

# Healing Trauma Part One: An Alternative Approach To Talk Therapy and Drug Therapy

## Prologue

This article is being written to give people who do not attend the group meetings insight into the work that is being done and for the people in the group to better understand the shift that is taking place in our work together. The article explores trauma specifically relating to our mind and to our emotions, and how to release the trauma that we carry. I estimate that 99.9% of us function from the position of having unresolved trauma.

## Definitions Of Trauma

A definition of trauma from the dictionary: “A powerful shock that may have long lasting effects.”

Here is my definition of trauma: “Trauma is the detrimental mental and emotional imprints that are left inside us after we are stressfully aroused.”

## Arousal and Trauma

Arousal means that we’re stimulated. There is pleasant arousal (stimulation) like laughter, enjoyment and sexual arousal. This pleasant arousal does not leave stress inside us. It’s the stressful arousal that can leave detrimental mental and emotional imprints inside us.

The following are some forms of stressful arousal: Some of our thoughts, our unhealed past, our current interactions with others, the necessity of what we have to do in a day, low self esteem, a car accident, medical procedures, and feeling overwhelmed.

In summary, trauma is not about the event itself. Trauma is not about what happened to us. Trauma is the unhealed mental and emotional imprints that are left inside us after we are stressfully aroused.

## My Recent Burnout and The Return From Burnout

Some people reading this article know that I experienced burnout in July (it’s now December). I took time off work. I was in a cortisol reaction where I was wire-tired during the day and I had a difficult time sleeping at night. This went on for many days. Slowly my system lessened the intensity of this heightened cortisol state. In October I felt I had fully

recovered from the burnout. I feel better now than I've felt in years. Looking back on it, I can see how I was getting closer to burnout. It was happening so slowly that I didn't know how close I was to the edge of burnout.

Since July I've been studying about stored/unresolved trauma in order to help facilitate my recovery from burnout. [David Berceci](#) developed a method for trauma to release from the body. Utilizing Berceci's trauma release work was the first input that accelerated my recovery. I soon added doing a variation of Berceci's work while floating many times in a high density salt water tank.

The work of [Bessel Van Der Kolk](#) helped me understand and work through more of the accumulated trauma that brought about the burnout. The work of Berceci and Van Der Kolk along with what I've learned from my teacher brought me to a renewed state. An additional vital part of my recovery from burnout was having four sessions in fairly quick succession with Racquel. Her guidance and insight greatly helped me to heal. Without those sessions, I would have struggled longer and harder for the healing to complete.

Recently I've been studying the work of [Peter Levine](#). His work has brought more refinement and understanding of the trauma that is stored in the body. I'll continue to study his work and then I'm looking to add in the work of [Stephen Porges](#).

### Releasing Held Trauma

My emphasis, from the beginning of working with people in group, has been to release the held trauma inside each person. This held trauma is in the body. Where else could it be? When trauma is released, the flow of our Natural Energy is increased.

In the group meetings, I want people to be more connected to the God-part of themselves. It's in releasing the obstacles to God that God shows up more; automatically. One of the main obstacles to the flow of God through us is how unresolved trauma affects our body, mind and emotions.

The work of David Berceci, Bessel Van Der Kolk and Peter Levine confirm the conclusion that the trauma (the unresolved mental and emotional imprints) from our thoughts and from our life experience is held in the tissues of the body and that this held-energetic stress needs to be released for the person to heal. If the held energy is not released, then the person does not fully heal.

Berceli, Van Der Kolk and Levine each have ways for the body to release the held energy. They use body movement as a primary way to resolve the stored trauma. Each of them states that talk therapy and using prescription drugs are usually inadequate to heal. Berceli and Levine both use trembling, shaking and tremoring as the primary way for the body to release held trauma. Van Der Kolk uses yoga and rhythmical body movement (dance and sports).

### How Stressful Mental And Emotional Imprints Accumulate

Many times a day we can be aroused/stimulated and then quickly we need to get to the next activity of the day. We often don't get an opportunity to go from being aroused/stressfully stimulated to having a balanced feeling before we go to the next activity or to the next thought. Over decades, this usual way of living builds many unresolved mental and emotional imprints in us.

One result of building stress in us is that we develop triggers. If we do not go to a normal feeling after being stressfully aroused, then trauma builds up inside and triggers are formed.

Each of us are familiar with being triggered. Being triggered is when we overreact to a situation. Examples of being triggered is when a person says something to us and we blow up, or when something minor happens and we become very stressed.

### Why Certain Ways Of 'Releasing' Trauma Don't Work and How These Same Ways Can Work

#### Telling The Story Over and Over

Do you know a person who has told the same story of their life over and over? How their mother or father was abusive. How their wife/husband cheated on them. They can be telling the same story for years or for decades with the same bitterness or with the same feeling of neglect.

Repeatedly telling a story of what happened in our life can actually keep reinforcing or increasing the exact feeling that we want to be free of. In the Gurdjieff work that I was a part of for many years, Mr. Gurdjieff called it "singing your song." If you find yourself singing your song again and again with unresolved feelings, you may recognize that this re-telling of the story is not helping you to heal.

### When Telling The Story Can Work

If you're telling another person what happened and if you stay connected to what you're feeling inside yourself at the moment, not making it about what the other person said or did, then the held traumatic energy within you can release. The release happens in your body; not from the words that you're saying.

### Screaming Your Head Off

There has been some questioning in the therapy world if demonstrative anger release work actually releases anger or reinforces the anger. At times, screaming can further increase in a person the exact energy that they want to be free of. At other times, screaming can discharge anger that is being held in.

Screaming doesn't work if you're thinking of the reason that you're angry. If you're screaming and you're thinking "I hate him (or her)! I hate him (or her)," then it's likely that you'll increase your hate toward the person.

Also, if you're screaming in anger at a person, then you're reinforcing and increasing the anger in you. It may feel like a release at the time because you're discharging held anger, though the bottom line is that you've expressed anger toward another person and you've given the anger inside you a big feast to grow from. If you connect a story to the screaming, then you're very likely reinforcing the anger that you want to be free from.

### When Screaming Can Work

If you have attention on what is occurring inside your body as physical sensation (you feel tension in a specific place in your body, you feel hot or cold, your head aches, etc.), then screaming can release the held energy of anger.

### Repeatedly Crying Your Eyes Out

If you're crying very hard (crying your eyes out), then everything said about screaming your head off applies to crying your eyes out. Having your attention on the other person or on the story can increase the feeling that you want to be free of.

If you have your attention on what you're physically feeling inside yourself (sick to your stomach, achy, tense), then crying can help release the detrimental mental and emotional imprints.

(Cathartic Movement is addressed on pages four and five in [Healing Trauma Part Two: Getting Out Of Our Own Way.](#))

### Talking With Socorro

I recently talked with Socorro. She has been doing the Berceli release work during the last three years. It has helped her reduce the amount of trauma inside herself. She told me now that the Berceli release work is not going deep enough in her healing.

I agree with her. The Berceli work can help, though, for releasing the deep trauma, we need help from others. People join support groups like AA because they can't do it all on their own. People enter religious orders to help them in their spiritual life. We need the help from others to be free. Socorro is at the point where specific help is needed. It's great she recognizes this and that effective help from others is available.

### Peter Levine Needing Help To Recover From Trauma

In 2005 Peter Levine went through the most traumatic episode of his life (detailed in [In An Unspoken Voice: How The Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness](#)). He was well known at that time as an expert in the trauma field. He said that he recovered on-the-spot from the trauma of being hit by a car by releasing energy through spontaneous shaking and trembling movements and by being helped by a woman who was at his side and was holding his hand. He said that the woman being there and holding his hand was essential for him to be able to feel deeply and to physically release the trauma from the accident through trembling and shaking.

You can listen to a seven minute audio clip from his book about how he released the trauma after being hit by a car while he was walking. He got thrown up onto the windshield of the car, broke the windshield and needed an ambulance to take him to the hospital. [Click here](#) to go to my dropbox account to listen to the seven minute audio segment. You'll start in the middle of a chapter. You may need a few sentences to settle into what he's saying.

P.S. During the time of releasing (before the ambulance arrived), Peter also allowed his arms to move as if they were trying to protect his head. He states that this body movement also helped release the trauma from the accident.

### The Approach That I Used For Years

Prior to recovering from burnout, the approach that I used in helping the body release held trauma was from a combination of my professional life of working deeply with the body for forty years and from the experience of being with my teacher in group and being with him individually for over nine years. The approach did include facilitating a person to tremor, though trembling was not a primary focus.

### The Approach That I Now Use

I'm now adding in the influences of Berceli, Van Der Kolk and Levine in the work that I do with people. Each of these men agree with the work of the other. (Van Der Kolk wrote the foreword to a recent book by Peter Levine).

Each of them agrees that the body itself needs to release the held energy of the trauma for the trauma to fully heal. Berceli and Levine focus on the body releasing through trembling, shaking and tremoring. Van Der Kolk recognizes the validity of this type of physical release and adds in yoga and rhythmical movement.

My current approach is that cathartic expression is not needed each time for the body to release trauma, and that cathartic expression (intense anger or intense crying), at times, can assist the body to release trauma.

My years of professional work of aiding deep release from the body of patients tens of thousands of times, from being mentored by my teacher for nine years, from learning from respected experts in the field of recovering from trauma and from receiving help from one-on-one sessions with my teacher and with Racquel has brought me to a unique type of work in helping the body release the held trauma.

In a group meeting, we talk, laugh, cry, scream, shake, rattle, roll and dance. Full expression is encouraged. Also in the meetings, the body is supported and aided to release it's held trauma.

### Conclusion

I've been very fortunate to have teachers; both in person and through their published work. These teachers and my professional experience give me the opportunity to integrate different proven approaches to healing trauma.

My view is that each of us (with few exceptions) suffer from what can be called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We may not fit the clinical definition of PTSD, though we do carry trauma (detrimental mental and emotional imprints that are left inside us after we are stressfully aroused) that result in dysfunctional thoughts and behavior.

This held trauma can be released through the body. When the mind and emotions are no longer being re-fueled by the held energy from the trauma inside the body, the mind and emotions too can balance and become truly humane rather than what is currently viewed as being human.

May each of us live in freedom.