

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
Why Am I Like This? By Kobe Campbell
Bible and Book Study Series
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Chapter 7: “Recognizing Triggers: Why Do I React This Way?”

Many of us think the key indicator that leads a person to consider **suicide** is sadness, but it is often **OVERWHELMING EXHAUSTION**. (p.118)

Numbers 11:11-17 *11 And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?...14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness...*

1 Kings 19:2-4 *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.*

Suicidal **ideation** – wanting or feeling like you should die.

Suicidal **intent** – actually planning to go through with the action.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

I. WHAT ARE TRIGGERS?

A. **TRIGGERS** are *biological and relational* **reminders** that something painful and confusing happened to us or around us in the **past** that affects our **present** experiences. (p.119)

B. A trigger is a “**stimulus** that elicits a **reaction**.”

Triggers are complex, nuanced, and incredibly personal reactions. They can be sounds, smells, colors, textures, sights, and tastes. **ANY** of the senses can be an entry point for triggers. (p. 119)

C. Triggers are not just about remembering the past pain, they are about **reexperiencing** past pain as if it were happening in the present.

II. BIOLOGY OF TRIGGERS

A. God’s beautiful creation...the human **NERVOUS SYSTEM**.

1. **Somatic** nerves control the voluntary movement of our bodies (lift you arm, turn your head, talk, walk, stand up, sit down).

2. **Autonomic** nerves control and regulate the involuntary functions our bodies need to stay alive and healthy (breathing, heart beating, blinking, etc.)

a. Sympathetic (**SNS**) is the involuntary actions that kick in in the face of great **physical exertion**, threat, or perceived threat. (weight lifting, running, sexual activity/stimuli, running from danger, fighting off an attacker) p. 122

b. Parasympathetic (**PNS**) is the involuntary actions that are activated in times of **recovery and rest**. (sleep, relaxation, meditation, prayer, or spending time with a loved one in a safe environment.)

B. Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Fight – response of aggression to a perceived threat:

- Tight jaw or grinding teeth
- Urge to hit or harm someone or something
- Feeling intense anger
- Yelling and screaming
- Crying
- Glaring or conversing angrily
- Attacking or confronting the source of danger

Flight—response of escape/retreat from a perceived threat:

- Physically avoiding a person, place, or thing
- Distracting ourselves from the issue at hand
- Constantly moving legs, feet, and arms
- Exiting Places when we feel overwhelmed

Freeze—response of temporary inability to move or act:

- Inability to move
- Pale skin
- Loss of sense of time
- Inability to speak
- Feeling stiff, heavy, cold, or numb
- Loud, pounding heart
- Decreasing of heart rate
- Feeling trapped in your body

Triggers are harmful to us because they prolong states of panic and terror that were made only for very specific moments. This creates:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Muscle tension and pain
- Heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke
- Sleep issues
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

III. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY TRIGGERS?

There are no skills that can make a person stop themselves from ever being triggered again, but there are skills that allow us to cope with the triggers until we are less and less disarmed by them and desensitized to the previously painful memories they bring us. (p.121)

A. God created a beautifully intricate system where the mind, body, and spirit all **interact** and affect each other. (p.127)

B. God does **NOT** become angry or displeased with us because we get triggered.

1 Kings 19:5-8 *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.*

C. Our automatic biological responses to pain are **NOT** a reflection of our faithfulness, morality, obedience, or trust in God.

God responds to our weariness and brokenness because he loves us.

D. We can control what we do **after** we reflex/react to them.

- Sleep/rest
- healthy diet
- hydration/water
- more rest
- quiet time with God!

When we trace our triggers, we build the opportunity to gain understanding of why we react the way we do and prepare for post reflex reflection and response to initiate a faster and faster recovery. (p. 129)

“Healing won’t look like what you thought it would, but it will come, and it will be **beautiful.**” (p.132)

Reflection Questions:

1. Work on completing this exercise:

Wounding Moment (ACE Reflection)

- Life is:
- I am (negative core belief):
- I feel:
- People are:
- Relationships are:
- I must (everyday patterns):
- I need (everyday patterns):
- I want (everyday patterns):
- When I think of this moment, I feel the need to (triggering response):

2. What trauma responses (triggers) do you relate most to?

3. What did it feel like to fill out these wounding moment reflections?

4. What did you learn about yourself through completing this activity?

Roadmap Ahead

Part 1 - Understanding Our Pain

Part 2 - Healing Our Wounds

11/01 - Discovering The Truth: How Does God Respond To My Trauma?

11/08 - Recognizing Triggers: Why Do I React This Way?

11/15 - Grieving The Loss: What Do I Do With the Pain?

11/22 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29 - Moving Forward: How Do I Begin Healing?

12/06 - Trusting Others With My Pain: What If I Can't Do It Alone?

RESOURCES

Missed a week of this study? You are encouraged to get caught up with the recorded lessons and notes online at www.fbcopv.org/healing

American Association of Christian Counselors. If asking for help is hard, finding help should not be. connect.aacc.net

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – Dial 988 (*like you would call 911 in a physical emergency*)