

What Motivates Resilience After Trauma?

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Abstract

The author presents her view that resilience following trauma can only occur when three unconscious internal motivators (Survia, Passia, and Transcia) take turns or rotate in affecting our attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors through our ego states. Survia is concerned with personal survival, Passia with the survival of our species by supporting creativity, and Transcia with our need to sleep and to transcend everyday reality. Typical attributes of each motivator are listed, and a diagram depicts the relationship of motivators to ego states. Using examples drawn from her own and others' experience, the author discusses how, for someone who has suffered trauma, Survia may become overly dominant and the smooth rotation of motivators is thus impeded. When attributes pertaining to Passia are stimulated, rotation of motivators and consequent emotional balance are resumed and resilience becomes possible.

The word "trauma" usually refers to one or more shocks to a person's system. It might be a one-time event with pervasive aftereffects, such as an accident or the beginning of a life-threatening illness. Or it may represent repeated and anticipated shocks (as in chronic illness, continuous child abuse, or wartime situations). *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2003, p. 1331) indicates that the word "trauma" comes from the ancient Greek, meaning "wound" or damage to the organism.

When I was a child, our housekeeper, who spoke popular Greek, used the word "trauma" to mean fear, for instance, in telling me not to feel "trauma" when there was thunder during a storm. The switch in the meaning of the word "trauma" from "wound" to "fear" in popular parlance may reflect the human experience that the emotion of fear, an attribute of the survival motivator (which I will describe later) generates

fight/flight/freeze reactions to defend or protect the self from being wounded. Thereby, the individual's energy resources are mobilized if there is impending danger.

Unfortunately, in many cases the imprint of certain traumatic events is so powerful that even after the original reasons for mobilizing the organism to action no longer exist, the residual anxiety persists, and mortal danger continues to be anticipated. How fast and how well a particular individual can overcome this residue of anxiety, or posttraumatic syndrome, and revert to his or her previous way of functioning—assuming the person was emotionally balanced in the first place—depends a great deal on his or her capacity for resilience.

The term "resilience" is borrowed from industry. It suggests the ability to bounce back to a previous condition. For instance, the term is used to indicate how well a tufted carpet will revert to its original condition after someone steps on it. Of course, this varies among carpets, and it also depends on the previous condition of the carpet. This capacity varies even more among people. A person's resilience after trauma depends not only on the kind of trauma and how extensive it was, but also on his or her genetic endowment, previous life experience, and physical and emotional condition before the trauma.

A terrible example of a young man who was incapable of resilience after returning from fighting in Iraq was recently reported in the *New York Times* (Sontag & Alvarez, 2008):

In the summer of 2005, Mathew Sepi, a lonely 20-year-old Iraq combat veteran, plagued by nightmares about an Iraqi civilian killed by his unit, desperately wanted liquor to help him sleep. Even though it was late at night and he lived in a seedy neighborhood, he decided to go to a neighborhood convenience store.

To feel safe, he took his AK-47 rifle under his coat. Still legally under the age (21) to purchase alcoholic beverages, he

paid a stranger to buy him beer, and scurried down an alley, ignoring shouts about trespassing on gang turf. Two gang members, both large and both armed, stepped out of the darkness. . . . In the end, one gang member lay dead, the other wounded. Mathew crept home, loaded 180 rounds of ammunition into his car and drove until police lights flashed behind him. . . . The diminutive young man said he had been ambushed and then he had, reflexively, “engaged the targets.”

He shook. He also cried. Nonetheless, he was booked. (p. 1)

By contrast, there is the example of amazing resilience demonstrated by Viktor Frankl. An Austrian psychiatrist who directed the “Suicide Pavillion” of a Vienna hospital between 1935 and 1937, he lost his position because he was a Jew after the Nazis took over Austria in 1938. He was deported to a concentration camp in 1942, and the coat in which he hid the manuscript he had worked on for years was taken away. After he was released in 1945 at the end of the war, Frankl found out that his wife and parents had all died in other camps. Rather than sink into depression, he busied himself with rewriting his monumental work on suicide prevention and got it published. He also resumed his professional activity, developed his theory of logotherapy, and published numerous additional books until he died in 1997 at the age of 92.

Can we make any sense out of the contrast between the way these two individuals functioned after they were released from immediate danger and the consequent fear and anxiety with which they had been living? It is still not possible to show exactly how our conscious and unconscious processes actually operate to give us the feeling of wanting to live and the ability to function relatively well even after pain or suffering. Nevertheless, there are some processes we can identify that may be important in relation to our potential for resilience after trauma.

With the development of the frontal lobe in our brain and our own particular consciousness, we humans have evolved the capacity for complex thinking and a related elaborate memory system—the same system that can also contribute to emotional distress after trauma, long

after danger has abated and physical healing has taken place. Do we, also, have compensatory aptitudes for resilience so that we can resume living with emotional balance even after trauma?

To begin, we first need to see if it is possible to define “living.” The French philosopher Henri Bergson (1907/1911) came up with the term “*élan vital*” (“the vital impetus” or “life drive”) for what he described as “the current of consciousness that has penetrated matter, giving rise to living bodies and determining the course of evolution” (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1972, p. 295). I think this is as good a name as any for the strange, mysterious “energy” that animates all creatures from birth to death. This is not a passive system, but one that operates actively in each individual to maintain his or her survival and that of the species. It animates all of our physical and mental functions and “keeps us going.” However, the joyful sense of “feeling alive,” so necessary for resilience, requires further consideration.

How does the “vital impetus” function for us humans? My own concepts of the three motivators, developed in the course of extensive clinical and personal experience and grounded in the theories of Freud, Berne, Frankl, and others, have been previously presented over the years (English, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008; English & Pischetsrieder, 1996). What follows here is a summary and an elaboration of material presented on this topic in the July 2008 *Transactional Analysis Journal* (English, 2008).

Our own “vital impetus” operates for the same unconscious purposes as those of other animals, namely (1) personal survival, (2) survival of the species, and (3) escape from daily pressures (e.g., by sleep). However, through the vagaries of evolution, for us humans these purposes are furthered in a more complex way by means of three categories of unconscious circuits that I refer to as “unconscious motivators.” Each motivator may bring on, within us, one or more of its particular attributes (i.e., impulses, attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors) that correspond to its evolutionary function.

To represent these three motivators and to show how each has different functions, we can

imagine them as three dancing Olympic goddesses that take turns in influencing us at various times, the way the ancient Greeks gave substance to the mysterious forces beyond their conscious control that brought on, within them, particular feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

1. “Survia” cares for the survival of the individual. She may help us feel satisfied, for instance, when we enjoy a good meal, or she may offer pressure or stress with fear and pain to make sure we attend to our survival. She is also active in getting us to work regularly, to transact with others for literal or symbolic stroke exchanges, and to structure time.

2. “Passia” wants the survival of the species. Passia supports sexual procreation and parental tendencies to produce and care for children. Even certain religions that look askance at sexuality nevertheless emphasize consummating marital sex in order to have as many progeny as possible. However, over the millennia, sexual procreation alone would not have sufficed to maintain the human species. We would have become extinct, devoured by more powerful animals, were it not for the fact that for us humans, “pro-creativity” evolved to mean not only generating children, but also generating all the discoveries and inventions that have benefited our species through the ages—from harnessing the power of fire, to exploring the world, to creating the increasingly complex tools we live with nowadays. Accordingly, Passia’s attributes and manifestations (behaviors), such as curiosity and risk taking, which may seem purposeless and simply related to fun, are at the root of certain discoveries and inventions, such as those generated by explorers and inventors of the past, often at the risk of their own health and personal survival. Thus, Passia encourages us to disregard strokes and corresponding time structure when we are involved in exciting pursuits of whatever kind, even when they are of no immediate personal value.

For example, Craig Ventner (2007), one of the pioneers in plotting the human genome, claims that his own risk-taking tendencies were essential for his scientific success, although they led him to much trouble and danger during his youth. In a recent interview about his biography and his discoveries, he stated that a

risk-taking gene in humans may be a part of significant mutations in our species that have yet to be studied.

3. “Transcia” helps us to transcend, that is, to move away from daily pressures. Like other animals, we humans also need to restore our energy through sleep and thereby to escape temporarily from conventional time structure and reality. However, we have also evolved additional ways to transcend the grind of daily cares through spirituality, meditation, art, music, and other ways of detaching from concerns and activities promoted by Survia and Passia.

As is obvious from these descriptions, our three motivators (or imaginary goddesses) are likely to influence us in very different ways, so at times we may be pulled in opposite directions and experience inner conflict. For instance, Survia, who seeks to ensure safety, may bring on fear, sometimes stimulating fight/flight responses to real or assumed danger. By contrast, Passia is indifferent to danger and may actually promote dangerous risk taking, and Transcia may encourage obliviousness, for better or worse. On the other hand, sometimes the influence of two motivators may combine. For instance, a bread-winning activity for Survia may also offer excitement for Passia.

Essentially, although the differences among the motivators and their functions may lead to various inner conflicts or to social difficulties or irrational behaviors, most of the time our emotional balance is maintained by the fact that our motivators rotate or take turns influencing us at different times, just the way our blood circulates in our body in order to serve different organs.

Table 1 presents a list of some typical attributes and manifestations pertinent to each motivator. An attribute can be experienced or felt somatically or unconsciously and may lead to corresponding preconscious or conscious manifestations in any one of our ego states in the form of wishes, impulses, inner calls to action, or overt behaviors. There are many more attributes and manifestations (i.e., feelings, thoughts, and behaviors) than are shown in Table 1, but it provides a general sense of the difference between how one motivator may affect us at a given time in contrast to another.

Table 1 Typical Attributes, Tendencies, and Manifestations for Each Motivator	
“Survia”: for personal survival	<p>All bodily feelings or physiological reactions that signal essential physical survival needs for nourishment or elimination of bodily waste, shelter, clothing, protection, safety, and strokes. Thus: hunger, thirst, need to urinate or defecate, bodily discomfort, pain, feeling cold, hot, sweaty, etc.</p> <p>Also: fear, anxiety, shame, guilt, pride, sadness, disgust, longing, etc. as emotions and/or manifestations such as trembling, blushing, crying, etc.</p> <p>Also: fight/flight/freeze reactions to real or assumed danger</p> <p>Also: stroke needs, requests, transactions, communications, wishes, and efforts for affection, admiration, power, and control (of self or others)</p> <p>Also: greed, competitiveness, gluttony, covetousness, envy, jealousy, defensiveness, arrogance, etc.</p>
“Passia”: for survival of the species or creative passion	<p>Sexuality in many forms, as well as all tendencies that demand free expression, self-determination, freedom, sense of “meaning,” challenge, “going outside the box,” hope</p> <p>Also: fun, laughter, humor, sarcasm, etc.</p> <p>Also: whatever leads to discovery, invention, creativity, and procreation (physical or symbolic), whether intentional or not, such as curiosity, interest in exploration, playfulness, excitement, enthusiasm, optimism, courage, sexual arousal, idealism, risk taking, stimulus hunger, interest in new paradigms in adventure, experimentation, having children, concern for progeny, or about gifts to posterity, imagination, pleasure</p> <p>Also: determined (even obsessive) involvement with projects or scientific or artistic creation or research, concern about future generations, impracticality, disdain of conventionality and of strokes</p>
“Transcia”: for escape from daily pressure, for transcendence	<p>All broad “other-worldly,” spiritual needs beyond concerns of the two other motivators or beyond reality, including meditation, contemplation, and relaxation Thus, placidity, calmness, peacefulness, restfulness, “oceanic” feelings, quietude, passivity, broad philosophical views, withdrawal, harmony with nature, interest in ecology, appreciation of music and art, but also attraction to death (morbidity)</p>

It is important to remember that since motivators operate unconsciously as complex psychosomatic networks, their attributes cannot be evaluated as good or bad in themselves, especially because a useful attribute can become harmful if exaggerated (e.g., hunger can become greed). We can only be aware of any attribute or corresponding wish if it manifests and becomes conscious in one of our ego states or is acted out as overt behavior. At that point, it may be evaluated as positive (i.e., benefiting the individual in a particular situation) or negative (i.e., harmful to the individual in a particular situation).

Figure 1 shows the three motivators in our unconscious. They overlap because all three are aspects of the “vital impetus” and use its emotional energy in turn. The lines shooting upward toward preconscious and conscious ego states are meant to show that the attributes of our motivators can manifest preconsciously or consciously in any one of our ego states.

Many of us have a preferred motivator that comes on more frequently and is more active than the other two. It accounts for some basic personality differences among us. For example:

- A preference for Survia makes for a cautious individual who cares about health

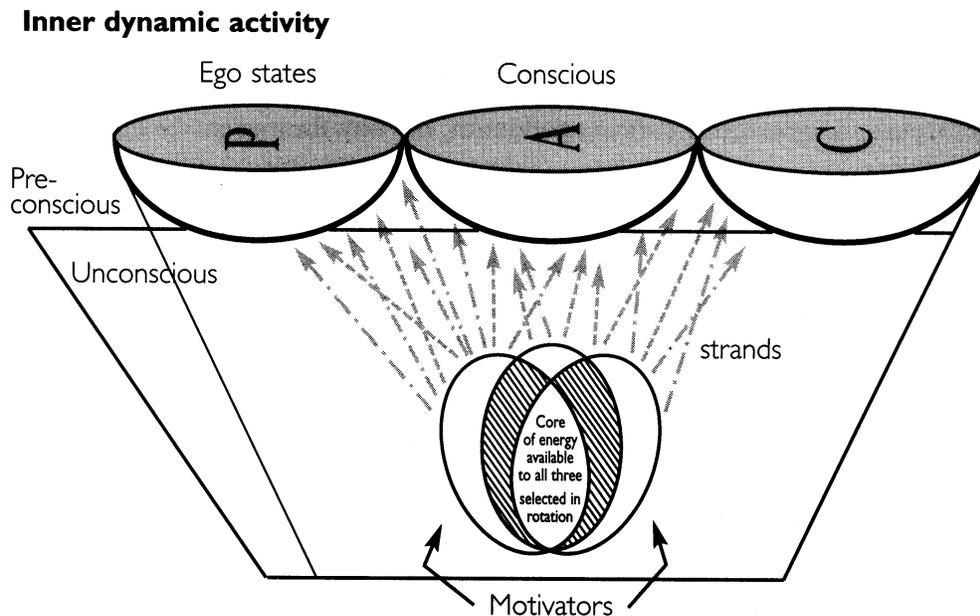


Figure 1
The Motivating of Ego States (from English, 2003, p. 67)

and life, who is more open to stroke exchanges than others, but who sometimes is more vulnerable or aggressive if he or she fears danger.

- A preference for Passia makes for a more adventurous person or one who will become committed to projects for the future, regardless of effort, cost, or danger.
- A preference for Transcia will make for a more spiritual person or someone who is more peace loving (or passive) than most but also more likely to be attracted to death.

Smooth movement or rotation among the influence of our motivators must occur much of the time, even if we prefer one or another motivator, because that is the only way that emotional balance is maintained with a sense of feeling OK and the consequent ability to make rational decisions from the Adult ego state. This means that while we might operate under the influence of one motivator at one moment in time—perhaps in combination with another

while the third is dormant—a transition is necessary whereby one or both recede to the background as the third comes to the fore. This is the only way that there can be some resilience, even after a traumatic experience.

If one motivator becomes so dominant that the flow of rotation is stopped, even if that motivator combines with another but they forcefully exclude the third, then it is as though the gears maintaining emotional balance grind to a halt, and the entire energy system goes awry.

Unfortunately, trauma, ensuing stress, and an insecure environment will result in the overarching dominance of Survia, with her attributes of fear, anxiety, horror, pain, and defensiveness. In such circumstances, it is likely that uncontrolled fight/flight/freeze reactions may occur unless they are forestalled or offset by massive protection and strokes to satiate Survia. Only then will her anxious grip on the person's psyche be reduced sufficiently to allow for renewal of relatively normal rotation among

the three motivators. If this does not happen, the person's organism ends up out of balance. After that, resilience is impossible, even if massive strokes are offered later.

For example, returning to Mathew, because he was considered qualified for military service before he went to Iraq, we can assume that he would not have become a murderer had his war experience not caused Survia to become his dominant motivator. On returning to the United States, when he was alone in an unfamiliar neighborhood and thus deprived of strokes from others to gratify Survia, her attributes of fear and anxiety were exacerbated. Even when Transcia came on, instead of calming him with sleep and bringing on Passia to produce pleasant dreams, apparently Mathew kept having nightmares about the dead Iraqi civilian. Survia thus maintained dominance. Mathew sensed that he needed a change of perspective, and some liquor. Indeed, this may have dulled the pressure from Survia and brought on Transcia for relatively peaceful sleep. (This is why traumatized individuals often seek relief with liquor or drugs, which, sadly, when relied on, may eventually bring on another form of imbalance.) So Mathew went out to obtain the liquor, but he was so much in the grip of anxiety that he needed to take his gun along for reassurance. This might have helped him temporarily had he not heard the shouts, which almost automatically brought on a defensive fight/flight reaction to shoot and flee, with the terrible consequences mentioned earlier.

Perhaps had sufficient compensatory protection and strokes been available to him on discharge, Mathew might not have needed his gun for support after his traumatic experiences at war. Still, in view of his nightmares, we cannot know whether actual resilience to the innocence of the 20-year-old he had been before he deployed to Iraq would have been possible. This is where the human ability for memory sometimes serves an individual badly, for Mathew's terrifying memories may have prevented his motivators from rotating harmoniously, and resilience is impossible when such rotation has not resumed.

How was Viktor Frankl able to manage during and after 3 horrible years in three successive

concentration camps? His autobiographical book *Man's Search for Meaning* (Frankl, 1946/1997) offers some answers. For one thing, Frankl was determined to survive in order to rewrite his first book and to publish observations he made about himself and his fellow inmates. Thus, for him, Survia frequently connected to Passia, with her attribute of hope for the future. Whenever he could, Frankl obtained scraps of paper on which he wrote. Clearly, he could draw on Passia at those moments rather than remain stuck only with Survia, as would have been likely in the concentration camp environment. Also, Transcia could come on thanks to his belief that a transcendent God in each of us offers spiritual freedom, so he actively tried to dissuade some fellow concentration camp victims from suicide. In this way, all three of his motivators took turns in influencing him rather than Survia alone, and he maintained his emotional balance in spite of terrible deprivation.

Probably even before he was deported, Passia was Frankl's preferred motivator, so it was all the more possible for her to be active for him in the camps. Her attributes typically offer hope and enthusiasm with disregard of Survia's fears, however bleak the circumstances. For instance, when prisoners had to stand outside in the courtyard for hours on end, Frankl pretended he was there to give a lecture to a large imaginary audience, and he concentrated on improving and editing the text in his mind rather than on how cold it was.

Presumably, Frankl also hoped that his family would survive, just as he had. After he was liberated, it must have been terrible to hear of their deaths. This was an additional trauma. Nevertheless Passia's influence remained strong, and Frankl did not lose sight of the goal that had kept him going: to reconstruct his destroyed manuscript and have it published. As he became fully involved in that project, he gained the resilience to return to his previous professional life. Eventually, he even remarried. This corresponds with my assumption that Passia continued to be powerful for him throughout his life.

Frankl's own interpretation of what kept him alive was that he felt there was "meaning" to his life, even in difficult circumstances. In the

years that followed his release, Frankl elaborated on his concept that human existence is always directed toward something or someone other than the self. It is this that gives a sense of meaning to offset the existential vacuum and ensuing boredom or depression in which some people find themselves (Frankl, 1995).

From my perspective, this translates into my idea that for each of us, it is thanks to *Passia*—the motivator that enables a person to have hope and be involved with the future—that resilience can be achieved when trauma brings on *Survia* so forcefully that smooth rotation among the motivators may be blocked. About this I want to add a personal story of how resilience came about for me unexpectedly at a time when I was getting ready to die.

In October 1999, due to an accident, I suffered third-degree near-fatal burns on a large part of my body. This necessitated six skin grafts and 2½ months in the burn unit of a hospital. Obviously, it was quite a trauma, but I was given much morphine, highly skilled treatment, care, and enormous attention and strokes from the hospital staff and relatives and friends. So, in spite of the devastating physical injuries, I did not suffer much.

When I was discharged around the end of December, I was given a good supply of *Oxycontin* to alleviate the pain I still felt. Unfortunately, the discharging doctor did not consider that drug dependence can turn to addiction. Rather than warn me early on about side effects, or supervise how I was doing with the prescribed medication, he willingly kept renewing the prescriptions to alleviate the headaches and fatigue that kept increasing. So, even though I was cured physically from the trauma of burns and surgery, I kept taking ever more *Oxycontin* and *Vicodin*. As happens with addictive drugs that offer brief chemical “highs” followed by lengthy “down” feelings (thereby excluding *Passia*), it was only *Survia* and *Transcia* who influenced me when I moved to a retirement community where all my physical needs were taken care of. Outwardly, I seemed well enough, but actually I functioned like a zombie, dozing on and off much of the time, ready to die peacefully with the benevolent support of *Transcia*.

One day in March 2000 I was jarred awake by a long-distance call from the director of an institute in Germany where I regularly ran workshops in June. As soon as we were connected, he launched into an angry diatribe about how I was supposed to have sent him my workshop descriptions in January. Not only had I failed to do so, I had not even bothered to notify him of my new address and telephone number. This was unbelievably irresponsible of me, he complained; he had had such a hard time locating me, and on and on. When he finally stopped, I told him about my accident in my weak, tired voice. There was a long silence at the other end of the telephone line. This man is usually proud of being very proper and considerate. Now he must have felt terrible about having scolded me so vehemently. Then he said, abruptly, “Well, the program is already printed for you to come in June. Maybe you can make it by then. I’ll call you again in May. Good-bye.” And before I could protest, he was off the line.

Suddenly, I was overcome with laughter, picturing that normally courteous man, now red in the face, totally embarrassed about how he had “attacked” a pathetic, sick old lady! I laughed and laughed as I had not laughed in months. And then, unexpectedly, I realized that I did not need the drugs to soothe my headaches. Could I be OK by May? From that moment on, I did not take another pill, even though for a few weeks I had terrible withdrawal symptoms. Yet sometimes I also had strange feelings of elation, as a little story I used to read to my children kept coming to my mind about *The Little Engine that Could* (Piper, 1930/2002), which was puffing away and repeating, “I think I can . . . I think I can . . . Yes, I can!” (The story is of a small train whose passionate belief that she could do so enabled her to pull a train load of toys up a mountain for delivery to children who were anticipating them.)

Apparently, my spontaneous laughter brought on *Passia* and dislodged *Survia* from dominance. All of a sudden I felt elated by the challenge that I might hold on through the ordeal of withdrawal and conduct my workshop in June. Thus, with *Passia* having come on, rotation among my motivators resumed, and, therefore, resilience took hold. I was well enough to do

the planned workshop in June, even though I was fearful right up to the moment it started. Afterward, I was able to continue living my life as I had before the life-threatening burns and addiction.

Sonia, a friend, told me about a similar coincidence that saved her life after traumatic rape she was subjected to many years before. When she reported it to the police, she had a required physical examination, during which she was additionally mishandled. She was then forced to meet with a mental health person. She was so disgusted and horrified by all that had happened to her that she decided to kill herself as soon as she got home.

According to Sonia, what saved her from her intended suicide was, paradoxically, the incompetence of the young, inexperienced would-be helper assigned to her. She had been so flustered by what had happened to Sonia and so confused in trying to “help” her with stereotyped comments that Sonia burst out laughing and continued to laugh even as she walked out and even though she remained furious at the police. She went to buy the liquor that she planned to use with a large supply of pills she had at home, but she was surprised to notice that she kept remembering how totally incompetent and pathetic her assigned “helper” had been, which caused her to again start laughing uncontrollably. She thought perhaps now she was hysterical, but even so, she herself would certainly have known better how one should help a rape victim! With that, she decided she still wanted to “do something” before killing herself.

Sonia told me that she felt a warm, supportive, competent person would not have stopped her from her determination to kill herself because she felt so disgraced and guilty about the rape. She was sure that her decisive switch away from plans of suicide occurred because the incompetent “helper” had triggered her “funny bone” along with her anger, which somehow mobilized her will to constructive action. Indeed, she soon started an after-school program for teenagers.

Fortunately, both Sonia and I had a particular sense of humor that brought on Passia. We were thus saved from probable death by chance, for

it is not possible to “will” oneself to bring on Passia when Survia is firmly entrenched and overly dominant, even to the point of combining with Transcia to generate morbidity! Nor is it easily possible for others to deliberately bring on laughter in someone else. Yet as therapists or counselors we are called on to have some ideas about how to bring on emotional resilience in someone after trauma.

Because emotional balance can only be achieved if all three motivators rotate, and trauma brings on the exclusive dominance of Survia (sometimes with morbid aspects of Transcia), the challenge for therapists and counselors is to stimulate Passia in someone after trauma in order to achieve some resilience. For Sonia and me it was laughter, amusement, and challenge, as attributes of Passia, that brought her to the fore and prompted the rotation of our motivators again, but I doubt that someone else could have purposefully made either one of us to laugh this way.

In his book, Frankl (1946/1997) offered case examples of how he was able to help many depressed patients by teasing out what was meaningful for them. Indeed, a sense of meaning is an important attribute of Passia. Perhaps, in addition to offering strokes, a talented therapist might similarly be able to remind a traumatized client of what is meaningful for him or her as a way to bring on resilience after trauma. This is easier to do with those who tend to prefer Passia and/or Transcia in the normal course of events, and harder—sometimes impossible—with those who depended too much on Survia even before the trauma. Such individuals will stay in alarm mode and reinforce it by repeatedly bringing forth corresponding memories. Still, it is worth trying. Of course, Passia has many additional attributes besides laughter, amusement, challenge, and a sense of meaning. Perhaps it would be easier to stimulate another of these (e.g., curiosity) in a given individual.

The same Greek housekeeper I referred to at the beginning of this article, who taught me the word “trauma” when I was 6 years old, intuitively used folk wisdom to elicit resilience in me after I suffered from some trauma occasioned by a heavy thunderstorm that shook the house while my parents were away. First she

gave Survia her due by hugging and soothing me. But after a while she realized more was needed. She pretended to wonder aloud, during the storm, about the time difference between lightening and the sound of thunder. Does one always follow the other? In what order? Shall we check the next time there is lightening? Soon she had me fascinated, anticipating thunder with the excitement of a scientific investigator. To this day, any time I am awakened by a storm, I find myself smiling with the pleasant memory as well as shuddering slightly with anxiety.

Recently, on a commuter train, I had the chance to test the question of whether you can help awaken Passia after a mini-trauma by stimulating curiosity and challenge. On the aisle near me a toddler was bravely trying to walk forward when the train suddenly jerked. Boom! Surprise! Shock! The child landed on his behind and this set off a howl. Mother came to the rescue, picked him up, and took him in her arms, where he snuggled and continued whimpering. He looked like he might stay there for the rest of the ride. Mischievously, I dangled my fancy key chain with many keys on it across the aisle. He stretched out to reach it. I pulled it away, still dangling it. Eventually, yes indeed! He got off the comfort of his mother's lap and took the risk of another accident by toddling over to get the keys. Viva Passia! Without her, life is no fun.

True, it may be easier to provoke a young child to curiosity and to get him to mini-resilience after mini-trauma than to deal with a seriously traumatized adult, but at this point this is all I can offer to substantiate experimentally my conviction that it is Passia who somehow oversees resilience after trauma, if only she can be brought forth.

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