



# *Address the Trauma of Childhood Still Impacting You Today*

*Identify What Drives Your Repeating Patterns and Take Charge of Your Life*

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*Workshop 7*

**HEALING**

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## *Address the Trauma of Childhood Still Impacting You Today*

*Identify What Drives Your Repeating Patterns and Take Charge of your Life*

Repeated less-than-perfect-parenting without repair is traumatic for children creating pain, wounds, that impact how they develop and interact with their world. Our culture's support of certain parenting styles makes it difficult to identify when our parenting is damaging. A close look at accepted parenting practices can actually be recognized as less-than-nurturing or abusive (conceptualized by Pia Mellody in Facing Codependence). This creates "Relationship Trauma" (coined by Tian Dayton in Emotional Sobriety).

We are wired for love, attachment and connection and to fear abandonment as a survival mechanism. This is why hurts by our primary caretakers, in our "survival relationships", are so impactful and the related emotions so intense. The pain is held in the muscle tissue of the body and is imprinted on our neurological systems.

### **Love is cruel and a saving grace! (Dayton)**

> Disappointment and loss trigger fear with self-protective responses

Fight – anger, rage, aggression

Flight – taking off, leaving, dissociating

Freeze – shutting down, withdrawing

> Connection and care soothe, bringing us back to a state of equilibrium

Chronic emotional pain affects the limbic system in our brain with the repeated triggers of our fear/stress response impacting our ability to regulate our emotions.

This in turn impacts how we organize our sense of self, manage our external world and our relationships.

We are born a blank slate, full of potential, and with inherent wondrous natural child characteristics. As soon as we start interacting with the world around us and our caretakers, we start wiring our brain, creating our sense of self and learning. We are vulnerable, susceptible and malleable. Our environment greatly influences how we develop. The natural child characteristics are the basis for evolving into amazing adults.

## *Growing Ourselves Up...*

We want to capture our child natural characteristics and develop them into mature adult ones (Mellody):

<b>Natural Characteristics of the Child</b>	<b>Dysfunctional Survival Characteristics (defenses)</b>
Valuable	Able to esteem oneself from within the presence of one's humanity
Vulnerable	Able to be intimate, have moderate vulnerability
Imperfect	Able to be comfortable with oneself and accountable for one's impact on others
Dependent (Needing/Wanting)	Able to be responsible for one's own self-care and to be interdependent
Immature	Able to contain oneself as well as maintain a sense of spontaneity

But less-than-perfect-parenting, void of repair, undermines this process creating instead Core Difficulties, or symptoms:

- Experiencing appropriate levels of self esteem
- Setting appropriate and effective boundaries
- Owning and expressing own reality
- Taking care of own adult needs and wants appropriately
- Experiencing and expressing own reality, including emotions, moderately

Natural Characteristics of the Child	Dysfunctional Survival Characteristics (defenses)	Core Difficulties (symptoms)
Valuable	Less-than or Better-than	Difficulties expressing appropriate self-esteem levels
Vulnerable	Too vulnerable or Invulnerable	Difficulties setting appropriate boundaries
Imperfect	Bad / rebellious or Good / perfect	Difficulties owning and expressing one's own reality
Dependent/ Needing/Wanting	Too dependent or Antidependent / needless / wantless	Difficulties taking care of one's adult needs and wants
Immature	Extremely Immature (chaotic) or Overmature (controlling)	Difficulties experiencing and expressing one's reality moderately

### These impact relationships...

- Distorted or nonexistent spirituality – difficulty experiencing connection with power higher than ourselves, feeling stuck / hopeless / alone
- Negative control – we determine other's experience for our own comfort
- Avoiding reality – use addictions or illnesses to avoid what is going on with us or those we love
- Resentment – need to get even or punish other for perceived infraction to us (that affect our self esteem and cause shame)
- Impaired ability to sustain intimacy – difficulty sharing who we are with others and hearing/seeing others without interfering with what we hear or see

### How do we fix this?

Addressing the less-than-perfect parenting emotional damage is the cornerstone for healing, developing and evolving, along with learning self-management, relationship enrichment and success skills.

### Feelings serve a purpose

When honored feelings guide us. They can be translated and used to navigate life. In their un-moderated state, they become challenging and create difficulties.

Joy – abundance  
 Passion – motivation  
 Love – worth

Anger – self-care / protection  
 Fear – protection  
 Pain – growth  
 Guilt – check-n-balance  
 Shame – humility (we are not the Higher Power)

### In their unModerated State...

-- rage  
 -- panic  
 -- hopelessness / depression  
 -- stuck  
 -- unworthiness

There is a bias in our society against emotionality, being emotionality expressive – even moderately emotionality expressive...

We are to become aware of messages about feelings not being ok, being emotional indicating instability or craziness, preference towards rationality vs emotionality, etc. that perpetuate the disowning of feelings and sabotage healing.

## BONUS CONCEPT

### Induced or Carried Feelings

Caregivers are not in touch with own feelings when “abusing”. They are in the throes of an overwhelming emotional state and flooded. If they were in touch, they wouldn’t abuse... Their feelings are not moderated, becoming too large and “spilling” over... The “spill” is picked up by the child, who then carries the excess feelings with them perpetuating reactivity and unmoderated tendencies.

The child does not have an appropriate mirror and regulating mechanism in the caretaker undermining their ability to develop this for themselves.

### To heal the “emotional damage”, we are to:

- Embrace and honor our spectrum of feelings, feel our feelings (long enough to attach words to them)
- Express our feelings moderately - appropriately and using language
- Address the needs behind them - appropriately, mindfully and intentionally

### To continue our development and evolution, we are to:

- Self-soothe and self-regulate – self-care practice
- Process our experience – narrate our story, journal
- Understand our experience – put into perspective, reframe it
- Reparent ourselves – appropriately meet our needs and give ourselves unconditional love
- **Address the Core Symptoms – use self growth and relationship enrichment**
- Set ourselves up for success – use advance success skills



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