

## Listening To Your Body & Building Resilience

Oh no. It's happening again... Here comes the racing heart, the sweaty palms, and the blotchy red skin. "Have I forgotten how to breathe? Why can't I breathe? What is happening?" If this panic sounds familiar, you are not alone.

Sometimes the stress of daily life comes barreling towards us, and our brain and limbic system do not have time to prepare. That's when the taboo symptoms start to bubble to the surface. No one wants to walk around feeling like they can't breathe while their skin is dotted with red splotches. We've all been there, and we most certainly do not wish the experience on anyone. After all, we're supposed to feel good, right?

### First Line of Defense

As humans, we are born into the world automatically wanting to feel our best and we develop necessary skills to self-soothe. So, it's only natural that when something taboo occurs, our natural inclination is to attempt to make the symptoms dissipate as fast as possible.

But what if those pesky, taboo symptoms were your body trying to tell you something? Would you listen?

These taboo symptoms are our body's first line of defense, and we must take time to pause and listen. Let's break it down a bit.

### The Fight-Flight-Freeze Response

Our body has an incredible nervous system that is hardwired to keep us alive and protect us from danger. When we feel threatened, our body goes into survival mode and releases stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones increase our heart rate and blood pressure and make us more alert (cue the racing heart and sweaty palms).

This internal response is known as fight-flight-freeze. While the fight-flight-freeze response is vital for keeping us safe in times of danger, it can also be triggered by everyday stressors such as work deadlines or financial worries. When this happens, we often try to shut out what our body tells us by doing all we can to make the annoying symptoms go away as fast as possible. But at this moment, when **we don't listen to what our body tells us, we can start to feel overwhelmed, and our mental health can suffer.**

It's essential to take a step back and assess the situation. Are you in danger? If so, seek emergency assistance right away. If not, ask yourself "What is bothering me?" Breathe. Thank your body for alerting you to the activating event. It may be time to reframe how we're thinking about the signals our body sends us.

### Why Is It Important to Listen to Your Body?

Learning to listen to your body is a skill that takes time—it is not something to master quickly. But every effort we make toward better understanding our bodily signals is one step closer to releasing and regulating stress and getting back to how we wish always to feel. Learning some of the most common signals our body sends us is an excellent place to start when learning to tune in to your body's triggered responses.

- **Don't Ignore Physical Pain:** One of the most common signals that our body sends us is pain. Pain can stem from many things, including injuries, illnesses, and emotional stress. It's important to pay attention to any pain you're experiencing, as it may indicate a bigger problem.
- **Evaluate the Root of Frequent Exhaustion:** Another common signal our body sends us is exhaustion or fatigue. When we're under constant stress, it's challenging to get the rest we need. If you're feeling exhausted all the time, it may be a sign that something in your life (whether internal or external) needs a closer look.
- **Tap Into Signals from Your Gut:** Digestive upset may not be the first thing you associate with stress or other challenging emotions. However, research describes the "[gut-brain connection](#)" as a link to stomach problems and anxiety and vice versa. The brain and gastrointestinal system are deeply connected. If you're experiencing digestion problems for no apparent reason, your intestinal tract may be telling you that you're experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression.

### **Reframing the Taboo & Building Resilience**

Why is it important to know about the gut-brain connection or the fight-flight-freeze response? Because increasing awareness around your body's signals contributes to a solid foundation for building resilience and learning how to better listen to your body.

In 2016, a fascinating [research study published in \*Biological Psychology\*](#) produced compelling results showing resilience to stress may directly correlate with one's ability to listen to their body. [The New York Times](#) quoted one of the lead authors, Martin Paulus, saying, "This study says that resilience is largely about body awareness and not rational thinking. Even the smartest people, if they don't listen to their body, might not bounce back as quickly from adversity as someone who is more attuned to [their] physiology."

Somatic intelligence is a critical factor to unlocking resilience, and we are here to guide you.

### **Seek Support to Listen to Your Body**

Here & Now will help build your understanding of exactly how the taboo symptoms you're experiencing are your greatest assets. We offer [somatic movement therapy and mindfulness classes](#). We can all learn how to honor our bodily communications. Doing so will enable us to better understand how to pause and respond in a beneficial way instead of reacting in the moment or stuffing away what we're internally experiencing.

We foster greater resilience when we reframe how we manage taboo feelings and experiences. [Reach out today](#) to start listening to your body. Isn't it time you heard what it wants to say?