

## Our Body's Superhighway

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## Our Body's Superhighway: Surrender & Connection Series

Did you know that each of us has a superhighway within our bodies that carries information between the brain and the internal organs and controls the body's response in times of rest and relaxation? It is the vagus nerve. Maybe you have heard of it before, but if you are like me, you don't know much about what it is and what it does. The vagus nerve is the longest nerve in your body, running from your brain through your neck and ear and down to the body. It connects your brain to many important organs throughout the body, including the gut (intestines, stomach), heart and

lungs. In fact, the word "Vagus" means "wanderer" in Latin, which exactly represents how the nerve wanders all over the body and reaches various organs.

Researchers have discovered that keeping our vagus nerve in good health helps us better manage stress, stay out of fight-or-flight response, and keep in overall good mental and physical health. Learning to pay attention to our bodies is part of surrendering to the fact that we need to take care of ourselves so that we can be better partners, parents, children, friends, and co-workers. We cannot have deep connections with each other when we are stressed and ready to snap at the next frustrating thing that our child or spouse does or says.

There is so much information available on the internet for you to educate yourself more about the vagus nerve and why it is important to you. Google it for yourself. But I would like to leave you with some simple ways that you can support a healthy vagus nerve for yourself and your family.

- **Deep and slow breathing** has been shown to reduce anxiety and increase the parasympathetic system by activating the vagus nerve. Breathe in deeply from your diaphragm. When you do this, your stomach should expand outward. Your exhalation should be long.
- **Gratitude**--Take time each day to be grateful for 5 things in your life and think of loving, kind, compassionate and forgiving thoughts towards others and yourself.
- **Meditation** can stimulate the vagus nerve and increase vagal tone. Research shows that meditation increases vagal tone and positive emotions and promotes feelings of goodwill towards yourself.
- **Sound Therapy, Singing, Humming, Chanting and Gargling**--The ear and hearing have a significant effect on the rest of the body due to its proximity to the vagus nerve. The ear is a parasympathetic regulatory organ that uses innervation of the vagus nerve to affect the whole body. Auditory stimulation of the vagus nerve can lead to

reduced activity of the limbic system. One of my favorites is to chant Om along with the Tibetan Monks.

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0D4V5awe-PA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0D4V5awe-PA)
- **Socializing and Laughing**--Positive social connections actually improve vagal tone and increases positive emotions. Laughter has been shown to increase heart-rate variability and improve mood. Plan something fun with your family soon.

***We are so wonderfully made!***

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Amazon: [www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09L7KS5VH)

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*If you would like to know more about what I offer as a coach, please visit my website: [www.coachmyrna.org/](http://www.coachmyrna.org/) Find out more about Safe Conversations [www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html](http://www.coachmyrna.org/safe-conversations.html).*

