

Part Six

Summary, Synthesis, and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Summary Points and Synthesis Conclusions

In closing, I would like to offer a combination of summary points and synthesis conclusions:

- Trauma occurs when we fail to successfully process painful experiences, and this failure to successfully process results in active toxic content that is carried in the memories for these traumatic experiences.
- Psychological trauma can be caused by painful events that may seem minor, and traumatic memories are therefore much more common than most people realize.
- When traumatic memories are activated, the toxic content they carry comes forward and powerfully affects our perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, emotions, abilities, and choices.
- This traumatic, toxic content comes forward as “invisible” implicit memory, so that *it feels true in the present, and is not recognized as coming from underlying unresolved trauma*. Our VLEs come up with explanations that focus on the triggering stimuli in the present. Our central nervous system extrapolators fill in most of the holes in the VLE confabulated explanations, and good old denial and self-deception take care of anything that is left over. The end result is that we usually believe the explanations that the VLE makes up, accept the implicit memory content as true in the present, and blame the triggers as if they are the original source of the implicit memory content that is actually coming from the underlying traumatic memories—we blame the triggers as if they are the true and complete reason we’re feeling bad.
- If we perceive that a *person* is responsible for the triggering situation, we will only feel heard, validated, safe, and ready for reconciliation if she takes full responsibility for the implicit memory traumatic content. This creates an irreconcilable difference because she cannot honestly do so.
- If we are triggered by some aspect of our interactions with *the Lord*, then all of the above dynamics will result in traumatic implicit memory content and VLE confabulations undermining our relationship with

him. Our perception is that *traumatic implicit memories and VLE confabulations combine to create some of the most important blockages hindering people from perceiving the Lord's presence and from connecting with him more intimately.*

- Recognizing, acknowledging, and taking responsibility for our traumatic implicit memories and VLE confabulations helps us choose righteous behavior, even before anything *feels* different.
- Recognizing and acknowledging our traumatic implicit memories and surrendering our VLE confabulations opens the door to the possibility of finding and resolving the underlying traumatic memories. Until we recognize and acknowledge our traumatic implicit memories and surrender our VLE confabulations, we are not even asking the question: “Should I deal with underlying memories?”
- When we are able to identify the underlying traumatic memories, the moment the pieces all come together so that it *feels* true that our pain is really coming from the memories, *all the negative thoughts and emotions we had transferred onto others drop off of them.* For example, it no longer feels true that bad Charlotte is causing my pain by beating me at Scrabble and making insensitive comments, *and I once again perceive her as my ally instead of the source of my pain.* I may still feel the negative thoughts and emotions from the trauma, but it no longer feels true that *Charlotte* is causing them.
- When we successfully work through a traumatic memory, this particular package of toxic content is *permanently* resolved so that it will *never again cause trouble.*
- An especially powerful point of good news is that Jesus understands the healing process, he wants to help us heal, and for those who are able to establish a strong, interactive connection with him, *healing for traumatic memories becomes surprisingly simple as the Lord leads the person through each step of the process.*
- There are exacerbating factors (such as maturity from the age of memory and second-level triggering) that can make it much more difficult to recognize, acknowledge, and take responsibility for our traumatic implicit memory and VLE confabulations. Fortunately, being aware of these exacerbating factors enables us to at least partially neutralize them.
- Recognizing that we have lost access to our relational connection circuits, and then choosing to take deliberate steps to get them back on line, will dramatically reduce the negative effects of our traumatic

implicit memory and VLE confabulations. Furthermore, understanding with respect to our relational circuits and attunement, and specific tools that apply this understanding, can further neutralize the exacerbating factors discussed in part 3 (for example, attunement without agreement).

Finally, I would like to make several comments specifically regarding traumatic implicit memory, VLE confabulations, and relationships.

- When we are trying to help another person who is triggered, *starting* with attunement *before* suggesting the possibility of triggering makes it much easier for the other person to surrender VLE confabulations and acknowledge traumatic implicit memory.
- No matter what kind of interpersonal difficulty we are dealing with, simplifying the system by eliminating any triggering, immaturity, or other dysfunction on *our* side will *always* help.
- As Charlotte and I have applied the principles and tools presented in this book we have experienced steadily increasing joy in our marriage. And this makes sense: *relational connection is the source of joy, relational conflict breaks relational connection, and applying these principles to resolve and prevent relational conflict will therefore result in much more joy.*
- As mentioned earlier, God has created us to be relational beings, and this seems to be one of the most important aspects of his plan for us. The enemy, not surprisingly, therefore makes a special effort to attack relationships. *Understanding and applying these principles can help us to outwit the devil's schemes to disrupt the body of Christ through relational conflict.*
- Our most important relationship is our relationship with the Lord, and therefore **the** most important point regarding all of this is how it applies to this relationship. The most costly effect of traumatic implicit memory content and VLE confabulations is injury to our relationship with the Lord, and *the most important reason to understand and apply these principles is to remove blockages that hinder our hearts from perceiving and connecting with him.* Understanding and applying these principles in our relationship with the Lord will help us outwit the devil's schemes to disrupt this relationship that God desires to be the foundation and center of our lives.

How many of you have watched *Star Wars*, and thought: “I wish I could be a Jedi knight, defending the innocent and battling evil in heroic confrontations”? How many of you have watched the *Lord of the Rings*, and thought “I wish I could stand beside Aragorn, fighting the forces of darkness in an heroic and righteous quest”? Well, I haven’t seen any death stars, orcs, or trolls lately, but our true enemy makes the *Star Wars* emperor and Middle Earth’s Sauron look like my grandmother, and Jesus—*our* commander who is *always* standing beside us—makes Aragorn look like a Cub Scout (a good and heroic Cub Scout, but a Cub Scout nonetheless). We have our opportunities if we choose to accept them. For example, every single one of us will face the challenge of being triggered and non-relational while in conflict with someone else who is also triggered and non-relational, and often in situations where **they started it!** In these situations, you can be courageous and heroic in choosing to get *your* relational circuits back on *first*, acknowledging *your* triggering, and then offering attunement.

Men, if you want to be courageous and heroic in serving your wives, your children, your friends, and your communities, then be courageous and heroic in the battle to expose and neutralize your triggered traumatic content and VLE confabulations. Women, if you want to be courageous and heroic in serving your husbands, your children, your friends, and your communities, then be courageous and heroic in the battle to expose and neutralize your triggered traumatic content and VLE confabulations. Believers, if you want to be courageous and heroic in serving the Lord, then be courageous and heroic in the battle to expose and neutralize your triggered traumatic content and VLE confabulations. Let us be courageous and heroic in exposing and neutralizing our triggered traumatic content and VLE confabulations *so that we can foil the enemy’s schemes for division, and fulfill the Lord’s plan for thriving relationships, healthy community, and a unified, relational church that will take his love to the world.*¹

1. You may think I’m being melodramatic in my use of “courageous” and “heroic,” but if you take me up on this challenge you’ll discover that I’m not overstating my case. In fact, once you have gotten some practice with recognizing and acknowledging your stuff, and have strengthened your capacity for vulnerability, if you are feeling especially courageous you can take the step of *inviting* others to help you in the narcissistically mortifying process of exposing your triggered traumatic content and confabulated explanations.

We invite you to join us in the following prayer:

Lord, we thank you for the Immanuel truth that you are *always* with us, and we ask that you would help us to perceive your presence.

Lord, we want to be courageous and heroic in the battle to expose and neutralize our triggered traumatic content and VLE confabulations—give us the grace to do so.

Lord, we want to foil the enemy's schemes for division—give us the grace to do so.

Lord, we want to cooperate with your plan for thriving relationships, healthy community, and a unified, relational church that will take your love to the world—please give us the courage, the grace, and the love that we will need to fulfill this vision.

Amen.

