

Consciously Healing from Trauma

After reading "The Body Keeps the Score" by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, which is a book that focuses on the impact of trauma on the body and the mind, I was mind blown; flabbergasted if you will, at the information that I came across whilst reading this book and how many answers it gave me to my own life and I want to share it all with you too.

Hurt people, hurt people

That's how pain patterns gets passed on, generation after generation... after generation. Until we make a conscious choice to stop, reflect and learn about the traumas we've not only faced, but are still carrying with us like dead weight, we will continue to inflict others with the pain that was given to us. There has to come a point, where in order to truly heal, we address the suffering we've endured with the right tools and resources, so that our friends, families, children and communities are receiving a high frequency version of us.

“If you never heal from what hurt you, you'll bleed on people who didn't cut you”

Here are some ways in which our bodies can be affected by trauma, as described in the book:

1. **Activation of the stress response:** Trauma can activate the body's stress response system, leading to the release of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. This can cause physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing, and tense muscles.
2. **Changes in brain function:** Trauma can alter the structure and function of the brain, particularly the areas involved in memory, emotion regulation, and stress response. This can lead to difficulties with memory, concentration, and emotional regulation.
3. **Chronic pain and physical symptoms:** Trauma can cause physical symptoms such as chronic pain, headaches, and gastrointestinal problems. These symptoms can be related to the body's stress response and may be exacerbated by ongoing stress and emotional distress.
4. **Immune system dysregulation:** Trauma can affect the immune system, leading to chronic inflammation and an increased risk of autoimmune disorders.
5. **Changes in nervous system function:** Trauma can disrupt the autonomic nervous system, which controls essential functions such as breathing, heart rate, and digestion. This can lead to a range of physical symptoms, including dizziness, fainting, and gastrointestinal problems.
6. **Dissociation:** Trauma can cause individuals to dissociate, which involves a disconnection from their physical and emotional experiences. This can lead to a range of physical symptoms, including numbness, paralysis, and altered perception of pain.

My key takeaways for how we can begin to heal from trauma —

Recognise the impact of trauma	It's essential to understand how trauma can impact the body and mind. Trauma can create a state of constant hyper-vigilance, and can cause emotional and physical responses even long after the traumatic event has passed.
Practice self-regulation	Learning techniques for calming the body, such as deep breathing, yoga, or meditation, can help regulate the body's responses to stress and trauma. Mind-body practices can help us connect with our bodies and develop a sense of control over their physical and emotional responses.
Seek support	Healing from trauma is not a solo journey. Seeking support from a therapist, support group, or trusted friend or family member can help us process our experiences and gain the tools we need to cope with trauma-related symptoms.
Engage in physical activities	Engaging in physical activities such as dancing, running, or swimming, or anything else for that matter can help us process trauma and release pent-up emotions.
Cultivate positive relationships	Nurturing positive relationships with others can help us feel safe and connected. Developing supportive relationships can help us build resilience and cope with the effects of trauma and not just for our healing, but the healing of others.
Practice mindfulness	Mindfulness practices can help us develop awareness our thoughts and emotions and cultivate a sense of non-judgmental acceptance of our experiences. Mindfulness can help us learn to observe and tolerate difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed.
Address the impact of trauma on the body	Trauma can cause physical symptoms such as chronic pain, digestive issues, and headaches. Addressing these symptoms through therapies such as massage, acupuncture, or chiropractic care can help us heal from trauma and improve our overall well-being.