

PTSD Resulting from Unresolved Guilt

by

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In Moral PTSD, guilt and gratitude appear to be entwined in a tension within both the conscious and subconscious minds, and, as such, each supports the other.

When using the tools of Mindfulness meditation for healing, one focuses on the body sensations that arise relative to the issue being addressed. For example, when a particular incident is recalled for which one feels guilt, and, is subsequently replayed in the memory, sensations also arise that are related to and support that memory. Feelings associated with guilt typically manifest in the chest in the heart and lungs.

When these sensations are observed in a sustained focus, the sensations, and the issues that they represent, gradually begin to dissipate. This happens naturally in the practice of focusing on the sensations, as in doing so, *the process of thinking is suspended* when the attention is focused on sensation. It is the process of thinking, which, in the body, is accomplished by the release of chemicals that cause the bodily sensations. In other words, you might say that we create and recreate our emotional misery by our thinking, and, replaying the unresolved incident over and over and over countless times, both consciously and unconsciously. The replay, in my experience, comes about as an attempt to solve the problem, but, instead of solving the problem recreates the problem each time it is recalled. Focused Watching solves the problem through a process of dis-creating the memory at the cellular level with no thinking involved, and instead, uses the process of observation to dis-create.

If it is true that tension between the two opposites of guilt and gratitude exist as one, they will both lessen as a result of a sustained focus, as neither guilt nor gratitude, as counter-parts can exist in a sustained observational focus, as *they both are created and maintained by thought*. This happens because the sensations that fuel awareness of emotions, gradually begin to dissipate with continued use of a consistent practice of a Focused Meditation, and, this happens *in* the practice of a Focused Meditation because the process of thinking is *suspended* while watching the sensations, and, sensations result

from the process of thinking. To consciously try to stop one's thinking is next to impossible, as the mind is thinking all of the time at both the conscious and subconscious levels, however, with practice it is possible to train the mind.

When engaged in the practice of Meditation, and you become aware that you are, or have been thinking, simply return your focus to your sensations as your object of Meditation. In the practice, going back and forth, from thinking to watching becomes a repeated process, and, the practice itself develops, not in spite of, but because of the going *back and forth*. The result is the development of the still-watching-awareness-mind. This is because in the beginning of a Meditation practice, it is not possible to sustain a quiet mind, however, that *is* the ultimate goal. But, before that goal can be reached, the thinking mind has to be trained to be quiet. This is done gradually, and is like training a puppy. Success comes, not so much in the moments of sitting still without thought, but rather, in noticing that when thought has arisen, being willing to return to the object of focus, as it is in the *going back and forth* that the gradual cessation of thinking develops, and, this is the process by which sensations are ultimately eliminated.

In using this process, guilt is gradually resolved and replaced by the realization that one has already been *forgiven*. Gratitude follows and is the means by which one is able to realize that there is more to life than we consciously realize, and further, that life and death are opposites ends of the same continuum. One also realizes that the gifts of each, life, and the awareness of death, allow for a range of experiences and understanding that would otherwise not be possible.

When the tension between guilt and gratitude, as two separate aspects of one whole become resolved, they are removed, and in that moment one *transcend* guilt. A deeper meaning then emerges in the realization that one has *already been forgiven*, and, with this new understanding, one, who has previously known and accepted guilt as a way of life is now liberated from their former ways of thinking and feeling, and, is now able to experience *Gratitude*, as realized by having a deeper appreciation for their own life.

When this understanding has been realized and embraced, healing from guilt is complete.