
MODULE 1: TRAUMA-INFORMED WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP - FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

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EXPLORING THE NATURE OF INDIVIDUAL, ANCESTRAL AND COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE AND TRAUMA

REFLECTING ON THE NATURE OF COMPLEXITY AND OUR PURPOSE AS WOMEN LEADERS

LEARNING ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SKILLS

WHY TRAUMA-INFORMED WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP?

- Trauma - It is time to address the sand in the system - unrecognised trauma - that hinders our creativity and power of manifestation
- Women - what is the motivation that brings us to this work?
 - Do we have special skills to bring to the table? The two hemispheres of a woman's brain talk to each other more than a man's do. A 2014 study found that the females' brains consistently showed more strongly coordinated activity between hemispheres, while the males' brain activity was more tightly coordinated within local brain regions.
 - <https://stanmed.stanford.edu/how-mens-and-womens-brains-are-different/>
 - What would happen if each of us felt more deeply empowered and supported, if we could stand up and speak for what we believe in more strongly? If we could bring our love into places of power?
- Leadership
 - When is it my place to lead and when is it my time to listen and be led?
 - Leadership is not a role, it is a movement
 - We are shifting from a paradigm of 'power over' to 'power with' - leading from a place of love, service, humility, relatedness, self-worth
 - We begin from Inner Leadership:
 - Knowing whether my heart is open
 - Offering space to myself as needed
 - Caring for myself so that I can offer space to others
 - Knowing when I am triggered and understanding how to self-regulate, when to ask for support, how to bring love and compassion to these spaces in myself, how to slow down
 - Moments of shakiness are part of our leadership - power of vulnerability

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is the inner response when some body / org / family / country / humanity goes through a strongly overwhelming experience that we cannot process. The high level of stress overloads the

capacity of the individual and/or collective to stay related to the experience (hosting range or resilience). Some neuronal pathways shut down in order to protect the rest of the organism and survive. We numb the overload. Where trauma is not integrated soon after the precipitating event, it remains stored in the nervous system and may create long-lasting after-effects within a person or, even, a culture.

RECOGNISING TRAUMA:

Trauma shows up in our lives as

1. High stress, hyperactivation, fight/ flight response
2. Numbing, freezing, collapsing, absencing, lack of compassion
3. In the middle: fragmentation, polarisation, separation, othering, loneliness, me versus the world, I lose my sense of interconnectedness

We don't meet the trauma directly, we meet it through symptoms

Trauma is a repetitive cycle. We meet similar symptoms in similar situations again and again, there is a repetition compulsion.

We recognise these experiences and call them 'difficult' or 'painful'

AS INDIVIDUALS, AS ORGANISATIONS, AS SOCIETIES WE EXPERIENCE TWO SETS OF PROCESSES AND TWO SETS OF RESPONSES:

EMERGENT VS NON-EMERGENT:

- Emergent, related, connected, warm and developing
 - Processes and organisations that can update themselves
 - Integrate challenges into growth and be innovative at the same time
- Disrelated, non-emergent, repetitive, non-creative processes

RESPONSIVENESS VERSUS REACTIVITY

- My ability to respond, my response comes out of a relational connection to a person, a situation, a challenge
- Triggered, I lose my relationship to a person or a situation
- Very important to be able to distinguish these as it can help us to respond differently

WHO HAS TRAUMA?

All of us are sitting in the same boat

All of us are carrying some trauma - it is part of what it means to be a human being

The question is not whether we have it, but how we live it and develop it into learning

INDIVIDUAL TRAUMA

- Biographical impactful events
- Attachment: Early childhood experiences - very vulnerable

ANCESTRAL TRAUMA

- Parts that are passed on over generations
- What our ancestors went through and they couldn't integrate is handed over to us to take care of

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

- The world that we have been born into was already collectively traumatised
- Hundreds of thousands of years of wars, racism, etc.

- Nobody told us this - instead we assume that this is how life is. But this is how life is when it's hurt. We were swimming in the water that normalises trauma - only in the past decades are we slowly waking up and starting to see the effects

THERE IS ALSO INDIVIDUAL, ANCESTRAL AND COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE: integrated life

- We are millions of years old - the evolution is sitting here with us
- The more integrated I am, the more able I become to respond to challenges
- Meet challenges and transform them into learning
- Integration and training gives us the capacity

WE HAVE THREE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND THREE POWERS:

THE RIGHT TO BE - PRESENCE: intentional presence is powerful, healing, transformative

- Our attention and witnessing capacity is impactful

THE RIGHT TO BELONG - RELATING: attunement and the capacity to resonate with.

- This is a competence. A high art form. Key in leadership.
- Wisdom is how much world I am able to include in the way I live and take decisions.
- It needs an open nervous system to be in resonance with each other. Where I'm hurt I cannot see you fully.
- The more I can represent the organisation I work with or for in myself, the more it becomes an open system - intimacy
- Can we learn to relate to Absence - Unconsciousness - World

THE RIGHT TO BECOME - CREATIVITY: so that I have a real future

COMPLEXITY becomes simplicity in the right cup - when my vessel can hold it, sense it, be with it.

- Complex human systems: the trauma factor needs to be factored in
- The unconscious parts of human systems add complexity and are often misinterpreted as difficulties

HOME PRACTICE FROM MODULE 1:

- Insert micropauses into your day: pause, reflect, digest, pray, do something that brings you joy
- Relate deeply to your body and to the body of the earth
- Notice where your life is in flow/emergent and where it is repetitive
- Wake up in moments of "difficulty"
- Notice moments where there is emergence and repetition

"Movement feeling movement. Relating is attuning to someone's movement and negotiating a mutual movement. Leaders need to feel their people. People need to be felt by their leaders. Movement meets movement."