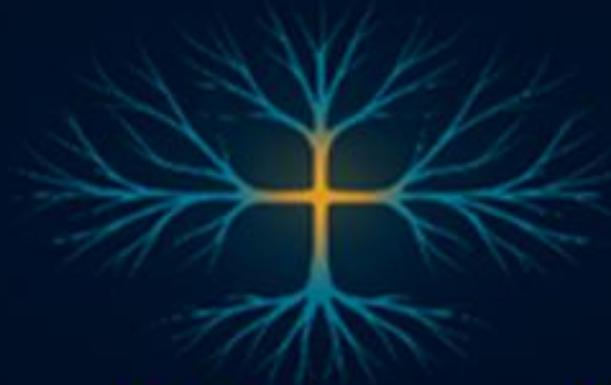


# Trauma, Hope, and the Four Pillars of *NeuroFaith*®



**Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D.**  
Clinical Director, Holdfast  
Recovery and  
AnchorPoint  
Founder and Director,  
NeuroFaith®, LLC



**NeuroFaith®, LLC**  
The Intersection of Science and Faith in the  
Healing of Trauma and Addiction

**Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D.**

*The NeuroFaith<sup>®</sup>  
Model for Healing*



# The Insidious Nature of Trauma

Trauma is the silent epidemic of our age.

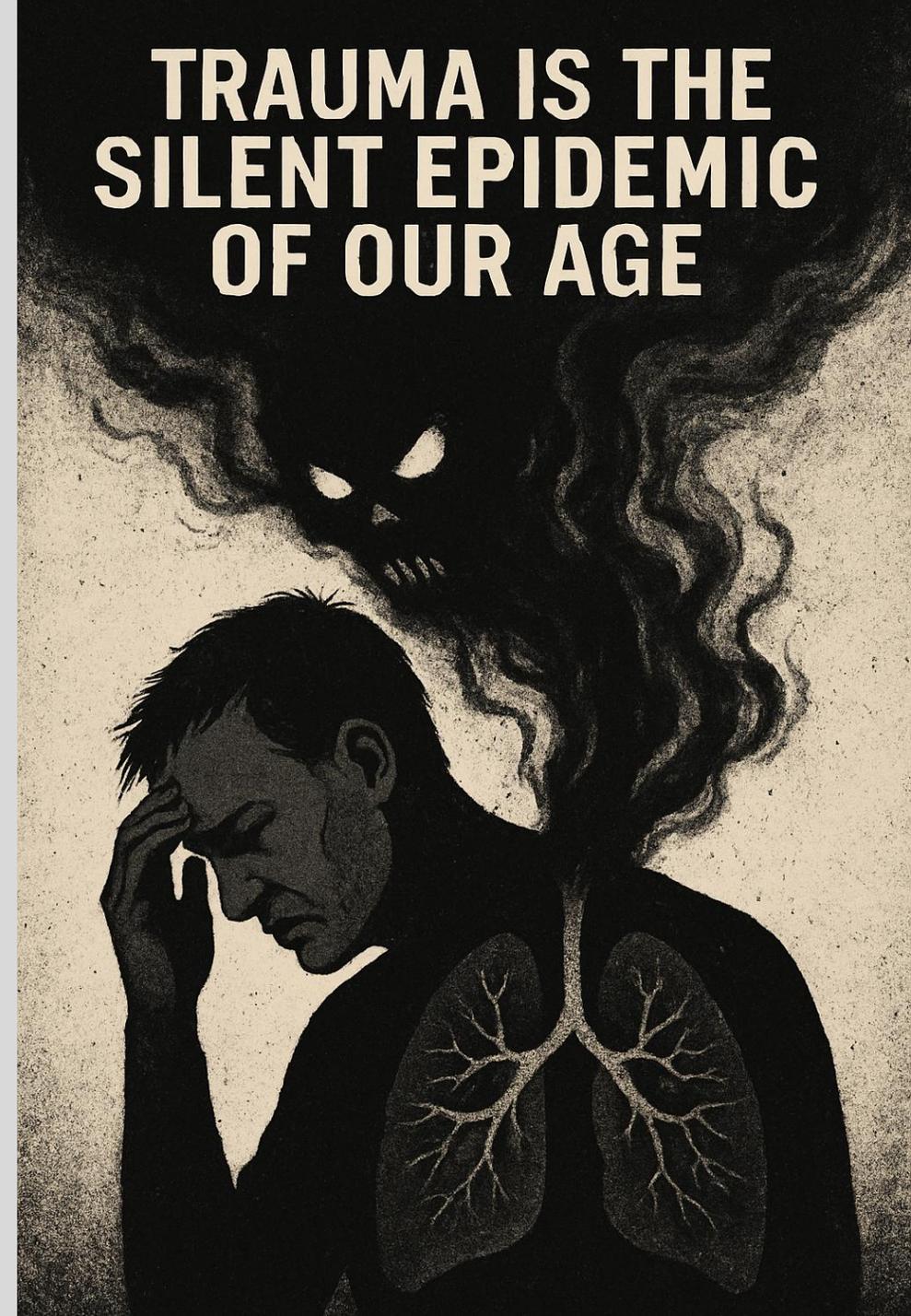
It tears through our families, our churches, and our communities.

It is not only the soldier blown up in Iraq, or the driver injured in a car accident, or the woman assaulted in a dark alley. Trauma is more insidious.

It slips like the enemy into our lungs and hides in our souls.

It is the unseen weight crushing our children, the shame that whispers, “you are worthless,” at midnight, the poison that rewires the nervous system and drains life from the body.

**TRAUMA IS THE  
SILENT EPIDEMIC  
OF OUR AGE**



# The Insidious Nature of Trauma

- You do not have to remember the trauma for it to remember you. Trauma is the enemy's graffiti on God's masterpiece, you.
- It does not only break bones. It breaks identities.
- Here is the truth. Trauma is merciless. It follows us into every relationship, every prayer, and every breath, until God breaks its grip.

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REMEMBER  
THE TRAUMA FOR IT TO REMEMBER YOU.**

**TRAUMA IS THE ENEMY'S GRAFFITI  
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IT DOES NOT ONLY BREAK BONES.  
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**HERE IS THE TRUTH.  
TRAUMA IS MERCILESS. IT FOLLOWS US  
INTO EVERY RELATIONSHIP, EVERY PRAYER,  
AND EVERY BREATH, UNTIL GOD BREAKS ITS GR.**

# The Science of Trauma (ACE Study)

- Prevalence: nearly two-thirds of Americans have at least one ACE.
- Burden: about 1 in 5 have four or more ACEs.
- Suicide: with 4+ ACEs, risk of attempting suicide is  $12 \times$  higher. With 6+ ACEs, risk is about  $30 \times$  higher.
- Depression and anxiety: one ACE raises depression risk by about 50%. With 4+ ACEs, risk of depression and anxiety increases up to sevenfold.
- Addiction: those with 4+ ACEs are 7 to 10 times more likely to fall into alcohol or drug dependence.
- Physical disease: trauma is associated with  $2-3 \times$  higher risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune illness, even without risky behaviors.

# ACE Scores and Outcomes

As Dr. Felitti in a 2009 lecture points out, studies reveal many shocking long-term horrible outcomes when we are exposed to ACEs and this raises exponentially according to how many of them, we have been exposed to.

The results indicate that for every category of traumatic experience we have had as a child, we are dramatically more likely to be depressed as an adult.

If we have ACE scores of , we are:

- **260%** more likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than someone with a score of 0
- **240%** more likely to contract hepatitis, **460%** more likely to experience depression
- **1,220%** more likely to attempt suicide

If we have ACE scores of , we are:

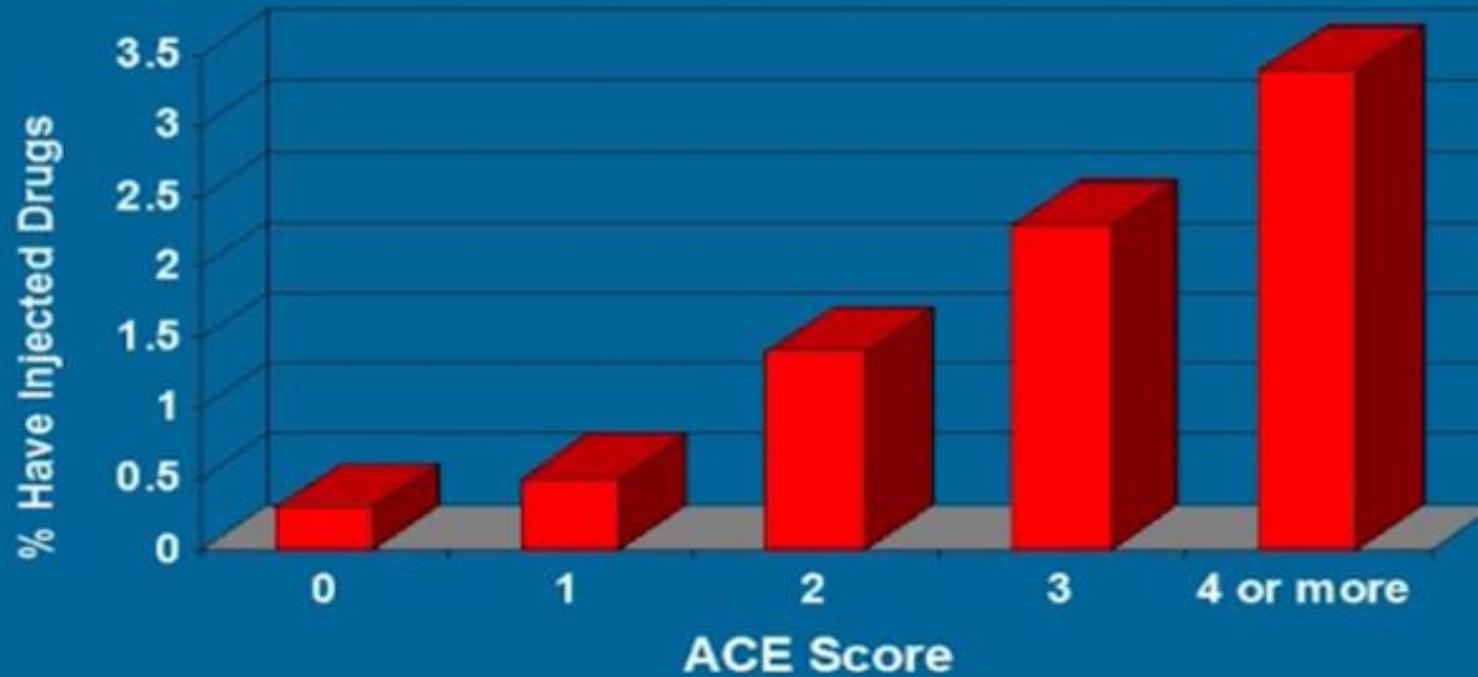
- Five times more likely to become depressed as an adult and if we have had

If we have ACE scores of , we are:

- **3,100 percent** more likely to attempt suicide as an adult (Felitti et al., 2014; Felitti 2004; Felitti and Anda, 2009; Felitti et al., 1998).

## Health risks, Emotional Benefits

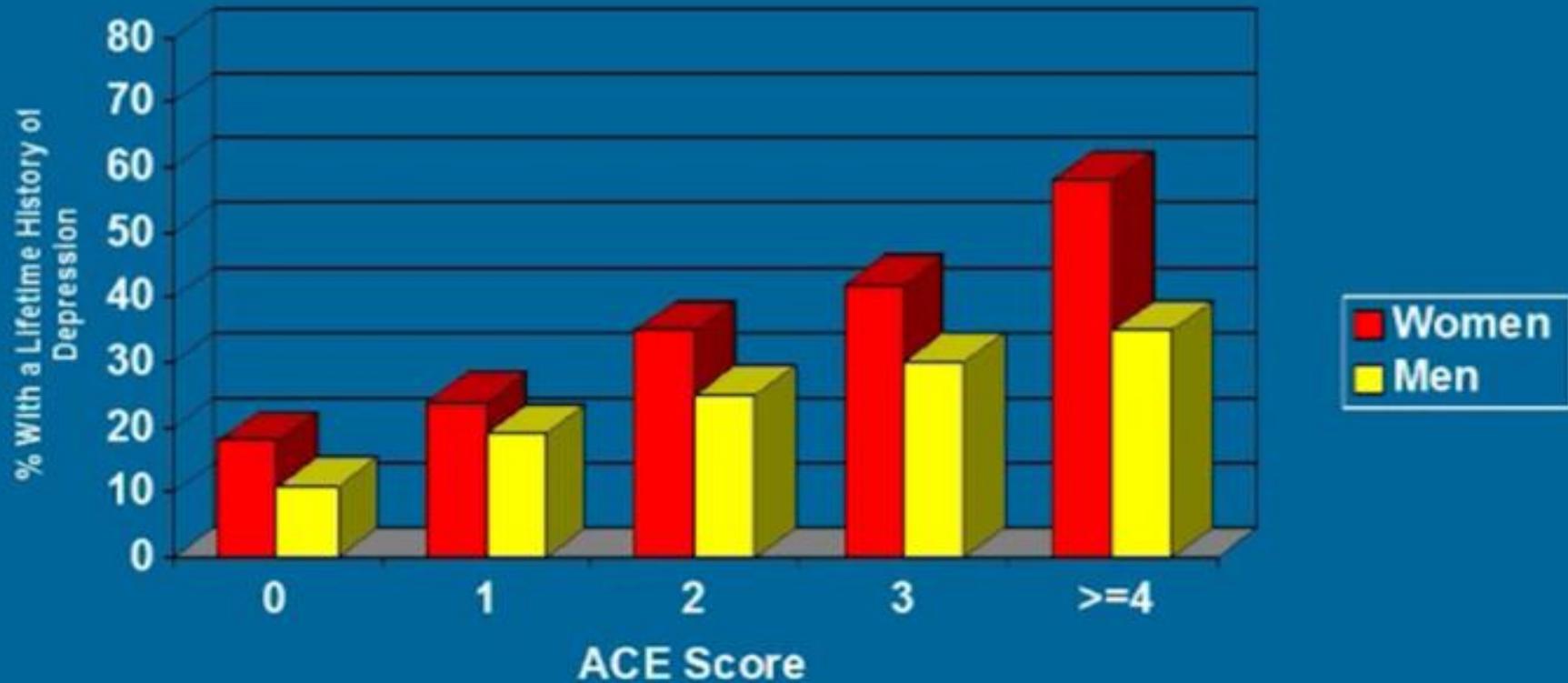
# ACE Score vs Intravenous Drug Use



$p < 0.001$

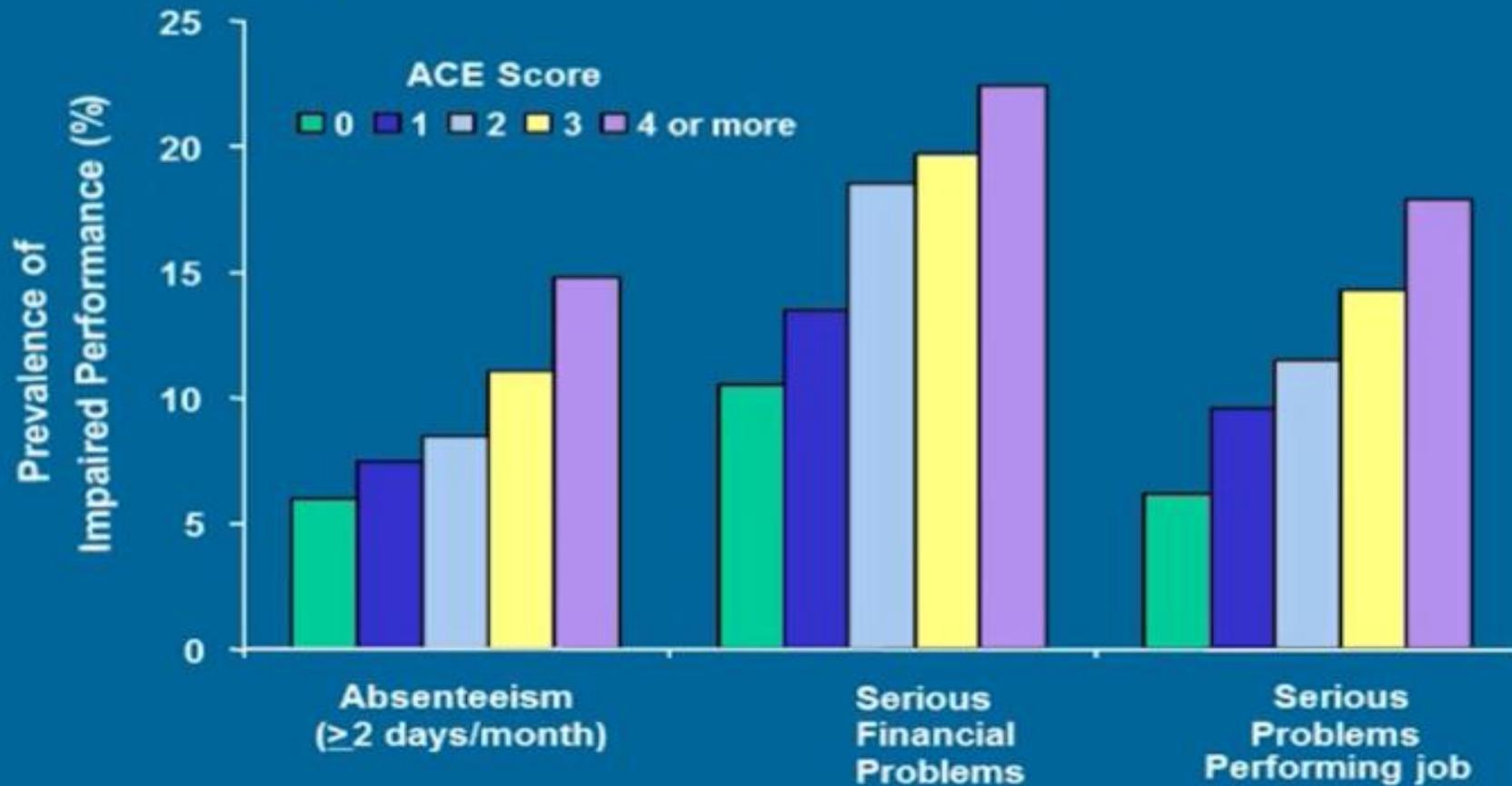
## Damaged well-being

# Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression



## Social malfunction:

# ACE Score and Indicators of Impaired Worker Performance

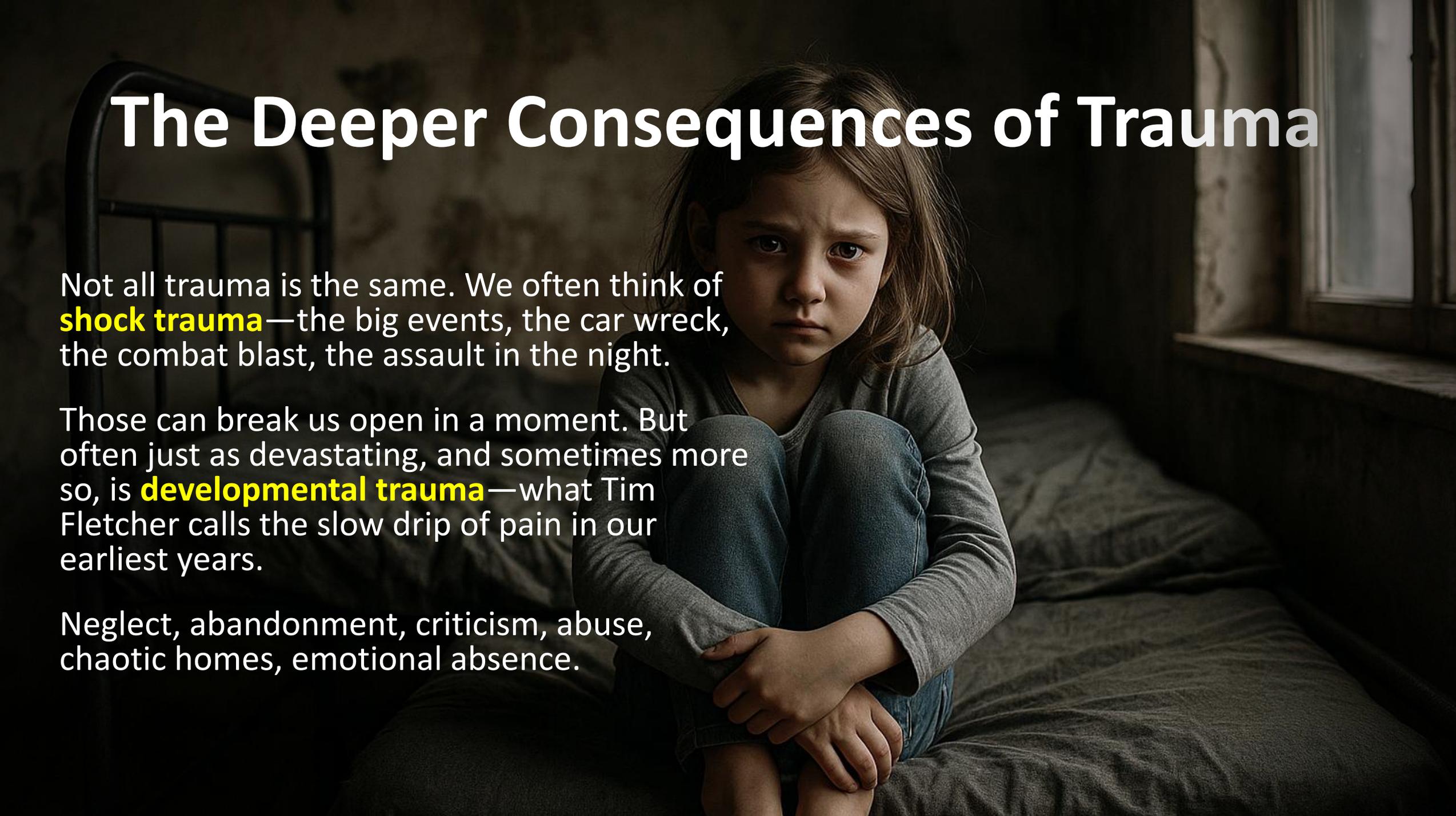


# The Consequences of Unresolved Trauma



- Broken marriages and fractured families.
- Churches full of people who smile on Sunday while bleeding inside.
- Numbing with alcohol, pornography, work, or food.
- Shame hardening into identity rather than remaining a feeling.
- Trauma does not only break the past. It steals the future.

# The Deeper Consequences of Trauma

A young girl with long brown hair is sitting on a bed in a dimly lit room. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, with her knees pulled up to her chest. She has a sad and thoughtful expression on her face, looking directly at the camera. The room is dark, with a window visible in the background on the right side. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

Not all trauma is the same. We often think of **shock trauma**—the big events, the car wreck, the combat blast, the assault in the night.

Those can break us open in a moment. But often just as devastating, and sometimes more so, is **developmental trauma**—what Tim Fletcher calls the slow drip of pain in our earliest years.

Neglect, abandonment, criticism, abuse, chaotic homes, emotional absence.

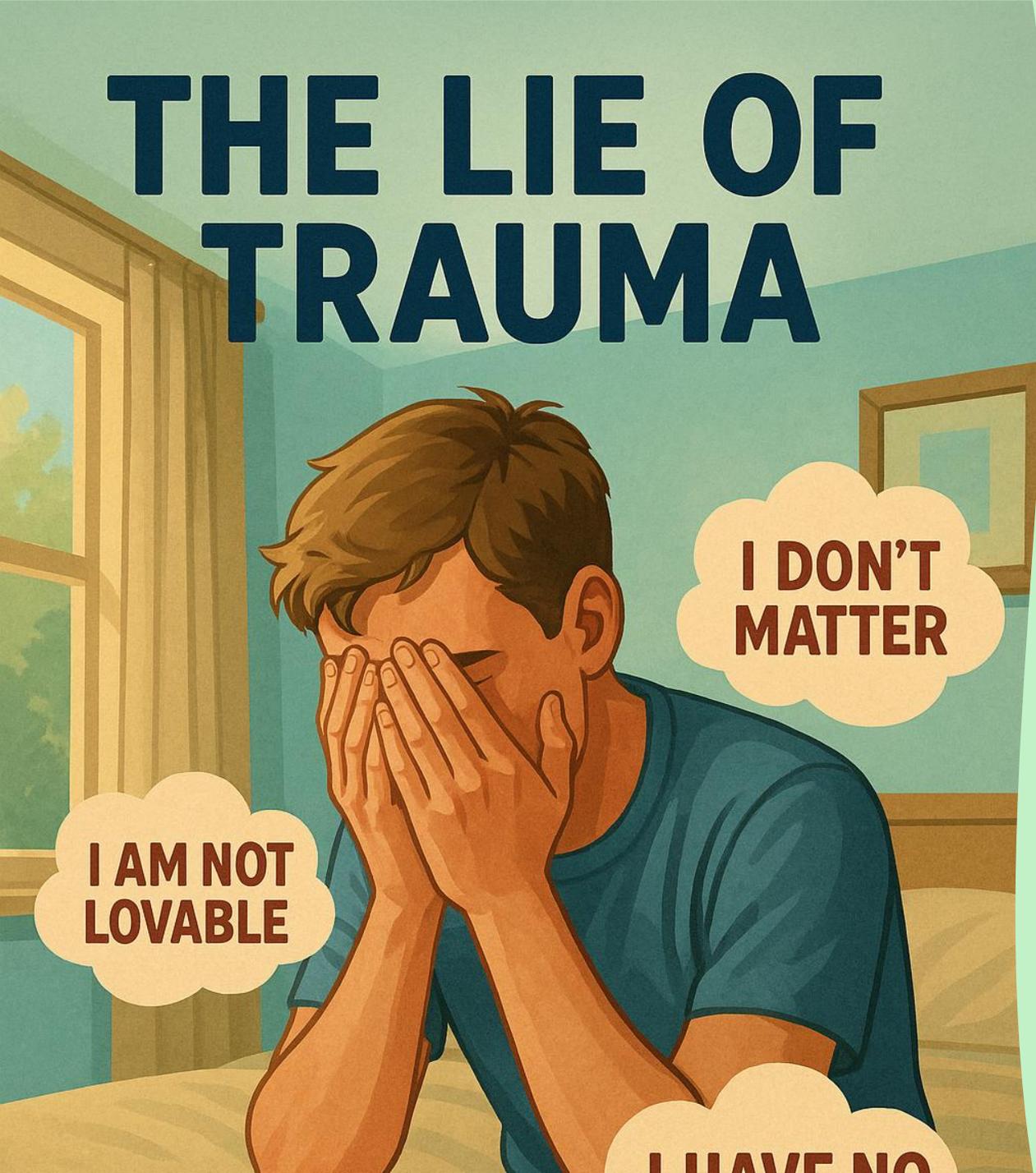
# — The Deeper Consequences of Trauma

Shock trauma can be life-altering, but developmental trauma wires itself into the very architecture of the brain. It leaves its fingerprints on how we see ourselves, how we perceive reality, and how we connect with others.

Every developmental trauma creates a negative core belief. Those negative core beliefs become etched into the default mode network of the brain—the system that quietly runs in the background, filtering every thought, every relationship, every experience.

I respect your expertise and your  
component of his care. My  
to collaborate around  
rather than interrupts, the  
to engage.

# THE LIE OF TRAUMA



## The Deeper Consequences of Trauma

These beliefs are devastatingly consistent:

- I am not lovable.
- I am not valuable.
- I do not matter.

When those core wounds become the lens through which we see the world, life itself becomes **confirmation bias**.

Every slight, every rejection, every failure feels like evidence that the wound is true.

Trauma does not only wound the past, it rewrites the script of the future.

**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”**

**John 10:10**

**Trauma steals, but Christ restores.**

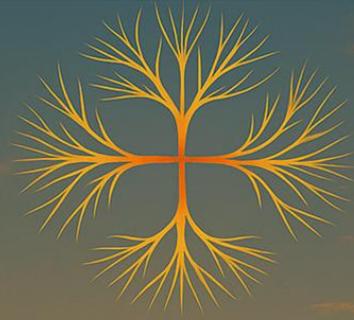
**Trauma destroys, but Christ redeems.**

**Trauma enslaves, but Christ sets captives free.**

**NeuroFaith®**

**Pivot to Hope  
NeuroFaith®**





**THE  
NEUROFAITH™  
FRAMEWORK  
FOR  
HEALING**





## **POLYVAGAL- INFORMED THERAPY**

Healing through  
the language of  
the nervous system



## **HEARTMATH® AND NEUROCARDIOLOGY**

Reconnecting  
with the heart  
as an intelligent  
center



## **INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS (IFS)**

Mapping the inner  
landscape of  
parts and burdens



## **FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY**

# Pillar One

**POLYVAGAL-  
INFORMED  
THERAPY**



# Polyvagal-Informed Therapy

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- God designed our autonomic nervous system to keep us safe (sympathetic for fight/flight, parasympathetic for rest/restore).
- Trauma hijacks that system, trapping us in survival modes.
- Instead of safety, we live in hypervigilance or collapse.
- Polyvagal theory helps us understand how trauma 'soars' on this God-given system, unbalancing what He created for protection.
- Healing restores the sense of safety that lets us re-engage with life, others, and God.

The chart below adapted by Dr. Rothschild nicely demonstrates the shifting in body sensations, physiological symptoms, and emotions as we move between autonomic states (Rothschild, 2017).

### AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: PRECISION REGULATION

**\*\* WHAT TO LOOK FOR \*\***

	<b>LETHARGIC</b> Parasympathetic I (PNS I)	<b>CALM</b> Parasympathetic II (PNS II) <i>Ventral Vagus</i>	<b>ACTIVE/ALERT</b> Sympathetic I (SNS I)	<b>FLIGHT/FIGHT</b> Sympathetic II (SNS II)	<b>HYPER FREEZE</b> Sympathetic III (SNS III)	<b>HYPO FREEZE</b> Parasympathetic III (PNS III) <i>Dorsal Vagus Collapse</i>
<b>PRIMARY STATE</b>	Apathy, Depression	Safe, Clear Thinking, Social Engagement	Alert, Ready to Act	React to Danger	Await Opportunity to Escape	Prepare for Death
<b>AROUSAL</b>	Too Low	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme Overload	Excessive Overwhelm Induces Hypoarousal
<b>MUSCLES</b>	Slack	Relaxed/toned	Toned	Tense	Rigid (deer in the headlights)	Flaccid
<b>RESPIRATION</b>	Shallow	Easy, often into belly	Increasing rate	Fast, often in upper chest	Hyperventilation	Hypo-ventilation
<b>HEART RATE</b>	Slow	Resting	Quicker or more forceful	Quick and/or forceful	Tachycardia (very fast)	Bradycardia (very slow)
<b>BLOOD PRESSURE</b>	Likely low	Normal	On the rise	Elevated	Significantly high	Significantly low
<b>PUPILS, EYES, EYE LIDS</b>	Pupils smaller, lids may be heavy	Pupils smaller, eyes moist, eye lids relaxed	Pupils widening, eyes less moist, eye lids toned	Pupils very dilated, eyes dry, eye lids tensed/raised	Pupils very small or dilated, eyes very dry, lids very tense	Lids drooping, eyes closed or open and fixed
<b>SKIN TONE</b>	Variable	Rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Less rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Pale hue, despite skin color (blood flow to muscles)	May be pale and/or flushed	Noticeably pale
<b>HUMIDITY</b>						
Skin	Dry	Dry	Increased sweat	Increased sweat, may be cold	Cold sweat	Cold sweat
Mouth	Variable	Moist	Less moist	Dry	Dry	Dry
<b>HANDS &amp; FEET (TEMPERATURE)</b>	May be warm or cool	Warm	Cool	Cold	Extremes of cold & hot	Cold
<b>DIGESTION</b>	Variable	Increase	Decrease	Stops	Evacuate bowel & bladder	Stopped
<b>EMOTIONS (LIKELY)</b>	Grief, sadness, shame, disgust	Calm, pleasure, love, sexual arousal, "good" grief	Anger, shame, disgust, anxiety, excitement, sexual climax	Rage, fear	Terror, may be dissociation	May be too dissociated to feel anything
<b>CONTACT WITH SELF &amp; OTHERS</b>	Withdrawn	Probable	Possible	Limited	Not likely	Impossible
<b>FRONTAL CORTEX</b>	May or may not be accessible	Should be accessible	Should be accessible	May or may not be accessible	Likely inaccessible	Inaccessible
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	Not likely	Likely	Likely	Not likely	Impossible	Impossible
<b>RECOMMENDED INTERVENTION</b>	Activate, Gently Increase Energy	Continue Therapy Direction	Continue Therapy Direction	Put on Brakes	Slam on Brakes	Medical Emergency CALL PARAMEDICS

The Autonomic Nervous System Precision Regulation Chart is Available for purchase on Amazon for \$8.99 (a very high recommend):

Babette Rothschild (2017) [https://www.amazon.com/Autonomic-Nervous-System-Table-](https://www.amazon.com/Autonomic-Nervous-System-Table-eminated/dp/039371780X/ref=cr_1_15?child=1&keywords=dehadana&pid=1590376813&pf_rd_p=1590376813&pf_rd_r=1590376813)

[eminated/dp/039371780X/ref=cr\\_1\\_15?child=1&keywords=dehadana&pid=1590376813&pf\\_rd\\_p=1590376813&pf\\_rd\\_r=1590376813](https://www.amazon.com/Autonomic-Nervous-System-Table-eminated/dp/039371780X/ref=cr_1_15?child=1&keywords=dehadana&pid=1590376813&pf_rd_p=1590376813&pf_rd_r=1590376813)

Dimension	Lethargic	Calm	Active/Alert	Fight/Flight	Hyper Freeze	Hypo Freeze
Primary Experience	Shutdown, Depression	Safety, Social engaged	Ready to act	React to danger	Overloaded	Collapse, Numb
Body Response	Low energy, slowed body	Relaxed, steady rhythm	Energized, focused	High arousal, tense body	Rigid, panicked	Flaccid, shutdown
Emotional Tone	Numb, sad, withdrawn	Clear, connected, at peace	Interested, engaged, curious	Fear, anger, urgency	Terror, frozen in fear	Empty, detached, despair
Therapeutic Focus	Gently activate energy	Maintain connection	Channel energy	Ground, create safety	Contain, stabilize	Emergency support

Emotion Regulation Chart Simplified

# Pillar Two

## HEARTMATH® AND NEUROCARDIOLOGY



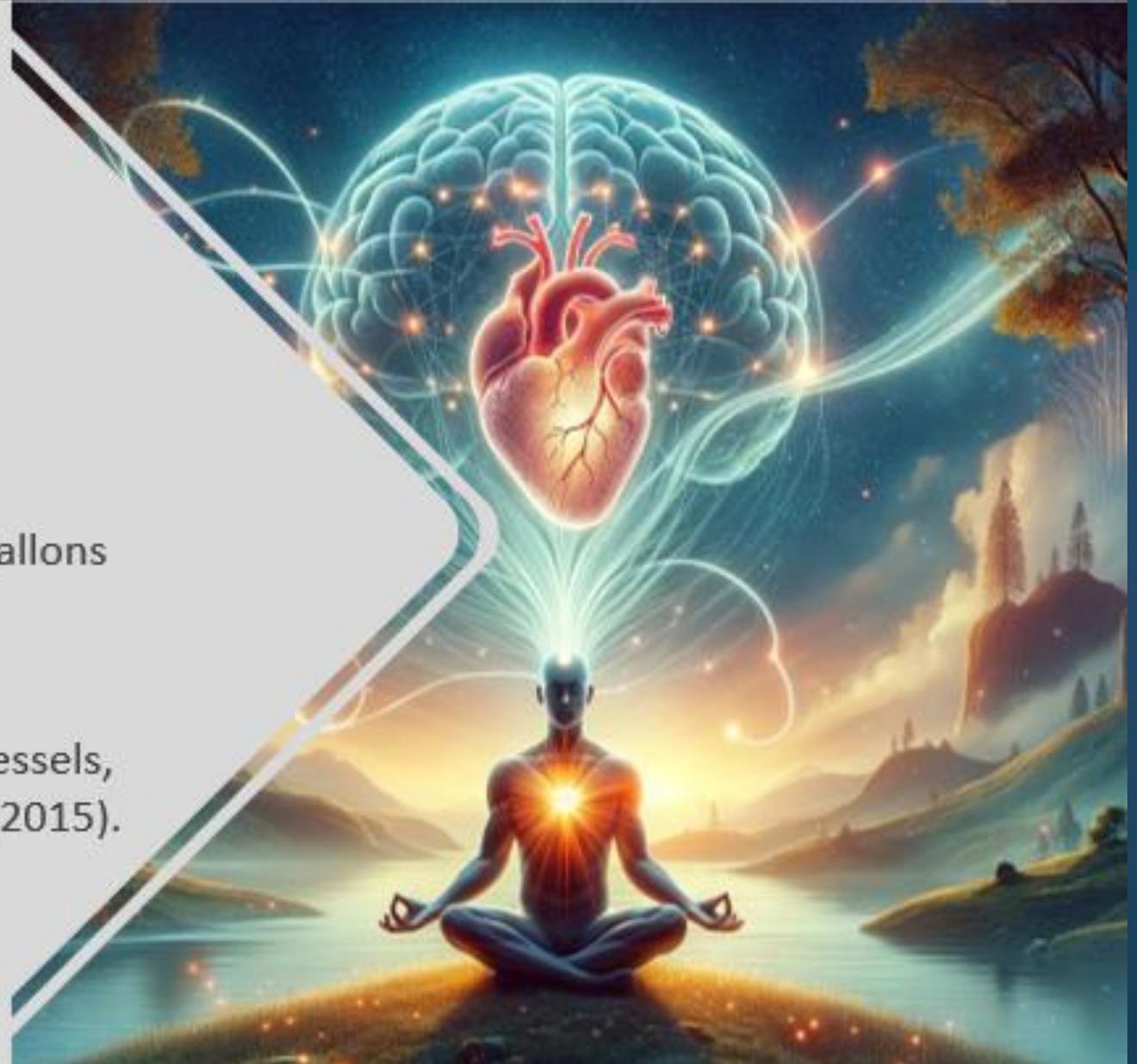
# HeartMath® / Neurocardiology

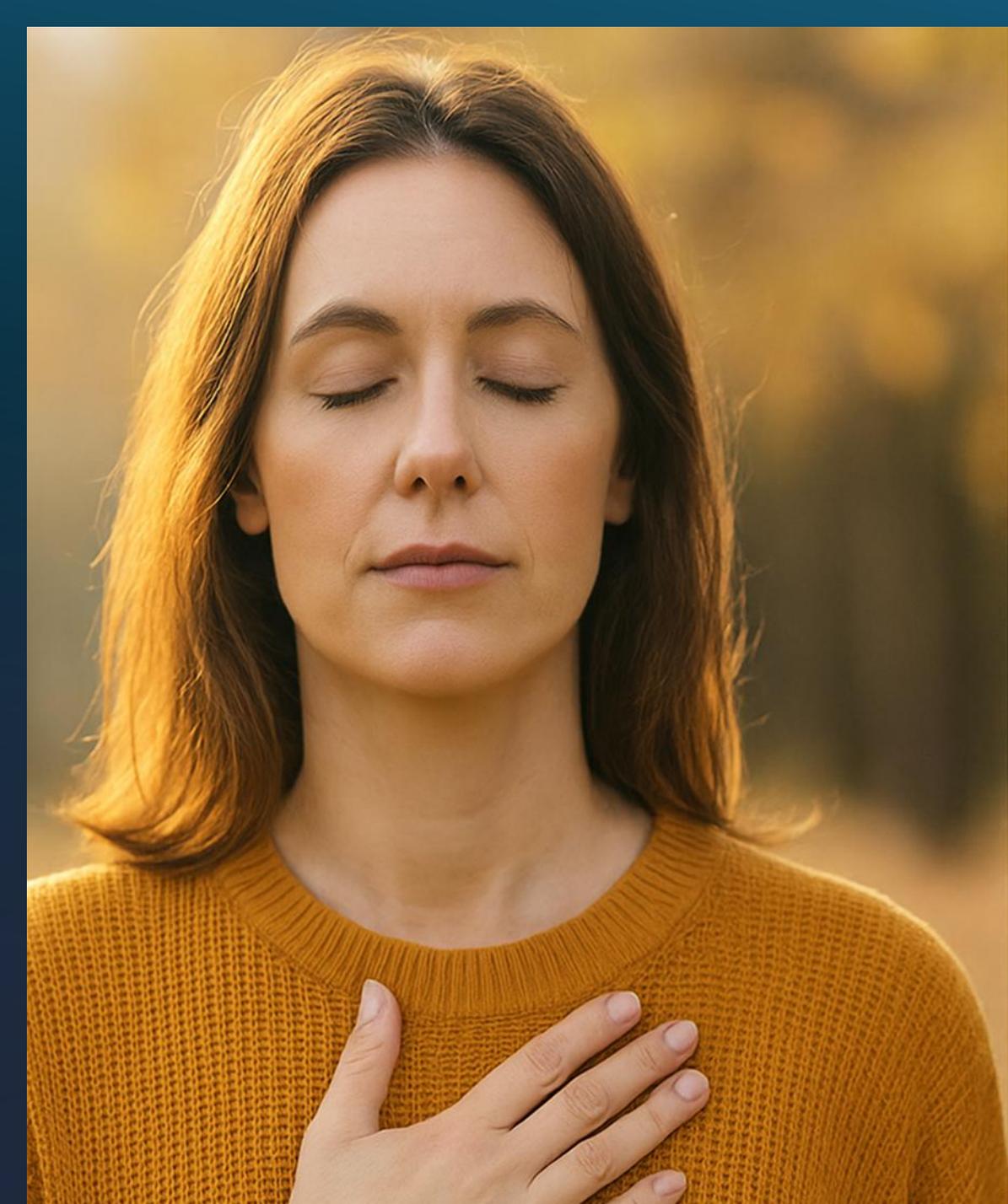
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- The heart is more than a pump — it has 40,000 sensory neurites that form neural networks, storing wisdom, judgment, and even memory.
- Science shows the heart communicates with the brain, shaping emotion, decision-making, and resilience.
- Heart–brain coherence (a balanced rhythm between heart and brain) produces peace in the body, clarity in the mind, and safety in relationships.
- As we regulate heart rate variability, we not only calm the nervous system but radiate peace to others.
- Scripture affirms this: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23).

## Our incredible heart:

- ▶ Beats 101,000 times a day
- ▶ Circulates an astonishing 1,900 gallons of blood of blood
- ▶ Through 60,000 miles of blood vessels, arteries, and capillaries (Braden, 2015).





# Proverbs 3:5

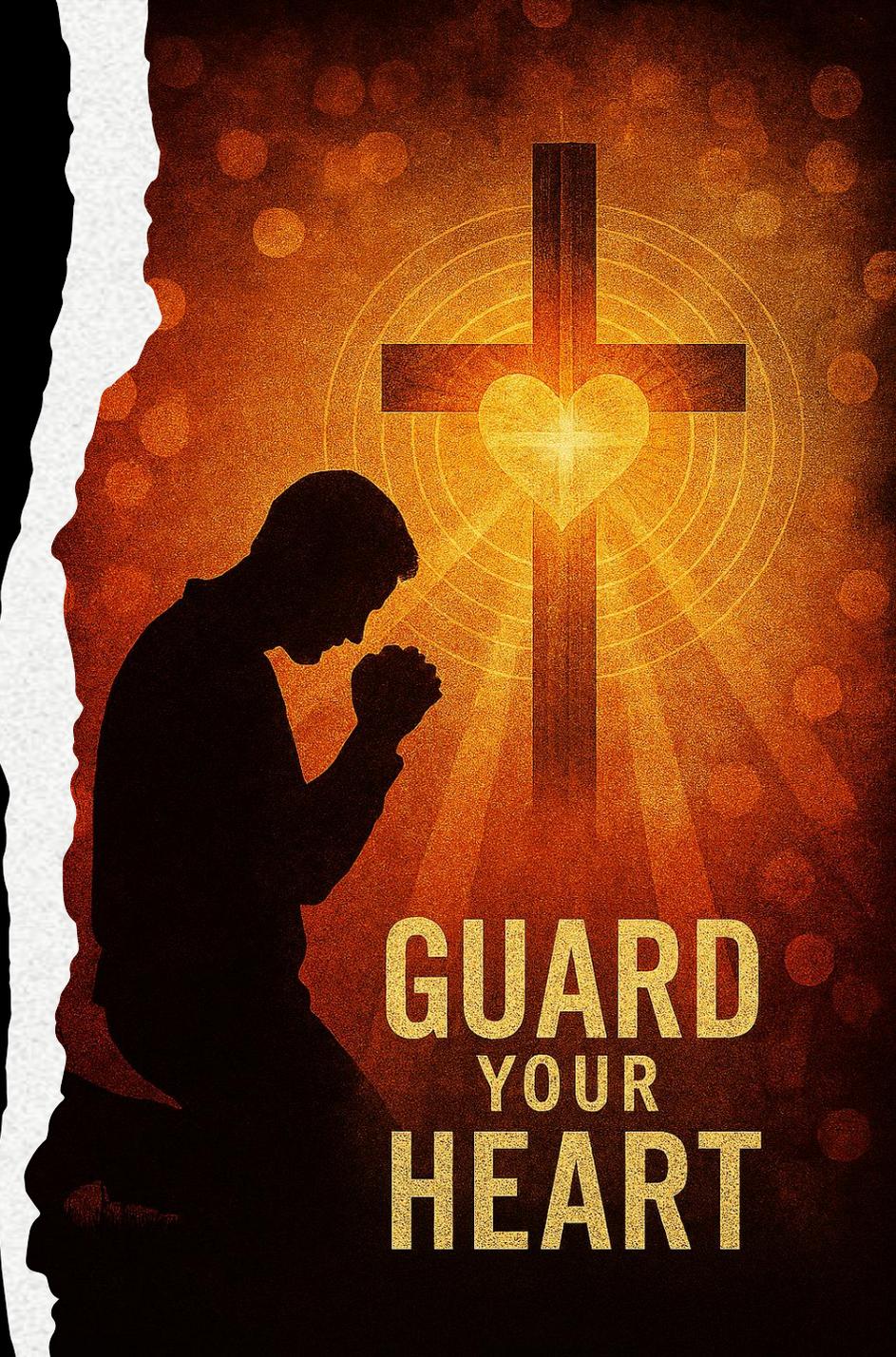
Trust in the LORD  
with all your heart,  
and do not lean on  
your own understanding.

HeartMath teaches connecting with the heart's intuitive intelligence to find inner guidance. This verse highlights the value of heart-centered wisdom

## Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

This aligns with HeartMath's idea that the heart is a central organizing force. Guarding the heart reflects intentional regulation of emotional energy and coherence.



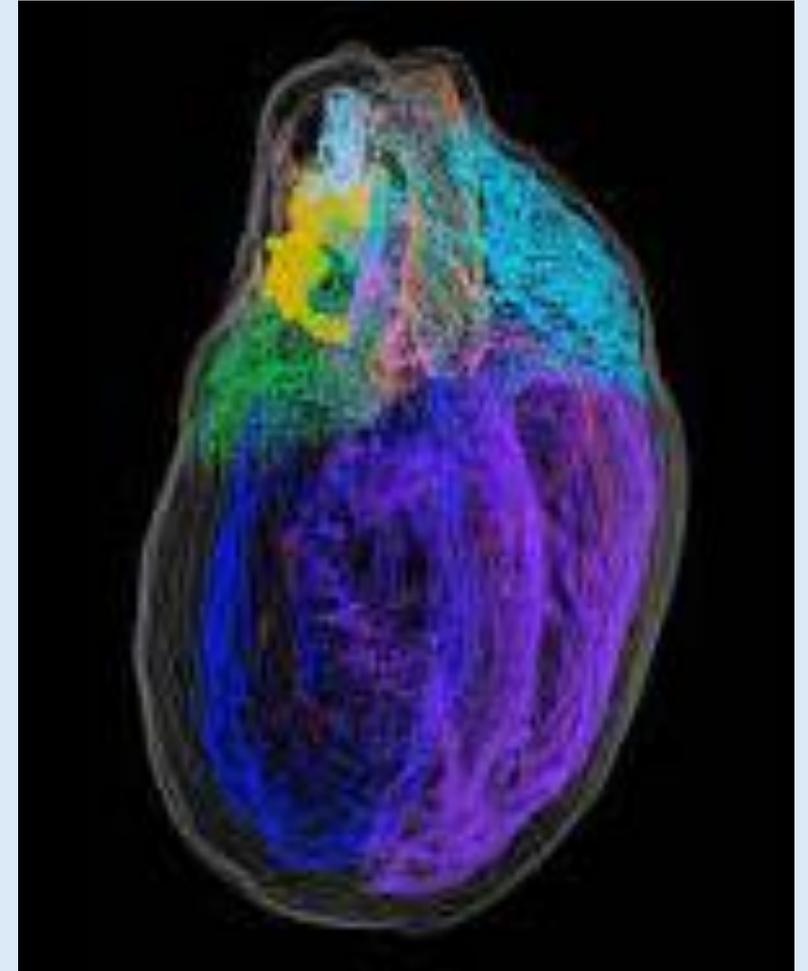
**GUARD  
YOUR  
HEART**

# Imaging showing the sensory neurites (in yellow) which comprise the Little Brain of the heart

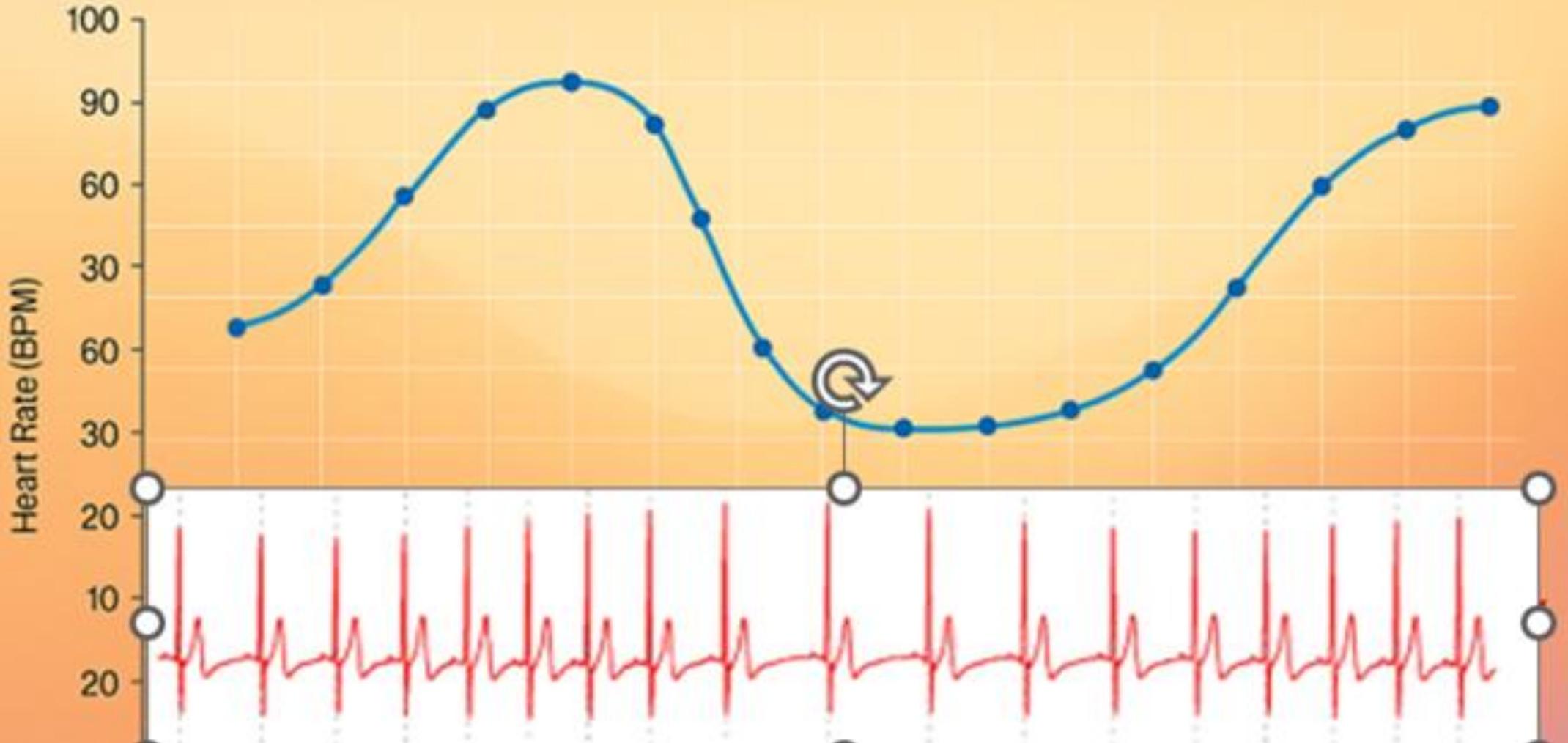
## The heart's "little brain" can:

Act **independently** of the cranial brain to think, learn, and remember.

Act **in harmony** with the brain to give us the benefit of a single and potent network shared by both the heart and the brain (Braden, 2015).



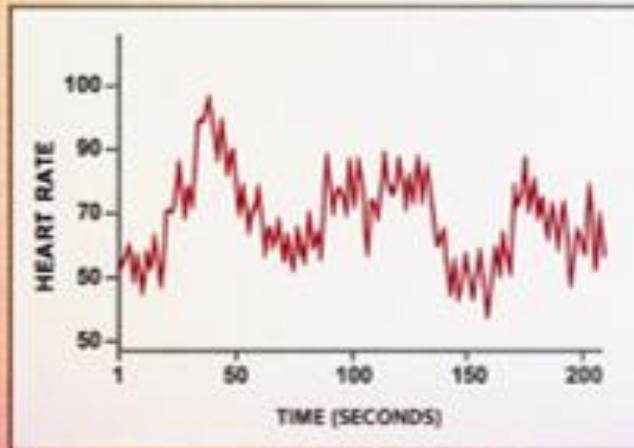
# Heart Rate Variability: The Heart's Rhythm



# Emotions and Heart Rhythms

## Incoherence

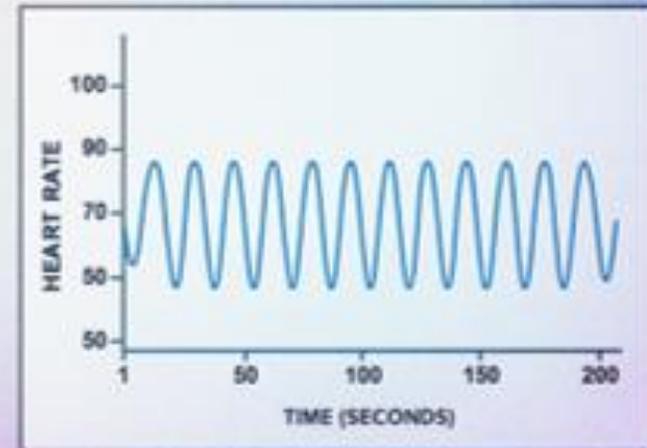
frustration, irritation, impatience,  
worry



Inhibits brain function –  
impairs performance

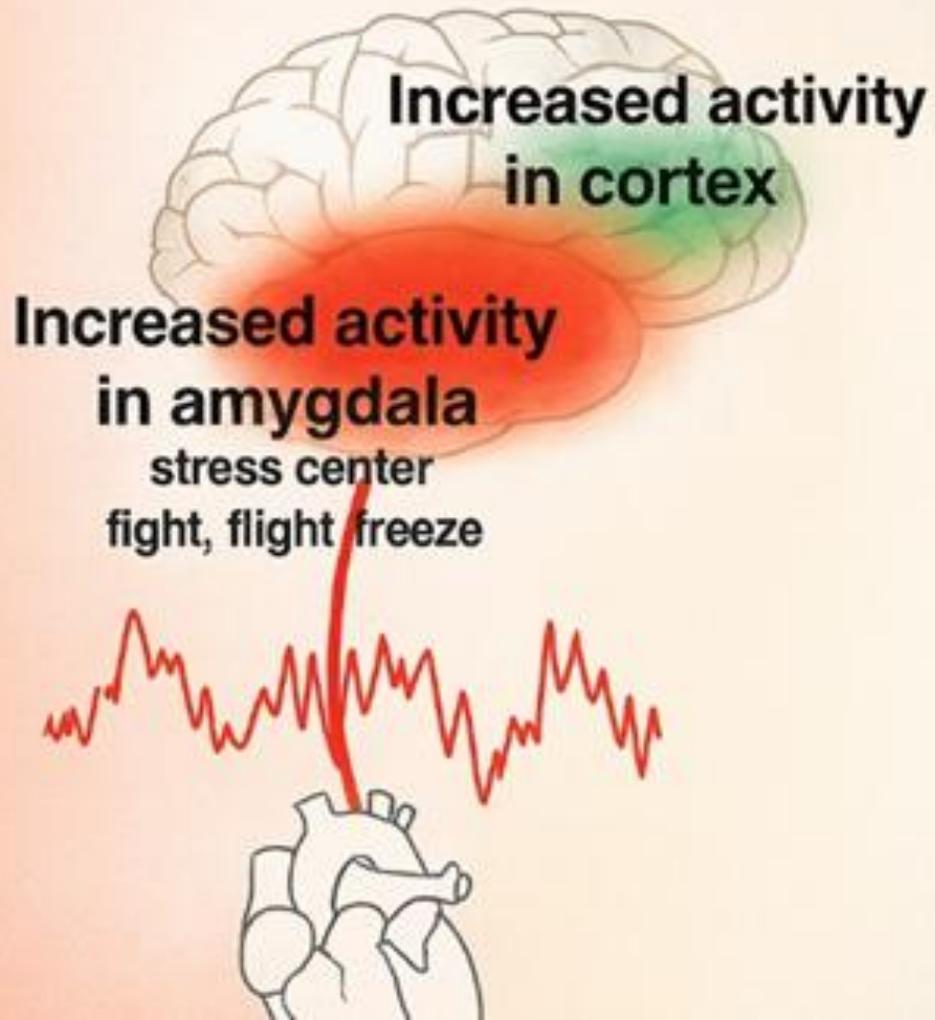
## Coherence

appreciation, calm, patience, confidence

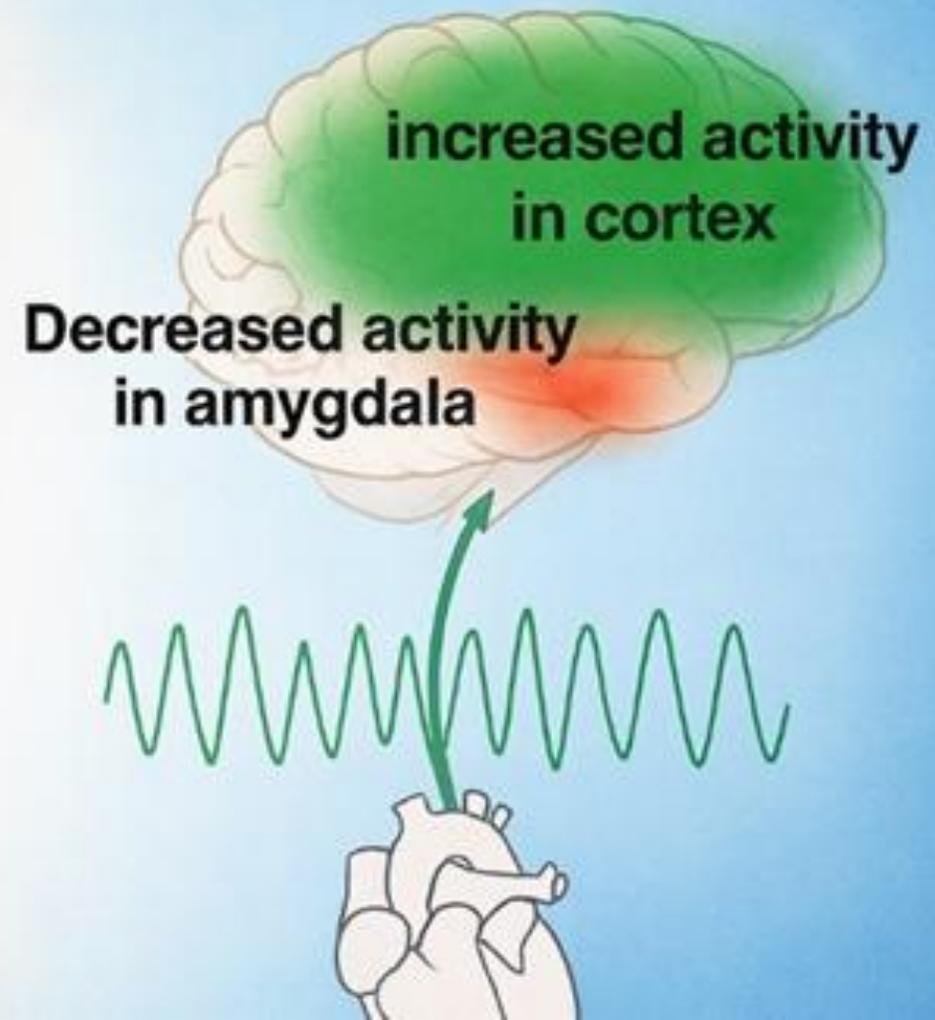


Facilitates brain function – promotes  
optimal performance

## Cortical Inhibition



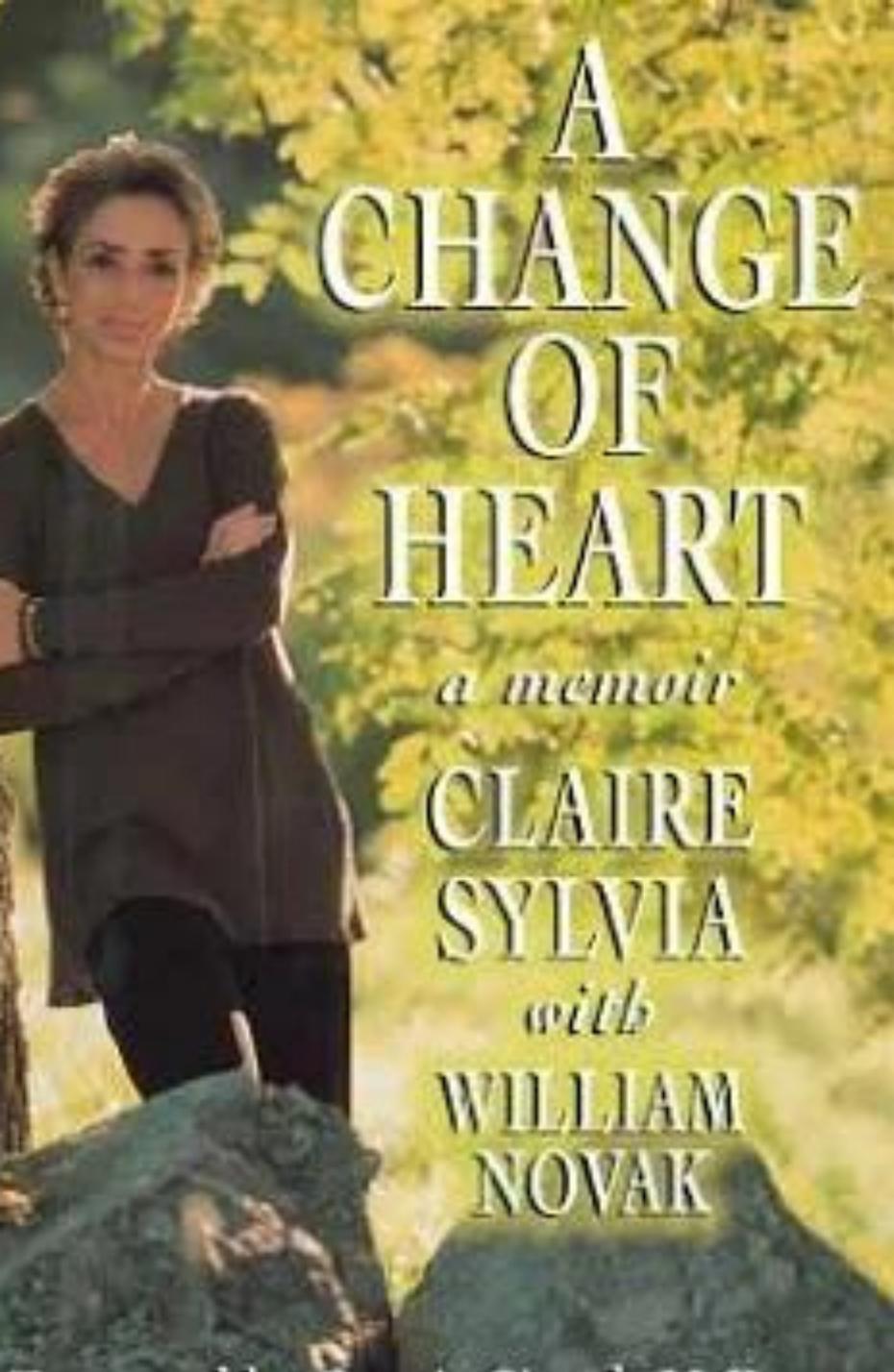
## Cortical Facilitation





**Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)**  
**"Above all else, guard  
your heart, for  
everything you do  
flows from it."**

This aligns with HeartMath's idea that the heart is a central organizing force. Guarding the heart reflects intentional regulation of emotional energy and coherence.



# A CHANGE OF HEART

*a memoir*

CLAIRE  
SYLVIA

*with*

WILLIAM  
NOVAK

## Stories of the Heart:

- **Clare Sylva**, a professional dancer, in 1998 received the heart and lungs of a young man, Tim, who died in a motorcycle accident.
- Not long after the transplant, she began to crave new foods such as **chicken nuggets and green peppers** and was specifically drawn to KFC to satisfy her cravings.
- She was able to eventually visit the parents of this young man and discovered that **Tim precisely loved the same kinds** of foods that she was now craving.
- Clare had acquired her cravings through the phenomenon of **memory transference** which has become an area of serious study and eventual acceptance.

Please click below for Dr. Braden's enticing discussion:

<https://youtu.be/Hir6I-RfOiY>

Paul Pearsall, Ph.D.  
Author of the New York Times bestseller  
*The Plowman's Progress*

Tapping the Wisdom and Power of Our  
Heart Energy

# The Heart's Code

The New Findings About  
Cellular Memories and  
Their Role in the Mind/  
Body/Spirit Connection

## Stories of the Heart

- In 1999, **Dr. Paul Pearsall, a neuropsychologist**, in *The Heart's Code* wrote about an 8-year-old little girl who received a heart from a 10-year-old girl.
- Almost immediately after the surgery, she started having vivid nightmares of being **chased, attacked, and murdered**.
- Her mother arranged a consultation with a psychiatrist who after several sessions concluded that she was witnessing actual physical incidents.
- They decided to **call the police** who used the detailed descriptions of the murder (the time, the weapon, the place, the clothes he wore, and what the little girl he killed had said to him) given by the little girl to find and convict the man in question.

Please click below for Dr. Braden's enticing discussion:

<https://youtu.be/Hir6I-RfOiY>

# The Heart Lock-In® Technique

## Step 1: Center and Breathe



- Focus your attention on your heart area
  - Imagine your breath flowing in and out through your heart or chest
- 
- Keep the in-breath shorter, drawing in energy and life. Some find it meaningful to imagine they are breathing in the breath of God
  - Let the out-breath be longer than the in-breath. This engages the parasympathetic nervous system and fosters relaxation, calm, and peace

## Step 2: Focus on Regenerative Feelings

- While maintaining this rhythm, shift your attention to feelings of gratitude, appreciation, love, care, or compassion
- Hold your focus there
- Allow yourself to fully experience these emotions as they grow stronger and more stable in your heart

## Step 3: Radiate and Receive

- With each in-breath, take in those renewing feelings. Allow yourself to be filled with love, compassion, appreciation
- With each out-breath, send those feelings outward, radiating care, compassion, and love to yourself and to others

# Pillar Three

## INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

MANAGER

FIREFIGHTER

EXILE

SELF

INNER  
CRITIC



# Internal Family Systems (IFS)

- Trauma fragments the soul into 'parts':
- Exiles – carry pain and shame.
- Managers – control to keep pain hidden.
- Firefighters – rush to numb pain with addictions or distractions.
- Inner critic – shames and condemns.
- IFS provides a map to make sense of these defenses.
- At the core, it's about returning to the true Self, which in Christian terms is aligned with the Holy Spirit.
- The “Eight C’s” of IFS (calm, clarity, curiosity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity, connectedness) resonate with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23.
- Healing is not erasing parts, but redeeming them under Christ’s Lordship.



# Treating a System, Not a Symptom

## Managers

- Stabilize/Improve
- Future-oriented
- Proactive
- Over-identified

## Firefighters Distracters

- Avoid/Soothe
- Present-oriented
- Reactive
- Reject/Concealed

SELF

## Exiles

- Absorb Energy
- Past-oriented
- Overwhelming
- Repress/Ignore

Cesare Sykes notes that in IFS, we treat a **system**, not a **symptom**.

Manager  
Exile  
Firefighter

---





# IFS Exiles

Exiles hold deep emotional pain and trauma.

They are protected by managers and firefighters to avoid pain.

Healing exiles is a goal for reintegration and relief.

Represent vulnerability and sensitivity.

Need acknowledgment and compassion for healing.

Healing transforms their roles for positive contributions.

Facilitates leadership by the Self, promoting calm and clarity.

Crucial for overall mental health improvement.

# IFS Firefighters

**Intervention:** Firefighters act quickly to extinguish emotional pain or discomfort from exiled parts.

**Distraction:** They often employ distracting behaviors to pull attention away from distress.

**Impulsivity:** Firefighter responses can be impulsive and may include behaviors like substance abuse, binge-eating, or overworking.

**Intensity:** Their actions are usually more extreme and can be disruptive to everyday functioning.

**Short-term relief:** The focus is on immediate relief rather than long-term solutions.

**Protection:** Their primary goal is to protect the psyche from feeling the pain of wounded exiled parts.

**Conflict:** Firefighters can be in conflict with Managers, as their strategies often oppose the Managers' approaches to control and order.





# INNER CRITIC

A harsh inner voice  
that criticizes and  
devalues, keeping  
you in check but  
potentially  
going too far.

# The 8 Cs in IFS

**Calmness:** The ability to maintain a sense of inner peace and tranquility.

**Curiosity:** A non-judgmental interest in understanding one's internal experiences and parts.

**Clarity:** The ability to see situations and internal parts with clearness and understanding.

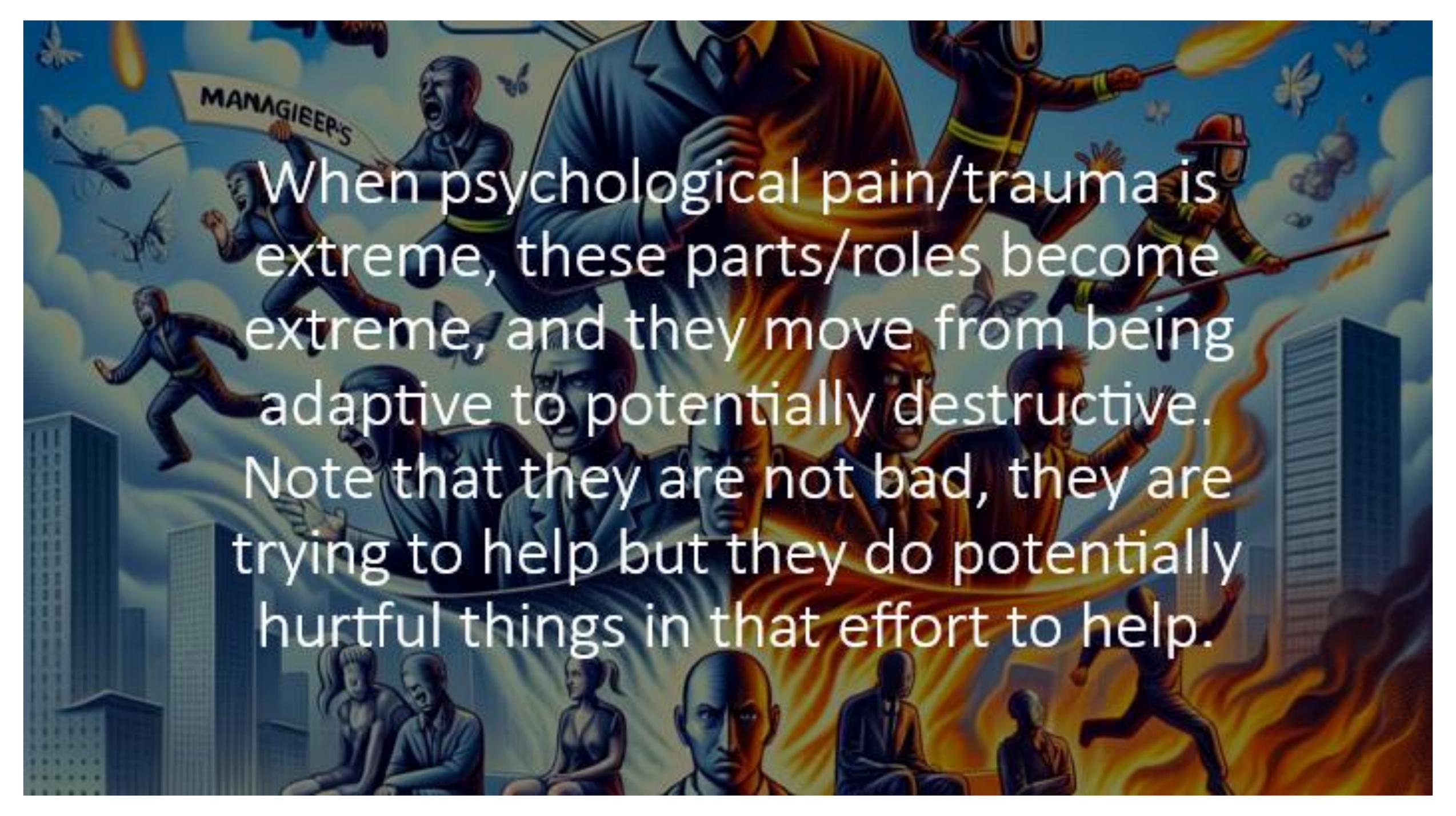
**Compassion:** A deep caring and empathy for oneself and one's parts, even those in pain or causing problems.

**Confidence:** A strong belief in oneself and the ability to handle what comes up inside.

**Courage:** The bravery to confront painful and challenging parts or memories.

**Creativity:** The innovative and imaginative energy to heal and transform one's parts.

**Connectedness:** A sense of being in harmony with all parts and feeling connected to others.

A surreal illustration depicting a city on fire. In the center, a large, glowing figure of a man in a suit, representing a manager, stands amidst the flames. To his right, a firefighter in full gear is running with a hose. On the left, another man in a suit is running, holding a banner that says "MANAGIEER'S". The background shows a city skyline with tall buildings, some of which are on fire. The sky is filled with butterflies and falling debris. In the foreground, several people are sitting on the ground, looking distressed or sad. The overall scene conveys a sense of chaos and the impact of extreme psychological pain or trauma on different roles in society.

When psychological pain/trauma is extreme, these parts/roles become extreme, and they move from being adaptive to potentially destructive. Note that they are not bad, they are trying to help but they do potentially hurtful things in that effort to help.

**PILLAR FOUR**  
**SPIRITUALITY**  
**AND FAITH**



# Spirituality & Faith in Christ

- Science can explain wounds, but only Christ redeems them.
- Developmental trauma etches negative core beliefs into the default mode network (I'm not lovable, I'm not valuable, I don't matter).
- These become filters shaping every perception and relationship — a destructive confirmation bias.
- Scripture rewrites the truth:
- “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3) → You are lovable.
- “You are worth more than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6–7) → You are valuable.
- “See what great love the Father has lavished on us... that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1) → You matter.
- Faith is the anchor: science shows neuroplasticity, but God provides the new story.
- “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF SPIRITUALITY



Adolescents raised in a spiritual environment were 80% less likely to experience substance dependence or addiction.

They were 60% less likely to develop Major Depressive Disorder.

Girls were 70% less likely to engage in sexual risk taking.

Spiritual adolescents were 50% less likely to experience suicidality.

# Spirituality as a Powerful Protective Factor

Based on Dr. Lisa Miller's research

Children and adolescents raised with meaningful spiritual or religious involvement experience strong mental health protection:

- ✓ **80%** less likely to develop substance dependence or abuse
- ✓ **70%** less likely to engage in sexual risk-taking (in girls)
- ✓ **60%** less likely to develop Major Depressive Disorder
- ✓ **50%** less likely to experience suicidality

“Spiritual development is not just good for the soul, it’s powerfully protective for the mind.”

— Dr. Lisa Miller

# Emotional Frequencies and Health

## Unresolved Toxic Shame **Kills** US!

(Hawkins, 2014; 2020)

**Shame (20) and guilt (30)** are seen as the heaviest emotions and are the lowest in energy where we feel contracted and stuck.

In contrast, emotions like **love (500) and joy (540)** are lighter, with more energy and movement, creating a sense of openness and lightness.



700+	Enlightenment
600	Peace
540	Joy
500	Love
400	Reason
350	Acceptance
310	Willingness
250	Neutrality
200	Courage
175	Pride
150	Anger
125	Desire
100	Fear
75	Grief
50	Apathy
30	Guilt
20	Shame

# The Bottom Line

Trauma may write its scars on our bodies, but Christ rewrites our story. Trauma may have stolen years, but Christ restores eternity. We are not defined by our wounds—we are defined by His victory.

