

Flashbacks

Many people who have been through traumatic experiences live with flashbacks. They are a common symptom of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder & Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

When flashbacks happen, you suddenly feel as if you're reliving a traumatic experience. It can be difficult to distinguish reality from the flashback. Grounding techniques, such as holding something very soft or coarse or smelling something with a strong scent like lavender can help you to stay in the here & now.

Unfortunately flashbacks aren't controllable, only manageable. Managing them with grounding techniques like I mentioned is very helpful to get you through them. Also, the more you heal, often the less frequently they happen.

Since I have C-PTSD & flashbacks, I decided to learn all I could about them. Might as well since they're a part of my life. So, I prayed about it & God showed me some things.

Flashbacks show you what areas you need healing in. Your brain is trying to come to terms with what happened, which is why the flashback happened. So in that way, they can be helpful. Once you see the problem, then you can deal with it & heal.

They also can enable you to feel emotions that you couldn't feel, let alone process, at the time of the trauma. During a traumatic event, you're just trying to survive. Processing your emotions aren't a priority—surviving is. When you have a flashback, it's well after the trauma is over. Maybe that is a sign that it's time to deal with the trauma.

Flashbacks also are a good reminder for why you're low or no contact with your narcissistic parent. After I blocked my parents' phone number after months of no contact from them, my father apparently called. He couldn't reach me so he sent his flying monkeys after me to tell me to call him. Considering his age & failing health, I honestly had a tough time not calling him at first because I felt so guilty. Thank God I have a loving God & good friends who reminded me why I blocked his number in the first place to get me through the worst of it, but I also had a few flashbacks. They really helped me to remember exactly why I need to stay away from my parents. They showed me exactly how abusive & dysfunctional they are.

I know flashbacks are extremely painful to deal with, but if you allow yourself to learn & heal from them, at least that pain won't be in vain. If they're going to happen anyway, you might as well make them work for you, yanno?

If you're unsure what you're supposed to learn or do after a flashback happens, then pray. God will show you what the purpose of it coming to your mind at this time is.

I also recommend keeping a journal. Writing things down gives you something to look back on. It reminds you of things you may have forgotten, offers you strength when you see how far you've come & something about seeing things in writing is extremely validating as well. A written record can be a wonderful thing! I found a free online diary site that can be password protected & private. I love it, because of the privacy it offers. There are many to choose from so if you opt to use an online diary, I'm sure a quick search will help you to find one you like.