

LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS - HEALING THE TRAUMA OF A WAR VETERAN

WITH PSYCHOPHONETICS

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This is a message of hope for the New Year: human traumas can be healed from the inside of the soul, by oneself, and the healing process itself can become a new step in one's personal and spiritual development, strength, resilience and maturity.

A new ray of light is needed, a new insight, an act of self-compassion, an act of self-empathy is required. Once activated, this new ray of inner light, consciously brought into a previously dark painful wound in the soul, becomes applicable for the rest of one's life and relationships. Light is light: wherever it comes from, it can radiate in all directions.

Trauma is not just a mental-emotional-psychological reality. It goes right into the hidden life of the living body, wounding the body and the soul perpetually. No amount of mental talking, analysis, interpretation, mechanical techniques, hypnosis, meditation, anti-depressants, anti-anxiety or any other chemical numbing mechanisms can fully clear the imprints of trauma from the human constitution. They can numb it, divert attention from it, delay the inevitable return of disturbance later in life; and create a disconnection between one's awareness and the suppressed wound. But the damage will continue until a new ray of inner light, new care, new compassion, new self empathy and self healing reaches the soul-wound, just as for a physical wound.

The human body forgets nothing. No matter how many layers of denial, numbness, forgetfulness and avoidance the mind puts on top of indigestible painful memories to cover them up from awareness, the body remembers everything. From the depth of the body-memory the suppressed painful memories will come up like a ghost from the grave, to haunt the mind with its agony from behind.

Time itself does not heal a trauma. If shards of glass flow in your veins, time will just make their accumulated damage worse. Trauma acts like shards of glass revolving in the soul-body continuum. They are not made of time-bound elements, and time cannot heal them. Consciousness can heal. Heart consciousness, empathy-consciousness, compassion consciousness can heal all trauma.

The role of the therapist, at least of the Psychophonetics practitioner is never to replace the self-healing of the client, but to encourage it. Courage encourages, but it has to be gained first in very real terms. The therapist who is not engaged in self healing cannot encourage self healing in anyone else. Out of all the forms of trauma I have been dealt with during my 26 years of work as a therapist, the challenge of recovery from the trauma in war veterans is the closest to me personally. I was a frontline soldier and commander in a war zone. By good fortune and chance alone I was not killed, wounded, or made to kill and wound others. I was a highly trained, equipped and determined 20 year old professional soldier. I came back unharmed. Many of my comrades never came back. Many came

back traumatised. To them I owe the debt of the one who was spared the damage. It does not matter what country, army, nation, cause, formed the particular conflict situation. All that matters to me is that I was once prepared to kill and be killed, and therefore all war veterans everywhere are my comrades for the rest of my life. There are millions of them in many countries with deep wounds buried inside, and many of them cannot sleep at night for many years later.

My first client of 2016 was a war veteran. Three decades ago he was recruited to a frontline unit when his country was at war, and after the necessary rough training he played his part as required. He did not choose to enlist. He was forced to by the war. He did not believe in the war aims of those in charge of him. But he was far too young to have the



Two Yehuda's in the Judea Desert 1973. The one on the right is me who survived. The one on the left is my friend Yehuda who was killed in action a few months later.

perspective and the independence required for conscientious objection. He needed to belong to his people, and that was the only way to do so. He did his duty and fought. And at one point he saw his brother, fighting alongside him in the same unit, being shot dead next to him. The pain never left, the ability to sleep was never restored, the anger, the sense of betrayal by the system, the horror, the cruelty and the brutality of it all never lifted. He lived on top of it all, with an undigested, unresolved, unhealed wound.

As always in a Psychophonetics session, no questions have been asked, empathic responses were offered for feelings, emotions, sensations, meanings, and, when the warmth of the 'Empathic Common Picture' was created, a wish was requested of him. It came ready and clear: To bring this inner wound to a closure, to heal it, to move on, and to be able to sleep well. That wish was completely honoured. Then, as we always do in Psychophonetics processes, he chose a moment from recent time when the disturbing thought associated with that inner pain was active.

We did not go back in mental memory to the event that caused the trauma. We started from the effect it still had on his normal life now. He was encouraged to apply the 'Deep Intelligence' of Self-Empathy of the Psychophonetics therapeutic process: Body Awareness; Spontaneous Gesture; 'Exiting' and visualising the imaginative gestured experience from outside; giving the new visualisation a new meaning, spontaneously constructed. Sometimes we use the sounds of human speech to address, connect, match and release experiences lodged in the body. This time there was no need for it. Sensing, Gesture and visualisation were enough for the exploration phase.

What we discovered in this process was new to him: he could see that the pain emerges from his own mind in constant internal attack on his own defenceless heart. He played the part of the attack physically. His own body told him what he has been doing day and night to himself, half-consciously, for 30 years. When translating the inner attack into words he said to himself: *How could you do it?* 'IT' was his participation in that cruel, inhuman, senseless war that killed his brother. That was the perpetual internal meaning that became the self-attack. Then he played the part of the helpless,

trapped heart at the receiving end of that self-attack. He was totally contracted in the midst of an unbearable pain with no escape and no protection. When he exited from this position and looked at the empty space in front of him, he saw a 19 year old man in uniform, next to his dead brother.

All this was named, acknowledged, heard, and respected. No judgment, not even judging the attacking inner character was present. We were looking at the inner facts externalised, made visual to both of us through the meaning he gave his own experience. Looking at it all, it became obvious to him that he was perpetually blaming himself for his part in what took place three decades ago, making the internal wound progressively worse. The unfairness of the situation in which a more mature and older man keeps blaming a younger inner man for a situation not of his own making, became clear to him. It also became clear to him from the position of Self-Compassion that an apology is well deserved. From the position of Self-Compassion now attained, he knelt in front of his 19 year old self, now and 30 years later and heartily apologised for all those years of unfair self-accusation. Then he took gentle care of his own heart. Something new entered the room at that moment. A clear, warm, light, heart presence entered, reaching right into the wound that was exposed to that new light. It came from his heart into his own heart. It was a new dimension of him.

His homework practice was proposed: (1) to create a 'self-compassion' moment morning and evening, and (2) to catch himself in the act of habitual self attacking, no matter what is the conscious cause – to gesture it, freeze, and let go and look at it, just as we did in the session. The homework made sense to him.

I do not know for sure when will be the next session with this man, but the earliest I will be able to meet him will be in five months from now. But neither him nor me were worried about it. He had made an irreversible act that day which made an irreversible change in his understanding and his attitude towards himself. His expressed wish was, in his own view, fulfilled. He was given something concrete to do in continuation of what was achieved in the session. He felt in charge of his own on-going process.

Every Psychophonetics session must be conducted as if it is the first time the practitioner meets that client, and, at the same time, as if it is the last time he/she meets the client. It has to stand on its own feet, independent of any follow-up session. There could be more sessions, but the achievement of one does not depend on the next one. The creation of dependency contradicts Psychophonetics ethics. I am trying to share with you in as vivid way as I can my knowing that it is possible to achieve self-healing and start the recovery from deep trauma of a war veteran through by encouraging his own exploration, new insights, heart intelligence, self-empathy and self-compassion, all of which can be continued independently by himself for the rest of his life.

That was my first Psychophonetics session of 2016. I consider it a blessed start for my new year. May it warm your hearts and encourage your practical hope for your life, work and development in 2016.