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The Trauma DJ

TRAUMA IS LIFE'S ULTIMATE TEST. It pushes you to the edge of your breaking point. Each of us, at some time, faces a life circumstance that is so trying that we feel like crumbling. It could be the death of a loved one. Or it could be something else: divorce, incest, infidelity, sudden job loss, church blowups . . . All can be crucibles that leave us reeling in emotional pain for years. The aftermath of this trauma is for the survivors to be left with a strange, uncomfortable voice, like a tape playing in their heads. It's the voice of the Trauma DJ.

Sometimes the voice of the Trauma DJ thunders. Sometimes the voice whispers. Usually it's a nonstop chatterbox that speaks to you, keeping you on edge. The Trauma DJ speaks to your heart, leaving you stymied, frozen, and overwhelmed. You feel like hiding and taking cover. You end up feeling like a chicken running in circles with its head cut off. You feel trapped in a time warp that is embedded in your past as you relive your nightmares a thousand times.

For some people, the Trauma DJ assumes the form of a

disturbing image. It can be a flashback—a snapshot of a tragic experience that litters the landscape of your mind.

Tricky and tenacious, trauma slips on the noose and tries to strangle you. The Trauma DJ whips your feelings into a frenzy by getting you to buy into the thinking that your life can never change. It's a kind of “once bruised always damaged” type of thinking.

The voice of the Trauma DJ is persistent and overbearing. When you heed its advice, it binds you up, like a ball and chain.

The Trauma DJ counsels you to expect the worst from life and people. It points to your life experiences that have been tragically painful. It convinces you (to prevent an encore performance of pain) to be on guard. Be ready to duck. And if necessary, duke it out. “Don’t take no stuff!”

The Trauma DJ has a message with your name on it. Based on your personal crucible, the internal tape begins to play, saying:

- *“What’s the point in even trying? You’ll never . . .”*
- *“They never supported you before. What makes you think it will be different now?”*
- *“Remember when things fell apart before? You might as well not even bother now.”*

And the beat goes on. The voice of the Trauma DJ is persistent and overbearing. When you heed its advice, it binds you up, like a ball and chain. When you follow its instructions, it renders you powerless.

That's the bad news. The good news is that the Trauma DJ is akin to a broken fire alarm system. It goes off daily when there is neither fire nor danger. The work of healing from your emotional pain is to identify when the Trauma DJ is sending out another false alarm and to tune it out. The challenge is to learn how to relax and calmly face whatever the Lord allows. Trauma tends to make you an emotional basket case if you let it. So remember that the Trauma DJ always speaks in the language of exaggeration.



*Allow your
mistakes to be
your mentors.*

When the Trauma DJ overwhelms you with a recurring problem, one that has tripped you up many times before, slow it down a bit. Take it easy and learn from your errors. Allow your mistakes to be your mentors. When the Trauma DJ tries to persuade you that past tragedies will hunt you down and haunt you forever, say “hogwash.” Say to yourself, “Then was then and now is now.” Remind yourself that you can choose to live powerfully in the present.

When the Trauma DJ tries to paralyze you with fear to the point that you feel you can't move, just keep walking, one step at a time, and you'll march out of *The Trauma Zone*. When the Trauma DJ whips your emotions into a frenzy and you are inclined to overreact with sadness, anger, or fear, just remember that the Trauma DJ's message is overstated. Stay calm and respond to your challenges with the strength that comes from God's love.

The Trauma DJ is a fearmonger. But remember the words of Paul to the church at Corinth. God never tests us past our breaking point. Instead, His tests are designed for our good. They are intended to bring out Christian character.

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

—1 Corinthians 10:13

God is able to transform our emotional hurts into spiritual gain by making us more discerning, wise, and loving of self and others. This newfound understanding helps us to sort out both external and internal distractions. The Trauma DJ is an internal distraction. Its message of doom and gloom is never fully accurate. Instead, it is the voice of cover-up.

We can choose to listen to another voice—the voice of recovery. This voice of the Holy Spirit calms us, renews us, and redirects us. This voice encourages and inspires. This voice connects with hope and an uplifting vision that leads us out of *The Trauma Zone* and into a relationship with the Good Shepherd. “My sheep listen to my voice,” Jesus said. “I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

ACTION STEPS ↓

- 1. Learn to quickly recognize the Trauma DJ based on the negative messages that it gives you about yourself in particular or life in general.** Sometimes the message is a put-down of who you are or your abilities. Sometimes the message creates a pessimistic view of others. If you buy into these negative messages, they will keep you stuck in *The Trauma Zone*.
- 2. Pray for wisdom to quiet the voice of the Trauma DJ in your life.** God’s wisdom will help you discern healthy

self-reflection from toxic negative thinking. Healthy self-reflection enables you to look objectively at how you can improve and grow. The thinking generated by the Trauma DJ never helps because it only makes you more indecisive and afraid to live your life to the fullest as God intended.

- 3. Study God's Word.** Fill your mind with God's promises that represent His ideas about you and the wonderful plan He has for you. Meditation is one excellent way to fill your mind with God's promises. Choose some of your favorite Scriptures. The book of Psalms is a great place to start when you are going through a difficult time. Allow your mind to think about God's Word and how it applies to your life today. Meditating on God's promises creates enormous life-giving spiritual energy. You will find that what you think about makes all the difference in the world. Remember His promise:

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!—ISAIAH 26:3

Let's Pray Together

Father, many of us have been through the wringer emotionally. We learned to listen to a voice that was not Yours. It was the voice of our pain, our fear, and our doubt. It was the voice of the Trauma DJ. Teach us today to override the voice of our misery with the voice of Your mercy. Help us to overcome the voice of fear with the voice of faith. Empower us to conquer the voice of defeat with the voice of Your overwhelming, life-transforming love. Remind us, dear Father, that there is a way out of our heartache and that You will show us the way. Amen.

TOGETHER LET'S BEGIN TO
PLOT THE ROAD MAP FOR EXITING
YOUR PERSONAL TRAUMA ZONE.