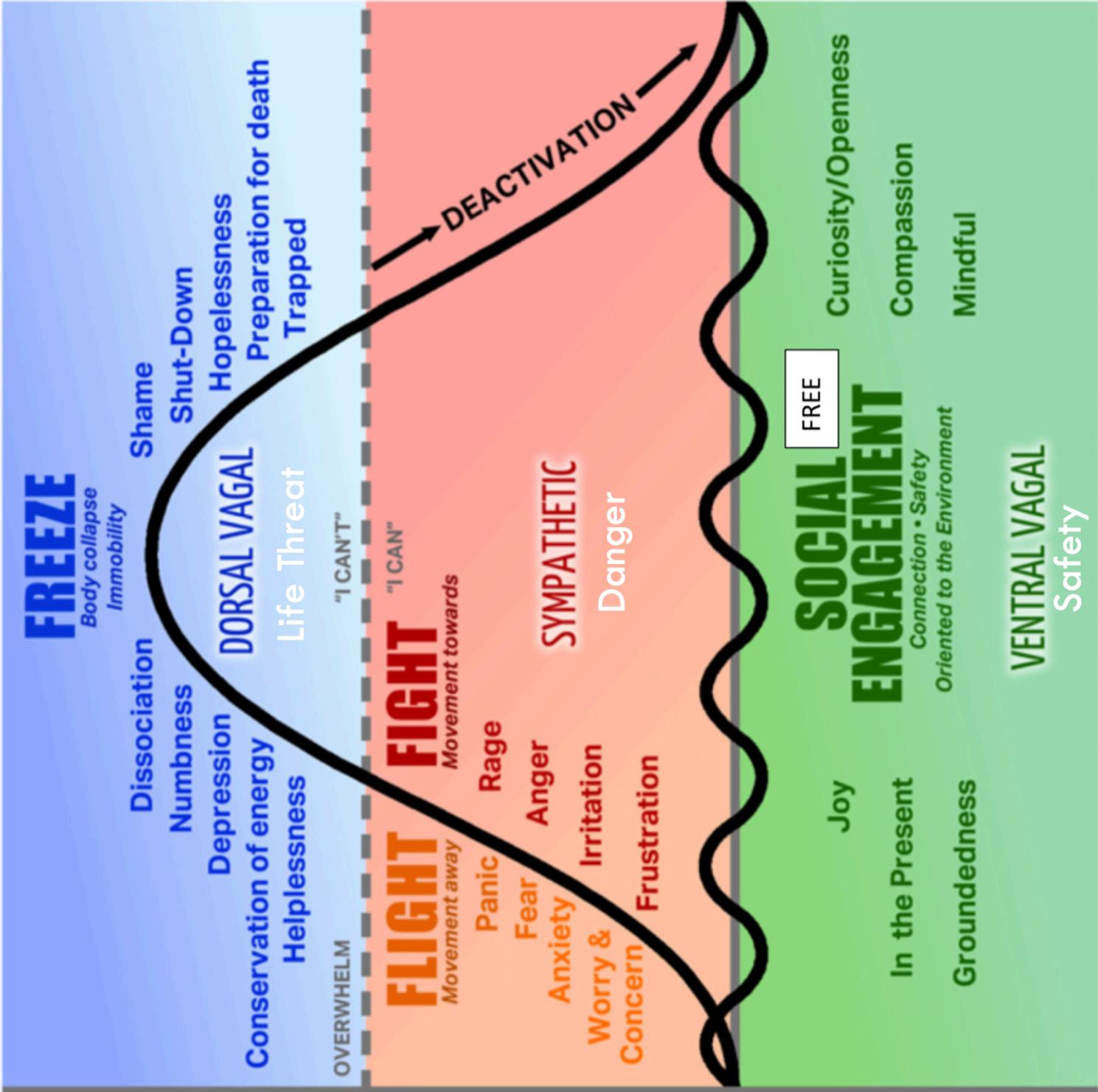




ACTIVATION INCREASES



**PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

**DORSAL VAGAL - EMERGENCY STATE**

**Increases**

Fuel storage & insulin activity  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold.

**Decreases**

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure  
Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions • Eye Contact  
Intonations • Awareness of the Human Voice • Social Behavior • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

**brake**

**SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

**Increases**

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate  
Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen circulation to vital organs  
Blood Clotting • Pupil Size

**Decreases**

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity  
Digestion • Salvation  
Relational Ability  
Immune Response

**gas pedal**

**PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

**VENTRAL VAGAL**

**Increases**

Digestion • Intestinal Motility  
Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response  
Rest and Recuperation  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear)  
Ability to Relate and Connect

**Decreases**

Defensive Responses

**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**  
Connection • Safety  
Oriented to the Environment

**VENTRAL VAGAL**  
Safety

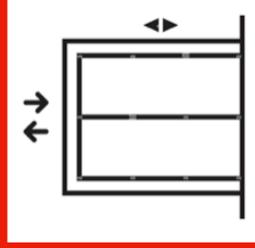
Capitulate  
Subjugate  
Appease  
Pacify  
Caretaking

Body  
(brake)

- Abandon Self
- Disappear
- Merge
- Center the other

Agreeable  
Self-blame  
Apologize  
Flatter  
Cater  
Careful

FAWN



towards/  
submit under

Body  
(gas)

- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Temperature
- Adrenaline

+

Body  
(coast)

- Ability to relate and connect
- Facial expression, eye contact, voice

+

## *Calming Body Practices*

### 1. Movement: Dispersing Energy

- See attachment (pg. 172 from [My Grandmother's Hands](#) by Resmaa Menakem) for exercises that help disperse energy rather than gather it when we are feeling negatively.
- Shaking, dancing, muscle tension release
- Muscle Tension & Release
  - Inhale and tense each muscle group (hard but not to the point of cramping) for four to ten seconds, then exhale and then completely relax the muscle group (do not relax it gradually). Give yourself 10 to 20 seconds to relax.
  - Slowly move through each muscle group one at a time. Following is a suggested guide for moving through different muscle areas and how to tense them:
    - **Hands:** Clench and release them both together.
    - **Wrists and forearms:** Extend fingers and bend your hands back at the wrist.
    - **Biceps and upper arms:** Clench your hands into fists, bend your arms at the elbows, and flex your biceps.
    - **Shoulders:** Shrug them up to your ears.
    - **Forehead:** Wrinkle it into a deep frown.
    - **Around the eyes and bridge of the nose:** Close your eyes as tightly as possible. (Remove contact lenses before beginning the exercise.)
    - **Cheeks and jaws:** Smile as widely as you can, and open the mouth as wide open as you can.
    - **Around the mouth:** Press your lips together tightly.
    - **Chest:** Take a deep breath and hold it, then exhale.
    - **Back:** Arch your back backwards. Then relax. Circle your back forward so you are folding in toward your chest. Then relax.
    - **Stomach:** Suck it into a tight knot.
    - **Hips and buttocks:** Press the buttocks together tightly.
    - **Thighs & hamstrings:** Clench the big muscles in your upper legs hard. This can also be done one leg at a time.
    - **Lower legs:** Tense the lower legs and feet. This can be done one leg at a time. Lift each foot up at the ankle to tense the front of the leg.
    - **Feet:** Curl toes down as far as you can. This can also be done one foot at a time. Take a few minutes at the end to breathe through your whole body inviting all muscle groups to relax as fully as possible.

### 2. Feet Above Heart: Legs up the Wall for 12 minutes

- <https://www.doyou.com/5-health-benefits-legs-wall-posture/>
- Feet higher than your heart engages parasympathetic nervous system
- In 12 minutes, your body's blood supply does a full circulation which increases oxygen flow to every organ and extremity

### 3. Temperature Change

- When we're upset, our bodies often feel hot. To counter this, splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube, or let the car's AC blow on your face. Changing your body temperature will help you cool down—both physically and emotionally.
- <https://sunrisertc.com/distress-tolerance-skills/>
- The mammalian diving reflex which is a natural reflex that occurs in all mammals and is triggered in humans when our faces are submerged in cold water. The reflex causes our body chemistry to change—heart rate drops down immediately and the parasympathetic nervous system is activated to prompt a relaxation response. Make sure to keep water above 50 degrees Fahrenheit

#### 4. Breathing: Longer Exhales

- Any time you exhale for longer than you inhale, you are engaging your parasympathetic nervous system. Even if it's one second longer it will help. Try to lengthen your exhale and as you calm down your breathing will slow and you'll be able to inhale more deeply. Focus on your breathing until you can inhale for 5-6 seconds and exhale for 8-9 seconds.
- Starfish Breathing Exercise for Kids

#### 5. Left/Right Exercise

- Any time we engage our body in an alternating left-right, repetitive movement we begin to access both parts of our brain. The most powerful are walking, running and freestyle or breaststroke swimming. If we are stuck in sensations and emotions, it helps us access logical. If we are spinning in thinking it helps us access our creativity and feelings. We are also dispersing energy.
- 100 Butterfly Taps
  - Cross your hands over your chest (or knees)
  - Your breathing will deepen, and your tapping pace will slow naturally
- Non-dominant hand journaling
  - <https://www.psychologies.co.uk/non-dominant-hand-writing-therapy/>

#### 6. Rhythmic Repetition

- Rocking
  - <https://michelejdemarco.medium.com/how-rocking-can-help-you-heal-b57d8ca70ac1>
  - See attachment (pg. 143 from My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem) for a slow rocking exercise
  - If you have a rocking chair, glider or even a swing set at a nearby park accessible keep it in mind as a resource.
- Humming
  - See attachment (pg. 141-142 from My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem) for a guiding humming exercise

- Why it works: [https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/arts-and-health/202004/tapping-the-healing-rhythms-the-vagal-nerve?fbclid=IwAR25n6j7CYUzXdxnYjdaNZprx4Yce515xeX3uryXkU1pfmTQO\\_Sg7WqkLv0](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/arts-and-health/202004/tapping-the-healing-rhythms-the-vagal-nerve?fbclid=IwAR25n6j7CYUzXdxnYjdaNZprx4Yce515xeX3uryXkU1pfmTQO_Sg7WqkLv0)
- Tapping
  - [www.thetappingsolution.com](http://www.thetappingsolution.com)

7. Grounding: 5 Senses

- Mindfulness Exercise: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
  - <https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/destress-monday/unwind-monday-5-4-3-2-1-grounding-technique>

## What's Your ACE Score?

There are 10 types of childhood trauma measured in the ACE Study. Five are personal – physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. Five are related to other family members: a parent who's an alcoholic, a mother who's a victim of domestic violence, a family member in jail, a family member diagnosed with a mental illness, and the disappearance of a parent through divorce, death or abandonment. Each type of trauma counts as one. So a person who's been physically abused, with one alcoholic parent, and a mother who was beaten up has an ACE score of three.

There are, of course, many other types of childhood trauma – watching a sibling being abused, losing a caregiver (grandmother, mother, grandfather, etc.), homelessness, surviving and recovering from a severe accident, witnessing a father being abused by a mother, witnessing a grandmother abusing a father, etc. The ACE Study included only those 10 childhood traumas because those were mentioned as most common by a group of about 300 Kaiser members; those traumas were also well studied individually in the research literature.

Prior to your 18th birthday:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
10. Did a household member go to prison?

Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score

# What's Your Resilience Score?

This questionnaire was developed by the early childhood service providers, pediatricians, psychologists, and health advocates of Southern Kennebec Healthy Start, Augusta, Maine, in 2006, and updated in February 2013. Two psychologists in the group, Mark Rains and Kate McClinn, came up with the 14 statements with editing suggestions by the other members of the group. The scoring system was modeled after the ACE Study questions. The content of the questions was based on a number of research studies from the literature over the past 40 years including that of Emmy Werner and others. Its purpose is limited to parenting education. It was not developed for research.

**RESILIENCE Questionnaire-- Please circle the most accurate answer under each statement:**

**1. I believe that my mother loved me when I was little.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**2. I believe that my father loved me when I was little.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**3. When I was little, other people helped my mother and father take care of me and they seemed to love me.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**4. I've heard that when I was an infant someone in my family enjoyed playing with me, and I enjoyed it, too.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**5. When I was a child, there were relatives in my family who made me feel better if I was sad or worried.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**6. When I was a child, neighbors or my friends' parents seemed to like me.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**7. When I was a child, teachers, coaches, youth leaders or ministers were there to help me.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**8. Someone in my family cared about how I was doing in school.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**9. My family, neighbors and friends talked often about making our lives better.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**10. We had rules in our house and were expected to keep them.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**11. When I felt really bad, I could almost always find someone I trusted to talk to.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**12. As a youth, people noticed that I was capable and could get things done.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**13. I was independent and a go-getter.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**14. I believed that life is what you make it.**

**Definitely true    Probably true    Not sure    Probably Not True    Definitely Not True**

**How many of these 14 protective factors did I have as a child and youth? (How many of the 14 were circled "Definitely True" or "Probably True"?) \_\_\_\_\_**

**Of these circled, how many are still true for me? \_\_\_\_\_**

