



The Ego helps us to Cope with Childhood Traumatic Events

Hi listener's and welcome back to the 'Victim2Victor' podcast. My name is Anu and I am your host. In the previous podcast episode, we gained insight into the holistic concept of what ego stands for & its functioning mechanisms along with a typical idea of its place of origin.

So now in today's podcast episode we would reflect back on & further draw conclusive evidence as to how childhood trauma, particularly that of child abuse & ego development, go hand in hand & we will also look at ways to advocate methods to shed the baggage of trauma to keep the ego from subjugating our sense of attachment from reality.

For starters I would like to mention how parental violence or any other forms of abuse influences a child's ego functions. Well, the impact is detrimental and apparent from the high level of impairments created in forms of irritability, anger, passivity, depression, low levels of impulse control, distortions in reality testing, and extensive operation of immature defense mechanisms in the physically abused children.

Speaking of defense mechanism, let me highlight a few measures of ego defense mechanisms that child abuse survivors engage in. They usually adopt regression, denial and splitting, projection & introjection for compensation. Now these technical terms can be illustrated in manner like let us take denial for that matter, this occurs when you refuse to accept reality or facts. You block external events or circumstances from your mind so that you don't have to deal with the emotional impact.

In other words, you avoid the painful feelings or events. In a similar thread Regression is when you unconsciously find an escape whenever you feel anxious or overwhelmed or threatened by a particular thought about a particular situation which in this instance would be of the abuse.

Now if it is encountered at an early stage in the younger years of life then the child's experience of trauma or loss may make them act as if they were younger again. They may even begin wetting the bed or sucking their thumb. However, in case when the haunts of trauma catches up as an adult then regression can take up a different form such as the survivors may return to sleeping with a cherished stuffed animal, or overeat foods that they find comforting, or they may begin chain smoking or chewing on pencils or pens. They may also avoid everyday activities because they feel overwhelming.

Likewise, Introjection occurs when a person internalizes the ideas or voices of other people. This behavior is commonly associated with the internalization of external authority, particularly that of parents. We can also come to say that Introjection is the opposite of projection.

Projection occurs when a person projects feelings or characteristics onto another person, however, introjection is when you start identifying with a person or an incidence so strongly that you cannot separate that person or situation from within your thought patterns & behavior. Depending on the types of attitudes that are picked up, introjection may lead to positive or negative effects though in the case of child abuse, it undoubtedly resonates with the negative parameter of effects that the child was exposed to.

The child may constantly feel worthless, incompetent, or guilty, they may feel unable to freely express emotion, and they may find it difficult to discover their identity or a sense of self. With this obstacle to the child's self-development they may begin to lose confidence and may also become self-critical. But amid all these unconscious consuming walls that we build up let's not forget that coping mechanisms are ways that the ego uses to numb us out. By doing so it keeps us from facing the need to heal as it often responds with a fear called shame. The ego wants you to believe that exposing the wounds to the light will cause you additional harm. Again, this is a concocted myth. Healing of a wound can be uncomfortable, but it's necessary for us to release the shame of the past and to become our authentic selves.

Now that we have explored the unconscious link between ego & child abuse experience, let us also shift our focus of attention to what the preliminary conscious emotions are that cloud our growth. As a repercussion of child abuse trauma, you can be left with a feeling of emotional depletion, you tend to feel "stuck", life doesn't feel joyful to you, you may even find yourself in unfulfilling or toxic relationships because of that unresolved feeling that keeps lingering in the back of your mind, you may find changes difficult & you may conform only to a rigid set of beliefs, you may even encounter a feeling of something being missing. The ego aims to provide temporary comfort by acknowledging & agreeing to these set of disturbed feelings which makes you feel affirmed & protected, unlike your childhood experience, but in the long run it makes you stagnated as it reinforces wrong sets of beliefs & overcompensates by inculcating a false confidence and a rejection of any idea that conflicts with our mindset, promoting black & white thinking and fueling constant comparison & judgment to others. It can even induce you in a feeling of analysis paralysis which dictates an obsessive chain of thoughts that stops you from completing any action.

With this I would also like to remind the listeners that ego is for that matter a necessary evil, that is to say, that as we know that ego is a person's sense of self-worth and if that self-worth is positively affiliated then it can impart a sense of confidence & strength. It can even channelize strong conviction in your beliefs even when the whole world ridicules you, but again all of this works for the betterment only as long as you are in control of your ego & your core beliefs are rationally supportive & positively inclined, which isn't always the case for child abuse survivors.

Having said enough about the output of ego on survivors of abuse, let us head into how we can control this ego from having an overpowering access to trauma and at the same time, overcome this fragile daunting experience of abuse in childhood.

For this I have stumbled upon three enriching techniques which proposes to consciously steer our attention's source from the ego to the heart. But, that's not always easy because our heart speaks in whispers compared to the loud thunder of our ego. That's why we need to discipline ourselves and our minds. That's why we need to meditate. Meditation is a practice that helps you separate from your thoughts and to realize, "I'm not just this stream of consciousness nonsense blaring through my brain, I am much more than that, there is much more that constitutes me than those dreadful memories of abuse."

However, if you are not a meditation person then there still sure are ways that you can hop on & get yourself into your heart zone, to stop the thoughts and to help you feel whole again like if we do five acts of kindness in one day, once a week for six weeks.

Studies show that when we do good deeds frequently, we actually start to experience a "helper's high." How's that for a benefit? You don't just get out of your head, you get high! Doing good deeds can actually make you happier and less depressed and can lessen aches and pains. As human beings, we all want to contribute to something bigger than just ourselves. Doing something nice for others is like a salve that soothes some angst and quietens the ego. Do you feel too busy to help someone out? You don't have to volunteer for hours, even though that would be great. You could buy the person standing behind you in line a cup of coffee, pay for someone's parking meter anonymously, give someone an authentic compliment, leave a positive quote on a sticky note on someone's desk or just be present and listen instead of multitasking.

Now besides these, the third set of technique recommends practicing gratitude. Often when we're consumed with our thoughts, gratitude helps give us perspective and expand our attention beyond just what's wrong. Just remember that at any one second, your body is receiving over 11 million bits of information from your nerve endings and your brain can only process about 40 bits. What that means is that there's more information available out there to help you assess your reality. There's another way to see your situation and another way for you to be. If you're feeling stuck in your head or at the mercy of your ego, a dose of gratitude will help. Try writing down three things you're grateful for once a day for a week, and notice what you notice. By intentionally steering your attention with gratitude, you don't leave yourself at the whim of your ego or your past trauma for that matter.

So before bringing the curtains down I would just like to say that if you want to reach a state of bliss, then go beyond your ego and the internal dialogue. Make a decision to relinquish the need to control, the need to be approved, and the need to judge. Those are the three things the ego is doing all the time. It's very important to be aware of them every time they come up. In other words, it can be concluded that we should be wise enough to listen to advice from others, but at the same time have a strong conviction about where we are going for everyone has a right to his/her ego, but should never let himself/herself become an object of that same ego.

However, if circumstantially, you have become a victim to your ego then never let go of the school of thought that when it comes to getting out of your head and overcoming your ego, the key is to have some go-to exercises that resonate with you and, ideally, that you practice regularly. Just like you go to the gym to get physically in shape, you must also practice getting your mind in shape. And, just as there are infinite ways to build strong muscles, there are infinite ways for you to conquer your mind. You just have to test out some methods and see what you like best. Start with one or all three of the above, and see what works for you.

With this our podcast episode comes to an end but before that don't forget to read my book called Victim2Victor where I have shared my journey of evolving through travel, self-help and a determination to cast off my damaging past. Via this platform I wish to reach out to fellow survivors of abuse & be the source of light & motivation in their life. I hope by my efforts I can help victors transform their lives just like I did for betterment & in the process discover their true self.

I also have a 12-week self-development plan course that is FREE and aims to guide you in bringing the superwoman hiding inside you. You can find the link in the description below.

Do like the podcast and tag someone or share it with someone you know who is going through a similar situation & may need help. I will be back with another podcast soon. Until then adios! Take care and keep fighting.

