

Healing Forward

Unpacking Generational Wounds & Trauma

“Trauma decontextualized in a person over time can look like personality. Trauma decontextualized in a family over time can look like family traits. Trauma decontextualized in a people over time can look like culture.”

-- Resmaa Menakem

Examples of Generational Trauma

- enslavement
- genocide
- land takeover/ occupations
- war
- civil rights abuses
- colonialism
- severe mental illness
- immigration + asylum

Important Terms To Know

- **Intergenerational trauma:** the cumulative, emotional, and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, resulting from significant and major traumatic experiences and events.
- **Racial trauma:** ongoing individual and collective injuries experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of colour who are exposed and re-exposed to race-based stress.
- **Vicarious trauma:** the impact of witnessing or learning of racist and discriminatory events happening to people within your community, family or friend groups.

Generational Wounds Shape Our Everyday Lives:

- How we engage in self-care
- Burnout cycles & productivity mindsets
- Romantic partnerships and friendships
- Family-gender roles/ expectations
- Disconnection or displacement from ancestral origins and knowledge
- Parenting/re-parenting
- Cycles of abuse, family secrets
- Poverty, food insecurity, hoarding
- Our self-talk, inner narratives
- Confidence, self-esteem, self-worth
- Confronting stigma and shame
- How we connect or disconnect with others around us
- Our relationship with money
- Epigenetic's - trauma in our genes
- Addiction, mental health
- Emotional awareness and wellness

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Self Talk & Inner Narratives

How did your family communicate growing up? What similarities and themes do you notice in your self talk and personal belief systems?

Further thoughts:

The ways our parents communicate to us (and themselves) as children often becomes our inner voice. How do you motivate/ criticize/ encourage/ affirm yourself today? Do you see links between the language your family and community used in your childhood and your inner voice today?

Parentification

What was your experience like when taking on roles, duties, burdens and responsibilities in your family? What impact has that had on your life today?

Further thoughts:

We are often tasked with growing up and taking on adult responsibilities before our time. What standards do you set for yourself as a result? Does perfectionism and people pleasing show up in your life? How do you accept help from others and set boundaries in relationships?

The Risks of Healing

What happens when the people around you aren't doing the same healing work? How do you encourage yourself on the journey toward breaking generational cycles?

Further thoughts:

It may not be our fault that we have experienced generational trauma, but it is our responsibility to stay accountable, curious, and open. What practices help you as you unpack generational wounds? What reminds you of your worth and keeps you grounded?

Resources

for further exploration

Books

- Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents -- Lindsay Gibson
- Recovering from Emotionally Immature Parents -- Lindsay Gibson
- It Didn't Start With You -- Mark Wolynn
- The Drama of The Gifted Child -- Alice Miller
- How to Say No Without Feeling Guilty -- Patti Breitman & Connie Hatch
- Drama Free -- Nedra Glover Tawwab
- The Deepest Well -- Dr. Nadine Burke Harris
- Let It Go -- Chelene Knight
- Complex PTSD: From Surviving To Thriving -- Pete Walker
- Becoming Safely Embodied -- Deidre Fay
- Somebody's Daughter -- Ashley C Ford
- The Pain We Carry -- Natalie Gutiérrez, LMFT
- Sisterhood Heals -- Dr. Joy Harden Bradford
- How We Show Up -- Mia Birdsong
- All the Right Pieces -- Nakeia Homer
- How We Heal -- Alex Elle
- Sister, Outsider -- Audre Lorde
- Break The Cycle -- Dr. Mariel Buqué
- My Grandmother's Hands -- Resmaa Menakem
- What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma -- Stephanie Foo
- No Bad Parts -- Richard Schwartz

Podcasts

- Homecoming -- Dr. Thema Bryant
- Be Well Sis -- Cassandre Dunbar
- Life, I Swear -- Chloe Dulce Louvouezo
- Too Smart For This -- Alexis Barber
- Brown Girl Self Care -- Bre Mitchell
- The Sugar Jar -- Yasmine Cheyenne
- Eldest Daughter -- Kendra Austin
- You Need To Hear This -- Nedra Glover Tawwab
- Therapy For Black Girls -- Dr. Joy Harden Bradford
- The Morgan Harper Nichols Show -- Morgan Harper Nichols

Workbooks

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences Recovery Workbook by Glenn Sciraldi
- Recovery of Your Inner Child by Lucia Capacchione
- The Attachment Theory Workbook by Annie Chen
- The Self Love Workbook by Shainna Ali Ph.D
- Drama Free Workbook by Nedra Glover Tawwab