

## Episode Transcript

### TAOLC EP: 020 - The Wisdom of Trauma and Why it Can Evolve You

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- 00:06 Welcome to The Art of Living Consciously Podcast, a show designed for out-of-the-box thinkers and mindset shifters who are looking for new ways to evolve. This is an intimate container designed to uplift, inspire, and motivate you on your own growth journey.
- 00:31 I'm your host, Dannie Reeve. As a certified BNE or Bioneuroemotion practitioner, I empower men and women to turn their conflicts into stepping stones for growth because when you question your own beliefs and perceptions and take responsibility for your life, everything else follows. If you ask me, earth is a place where souls are sent to evolve, and in this podcast we will discuss the best tools for our evolution.
- 00:58 Hello, flawsome friends and welcome to episode 20. Today let's talk about trauma, but I would like to give it a different spin for you to understand how with the right perception trauma can provide you with the wisdom to move forward and to evolve in your life. First, we'll look at what trauma is, as the way we view trauma has changed in recent years and that has enabled us to also find different ways of treating and overcoming trauma.
- 01:38 Then we will look at how trauma can affect the way you respond to stress or the way in which you deal with conflict, and this will lead you to understanding better how trauma can evolve you and what you can do in order to start acting differently. Thanks to the wisdom it has provided for you. I will teach you how to start understanding the cues that your responses are leaving and this will help you to deal with conflict in a different way. So stay tuned for that and let's delve in. Trauma is a loaded term and we tend to associate it with particular events such as sexual abuse major accidents, etcetera. But actually recent studies are showing that trauma is not an event, is not something that happened to us. Trauma is the experience, it's not the event, it's what happens inside of you as a result of what happened to you.
- 02:52 So in other words, it's your response to the event rather than the event itself. In that sense, trauma can be anything that made you feel negatively about yourself and that you were unable to fully process and cope with. A visit to the gynaecologist can be traumatic, if you feel that the procedure was invasive and it made you feel a certain way. Another person may go to the same appointment and have the same procedure and not feel anything inappropriate or invasive about it at all. A same experience can be traumatic for some and not a source of concern for some other people. That will also depend on how they view the

world and on past experiences they have had, which will make them face the same situation in a different way and perceive it differently. What I want you to take away from this is that the trauma is not the event.

03:52

The event has no power over you. What is traumatic is how it makes you feel and how you respond to it. That's why trauma is often deeply rooted in childhood because it's when we were most vulnerable and didn't have the tools that maybe we needed in order to face these situations. However, this new definition of trauma is wonderful because it means that as adults we have the tools or we can acquire the tools to rewrite the story and to learn how to respond differently to similar situations. We will look into how to do that later on in the episode, but for now, I'd like you to keep this in mind. The power is in the response, not in the event. A typical example of this is studies done on concentration camp survivors and how some people allowed the experience to completely condition and destroy the rest of their lives, whereas others were able to process it and to turn their lives around.

05:05

For example, Dr. Victor Frankl whose book *Man's Search for Meaning* is a testimony to that. In fact, there's a passage in the book where Dr. Frankl and a friend of his go out of the camp after being liberated and the friend is in the midst of rage and he just wants to destroy everything which is understandable, an understandable emotion that he had after being liberated. Viktor Frankl reflects on that and says, well, I understood that that was not going to do any good to me, but that many people prolonged that period of rage and helplessness and let it destroy their lives, whereas other people decided not to let the event condition their entire life. This stark difference in how people handle things in the face of such a traumatic event just reinforces that it's not the event that produces suffering, but how you respond to it.

06:09

Now, obviously I'm not saying that there aren't any painful events, but we all know the famous quotes, pain is unavoidable, suffering is optional. What trauma does in the long run is that it keeps us stuck in suffering. Now, if you're listening to this, chances are that you're human <laugh>. And so as a human being, you've probably gone through some sort of trauma in your life. We all go through trauma because at some point in our lives we've had an experience that has made us feel a certain way inside and that we haven't been able to cope with appropriately. There are many different sources of trauma and here are some of the most important categories and some that you might be able to relate to. So we have shock trauma which can be an accident, an assault, a natural disaster as well.

06:58

There's also developmental and relational trauma, which can be due to experiencing chronic adversity, abuse, neglect, or lack of safety whilst growing up. Other sources of trauma can be experiences such as chronic or toxic stress, medical procedures, adverse community environments such as growing up in or being subject to poverty, violent neighbourhoods or racism amongst others. And

what is very interesting is the science of epigenetics is showing that trauma can be passed down up to three generations. It's known as intergenerational trauma, which means that the way that you perceive the world might be conditioned by a particular trauma someone in your family had. As I say this, this story comes to mind. I don't know if I've talked about it already in one of my episodes, but it's this account I read in a newspaper article. I can't remember where, but it was this man who was saying how in his family they planned everything ahead, like really ahead.

08:09

Every meeting in the family was ridiculously planned. Like Christmas dinner was planned like a year ahead. If they had to go to an airport, they would be there a ridiculous amount of time before like maybe four or five hours before they actually had to be there. This man was Jewish and it turns out that the reason why his great-grandfather was able to escape from Germany with his family was because he really planned ahead of time. He got his family on a boat to the UK. At the time of the event, the grandmother was a teenager, I think she was around 14. She remembered very vividly the dread and the silence in the boat as they were leaving German waters. And it was only when they were sure that they were out of German waters that everybody relaxed and everybody broke into a cheer. Unfortunately, the family members that they left behind, those who had not planned ahead, didn't have such lucky fates.

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Therefore, for the unconscious mind of this man and his family to plan ahead and to be ahead of time is a way to respond to that trauma and they keep responding in the same way. Even though today there is no danger and that's a clear example of how your perception conditions, your response and how sometimes your perception has nothing to do with reality, but is rooted in someone's else's experience. Maybe this story has brought something up for you. Maybe you're thinking about some of your own responses or moments where you get particularly triggered and respond in a certain way. We'll talk about this a little later, but triggers are usually rooted in some kind of trauma because it's our unconscious mind who is trying to communicate with us and shine the spotlight on something that we're not paying attention to and needs healing. Usually it's our inner child who is trying to communicate with us because as I said earlier, most trauma is rooted in childhood experiences, and these experiences and the way we felt them and we responded to them, might still be conditioning the way you are showing up in your life today.

10:45

Over 20 years ago, the American CDC and Kaiser launched the permanent adverse childhood experiences study and they established a direct link between adverse childhood experiences and long-term health and wellness. And they did so after examining over 17,000 patients, the adverse childhood experiences or ACEs could be neglect, physical and or emotional abuse as well as household dysfunctions such as mental illness, substance abuse, divorce, a parent being treated violently, incarcerated relatives, etcetera. Two thirds of the participants had one ace, over 20% had three or more ACEs, and they found out that people

with four or more ACEs were at much greater risks of developing diseases such as cancer, strokes, diabetes, obesity, and suffer from depression, drug abuse or attempt suicide. The study also showed that people who had six or more ACEs could see their life expectancy decreased by almost 20 years. So yes, trauma can hugely affect your life and that's why it's so important to understand it in order to be able to overcome it because now we know that this is not a life sentence.

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These figures, these numbers are not set in stone. By looking within and starting to see the cues that trauma is showing you, you can turn this story around. What is important to understand is that the way you perceive the world is greatly conditioned by your childhood experiences, your autonomic nervous system, which is responsible for scanning your environment and seeing if it is safe or not and is responsible for eliciting certain responses, is mostly wired in your childhood. Let's say you grew up in an environment where the adults in your life didn't feel safe, maybe because they were fighting all the time, maybe they were abusive towards you or towards one of your parents. For x y reasons you might have grown up in an environment that was not safe and where you couldn't rely on the adults in your life for support.

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Therefore, your autonomic nervous system is wired not to trust and to fear connection and intimacy because it didn't feel safe as a child. So as an adult, even though you consciously want to connect with people and have intimate relationships, you might unconsciously reject them. Your autonomic nervous system or your unconscious mind is not allowing that connection. It's trying to protect you and is not doing a very good job of it because it's not distinguishing what is actually safe and what is not, in your current reality. So in its attempt to protect, it's replacing your need for connection, for a need for protection. The key here is perception. If your autonomic nervous system is dysregulated, it'll be stuck in survival mode. It will be scanning the environment for threats all of the time. Put it simply, you are perceiving your current circumstances through the eyes of that scared child because remember, trauma is not the thing, it's not the event.

14:34

It's how you experience that event. And this is wonderful news because it means that you can retrain your brain and your nervous system to feel safe again. In other words, you can reparent that child. To do that, you have to first understand how that child is reacting and what it is reacting to and what it is reacting for. In his wonderful book, *waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*, Dr. Peter Levine explains that as a result of trauma, the body stores trapped energy. Remember, trauma is how the experience made you feel and how you responded. For example, you might have experienced a lot of shouting when you were growing up. Maybe your parents fought a lot and maybe your father used to scream at you a lot and your way of dealing with that type of violence was to freeze. You might have decided that it was better to keep quiet to avoid

any more violence or you might have fawned, which is another type of response, which is an attempt to appease the other person and is a form of people-pleasing.

16:01

You learned to tend to their emotions to be overly nice to try and fix things. At that time, you didn't have the tools to stand up for yourself and so you have all these internal emotions going on and you're trying to suppress them. You're trying to appease your external environment and you are not tending to your inner world and to what you need. Those suppressed emotions are what Peter Levine refers to as trapped energy, but that energy needs to be moved. Those emotions need to be processed. So in order to release that energy and to process those emotions, the brain is going to seek to recreate similar situations so you can respond differently to them and that's where perception comes into play. Your brain uses your perception to create metaphors. That's to say current representations of people, places, et cetera from the past and then it assigns a similar meaning to these metaphorical experiences for you to respond differently.

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So I know this is all a little bit wordy, so let me give you an example of how this works so you can understand it better. Let's take the example I told you about earlier. In that case, the trauma was how you experienced someone shouting at you and the coping strategies that you adopted. Then you might be extremely triggered by people who speak to you in a certain tone of voice. You might have a boss who is a metaphor for your father and that boss might use the same tone of voice as your father when he speaks to you and he might be constantly picking up on your mistakes and speaking to you in a way that you feel is disrespectful. The way the child in you is coping with this situation is by responding in the exact same manner that you responded to your father.

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That's to say not saying anything to him, maybe trying to appease him and constantly try to do more and do better and try to gain his approval. The reason you are doing that is because unconsciously you are reacting to your father. You are seeing your father in front of you and you're reacting as if you were a defenceless little girl or boy, but you're not that anymore. You have other tools in your toolkit and your brain is giving you an opportunity to overcome your trauma by recreating similar circumstances so you can respond differently. This might look like actually standing up for yourself and being assertive and for example, saying, I'm sorry, but can you please speak to me in another tone of voice or asserting your needs. Whatever comes up for you, you are being called to change. It's important to understand that your triggers are the way forward for understanding your trauma and overcoming it.

19:20:

Your triggers are the cues that can help you heal your trauma in your present circumstances because for your unconscious mind, there is no difference

between past and present. Everything is present. So if you are able to start healing the way you respond in the present, then you are starting to overcome your past trauma. Your triggers are not random. It's your inner child who's trying to communicate to you the places that need healing and attention from yourself. So triggers are a great cue to help you to see how you are perceiving the world and trail back to that moment in life where you decided to respond that way, because you were reacting from a place of trauma. People often ask me what BNE or bBioneuroemotion is about and what happens in a session? And actually I feel this is a really good moment to explain how the method can help with triggers and trauma.

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In a session, we will look at a conflict through the lens of a detective, and that's to say my role as a practitioner is to help you look at your current circumstances or conflict objectively and I do that by being very specific in the information I ask and getting you to be very descriptive when it comes to the situation that we are exploring or investigate. That helps me to see how your nervous system is scanning your world, what is triggering you and how you are responding. I will help you journey through different situations or metaphors that your brain recreated of that same issue and that will eventually lead us to going back to that seed moment, that moment in your life where you decided to respond the way you are responding. The objective is not to wallow in the past, but to understand your operating system and for you to be able to rewrite your story.

21:35

That's to say, to understand what led you to react that way, what belief you took on that led you to perceive the world the way you perceive it, and to act the way you act so you can now rewrite that belief from a place of understanding and choose to act differently. So that the adult in you can start taking ownership for their decision and that you are not a victim of your circumstances, but rather that you are able to see the wisdom in your triggers, conflicts, and trauma, and that gives you the keys to start leading a different life. Of course, there is much more to the session, but I felt that since we were talking about trauma and triggers, this is a tool that can help you as well. Sometimes we need that external objective perspective in order to be able to connect all the dots and start acting differently because our actions are determined by our beliefs and our beliefs are largely determined by the experiences we had in our childhood and the meaning we assigned to them back then.

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A BNE session can certainly help a dysregulated nervous system in that sense by working on your perception and by helping you to release that trapped energy, by processing your unprocessed emotions. We live in exciting times where we have a far better understanding of what trauma is, how it can influence us, and how we can overcome it. More importantly, because you are not a victim of your circumstances, trauma does not have to condition your entire life. It is within your power to turn it around and there are so many tools out there to help you do so. And today we have seen that your trauma holds great wisdom. It is teaching you a lot about yourself and also about what you are capable of doing

once you learn to read the cues that the trail of trauma has left behind you and the ways in which your inner child is trying to get your attention so you tend to it and so you can get back in the driver's seat of your life. If you are interested in finding out more about my work and the sessions I offer please head over to my webpage [www.danniereeve.com](http://www.danniereeve.com), that's DANNIER EEVE.COM, and you'll find all the information on my Work With Me page. And there you have it for today's episode. Thank you so much for listening. I truly appreciate you and I wish you a flawsome day that is flawed and awesome, just the way we like it.