

PostTraumatic Growth: From Surviving to Thriving

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Trauma

An experience that pushes the nervous system outside its ability to regulate itself.

For some, the system gets stuck in the “on” position, and the person is overstimulated and unable to calm.

PTSD

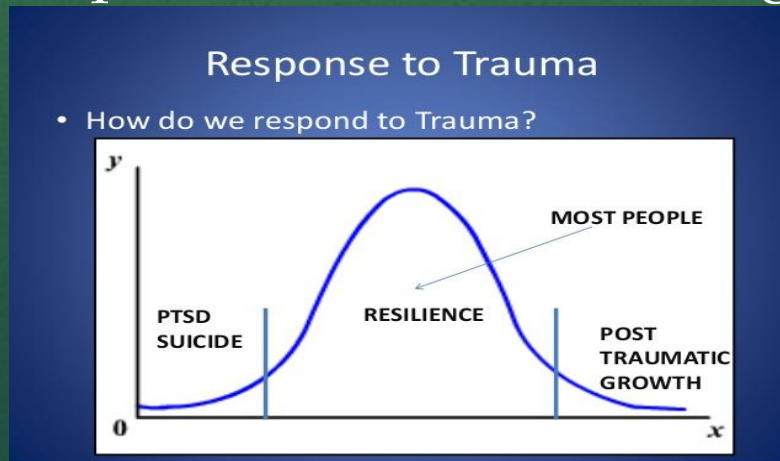
An event that overwhelms the Central Nervous System (for more than one month)

- Symptoms are intrusive (flashbacks, etc) and avoidant (dissociation, etc)
- Prefrontal Cortex shuts down when recalling trauma (thinking, right/wrong, ability to speak)
- Mood and behavior altering

Statistics

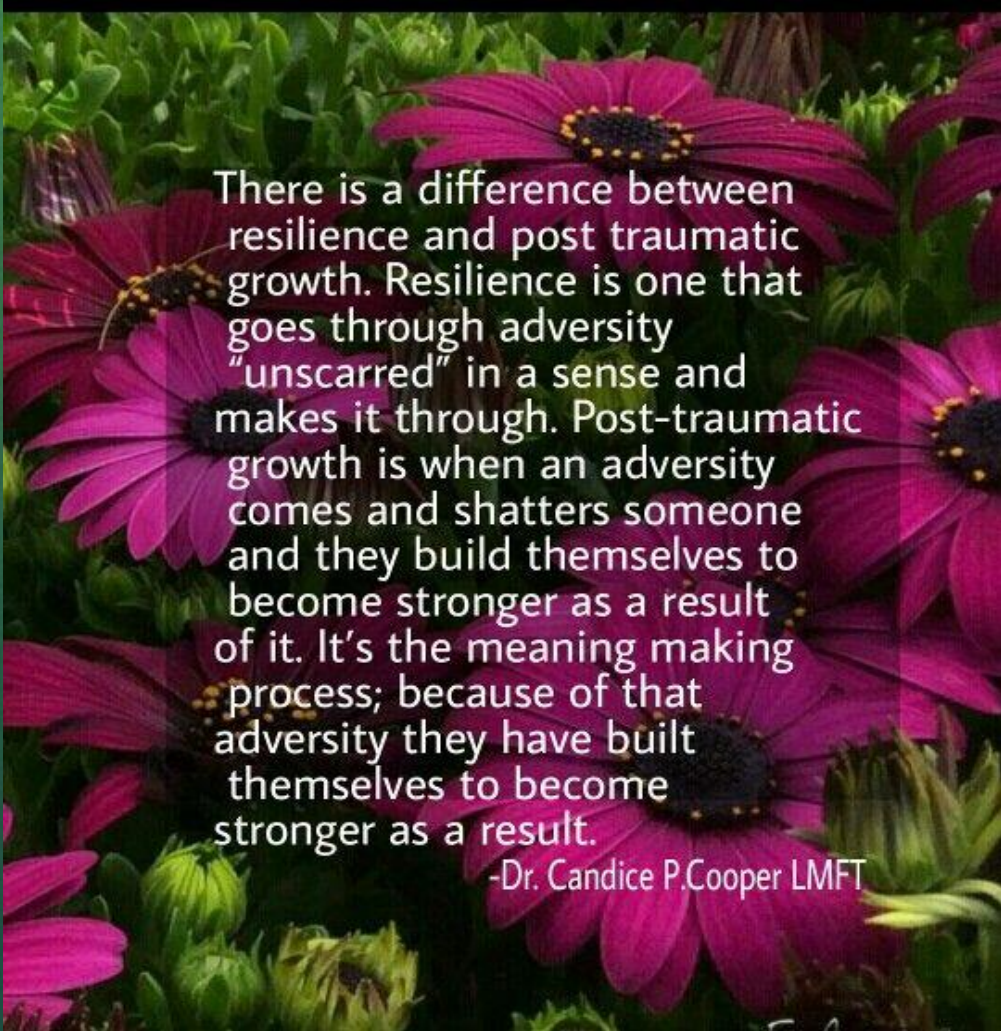
75% of trauma victims (regardless of the nature of the trauma) will evidence resilience and some will even evidence PostTraumatic Growth!

90% of trauma survivors report at least one PTG benefit! It's possible....let's encourage it.



(Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G.)

Resilience vs PTG



There is a difference between resilience and post traumatic growth. Resilience is one that goes through adversity "unscarred" in a sense and makes it through. Post-traumatic growth is when an adversity comes and shatters someone and they build themselves to become stronger as a result of it. It's the meaning making process; because of that adversity they have built themselves to become stronger as a result.

-Dr. Candice P.Cooper LMFT

Definition of PTG

Positive transformation following the psychological struggle of trauma

Developed by psychologists Richard Tedeschi, PhD, and Lawrence Calhoun, PhD, in the mid-1990s

Quote



Just when
the caterpillar
thought the
world was
over, it became
a butterfly.

Evidence of PostTraumatic Growth

- Sense that new opportunities have emerged from the struggle, opening up possibilities that were not present before
- Experience closer relationships with some specific people, and also experience an increased sense of connection to others who suffer
- Increased sense of one's own strength – “if I lived through that, I can face anything”
- Greater appreciation for life in general
- Deepening of spirituality, however, this deepening can also involve a significant change in one's belief system

Bounce Forward in....

- **Relationships**

Value friends and family more deeply and don't take it for granted; increased compassion and wanting intimacy

- **Self-Esteem**

Inner wisdom, personal strength and gratitude; accepting of limitations

- **Meaning**

Purpose, meaning, identity

Possible Influential Factors

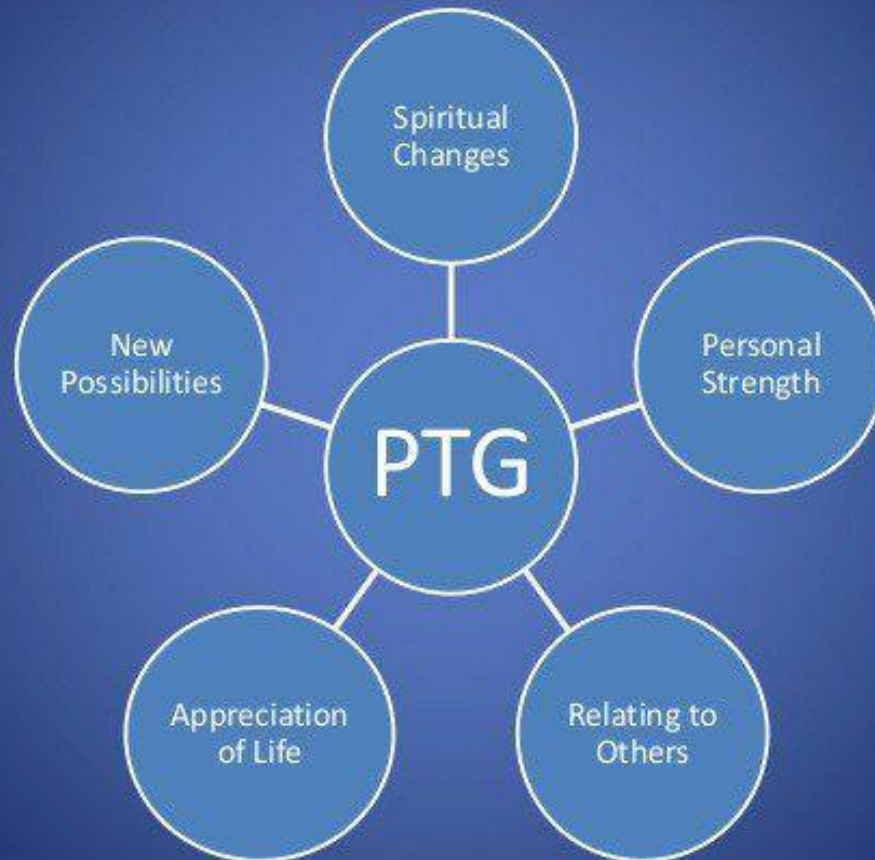
Personality: openness to experience and extraversion (Also optimism and future orientation)

Age: children under 8 less likely to have the cognitive capacity to experience PTG, while those in late adolescence and early adulthood – who may already be trying to determine their worldview – are more open to the type of change that such growth reflects

Source: APA

How We Can Promote PTG

Forms of Post Traumatic Growth



Caution

Please do not jump right into the possibility of growth.

It can often be construed as minimizing someone's pain and suffering and minimizing the impact of the loss.

Wait for the person to express some positive reaction to the event.

Source: Dr. H'Sien Hayward

[1] Grief

Requires grieving for the old life and identity.

Stages of Grief (not linear):

- Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance

[2] Psychological Development

Notice and support movement through stages:

- Enmeshed - relationship to caregivers and the trauma
- Healthy differentiation (rebellious, resistant, difficult? YAY!) Separating experiences from sense of self – I am not my emotions, thoughts, actions; I am the observer
- Integration - trauma happened to me. I am not the trauma.

[3] Meaning Making

Strategies:

- Create a work or accomplish some task
- Experiencing something fully or love somebody
- Adopt an attitude toward unavoidable suffering
- Identify evolved values
- Create life mission statement

Define Mindfulness

A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.

(resource: Dictionary)

Mindfulness Activity

- Deep Breathing
- Visualization
- Meditation
- Grounding
- Affirmations
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Daily tasks of eating, walking, showering, dishes, gardening
- Where do you feel this in your body?

Define CBT

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a short-term therapy technique used by counselors and therapists to teach individuals to change their unwanted behaviors by changing their thought patterns.

The premise of cognitive behavioral therapy is that our thought patterns (cognition) and interpretations of life events greatly influence how we behave and, ultimately, how we feel.












(Resource: Medical News Today)

CBT Techniques

- Relaxation
- Activity scheduling
- Problem solving
- Goal setting
- Cognitive restructuring
- Stress management
- Coping skills

Reframing to Abundance Mindset

Abundance-Based Value System

	Freedom Liberty • Opportunity • Ability	Access to tools, information and what nature provides so we can fulfill our needs without servitude or exchange.
	Efficiency Ephemeralization • Resourcefulness Economy • Optimization	Liberally applying technology and processes to do more with less will more easily create abundance.
	Discovery and Exploration Learning* • Integration* • Play Travel • Adventure • Challenge	Access to the tools and information that will allow us to be lifelong learners and follow our interests.
	Health & Vitality Wellness • Well-Being Homeodynamic	An environment and resources/nutrition conducive to having optimal health and vitality.
	Love and Compassion Appreciation* • Acknowledgement Recognition • Friendship	The ability to find appreciation and compassion for all life and beings.
	Regeneration Revitalization • Renewal • Healing Caretaking • Sustainability*	Caretaking our environments to be sustainable, as well as regenerative to ourselves and the planet, as nature does it when left alone.
	Abundance Plenty • Sufficiency • Thriving Productivity • Scalability • Technology*	Applying the tools of automation to laborious and monotonous tasks so the community can spend more time self-actualizing.
	Access Sharing* • Openness Open-source • Duplicable	Complete access to information and resources frees us from coercion and lets innovation and abundance flourish.
	Shared Vision Cooperation* • Collaboration* Purpose • Harmony • Unity Teamwork • Synergy • Inclusion	Working together to meet whatever aims we may have as a community.
	Intrinsic Motivation Autonomy* • Mastery* • Purpose* Interest • Inspiration • Goals	Intrinsic motivation is when one is motivated by internal factors, as opposed to the external drivers of extrinsic motivation.
	Restorative Justice Restoration • Mediation • Intervention Understanding • Participative Justice	The approach to justice that focuses on the needs and values of the victims and the offenders, as well as the involved community.

Define the Arts

The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

Subjects of study primarily concerned with the processes and products of human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, and history (as contrasted with scientific or technical subjects).

(resource: Dictionary)

Trauma and Expression

- When a trauma occurs there are no words to describe. You almost turn into a POET using analogies, descriptors, etc.
- Human beings are creatures of narrative, creatures who make meaning, tell stories about their lives.
- Healing is often experienced in and through imagination, play, creativity, freedom = artistic expression

Express and Experience Self Regulation

- Drawing, painting, etc
- Spoken word
- Movement to reconnect to the body: Yoga, Tai Chi, Boxing
- Dance, drums
- Trembling (via muscles or voice)

In The Breaking....



kintsukuroi

(n.) (v.phr.) "to repair with gold"; the art of repairing pottery with gold or silver lacquer and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken.

Review



Support Toward PTG

- The normal response to experiencing VERY bad things is not PTSD – it is resilience and, not infrequently, growth!
- Support the idea that new doors will open so loved ones can be prepared to walk through them
- Create narrative of the trauma where higher values are incorporated
- Explore using the pain, connecting to community, creating meaning, and owning the narrative when ready

Try to....

- ★ Recognize the worth of each individual and honor their individual journey - authentically
- ★ Help each person to envision a future that is full of promise and potential
- ★ Actively involve each person in their own care trajectory
- ★ Celebrate changes to each person's sense of self

You





Contact with questions or request resources:

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