

The Evolution of Our Response to Stress

When our social engagement system is not attuned we become sympathetic nervous system dominant. This is unattainable in the long term and eventually the system drops down to our most archaic survival mechanism, which is to shut down. There are many reasons that we are not able to be in our social engagement system: trauma, stress, pain, lack of movement, un-integrated primary reflexes and skipping developmental movement patterns. Sympathetic arousal heightens the activity of pain receptors; we are more likely to perceive threat where there is none; we are less able to listen because we are always being alert to sounds of threat; we react quickly or over react; and have difficulty engaging with others because we are always primed to run or defend. Eventually we feel there is no escape and shut down, disengage, become depressed, and the body may present with autoimmune disorders.

