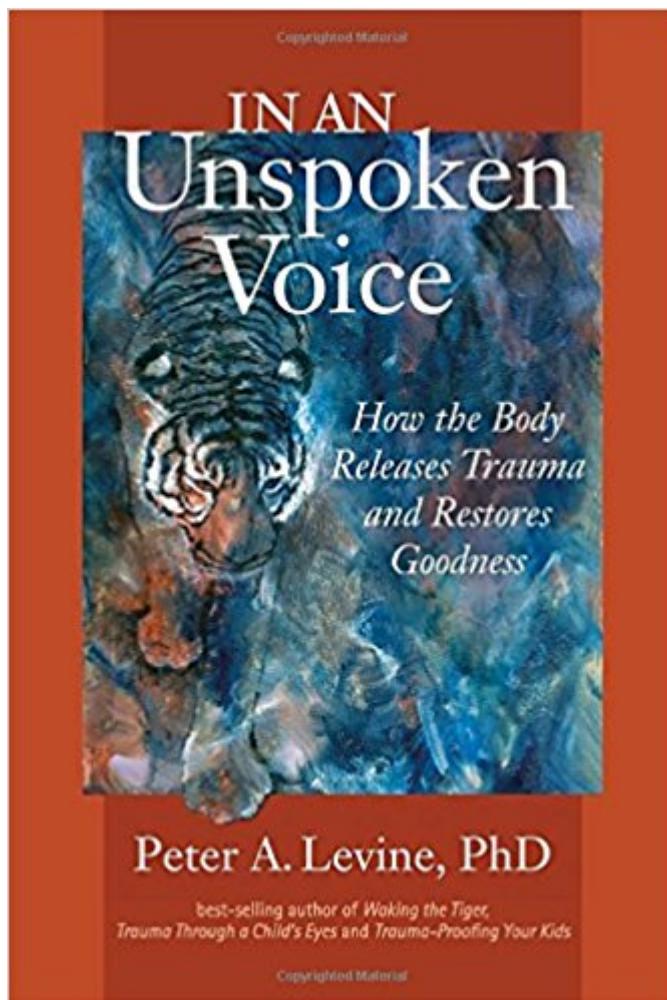


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In An Unspoken Voice: How The Body Releases Trauma And Restores Goodness



Synopsis

Unraveling Trauma in the Body, Brain and Mind In this culmination of his life's work, Peter A. Levine draws on his broad experience as a clinician, a student of comparative brain research, a stress scientist and a keen observer of the naturalistic animal world to explain the nature and transformation of trauma in the body, brain and psyche. In an Unspoken Voice is based on the idea that trauma is neither a disease nor a disorder, but rather an injury caused by fright, helplessness and loss that can be healed by engaging our innate capacity to self-regulate high states of arousal and intense emotions. Enriched with a coherent theoretical framework and compelling case examples, the book elegantly blends the latest findings in biology, neuroscience and body-oriented psychotherapy to show that when we bring together animal instinct and reason, we can become more whole human beings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In An Unspoken Voice uses the author's experiences as a clinician and a student of comparative brain research to explore the nature and impact of trauma on the body and brain. Case study examples blend biology and body-oriented psychotherapy in a fine collection of insights highly recommended for college-level psychotherapy holdings.

Midwest Book Review In this masterpiece Peter Levine has captured the essence of trauma as residing in the unspoken voice of our bodies. Combining a thorough study of animal ethology, brain research, and indigenous healing rituals with vast clinical knowledge, Levine provides a marvelous and original perspective on how trauma results in injuries

that can be transformed and healed by attention to the natural healing powers of that reside deep within every human being.â•â•Bessel van der Kolk, MD, medical director and founder of the Trauma Center at Justice Ressource Institute, director of the National Complex Trauma Treatment Network, and professor of Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine" With this book Peter Levine secures his position in the forefront of trauma healing, as theorist, practitioner, and teacher. All of us in the therapeutic communityâ•physicians, psychologists, therapists, aspiring healers, interested laypeopleâ•are ever so much richer for this summation of what he himself has learned."â•Gabor MatÃfÃ©, MD, author of *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*â•"Peter Levineâ•â•'s work is visionary common sense, pure and simple.â•â•Laura Huxley, lifetime partner and collaborator of Aldous Huxleyâ•"Peter Levineâ•â•'s first book, *Waking the Tiger*, changed the world of trauma treatment: somatic therapy, specifically Somatic Experiencing®, the name of the specific approach he developed, no longer alternative fringe practice, became a major player in the world of the mainstream psychotherapies. Like an anthropologist acquainting us with a different culture that he has made his own, Levine, in his new book, *In an Unspoken Voice*, systematically and engagingly initiates us into the ways of the body and the nervous system that animates it: how it works, what makes it tick, how to make friends with it, how to understand it, how to communicate with it and, last but not least, how to treat it and release it (and with it, us) from the hold of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). No longer unspoken, all that is held in the body-â•â• in trauma and in health, in psychosomatic illness and in resilienceâ•â• is described, articulated and made coherent. The result is a masterful, fluent book that seamlessly moves between evolution, science, Polyvagal theory, mind-body practice, impassioned defense of our animal natures, self-disclosure and specific step-by-step guide to treating trauma and restoring resilience. It is erudite, it is impassioned, it is learned and it is accessible.â•â•Diana Fosha, PhD, director of The AEDP Institute, co-editor of *The Healing Power of Emotion: Affective Neuroscience, Development and Clinical Practice*, and author of *The Transforming Power of Affect: A Model for Accelerated Change*â•"To be traumatized is to be condemned to endless repetitions of unbearable experiences. In this beautifully written and engrossing book, Peter Levine explains how trauma affects our body and mind and demonstrates how to call upon the wisdom of our bodies to overcome and transform it. The accounts of his personal and therapeutic experiences, integrated with the essentials of the sciences of trauma and healing, are highly informative and inspiring. His distinctive voice should be widely heard by survivors, clinicians and scientists.â•â•Onno van der Hart, PhD, Honorary Professor of the Psychopathology of Chronic Trauma,

Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands, and co-author of *The Haunted Self: Structural Dissociation of the Personality* “Like a wise old weaver Peter Levine painstakingly blends together strands of many dense colors into ever-fresh patterns emerging from his honed intelligence and fertile imagination. These strands comprise careful reflections on his own personal healing, his work with others, insights from studies with animals, different views from indigenous peoples here and elsewhere, various scientists exploring the biologies of the body, spiritual practices in many traditions and whatever else passes in front of his sparkling eyes. His first (and now iconic) book, *Waking the Tiger*, is now part of the canon for the education of therapists. This major new book is a welcome landmark in his long history of creating an intricate tapestry of Somatic theory and practice.” •Don Hanlon Johnson, PhD, professor of Somatics at California Institute of Integral Studies, founder of the first accredited graduate studies program in the field, and author of *Bone, Breath, and Gesture: Practices of Embodiment and Everyday Hopes, Utopian Dreams: Reflections on American Ideals* “For more than forty years, Peter Levine has gently, humorously, and with stunning simplicity, shown us how trauma responses are part of a brilliant psychological self-protection system; a protection system that we, professionals and laypeople alike, unwittingly block with our many ‘normal’ responses. If you want to grasp the essence of how and why the trauma response can help people heal, read this book. If you want to help a traumatized person lessen the impact of the trauma while it’s happening, read this book. If you want to understand your own journey through stress and trauma, read this book. If you want some trail markers for a path from the daze of dissociation to the reemergence of deep vibrant aliveness and spiritual feeling, read this book.” •Marianne Bentzen, international trainer in Neuroaffective Psychotherapy, Copenhagen, Denmark “Peter Levine conveys his profound scientific understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) so vividly that the reader can sense, feel and identify with the many traumatized children and adults he has worked with. Levine helps us to understand the complexity of PTSD seen from the outside as well as felt from the inside. He invites us into a spiritual dimension that draws equally on science and experience. Through his poetic style the reader is conducted from the built-in reactions of the nervous system to deep mental scars, and to how the skilled PTSD therapist can guide far-reaching healing processes. Levine’s understanding is vast in its scope, from an evolutionary understanding of the source of trauma to a spiritual dimension of how we as human beings can be strengthened by healing from trauma.” •Susan Hart, Danish psychologist, author of *Brain, Attachment, Personality: An Introduction to Neuroaffective Development and The Impact of Attachment: Developmental Neuroaffective Psychology* “This book stands as a worthy

sequel to Levine's groundbreaking *Waking the Tiger*. He expands his concepts of the neurophysiological basis for trauma with a thorough review of the science of trauma and his own creative theories, providing rich insights for application to the business of healing. Valuable case studies illustrate the "physiology" of the behavior of the trauma victim, and useful tools help the therapist enlist the body in the process. • Robert Scaer, MD, author of *The Trauma Spectrum* and *The Body Bears the Burden* "Peter Levine's approach to understanding and healing trauma is innovative, vital and thoroughly creative. The map for therapy that he introduces is very helpful to any healer of trauma. Once again Levine reminds us that our evolutionary ancestors are not so removed from us. That we and the other animals are all one family and that we should learn from them, as our survival and sanity depends on it.

Levine's suggestion to change post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) is much more realistic as we are healing the hurt and not the disorder. • Mira Rothenberg, author of *Children with Emerald Eyes* and founder of Blueberry Treatment Centers "In the detailed, thoroughly researched, and easy-to-read book, *In An Unspoken Voice*, Peter A. Levine gives readers a fascinating new perspective on dealing with and healing from stress and trauma. | Anyone working in the holistic health and wellness field, or even a contemporary health care practitioner, will derive great amounts of knowledge from this book that can be applied and practiced within their own healing environments. • CirclesOfLight.com "In an Unspoken Voice is a life enhancing read. • Bipolar Disorder Batesy

Peter A. Levine, PhD, holds doctorates in both medical biophysics and psychology. The developer of Somatic Experiencing®, a body-awareness approach to healing trauma, and founder of the Foundation for Human Enrichment, he conducts trainings in this work throughout the world and in various indigenous cultures. Dr. Levine was a stress consultant for NASA on the development of the space shuttle project and was a member of the Institute of World Affairs Task Force of Psychologists for Social Responsibility in developing responses to large-scale disasters and ethno-political warfare. Levine's international best seller, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*, has been translated into twenty-two languages. His recent interests include the prevention of trauma in children, and he has co-written two books, with Maggie Kline, in this area: *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes* and *Trauma-Proofing Your Kids*. Levine's original contribution to the field of Body-Psychotherapy was honored in 2010 when he received the Life Time Achievement award from the United States Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP). For

further information on Dr. Levine's trainings, projects and literature, visit www.traumahealing.com and www.somaticexperiencing.com.

Edit: the review below was written when I hadn't quite got to the end of this book. I have now finished the book and what I say below still holds true. However, I am also a little underwhelmed by Levine's process. The reason is that I think he has the problem he blames talk therapy of having. He (quite rightly) says that talk therapy will not really get you anywhere. This is true, ON ITS own it won't get you far. But Levine has swung way over to the other side and places the locus of healing within the body and "viscera" only. I find his explanations for me just don't cut it 100%. He skims over the role of conditioning and the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus etc. For him, it seems, it's all the visceral (gut) brain. He is not wrong about the importance of body awareness (i.e. mindfulness) and being able to hold and contain strong feelings. This is vitally important. But his complete dismissal of identifying causes and beliefs that contribute to suffering are detrimental to his overall argument. Exhaustively cataloging every bit of harm from your life is indeed useless, but being mindful of and able to identify and label general beliefs and thinking patterns (like "Oh, I'm thinking I'm worthless again." or "I'm getting sucked into the story of how no one will love me") is, in my opinion, extremely useful for being able to let go of them and live happily in the present (when you remind yourself they're useless relics from the past). The author doesn't place any value on this sort of broad exploration of the past. So in the end, while a lot of what he says is spot on and very useful, I feel that he himself has thrown the baby out with the bathwater (even if unintentionally.) A very good companion book to this one, which balances this purely "visceral" view, is "Bouncing Back" by Linda Graham, which is a book on neuroplasticity which discusses the importance of mindfulness of body AND thoughts.~*~I'm not going to outline the contents of this book because other reviewers have already done a great job of that. I actually think the information and theory of Peter Levine deserves 5 plus stars. I appreciate that he's going against the toxic psychiatric mainstream of labelling trauma as some sort of brain disease/disorder. He sees trauma as an injury that can be healed, no matter how long ago it happened, and that gives anyone with trauma hope. Here's why four starts instead of five: He's got a trade-marked therapy with its own steps and jargon etc. "So what?" you might say, "there are lots of trade-marked therapies what does that have to do with anything?" Well here's the thing, I can image many people reading this (or any of his other books) and finding relief to have their trauma explained. They feel hope that there is a way out. BUT after this initial joy they are faced with bitter disappointment when they realise they could never have access to this trade-marked therapy because of their location and/or financial

situation. So what are those people to do? Will they never have a chance to heal and resolve trauma? Are they to be stuck in their pain forever because there's no Somatic Experience therapist in their town, state, country? This is the problem with trade marked methods. They implicitly suggest that it is THE (only) method to recovery. I know that this is not what Levine intends but isn't this the logical conclusion after reading through his books? I highly recommend this book for anyone with trauma or with unexplained anxiety or depression. You will understand why you feel as you do. However, if you are not fortunate enough to have access to Somatic Experiencing Therapy it's ok. What you need to understand is that Levine's therapy teaches you skills in how to handle and resolve your trauma. These skills can be learned by other methods than his therapy. I say this with the utmost respect for Dr. Levine and his work. If you have a chance to work with his specific programme, then take it! But here's the thing: the core skills (as I understand them) of his therapy are-becoming aware of the physical body-feeling safe in the physical body-knowing (through experience) that all feelings and sensations are temporary-being aware of yourself and knowing how to pace yourself-feeling uncomfortable sensations without being overwhelmed by them-letting go and allowing your body to do what it needs to do (whatever it wanted to do at the time of the traumatic event) Obviously there are some more nuances and details but the above skills are basically the core of it. (I suggest you read the book to get a full explanation.) As anyone who has worked in any education setting knows, there is more than one method to teach any given skill. If you do not have access to a Somatic Experiencing therapist or any therapist at all here are some resources that can teach you the same basic skills:-Mindfulness training. Mindfulness is becoming more and more established and practiced. You may even find a mindfulness centre or mindfulness classes in your city. If this is not an option I recommend the excellent mindfulness programme (book) "Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world" by Mark Williams. You can download the meditations for free on the internet. This programme is designed to ground you in your body, become aware of physical and emotional sensations and how they are always changing and how to stay in the present moment. It also teaches you to befriend negative feelings.-Trauma Release Exercises. Only do these after doing mindfulness training. These were developed by David Berceli and are detailed in his book "The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process". These are designed to discharge trapped energy, which is a component of Levine's therapy. (They're also trademarked, but I have no gripes with this because they are designed as self-help. You don't need a specialised therapist to do them.)-Self-compassion. Do this at any time, maybe together with mindfulness. The best book is "Self-Compassion" by Kristin Neff. I think the title is pretty self-explanatory. It is important to note, that if you decide to try any of this you at least have a

support person, if not a therapist, with whom you can share things if it gets a little overwhelming or you need to talk about things that come up. I hope these alternatives help people who don't have access to the specific therapy described by Levine. I do not think that the books I suggested are in any way better or superior to Levine's, they are just much more readily accessible and provide the same basic skills if done correctly.

I have had severe PTSD, agoraphobia, depression, etc. for decades. I have been through repeated, unusual traumas for most of my life. I have tried several different cognitive behavioral therapies, I have read multiple books, and I have suffered trying to figure it out. I am up to around page 120 of this book and I am amazed. It is as if Dr. Levine knows me, my mind and my body's reactions to what I have been through personally. I do not feel crazy any more. My shame and self blame is lifting. I was already doing some of the things he suggests during trauma release times (mostly because I could not hold it in any longer) over the past few months. Teeth chattering, trembling, writhing around with my legs going crazy, so locked up that I was unable to cry which he mentions specifically. But before I read this book, I felt crazy. NOW, because of this book, I know I am not. I am reacting naturally to multiple over the top traumas. In the past few years, my mind and body were actually trying (after all these decades) to let things out physiologically. Now, I know that finally letting my mind and body work together because they know what is best for my recovery from this devastation is what I needed to do. And this book lets me know that I was right to finally just let my body react as it should have during all the traumas. If you have suffered and have not found "the answer," read this book. PTSD is supposed to be something that can't be cured. I am willing to accept that. But to know that I can safely release the trauma and it is an evolutionary process (not crazy, uncontrolled movements), has made all the difference in my broken heart and mind. I highly recommend this book and hope to read all of his books. UPDATE: I made a digital recording guiding myself through the instructions for the exercises Dr. Levine recommends and I do them every day. I have been shocked by the difference in my pain level, fewer days in pain, less panic attacks, etc. This book will teach you how to respond to that horrible "fight or flight or freeze" feeling in a private and ordered way. I will use this book as a handbook for the rest of my life. P.S. Try some Jon Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness books and CDs also. Equals the helpfulness of Dr. Levine's information and guidance and working with your PTSD using the information from Dr. Levine along with the daily easy guidance from Kabat-Zinn has truly helped me. UPDATE 2012: I have found the Trauma Resource Institute through my local mental health association. They have an excellent and very easy to follow handbook written using the excellent research of Dr. Peter Levine (they do give him

credit for their research and their workbook). This is a non-profit organization. One of the founders returned my long distance call, and spent a good amount of time listening to me. I have begun working through the Trauma Resiliency Model Workbook they offer through their website and have already seen improvement. By the way, If you physical trauma pain, check out Dr. Levine's newest book, "Freedom from Pain" which is a great handbook (including a guidance CD) for understanding pain and trauma. UPDATE: December 2015: I have found some very excellent mindfulness videos on youtube. I can highly recommend Jason Stephenson (He has recorded a great one for people with PTSD), and Mindful Peace channel. Keep searching for the best one for you. There are many others you may find that fit your style of trauma release and reorienting. We are not alone. UPDATE: June 2017: I would like to recommend another book I am currently working through. NO exposure therapy which makes PTSD worse for so many of us. This is something quite different. Paired with Dr. Levine's physiological explanations of PTSD trauma here, I believe many could be helped. The name of the book is "The Time Cure: Overcoming PTSD With the New Psychology of Time Perspective Therapy," by Zimbardo, Sword, and Sword. So far, it does an excellent job of explaining where, and how, in the brain PTSD embeds itself in the first few pages. Then, you set about trying to change those sections of the brain capable of changing to a less cynical/powerless present, to a non-fatalistic future (we all know that one well). There is a section for Veterans as well as all others with PTSD. I will say to take your time. After reading what is going on with my brain in very simple terms, I felt anxious. However, that section is only about 15 pages, and I was able to process it over time. Once I picked up The Time Cure again, I got to the first "assignment" which was to recall a GOOD memory even if you have to go back to childhood, and write about that. So much better than writing about the trauma because our trauma brains repeat it 24/7 anyway! I had to put the book down for a few days, and I began thinking of any good things in my past. It took a while, and I know many people with PTSD will have the same difficulty. Don't despair. Take your time. A very vivid memory of a 5th grade school field trip came to my brain over time! it was a wonderful memory. I kept thinking about it, and before I knew it, I was remembering how peaceful it was, how I felt, how beautiful it was, etc. I will update when I finish that book. I can already see positive effects. My best friend is also reading so he can help me with it when needed. If you have one friend, or family member, willing to read the book so they can help you as you work through it, do that. Best to all who read this. We are STILL not alone. We have each other, and we are the ones who try to make it through each day with this brain injury. Check out "The Time Cure," and see if it gives you a little more hope as it has for me so far.

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