**Calm your nerves**

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I recently did a training in trauma therapy that discussed what trauma in early years means, how it affects the functions of the brain, how the nervous system gets involved when a human being experiences real or perceived threat, and most importantly, how trauma in early years catches up on an individual in his adult life in the form of mental and physical illnesses.

Everything is biology. I was familiar with trauma and its effects on the human psyche. Still, this training further highlighted the impact of trauma, and it was overwhelming to imagine how blindly we live our lives and how we have the wrong lens through which we have been managing our minds and body.

Gabor Mate is a Canadian physician and author interested in childhood developmental trauma and its effects on physical and mental health, including physical and psychological health, ADHD, cancer, and autoimmune diseases. He believes all these issues are rooted in trauma, and it “is not what happens to you; it is what happens inside of you as a result of what happens to you.” In Greek, trauma means ‘wound’ and is the invisible force that shapes our lives. It shapes the way we live, the way we love, and the way we make sense of the world. It is the root of our deepest wounds.

[Elton John’s Glastonbury triumph attracts 7.3 million TV viewers](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/elton-john-s-glastonbury-triumph-attracts-7-3-million-tv-viewers)

We all can, with conscious intention, work through our traumatic responses, which get presented as diseases, physical illnesses, insomnia, mental health issues like anxiety, depression, nightmares, brain fog, memory issues, and the list goes on. Where all of this affects us individually, trauma also gets presented in relationships, and the unsafety we have experienced gets projected in our relationships. For example, a man whose father cheated on his mother will grow up with trust issues and be paranoid about his partner’s loyalty. When people ask why more and more people are coming into therapy, it’s simply about people acknowledging their traumatic histories and having the will to work through them.

It’s necessary to understand here that childhood trauma doesn’t mean a significant life event only, like the death of a loved one, divorce, or sexual abuse, but when I ask an adult client, ‘‘When you felt bad as a child, whom did you talk to? And he says, no one, that’s trauma. Children learn to suppress emotional pain when they don’t have parental support to process it, and the child, in an attempt to disconnect from the pain, disconnects from the inner self. He no longer has ‘himself’ and will continue life sublimating that pain in addictions, introverted behaviors, and drive towards achieving, to name a few. At the same time, the body and mind will protest in the form of something as benign as neck pain or panic attack.

[Mitsotakis’s conservatives clinch landslide Greece election win](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/mitsotakis-s-conservatives-clinch-landslide-greece-election-win)

Underneath the trauma is a healthy individual who hasn’t found expression or a healthy way to connect to others. He seems to live everyday life, but the nervous system is vulnerable to being triggered instantly. Childhood trauma creates ‘procedural memory’ that can get activated by any being triggered through life unless processed, and the nervous system’s fight, flight, or freeze response gets activated. Road rage is a typical example of that. Have you seen how angry some drivers get? Do you think it’s terrible driving that induces that kind of rage? If you want to understand what I am referring to here, watch ‘Beef’ on Netflix, the best example of traumatic childhood experiences manifesting in so many moments of life as we try to rationalize our emotions by distracting ourselves with narratives about ourselves and others. ‘I am overreacting because you made me’ whereas the ‘you’ in this scenario is as lost and trying to see how he or she had the power to provoke such an extreme reaction in the other.

[Ukraine forces recapture new Russian-occupied settlement](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2023/ukraine-forces-recapture-new-russian-occupied-settlement)

We need to address our traumas. If therapy isn’t your cup of tea, seek support from people you trust to process unresolved pain. Stories you have not shared. Hurt that’s locked inside for decades. It will be the most challenging thing you do. But the pain that you think is locked inside and not affecting your life because you are not consciously thinking about it is an active part of your body-mind system and gets presented as ‘jittery nerves’ that get over-triggered in unhealthy ways, physically and psychologically, in behaviors and life choices. So, start healing your trauma sooner than later to live an authentic and healthy life.