



# *Cycle Breaker*

A Guide to Transcending  
Childhood Trauma

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## Introduction

This book reflects a deep professional and personal exploration of trauma recovery and human capability. My approach for transforming trauma is based on what I have learned in my work as a therapist since 1997, studying and practicing many excellent trauma-resolution treatment approaches, including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Somatic Experiencing, Logosynthesis, and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy.

My approach is also largely rooted in the wisdom I have gained in the process of transforming my own trauma. I have explored a wide range of mind, body, and spirit modalities in the teachings of many authors, teachers, and healers. I have learned from those who have guided me out of the darkness and from the clients I have assisted out of theirs. My quest to alleviate both my own suffering and that of those who have sought my help has informed my perspective about what it takes to transcend a painful life.

On the reality television show *The Voice*, gifted amateur musicians audition for the chance to be coached by one of the music industry's top stars. In one episode, coach Gwen Stefani said to a musician after his heartfelt performance, "Thank you for not wasting your pain." Even though she didn't know his story, it was clear that his performance was more compelling because of what he had been through. When we channel the wisdom gained from suffering into a higher purpose, healing is contagious.

I know I am far from alone in experiencing severe trauma. I wrote this book to share my truth and to offer a voice for the countless suffering adults who are plagued with feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, and hopelessness, many of whom are unable to understand the origin of their own self-loathing and unhappiness. People who support wounded adults, such as partners, friends, and healing professionals, can also benefit from this book. It is for anyone who would like a road map to create a good life.

*Cycle Breaker* is part memoir and part guide to assist people recovering from developmental trauma, also known as complex post-traumatic stress disorder. Developmental trauma results from painful childhood experiences, ranging from being routinely dismissed and criticized to severe chronic abuse and neglect. Though developmental trauma begins in childhood, the profound impact is felt throughout life, until the wounds from childhood are healed. Using this book, traumatized people can get the information they need to better understand themselves and to find a pathway to healing.

Many people with developmental trauma live with a range of difficult symptoms and believe they are incapable of changing their lives. But I do not believe that you are stuck feeling the way you do. It is entirely possible to create high levels of joy and peace in your life, no matter what you have been through. Post-traumatic growth is the process of creating an even more vibrant and meaningful life after struggling with and transcending trauma. To achieve this, you must understand the necessary components of healing and dedicate yourself to doing what it takes to restore your sense of authenticity and return to your Essence, your true nature.

Essence is the part of us that is all knowing and all encompassing. It has no beginning and no ending; it is our

eternal self and our contact with truth. This part of us is always growing and evolving and contains all the information we have gathered from all our lifetimes. Our Essence holds the qualities of joy, playfulness, and ease. It is awakened to the true nature of reality and is not hindered by personality, ego, and pain. Essence is hard to fully define because I do not believe we have the capacity to comprehend the magnitude of this Divine force that exists both within us and outside of us. Before our incarnation, Essence determines what it wants to learn more about during our human life and guides us to carry out this fluid plan. Though it is not a concept specific to the healing method called Logosynthesis, this powerful approach to transformation is my source of inspiration for using *Essence* as the word that represents the Divine in all of us.

Although we are born connected to our Essence, we are immediately exposed to programming from parents and society about how we are supposed to behave, think, and be. When we are wounded and not living an intentional life, we get more and more detached from our Essence as each year passes. Healing our trauma and breaking the cycle enables us to restore our connection to this vital part of ourselves.

Being a cycle breaker means you are the person in your ancestral line who puts an end to destructive intergenerational patterns. You are the courageous one who recognizes that how you were raised was harmful to you, and you don't want to repeat the same patterns in your life. In many cases, this is related to abuse and neglect. The destructive patterns can also be the result of over-functioning parents who did not teach you to believe in yourself; therefore, you may struggle with helplessness and the desire to be rescued. Choosing the cycle breaker way can allow you to recover from the hardships of childhood and live an empowered life, instead of repeating

the transgressions made by previous generations. This requires you to face all you have been through and commit to loving yourself. It is no easy task, but it is worth it. Transcending childhood trauma is an inspirational endeavor, one you will never regret.

There are many possible points of view to explain why we experience hardship. The perspective we choose determines how we feel. Early in my journey of trauma recovery I heard a motivational speaker say, “Imagine what is happening in your life is happening *for* you, not *to* you.” At the time this was a revolutionary idea because I believed I was powerless and victimized. I felt completely at the whim of life and unaware of my own power.

The speaker’s message resonated deeply, serving as the beginning of my exodus from hopelessness. My perspective of hardship began to change as I reviewed my life through this lens. I could indeed see the many benefits that had accompanied the difficulties I faced. I could acknowledge that the trauma from my childhood enabled me to become a healer. I could see that though it hurt when people were taken out of my life, it was ultimately for the best. I felt more at peace with my health crisis, knowing it gave me the time I needed to rest and recover.

I became inspired to learn more, and I was drawn to other spiritual teachers who verified the notion that our highest good is always served by the experiences we face. As I began to understand more about the nature of suffering, I gradually started to believe that life was on my side and that hardship was not a punishment. My quest to understand suffering helped me to see that we are truly never alone, even if the support isn’t in the form our human minds have been trained to expect. Paulo Coelho, author of *The Alchemist*, said, “And when you want something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve

it.” I began to believe that more was possible for me than I had previously realized.

I have come to understand that suffering is largely tied to expectations that certain things should or should not have happened and believing that life should or should not be a certain way. It is resistance to what was and what is. Even though people with childhood trauma expect hardship, we are conditioned by society to believe that challenges in life are unfair, and if we are suffering, it is the result of our own failure, the failure of others, or life having gone awry. When we think hardship is wrong, we respond with judgment and blame. We limit the possibility of empowerment, transcendence, and fulfillment when we believe that we were and are cheated or that we were or are alone.

Buddhist teachings describe the concept of the two arrows. The first arrow is the result of hardship. The sting of getting passed over for a promotion, dealing with a physical injury, or failing an important exam are experiences that can feel like we were assaulted. It hurts. According to this teaching, the second arrow is our reaction to the first arrow, when we add to our own suffering because of our judgment of what happened. We cannot control the first blow, but we can refuse to injure ourselves with our response. Knowing that hardship is part of a universal process can shift our perspective from victimhood to empowerment, from “Please, please, please don’t let this be happening” to “I’ve got this.”

There is an arc to the process of transformation. This means there is a predictable sequence of stages that one goes through when faced with adversity. Some refer to it as the hero’s or heroine’s journey. These are frameworks by which we can understand that hardship is a universal, and even beneficial, part of life.

Here is my own conceptualization of this process for cycle breakers.

**Disconnection** is where the journey is initiated. This is where the loss of innocence occurs. Wounding from parents or others happens, which alters our blueprint of ease and trust. The template of fear and unworthiness becomes the replacement. We learn to cope with pain instead of just being ourselves by following our own impulses, interests, and desires. The heart develops armor, and we operate to preserve our safety instead of living in integrity with ourselves, where we would speak our truth if we felt safe. In our attempt to avoid more pain, what could have been movement toward expansion becomes constriction.

**Anesthesia** is the period of life where we live in denial about our pain. We pretend we are okay. We rely on addictions such as mind-altering substances, being popular, being invisible, or any compulsive method to ward off the reality of how we really feel. We force the pain into hiding because we believe there is no solution to the suffering embedded in facing it. We do the best we can. For some this looks like overachieving by getting advanced degrees and important jobs to remedy the emptiness inside. For others, it can look like underachieving by living beneath our capability and being disconnected from life.

The **Crisis** is our wake-up call. This is the call to turn inward. This stage involves life as we know it coming to a halt as the result of life-changing circumstances. This may be a serious car accident, a chronic or life-threatening illness, a devastating divorce, or the loss of a job, home, or loved one. This is generally a very painful time, as the feelings of uncertainty that accompany the rug being pulled out from under us can be scary. How we appear to others suddenly becomes less important than finding a solution to the true cause of our

suffering. The adversity makes it nearly impossible to continue living life as usual. We can ignore the wake-up call; it is a choice. However, for those who ignore or delay their response to the call, life only becomes more challenging and unsatisfying.

The **Revelation stage** is the part of the journey where we begin to realize why we are unhappy, and we mobilize our efforts to resolve our pain by dealing with the root cause. This is where our personal dragons appear and we learn to conquer them. We are tested with challenges we need to face to find our way back to our Essence. This is where we cultivate resiliency, internal strength, personal power, and self-love. In the Revelation phase we go beyond our own perceived limits and discover the power we have within ourselves. Just like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, we will find that we had it in us all along but could not access our capabilities until we were tested. Though this phase may feel isolating, we may also feel divinely guided. Many people have fascinating mystical experiences during this time, as the veil thins between the earthly and spiritual realms.

Finally, we enter the stage of **Completion**. This is the phase of the journey where we have transcended our pain and reengage with life as transformed people. We have reunited with our Essence and can now live with more joy and tranquility. We emerge like the phoenix rising from the ashes, the butterfly from the cocoon, the baby bird who has confidently left the nest. We learn to follow our intuition and align with our purpose. The jewels of wisdom that we discover on our quest are then shared with others to aid them on their transformational journey. There are still challenges in life, but now we have the confidence and wisdom to handle them.

There is tremendous value in cultivating wisdom; it is a requirement for a peaceful life. We cannot become wise

through intellect; it must be embodied as the result of lived experience, which is the gift of a transformational journey. It is not just hardship that makes us wise: It is when we pair our experiences with knowledge and surrender that we allow ourselves to grow.

We are here on Earth to experience life. We must recognize that everyone experiences suffering and hardship. Though some people suffer more than others, no one gets a free pass. Once you have moved through your transformational journey, you will also know this to be true, not just with your mind, but with your whole being.

Pairing the helpful knowledge in this book with your experiences and willingness to let go can lead you to cultivate the wisdom that sets you free from suffering. This process enables you to become your own sage.

The transformational journey is an endeavor for all evolving people who are in the process of transcending childhood trauma. Everyone's journey is unique, but the process is the same: Disconnection, Anesthesia, Crisis, Revelation, and Completion. There can be great comfort in knowing you are not alone on your journey. Many people completed this journey before you; others are completing the journey alongside you or will begin theirs when yours is complete.

Although it may feel uncomfortable and triggering to see yourself in this book, I invite you to surrender your resistance and say yes to your healing journey. Resistance is bred from lack of trust and causes us to say no with our thoughts, words, and actions. Many of us were not allowed to say no in childhood. Many of us could not resist those who hurt us without suffering harsh punishment. Resistance is self-protection after a troubling childhood, but it can prevent us from moving forward. I invite you to say yes to the truth

of what you experienced. I encourage you to say yes when you recognize how trauma impacts you. I welcome you to compassionately acknowledge your problematic patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors stemming from unwanted childhood experiences. Say yes to lovingly embrace the journey that will bring you back to your Essence.

You can do it.

### **This book is divided into three parts.**

“Part I: Origins” explains the roots of developmental trauma and how harmful parenting and other traumas create a foundation of fear and unworthiness.

“Part II: Consequences” addresses the complex challenges or consequences that wounded adults face as a result of growing up feeling unheard, unseen, and, for many, unloved.

“Part III: Empowerment” explores the 16 Pillars of Trauma Recovery, or the essential elements of healing that are necessary to transcend developmental trauma.

Let's begin.