



Transformation Groups:

Awareness & Skills to Transform Trauma

"I can feel very alone in this journey, but I don't have to take this journey in isolation. We are conditioned by our society and culture not to talk about our pain. But if we don't talk, if we don't create a language to express our feelings, healing will not take place. We will continue to store up and re-create the cycles of suffering. What is helpful and necessary in this process is a safe container such as a therapeutic environment or a community of like-minded people who can assist, help, support, and encourage each other in this process of waking up."

~ Claude Anshin Thomas, *At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace* ~

Trauma arises from your unique experience of an event or enduring circumstance that is markedly distressing and overwhelms your ability to cope with a perceived threat to your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual well being. The traces of big & small traumas that remain in your nervous system and mind *can* be released, freeing a new relationship with your self and your life.

Transformation Groups focus on the development of new capacities to transform past traumatic experience. Because revealing much of one's "story" can trigger yourself or others, this group's focus is not on talking about our history. Instead, the group is dedicated to helping you develop the awareness and practical skills to create safety, stability, and support; develop internal and external resources; transform your relationship to past trauma; promote mind-body-emotion regulation and integration; and create the conditions for optimal personal and relational health and well-being. This group may be a valuable adjunct to individual therapy or a first step toward exploring your relationship with your past.

I strive to create a safe, peaceful, and fun group environment that supports stability and well being during the group and in your life. Each week will draw upon practical tools of mindful awareness, self inquiry, mind-body awareness, conscious boundaries, and empowered choice to allow you to safely enter your internal world; begin to transform your mind and body into safe places for rest, reflection, and well being; and, take steps toward the life you want to live...

- Week 1: Setting the Foundation:** Develop safety, stability, and choice. Intentions and boundaries. Exploring with fresh discovery.
- Week 2: Belonging:** Offset isolation and alienation. Discover new connections with your self, others, and the larger world.
- Week 3: Mindful Awareness:** Notice without judgment. Focus and direct attention. Dis-identify from triggers. Tolerate kindness.
- Week 4: Internal Information Flow: Thoughts/Feelings/Body Sensations:** Differentiate. Choose. Deconstruct triggers.
- Week 5: Separating Facts from Feelings:** Discernment of interpretations & habitual beliefs. Staying within your "window of tolerance"
- Week 6: Addressing Parallel Lives:** Distinguish past from present, and the "wise self" from parts of the self that are triggered.
- Week 7: Working with Internal Parts:** Discover the neutral observing witness. Learn to calm internal dys-regulation.
- Week 8: Carving Out a New Path:** A step-by-step means for changing direction and choosing the life you want to live.
- Week 9: Telling & Retelling:** Develop new perspectives to observe your life. Empowered approaches to painful life situations.
- Week 10: Finding Guidance from an Older, Wiser Self:** Anchoring in the inner "knowing" of your truth and direction.
- Week 11: Conscious Closure:** Support for internal and external resources, supportive endings, integration, and beyond.

(Concept inspired by *The Becoming Safely Embodied Skills Manual: Skills Building Groups for Trauma & Dissociation*, by Dierdre Fay MSW.)

Registration Groups of 6-8 participants meet weekly for 1½ hours, for an on-going 11-week series – day, evening, or Saturday. Groups are available for women, men, military, and others with shared experiences. Fee: \$440, insurance accepted. Initial session prior to beginning the group. Individual and couples therapy available by appointment. Contact Marilynne at (415) 492-1042 to discuss your interests.

Marilynne Chöphel is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist who has practiced depth psychotherapy with individuals and couples for 20 years, and has taught meditation and yoga for over 25 years. She has completed advanced training in the treatment of acute trauma, as well as the related early attachment and relational traumas, through the **Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute**, other mind-body approaches of **EMDR**, **Trauma First Aide**, **Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)**, and ongoing training. She is a therapist for the **Victim-Witness Program**, and a volunteer therapist for **The Coming Home Project**, committed to helping transform the wounds of war for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families. For more information on her work and offerings, visit www.dharmaspirit.com.