



How unresolved trauma prevents NextGen Performance

# Complex-PTSD in the Workplace

50+ insights  
27+ Illustrations

**Shannon E. Eastman**

A must read for Leaders, Founders and Investors to better understand their people, or for any professional (still) stuck or for anyone wondering "what is going on" with a loved one.

# **Complex-PTSD in the Workplace**

**50+ insights alongside  
27+ hand pressed illustrations**

**NB3.io**

**NextGen Performance**



**Shannon Eastman**

Author, Designer, Illustrator, Producer

**Leo Cullen**

Editor

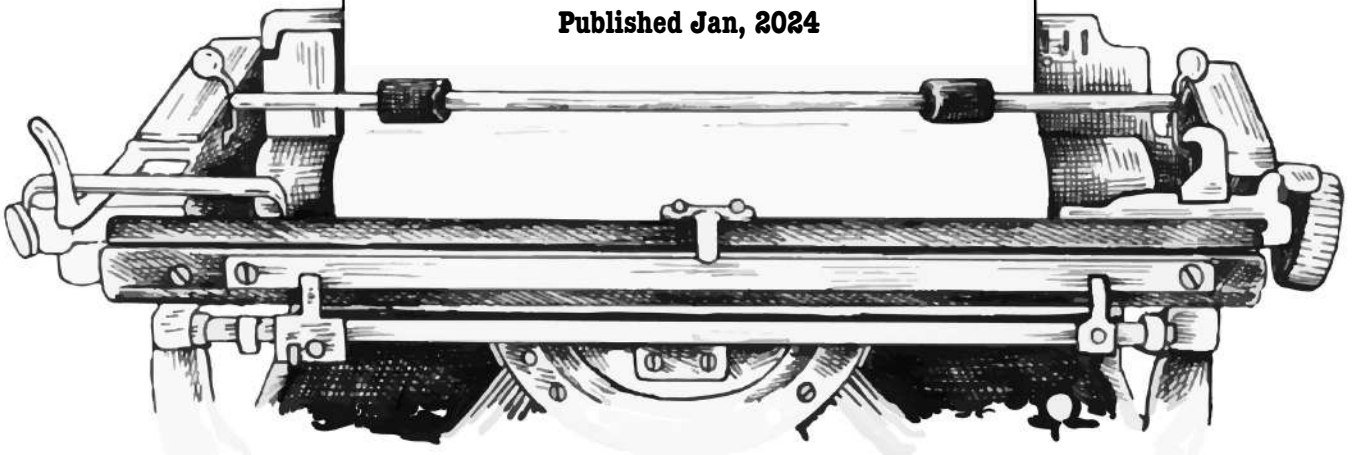
**The Financial Services Industry**

Inspiration for this book



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You meet your destiny on the road you took to avoid it. – C.G. Jung

# Complex-PTSD in the Workplace

How unresolved trauma prevents NextGen Performance



This content is provided for informational and educational purposes only  
It does not substitute professional trauma-informed medical advice.



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Highly Functioning, Secretly-in-Despair: Reported by 33% of Snr. Executives  
in the Financial Services Industry in a 2020 Mental Health survey.



## Hi! I'm Shannon

C-PTSD is a subject of significant interest to me, both professionally and personally.

I have C-PTSD and after decades fighting ghosts, I found a door out of the struggle and into a space where I have all sorts of fun, thriving. Aka Post-Traumatic-Growth.

I wrote, illustrated and published this book for my 30ish self as I complete my MSc in Mind-Body Psychology, before pursuing my PhD in Complex Trauma, C-PTSD @ Work.

Anyone can read this book and learn something about themselves, their colleagues, loved ones, staff or clients.

C-PTSD does not have to be a life-long struggle and it does not have to prevent NextGen Performance in the workplace.

For a free-consult, visit [nb3.io](http://nb3.io)

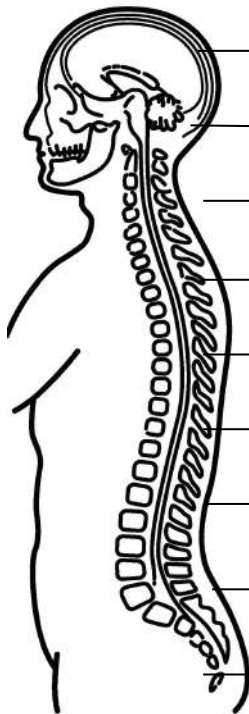
NB3 for NextGen Performance for Business, Culture and People.

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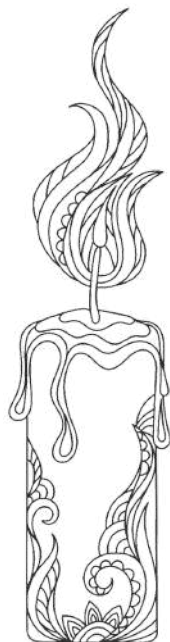
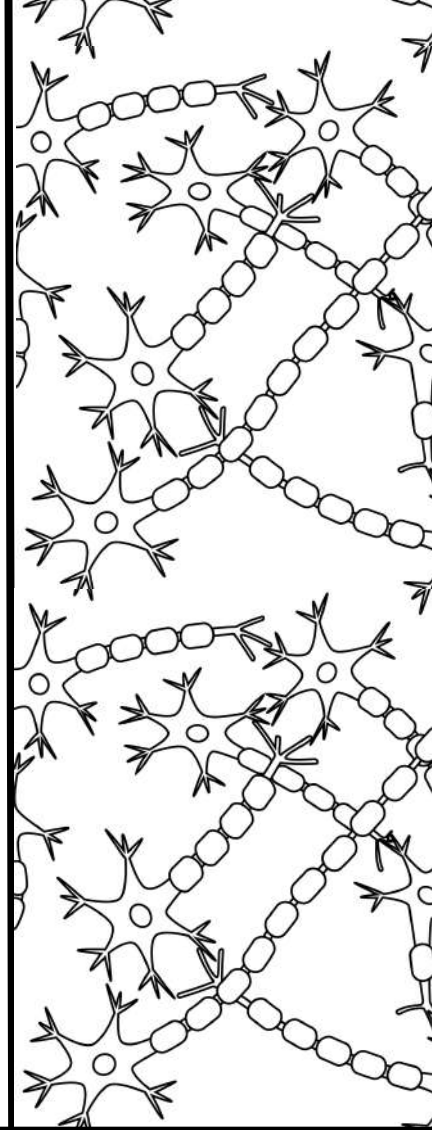
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Expose more, teach less

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## For an immersive mindfulness experience:

Use all 5 senses to relax faster: Light a candle,

Use essential oil; burn it, or apply topical oil to the front of each thumb, inhaling it every few minutes.

Put your earphones in and listen to 432 Hz music. I recommend Emiliano Toso, PhD, Cellular Biologist and Music Composer. Find him on Spotify or YouTube.



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The obstacle is the path

## Reminder of the Benefits of Mindfulness

**Mindfulness** - the practice of being in the present moment, with non-judgmental awareness, can support your Brain-Body regulation by:



Increasing gray matter in the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus - areas of the brain associated with learning, memory, and emotional regulation.



Decreasing amygdala activity (the part of the brain responsible for the fight-or-flight response) and reducing the body's stress response.



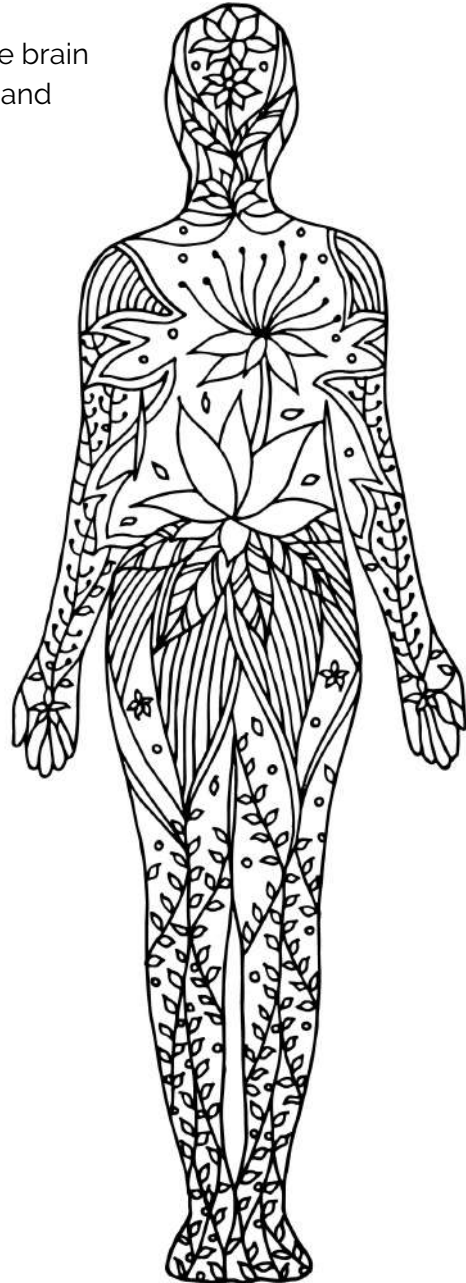
Improving connectivity and communication between areas of the brain responsible for sensory perception, emotional regulation and cognitive function.



Enhancing Immune Function by increasing the activity of healthy cells and reducing inflammation.



Regulating heart rate variability which leads to better cardiovascular health and improved stress management.



**nb3.io**

## Reminder of the Effects of Stress

**Stress** impedes our ability to enjoy a meaningful life. It can lead to a range of physical and mental health problems. Stress can affect your:

### Cardiovascular System

Stress can cause an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, which can put extra strain on the cardiovascular system. Over time, this can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

### Musculoskeletal System

Stress can cause muscle tension, leading to headaches, neck pain, and back pain. Chronic stress can also increase the risk of developing conditions like fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

### Hormones

Stress can disrupt hormonal balance (hormones are chemical messengers that regulate many of the body's functions, including growth and development, metabolism, mood, and reproductive health).

Hormonal imbalance can affect us in the areas of: mental health, physical health and mood.

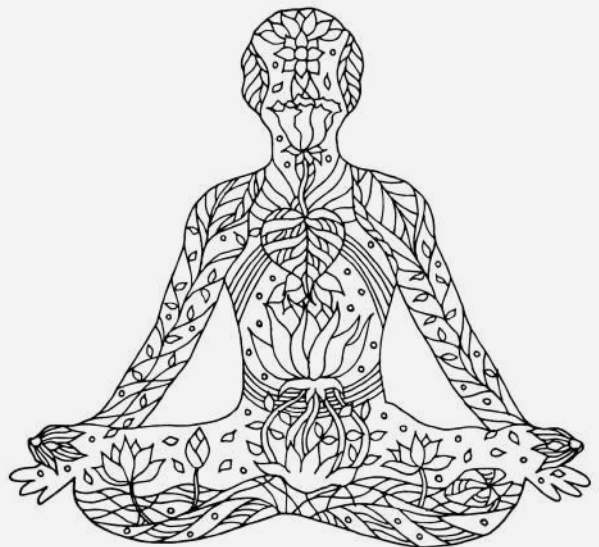
### Digestive System

Chronic stress can disrupt the digestive system's ability to perform optimally.

The gut-brain axis, a communication pathway between the digestive system and the brain, plays a crucial role in mental health. Imbalances in the gut microbiome have been linked to conditions such as depression, anxiety and insomnia.

### Immune System

Chronic stress can suppress the immune system, making it more difficult for the body to fight off infections and diseases.



# An Introduction to Complex-PTSD





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Depressed (Deep Rest)

# Childhood Neglect in adult life

## What is C-PTSD?

Complex Trauma is the label assigned to repeated exposure to traumatic events or situations, typically involving interpersonal trauma and a lack of escape or support.

Childhood Neglect, Domestic Violence, Loss, Cultural Trauma and Covid are just a few examples of Complex Trauma.

For some people, Complex Trauma can lead to Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD).

A disorder that can affect the body in a similar manner to how a stroke leaves a lesion on the brain.

C- PTSD is the body continuing to defend against a threat that belongs in the past, The body cannot stop the 'defence' cycle without deliberate intervention.

As such, C-PTSD symptoms emerge without context, disrupting our day-to-day lives, originating in past experiences with which we have no memory of.

Or it fuels a (manic) episode where intellect & insight are futile. The logical brain has been forced to subordinate to the body's ongoing need to defend' itself.

## Complex Trauma effects our entire reality:

1. Our 5 Senses, Brain & Body
2. Programmed Powerlessness
3. How we Perceive the world
4. Emotional (dis)Regulation
5. Interpersonal Relationships
6. Our Relationship with Work

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Adults with C-PTSD have a very different brain-body combination with which they experience the world. When compared to those raised in a loving home and now operate life with a healthy and well-nourished brain-body system, adults with C-PTSD often feel like they don't belong.

Work is a common coping mechanism used to conceal and avoid dealing with one's inner conflict. Prolonged avoidance of unresolved trauma will typically produce dis-ease in the body, forcing the person to finally intervene with the body's ongoing 'must-defend' mode.

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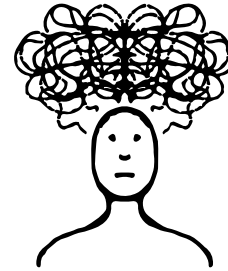
Everything in life is feedback to get you aligned and congruent.

**The complex trauma affected brain-body combination has become hard wired for survival, and directly influences the person's:**

1. Pleasure centers; shutting them off while survival is made paramount
2. Intrusive thoughts, distorted communications and heightened mistrust
3. Unpleasant implicit memory (flashbacks) triggered through 5 senses; smell, sound etc
4. (Over) reactions to seemingly normal situations or 'dead-inside' numbing
5. Negative self perception
6. Impaired interpersonal relationships preferring self-isolation that we trick ourselves into believing to be 'solitude'.
7. Coping strategies more akin to addictive behaviours
8. The need to run - For people with C-PTSD, the Past is all that is Present. Their comfort zone is moving towards 'future plans' (that seldom arrives).

**The complex trauma affected person often feels:**

1. 'Not safe, can't trust' - a hallmark trait for C-PTSD.
2. Overwhelmed easily, with bouts of 'explosion'.
3. Riddled with anxiety, fear, shame, guilt and depression.
4. Mysteriously locked into a self-made prison that is physiologically impossible to exit, despite the doors being wide open.
5. Compelled to avoid "Being Present" - so, mindfulness can FU!
6. Lost to illnesses that are not easy to label: inflammation, chronic and autoimmune disease are often present in adults with C-PTSD.
7. The need to self-soothe, often with harmful coping strategies; self harm, substance abuse, sex addiction, comfort eating, endless distractions, numbing activities, and work.
8. Gut wrenching fear, intense heart break, and a chest occupied by 'elephants'. So dissociation is par for the course. We happily disconnect mind and body so we don't have to feel anything.



People with C-PTSD who are using work to channel their inner conflict, are very good at looking the part...

...“Highly Functioning, Secretly in Despair”. but only for so long.



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The field cannot be seen from within the field. ~ Emerson

## Where is C-PTSD?

Complex Trauma can be found inside the body, and thus, what is within the body, will be expressed in the day-to-day of the person. Complex Trauma can be observed on par with a stroke leaving a lesion on the brain.

### Inside the Person's Body with C-PTSD:

1. **The Brain** has up to 30% less pre-frontal cortex, impaired brain stem, impaired amygdala, impaired hippocampus
2. **The Nervous System** is at the beck and call of the brain. When the brain is impaired, all communication to and from the body are affected.
3. **The Endocrine System** suffers at the mercy of excess hormones pouring into the body creating a toxic environment.
4. **The Musculoskeletal System** is where suppressed psychological pain is stored disrupting sleep, creating tension, headaches and physical pain.

When Complex Trauma has left its imprint on the brain-body, evidence of Complex Trauma shows on the person, permeating their day-to-day comings and goings.

### What we can observe of a person with C-PTSD:



1. Inability to focus or follow through on basic tasks; disorganised.
2. No motivation, or when they do accomplish something, there is no sense of satisfaction.
3. Avoidance, withdrawing and self-isolating behaviour.
4. Heightened levels of anxiety, irritability and hypervigilance.
5. Heightened levels of Intolerance and allergies to many foods.
6. Addictions and high risk behaviours.
7. Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, OCD and other mental health disorders.
8. Extreme reactions (anger to rage) to seemingly normal situations.
9. Lack of self care in appearance and their personal space. People with C-PTSD will find brushing their teeth difficult to maintain.
10. Rigid and inflexible in both body and thought.

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Perfectly imperfect is a great start

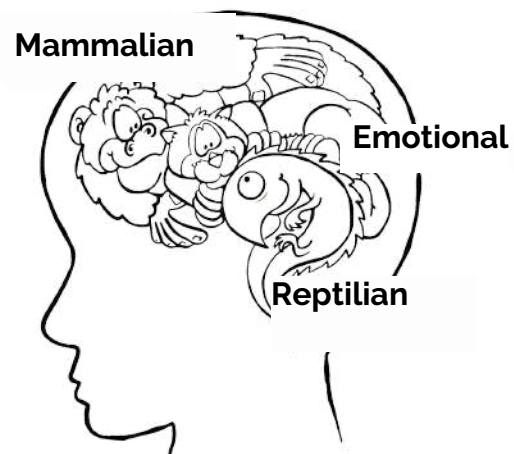
## How the brain-body forms, matters a lot

### Why is C-PTSD (still) here?

It is still here, because unresolved trauma stored in the body is running the show through a lens that distorts all reality.

Using a simple 3-part construct of the brain:

1. Mammalian part
2. Emotional part
3. Reptilian part



easily illustrates how complex trauma takes hold in the brain-body and mind, that will direct our life in later years.

### Reptilian Brain comes first

The first part of the brain and nervous system that comes online in the third trimester of pregnancy is the reptilian brain. Our instincts and self-regulating mechanisms are found here.

In the third trimester, the blueprint for our brain and nervous system is taken from mum. Mum's stress levels, stress management resources, and ability to manage life, is copied over to the baby in-utero.

### Second, comes the Emotional Brain

From ages 0 through the next 5 years, the second part of the brain, the emotional brain develops. It is shaped directly by our caregivers and the environment in which we are raised.

From age 6 onwards, the third part of the brain, the mammalian brain develops. It continues to develop as a result of our experiences until age 20, or so, in females, and age 25 in males.



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Focus is a portal

If our reptilian brain was forged through a fractured blueprint belonging to mum, followed by our first 5 years being raised in an environment with caregivers that struggled to nourish, love and support our development, then our emotional brain will yield evidence of 'fractures' and traumatic imprints. By the time we are 6 years old, 2 of the 3 parts of our brain and nervous system already demonstrate physical effects of trauma, like lesions on the brain caused by a stroke,

### **Last comes the Mammalian Brain:**



From age 6 onwards, our experiences, social network and caregivers (at home and school) will be used to complete the formation of our mammalian brain.

Statistics clearly show that victims of abuse have a high propensity to be re-victimised. Experiences that will be used to complete the formation of the third, and last part of the brain-body system in time for adulthood.

Adults with complex trauma engage the world with a fundamentally different physiology that feels 'gut wrenching pain', 'intolerable heart break' and 'difficulty breathing'. Dissociation with the body is an easy choice in an effort to shut off (repress) such debilitating feelings. Often work is a preferred go-to strategy to help one dissociate (further) from their body.

### **The final point to 'why-is-C-PTSD-here'? Trauma Energy!**

Mammals faced with dangerous situations will activate a fight, flight survival mechanism. People with complex trauma will have many of these types of fight/flight experiences. These experiences come with immense energy that seeks to be processed, in, through and out of the body.

When this latent energy is not processed in, through and out of the body, it is stored in the body. When it is not processed out, but instead locked into the body, it becomes toxic.

The longer it remains locked in, the more dis-ease and disfunction it causes.

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That which you seek, is also seeking you. – Rumi

## How do we initiate recovery from C-PTSD?

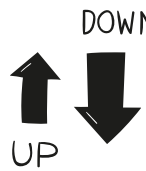
We are uniquely the same. We each have a unique protocol that suits us best when it comes to recovering from C-PTSD. However, in every case, resolving past trauma requires one to feel their way through the healing.



Courage and a 'decision to remember' are a must for recovery.

### Recovery resources can be grouped into two categories:

Top Down and Bottom Up. Engaging Top Down and Bottom Up resources in tandem, is recommended.



### Top Down Approaches dissolve the programs that harm.

1. Using mindfulness, meditation and yoga, to relax and be calm is step 1, period.
2. We want to befriend, not suppress our feelings and practice ending the need to keep secrets from ourself.
3. Practice self-awareness with deliberate recognition of our pre-programmed 'reactions' to life, resolving how to interrupt these physiological patterns to slow them down, as we change our focus, and introduce new ways to manage them.



### Bottom Up Approaches support the body to:

1. Revisit the trauma through non-verbal practices where breath, movement and touch are key. Doing so, dissolves large portions of fear, anxiety and related symptoms that are often present as a result of the brain-body operating inside states of chronic dis-regulation.
2. Release trapped trauma energy that is constantly seeking how to move in, through and out of the body. That trapped trauma energy has to go somewhere. If it remains in the body it will cause all sorts of dis-ease.



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A disciplined mind brings happiness - Buddha



## Are you more Hyper-arousal or are you more Hypo-arousal?

We may have a preference for the type of Bottom Up resources we engage, pending whether we are more hyper or hypo. A quick overview.

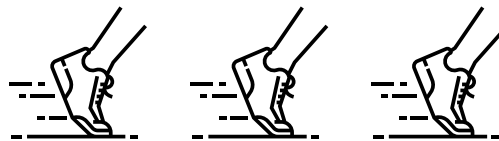
### Hyper-arousal; Hear me roar!



Hyper-arousal will often be used to describe individuals who 'accelerate with emotion'. They are prone to explosive outbursts, tend to be the 'pursuer' of a partner who is a "hider", tend to feel everything deeply and reach overwhelm fast. They avoid people and situations because they intensely feel inner conflict at the mere thought of engagement. They use addictions such as: work, food, sex or substance abuse that offer comfort after intense emotions to ease back into day-to-day activities,

Hyper-arousal types can feel overwhelm at the idea of being present, in order to feel into their body. They will often assert that "feeling into their body will be so overwhelming, it may actually kill them".

### Hypo-arousal: Watch me run!



Hypo-arousal is used to describe individuals who "brake and numb". They are prone to shut down, tend to be the 'runner' of a partner who 'pursues' them with the need to confront or engage in conflict. These people have high levels of dissociation and struggle to feel anything in their body. Seemingly normal situations can cause great internal upset draining them of their energy fast. They are very much in their 'head' and often cannot remember past trauma. Addictions such as work, food, sex, or substance abuse that suppress feelings will be engaged.

Hypo-arousal types can feel irritated at the idea of becoming present to feel into their body. They will often assert that "there is nothing to feel, they can't feel." They may not even attempt to engage healing resources, already believing it will fail.

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God enters through the wound. – C.G. Jung

## Top Down Approaches:

Using the mammalian part of our brain, design a plan to 1) Enter states of relaxed and calm (using all 5 senses) 2) interrupt the legacy programming running today's show so we can 3) retrain ourselves as we 4) install new programming.

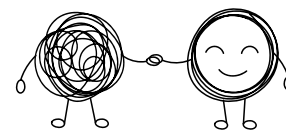
## Suggested routes to achieving this:

1. Engage a qualified and experienced (5+ years) trauma-informed practitioner to co-create and co-design this with you, is strongly recommended.
2. Read Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk's - The Body Keeps The Score
3. Read Dr. Gabor Maté's - In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, The Myth of Normal or anything of his that resonates.
4. Read anything by Dr. David Richo. Two great books to start with: 'Daring to Trust', and 'When Love Meets Fear'.
5. Join Dr. Gabor Maté's "Wisdom of Trauma" Facebook Group.
6. Listen to TraumaInformedGrowth.life podcast, read my blog at [www.moodycow.life](http://www.moodycow.life)

## Top Down Approaches to becoming present:

1. Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, Qi Gong,
2. Journalling and Gratitude practices are powerful regulators
3. Moody Cow's Lux colouring books are designed specifically for adults with CPTSD. These books combine Top Down and Bottom Up approaches while gently supporting us to become present.
4. Curate your personal space to feel good. Your 5 senses take information (equiv. to 100 soduko puzzles per minute) from your environment unconsciously. That information is processed by the brain in order to instruct 50 trillion cells in your body on how to animate.

Ensuring your personal space is full of symbols, images, and colours that deliberately feed your 5 senses information that you are safe and zen, is a relaxation hack I cannot recommend enough.





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The very essence of instinct is that it is  
followed independently of reason. - Darwin

## Bottom Up Approaches using the Emotional Brain:

We are reconfiguring a brain-body that developed with stone-wall-strong defences to survive, that no longer serve us.

For the most part, we 'appear normal'. However, when triggered, it is clear to us (and everyone around us) that we are not ok. We still have past trauma running the show.

Brain-body disregulation produces chemically made states that feel like ever present fear and anxiety. We will numb as best we can, and it will overwhelm us.

Cognition (logic and reason) has very little effect on these physiological challenges; numbing will only get you so far.

It is the repair, recovery and regulation of our brain-body through Bottom Up approaches that releases much of this fear and anxiety by simply returning to us a regulated brain-body systems.

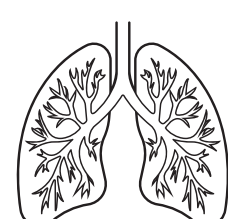
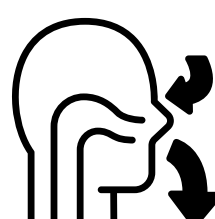
Breathing is one of the most powerful resources we can engage today to regulate us.

When we inhale, we are engaging the hyper-arousal side of our nervous system, when we exhale, we engage the hypo-arousal portion.

Deliberate breathing for 15-minutes a day supports the re-integration and regulation of those two sides of our nervous system. There are thousands of breathing techniques to choose from.

Alternate nostril breathing (I use this a lot), Box Breathing (I also love this one), and Guided Breath work (on youtube for example), that allows a moment of pause at the end of an inhale and the end of an exhale in particular, are worth trying out.

Movement such as; yoga, Tai chi, Qi gong, dance, mindful walking, open water swimming or any form of activity that you can do while becoming and staying fully present gets two thumbs up,



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And remember, no matter where you go, there you are. – Confucius

## 38 Bottom Up Approaches

Following is a list of resources to repair, recover and regulate the brain-body systems. Some are for you to do on your own, many are with a qualified practitioner. All are easily 'googled'.

Consider making inquiries with the practitioner of a particular resource to ensure you resonate with the practitioner and the resource - ensuring that it is best suited for your Hyper/Hypo style. There are 100s of resources. I am sharing just 38 of them, that I have come to know and value.

1. Chanting & Mantra classes
2. Nutrition & Exercise
3. Grounding Techniques
4. Nature Therapy
5. Neuroprocessing
6. Havening
7. Feldenkrais Method
8. Body Talk Systems
9. Acupuncture, Massage
10. Trauma-informed Yoga
11. Shamanic Soul Retrieval
12. Craniosacral Therapy
13. The Hakomi Method
14. Internal Family Systems (IFS)
15. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy
16. Accelerated Resolution Therapy
17. Tai chi, Qi-gong, Dance
18. Colouring and Art Therapy
19. Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE)
20. Non-Personal Awareness (NPA) Method
21. EFT (Tapping)
22. Compassionate Inquiry
23. EMDR Sessions
24. Psych-K
25. Somatic Experiencing
26. Breath work Classes
27. Aromatherapy
28. 432 Hz Music (Theta Healing)
29. Cold Water Showers
30. Sauna, Steam Room
31. Trauma-Informed Parenting
32. SGB (Stellate Ganglion Block)
33. Biofield Tuning
34. EMDetox
35. Emotional Resolution (EmRes)
36. HoloSync
37. Inner Resonance Technologies
38. Innerwise

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Another name for my super villain back story, is trauma.

# Complex-PTSD in the Workplace



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*Alas, you cannot talk butterfly language with caterpillars. (Note to self)*



## **C-PTSD @ Work**

### **When work is the escape route**

Employed and dying in it, self-employed and paralysed by it, side hustling to run away from..., between jobs (again) or leaving corporate to become a founder of a company with no real plan because you prefer to 'wing it' - 'work' has an endless wardrobe for us to show up as "Highly Functioning, Secretly in Despair".

For people who have C-PTSD, the work emphasis is on the 'wardrobe'. A costume, if you will.

Work is often used by people with C-PTSD, to conceal and disguise overwhelming inner conflict allowing us to weave a (false) sense of identity tied entirely to what we DO. When work is taken away from us, the inner conflict can be unbearable.

### **The overwhelm that swallows us whole**

Overwhelm is a hallmark trait of C-PTSD. It can feel like anything from disruptive to paralyzing. That overwhelm would be our unresolved trauma, stirring inside us as it insists on finding a way out of the body. When it isn't properly facilitated to exit, that unresolved trauma overrides our logical and rational self, and assumes a Commander in Chief role, becoming a driving force we (prefer to) channel into things like, work.

God forbid, we turn into our self and be with our unresolved trauma fully with the intention of facilitating its' proper exit from the body. The very thought of doing such a thing brings an overwhelm into the body that can feel as if it is swallowing us whole. Instead, we master the art of "Highly Functioning, Secretly in Despair' and keep going.

Basically, we pursue an alternative outlet for this driving force of unresolved trauma, such as work, where we get to use more acceptable labels of 'productive' and 'providing for the family'. We do this because, we either don't know better, (I certainly didn't) or we find it impossible to be in our body. (That would have been me, too).



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Find out what a person fears most and that  
is what he is to develop next. C.G. Jung.

## **We are concealing and leaking**

C-PTSD leaks into every area of our life despite how much effort we place into concealing it. And we put huge effort into concealing our flawed self.

When your physiology is affected by complex-trauma, success can be short lived, or elusive altogether. For some complex-trauma-related reasons, we create endless experiences of needing to start over that we very intelligently rationalise away as the fault of some external force. We are unable to pursue sustainable and profitable growth efforts - so we stumble along into (more) cul de sacs, rabbit holes and dead end streets as cognitive function remains impaired.

## **This is by physiological design.**

A dis-regulated brain and nervous system cannot allow you to operate any other way until the brain and nervous system become regulated through a combination of Top Down and Bottom Up approaches that permits the unresolved trauma to exit the body.

## **Neurons, synaptic connections, dopamine and norepinephrine for starters!**

I met a business man who was textbook C-PTSD. A failed entrepreneur about 100x over to the despair of family, friends, and finances. His need to start again (now on credit) was on par to a junkie needing his next fix of heroine. The chemical rush of dopamine and norepinephrine that he got from the next 'attempt', was a far more attractive "hit" than doing The Work to repair, recover and regulate brain and body.

Ironically, what he seeks is (only) available to him by doing The Work that regulates brain and body. Regulation turns off regions of the brain pumping out anxiety and fear (causing the disfunction at work), while turning on regions of the brain that bring infinite creativity, problem solving, and fresh perspectives with which to inform grounded and profitable business decisions. Replacing our addiction to dopamine and norepinephrine with a state of congruency, alignment and endless inspiration is the way out. Becoming congruent is not accessible to the human, when the brain-body is dis-regulated.

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It is always advisable to perceive clearly our ignorance. -Darwin

## 13 ways C-PTSD is leaked at work

Not an exhaustive list, but a list that captures the majority of behaviours that arise in the workplace when C-PTSD is present in the individual.

You may recognise yourself, or someone you know within this list.

1

It's a fantasy, not a dream - unrealistic, unfounded and ungrounded! We do this unconsciously by design, fulfilling unconscious limiting beliefs

2

Insecurity dressed up as 'Ambition', hypersensitive to almost everything.

3

Using an A-type personality to camouflage an inability to handle stress.

4

Ms. No Boundaries! Can't respect boundaries of others, doesn't have her own boundaries.

5

Fear! Fear of: being seen, being found out, failing publicly, being rejected, or the idea of feeling exposed. Success is never within reach because our unconscious complex-trauma designed programming will not tolerate being 'unsafe'.

6

Need to Lead, Need to be Hyper Vigilant, Need to Control - often a front for "not safe, can't trust".

So you lead, leaving others behind. Your colleagues continue to have awkward conversations with you about the requirement to be a team player and to ease up on the micro management.

7

Blinkered to any and all red flags, at home, at work and at play, usually because, toxic has been (and continues to be) 'normal'.

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We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are.



## 13 ways C-PTSD is leaked at work - Continued

- 8** Allergic to sustainable growth! Impaired cognitive function inhibits memory, decision-making and attention that leaves others drawing unfortunate conclusions about your productivity and contribution because you forget things, are unable to concentrate, you show up as indecisive and difficult to manage... so instead, you get managed out of the business.
- 9** Busier than the government with very little to show for it. The 'Busyness' is like the cold cloth on a fevered forehead that brings a bit of relief. Alas, that cold cloth does not solve the issue.
- 10** Money! You are in trouble with the Tax-Man. or you are selling yourself too cheap so you can't afford to serve clients in the way they deserve, or you are overpriced to the degree you can't get repeat business, or living off credit. All 4 scenarios are a perfect maze to keep you small (and safe).
- 11** The industry's best-kept-secret. You can't handle being seen, so you hide.
- 12** You are doing the jobs of three or more people, and/or tout "If you want it done 'right, best do it yourself". A tragic paradox.
- 13** You outsource your goals and success to others under the guise of delegation, only it is not delegation. It is hiding.

When you have C-PTSD, your unconscious physiological default setting is "Not Safe- Can't Trust".

Your unconscious programmes running your physiology, will keep you tethered to disfunction, while ensuring your safety by keeping you small (small is safe). "Highly Functioning, Secretly in Despair" will only get you so far.

---

Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.

## So what does healthy look like?

1. Congruent, aligned & inspired by the pursuit of a meaningful goal.
2. Obstacles are embraced as simply being "on the way" to the end goal. They are not the reason we slink away and start over. Healthy people have a plan for most obstacles that show up and happily overcome them. Their End Goal contains a big "Why Reason" that views obstacles as 'no big deal'.
3. Strong and active **interoception\***: Bi-communication between Mind-Body is active and leading the day-to-day. This means the person is mostly present. They use mindfulness to advance their work goals.
4. Regulation of nervous system and emotions means they are grounded, balanced, and adapt easily. They are not easily thrown around by life.
5. They have Accountability for how their actions impact others
6. They value and have genuine interest in different opinions holding their own views lightly.
7. Collaborative - a Team Player that other people want on their team.
8. Resilience towards everyday challenges is the norm..
9. Healthy self-image and the way they present themselves shows this.
10. Self-Discipline in work, life and play.
11. Joy and fun! Hallmark traits of healthy. Neither Joy or fun is available to people with C-PTSD. The body's "Defense-Mode" will not permit it, however, people with C-PTSD will insist that their "Binge Drinking Nights" or 'workaholic' lifestyle, is where they get their 'pleasure'.

## A healthy person will have demonstrable evidence of:

1. Actively giving, receiving and co-creating with their 'village'. Inter-personal relationships are deeply satisfying and meaningful.
2. Continuously learning about subject(s) they love, making them feel alive.
3. Using imagination to create a world rich with beauty and contribution.

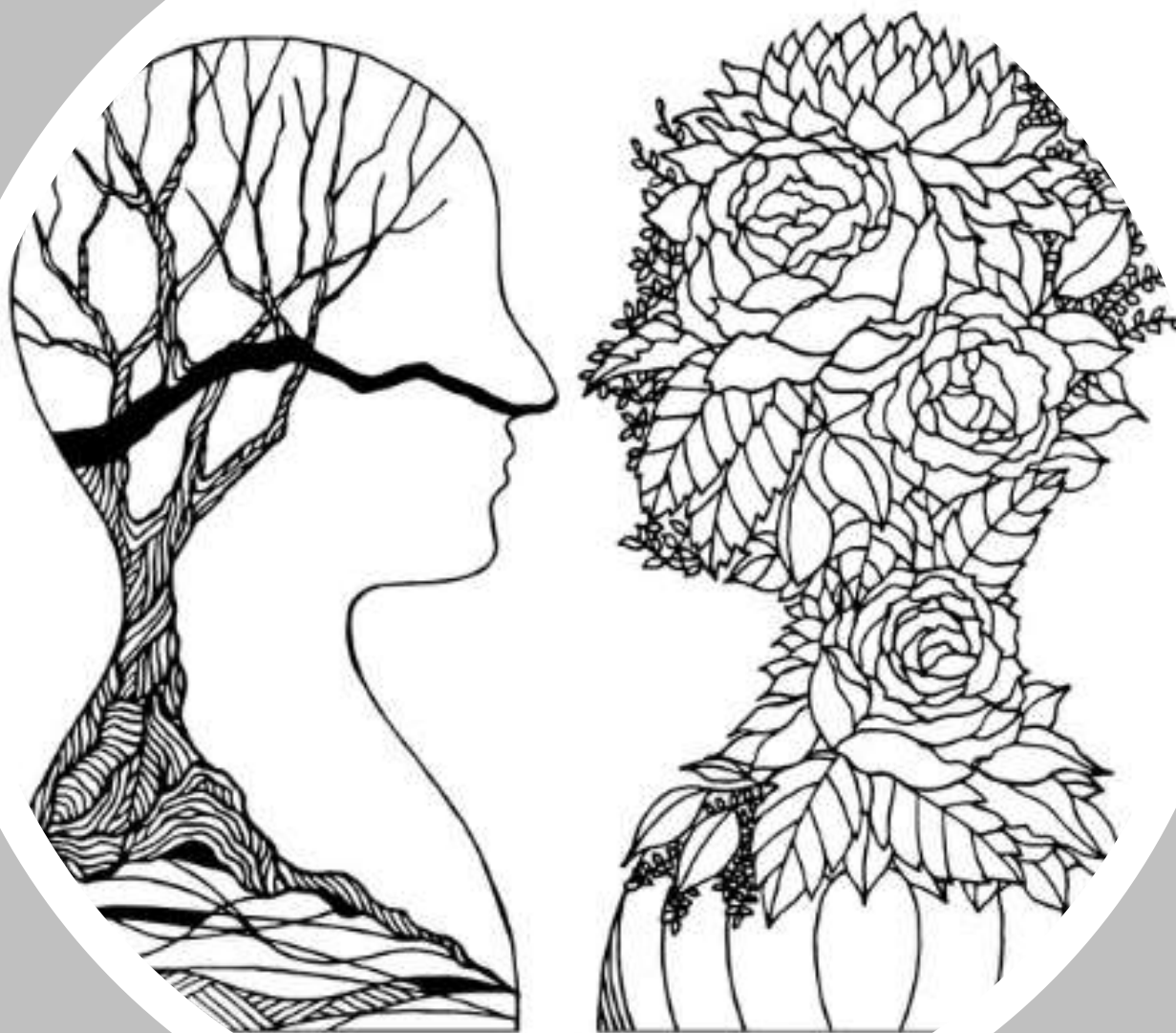
Healthy people find it easy to become present to their feelings. Something that is triggering and feels impossible for adults with C-PTSD



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A man with outward courage dares to die;  
a man with inner courage dares to live. - Lao Tzu

# Post-Traumatic Growth

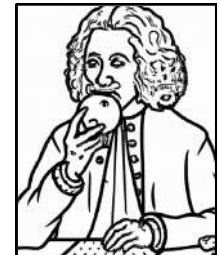
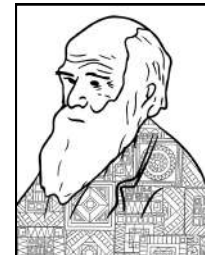
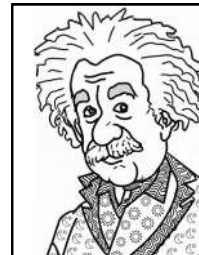
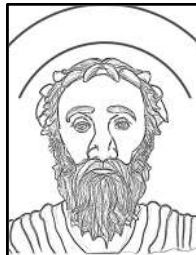


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The Master moves inside transformation.  
The Student moves inside loss and gain.

## Moving from suffering to strength is not new.

Marcus Aurelius, Confucius and Aristotle, circa 5th century, A.D. are just a few of the more famous writers on the subject. Einstein, Darwin, Newton and Beethoven also spoke at length on transforming adversity.



## Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) As a Process

PTG is a transformative response to trauma, where individuals not only recover but experience personal growth as a result of past trauma. PTG involves a deep psychological shift, often occurring after an individual's core (limiting) beliefs about the world are challenged or dissolved entirely, leaving the individual with an invitation to "Step Back to Step Up".

Interventions for emotional regulation are to be met with social support factors to effectively shift the person's state from negative to reflective.

Emotional regulation techniques, through a combination of Top Down and Bottom Up resources, help individuals manage trauma-related emotions until regulation has returned to the body, upgrading and restoring cognitive function.

Social support networks, attainable role models and open dialogue with Trauma-Informed practitioners, are often attributed to be the number 1 factor for the individual to fully transform from from where they are now, into PTG.

The final stage that emerges is a reframed narrative. Typically a narrative that supports and assists others, making the person inside PTG, a valuable and contributing member of society.

---

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.  
African Proverb





## **PTG Outcomes:**

### **Fresh Perspectives & New Ways of Seeing:**

Kind of like, impaired eye sight for 40 years, and then being given prescription eye glasses for the first time. The way you “see” before and after PTG is comparable.

### **Resilience:**

Not only does it take a lot to throw you off balance, but when you are shaken, your ability to bounce back is increasingly easier until it becomes innate.

### **Meaningful Relationships:**

You seek out and appreciate the people in your life and enjoy reciprocal relationships with people you value and who value you.

### **Congruent, Aligned & Inspired with what is Meaningful to you:**

Discover your purpose and feel renewed and alive in your pursuit of it.

### **Personal Strength:**

Gain confidence, clarity and become empowered.

## **PTG - Worth Noting:**

### **There is no “Instant Recovery”**

There is marked progress that comes with practice, patience and persistence and is proportional to the quality of your support network.

### **8 billion people, 8 billion different ways to do this:**

We are uniquely the same. The path we follow out of suffering into PTG is unique for everyone and it has some common characteristics.

### **Non-Verbal, Bottom Up Approaches and Top Down resources:**

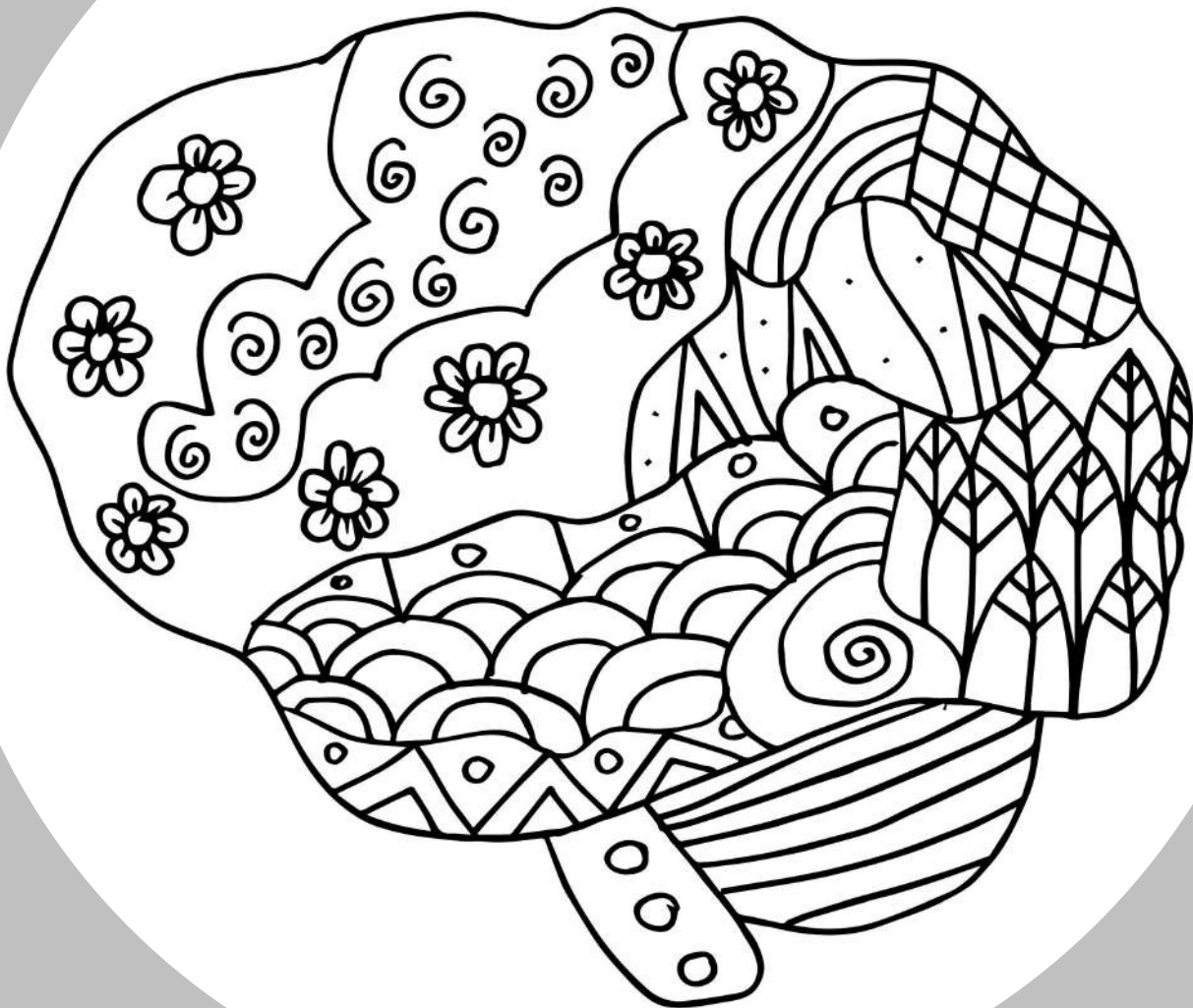
It is common that individuals recovering from C-PTSD will engage 2 or 3 Bottom Up resources, and 1 or 2 Top Down Resources, on average.

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Creativity is intelligence having fun. - Einstein



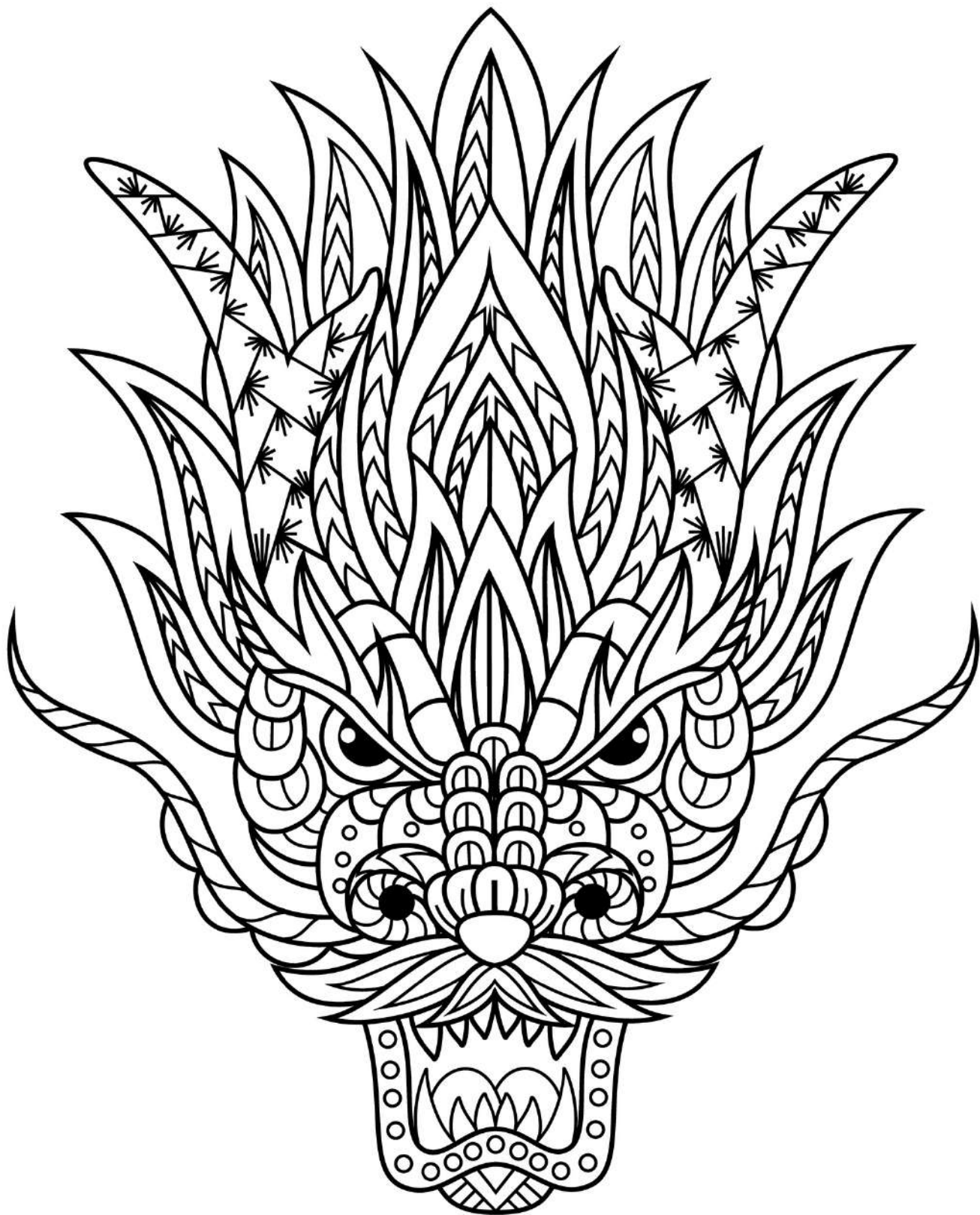
# WHAT IS C-PTSD?



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If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration. – Nikola Tesla

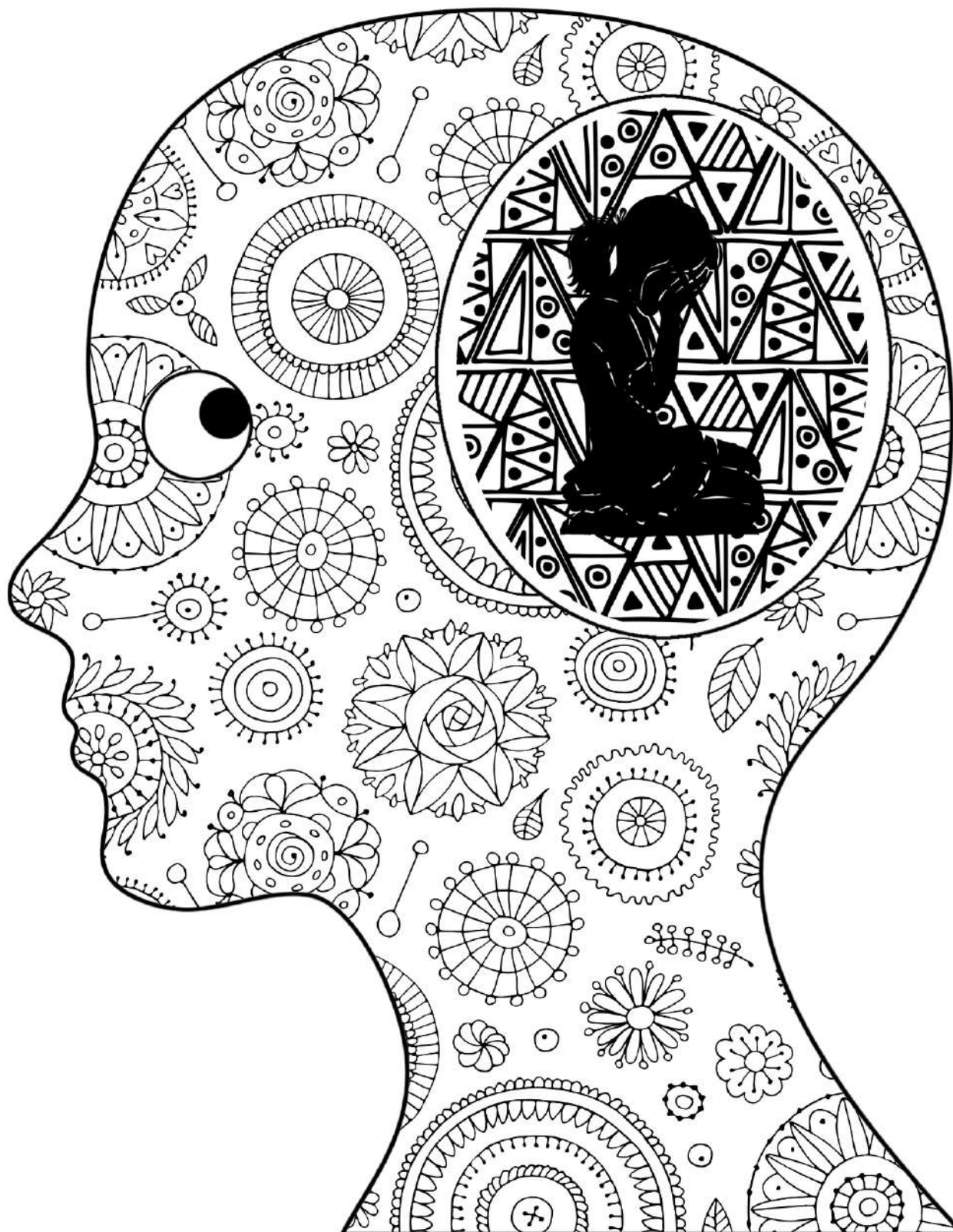
The cave you fear to enter that holds the treasure you seek. Dr. Joseph Campbell



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A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval. – Mark Twain

**C-PTSD is the veil that blankets our perspective and perception.**



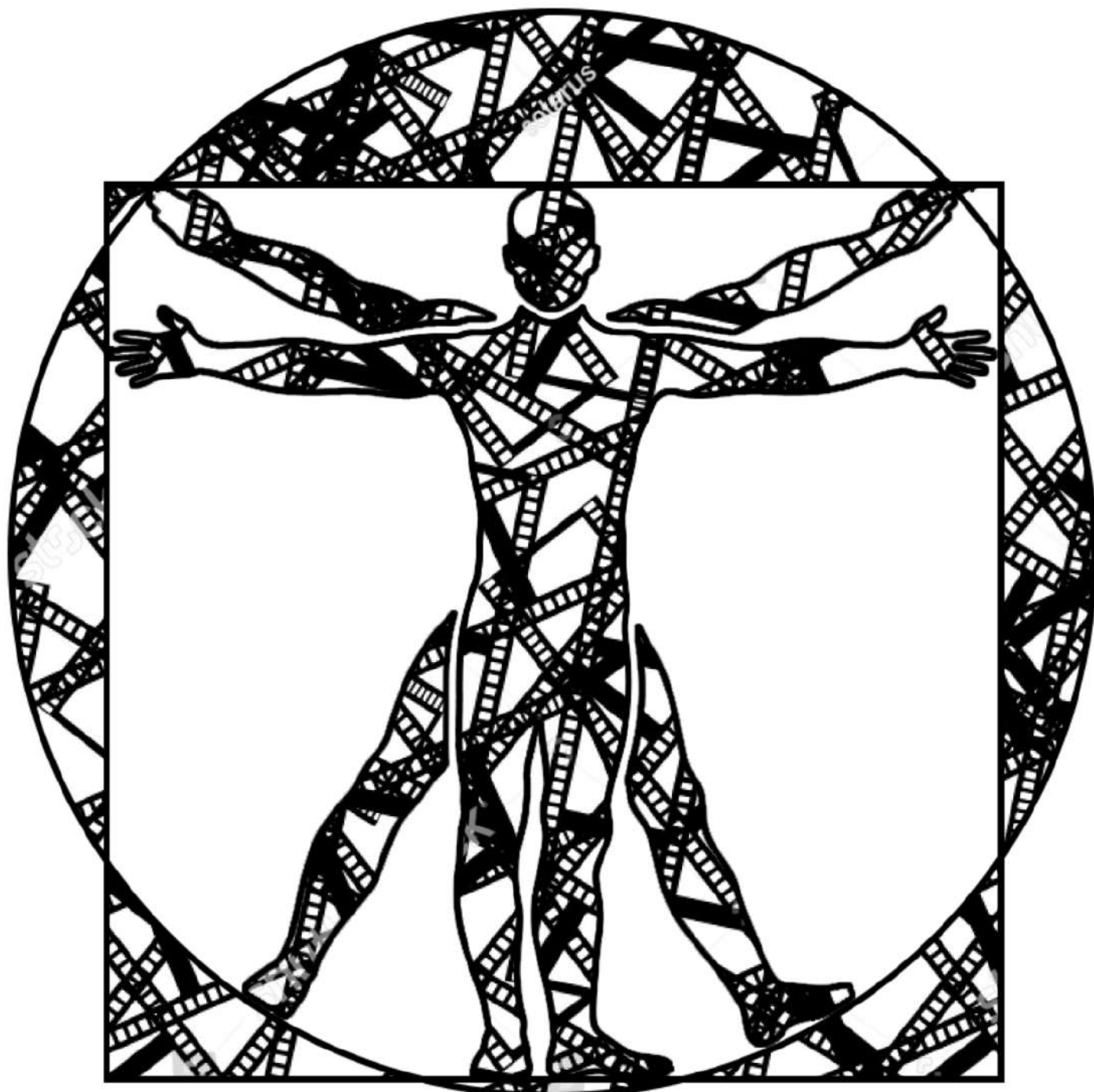
**Perspective gives us our Point of View.  
Perception is how we interpret stimulus.**

---

I am an old man and have known a great many troubles,  
but most of them never happened. - Mark Twain



**C-PTSD is the physiological prison of past stories we cannot exit, without repairing and regulating our Nervous System.**



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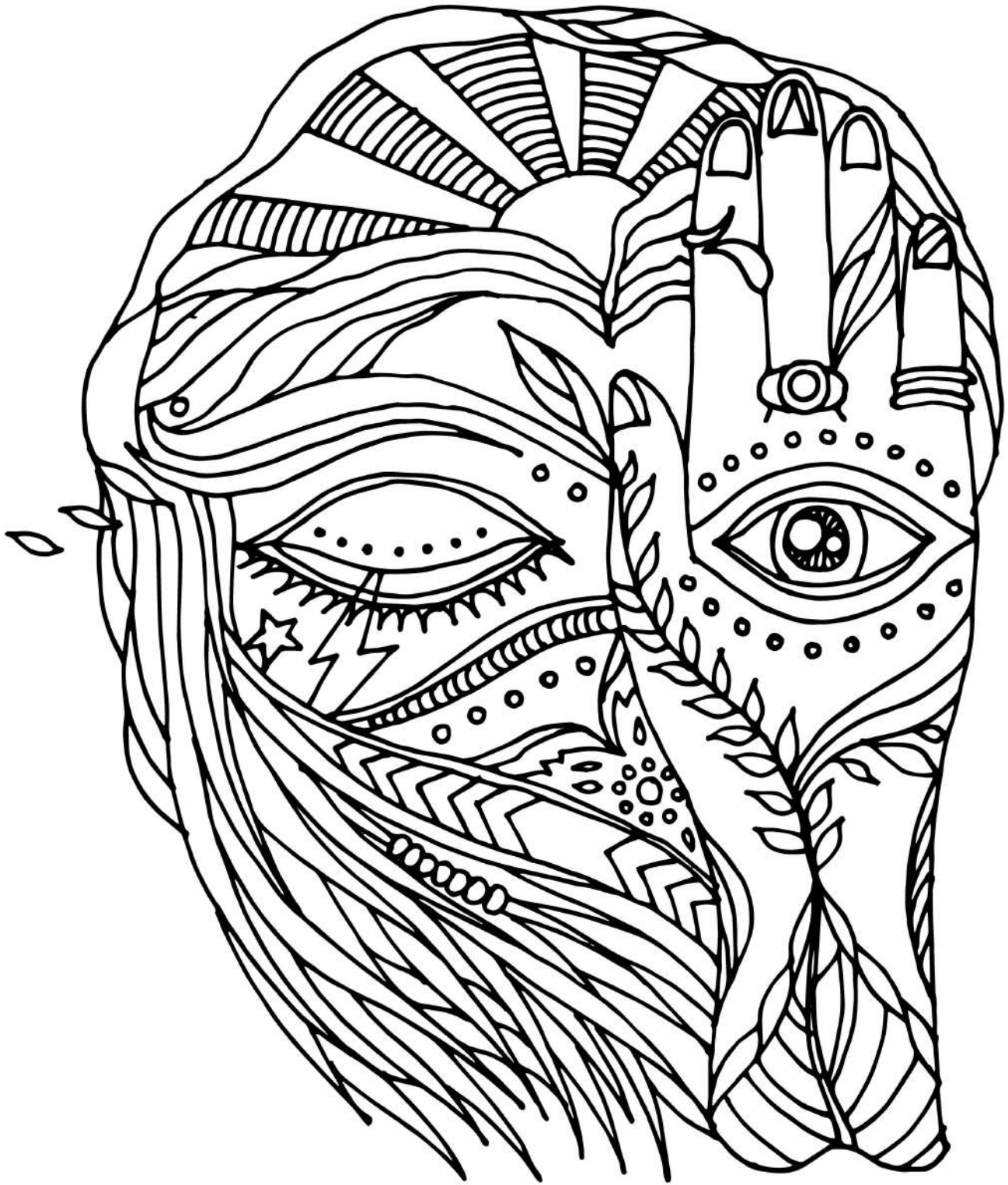
Confine yourself to the present. – Marcus Aurelius

**C-PTSD is When the Past is Present.  
You're not present.**



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Have I gone mad? I'm afraid so, but let me tell you something,  
the best people usually are. – Alice



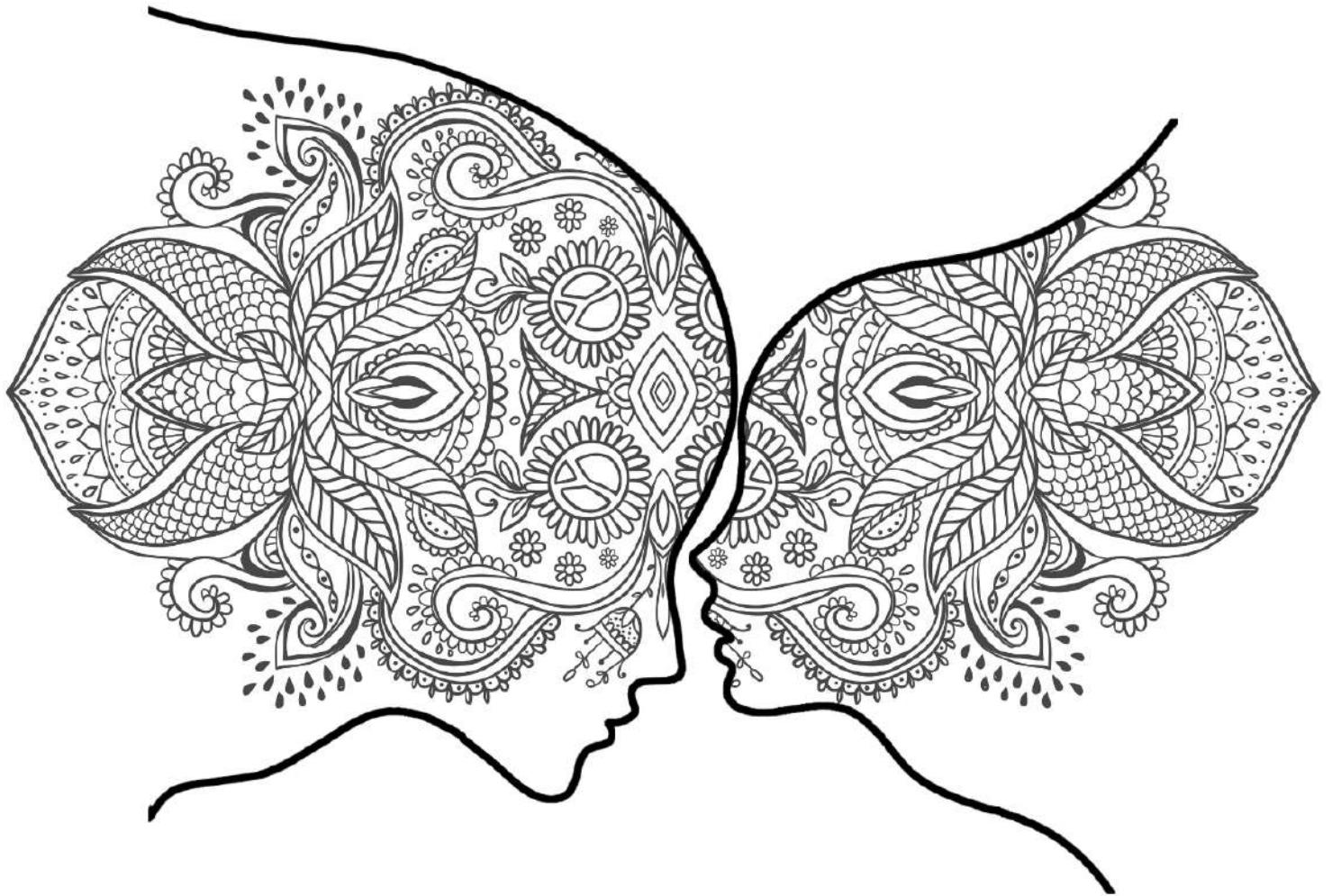
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C-PTSD is a self imposed prison sentence where you are judge, jury and prison guard.

---

Everyone thinks of changing the world,  
but no one thinks of changing himself. - Leo Tolstoy





The formal invitation  
to practice interoception.

---

If you cannot work with love but only with distaste,  
it is better that you should leave your work. – Khalil Gibran

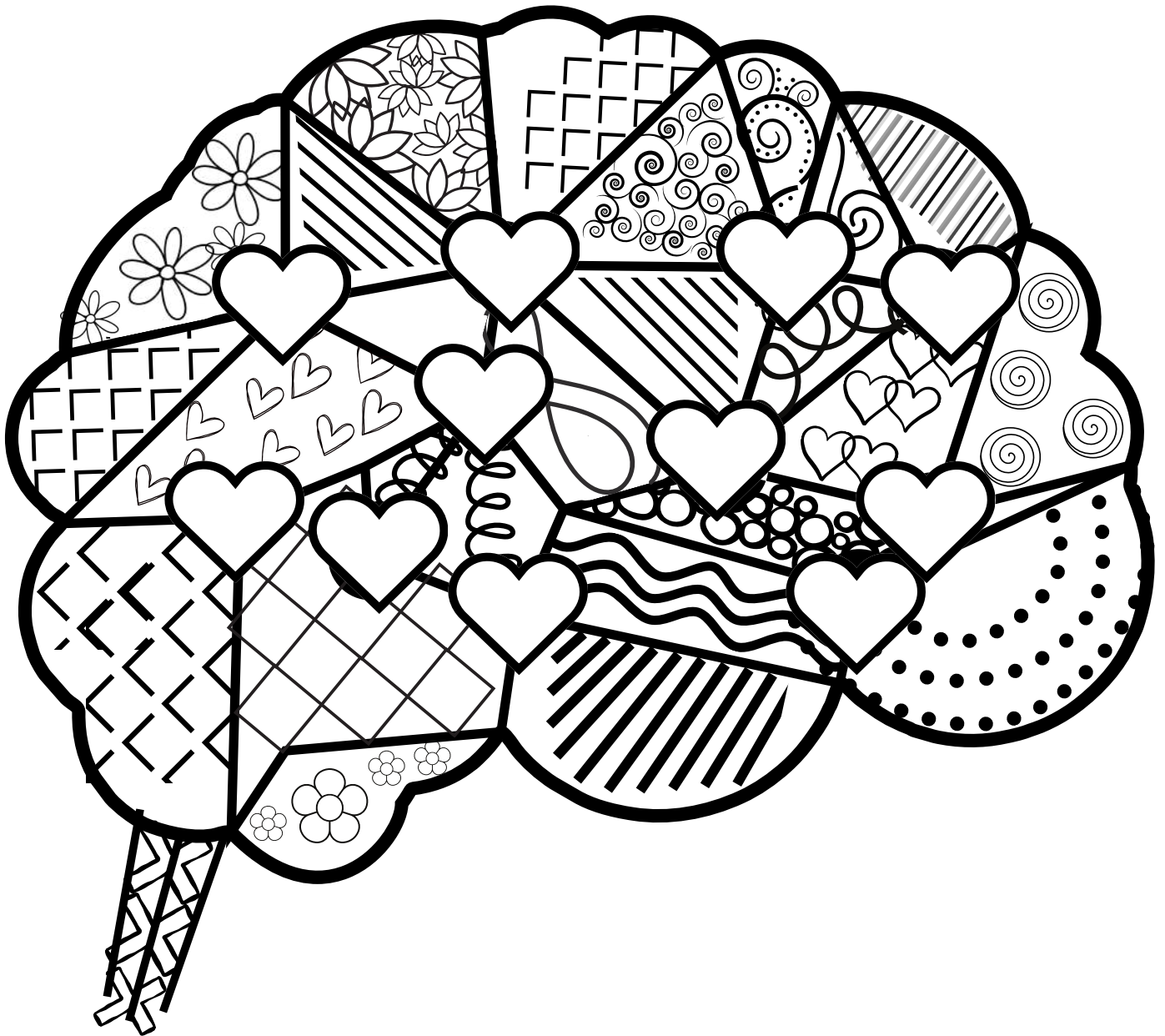


The reason why we hear ourselves say:  
“I know what I’m supposed to do, but I just can’t do it!”

---

The purpose of memory is to store your delusions  
until you can bring balance and love to them. Dr. J. Demartini

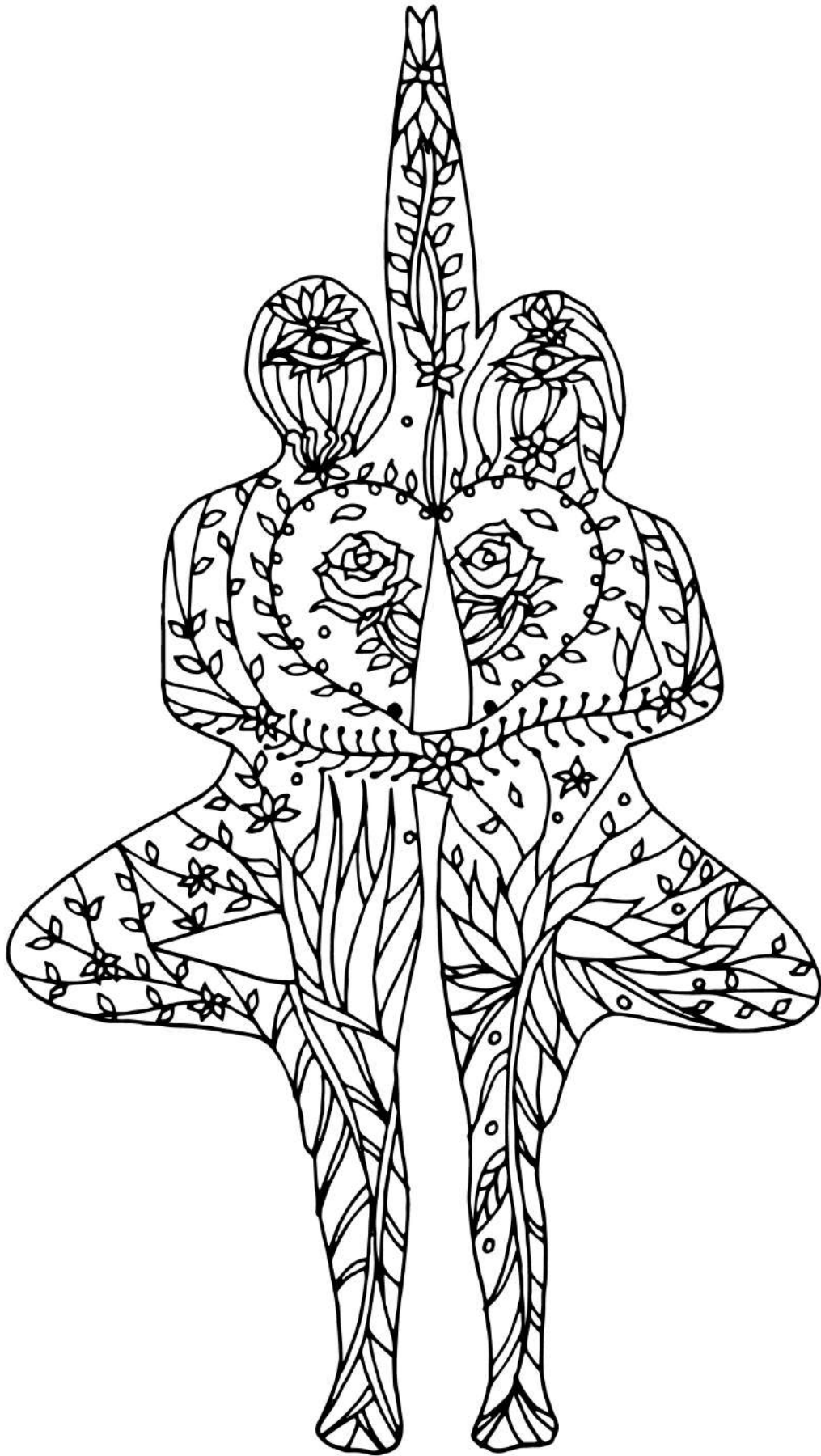
A gift that offers us wisdom, enriched with character, resilience, depth, and empathy.



---

I can calculate the motion of heavenly bodies,  
but not the madness of people. - Isaac Newton





*A story hand-pressed for healing others.*

---

What we speak becomes the house we live in. – Hafiz

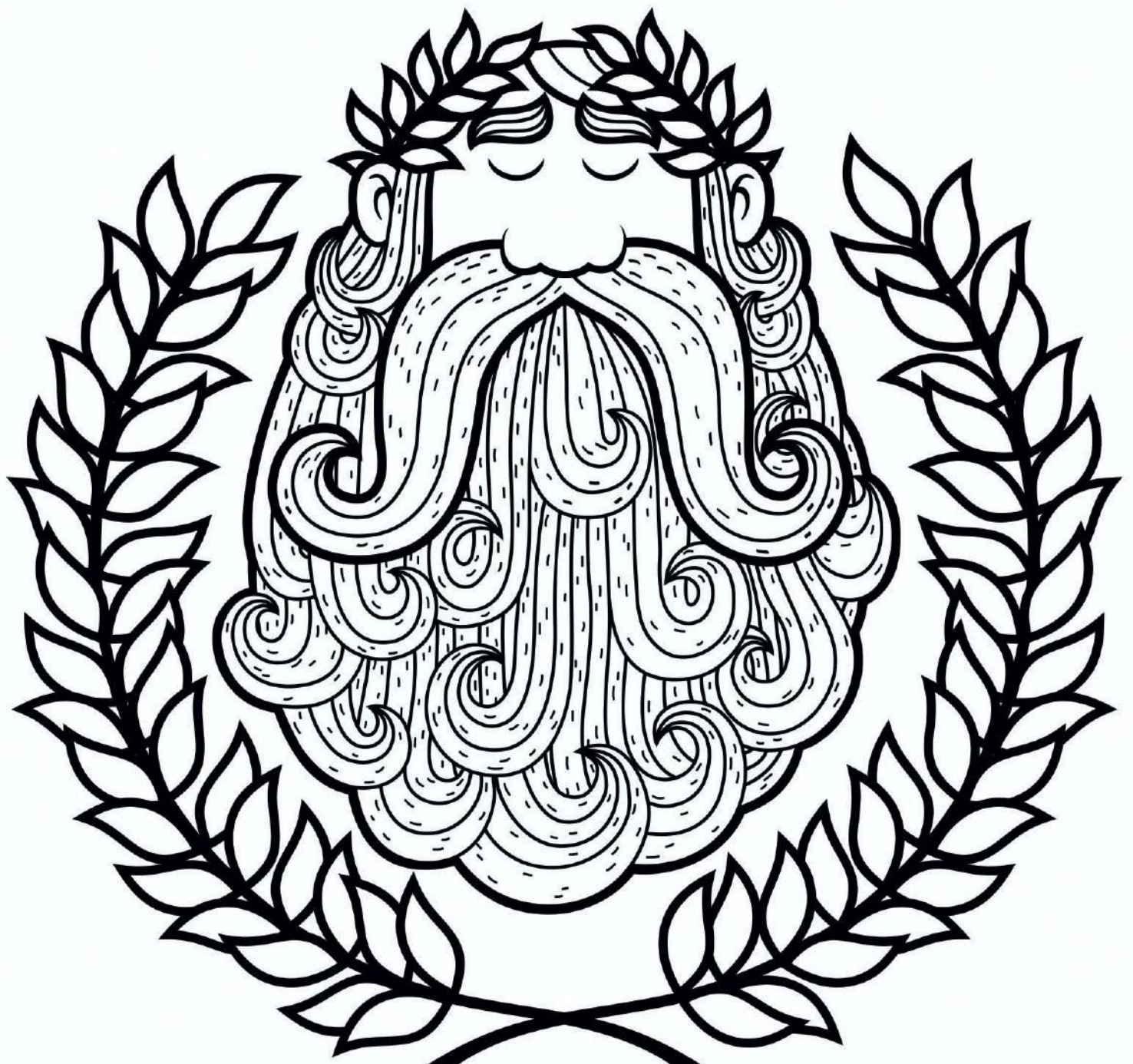
A rich path to self-actualisation  
should you choose it.



---

Alcohol is the anaesthesia by which we endure the  
operation of life. – George Bernard Shaw.

An opportunity to know  
thyself, love thyself, be thyself.



-Socrates

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Follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly. Frank Kafka



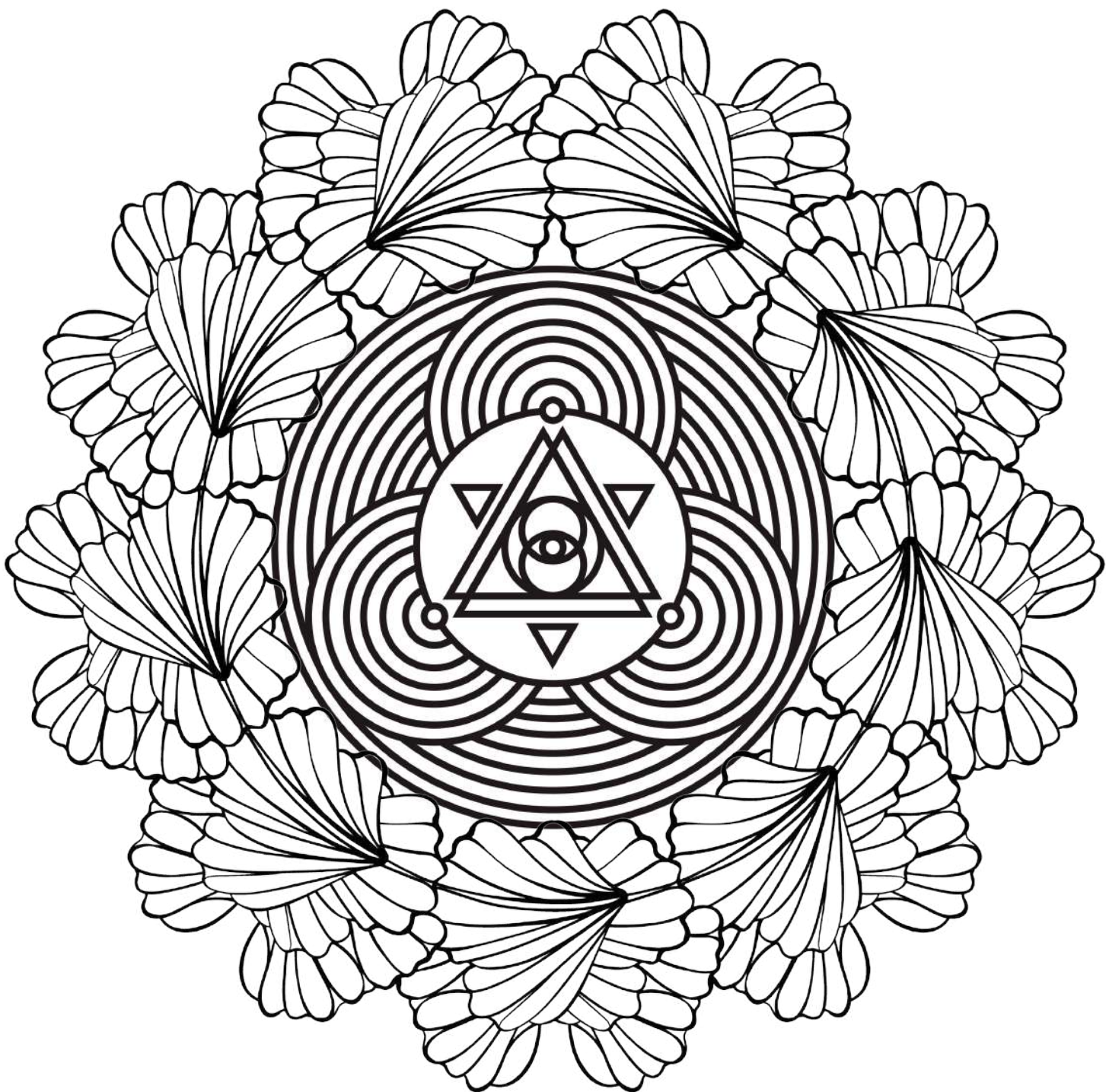
A PERFECT REASON TO BE  
KIND. 1 IN 3 OF US HAVE  
EVIDENCE OF C-PTSD,  
BELIEVING WE ARE ALONE  
IN OUR SUFFERING.



---

If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet,  
you'd best teach it to dance. – George Bernard Shaw

An opportunity to become whole as we embrace  
brain-body-mind, allowing them to become one.



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To play a wrong note is insignificant; to play  
without passion is inexcusable. – Beethoven



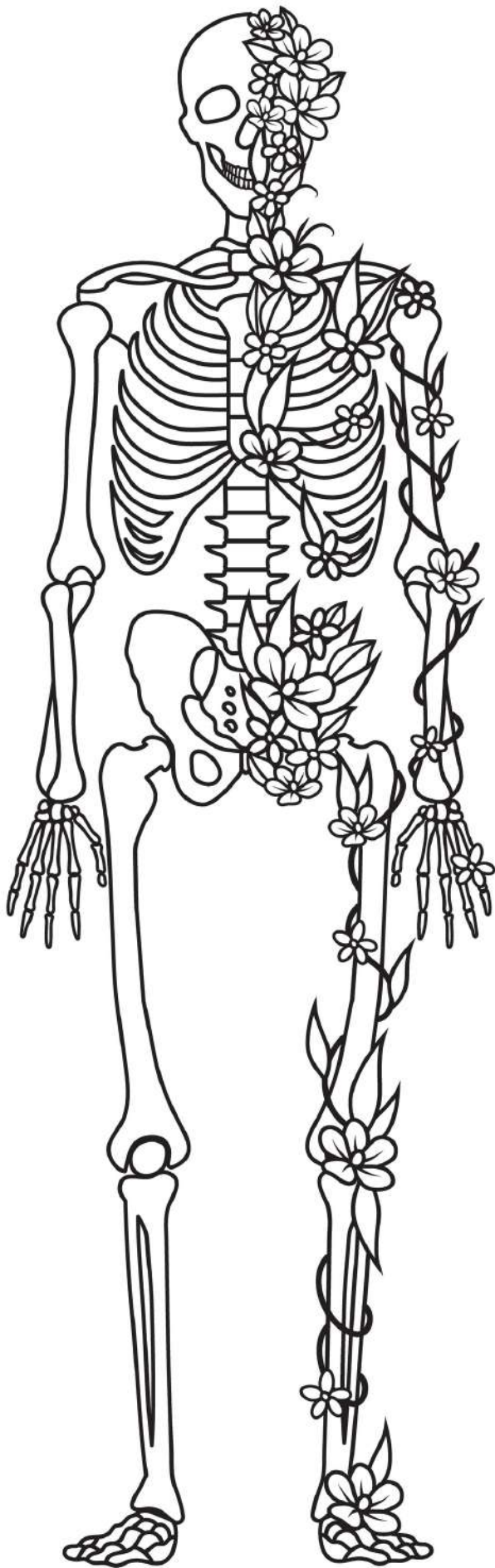
# WHERE IS C-PTSD?



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Happiness comes when your work and words are  
of benefit to yourself and others. - Buddha



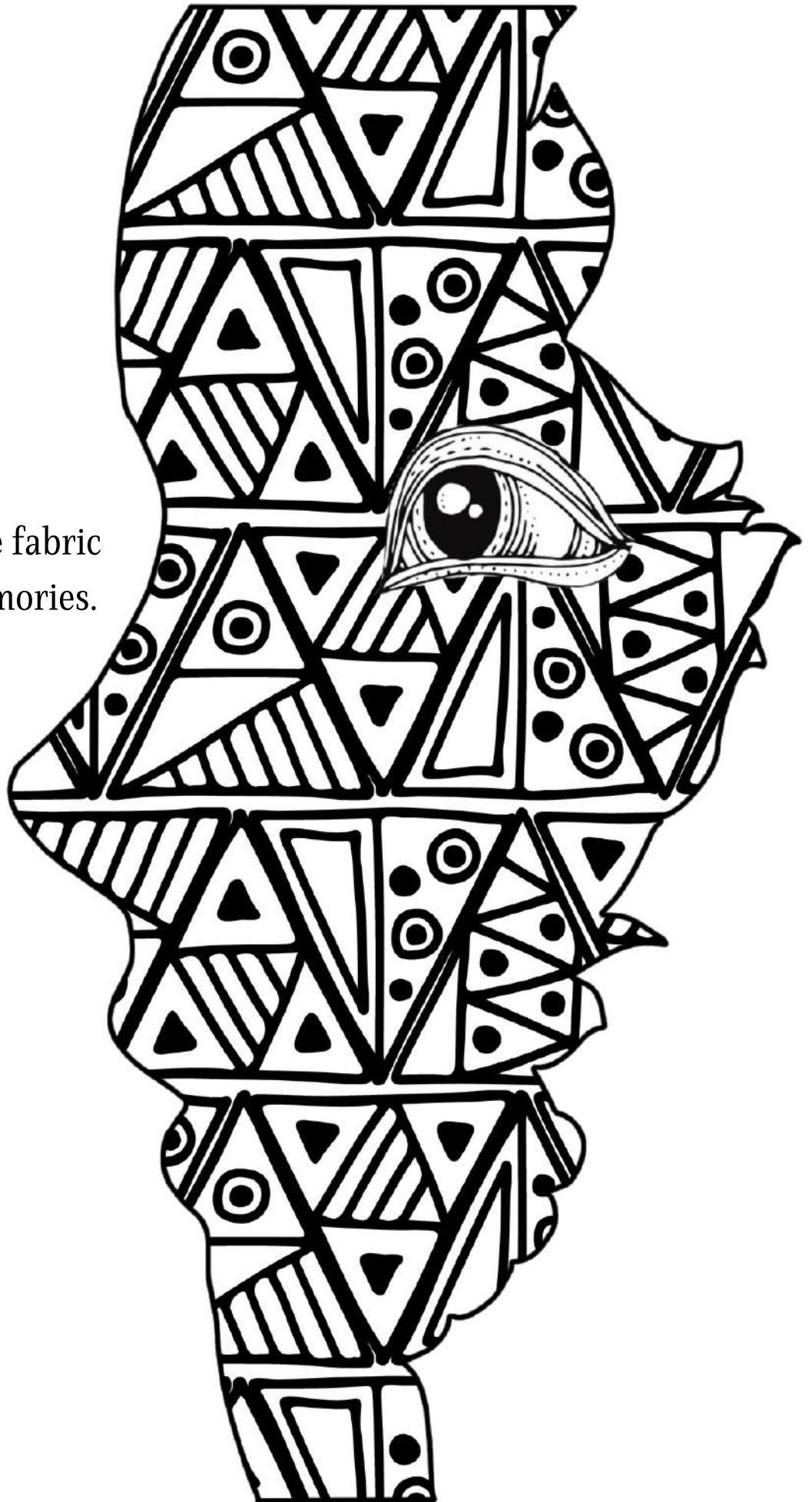


Planted into the brain-body causing disregulation that manifests as fear and anxiety, until deliberately transformed into a garden that sustains a new life of play.

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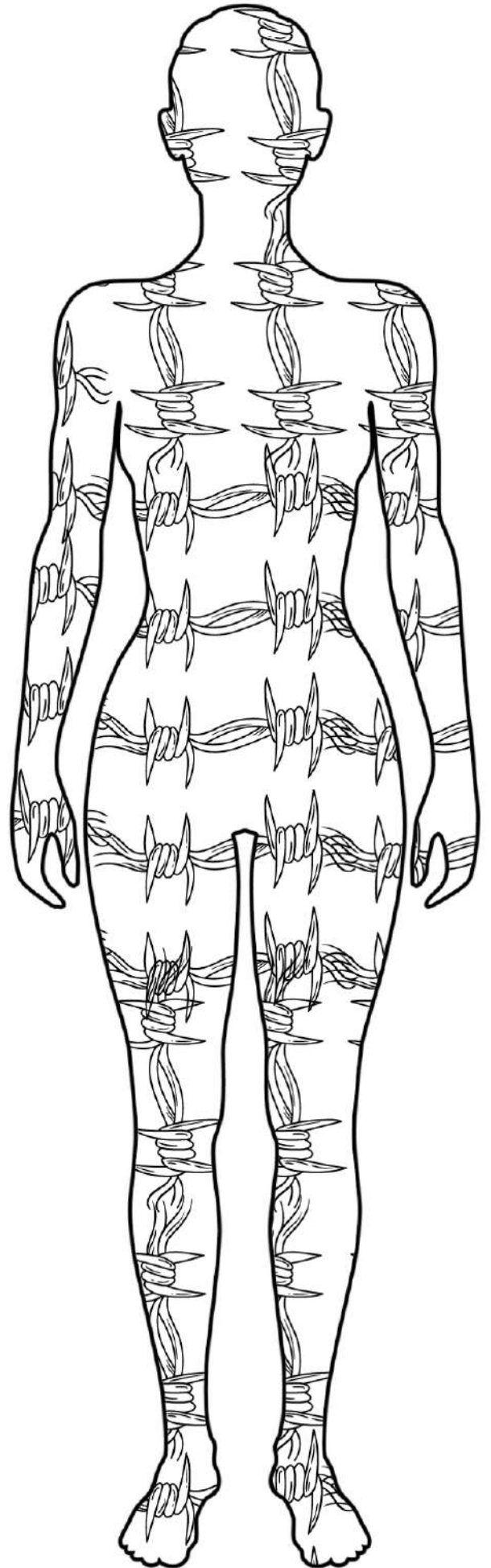
We stopped looking for monsters under our bed when  
we realised that they were inside us. – Darwin

Embedded into the fabric  
of our implicit memories.



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We forged the chains we carry throughout our lives. – Charles Dickens

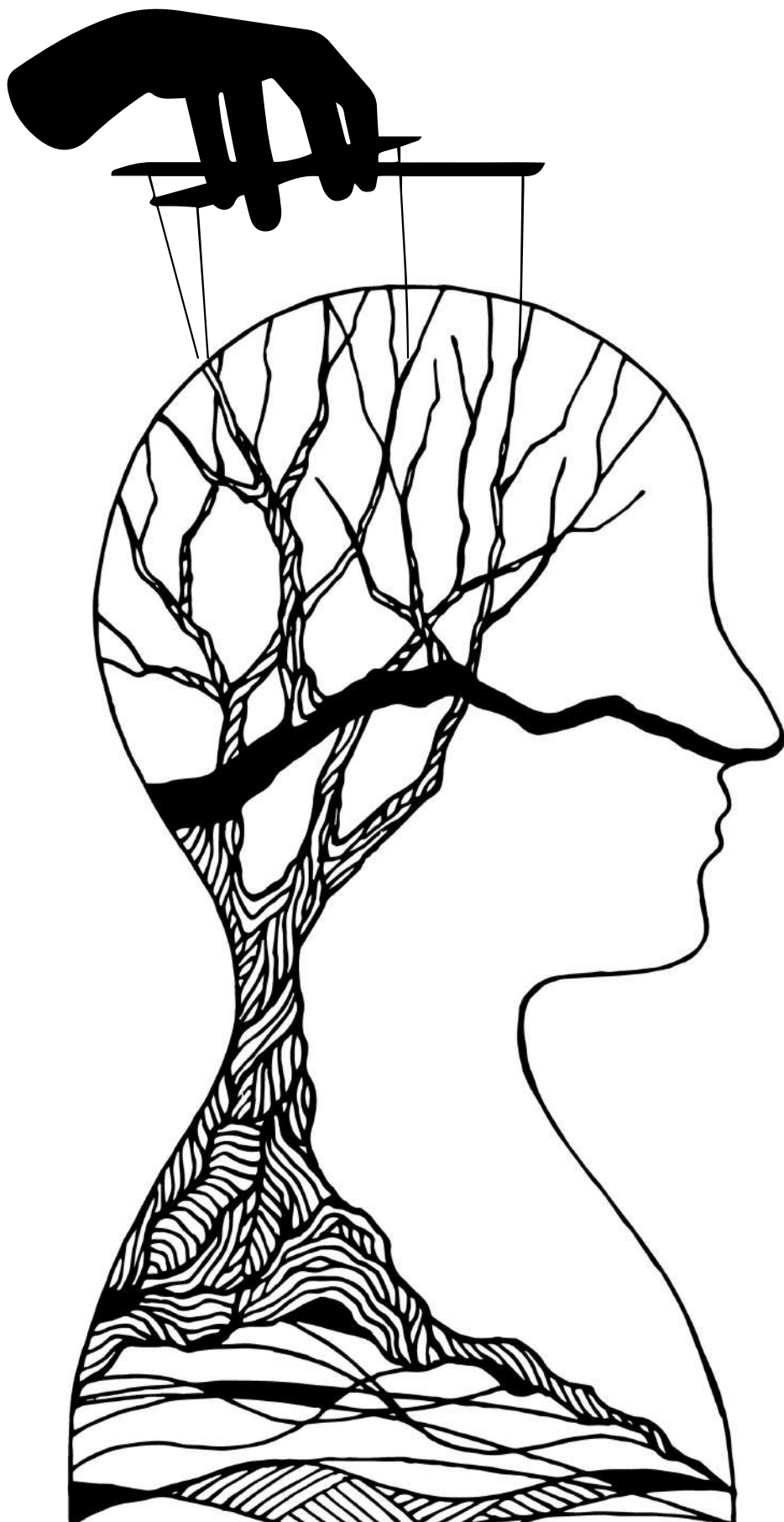


Intertwined within the brain  
and Nervous System,  
patiently waiting to be  
unravelled and released.

---

You yourself are your own obstacle, rise above yourself. Hafiz

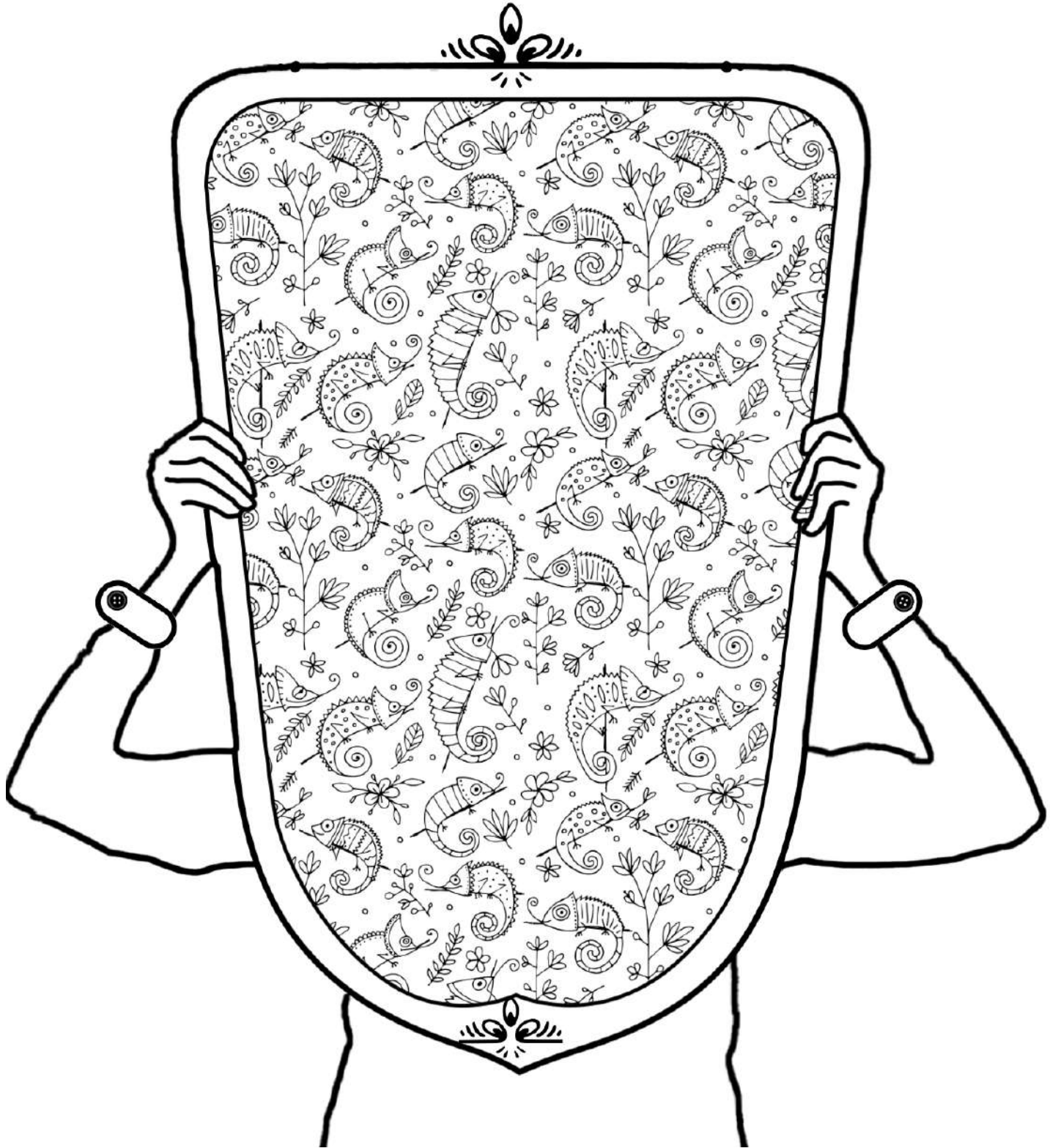
Behind the curtain, pulling our strings for suffering, addiction and self-isolation.





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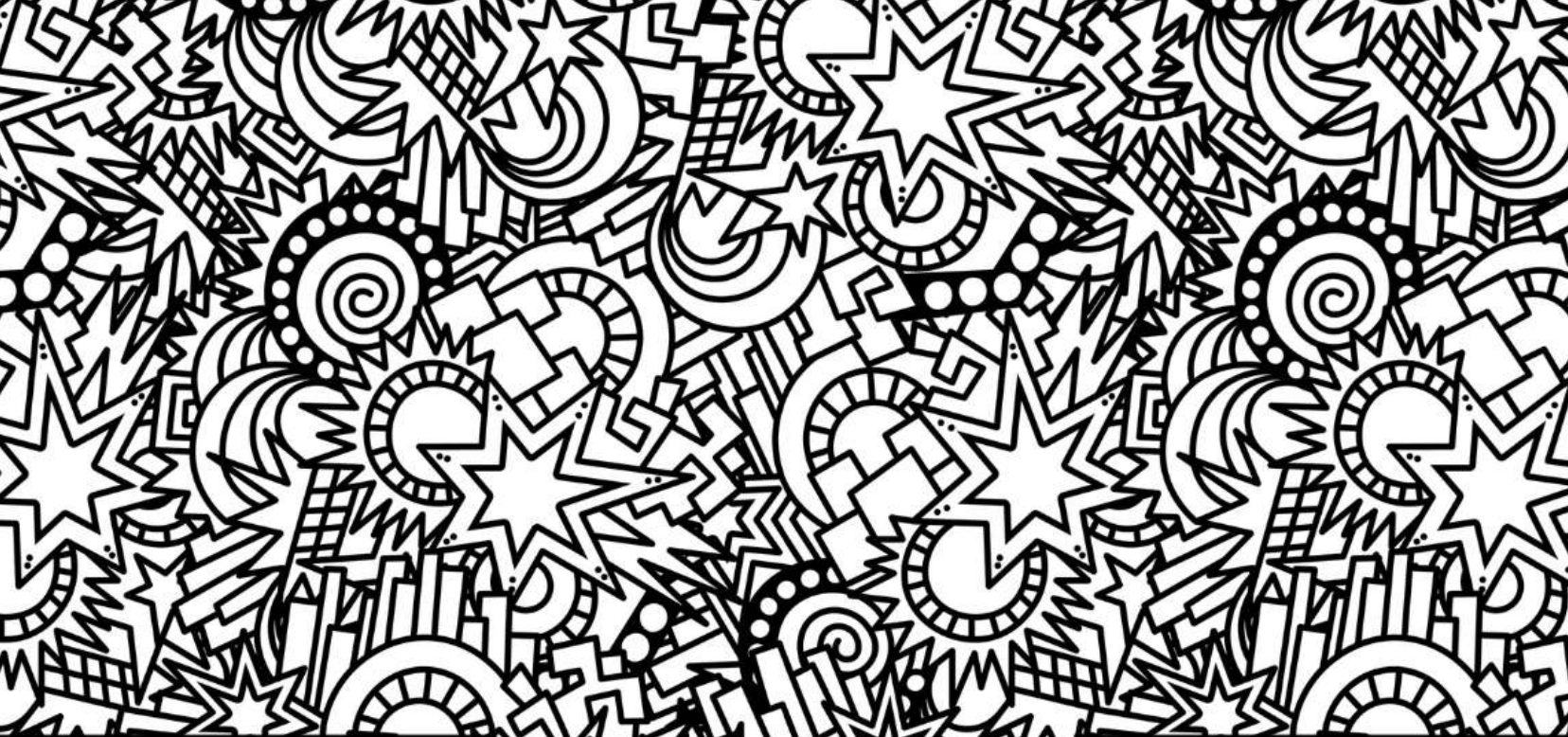
If you are depressed you are living in the past. – Lao Tzu



**Hidden behind our need to avoid facing our  
Self, while offering the world one of  
our many chameleon-like fronts.**

---

It would be so nice if something made sense for a change. – Alice



**Buried in decades of numbing,  
distraction and avoidant behaviours.**

---

The hurrier I go, the behinder I get. – Alice

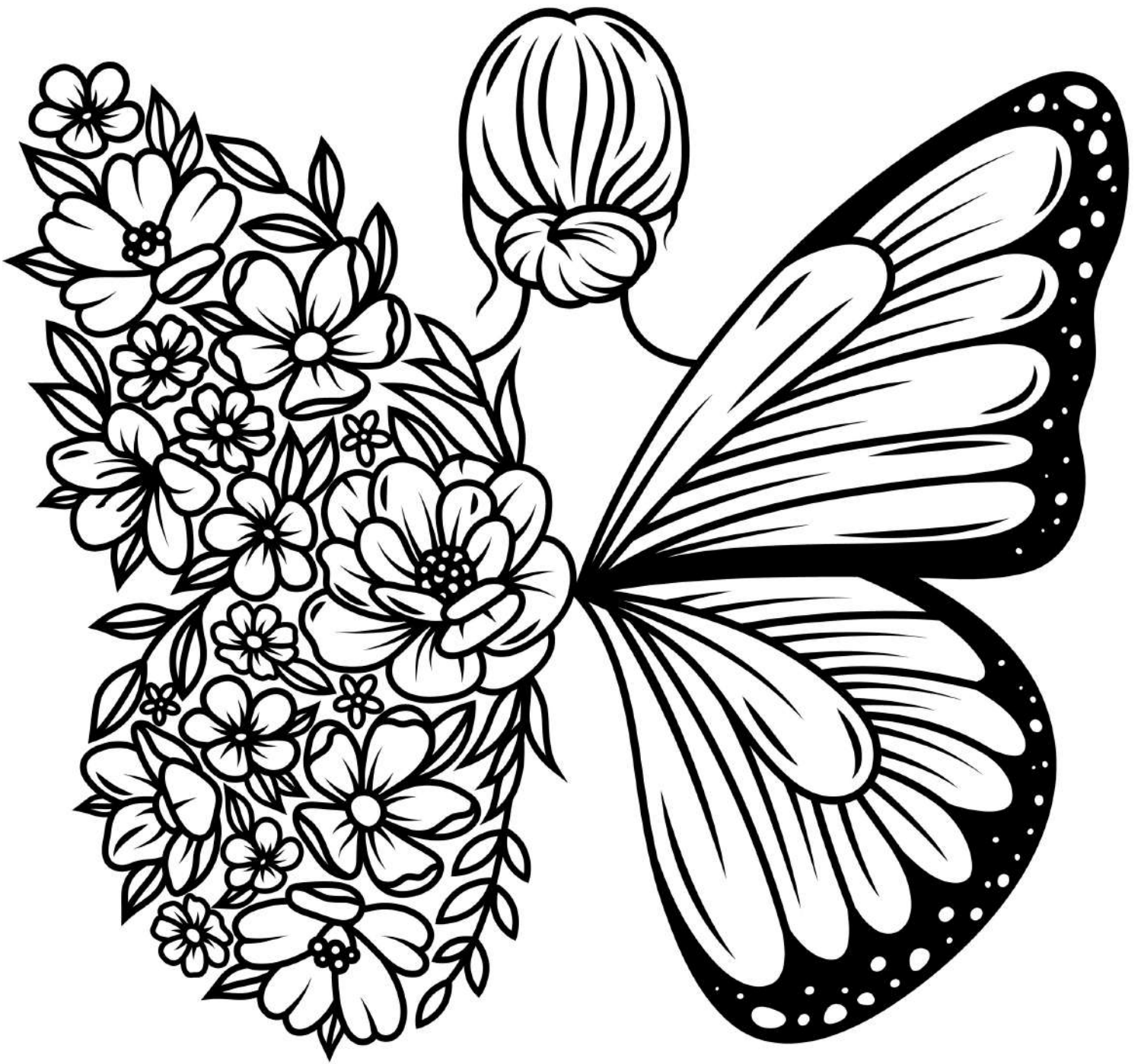
# WHY IS C-PTSD here?



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People will do anything, no matter how absurd,  
to avoid facing their own souls. – C.G. Jung

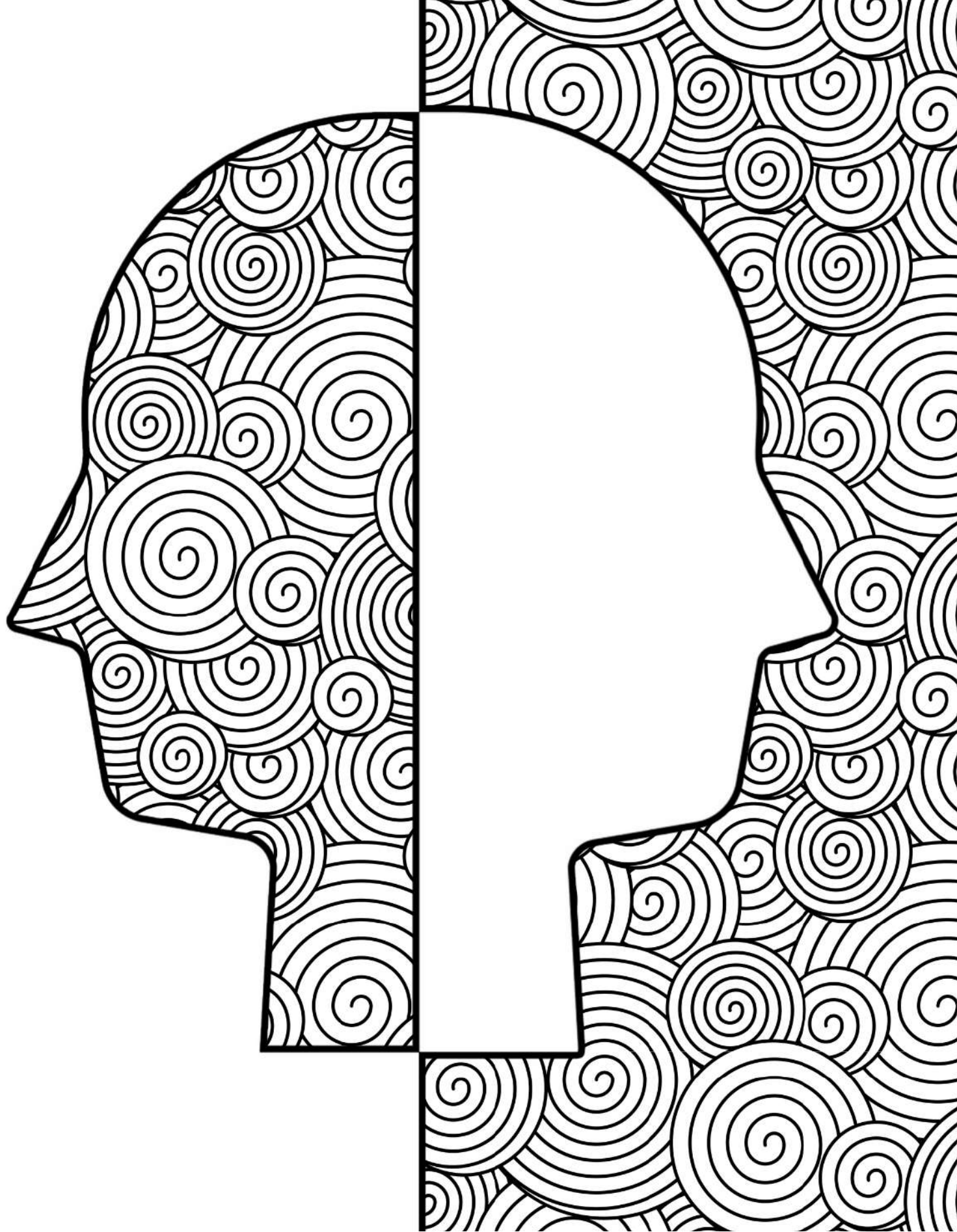




Survival required we repress  
childhood trauma, until the day  
arrives for us to safely transform it.

---

In all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order. C.G. Jung



We're busy moving in circles from one addiction to another, until suffering from repressed trauma is impossible to ignore.

---

The true leader is always led. C.G. Jung

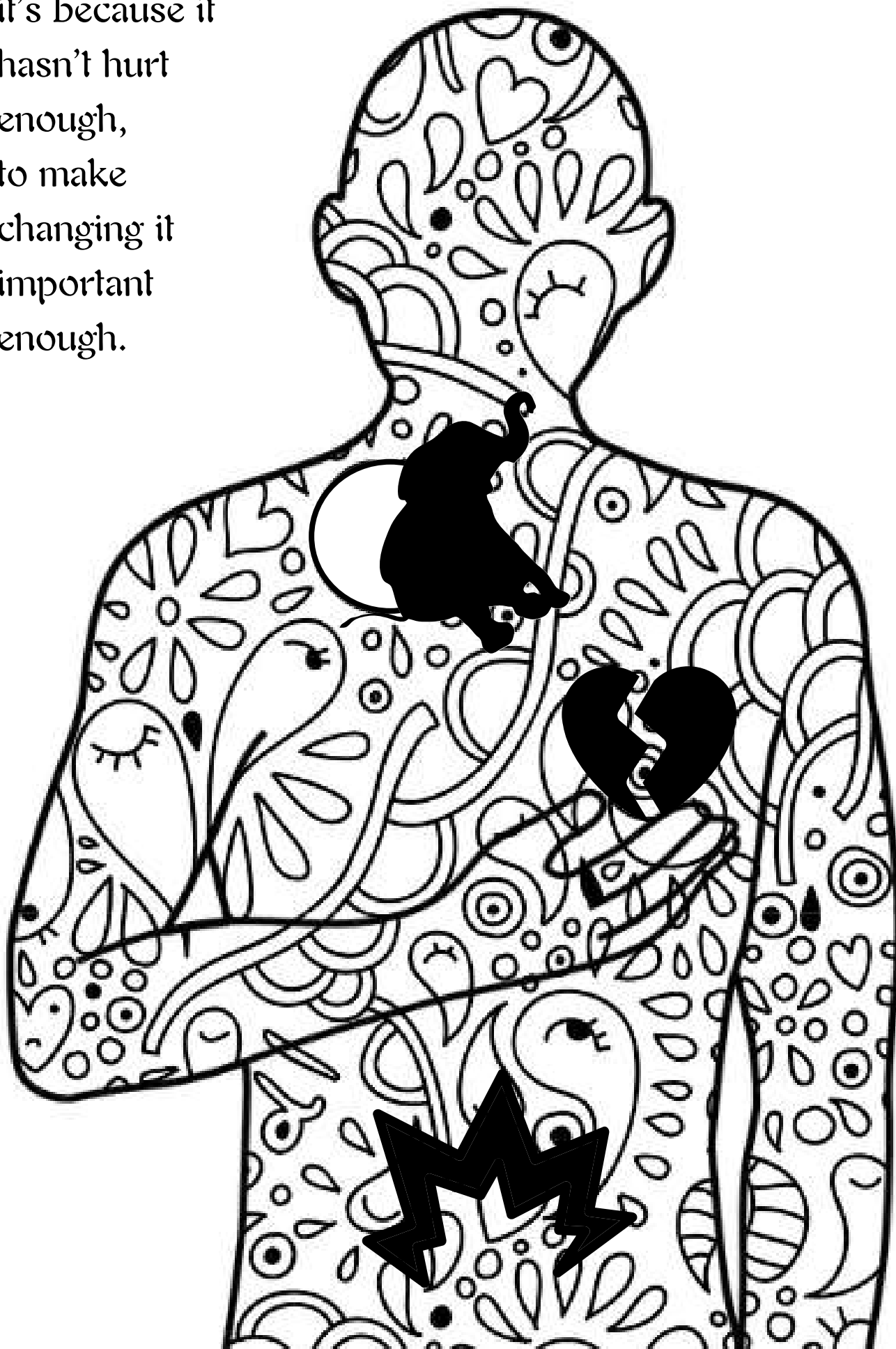
We don't understand the treasures  
available to us through the body.  
We fear what we don't understand.



---

No man is happy who does not think himself so. – Marcus Aurelius

Sometimes  
it's because it  
hasn't hurt  
enough,  
to make  
changing it  
important  
enough.

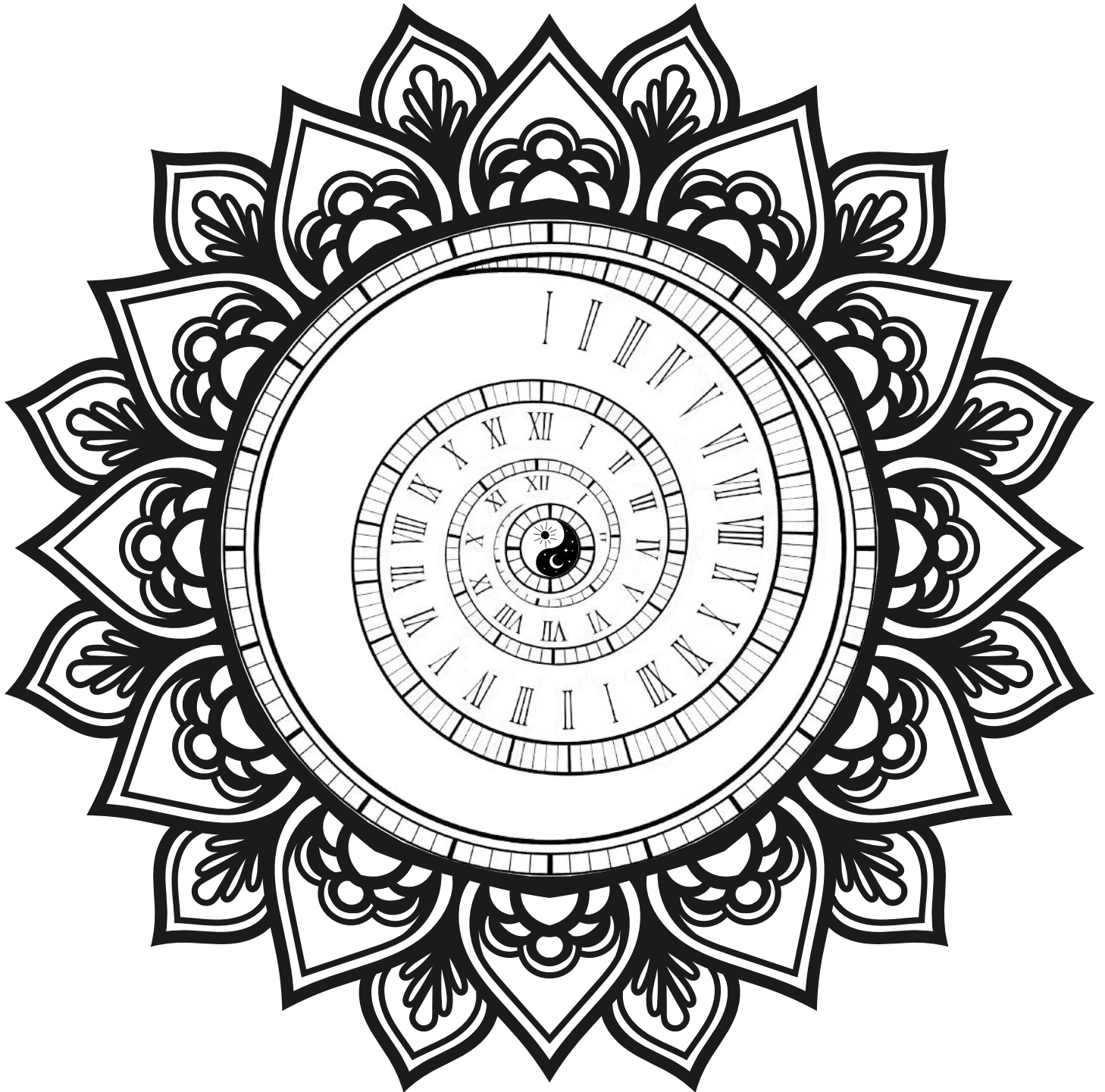




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We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. – Mark Twain

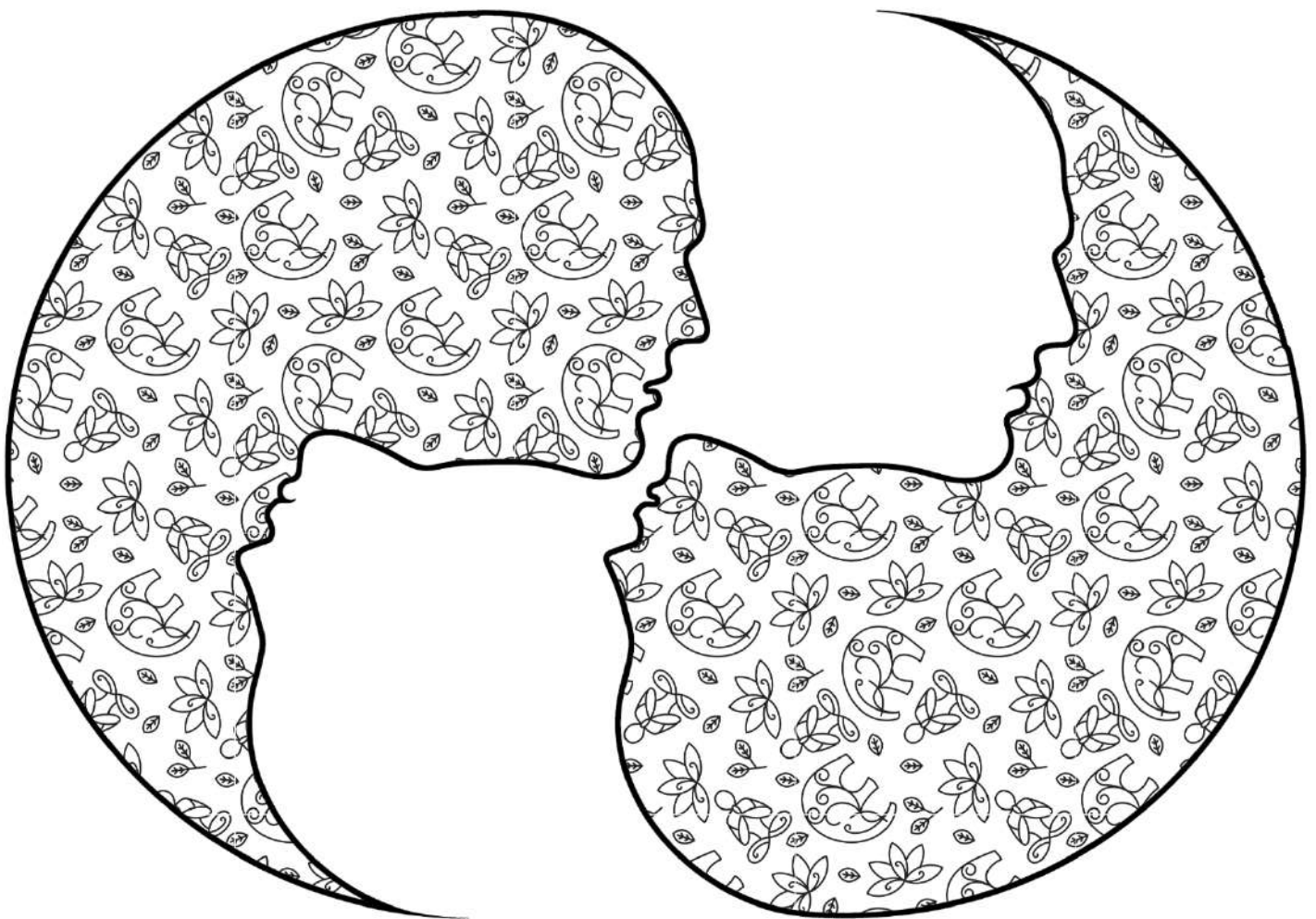
Change takes energy, persistence and time to get things moving. We often prefer get-there-quick approaches, like a pill.



---

The greatest victory is overcoming your negative thinking. – Plato

Our strategies to survive worked. Today offers an opportunity to choose to continue those same survival strategies, or make room for new strategies that allow us to thrive.



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*"The wound is the place where the light enters you." – Rumi*

# W.A.T.E.R. IT

approach to healing from

# C-PTSD



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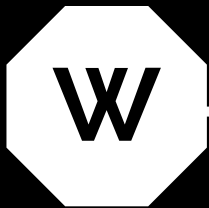
O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart  
cannot conceive nor name thee. -Shakespeare



# W.A.T.E.R. It

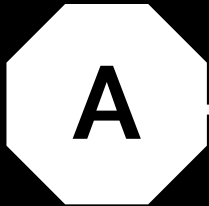
approach to healing from

# C-PTSD



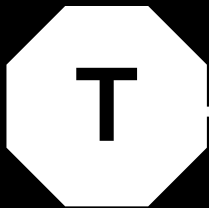
## Wisdom

- Becoming Present
- Interoception
- I'm safe, I trust



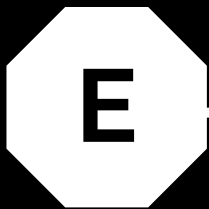
## Awareness

- Where focus goes
- Latent potential
- Connection



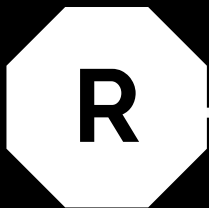
## Tools

- Deeply Personal 15 x 4
- Alternate Nostril breathing
- 432 Hz music



## Exercising Choice

- Strategies for surviving vs. Strategies for Thriving
- Fun and play as medicine
- Future Planning



## Reduce Stress

- Curating your Environment
- Nature
- Mindfulness

---

The punishment of every disordered mind  
is a life of disorder. -St. Augustine

# WISDOM & C-PTSD



## I'M SAFE & I TRUST

Two feelings that are almost impossible for a person with complex trauma to experience without repair, regulation and releasing stored trauma energy.

"Not-Safe-Can't Trust" was true during the original trauma. However, today, the persistent feelings of "Not-safe-Can't-Trust" are now locked in as a physiologically setting in the body until the body becomes regulated again.

Seemingly normal situations can trigger implicit memories that will heighten 'Not-Safe-Can't-Trust' leading the C-PTSD adult to display bizarre behaviour and over-reactions.

Bottom Up approaches move a C-PTSD adult into the embodied feeling of 'I'm Safe & I Trust.'

## BECOMING PRESENT

The Past is Present for most adults with complex trauma. Physiologically locked into systems where parts of the brain are literally shut down that keeps the person reliving past trauma as if it is happening in this present moment.

The practice of becoming Present shifts our physiology to decrease the confusion we have with past, present and future events.

As we deepen this practice, we benefit from; body-brain regulation, allowing past trauma to be integrated and released.

## INTEROCEPTION

Two way communication between mind and body that reveals what, where and why is going on inside us, that is almost always outside of our awareness until we practice interoception.

As we do the work to integrate trauma, our two way mind-body communication shifts from repair and recovery, to rich insights and guidance, that move us deeper into states of synchronicity, pleasure and fun.

Interoception can be practiced on your own, and may benefit from starting with a qualified trauma-informed practitioner.

---

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle. – Socrates

# Trauma and Energy Centers

## Crown Chakra

**Developed:** age 43 to 49

**Trauma Expression:** Feeling alone, unsupported, disconnected from the divine, migraines, neuroses, dizziness.

**Healing Tool:** Find your Village



## Third Eye Chakra

**Developed:** age 36 to 42

**Trauma Expression:** Sinus issues, nightmares, mental foginess, inability to concentrate, and issues connecting to your intuition.

**Healing Tool:** Subconscious exploration through dreams

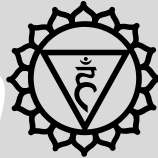


## Throat Chakra

**Developed:** age 29 to 35

**Trauma Expression:** Frequent sore throats, colds, problems with thyroid.

**Healing Tool:** Chanting, singing, humming



## Heart Chakra

**Developed:** age 22 to 28

**Trauma Expression:** Consistent feelings of grief, jealousy, asthma, issues with the heart or lungs.

**Healing Tool:** Breath work



## Solar Plexus Chakra

**Developed:** age 15 to 21

**Trauma Expression:** Hormonal imbalances, sexual repression, frustration, issues with the reproductive organs.

**Healing Tool:** Somatic Therapy

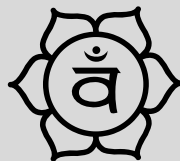


## Sacral Chakra

**Developed:** age 8 to 14

**Trauma Expression:** Anxiety, low self-worth, digestive problems.

**Healing Tool:** Nutrition, supplements and diet



## Root Chakra

**Developed:** age 0 to 7

**Trauma Expression:** Depression, paranoia, issues with hips, legs, or feet.

**Healing Tool:** EMDR



---

Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself. – W.B. Yeats

# AWARENESS & C-PTSD



## CONNECTION:

"Not-Safe-Can't-Trust" combined with Overwhelm that quickly engulfs us, are hallmark traits of C-PTSD. They are also a large reason why self-isolation feels kinder and necessary.

Healing C-PTSD returns us to our proverbial Village. We can feel our innate desire for social interaction, and meaningful friendships. Only now, they feel safe.

We can trust, and the past tsunami states of overwhelm fade into a distant memory.

Connection is the glue that binds us to life. Co-creating with our village, brings the joy of life. Going far in life is the result of your village, encouraging you forward.

## WHERE FOCUS GOES, ENERGY FLOWS

Your focus will amplify a subject or object. That amplification will create inner states within you; subtle to intense.

Deliberately curating subjects and objects of focus will aid in: regulating the brain-body, integrating past trauma, and directing an experience that better serves you in the present moment.

When complex trauma is in our past, our focus naturally gravitates to familiar and disregulating subjects and objects. Interrupting our 'drifting' focus to deliberately focus on what makes us feel calm, will aid in your recovery.

Fill your space with tools, images, symbols that make you feel calm so they are easily accessed when you need to shift your focus, quick.

## LATENT POTENTIAL

The Trauma energy locked within our body is patiently waiting to be processed in, through and out of the body. When repressed it creates dis-ease in the body. When transformed from locked in and repressed, to processed and exiting from the body, it gifts us with heightened energy levels, lighter and more calm inner states, and allows latent potential to be put into play.

We spontaneously experience ideas, that when pursued, bring us joy.



---

Get rich by the creative method and not by the competitive one. – W. Wattles

# TOOLS & C-PTSD



## 432 HZ MUSIC

A deeply harmonious frequency that can lower blood pressure, increase focus, release anxiety, improve your quality of sleep, as well as repair and regulate your brain-body.

It's vibration is harmonious with our earth's frequency, the Schumann Resonance, and the Golden Ratio.

Emiliano Toso is a Cellular (molecular) Biologist and Music Composer. We recommend his music.

There are numerous scientific studies that favor the 432Hz (440 Hz was instituted in 1953) argument that it is beneficial for health across mind, body and spirit.

Toso's music is played in schools, hospitals and wellness centers.

## DEEPLY PERSONAL 15 X 4

An easy exercise. Choose 1 past traumatic event and in a journal, invest 15-minutes a day for four consecutive days, noting down the: facts, feelings, emotions and the impact that experience has on you today.

An exercise scientifically proven to repair, heal and regulate the body. This is a guided journaling exercise.

Journaling can be highly medicinal with endless scientific studies supporting the healing effect of journaling for as little as 10 minutes a day.

## ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

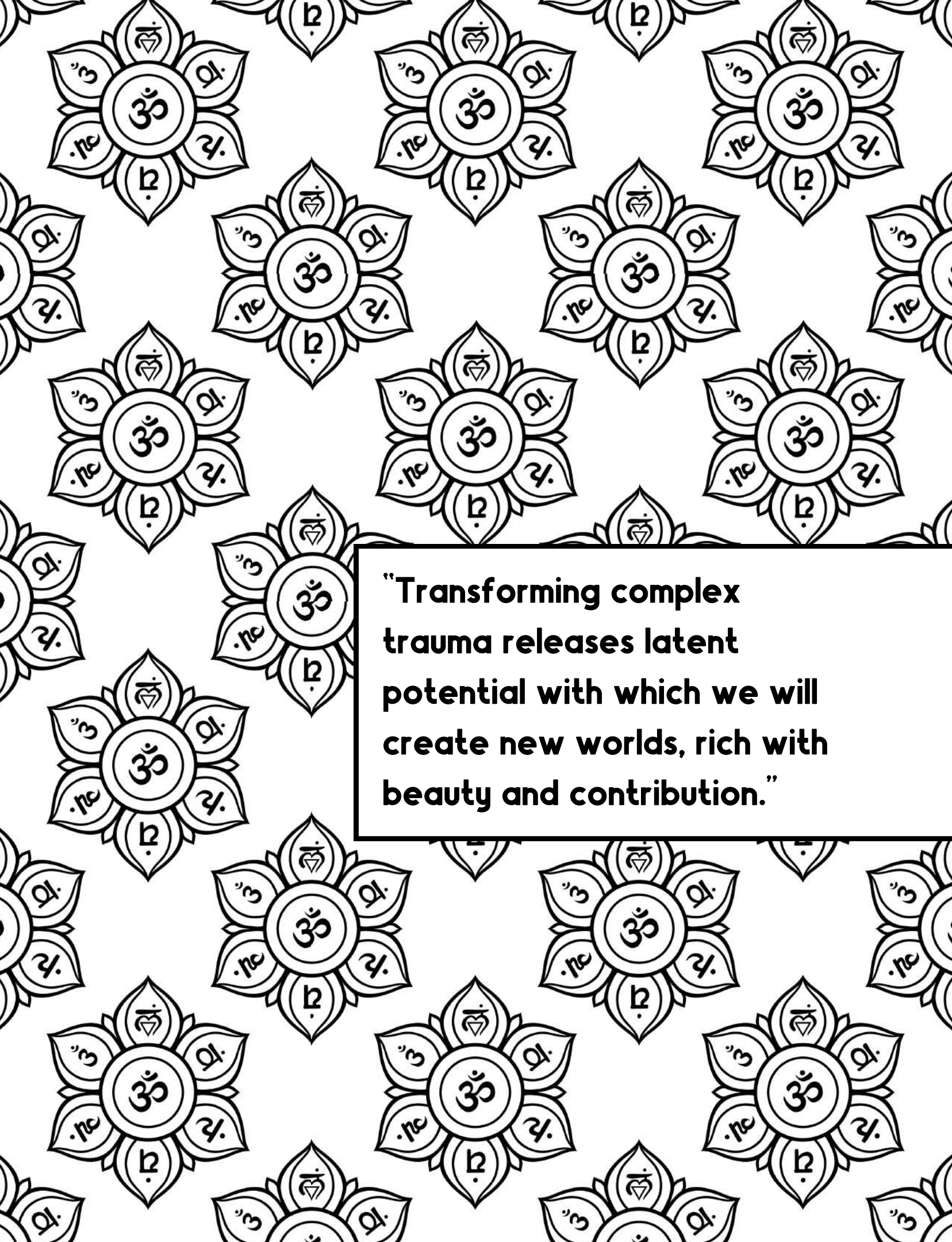
When you inhale, you are activating the Sympathetic Nervous System, exhaling engages the Parasympathetic Nervous System.

When you inhale through the right nostril, pinching off the left nostril, then exhale through the left nostril, pinching off the right nostril, you are deliberately aiding the brain-body to regulate itself.

Practice this alternate nostril breathing exercise for 15-minutes a day for 5 days while you notice how you sleep, wake and navigate the day-to-day.

---

Let him that would move the world, first move himself. – Socrates



**“Transforming complex trauma releases latent potential with which we will create new worlds, rich with beauty and contribution.”**

---

Without pain, there is no wisdom. – Buddha

# EXERCISING CHOICE & C-PTSD



## FUN AS MEDICINE

Where there is fun, there is healing and nourishment of the cells.

Engaging in fun activities matters a lot. Perhaps as important as Connection.

A reasonably easy place to start is the outdoors in your area.

Have a think about what would feel fun to you, and go get some equipment to engage the outdoors with, and see what happens.

I started with water shoes so I could walk the shoreline, ankle deep without worrying about stepping on anything odd.

An alternative is to get one of the Moody Cow Luxury Colouring Books: a mash up of Top Down and Bottom Up approaches to healing.

## STRATEGIES: SURVIVE OR THRIVE?

It is a choice, currently lost in: 'not-safe-can't-trust', overwhelm, low energy and dissociation from the body, so physiologically speaking, thriving feels like a fairy tale in some worn out children's book; not a plausible experience you'll be having anytime soon.

And as you invest in bottom-up approaches to repair and regulate the brain-body, your physiology will make thriving feel possible.

At this point, you have a choice. Do the work and invest the effort to release the old strategies you needed to survive, to make room for new strategies that support you to have fun thriving, or continue until the pain you are in pales in comparison to the pain of creating change.

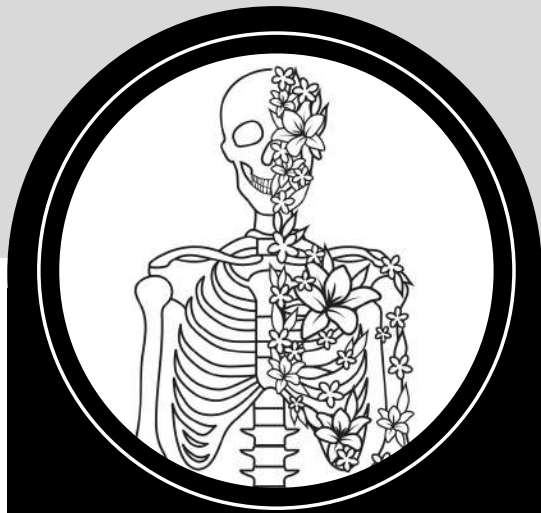
## FUTURE PLANNING

For adults with C-PTSD, planning for the future is as lost on us as planning a trip to Jupiter. We don't give it a thought, and when someone else suggests it we dismiss it, if it even registers at all.

The brain-body disregulation makes the area of the brain that plans for the future inaccessible. It doesn't exist for us. Repair and regulation of our bodies, will bring this area back online, and one day, we'll find ourselves planning for the future before we take pause and sit in awe at how this ever came to be.

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Your purpose in life is the only fortune worth finding.  
- Robert Louis Stevenson



# REDUCE STRESS & C-PTSD

## **Smell: Burn essential oil**

Aromatherapy, typically used with essential oils, improves a person's mood by stimulating the olfactory system of the body, releasing chemicals that promote relaxation.

## **Sound: Turn on some 432 Hz music**

Music played at this frequency is softer and calmer and helps reduce anxiety and stress. We recommend Emiliano Toso PhD, a cellular biologist and music composer.

## **Sight: Our colouring pages**

These colouring pages along with the intention you bring to them.

## **Taste: Stick the kettle on**

Herbal tea, dark chocolate, or magnesium rich foods, such as pumpkin seeds and almonds.

## **Touch: Magnesium**

Apply topical Magnesium (gel, lotion or spray) to your abdomen. Magnesium is responsible for more than 300 processes in the body aiding many associated with reduced anxiety and reduced inflammation.

## **CONSCIOUSLY CURATE YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

Your environment is continuously feeding information through your 5 senses to your Central Nervous System (CNS). This can either result in states of stress and anxiety (alarm, resistance and exhaustion fuelled by stress hormones) or feelings of safety and calm (improved mental function; making inspiration and imagination accessible).

Deliberately influencing your environment to inform your CNS that you are safe and calm is a transformative experience.

## **NATURE**

An environment that feeds all 5 senses information that your CNS receives and declares to 50 trillion cells in your body that we are in heaven's living room and all is well.

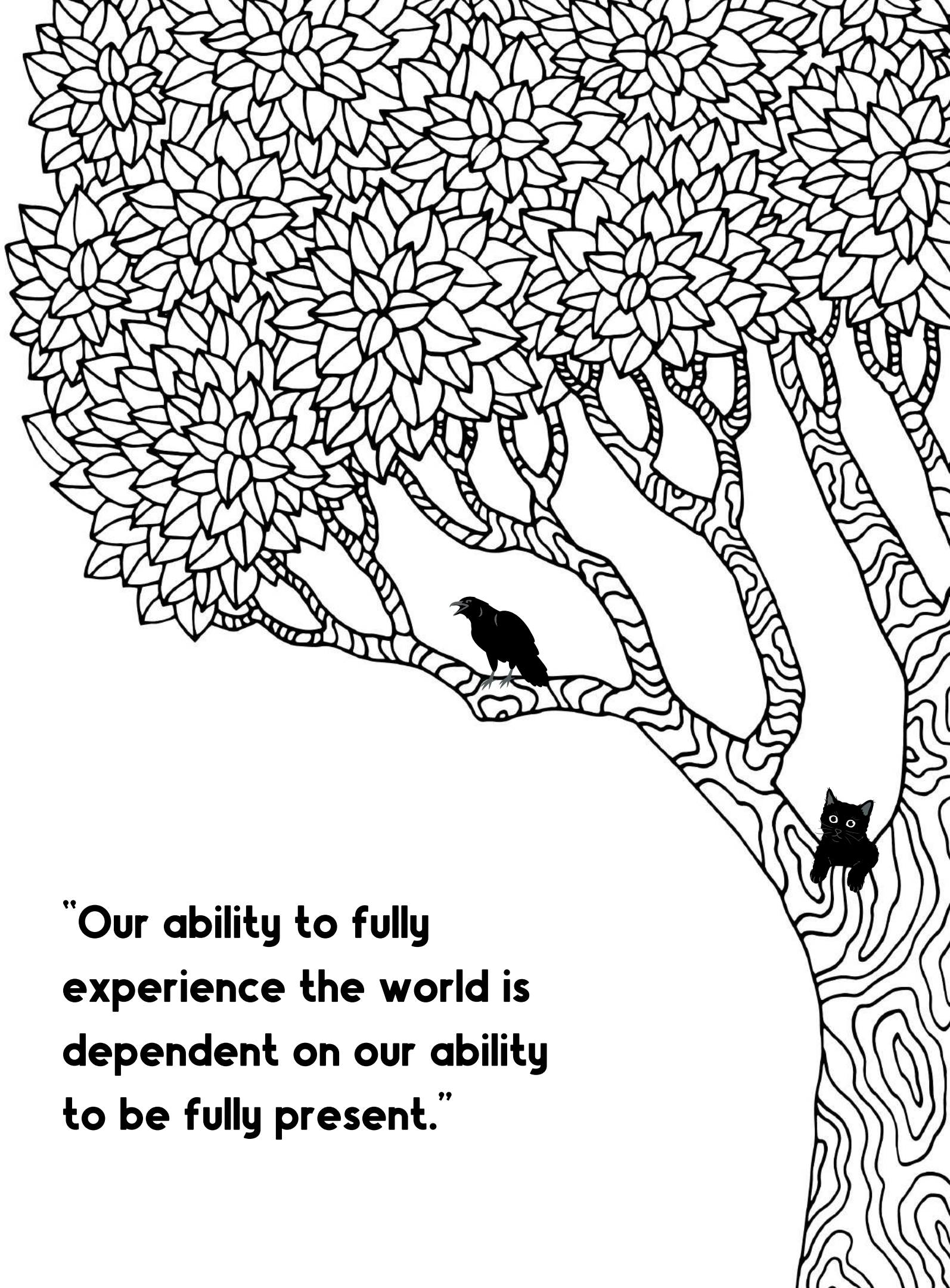
## **IMMERSIVE MINDFULNESS**

Immersive Mindfulness - the practice of being in the present moment with non-judgmental awareness inside a consciously created environment - can support your Central Nervous System (CNS), and facilitate wellbeing across your mental and emotional states.



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We are always getting ready to live but never living. - Emerson



**“Our ability to fully  
experience the world is  
dependent on our ability  
to be fully present.”**

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To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. – Emerson

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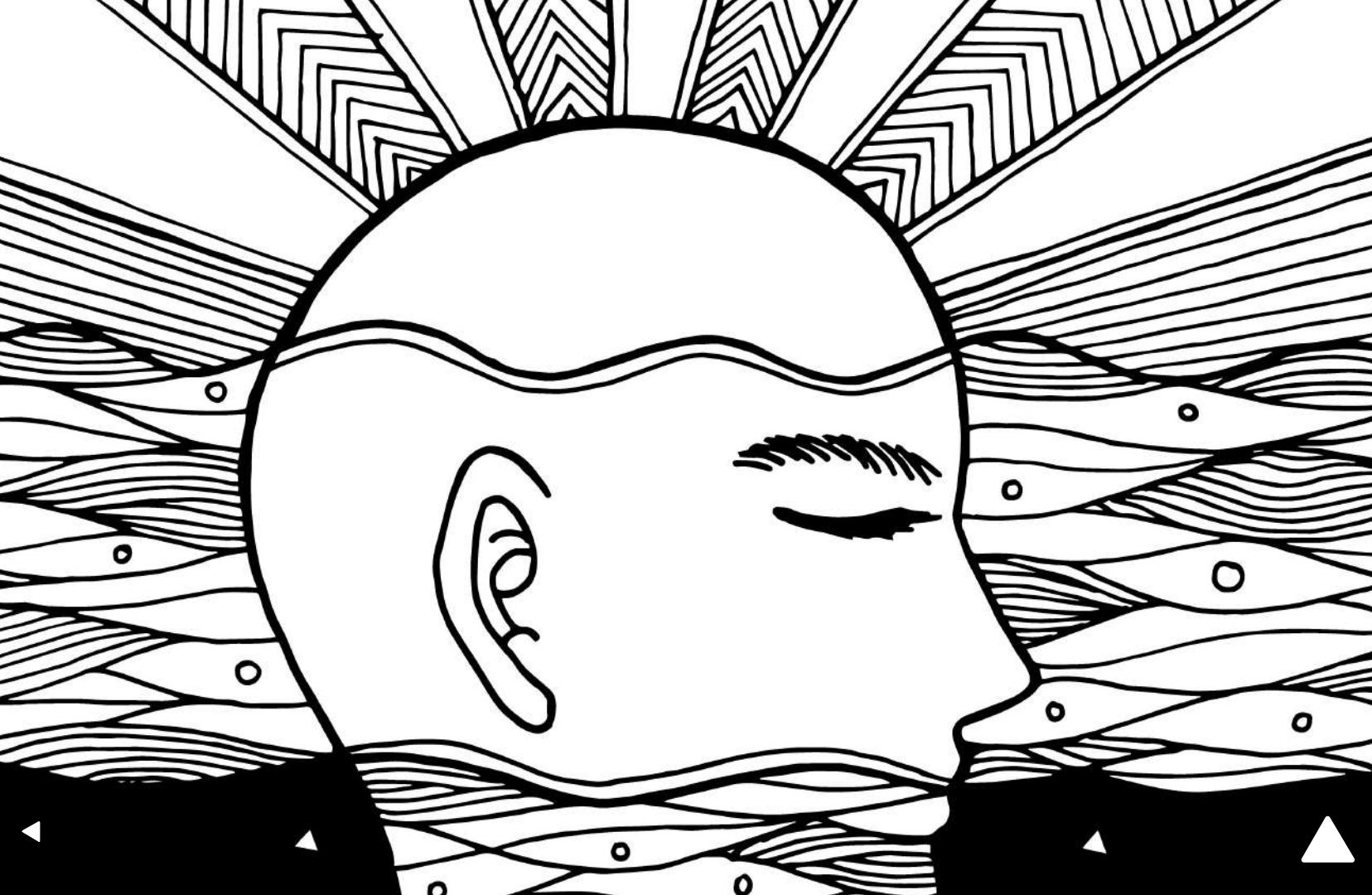
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## [NB3.io/free-consult](https://nb3.io/free-consult)

Human Behaviour is not fixed. It is dynamic.

Trauma-informed Advisory, Coaching and Training for the workplace can make the difference between people performing (task focused) versus NextGen Performance (outcome focused).

For a free-consult or more information, visit [nb3.io](https://nb3.io)

NB3: NextGen Performance - Business, Culture, People

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