

# Trauma Patients in Satsang

## About the search for healing



I myself have searched for almost 10 years in satsang and spirituality for healing emotional suffering, in vain. I have been granted transcendent experiences and ecstasy, for which I am very grateful. Nevertheless, the whole thing did not help me to dissolve my suffering. My life was, in large parts, in a state of misery that I had no control over. After every meditation retreat, it took only a few days for hell to come over me again.

At some point I found a healing practitioner who offers figure therapy and trauma therapy. After only one year, the core problem of my life and the related suffering was understood and largely dissolved. The moment I learned about trauma and attachment trauma, I knew right away, that's it! Finally, the nameless suffering had a name. The problem was well known, largely researched and there was a way back into life.

So I found the solution with someone who wasn't about spirituality at all. In no single session was it explicitly about this issue, but it was always about physical effects of trauma and, above all, about relationships. This was exactly the opposite of what I heard in satsang. There you usually learn "that there is no one", that you "just need to feel it" or "that relationship is an illusion".

The problem, however was that the base in my outer life and in my nervous system was not present at all due to traumatic childhood experiences. You can only integrate feelings if you have an "island" on which you can do so. If, however, I have been stuck in loneliness and lack of attachment relationships since early childhood *and therefore have*

*nothing else to know!!!* How and from where should I be able to integrate and heal this traumatic pattern?! That can't work with "just feel". A drowning man can't look at the ocean.

First, the automatic nervous system has to be calmed down and at the same time a relationship basis is needed in which one experiences the opposite. As a result, the whole system learns that it is different. It is necessary to learn ways and means for the nervous system to carefully get rid of its trauma state. Only then can I face such things. And this only works with a suitable therapist or healer who knows and understands these things. If you are entrusted to a spiritual teacher who has never heard of a binding disorder and the physiological foundations of trauma, you do not need to be surprised if the whole thing ends in a disaster! I speak of my own sorrowful experience.

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So I lived almost continuously in dissociation and depression. A state of inner solidification, complete emotional numbness and disconnection from reality. You feel at the same time under current and as stunned.

At first, my therapist explained me this condition, what it means, where it came from, that it is a "normal" mechanism to cope with overwhelming experiences. The nervous system goes into a freeze (solidification) to stay above viable and uses primarily brain areas that arose very early in evolution. As the work of Peter Levine and David Berceli show, trauma is physically or psychologically primarily a matter of the *physical* body and its nervous system: So this was the first important step, the understanding of one's own situation, for its own condition. I understood why I could hardly remember anything, why I did not get anything right, had no interest, was constantly afraid etc. This understanding was helpful and stabilizing. Until then, I thought it was a state that was unique to me.

Gradually I became aware that my nervous system "was stuck" in childhood experiences. During the course of the year, the therapy led me to experiences of my current life time and with this stabilization then gradually experiences of my childhood were *processed*, rather than to

*experience* them again and again (unconsciously) as current and real. The whole thing was neither particularly strenuous, nor difficult, nor cathartic.

After this development and healing had taken place, the meditation also succeeded much more easily, since the mind does not have to race anymore in order to maintain the separation of feelings.

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When I observe the visitors in satsang and meditation groups, I have the feeling that there are many people with developmental trauma. They seek relief and help in spirituality. You may not find it there, however, because there is something different in satsang and meditation. The spiritual methods are aimed at transcending personality and life. They point to what is beyond our thoughts, feelings and our body. There is nothing wrong with that, only how can anyone look at it, who experiences great suffering and is imprisoned in unconscious survival fights from earliest childhood?

The tendency is to initially choose a path that does not dissolve its own pattern, but even enforces it.

I can only recommend to anyone who has the feeling of being stuck in spirituality and not getting any further to deal with the topic of trauma therapy. This is especially true for people with binding disorders. For them, satsang, meditation and spirituality can become a dead end.

*Those who are not capable of having relationships and, for example, for fear of closeness and dependency use retreat as a protective mechanism, may be even be encouraged in the spiritual scene, rather than go into contact and overcome the old mechanism.* However, this requires a therapeutic framework that is suitable for this. I assert that there is no end to suffering as long as one has not become capable of having relationships.

Of course, it can happen in rare cases that someone awakes and is completely free from the identification with the mind structures. I guess I am not awake, but I have my life back and the shadow of my childhood

has much less influence over me. On this basis, I can now relax in meditation and integrate more and more feelings. Thus, there is no more division between everyday life and spirituality, since the suffering in every day life was largely dissolved. The need for enlightenment to escape the suffering also vanished.

But even complete awakening, deep realization and enlightenment do not mean that the trauma imprints disappear! Nor does a broken leg disappear through enlightenment. I know personally enlightened people who work as satsang teachers and at the same time do trauma therapy on a large scale for themselves.

Spirituality aims at the absolute truth, yes. There's no objection, I'm a satsang visitor myself. But maybe you have to work in parallel elsewhere. So far I have only learned in very rare individual cases that a satsang teacher has advised someone to make an additional trauma therapy. I think this is a pity, but in my view it would shorten the ordeal of many. The solution must be sought on the level where the suffering is located. If I have a burst pipe in the basement, I will not go to a chimney sweep.

Finally, I would like to point out that conventional psychotherapeutic methods such as psychoanalysis, hypnosis and behavioral therapy do not meet the core of the problem and are hardly helpful for many traumatized people. In my case a behavioral therapy had even done damage because symptoms were moved and veiled. Figure therapies and trauma therapies are instead the keywords you should look out for.

In the case of people who focus on spirituality, it is also necessary that the corresponding therapist recognizes and respects the spiritual dimension at least. He doesn't need to have any experience with it. But for the treatment success, this level must be respected to which the client has access. It often happens that you encounter trauma symptoms and spiritual approaches at the same time. In most cases, these levels cannot be distinguished from those affected and there is a great deal of confusion. Here it is particularly important to separate the levels and to take appropriate differentiation. For example, what is called high sensitivity can be fed from both levels.

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All this would not have to be if....

- 1) Spiritual teachers educated themselves on the trauma topic and the neurological results of that in order to support and recognize people suffering from trauma.
- 2) Doctors and psychologists open themselves to the spiritual dimension. Obligatory reading for this occupational group would be „Collision with the Infinite“ by Suzanne Segal.
- 3) Seekers and affected go into their own responsibility and research themselves to become clear about their situation, instead of blindly surrendering responsibility to spiritual institutions.

Another recommended book is “Healing Developmental Trauma” by Laurence Heller and Aline Lapierre. (The NARM book)

I would go so far to say: the spiritual dimension opens *automatically* as soon as the nervous system has been fundamentally calmed down and we can get into relationships. Conversely, it does not work: The attempt to open the gates to spirituality by force in order to redeem suffering through trauma. Unfortunately, this is what many are trying to do and what the implicit message of most spiritual teachers is.

Once again, I have nothing against spirituality nor anything against psychotherapy and psychiatry. What I am concerned with is to clarify where the best help is to be found for traumatized people.

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It would be nice if one day all the doctors, healers, therapists and spiritual teachers would work together. If you have any questions about the topic and orientation in the ever increasing therapeutic/spiritual offer in this world, I am happy to help.

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