

The
Unexpected
Gift of Trauma

The Path to
Posttraumatic Growth

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DR. EDITH SHIRO

With Linda Sparrowe



HARVEST

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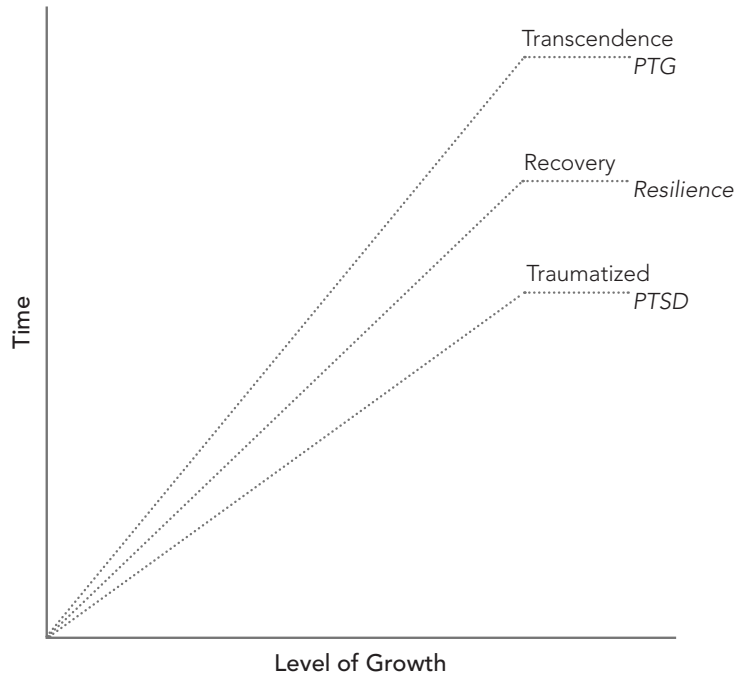
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Three Possible Outcomes



PTG Theoretical Approaches

Well-being
Positive psychology

Epigenetics
Neuroplasticity

Resilience

Psychodynamic
Interpersonal
Attachment
Theory

Brain Science
Neuroscience

PTG Model

Spiritual
Mindfulness
Somatic
mind / body

Systemic thinking
Community / social
Relational

Buddhist
philosophy

Symptoms of PTSD

INTRUSION

Invasive thoughts

Nightmares

Flashbacks

Repeated, involuntary memories

Distressing dreams

PHYSICAL

Fatigue

Insomnia

Headaches

Loss of appetite

Hyperactivity

Muscle tension

Racing heart

REACTIVITY

Irritability

Angry outbursts

Reckless or self-destructive behavior

Hypervigilance

Concentration difficulties

Sleep disturbances

COGNITIVE

Difficulty focusing

Difficulty making decisions

Difficulty remembering important aspects of trauma event

Confusion

Dissociation

Negative thoughts and feelings

Distorted beliefs about oneself and others

BEHAVIORAL

Avoidance of triggering people, places, or situations

Social withdrawal and isolation

Substance abuse

Self-destructive behavior

Agitation, irritability, or hostility

Trauma Responses

FIGHT	Aggressive, angry outburst, irritable, controlling, demanding, impulsive decision making, "acts tough," "bully," critical
FLIGHT	Avoids conflict, distracted, always on the go, staying busy, overworking, perfectionist, overachiever
FREEZE	Cautious, stuckness, difficulty making decisions, isolation, lack of motivation, numbed, shut down, immobilization, collapse, scared stiff, feeling dead inside
FAWN	People pleaser, hard time saying no, lack of boundaries, defers to others, avoids conflict, prioritizes others' needs, overwhelmed, loss of self, codependent, obsessed with fitting in

THE FIVE STAGES OF POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH

1. **The Stage of Awareness:** Radical Acceptance
2. **The Stage of Awakening:** Safety and Protection
3. **The Stage of Becoming:** A New Narrative
4. **The Stage of Being:** Integration
5. **The Stage of Transforming:** Wisdom and Growth

Resilience vs. PTG

Resilience

- BOUNCING BACK
- Can be a personality trait
- Does not require profound changes
- Does not necessarily require having experienced trauma
- Doesn't mean beliefs are shaken to the core
- Doesn't require a person to seek a new belief system, a new paradigm
- Doesn't necessarily ensure growth will happen
- Assumes an ability to cope with life after adversity

Posttraumatic Growth

- BOUNCING FORWARD
- Develops as a consequence of trauma
- Can redefine the personality of an individual
- Requires being exposed to intense stress at some point
- Shakes beliefs to the core and shifts priorities
- Requires a paradigm shift
- Results in positive psychological development in the face of hardship or adversity
- Allows for new behaviors and attitudes that were not present before
- May not occur without some level of discomfort, but distress diminishes over time

PTG: from Trauma to Growth

FROM

Guilt

Shame

Loss

Suffering

A FIXED, closed mindset

Rigid

One way of looking at the trauma

Criticizing the SELF and others

Dismissing and denying

Reacting

Repeating

Repeating cycles; repeating compulsively; repeating maladaptive coping mechanisms

Carrying and repeating past trauma, ancestral, generational traumas

TO

Self-compassion

Vulnerability and acceptance

Gain

Having both joy and pain

A GROWTH, open mindset

Flexible

Multiple points of view and perspectives

Radical acceptance of SELF and others; SELF-LOVE

Validating and SELF-SOOTHING

Acting and making conscious decisions

Repairing

Repair; creating new behaviors, new beliefs, new paradigms

Becoming a transitional character; break the cycle of trauma; stop the cycle

Create new stories, new identities, new pathways

Break free from trauma reactions, have more freedom in the response,
based on true meaningful values

Vocabulary of Emotions

Now that you are beginning to identify and name your emotions, here's a list that can help you expand your vocabulary.

Exhausted	Confused	Ecstatic	Guilty
Angry	Satisfied	Frustrated	Sad
Embarrassed	Happy	Mischievous	Disgusted
Enraged	Ashamed	Cautious	Calm
Overwhelmed	Hopeful	Lonely	Loving
Bored	Surprised	Anxious	Shocked
Thrilled	Joyful	Excited	Cheerful
Grateful	Balanced	Rejected	Uncomfortable
Worried	Broken	Nervous	Concerned
Worthless	Paralyzed	Powerless	Disappointed
Suspicious	Confident	Afraid	Depressed
Jealous	Shy	Despair	Melancholic
Troubled	Uptight	Hurt	Inspired

Therapy Modalities

Here is a list—by no means exhaustive or complete—of different treatments, therapies, and practices that could be helpful in treating trauma. Regardless of the modality you choose, one condition should be in place: you should feel safe and protected and have a sense of trust in the person who is offering the help in order to do this work. Listen to your body, and pay attention to any alarms or triggers that arise when you are seeking help.

Functional life coaching	ACT therapy
Internal Family Systems (IFS)	Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP)
Sensorimotor psychotherapy	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
Accelerated Resolution Therapy	Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
Somatic Experiencing	Hypnotherapy
Emotionally focused therapy	PSYCH-K
Neurofeedback	Acupuncture
Emotional freedom technique	Vagus nerve technique
Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)	Energy healing therapy
Play therapy	Group therapy
Reality therapy	Prolonged exposure therapy
Trauma-informed yoga	Narrative exposure therapy
Trauma-informed meditation	
Rapid Resolution Therapy (RRT)	

Words to Remember

Here is a list of words and phrases you can refer to as you step onto the path of Becoming. As you read each word, consider how you can apply it to your relationship to yourself, to others, and to the world.

BEGIN IN A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Reconnect
Rebuild
Reimagine
Reinvent
Regenerate
Reprocess
Reactivate
Relate differently
Release the old
Reorganize priorities
Re-create new memories
Reshape habits
Resource self
New narratives
New possibilities
New perspectives
New paradigms
New growth mindset
More flexibility
More openness
More creativity
More willingness

TRANSFORM TO A WORLD THAT MAKES SENSE

Self-resilience
Self-regulation
Self-coherence
Self-care
Self-confidence
Self-love
Self-trust
Self-renewal
Self-reliance
Self-reflection
New beginning
New belief systems
New identity
New relationships

Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun developed the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) to assess the posttraumatic growth and self-improvement a person undergoes. A twenty-one-item scale built on the five-factor model of Tedeschi, this inventory is one of the most valid and reliable resources for evaluating personal growth following a stressful encounter.

The statements included in the inventory are related to the following five factors:

Factor I—**Relating to Others**

Factor II—**New Possibilities**

Factor III—**Personal Strength**

Factor IV—**Spiritual Enhancement**

Factor V—**Appreciation**

Each of the twenty-one items falls under one of the five factors and is scored accordingly. A summation of the scores indicates the level of posttraumatic growth.

The advantage of this scale is that the categorization of scores according to the five factors is suggestive of which area of self-development is predominant and which area might be a little behind.

For example, a high total score implies that the person has undergone a positive transformation. But a closer look at the scores of each section would provide a more in-depth insight into what has changed significantly and what aspects of the self may still need some improvement.

The PTGI was initially developed to measure favorable outcomes following a stressful life event. But with time, it became popular as a test that provides direction to the participants about their future actions and suggests a scope for self-improvement.

Where Can I Find the Scale?

As mentioned earlier, the PTGI consists of twenty-one statements, each coming under one of the five categories mentioned by Tedeschi and Calhoun in their initial proposition.

Participants indicate their scores on a six-point scale where:

- 0 implies—I did not experience this as a result of my crisis.
- 1 implies—I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.
- 2 implies—I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.
- 3 implies—I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.
- 4 implies—I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.
- 5 implies—I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Here is an overview of the test items along with the categorization of the five factors.

Factor	Item Numbers
1—Relating to Others	6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 20, 21
2—New Possibilities	3, 7, 11, 14, 17, 18
3—Personal Strength	4, 10, 12, 19
4—Spiritual Enhancement	5
5—Appreciation	1, 2, 13

The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

PTGI is widely available online. Below is an illustration of the form:

SCORING

0 1 2 3 4 5

1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life.
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.
3. I have developed new interests.
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance.
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.

6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.
7. I established a new path for my life.
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others.
9. I am more willing to express my emotions.
10. I know that I can handle difficulties.
11. I can do better things with my life.
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out.
13. I can better appreciate each day.
14. New opportunities are available that wouldn't have been otherwise.
15. I have more compassion for others.
16. I put more effort into my relationships.
17. I am more likely to try to change things that need changing.
18. I have stronger religious faith.
19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.
20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.
21. I better accept needing others.

Psychological Well-Being Posttraumatic Changes Questionnaire

By Stephen Joseph, PhD

Think about how you feel about yourself at the present time. Please read each of the following statements and rate how you have changed as a result of the trauma.

5 = Much more so now

4 = A bit more so now

3 = I feel the same about this as before

2 = A bit less so now

1 = Much less so now

1. I like myself.
2. I have confidence in my opinions.
3. I have a sense of purpose in life.
4. I have strong and close relationships in my life.
5. I feel I am in control of my life.
6. I am open to new experiences that challenge me.
7. I accept who I am, with both my strengths and limitations.
8. I don't worry what other people think of me.
9. My life has meaning.
10. I am a compassionate and giving person.

11. I handle my responsibilities in life well.
12. I am always seeking to learn about myself.
13. I respect myself.
14. I know what is important to me and will stand my ground, even if others disagree.
15. I feel that my life is worthwhile and that I play a valuable role in things.
16. I am grateful to have people in my life who care for me.
17. I am able to cope with what life throws at me.
18. I am hopeful about my future and look forward to new possibilities.

Add up your scores to all eighteen statements. Scores over 54 indicate the presence of positive change. The maximum score is 90. The higher your score, the more positive change you have experienced. You may have changed more in some areas than others: self-acceptance (statements 1, 7, and 13), autonomy (statements 2, 8, and 14), purpose in life (statements 3, 9, and 15), relationships (statements 4, 10, and 16), sense of mastery (statements 5, 11, and 17), and personal growth (statements 6, 12, and 18).

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