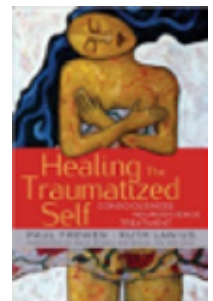


Creating an AcuDestress Schema

While it is intended that anyone could create their own personal **AcuDestress Schema** from reading these pages, our own use of it is that we now (as of September 2018) introduce it on the last day of an AcuDestress session, and to patients returning for a second round of the program. Note that it is based on, refers to, and assumed familiarity with one's experience of a whole **AcuDestress** session, including the exercises which have been experienced. First and foremost, it requires knowing if one is **RED**, **BLUE** or **GOLD/YELLOW**.

Attendees (only) will have access to, and should refer to the passworded Getting Back Your Smile Workbook to refresh your memory about exercises which will be referred to here. Our schema assumes prior participation in 16 rounds of **Smith's 5-point ear acupuncture**, the AcuDestress training exercises and access to the publicly-accessible text for aftercare - **The Magic of AcuDetox Part Two**. It is a way of organizing one's path forward to embodiment of gains realized during one's treatment. AcuDestress is not complete until one's whole body and whole brain and one's connections to the so-called outside world have been integrated. For those with a history of trauma at least, it means, in addition to knowing one's own acquired COLOUR, becoming more familiar with one's birth COLOURS. To get the most out of the Schema, the reader is directed towards reading **The Territory Beyond Talk Therapy**.

Acknowledgements The **AcuDestress Schema** is an adaptation of a schema developed by **Paul Frewen** and **Ruth Lanius** for following the treatment path of patients with PTSD in their trauma text, *Healing the Traumatized Self*. Their trauma schema appears on Page 85 of the text and they use it to follow patients progress. We are more prone to assign it to patients during the embodiment phase of our treatment, so that they manage it, adapt it and change it according to their own needs. for this, I thank those who have ComplexPTSD in our groups who have been willing to take its on and to suffer "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune it brought up in them. This surprised me when I first saw it, but I understand now.



The authors are aware of my adapted use of their work. I, in turn, am indebted to these authors for this text with so many new findings, particularly findings backed up by neuroimaging (PET scans, fMRI's and some of the newer scanning variations) which begin to unearth the deeper mechanisms behind complex PTSD. I am also in debt to the work of **Judith Herman**, the psychiatrist who coined the term **Complex PTSD** :

Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

A history of subjection to totalitarian control over a prolonged period (months to years). Examples include hostages, prisoners of war, concentration-camp survivors, and survivors of some religious cults. Examples also include those subjected to domestic battering, childhood physical or sexual abuse, and organized sexual exploitation.

Alterations in affect regulation, including

Persistent dysphoria

Chronic suicidal preoccupation

Self-injury

Explosive or extremely inhibited anger (may alternate)

Compulsive or extremely inhibited sexuality (may alternate)

Alterations in consciousness, including

Amnesia or hyperamnesia for traumatic events

Transient dissociative episodes
 Depersonalization/derealisation
 Reliving experiences, either in the form of intrusive PTSD symptoms or in the form of ruminative preoccupation.
 Alterations in self-perception, including
 Sense of helplessness or paralysis of initiative
 Shame, guilt, and self-blame
 Sense of defilement or stigma
 Sense of complete difference from others (may include sense of specialness, utter aloneness, belief no other person can understand, or nonhuman identity)
 Alterations in perception of perpetrator, including
 Preoccupation with relationship with perpetrator (includes preoccupation with revenge).
 Acceptance of belief system or rationalizations of perpetrator
 Alterations in relations with others, including
 Isolation and withdrawal
 Disruption in intimate relationships
 Repeated search for rescuer (may alternate with isolation and withdrawal)
 Persistent distrust
 Repeated failures of self-protection
 Alterations in systems of meaning
 Loss of sustaining faith
 Sense of hopelessness and despair

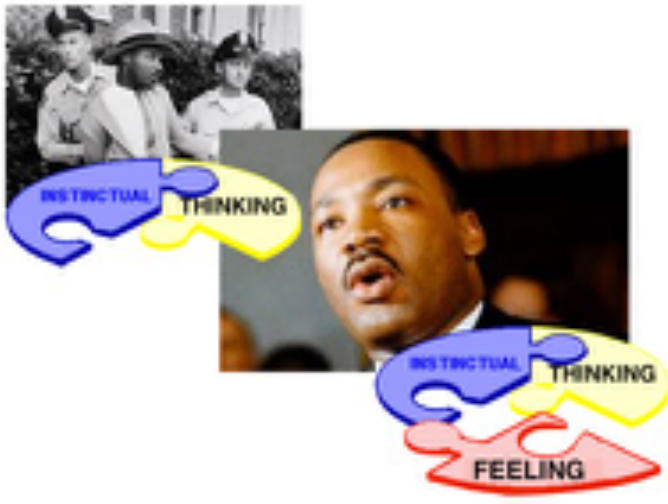
The Resources Make An Entry These are the a multitude of elements of PTSD which at least 60% of the people who attend AcuDestress will have to address with the tools we have provided. While it may not be easy it is doable. We now accept however that you can't isolate one element and deal with it. dealing with anything on the list about requires dealing with all of it, and that means all three layers of the brain. Conventional psychotherapy was devised to deal with them balance of two layers of the brain, not three. This is understandable because the third brain layer is only elevated to prominence by methods which, for the most part use neuromodulators to stimulate the brain where which has been recessive or "existing as potential" in most persons. Andres Lozano's Deep Brain Stimulation is an example. When we experience this "lying-in-waiting" brain layer exposed, it is remarkable, and our attention is galvanized in its exposure, much in the way the world sat up and listened with rapt attention to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address. While we often call it "rising to the occasion" those who experience it are mostly changed by it forever. Such is the nature of experiencing one's COLOUR.

THE BLUE RESOURCE

So, when the brainstem evolutionary brain layer has been "lying-in-waiting" the person suddenly **"knows what to do."** Abraham Lincoln, for instance, being a Must-Adapt thinking-feeling personality was wishy-washy and non-descript, a bumbling do-nothing individual before his epiphany at Gettysburg when he realized the necessity of taking a stand for the equality of America's black slave population. He was never colourless or non-descript afterwards, and his focus created the winning conditions for the Union to rise to victory the Civil War. So the evidence for the **BLUE Resource** appearing is an uncharacteristic decisiveness and centeredness appearing in a person who didn't appear to possess it up to that point



THE RED RESOURCE



This is a little early to introduce the **RED Resource**, but this chapter is dedicated to **RED ERNEST** and **YELLOW ERNEST**, so introducing, here, the concept of resources as “untapped potential” probably will make the appearance of the personalities which are not the withdrawing type we see in the **BLUE**, but the **other-approaching YELLOW-GOLD** type and here, the **moving-against-the-stressor RED** type we will see in more detail below. Few of remember the angry rabble-rouser **Martin Luther King** of his early years, when he was treated for anxiety and depression while a young man seeking justice for his race. But in the years we remember of him and his “I have a dream” speech we see someone who possessed the **RED Resource**, which enabled him to “**reach out with unconditional compassion**” which is the quality seen when the **RED Resource** appears.

THE YELLOW/GOLD RESOURCE



At a certain point in her stroke, when her left brain is injured and her right brain kicks in, the **RED** and **BLUE** layers are helped out by the previously silent **YELLOW-GOLD** layer... This is **MINDFULNESS**, as she is enabled to see what's going on from a detached outer view....

looking for danger and dysfunction on all sides. But when they acquire their **YELLOW/GOLD Resource** they suddenly are “**able to address, with perspective, what is really important,**” by including themselves in the equation. The appearance of the **YELLOW/GOLD** resource is never so well illustrated as the video of Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor's most extraordinary recovery from a stroke - which she later called her stroke of insight.

So the first steps to creating your own personal schema, are 1.) having your colour in play and available to you, knowing its experience , hands-on, and knowing how to access it, using mindfulness when you're in a situation when circumstances

have distanced you from the identity it confers upon you, 2.) having an experience of your at-birth resource colours operating at full tilt. The learning is:

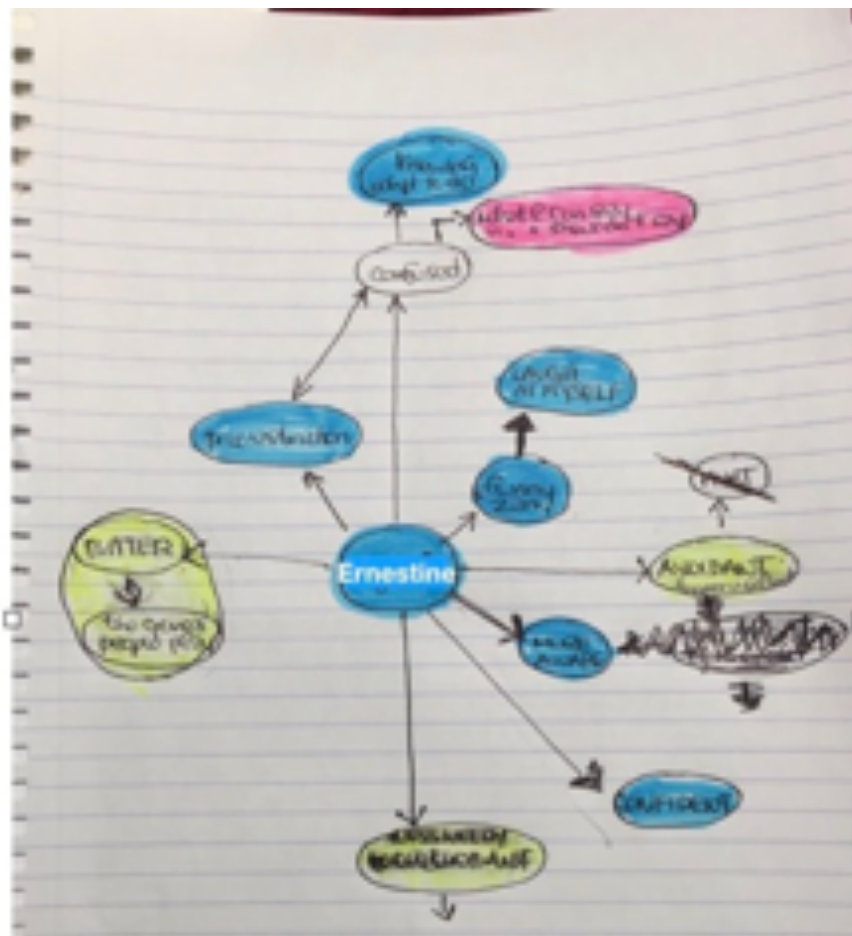
BLUE Resource = knowing what to do (in the moment)

RED Resource = accessing the unconditioned ability to reach out compassionately

YELLOW/GOLD Resource = accessing the ability to address, with perspective, what is really important

Once you know these three, the two you've had your entire life and the third one which has suddenly appeared to you, you're ready to create a schema. But make sure you are really aware of the abilities inherent in these resources, and then move on to the following page where you can create a schema from them...

HOW TO START AN ACUDESTRESS SCHEMA



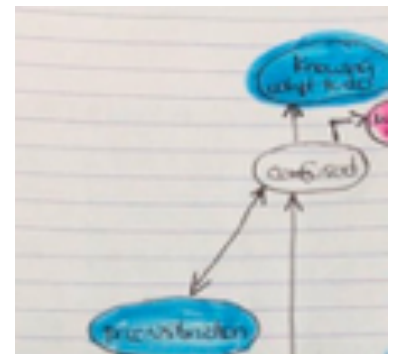
We will begin by showing a next-to-perfect Schema Page contributed by a patient we'll call **BLUE ERNESTINE** (not, of course, her real name.) The moniker was created in Chapter 9 of The Territory Beyond Talk Therapy if you are interested in following up on it. There are frequent references to her in the book, beginning on page 47, which may help to give her an identity consistent with the Schema she drew 6 months after her treatment began. This could well have been a Frewen/Lanius schema were it not for the three personality-related colours appearing on it which are of major significance as they will direct Ernestine's treatment going forward.

Ernestine discovered that her colour was BLUE early in her treatment of *Borderline Personality Disorder*, when she noticed that promoted and getting all tied up in not knowing what to do, in getting very emotionally perturbed in the process, she found that decisions came easier and with less consternation.

The first instruction, then, in creating an AcuDestress Schema, dated from the final day of your five-point year acupuncture session is that there are seven steps to creating and the same seven steps to review and update your schema :

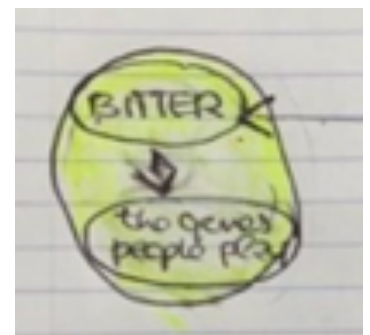
1.) Write your name in the centre of the page and draw a circle around it. Choose four words or short phrases which describe you today. They can be positive or negative. Write one at the top of the page, one at the bottom. Write the other two at the left and right borders of the page. Circle each.

Ernestine wrote *bitter, confused, avoidant, and needy* - indicative that there was still her associated PTSD to process. this is very consistent with and Judith Herman's description of complex PTSD on Page 1. she also wrote "*Knowing what to do*" above "*confused*", indicating an event which occurred in which she recognized that instead of incessant confusion she was beginning to have times when she was spot on in taking the next step forward. It wasn't an ultimate goal, but a momentary one. So I then asked her to do the second step: _____



2.) Look at you four circles, and think of an event which represents an experience of the quality that you have mentioned. Write it next to that circle. Join it with an arrow.

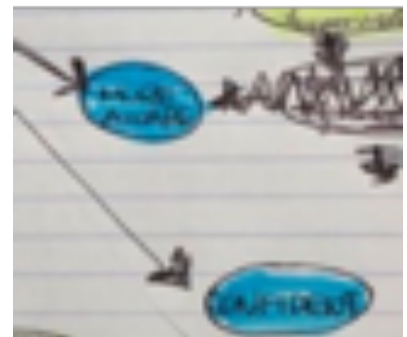
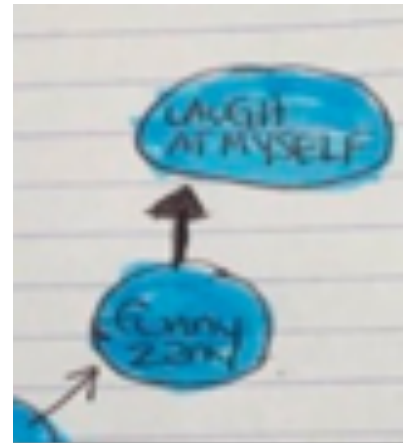
Ernestine chose her experience of being *bitter*. She wrote in below it "*the games people play*" remembering that both in her past as far back as she could remember, and in her present and recent past, she had had a hard time with people who were not either transparent or forthcoming. She rued the fact that things happened in relation to those people which she eventually blamed on herself as is so often the case with people with PTSD. This indicated that at the time that this aspect of her PTSD was still in play. When things are still in play, as they always are at the end of the session, it means that the issue will come up, and will still have to be addressed. At the time, these circles were not colored in yellow. We will come back to the coloring in below. The third instruction is



3.) Add as many circles as you can think of which describe other attributes, people you must deal with in your life, issues in your life you are aware of, personal attributes which are in your favour, beneficial qualities, areas where you stumble and fall, anything that gives a further description of your present status.

Ernestine wrote in a number of both positive and negative attributes which he attributed to her sojourn through the program, and which she could identify as making appearances in the period following her treatment.

We look for additions to the schema which indicate that the treatment is having an impact on the subject. Towards the end of the treatment people begin to feel good, even joyous for no good reason. Some of this manifests itself as new qualities which appear and last in the subject, like Ernestine's notation that she had become "*funny, even zany*" and that subsequently she could *laugh at herself*. She also declared that she was "*more aware,*" more "*confident*" which are obviously beneficial to her.



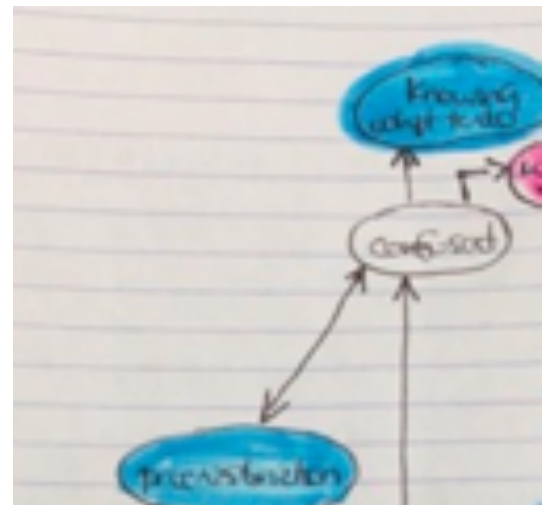
4.) Next comes the exercise of colouring in whichever circles you feel you are taking on actively in your post treatment period, Or in your second round of treatment if that is where you are at the moment. This will take some trial and error, so I introduce it to you in a group setting where you can talk about it with other people.

But basically it refers to the fact that while your new resource is replete with potential to be beneficial to you 1.) it has to be applied by you and 2.) you will need to let it assist your existing resources to get better and deal with other issues which pertain to them specifically. This again is the this says city which appears of integrating your resources. They are never as powerful as they can be applied singularly, and they are often more powerful than you can believe when applied together. less identifying which resource will take the lead will be helpful to your unfolding experience. when you are stopped in her tracks you can come back to your schema and see what you have planned as your mode of dealing with that particular issue. Our job is to give you the access to new abilities, that to solve your problems for you as you will never get better on other people's solutions. It has to be you.

5.) Start with the circles that you relate to the RED, BLUE or YELLOW Resource you've individually identified with or discovered during the program. Colour your name circle in that colour. If you have colored in your name in red, look for other circles in which the appearance of unconditional compassion, for yourself and others are needed. Look for circles where the Resource can be applied, and colour them in your name colour as well.

If you are like Ernestine, someone with a new BLUE Resource, you look for circles which require a "knowing what to do" like Ernestine circle of procrastination. when interesting finds herself procrastinating, it is helpful if she asks herself (remember us asking herself not someone else) what she should do next, and then do it.

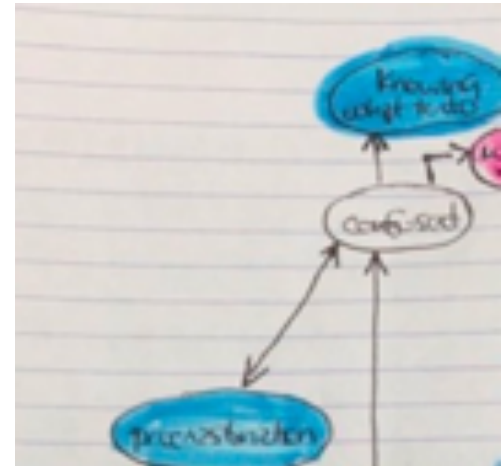
Here you see Ernestine colouring in *procrastination* in the same (BLUE) colour as her name. Of course, procrastination is an instance of not knowing what to do. it is obvious that knowing what to do with solstice, but not so obvious that one can do anything about it. but that's incorrect. if one is willing to be present to one's *procrastination*, the answer will come as if it were *guidance*. As this guidance is new, it will often need to be tweaked, by being conscious of the opportunity at hand.



Notice in the diagram, that Ernestine links *procrastination* with *confusion*, and links *confusion* with "knowing what to do." Can you begin to see that when you colour in the circles, it begins to show you which resource will get you out of hot water. It may not stop you from procrastinating (though it may do that too) but when you are draft of the

direction to take knowing that you have the city to “know what to do” believe that capacity to come to the surface. You have all heard of remarkable examples of this while you are in the sessions. countless people have told you that in times when they chose to be conscious, remarkable epiphanies occurred which would not have otherwise come to the surface. All of this quiets PTSD.

6.) This is not a one time exercise. It will inevitably require modification based on your experience of using it to direct your work on yourself. Be prepared to colour in the best you can, then try it out. You may learn from trying it out that there are changes, including colour changes, to get it right. It is a “trial and error” method. Enjoy the fact that you are doing this yourself. That you are willing to become your own teacher. That you are taking your life into your own hands.



The time to review your schema is when some of the issues on it arise, and you see that there is an ability becoming manifest, which moves you on to success in a way very different from how you usually purveyed that dilemma into failure. It may not be the resource which appeared newly for you, but perhaps that resource will help in the process.



[Ernestine](#) for example, could not figure out, initially, what shade to colour in the circle she called *confused*. She added the circle “*what can I say and what shouldn’t I say?*” as an issue that often came up for her, and moved her to confusion. While “*knowing what to do*” was beneficial here, Ernestine started off as being *alexithymic*, which meant that she was very vague about what she felt about anything and equally vague about what other people felt.

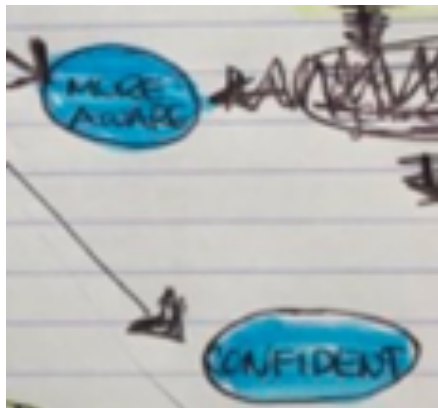
She often projected her feelings on other people which had gained her the additional label of *Narcissistic Personality Disorder*. So no wonder she was confused about what she could say or not say.

When she did say things she was often wrong. What she was wrong about was not knowing her own feelings or the feelings of other people around her. “Knowing what to do” told her to be expressed, but it didn’t tell her what should be expressed.



She had during her session, gone on the emWave2, and had reduced her TAS-20 alexithymia score below 100, but she still has to practice becoming conscious of what to say and what not to say, that she had a long history of “putting her foot in her mouth.” so both the confused and the “what can I say and what should I not say” our issues would belong to the malfunctioning limbic (red) brain, which we can relate to what we know now as an over-functioning amygdala and an under-functioning prefrontal cortex when PTSD is in play. As you see it above, Ernestine was able to see that these two circles where red issues, and that she needed to apply her new ability to suss out her feelings on the matter, and the feelings of others she could now read.

7.) So what you need to realize, especially if you are confused and don’t have all the answers for yourself the first time you are introduced to coloring in your schema circles, is that this is just a trial run to give you an idea of how you might eventually color them in. Wait about a week and draw your schema again without colours. To the extent that you can remember how things have gone during that period of time, you may have more insight as to which colours belong to which circles. As you go along, change whichever colours you need to. But you may also find that it interests you to adding new circles which come to light in your later thinking. They are often good circles. You need good circles!

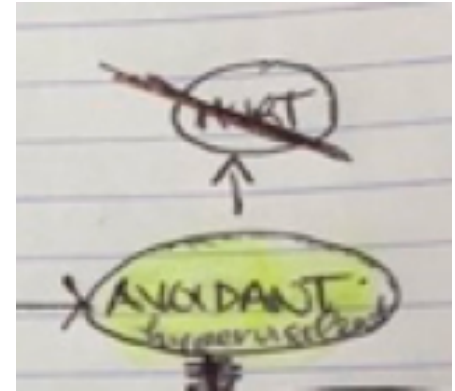


Therapy’s End You may even see some circles as the longer in play, which may be an indication that the end of the journey, or the end of this ticket or phase of the term is approaching. I don’t want any of you to get locked into doing therapy forever.

Good therapy has a transition point where you must take the skills you learned on the road. At the end of your 5-point ear acupuncture, we call this the Embodiment Phase.

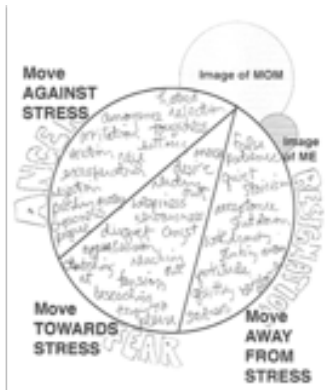
Your body, which has, due to emotional trauma, been excluded from your self-knowledge and decision-making, now kicks in with it’s own “gut feelings” and, the the best case scenario replaces someone on the outside telling you what to do next. It’s the step a schema addresses and initiates.

If it's missed out on, help from the outside will be endless. Therapy is not the be-all and the end-all. Sometimes it helps just to go for a nice walk, or sign-up for a yoga course. As you do this the schema will indicate things happening in your favor and you will be able to use it to gauge what to do next. Ernestine found that when she began to use her right-brain layer (rather than listen to the voices in her head) to notice her "*avoidance, hypervigilance*" that her chronic sense of *hurt* ceased to be a factor in her life, A very healthy sign. Therapy ends when you can take over its function, yourself.



THE INTEGRATION FACTOR

Your work is not over until all three brain layers are "alive and well." The layer which has come alive during your 5-point ear acupuncture can be enlisted to assist the layers you have always had in play work better. It may seem like your problem is the content of your thoughts and feelings, but really it's the function that's at fault. Focus on the content will keep you trapped. It's the function that matters. What I mean by this is that if you have voices of the past directing you, rather than focusing on what they're saying, your only job is to get them to "Shut up."



Your schema shows you the function that's needed. You can increasingly do the work, yourself. It takes the activation/integration of all three brain layers to overcome the effects of early life trauma. One cannot talk oneself out of an emotion. But by using neuroplasticity (*The Odd Man Out Exercise*) one can find oneself free of the *negative object relations triad* (as seen on the right) which renders one reactionary to every little triggering thought from the outside (or even the inside.) Work on the superego may seem done, but specific reminders of the past still have to be countered. *Repeat thirty times!* In the final analysis, there comes a point when you have learned the skills, and you must be the person to put them into operation. Not only do your own efforts begin to pay off, but you regain the abilities that trauma has denied you. Talk therapy can convince you it has to be someone else. That's wrong! You can prove to yourself otherwise. Yes, you can do it!

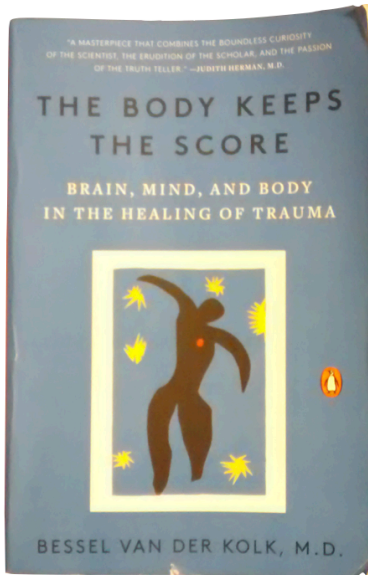
AFTERTHOUGHT

You may even, at the start of creating your schema, have a bad time of creating your first iteration of it. When you write down a word or phrase, it may remind you, poignantly, that there remains work to do on that item - or even cause it to re-activate past feelings on the spot. This is because it triggers the remaining dysfunction to which the word or phrase points. This can help by suggesting that the work on this issue is different than you thought. Look for a **different brain layer** than the one you currently use. Reread your notes or the web page notes pertaining to the different days of the course. Doing the same thing that doesn't work over and over amounts to obsessing. You must act to counter this. If you were to identify the first thought you have that tells you that you are in a dilemma as an obsession, using mindfulness, Jeffrey Schwartz at UCLC suggests a process to enter into which breaks up obsessive thinking. This is also elegantly described in Chapter 6 of Norman Doidge's *The Brain that Changes Itself*. Obsessing will not go away without your committed participation. We can help you expand your mindfulness but you must put it to use. Nobody but you can do this for you. Creating a schema is the ultimate

workaround for obsessive thinking. There is no advantage, and maybe even a big disadvantage to talking your problem over time after time. When you have a schema, it helps you “cut to the chase” of using what you have already learned to move beyond the problem.

The Patient Keeps The Score

As alluded to in Bessel van der Kolk’s seminal book *The Body Keeps The Score*, the healing of Complex PTSD is not so much a healing of the content of what happened, the actual story which unfolded, but how it effected the functioning of the brain, and its connections to the rest of the body. It is the brain and the body, not the story, which seeks healing.



But the story is the marker for which part of the integrated brain requires our action. Which brain does it call forth into action? It gets our attention. When we see the words linked to the memory or our dysfunction, we are prone to cringe in pain - until we aren't. So, our schema is a map which we can use to find our way around the field of action, and ultimately points to what brain layer to use at each point of the map. We can drill down on what will work here. How we see the map does remind us, dramatically what needs attention. But, in the words of Alfred Korzybski, “*the map is not the territory.*”

Level of Complexity When we look at a word or phrase on the schema, an experience comes to mind, often painfully. Or we have the pain in everyday life and we look to the map to see where it belongs. Thus the complexity of the map is a representative stand-in for the complexity of our healing process. As Nobel laureate *Ilya Prigogine* tells us, the brain is


capable of rising to a higher level of complexity, if we are patient with it. As Billy Harris’ paper on Prigogine’s work tells us, the solution to childhood trauma lies in the brain rising to a higher level of complexity. Of course, we must presuppose that there is a higher level of complexity, and this is helped by the extraordinary phenomena which begin as soon as 5-point ear acupuncture is used.

An example of this is seen in Out-of-body experiences, as described by Charles Tart. These are time-limited instances of higher brain complexity, attempts of the organism to solve problems by rising to more complex states of consciousness. so let us give complexity a numerical value here. This way, we can get a rough sense of the progress we’re making. We can compare this month with last month, as long as we are prepared to update our schema. While if this were research (and it could be) we’d like to have a control group, when we’re interested in our own personal experience, we are best to compare ourselves at the outset, to ourselves after we have made some therapeutic gains. In the schema exercise, we are asked to write down four qualities which describe ourselves. They are our starting point.

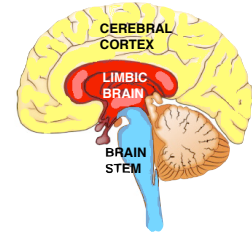
We think of this as the starting state. We have to start somewhere. And since we have been asked to come up with 4 words or phrases, let us say we start at scoring four. Of course, we don’t really start at 4, but we must start somewhere as a baseline. Over time we come up with more and more circles if we are paying attention and being mindful every time our experience asks us to. So let us call the number of circles we have in our schema beyond 4, our ***Current Level of Complexity***. Though I know [Ernestine](#) has added more circles, I can count her opening score as 10 (14 circles less the original 4.)

Whatever colour [Ernestine](#) has coloured in her name circle indicates that she has come into contact with the brain layer which mainly exists as untapped potential. But, coloured in, it means that it is no longer mere potential but an extra source of capacity she can now use. We could call the circles she has coloured in with this colour ([blue](#) in her case) her ***Acquired Level of Complexity***. She scores 7.

The Adaptability Index I said above that this schema is near perfect for a reason. What is that reason? Not only does she “cover the waterfront” by colouring in almost all her circles, indicating that she is working on (almost) all of them simultaneously, but, by including them all, she shows evidence of integration of all three brain layers, the cerebral cortex, the limbic brain, and the brain stem, not just the layer (in **Ernestine**’s case the **BLUE** layer) which has emerged from “available potential: status. Finally **Ernestine** has stroked out one circle (hurt.) Even being able to say that one area has ceased to be problematic is a good measure of her **Level of Progress**. It is a major accomplishment to clear one area of dysfunction, and indicates that all three brain layers have been integrated to do so. Thus, for each instance of such an accomplishment we can allot three points. Thus we can “add up” her adaptability.



A diagram of the human brain is shown on the right side of the text. It is a sagittal cross-section. The top part, the cerebral cortex, is colored yellow and labeled 'CEREBRAL CORTEX'. Below it, the limbic system is colored red and labeled 'LIMBIC BRAIN'. The bottom part, the brain stem, is colored blue and labeled 'BRAIN STEM'.



Current Level of Complexity = total circles on the schema minus 4
Acquired Level of Complexity = number of circles of one's newly acquired brain layer access
Enhanced Level of Complexity = number of circles of enhanced use of existing brain resources
Level of Progress = circles struck off (as completed) x 3
Adaptability Index = total of all values above

Current Level of Complexity = 10
Acquired Level of Complexity = 7
Enhanced Level of Complexity = 5
Level of Progress (striking off "hurt") = 3
Adaptability Index = 25



No, but it shows her, in a measurable way, that she is "*pulling out all the stops.*"

A photograph of a woman from behind, seated at a large wooden organ console. She is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a dark, patterned skirt. The organ has multiple manuals and a large pedalboard. The background is a red wall. Several black lines point from text annotations to specific parts of the organ and the woman's actions.

Annotations:

- playing from this book (pointing to the music book on the console)
- reading the words from this book (pointing to the hymn board on the wall)
- keeping an eye on the Minister here (pointing to the doorway on the left)
- keeping an eye on the congregation here (pointing to the doorway on the right)
- remembering to book 3 more singers for the wedding on Saturday (pointing to the organ console)
- remembering to omit verse 4 (pointing to the organ console)
- remembering to press some of these for the final verse (pointing to the organ console)
- playing with hands here and here (pointing to the organ manuals)
- playing with feet here (pointing to the organ pedals)
- remembering B flat sticks in wet weather (pointing to the organ console)

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