



ALL WE NEED IS LOVE!  
*Trauma Responsive Living*

Mary Coughlin MS, RNC-E, Trauma Informed Professional™, Caritas Coach®

# DISCLOSURES

- I am the president and founder of Caring Essentials Collaborative, LLC

# PROQOL - HEALTH

- As a health worker you have direct contact with the lives of your patients and families.
- Your compassion for those you help can affect you in positive and negative ways.
- Consider each of the following statements about your current work situation. Select the number that most accurately reflects how frequently you have experienced these things in the last 30 days.



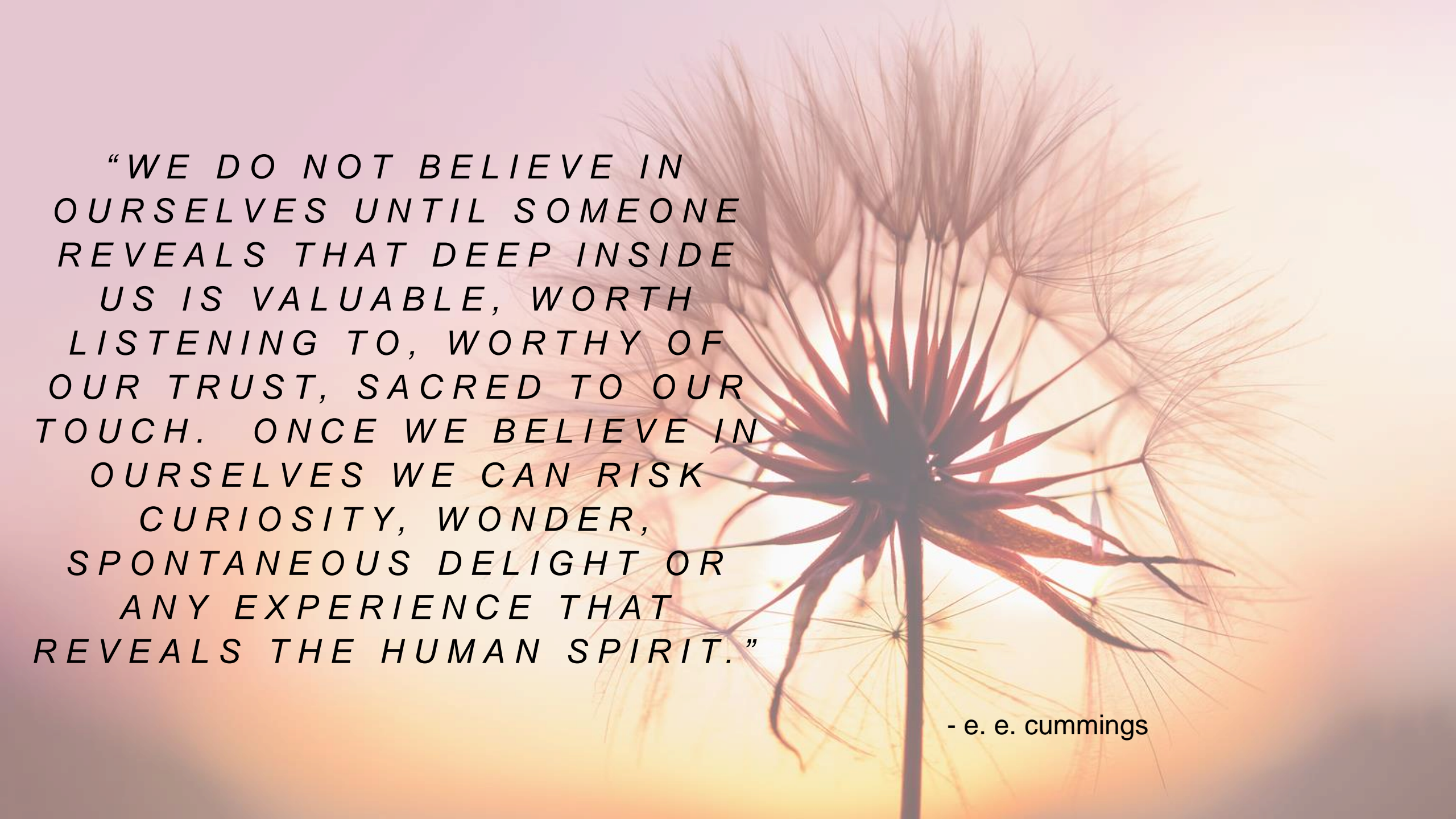
PROQOL - HEALTH



# LEARNING INTENTIONS

Upon completion the participant will:

- Recognize signs and symptoms of traumatic residue.
- Uncover the power of love to foster resilience and enhance the lifelong health and wellness of babies and families.
- Assimilate the values of a trauma responsive paradigm and live a life of loving leadership

A close-up photograph of a dandelion seed head, showing the intricate structure of the seeds and their long, feathery pappus. The background is a soft, warm glow of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The lighting creates a silhouette effect on the dandelion, highlighting its delicate form.

*“WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN  
OURSELVES UNTIL SOMEONE  
REVEALS THAT DEEP INSIDE  
US IS VALUABLE, WORTH  
LISTENING TO, WORTHY OF  
OUR TRUST, SACRED TO OUR  
TOUCH. ONCE WE BELIEVE IN  
OURSELVES WE CAN RISK  
CURIOSITY, WONDER,  
SPONTANEOUS DELIGHT OR  
ANY EXPERIENCE THAT  
REVEALS THE HUMAN SPIRIT.”*

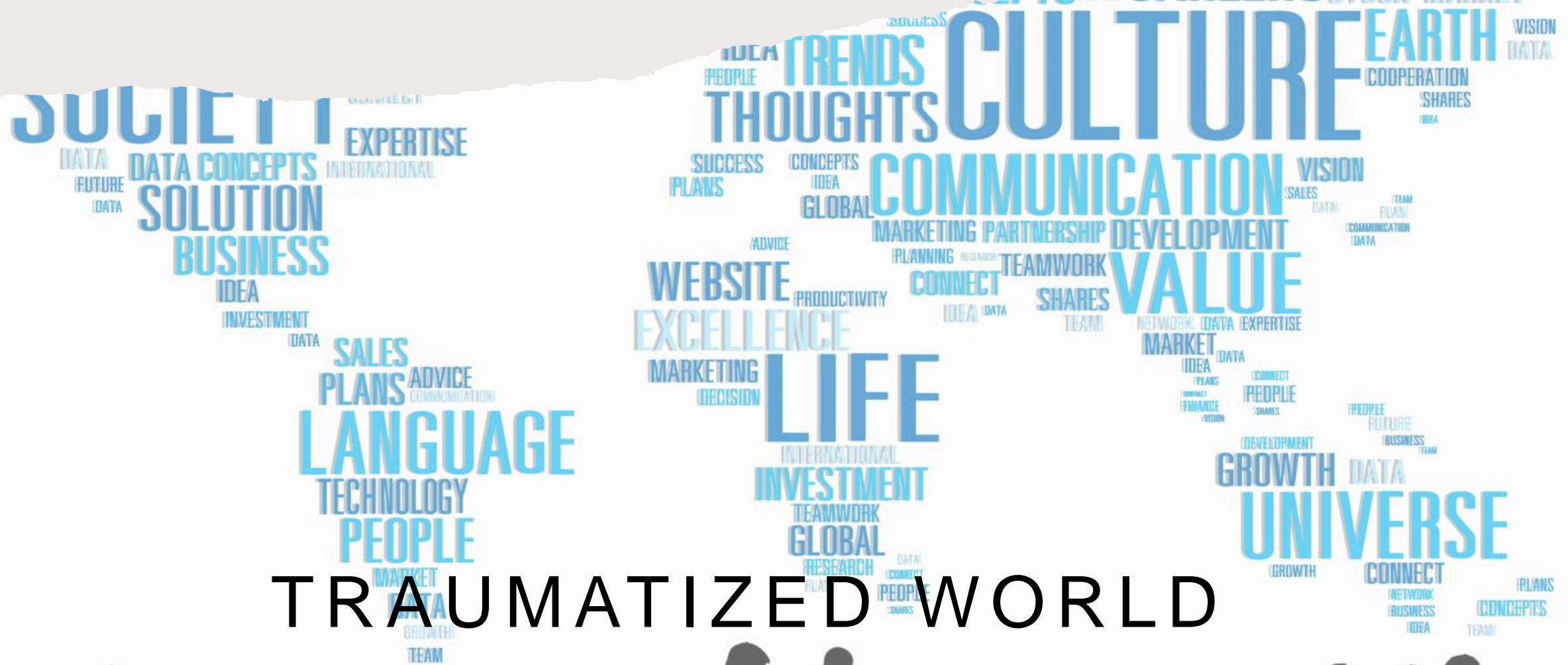
*- e. e. cummings*



SO, HOW DID  
WE GET HERE?







# TRAUMATIZED WORLD



<https://integralguide.com/Traumatized-World>





# DEHUMANIZATION & DEPERSONALIZATION

*Landry et al., 2023*



*“ONCE YOU LABEL ME, YOU NEGATE ME”*

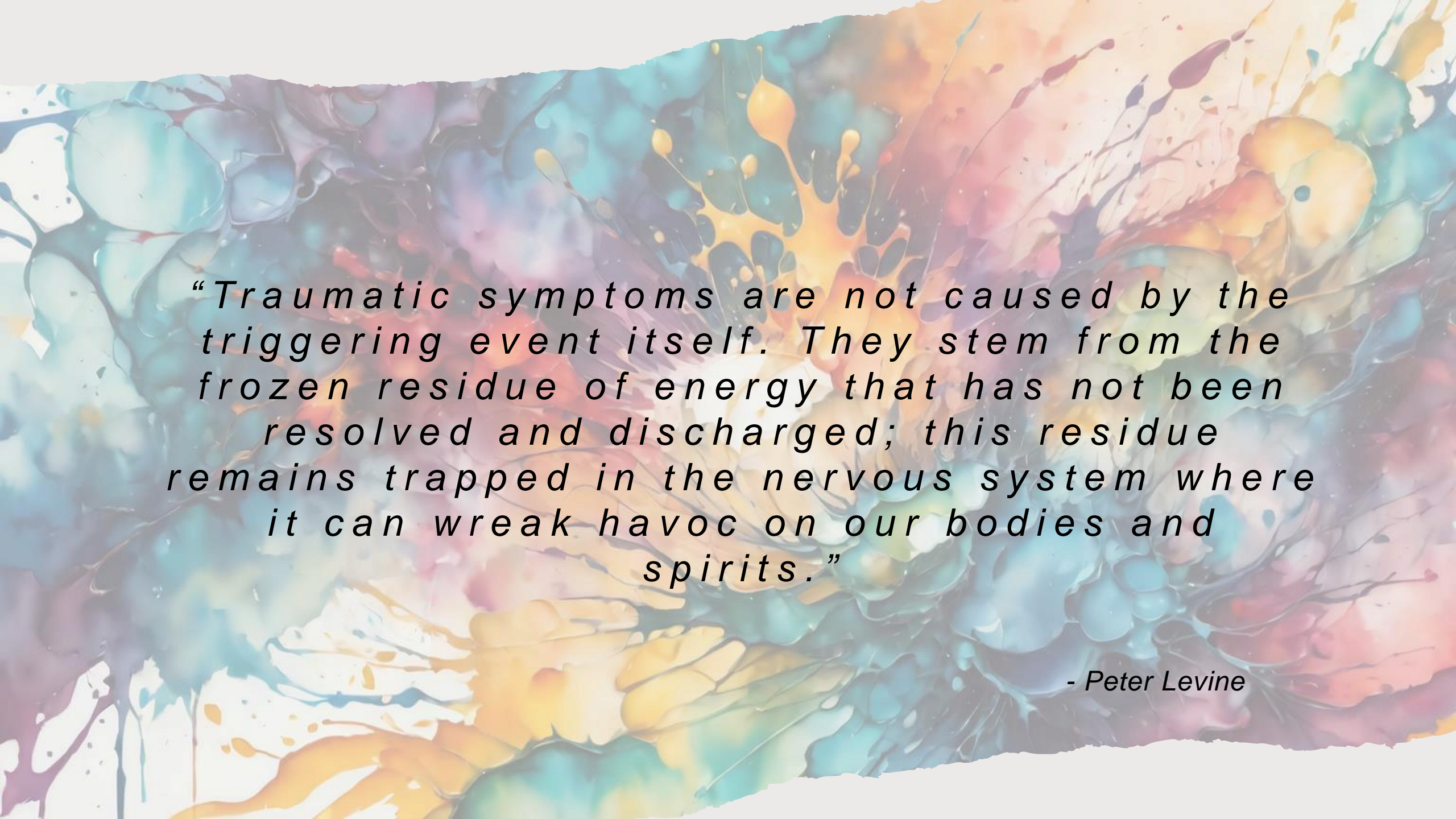
Soren Kierkegaard



TRAUMA IS AN  
EXPERIENCE,  
NOT AN EVENT

*“Psychical trauma – or more precisely the memory of the trauma – acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as the agent that still is at work.”*

*Breuer & Freud, 1895*



*“Traumatic symptoms are not caused by the triggering event itself. They stem from the frozen residue of energy that has not been resolved and discharged; this residue remains trapped in the nervous system where it can wreak havoc on our bodies and spirits.”*

*- Peter Levine*

A photograph of a small, vibrant green plant with four leaves growing out of the center of a charred, cracked tree stump. The wood is dark and heavily textured with deep cracks, symbolizing resilience and new life emerging from adversity.

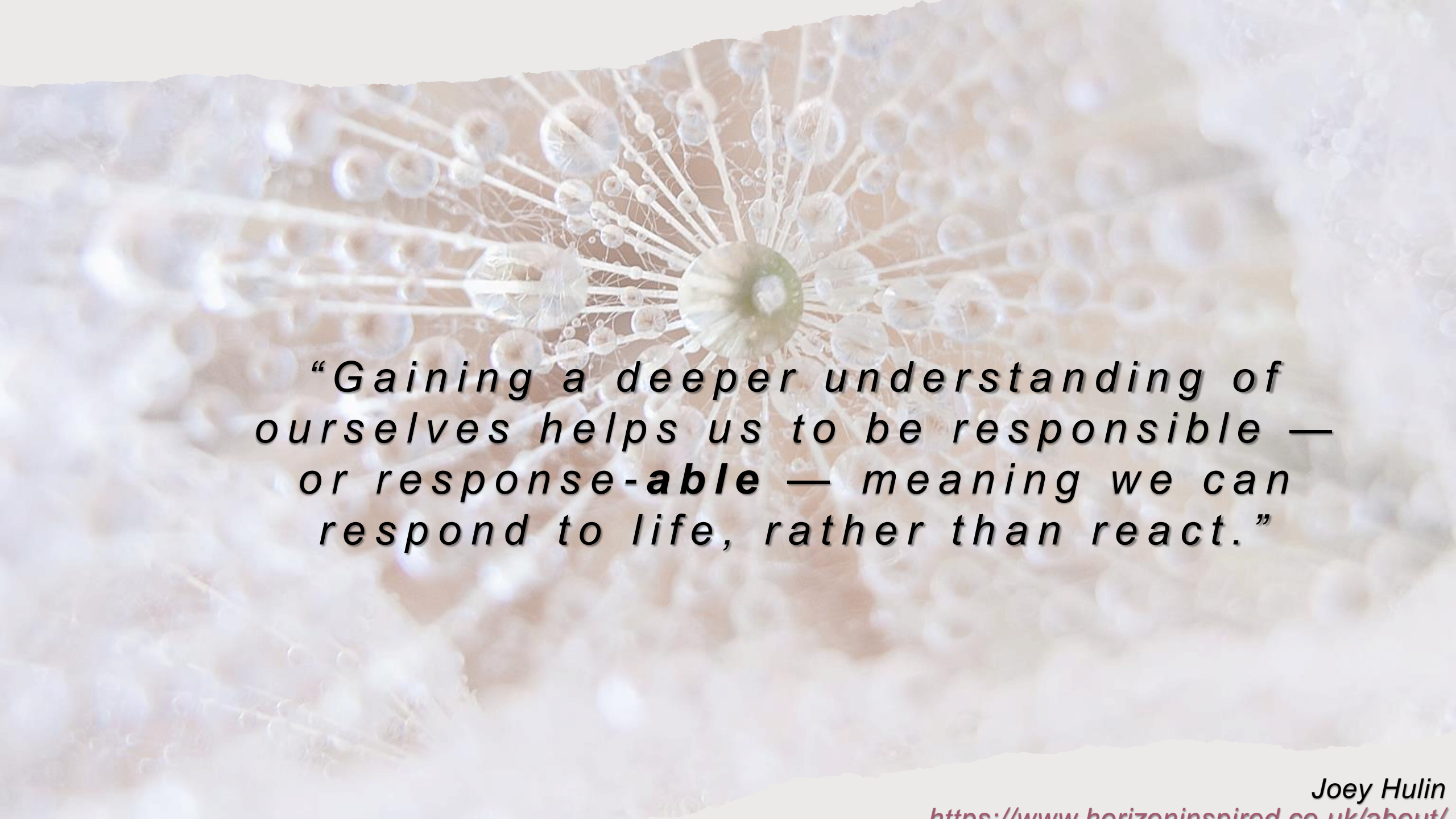
# SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

- Dissociate
- Repress our feelings
- Deny, ignore, reject, and minimize what happened to us
- Suppress our rage and despair by numbing our physical sensations
- Become aggressive and easily irritated
- Experience somatic symptoms (headaches, migraines, anxiety)
- Disconnect from others



*WE POSSESS THE ABILITY TO  
HEAL!*

*“Trauma does not have to be a life sentence.” – Levine,  
2008*



*“Gaining a deeper understanding of ourselves helps us to be responsible — or response-**able** — meaning we can respond to life, rather than react.”*

Joey Hulin

<https://www.horizoninspired.co.uk/about/>

BE/BECOME THE B.U.F.F.E.R,

B = Belonging

U = Understanding

F = Forgiveness for others

F = Forgiveness for self

E = Equanimity

R = Relationships

*Coughlin, 2023*



A vibrant pink heart is centered within a clear, reflective glass sphere. The sphere's surface shows iridescent highlights and reflections of the heart. The word "LOVE" is printed in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the middle of the heart. The background is a soft-focus pattern of pink hearts on a light green and yellow background, with a white torn-paper edge at the bottom.

LOVE

# FIERCE SELF-COMPASSION

DR. KRISTIN NEFF  
self-compassion.org

## TENDER SELF-COMPASSION

ACCEPTING OURSELVES  
TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING

## FIERCE SELF-COMPASSION

TAKING ACTION  
TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING



BALANCE  
OF BOTH  
ENERGIES FOR  
WHOLENESS

- **PROTECTING** DRAWING BOUNDARIES AND SAYING **NO**
- **PROVIDING** AND SAYING **YES** TO OUR NEEDS
- **MOTIVATING** TO LEARN, GROW AND CHANGE THE WORLD



INNER HEALING

TENDER

OUTER CHANGE

FIERCE



together

CREATES A

CARING FORCE



ALLOWING US TO

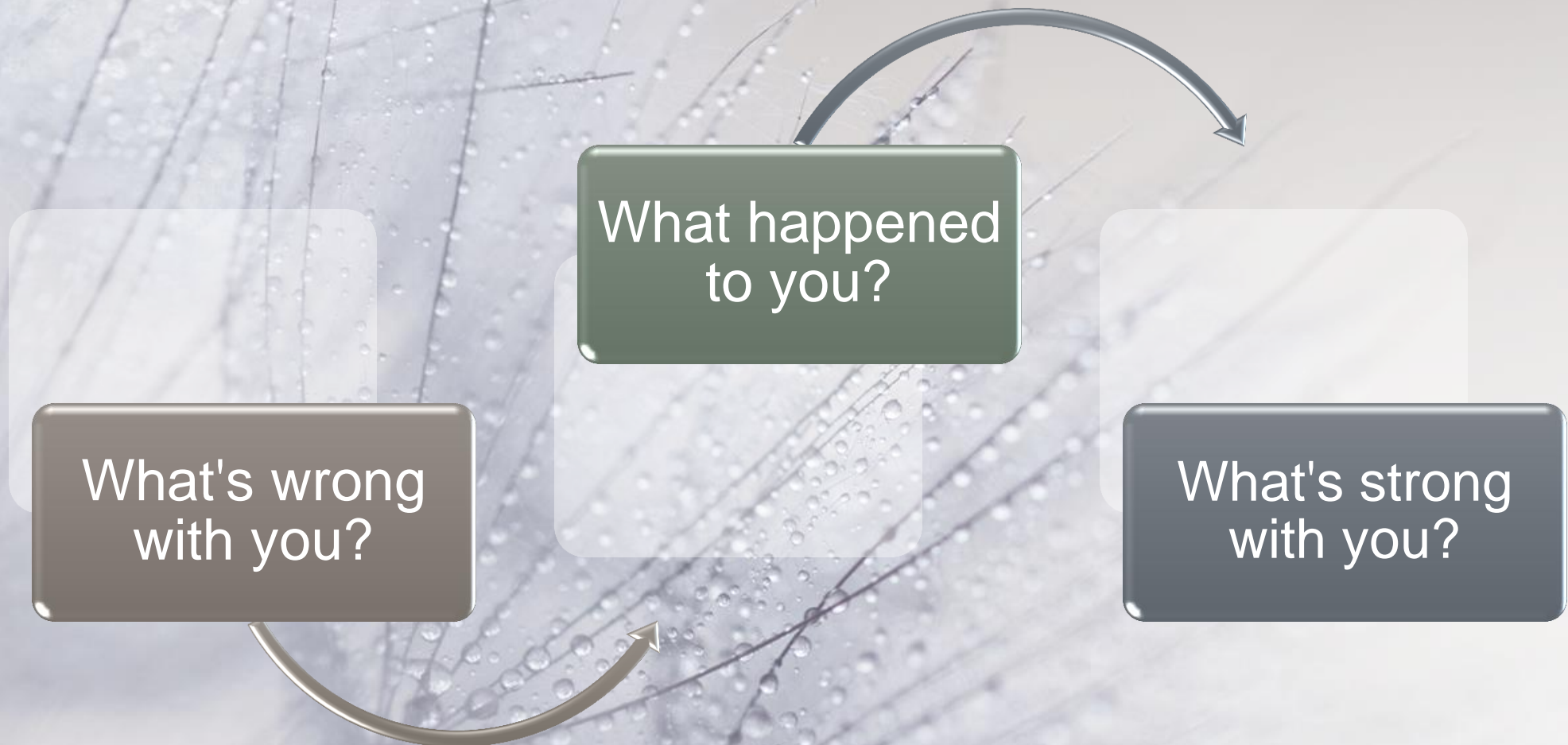
THRIVE

OUR AUTHENTIC SELF

CLAIMS BOTH OUR TENDER & FIERCE SIDES COUNTERING THE GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION WE HAVE ALL BEEN STEEPED IN



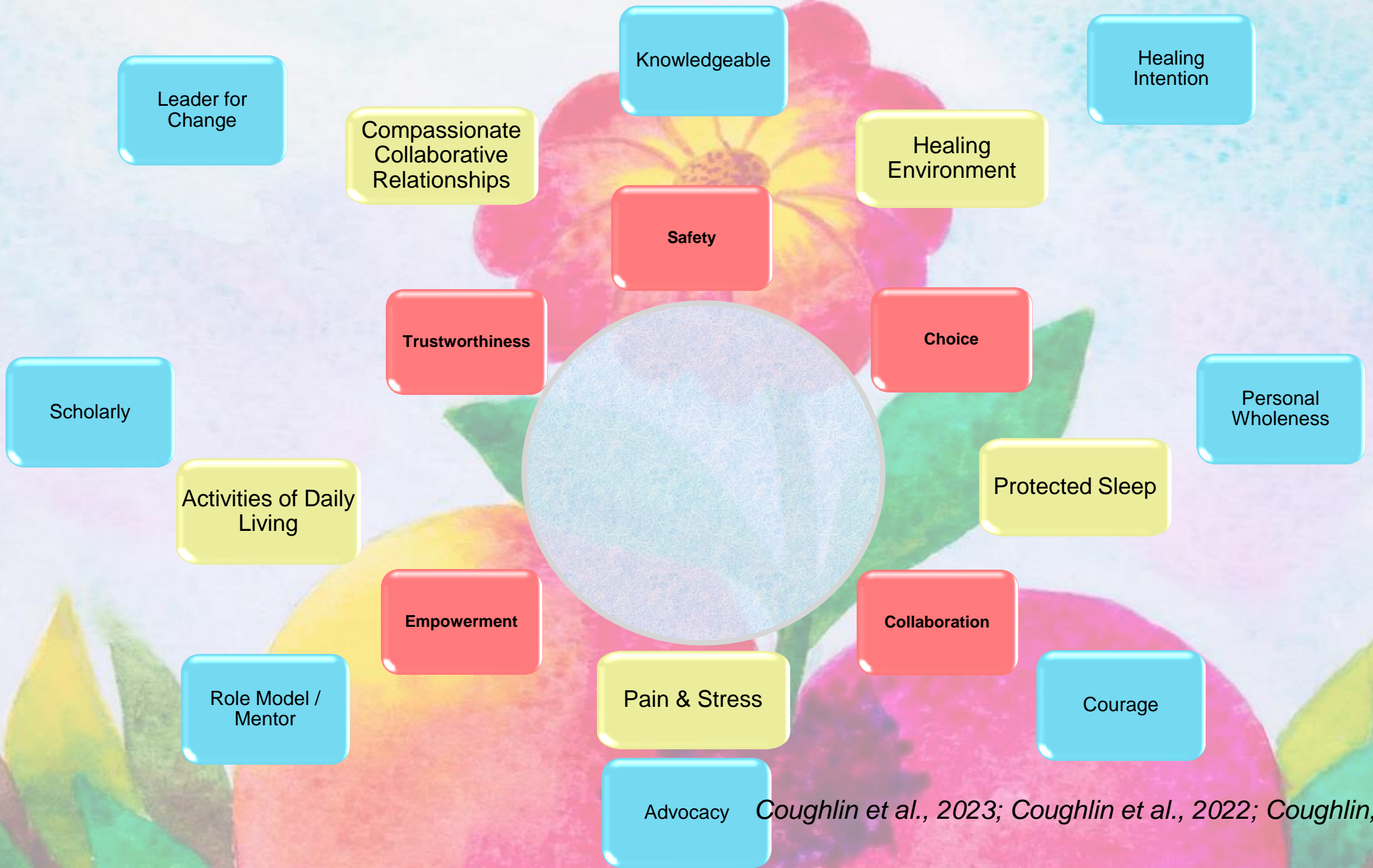
# PARADIGM SHIFT



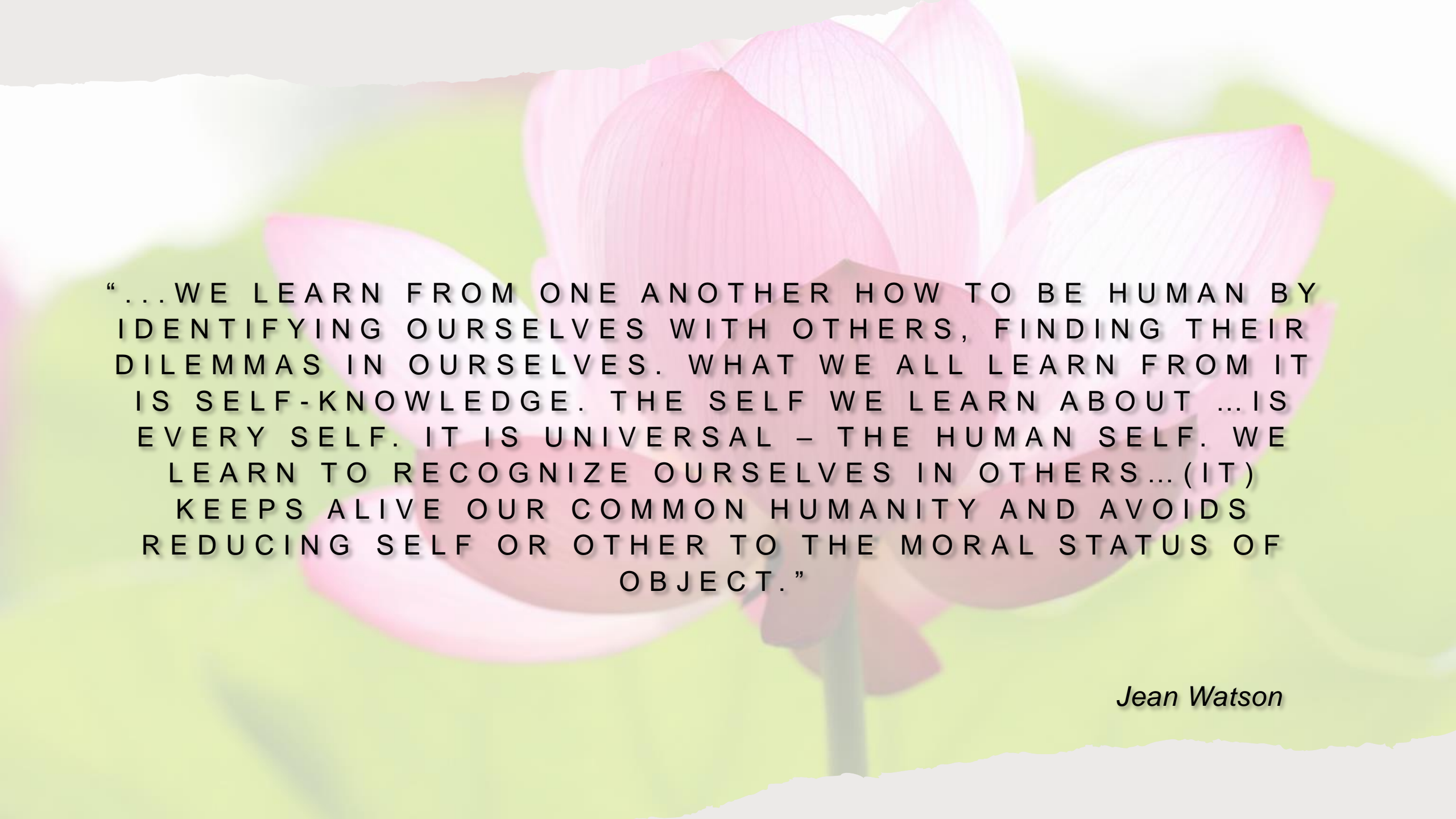
What's wrong with you?

What happened to you?

What's strong with you?



*Coughlin et al., 2023; Coughlin et al., 2022; Coughlin, 2021*



“...WE LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER HOW TO BE HUMAN BY IDENTIFYING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS, FINDING THEIR DILEMMAS IN OURSELVES. WHAT WE ALL LEARN FROM IT IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE. THE SELF WE LEARN ABOUT ... IS EVERY SELF. IT IS UNIVERSAL – THE HUMAN SELF. WE LEARN TO RECOGNIZE OURSELVES IN OTHERS... (IT) KEEPS ALIVE OUR COMMON HUMANITY AND AVOIDS REDUCING SELF OR OTHER TO THE MORAL STATUS OF OBJECT.”

*Jean Watson*

# TRAUMA RESPONSIVE LIVING

For a New Beginning...

A person wearing a light blue, long-sleeved dress stands in the center of a paved road with double yellow lines. They are holding a large, empty, gold-framed mirror in front of their face, completely obscuring it. The background shows a vast, open landscape with mountains in the distance under a hazy sky. The overall tone is contemplative and serene.

“WHOLENESS DOES NOT MEAN  
PERFECTION; IT MEANS  
EMBRACING BROKENNESS AS AN  
INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE”

– *Parker Palmer*

# A WAY THROUGH... WHEN LESS IS MORE

Less Distraction, More Intention

Less Disconnection, More Presence

Less Attachment, More Curiosity

Less Depletion, More Stamina





“They tried to bury us. They didn’t know we were seeds.”

*Dinos Christianopoulos, poet*

# FIVE MICRO-PRACTICES FOR SELF

## Notice without judgement

- Take 3 deep nourishing breaths while
- Completely relaxing your body tension

## Unconditional acceptance

- Place our hand on our heart and acknowledge, “I feel anxious/sad/exhausted/stressed” and unconditionally accept the content of our feeling
- Choose to respond with self-kindness in the form of any positive thoughts about ourselves

## Response-able

- Take control of how we respond verbally and in your thinking. Like elite athletes we can pick our favorite chant: “I am a good nurse,” “I make a difference,” or any empowering quote
- First pause and then respond to situations and acknowledge our full abilities

## Strengths focused

- Making a list of positive personal strengths
- Allow this knowing to radiate a sense of pride and accomplishment

## Empowered

- The Tree yoga pose can be practiced quickly and helps build core strength: Stand with our feet shoulder-width apart; Take a slow deep breath while lifting the hands above our heads towards the sky; Lift the heels off the floor if comfortable. Hold the position for a few seconds then gently bring our arms back to our side while exhaling completely.
- Hold the position for a few seconds then gently bring our arms back to our side while exhaling completely.





FOR PRESENCE

John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between*

# REFERENCES

- Breuer, J. & Freud, S. (1895). Studies on Hysteria. Standard Edition, Vol II.
- Coughlin, M., DeWolfe, T., & Fuller, K. (2023). Quality Indicators for Developmental Care: A Trauma Informed Conceptual Model as an Exemplar for Change. In C. Kenner & J.M. McGrath (Eds.) Developmental Care of Newborns and Infants: A Guide for Health Professionals (3rd. ed. 1-20). Alphen aan den Rijn: The Netherlands: Wolters Kluwer.
- Coughlin, M., DeWolfe, T., & Fuller, K. (2022). Trauma-Informed Developmental Care. In C. Kenner & M.V. Boykova (Eds.) Neonatal Nursing Care Handbook (3rd ed. 441-454). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Coughlin, M. (2021). Transformative Nursing in the NICU: Trauma-informed Age-appropriate Care Second Ed. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

# REFERENCES

- Landry, A. P., Schooler, J. W., Willer, R., & Seli, P. (2023). Reducing Explicit Blatant Dehumanization by Correcting Exaggerated Meta-Perceptions. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 14(4), 407-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506221099146>.
- Levine, P. (1997). *Walking the Tiger*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Levine, Peter A. (2005). *Healing trauma: a pioneering program for restoring the wisdom of your body*. Boulder, CO :Sounds True.
- Lipsky, L.V.D. (2009). *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. Oakland, CA.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

# REFERENCES

- Lipsky, L.V.D. (2018). The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul
- Professional Quality of Life. (2021). The ProQOL Health. The Center for Victims of Torture. Retrieved October 1, 2023, from: <https://proqol.org/proqol-health-1>.
- Van Der Kolk, B. A. (2015). The body keeps the score: brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma. New York: Penguin Books.
- Watson, J. (2021). Caring Science as Sacred Science. Boulder, CO: Lotus Library.



THANK YOU!

Mary Coughlin

[mary@caringessentials.net](mailto:mary@caringessentials.net)

[www.caringessentials.net](http://www.caringessentials.net)