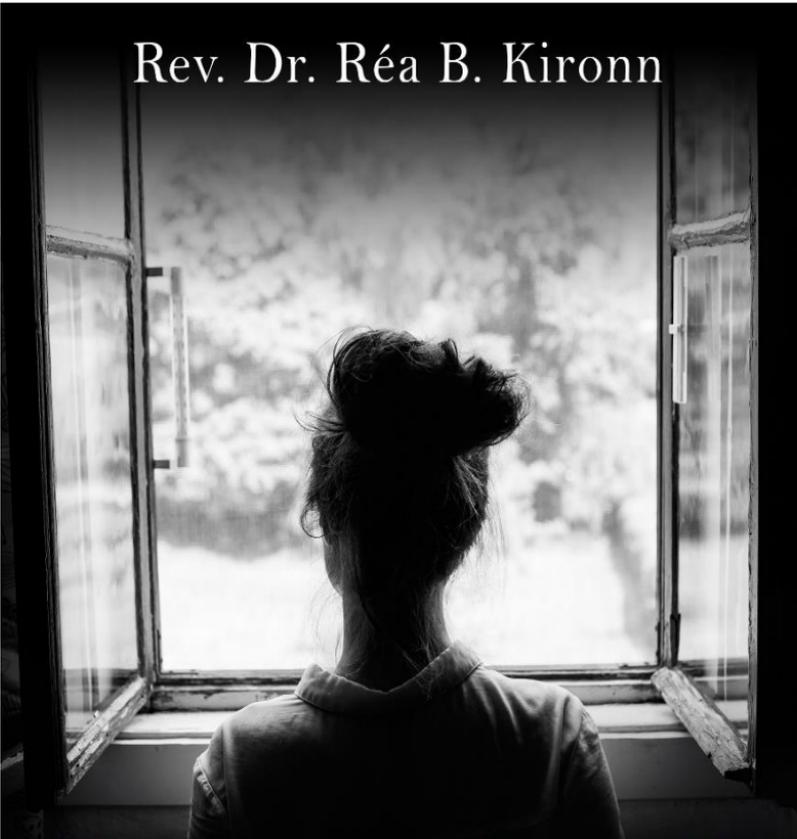


Rev. Dr. Réa B. Kironn



# Traumatized!

*A spiritual approach to the healing  
of emotional trauma.*

# ***Traumatized!***

*A spiritual approach to the healing of emotional trauma of childhood abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, combat, horrific accident, witnessing brutality and other dreadful experiences throughout one's life.*

Rev. Dr. Réa B. Kironn

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## Introduction

Based upon the extremely violent content of today's media, it seems as though the human mind and body can withstand non-stop kicking, punching, pummeling, and all manner of verbal and emotional abuse with little consequence. In video games, social media and even in so-called *comedies*, violence is often portrayed as light and even laughable. Everywhere we turn, there is constant exposure to violence. We have become desensitized to violence!

Desensitization is a common psychological response to prolonged exposure to many conditions, particularly violence. All human life is sacred and fragile. And because the body, mind, and spirit are so deeply interconnected, while still having limited coping systems for dealing with such repeated negative interaction, we are often the unwitting victims of trauma.

Trauma is caused by the unexpected, unwelcome, and unbearable pain of the violation of the body, mind, and/or spirit. This emotional wounding has been an ongoing experience almost on a daily basis. Humanity has experienced thousands of years of emotional trauma (man's inhumanity to man) and although resiliency is a strong human characteristic, violence-induced emotional trauma cannot be easily forgotten and it shapes the human character.

We must now re-think how we treat one another, not only from the *Golden Rule* perspective but also with the Big Picture in mind: the fact that we can do permanent, far-reaching damage to one another through *violence*.



## *Emotional Trauma*

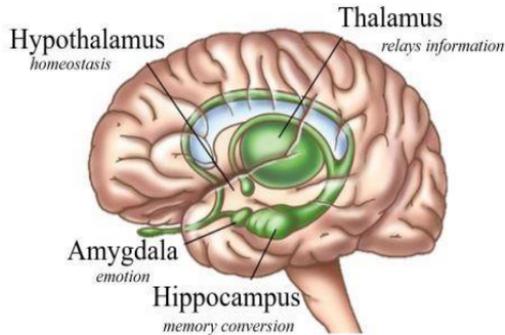
It is estimated that the earth is somewhere around 4.5 billion years old, yet man has only been evolving for the past six million. So, the human brain has been developing and adapting from *Homo sapiens'* time: a logical evolution from pre-mammalian life.

The *old* brain—our *animal* or lizard brain (which is what is referred to as the limbic system)—was wired primarily for survival. It is where the *flight, fight* or *freeze* function is initiated. It was designed by Universal Intelligence—a Divine Mind, if you will—to help assure our survival in the face of sudden or extreme danger. It was designed to keep us alive—and it did so just fine. We are the living proof of its success.

The amygdala is a key component of the primitive inner brain. It is linked to both fear responses and pleasure. The amygdalae, an almond-shape set of neurons deep within the brain's medial temporal lobe, signal the body to secrete the appropriate hormones to protect our very lives. If you were to put your hand on a hot stove, the amygdala would recognize this information as pain and cause you to jerk your hand away from the source of the pain immediately. It would also store this information as a memory of pain, in order to (hopefully) prevent you from doing it again.

However, during major trauma, such as domestic violence, combat, child abuse, sexual assault, horrific accidents, witnessing a homicide, or political oppression the process becomes much more complicated. The violence is unexpected, unwelcome, unbearable, and the victim can be rendered helpless to fight, to run away, or to even protect themselves.

# The Limbic System



The forebrain, just behind where your eyebrows are, is referred to as the *new* brain, or the thinking brain. This section, also known as the pre-frontal cortex, is associated with taking in information, weighing options, and making and executing decisions. When unbearable psychological pain occurs, as in major trauma, the amygdala goes into action. It signals the hypothalamus to send out messages to the pituitary and adrenal glands.

These glands secrete hormones rapidly into the body through the nervous system to ignite the fight or flight response. Among these hormones secreted are adrenaline (the rush), cortisol (the energy to act), opiates (to ease the psychological and emotional pain), and oxytocin (to induce a sense of well-being). This is all done simultaneously by our body during trauma, in an attempt to bring balance to an overworked, over- distressed system.

The usual function of the hippocampus is the orderly, sorting and storing of memories in the brain. At major trauma, the function of the hippocampus is compromised due to the

hormone mixture flooding the system. Thus, the hippocampus fails in its function, causing traumatic memories to become fragmented (dissociated or split-off). They are then usually buried deep within in the brain or even perhaps in the energy field surrounding the person.

Simultaneously, the pre-frontal brain goes offline (due to hormone overload) and cannot reason about the traumatic event. This is why many trauma victims may not be able to recall the details of the traumatic event. In addition, a traumatized person may be unable to make any decisions or think logically at all. Unfortunately, those fragmented memories still contain within them the exact emotions felt at the time the trauma occurred. Then, recalling these memories may even be more difficult, due to their extremely painful nature. This usually forces the brain, in an attempt to protect itself, to take these unbearable memories and repress them.

We have only recently come to learn much about trauma. Studies that began during World War I showed soldiers being victims of *shell shock*, only to be sent back to combat. Since the advent of new technology, such as fMRI brain scanning equipment and advances in neurobiology, we have learned a great deal about the nature and inner workings of the brain.

We have learned that the brain, seeking some sort of resolution to the trauma, often creates wiring that actually continues the cycle of trauma/violence of the traumatized individual, which is usually expressed either internally through mood and behavioral imbalances, or externally. This is why it may appear, for example, that a woman exposed to domestic violence continues on to yet another abusive relationship, repeating the cycle. Some say, without sympathy or understanding that she is *asking for it*. But this is certainly not the case. Until the initial trauma is acknowledged and treated,

the brain will continually habituate itself to a repetitious cycle toward resolution never found. So, the pattern repeats.

Unfortunately, this pattern of destruction cannot be disrupted on its own. Outside help is needed—understanding and care given by loving, intelligent, patient and qualified caregivers. Emotional trauma is a wounding. It is psychologically painful, even excruciatingly so. This is because the experience of major trauma undergoes an unnatural state of being, causing a loss of balance. The splitting off or fragmenting of memory forces a disconnection from reality in the victim. Experiencing sudden, unspeakable or unbearable pain radically changes our normal brain function—which also affects the soul.

The soul is the sum-source of who we *are*, the very center of our own unique identity. It contains our particular spark of life. So, when a sudden change in our mental health occurs, we become energetically disordered, spiritually fragmented. The emotional suffering, we have experienced can bring about mental health problems, or even personality disorders.

In all of the major trauma mentioned earlier, victim responses seem to be fairly similar. The survivor of rape experiences similar emotional symptoms as a combat veteran, as both are at the mercy of the limbic system's original responses.

The great educator Maria Montessori found that interruptions in early childhood development could actually cause brain damage to the child. Similar claims can be made that would suggest how major trauma at *any* point in our lives could cause a definite interruption in our personal development, as well as our overall state of mind.

At emotional trauma, memory fragmentation occurs which makes it difficult for the victim to recall what happened. There may be no other witness to the trauma, perhaps the witness may even be dead. The only witness could very well be

the perpetrator, who may deny that the trauma occurred. Without a witness or any recollection of the event, an outsider might say that the event did not occur, or that the victim is lying, perhaps even *crazy*.

If one has a recurrent dream or memory that is not clear, it may be an indication of exposure to major trauma which has been repressed, unrecognized, and as of yet, unresolved. Certain triggers, such as sounds, images, smells, or thoughts may stimulate all or parts of the fragmented trauma memory. The repressed memories may also manifest themselves in a variety of unpleasant, even harmful, ways such as chronic physical ailments, addictions, personality disorders, or self-destructive tendencies.

A person can be re-traumatized by the painful memories if they should surface in an unsupportive environment, or in the event that the trauma is repeated. The memories of the trauma have been split off from the conscious mind and buried in the subconscious. They may seem to have been forgotten or unable to be recalled because they are painfully unbearable. The inability to recall the memories is caused by the compromised hippocampus. Still, the fragmented memories exist, attached to the psychological pain that occurred at the moment of trauma.

Trauma survivors often say they don't want to talk about *it*. They even may be subtly aware that the repressed memories are *still* attached to unbearable pain. Unfortunately, re-experiencing this pain is almost inevitable, in order for the fragmented memories to be made whole and the trauma healed. This is why loving support is so important. The memories *must* surface before the healing can begin.

Flashbacks, nightmares, and unexpected reactions to stimuli are common indications that traumatic memories have been triggered. In some severe cases of major trauma, these responses can escalate into mental disorders. The

psychological “scars” of traumatic memories remain firmly a part of the brain. Healing provides a *deactivation of the energy* attached to the memory and certainly a release from the psychological pain. But the imprint, that *scar*, remains. *Getting over it* may be the goal, but far easier said than accomplished. Psychological issues can present in trauma survivors as a myriad of abnormalities and fears: avoidance of potentially emotionally disturbing situations; fear of (or inability to achieve) intimacy; feelings of shame, worthlessness, inferiority; an inability to trust others, and much more. There are many physical symptoms that may also develop, such as allergies, anxiety, asthma, panic attacks, digestive problems, and migraines or other types of headaches. These symptoms can be directly related to those feelings experienced when the trauma is recalled. It is crucial that those who suspect or know they have been traumatized should consider seeking out help to work through the underlying memories and the feelings attached to them. Otherwise, they may just continue to use drugs, alcohol, and therapies to treat the *symptoms*, without ever addressing the root causes of their misery.

I often think about Aesop’s fable of *Androcles and the Lion*. The story takes place in ancient Rome, where an oppressed Christian slave named Androcles decides to flee his abusive master, so he runs away. Sometime later in the woods, Androcles encounters a roaring lion who is in excruciating pain. At first fearing the ferocious beast, Androcles is convinced that the lion will attack him. Still, he moves closer and on inspection, he sees that the lion is suffering from a wound in its paw which had been inflicted by a thorn. Androcles removes the thorn, which causes the lion even more pain. The great beast growls out in pain, but afterward Androcles and the lion rest. The escaped slave has helped the King of the Beasts to heal. The two become friends and in the end, Androcles’ kindness and bravery are rewarded.

So, what is the point to this story? Simply put, trauma is painful not only *when it occurs*, but *while it remains unresolved and even when it begins to heal*.

I did not fully come to realize the extent of the pain I had experienced throughout a childhood and adolescence of emotional trauma (child abuse and domestic violence) until I was thirty-five years old. Out of the blue, I felt great crashing waves of loss and grief wash over me, seemingly without cause or reason. I was truly perplexed. But through a great many years of caring support, I was able to come to understand what had happened to me. I learned how to *deactivate* the pain energetically. These once-painful memories are no longer fractured and are now a viable part of my personal history, a part of the memory quilt integrated into *who* I am.

An example of psychosomatic pain is Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Spellbound*, where an emotionally disturbed physician relives the pain from burns on his hand sustained in an airplane crash. When attention is called to the scars on his hand, from the early burns, he experiences the pain again psychologically even though it no longer exists physically. The pain is still attached to the memory buried in the subconscious. His counselor uses the burns as an example of how trauma pain can remain in the memory.

Survivors of sexual assault can respond to their abuses in many ways, such as allowing additional or continual assault or abuse to occur because of their trauma. They may feel disconnected from the world, from others, even from their own bodies. A victim of rape or other sexual abuses may even relive the assault over and over, even when engaging in desired sexual activity. Sexual abstinence or intolerance may also occur. The effects are complicated, particularly if the traumatized victim is suddenly made aware of the trauma. Should this happen, the victim runs the risk of being re-traumatized. Often, adults who were beaten or neglected as children believe

that they had somehow deserved it, even if they have sustained severe physical injuries or emotional wounding. This was the topic of the extensive work done by noted Swiss psychiatrist Alice Miller.

When I was young, it was considered a man's *right* to beat, abuse, and demean his wife and children. Miller's book *For Your Own Good* discusses this insanity. We remember the horror of trauma, especially that experienced in childhood. These memories *can* be healed, but never *fully* eradicated. We do not want them to vanish however, because, even as painful as they may have been, they are still a part of what molds and shapes our character and identity, even to this day. It is important to never disregard such aspects of ourselves, regardless of how dark they may appear.

Researchers have discovered that blows to the head, whether psychological or physical, can cause severe brain damage. Physical abuse to the head can damage brain cells, protective brain tissues, brain stability, and even cause bleeding, swelling, and blood clots. All these can lead to brain damage, which may become permanent. Similar damage can occur during times of major emotional trauma, which can cause severe damage to the brain's neuropathways, causing the brain to misfire, miscommunicate and eventually causing psychological wounding.

Has someone perpetrated heinous physical or psychological violence against you? Or were you forced by circumstances to witness violence on a regular basis?

If so, then you may very well have been *traumatized*!



## *Trauma, the Soul, and Psychology*

*Soul* and the human spirit are not the same. Spirit (without reference to God), is higher, lighter, dances more, and sparkles greater, perhaps related to vibrations of the higher chakras. Soul, on the other hand, is a lower vibration—more grounded, encompassing spirit, as well as the entire human mind, and body. The soul is the unseen membrane which connects us to a Source Energy, the Universal Intelligence (or Universal Mind, if you prefer).

Our soul is infused within us when we arrive on the planet. It permeates every fiber of our being, its flame lights our way. When we die, the soul departs to become a part of Universal Consciousness once again. The soul has its own work to do on behalf of the Universal Mind—work it can only achieve through us. The soul is at home in the body; its work is part and parcel of our *raison d'être*. Perhaps we are here to allow fulfillment of our soul's work, which is also the work of the Creator, achieved through adventure, growth, expansion. The soul is here to experience *all* of it: the joys and the sorrow, the laughter and the tears, even the healing of trauma.

The soul develops in the child, just as do motor and cognitive skills. Neglect, abuse or trauma imposed upon a child—or anyone, for that matter—can cause the soul's development to be compromised. Marginalized. Driven into hiding, fractured into pieces, scattered in repose throughout the body. When the spirit is broken, the soul becomes disenfranchised. Essential life force energy, required for greater, glorious things, is choked-off. Our natural connection to The Source is weakened. This is because neither soul nor spirit can thrive in violence. Violence is a distortion, a subversion, a twisted perversion of love.

We know that both spirit and soul reside in the dimension of the unseen, yet are still felt and experienced. So where do they go after a traumatic incident has occurred? They still remain a part of our consciousness, given to help us find healing. They may remind us of their continued existence through dreams, visions, or subconscious images we receive. They can also present themselves through emotions, even after trauma. The phenomenon is “soul murder” a term that relates to the situation where trauma following violence renders the soul’s connections *impuissant*, less likely to keep us connected.

Since the soul encompasses both the mind and body, the energy given off by a trauma victim is dispirited. This, in turn, will likely attract other dispirited souls. It is our responsibility as caring humans to recognize these difficulties and to help one another heal from trauma by restoring the vibrations of the body, mind, and soul to their highest level. This is what it means to truly be *compassionate*.

The soul thrives best in a natural environment where all of life’s experiences can be known. Being stuck in the endless cycle of trauma is unnatural. Killing other beings is also unnatural to humans, leaving the majority of souls on our planet damaged. This damage is reflected in our relationships with each other, in our possessions, and in the condition of our planet, Mother Gaia.

Is the traumatized person aware of their soul, even though they are living in a state of hypervigilance and mistrust? Yes, the awareness of the soul is present even if the trauma victim is stuck in that endless loop. The soul might make itself known when someone offers a kind word, or some moment of clarity causes light and warmth in one’s self. Sometimes it can be found briefly while sitting in silent meditation, or perhaps walking in Nature.

How then is the soul eventually nurtured? Through the expression of the self and development of the identity. As soon

as a way is opened, some conduit, through conversation, through art, music, exercise, meditation, what have you—as soon as there is some small space in our consciousness for the soul to emerge – it will. The soul will once again flow and the more space it is given, the greater an appearance it will make, bringing us that much closer to the Source Energy.

The word *psychotherapy* is derived from Ancient Greek *psyche* meaning breath, spirit; soul); and *therapeia* meaning “healing; medical treatment). There was a time in the not-too-distant past when a soul in distress was recognized and treated with “soul therapy”. Psychotherapy has evolved into an umbrella word, covering a variety of treatments (primarily with the use of drugs) for disorders, or behavior modifications, as a form of healing.

Some of the physical ways that trauma can manifest itself in victims who have yet to seek treatment include eating, sleeping, or sexual disorders; energy disturbances; depression; anxiety/panic attacks; irrational fears or anger; distemporal flashbacks; uncontrollable floods of emotions; amnesia, and many other possibilities.

Reflect upon this for a moment: simply by creating a traumatic situation for someone, you may be causing that person more damage than you can possibly imagine.

How do people know whether they need psychological assistance or not? Well, for starters, if any of the above symptoms appear without cause, or seem to persist without resolution, a need for assistance may be warranted. If such assistance is sought, one might consider a therapist with a spiritual sense of healing who has experienced trauma and is qualified to assist you in your struggle: the wounded healer.

Thankfully, Spiritual Counselors are now emerging onto the mainstream to add to the colorful mix of aides who can support a person through their times of struggle and

deprivation. Even if one cannot afford qualified counseling, many avenues are accessible at no cost to the client.

Look around you with a discerning eye and you will see emotionally disturbed people *everywhere*. They are not just in the movies or on television, in games or graphic novels. They are everywhere, every day. Emotionally disturbed people are in the workplace, in line behind you at Walmart, sitting next to you on the bus, even driving alongside you at the intersection when the light changes to red.

So how do we deal with it? Simply by treating *everyone* with loving kindness. At the moment of trauma, when all rational interior systems go off-line and the brain goes on *tilt*, that loving kindness is absent! Its loss is deeply disturbing to the psyche, which is constantly seeking itself in others. This proves without a doubt that we need each other!

If you are concerned about what people will think of you by admitting that you have some emotional difficulty and need some help – don't waste your time with them. Get the help you need! You will be a better person for it, and probably without them in your life, as well.

In a workplace some years back, I had a supervisor who admitted to me that she was abused as a child by her father. He would smoke while driving in the car with the windows open. The burning ashes from the cigarettes flew into the back seat and burned her. This happened many times. He kept smoking while driving, and she kept being burned by her own father.

She never resolved her trauma—the damage done by these seemingly insignificant episodes was like a ball and chain she dragged with her *everywhere!* She was always in complete misery, even though she would force a smile all the time. She had to be the center of attention always, and those employees who did not kiss up to her were demeaned and humiliated. She dragged that ball and chain with her in the form of tyrannical

supervision wherever she went. Her conduct even became a part of the company's daily culture. How many more of these scenarios are there out there?

We can alter our experiences by changing our way of thinking. There are many *motivational* gurus out there these days trying to help people lead more fulfilling lives. I applaud their efforts, if not their methods. It is my belief, however, that in order to get to the place where human potential can be realized, one has to heal those still-energized wounds of the psyche. I believe these unhealed rifts are a burden on our consciousness, and will ultimately prevent our soul's potential from unfolding.

Neuroscientists are now utilizing fMRI scans and blood/urine samples of trauma victims *immediately after* trauma, to measure brain/hormone activity—and this is only the beginning of the research being conducted every day! The important point is that trauma affects the brain adversely. Trauma arrests normal brain development. So, who knows how many people out there are moving about misdiagnosed with all kinds of learning disorders and using prescription, consciousness-altering drugs when the source of all their woes may very well be early repressed trauma? We must give credence to the possibility that such trauma is the root of much difficult or *abnormal* human behavior.

But there can also be an upside to having experienced trauma in that, once healed, the victim can truly embrace the joy and grace of having overcome such a life-threatening situation. James Allen, the pioneer of the *self-help* movement, thought that man's mind can be compared to a garden. If there are weeds within the mind causing negativity and depression, perhaps the soil that bore these weeds is trauma.

In her talk *The Neurobiology of Sexual Assault*, Dr. Rebecca Campbell stated that often the police will interrogate a sexual assault victim just *after* the attack when they can barely recall anything. Pressure from law enforcement on victims to

disclose information which may be scattered and inaccessible throughout the brain can often cause re-traumatization.

The general consensus is that the brain can be re-wired, as long as the brain is not actually *physically* impaired. Our thoughts can easily alter both our perceptions and our attitudes. A very simple example is the way one views the day upon awakening. If it appears as though sheer misery is ahead – so it will be. But if one is simply glad to be alive and ready to take on what the day brings with love and joy, then their day will be blessed. Or, as James Allen wrote, “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is *he*.”

The traumatized person has experienced a horrific ordeal, leading to an altered state of consciousness. Their very mental existence occupies another interior dimension from the one that non-victims exist upon. But one day soon, we will understand much more of the experience of trauma.

As John O’Donahue said, "Your vision is your home, and your home should have many mansions to shelter your wild divinity."

## ***TRAUMA AND SPIRITUALTY***

Spirituality is more than simply a lifestyle choice. It is a practice of values encompassing a sense of the awe and wonder in the essence of simply *being*. It includes a sense of connection to the Universal Intelligence or Consciousness. It is choosing what benefits not only yourself but humanity and the world as a whole. It is striving to fulfill the work of the soul: studying, learning, growing, and giving. It is the expression of the essence of our being: Love. It is being *open* to possibilities.

Once the recognition and healing of trauma have begun, a spiritual life makes sense. I believe that at the moment of trauma we are knocked “out of love,” due to the altered state of consciousness caused by the shock of the ordeal. The vibrational resonance between Soul and Source is compromised. It is simply impossible to live in a state of fear and negativity while also feeling safe and comfortable. For some, the unresolved experience of trauma has become a way of life: addictions, physical/mental ailments and diseases, personality disorders, and increasingly anti-social, abnormal behaviors can develop.

In *Buddha’s Brain*, author Rick Hansen suggests that humans have a natural capacity and propensity for negativity originating back in our Neanderthal period when self-preservation was *all*. Anticipating the negative, such as predators and other everyday dangers, was repetitive and had an effect on the wiring of the brain.

But today’s predators are not terrible beasts, but rather terrible people—people who are so traumatized that they are twisted into psychopaths or other sociopathic disorders. They are self-made, emotionally-damaged war-mongers, practicing

unnatural, violent acts against humanity for causes cloaked in patriotism or religious fundamentalism.

Hansen suggests ways for rewiring the brain which are essentially lifestyle changes that foster positive and creative thinking and actions. He frequently refers to the Buddha, who proffered living a spiritual life devoid of desires, in order to alleviate our suffering.

All religions were *originally* inspired by spirituality, having a foundational sameness rooted in *The Golden Rule*. Seemingly, man appears to have a natural propensity for spirituality: marveling at the wonders of life and nature and our very existence and place within it. This is an exciting time in human history, where science and spirituality are coming ever so close to finally embracing each other, as it was always meant to be.

The soul is clever in that it will discern a way to emerge from whatever circumstance it finds itself in. Even in trauma, where the human spirit is depleted and the soul has been marginalized; somehow, the soul will come peeking through wherever there is an opening. A shining glimmer of light through a tear in the fabric of possibility. This is because the soul is the stuff of life-force energy. It has no choice but to survive because Life is its calling and its destination.

Have you ever tried to quit some destructive habit? Whether it was smoking, shooting heroin, binge drinking or just biting your nails, you are constantly faced with the question: what happens when the habit goes away? You wonder if there is life for you after this habit is broken and if so, what sort of life will it be?

Contemplating any kind of major change, like the removal of altering addictions, can be frightening. Perhaps it may even feel overwhelming, and you just cannot seem to go on. You may even feel like you will die without your booze, or your drugs, or your nicotine. But you won't. Sadly, however,

it is possible that we might also become addicted to our trauma, because it is habitual and cyclic, which is a comforting pattern for those of us always yearning for something *else*...

And it is *scary* coming out of trauma; psychologically painful, too, like drug or alcohol withdrawal. Who will I be, if I am no longer the child my father abused? Who will I be, once I realize that I am a person of value and worth? What will it take to convince me of this? Will I regress? Will I relapse into more destructive or negative behaviors? Can I resist the pull of others who share my feelings?

These are tough questions. And they are best explored with trusted, intelligent counsel, in the safety and security of a judgment-free, loving space.

In *How to Change Your Life*, Ernest Holmes talks of several qualities which, when cultivated, help us to get on track toward a spiritual and peaceful existence. Buddha, Jesus, and many other wise and loving teachers have imparted similar concepts. Some of these core values: love, patience, gratitude, kindness, and compassion are qualities that are the direct opposite of the experiences of people who have survived trauma. In other words, if you want to get away from people of ill will surround yourself with people of good will. Opposites might attract, but positives will support *positively!*

It isn't easy to unlearn an old habit. So, imagine the difficulty it takes to cultivate a new mindset or creating new neuro-pathways. The old familiar paradigm keeps calling us back. Repetition is the key to learning new formulas, as well as stimulating new neuro-pathways. So the new values of a spiritual life need to be practiced over and over, especially in the face of adversity and negativity, or exposure to users and abusers.



## ***TRAUMA IN SOCIETY***

Trauma touches *everyone*. When I was a child, we never knew when my father was going to go off—and when he had his fits of rage, what he would do. Maybe he would throw a glass bowl at the baby in the playpen, or charge after my mother, holding a kitchen knife at her throat. Perhaps he might upend the dining table, not only ruining dinner but destroying more of what little we had.

I often would catch hell from my older disturbed sister, as well. She would hit me on the head with an iron skillet or kick me out of the car to find my own way home from wherever we happened to be.

According to the U. S. National Library of Medicine in an article titled *Violence Begins at Home*, “*Violence in the family includes any act or omission committed within the framework of the family by one of its members that undermines the life, the bodily or psychological integrity, or liberty of another member of the same family or that seriously harms the development of his or her personality*”. And where there is domestic violence, there is also emotional trauma. Add to that horrific everyday worldly occurrences, such as human trafficking (children and women), faith-based torture and punishments, sexual mutilation, gang activity, general street crime and crimes occurring during times of war and you have

an incredible array of negative trauma wreaking havoc upon the human psyche, with far-reaching effects.

What about the people who witness a child being gunned down by police on the street? Or those who see a pedestrian hit by a car or are involved in an automobile fatality on a deserted stretch of road? Can we imagine the horror of a young man in the military who lobbs cluster bombs at innocent children under orders, or watches the head of his buddy being blown off by *friendly fire*?

What of the young woman on a date with her new beau, who gets her drunk and brutally rapes her in an alley?

The victims and the survivors of all of this unwanted, unexpected trauma are all around us. It may very well be someone we know and love. It may even be ourselves who are caught up in trauma's vicious cycle. But do we usually consider this in our regular interactions with each other? No, not really. Ask yourself honestly: do you know *anyone* who has *not*, in some way or another, been touched by trauma?

Regardless of what caused the horrors of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, how many *thousands* of people across the country and around the world were traumatized by events on this one single day? Have they been healed? What about the survivors of Hitler's atrocities in Europe, or Stalin's in Russia? The survivors of Abu Ghraib, or the terrorist bombings in Paris, in November 2015? Or the children incarcerated in Trump's camps today?

I am positing these questions simply to illustrate how the effects of trauma are far-reaching, indeed. Even those working in health care may suffer from deep-seated trauma simply by being constantly exposed to trauma survivors on an almost daily basis.

On my frequent trips to the public library, I am reminded of the many videos, graphic novels and even books on tape containing violence for easy consumption. In addition,

streaming media from popular internet sites means violence on demand is never more than a click away. Movies of vicious crimes and horrendous violence that almost always seem to derive their story line from demented people whose dysfunction runs deep, without resolution, which only leads to even more murder, violence, and mayhem. When was the last time you really stopped to consider what watching such dramatized violence does to your mind or to those of your loved ones, especially the young?

So what are some options for the peaceful future of humanity? Well, in the 1970's, amidst great social unrest and upheaval in the United States, many of us were aware of an evolutionary change in the collective consciousness. Granted, some were certainly altering their consciousness through a myriad of readily-available drugs. However, the shift in awareness to which I refer was an authentic sense of a new level of human consciousness. During that time, I attended a lecture held in San Francisco, by the brilliant psychologist and author Robert Ornstein. He spoke of this very same phenomenon in such an informative and engaging way as anything I have ever been a part of and I've never forgotten it.

In addition, I have sensed a social paradigm shifting for the past two-plus decades...and it steadily keeps on shifting. The results are the coming together of science and spirituality, eastern and western religion and spirituality, an overall general decline of interest in religion and an increase in people seeking *spiritual, rather than religious* meaning in their lives. There are a great many more changes which seem to be drawing humanity into a new paradigm founded on understanding, compassion, and love.

It's an amazing time to be alive, to be able to bear witness to such a transformative era happening on a global scale. Granted, the paradigm shift has yet to reach the greed-based, for-profit *conglomerate-beasts* on the planet, but with this kind

of change, not everyone needs to subscribe – just those *true* believers, willing to put in the *real* work.

What can a person expect from Spiritual Counseling then? Well, much of what heals a wounded soul has been known for thousands of years but has yet to be disseminated to the masses, save perhaps through religious dogma.

To begin, we must consider a non-violent existence. We know, of course, that many institutions we have created thrive on violence—but these are man-made institutions, likely created by disturbed people for their own single-minded benefit, rather than the common good of humanity. We can then begin to study those things which the soul *truly* loves and craves: compassion and caring. We can learn to relax through meditation and prayer, not only for the health and psychological benefits it brings but for the simple opportunity to open ourselves up to the Collective Universe on a regular basis. This will also help us to develop more in-depth communication with Our Source via these modalities.

We can practice loving self-talk and affirmations, not only for ourselves but for others as well. Throughout the process, we can discover what works—and what we don't really need, and to eliminate it. This will make way for us to discover what it is that we truly *do* need. We can find the courage to leave behind those people and situations that demean or deaden our spirit and interrupt our journey. We may even meet some like-minded travelers along the way!

We can learn about the subtle energy systems of the mind and body, thereby learning to promote self-healing in ourselves and others. We can turn to natural healing methods, to discover what “The Herb Doctor” Richard Schulze means when he claims that “there are no incurable diseases.” We can consider getting off of the heavy animal-based toxin-laden diets, replacing them with viable clean, plant-based options. We can live healthily!

Okay, so why is everyone *not* prospering? Let's teach everyone how to enjoy the abundance we see in front of us all over the planet. It's not only for the super-rich. The abundance from the Universal Source is endless, available to everyone who searches with an open heart and an unfettered mind.

I have very much enjoyed communicating with you, imparting what I think and feel about emotional trauma.

So, now you tell me: **what do you think and feel?**

I leave you with my love and eternal blessings. Stop fighting, not only with others but with *yourself*. Love one another! Do not give in to your limitations, because we can change and grow each and every day. And stay away from negative people! Both negative and positive energies are addictive and that energy will be transferred to you when you least expect it!



### ***About the Author:***

Dr. Réa Kironn is a trauma survivor of domestic violence, childhood violence, and sexual abuse. She discovered the spiritual path as the only way to emotional healing, peace of mind, and relationship with Source. She is an ordained minister, certified metaphysical practitioner, certified spiritual counselor, certified stress management consultant, and is working on certification in pastoral thanatology. She is a member of the International Holistic Ministry, International Metaphysical Practitioners Association, Charter for Compassion, and American Institute of Health Care Practitioners.

Dr. Kironn received her Masters and D. Min. degrees at the International College of Metaphysical Theology, Vancouver, WA., under the guidance of Dr. James Grant, Ph.D., D. Min.

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## About Dr. Réa Kironn and *Traumatized*:

“Trauma is experienced both within and from outside the individual: mental and/or physical wounding. To heal, one has to be willing to get back to the source of the trauma and work through it, which is not easy. It takes a particular type of counselor to help a trauma survivor get down to the source. Counselors, ministers and, psychologists who are trauma sensitive are better trained and have more tools at their disposal. Réa Kironn is such a counselor.”

-Dr. James Grant. PhD., D.Min.

“Rev. Dr. Réa Kironn's eloquently written book provides a sense of validation to those who have been traumatized and illuminates a hopeful spiritual path out of the pain and suffering that emotional trauma generates. Her suggestions to surround oneself with those of good will and to nurture those around us with "loving kindness" and compassion are sentiments and practices much needed in this time in history when trauma is so prevalent. I look forward to reading more works by Dr. Kironn on this important and timely topic. “

-Jill E. Brenizer, Psy.D.



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