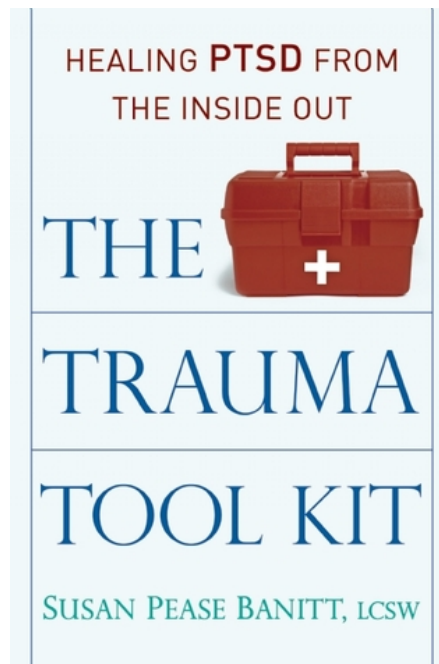




Trauma Tool Kit: Healing PTSD from the Inside Out

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In 2010 the Department of Veterans Affairs cited 171,423 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans diagnosed with PTSD, out of 593,634 total patients treated. That's almost 30 percent; other statistics show 35 percent. Nor, of course, is PTSD limited to the military. In twenty years as a therapist, Susan Pease Banitt has treated trauma in patients ranging from autistic children to women with breast cancer; from underage sex slaves to adults incapacitated by early childhood abuse. Doctors she interviewed in New York report that, even before 9/11, most of their patients had experienced such extreme stress that they had suffered physical and mental breakdowns. Those doctors agree with Pease Banitt that stress is the disease of our times. At the 2009 Evolution of Psychotherapy conference Jack Kornfield noted, "We need a trauma tool kit." Here it is.

Most people, Pease Banitt says, experience trauma as a terminal blow to their deepest sense of self. Her techniques restore a sense of wholeness at the core level from which all healing springs. The uniqueness of her book lies in its diversity and accessibility. She assesses the values and limitations of traditional and alternative therapies and suggests methods that are universally available. Almost anybody can

Trauma Tool Kit: Healing PTSD from the Inside Out Details

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From Reader Review Trauma Tool Kit: Healing PTSD from the Inside Out for online ebook

Emily says

The book is true to its title - it is a great list of possible tools for people who have experienced and want to heal from trauma. As a clinician who focuses on trauma, many (if not most) of the tools were already familiar to me; however, I can see this book being very useful as a quick reference or for a trauma survivor exploring their options. The tools were not written in such a way that all tools could really be used to their full potential without the assistance of a therapist, but it's a great starting point and resource that is otherwise unavailable for survivors themselves.

Kathy says

I must begin by disclosing that I won a free copy of this book through Goodreads First Reads. That being said:

While this book contains a lot of information that may be very helpful to those just beginning to understand PTSD, it doesn't really introduce anything "new". It includes basically the same things I've already learned within the last year of therapy and basic research into my condition. that's not to say that the things in this book aren't important for those dealing with PTSD. The truth is these things, this information is very important. It's just that, while this book may put these things in new words, new terms, it's not actually any new information that most haven't already garnered from other sources. It would definitely be helpful to those just learning about PTSD and how to cope with it, but is just another self-help book for those who have been dealing with PTSD for an extended period of time. An average resource overall.

Nor Finn says

Clear, simple, easy, friendly and insightful tips to help get through the PTSD struggle. Felt like the author "got it". Friendly language and good advice that can be used right now. So far I like this in my reference library to be close at hand for quick relief ideas .

Allcapps says

As I write this, I hesitate to give my full disclosure, [full disclosure: I work with Susan Pease Banitt] because I think some of you won't read my review, or will dismiss it. But I have read the book, and I do work for her, and I would not stay at a job I didn't in some way believe was for the sake of bettering the world.

As I write this, our world is falling apart.

Some reviews of The Trauma Tool Kit claim, "I know this already." But many of us do know this already. So then why does it seem no one is practicing it or heeding it?

I'm guilty of this.

It's easy to read through this book, or even pass by this book, because we think: I don't have PTSD or I know that or That book's not for me. Or maybe we're deterred by the Self-Help section.

And yet, that's where we are in the world—having to help ourselves.

As I read the book, the revelation I had was twofold: First, I realized that I just might have suffered some trauma. I have been fortunate in the low degree of my trauma, but it has continued to affect me still to this day. And just taking that moment to think, and to look inside, has made a difference in how I see my past, how I live in the moment, and make plans for the future. It's this kind of meditation and thoughtfulness in our lives that should be able to keep us from the savage culture we are becoming—nay, have become. We live in a traumatic lifetime. I think back on the horrors of the recent past. Think about it. Think about the 20th century—that amazing time of innovation, progress, war. Do you think we do not still carry trauma? Every single one of us?

Which leads me to my second revelation: We must all commit to fixing this now. The final tool in the toolkit, Embracing Wholeness, summarized everything I had been thinking while reading the book. Not only do people who have been diagnosed with PTSD need to find help—the rest of us need to help prioritize providing this help. PTSD needs to jump into the limelight, and not in the way it's been discussed in mainstream media; that is no help to anyone. The conversation needs to be changed, and it needs to be louder and it needs to be broader. We cannot continue to ignore what is becoming an epidemic. Because every time another of our young men or women is deployed into battle, every time another woman is beaten or raped, every time a young boy is molested—and when each of these atrocities is lied about, covered up, and hushed—our world suffers and surrenders.

Look around us—soldiers who are supposed to be fighting for freedom are being tried for murder. And the people who send them there don't want anyone to talk about the PTSD they are diagnosed with.

Women are being raped, and instead of finding the rapist, we are blaming the victim.

Children are being shot in our schools. And the children who survived will suffer a great trauma.

And when our children see all of this happening, that merely perpetuates the problem.

The media use PTSD as a way to get ratings, then turn around and use the most sensational and traumatic video from war and terror.

Do we not see a cycle here? Do we not want to stop it?

In the book, Susan says:

"[P]ost-traumatic stress engenders profound changes in the physical body, not only in the victims but also in the victims' children and grandchildren, down [through] generations. The health problems that follow PTSD, both physical and emotional, affect our society in myriad ways: health-care costs; lost wages; lost productivity; crime; loss of intelligence (cognitive function); dysfunctional interactions that prevent problem resolution in marriages, businesses, and politics, etc. PTSD is a problem that snowballs with each succeeding generation. We have collectively had our heads in the sand about the issue. Now it is time to end the avoidance. PTSD hurts. PTSD kills. **Untreated PTSD has the potential to unravel the very fabric of society.**"

If you know all the things in this book already, then share it with someone who doesn't. When you read it, did any of it remind you of anybody? If you don't know what's in this book, read it and find out.

Then use it. Use the tools Susan gives you. Use the tools you have.

One of the greatest tools we have as human race is communication. Read this book—then talk about it.

Lisa says

I am both a therapist and a survivor of trauma. . . I have read many books on this topic. I loved this book, as it has many good practical ideas to aid trauma survivors on their path to wellness. It delivers both empirical science and spiritual methods in the most compassionate way possible.

I have found that therapy for survivors is not a "one size fits all" method. What works for one person may be ineffective for another. Thank you Ms. Banitt . . . I am going to give some of your suggestions a try both personally and professionally. You are helping many with your thoughtful and compassionate work. :-)

Carmen Tracey says

I'll be entering a more comprehensive review of this book later, since I think it's deserving of a point-by-point rundown, but for now suffice to say that, despite its drawbacks (a too-credulous attitude toward alternative medicine, some benign-spirited but ultimately harmful cultural appropriation), this book is a wealth of information written by a compassionate, knowledgeable, and surprisingly funny author.

Shelley says

This book has a great title and I was hoping it would be a good resource. Unfortunately, it is mostly a mish-mosh of legitimate psychological techniques combined with New Age herbal and spiritual suggestions.

My professional opinion is that the following books are better for various types of trauma recovery:

It's My Life Now by Meg Dugan

The Emotionally Abused Woman and the Right to Innocence, both by Beverly Engel

The Verbally Abusive Relationship by Patricia Evans

Toxic Parents by Susan Forward

Outgrowing the Pain by Eliana Gil

Survivor's Guide to Sex by Staci Haines

Healing Developmental Trauma by Laurence Heller

Trauma and Recovery by Judith Herman

Shattered Assumptions by Ronnie Janoff-Bulman

In an Unspoken Voice by Peter Levine

Victims No Longer by Mike Lew

Your Inner Child of the Past by Hugh Missildine

Seeking Safety by Lisa Najavits

Childhood Disrupted by Donna Nakazawa

If You Had Controlling Parents by Dan Neuharth
The Unsayable by Annie Rogers
Integrating the Shattered Self by Nicki Roth
8 Keys to Safe Trauma Recovery by Babette Rothschild
Strong at the Broken Places by Linda Sanford
The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk
Complex PTSD by Pete Walker

There are other good ones too. Just wanted to give readers an idea of how many good books on trauma that exist. I've got 80 books on my trauma shelf.

Susan says

OK, I give up. I tried, I really, really tried to get into this book and to read it through but I got to page 64 and must put it down and move on to something more useful. Goodreads really does need an 'I tried to read this but could not finish it' button.

I just finished writing a really angry review on why I could not read this book. But that is not useful. My thoughts summarized:

- there is some decent 'Trauma 101' information here for those just learning about trauma and how it impacts people
- I appreciated that Banitt was thoughtful about how working on trauma can trigger responses in individuals. She realizes that even though people are working on healing exercises, those going through the book might be triggered by or experience strong emotions their work, which they will need to handle along the way
- I appreciated that Banitt offered a number of generally useful ideas for people who are triggered to help deal with their responses and get regrounded
- I liked that Banitt covered options for people to choose from and to build on to generate re-centering techniques that work for them rather than saying 'do this, do that'
- I also appreciated that Banitt took a compassionate approach to those who have experienced trauma in their lives
- I was really irritated by the repeated 'the Western Way is Wrong' references. There are many reasons that such a 'right-wrong' division of the world is problematic including: stereotypes are virtually never useful; such divisions entrench 'Otherness' of the 'opposite' culture; and, in this case, it seemed hypocritical in the extreme to criticize 'The West's' need to categorize and divide people in body vs. mind but then to turn around and divide and categorize an entire planet of people into so-called 'right' and 'wrong'
- The information (at least as far as I read) does not really offer anything new to those of us who have already done reading on the topic
- I took exception to Banitt's idea that 'forgiveness' is a necessary part of healing. That said, what Banitt seems to be talking about it not really 'forgiveness'. Instead, it seems to be more about 'letting go' and 'moving on'. Yes, letting go and moving on are important parts of healing. However, I fail to see what Banitt is trying to put a square peg into a round hole by trying to redefine the word 'forgiveness' (perhaps, as she claims the 'clinical definition' of the word is fundamentally different - I doubt that, but even so, why try to redefine the way that people in general - i.e. the type of people reading the book - would use the word forgiveness, whether they are religious or not, use the word?). Why does she not instead say what she seems to mean, that 'letting go' and 'moving on' are important?
- if Banitt really does mean actual 'forgiveness' then a) I still take exception to the rule; forgiveness is not

necessary (and often harmful) while letting go and moving on are essential to moving on; and b) that section is poorly written because it really does seem to be about 'letting go' and 'moving on' rather than 'forgiveness' (and again, why not just call it that?)

-(the reason I finally put the book down) Banitt references individuals who had done self-validating 'research' on their past life regression techniques. Where I had a problem was that she puts this down uncritically and unquestioningly even though there are criticism and questions about this type of work (e.g. there is no way to prove, or disprove, the existence of past lives in the first place). The unquestioned acceptance of this type of so-called research without any acknowledgements of the questions that it might (and does) raise makes me question Banitt's credibility. If she is unable to see the concerns here, then how can I trust the interpretations she has made of the literature and research in other areas? How can I trust any research she herself might have done?

So, I have put the book down and will move on to other things. I really wish Goodreads had an 'I tried but just couldn't do it' button.

Hong says

I won this book through Goodreads First Reads.

I have to start off stating that this would be a great book for people that are experiencing PTSD for the first time. As a person who has gone through it, it would have been a better ordeal if I had this book to guide me through that particular time period. I am familiar with a few of the different ways to cope but not all. It is written clearly and with enough details that it does help with finding solutions to coping with the disorder. For me, I find it enlightening with the explanations of other methods that I am not familiar with that I will pass this book to another person that is coping with the problem or any students that I know that are interested in learning more about dealing with the disorder.

Tara ? Tarasbookshelf says

Very basic, introductory text. Heavy on alternate remedies. Nothing much to see here. Three stars for not triggering me.
