

The Trauma of Loss

Causes, psychodynamics and
traumatherapy

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Two “classical” types of trauma



- caused by life threatening events (e.g. war, accidents, rape, natural catastrophies)
- caused by loss of a person (e.g. early death of parents, loss of children, adoption)

Relationships with traumatized people produce two specific types of trauma



- Trauma of bonding (being rejected by the people one needs to bond to)
- Trauma of confusion in a bonding system (caused e.g. by murder, sexual abuse, incestuous relationships within the bonding system)

Maximum of Losses

- Death of a loved person (mother, father loses a child; child loses his parents)
- Permanent separation from a loved person
- Loss of the community, where we were born into (family, city, country)



Reason for the feelings of loss

- Emotional bonding has happened
- Relationship is vital
- There is no substitute for the lost person

What connects us with the world are emotional bonds.



When is a loss traumatic?

- The loss causes existential threat, anxieties and stress and is enormous painful
- The lost person/object can't neither be get back again nor be forgotten
- To forget the lost person feels like a betrayal towards him/her

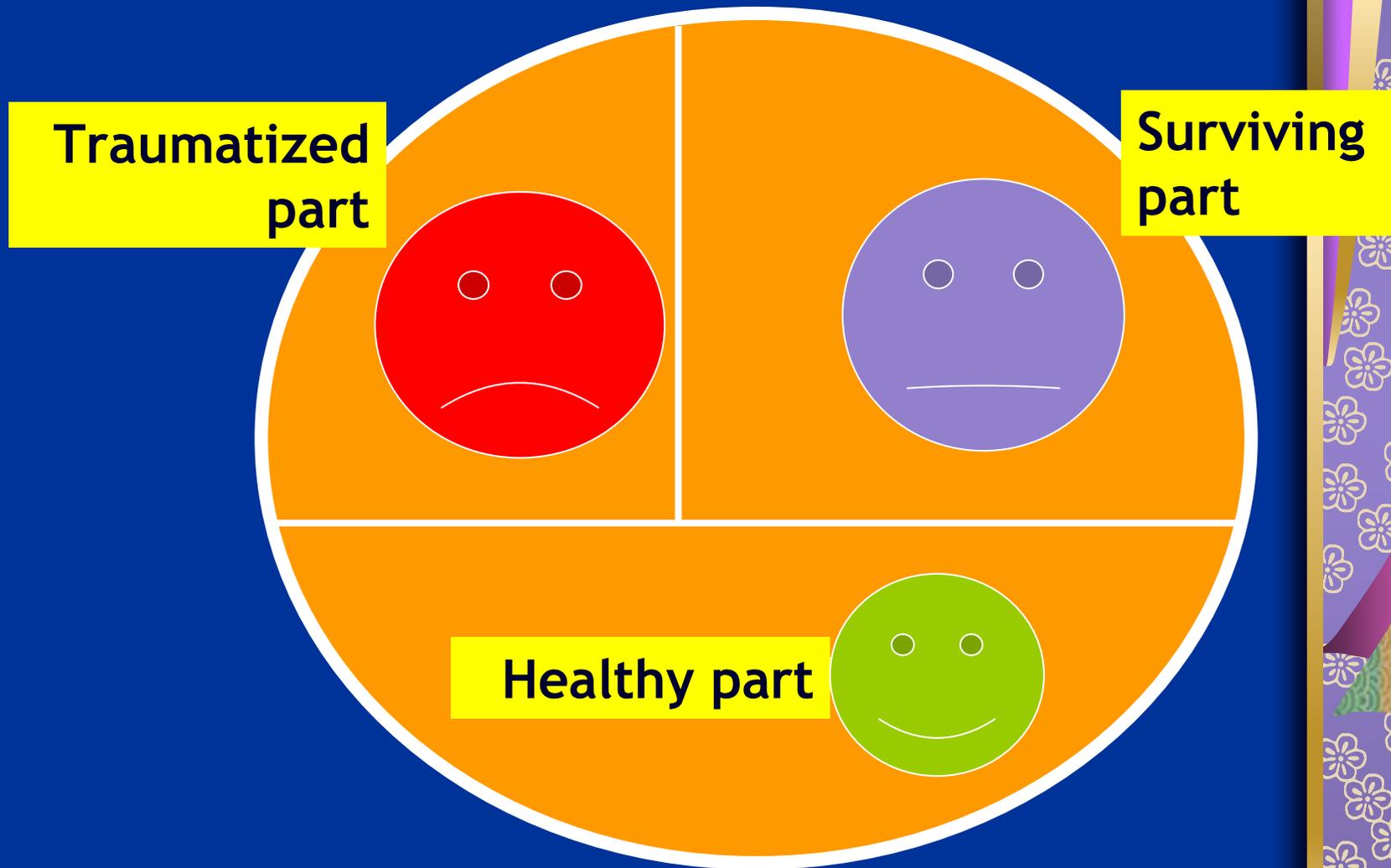




**When
traumatised we
get shocked,
freeze,
dissociate
and split the
personality in
order to
survive.**



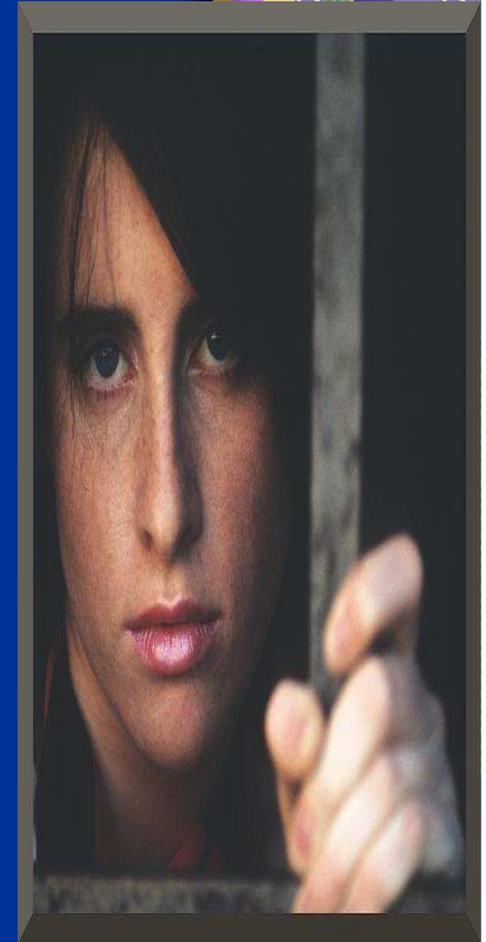
Split of the Identity after an Experience of trauma

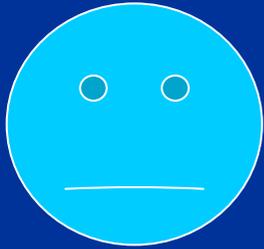




Characteristics of the traumatised parts in a loss trauma

- store the **memory** of the trauma (pictures, smells, voices, pain, anxieties, rage, grief)
- are still **engaged** with the traumatic experience (how to get into contact with the lost person again, feeling guilty, what would have been if ...)
- are always the **same age** as they were, when the trauma occurred
- can unpredictably, suddenly and easily be **triggered even years after**





Characteristics of the surviving- parts in a loss trauma

- denying the loss, keeping the lost person alive
- Idealising the lost person
- Denying the emotional consequences of the loss
- keeping feelings under control e.g. with the help of medication or drugs
- trying to compensate (another child, another partner)
- producing illusions (reunion with the lost person after the own death)





Characteristics of the healthy parts of an adult personality

- true realism
- self-responsibility
- capable of regulating feelings
- love of truth
- contact with oneself
- optimism and basic confidence
- ability to make safe bonds and resolving bonds if necessary
- strong enough to confront traumatic experiences
- ability of self-reflection



Consequences of a trauma of loss

- Symptoms of depression (feelings of senselessness, no energy, emptiness, numbness, tiredness, lack of concentration, lack of appetite, lack of self confidence, difficulties to sleep well, pessimism)
- Avoiding new bonding relationships
- Escape into spiritual realms
- Aggressions and desire for revenge
- Somatic illnesses
- Unconscious reiteration of death
- risk to enjoy suffering
- Suicid



If parents suffer from a trauma of loss this can cause a symbiotic trauma for their children (multigenerational effects).

A trauma that is experienced actually can trigger a former trauma.



What can be done?

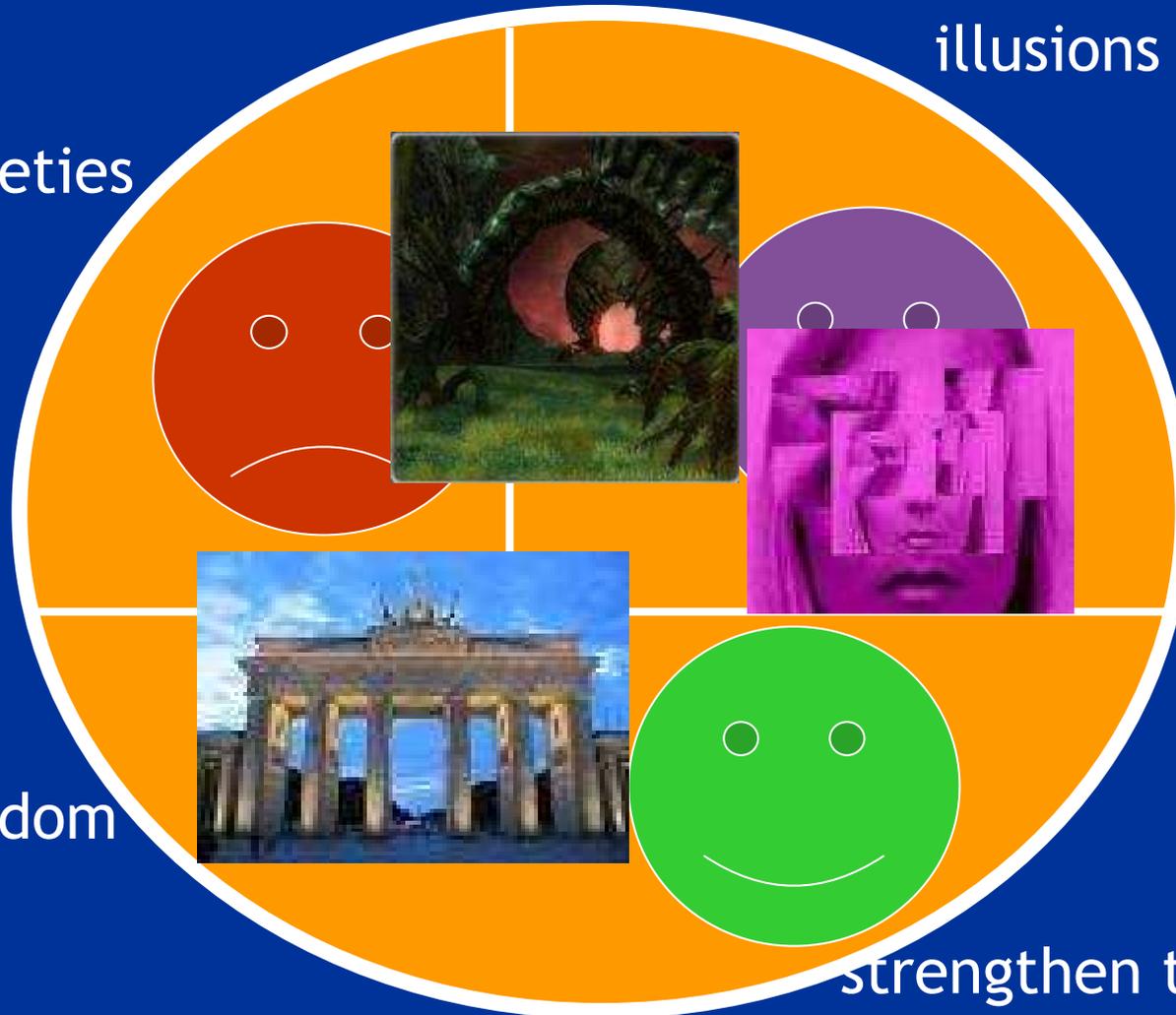
- to grieve deeply and intense about the loss not about the dead person
- to accept the loss as permanently and final
- to give up illusions of reunification
- not feeling guilty, when the lost person is no longer living, is dead and forgotten
- drawing a clear line between life and death
- taking existing relationships more serious than the relation with the lost person



Healing the Spilts after Traumatic experiences

Gate to illusions

Gate to anxieties and pain



Gate to freedom

strengthen the
Healthy part

Literature

- Franz Ruppert (2008). Trauma, Bonding & Family Constellations. Understanding and Healing Injuries of the Soul. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing.
- Franz Ruppert (2011). Splits of the Soul and Inner Healing. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing
- Franz Ruppert (2010). Symbiose und Autonomie. Symbiosetrauma und Liebe jenseits von Verstrickungen. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag.



Symbioses and Autonomy

1. International conference working with constellations on the basis of bonding and trauma

Munich, 26 to 28th of october 2012

www.healthy-autonomy.de

