

RELEASING TRAUMA STORED IN THE BODY

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Releasing Trauma Stored in the Body
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What we perceive to be a stressful or traumatic experience can get stored in the body if not fully processed emotionally and physically. When the energy of the experience is not released the energy can still manifest and continue to be reinforced from a thought, memory or feeling. The memory could be in the form of a

smell, taste, sound, someone's facial expression, words, tone, body language and more.

Some signs you may have unreleased energy could be if you experience anxiety, fear, worry, depression, anger, ruminating thoughts, being triggered, pleasing others, fleeing, fighting, or freezing up. These are protective ways that are not serving you anymore because you are not in that predicament now. However, the body and mind don't want to have that experience again, so they do what they only knew to do back then.

So unless you have learned how to have a more successful outcome, you will do what you only knew back then now, which may have been to freeze, fight, flee or fawn (please people), etc. And these ways can take away your agency, your power, for getting your needs met right here. Not power over someone but power to choose a way of being that aligns for you to keep grounded in presence where you set the conditions to be comfortable, calm and content with whatever is happening.

So whenever the body senses the memory of the past experience, again unless you have a new belief and learned or experienced another way to handle the situation with a better outcome for you, you will do the same thing last time. One reason is because the energy is stuck, it did not continue to flow after the traumatic experience. This can create narrow focus thinking; thinking that you don't know how to handle the situation now. You aren't able to see all the choices you do have.

So you have to learn and train yourself to see all your choices, or create other choices, and respond another way. The good news is now that you are aware of this you can learn and create a new way that serves you better. This can help release the trauma stored in your body and also enable you to respond to other

circumstances differently as you will begin to have a more diffused outlook and see your choices more clearly.

The key to releasing the energy is to reenact the experience with a successful outcome to help rewire the brain, mind and body that you know how to handle this situation now if it shall ever happen again.

To release the energy you are going to take the experience that was stressful or traumatic for you and reenact it with a successful outcome visually, verbally, and physically.

First, visually picture the scenario now with a successful outcome. Then verbally say out loud the scenario with the successful outcome.

Now write down your scenario with the successful outcome. Writing it down helps to make it more concrete as well as helps create new neural pathways in the brain with the interaction of the eyes, hands, fingers and nervous system embodying and sensing this new successful outcome.

And now act out physically and verbally all parts of the scenario you can in a calm yet confident and empowered manner and tone.

Finally, have compassion for the younger you that she or he did the best they could with what they knew. Your experience is giving you the wisdom to learn how handle the situation now if you shall encounter it again as well as learn to handle other challenges that may come up.

It is OK if your successful outcome morphs and changes over time as you do this. That is your creative side and this can be useful to see that there is more than one way of doing things. Practice each of these steps twice a day and anytime you are triggered. Ideally every morning close to when you wake up and every evening close to bedtime, but if that is not convenient making sure you do it at least twice a day is important for practicing, learning and creating a new path for the stuck energy to move and release.

Do this for at least a month and see what happens. You will begin to embody mentally, emotionally and physically a new sense of agency, a confidence and sense of power, that you can now handle this situation. You will begin to feel less anxious when thoughts or sensations arise of the experience and you will become more confident that you can handle other challenges that arise as well.

It is possible for some people to have the uncomfortable sensations feel stronger before they start to dissipate. Do this at a pace you feel safe to do so. Know that feelings come and they also go. As you allow the feelings to come the more you do this the more you will begin to feel safe to feel the sensations as you will learn they do eventually also subside. The acceptance of the sensations to be felt will allow them to move and release.

If you have improved and stopped the practice and then notice you are getting triggered again reinstate the practice again. Everyone is different on how long it will be needed for the body to feel that you are safe here, now. You can always do maintenance with this practice at any time or do it as a preventative tool whenever you want.



Here is an example of this method of reenacting a traumatic experience with a successful outcome.

In 6th grade I went to a girl's swimming birthday party. There were about 8 of us girls, the mom of the birthday girl and a lifeguard. We were all in the pool either jumping off the diving board or swimming around in the deep end of the pool. The mom of the birthday girl was sitting in a chair off to the side of the pool. At one point the birthday girl swam up to me, wrapped her legs around my waist, and then used her arms and hands to push me under the water. At first I thought maybe she was playing but as I was running out of air and trying to get back up to the surface to breathe she was not letting me do so. I discovered frantically that under water it was difficult to kick or use my hands and arms to push her away. My legs seemed to be useless with her legs tightly

wrapped around me, and it felt like everything was moving in slow motion in the water, so when I tried to punch her the force was not strong enough to get her off of me. I am not exactly sure how I was able to get to the surface just in time to get air and then feeling weak and shocked to have the energy to get to the side of the pool where I could rest, cough up water, and finally get some air.

I looked up and the lifeguard was peering over and asked if I was ok. I was very shy at that age. I felt shameful for having this happen and did not know what to say or do. The lifeguard then asked if I wanted to get out and rest, so I did that. The girl did get scolded and I never told anyone about this. I then developed a fear of swimming around others and I also developed a fear of driving over water bridges. As I started to remember this 6th grade experience again I look back and see that I was confused why the girl did this to me, mad that she did not get reprimanded, and was so ashamed it happened to me.

What I have learned from this was my body stored the memory of this experience in my nervous system physically and emotionally; the energy did not continue to move and release. When I would drive over bridges, stand near water, hear about a drowning accident in the news, or go swimming I would start to have trouble breathing and my body tensed up. I now see it was a feeling of helplessness and not feeling safe within myself to know what to do now. I still felt trapped underwater.

I read "[Waking the Tiger](#)" by Peter Levine and worked with a craniosacral practitioner who taught me how to reenact my incident with a successful outcome. After about a month of practicing the successful reenactment I was not having as strong of reactions whenever I heard about a drowning incident in the news, thought about my experience, or drove over water bridges.

I continued to do this for three more months and I am mostly free from being triggered. And when I am triggered, the reenactment continues to help.

My successful story goes like this. The girl swims over to me, locks her legs around my waist and pushes me under the water with her hands and arms. I take my hands and fingers and tightly grab the skin on her chest. Then I twist so hard that the pain makes her quickly release her hands and legs around me. I surface, swim over to the edge to catch my breath and get my bearings. Then I swim by the girl and confidently and sternly say to her, "That is not acceptable!" I then enjoy the rest of the swim time with the others.

The physical reenactment was useful for me to do in bed every morning and every evening because I would take the fitted bed sheet I was lying on and use that to physically twist for the reenactment of tightly grabbing the girl's skin to release her hold. In the air I would do the physical swimming motion with my arms, legs and breath.

To complete the writing portion of this practice you can have the verbal story be longer and more detailed if you want and have the written piece be a shorter length that is doable for you.

If you have more than one traumatic experience it is helpful to do this practice for each one.

If you don't remember the experience, you can either make up a scenario with a successful outcome. The made up scenario can still help the energy move and release. Whether the story actually happened or not is not what helps the energy move it is at first creating the space for the energy to feel safe to move and release.

Or anytime you have an uncomfortable sensation you can gently shake your body. Shake your arms, legs, hands, fingers, head, and bounce gently. This can help you learn how to feel and have energy move, flow and release if needed. You can check out [Kim Eng's shaking video](#) for more information with this.

This practice not only can help you release trauma it can also empower to know that you to handle anything. The more awareness you have the more your choices and agency become clear.

If you have any questions you can email me at presentforpeace@gmail.com.