Transcript: Trauma Response, Intuition Or Ego?

I would love to offer you my understanding of how you can tell whether your reaction or response to a situation is a trauma response, whether it's intuitive, whether it's your intuition, or whether it's ego based.

This is information that I would have really loved to have had many, many moons ago when I was asking these kinds of questions, and nobody could really give me any definitive answers.

So I hope you find this a benefit.

If, as you're listening to me, you find that you can't classify yourself or your experience in any one of these descriptors *that's okay*. I am, contrary to popular opinion, neither omnipresent, nor omniscient. I don't know your *exact* situation.

But, I hope what I give you is enough for you to see and feel, your body can hear me talk, and you can recognise something of yourself and your reactions within them.

And if you can't, that's okay, that doesn't mean anything about you. It doesn't mean anything about me. It's just that in the scope of this podcast, I might not be hitting exactly the right words that resonate with you.

So. This question will often come up when people are moving towards a new situation, shifting into a new period of their life.
Maybe there's something that has been repeatedly coming up, that doesn't make an awful lot of sense to them.

This question will come up 'How do I know if I want or don't want'?
How do I know if I should do or not do it?
How do I know what my body is telling me when I don't have a long standing relationship with it?
How do I know whether that is a **trauma** response or not?
Very often this will come off the back of "or am I just lazy"?
Or am I just weak?
No, never, never.

That is a socialised construct.
Could your body be responding to a socialised construct? 100%.

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But it doesn't mean that that is true about you.
And I want to put that out in the first instance, you will know that your reaction to a situation is a **trauma** response if you recognise fear.

Trauma responses are what happens within our body, what absolutely *correctly* happens within our body, when it is exposed to a threat to a danger whether that danger is real or perceived.

A **trauma** response is a physiological, biological, neurological thing that happens because we're human. It comes because we are scared.

And with that fear, with a trauma response, with a reaction from fear… there is a sense that the reaction is a compulsion or maybe even possibly, that it's pre-cognition - you can't catch a thought that's leading to this, you don't quite know, maybe you're not thinking that you're scared, but your body is telling you that you are under threat in some way.

When I say compulsion, it's like you're you are internally driven to that response - which is actually what's happening! Your body is driving you to respond.

Whether that is to, to shrink away from something, for example, if you have moved into a space that's new, maybe you've got a lot of new exposure, and something deep **in** you goes "Oh my god, people can see me".

Perhaps your body response to that is to hide, to provide you with a measure of protection or safety from a potential threat of visibility.
But this compulsion to do it doesn't feel like it comes from your thoughts. You're not necessarily thinking "I'm visible".
Your body is like "this is happening and I'm feeling very vulnerable".

This is an appropriate response for me, your response in that situation may be different.
There may be lots of different ways that you find to cope with for example, visibility.

Your reaction in a **trauma** response may also be disproportionate so it might be something that your logical mind thinks 'Hang on a minute, this happened or I'm doing this, but how I feel is like way worse than this situation logically entails".

So that trauma response is bouncing potentially off something in your lived experience, perhaps something that's epigenetic, something cultural, that may be so deeply set in the back of your mind those thick neural pathways, something that genetically you have inherited, that it doesn't make sense to you.

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Your response, your reaction, this compulsion, this inner driven kind of reaction to the world, is your body's attempt to keep you safe in the face of a threat that your logical brain may not quite understand.

So it may feel disproportionate, and it may feel like you have no option.

In that time, it is possible, I like to say it is, it is possible to “ride over” the top of a trauma response, but it is not possible to “override” a trauma response.

I'm gonna say that again, **you can ride over the top of a trauma response, but you cannot override a trauma response**.

What I mean by that is, you can - if I use the example again, where you've got visibility, and your body wants to shrink, everything in you is screaming, like you've got fire ants climbing up your insides that you just want to get away, you want to hide, you want to be under the duvet… you can ride over that and *do something different*.

But you **cannot** override the fact that your body is reacting in this way.
It is a precognition.
You can ride over the top of a trauma response, you can ignore it, you can interrupt that trauma response and do something else, which I don't recommend, but you can.

Why not do this? Because It’s not necessarily learning.

So when you're **trauma** response *learning* you are activated in a **measured** way, **intentionally** in the direction of your dreams. You learn to tolerate discomfort, you teach your central nervous system that there is safety in that space.

But if you entirely ride over the top of your body's response reaction to a situation, you're telling it that it's wrong.
You're not teaching anything different, you're simply ignoring.
You're interrupting what it then needs to recover from, and you're interrupting that recovery so you're likely to create a *larger* central nervous system response next time, than is already there existing within your system.

If you are reacting to, responding to, open to having **intuition**, this is going to feel very different.
That's not to say that it's not ever going to feel scary.
Because this **intuition**, this *knowing*, the opportunities being there, wanting to take them, (that's the key word, wanting to take them), it may still be scary, you might be moving into an

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environment that you haven't yet got the skill set for or you if we use the example again, of visibility with a lot of people, perhaps that's new to you, that might be a bit scary, right?

That might be a bit alarming.
And you get to tend to yourself in that process.

But the key to **intuition** is that it will take you in the direction of your desires.

It's often obvious when it's **intuition**.
I found for myself that when I have used my intuition historically, I often haven't credited it.
So it's just “obviously I do that” and off I would go and do it - THAT is **intuition** when these paths or opportunities open up and the direction that you want to take is so clear to you.. that is intuition, that clarity.

Now remember it is not an ‘**intuition**’ job to take you down the easiest path.
It is to take you down the path that will give the most personal growth and the greatest personal development however you would like to phrase that for yourself.

So the scariness that can come with intuition may also be coupled with like an expansiveness, you may feel expansive.

What's key with **intuition** that certainly I have found, is that intuition feels like a “pull to”.
So in contrast to a **trauma** response, which is like a “run from” or a “push from”
Oh, I don't want to be doing that, now I've got to hide or I don't want to be here, there's something I think I have to do…

Whenever your response is in a **trauma** response, there's an imperative, urgency or compulsion, a quick push to do it.
Because your body has adrenaline in its system, right?
With **intuition**, there is more often a pull, it doesn't always come gently, sometimes it can be a very strong pull.

Sometimes it can be so gentle that you don't notice it, and yet you *are* following your intuition**.**
Your intuition, will never ask you to ignore your central nervous system.
Your intuition will never put you in a position where you trust yourself *less* at the end of it.

So it may be inconvenient, and it may be illogical, and it may be just entirely the wrong time for whatever it is that your intuition is nudging you towards.

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But at the end of the process of **intuition**, (which may or may not be enjoyable, right, because **intuition** job isn't to take us down the easiest path), there will be a reflection of growth, personal growth, that is important TO YOU. Not “all the people in the world”, to YOU that is relevant to YOU.

This is your **intuition**.
This is your system.
This is whatever you want to call it, your higher purpose.

Your nudges, however you’d call it.
I have three nudges, I tend to require three nudges to even notice that my intuition is pointing me in the direction of something.
Or I follow it so easily that it doesn't even occur to me often that it is intuition!
I've got better at catching that now.

But my three nudges will often come up, something will pass my desk, something will be mentioned in a comment, maybe it's a book, maybe it's a particular subject, maybe it's a person, maybe it's a conversation, and then a little period of time later, it'll happen again, it'll be mentioned again, in a different situation.
And that's when I start to pay attention.
And on the third nudge, the third time it happens (sometimes this could be years apart, sometimes it's minutes apart) I'm like, okay, there is something for me there.
My brain is picking up on information coming from people coming from lots of different sources.
“This” is what it's filtering for.
OK.
Let's go see what's there.
Now, I'm curious! Now, I'm curious.
Intuition has curiosity baked into it. Curiosity, desire, want, which again, does not mean that there is no scariness there, that there is no expansion there, that there is no “moving to a new space aaaah-iness”
“aaaah-iness”, I think that's definitely a word now.

So we can deny our **intuition**.
We can bury our **intuition**.
Just as we can bury our sense of self, just as we can bury our self worth, just as we can deny that we trust ourselves.

And the voice of your inner **intuition** can become more and more quiet, your inner genius becomes less pushy, less noisy. Sometimes you have to wait a little longer to hear that **intuition**.

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And sometimes the opposite happens.
Sometimes your **intuition** gets a bit pushy.
This happens to me with the three nudges.
That third nudge is usually like a big wall up on the back of the head like: come on, how many times? How many times do you need to hear this?
And I'm always fascinated by where I end up when I follow my **intuition**.

Ego is our socialised mind.
We need our **ego**. I'm not down with this whole thing like "death to the **ego"**. No.

Our socialised mind, our **ego** allows us to communicate in a way that we can better humanity. It allows us to be part of a bigger social sphere than just us on our own.

But when it rules the roost, right when it's making all the rules, when our socialised self is so strong that our authenticity, if it is not approved of, gets severed, buried, covered up by mountains and mountains and mountains of 'shoulds' then that becomes something that has a net negative benefit for you, for me, for all humans.

When those things get embedded into systems, get embedded into structures, that's when entire communities can have complications, they could be working, as a community, from a dysregulated central nervous system, because the central nervous system has been, if you like, abandoned to the, you know, sort of the worship of the **ego**.

That's not what we're working with here. Right?

If you're listening to me, you're aware of your central nervous system, but how do you know, **intuition** or **ego** trauma response?

I'm hoping that you've got a little sort of perspective on that.
But **intuition** and **ego** sometimes can sound very similar.

Ego is largely based in societal shoulds.
It comes from that socialised mind, it comes from our cultured mind and how we've been trained.
So if you are looking at a number of different options, and one of them is the one that let's say, for example, your parents would love…maybe my parents would love me to become a doctor, but actually, I'm really pulled to becoming, let's say, an artist or a coach… but they don't recognise those as like proper professions, so I think I'll just go become a doctor, because that's, you know, the done thing…

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E**go** often has status, societal status baked into it. Something that will improve your standing in the tribe, that largely is going to be **ego** based.

That is not to say that status in tribe are not important.
That's not to say, because to our central nervous system, it really is our status, which is why we react so badly when it's challenged, was an indicator in ancient times, of survival, the more important you are, (but not too important), but the more important you are, the more likely you are to have food, to have people around to support you.

So status was important. **Ego** is concerned with increasing our status to ourselves and to the tribe.

With **ego** there is judgement, and there is usually some form of threat or consequence.
Like if you don't become a doctor, and you do become an artist, you'll never make any money and you'll die in some dark room feeling sorry for yourself.
There is drama with **ego**.

There's no consequence with intuition.
You can deny your intuition, and it's still there.

If you deny **ego**, or if you move in the direction of intuition, and it isn't what '**egos**' keen on, '**egos**' going to start throwing mud.

So, you can tell if you're making a decision based on **ego**, because it is going to be something that pleases the tribe that pleases other people, there is a threat, or a consequence that is embedded into a should, or the have to.
It's the social rules of the wants that you *should* have, not the wants that you do have, or the desire for the life that you do want, but the life that you *should* want.

Ego can very much be at the cost of your central nervous system.

When we're moving against our wants, when we are moving into potentially activating situations, when we are riding 'over the top' of our central nervous systems response, we are doing that against ourselves,.... against our central nervous system in the name of what **ego** believes is going to help us survive in the world.

Because at some point, and this is what I really do want to emphasise, at some point, that was true. Right? At some point, all of the socialised things that we have in our head at some point in our life, it was relevant. At some point in evolution is WAS relevant.

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So you don't need to get pissy with it.
You can just be aware of the shoulds and the social rules when they are associated with your wants, that's **ego**.

If you override the importance of your central nervous system and your true wants, whichever direction you decide to go in, at best your results (because it is possible to get results with ego) at best your results are going to be short term.

And at worse, you're going to repeat short term results that actually don't matter to you - they matter to somebody else.
You're going to repeat those results, and the effect of that, the outcome of that, the long term of that, is that your life *will be somebody else's*.

The life that you live will be by somebody else's shoulds, somebody else's wants.
And you totally get to do that, if you wish.

It's a choice.
I would much rather that you made that choice, then sort of fell into it by default thinking, that you really have to do what somebody else wants you to do.

YOU don't need anybody else's permission to do anything.

The long term results that you get from repeated short term gains that benefit others and not you is unfulfillment, is a life not lived benefitting you, that is not fulfilling to your personal wants.

So you might have all of the shiny things, you might have all of the money, you might have all of the like the tick boxes of society BUT if your life is **ego** driven, if your decisions, the opportunities that you take are **ego** driven, your life will fit somebody else perfectly.

But it might not fit you.

That does not mean that if you follow a life lead by **intuition** that you don't get the shiny things, or that you don't get to keep shiny things, if you have shiny things, and you love the shiny things!

Knowing what it is that you *want* is the thing that is going to centre you into your intuition, it’s the thing that is going to allow you to express to yourself the direction that you wish to move in.

Your values are going to back that up.

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So there's an episode on values (I think it was two podcasts ago, maybe three) where you can really dig into what your values are.

So what to do, when you're faced with a room full of opportunities, and you're like, I don't know, I can't tell if I'm **trauma** responding, if I'm being led by **intuition**, or if I'm being led by **ego**.
What to do?
The very first thing, which, if you're asking that question, you're halfway there already, because it's '**awareness**', that very first thing is to pause.

Take a moment, take a count, take a physiological sigh - that's too short breaths in through your nose, and one longer breath out - and this allows space. And when you allow yourself space, you gain perspective.
Sink into your body.
What does it want?
Does it want this?
Or that?
Do you want to do this? Yes or no?

Decisions are made in the body, the plans to support them are made in the head.
So allow your body a voice - that voice will be the voice of **intuition**.

Will you potentially also be tapping into what may be a **trauma** response?

Yes, you may. And that's okay.

Because then, you know.
Oh, hang on a minute, I see what's happening here.
This is a **trauma** response.
And when I'm in a **trauma** response, I understand that I cannot make a clear decision.

So you can allow that response it's space, 'allow' it to process and move through your body.
And when you have completed that, then you get to ask these questions again, you get to consult with your body again.
One of the most important things about consulting your body is that you wait for an answer.

I've spoken about this before, but a lot of people are very impatient.
We're in the digital age where things happen instantly or three seconds before you wanted them to… people want that answer right now!

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And sometimes it takes a little time……
Maybe it takes a night sleep.
Maybe it takes a week, maybe it takes asking the question and then not thinking about it, going out for a walk, doing something else that's thoroughly enjoyable.
I promise you the answer will come. I promise you!

I have had 0% of people find **NO** answer.

This is part of being human.

And how you hear your answer is going to be so bespoke to you. Again, I've spoken of this before; perhaps it feels like expansion.
Maybe it's a temperature change.
Maybe it's something that you begin to notice in your environment.
Maybe it's an opportunity that lands, maybe… all of these things you get to be open to you, get to be receptive to, you get to receive as curiosities, you get to follow your want.

When you do this, you build a relationship of communication, and a relationship that's founded on trust.

Before you choose to move in any particular direction, whether it is **ego** based, whether it is **intuition**, whether you recognise that this is a **trauma** response… choose how you are going to treat yourself.
At the end of this, no matter the outcome, I've got my own back. I know, I care for me, I will show me compassion.

If this is something that you haven't done in the past, it's well worth forgiving yourself and loving yourself and having a lot of compassion for choices that you made previously, whether they worked out or whether they didn't.

Allowing yourself that forgiveness, that "past you" forgiveness, proves to your body that in the future, no matter what happens, you will afford the same compassion, the same love.

At the end, at the results, at the outcome (if indeed there is one, because this may just be a directional thing), you get to look back on the data, you get to assess this information that came in, the data that came in, and what your body made it mean, what your brain made it mean.

You get to assess how you felt through the process.
You get to check against your values.
Were you within them?

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Maybe some of those values need a little aligning?

How was it that you were outside of them in the first place, if you were?
You get to ask these questions, non judgmentally, you get to use **discernment**.

You get to use your ability to see data to see what is in front of you, without judgement.
And that information is information that will fuel you the next time.

If I have the slightest inkling, that **intuition** is offering me something, I take it.

Even if it may be not **intuition**, even if it may be something else, if I feel like **intuition** is saying to me: I don't really enjoy spending time with that person, I listen to it.

If **intuition** says to me, I think this is a great opportunity for you.
I listen to it.
No matter the result of those situations, I would rather choose myself and MY **intuition** and get it “wrong”, than run the risk of not listening to my **intuition**.

Intuition is something that adds to your life, it's not going to be something that suggests that you do something detrimental to yourself, that you do something that will damage your body, damage your brain, damage your lived experience.
You may have discomfort, it may be a bumpy ride, BUT at the end of it having made the decision that no matter what, you have your own back, when you look back, you get to see what you've learned.

Sometimes **intuition** *teaches* - it doesn’t just give you the shiny thing at the end! That teaching is important because it's about YOU - all of this this whole **intuition** and the **ego,** and the **trauma** response is all about you and your body, it's all about your relationship to, and with, and within your body.

Your experience of life is yours.
You get to make it whatever you wish.
Knowing the difference between a **trauma** response, an **intuitive** nudge, and something that may be **ego** based, is going to be a really helpful way of you being the architect of your future not falling into it by default.

Because remember, your central nervous system is historic. It only knows what has happened before.

So for it to be comfortable in a situation, you've got to train it to a new one.

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You have to spend time with it relearning.
Trauma responses aren't bad.
Trauma responses aren't to be avoided, to avoid any situation that's going to create that.

Choosing your challenges from **intuition,** you may have **trauma** responses embedded within that - but when you are doing it intentionally with love and compassion, you are in a process of communication with your body… of learning, like you would do with a small child.
A small child who, the first time they hear a balloon pop, they're in tears.
And the second time, they're in tears, because it's scary,
And the third and the fourth and the fifth… but maybe the 10th time when a balloon pops, they're not in tears.
Not because they have just totally ignored their central nervous system, but because they have been in an environment with you where they have been *allowed to experience that scary thing*, and recover and learn that while it may be surprising and shocking, it's the *perception of danger, there is no true danger.*

Your **central nervous system** doesn't learn that on its own.
That's your job as a human.

YOU are the parent of your central nervous system, this central nervous system that has been caring for you, since before your brain even came on board.

I really hope that in these categories that you find some resonance, and that will enable you to move into your future as the architect of it.
Because your future is incredible.
And it really gets to be whatever it is that you want it to be.

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