



HealthyBodyHealthyLife
with *Melissa Koerner*

Total Transformation

Module 3 – Part 6:

How Trauma Gets Stored in Your Mind & Body And Creates Self-Sabotaging Behavior Patterns

With Nutrition, Fitness & Integrative Medicine Health Coach Melissa Koerner

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Trauma Creates a Button Activating the SNS

- Trauma and autoimmune expert, Dr. Keesha Ewers, says that past hurt in childhood creates a “button” that can then be **pushed** by people later in your life.
- When this happens, it **activates** the stress response system (sympathetic nervous system) that results in high blood pressure, an increase in heart rate, diminished libido, and a dysfunctional immune system.
- In her practice, Dr. Keesha discovered that **healing** the trauma, learning to **forgive** and the willingness to **self-confront** patterns of reactivity could **reverse** inflammation and disease.
- It was just a matter of **retraining** the brain and **reframing** the stories.

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Maladaptive Memory Looping

- But there's a **catch** when it comes to retraining your brain.
 - When your mind believes that there's a problem and you ask the **same** mind that **created** the problem to help **solve** the problem, you create a "dog chasing its tail scenario."
- But in this scenario, your mind is chasing its own *tale*.
- This is called **maladaptive** memory looping.
- And it happens when **automatic negative thoughts** ("ANTs") surface from feeling hurt, betrayed, unsafe, unworthy, unimportant, not good enough etc.

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Adaptive Memory Processing

- With **adaptive** memory processing, you **STOP** chasing this belief or tale.
- You reach a point in your life where you get **tired** of the cycle of getting triggered by the **same** past hurts over and over.
- And you notice these same **patterns** keep repeating in your life.
- You realize the manner in which you're reacting to them is **NOT** doing you or anyone one around you any good.
- In fact, you'll notice these reactions not only **block** you from achieving your health and weight loss goals and from showing up in your life as your **best** self.

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Self-Confronting the Trauma

- To stop your mind from chasing its own tale, you must be **willing** to self-confront the **story** you've created around the trauma and change it.
- This is about letting go of the **sabotaging** patterns that keep looping, and keep you stuck.
- It's about **letting go** of all the pain.
- If you're not willing to do this, you'll **never** set yourself free.
 - And you'll **stay** in this cycle of feeling sick, fat and tired.

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How Trauma Creates “Buttons” That Trigger Stress

- We're going to talk about how traumatic events create theses “buttons” that can then be **pushed** by people later in your life, essentially **keeping** you stuck in a chronic state stress or “fight or flight.”
- I'm going to use the story of a past client of mine to show you how this works.
- I've changed her name and some of the specific details of her experience.

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1: You Experience a Hurtful Event

- When Grace was two years old her father died of cancer.
- So, she and her mom went to live with a friend for a period of time.
- During her stay, Grace wet the bed in the middle of the night.
- Her mom was so embarrassed by this, the next day, Grace's mom put her on a train and sent her away to go stay with her grandparents.
- Grace travelled several hundred miles all by herself.

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2: The Hurt is Stored in the Body, Mind, Heart & Story

- This experience was very **distressing** for Grace's little-girl self and it became a crucial part of her story.
- From this experience she created **beliefs** or **tales** that she was still carrying around with her when she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and chronic fatigue at the age of 53.
- Some of those **stories** were:
 - "I have to be really good – I have to perfect, or I'll be rejected."
 - "If I make everyone happy and I please people by behaving exactly the way they expect me to, everything will be fine - I'll be safe."

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3: A Button is Created and Can Be Triggered in the Future

- Whenever Grace felt **unsafe** or **rejected**, she would go above and beyond to make it right and make everyone happy.
- She became a people pleaser, an overachiever and a perfectionist.
- She also created **co-dependent** relationships to validate her self-worth, which was essentially a childhood strategy she created as a survival mechanism.
 - But the problem is, you **CANNOT** rely on sources outside of yourself for approval of self-worth.
 - Because you can't please everyone. And you can't make everyone like you.
 - Dr. Keesha says "codependency is a roller coaster of emotional slavery. It does not lead to self-differentiation or an empowered sense of self."

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4: Emotions Are Felt in the Body

- When Grace felt **unsafe** or **anxious** as a child, she often felt it in her gut.
- It makes sense that as a teenager she developed **gastroenteritis** and had severe **constipation**.
- As an adult she also developed **leaky gut** as well as several **gut infections**.
- For the rest of her life, she will need to be aware of treating her digestive system with **extreme care**.

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5: The 4F Stress Response System is Activated (Fight, Flight, Faint or Freeze)

- When Grace encountered someone who she felt didn't **like** her, **criticized** her behavior, said something **negative** about her, got upset with her etc., this would trigger a primal response in her brain that sent the message "**danger**" to the rest of her body.
 - This then triggered the release of **cortisol**, so she could flee or fight the danger.
 - But in reality, there was **nothing** to run away from.
 - So the cortisol **remained** in her system making her heart rate increase, her bowels shut down and weight go up!
- As I mentioned, Grace had constipation for many years and the repeated triggering of cortisol began to **break down** the lining of her gut wall creating a "leaky gut."

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6: Meaning is Created

- The **meaning** that Grace created in her undeveloped mind was that she is unworthy, unlovable and unimportant.
- Because if she were all of these things, she would not have been **rejected** and **abandoned** by her own mom.

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7: Beliefs Are Put in Place

- The beliefs that Grace created were that she had to be **perfect** and **please** everyone around her to feel **loved** and **accepted** by others.

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8: Behaviors Are Adopted

- Grace became **hyper-aware** of reading other peoples' signals when they were upset, and she responded by trying to "fix" the situation and **diffuse** the conflict.
- She tried to be **perfect** all the time and worked hard to **please** everyone around her to prevent **conflict** and being **rejected** abandoned.
- She became an **extreme** caregiver as a way to survive.

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The Trauma Button is Like a Time Bomb

- Now that this button is in place, created in her early childhood, it can be **triggered** by anyone who Grace **perceives** is rejecting her or threatening her.
- This button is **wired** to her brain, heart and immune system.
- Without **facing** this maladaptive processing loop created in her childhood, this button will continue to be triggered by anyone she interacts with for the rest of her life.
 - It's like a **time bomb** ready to explode every time someone trips the wire.
 - The series of stressful reactions she experienced in her childhood now **repeat** at potentially the same degree as they did when she was a child.

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Unresolved Trauma Can Make You Sick

- When this cycle continues over a period of many years, it **promotes** chronic inflammation, which can lead to leaky gut, severe food and chemical sensitivities, weight gain and eventually an autoimmune disease and cancer.
- Here's your big takeaway: You must be **WILLING** to heal **unresolved** emotional hurt from past trauma to heal chronic inflammation making you sick, fat and tired!

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Self-Confront Your Story

- Everyone knows that in order to **lose weight** and reverse other **inflammation-related** health issues you have to eat healthy and exercise.
- But what most people don't know is that these efforts alone are **NOT** enough.
- You must be willing to **self-confront** the story you've created around past trauma and your patterns of reactivity.
- If not, you'll **continue** to be triggered by your past trauma over and over.
- And losing the excess weight and reversing your chronic health issues will continue to be a **constant** struggle for the rest of your life.

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The Choice is Yours...

- You get to choose between **MALADAPTIVE** continual looping, which leads to weight gain and disease and staying **stuck** and loopy.
- Or, the **ADAPTIVE** memory processing that leads to **freedom** through your willingness to self-confront.

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Here's a Recap of How Trauma Effects You

1. Experiences that hurt are felt in your body as **emotion**.
2. Your 4F stress response system is **activated** when you feel threatened.
3. You create **meanings** to explain the disturbing experiences from a child's perspective.
4. This creates your **belief system** about yourself, your world and the people you share it with.
5. Behaviors are then **developed** to match your beliefs, and you **adapt** in the most skillful way you know how with your undeveloped child brain.

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Here's a Recap of How Trauma Effects You

6. As a child, you **embed** this experience in your **story** as a factory default setting, rather than with **intention**.
7. This creates a **button** that can be **triggered** again and again for the rest of your life. It's like a **time bomb** of default settings, created by your underdeveloped brain.
8. Now, as an adult, you get opportunity to **upgrade** your default settings.

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Next Up...

**Module 3 – Part 7:
How to Use the HURT
(Healing Unresolved Trauma) Model**