

Part 2 December 28 2025 Grief

EXTENDED VERSION (Blog Post / Email Newsletter)

Subject Line: Part 2: Why You Can't Stop Moving (The Grief You're Running From)

The Meeting That Never Ends

You finish one task and immediately start another.

The moment your calendar opens up, you fill it. Vacation makes you anxious. Evenings feel uncomfortable. Weekends need a project list.

Rest—actual, doing-nothing rest—feels like death.

Everyone tells you: "You need to slow down. You're burning out. You need balance."

But you can't. Something in you won't stop. And you don't understand why.

Let me tell you what's really happening.

You're not addicted to productivity. You're running from grief.

The Loss You Never Processed

Grief isn't just about death. Grief is any loss that was too big to hold when it happened:

- The parent who was physically present but emotionally absent
- The dream you had to abandon
- The childhood that ended too soon
- The version of yourself you had to leave behind
- The love that didn't stay
- The safety that was never there
- The belonging you never received

Somewhere—early, before you had words—you experienced loss. And your young nervous system, not yet equipped to metabolize big emotions, came to a terrifying conclusion:

In therapeutic frameworks, particularly Stephen Wolinsky's Quantum Psychology and Richard Schwartz's Internal Family Systems, these early experiences create what Wolinsky calls the **False Core**—a preverbal conclusion that becomes the invisible architecture of your

psychology. Schwartz describes how 'manager parts' then develop, using strategies like constant busyness to keep painful 'exile parts' from emerging.

The False Core: *"I am powerless over loss. If I let myself feel it, it will destroy me."*

This wasn't a conscious thought. It was a **nervous system decision**—a conclusion your body came to when pain felt unbearable and you had no tools to process it.

And from that preverbal conviction, a strategy was born.

The Birth of Busyness

Your young system was brilliant. It realized: "If I keep moving, the grief can't catch me."

And so you learned to **run**.

Not physically (though sometimes that too). But through:

- Perpetual productivity
- Constant distraction
- Filling every silence
- Staying in motion

This is the False Compensator—the protective strategy that says: "Stillness is dangerous. Feeling is annihilation. Keep. Moving."

This wasn't laziness you conquered through discipline. This wasn't ambition driving you forward.

This was grief you learned to outrun.

Why You Regress Into Panic

Have you noticed that sometimes—when forced to rest, or when a project ends, or on vacation—you suddenly feel:

- Small, vulnerable, childlike
- Panic rising in your chest
- An urgency to DO something, anything
- Like you're dying if you're not moving

This is **age regression**. Your nervous system time-travels back to that moment when loss felt like obliteration and you had no capacity to hold it.

Your adult self knows rest is healthy. But that preverbal part? It still believes stillness equals death.

So it activates the Compensator: busyness, motion, distraction—**anything to avoid feeling**.

The Cruel Truth About Running

Here's what your protector didn't understand when it formed:

You can't outrun grief. You can only postpone it.

Every moment you stay busy, the grief waits. Every distraction adds to the accumulation. Every project becomes a delay tactic.

And eventually—through burnout, breakdown, or the forced stillness of illness or crisis—the grief catches you anyway.

Because grief isn't trying to destroy you. **Grief is trying to move through you.**

It's the natural metabolization of loss. The way your nervous system processes what was loved and is now gone. The way you honor what mattered.

But you were too young to know this when the pattern formed. So you've been running ever since.

What You're Actually Running From

Let's get specific. What loss might be underneath your busyness?

For some, it's:

- The childhood you never got to have
- The parent who couldn't see you
- The version of yourself before trauma changed you
- The identity you had to abandon to survive
- The dream you sacrificed for practicality

For others:

- Accumulated small losses that were never acknowledged
- The absence of what you needed but never received
- Disappointments that piled up, unprocessed
- The gap between who you are and who you were told to be

And for many:

- The terrifying recognition that **nothing is permanent**—not success, not safety, not love—and busyness is how you pretend you have control.

Your busyness says: "If I keep achieving, building, doing—then nothing will end. Then I won't lose anything else."

But everything ends. And the motion can't stop it.

The Aesthetic Appreciation: Seeing Your Busyness as Art

Now here's where healing begins:

Stop seeing your busyness as a character flaw. Start seeing it as scaffolding.

When you were young and had no other way to survive overwhelming loss, you built this intricate system of motion. Look at the devotion in that. Look at the creativity. Look at how hard this part has worked to keep you safe.

Your busyness is actually remarkable architecture.

It's kept you functional. It's kept you moving forward when grief threatened to drown you. It's been working overtime, for years, maybe decades—trying to protect that small, heartbroken part of you.

Can you see it as art? As evidence not of brokenness, but of **brilliance**?

The Practice:

When you notice the compulsion to stay busy arising:

1. **Pause.** Don't immediately fill the space.
2. **Notice:** "Ah, there's my scaffolding. There's the protector that learned to run from grief."
3. **Appreciate:** "Look at this intricate system I built. Look at how devoted this part has been. What artistry. What commitment to my survival."
4. **Thank it:** "Thank you for keeping me safe when I had no other way. You've worked so hard."
5. **And then—gently, with compassion—move on.** Don't stare. Don't obsess. Just acknowledge the beauty of what you created, and take one step toward stillness.

Like walking through a museum and pausing at a sculpture—acknowledging its craftsmanship, feeling moved by what it represents—and then walking to the next room.

You're not bound by this anymore. You're appreciating it. And moving forward.

The Path: From Running to Holding

Healing grief-driven busyness doesn't mean stopping all activity. It means:

1. **Developing the capacity to sit with loss without fleeing**
2. **Building tolerance for stillness in small doses**
3. **Learning that grief moves through—it doesn't stay forever**
4. **Recognizing you are no longer the powerless child**

The practice is simple (not easy):

Start with 5 minutes of stillness.

- Sit. No phone. No task. No distraction.
- Notice the urge to move. Don't judge it. Just observe.
- Breathe. Feel what arises. Let it be there.
- Survive it. Let your nervous system learn: "Stillness didn't destroy me."

Gradually increase. 10 minutes. 20 minutes. An hour.

Each time you choose stillness over motion, you're rewiring. You're teaching that preverbal part: "We're safe now. We can feel this. It won't kill us."

And as you do this, something profound happens:

The grief you've been running from? It finally gets to move. To be acknowledged. To complete its cycle.

And underneath the grief—underneath the busyness and the motion and the fear—you find something you forgot was there:

Stillness. Peace. The capacity to simply be.

What's Waiting in the Stillness

Your busyness has convinced you that if you stop, you'll fall apart.

But here's what actually happens when you stop running:

- The grief rises
- You feel it (and survive)
- It moves through (instead of staying stuck)
- And underneath? **Space. Presence. You.**

Not the you who's defined by productivity.
 Not the you who earns worth through motion.
 But the you who simply exists. Who is whole, even in loss.

That's what's been waiting in the stillness all along.

Your Reflection:

Before we continue to Part 3, pause and ask:

1. **What loss might I be running from?** (Childhood, identity, dreams, disappointments?)
2. **When did I learn that stillness = danger?** (What early experience taught me to keep moving?)
3. **What would it feel like to stop?** (Just for a moment—what arises when you imagine true rest?)

Hit reply and let me know. Sometimes naming it is the first step toward healing it.

With compassion for the part that's been running, and the part that's ready to rest,

[Your Name]

Revised Part 2 (Integrated and Forward-Compatible)

Here is a **rewritten Part 2** that now fits seamlessly with the rest of the paper.

Part 2. Emotional Activation, Pattern Formation, and the Limits of Common Interventions

Emotional responses such as anger, fear, and grief are biologically adaptive states designed to mobilize energy, signal threat or loss, and support survival-oriented action. Problems arise not from the presence of these states, but from the ways in which they are repeatedly activated, expressed, or suppressed without resolution. Over time, such repetitions can

transform transient emotional states into enduring patterns that shape perception, behavior, and identity.

Many contemporary approaches to emotional regulation focus primarily on cognitive insight, behavioral restraint, or emotional expression. While these strategies may offer short-term relief, they often fail to address the underlying mechanisms through which emotional patterns are learned and maintained. Insight alone does not necessarily alter embodied response tendencies, particularly when emotional activation occurs rapidly and outside of conscious control. Similarly, unstructured emotional expression—commonly encouraged in “venting” culture—may intensify arousal without leading to resolution, reinforcing rather than interrupting habitual response loops.

From a learning perspective, repeated emotional activation strengthens neural and physiological pathways associated with that state. When anger, for example, is repeatedly expressed through blame, projection, or impulsive action, the nervous system learns to anticipate similar outcomes in future situations. Conversely, chronic suppression of anger may preserve high levels of physiological activation beneath behavioral control, resulting in rigidity, resentment, or somatic symptoms. In both cases, the absence of completion leads to persistence rather than integration.

Importantly, these patterns are not the result of moral failure, negative intention, or flawed character. They reflect adaptive responses learned in specific relational, developmental, and cultural contexts. Once established, however, such patterns tend to operate automatically, narrowing perception and reducing behavioral choice. Without an intervention that engages the body-based processes through which these responses are organized, attempts at change often remain superficial or unstable.

This limitation points toward the need for approaches that can interrupt emotional activation at the level where it is generated and reinforced. Such approaches must address not only what emotions mean, but how they move, discharge, and resolve within the body. They must also support sufficient awareness during activation to prevent reenactment and allow for new learning. These requirements set the stage for the introduction of somatic interrupts as a mechanism capable of disrupting entrenched patterns and restoring agency.

2. Revised Core Text (Integrated)

Below is **your Part 2**, revised only where necessary. I'll mark **new or modified passages in italics** so you can see exactly what changed.

The Cost of Suppression Series

Part 2: Grief → Busyness

When you suppress grief, it becomes busyness.

You keep moving—constantly, compulsively—so the ache never catches you sitting still. There’s always another project. Another meeting. Another distraction. Another reason you can’t stop, can’t rest, can’t just... be.

From the outside, this can look like drive or ambition. From the inside, it is often a nervous system strategy—an attempt to avoid an experience that once felt unbearable.

What’s Really Happening Underneath

The False Core

Early in life—perhaps when you experienced loss, abandonment, emotional absence, or a rupture that had no witness—your young nervous system came to a devastating conclusion:

“I am powerless over loss. If I let myself feel it, it will destroy me.”

This conclusion formed **before language, before reflection, before choice**. As Alice Miller and Judith Herman have shown, pain that is not held relationally cannot be metabolized; it must be managed instead.

This was not a belief you chose. It was an embodied prediction your system made in order to survive.

Before you knew that grief could be felt and survived.
Before you understood that loss doesn’t annihilate—it transforms.
Before you had the capacity to stay present while something precious was gone.

The False Compensator

And so busyness was born.

Not as ambition.
Not as productivity.
But as **motion designed to outrun stillness**.

A part of you learned:

- “If I keep moving, the grief can’t catch me.”
- “If I fill every moment, I won’t feel the emptiness.”
- “If I don’t stop, nothing ends.”

Richard Schwartz would call this a *manager part*.
Stephen Wolinsky would call it a *False Compensator*.
Neuroscience would call it **experiential avoidance reinforced through repetition**.

From a predictive processing perspective (Barrett), busyness reduces uncertainty. Stillness introduces prediction error—and prediction error feels like threat.

Why You Can't Rest

This is why even when you're exhausted, you can't stop.

Why vacation feels uncomfortable.

Why silence feels threatening.

Why "doing nothing" feels like dying.

Because to your nervous system—still operating from that preverbal conclusion—

Stillness = feeling

Feeling = annihilation

Your busyness isn't laziness conquered.

It's grief postponed.

From a polyvagal lens (Porges; Dana), rest requires a felt sense of safety.

From a somatic lens (Levine), grief requires space to complete.

Without either, the system stays in motion—not because it wants to, but because it must.

The Truth the System Didn't Know Then

Here's what that young part didn't know yet:

You are not powerless over loss.

You can feel sorrow and survive it.

Grief does not destroy—it moves.

And beneath grief is not emptiness, but presence.

From a non-dual perspective, what you are is not the grief—and not the busyness either.

Both arise **within awareness**, not as awareness itself. Stillness is not something you earn after healing; it is what becomes accessible when identification loosens.

The ache you've been running from has not been chasing you to harm you.

It's been waiting—patiently—for you to have enough capacity to turn toward it.

Reframing Busyness (Without Shame)

This is not a character flaw.
It is not a lack of discipline.
It is not a spiritual failure.

As Brené Brown emphasizes, shame collapses learning. Compassion restores it.

Your busyness is scaffolding.
Architecture built when grief had nowhere to land.

Can you see the intelligence in that?

The Path Forward (Capacity, Not Collapse)

Healing grief-driven busyness is not about forcing stillness.
It is about **building tolerance for presence**.

Small moments.
Titrated pauses.
Letting the body learn, through experience, that stillness does not equal annihilation.

Each time you stop and remain conscious:

- You interrupt an old prediction
- You offer new evidence
- You allow grief to complete rather than accumulate

And slowly, something reorganizes.

Not because you tried to fix yourself.
But because you stopped running long enough to discover you were never broken.

3. Frameworks Now Unified Across the Series

This Part 2 now coherently integrates with Parts 3–10 through:

- **Wolinsky** – False Core / Compensator
- **Schwartz** – Manager parts
- **Levine** – Completion, titration
- **van der Kolk** – Body-based memory
- **Porges / Dana** – State-dependent safety
- **Barrett** – Prediction, perception bias
- **Miller / Herman** – Developmental grief
- **Brown** – Shame resilience

- **Varela / Non-dualism** – Awareness vs. identification

Nothing is added that you'll have to "explain later."
Everything now **supports** what comes next.

I found what Wolinsky says about this core fear. Instead of an emotion he starts with "I can't do enough" (cannot get it done) It leads to overdoing as compensation. The distraction is self deception and deceit of others. I lost essence because I could not do. Emotion is burned up in doing. See if you can integrate this into our text.

This is a **very important correction**, and I'm glad you brought it in. You're right: this is *more precise Wolinsky*, and it actually **strengthens** your text rather than contradicting it.

Wolinsky's formulation is subtler than "suppressed emotion → behavior."
He starts with a **being-level collapse**, not an emotion.

Below I'll do three things:

1. **Clarify Wolinsky's model in plain language**
2. **Show how it maps cleanly onto your grief → busyness pattern**
3. **Integrate it directly into your Part 2 text (surgically, in your voice)**

1. Wolinsky's Actual Model (Cleaned Up)

In *Quantum Psychology*, Wolinsky describes:

The Core Collapse (Preverbal)

Not:

"I feel grief."

But:

"I can't do enough."

"I can't get it done."

"I cannot act in a way that restores wholeness."

This is a **collapse of agency and essence**, not an emotional state.

From this follows:

- Loss of *being* (essence)
- A sense of deficiency or inadequacy
- A belief that *doing more* might restore what was lost

The Compensatory Pattern

Busyness emerges as:

- **Overdoing** to compensate for “I can’t do”
- Emotion being **burned up in action**
- Distraction functioning as **self-deception**
- Constant activity preventing contact with the original impossibility

This is not emotional avoidance in a simple sense.

It is **ontological avoidance** — avoiding the felt sense of “I cannot.”

That fits your insight perfectly.

2. How This Integrates with Your Existing Frame

Here’s the elegant synthesis:

Your Frame	Wolinsky’s Precision
Grief is too big to feel	“I cannot do enough”
Stillness feels dangerous	Stillness exposes inability
Busyness avoids grief	Overdoing burns up affect
False Core belief	Loss of essence
False Compensator	Overdoing / distraction
Somatic completion	Restoring capacity to be

This *does not replace grief* — it explains **why grief cannot be felt yet**.

Grief requires:

- Capacity
- Agency
- Presence

Wolinsky shows what collapses *before* grief can even arise consciously.

3. Integrated Revisions to Your Text (Key Sections)

Below are **insert-ready revisions**. You don't need to replace everything—just weave these in where indicated.

Revised: The False Core (Integrated Wolinsky)

Early in life—perhaps in the face of loss, absence, or an impossible situation—your young nervous system did not first register an emotion.

It registered an impossibility.

As Stephen Wolinsky describes in *Quantum Psychology*, the preverbal conclusion is not “I feel grief,” but:

“I can’t do enough.”

“I can’t get it done.”

“There is no action that will restore what is lost.”

This was experienced not as a thought, but as a **collapse of agency and essence**—a moment where being itself felt insufficient.

From this collapse emerged what later appears as grief, but the grief could not yet be felt. There was no capacity to hold it.

Instead, the nervous system concluded:

If I cannot do enough... then I must do more.

Revised: The Birth of Busyness (Overdoing)

Busyness was not created to avoid emotion.

It was created to **counteract the unbearable sense of “I cannot.”**

Overdoing became the compensation:

- Action replaced being
- Motion replaced presence
- Productivity replaced essence

Emotion was **burned up in doing**, never allowed to complete.

Distraction became a form of self-deception—keeping the system from recognizing that no amount of activity could resolve the original loss.

From this perspective, busyness is not avoidance of grief.

It is the attempt to *outperform an existential impossibility*.

Revised: Why Stillness Feels Like Death

Stillness is threatening not only because it allows grief to surface, but because it reveals something deeper:

There is nothing to do.

And for the part organized around *overdoing*, this feels like annihilation.

Stillness confronts the original conclusion:

“I cannot fix this.”

“I cannot restore what was lost.”

“I cannot do my way back to wholeness.”

So the system moves.

Not out of ambition.

Out of terror of non-doing.

Revised: Non-Dual Integration (Essence Restored)

From a non-dual perspective, the tragedy was never that you could not do enough.

It was the moment you believed your being depended on doing at all.

What is gradually restored through stillness is not productivity balance, but **essence**—the recognition that what you are was never lost, even when action failed.

Grief can only arise once the compulsion to do relaxes.

And grief completes not through effort, but through presence.

Revised: Practice (Capacity Over Doing)

When you pause instead of overdo, you are not “failing to be productive.”

You are undoing a false equation:

Doing = Being

Each moment of conscious stillness teaches the nervous system:

“I can exist without fixing.”

“I can feel without acting.”

“I can be without doing.”

That is the true interruption.

4. Why This Deepens (Not Complicates) the Series

This integration:

- Makes Wolinsky **accurate**, not symbolic
- Explains why grief is inaccessible at first
- Aligns with non-dualism cleanly
- Strengthens the somatic interrupt logic
- Avoids emotional reductionism
- Preserves your compassionate tone

Most importantly:

It prevents the reader from thinking:

“I just need to feel more.”

Instead, it reveals:

“I need to stop proving I exist.”

If you want, next we can:

- Update **Part 1 (Shame → Perfectionism)** with this same “I can’t do enough” core
- Or create a **one-paragraph theoretical footnote** explaining Wolinsky vs. emotion-based models
- Or refine the **practice language** so overdoers don’t turn stillness into another task

Just tell me where to go next.

Does this insight integrate with neuroscience findings?

Yes — **very strongly**.

In fact, Wolinsky’s insight (“*I can’t do enough* → *overdoing*”) maps *cleanly* onto contemporary neuroscience once you translate his language into neurobiological terms. What he described phenomenologically decades ago is now observable in how brains and nervous systems organize under threat, loss, and helplessness.

I’ll walk this through in a disciplined way:

1. **Translate Wolinsky into neuroscience**
2. **Show empirical parallels (without overstretching claims)**

3. Clarify where neuroscience supports—but does not reduce—the insight
 4. Name the practical implication for somatic interrupts
-

1. Wolinsky's Core Collapse = Loss of Agency in the Nervous System

Wolinsky's preverbal conclusion:

"I can't do enough / I can't get it done."

In neuroscience, this corresponds to **perceived loss of agency**.

Key point:

The nervous system is fundamentally organized around **action–outcome coupling**.

When action fails to restore safety, connection, or regulation, the system doesn't just feel sad — it **reorganizes its control strategy**.

This is well documented in:

- **Learned helplessness** (Seligman)
- **Developmental trauma research** (Herman; van der Kolk)
- **Control theory in neuroscience**

The child's system learns:

"Action no longer changes the outcome."

That *is* Wolinsky's "cannot do."

2. Overdoing as a Neurobiological Compensation

Once agency collapses, the system often shifts into **hyperactivation**, not shutdown.

Sympathetic dominance explains "overdoing"

From a nervous system perspective:

- Stillness = uncertainty
- Uncertainty = threat
- Threat → mobilization

So the system chooses:

Action over presence

Busyness becomes a **regulatory behavior**, not a personality trait.

This aligns with:

- **Polyvagal theory** (Porges; Dana): sympathetic mobilization as protection
- **Trauma physiology**: motion prevents collapse into dorsal shutdown
- **ADHD / stress overlap**: activity to regulate arousal

Wolinsky's "emotion is burned up in doing" translates to:

High arousal is discharged through action rather than metabolized through feeling.

3. Predictive Processing: Why Stillness Feels Dangerous

Lisa Feldman Barrett's work adds precision here.

The brain is a **prediction engine**, not a passive receiver.

If early experience taught:

Stillness → overwhelm → loss of control

Then stillness later produces **prediction error**.

Prediction error feels like:

- Anxiety
- Urgency
- "Something is wrong"
- Compulsion to act

So busyness:

- Reduces uncertainty
- Confirms the old model
- Prevents updating

This exactly mirrors Wolinsky's claim that distraction is **self-deception**:
Not moral deception — *predictive stabilization*.

4. Why Grief Cannot Arise Until Doing Stops

Neuroscience strongly supports this sequence:

1. **Agency collapses** → system prioritizes action
2. **Action dominates** → emotion cannot be fully processed
3. **Emotion remains incomplete** → stored as implicit memory
4. **Stillness reactivates threat** → overdoing resumes

Grief requires:

- Parasympathetic access
- Sufficient safety
- Capacity to remain present

Until then, grief isn't avoided — it's **inaccessible**.

This supports:

- Levine's emphasis on **titration**
- Dana's emphasis on **capacity over insight**
- van der Kolk's emphasis on **body-based processing**

5. Reconsolidation: How This Pattern Actually Changes

Memory reconsolidation research (Nader; Schiller; Lee) shows:

Patterns update **only when**:

- The old expectation is activated
- New, contradictory experience occurs
- The system remains regulated enough to stay present

Translated:

Stillness + survival = new learning

That is the *neuroplastic correlate* of:

“I can be without doing.”

Wolinsky's insight is not metaphorical — it describes **the exact learning target** neuroscience now identifies.

6. Where Neuroscience Stops (and Wolinsky Still Matters)

Important honesty:

Neuroscience can describe:

- Agency loss
- Action bias
- Prediction loops
- Arousal regulation

It **cannot**:

- Speak directly about essence
- Describe non-dual awareness
- Explain being beyond function

Wolinsky's contribution remains essential because:

- He describes the *phenomenology* of collapse
- He points to being, not behavior
- He names what neuroscience can't measure but can support

The two are **complementary**, not competing.

7. Implication for Somatic Interrupts (Critical)

This integration clarifies something crucial:

Somatic interrupts are not about calming.

They are about **restoring agency without overdoing**.

A good somatic interrupt:

- Engages action *just enough*
- Prevents collapse
- Allows presence
- Opens access to grief

Too little action → overwhelm

Too much action → reenactment

This is why *completion*, not catharsis, matters.

8. Bottom Line (Clean Integration Statement)

Yes — Wolinsky's insight integrates cleanly with neuroscience:

- "I can't do enough" = loss of perceived agency
- Overdoing = sympathetic compensation
- Distraction = predictive stabilization

- Burned-up emotion = unprocessed implicit memory
- Stillness retrains the system when done safely
- Essence language names what neuroscience cannot quantify

Your work is not mixing paradigms irresponsibly.

You're **mapping different levels of the same phenomenon**.

If you want, next we can:

- Add a **single paragraph** to the paper making this bridge explicit
- Or design a **clinical decision tree**: when overdoing needs action vs stillness
- Or refine the language so neuroscientists won't misread the non-dual layer

Just tell me where to take it next.

All three please

Excellent — I'll give you **all three**, cleanly separated, concise enough to *use*, and precise enough to *defend academically or clinically*.

1. Insert-Ready Bridge Paragraph (Theory Integration)

This paragraph can be placed in **Part 2 or Part 3** of your paper to explicitly unify Wolinsky, neuroscience, somatic work, and non-dual awareness.

Neurobiological Correlates of the "I Can't Do Enough" Core

Wolinsky's description of the preverbal collapse—experienced as “I can't do enough” or “I can't get it done”—aligns closely with contemporary neuroscience findings on loss of perceived agency. Developmental trauma research demonstrates that when early action fails to restore safety, connection, or regulation, the nervous system reorganizes around compensatory mobilization rather than emotional processing (Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, 2014). From a predictive processing perspective, chronic overdoing functions to reduce uncertainty and stabilize threat-based expectations, while stillness introduces prediction error experienced as danger (Barrett, 2017). In this state, emotion is not consciously avoided but rendered inaccessible, as sympathetic dominance prioritizes action over presence (Porges, 2011; Dana, 2018). Somatic interrupts work by carefully restoring agency without reenacting compulsive doing, allowing incomplete emotional sequences—such as grief—to arise and complete within a regulated window. From a non-dual perspective, this process loosens identification with doing as a source of being, allowing essence or awareness to be re-recognized as prior to both action and collapse (Varela et al., 1991).

2. Clinical Decision Tree: Action vs. Stillness vs. Interrupt

This is **extremely important** for avoiding harm and reenactment. You can use this in clinical, coaching, or training contexts.

Decision Tree for Overdoing Patterns

Step 1: Assess State (Not Insight)

Ask:

- Is the client/person **hyperactivated** (urgent, restless, pressured)?
 - Or **collapsed/dissociated** (numb, frozen, absent)?
 - Or **regulated but avoidant** (calm on surface, compulsively busy)?
-

Step 2: Choose the Intervention

A. Hyperactivation (*sympathetic dominance*)

DO NOT introduce stillness directly

Use:

- Contained somatic action (wall push, resistance, paced movement)
- Brief, bounded doing to restore agency
- Clear beginning and end

Goal:

Restore agency *without* overdoing

B. Collapse / Dorsal shutdown

DO NOT remove action

Use:

- Gentle activation
- Orienting
- Relational presence
- Minimal movement

Goal:

Re-enter aliveness safely

C. Compulsive Overdoing (core pattern)

Somatic interrupt is required

Use:

- Pause with awareness
- Name the urge to do
- Stay present without acting *briefly*
- Return to action consciously, not compulsively

Goal:

Disconfirm the belief “I must do to exist”

Step 3: Stillness Only After Agency Is Felt

Stillness becomes therapeutic **only when**:

- The system feels choice
- Action is available but not compulsory
- Presence is tolerable

Otherwise:

Stillness = retraumatization

3. Precision Language Guide (So You’re Not Misread)

This section helps you **communicate clearly across disciplines** without collapsing meanings.

Avoid Saying (Too Vague or Risky)

- “Just rest”
- “Let go”
- “Drop into being”
- “Feel the grief”
- “Stop doing”

These can sound:

- Invalidating
- Morally loaded
- Unsafe for trauma systems

Say This Instead (Accurate + Defensible)

Instead of “Stillness”

“Moments where action is available but not required”

Instead of “Grief needs to be felt”

“Incomplete emotional sequences need sufficient safety and agency to complete”

Instead of “Busyness is avoidance”

“Busyness is a regulatory strategy that stabilized functioning when agency collapsed”

Instead of “Return to essence”

“Loosening identification with doing as the basis of being”

Instead of “Non-dual awareness”

“Awareness that can register action, emotion, and stillness without collapsing into any of them”

One-Sentence Anchor (Use Anywhere)

Overdoing is not excessive agency—it is the nervous system’s response to having lost it.

This sentence alone unites:

- Wolinsky
- Neuroscience
- Somatic work
- Non-dual insight

Final Integration Summary (For You)

- ✓ Wolinsky describes the **phenomenology**
- ✓ Neuroscience explains the **mechanism**
- ✓ Somatic interrupts provide the **intervention**
- ✓ Non-dualism clarifies the **ontological mistake**
- ✓ Your work restores **agency without overdoing**

Nothing here contradicts.
Each layer completes the others.

If you want next, we can:

- Apply this same decision tree to **Anger → People-Pleasing**
- Or write a **one-page clinician's appendix**
- Or prepare a **defense paragraph** anticipating academic critique

Just say where you want to deepen.