

The Territory Beyond Talk Therapy ***by Brian C. Bailey M.D.*** ***A MANUAL FOR PRACTITIONERS OF*** ***ACUDESTRESS***

*Chapter 11 The Red Folks Who Never
Come To Psychotherapy*

One of my longest term patients, a man I have known for perhaps 30 years, has done the program 3, perhaps 4 times. He regularly sits on the **RED PANELS** I put on, and now regularly admits (*I will get him to admit again below in his own words*) that he is a “reformed Donald Trump.” Ron (his real name) once felt secure enough in his relationship with me that he invited me to meet him in a restaurant, at which time he admitted that when he left the restaurant, he wouldn’t be able to find his car. Despite the familiarity of knowing each other for 15 years at the time, and my having treated his 7 year old prodigy son for being bullied, we both jockeyed around for words, avoiding the A-word like the plague. “*I don’t know Ron. You’re only 44.*” It wouldn’t be me who would follow Ron through the next seven years of his life. All in all, 48 specialists saw him, half neurologists, half psychiatrists (involved to catch him as a malingerer) as he had a big fat insurance policy (after all he’d been an insurance and stock broker.)

Then one day I was working in medical clinic that specialized in impossible cases - patients who had been through the medical system and had come away without a diagnosis and/or without treatment that worked. This included people who were on as many as three psychoactive drugs - say Effexor, Wellbutrin and Seroquel - and weren’t having any results.

Meanwhile Ron had receded from my life, sold his business, and was languishing with prescriptions for antidepressants which he flushed down the toilet after finding they made no difference. A day came when the pharmacist who ran the clinic where I worked discovered the avant-garde work of gastroenterologist Kenneth Fine in Dallas, Texas who was analyzing poop for *gluten sensitivity*. This was before the fad use of going off gluten (for no good reason.)

And these disgruntled patients were people who were evidently resistant to SSRI’s. Researchers [Genuis and Lobo](#) had them to dead rights. No wonder, as 100% of them were deficient in *serotonin, noradrenaline and dopamine*. Not one off the consultants who’d seen him had asked Ron, as it wasn’t their bailiwick, about his falling down in pain right to the floor when he ate certain meals, or about his son who did the same thing. I looked up Ron, took him off *gluten* on spec, and his memory loss was restored in ten days. Meanwhile Ron had been thrown out of a psychiatrist’s office and told never to return. “*I don’t treat narcissists, you creep!*” I’m not sure word *creep* was used, but it was plainly implied. Ron got the picture.



Narcissus, wall painting; from the House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto, Pompeii, Italy, 14–62 CE.
 Alinari/Art Resource, New York

So yes, **REDS** are narcissists. The Narcissus of Greek mythology was said to be so handsome that he fell in love with his own reflection in a stream - but we often don’t hear the whole story of his fatalistic love for Echo, who was herself cursed by the gods. All in all, Narcissus died somehow from “pining away.” Both he and Ron contemplated suicide at times. Therapists are right. Not many of their narcissists do well. Treating them can be a losing proposition.

One of the seasoned social workers who refers to me told me that she knew what narcissists were (*her brother was one, she said*) but she only ever had one come to her for help. So, beyond pejorative terms, narcissists are people born with the limbic brain offline, who rely on a *think-an-do-think-and-do-think-and-do* strategy or even worse a *do-and-rationalize-do-and-rationalize* modus operandi, akin to Donald Trump or our own Canadian Donald S. Cherry.



Why would a narcissist ever come to therapy? Their is a very independent temperament. They solve their own problems. But seeking control has its limits. Ron often tells the story of being the head honcho of a video production facility for the Board of Education. He was a czar there, a mogul without restraint. His brilliance bowled over his supervisors - and his staff, whom he recognized one day, had the tar and feathers out to lynch him. So I was brought in to quell the tide. Back in the days when I did talk therapy, I gave him a tongue-lashing in front of his staff. He just had to stop tongue-lashing them. That worked - but only because he saw what I saw.

So, the introduction of a personality type who seeks control of the situation by dominating it doesn't have to be a bad thing, any more than pondering an idea and then knowing when to spit it out (BLUE) or putting a lot of balls in the air in order to find the one which merits one's attention (GOLD.) Ron, in his heyday, took a trip with his girlfriend to a foreign city where he barely spoke the language. They had a tiff, and became separated in city of 13 million. But they had a plane to catch to return to Canada. Ron panicked. How would he find her? A local resident told him to go to the local police station and report her missing. Without any other solution, Ron relented. He went to the police station. But he was told that no one became a missing person until they were missing for 48 hours. By 48 hours their plane would be gone. As the argument heated up, who should walk into the the stationhouse door but his girlfriend. Go figure. A city of 13 million? How did they cross paths except by magic? Ron's magic!

When people come to our program, they have been named and renamed, even diagnosed and re-diagnosed, but all of it paints a bleak picture of them. They're both tired of this, and it hasn't worked. If it had, they wouldn't be here. There's nothing about a diagnosis that's kindly. Martin Seligman found this out when he coined the term "learned helplessness" to describe the plight of patients who are deprived of their own resources, say their ability to make a sandwich, when they break their pelvis and are immobilized for several months, and never see a kitchen. Do you know that when they get home, they stare into space at sandwich time? But it's no use saying something disparaging to them or even about them. They need encouragement, not criticism.

Seligman, inspired by his 5 year old daughter who asked him why he had to be a "grump" talking about his work decided to take on the cadre of Grade 4 students who were sufficiently pessimistic that they were seen to be ready to join the depressed by their next year in school. Taking this daughter's advice, he was inspired by the story of one Thomas Hovey.

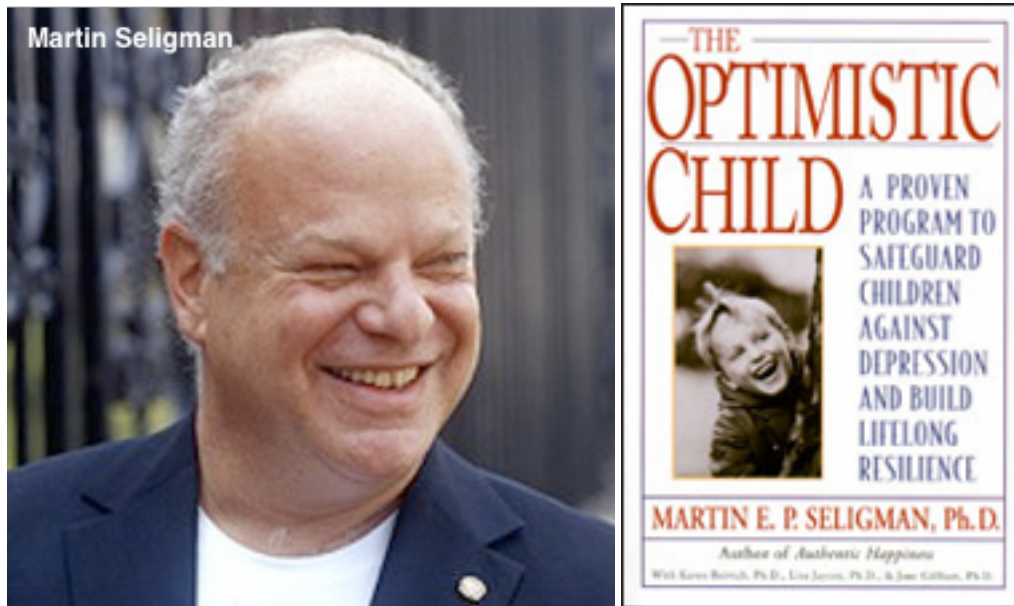
Seligman relates the inspiration for his work in his book on the subject- *The Optimistic Child*⁴¹. Thomas Hoving⁴², the formidable curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, was

⁴¹ Seligman M.E.: Learned Helplessness: 1993: Oxford University Press ¹⁴ Seligman M.E. : The Optimistic Child: 1995:Harper Perennial

⁴² The story of Hoving's adolescent transformation was originally told in John McPhee's book (1968) A roomful of Hovings and other profiles : New York: Farrar, Straus, and Groux.

known for not only his exquisite taste but also his ability to sniff out fraud and his unshakable confidence in his own artistic judgment. But he was not always full of such confidence.

He tells of being nineteen at Princeton University, flunking out, anxious, low of self-esteem, and unsure of judgment. Before dropping out, however, he decided to venture one more course, an upper-class sort appreciation and sculpture course. On the first day, the professor placed on the podium a gleaming metal object with a streamlined finish. It was not familiar to the beek of second year students who'd gathered.



“Gentlemen,” the professor instructed the eight Princetonians, “Comment on the aesthetic merits of this piece.”

“Mellifluous fluidity,” asserted the Ivy Club senior.

“Harmony of the spheres,” agreed a junior in plummy tones. On and on went the plaudits around the room, until the only until only the sophomore, pimpled, quaking Hoving remained.

“Well, this is too well tooled, too cold, and too mechanical. It’s too functional. This isn’t art,” mumbled Hoving apologetically.

The object was an obstetrical speculum.

“After that,” Hoving tells us “there was no stopping me!”

Hoving’s transforming event was a positive one, but I am convinced a single, crucial event that shatters the routine of childhood or adolescent life – for better or for worse – can markedly alter pessimism or optimism by changing the child’s theory of who he is and what he is worth.

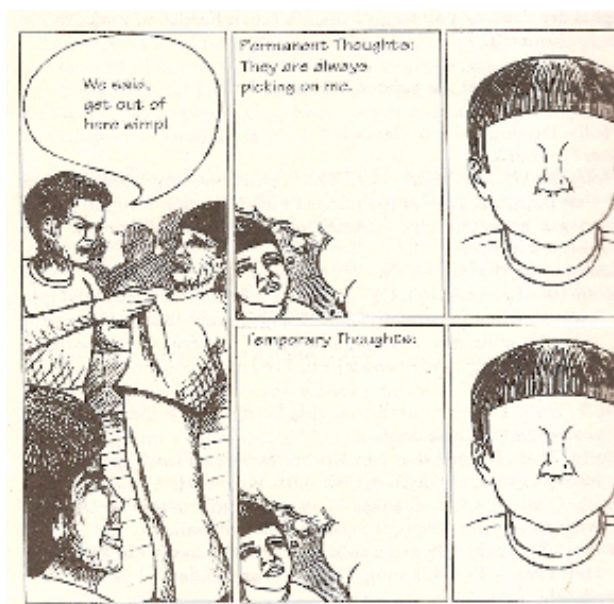
Seligman designed an intervention filled with events he hoped would shatter the pessimistic view of his youthful participants. He drew up a list of events which would have maximal significance to Grade 5-6 students – events like being invited to somebody’s birthday party, being picked on by one’s brother, being compared to a sibling by one of one’s parents – events which were loaded with the possibility that the young person would exhibit pessimism. Then he created a series of cartoons with



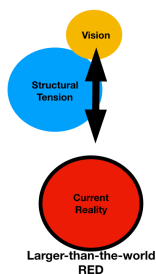
young people began to see that they had a choice, and when given a choice, they were better able to relate to the optimistic view rather than their usual pessimistic one. This turned out to be a brilliant coup. But would it work a year later? The prediction was that 44% of the students would present with clinical depression a year later – and when a year later came, only 22% of them were depressed.

Seligman was awarded the *Psychologist of the Decade* award for the 1990s for this work, and by 2004, variations on the exercises he had created were ensconced in every elementary school in Australia.⁴³

bubbles representing young person's thoughts. His researchers induced the young participants to use one series of cartoons to fill the thought bubbles with their usual response – which might be something like “it always happens to me.” and he added the second panel of cartoons with a thought bubble preceding a frame which indicated a positive outcome. By filling out both panels



Seligman may or may not be a Red, but his ideas of providing natural pessimists with “control” of what they do with their thoughts and feelings is a distinctly RED idea. And interestingly enough, in Ron's years as a Community College principal in Papua-New Guinea and his sojourn as a creator of programs for learning-disadvantaged kids. Ron has become a self-styles exemplar for empathy and compassion, and program after program inspires others to be like him. He, in turn resembles Martin Luther King Jr. who turned youthful depression and bitterness into a dream of togetherness. So let us add **Red Ernest** to the mix....



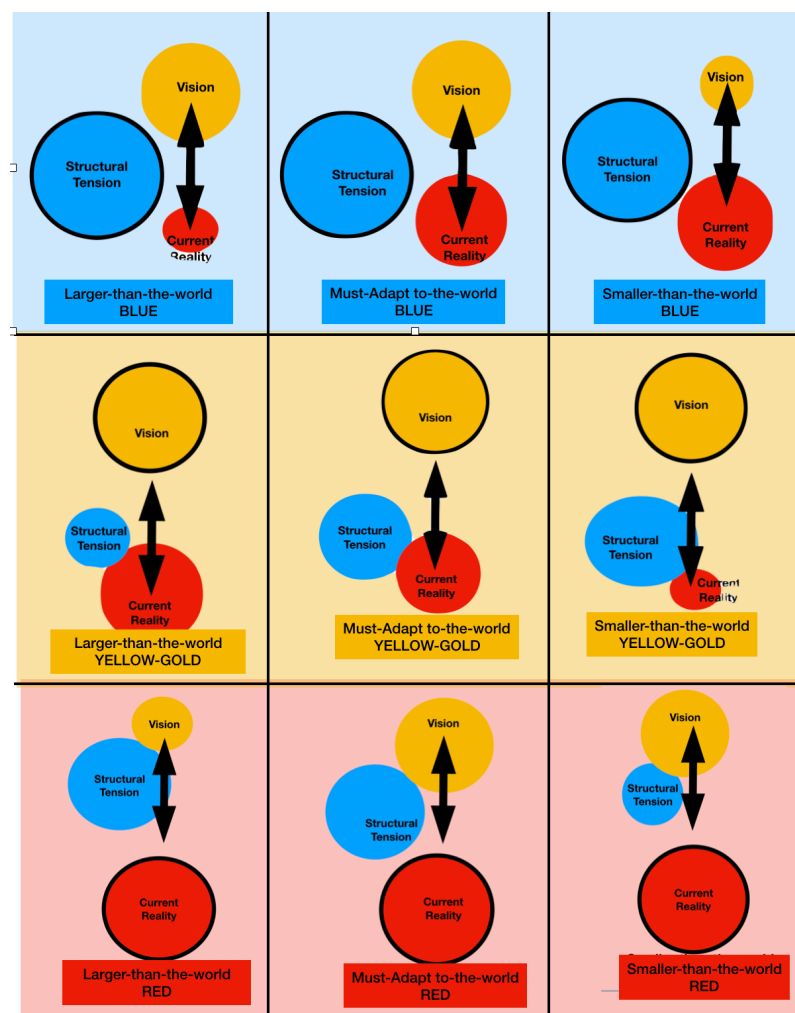
Ron, who epitomizes all that is RED, pulls out all the stops when it comes to relationship. He is seen here in 2013, talking about his interesting life. He is “all in” with compassion, mentors young people who have trouble negotiating the educational system, even providing bursaries for kids who need it. On the other hand, Ron does not “suffer fools gladly” and says he has to be careful that he doesn't just “fire” those who are not on his wavelength. He acts first and determines afterwards whether it was the right thing to do. In the past it wasn't. Now it is, not always, but usually. To augment his flagging GOLD layer he uses his RED piece now to decide, hands-on, whom to hang out with and which books to read. Hopefully, by meeting Ron, you will see that not all REDS are angry.

The “**missing red piece**” is an “in limbo” limbic brain layer. This layer wants to do anything but control things. Control is the job of the brainstem-cortical connections the RED has from birth. Since there is no factoring in the feelings of others in the mix without the limbic brain, thinking is paramount and can lead to ADHD. It is also important to see that others in the other colour cohorts can be just as angry. Each grouping has its own locus of anger, and while all **REDs** are playing the control card most of the time, they can be as gracious as Ron too.

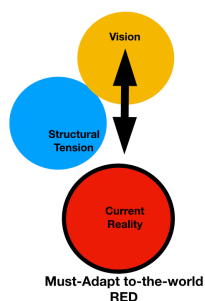
⁴³ Bailey, Brian: *Love, Liberty and Leadership* Chapter 3 P. 25-7

So let's place the REDs where they belong. We see where Ron fits in on the lower left hand corner. We've already seen the tendencies for one's nurturance, and maybe one's attachment style.

As *avoidant attachment* types, Reds in their infancy "... did not use the mom much as a secure base from which to explore. When the mother began to leave the room, the infant might move toward her, but often did not. When the mother returned, the infant acted like she was not even there and just continued playing. In the home, these parents were seen to be emotionally unavailable, imperceptive, unresponsive, and rejecting. Some were responsive in many non-emotional interactions, but were very dismissive and non-responsive when the infant was emotionally needy, frustrated, or angry. These infants often expressed random aggression, and were more clingy and demanding in the home than securely attached infants. The internal working model is likely, "mom does not respond to my emotions, especially when I am needy or angry, so I will shut down my needs and try to become independent." The infants then protect themselves from this difficult situation by **dissociating** from contact with their normal need for connection, and repress their emotions more generally."⁴⁴



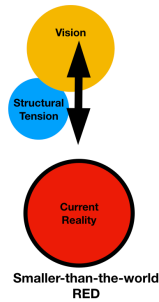
Above we have called the BLUES the dissociators. But it only makes sense, that as part of the animal kingdom we all have a way to hide from the forces which oppress us. Ron would say that he just "numbs out" at times to protect himself. And it may not look that way. At Ron's wife's funeral, he was the "life off the party" in a subdued pleasant, semi-formal way, welcoming each guest warmly. But inside he was devastated, and remained so for several months, until he came around to believing that he was worth it to rise like the Phoenix to re-embrace life.



So, when I move on to the **Must-Adapt-to-The-World RED**, we are seeing a person who never wants to be seen as weak, and who is gracious by reason of wanting to be seen that way. Rarely does one not see a smile on the face of a **Must-Must-Adapt RED**. Is Oprah ever in a bad mood? She and her compatriots are self-assured, attractive, and charming. Ambitious, competent, and energetic, they can also be status-conscious and highly driven for advancement. They are diplomatic and poised, but can also be overly concerned with their image and what others think of them. They typically have problems with workaholism and competitiveness. Their **YELLOW** thinking layer and their **BLUE** acting layer are equal, so the natural toggling back and forth between them in order to create the right image can be explored for their own merits once the person of this type learns to be mindfully centred.

Oscar Ichazo, who has contributed to the understanding of the inner dynamics of each of the personality types sees the Must-Must-Adapt REDs as having the hardest time to establish an identity, and especially in an identity described by anyone else. "Hell, who has the right to tell me who I am. If I can't decide that myself, surely you can't." These REDS can put on a happy face when the doorbell rings, even if the moment before they're angry.

⁴⁴ For full quotation see p.48 and p. 98



Finally, the Peter Pan of the types, and perhaps the easiest to spot are the **Smaller than-the-World REDs**, who are found preaching “*Don’t Worry, Be Happy*” even when they are in a their most worried and unhappy state. This is not to say they’re chronically unhappy. If they put on a party, they’re the life of it, and are genuinely concerned that every last guest is having a good time, even those they don’t like. Ben Franklin advocated for everyone, had a solution for everything, and spent his life holding court for the interests of his treasured America in the capitals of Europe. But few knew that beneath his veneer he was a serious ladies man. Thinking, planning, thinking, planning can give way to serious generosity of spirit. Ben was of this ilk!

While each of the types have their down sides, that is the fodder for talk therapy. We could talk till the cows come home about actually acting on all the fine surface emanations but Franklin’s “a stitch in time saves nine” suggested frugality and preparedness. But these were never Franklin’s qualities. He talked about it rather than doing it, and died a virtual pauper. His quality we remember is his generosity to the national interest. Everyone knew that Ben Franklin could do it for you, and probably would. We call this quality sobriety, as it captures the natural ebullient nature of a Smaller-than-the-world RED but adds the reliability and the sense of the person being someone you can count on to come through.

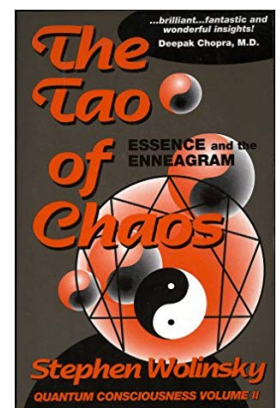
What About PTSD Among REDs?

Going back to the work of [Wolf, Miller and Reardon](#) on page 95, we are reminded of the *externalizing form of PTSD*.....

“The externalizing subtype was characterized by features of antisocial, borderline, histrionic, and narcissistic personality disorders on the International Personality Disorder Examination (Loranger, 1999) as well as low levels of constraint and high levels of negative emotionality on the MPQ-BF. In contrast, individuals in the internalizing class exhibited features of schizoid and avoidant personality disorders, low levels of positive emotionality, and high levels of negative emotionality. The simple subtype was defined by low levels of comorbid personality disorder features and relatively normal personality profiles. Findings support the reliability of this typology and support the relevance of the internalizing and externalizing model to the structure of personality disorders.”

Can we square the circle here? Yes, I think we can. In their extreme form, Larger-Than-The-World REDs are antisocial personalities. In their extreme form Must-Adapt-to-the-World REDs can be any combination of borderline, histrionics and/or narcissistic personality disorders. Smaller-than-the-world REDs can be histrionic personality, ADH or Bipolar II. And do REDs dissociate? Well, they do, but in their own unique way. By “spacing out.”

Stephen Wolinsky in his book *The Tao of Chaos* describes how, under hypnosis, it has been discovered that the mind’s remarkable functionality leads to there being several pairs of complementary activity. When it comes to memory, Wolinsky describes “*Hypervigilance*,” by which we can access memory trace of any event in our lives, and a balancing function called “*Selective Forgetting*.” We use this function to wind our way home after a day’s work, forgetting what we’ve been doing in favour of what we will be doing. On vacation we forget our arduous day jobs in favour of relaxation at the beach. If we are RED, could it be that we “space out” into *selective forgetting*, losing our forward-leaning aggressive nature for a virtual shutdown of our aggressive emotions. Could this be how REDs dissociate?



Extra Piece of Work for RED Assistants

Wolinsky would say that the **RED Resource** is a way of waking up from a trance of invincibility. Of course, none of us are invincible. I’m sure Ron would (or will) tell you that. But if one is not invincible what are we in the light of day? I’ll let two REDs, both of whom suffered from PTSD tell you that in **Appendix C**. We’re ready to embark on Part II, where we see the difference between success and failure with these complex forms of humanity. If we can keep from dealing with them piecemeal, moving them to higher complexity does work.