

Dear Mind/Soul Explorers,

Discussion on One Newly Discovered Advantage of PTSD, or Post PTSD Psychological Growth

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【Abstract】

It was discovered that there exists one advantage in PTSD and this advantage is post PTSD psychological growth. Those who attain this state not only recover from PTSD but also acquire better physical and mental condition than before they experienced PTSD. This is a discovery really worthwhile and can shed light to solving certain mystery of human mind. Having resilience is beneficial enough. But those who attain this psychological growth have something other than resilience also. My opinion is their inherent attitude towards life and the ability to enjoy life's good things keenly and heartily combined can trigger such phenomenon. This attitude can be followed by confidence and cause such people to try to manage their own life and future by themselves more and more, and actually continue to manage things as best as they can under any predicament. Passivity has many downsides and one of them is vulnerability towards predicament. Striving with broad perspective is highly beneficial and this process itself breeds confidence and subsequent ability to try to manage things optimistically, including PTSD. To strive blindly is at times dangerous.

【Keyword】

post PTSD psychological growth, resilience, learned helplessness, the degree of passivity, personality trait, attitude towards life, confidence, striving, broad perspective, optimistic

【Preface】

Naturally, we have believed that there existed only downsides in PTSD until now. But it was discovered that there exist at least one advantage. It was revealed that there exist occasional individuals who not only recover from PTSD but also acquire better mental, physical condition than before they experience PTSD after their

recovery. This research was conducted by Martin E.P. Seligman, a professor of University of Pennsylvania. I just happened to glance at the abstract in Harvard Business Review and intend to discuss my impression about the outline and concepts of this discovery based on my own experience and psychological knowledge.

As he discusses in his book, this is connected with learned helplessness, commonly known concept. This has been one of my primary concerns ever since I started to study psychology at College and encountered this concept. I have been secretly wishing to find out how to overcome this condition, however, it seemed very presumptuous for a mere college student wishing to resolve this great mystery, and never breathed a word to any professor.

Firstly, the fact that this discovery was very positive and clear one first attracted my attention. Secondly, the fact that this abstract contained description about “learned helplessness” interested me more. Recently, I’ve been sick and tired of psychology partly because there existed many patients who continue to suffer for a long time even with the aid of therapists and partly because it seemed that there won’t appear exciting, new discovery anymore in the future. I did some thinking after reading this article and could form my own rather unique opinion that can be helpful after sharing with some professionals or therapist and revise and improve. So I’m going to discuss my own both newly-shaped ideas and accumulated childish lore of knowledge.

【Introduction】

Human reaction toward adversity : there exist three types

1. suffers from PTSD, depression, at times

commits suicide
2. at first shows symptoms of depression, anxiety feelings, but recover to a former condition both physically and psychologically in a month’s time
3. shows post PTSD psychological growth

2 type persons possess “resilience”

3 type persons acquire better condition than before experiencing PTSD within a year

(Above discovery was done by Martin E.P. Seligman)

【Discussion】

My Own Principal Viewpoint

His research thesis is focused mainly on master resilience program, but my discussion point is meticulous examination about the differences in personality trait, ways of life, coping strategies, and how to perceive the world I could find in these three types.

Passivity

One of the strong characteristics that determines the degree to which he/she can be at the mercy of horrid experience is their general attitude toward life-----the degree of passivity

Type 1 Persons

1 type persons seem to be just overwhelmed by the experience he/she had to face and

this type of persons confront horrid images and feelings categorically in a way that is more excessively than exactly necessary, and never confront them

neither truly emotionally nor logically. They just confront each image and feeling that visits them and every time they confront them they are disturbed (They are overwhelmed at the sight of corpse, the horrible aftermath of traffic accident, strong waves of sadness, anxiety feelings, longing for deceased ones, uncertain future life, daily petty concerns, terrible noises or screams they heard, horror, disgust, etc.).Whenever new wave of feeling and flashback visits them, their attention is focused on observing them(“Oh, I cannot get rid of that horrid image!”, “I’m sure this memory can never vanish in my whole life!”, “Oh, I remembered about that accident again!” , “Oh, how long must I suffer?” , “Oh, I cannot help feeling anxious about those children. What is to become of them? I cannot sleep. What is to become of myself, too?” etc.)

Yes, they observe, however, just observe while those images or feelings seize upon them and stop to observe as soon as they pass away, and never try to think how they are related. Yes, they feel, however, their feelings also are only temporal one and every time those feelings diminish or vanish they put them behind and never think how they are related. In other words, they confront everything that visits their mind while they seize them forcibly and once freed from them, never consider about the existence---they don’t want to honestly, and just passively

confront them when they choose, seemingly squarely and earnestly, however, with strong innermost unwillingness accompanied. They are ready to escape. This seems to be a sort of passive attitude.

Similarities Between Type 2 and Type 3 Persons

2and 3 person can recover because they both taste their experience fully and try to grasp what happened to their mind---not the horrid images and feelings of exact events---. Moreover, they experience whole process as a whole, not as an accumulation of meaningless, temporal visitation. They have both objectivity and subjectivity and attempt to grasp things logically and at the same time never suppress emotional aspect or functions, that is vital and sufficiently reasonable. they try to confront both psychological truth and logical fact in a way that suggests intelligence and composure while maintaining vivid emotion.

These two elements are hard to maintain for trauma victims in general after experiencing catastrophic events and attaining this very few people can, is my opinion. They just continue to confront and think and try to grasp things precisely, reshaping their understanding every time something incongruent visits them by incorporating every new discovery.

The Differences Between Type 2 And

Type 3 Persons

It is certain that both two types are resilient. But 3 type persons never stop their thinking even after their recovery and that can bring about post PTSD psychological growth, it seems.

These differences are deep-rooted in their way of life. 2 type person fully intends to enjoy life and bravely overcomes difficulties and recover. They are both energetic and positive and subsequently possess resilience. 3 type person just struggles whole life in pursuit of life's supreme meaning while enjoying good things of life heartily and keenly. Type 1 person also is struggling, but it is a sort of passive struggle, I felt. They wait for healing time comes. They expect time or other people or change in outer circumstances can give me rest or peaceful mind and solvation. They also expect negative things and worry. In other words, they believe they have less control on life or their future than actuality.

Confidence

Those who always try to create their own life and future themselves seem to have a strong belief that they can manage or control their life and future by working on it and making enough efforts, and have positive and optimistic view of life. They are confident. This confidence might have been brought about partly by their upbringing, but not only that. To gain confidence, they have made efforts

to achieve important or great things and must have been rewarded duly in the past. And in the process of making enough efforts to accomplish many things they must have cultivated various possibilities and abilities. Enhanced ability and efficiency can contribute to working performance and trigger further accomplishment and success. Striving process itself can boost confidence to some degree because the fact one can be tenacious and diligent and sacrifice other things for certain worthy object convinces the person that he/she is capable.

Disadvantages Hidden in Striving

However, striving has its downsides, too. Striving blindly at times causes bad effects. Being blind is can be harmful on numerous occasions. It means having no prospect in mind, or indicates the possibility of losing sight of oneself. Moreover, subsequent success can prompt the person to be blind again. When he/she couldn't succeed after he/she strived blindly, he/she may feel the limitations of his/her present method or ability and think of changing stance or strategies. At least, they can be spared from the tragedy of losing sight of themselves. But it will take considerable time and effort to reconstruct their styles.

Another downside of striving is the fact that by just striving and exerting oneself excessively one can stop thinking for the time being and forget certain things. This can be beneficial when we cannot always

confront and try to solve every problem we have. But when you need to avoid to give enough consideration to something and want to avoid it, there arises a possibility that you may be tempted to escape from thinking by striving excessively and forgetting temporarily your own intellectual laziness. This is a nasty habit and we ought to avoid this heroically. Forming this sort of habit can lead to failing to furnish broad perspective.

Finding out human inclination and

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【要約】

「心的外傷後成長」という新しい概念が、ペンシルバニア大学のマーティン・セリグマン教授によって見いだされた。単に回復するのみならず、心的外傷体験前よりも良い状態になる人がいるという画期的なものである。彼は、この知見を用いて訓練プログラムを作ることに主眼を置いているが、私は、なぜこのような特性の違いが生じるのかということに関して、人格特性、受動性の程度、人生に対する根本姿勢といった観点から、臨床心理学的考察を試みる。逆境に押しつぶされ、自殺にまで追い込まれる人がいる一方で、再起力のある人は回復する。この違いは、受動性の度合いによるのではないか。回復のみならず、心的外傷後成長まで遂げる人は、非常に能動的かつ積極的に人生を生きている。単に懸命に闘っているのみならず、最大限に人生を楽しんでいる。過去の生育過程の影響も大きいですが、努力の過程で育まれる自信が、さらに努力して自分の人生をよきものとし、逆境すら最大限に利用し、このような成長を遂げることを可能ならしめたのではないかと、言ったことに関する一考察である。見通しを持つことなく盲目的に努力することの不毛さにも言及した。こういったことすべてを考慮することで、人間の弱さを認識し、より幸せで有意義な人生を生きるために必要なことに気付けるのではないか。

【キーワード】

心的外傷後成長、再起力、学習性無力感、人格特性、人生への根本姿勢、自信、広い視野、

realizing fundamental truth combined together can enhance both understanding and well-being of human-beings. I sincerely wish this discussion can contribute to the ultimate aim even a bit.

【References】

Martin E.P. Seligman (2011): *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*, Free Press, (abstract of this was cited on Harvard Business Review July 2011 and I referenced only this abstract)

楽観的であること

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