



Introduction: Welcome

Welcome to support and comfort whether you are new to healing or an old hand, whether the trauma is long past or ongoing.

Your experience is valid. Trauma survivors and sensitive people are both considered Other by mainstream culture. Flooded by that viewpoint, we often treat our own experience as a problem to be solved. This book accepts your experience as valid and important.

Explore self-care. Self-care can sound like an obligation, one more item on a long to-do list. Self-care can sound like abandonment if we were emotionally or physically neglected as children and still long for someone to rescue us. Self-care can sound selfish, self-indulgent, or forbidden when we are accustomed to caring for others first.

Caring for and about yourself includes resting from self-improvement, reaching out for help, and expressing clear boundaries. True self-care is self-compassion, allowing yourself to be exactly who you are right now. Grounded in self-compassion, you will be able to offer assistance to others and help them learn self-compassion as well.

Still growing. I started my own healing process full of

impatient enthusiasm. I was sure that if I worked hard enough and figured out the right choices, I would be healed in no time. Twenty years later, many aspects of my life have improved and I still encounter challenges as well.

Nowadays, fewer stones block my access to the wellspring of compassion within me, and I feel a seeping certainty that I am already good enough. I understand now that compassion was always there waiting while I hunted for it everywhere except inside myself.

Turn within. It takes a leap of faith to stop looking for external permission and trust the compassionate voice welling up inside. Internal critical voices are loudly emphatic, and they are often supported by external voices as well.

These articles were written over a three year period for my monthly newsletter.* Each one focuses on an aspect of healing from trauma by reconnecting with your body, your emotions, and your felt experience. The material is gathered from reading others' wise words, from listening to my body, and from working with my clients.

Take your time. Lotus plants take root underwater and grow toward the surface where the flowers open to light and air. At the beginning of each article, a lotus flower invites you to pause, breathe, and open to your self.

You can read this book as a continuous whole or dip in and out, focusing on the topics that are most alive for you right now. The examples are intentionally mild to avoid additional triggering. If you feel anxious, impatient, or bored, you can take a break or skip the parts that are difficult for you.

* Read new articles and subscribe to my free monthly newsletter: www.TraumaHealed.com/articles/

As you read, listen to your body and notice what is true for you with gentle awareness. You can try the suggested exercises and experiments when you have an uninterrupted block of time to yourself, or they can be done in bits and pieces as you go about your day, whenever you have time to think and feel.

Resolving trauma held in the body is an ongoing process. As you tune in to your body and your inner self with the suggestions in this book, you may connect with upsetting information about past trauma. Especially at the beginning, it is important to proceed gently and with support.

Overview. The articles are grouped into seven themes.

- 1. Find Support.** Support and trust are complex issues for trauma survivors. Reach for both external and internal support and meet your Inner Nurturer.
- 2. Celebrate Your Survival Tools.** Learn to meet yourself where you are now. Rather than devalue the tools and behaviors that helped you survive, celebrate them and yourself. Negotiate a truce with your Inner Critic.
- 3. Connect with Your Self.** Trauma often catapults us out of our bodies. Bring kind attention to your emotions and sensations to reconnect with your self.
- 4. Recognize Abuse.** Trauma can be shockingly sudden and obvious, or it can be subtle, ongoing, and difficult to name. Be your own ally in response to victim-blaming, double binds, neglect, and other types of covert abuse.
- 5. Understand Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).** PTSD is a label for your nervous system's long-term response to trauma. Learn about compassionate approaches to the symptoms and how to

find healing.

6. **Heal Your Boundaries.** Most trauma damages physical and emotional boundaries. Reconnect with and express your preferences to help your boundaries heal. When “They” disapprove of your decisions, hire a new internal committee.
7. **Learn to Thrive.** It is not just about healing the past. Explore tools for shaping the life you want and finding joy in the present.

Check the **Glossary** for definitions when you encounter unfamiliar terms.

Trust your Self. With validation and support, your self-trust will heal. As you shift from fear to curiosity, you will find new ways to be kind to yourself and remove the stones that block your wellspring of compassion.