



EMBODIED MINDFULNESS
HELPING KIDS THRIVE

SUPPORTING KIDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Using Yoga Practices Safely and Effectively

JENNIFER COHEN HARPER

Embrace Joy, Build Resilience



Our mission is to help kids **thrive** in the world regardless of circumstances, and **navigate** the many challenges they face with a sense of **personal power** and **self-awareness**.

What is Trauma?



- ❑ **Overwhelms our ability to cope**
- ❑ **Threatens our foundation of safety**
- ❑ **Reduces our sense of agency**

What is Trauma?

DEVELOPMENTAL / COMPLEX TRAUMA

As many as 80% of kids who experience trauma don't meet PTSD diagnostic criteria, because most childhood trauma manifests differently -- kids experience repeated violation that impacts the nature of how they experience and engage with the world. They often accumulate many different diagnoses - oppositional defiant disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, ADHD and more, but none of these get to the root of the problem.

What is Trauma?

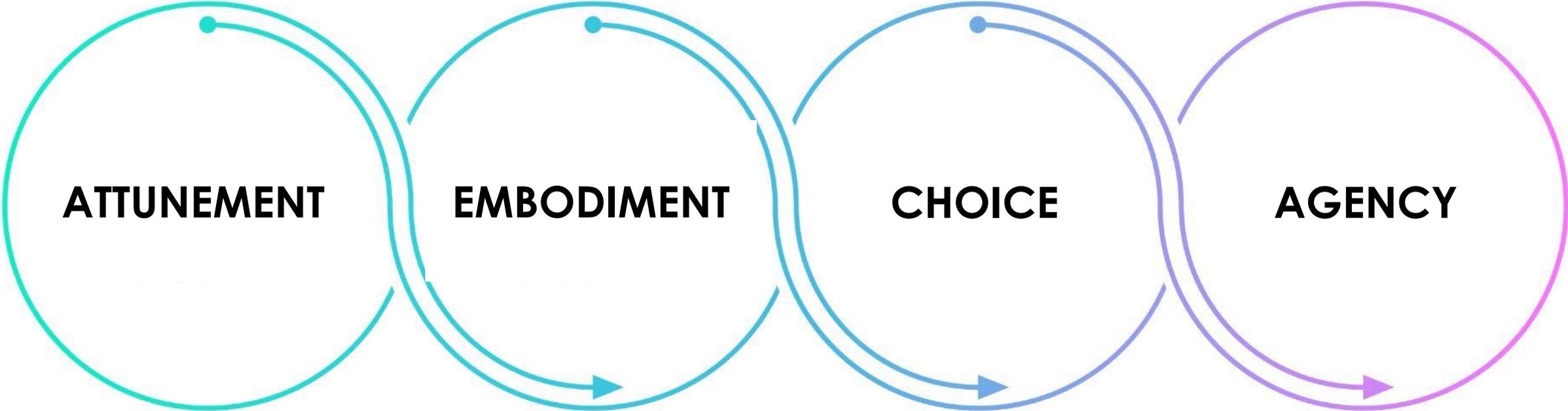
***“We now know that trauma compromises the brain areas that communicate the physical, embodied feeling of being alive.”
— Bessel van der Kolk***



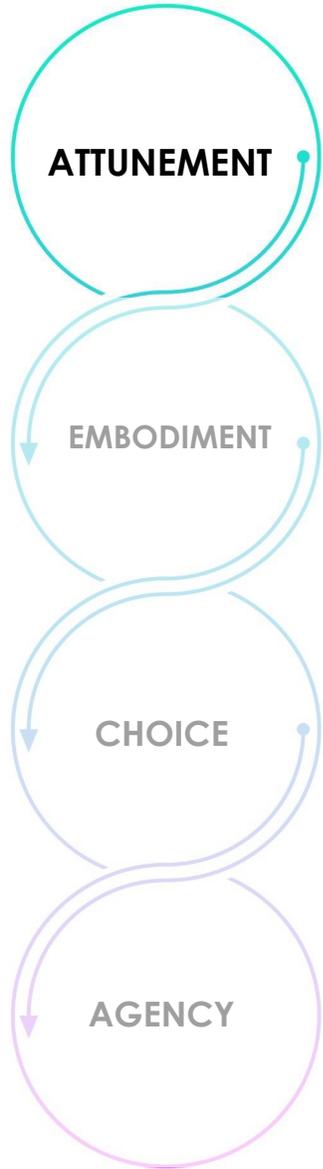
Using Our Inner Anchor in an Emotional Storm



Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



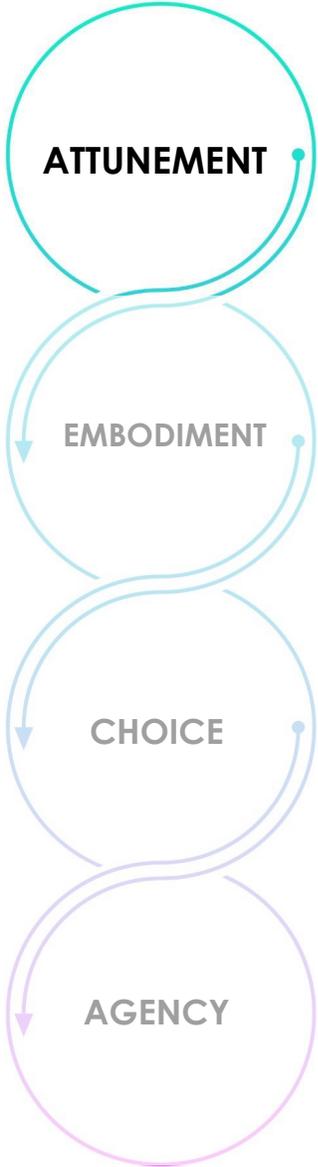
Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



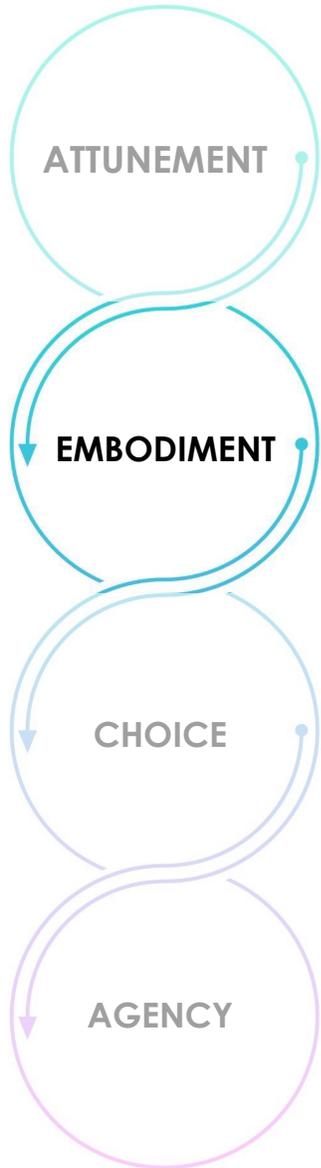
Feeling seen, understood, taking into consideration. Remember that individual experiences of practices vary. What is helpful for one person may be harmful for another.



Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



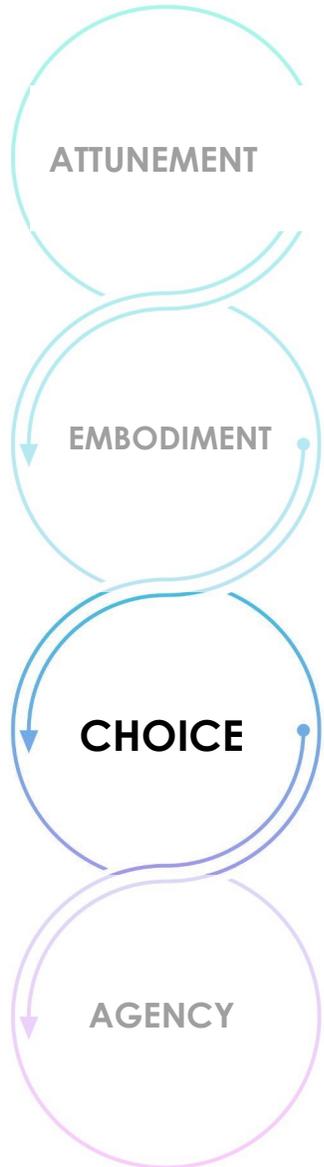
Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



Experiencing body sensation without fear or disassociation. Support each child in interpreting the effect of any practice or activity for themselves. Avoid telling students what they “should” feel.



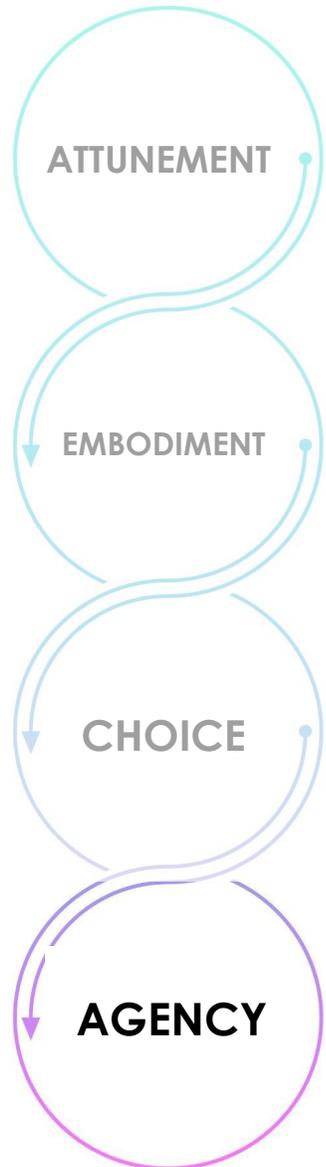
Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



Helping students connect with their capacity to make choices based on their internal experience. If something doesn't feel right, students should stop, check it out, and make a decision that respects their own body, mind and experience.



Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



Creating opportunities for children to feel that their actions and choices matter. Invite students to notice how they feel before, during and after an activity, with a particular focus on any changes they have created with their actions.



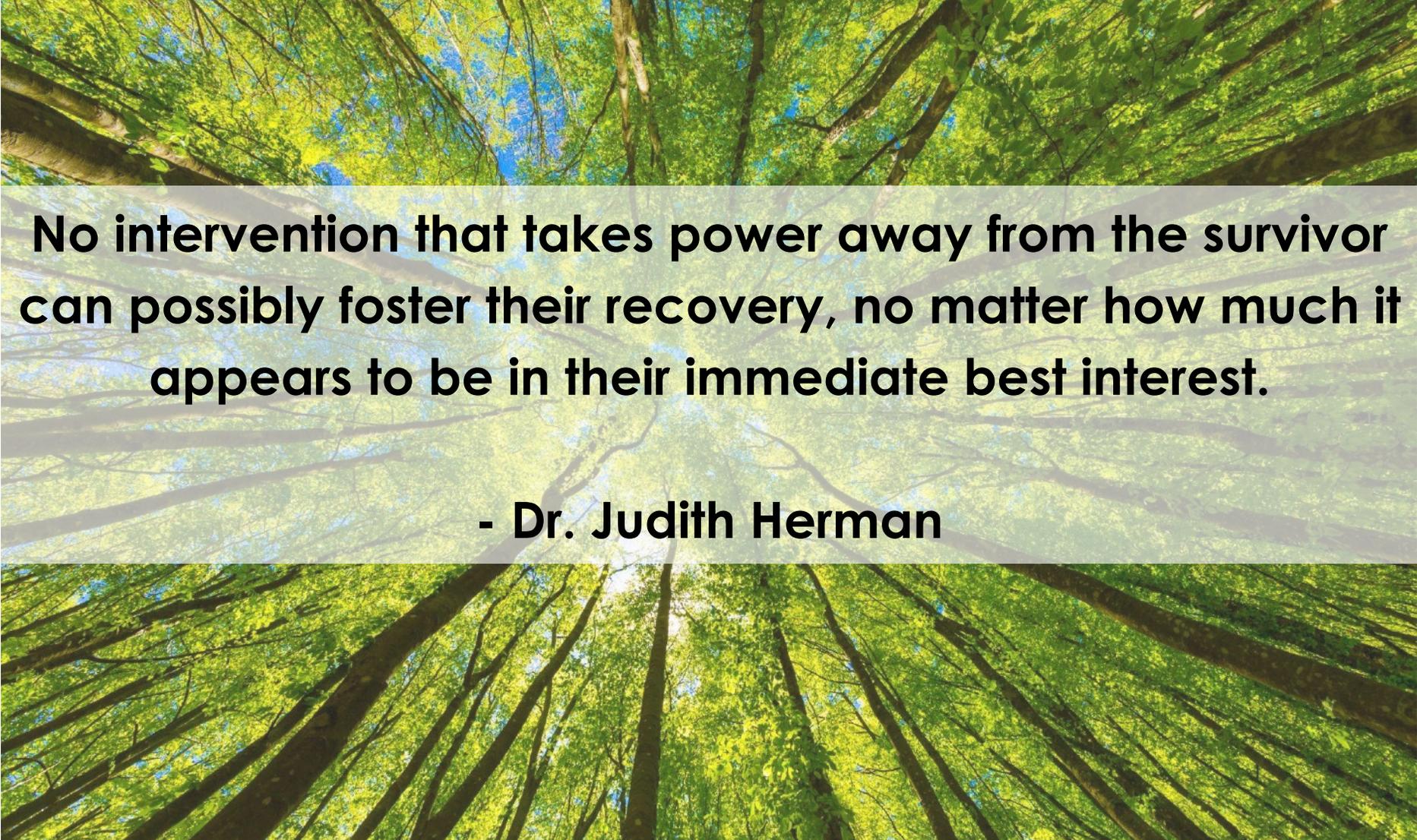
What is Trauma?



“Children’s behaviors nearly always make sense, given an understanding of the context in which they develop”.

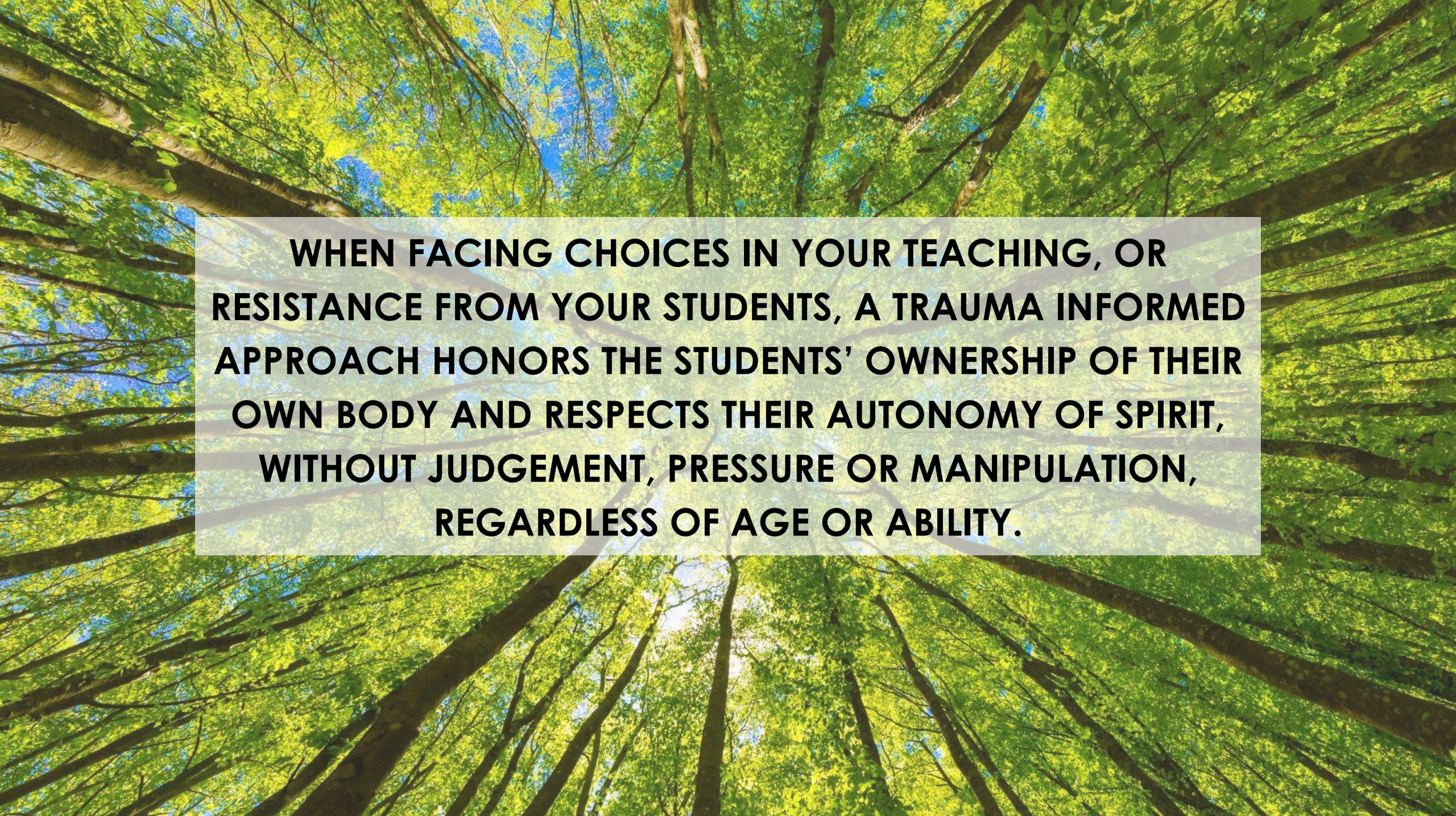
- Treating Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents by Margaret Blaustein and Kristine Kinniburgh

Guiding Principles: Cultivating Safety



No intervention that takes power away from the survivor can possibly foster their recovery, no matter how much it appears to be in their immediate best interest.

- Dr. Judith Herman



WHEN FACING CHOICES IN YOUR TEACHING, OR RESISTANCE FROM YOUR STUDENTS, A TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH HONORS THE STUDENTS' OWNERSHIP OF THEIR OWN BODY AND RESPECTS THEIR AUTONOMY OF SPIRIT, WITHOUT JUDGEMENT, PRESSURE OR MANIPULATION, REGARDLESS OF AGE OR ABILITY.



EMBODIED MINDFULNESS
HELPING KIDS THRIVE

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RESOURCES

