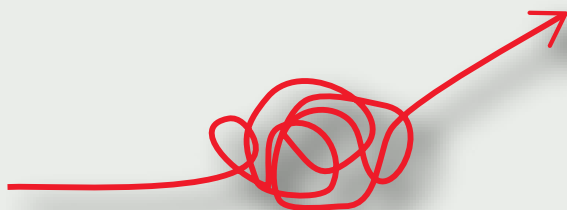


Brilliant! Dr. Bell bridges the journey from grief to growth.
This is classic wisdom on healing from our heartbreaking
disasters and ultimately enjoying a fulfilling life.

– CHRISTINE THEARD, M.D.

Post-Traumatic Thriving

The Art, Science, & Stories of Resilience



Randall Bell, Ph.D.

EXHIBITS & ADDENDA

POST-TRAUMATIC THRIVING: The Art, Science & Stories of Resilience
Randall Bell, PhD

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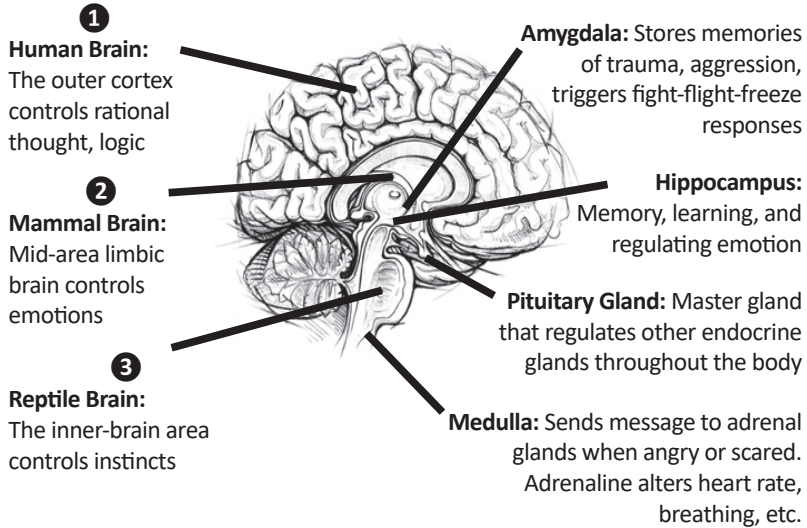
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THE HUMAN BRAIN AND TRAUMA



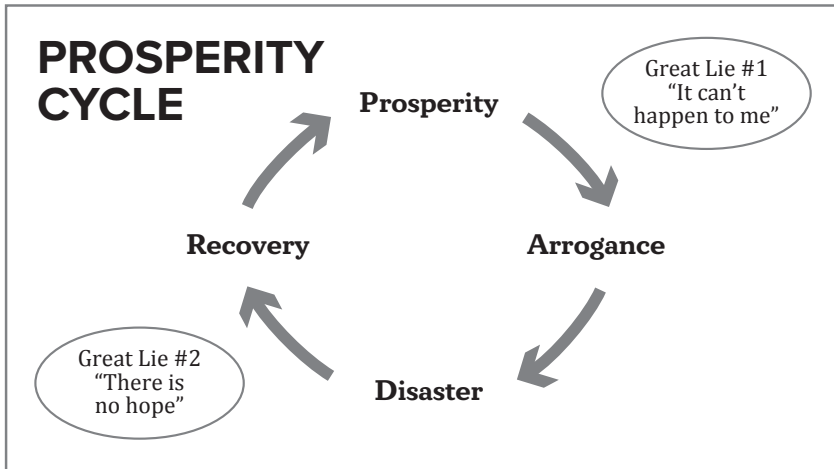
HEN: Hormones - Endorphins - Neurotransmitters

- **Hormones** include about 50 chemicals primarily stored in eight major glands and are secreted into our bloodstream.
- **Endorphins** include about 20 chemicals primarily stored in the brain's pituitary gland and are secreted into our bloodstream. They are used primarily for pain relief and are considered both hormones and neurotransmitters.
- **Neurotransmitters** include about 40 chemicals stored along our nervous system and are released by nerve impulses.

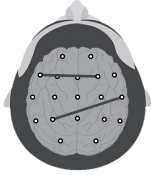
SODA: Serotonin - Oxytocin - Dopamine - Adrenaline

- **Serotonin** is related to well-being. It is a neurotransmitter that is released by various activities, such as eating certain foods, exercise, meditation, sleep, and music.
- **Oxytocin** is a hormone associated with feelings of love and social bonding. This hormone is released by the pituitary gland when people snuggle and connect socially.
- **Dopamine** is a pleasure-related neurotransmitter and hormone produced in the brain's hypothalamus. It is released during actual and anticipated pleasurable experiences such as eating, sex, finishing tasks, and certain drugs.
- **Adrenaline** (fear and anger) and **Cortisol** (stress) are released during sports or exercise or by fear or anger. The brain's medulla triggers the adrenal gland, located above the kidneys, and releases these hormones into the bloodstream causing an increase in heart rate, muscle strength, breathing, sugar metabolism, etc. This is the classic flight-fight-freeze response.

every aspect of the disaster we can find. After the “assessment” stage comes the “repair” and “ongoing” stages. But if we attempt to repair before we assess, we skip the essential step and turn that focused sunlight to light the fire in the wrong areas.



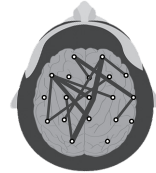
BRAIN WAVES



0.2 - 4 Hz

DELTA

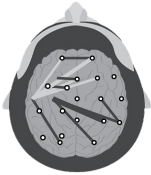
These slow, loud brainwaves are generated in dreamless sleep and deepest meditation. They are a source of empathy and stimulate healing and regeneration.



4 - 8 Hz

THETA

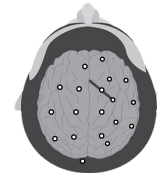
Theta waves occur most often in sleep (drifting off or waking up) but are present in deep meditation. They are the gateway to learning, memory, and intuition. They focus on internal signals versus the external world and can hold fears, troubled history, and nightmares.



8 - 13 Hz

ALPHA

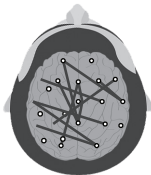
Alpha waves are dominant during quietly flowing thoughts and some meditative states. They are a resting state for the brain and help us be in the present. They aid mental coordination, calmness, alertness, learning, and mind/body integration.



13 - 27 Hz

BETA

Beta waves dominate the normal waking state of consciousness. They are present when we are alert, attentive, engaged in focused mental activity, judgment, problem solving, or decision making. Beta waves are directed towards cognitive tasks and the outside world.



27 - 100 Hz

GAMMA

These are the fastest moving brainwaves. They pass information in the brain, and we must be quiet to tap into them. They relate to simultaneous processing of information from different brain areas.

SITTING IN THE FIRE

Society and perfectionist cultures tend to downplay the difficult experiences in life. Internal pressure builds up when we “suck it up,” “sweep it under the rug,” or dodge the real conversations. Not only does this prevent healing, the pressure builds up like a volcano.

“Sit in the fire” means that we are honest and have the difficult conversations about what is real. We candidly discuss the details of the trauma, without sugar-coating or glossing over anything.

Opening up to these vulnerable conversations allows us to relieve the pressure. The process is called “Sitting in the fire” because the raw words often burn with emotion. During these moments, we can be tempted to mask the hurt with humor, sarcasm, or some other distraction, but we must just sit in the fire.

The ultimate goal is to have a conversation with a trusted person or group where we can express what really happened. It is remarkably healing to sit in the fire, and there are basically three options:



- 1. THERAPIST:** The ideal way to have a dialogue and process trauma is with a trained therapist. A competent therapist will allow us to express the full extent of the trauma without judgment and will keep the conversations confidential.



- 2. TRUSTED FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND:** We can confide in a trusted person; however, there are two important criteria. First, the person must simply listen within interrupting or being judgmental. Second, they must be trustworthy and keep our conversations strictly confidential. If these conditions are not met, this could lead to being re-traumatized.



- 3. JOURNAL:** Until we find a therapist or a trusted person, we can journal our experiences. We write about life before our trauma, the trauma itself and what has happened since. Maintain the journal and continue to write about the experiences as additional thoughts come to mind. Writing things down organizes our thoughts and emotions. Make written lists of what you need.

GROUNDING

Grounding is an exercise that can help improve your memory, lower blood pressure, control anxiety, and reduce stress. Choose the steps below you are comfortable with and spend 60 seconds or 60 minutes grounding. The time does not matter.



1. Sit comfortably in a chair with both feet planted on the ground.



2. Hands can rest gently on your lap.



3. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breathing. Take 3-5 slow, deep breaths in and out.



4. Conduct a complete body scan. Focus attention on what you're physically feeling beginning at your toes and moving upwards towards your head.



5. Where in your body are you feeling pain, discomfort, or stiffness? Explore why you are feeling this.



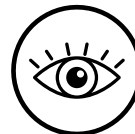
6. Bring your attention to each of your 5 senses, one at a time.



7. Focus on what you touch, hear, taste, or smell.



8. Finish by taking 5-7 deep, slow breaths in and out.



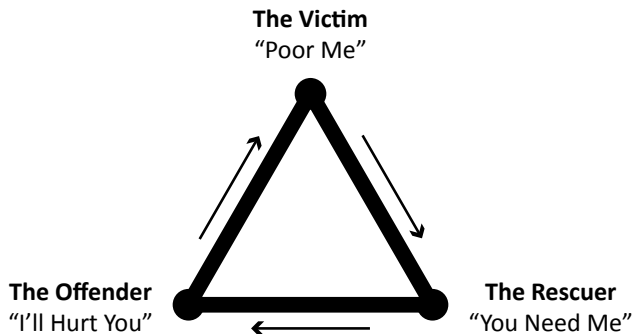
9. Open your eyes. You are now grounded!

Russia had failed to withdraw its troops by an agreed-upon deadline. The only thing that mattered to Tom was the Olympics. His dreams were dashed.

TRAUMA TRIANGLE

The world of *trauma drama* can suck us into a cast of characters including perpetual victims, offenders, and rescuers. We may be in a legitimate state of trauma for a while, but we do not want to get stuck there:

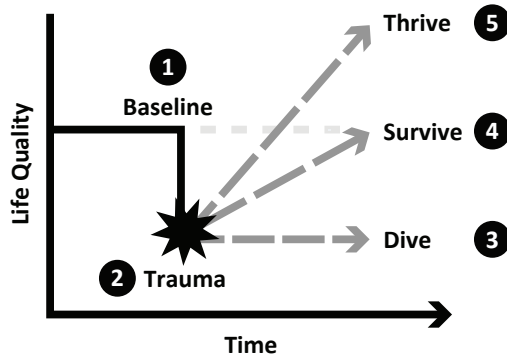
- **Victims** are the prey who remain helpless and give up. Their state seems hopeless and they refuse to take action to change. Victims get off the trauma triangle when they say “Enough!” and get the help they need to solve their problems, and practice self-care.
- **Offenders** are predators who bully and persecute others. They get out of the trauma triangle when they stop being domineering and harsh and hold themselves accountable.
- **Rescuers** are enablers who sweep in to declare, “You need my help!” They get out of the trauma triangle when they become a supporter and offer encouragement while never doing anything that someone can do for themselves.



Adapted from the *Trauma Triangle* by Dr. Stephen Karpman.

POST-TRAUMATIC THRIVING

The Post-Traumatic Thriving framework is founded on a range of sciences, including computational biology, neuroscience, game theory, neuro-linguistic programming, positive psychology, and psychophysiology.



1. BASELINE. The baseline represents our average day-to-day lifestyle. We primarily use the outer (human-logical) brain and the mid (mammal-emotional) brain. Our inner (reptilian-instinct) brain operates in the background. Our parasympathetic nervous system (rest & digest or feed & breed) dominates over the sympathetic (fight-flight-freeze) nervous system.

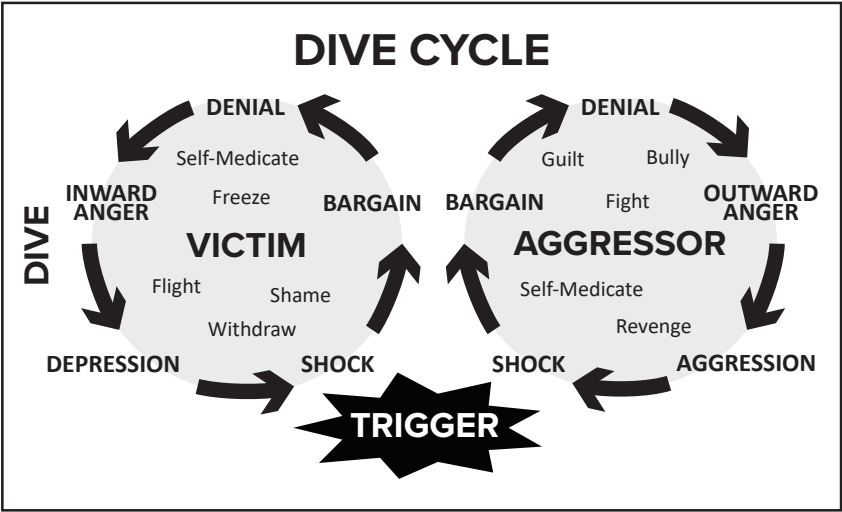
2. TRAUMA. This may be a single (acute) event (e.g., accident or crime) or a recurring (chronic) event (e.g., abuse or lingering illness). During a trauma, our outer and mid brains yield to our inner (reptilian) brain's amygdala. Our parasympathetic nervous system is taken over by the fight-flight-freeze response. This is an evolutionary adaptive response to get us to safety. We are on high-alert and we may go into shock.

3. DIVE. We get stuck in the fight-flight-freeze mode although the trauma is over. Our inner (reptilian) brain dominates. Hormones, endorphins, and neurotransmitters (e.g., cortisol, adrenaline) continue to flood the bloodstream. Our breathing elevates and hearts race. Triggers continue to reactivate this response, even though the trauma is past and we are in no danger. We are prone to chronic anxiety, depression, addiction, or burnout.

4. SURVIVE. At this stage we heal. We stabilize as we complete the trauma cycle and let the brain know that we are safe. Our brains reset from the high-stress sympathetic to the baseline's parasympathetic nervous system. We do this through affirmations, exercise, grounding (deep-breathing) exercises, sitting in the fire (talking with a therapist or trusted person), and other activities.

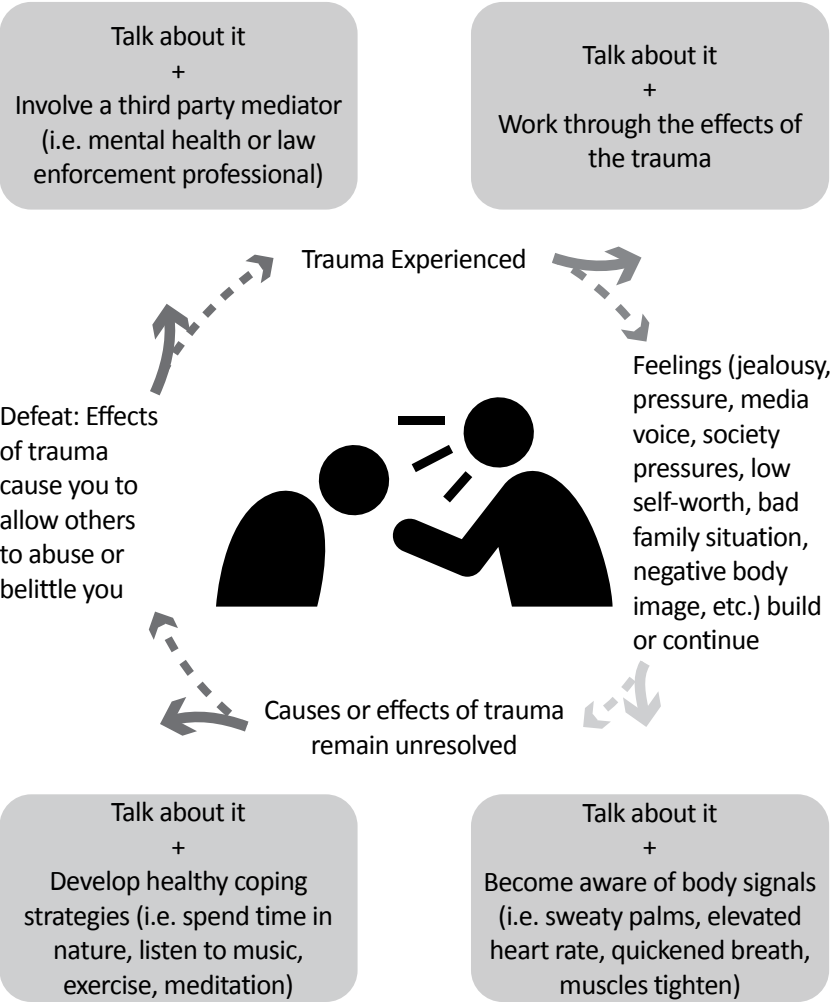
5. THRIVE. Now awakened to our inner strength, we use the trauma's energy as fuel to do something new, vibrant, and fulfilling. We set goals for growth and development. The memory of our trauma passes harmlessly through our minds. We develop gratitude for the lessons we have learned.

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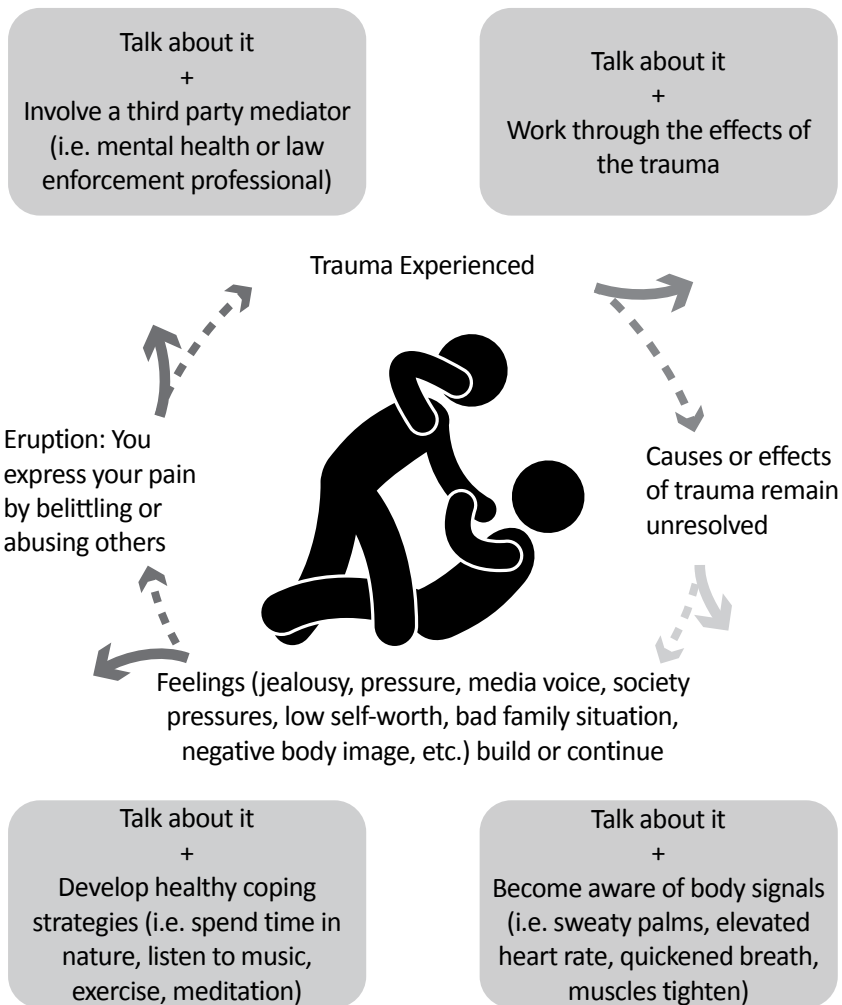
THE VICTIM CYCLE

Bullying is persistent and ongoing, happening sometimes up to three or four times a day. It is likely to continue into adulthood, unless the trauma that leads to the bullying is addressed. As noted in a study conducted by Utterly Global, children who were bullies in grades six to



THE BULLY CYCLE

nine are 60% more likely to have a criminal conviction by the age of 24, and according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, workplace bullying causes \$3 billion in lost productivity and a \$19 billion loss in employment every year.



H.A.L.T.

H.A.L.T. is a simple, powerful tool to practice self-care. When we feel irritated, anxious, or depressed, it could be that we are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. This is a signal to H.A.L.T. and assess our situation.



Hungry

If we do not eat well, we get grumpy. Avoid junk food, drink plenty of water, and take time for good meals and snacks.



Angry

When we feel angry, avoid acting irrationally. Pause, and take a time out. Find a quiet space to take some deep breaths, and stay in control.



Lonely

Isolation can lead to depression or anxiety. Reach out to family or friends or join a club, church, or other positive support group.

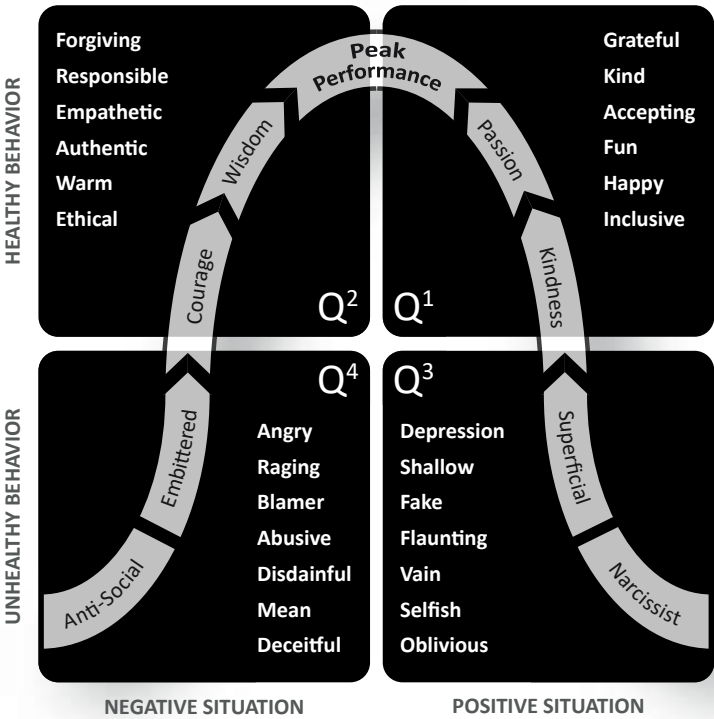


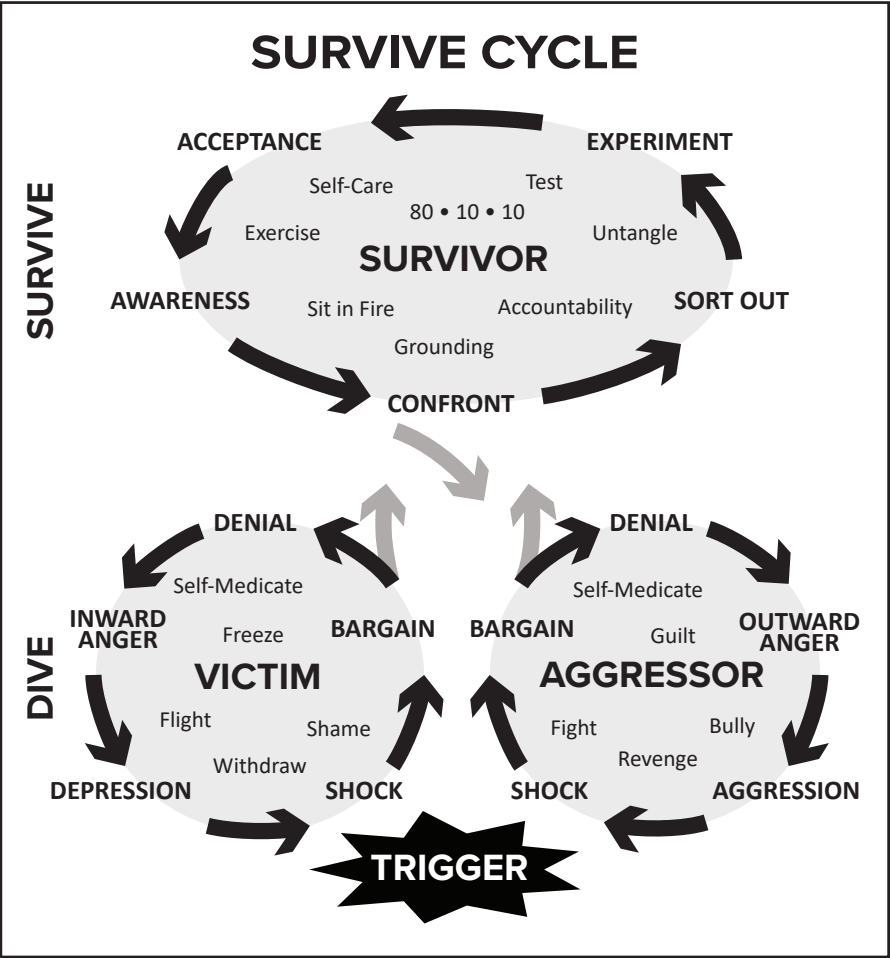
Tired

Fatigue makes us irritable. Take regular breaks, do deep breathing exercises, and get enough sleep.

PEAK PERFORMANCE THEORY

The Peak Performance Theory compares behaviors and situations. The goal is to remain in Q1 and Q2 (healthy behaviors or responses to both positive and negative situations) as often as possible. If you find yourself exhibiting unhealthy behaviors frequently, consider how you might be able to behave differently when the next conflict or triumph arises.





THE SIX HONORINGS

This roadmap was created by Ken Druck, PhD, following the death of his daughter Jenna. Dr. Druck has assisted families who lost loved ones in tragedies including 9/11, Columbine, Katrina, Sandy Hook, Boston Marathon, Las Vegas Mandalay Bay Concert, and COVID-19. Each one of these six honorings is a guideline for how to begin living courageously, heal shattered hearts, and honor our loved ones.



1. YOUR OWN SURVIVAL. The first way we honor the loss of a loved one is to slowly and gently begin to fight our way back into life. Putting best practices for self-care and healthy grieving into play allows us to learn how we can survive their death.



2. DO SOMETHING GOOD IN THEIR NAME. In doing something as simple and elegant as lighting a candle or planting a tree or as elaborate as conducting a celebration of their life or starting a non-profit organization, we show the world who they were. We express to the world that they lived and that they will continue to live on through the good deeds done in their name.



3. CULTIVATE A SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP. We used to be able to stop over for a quick visit, meet for lunch or pick up the phone and hear their voice. Coming to terms with the fact that we can't see or hear them again brings deep sorrow. And yet, our love for them lives on, perhaps stronger than ever, our love never dies. How and where to express this undying love leads us to cultivate a "spiritual relationship" with them.



4. EMBODY A SPECIAL QUALITY OF THEIRS. Whether it's their kindness, sense of humor, fierce determination, loyalty, or even their irreverence, choose a very special aspect of their personality and begin to embody it.



5. WRITE NEW CHAPTERS OF LIFE. This honoring is perhaps the most challenging. To the best of our ability, we try to begin living out the rest of our own lives.



6. TAKE THE HIGH ROAD. To help families torn apart in the raw grief after 9/11, Dr. Druck started a program called "Take the High Road." By treating one another with patience, kindness, respect, humility, compassion, and understanding, survivors express their love for the person who had died.

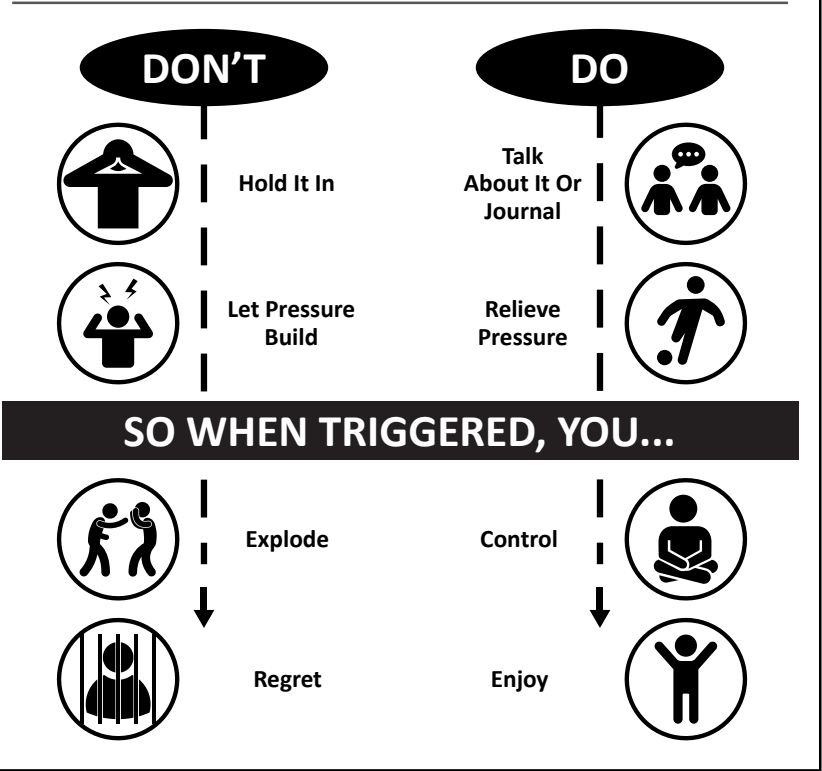
GUILT VS SHAME

GUILT IS...

- A feeling when we have done something wrong (i.e. hurt someone or committed a crime).
- Healthy guilt keeps us close to our moral compass, regulates our social behavior, serves as a sign that our conscience is working properly to stop us from repeating mistakes, and involves making amends to resolve the feelings of guilt
- Toxic guilt happens when we make a mistake and are unable to overcome the negative feelings associated with the event, even when amends have been made

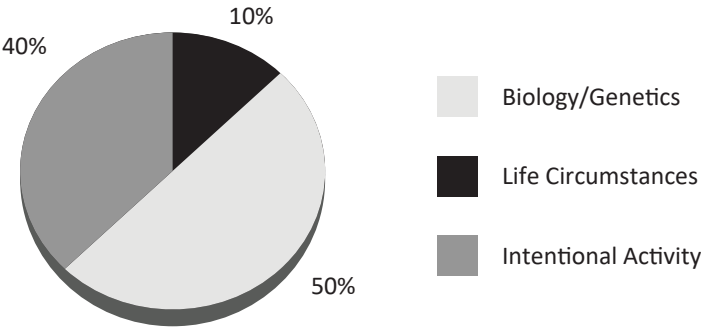
SHAME IS...

- A feeling about who we are, but we have done nothing wrong (i.e. “My family is poor” or “I have a medical issue”)
- Protecting an idealized version of yourself
- May have deep fear of failures or shortcomings being exposed
- Individual does not want to own up to their problem and correct it
- May have a difficult time acknowledging that a problem actually exists
- Harder to overcome than guilt



THE SCIENCE OF HAPPY

Science reveals that happiness is determined by three key factors. While approximate, half of happiness is determined by genetics and DNA. If our biology is deficient, there are prescription drugs that can bring this into balance. Only 10% of our happiness is determined by our life circumstances. The remarkable insight from this research is that our daily habits and activities, determine 40% of our happiness. Our activities and habits are under our control. Thus, it is essential to select those that bring the most joy.



Lyubamirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.

STRESS REDUCTION

Stress is measured on a continuum from 0 to 10. When stress levels are between 0 and 4, we are using our brain's frontal lobe and are able to solve problems. Between a 7 and 10, our brains no longer think rationally. The following stress reduction techniques can help you to relax and prevent your emotional brain from reacting in a way you might later regret.

STRESS LEVEL



SPEND SOME
TIME OUTSIDE



WORK OUT



WATCH A
FUNNY VIDEO



CHAT WITH AN
UPBEAT FRIEND



TAKE A WARM
SHOWER



LISTEN TO
INSPIRING MUSIC



JUMP ON
THE BED



GO ON A
BIKE RIDE



GO FOR
A WALK



MEDITATE
OR PRAY



DOODLE



GET A GOOD
NIGHT'S SLEEP



BLOW
BUBBLES

Concept developed by Elizabeth Lombardo, PhD, author of *Better Than Perfect: 7 Steps to Crush Your Inner Critic and Create a Life You Love*.
www.ElizabethLombardo.com. Used with permission.

STRESS vs. CALM

Our bodies are wired with two separate nervous systems, called the parasympathetic (calm) and sympathetic (stress) systems. We have the ability to switch "on" and "off" with our simple choices. The "calm" activities are medically proven to switch the body from "stress" to "calm." Remember that these activities flip the switch "on" for "calm" feelings, but they do not address the underlying issues. However, we can make better decisions in a calm state.

CALM

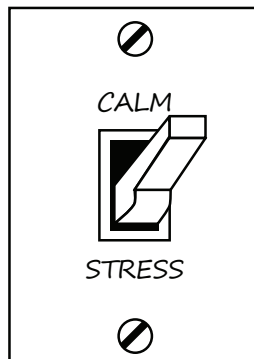
Parasympathetic Nervous System

Deep Breathing: Taking in long, deep breaths, and exhaling slowly—such as in grounding, meditation, or yoga exercises—flips on the "calm" parasympathetic nervous system

Laughter: Watching funny videos, telling jokes, or comedy clubs are outstanding for flipping on the "calm" switch

Bio Rhythms: Listening to your body telling you when you are hungry, angry, lonely or tired—and taking action—brings "calm"

Socializing: Getting together with people we enjoy brings "calm"



STRESS

Sympathetic Nervous System

Trauma: Any trauma can flip on the "stress" reactions, where adrenaline is pumped through our veins and we have the "fight-fight-freeze" reaction

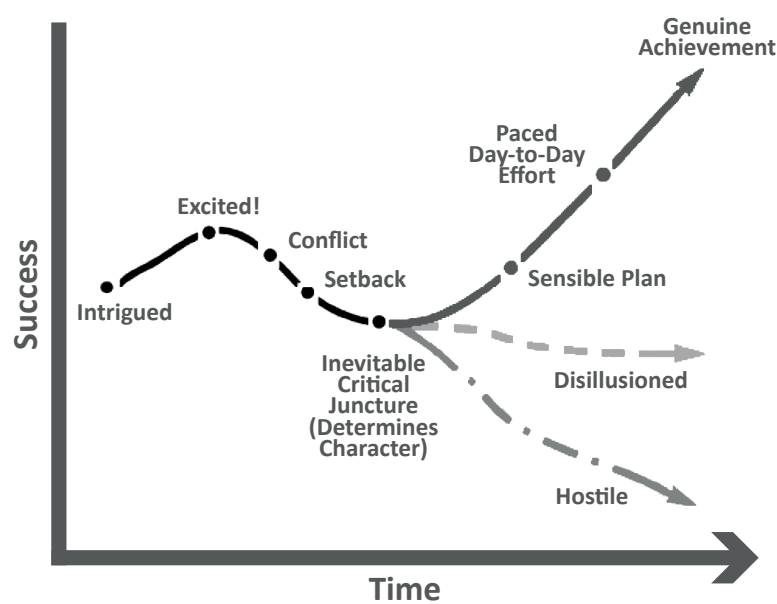
Horror Movies: Watching any frightening movie will switch on the "stress" switch

Procrastination: Putting off essential tasks will increase "stress" levels

Arguments: Picking an argument will flip on the "stress" switch

ACHIEVEMENT PATHS

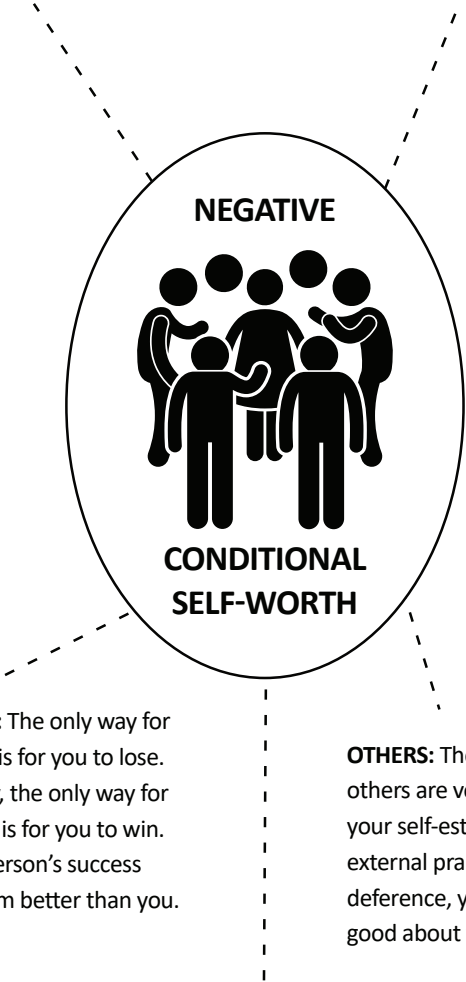
Many potential achievements begin with an intrigue of a situation that grows to excitement. After the “buy in,” conflict and setbacks often set in. There is an inevitable critical juncture where the real level of commitment is determined and often one’s character is tested. If truly committed, the individual will look at the situation more sensibly, implement a paced, day-to-day effort and over time obtain genuine achievement. If one fails at the critical juncture, then disillusionment or even hostility can set in.



NEGATIVE SELF WORTH

PERSONALIZE: Any feedback from or positive and negative reactions of others are always taken personally.

“IF”: You believe in yourself only “if” you meet certain criteria, i.e. If “I am successful,” If “I lose weight,” If “I feel superior to others.”

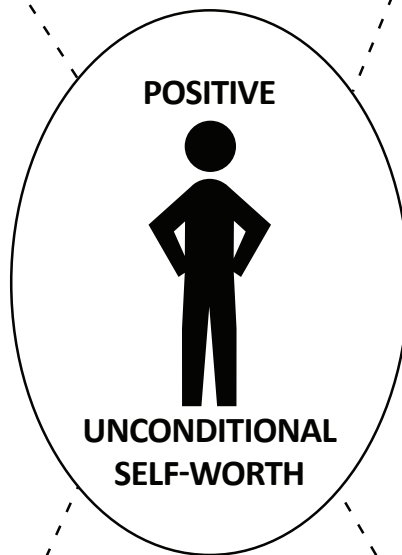


POSITIVE SELF WORTH

WIN-WIN: You can celebrate the success of others because you do not feel that it makes them better than you.

REGARDLESS: You believe in yourself independent of other's opinions.

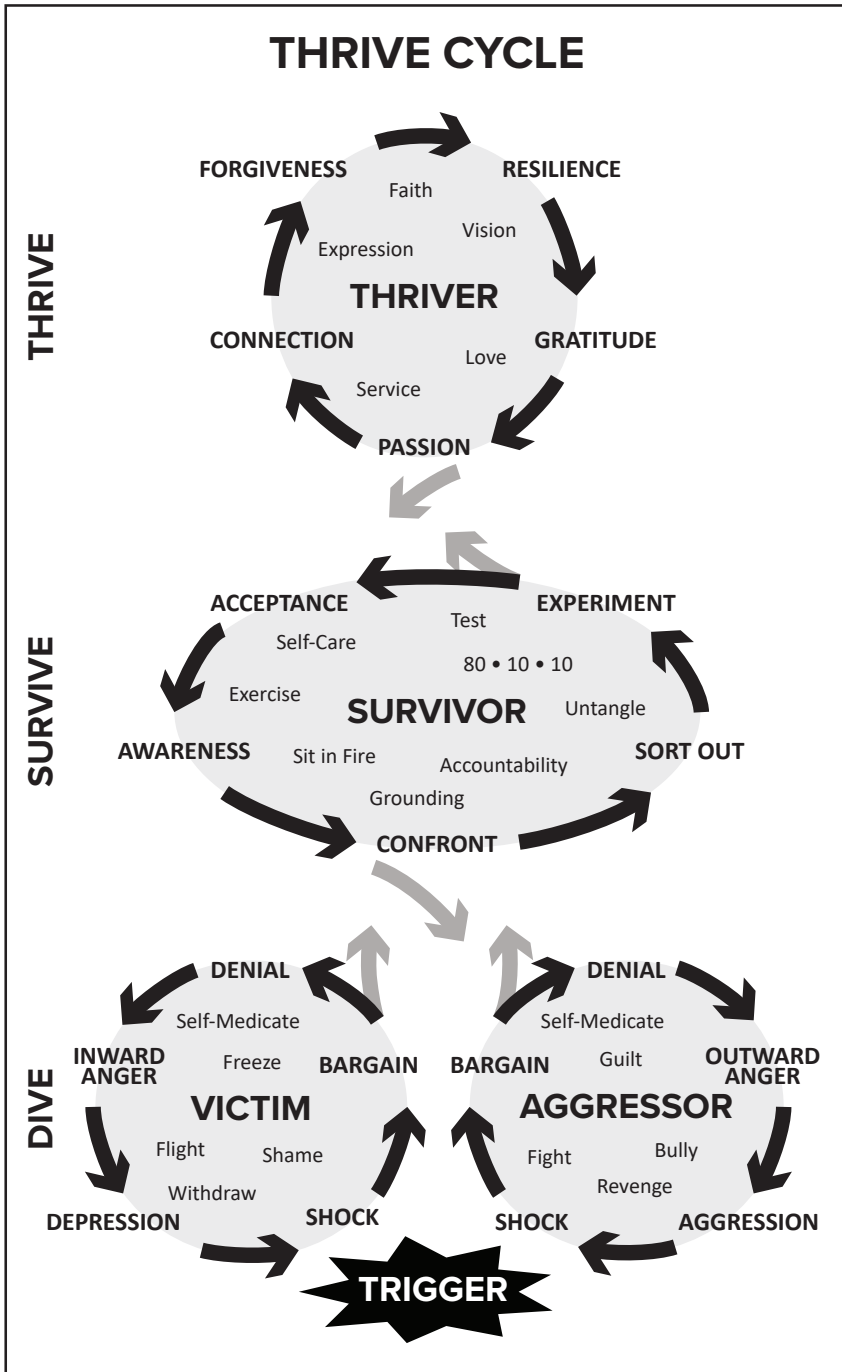
ACCEPTING: You accept your own flaws and are comfortable in your own skin.

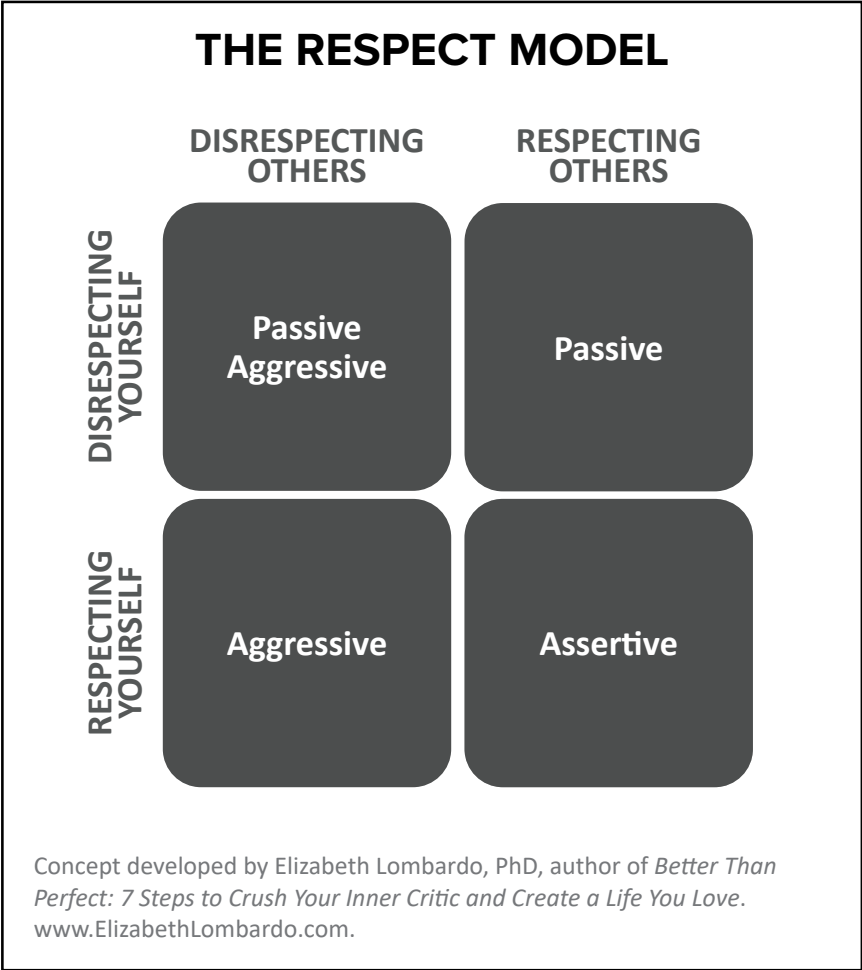


EMPATHIZE: You are able to accept feedback and relate to other's experiences because they aren't received as personal attacks.

VALUES: You believe in yourself by focusing on the values, strengths, and core characteristics within you.

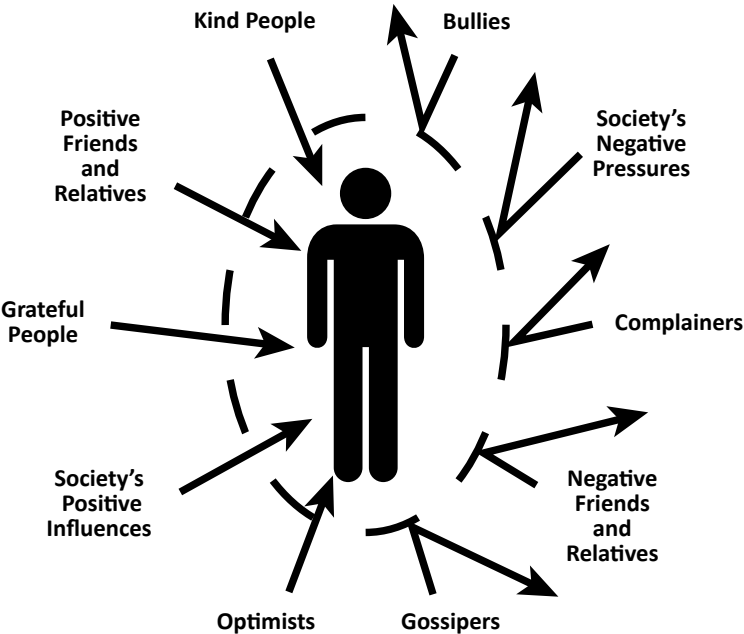
Concept developed by Elizabeth Lombardo, PhD.





HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

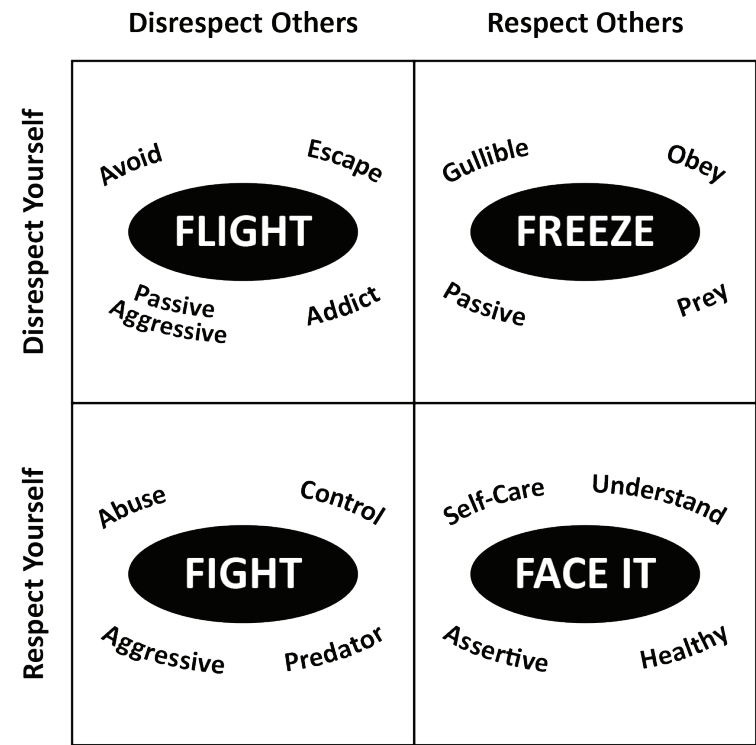
Each person has an energy field around them. You are the sole gatekeeper of what can enter your space. Be aware of energy thieves, and maintain positive relationships and set healthy boundaries. For example, “Nobody can touch me or my property without my permission” or “I am not obligated to discuss topics I’m uncomfortable with.”



POST-TRAUMATIC THRIVING

In the midst of a traumatic event, we are usually faced with the fight-flight-freeze responses. In the aftermath of the trauma, triggers can result in revisiting these same realms.

In the post-trauma stage, a fourth option emerges. Specifically, we can face the situation by developing healthy self-care skills.



HOW TO GET HIGH

We all need to get high. Thrills come in many ways. When we get high, the brain secretes dopamine, endorphins, serotonin, and oxytocin. Don't be fooled by counterfeit buzzes like illegal drugs and excessive alcohol. Find your passion, and get a real high!

PICK YOUR POISON



PARTYING



DRUGS



ALCOHOL



VIDEO GAMES



CHECKING OUT



JUNK FOOD



VIOLENCE



GOSSIP



MUSIC



DANCE



TRAVEL



ROCK CLIMBING



READING



DRAWING



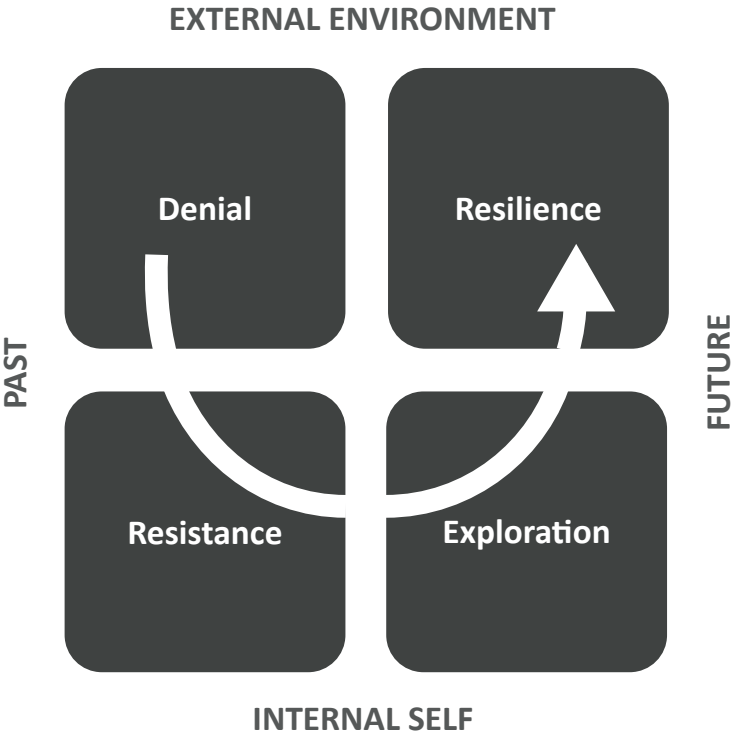
SKIING



COOKING

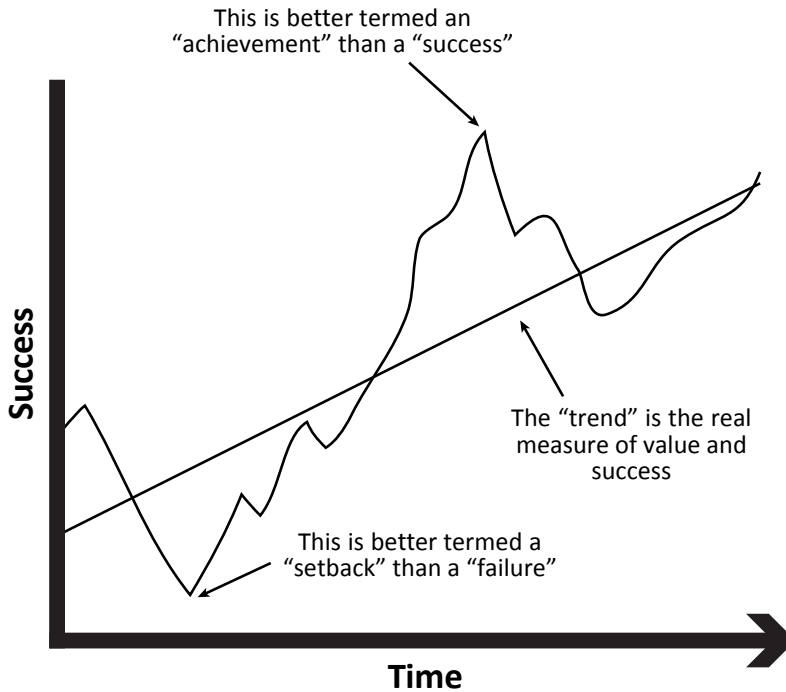
ADAPTING TO CHANGE JOURNEY

Learning new ideas and worthwhile concepts can be difficult. At first, external influences can result in denial and then personal resistance. Depending upon the character of the person, “open mindedness” and exploration will prevail and lead to eventual acceptance.



ACHIEVEMENT VS SUCCESS

Success is actually a trend rather than a specific event. As this graph illustrates, everyone will have achievements and setbacks, but the real measure of success is the trend over time.



THE ARCHITECTURE OF THRIVING

This is a blueprint for constructing a fulfilling life and is based on published social-science research.

Grounding: Deep breathing exercises (mindfulness, meditation, yoga, focused breathing) resets the brain's fight-flight-freeze mode, connects with our inner voice, and brings focus. Do this 10 minutes a day.

80 • 10 • 10: Thriving requires stable finances. Live on 80% of all income. Save 10% to create security. Give 10% to those in need. If in debt, live on 70% and use 10% to pay it off

Faith: It takes faith to cross a street. Those with faith in a higher power (God, nature, humanity, intelligent design, meaning, and so forth) fare better. Maintain a daily practice that builds faith and hope.

Movement: A sedentary lifestyle breeds depression. Studies reveal a connection between mental fitness and exercise. With a doctor's approval, do cardio exercise 10 minutes a day.

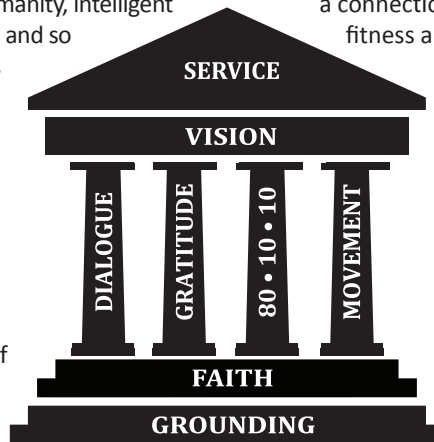
Dialogue: We cannot "bottle up" feelings and thrive. Be part of a community. "Sit in the fire" and confide in a trusted person, licensed therapist, or write in a journal. Do this once a week.

Vision: This is more than a goal; it is our soul's voice. See, touch, hear, smell, taste, and feel the dream. Convert

a trauma's energy to fuel. Envision a timeline and the steps to get there.

Gratitude: A thankful heart is kind and charitable. Gratitude is the highest form of humanity. Visit, call, or send a note to say "thank you" once a week.

Service: We have a purpose that is greater than ourselves. It could be creating art, charity work, literature, music, or other talents. Meaningful service, aligned with our inner voice, is the pinnacle of thriving.



THE T.A.N.Y.A. FORMULA

T

TALK ABOUT IT

Walk through the Tornado of Chaos to prevent becoming overwhelmed, exhausted, or even depressed.

TECHNOLOGICAL DETOX

We are too connected to things instead of to those who matter.



A

ATTENTION ON THE POSITIVE

There is always a silver lining in chaos. Be still to see and hear it.



N

NURTURE YOURSELF

Do something every day, even for just 10 minutes, that nurtures your soul.



Y

"YOU" TIME

Schedule self-care time daily! You are no good to others if you are not putting your well-being first. Remember, you must put the oxygen mask on yourself first.



A

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

There is always something to be grateful for, even in the darkest of times.



Concept developed by Tanya Brown.

APPENDIX A

The 15 Stages of Post-Traumatic Thriving

15 STAGES OF THRIVING

THRIVE STAGE: YOU OWN YOUR TRAUMA



- 15. **Gratitude:** Wisdom and appreciation for life; contribute, love, and give back
- 14. **Resilience:** Reframe, set goals, new meaning, and a new-found spirit
- 13. **Forgiveness:** Let go of past; work and grow to realize new possibilities
- 12. **Connection:** Accept support; form new ways to love and relate to others
- 11. **Faith:** Passion in God or higher power; spiritual or existential awareness

SURVIVE STAGE: YOU STABILIZE



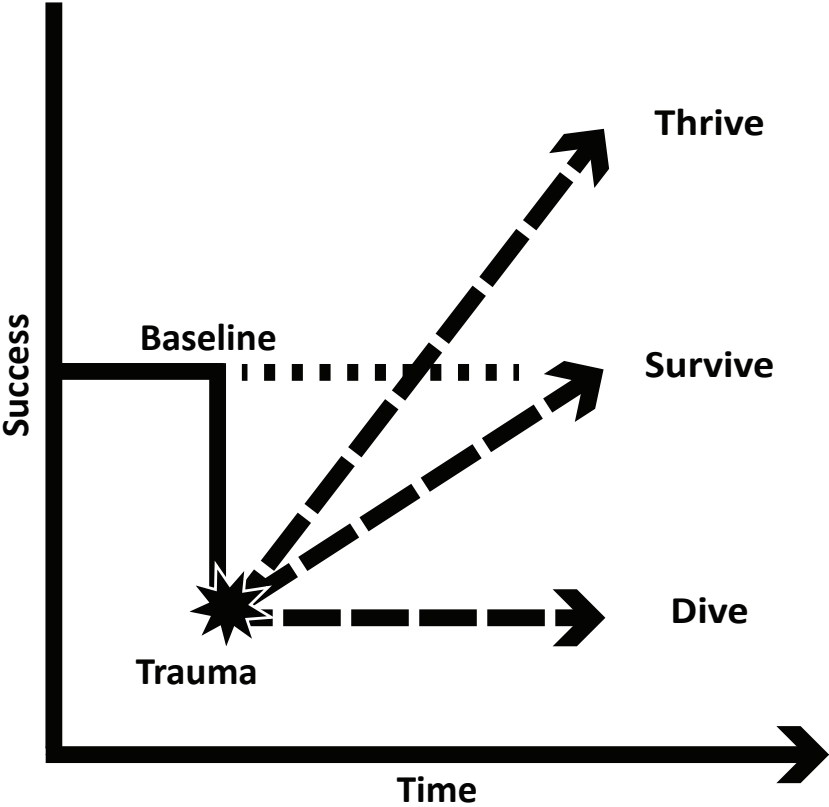
- 10. **Awareness:** Mindfulness of personal strength and transformation
- 9. **Acceptance:** Character to hold ourselves and others accountable
- 8. **Experiment:** Test new life skills to cope; show self-care and love
- 7. **Sort Out:** Untangle guilt (wrongdoing) vs shame (circumstances)
- 6. **Confront:** "Sit in the fire," and identify the pain head on

DIVE STAGE: THE TRAUMA OWNS YOU



- 5. **Depression:** Feelings of utter hopelessness and despair
- 4. **Bargain:** Negotiating or seeking ways around trauma
- 3. **Anger:** Filled with rage, hate, resentment, or blame
- 2. **Denial:** Dodging, hiding, and avoiding the inevitable
- 1. **Shock:** Feeling stunning disbelief and paralyzed to the core

POST-TRAUMATIC THRIVING



APPENDIX B

Exercises for Further Exploration

*There is a life-force within your soul; seek that life.
There is a gem in the mountain of your body; seek that mine.
O traveler, if you are in search of that, don't look outside.
Look inside yourself, and seek that.
-Mewlana Jalaluddin Rumi*

EACH OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS introduces us to powerful concepts that compel us to look deep inside. The exercises on the following pages help guide us through the process. As we complete them, we will come to understand our reaction to the trauma we have experienced. More importantly, we will identify the best way to approach our journey and heal.

To achieve the full benefit of these soul-searching exercises, it's essential to carefully read the directions for each one, and then thoughtfully answer each question or scenario in full.

We may want to write out our answers in a journal. Perhaps we will use these exercises as a way to explore our memories in a more focused way. If we are reading *Post-Traumatic Thriving* as a part of a class, seminar, or therapy program, these questions can serve as a launchpad for a therapeutic discussion with our colleagues or therapists.

Remember, there is no need to complete each exercise in one

sitting. Allow time to process the emotions, whether it takes a few minutes, weeks, or longer. Once we give ourselves the time to access our feelings, we can come back and complete the next exercise.

As a word of caution, please do not push yourself or anyone else too hard through these exercises. On the one hand, we want to grow. Yet, on the other hand, we do not want to retraumatize ourselves. There is an optimal level of moving beyond our comfort zone. If we are pushing ourselves to the point of panic or mental anguish, that's going too far.

Be patient. Healing takes time. Be confident knowing that when we follow the principles we have discussed, we will heal. We will change our world. We will *thrive*.

CHAPTER 1: SHOCK EXERCISE

Think of a trauma you have experienced. Make a note of your shock and emotional and physical responses you experienced at the time of the trauma. Through this exercise, I hope you will become more aware of your reactions to shock and note how these reactions are nature's way of protecting you and your loved ones.

1. What was your trauma?
2. What did you notice about your heart rate?
3. What was your breathing like? Did you hyperventilate?
4. What was your emotional state? Were you angry, scared, or anxious?
5. Did you take fight, flight, freeze, or appease?
6. Did you request help? Who responded?
7. How long did your shock last?
8. What would you have done differently?
9. What would you do the same?
10. Do you feel the same physical reactions today, or has the shock subsided?

CHAPTER 2: DENIAL EXERCISE

This exercise is designed to identify the issues of denial and your trauma.

1. What am I avoiding, and what is the root cause?
2. Have I fully admitted the impact of the trauma to myself today?
3. Have I admitted the trauma to others?
4. How long did my denial or minimizations last?
5. How was I protecting myself or others with my denials?
6. Are my denials still protecting me from something?
7. If not, is it time to let them go and face what I need to face?

CHAPTER 3: ANGER EXERCISE

1. How mad and upset were you as a result of your trauma?
2. Did you bottle your feelings up, or did you let it out?
3. Did your anger unnecessarily hurt anyone?
4. Did your anger result in you doing something that you now regret?
5. What is your level of anger today?
6. What are some ways you could direct the anger to use it as fuel to resolve the issue or help others with similar issues?

CHAPTER 4: BARGAIN EXERCISE

1. How did you bargain with your trauma?
2. Did it work?
3. Are you still bargaining?
4. Are you bargaining with any toxic groups?
5. Is your inner voice aligned with your outer world?
6. Is your inner voice aligned with any group that you belong to?

CHAPTER 5: DEPRESSION EXERCISE

1. Do you feel sad, blue, hopeless, or down? If so, how long have you felt this way?
2. Has your behavior changed? Are you sleeping more or less, avoiding activities you once found fun, or struggling to accomplish desired tasks?
3. Is any depression subsiding, remaining the same, or getting worse?
4. Have you been diagnosed as having depression?
5. Do sad feelings interfere with leading a healthy life?
6. If you are feeling depressed for a prolonged period, are you seeking professional help?

CHAPTER 6: CONFRONTING EXERCISE

Have you “sat in the fire” and faced your trauma? What is your level of awareness? Let us confront both our bright and dark sides. Circle all of the words, good or bad, which describe where you are now in your life:

Absent	Blaming	Competitive
Abusive	Boring	Confused
Academic	Brutal	Controlling
Affectionate	Bullying	Critically harsh
Aggressive	Busy	Cruel
Alcoholic	Calculating	Curious
Angry	Calm	Degrading
Animated	Caregiver	Democratic
Anxious	Center of Attention	Dependent
Arrogant	Centered	Depressed
Authoritarian	Childish	Disapproving
Available	Cold	Disrespectful
Bitter	Compassionate	Distrustful

Dominating	Invalidating	Relentless
Egotistical	Involved	Resentful
Empathetic	Jealous	Righteous
Envious	Joyful	Rude
Excited	Judgmental	Sad
Exhausted	Kindhearted	Satisfied
Extroverted	Lazy	Self-centered
Fake	Lively	Sensitive
Flashy	Loud	Serene
Forgetful	Loving	Stable
Forgiving	Martyr-like	Stingy
Fragile	Materialistic	Submissive
Friendly	Mean	Suspicious
Frightened	Mellow	Sympathetic
Frustrated	Moody	Tender
Fulfilled	Naïve	Thoughtful
Fun-loving	Narcissistic	Timid
Grandiose	Negative	Tired
Greedy	Non-judgmental	Tranquil
Harmonious	Obstinate	Trusting
Helpful	Open-hearted	Truthful
Honest	Optimistic	Unavailable
Hopeful	Overly protective	Unforgiving
Hostile	Paranoid	Uninterested
Humorous	Passionate	Unkind
Hurtful	Passive	Unreliable
Impatient	Peaceful	Vain
Inattentive	People pleaser	Vengeful
Inconsistent	Perfectionist	Violent
Indecisive	Promiscuous	Warm
Intelligent	Racist	Weak
Interested	Rageful	Workaholic
Intolerant	Regretful	Worrier

CHAPTER 7: SORT OUT EXERCISE

1. What shame do you feel in your life?
2. What guilt do you feel in your life?
3. Do you have a trusted person you can confide in?

CHAPTER 8: EXPERIMENT EXERCISE

1. What have you tried, since the trauma, that you now see as unhealthy?
2. What have you tried, since your trauma, that you now see as healthy?
3. What would you like to try that could help you heal from your trauma?

CHAPTER 9: ACCEPTANCE EXERCISE

1. What have you had a difficult time accepting?
2. What do you now accept?
3. What do you do now to prove to yourself that you have accepted your reality?

CHAPTER 10: MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

Grounding, also known as meditation, contemplation, focused breathing, or yoga, is a natural, simple, and effective technique. It can have dramatic effects on lowering our blood pressure, stabilizing brainwaves, and calming anxiety in as little as five to ten minutes. The essence of meditation is to not think about the past or the future but to focus on the here and now. Here is one approach to meditation that you can try:

- Sit down in a comfortable, quiet place, either on a chair or on the floor.
- Close your eyes or focus on an object in the center of the

room. Take a few deep breaths. If concentrating on your breathing causes anxiety, focus on a person or place that brings peace.

- Start taking normal breaths while focusing on your breathing.
- Some prefer to repeat the word “So” silently. Exhale through your nose while silently repeating the word “Hum.”
- It is okay if you’re distracted by outside sounds or your attention drifts. When it happens, passively observe the thought until it dissipates, and then gently return to your breathing.
- Do this for 10 minutes a day, and lengthen the time if you want. The objective for many people is to meditate half an hour a day. You can do this in complete silence, or you can add soft music. There are also apps and guided meditations you can use.
- When you finish, open your eyes, and sit for a few moments in the stillness and silence. You will notice that your mind and body are calmed, which will naturally extend throughout the day.

Similar to grounding is a “safe place” exercise. This is calming for many people who mentally visit a comforting or “safe place.” Create an image in your mind that you can visit when you want to relax. It can be a beach, cabin, meadow, or any place, real or imagined, that you love and makes you feel calm. Spend time developing this place in your imagination in as full a sensory way as you can.

- How does it look?
- What does the sky look like?
- How does the air feel?
- What are the smells?

- When you are sitting, how does the grass, dirt, or sand feel?
- What sounds do you hear?

When emotions threaten to overwhelm, you can visit this place, remember as many of the sensations as possible, and relax into them.

CHAPTER 11: FAITH EXERCISE

1. What are your beliefs about a higher power or sense of that which is greater than yourself?
2. What inspires the greatest sense of awe and wonder for you?
3. What thoughts make you feel most centered and at peace with yourself?
4. What do you do to cultivate your beliefs in the divine and your admiration of nature?
5. What daily act or ritual do you use to connect to God, nature, or your inner sense of spirituality?
6. Where do you feel the greatest sense of excitement and purpose?
7. Are there sources of information, literature, music, art, poetry, or other works that inspire you? What are you doing to foster that sense of inspiration?
8. Have you ever felt “drawn”? What events or thoughts have given you a feeling of being pulled towards greater things? What does your inner voice sound like?

CHAPTER 12: CONNECTION EXERCISES

Quietly consider each of the following questions, and assess where your predominant communication style lies:

1. Do you have to yell to be heard?
2. Do you have a hard time saying no?
3. Are your feelings about your trauma bottled up?
4. Do you clam up when you are being criticized?

5. Do you feel upset and angry with others?
6. Is it essential that you “win” a conversation with others?
7. Do you try to blend in with the conversation?
8. Do you feel shamed or shunned by people you should be close to?
9. Do you feel uncomfortable when people disagree with you?
10. Do you try too hard to avoid conflict?
11. Do you regret not speaking up and saying something after conversations?
12. Do you feel overly anxious about telling others how you feel?
13. Is peace at any cost vital to you?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be communicating passively, aggressively, or passive-aggressively. Consider how you can turn from these old behaviors to a healthy, assertive style of communication if it is safe to do so.

1. Do you keep a journal and keep it in a safe and secure place?
2. Have you identified a trustworthy friend or family member in whom you can confide?
3. Do you have a licensed and competent therapist in whom you can confide?

The more you can answer “yes” to these questions, the better.

CHAPTER 13: FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

1. What memories cause you to become emotionally charged?
2. What does forgiveness mean to you?
3. Who in your life do you need to forgive?
4. Who do you owe an apology to?
5. Who in your life do you need forgiveness from?
6. Do you harbor bad feelings toward yourself or others over the trauma?

7. What do you do to burn off steam?
8. Will you commit to seeing a healthcare provider about getting the okay to do 10 minutes of cardio a day—six days a week?

CHAPTER 14: RESILIENCE EXERCISE

1. Do you bounce back easily from difficult emotions, or does it take a while?
2. What activities or thoughts help you get emotionally evened out?
3. What do you envision yourself doing in six months?
4. What stands in your way?
5. Build a vision board with a timeline and all the steps to get there.

CHAPTER 15: GRATITUDE EXERCISE

Trauma, while unpleasant, can yield gratitude to those who allow it. We are usually not grateful for an injury itself, but write a “gratitude letter” expressing your thankfulness for the lessons you have learned from your trauma and detailing how your trauma has allowed you to gain wisdom and help others.

Answer these questions honestly:

1. What was your trauma?
2. Summarize the key points you have learned so far.
3. List three specific things you learned about yourself.
4. List three specific things you learned about your trauma.
5. What healing thoughts have you used in the past?
6. What healing thoughts will you use in the future?
7. What situations are triggers or high-risk for you now?
8. What tools have you found to be most helpful?
9. What areas of work do you still need or would like to do regarding your ongoing healing?

10. Who are the people who can help you achieve your current goals?
11. If you could do anything, what would be the one thing you would do to heal yourself?
12. What can you do to serve others or your community?

If you are comfortable and so inclined, email a copy of your letter to me at Bell@CoreIQ.com. Please let me know if I may share your thoughts or if you wish for me to keep them confidential.

APPENDIX C

How Was School Today?

SOME OF US STUDY TRAUMA for the purpose of helping a child. The following questions are designed to help stimulate an in-depth conversation with a child, rather than just asking, “How was school today?” Go through the list and pick a couple of questions that best suit the child:

1. What was the best thing that happened at school today?
2. What was the strangest thing you heard at school today?
3. What was the worst part of school today?
4. How did somebody help you today?
5. How did you help somebody today?
6. If I called your teacher tonight, what would she tell me about you?
7. If you could choose, who would you like to sit by in class? Why?
8. If you could switch seats with anyone in the class, who would you trade with? Why?
9. If you got to be the teacher tomorrow, what would you do?
10. If you were principal for a day, what would you do?
11. Is there anyone in your class that needs a time out?

12. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
13. Tell me something good that happened today.
14. Tell me something that made you laugh today.
15. What do you think you should do less of at school?
16. What do you think you should do more of at school?
17. What was your favorite part of lunch?
18. What word did your teacher say most today?
19. When were you bored today?
20. When were you the happiest today?
21. Where do you play the most at recess?
22. Where is the most relaxing place at the school?
23. Who in your class do you think you could be more helpful to?
24. Who is the funniest person in your class? What makes them so funny?
25. Who is the most helpful student at your school?
26. Who is the nicest teacher at your school?
27. Who would you like to play with at recess that you have never played with before?
28. Who would you not want to sit by in class? Why?

24 Things I Learned in San Quentin

GOING INSIDE OF PRISONS and jails has been a life-altering experience. There is no time for sugar-coated remedies. If we want to help someone turn their lives around, we need to get to the core of what is effective and what is not.

- I. **Meditate.** I learned how to meditate for the first time in prison. Meditation (or “grounding”) lays the cornerstone for transforming the cold heart of a criminal. It is the first step for an offender to take full responsibility for the harm and damage they have caused and transition into becoming a person of integrity. As I learned about meditation, I discovered that it focuses the mind on “now,” rather than the regrets of the past or the worry of the future. This alleviates what Eastern society calls “monkey mind” and Western society calls “anxiety.” Later, my cardiologist explained how brain waves work and prescribed ten minutes of meditation a day—every day. In its simplest form, we sit comfortably, close our eyes, and focus on breathing. It was easy, and my

blood pressure dropped. That is when it hit me: Meditation heals broken hearts.

2. **Deal with Unprocessed Trauma.** Life is tough. According to one university study, 66 to 85 percent of all people have faced at least one trauma by college age. Unprocessed trauma is at the core of crime, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, fringe politics, fringe religion, overeating, and other forms of self-medication. Any of these gives a counterfeit high but is not a solution. Self-medication numbs reality, and we cannot heal from something we avoid. A better choice is to face the issues, seek help, and get authentic highs through exercise, meditation, prayer, music, charitable service, sports, hobbies, healthy relationships, and pursuit of our passions.
3. **Don't Rank Crime.** Crime is crime. Sin is sin. Abuse is abuse. My crimes, sins, and abuses are no better than yours. Your crimes, sins, and abuses are no better than mine. They all hurt people, and it is all wrong. When we rank our sins and crimes, we constantly compare ourselves to others to see where we measure up. This results in false feelings of superiority or inferiority. When we remove the ranking and judgment, we align with reality.
4. **Understand "Grounded Theory."** In prison, people have hit rock bottom. In academics, we recognize that sometimes, we learn better when we throw out everything and just start over. In business school, we called it "frame-breaking." In essence, we just scrap everything and start from the ground up. When we hit bottom, it shakes us to the core. Yet rock bottom is a wonderful place from which to build.
5. **Know Everyone Is Redeemable.** My volunteer work is through a program called "Insight Prison Project." One of its leaders said, "Human life is a miracle, but human transformation may be even more miraculous." In the right environment, I have seen the most hardened criminals, who flash gang signs and put on the whole macho act, melt like

butter. Everyone can turn their life around, even with a life sentence. I have seen it happen many times. Ultimately, true character is measured by the ability to navigate through a crisis successfully.

6. **You Can't "Teach" Deep Transformation.** The power for transformation comes from inside. Profound transformation takes a Socratic approach (questioning dialogue), not a conventional, didactic, teacher-student model. External solutions do not solve internal problems. Books, lectures, seminars, and sermons can help, but ultimately the answers are not out there. They are buried in the last place people often look—deep inside the heart.
7. **Meet People Where They Are.** You cannot find people more broken than those in prison. While I am trained and qualified to facilitate group meetings, I cannot fix anyone else. Frankly, you cannot either. What we can do is to simply meet people where they are. If they are angry, ask why they are angry. If they hurt, ask if you can help. If they lie, don't call them out, but realize that it is a protection against something they are not yet ready to share. Just being there at their level helps them process their trauma and heal in their own time and way. Trying to fix, diagnose, convert, or repair a person is a waste of time and can even be damaging. Simply show up and meet people where they are.
8. **Don't Judge Others.** Sometimes I have judged an inmate and realized I was completely wrong once I got to know them. When I learned their backstories, I thought that they were doing better than I ever could. Eventually, I just admitted that I am terrible at judging, so I no longer bother. We never know what battles people are fighting. Judgmental and self-righteous behaviors are enemies of healing and healthy lifestyles.
9. **Diversify.** You will never see a more racially-charged place than prison. Even today, Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Asians,

and others are strictly segregated. Yet real progress is only achieved when everyone is included. We must directly challenge the ignorant precedents of racism and instill a spirit of absolute teamwork and mutual respect. Smart investors diversify their portfolio, and intelligent people and businesses diversify their teams. In prison, we face this issue head-on and address the depravity of racism. Every person has inherent value. We intentionally form diversified groups so we can draw on everybody's strengths.

10. **Be Trustworthy.** In our prison program, we form a circle and discuss topics that could get the speaker killed in the prison yard or jeopardize their possibility of being paroled. Gossip and idle talk are a life and death matter. It is critical we keep these conversations confidential and never talk about them outside the group. Ever. The inmates and victims are asked to trust the process and stick to the established curriculum, as it has been proven to work. Once a safe place is established, the offenders are asked to be brave, vulnerable, and willing to take a risk. This same principle applies to everyone. We can be vulnerable and find a trustworthy person to confide in. If we have been trusted, we must maintain that integrity. It is critical to build a safe place where healing can happen. Trust and vulnerability are key elements when coming clean and freeing ourselves from unresolved trauma and pain.
11. **Cut Some Slack.** Life is messy. Anyone who "knows" all the answers to life's biggest questions is kidding themselves. The world is a broken place and people mess up. In this kind of work, there is no checklist, and there is no script. Inmates will make mistakes, and so will I as a group facilitator. We just agree to pick ourselves up and move forward.
12. **Don't Be a Sucker.** There are con artists in prison. Frankly, they are so good that they fool me; however, they can't con the other inmates in the circle. Of course, con artists are not

just in prison; they are everywhere. Harvard sociologist Dr. Martha Stout estimates that one out of 24 people is an everyday sociopath. The simple rule of thumb is that if you catch someone in three lies, they have a problem. Some con artists set up phony charities, do fake work at their jobs, and enjoy abusing others. We want to be kind, but we do not ever want to be a sucker.

13. **Don't Motivate by Fear.** Fear is the cheapest and sleaziest way to influence people. It may work at first, but at a cost, and there is a risk of negative fallout. A far more effective way is to engage people and accept them. Show respect, whether it is earned or not. Love the unloved. Care for those who do not care. This is a higher way.
14. **Understand Guilt vs. Shame.** Guilt and shame are very different, and understanding this is a game-changer. Guilt comes from doing something bad. Shame is feeling ashamed for something for which we had no responsibility or control over. In other words, guilt is what I did, while shame is who I am. For example, some of us feel shame for growing up poor, being abused or bullied, not understanding school subjects, the color of our skin, having a disability, being attracted to the same gender, and so on. In my life, I felt shame about having open heart surgery when I was a kid. Unprocessed shame can build up like a volcano and explode when triggered. The solution is to talk about feelings of shame with a trusted person. A remedy may or may not be possible, but these discussions help relieve the pressure. That way, when we are triggered, we don't explode.
15. **Listen.** This is the single most important principle. In prison, people tell horrible stories of their crimes, and their backstories are heartbreaking. We simply listen as the inmates talk about these terrible events and the guilt, rage, and anger. We cannot scream and run out of the room. We learn to "sit in the fire," and quietly listen. We listen to

things that are repulsive to the core. Yet, just being there, while people speak from the soul and pour out their guilt and shame in a safe environment, allows them to heal. Listening will enable others to feel heard, seen, and validated. Not only is the violence and ugliness discussed, but we also see joy, excitement, and happiness. The process is not all “doom and gloom.” Time and time again, there are beautiful transformations that take place in those sacred circles.

16. **Have Open Conversations.** We will never find more fallout from trauma than in prison. The only way inmates heal is from real conversations about the rough stuff. It does not happen overnight. It takes many months or years. But the objective, inside and outside prison, is to have open and honest conversations on any topic with people we trust. Toxic people say, “Forgive and forget,” or “Let us not talk about it.” On the other hand, healthy people say, “Let us have that conversation,” “I will listen to whatever you say,” or “That is wrong; let’s call the police.” The objective of any healthy relationship, family, or organization is to maintain a place where there are open conversations on any relevant topic. Healthy people do not hide, duck, or bury their feelings, avoid opposing views, or dodge inconvenient truths.
17. **Embrace Your Joys and Hurts.** Buddha said, “Life is suffering,” and I think he was half right. Life is an adventure that brings both suffering and joy. The lows in prison are apparent, but many inmates engage in activities that bring them joy, such as music, art, work, and writing. Sometimes, I get so busy that I forget to stop and enjoy those things that make me happy. For example, I love to play the guitar. I am not that good, and I have no interest in performing, but I just love it. Sometimes I realize that I am working too hard and have not picked up my guitar for months. I suppress my joys. On the other hand, my past traumas hurt, so I want to

suppress them. We all have joys and traumas.

Yet when we face and embrace both, we heal, grow, and live.

18. **Own It.** In prison, you cannot heal from trauma until you own it. It is the same outside. Only a fool would say, “I am never wrong.” Only a toxic leader would say, “We do not make apologies.” If we are wrong, we need to own it. If we feel shame, we need to own it. That is the only way to respect others and ourselves. That is how we go from arrogance, insecurity, and being desperate to becoming authentic, genuine, and real.
19. **Understand Religion Has Its Limits.** I am religious, but religion can get in the way of healing unresolved trauma. Healing takes real work, and the process is difficult. Some people dodge and say, “I already dealt with this with my pastor (priest, rabbi, cleric, bishop, minister, etc.).” It is great to have those conversations, but it does not provide a free pass from doing the work any more than it would allow you to dodge having a doctor reset a broken bone. Research and social science show the process for healing, so follow the proven path.
20. **Show Up.** My first visits to prison were tainted by my curiosity and ego. After the shock and novelty wore off, I took an in-depth look inside and realized I was still authentically drawn to the work. Somehow I knew my journey was tied to it. So I just kept showing up. One day, an inmate came up to me and said, “Thank you for coming in here. You being here makes me feel like a human. What I did was horrible, but I have committed to living a good and honorable life from now on—even if the rest of my life is inside a prison.” That man inspired me to keep showing up. Just showing up is a big part of any solution.
21. **Practice Unconditional Empathy.** When new inmates come in, some are hard to appreciate because of their rough, defensive, even aggressive exterior. Many people say, “I will respect you

when..." or "I love you, if..." but these are conditions. If we only love others based on how we see them or how we wish they would be and not how they see themselves, it is conditional love. When we listen quietly and with no judgment, it allows others to unlock that intuitive ability to process the damage, heal, and grow. We are there to "sit in the fire" of uncomfortable feelings and stories. From that, we often develop a sense of "unconditional empathy." Ultimately, I came to appreciate and respect every inmate that showed up and stuck with the program.

22. **Know How Sinners and Saints Operate.** On the extremes, sinners can suffer from a "guilt complex," while saints carry a "martyr complex." Neither is fully equipped to respond to logic, facts, or figures—yet they do respond to kindness. Guilt and self-righteousness are obstacles to growth; we must be teachable. Some "saints" have put on a beautiful show that turns out to be a fraud. Remarkably, the "sinners" in prison taught me about integrity. Face the truth. I would rather live an uncomfortable truth than a comfortable lie.
23. **Give Credit.** Give credit to those who inspire you. Insight Prison Project is a secular restorative justice program, but it presents the most profound spiritual principles I have ever seen. As the inmates and victims share their stories, it brings tears to my eyes every time. I give them all the credit for doing the work and inspiring me. Looking back on my journey, my visits to prison were not inspired by groups or authorities, Republicans, Democrats, organized religions, nor university professors. While this program is secular, my volunteer efforts are credited to the unfiltered words of Jesus who taught people to visit those in prison. Now I know why.
24. **Appreciate That This Stuff Works.** Prisons present the most complex challenges known to humanity. At least 90 percent of all prison inmates will be released or paroled at some time. The question is, "How do we want them released?"

Do we want men and women paroled who are cold, angry, and bitter or who have taken the responsibility to be healed, kind, and productive?" Prisons are the ideal setting to sort out what is fake and what is real. When the prevailing systems fail, these principles work. This program is in dozens of prisons, and of the hundreds of inmates who have completed it and have been released, the recidivism rate is near zero. I am not sure who else can say that. Not only do these principles work in prisons, they help anyone who wishes to evolve.

APPENDIX E

What You Should Never Say vs. What You Should Say

WHEN WE COMMUNICATE, we want to express how we feel, as well as validate how others are feeling. These simple phases help us adapt a new language that does that:

Avoid saying ...

- Do not be silly.
- Do not be so negative.
- Do not be ungrateful.
- Everything happens for a reason.
- Get over it.
- Grow up, and stop living in the past.
- Have you prayed about it?
- I know how you feel.

- I have been through worse.
- It was not that bad.
- It is all part of God's plan.
- It is not like he hit you.
- Just let it go.
- Suck it up.
- That was so long ago.
- Think of all the people who have it worse.
- Time heals all wounds.
- Well, did you provoke it?
- You need to just forgive them.
- You were not worthy.
- You are an adult. You cannot blame your parents for your problems anymore.
- Your parents did the best they could.

Show understanding and say ...

- It is safe to show your feelings to me.
- I have no solutions, only sympathy.
- I hear you.
- I am sorry.
- I wish it was not this way.
- I wish I could make you feel better.
- If you did not recognize that you were being abused, you are not alone.
- It was not your fault.

- It was not your job to be “the adult” as a kid.
- It is not your job to protect all the grownups. It is their job to protect you.
- I believe you.
- It is okay to be angry.
- It is okay to cry.
- It is okay to talk about it.
- Of course, you would feel that way.
- Tell me more.
- Tell me what happened.
- It was not okay what they did to you.
- What you heard is not true.
- You are a warrior.
- You are beautiful.
- You are not the worthless mistake you were told you are.
- You are strong, and recovery is possible.
- You are stronger than you think.
- You are worthy of love.
- You are not a sexual object.
- You can do this.
- You can stop the cycle of abuse.
- You deserve to talk about it.
- You did not deserve that.
- Your feelings are real and valid.

APPENDIX F

Psychological War Zones

WHEN WE HEAR ABOUT PTSD, we may think of combat war veterans. While this can be true, PTSD actually affects millions of people from a wide spectrum of traumatic backgrounds. PTSD can be behind any of the following conditions, and if it is, professional assistance is advisable:

- Aggression
- Avoidance of situations that bring back memories
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Drawn to unhealthy relationships
- Easily startled
- Emotional outbursts
- Excessive “inner critic”
- Excessive feelings of shame or guilt
- Excessive ruminations
- Feeling defective

- Flashbacks where we relive the traumatic experience
- Hyperarousal
- Hypervigilance
- Irritability
- Isolation
- Lack of interest in activities we once enjoyed
- Low self-esteem
- Memory loss
- Negative self-talk
- Panic attacks
- Risky behavior
- Self-blame
- Self-doubt
- Self-harm
- Sleeping disorders
- Substance abuse and addictions
- Suicidal thoughts

Daily Affirmations

HAVING A QUOTE OR DAILY affirmation in our purse or wallet or on our bathroom mirror can be an effective way to building a good attitude. Affirmations help release beneficial neurotransmitters and inspire our minds to actively work at making the phrase be true. Here are some ideas:

- I am loving.
- I am kind.
- I am grateful.
- I have value.
- I am humble.
- I have integrity.
- I am generous.
- I have a sense of humor.
- I am healing day by day.
- The world is evolving from greed and fear to peace and love, and I am part of this.

- I am the captain of my soul. –"Invictus" by William Ernest Henley
- The sun will come up in the morning. Simply showing up is a big part of the solution. I will show up for breakfast, my family, my friends, my self-care, my interests and hobbies, my therapist, and my tribe.
- I am persistent. A river cuts through solid rock not because of its power, but by its persistence.
- You can watch me, mock me, or join me. But you cannot stop me!
- I may not solve the world's problems, but I can make a difference one kind act at a time.
- When things get real, it exposes who is real and who is phony.
I am real!
- It is okay not to be okay.
- The best things in life are not things.
- Hurt people hurt people, but healed people heal people.
As I heal, I will help those around me.
- I look good. I feel good. I have the goods!
- God has a plan for my life, but so does everybody else. I will pick the plan that is right for me.
- I have character. I will not take my career, car, or cash to heaven.
The only thing I can take is my character.
- A negative mind will never give me a positive life.
- I am grateful for the rude and obnoxious people in my life—as they serve as examples of what I do not want to do.
- It is okay to be angry, but it is never okay to be cruel.
- I remember those who love me, even when I felt unlovable.

- I am nice to rude people, not because they are not nice, but because I am.
- I will not stay silent so that you can stay comfortable.
- Rock bottom teaches me lessons that mountain tops never will.
Rock bottom is a beautiful place from which to build.
- The person on top of the mountain did not fall there.
- A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.
- Integrity is everything.
- Yesterday was fine, but the future is all that I have time for.
- If I have the power to make someone happy, I will do it.
- Peace is the result of integrity. The very word “integrity” comes from the word “integrated,” where my inner voice aligns with my choices.
- I am a person of integrity. I follow my moral compass, no matter what any authority tells me.
- Just because I am kind to people does not mean that I must spend extra time with them.
- The short-term pain of the truth is better than the long-term pain of illusion.
- The best use of my life is to love.

APPENDIX G

Trauma Tree

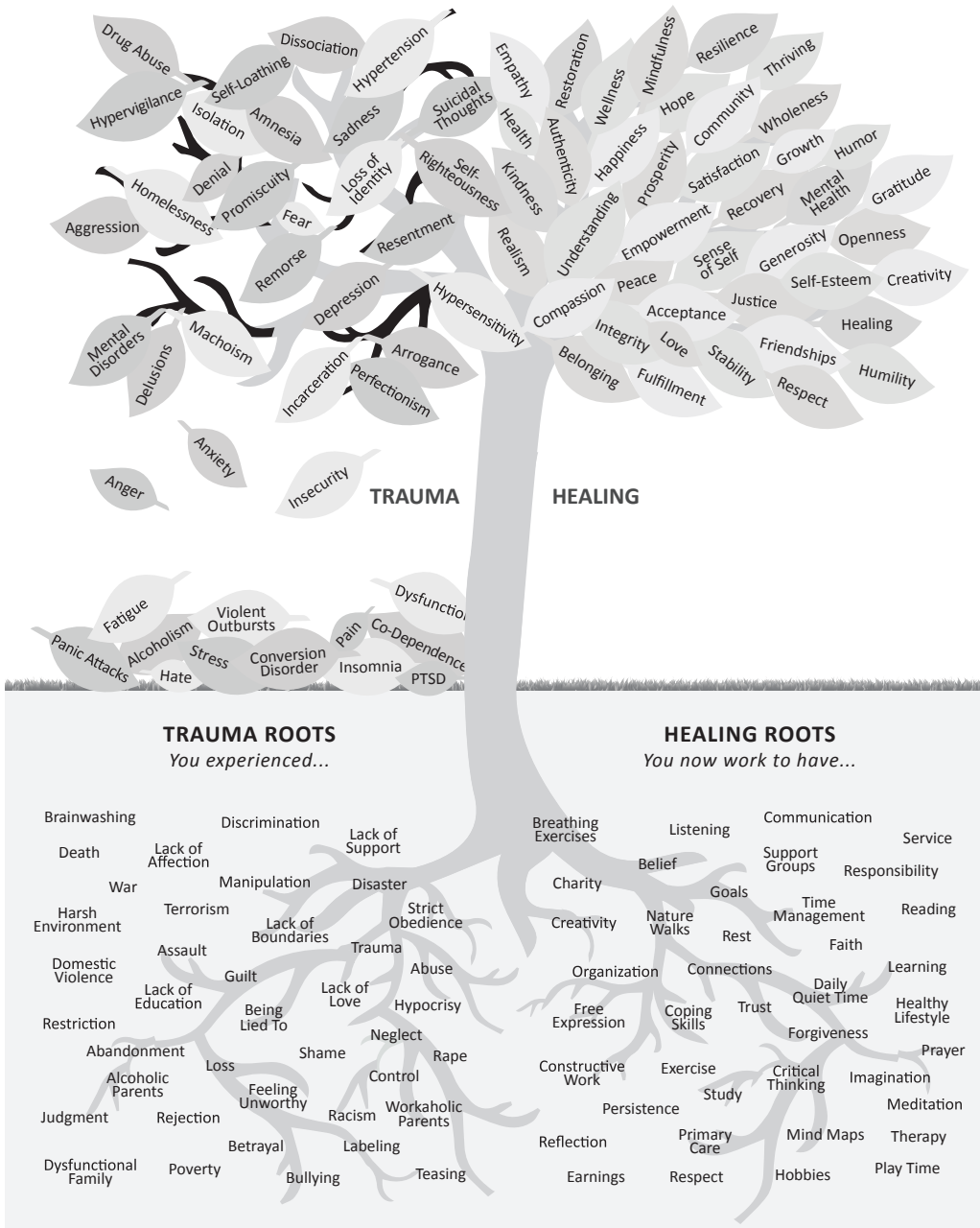
TRAUMA TREE

TRAUMA FRUITS

You have suffered from...

HEALING FRUITS

You are now enjoying more...



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About the Author

RANDALL BELL, PHD, is a sociologist and economist who specializes in disaster recovery projects. No stranger to how harsh the world is, Dr. Bell has consulted in more tragedies around the world than anyone. He was retained for the World Trade Center, Flight 93, Sandy Hook, BP Oil Spill, Hurricane Katrina, the Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test sites, the Northridge earthquake, OJ Simpson, Jon Benet Ramsey, Heaven's Gate, and hundreds of other cases. He has been retained by the Federal Governments of the United States, Canada, and Australia to help resolve numerous crises, and his work has generated billions of dollars to rebuild damaged communities.

Dr. Bell's investigations have taken him to 50 states, and seven continents. Having met with countless victims, he earned the nickname of *Master of Disaster*. In every case, Dr. Bell observed the emotional consequences and how some fared better than others. He was inspired to put his unique research skills to work and study the cycle of trauma.

A frequent guest of the media, Dr. Bell is the featured expert in Topic's "Distressed Real Estate" documentary series streamed on Apple TV and Amazon Prime. His career has been profiled by *NBC's Today Show*, *Rolling Stone Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *People Magazine*, *ABC's 20/20*, *Hallmark's Home & Family*, and many others.

Dr. Bell is the author of *MeWeDoBe* and the founder of *Core IQ*, a non-profit educational foundation that provides free online training on life skills. He is certified through the *Insight Prison Project* to facilitate group discussions with victims and offenders at San Quentin Prison. He has been active in jail ministries and a volunteer in homeless shelters.

In *Post-Traumatic Thriving*, Dr. Bell lays out the academic research and speaks freely about his trauma of being born with a congenital heart defect. Diagnosed with PTSD, he utilized these principles to heal from his childhood trauma and summit Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro at 60.