



WellnessForge

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 6 chapter books from the Wellnessforge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

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Introduction

The Wellnessforge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 6 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

The Steadying Pair

stress-regulation pair — Steady regulates the body (ground / breathe / slow). Pause regulates the moment (notice / wait / choose). Together they show that handling stress is both a body skill AND a decision skill, practiced together.



The community room was quiet and full of soft evening light. The day's energy had settled like dust on the shelves and rugs. In one corner, a tall, fluffy creature named Steady lay half-curved on a beanbag chair that was only slightly smaller than they were. Steady looked like a heap of warm, clean laundry and moved with the same slow, heavy grace. They let out a long, quiet sigh, and the air in the room seemed to get a little calmer.

Across the room, perched on a windowsill, sat Pause. Pause was small and smooth and grey, like a perfect skipping stone that had decided to stop skipping and just watch for a while. They didn't move much, but their presence was solid and certain. Between them, in the middle of the floor, was a tall, wobbly tower made of colorful, mismatched blocks. It was a monument to a busy day — a rainbow of felt and foam that reached almost to the ceiling. For a long moment, the only sounds were the gentle hum of the lights and the slow, deep rhythm of Steady breathing.



Suddenly, the main door to the hallway swung open with a soft *whoosh* and then clicked shut, sending a puff of air across the room. It wasn't a loud noise, but it was enough. The block tower shivered. It leaned. Then, with a series of soft *thumps* and *whumps*, it tumbled down, scattering a rainbow of felt shapes across the wooden floor.

Steady flinched. The fluffy fabric covering them went from soft to prickly in a second, like a startled cat. A little rumble started deep in their chest — a sound of surprise. They felt their whole body tense up, ready to do something — though they weren't sure what. The feeling was big and buzzy.

Instead of letting the rumble grow, Steady did something else. They let out the breath they were holding in a long, slow stream. Then they took a new one, even slower this time, feeling their big, soft body rise and then settle heavily into the beanbag. They focused on the feeling of weight — of being held by the chair, connected to the floor. The prickles smoothed out. The rumble faded.

That was the body part of the skill. Steady wasn't pretending nothing happened. They were just letting the body do what bodies do — breathe slow, settle heavy, find the floor.



Pause watched the whole thing from the windowsill. They saw the tower fall. They saw the blocks scatter. They saw Steady's fluff stand on end, and they saw the big, slow breath that followed. Pause didn't rush over or make a sound. They just waited, a tiny grey stone of stillness.

After a moment, they hopped down from the sill, making a small, clean *tick* sound on the floor. They hopped once, twice, three times, until they were sitting beside one of the fallen blocks.

Pause looked at the mess. It wasn't angry or sad or bad. It was just a pile of blocks where a tower used to be. They looked over at Steady, who was now breathing in that same slow, calm rhythm again. "The tower fell," Pause said, their voice clear and quiet. "That was a startling sound."

They didn't say it was Steady's fault or the door's fault. They just said what happened. Then they sat, perfectly still, giving the moment space to just be. They were a little island of calm in the sea of scattered blocks.

That was the moment part of the skill. Not jumping straight to a solution. Just naming what was there.



Steady looked at Pause, a small, solid shape in the middle of the colorful mess. They took one more deep breath and slowly, carefully, uncurled themselves from the beanbag. They padded over to where Pause was waiting. They didn't say anything, just stood there, feeling the solid floor under their feet. The big, buzzy feeling was gone now, replaced by a quiet stillness that matched Pause's own.

"I see a blue block near your foot," Pause said softly, not looking up. "What if we start there?"

It wasn't a command. It was a question — an invitation. Steady looked down. There was indeed a fuzzy blue block right there. It seemed like a simple, possible thing to do. They reached down with a soft, floppy limb and picked it up. It felt warm in their grasp.

Pause hopped over to a yellow one. "I'll get this one," they said.

Together, without any rush, they started to gather the scattered pieces. They weren't building the tower again — just making a neat pile in the corner, turning a mess into a tidy collection of colors. Each block went where it went. There was no race, no count, no scoreboard.



Soon, all the blocks were stacked in a low pile against the wall. The floor was clear again. The room felt even quieter than before. Steady settled back onto their beanbag, their fluff soft and smooth. Pause hopped up and sat on Steady's knee, a comfortable, familiar weight. The evening light was turning gold.

"My insides were all fizzy," Steady rumbled, the sound gentle and low. "Like a shaken-up soda bottle."

"I noticed," Pause said simply. "The fizz is gone now."

"Feeling my feet on the floor helped," Steady added. "And your waiting."

"The waiting is important," Pause agreed. "It gives the fizz a place to go. The blocks are still here. We are still here." They sat together in the comfortable silence — a perfect pair. The big, soft one who knew how to steady the body, and the small, solid one who knew how to settle the moment. And the room was calm.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/wellnessforge/steady-pause>

About Spark & Anvil

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- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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