

BAD STUFF HAPPENS

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AGAIN
BAD STUFF HAPPENS

BUT IT WILL BE HOW WELL THE PATIENT
IS ABLE TO PROCESS, INTEGRATE,
AND ADAPT TO ITS IMPACT
PSYCHOLOGICALLY, PHYSIOLOGICALLY, AND ENERGETICALLY

THAT WILL MAKE OF IT

EITHER A GROWTH – DISRUPTING TRAUMA
THAT OVERWHELMS BECAUSE IT IS “TOO MUCH”
“TRAUMATIC STRESS”

OR A GROWTH – PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY
THAT MAKES POSSIBLE TRANSFORMATION AND RENEWAL
“OPTIMAL STRESS”

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THE GOLDILOCKS PRINCIPLE

TOO MUCH CHALLENGE
WILL OVERWHELM AND PLUMMET THE PATIENT INTO
FURTHER DECLINE BECAUSE IT WILL BE “TOO MUCH”
TO BE PROCESSED AND INTEGRATED
TRAUMATIC STRESS

TOO LITTLE CHALLENGE
WILL OFFER “TOO LITTLE” IMPETUS FOR TRANSFORMATION
AND GROWTH, SERVING INSTEAD SIMPLY TO
REINFORCE THE (DYSFUNCTIONAL) STATUS QUO

BUT JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF CHALLENGE
WILL PROVIDE “JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT” OF LEVERAGE
NEEDED TO PROVOKE, AFTER INITIAL DISRUPTION,
EVENTUAL RECONSTITUTION AT A HIGHER LEVEL OF
INTEGRATION, FUNCTIONALITY, AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITY
OPTIMAL (NONTRAUMATIC) STRESS

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WITH THE THERAPIST'S FINGER
 EVER ON THE PULSE OF THE
 PATIENT'S LEVEL OF ANXIETY
 AND CAPACITY TO TOLERATE
 FURTHER CHALLENGE
 THE THERAPIST WILL THEREFORE REPEATEDLY
 CHALLENGE WHENEVER POSSIBLE
 BY DIRECTING THE PATIENT'S ATTENTION
 TO WHERE THE PATIENT IS NOT
 DISRUPTIVE ATTUNEMENT
 AND SUPPORT WHENEVER NECESSARY
 BY RESONATING EMPATHICALLY
 WITH WHERE THE PATIENT IS
 HOMEOSTATIC ATTUNEMENT

SALMAN AKHTAR (2012) 4

ALL WITH AN EYE TO CREATING
 JUST THE RIGHT LEVEL
 OF DESTABILIZING ANXIETY
 AND INCENTIVIZING STRESS

– OPTIMAL STRESS –

THEREBY OPTIMIZING THE
 PATIENT'S POTENTIAL FOR
 TRANSFORMATION AND GROWTH

NECESSARY BECAUSE ...

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WHETHER FUNCTIONAL OR DYSFUNCTIONAL

**SELF – ORGANIZING
 (CHAOTIC) SYSTEMS**

SUCH AS THE PATIENT'S LONG – ESTABLISHED AND
 DEEPLY ENTRENCHED "DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES"

**ARE INHERENTLY
 RESISTANT TO CHANGE**

AFTER ALL
**"SELF – ORGANIZING SYSTEMS
 RESIST PERTURBATION"**

CHARLES KREBS (2013) 6

I AM HERE REMINDED OF PORTIA NELSON'S
 AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN 5 SHORT CHAPTERS
 WHICH SPEAKS TO BOTH OUR INTENSE ATTACHMENT
 TO THE "DYSFUNCTIONAL STATUS QUO"
 AND OUR CAPACITY ULTIMATELY TO CHANGE

CHAPTER 1
 I WALK DOWN THE STREET
 THERE IS A DEEP HOLE IN THE SIDEWALK
 I FALL IN
 I AM LOST ... I AM HELPLESS
 IT ISN'T MY FAULT
 IT TAKES FOREVER TO FIND A WAY OUT

CHAPTER 2
 I WALK DOWN THE SAME STREET
 THERE IS A DEEP HOLE IN THE SIDEWALK
 I PRETEND I DON'T SEE IT
 I FALL IN AGAIN
 I CAN'T BELIEVE I AM IN THE SAME PLACE
 BUT IT ISN'T MY FAULT
 IT STILL TAKES A LONG TIME TO GET OUT

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CHAPTER 3
 I WALK DOWN THE SAME STREET
 THERE IS A DEEP HOLE IN THE SIDEWALK
 I SEE IT IS THERE
 I STILL FALL IN ... IT'S A HABIT
 MY EYES ARE OPEN
 I KNOW WHERE I AM
 IT IS MY FAULT
 I GET OUT IMMEDIATELY

CHAPTER 4
 I WALK DOWN THE SAME STREET
 THERE IS A DEEP HOLE IN THE SIDEWALK
 I WALK AROUND IT

CHAPTER 5
 I WALK DOWN ANOTHER STREET

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I AM ALSO HERE REMINDED OF
 A SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE SKIT IN WHICH
 TWO MEN ARE SEATED AROUND A FIRE
 CHATTING AND ONE SAYS TO THE OTHER –

“YOU KNOW HOW WHEN YOU STICK
 A POKER IN THE FIRE AND LEAVE IT IN
 FOR A LONG TIME,
 IT GETS REALLY, REALLY HOT?
 AND THEN YOU STICK IT IN YOUR EYE,
 AND IT REALLY, REALLY HURTS?
 I HATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS!
 I JUST HATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS!”

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A POPULAR SONG
 THAT SPEAKS TO THE NEED
 SO MANY OF US HAVE
 TO RECREATE THAT WITH WHICH
 WE ARE MOST FAMILIAR
 AND THEREFORE MOST COMFORTABLE
 IS A ROCK SONG BY
 THE LATE WARREN ZEVON (1996)
 ENTITLED
 "IF YOU WON'T LEAVE ME
 I'LL FIND SOMEBODY WHO WILL"

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AGAIN
 "SELF - ORGANIZING SYSTEMS
 RESIST PERTURBATION"
 WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT
 UNLESS A "CHAOTIC" SYSTEM
 IS SUFFICIENTLY "PERTURBED"
 - SUFFICIENTLY "STRESSED" -
 BY INPUT FROM THE OUTSIDE
 THEN IT WILL MAINTAIN ITS STATUS QUO
 AND AS THIS RELATES TO THE PATIENT
 UNLESS THE PATIENT'S
 "DYSFUNCTIONAL DEFENSES"
 ARE SUFFICIENTLY "CHALLENGED"
 BY THE THERAPIST
 THEN THERE WILL BE INSUFFICIENT
 IMPETUS FOR THEIR DESTABILIZATION
 - AND THUS LITTLE INCENTIVE FOR GROWTH -

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