

Is that the reason why I cannot deal with stress after a traumatic experience?

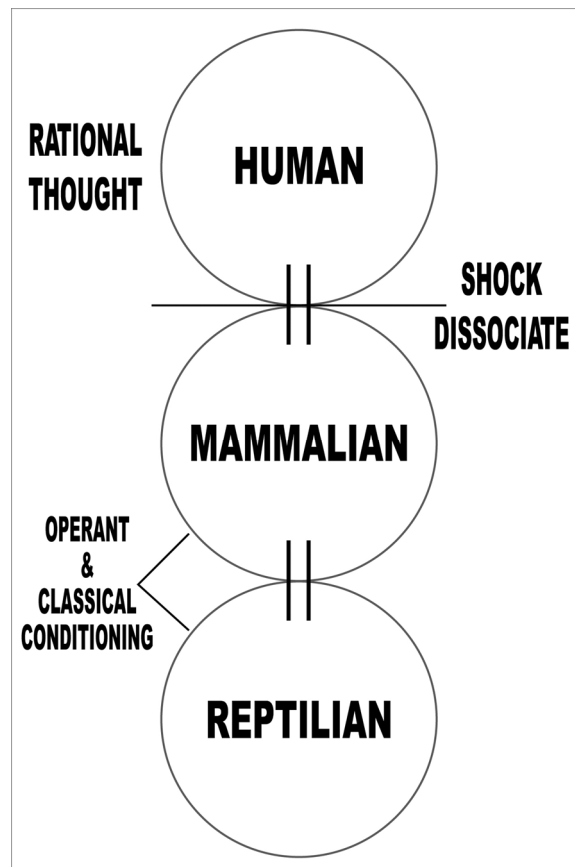


*Learn how to overcome the causes and
development of Post-Traumatic Stress
Disorder and how to cure it*

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Is that the reason why I cannot deal with stress after a traumatic experience?

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, has been called many names over the years. It was known as shell-shocked in World War I and battle fatigue in World War II. The term post-traumatic stress disorder became well known during the war in Viet Nam. It simply means a person has experienced an overwhelming trauma and there is a delayed reaction that occurs days, months, or years after the original stress has happened. However, the dynamics of post-traumatic stress disorder are very complex.



The Three Brains

I believe there are two ways to develop Post-traumatic stress disorder. One is an overpowering, unusual event that is shocking to the human emotional system and blows the system out, such as the Oklahoma bombing or the Twin Towers in New York. The second way to develop post-traumatic stress disorder is by experiencing a host of smaller or more moderate abuses over an extended period of time, such as a person growing up in an alcoholic family.

PTSD is based on very natural phenomena. Imagine a person who becomes involved in a car accident. That person will immediately go into fight, flight or freeze mode, which is a Reptilian Brain activity that I've talked more about in a number of other papers, including the Chemical Dependence paper. The heartbeat begins to race, the pupils dilate so the person can see any other threat from the periphery, the muscles become taut, and insulin and adrenaline flow into the system. A person will fight, flight or freeze immediately, which takes them out of homeostasis (homeostasis is the ability to maintain internal equilibrium by adjusting its physiological processes). At that moment, they don't have any spare time for regular activity. If the person is digesting their food, they will stop digesting; or they will lose their sense of hunger, even if they were hungry a moment ago.

During this period of time, a person will not be in touch with their feelings because they have other business at hand. After the accident, it takes several minutes until the feelings and reality of what has occurred hits. All of a sudden they will shake when they realize how they feel. That is normal and natural. What makes it abnormal is that the emotions get caught in a number of areas in the body and mind for an extended period of time, which prevents the person from returning to homeostasis. In fact, it gets caught in every single cell of the body. To understand post-traumatic stress disorder, we must discuss what symptoms characterize the disorder and then understand some of the basic facts of brain chemistry.

UNCONDITIONED STIMULUS	UNCONDITIONED RESPONSE
X FOOD	X SALIVATE
CONDITIONED STIMULUS	CONDITIONED RESPONSE
X BELL	X SALIVATE

Unconditioned and Conditioned Stimulus

Some of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder occur long after the precipitating event, from several months to several years later. Insomnia, anxiety, dissociation, time distortion, depression, appetite and sleep disturbances are all common problems associated with PTSD. A person can actually relive a vivid memory or even hallucinate about events that happened years ago. Drug and alcohol abuse are often used as inadequate coping skills to keep the traumatic memory in the subconscious. Other addictions and compulsions, as well as hyper arousal and intense anger that can flare up at a moment's notice, are other common symptoms.

PTSD is delayed grieving. What is often so confusing for people who suffer from PTSD is that in their mind they've gone through the trauma without any major negative effects, but later they start to have odd symptoms. They are confused by this and believe they're getting worse. In reality, these very symptoms indicate that they're actually getting better. If the trauma had been less severe or environmental support greater, the symptoms would have occurred faster and in a milder form. The person would have talked out the stress and returned to homeostasis quickly. With PTSD this normal process of dealing with stress and grieving has broken down.

Oftentimes, it's not the original abuse that causes the most trouble, but the secondary abuse. If a person has been raped, which is tremendously abusive and an overwhelming shock, this could well cause PTSD in its' own right. However, what might make the trauma even more difficult is if the person who has been raped went to the police station and were treated as if the rape were their fault. PTSD can also develop from those secondary abuses.

To understand PTSD, one must understand that there are at least three brains in the human body, not one. My belief is there is even a fourth brain in each and every cell of the body, and Candice Pert has gone a long way towards proving that fact. She is the researcher who discovered the Enkephalin System and Endorphins. She postulates that this system is not only the natural opium production system for the body, but also a primitive brain, which is capable of transferring feelings and also acts as an early warning web.