



Healing Trauma

Peter A. Levine

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According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 23 million Americans suffer from anxiety disorders- many as a direct result of trauma. As a young stress researcher at the University of California at Berkeley, Peter A. Levine found that all animals, including humans, are born with a natural ability to rebound from these distressing situations. Now on Healing Trauma, you can join this respected therapist and teacher to learn how to address these and other symptoms at their source-your body-and return to the natural trauma-free state that you were meant to live in. Featuring more than six hours of guided instruction to engage your body's built-in healing process.

Healing Trauma Details

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Author : Peter A. Levine

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From Reader Review Healing Trauma for online ebook

Paula says

It's certainly a very interesting book, I think st times it can be a little "wordy " especially if it's a lay person trying to understand by way of self help. It's a book I will likely go back to and pick bits out of it. I have a lot of respect for the work of Peter Levine . For me, this was more digestible when I read it in small parts, it was not a book that I devoured from cover to cover, it did however learn me a lot of things and provoke my thoughts both personally as professionally .

Ben Blue says

While his description of what trauma is is good, his methodology is lacking. I think his physical exercises have value, but they are merely taken from other systems that also seek to heal the inner pain, such as Christian Splankna.

Finally, his chapter on sexual trauma is down right dangerous. He literally says that sexual attraction between parent and child is NATURAL. Horrifying.

Louise says

An excellent, practical book that also comes with a CD with exercises to help the listener develop a deeper awareness of the body's "felt sense". Written with clarity, compassion, and well-grounded faith in the human being's innate capacity to triumph over trauma.

Stephanie says

This book is incredibly hard to read, unfortunately. I found it much duller than similar books of the same topic. Further, to be able to access all the exercises requires a CD player - do people still have those?? Was surprised (and disappointed) that there wasn't an online version of the audio that could be accessed. The mindfulness exercises are decent but, again, there are other books that are much easier to digest that contain the same and easier to access apps such as Insight Timer that likely contain similar. I mostly read this one due to the debate and controversy surrounding his method of dealing with trauma and was a little disappointed that I couldn't objectively approach his arguments because the writing was just so dull that I often found myself losing my place or reading whole pages with little idea of what I'd just read.

Luna says

Favorite quotes:

"I have come to the conclusion that human beings are born with an innate capacity to triumph over trauma. I believe not only that trauma is curable, but that the healing process can be a catalyst for profound awakening—a portal opening to emotional and genuine spiritual transformation."

"As we move from fixity to flow, we begin to experience a sense of coherency. We begin to feel reconnected to life. We feel more peaceful, at home with others, the world, and ourselves. We are no longer trapped by events in our past, some of which we may not even remember."

"In virtually every spiritual tradition, suffering is seen as a doorway to awakening." ... "The transformative power of suffering finds perhaps its clearest expression in the Four Noble Truths espoused by the Buddha. Though suffering and trauma are not identical, the Buddha's insight into the nature of suffering can provide a powerful mirror for examining the effects of trauma in your life."

"For someone who's been traumatized, that feeling of balance and wholeness is such a surprise, it can cause an 'identity crisis.' We don't recognize ourselves because we're no longer filled with shame and fear and collapse."

"Healing from trauma can be that final instinctive push, that inner shaking and trembling, 'the kick,' that can awaken us and lead us on a journey home."

Cecilia Hernandez says

this book is really boring and a drag . its a dull read. not informative did not help me at all. I did not find the information in it useful what so ever .

lov2laf says

This reads like a cliffs' notes version of Peter Levine's other works. I found the book interesting and helpful until the end of the practical exercises. The sections after felt like filler.

Levine's work is really interesting, especially since it deals more with body work vs intellect. Much of the time, trauma isn't bound in logic so thinking your way through it in order to process it doesn't work. Processing trauma through body exercises is another strategy and it seems to be effective.

This book can be bought with or without the CD for the exercises.

Waseem says

Interesting book, my first read of not only this authors work but really this type of "healing trauma" methods was new to me and a learning experience.

I thought it was a bit prolonged and more repetitive than it needed to be, but interesting nevertheless. If it works it's great because something like this can be accessible and easy to implement for many people who need it most for one of their aids to recovery / healing (reason I say if it works is because I didn't find any need for the techniques myself so can't comment on effectiveness)

To Our Continued Success!
Waseem Mirza

<http://www.WaseemMirza.net>

Krista says

You have to be cautious when approaching a significantly alternative philosophy: some can be pretty far out, and even detrimental. An open mind is a good thing, as long as you take care about what you're letting in! I had all my radar on for this book, which begins with a quote from the Gnostic Gospels and the four noble truths of Buddha:

Suffering is part of being human

Find out why you suffer

Suffering can be transformed and healed

After finding the cause of suffering, you must find the right path (assuming that the suffering is caused from the wrong path?)

Nonetheless, Levine's principles are sound, if surprising at times, and I have a lot of good takeaway from this book. The first half builds a foundation for understanding the affects of trauma, which author defines as: "debilitating symptoms many people suffer from after perceived life-threatening or overwhelming experiences." He notes that all trauma is stressful, but not all stress is traumatic – you have to perceive a significant threat to your well-being. Thus, trauma is subjective – especially for children, who can be traumatized by seemingly common everyday events or a series of minor mishaps.

He bases his treatment on the theory that trauma causes a loss of connection to ourselves, as we attempt to detach from overwhelming feelings and to others, as we feel alienated due to our unique experiences or avoid certain people or circumstances that might trigger traumatic memories.

Levine heavily relies on the animal kingdom as both the illustration and the justification of his theories, because while animals are often threatened, they are seldom traumatized. When animals and humans feel threatened, our bodies generate a lot of energy and adrenaline to help us deal with the threat. I was familiar with this as the "fight or flight" response, though Levine adds a third option: "freeze" which is the ability to go numb or even play dead when neither fight or flight seem feasible.

The main difference between us and animals is that they are able to discharge that energy once they get the "all clear" signal from their brain - they quite literally "shake it off." As humans, we either don't know how to go back to normalcy once we reach safety, or we brace ourselves against the intensity of our own response, stifling the release we need.

This lack of discharge can leave us with ongoing mental and physical effects, including dissociation, hypervigilance, flashbacks, anxiety, phobias, diminished emotional responses, inability to commit, chronic fatigue, and more. If the trauma is never addressed, victims can experience a compulsion to repeat the initial trauma through putting themselves accidentally or consciously in the same scenario again and again. Alternately, trauma survivors will begin to avoid any situations that might remind them of the past, becoming more and more isolated.

Levine's case was compelling, and I was very interested to proceed to the second part of the book, which details a series of exercises to help you reestablish your bodies natural responses to trauma. It was this second section that really stretched my mind – in fact, I just about put the book away when I read about talking to my hand (literally). However, I can't deny that I would like to experience more connectedness and freedom in my life, so I pressed on. I found that once you take the exercises as a whole, they start to make a

sensible pattern. The book comes with a CD to walk through the exercises.

Morgan Blackledge says

Healing Trauma: Restoring the Wisdom of Your Body is a brief introduction to Dr. Peter Levine's research, theory and clinical work in assisting recovery from PTSD symptoms.

Somatic Experiencing is the clinical modality based on Dr. Levine's theory and research.

Somatic Experiencing differs from conventional talk therapy. Rather than linguistically interpreting the trauma and reframing the event in a more adaptive way (cognitive restructuring and narrative integration).

Somatic Experiencing facilitates a "direct" experience of the trauma symptoms as body sensations via (a) systematic imaginal exposure coupled with (b) mindful awareness of emotionally significant body sensations, and (c) guided modulation and long term retraining of dysregulated body states.

In other words, rather than sitting around and talking about the trauma, the client lays down on a massage table and re-creates the traumatic event in their imagination while being guided to "feel their feelings in their body" and "discharge" (i.e. down regulate) the feelings via "pendulating" (i.e. alternating between focusing awareness on the intense dysregulated body sensations and neutral body sensations).

To all you psychotherapist out there, if this sounds a whole lot like systematic desensitization via imaginal exposure coupled with somatically oriented mindful awareness and grounding techniques, than I think you're dead on.

I'd say the major differences are that Somatic Experiencing clinicians use touch, posture and proximity in a way that is more closely related to physical therapy or bodywork.

Somatic Experiencing is based on the assumption that trauma symptoms are the result of a chronic dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) brought on by chronic or acute traumatic exposure.

According to Dr. Levine's research, mammals automatically regulate ANS survival responses by spontaneously "discharging" excess energy via involuntary movements such as shaking and deep spontaneous breaths after exposure to a survival challenge. Humans inhibit this discharge process due to enculturation and rational thinking processes.

In other words; we humans inhibit our natural emotional regulation because we're all up in our heads and generally freaked out by our own vulnerability and mortality and because we're scared to show our vulnerability (e.g. trembling and crying) after a threatening event because we're afraid other people will think we can't keep our shit together. So we bottle up all of our trauma feelings and over time we get all fucked up by it.

Somatic Experiencing attempts to restore our inherent mammalian capacity to self-regulate by retraining the individual to more skillfully release the energy stored in the body, during and after a traumatic event.

In other words, Somatic Experiencing trains you to (a) get out of your head and into your body, and (b) barf out all the toxic, pent-up trauma energy, and eventually (c) retrain your nervous system so that you don't bottle that shit up anymore.

Warning: it's important to note that Somatic Experiencing lacks sufficient randomized control trials to validate its efficacy compared to other "gold standard" trauma treatments such as Prolonged Exposure.

Additionally, there are few to no exclusively distinct features of the Somatic Experiencing model that are not otherwise represented in other empirically validated therapies for trauma.

If your curious, I recommend this program as a primer on the theory and model. But before you drink the cool aid. Remember that there are other, more thoroughly researched, evidence based trauma treatments that should be considered as a primary course of treatment for PTSD.

If you buy this program, be forwarded, it leaves the stratosphere (in the bad way) in some of the final chapters. What began as clinically sound(ish), theoretically plausible(ish) assertions morph into new age(ish) theoretical hokum faster than you can say "angle-dust".

I love the somatically oriented approach. But the field needs an update hella bad. For a much more sound overview of the current state of the art in trauma treatment, read Dr. Basil Van Der Kolk's The Body Keeps Score. It's fruity enough to slake your thirst for rainbow skittle flavored cool aid, while remaining substantial enough to satiate your hunger for meat and potatoes.

In the end Somatic Experiencing is redeemable because it's (a) big hearted and (b) an effective trauma treatment for a lot of people (myself included). But the science really needs to step into this century.

elissa says

A "somatic experiencing" book. I've had a couple of sessions of this bodywork modality, and might want to read a book about it at some point.

auie says

"If you bring forth that which is within you, then that which is within you will be your salvation... If you do not bring forth that which is within you, then what is within you will destroy you" - The Gnostic Gospels

done reading...have not come to exercising it yet. i think this book is helpful in terms of information about trauma - its level of helpfulness though will depend upon the result/s i get when i finally come round to doing the exercises.

Kumari De Silva says

I would not recommend this short book as an introduction to Dr Levine's work. If you read and enjoyed his work "Waking the Tiger" this book is a how-to with that process. The first time I listened to the audio I felt very hypnotized. I very easily sensed my feelings in my body because I was already on board with the idea, I meditate with regularity and practice body conscious exercises like running, hiking and yoga. It may take a little longer for you if the idea is new to you.

I fully expected to have a less intense experience the second time I used the CD. Was surprised to have a more intense reaction. I felt my face grimacing, my stomach lurching, the room spinning. I felt seasick. Unlike talk therapy it's not a head trip. I don't get addicted to hearing myself blah blah blah about my life. I sense these issues trapped in my tissues are finally dissipating. Although it may take a couple more rounds of work.

Maggie says

This book is much more readable than Peter Levine's other, for the lay person anyway. I like the way it talks about healing trauma in terms that a person can hear it without feeling it's the end of the world to get past trauma. Not to mention all the little things that can actually traumatize that we don't even realize can have an impact, especially for little children.

Justin says

I thought this was going to be similar to "trauma release exercises". There were some good exercises here but they seemed more like mindfulness (which is good) than training my body to let go of stress
