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**Travelling Light By
Pádraig Ó Tuoma**



Because sometimes we travel heavy
and those heady times we can barely
imagine the freebody movement of dance.
Because sometimes we travel dark
and from those hard paths we can't even
conjure an image of sunrise or moonrise or starlight or fire.
Because sometimes we travel solo
and those lonely times we forget all the others
we've travelled with lovingly
travelled with home.
Because sometimes we need to be
travelling lightly
because sometimes we're in need of
regular reminding
that light comes in circles
and waves
and small moments
and light
comes to find us
and light comes with hope.

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Our time together...



Describe	Describe Resilience & Post-Traumatic Growth
Identify	Identify resilience and protective factors
Apply	Apply the 6 Rs of Neuropsychotherapy

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Defining Trauma

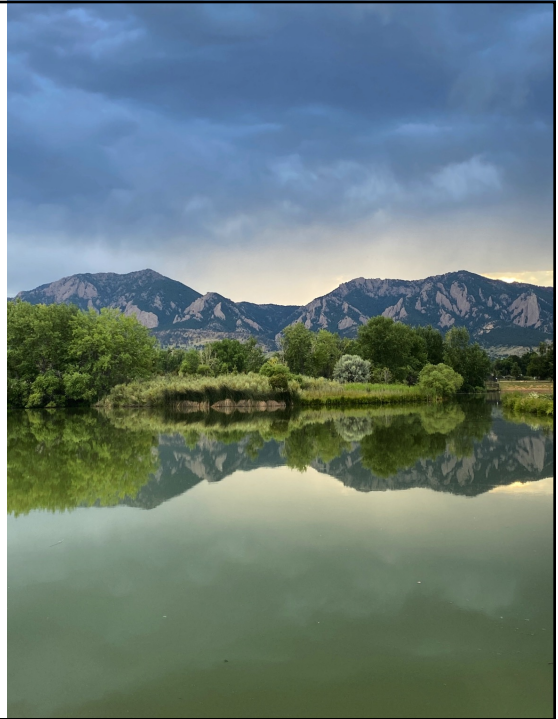
- "Any event that overwhelm[s] the ordinary human adaptations to life." Judith Herman
- "Anything that is too much, too soon, or too fast (or too little for too long) for our nervous system to handle." Peter Levine
- "Trauma is not what happens to you, it's what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you...seeing trauma as an internal dynamic grants us much-needed agency." Gabor Mate



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RESILIENCE & POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

- **Resilience:** adapting well in the face of adversity. Mental, emotional, physical, and nervous system capacity to flexibility respond to stressful or traumatic events.
- **Post Traumatic Growth:** the belief in our ability to work through feelings of terror, rage, shame, and despair and to know that we can ultimately discover a greater sense of freedom, wisdom, strength, and peace. This can lead to improved self-perceptions, enhanced relationships, and a strengthened life philosophy.



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“Health is not defined by the absence of disease; rather, it is recognized by the presence of well-being.”

~World Health Organization



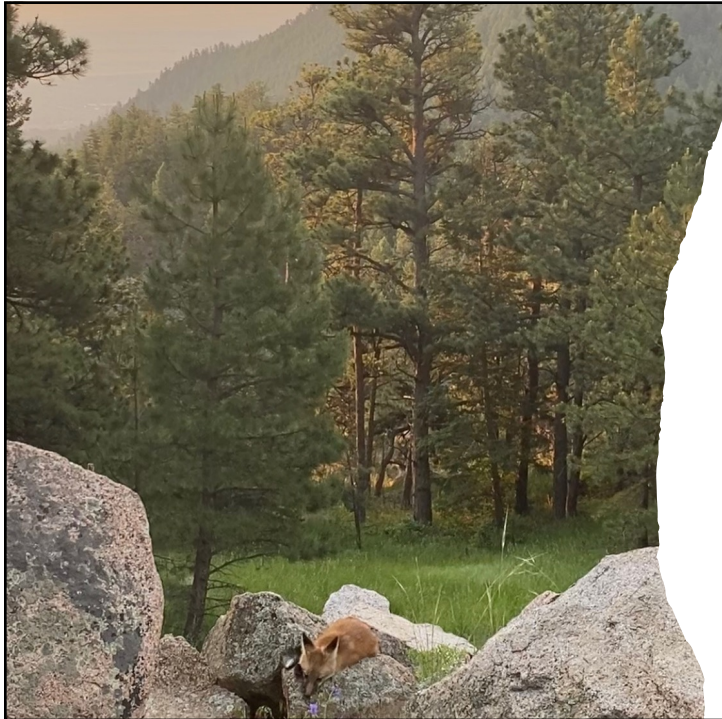
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Resilience-Informed Therapy

Broaden the Lens
Change the Focus
Enhance Self-Perception



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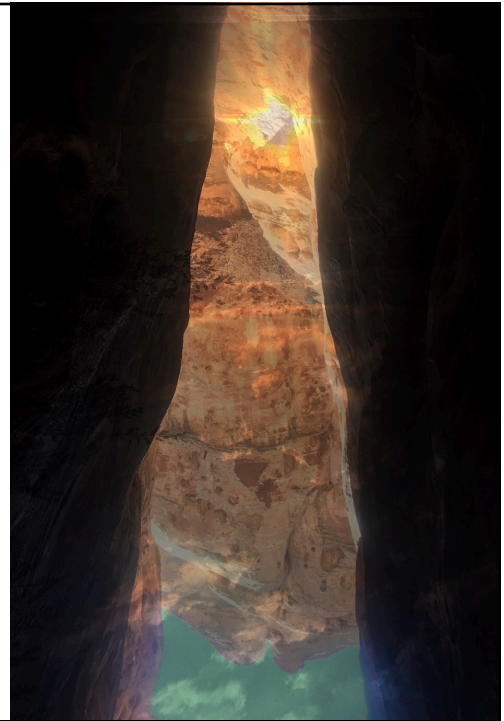
Questions of Resiliency

- Why do some people respond better to traumatic experiences than others?
- What coping strategies and behaviors are associated with the greatest adaptation to traumatic life events?
- What are the most effective means of integrating these strategies into our lives?

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FACTORS OF RESILIENCE

- **Mindset:** The belief that you can grow and change (even in relationship to challenging events)
- **Control:** The ability to access the resources you need to support your growth
- **Self-Efficacy:** The recognition that with effort you can change and grow
- **Commitment:** The willingness to stay engaged with your healing journey in a consistent manner
- **Connectedness:** The choice to stay connected to others rather than isolate
- **Compassion:** Our capacity to embrace ourselves, each other, and the world with grace, care, and genuine kindness
- **Coherence:** The cultivation of self-understanding that provides a sense of purpose and meaning
- **Action:** The actions you take to create a better world for yourself (and perhaps for others as well).



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PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY: GROWTH MINDSET

Growth mindset: learning and success is the result of effort. We can build our capacity to grow when faced with challenge which increases our willingness to take risks and stay engaged in the ongoing and inevitable stressors of life. (Carol Dweck)



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RESILIENCE AND COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY (SOUTHWICK, & CHARNEY, 2018)

- **People who are resilient tend to be flexible – flexible in the way they think about challenges and flexible in the way they react emotionally to stress. They are not wedded to a specific style of coping. Instead, they shift from one coping strategy to another, depending on the circumstances.**
- **Many are able to accept what they cannot change; to learn from failure; to use emotions like grief and anger to fuel compassion and courage; and to search for opportunity and meaning in adversity.**



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Nervous System Flexibility

The ability to tolerate a range of arousal states while responding effectively and efficiently.

“Autonomic nervous system flexibility supports psychological flexibility.” Dr. Stephen Porges

“The mind is better able to form an optimistic and hopeful narrative full of possibilities when we move out of an experience of feeling threatened into a felt sense of safety and connection.” (Applied Polyvagal Theory in Yoga, Schwartz, 2024)



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Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have.

It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and practiced.



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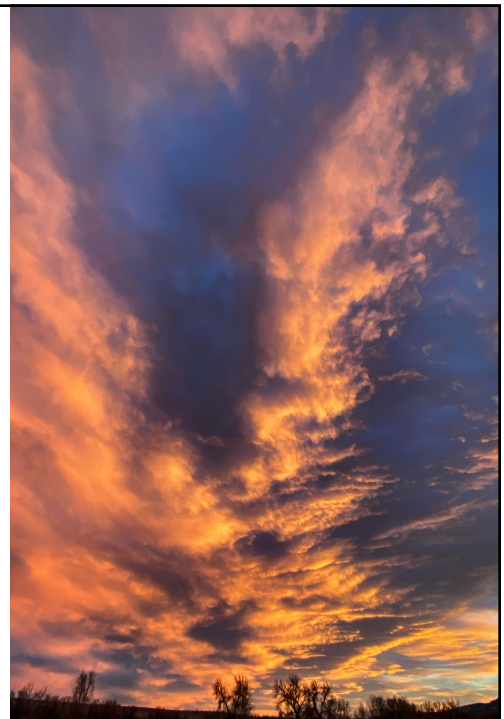
A PROCESS & AND OUTCOME

•The Process

- Work through vulnerable emotions with Social Support
- Challenge negative thought beliefs & explore meaning through the cultivation of a coherent narrative
- Cultivate the Resources you need to handle adversity
- Embodiment & Empowerment
- Transform Learned Helplessness into Learned Optimism

•The Outcome

- Greater sense of Choice in the Here and Now
- Sense of freedom "I am no longer defined by the past"
- Capacity to live in accept the world as it is and take part in creating meaningful change for an improved future
- "This happened to me, it is over now. I am strong and capable of handling challenge with support."



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What are Traumatic Memories

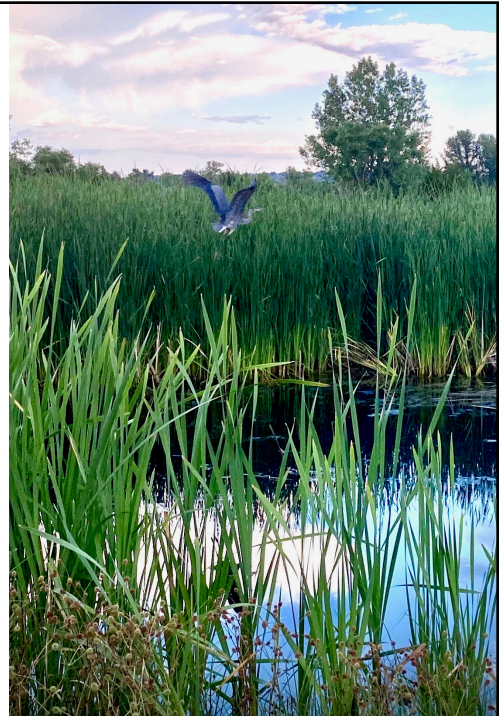
(Bergmann, 2012; Shapiro, 2018; Schore, 2018)

- Traumatic memories are maintained by thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- All Memories are neural networks
- Traumatic Memories are an Impaired encoding of neural networks Not integrated with other positive experiences
 - Limited ability to accommodate new information
 - “Encapsulated self-state”
 - New information, positive affect, and resourcing sensations are unable to functionally connect with the disturbing memory.
 - Impairs client’s ability to be emotionally flexible or cognitively constructive while thinking about difficult life events

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Predictive Processing

- Our nervous systems are wired to help us survive, and this requires that we use the past to attempt to predict the future.
- Approximately 90% of what we think or perceive about our environment is based upon our past experiences (Cozolino, 2016).
- The primary function of memories is to help us predict or anticipate the next experience (Chamberlin, 2019)
- These predictions are essential for our survival
- When we are confronted with new information that contradicts our expectations, there is a mismatch between our predictions and current information
- One therapeutic goal is to evoke a state of cognitive dissonance that supports a new, positive outcome—this helps clients update their expectations about the future.



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The 6 Rs of Neuropsychotherapy

- **Relating:** Brain is wired for and strengthened by connection (Cozolino, 2014)
- **Resourcing:** Strengthen neural networks for positive experiences (Korn & Leeds, 2002)
- **Repatterning:** Integrate movement sequences that help you come out of freeze, fight, flight, or Faint (collapsed immobility) (Levine, 2010)
- **Reprocessing:** Integrate distressing memories and impaired neural networks with resource states (Bergmann, 2012).
- **Reflecting:** Make meaning about experience (Siegel, 2010)
- **Resilience:** Adopting behaviors and beliefs that help you cope well in the face of adversity (Southwick, & Charney, 2018)



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RELATING

The greatest predictor of meaningful change in clients with complex PTSD is the quality of the therapeutic alliance (Courtois & Pearlman, 2005).



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RESOURCING

- **THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING (HANSON, 2016)**
- Research indicates the human tendency to focus on the negative.
- The capacity to focus on the positive needs to be developed.
- To counteract this negativity bias, we need to actively look for evidence of positivity and goodness in our lives, pause when we find it, and savor the positive state to absorb it.



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REPATTERNING

“The body has been designed to renew itself through continuous self-correction. These same principles also apply to the healing of psyche, spirit, and soul.”

Peter Levine, Waking the Tiger



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REPROCESSING

“Changing the memories that form the way we see ourselves also changes the way we view others. Therefore, our relationships, job performance, what we are willing to do or are able to resist, all move in a positive direction.”

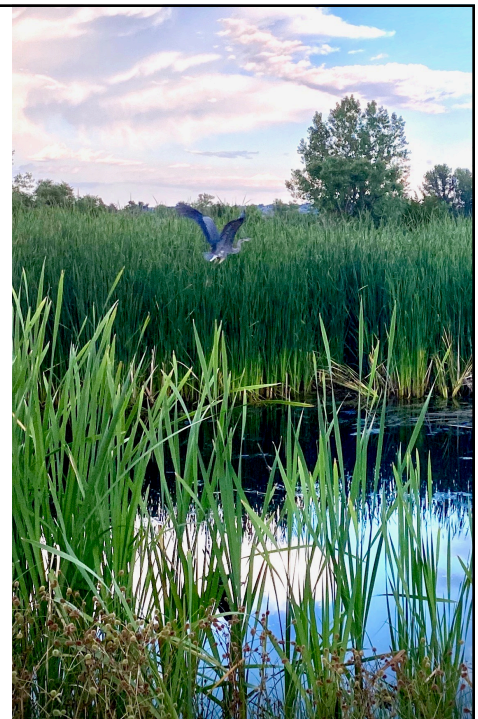
Francine Shapiro, *Getting Past your Past*



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REFLECTING

- **A Coherent Self:** Ability to talk about how the past has shaped your behaviors, beliefs, and relationships. Ability to make meaningful connections out of the complexity of diverse life experiences. Helps you hold dichotomies, polarities, conflict, disappoints, and contradictions.
- **An “Oscillating Narrative”:** an inclusive narrative about the ups and downs of your history is linked to greater resilience to stress



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RESILIENCE

“Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.”

Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*



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TRAUMA RECOVERY AS A HERO~HEROINE’S JOURNEY

- **Innocence:** The story begins with a phase of freedom and naivety.
- **The Call:** This period of ease is disrupted by loss or trauma. This is the call to enter the hero’s journey.
- **Urge to Reject the Call:** Fear leads you to rely upon avoidance, addictions, isolation, disconnection from yourself
- **Gathering your Resources:** You gather resources, mentors, and allies to face your fears and pain.
- **Crossing the Threshold:** You commit to your healing path.



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TRAUMA RECOVERY AS A HERO~HEROINE'S JOURNEY

- **Descent into the Underworld—the cave you fear to enter:** The courageous inner work of trauma recovery that allows you to retrieve the treasure (strength, courage, wisdom)
- **The Return:** Eventually you come full circle—back to your community with newly discovered gifts and capacities.
- **Master of two worlds:** You maintain a connection to your inner, spiritual self while compassionately relating the complexity of this world we share.
- **Self-Actualization & Self-Transcendence:** Self-leadership allows you to become a leader, healer, or guide for others.



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Resilience and A Search for Meaning

- Trauma asks us to come to terms with the lack of reason or overpowering senselessness that surrounds acts of violence or abuse
- We are not saying that “all things happen for a reason”
- Meaning is the result of actively committing to the task of working through despair to find hope for the future.

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ATTENDING TO THE PAST

- **The goal is to restructure the role that the trauma has played in your life and, in turn, lessen its emotional impact.**
- With support, you can process the emotions, sensations, memories, and beliefs associated with adverse or challenging events.
- By working through your past, you free yourself from the negative beliefs, emotions, and somatic experiences associated with these events.
- You can learn to trust that releasing these remnants of your painful past allows for new growth.



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Your Hero or Heroine's Journey

- What events in your life have initiated your hero's journey?
- Have you noticed a desire to reject the call?
- What resources or supports have helped you to face this challenge?
- What additional resources do you need to help you navigate the challenge?
- Are you aware of any strengths or positive changes that you have discovered as a result of your commitment to your healing journey?
- How has adversity influenced your sense of purpose?
- What gifts do you have to share with the world as a result of the difficult experiences of your life?



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COHERENCE (DAN SIEGEL)

- **Mindful reflection:** allows you to take responsibility for your life now so that you can take an active part in creating your future.
 - **Adversity is part of the story, not the whole story**
 - **Adversity is part of the story, but it doesn't determine the rest of the story**

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POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH

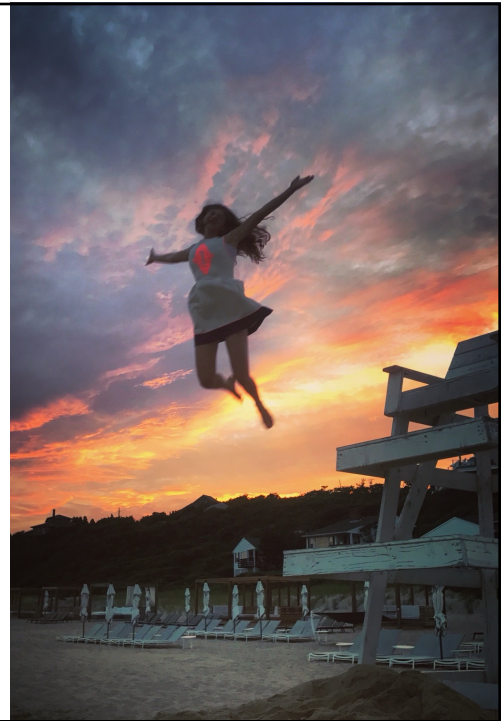
- **Discovered our strengths**
- **Enhanced interpersonal relationships**
- **Increased willingness to ask for and accept help**
- **Increased willingness to be vulnerable**
- **Increased recognition of social supports that had previously been ignored.**
- **Increased appreciation of life**
- **Increased ability to "take it easy"**
- **Newly found interests or passions**
- **Spiritual discoveries**



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Vicarious Resilience

The positive effects on helping professionals who witness the healing, recovery, and resilience of persons who have survived severe trauma in their lives (Hernandez, Engstrom, and Gangsei, 2007; Killian, 2017)



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RESILIENCE & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

- The process of fulfilling your potential in the world.
- Becoming who you really are and were always meant to be.
- Integrating the wounds that once may have been a source of shame or confusion
- Reclaiming a sense of dignity that allows you to walk in the world with the knowledge that you are so much more than your trauma or pain.
- Self-actualized individuals tend to be open-minded, creative, trustworthy, responsible, and value-driven. They are typically more able to cope successfully with an uncertain future.



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SELF-ACTUALIZATION

We become more human when we focus on loving another person or serving a cause that is greater than ourselves

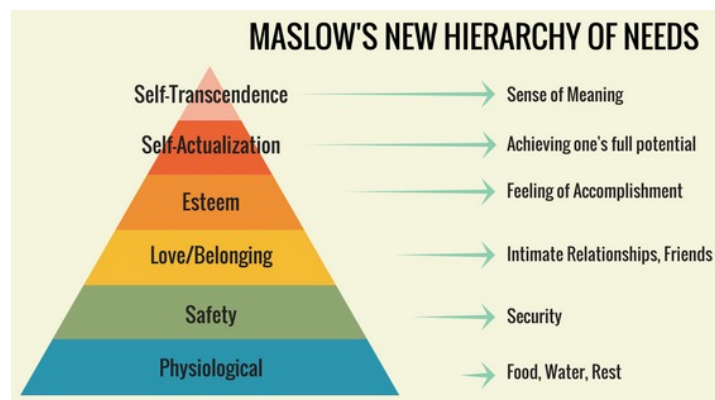
~Viktor Frankl



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From Self-Actualization to Self-Transcendence

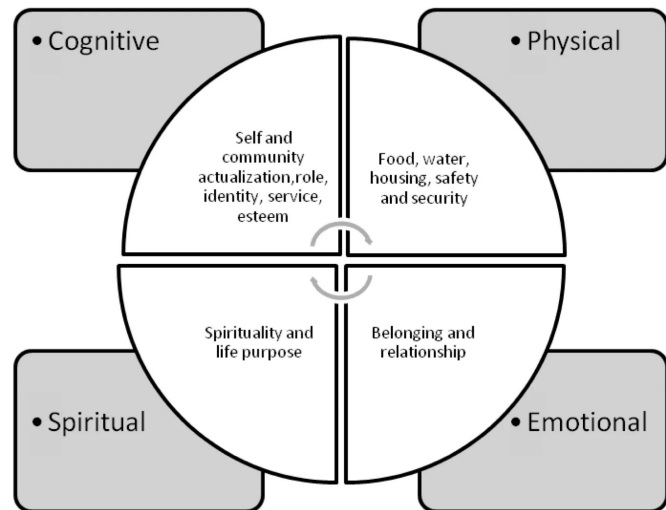
- Maslow viewed self-actualization as a rite of passage that allows us to go beyond the single self into self-transcendence.
- Self-actualization is about fulfilling our potential.
- Self-transcendence is about furthering a cause beyond the self and with developing a greater desire to protect the welfare of all people



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Maslow & the Blackfoot Nation

- Maslow's original research came from studying the Blackfoot First Nation People
- Circular model not a triangle representing interdependency of the key components of self-actualization
- You are born self-actualized (it is not an achievement)
- Your relationship to the land is essential
- Reverence to your Ancestors: Your actions are available to you because of the generations that preceded you...your actions have consequences for the generations that come after you.



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RESILIENCE AND COLLECTIVE HEALING

- Resilience is not just about personal healing.
- It is also about drawing on your own resilience to serve others as you share insights and wisdom gained on your journey.
- Resilience helps communities pull together to emerge stronger from tragedy.
- Resilience helps neighborhoods and cities to be better prepared to withstand catastrophic events, such as acts of violence or natural disasters like floods and fires.



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Over time, you take the many threads of your life experiences and weave them into a single fabric. You weave in your strengths and your struggles. You begin to notice patterns and themes. Most importantly, you recognize yourself as the weaver. You learn that you can continue to integrate new threads at any time, for you are an active participant in the ongoing creation of your life story. Over time, the fabric that you create out of your life experiences begins to feel increasingly integrated and whole. Now your life story can help you identify new possibilities for your future. You might even discover that your fabric is inextricably woven into the fabric of all life.

~Schwartz, The Post Traumatic Growth Guidebook

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STAY IN TOUCH

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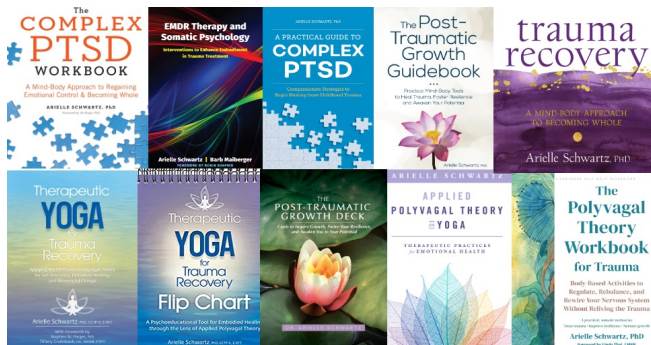
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