

# Your Traumatized Perspective Implications

Understand where your beliefs come from.

Spring 2022

## Do you have good evidence for that?

Hey Fuckers. Welcome back, I hope you're ready to think a bit today, because this series is RIPE with points that can reframe your life so far.

But, bear with me, because before we get into new material I'm going to harp on our previous findings for another few minutes. That's how important I think they were on a granular level, even if they seemed common sense at a broader face value.

So in our last show, we ran into a powerful line from a powerful research paper. Let's revisit briefly:

***The role of objective and subjective experiences, direct and media exposure, social and organizational support, and educational and gender effects in the prediction of children posttraumatic stress reaction one year after calamity***  
**Sefa Bulut\***

(Where it was stated, as one of the final conclusions of the data found on experience of disastrous events, versus individual life factors, correlating to downstream PTSD outcomes:)

“Individual subjective perception and appraisals of the traumatic events, their feelings of fear, helplessness, or hopelessness are detrimental factors in the development of PTSD reactions.”

(So, remember that this paper was focused on the directness of exposure, relating to the eventual onset of PTSD. Instead, they found that post-traumatic stress disorder was linked NOT EXCLUSIVELY to the degree or duration of potentially traumatic event experience. Also NOT to some weakness or penchant for personal drama.

But, literally, PTSD development was dependent on how disturbing (aka fearful) the event was, and how life-altering the aftermath of the event was, on the basis of resource destabilization,

and perceived social support for the individual. Remember, also, that even a friend moving away after the event was a risk factor for developing PTSD.

Those extenuating factors - resources and social support - seem to be the best predictors of PTSD, altogether accounting for 2/3rds of the post-traumatic upset, while Direct Exposure took up the remaining 1/3rd.

And... the reason why that's important?

Because those variables that seem to be correlated to PTSD-positive test results... Are all completely subjective measures of personal perception, and prior perspectives, being wrapped into larger stories of perspectives that can last a lifetime... Especially if the disturbances seem to stretch into the future, relative to the potentially traumatic event.

Meaning, in simple terms. PERSPECTIVE at the time of impact and how it has to change to account for alterations *during* the relative future is the basis of developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Or, that's what I'm taking away from it. Could always be wrong. Love to state that.

But there's NO doubt... There are no black and white rules for what is or isn't going to create ongoing stress responses in any person, especially when compared to other persons. Only IMPRESSIONS of what the event meant and still means, that really fuck us up.

Having a PERSPECTIVE that the danger isn't over? That maybe it's all just beginning? Well, clearly, that's grounds to cause long-lasting, predictive, distress.

Just for shits and giggles, let's check in again with the first authors we chatted with last time, to get a bit more research-backed information on that front. Again, the paper is:

**Beyond Resilience and PTSD: Mapping the Heterogeneity of Responses to Potential Trauma**  
George A. Bonanno and Anthony D. Mancini  
2012

They state:

Just as outcome following PTEs appears to be heterogeneous, so do the various factors that contribute to or detract from healthy functioning in the aftermath of such events.

Developmental theorists have for years argued that adjustment to aversive childhood contexts results not from a single dominant factor or even from several factors but rather from a cumulative mix of person-centered variables (e.g., disposition, personality) and sociocontextual (e.g., family interaction, community support systems) risk and protective factors.

Studies that have examined individual differences among adults exposed to PTEs have increasingly pointed toward this same crucial conclusion.

Indeed, research on PTEs in adults has underscored the myriad transpersonal factors that are likely to come into play. Here, we find resonance in Hobfoll's theory of conservation of resources - the idea that both the availability of resources and the change in resources that often results from highly disruptive events play a crucial role in human adaptability to extreme stress.

Among such resources are economic and material resources (e.g., income and income loss), energy resources (e.g., the availability of health insurance and loss of health insurance), interpersonal resources (e.g., positive and negative interpersonal support, availability of affinity groups), and work resources (e.g., gainful employment or loss of employment)...

(So, again we're being told, there's a lot more to PTSD development than one bad day creates a lifetime of not-getting-over-it, because some weak-butted a-hole is CHOOSING to continually interpret life events differently than the rest of the world. There isn't an Achilles Heel of personal weakness that sets one party up for a long bout of consta-stress, while everyone else prances past.

But there might be A LOT of endangering factors that set the person up for a crippling event. Those factors can be entirely out of the control of the ankle-buster... and... actually... in most cases, they are.

What I'M hearing is, trauma-outcomes are more linked to the system SURROUNDING the individua, and the effects of the event on the entire ENVIRONMENT, over time. Just as much as (if not more than) the upsetting degree of the acute event, itself.

And for those of us who are here for complex trauma talk - uh, I think we have a lot of evidence that this is the case.

We know we were not in control of everything happening around us in younger years, so much as we were just trying to weather a lot of individual storms. But unfortunately, each new weather pattern managed to kick up a whole new set of struggles - physical, emotional, material, social - didn't they?

And, in turn, we then had the whole cognitive hellscape to contend with in the aftermath of each upset, which probably felt somewhat linked to other upsets, as well.

Meanwhile, there actually is no “right answer,” the way we love to insist.

Our tiny, inexperienced brains were just in the mix, getting kicked around and trying to decide, “What the fuck now? And why? And what’s this mean about everything else? And what does it mean about me? And will it ever GET BETTER? Cuz so far, it’s not getting any better.”

In particular, those of us with lower class upbringings or rapid fluctuations within our family’s perceived resources and stability? We’re logically more strongly affected by PTEs that are followed or deepened by financial or family functioning strain.

Because, as we mentioned last time... and in two episodes before that (did you think there WEREN’T crossovers with the time distortion talk?) it all depends on what you’re paying attention to, doesn’t it? And that’s all driven by what we’re individually, most intensively, trying to survive, huh?

That’s the individual, subjective experience (aka FEAR) component that’s shown to be a powerful determinant of developing PTSD. And that’s never going to be cohesive between two brains, even in (what seems like) one set of physical circumstances.

Again, even as two children under one roof, you’re both going to have different current experiences and different conclusions you’ve drawn in the past. Different social support networks. Different relationships WITH the same family members. Different numbers of experiences with having and losing money, personally and in your household. Different opportunities to have and overcome fear. Different cultural experiences, based on your age, gender, traits, and appearance.

There are SO MANY FACTORS that create our brains’ neural infrastructure and our brains’ concepts of Self. And each dissimilar variable has a way of leading to a NEW dissimilar experience or conclusion.

There’s just no doubt. You’ll never have the same exact Perceptions as another human, which will always lead you to different Perspectives. And “Post-traumatic” might be one of them.

But enough of that horn tooting. Just really want to continually reiterate “you aren’t wrong for thinking about things differently than people close to you.” Cuz, uh, personal reasons.

Now, let's get into the real purpose of TODAY'S show. Giving you a way to conceptualize and visualize this entire mess, on a neural basis.

I think it'll be more clear than ever, WHY NO ONE can ever HAVE your perspective.

Why YOUR PERSPECTIVE as a social animal child with a sponge-brain wasn't ever actually even your own.

And therefore, why this whole "right versus wrong" way to view events makes no goddamn sense. ESPECIALLY including potential traumatic happenings, which... sortof like an eclipse, can often only really be viewed by the reflections of the changes AROUND the event... which are very open to interpretation.

Welcome to the first Perspective Implications Episode of this superlong series, where we talk about what your dumb fucking brain is actually doing, the implications of that behavior as a stupid, stupid child, with very limited opportunity to form your own Perspectives, and how that's created everything you hate the most - your multidimensional clusterfuck of PTSD.

Let's get back to the neural-basis of understanding our life shittery.

Here's my way of visualizing "Perspective" in a developing trauma brain. The implications of which, might help set ya free from imprisoning perspectives.

### **Conceptualization for the Brain basis of Perspective**

Here we go again. It's the "we don't know shit, and we have so much shit to figure out" talk.

We arrive here. We've got nothing that seems clear. So we make up stories about it.

Welcome to earth, human baby.

First, we exist. Secondly, immediately, and without our express permission, our brains automatically collect up all the details of our observed lives to get them loosely programmed into our neural structures. A process that will be repeated every day from here on out.

At this point, those observations are just established with weak, temporary connections that we make in this "holding compartment" for short term information storing. Our strategy is: get it in

the brain first, figure it out later. We will EVENTUALLY move the memory bits we want to keep into perma-storage, but only after they've been given some connection to OTHER neural cells that have been deemed somehow important enough to hang on to.

In essence, figure that we grab wildly at details... but long term we don't want to carry around a larger mental load than needed. We're always trying to figure out what's relevant and what's just junk we scooped up by accident. Hence, why you can't necessarily remember that trip to the grocery store last week, which was found unremarkable, but you remember that car ride from 1996 the first time you heard Mmm-Bop.

We only have so much brain space to use, so many neurons that can build the structures within that space, and so many connections with so many neurotransmitters to integrate all that shit together.

So we have to edit down our observations. We recycle and reorganize our neurons to keep our informational load and layout efficient as we learn, forever, every day, unless we refuse to (always gotta throw in that "rigid brain" caveat).

And THIS is careful connection, reorganization, "keep this forever," memory formation strategy is where we get that "personal story" known as Perspective. Perspective is like the integration of vast, diverse details from alllll your sensory memories and explicit "accepted" memories so far, combined into one easy to carry piece of baggage, instead of trying to hold all your shit separately as you stumble through the airport.

When you have ten thousand bits of semi-relevant information to ONE big, bad event... well... we can't hold all of that in one space, without some thread that pulls it all together. You really don't WANT to have to relive the entire montage from one week of shit events to get to the point - I think we all know, that spins us around and creates a lot of mental burden when things are trapped in that "temporary holding place" too long, with too much raw detail.

Let's visualize this one more time in brain terms though.

Now, this isn't exactly how neural networks... work. But it's close enough and more helpful thanks to simplicity.

I see "Perspective" as being this overarching, neatly organized, set of brain cells you build, draped over the top of a huge, clusterfucky mess of neurons containing a vast pool of potentially upsetting information.

An event happens that demands your attention, it's linked temporally, spatially, categorically, emotionally - and so on - with innumerable other details also contained in neurons, derived from

your observations. These are all linked through messy, poorly organized neuron connections that go every which way, contain a lot of excess information, and truly spin you out if you get sucked into them.

The whole thing can make your head feel like an Escher-esque chutes and ladders game, if you try to trace any set of connections in one logical direction. This cell connects to that one, which is telling a totally different story than the information encoded by this one (realistically, this one “network”), and half of them are pulling up emotions or fear responses or experiential flashbacks... and Jesus Fuck, you honestly have no way to carry this around while also being able to see straight.

This is where we first get the establishment of the “trauma mechanism” in our brain, yeah?

When, in the aftermath of a big upset, we’ve gotten TOO MANY neural bits of information, which are somewhat chaotically attached to too many other destinations... because we plan to edit them down later, when we have time.

Our cognitions and interpretations of the world are going in too many directions, or rapidly shift from one general understanding of existence to a completely different realization of how events can transpire. Like someone cracked a few dozen eggs in your head and scrambled them, and now you have to put them back together.

AND, a lot of those eggs were filled with emotional responses and sensory memories, too.

The result? Being totally discombobulated. You’ve got too many brain behaviors happening at once, with all these raw data points. SO... Your brain becomes obsessive, trying to figure out the mystery. Your thoughts, intrusive. Your emotions, alive as they were on the day in question. Every brain connection relating to the event through assumptions of similarity or correlation, overly active. Your whole head, running inefficiently and ineffectively, as it devotes ALL your processing power to a stack of data too thicc to carry alone.

SO you move into stage two. Time to simplify and sort. Time to develop a Perspective, and create a shortcut.

You gather up everything you’ve deemed “most necessary” after an unknown amount of rumination torture, and you make up a story about the event. Rearrange some brain cells to SparkNotes the whole story. Connect those new, simpler, neurons to the cognitive pathways that lead you to and from this disaster of an area.

And essentially use this new path to try to “jump the dumpsterfire” of overwhelming data points lying underneath, in meaningless but experientially poignant neurons. We’re a lot happier using

this highway of easier to navigate interpretations of reality that should loosely represent the more complicated catalog of cognitive material, than we are turning down 10k sidestreets to reach some similar destination.

And that's your Perspective as I visualize it in the brain.

A single story - a logical neural bridge - built on top of your disorganized angry beehive of fragmented Perceptions underneath.

An attempt to simplify, streamline, and summarize an overabundance of neural temporary-files that contain a ton of overly-connected references to OTHER emotionally-prioritized brain data, which otherwise scramble your thoughts and leave you dysfunctional on a neurological and behavioral basis.

I visualize a neuro-pileup. A bunch of cells all tangled in a heap, throbbing and screaming for attention.

And then, through months of careful self-torture, one layer of brain cells carefully installed above them, as a direct line from "before" to "future" times that encompasses the major takeaways.

Your Perceptions below. And then, your much-easier-to-live-with, resulting Perspective on top...

Both of which? Again. Not necessarily accurate to universal truths or any other person's experience. Just accurate to what you've deduced so far... which might be a bad start for a lifetime of subsequent brain activities, depending on your experiences.

And really, it all gets more complicated from there.

Cuz, sortof the way that memory-experts tell you to create a long, visual, all-encompassing story to tether disparate information points together, we do the same thing. That's your perspective.

BUT, as judgemental humans we also try to find MEANING for everything - *value* within our observations - so we can understand how it all FITS together and how WE fit into it, too. We can't often just throw together a fictiony fairytale and find satisfaction - this is OUR LIFE. So, we need a semi-realistic STORY with some sort of moral at the end, that finds points of (not only) causation within all the information... but, maybe more destructive to all of us... also finds points of PREDICTION for what's coming next.

Ya know, too bad those predictions don't turn out so great for us.



And, so, *here* we have the development of PTSD, a dooms-based Perspective you form in yer own stupid fucking brain to ruin you forever.

Because, like accidentally writing a buggy code in your still-developing software... you go on to base SO MANY other programs on your initial assessment. They're linked up together

Creating more strife in your trauma life.

## Wrap

Bahaha lame. And, uh, that's what happens when I adlib at the end of my writing because it feels unconcluded. God, sorry. Will try not to let it happen again.

But does this episode help you at all, to have a visual reference for the components that go into your perspective creation? To see that process as a granular, step by step, series of events? The result of your brain knocking through ten different mazes and then making a simpler path for itself to summarize the direction of the journey?

Rather than, you know, seeing your perspective as one stand-alone piece of information. Sometimes I feel like we see our prevailing, automatic thoughts to be like a book that's derived from a million unknown sources that came before it, yet somehow it's "known" to be right, without questioning those references.

So, having a simplified "neural understanding" and visualization? Is useful for me because whatever crazy shit I'm telling myself, it's always based on this swirling mix of other factors hidden beneath... but I need help remembering that and breaking it down for critical examination.

Like we're always saying around here... your brain is designed to work incredible, complex, integrated tasks to completion... but sometimes, the assumptions it's operating on are outdated, subconscious, or overly simplified beliefs.

So a big part of getting my brain in better working order has been recognizing that. Whatever story is streaming through my head, I don't just accept the "neural bridge" summary statement and move on. I found out a long time ago, that was the fastest way to anxiety, reactivity, and depression, which wasn't necessary or appropriate for the broader situation.

It was based on limited perspectives that overemphasized the emotional and shaming perceptions rooted firmly in my head and generalized to... most events.

Instead, these days when I feel a big energy or mood shift, I try to find the thought that caused it. Then I start working my way backwards, going underneath the neural overpass to figure out where my assumption is coming from, explicitly.

What memories is this based on? What feelings? What old thoughts that I'm probably trying to battle out of my skull, anyways? And how did this oneeee tiny factor over here act as the final straw that set this story development in motion?

Is the whole story verifiable, or is there a variable that's skewing this logical equation? Maybe, that unknown X is representing a whole different equation, where the numbers don't add up.

And that shit can be SUBTLE.

For me, when I'm having a strong and fear-based perspective rise to the top of the barrel, usually, there's one microscopic detail that "don't sit right" which, when perceived, throws my head into a tailspin. Like a "weird vibe" or a certain word that seemed out of place, as it relates to a lifetime of experience that I would otherwise ignore the relevancy and weight of.

So, ya know... I find that with my hypervigilance and sensitivity to others emotion, it's pretty beneficial to be able to grasp that one point - a perception that's potentially influenced by a lot of other events - and address it individually, before it becomes the deciding influence of the whole plotline - my perspective on this current event and what it means about life.

This is where understanding "Perspective" versus "Perception" versus... let's be honest... "objective data" is so helpful. Perspective is comprised of Perceptions, but those Perceptions may also be compromised by.... Say... emotional state. Innate fear response. Or just what you've been trained to pay attention to.

All of which, are complex trauma fuckery specials. Right?

Our brains skew our sensory experiences, sortof by survival necessity. We know, for instance, about the negativity bias - we gather and devote more attention to shit details than positive ones, so we can stay alive. Those will be more heavily weighted "perceptions" in your cumulative umbrella Perspective.

We also learned that having a negative or depressed mood increases the perceived size of physical obstacles in front of them a very long time ago. Perceptions influencing other perceptions.

And we just learned about all the ways that our perceptions of time can be completely boned by the various brain patterns described by mental illnesses, many of which are, themselves, limiting illusions of perspective AND perception, that we just can't break.

So, I stand by my assertion that there's no such thing as a "right" or "wrong" perspective.

But there are "uninformed" "and "incomplete" and "overzealous" ones.

They can be outdated and extreme. They can be rigid and limited by confirmation bias. They can be skewed by volume and available opportunities for the alternative.

Meaning, always assume people are honest, but inept. They mean well, but they have limitations. That's a great piece of advice I picked up once, for dealing with other humans.

And it's a principle to remember, I think, when assessing your or other people's brains.

Your think box isn't trying to kill you with mis-estimations.

They mean well. They aren't trying to be deceptive. They're TRYING to be as helpful as possible. But sometimes, they pick up on details that don't matter as much as previously programmed... while missing other details altogether, because... the constraints of being only one observer on this planet of infinite experiences.

Sometimes, your brain just gets the calculation wrong, and it's not because of personal failure. There's always at least SOMETHING we don't know about a situation, right? A missing perception or balancing perspective. That exclusion or the assumption that takes its place, can be the difference between a lifetime of thinking patterns.

To break those patterns?

I'd say... it really is worth teasing apart your "Perspective" from your "Perceptions." And if it helps you to visualize the connections pinballing beneath the overarching story, then we're on the same page.

You can draw this out, if it helps you. Like a bunch of bubbles beneath a gentle arch - your perceptions in the circles and perspective up above See how they all fit together and affect the

line drawn overhead. THEN, go back and question if each individual step is as sureproof and appropriately weighted as possible. Plus, make sure there aren't extra memories and emotions getting pulled into the perspective mix on accident or assumption.

You also might want to help yourself to trace perspectives back to their origins with "chaining." You write down one thought, put it in a bubble, connect it to the next thought that's popping up. Trace out what you perceived, what other memories and stories are coming up from that jumping off point, and continue from the start of the event to the end result - why are you getting this Perspective?

Do you stand behind the data building up this story?

Or is there possibly some variable in the chain that could be a distorted, outdated, or incomplete piece of information?

Perhaps... like fear, social support, or resource change?

Is there a way to find out of this thought pathway?

Can you take the steps to purposely conclude whether it's accurate or not?

Can you add in additional data points that maybe have been set aside in the past?

And how does that possibly change the overarching Perspective, to be more reflective of everything you know NOW?

Now, I'm not saying, you have to go back and question EVERYTHING you thought you thought. But... also... actually it really helps if you do this slowly over time.

"Why do I think that" (also, "Why did I just do that?") is a common question I pose to myself. Probably several times a day. And it really helps to go back and re-examine what I'm initially auto-assembling in my brain box for importance, emotional skew, and completeness. I do it in the moment, I do it at the end of daily events, and I do it regarding past perspectives.

Like... all the time. I don't trust my brain to parent itself, if that was ever unclear.

Sometimes, the answer to my "is this a realistic Perspective?" probe is, "I think that for clear and objectively validated reasons."

Sometimes, it is not. And I'm creating trouble for myself. Going back and digging into each variable that built up the story helps reveal another, possibly more helpful in THIS day and age, with who I've become over the years and who I'm working on being, perspective.

Is your Perspective in alignment with your Self? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

But either way, I think we can probably all agree... it's wise to know where your Perspectives - often the hill that you're willing to die on - are actually coming from.

YOU? Or... Your limited ability to perceive EVERYTHING in a particular moment? YOU? Or... Your FEAR? YOU? Or... the events that seem related, like a friend moving away, but might be irrelevant? YOU? Or... from your past library of unexamined perspectives, building this one up?

YOU? Or... from... other people's perspectives, trojan horsing as your own?

And that's what we're going to start talking about next time we topic-intro..

Because this Perspective bridge visual helps me a lot. But it also assumes that our Perceptions are pretty explicit. That we KNOW what we think, feel, believe, have seen, and why, as raw, novel, self-originating data. When the truth is... brains use whatever resources they have to build knowledge and behavioral frameworks.

Like previously accumulated perspectives. Which - especially as children - may not have come from YOU, at all.

In the next Perspective post, we're getting into the insidious challenges of COMPLEX trauma. What happens when shit Perspectives add up... but half of them were installed so early they aren't even identifiable as "potentially traumatic perspectives?" And... what happens when half of THOSE were probably taken as hand-me-downs from others?

Then, we'll dig into research - DOES complex trauma come with a heavier "traumatized outlook?" And what are some of the extra complicating perspective factors that contribute to the lifelong game we CPTSD folks play, called "oh shit, that was also fucked up, wasn't it? How deep does this trauma river run?!"

Lots more to say on this topic before we stopic.

That one actually wasn't adlibbed, it was just bad and I went with it anyways.

So I'll see you... not NEXT time, when I'm actually giving you something totally different... but the time after THAT, when we start talking about the next chapter. Your COMPLEXLY Traumatized Perspective.

AKA - Why is this Perspective thing all so much more challenging than it initially sounded?

Til then.

Start defining your Perspectives.  
And cheers, Fuckers.