

A Curated Bibliography of Relational Neuroscience

These are books that my colleagues and I have found particularly helpful in developing the always-valuable left hemisphere emissary.

The Foundations of Interpersonal Neurobiology

Siegel, D. J. (2020). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.

For me, this is the foundational text to begin to picture the neurobiology of our inner world. Not an easy read and really worth reading more than once.

Schore, A. N. (2012). *The science of the art of psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Norton.

Allan has given us such a depth of understanding about early wounding and about right-brain to right-brain processes in therapy. Read this one slowly, slowly.

Cozolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing social brain* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.

Cozolino, L. (2017). *The neuroscience of psychotherapy: Healing the social brain*. New York, NY: Norton.

For me, these books are a little easier to read than Dan or Allan while they deepen our awareness of the “social synapse,” the precious space between where healing happens.

Badenoch, B. (2021). Becoming a therapeutic presence in the counseling room and the world. In D. J. Siegel, A. N. Schore, & L. Cozolino (Eds.) *Interpersonal Neurobiology and Clinical Practice*. New York, NY: Norton.

This book, edited by Dan Siegel, Allan Schore, and Lou Cozolino, is a collection of reflections by authors in the Norton IPNB series about how they have applied IPNB to their practices. My chapter focused on the integration of the principles of relational neuroscience with our group of therapists at our nonprofit organizations in California and Washington.

There are also numerous YouTube videos from all three of these foundational theoreticians.

The Foundations of Presence

McGilchrist, I. (2009). *The master and his emissary: The divided brain and the making of the western world*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Ground-breaking work about the two hemispheres of the brain and how they each see the world differently and so create a different kind of relationship with each other and the world. It's dense and a very big book. Reading the first four chapters and the conclusion (maybe more than once) will give you the core ideas in great detail. I found this to be a life-changing book that has shifted my perceptual lens in the direction of compassion. He is just releasing a new book, this one is 3,000 pages in two volumes – *The Matter with Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions and the Unmaking of the World*. Iain has so much on YouTube and Channel McGilchrist.

Porges, S. W. (2013, September). A neural love code. In M. Kern (Chair), *Breath of life conference 2013*. Symposium conducted at a meeting of the Craniosacral Therapy Educational Trust, London, UK.

If it is possible to get a copy of this talk, it is a wonderful example of Steve speaking from his heart. His writings are often challenging, but the way he speaks about Polyvagal theory in terms of the human experience, we may be able to take in this theory in a more whole-bodied way. Steve also has a big presence on YouTube for more opportunities to hear this theory coming through him.

Badenoch, B. (2018). "Safety is the treatment." In D. Dana & S. W. Porges (Eds.). *Application of Polyvagal Theory in Clinical Practice*. New York, NY: Norton.

This book collects the reflections of a number of therapists who have actively included Polyvagal Theory in their practice, each in a different way.

Porges, S. W., Badenoch, B., & Phillips, M. (2016). *Feeling and expressing compassion*.

Webinar. Retrieved from <http://bestpracticesintherapy.com/silver-month-long-july/>.

Porges, S. W., & Phillips, M. (2016). *Connectedness: A biological imperative*. Webinar.

Retrieved from <http://bestpracticesintherapy.com/silver-month-long-july/>.

I had the privilege of doing a webinar with Steve and Maggie Phillips. We talked about the relationship between empathy and compassion. The only way to get these might be to contact Maggie Phillips through her website - <https://www.maggiephillipsphd.com/>.

Dana, D. (2018). *The Polyvagal Theory in therapy*. New York, NY: Norton.

Thanks to Deb, Polyvagal Theory is becoming even more widely known. Her work offers both understanding of the theory and exercises to help our people listen to their ANS. There is great value in this, particularly as a foundation for doing the deeper work of healing embedded traumas.

Beckes, L., & Coan, J. A. (2011). Social Baseline Theory: The role of social proximity in emotion and economy of action. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(12), 976-988.

Coan, J. A., & Sbarra, D. A. (2015). Social Baseline Theory: The social regulation of risk and effort. *Current Opinions in Psychology*, 1, 87-91.

James Coan, TedTalk – *Why Do We Hold Hands?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UMHUPPQ96c>

Social Baseline Theory (Beckes, Coan, Sbarra) tells us that when we are in trusting relationships, our amygdalae calm as soon as we are with each other. The deeper the trust, the greater the calming. It is so heartening that our presence – without doing anything – has this effect on our people's inner world. Jim Coan's 13-minute TedTalk, just above, is worth watching several times.

Hasson, U. (2010, December). I can make your brain look like mine. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2010/12/defend-your-research-i-can-make-your-brain-look-like-mine>.

Hasson, U., Ghazanfar, A. A., Galantucci, B., Garrod, S., & Keysers, C. (2012). Brain-to-brain coupling: A mechanism for creating and sharing a social world. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 16(2), 114-121.

Uri Hasson and his colleagues focus on shifting brain research from being primarily about a single brain to looking at how multi-brain systems are constantly shaping one another.

Perry, B. D., & Winfrey, O. (2021). *What happened to you?: Conversations on trauma, resilience, and healing*. New York, NY: Flatiron.

The question in the title is the key to this major contribution to a non-pathologizing view of our people. Instead of “What’s wrong with you?”, we are directed to consider that we are adapting to relationships and events that shaped us.

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

The whole book is an encouragement to cultivate nonjudgmental presence. Chapters 14-16 offer perspectives of our people that are non-pathologizing and respectful. Chapter 17 is about how the metaphors that automatically come to mind indicate which hemisphere is in the lead, and how whichever hemisphere dominates in us invites others to join us there. Chapter 18, “Leading, Following, Responding,” talks about how the pathway of presence opens a healing space for the inherent wisdom and health of our people to manifest.

Meeting the Embodied Nervous System

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

Chapters 2 – 11, each of them short, collect some of the neural streams throughout our bodies that are constantly speaking to us in the language of sensation. While these chapters aren’t exhaustive, they will give enough information to begin to get a felt sense of how wise our bodies are and how important it is to consciously involve them in our work of healing trauma. Our own bodies and those of our people.

Perry, B. D. (2014). *Rhythm regulates the brain*. Retrieved from

<http://attachmentdisorderhealing.com/developmental-trauma-3>

Perry, B. D., & Hambrick, E. P. (2008). The neurosequential model of therapeutics.

Retrieved from [https://childtrauma.org/wp-](https://childtrauma.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NMT_Article_08.pdf)

[content/uploads/2013/08/NMT_Article_08.pdf](https://childtrauma.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/NMT_Article_08.pdf)

Bruce Perry helps us develop awareness of the nested quality of our neural circuitry, and particularly the importance of the brainstem as the holder of rhythm and pattern in our bodies. In addition to these articles, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* (with Maia Szalavitz) and the recent *What Happened to You?* [instead of *What's wrong with you*] (with Oprah Winfrey) can deepen our sense of Dr. Perry's vision of the embodied brain in trauma, healing, and health.

Panksepp, J., & Biven, L. (2012). *The archaeology of mind: Neuroevolutionary origins of human emotions*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Not an easy read, but so important for establishing the importance of a bottom-up view of our emotional life. Side by side with Bruce Perry, they anchor us in the midbrain's systems where emotions first originate. This matters because these circuits are part of the inherent health that begins to manifest as we heal from embedded traumas.

The Formation of Implicit Memory and the Healing of Embedded Traumas

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

While, chapter 15 speaks about the relationship between implicit memory and inherent health, the whole book is really an exploration of the power of implicit memory and its importance in healing embedded traumas. The hope is that by the end of reading the book, we have soaked in the experience of implicit memory to the point that it has become an important part of our perceptual lens. When that develops, increased compassion is the natural outcome.

Ecker, B., Ticic, R., & Hulley, L. (2012). *Unlocking the emotional brain: Eliminating symptoms at their root using memory reconsolidation*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ecker, B. (2015). Memory reconsolidation understood and misunderstood. *International Journal of Neuropsychotherapy*, 3(1), 2–46. doi:10.12744/ijnpt.2015.0002-0046

Bruce Ecker and his colleagues have collected the research on memory reconsolidation in one place, a great service to those of us working with embedded implicit traumas. This research makes it clear that there is no such thing as pathology and that there is a clear process for changing the felt sense and behavioral patterns rooted in the implicit memory of these traumas. While I don't implement this healing process the same way as Ecker, the underlying pattern can become part of whatever modality we are practicing.

Exploring the Complexities of Attachment

Reading (or reading about) the work of John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Mary Main, and Erik Hesse can put an intellectual foundation about attachment styles in place. However, the schema they offer are also more rigid than what unfolds in our lives. Dan Siegel's *Developing Mind* is a rich resource. For highly disrupted early attachment, you can't do better than Allan Schore (except he is challenging to read). All of this can help build your left hemisphere emissary.

Badenoch, B. (2008). *Being a brain-wise therapist: A practical guide to interpersonal neurobiology*. New York: Norton.

On the foundation of these wise guides, chapter 5 of this book invites you to step into attachment in a more intimate way, into the felt sense and complexities of what happens in our bodies, emotions, thoughts, and relational patterns as our parents and others co-regulate with us.

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

Chapter 19, "Co-Attaching," explores the healing power of the relationship between us and our people.

Meeting and Healing Our Inner Community

There are many therapeutic models that conceptualize our inner world in terms of parts. Different from other ways of imagining, inner community work is built on an understanding of the neurobiological processes that make it possible for us to internalize others – those who care for us with warmth and understanding and those who have brought pain and fear. These internalized other become the portals for deep, deep healing. Here are some chapters that can offer an invitation to explore our own rich inner communities.

Badenoch, B. (2008). *Being a brain-wise therapist: A practical guide to interpersonal neurobiology*. New York: Norton.

Chapter 6 describes how inner communities form and chapter 15 talks about the kind of work we can do to foster healing of all inner community members.

Badenoch, B. (2011). *The brain-savvy therapist's workbook*. New York, NY: Norton

The first six chapters of this book are dedicated to doing our own work. The next six are about doing that work with others. Chapters 4 and 10 are dedicated to doing inner community work.

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

While the whole book honors the inner community perspective, chapter 21 is particularly focused on the kind of radical inclusiveness that supports resolving inner community pain.

Resources for IPNB and Sandtray/Play Therapy

Badenoch, B. (2008). *Being a brain-wise therapist: A practical guide to interpersonal neurobiology*. New York: Norton.

Chapter 16 talks about the integrative power of sand and miniatures, a first attempt at offering relational neuroscience understandings for this process.

Grayson, R. & Fraser, T. (Eds.) (2021). *The Embodied Brain and Sandtray Therapy: Stories of Healing and Transformation*. London: Routledge.

This book is a beautiful example of weaving science and story to help us embody the wisdom of relational neuroscience in the sandtray process. I had the delightful privilege of writing a chapter about the creative ways my people have taken to sand and miniatures in their healing journey.

Kestly, T. (2014). *The interpersonal neurobiology of play: Brain-building interventions for emotional well-being*. New York, NY: Norton.

This foundational book about the importance of play at every age is filled with science and story as well. A wonderful support for both understanding why play matters and bringing it to life in the counseling room. Clear, accurate, and a delight to read.

Badenoch, B. (2018). *The heart of trauma: Healing the embodied brain in the context of relationships*. New York, NY: Norton.

Chapter 21 is about radical inclusiveness and shares a sand tray exploration of what happens when we open to every part within us.

Some Foundations for Shifting Our Perceptual Lens toward Experiencing Interdependence

One of our lifelong projects is rewiring our embodied brains so that we can perceive and live in a felt sense of interdependence. This can become the bedrock on which our practice as therapists rests, and perhaps more importantly, it is also how we participate in care for each other and our precious planet. I have found that immersing myself in the words of these authors has a powerful effect on my body, bringing me more into the heart. You may find yourself adding many more titles to this section!

Kimmerer, R. W. (2015). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teaching of plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Robin gently brings us into the felt sense of Indigenous awareness while including her awareness as a scientist as well. Truly heart-changing.

Powers, R. (2019). *The overstory: A novel*. New York, NY: Norton.

For me, this book, more than most, brings the relationship between us and our forests to life. The glorious trees are central characters in this book that puts us in touch with the tragedy of what is happening to these beings as well as offering startling sources of hope.

Simard, S. (2021). *Finding the mother tree: Discovering the wisdom of the forest*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Suzanne carries us below the earth to the interdependent and collaborative world that links the trees. This is the story of her journey of listening in the darkness. She narrates the audiobook, drawing us into the beautiful relational depths.

Yunkaporta, T. (2020). *Sand talk: How Indigenous thinking can save the world*. New York, NY: Harper One.

Tyson, an indigenous Australian man, carries us into his story-filled wisdom in a way that we begin to step into a different perceptual universe where everything is alive. He narrates the audiobook himself which makes it even more powerful and delightful. I'm on my third time through, very slowly.