



The Mysteries of the Vagus Nerve

By

Chris Lalor

Flametree Yoga

Contents

- What is the vagus nerve
- How it works
- Connection to yogic philosophy (Gunas)
- Yogic practises for vagal tone

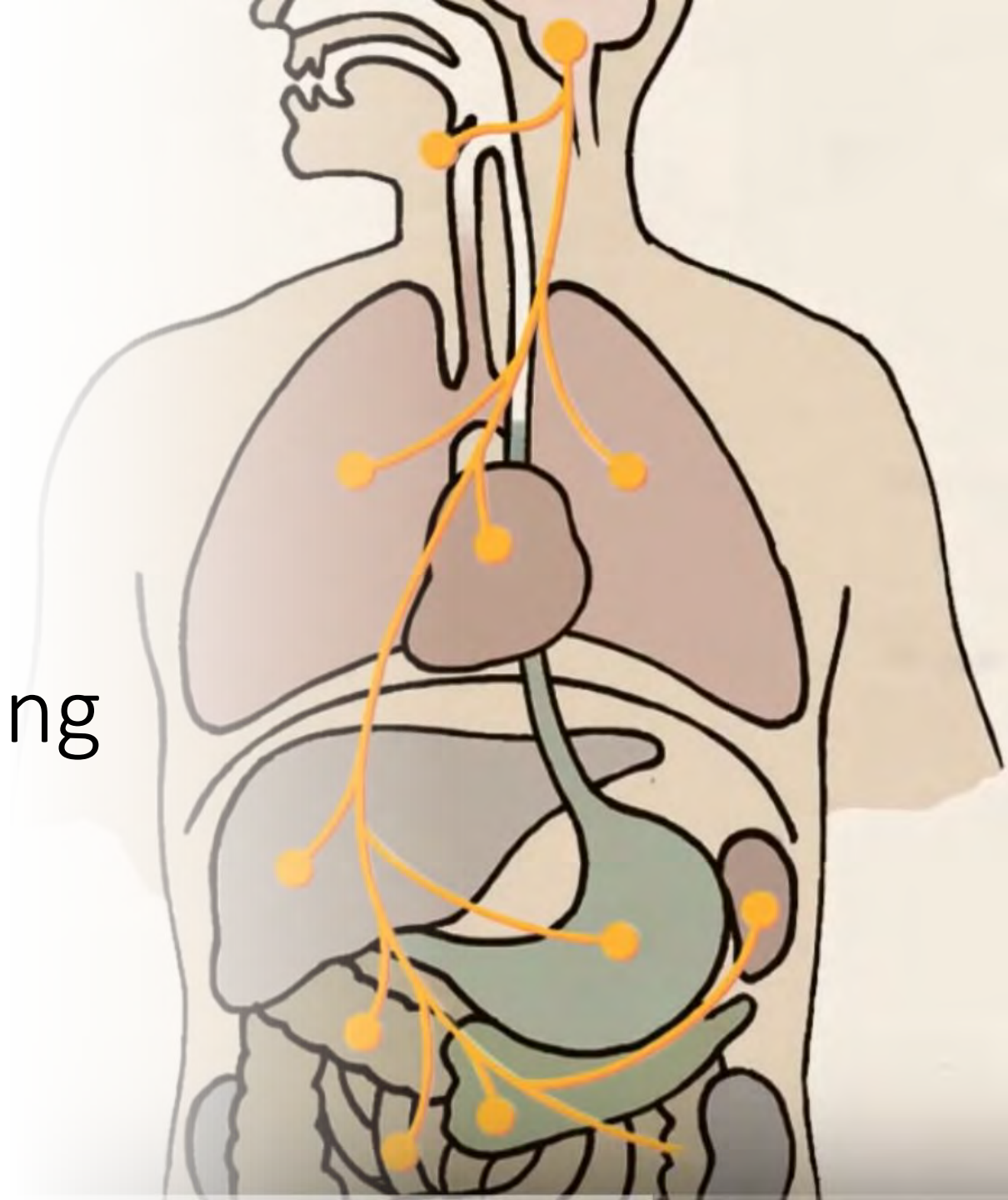


Problem: Most of us are “wired” 24/7!

Contents

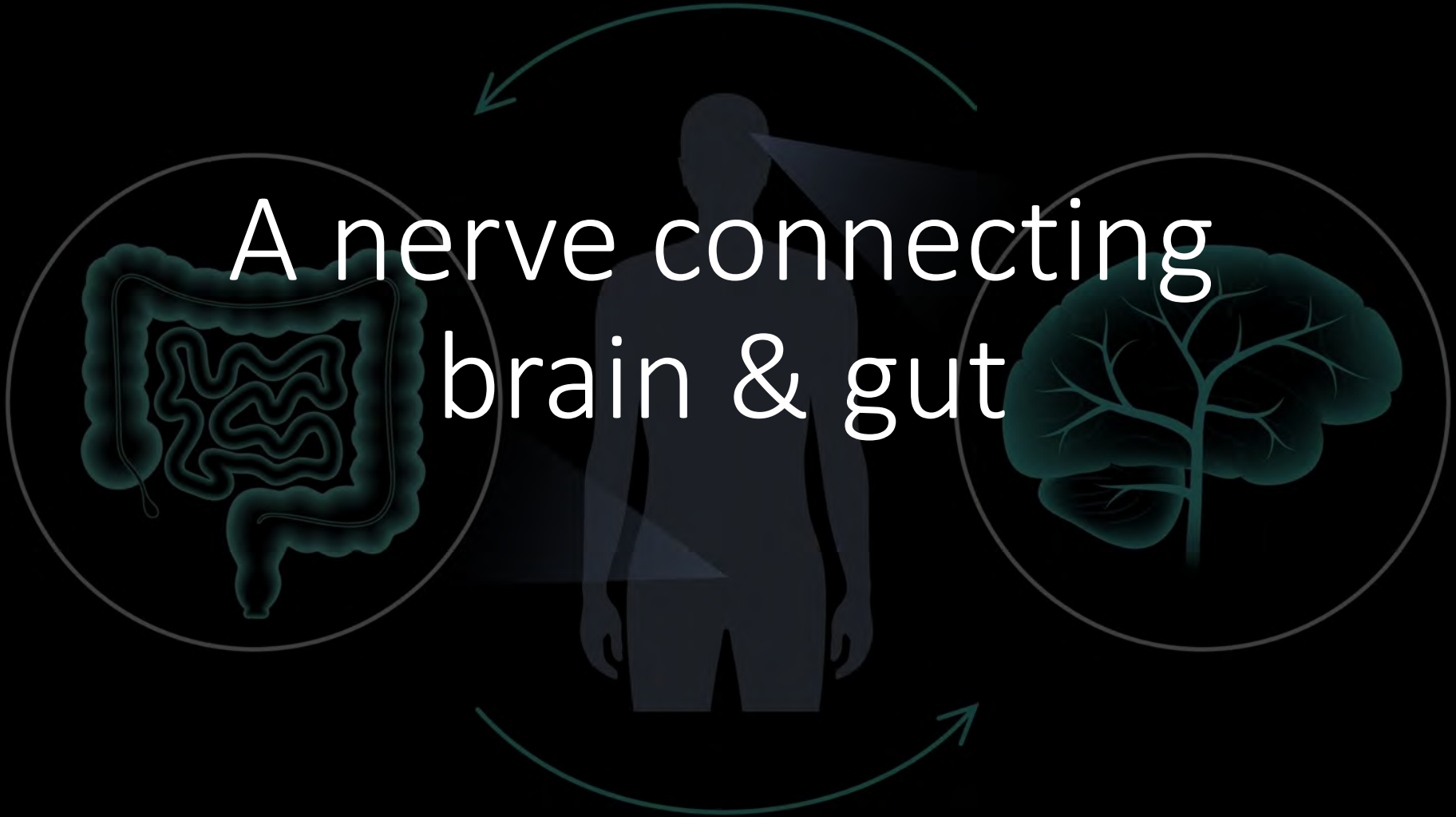
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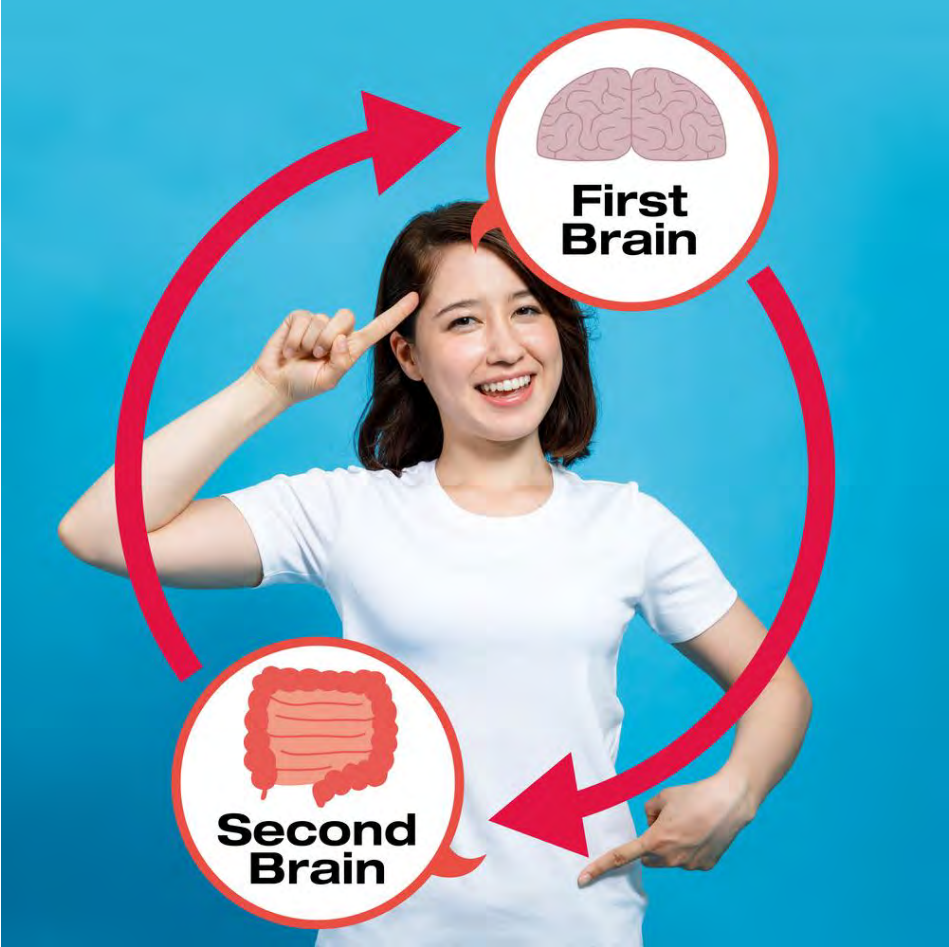
Vagus
means
wandering



GUT-BRAIN CONNECTION

A nerve connecting
brain & gut



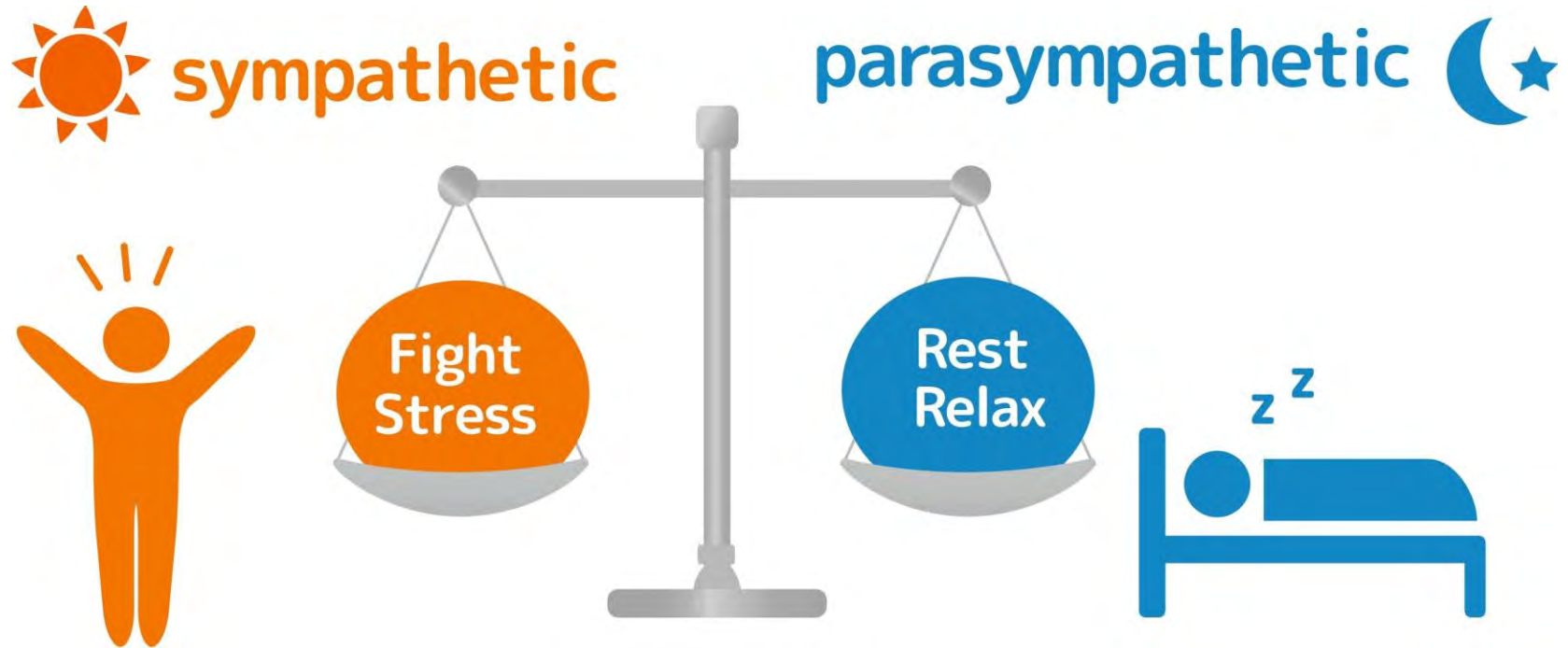


**First
Brain**

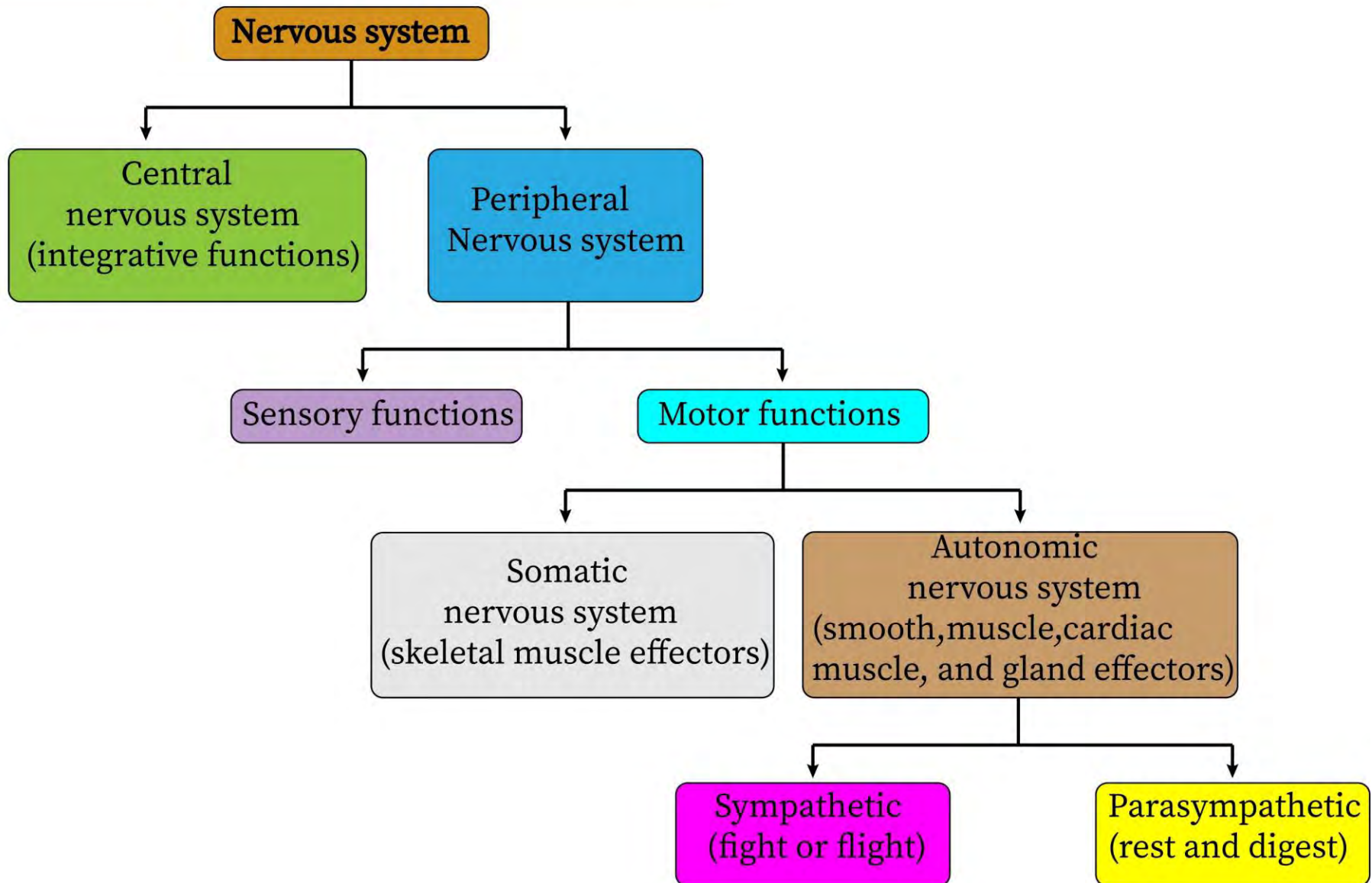


**Second
Brain**

Vagus nerve is main nerve of parasympathetic nervous system



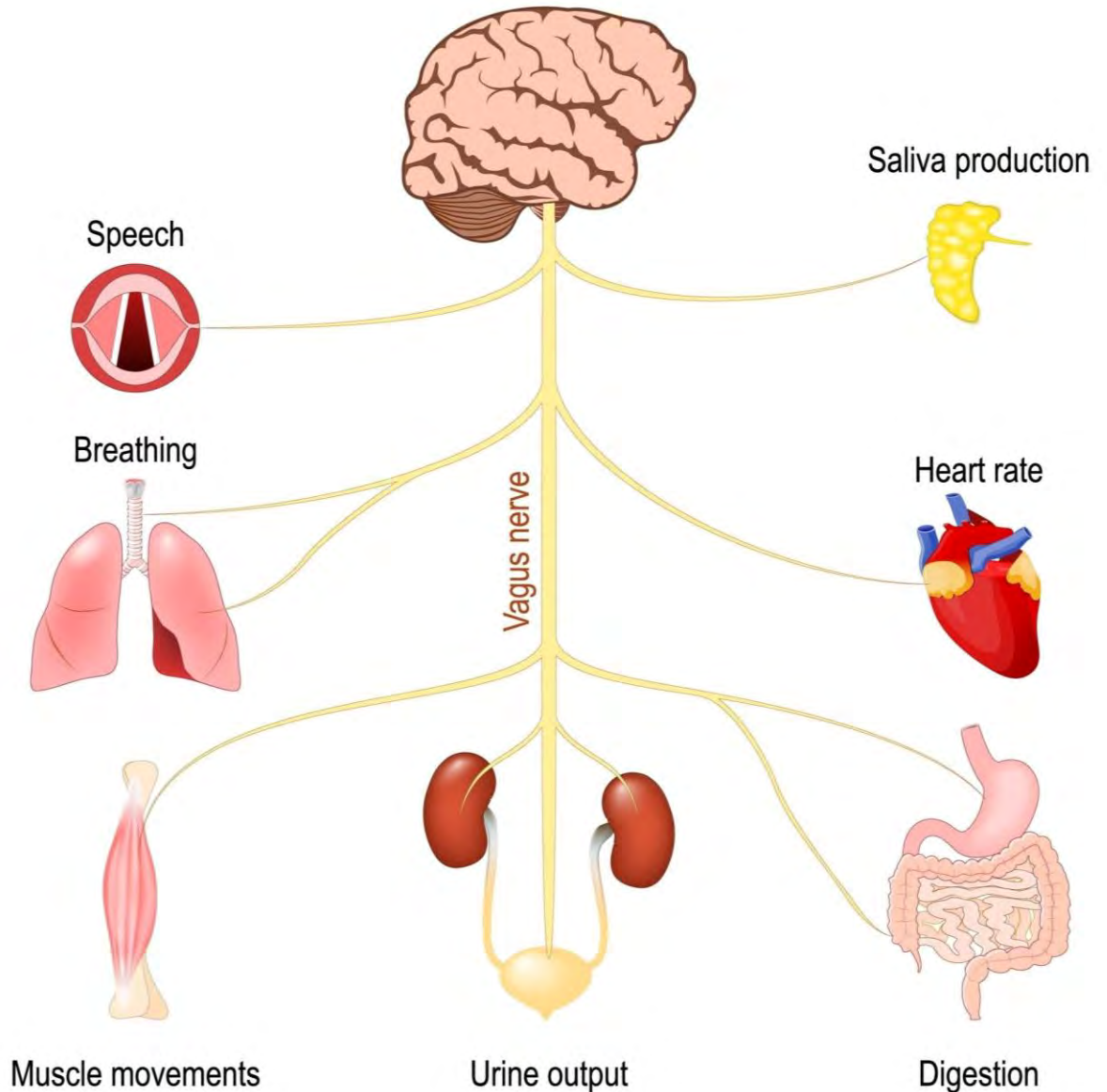
subdivisions of the nervous system



VAGUS NERVE

Impacts:

Heart rate,
digestion,
immune
system, &
more.



It delivers:

wellness,
relaxation,
stress recovery,
mind body link.



■

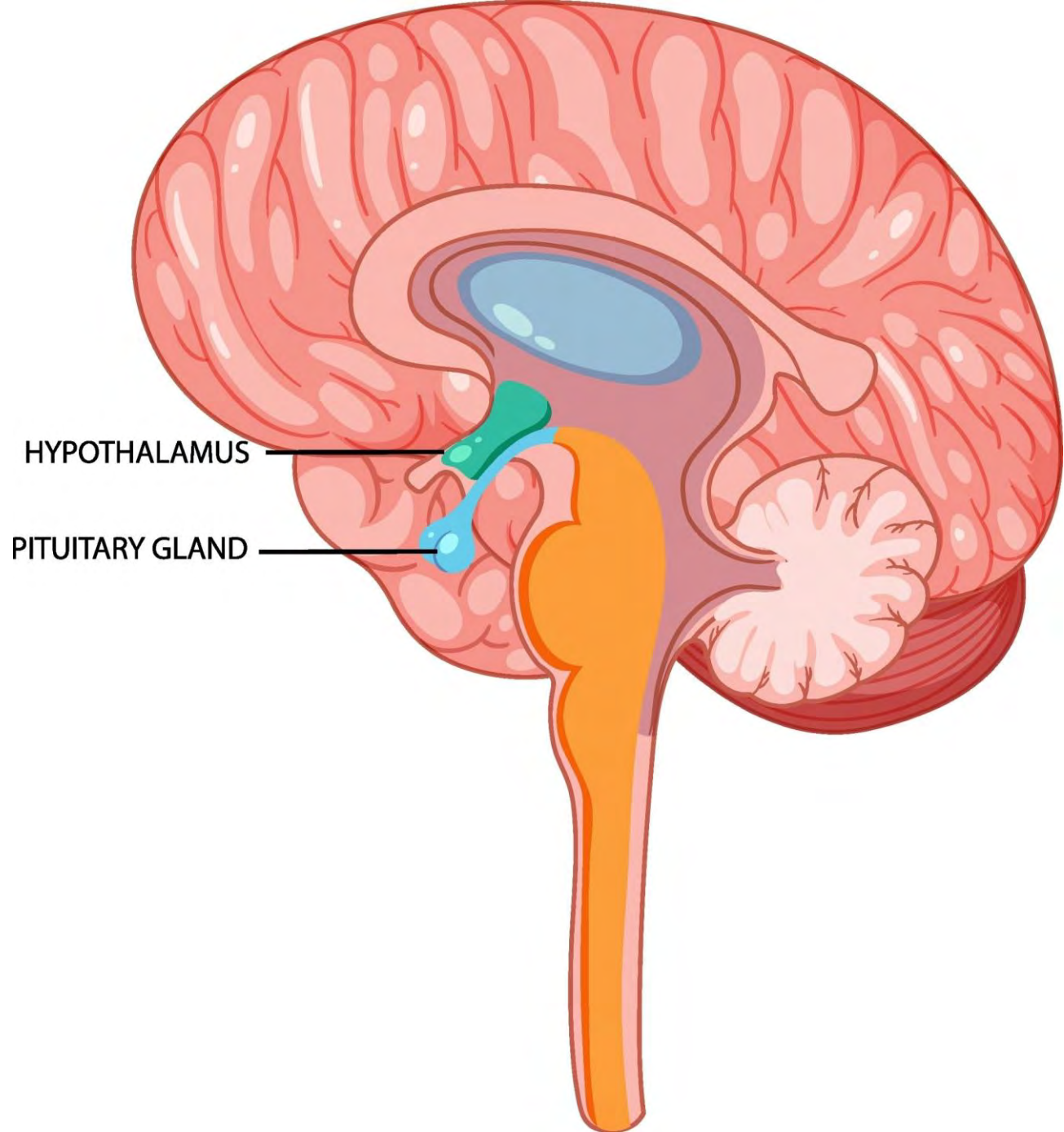
We can
impact it by
yogic
practices



Contents **update...**

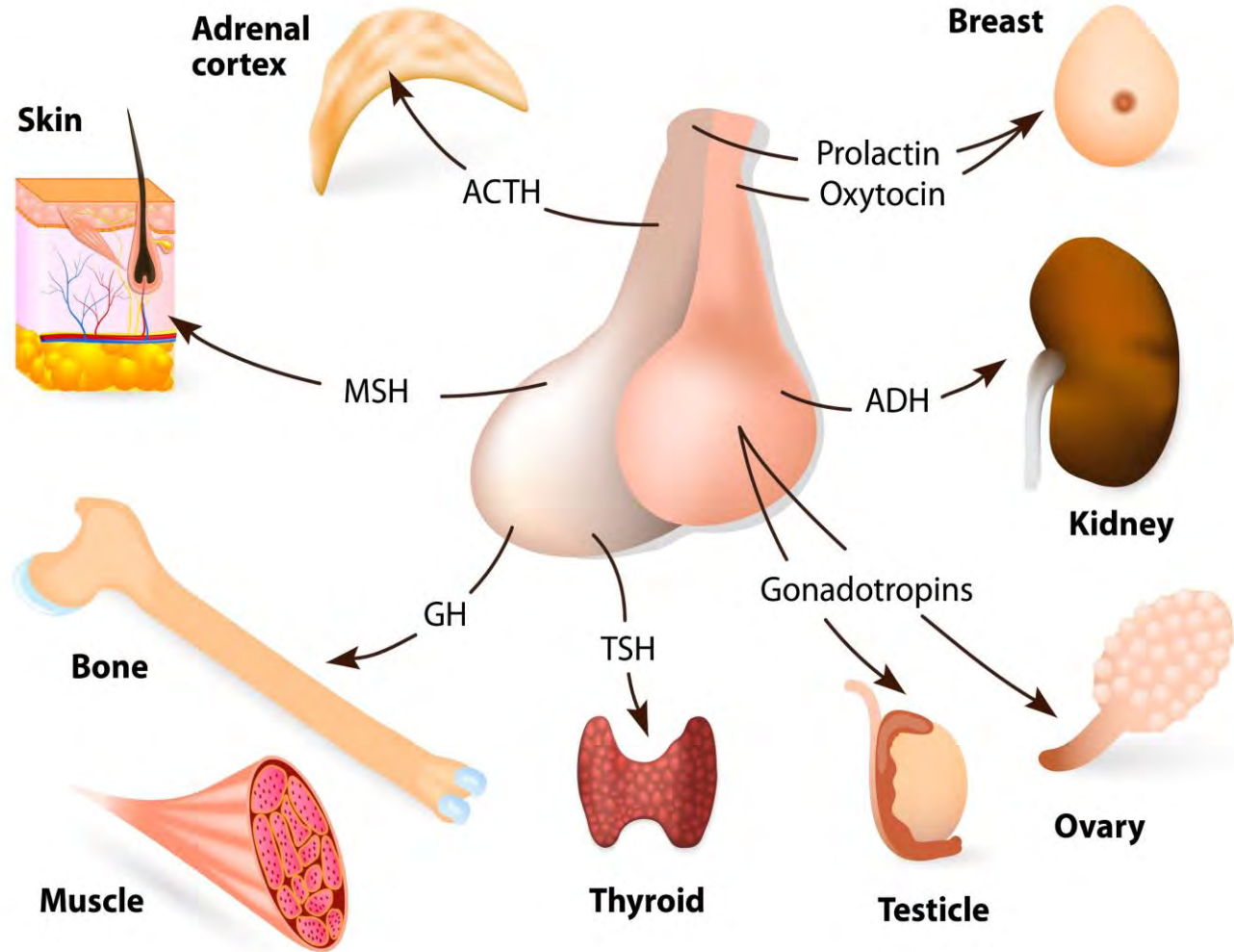
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Vagus nerve
“**talks to**”
master gland
(pituitary)



PITUITARY GLAND

Pituitary gland
“directs”
your other
glands



Glands secrete hormones like cortisol (stress), **oxytocin (“love”)**, adrenaline (energy)



If we don't recover, when trouble strikes, we're too exhausted to respond effectively.



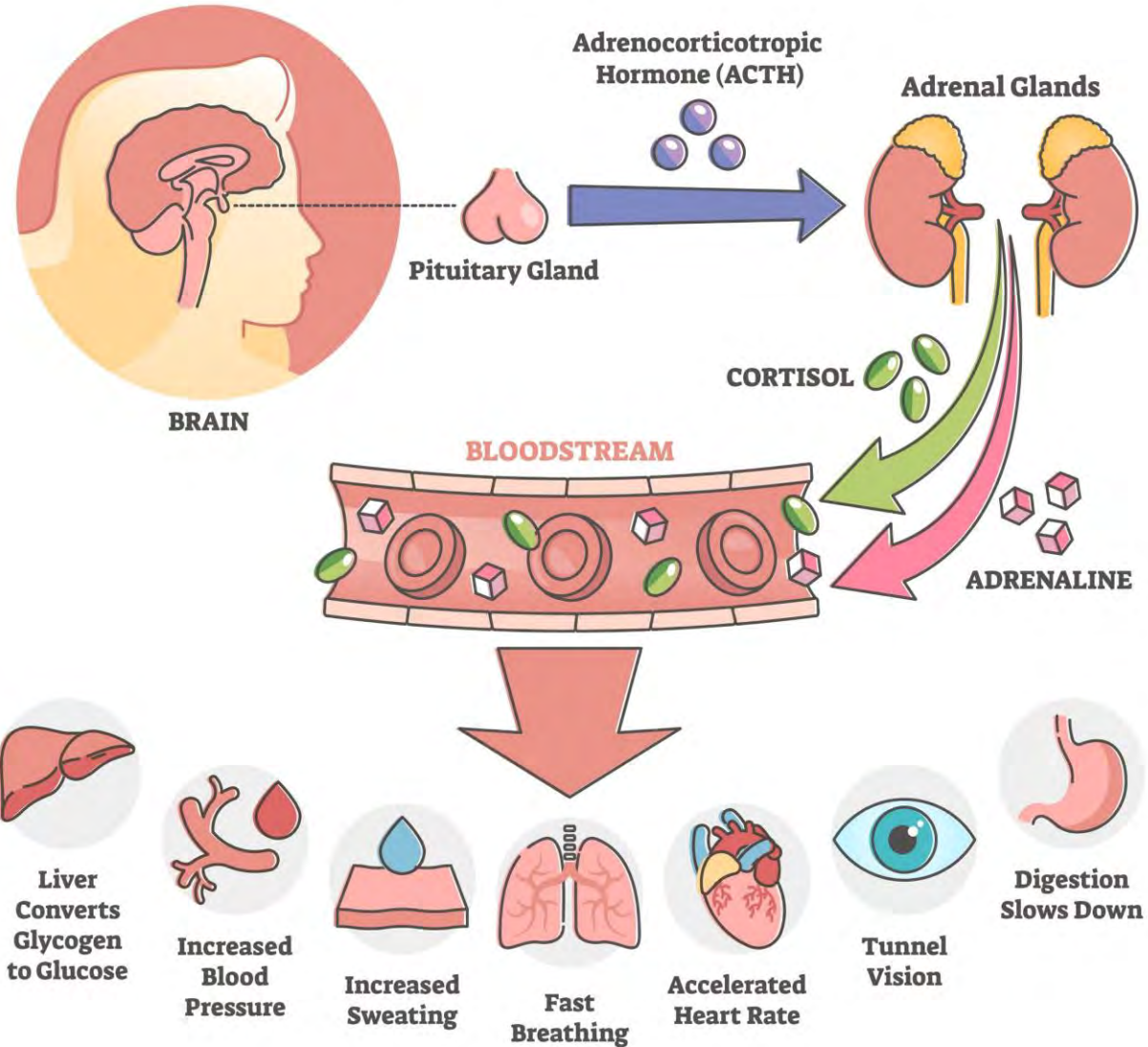
Humans are
fine tuned for
survival. To run
from danger!
Then recover!



Sympathetic

“Flight or fight” nervous system helps deal with stressful situations of all types.

STRESS RESPONSE



Parasympathetic.

“Rest & Digest”
nervous system
helps recovery,
& preparation
for next drama!



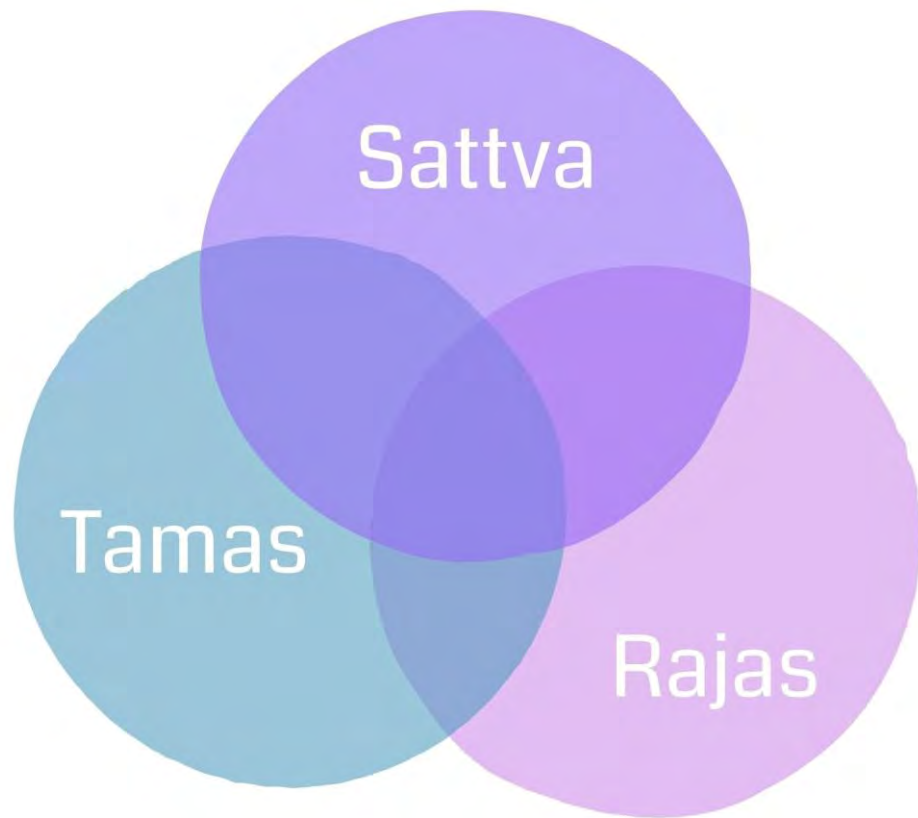
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Vagus nerve
can also be
understood in
terms of the 3
yogic gunas

The 3 Gunas



3 qualities of mind (Gunas)

Sattva... calm, balanced, clarity

Rajas...vibrant, active, agitated

Tamas...heaviness & lethargy

Gunās Overview: We're will look at each of these in turn

There are three guṇas (triguṇa), according to this worldview, that have always been and continue to be present in all things and beings in the world. These three guṇas are called: sattva (goodness, calmness, harmonious), rajas (passion, activity, movement), and tamas (ignorance, inertia, laziness).

Sattva
HARMONY AND CLARITY

Positive
Pleasure
Divine
Pure

A stylized human figure with a serene expression, closed eyes, and a green leaf-like symbol on the forehead. The figure is set against a teal background.


Rajas
MOVEMENT AND AGITATION

Selfish Desires
Controlling
Human
Mixed

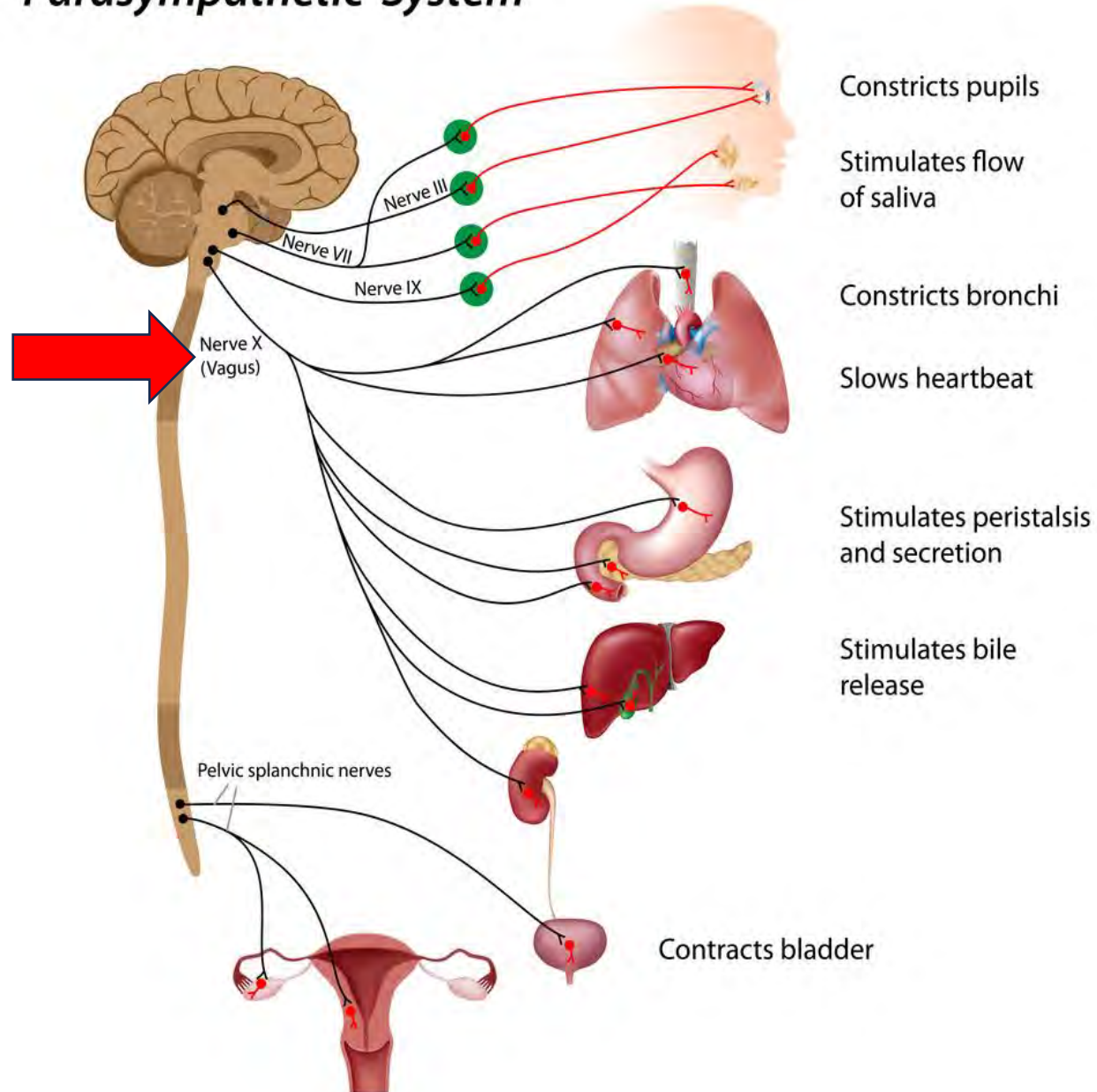
A stylized human figure with an angry expression, furrowed brows, and a flame-like symbol on the forehead. The figure is set against a yellow background.

Tamas
INERTIA AND CONTRADICTION

Negative
Impure
Pain
Demonic

A stylized human figure with a sad expression, closed eyes, and a red knot-like symbol on the forehead. The figure is set against a red background.

Parasympathetic System



Sattvic mind:
Associated with
your
parasympathetic
nervous system.

RAJAS

SATTVA

TAMAS



Better **“vagal tone”** means you’re more sattvic, with more compassion, courage, relatedness etc


—

We use yogic practice to move towards Sattvic states, to promote self awareness



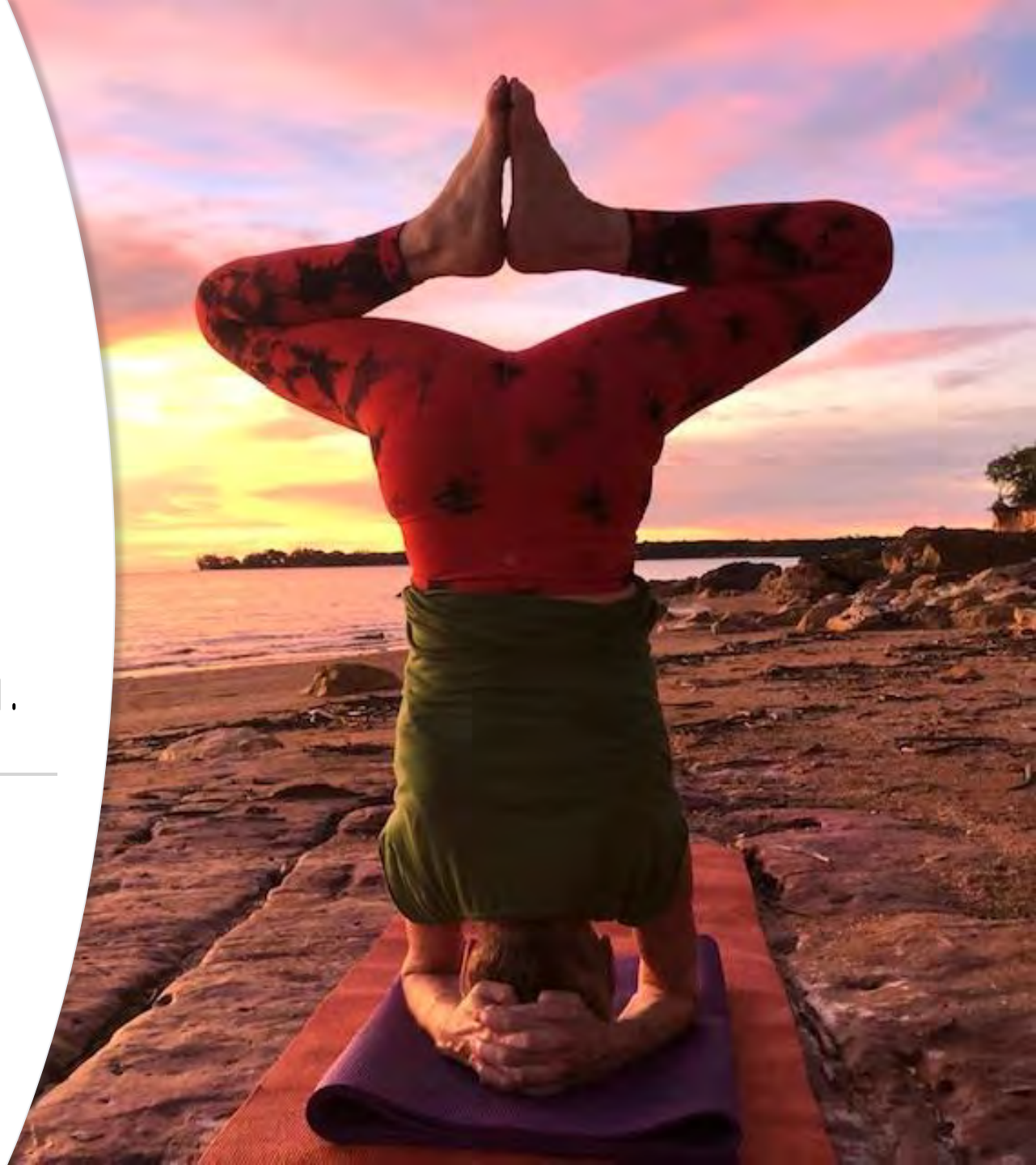
With good
vagal tone
you can
respond well
to the
changes in &
around you.





So, increasing
sattvic also
helps you be a
happier, & a
better social
being.

In contrast,
Rajas & Tamas,
can be
understood in
terms of your
SYMPATHETIC
nervous system.



Rajas

MOVEMENT
AND AGITATION

Selfish Desires
Controlling
Human
Mixed

Rajas =
agitation
(but also
creativity,
activity)



Tamas

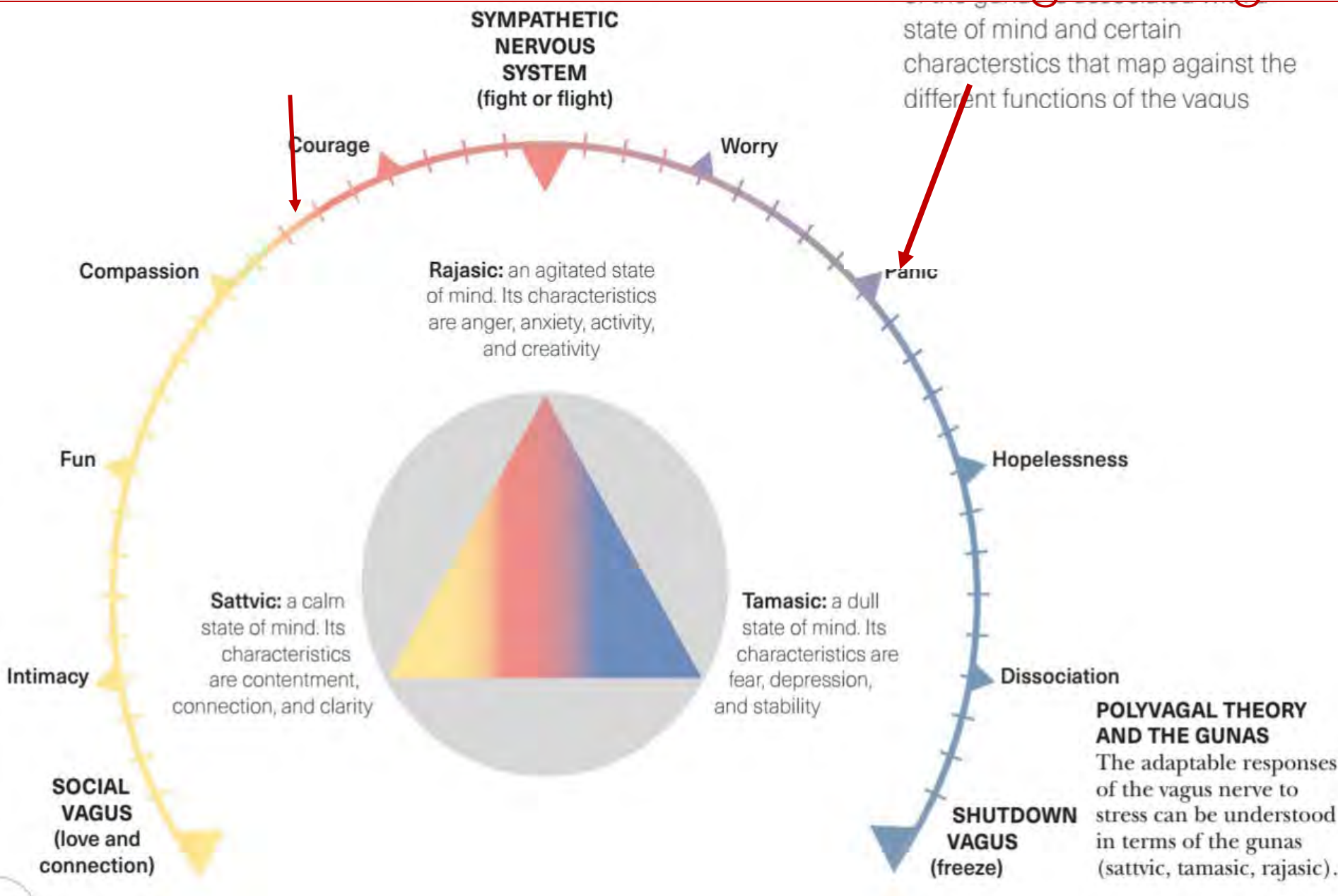
INERTIA AND
CONTRADICTION

Negative
Impure
Pain
Demonic

Tamas = panic,
fear,
hopelessness,
but also
groundedness,
etc



“Dance” between rest / relax AND fight / flight



Patanjali on Sattvic qualities:

*“... Through friendliness,
kindness, & compassion,
strength comes”*

Patanjali Yoga Sutras



Patanjali also said:

“... cultivate the 4 great attitudes of the heart.

- . Friendliness,*
- . loving kindness,*
- . compassion,*
- . joy for others,*
- . & equanimity*

... as the pathway to peace and happiness.



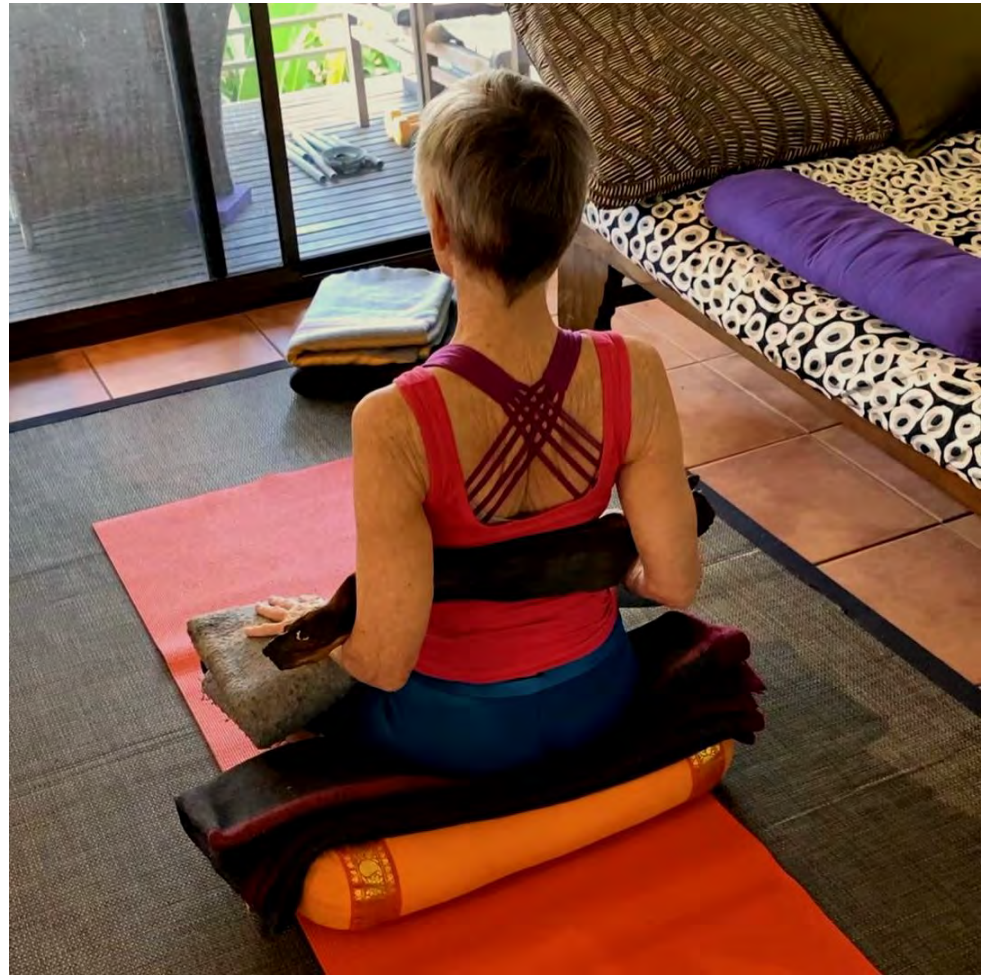
Developing sattvic qualities will
let you **see yourself** with
greater clarity,

& be more in charge of **how**
you respond to any situation.



You can also be
more at **peace,**

& live with more
tranquility.

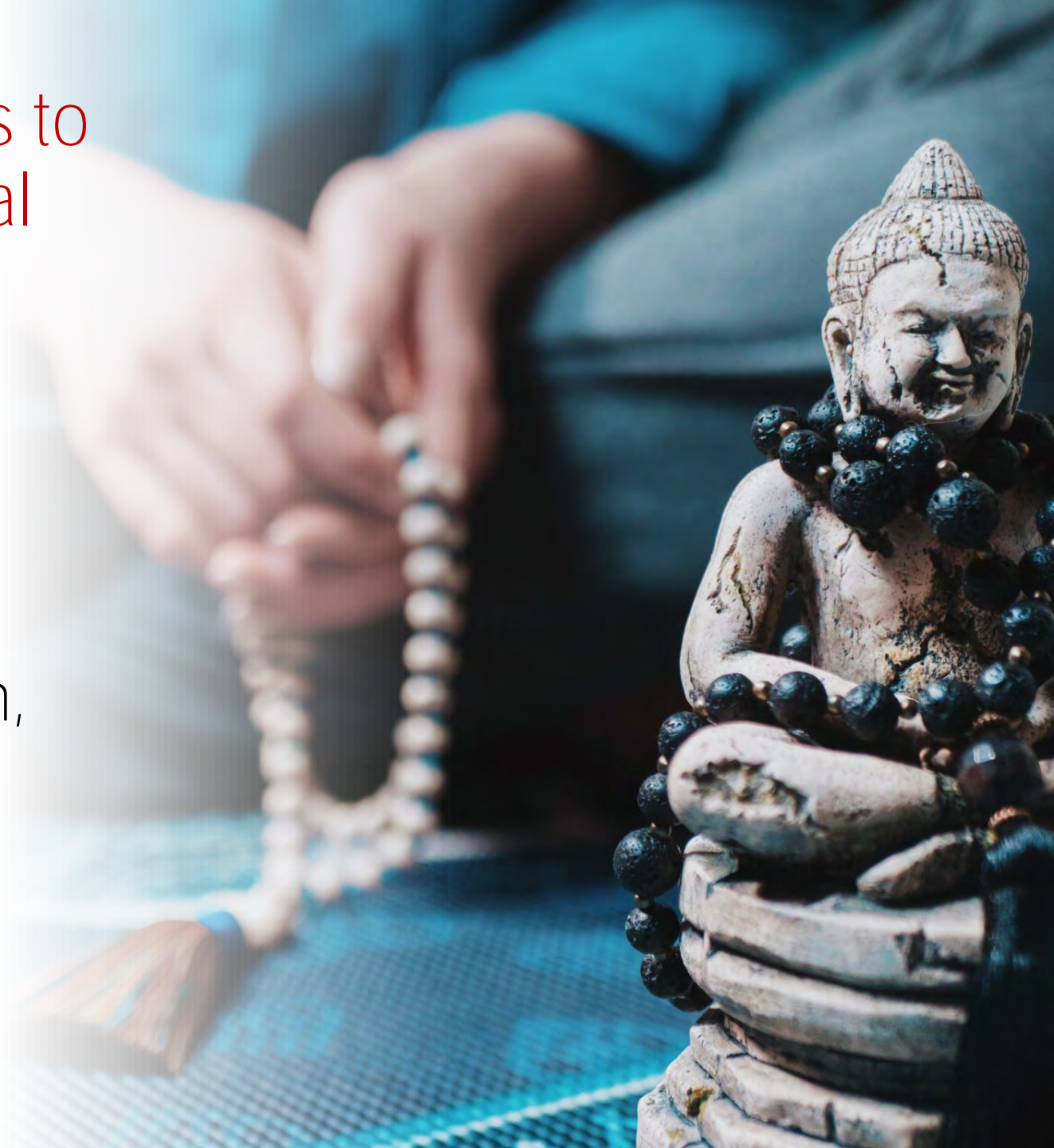


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- **Yogic practises & poses for vagal tone**

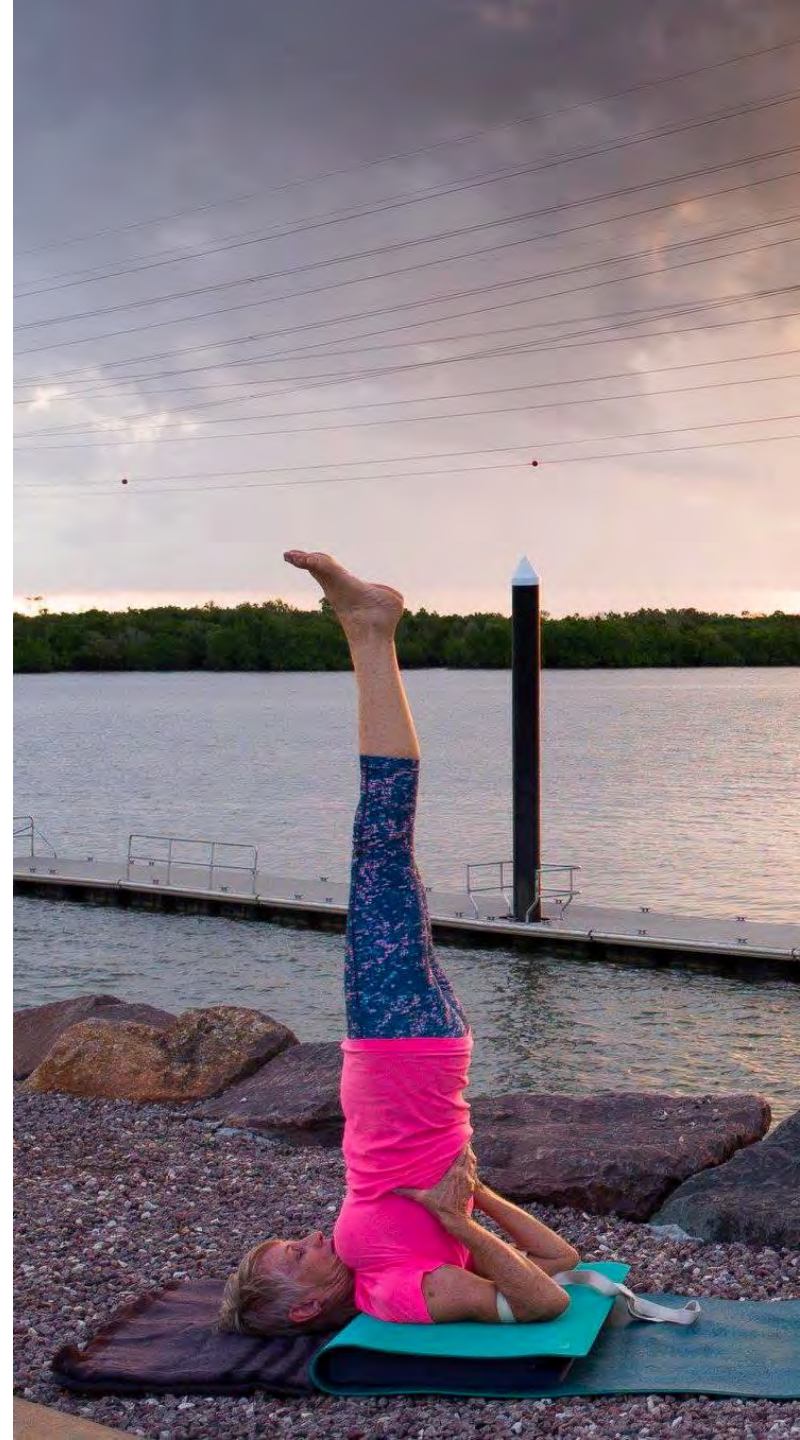
Yogic practices to improve vagal tone?

- Yoga
- Pranayama meditation
- Chanting: Kirtan, AUMs



Yogic practices can deliver vagal tone like:

- Introspection: observing thoughts & actions
- Reviewing habits to dump or keep
- Breaking undesirable emotional patterns
- Making new positive samskaras





EXAMPLES: poses to
increase your vagal
tone



Both simple & advanced poses do the job

Soothing &
rejuvenating...
via
baroreceptors,
vagal nerve, &
glands.





Relaxing poses including with weights!



Forward bends:
Lowering blood
pressure, &
relaxing whole
nervous system.





Chair to deepen forward bend without using hamstrings!



Both Shoulderstand and Halasana are soothing



Stops churning of thoughts... Bridge pose

Quietens mind &
allows for
reflection
via down dog with
head support



Deep chin lock:

Quietens nerves via baroreceptors.

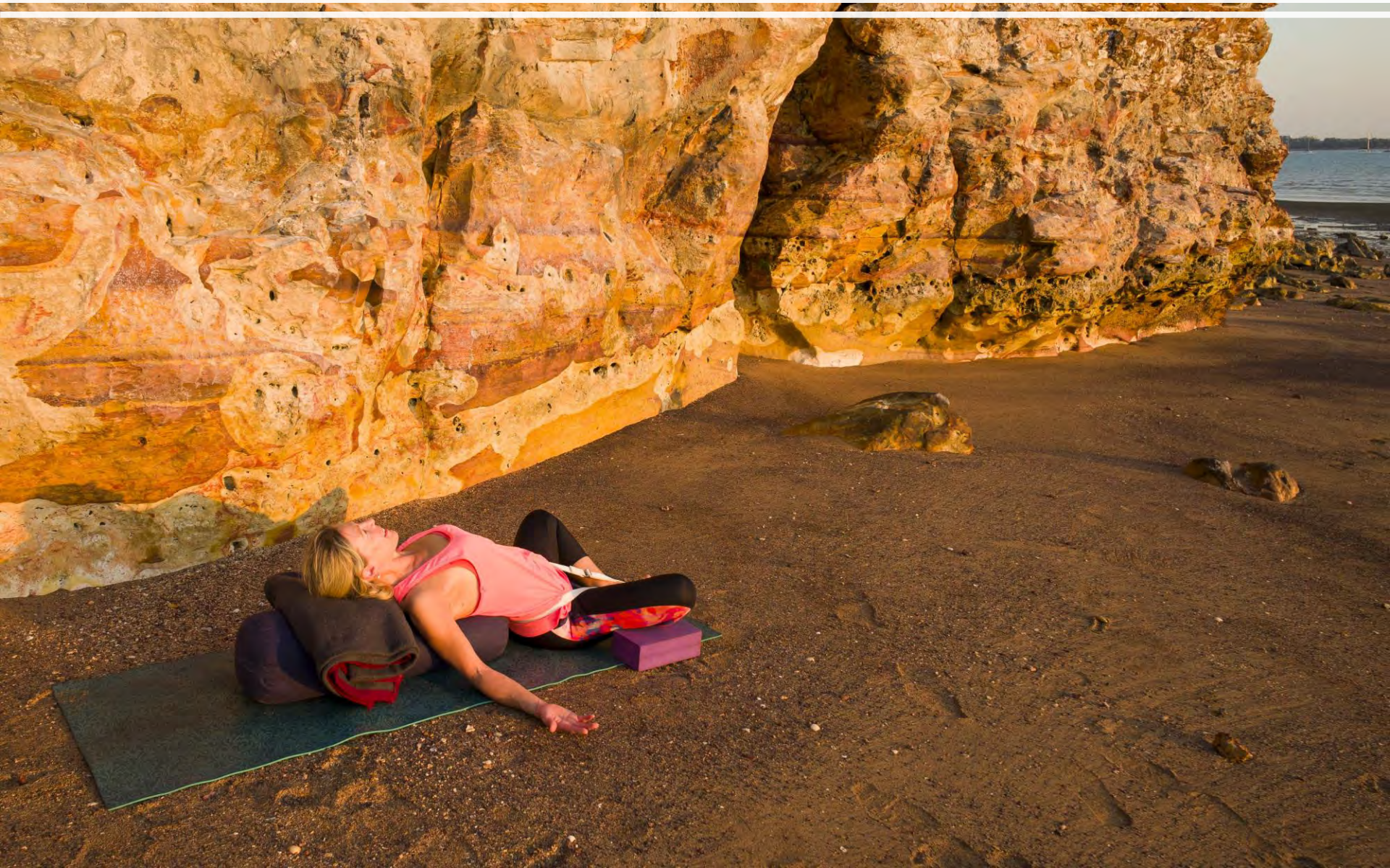
Stimulation of brain thru neck, with tail bone pushed inwards.





Ardha Halasana: Calming & energising

Delivers energy via relaxation (sattvic guna)



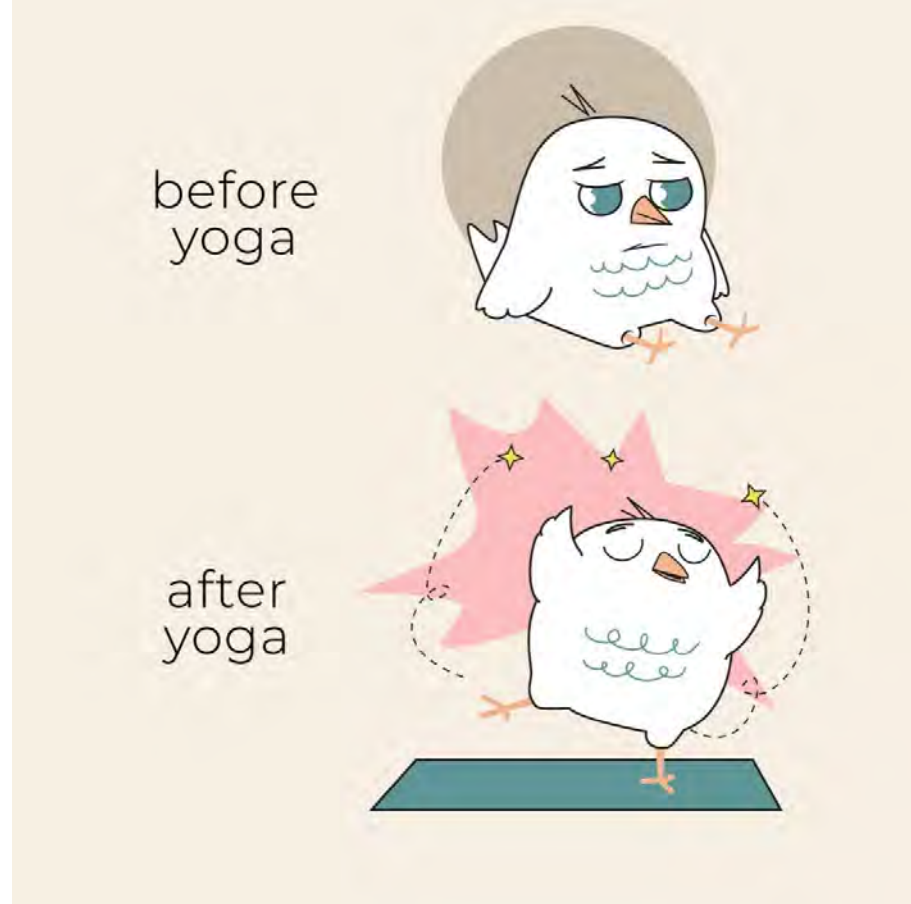
Pranayama:
with
lengthening
exhalation



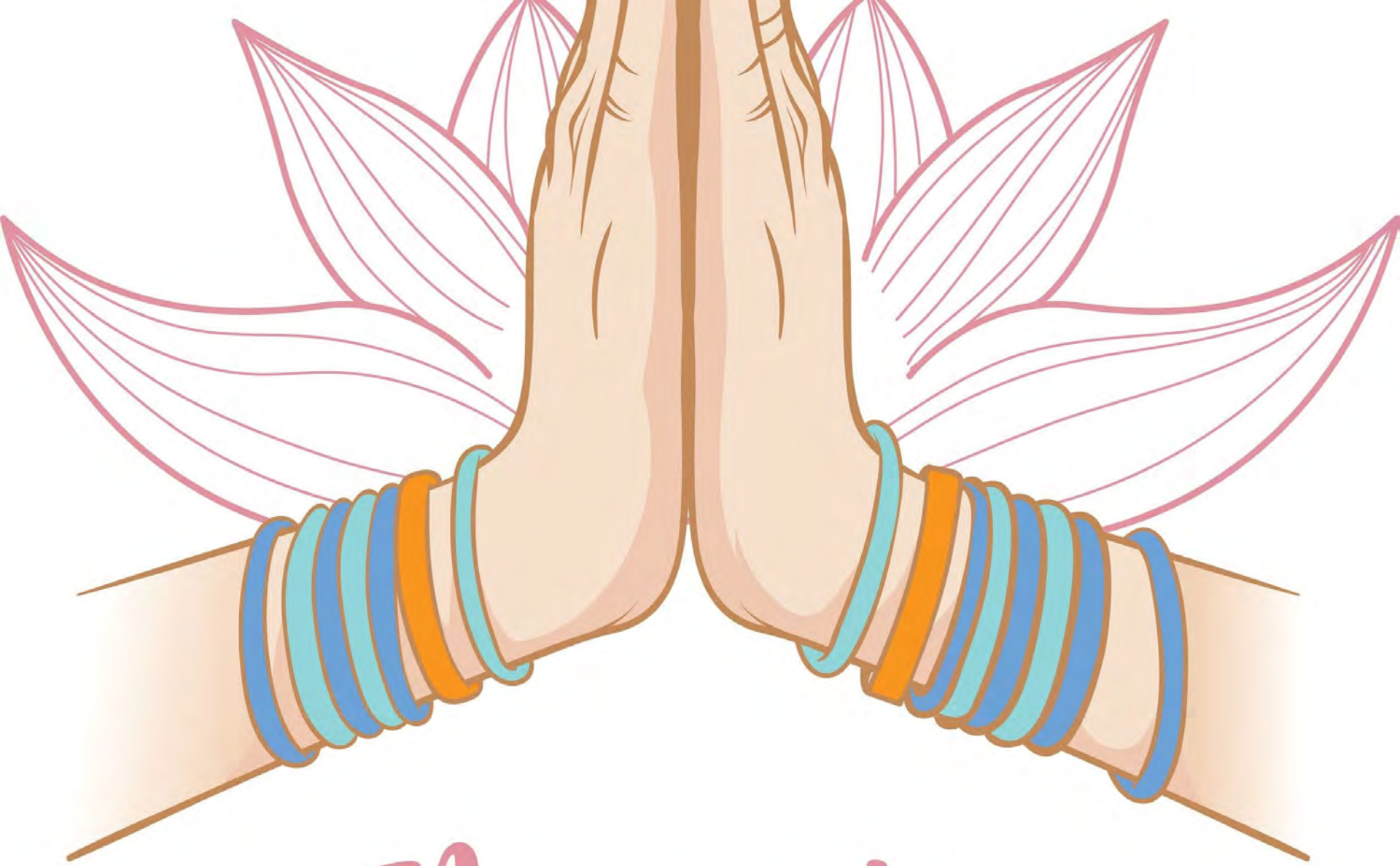
Relaxation pose



What **we've** covered



1. What is the vagus nerve
2. Key ways it works
3. Connection to yogic philosophy (Gunas)
4. Yogic practises for vagal tone



Namaste