

Introduction

Our hope is that the material presented in this book will be valuable for those who already have experience and training regarding psychological trauma, implicit memory, triggering, relational connection circuits, and emotional healing; and also that this material will be effective as the first exposure for people not yet familiar with these important concepts and phenomena. Since we are writing only one book, rather than providing separate “advanced” and “newcomers” versions, it’s as if we are presenting a single mathematics curriculum to a large class, with some of the material geared toward students who are just learning algebra and other material geared toward students who have already mastered calculus. We thought it would be helpful to name this reality so that you recognize it as you encounter it, and that it would also be helpful to make some suggestions regarding how readers might best embrace this challenge.

For readers who have already been working with psychological trauma and emotional healing, especially the first half of the book will include a lot of material with which you are already familiar. As you review chapters 1 through 8, where the content will be more familiar, I invite you to start thinking like teachers. Hopefully the material in these chapters will give you language, examples, and research that you will find helpful in sharing these concepts with others.

For readers who have *not* already been working with psychological trauma and emotional healing, especially part 3 will be presenting answers to questions you are not yet asking. I want to explicitly name my goal for you with respect to the more advanced material: your goal is not to even *try* to remember or master the details, but rather to take in the big picture, so that as you begin applying the more basic tools and principles, as you begin to encounter the phenomena we discuss in chapters 9 through 13, and as the more advanced material starts to become relevant, you will remember that it’s here and come back for it.

At this point I would also like to provide an overview with respect to content (like a satellite picture of a country you are visiting), that supplies reference points to help you stay oriented as you explore and learn through the next twenty-nine chapters.

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- In part 1 (chapters 1 through 6), I present basic information about psychological trauma, and then also discuss *implicit memory*, *the Verbal Logical Explainer*, and *central nervous system extrapolation*—three related phenomena that will be especially important in helping us understand how psychological trauma affects us, how it behaves, and what to do about it.
- In part 2 (chapters 7 and 8), I present an initial discussion of how to neutralize the negative effects of psychological trauma: the first half of the basic plan is to engage in the ongoing process of permanently resolving traumatic memories; and the second half of the basic plan is to recognize when we are being affected by traumatic memories, and then make behavioral choices based on truth.
- In part 3 (chapters 9 through 13), I talk about exacerbating factors that can make it very difficult to implement this basic plan: maturity from the age of memory, memory-based negative reactions to the suggestion that old trauma might be contributing to our thoughts and emotions, and loss of access to the circuits in our brains responsible for handling relational connection.
- In part 4 (chapters 14 through 23), I describe additional resources and insights that are helpful for working with both straightforward and more difficult situations: additional insights regarding the importance of taking responsibility for *our own* stuff, additional resources for recognizing when our traumatic memories are getting stirred up, and tools for reestablishing access to the circuits in our brains responsible for handling relational connection.
- In part 5 (chapters 24 through 27), I describe specific interventions for helping *others* who are impaired by traumatic memories getting stirred up.
- And in part 6 (chapters 28 and 29), I provide summary points, synthesis conclusions, and answers to frequently asked questions.

I hope this book will help you to better understand yourself and others, that it will teach you to recognize when unresolved pain from the past is invading the present, and that it will give you practical tools for helping yourself and others to minimize (and even eliminate) the wide variety of problems caused when old pain comes into the present.