



# OVERCOMING TRAUMA

By Phil Golding

## 2. Approaching the Process of Healing

As I mentioned previously, when we find ourselves struggling to overcome a traumatic experience, we need to be open to examining what we believe about the world and ourselves. The process of overcoming trauma usually has to be patiently approached in stages. We also need to approach the process with a lot of self-acceptance and self-compassion. It is unrealistic to think we can rearrange a mind full of complex belief systems that have been laid down layer by layer since childhood in one go. We need to give ourselves time to sit with our feelings and thoughts to allow insight and perspective to flow into our awareness. Of course, this is not always easy. Our minds tend to want to avoid emotional pain with various survival strategies such as pushing the experience out of our minds by diverting the pain with activities such as work, exercise, over eating, alcohol or drugs etc until the pain gets pushed far enough into our subconscious for us to get on with our lives. Unfortunately, sometimes the pain does not dissipate, but stays locked up inside us, subtly influencing our reactions to life. In this case, post traumatic stress is a danger, when cracks in our subconscious wall start to open up. At times we are not so successful at pushing the pain down, and it continues to dominate our life. It is normal to need help with this process because of the extreme and unusual nature of the experience. As I have pointed out, the way our minds try to instinctively cope with the trauma sometimes just postpones the necessary process of healing or even makes it worse. There is a well mapped out process to healing however. Because we are

individuals, we all need to find our own individual path through this process, but we don't want to have to struggle through learning the process from scratch. This is why working together with a specialist therapist is very important.



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