

Nostalgia After Trauma

Today's podcast is about nostalgia after trauma.

The definition of nostalgia is a longing for the past, in particular a time that is associated with good memories. People who have experienced trauma may have a predilection for having an appreciation for nostalgia more than the average person.

When a person experiences trauma, such as growing up with abusive parents, often times as adults, they long for certain things that take them back to a happy time in their life, in particular in their childhood. I admit to being one of these people. I have a small collection of toys from my childhood that I love, & I regularly listen to music from my teen years in the 80's. These things bring me a lot of joy.

Eventually though I thought this was strange behavior on my part. My childhood wasn't exactly the best time of my life, so why would I want reminders of it? Finally I realized why. The answer is simple. Security.

Whatever trauma you have experienced, it changed you & your perception of life. That is how trauma works. It can make you feel very insecure & skeptical, even cynical. A natural coping skill after trauma is to want to find some sense of security wherever you can. Sometimes finding that security manifests as mentally revisiting a time when you felt comfortable & in control.

Consider this. When growing up with narcissistic parents, you have very little control, especially if your narcissistic parents were the engulfing type who had to control every aspect of your life. Those few rare moments of having control over your life felt empowering. For me, my most empowering times of my younger days involved music. Either listening to the radio while alone in my room as a teen or when I drove my first car while listening to any music I wanted to. Now that I'm an adult, music still gives me that feeling of empowerment. I frequently still listen to similar music as I did in my younger days. I also have added more music to my repertoire that makes me feel that same feeling of empowerment. And you know something? There is nothing wrong with that!

There is also a comfort in knowing that not every single thing in your past was terrible, that there were some good times too. Thinking that there was no good in your life is a dreadful feeling! It can feel as if your life had no purpose. Reminding yourself of the good times, even if they were few, is very comforting.

Not to mention, only thinking of the bad times is simply depressing! Reminding yourself of good times is much less depressing & conducive to a better mood.

If you find yourself longing for certain things from your past, please know there is nothing wrong with you. Even if your past was full of terrible & traumatic events, there is nothing bad about waxing nostalgic for the few good times. Just enjoy the

nostalgia when you can. Listen to those old songs & remember your first slow dance or sharing songs with your childhood best friend. If you see a toy at a flea market that you used to enjoy playing with as a child, why not buy it? When you see it, it might just make you smile, & that is a lovely gift to give yourself.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!