

The TRUTH

R E S O U R C E S

The Quick-Start Guide to Healing Trauma and Psychological Wounds

A PERSONAL OVERVIEW

Over the course of writing *The Truth*, I came to develop a very specific take on healing developmental trauma as I slowly but surely reduced my own.

I began to think of the childhood pain and shame we store—and the dysfunctional behaviors and thoughts created by them—as cancerous tumors attached to the heart by a short elastic cord.

And when we go through deep therapeutic processes such as the chair work I experienced in the book, we're able for just a moment to pull that ugly tumor out of our chest and get a glimpse of who we really are without it, to see the difference between our authentic self and the reactive self who makes a mess of our life.

However, when the process ends, the elastic snaps back and the trauma fastens once again to our heart, until after a few hours or days or weeks back in daily reality, we can no longer tell the difference between our truth and our wounds.

But if we stretch the elastic enough times, eventually it will wear out. And when we release it, the load it's carrying will no longer snap back into us, but instead hang outside limply, a passenger in our life but no longer in the cockpit.

This is why I found that one of the best ways to heal yourself at a deep level is to go to a two-to-five day experiential intensive or workshop that will stretch the elastic as far as possible. It does this by helping you dive deep into your past and bringing up feelings in a way that a one-hour therapy-room session just can't.

I found talk therapy, in particular, less effective for deep healing and change, especially since so many of the wounds we carry are emotional, often created before we were capable of talking or intellectual thought.

For some people, a single workshop may be enough to make a big change. For others, going to several over the course of a few years may be necessary. And a few people may require more extensive in-patient therapy.

Whatever the case may be, just going to intensives or workshops is not enough. It's important to maintain any shifts, revelations, or improvements after the first healing experience with the following four things:

***Consistent Support:** Decades of dysfunctional behavior can't be eliminated in a weekend. To keep your head right, it's important to retain a regular regimen of individual or, even better, group therapy. Even if it's just a monthly or bi-monthly hour-long phone call.

***Self care:** If you take care of your mind, body, and spirit through healthy eating, exercise, positive self-talk, appropriate boundaries, sleeping well, and a practice such as yoga or meditation, you will be less vulnerable to your past dysfunctional behaviors and beliefs. A lack of self care typically leads to a lack of self regulation.

***Tools:** Through therapy, reading, and research, you can gather tactics and techniques for retaining your new healthy, functional behavior and thoughts. Sometimes, when under too much pressure, stress, or poor self-care, you may begin to backslide into old habits of dysfunctional behavior. And it's important to use a tool here—for example, using non-violent communication, focusing on slow diaphragm breathing, or having an inner dialogue to soothe your agitated inner child—to keep from going over the psychological cliff.

***Patience:** When cleaning a room, it gets more messy before it gets orderly. The same is true of cleaning your mind. Often, as you begin the healing process, you will begin feeling the pain or shame that your dysfunctional behavior was protecting you from. But if you can tolerate those raw feelings and process them in a healthy way this time, then you will no longer need the dysfunctional behavior. It won't have a purpose because there's no longer any toxic shame or pain to avoid. At other times, a behavior or belief that you thought you defeated may rear its head again. Don't get frustrated. Think of self-improvement as climbing a mountain. Sometimes you'll feel like you're in the same place you started, but the truth is that you've climbed higher and you're just looking at the same view.

RESOURCES

If you're ready to start exploring your psyche, unpacking your emotions, and healing your wounds (and we're all wounded in varying degrees), here are a few places and therapies I recommend starting with.

I've focused on the centers, counsellors, and therapies I had positive experiences with while writing *The Truth*. As such, some of the sections focus on relationship healing.

There are of course many other workshops and therapies that have helped others. So if you'd like to add your own recommendations, please do so in the Comments section here: www.neil-strauss.com/neil/trauma-healing/.

Trauma-Healing Workshops

- The Survivor's Program at The Meadows:
www.themeadows.com/workshops/survivors-i-workshop
- The Hoffman Process: www.hoffmaninstitute.org
- The Refuge: www.therefuge-ahealingplace.com
- Release Workshops: www.releasetrauma.com
- The Society Inner Game Intensive: www.thesocietyinternational.com (Conflict of Interest Note: These are workshops that I facilitate, usually with the same therapists who helped me in *The Truth*.)

Trauma-Healing Therapies

- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
Find a clinician here: www.emdr.com/find-a-clinician/
- Somatic Experiencing
Find a practitioner here:
www.traumahealing.org/find-se-practitioner.php
- Chair Work
Find a facilitator here:
www.healingtraumanetwork.net/frontpage/network-members-2/
- Acceptance & Commitment Therapy
Find a therapist here:
www.contextualscience.org/civicrm/profile?gid=17&reset=1&force=1
- Psychodrama
Find a counselor here:
www.psychodramacertification.org/index.php?name=Directory&s3mode=find_therapist
- Brainspotting
Find a practitioner here: www.brainspotting.pro/trainers

- Ego State Therapy

Find a therapist here: www.egostateinternational.com/esti-certified-therapists.php

- Sensorimotor Psychotherapy

Find a psychotherapist here: www.sensorimotorpsychotherapy.org/referral.html

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Find a therapist here: www.findcbt.org/xFAT/

- Group Therapy

I have yet to find a good website for finding a group, and recommend reaching out to local therapists you trust or forming one yourself with a professional facilitator. If all else fails, here's a possible online resource to start with: <https://groups.psychologytoday.com/rms/>

Relationship Intensives for Individuals

- Breaking Free *or* Facing the Shadow at Pine Grove:

www.pinegrovetreatment.com/intensives-workshops.html

- The Love Addiction/Love Avoidance Workshop at The Meadows:

www.themeadows.com/workshops/love-addiction-love-avoidance-workshop

Relationship Intensives for Couples

- Imago Therapy: pub.imagorelationships.org/findaworkshop/gtlywworkshop.aspx

- Strengthening Coupleship:

www.themeadows.com/workshops/couples-workshop

- The Art & Science of Love:

www.gottman.com/couples/workshops/art-science-of-love/

Diagnostic Tools

- Patrick Carnes's Original Post-Traumatic Stress Index:

www.mi-pte.org/sudppps2011/Shannon-PTSI.pdf