

# **Seeing Pornography Addiction Through a Trauma-Informed Lens:**

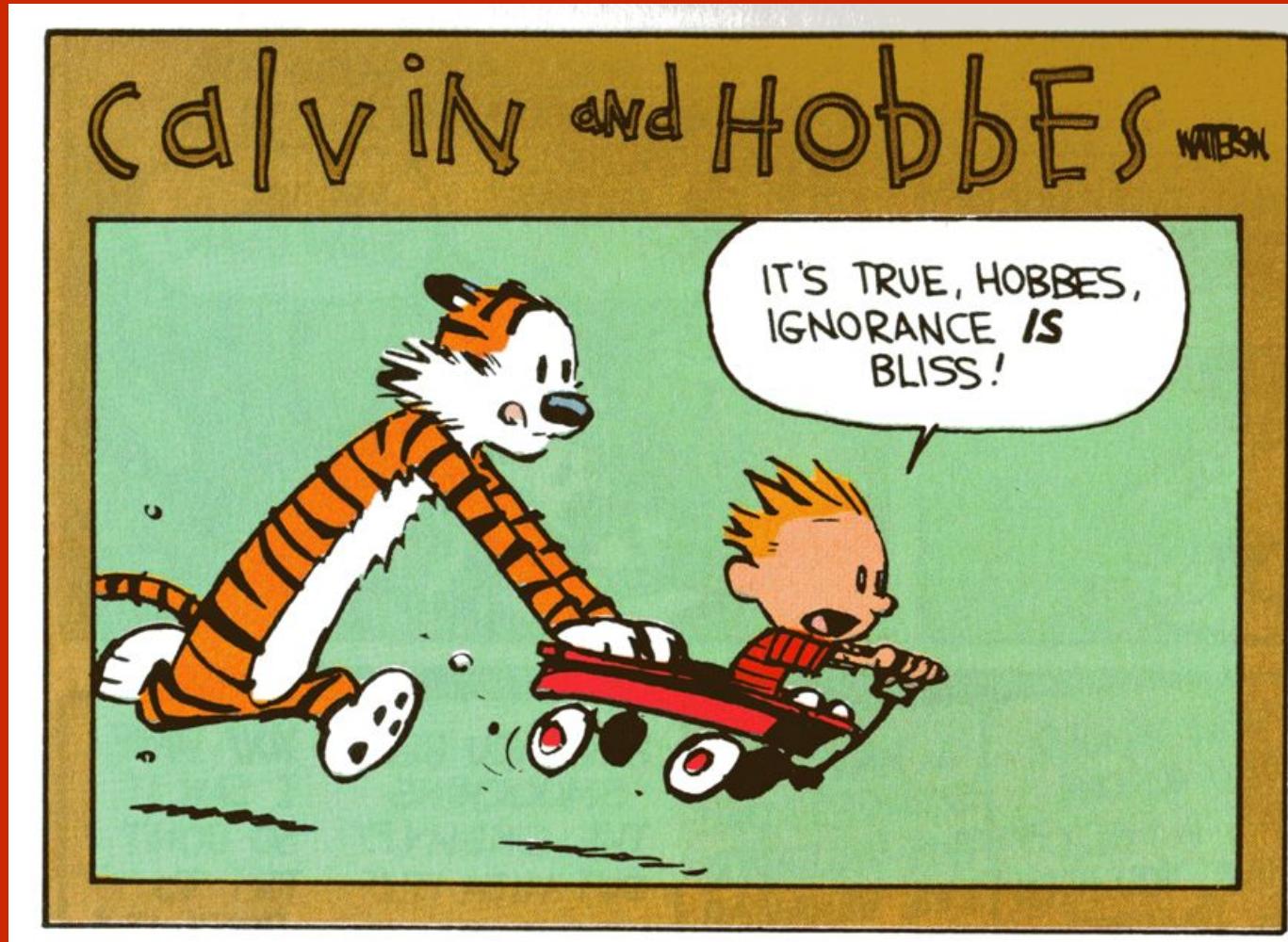


**What if the “Problem” is  
Actually Part of the “Solution”?**

~ ~ ~

**Martin Roundy  
23 February 2019**

# Let's begin with a “Moment of Mirth”



ONCE YOU KNOW THINGS,  
YOU START SEEING  
PROBLEMS EVERYWHERE ...

.. AND ONCE YOU SEE  
PROBLEMS, YOU FEEL  
LIKE YOU OUGHT TO  
TRY TO FIX THEM...

.. AND FIXING  
PROBLEMS ALWAYS  
SEEMS TO  
REQUIRE  
PERSONAL CHANGE...

... AND CHANGE  
MEANS DOING  
THINGS THAT  
AREN'T FUN!  
I SAY PHOOEY  
TO THAT!





BUT IF YOU'RE  
WILLFULLY STUPID,  
YOU DON'T KNOW ANY  
BETTER, SO YOU CAN  
KEEP DOING WHATEVER  
YOU LIKE!





WE'RE HEADING  
FOR THAT CLIFF!

I DON'T WANT  
TO KNOW  
ABOUT IT.



I'M NOT SURE I CAN  
STAND SO MUCH BLISS.

CAREFUL! WE DON'T WANT TO  
LEARN ANYTHING FROM THIS.



# Our Agenda

- ONE:** Why are *WE* here?
- TWO:** Why we may need cognitive dissonance?
- THREE:** I have four premises in delivering this session.
- FOUR:** What is trauma, and what is traumatic stress?
- FIVE:** What is a trauma-informed perspective?
- SIX:** What is the “ACE Study”, and what does it teach us about how addictions may develop?
- SEVEN:** How does traumatic stress relate to addiction?
- EIGHT:** What can I do to help things change?



# ONE: Why are **WE** here?

**Seeing Pornography Addiction Through  
a Trauma-informed Lens:  
What if the “Problem” is Actually  
part of the “Solution”?**

- **Why did *you* choose to attend this session?**
- **Why did *I* choose to deliver this topic?**



**“We have to care more  
than anyone else in the  
world about what  
we are doing.”**



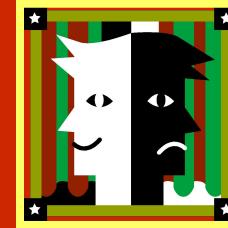
**Dayton Moore, General  
Manager Kansas  
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# TWO:

## Why do we need *cognitive dissonance?*

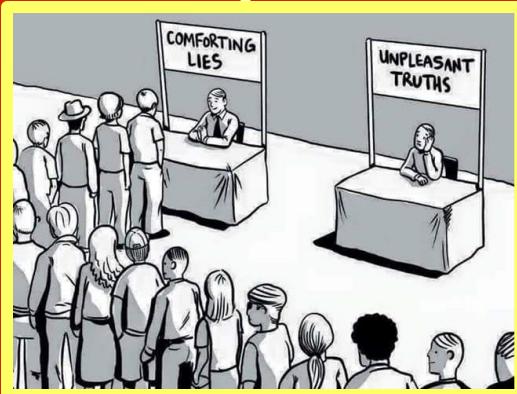


# What is Cognitive Dissonance?



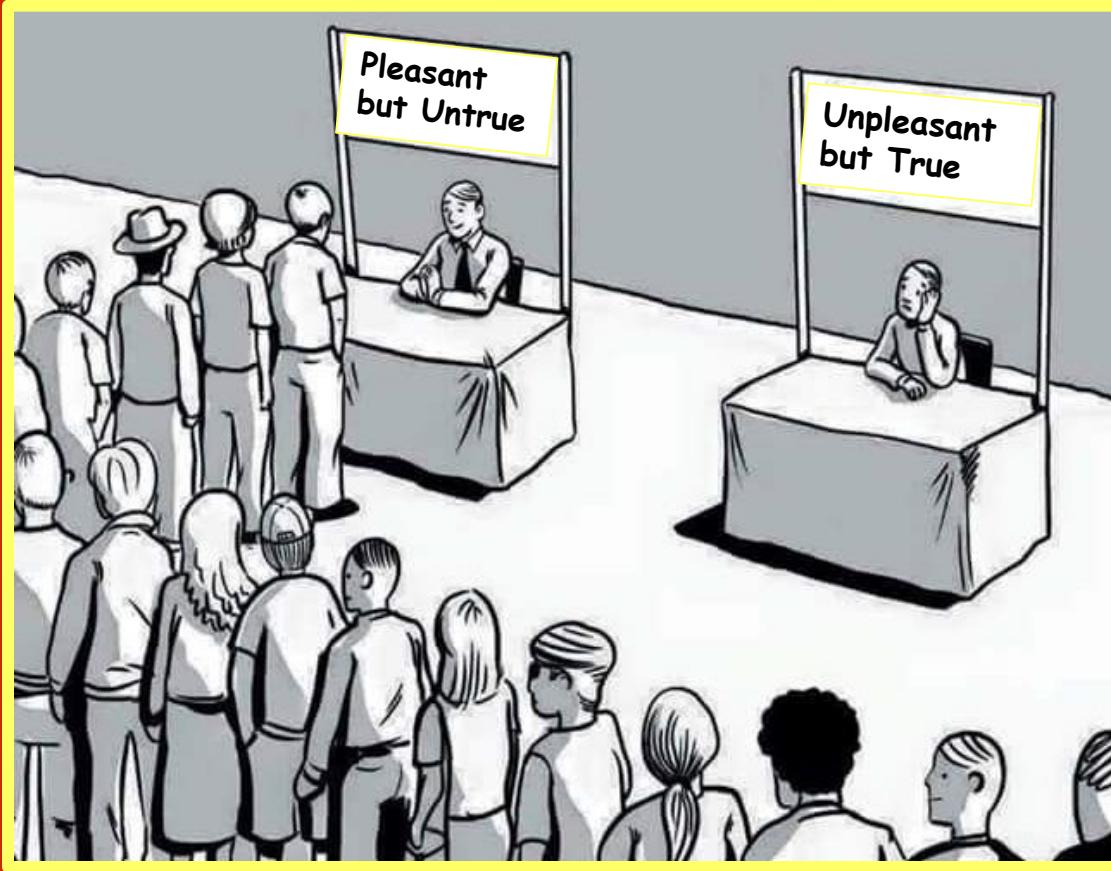
It is the ***discomfort*** a person experiences when there is a conflict between what they believe and new evidence that supports an alternate perspective.

It occurs when there is a need to consider ***new ideas***, and it may be necessary for cognitive dissonance to develop so that the person might become "open" to these new ideas.



Many people have an internal drive to reduce ***dissonance*** by ***changing*** or ***justifying*** their attitudes and beliefs.

**Can I ask two volunteers to help me demonstrate?**



**In this session, I invite  
YOU to be *open* to cognitive  
dissonance . . .**

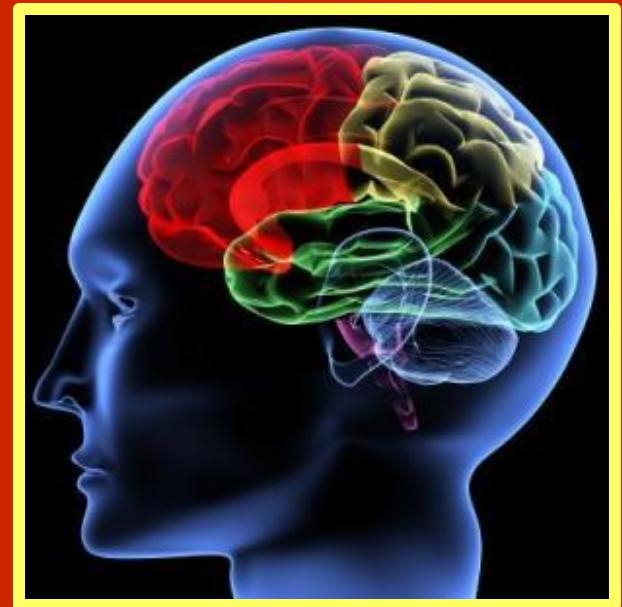
# **THREE:**

**I have four premises  
to share as I deliver  
this session.**



## Premise 1:

**For our discussion of pornography today, I come from the position that *addiction is a brain disease*, not a moral failure.**



## Premise 2:

**For purposes of this presentation,  
my position is that “drug  
addiction” may essentially  
be equated with  
“pornography addiction”.**



**Much  
of what we understand about the causes  
and outcomes of drug addiction is true,  
as well, of pornography addiction.**

## Premise 3:

### **Pornography is *very addictive!***

**Pornography, unlike other addictions, biologically causes direct release of the *most perfect addictive substance.***

**That is, it causes masturbation [and orgasm] which causes release of the naturally occurring opioids [dopamine, oxytocin and others].**

**It does what heroin can't do....**

**Jeffrey Satinover, M.D., Ph.D.**



## Premise 4:

***“The tsunami is coming!” \****

This *terrifying* image is the metaphor used by a recovery professional who treats porn addicts, and has observed the devastating impact of pornography.



\* Todd Olson, Director LifeSTAR Network



# **FOUR:**

## **What is trauma?**

***and...***

## **What is “traumatic stress”?**



***“Trauma is the result of overwhelming situations that exceed our ability to cope or process the emotions they generate.”***

Agata Vitale: Senior Lecturer in Abnormal & Clinical Psychology, Bath Spa University



# **There are Three Categories of Trauma: “Acute”, “Chronic” or “Complex”:**

## **I. Acute traumatic events:**

- Natural disaster
- School shooting
- Sudden loss of loved one



## **II. Chronic traumatic situations:**

- Repeated physical or sexual abuse
- Ongoing war or terrorism



## **III. Complex trauma:**

- Varied traumatic events which continue over time creating a cumulative impact on individuals.



**Next we will define the phrase**

**Traumatic  
stress**

*Traumatic Stress* is the  
“by-product” of traumatizing  
events in a person’s life.



**The graphic below illustrates how traumatic events take their toll on our health & well-being**



Traumatic  
Event



Traumatic  
Stress



Long-term Impact  
on Emotional &  
Physical Health

# **FIVE:**

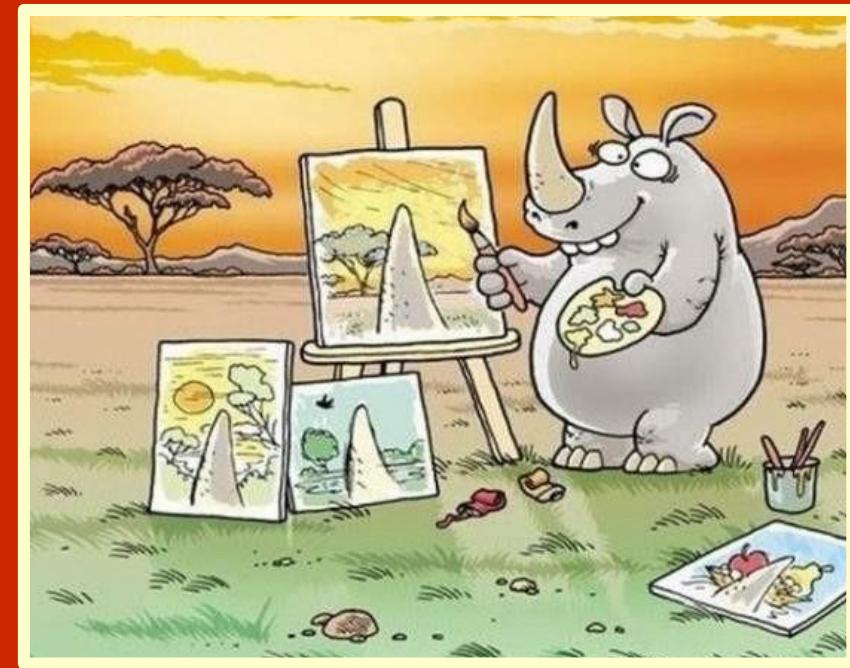
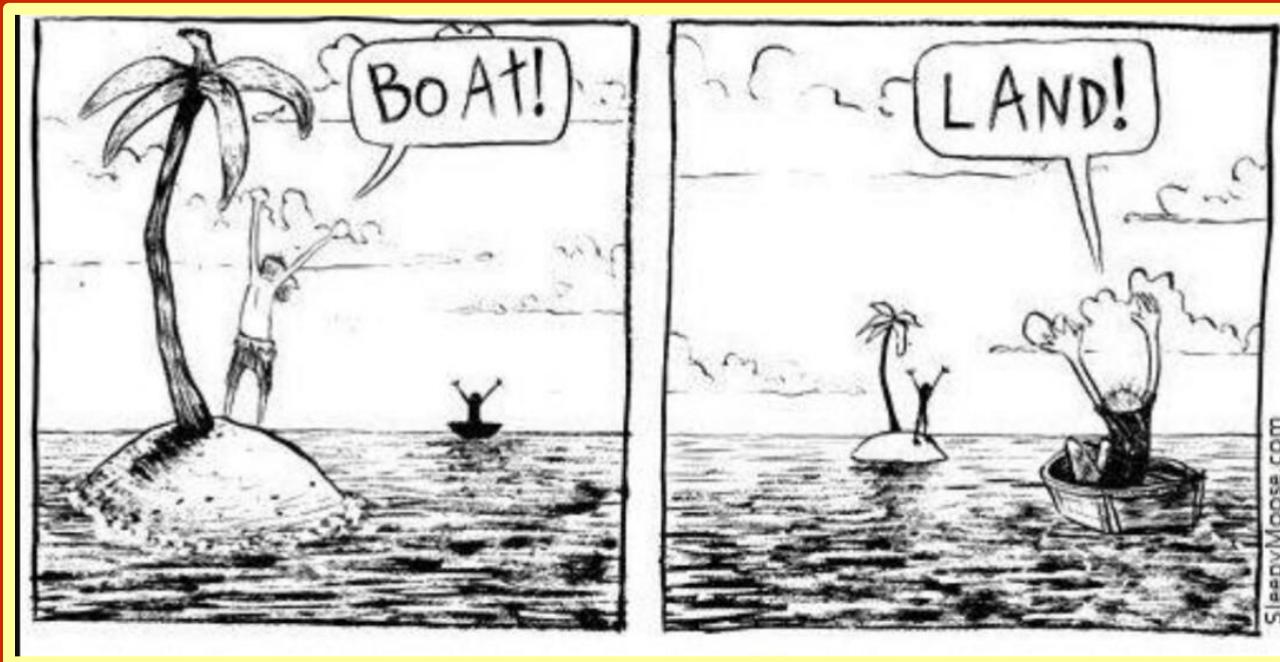
## **What is a trauma-informed perspective?**



# What is a Trauma-informed Perspective?

First, let's consider the meaning of the word, *perspective*.

- An attitude or way of regarding something
- A point of view



How we “see” things depends on our *perspective* or *frame of reference*...

# What does it Mean to be Trauma-Informed?



- We try to understand the reasons *behind* the negative behaviors we see in others.
- Previously we might have labeled these behaviors as *deliberate* acts of disrespect or rebellion.
- Now we are learning that these challenging behaviors may be the person's best attempt to cope with or survive in their world.



**Years ago, in a counseling group for adult survivors of child sexual abuse...**

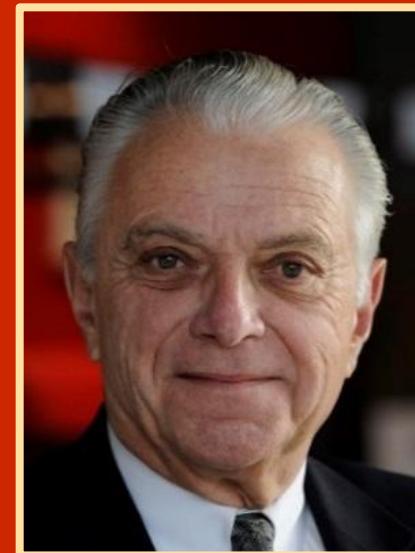
- One of our group members came to group “under the influence”, which violated one of our policies.
- When I asked about her intoxicated state and reminded her of our rule against being inebriated, she tearfully replied:

**“But Martin, you don’t understand.  
The *only time* I am not filled with  
pain is when I’m drunk.”**



**Dismissing addictions as  
“bad habits” or “self-destructive  
behavior” *comfortably* hides  
their functionality in the life  
of the addict.**

Vincent Felitti, MD,  
ACE Study co-investigator



# **SIX:**

## **What is the “ACE Study”?**

**And, what does it teach  
us about how addiction  
may develop?**





**By show of hands, how  
many of you have heard  
of the “*ACE Study*”**

# **The A.C.E. Study\***

**“Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults”**



**Dr. Vincent Felitti & Dr. Robert Anda**

\* American Journal of Preventive Medicine: May 1998, Vol14, Issue 4, pp. 245-258.

**Let's watch this brief  
overview of the “ACE Study”**



**FROM KPJR FILMS**

3:22 Mins

# **What Kinds of Life Experiences can be ACEs?**

- Physical & Sexual abuse
- Medical trauma
- Immigration-related trauma
- Domestic violence
- Traumatic loss or death
- Imprisonment of family member
- War
- Assault
- Bullying
- Natural disaster
- Community violence
- Terrorism
- Kidnapping
- Serious injury
- Betrayal

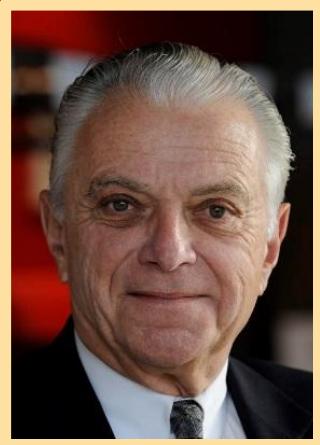


# **ACEs were found to predispose adults to the following:**

- Depression
- Drug addiction
- STDs
- Unintended pregnancies
- Rape
- Hallucinations
- Domestic violence
- Obesity
- Hepatitis
- STD's
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Sleep disturbance
- Learning difficulties
- High blood pressure
- Premature death
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Suicide



# **How could obesity be a *solution* instead of a problem?**



***“We need to explore this further.”***

**Dr. Vincent Felitti,  
ACE Study co-investigator**

# **SEVEN:**

## **How does traumatic stress relate to addiction?**





We all face stress, yes,  
***but we don't all...***

- Have histories of one or more ACEs
- Have childhood traumatic stress
- Have our capacity to cope with life's challenges *weakened by that stress*
- We are talking about ***severe, chronic & unmanaged stress!***

**Stress is the major issue a traumatized brain has to deal with.**



**So, how do our brains respond to stress?**

# **Stress can have significant effects on our thoughts, behaviors and emotions!**

- Most of us have been stressed to the point that we wanted to fight, run, or hide (AKA: *Fight, Flight or Freeze*).
- All three responses are managed *unconsciously* by our midbrains.
- The midbrain automatically initiates whatever needs to occur for us to *survive*.
- And our conscious “thinking” is put on *pause*.
- The only *emotion* of significance here is *stress*.
- All of our mental energy, behaviors and bodily functions are re-directed to aid us in *fighting, running away, or freezing*.



# **For Addicts, and the Rest of Us, Stress can be a Real “Joy Kill”**

*The addict is no longer able to derive normal pleasure from those things that have been pleasurable in the past.*



# How does Stress Affect the things we Enjoy?

People enjoying themselves:



New England  
Patriots fans

Stressed people *not* enjoying themselves:



# **EIGHT:**

## **What can *WE* do to help things change?**



# **Helping things change:**

***One***

***Look beyond the surface.***



**What more will this man see if  
he looks beyond the surface?**

# *The Desert Flower*

By Kathy Budge\*



*Out beneath the blistering desert sun a plant grows.*

*Though many shun this plant it has a very special secret.*

***Many never find the secret because they're afraid they'll get pricked, and so they turn away.***

***But, among the needles and pins of the cactus a blossom grows.***



\* Kathy was 15 years of age when she wrote this piece.

***This flower is very unique as it blooms only a few times a year.***

***The colors vary from scarlet red to violet.***



***The honeybees go mad on her wine.***

***They stay within her flowery petals sucking nectar until their hunger is satisfied.***



***Thus many people in life are like the cactus.***

***Because of their experiences they protect themselves with shyness, vanity or pride.***

***But, underneath, they hide a special sweetness.***



***May we not turn away our hearts from them because  
we just see thorns . . .***

***. . . but rather, be like the  
honeybee, which was able to  
look past the thorns and see  
the flower.***

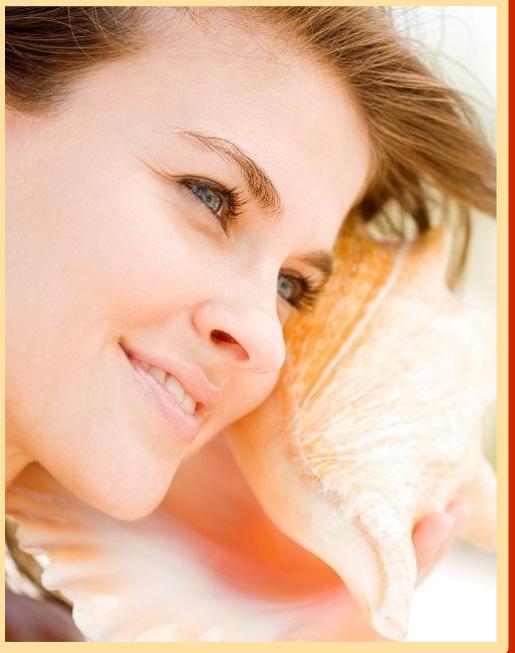


# Helping things change:

***Two***



*Really listen and speak  
so you can be heard...*



Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else.

We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there, and listen.

≈ Margaret  
Wheatley ≈

≈ Margaret



**“Say it so it can be heard.”**

What does it mean to  
**“Say it so it can  
be heard”?**



# Helping things change:

*Three*



Be a cheerleader...

**“Every child needs *one* thing.”**

**They need one person to passionately believe in them, love them, and support them. After years of working with abused and neglected children . . . I can say without equivocation that for kids to grow into healthy, caring, kind, responsible adults . . .**

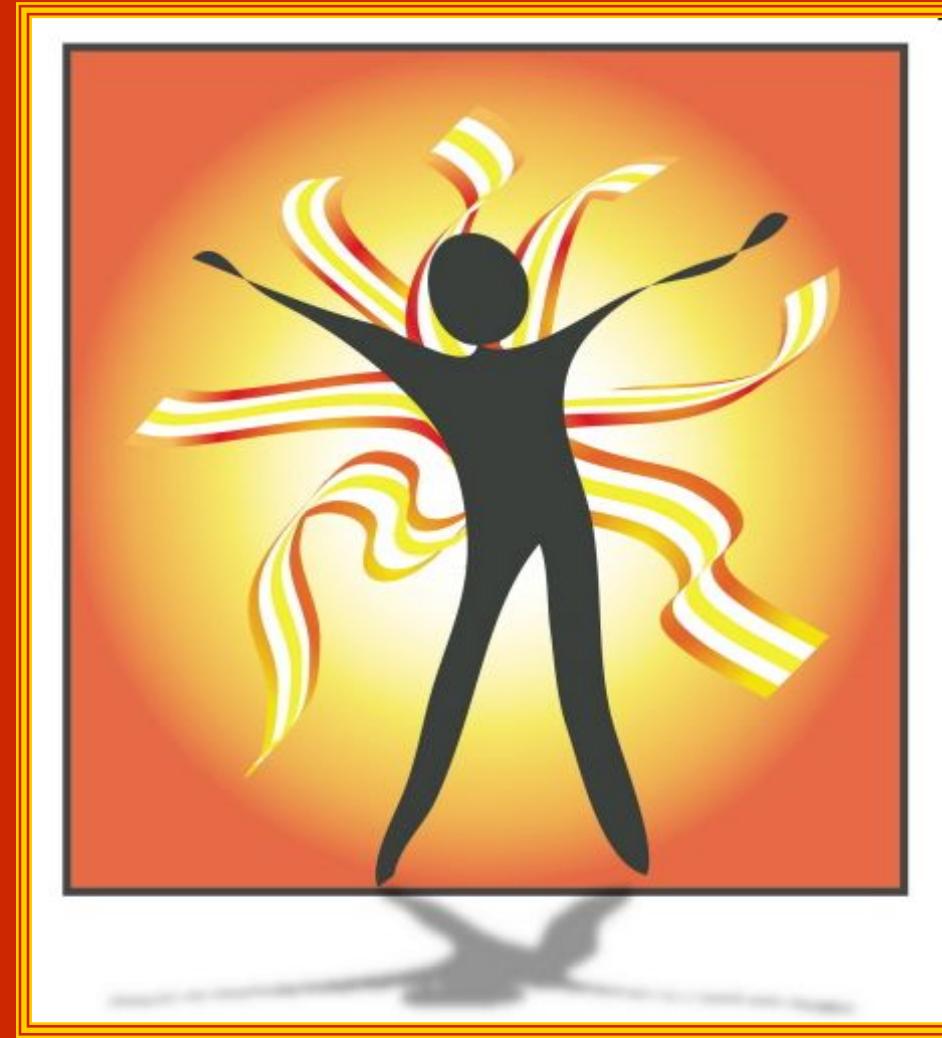
***They need someone to cheer for them!***

*Cheering for the Children*, p. 3 Casey Gwinn, Former San Diego City Attorney



**Helping things  
change:**

*Four*

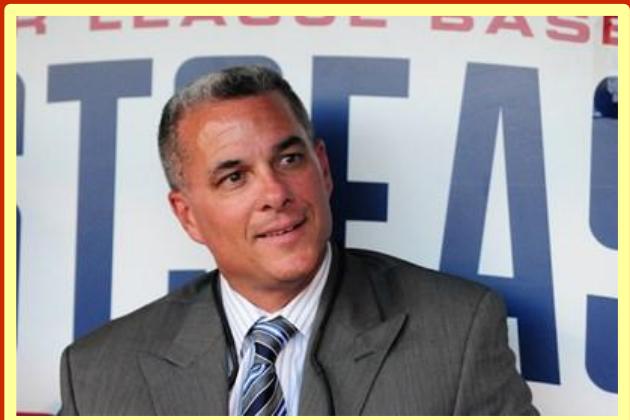


**Tap into the power...**

**We are most like the beasts when we kill.**

**We are most mankind when we judge.**

**We are most like God when we forgive and love.**



**Dayton Moore, General  
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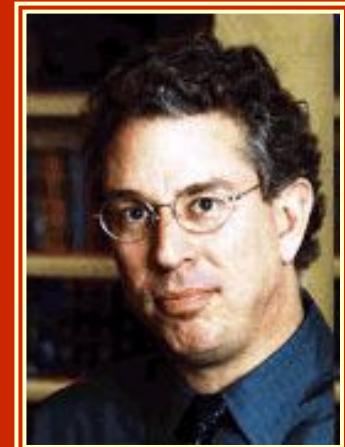
# The Power of Caring Relationships in Healing Childhood Trauma

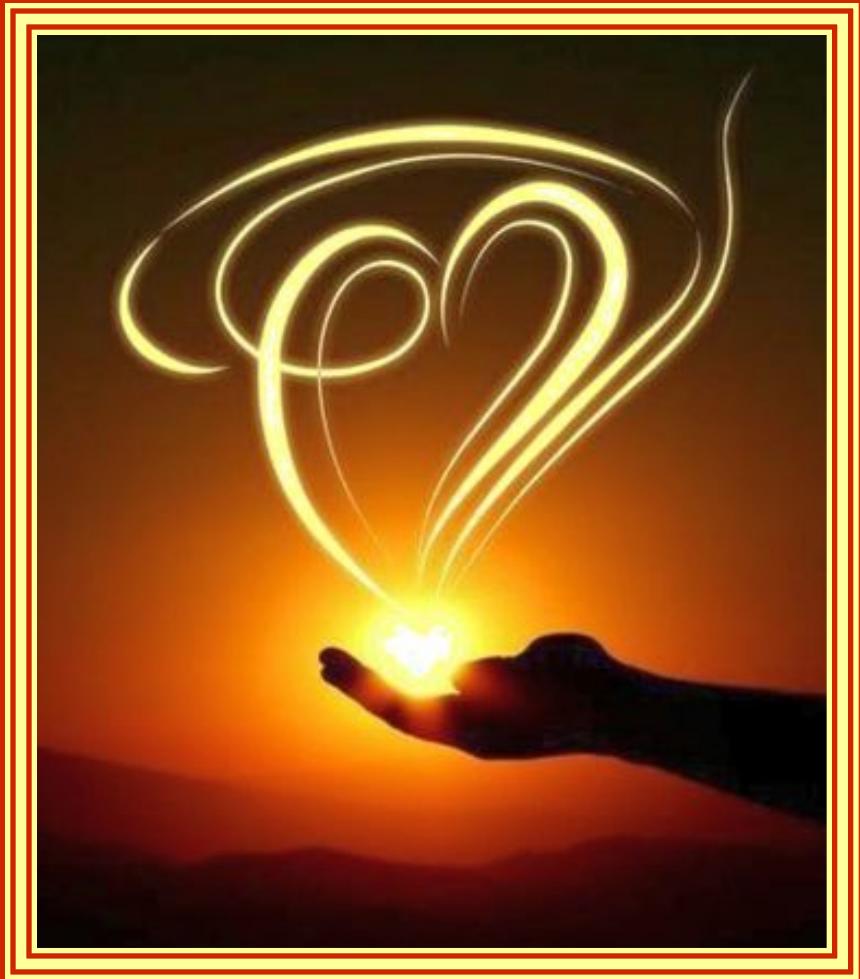
Trauma and our responses to it cannot be understood outside the context of human relationships.

The more *healthy relationships* a child has, the more likely he will be able to recover from trauma...

Relationships are the agents of change and the *most powerful therapy is HUMAN LOVE!*

Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.





***Love is the  
Greatest Healing  
Power in the  
Universe!***