

# Mental Health: The Walnut Analogy

**Mental health is a topic that touches us all, either personally or through someone we know. But understanding the intricacies of our mental wellbeing can sometimes be challenging.**



We often wonder, why do some people seem to be so resilient, while others might struggle after facing difficulties? To make sense of this, perhaps consider a simple analogy: the walnut. Just as a walnut has a hard exterior protecting its delicate inside, we too have an outer layer of resilience guarding our emotional wellbeing. But how much pressure can this outer layer withstand before it cracks?

Imagine for a moment that a person is like a walnut. The walnut's shell is incredibly tough. Dropping it or knocking it lightly won't cause it any harm. It requires significant force, like a hammer, to crack open. Similarly, throughout our lives, we build a protective shell around ourselves to withstand the challenges thrown our way.

Now, imagine placing a heavy paving slab on top of that walnut. Imagine each paving slab represents something really sad or upsetting or angering that a person has experienced in their life. Probably the first paving slab isn't going to break the walnut. We don't know how many paving slabs put on top of that walnut it can endure before it cracks.

But when we layer on top of that walnut enough paving slabs of emotional trauma, just like the walnut, our protective shell gives way and everything inside is going to feel crushed causing a situation where those symptoms are spilling out.

It's not possible to keep shouldering increasing emotional weight without feeling its toll.

Contrary to what some might believe, it isn't necessarily those who've led easy lives that are most susceptible to breaking. The people who are going to crack are the ones who've borne too much for too long. This is especially true for people in high-stress professions or those who've experienced significant trauma, such as

military personnel, police, first responders, healthcare workers, and civilians who have been through very traumatic experiences in their lives. They are going to get to a point where it's just too much for too long and those symptoms are going to come spilling out.

Their breaking point can manifest not just mentally, but also physically. It's not uncommon for emotional distress like anxiety, depression or insomnia to manifest as physical symptoms – be it pain, paralysis or even seizures.

Just as a walnut can only bear so much pressure before cracking, we too have our limits. Recognising these limits in ourselves and others is crucial. Everyone's threshold is different, influenced by past experiences, current circumstances and individual resilience. But, as with the walnut, there's a point beyond which even the toughest exterior can't hold back the internal turmoil. Compassion, understanding and timely intervention, such as specialist clinical hypnotherapy, can make all the difference. Let's ensure we extend that care to ourselves and to those around us, acknowledging that beneath our shells, we are all, in our unique ways, beautifully vulnerable.

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*Louise Hall is a Certified Professional Hypnotherapist based in Coventry, helping people to overcome issues they are struggling with, allowing them to take back control and transform their lives with hypnosis. Visit [www.louisehallhypnosis.com](http://www.louisehallhypnosis.com) to see how hypnosis can help you.*

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