



Katlyn's
Healing Center

Maybe What You
Have is Just “BAD”



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What is “BAD”?

BAD is an abbreviation for:

- **Brain Adaptation for Danger,**
- **Brain Adaptation for Disconnection, and...**
- **Brain Adaptation for Disempowerment**

An “Adaptation” is a physical or mental ability, feeling, or behavior pattern that humans developed during the course of our evolution to enhance our chances of survival (i.e. to better adapt to our environment).

- **To understand better, let’s start with human evolution...**



How We Evolved

How We Conquered the Planet

“How did our ancestors... take over... the entire world?” [in just ~50,000 yrs.] “The emergence of traits that made us, on the one hand peerless collaborators and, on the other, ruthless competitors best explains H. Sapiens’ sudden rise to world domination. Modern humans had this unstoppable attribute; the Neanderthals and our other extinct cousins did not.”

Scientific American, Aug. 2015



Human Nature is Intelligent

- 2 million years of human evolution in a mostly violent, predatory environment have left us with a strong fearful-aggressive bias. We evolved to be “**ruthless competitors**” and wouldn’t have survived as a species without this trait.
- Later human advancement depended on becoming “**peerless collaborators,**” in order to work together to feed, support, protect and defend each other in tribes and communities (i.e. love, not fear).
- Human survival and well-being now depend on being highly socialized and mutually supportive (i.e. loving) in our highly interdependent world, yet our fearful instincts remain strong.
- So, what happens when our fearful and loving instincts are in conflict and our human survival needs around safety, belonging, and cooperation are not met?



Human Nature is Intelligent (cont.)

- When our environment or experiences tell us we are not safe (**danger**), not supported by others (**disconnected**), and/or not able to get what we need (**disempowered**), we feel emotional pain, such as fear, anxiety, anger, and depression.
- These painful emotions tell us there is a problem (just like the physical pain from a broken bone). **This is “BAD.”**
- These emotional pains are “adaptive,” because they’re a signal to you and to others that aspects of your environment or experiences are harmful, and your survival and well-being are being threatened in some way.
- The problem, then, is not the emotional pain signal your brain sends to you (even though it hurts). **The problem is what is happening to you.**



What Does This Mean?

If the pain signal your brain sends to you is not the problem, but rather a result of your painful life experiences, then:

- **Your pain is not an illness or disorder, but rather a symptom of the true cause: Bad environment and Bad experiences.**
- **This pain signal arises to encourage you, or those with whom you interact, to take corrective action to improve your environment and experiences.**
- **Therefore, caregivers need to ask, “*What happened (or is happening) to you?*” not tell you what’s wrong with you.**
- **And the cure for your emotional pain turns out to be as simple as the diagnosis...**



What's the Cure for BAD?

If your pain is a symptom of a Bad environment and Bad experiences...

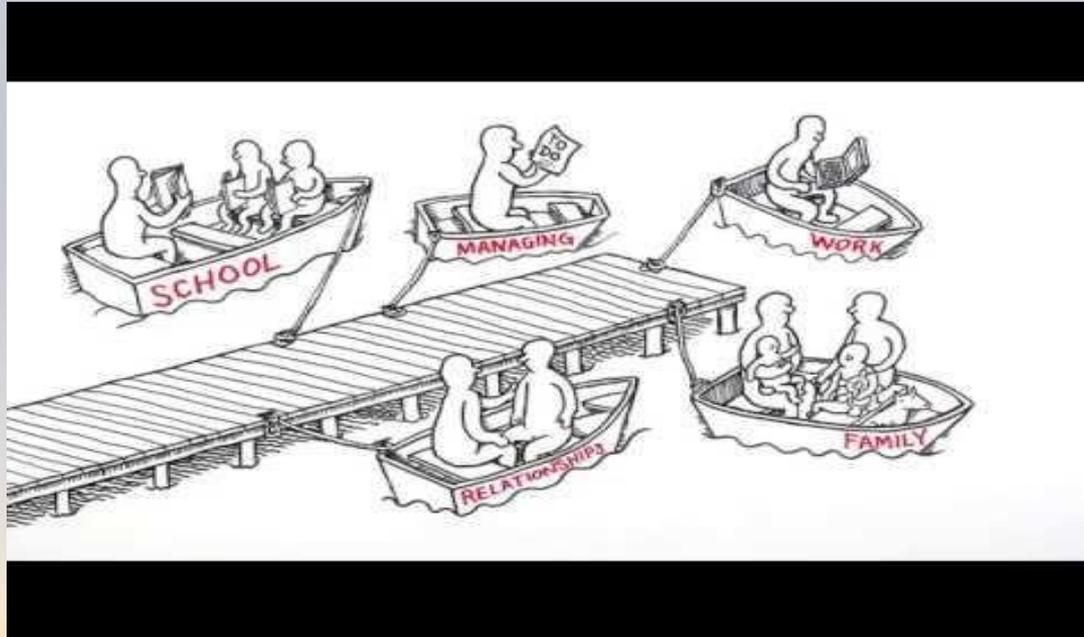
- **Then the cure is straightforward: Good environment and Good experiences. We all know this intuitively. If everything were good, we'd have no pain.**
- **Pain relievers like anti-anxiety or antidepressant medications may provide needed short-term relief, but in the long term they serve only to mask the symptoms and are not curative.**
- **Plus cognitive therapy will not change what the mind knows from experience. The brain does not allow reasoning to override threatening experiences.**
- **Healing from Bad experiences requires Good experiences, which then enable us to overcome the painful (BAD) adaptations of our brain. But creating good experiences requires some understanding, effort, and practice.**



How to Heal from the Effects of BAD

To view the video, click on the hyperlink below. When the video is complete, return to the PDF presentation.

Video from Harvard Univ.: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/video-building-core-capabilities-life>



Healing from BAD is Experiential

- People who have lived through difficult childhood and adult experiences often lack some of the capabilities for intentional decision making, through no fault of their own. This was caused by **BAD experiences**.
- The brain's reaction to trauma and stress is automatic, to help ensure our survival. It is **normal for survivors to be stuck** in this more fearful, reactive mode, with less capability for intentional decision making.
- However, intentional capabilities can be developed or restored later in life with positive intentions and experiences. ***“Stronger brain circuits are built up through practice.”*** That is, restoring intentional capabilities is an **experiential process**. Therefore, we need to learn to create and sustain **Good experiences**.



Prescription for Healing from BAD

The simple prescription for healing from BAD is:

- Safety – move out of danger
- Loving Connections – need caring, supportive relationships
- Understanding – knowledge of your condition and what’s needed to heal is the first step of empowerment
- Positive Intentions and Actions – the next step in empowerment is setting positive intentions and taking “*creative action*,” which leads to....
- Good Experiences – to stop the emotional pain and restore peace of mind



BAD Experience Effects that Need to be Healed

When we've experienced excessive danger, disconnection, and/or disempowerment, especially when these experiences began in childhood, we can develop negative **Thought, Behavior, and Belief (TBB)** patterns that tend to hold us back even when our environment and experiences improve.

In order to create and sustain good experiences, then, we need to learn to release the negative TBB patterns caused by our BAD experiences.

These TBB patterns reside primarily in our subconscious mind. So healing often requires a conscious effort to identify them and change our mind about ourselves and our environment, once our experiences start to improve.



Thought, Behavior, and Belief Patterns from BAD

BAD Experiences	Passive Responses	Aggressive Responses
<u>Unsafe (Danger)</u> : Physical threats, threats to health and well-being, can't fulfill our basic needs	Defensive, withdrawn, freeze, run away, insecure, isolated, distrustful, worry, anxiety	Violent, destructive, take what I want, don't care about others, dominating, controlling, reactive
<u>Not Worthy (Disconnection)</u> : Feeling unlovable, undesirable, lonely, worthless, alone	Stay isolated, avoid others, self-loathing, sad, depressed, shutdown, ashamed, anxiety	Demand attention, blaming and judgmental of others, dishonest, manipulative, anxiety
<u>Not Enough (Disempowerment)</u> : Feel like a failure, loser, can't succeed, nothing ever works out for me, helpless and hopeless	Give up, stop trying, coast along, victim mentality, no self-acceptance, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression	Never satisfied, be the best, be famous, have the most, ultra-competitive, workaholic, something to prove, anxiety



Other Behavior Problems that can Arise from Danger, Disconnection, and Disempowerment

- **Endangerment** is when we become overly aggressive in response to potential threats or injustice, which may put us in greater danger than a less aggressive response; for example, arguing with a police officer or someone with a weapon.
- **Misconnection** is when we connect to persons or things that are harmful to us in order to fill our unmet need for loving connection or to obscure or relieve our pain. This would include, for example, most forms of addiction or choosing relationships with organizations or people who are controlling or abusive.
- **Misempowerment** is when we give our power to persons, organizations, or things that are harmful and/or seek to control us, in order to feel better, or when we take power from others by trying to manipulate or control them to get what we want.



How Do We Overcome TBB's from BAD?

- Negative Thought, Behavior, and Belief patterns are normal and adaptive for human experiences of danger, disconnection, and disempowerment. So **“don’t feel Bad”** if you see yourself in the TBB patterns listed. All humans experience them, and it requires effort to become sufficiently aware to change them.
- In order to overcome these TBB patterns, first we need to be out of danger and start to experience loving, supportive relationships (i.e. connection). Then we can feel safe enough to bring awareness to our negative patterns.
- Mindfulness practice is key to creating this awareness and beginning to see these patterns. Through mindfulness, we also learn that **“we are not our thoughts”** and can make the choice to let fears, negative self-talk, and belief patterns just pass.



Mindfulness – Changing Perspective

To view the video, click on the hyperlink below. When the video is complete, return to the PDF presentation.

Video from Headspace: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN6g2mr0p3Q>



Summary on Healing from BAD

- **Healing from BAD experiences not only requires Good experiences, but we also need let go of negative Thought, Behavior, and Belief (TBB) patterns over time that hold us back from creating and experiencing the good that we desire.**
- **Once we move into safety and start to experience loving, supportive relationships, letting go of negative TBB patterns becomes possible.**
- **With increased awareness and understanding, we have the power to let go of Bad TBB patterns and make the positive choices required to create Good experiences.**
- **It just takes a consistent practice over time, along with positive changes to our environment, to learn to create and sustain Good experiences. This leads to the healing from BAD, and feelings of safety, connection and empowerment (i.e. 😊).**

