

The 3R's for a Happier Memorial Day
Prof. Barry Austin Goodfield, Ph.D., DABFM

The warm Arizona sky felt fresh on my skin as Dori and I sped down the empty freeway heading towards the 8 o'clock service at Pinnacle Peak Presbyterian Church. Top down and a 70 mile an hour breeze and the roar of the Morgan's engine hearkened another beautiful day. By noon the temperature would be in the hundreds (+ 32 Celsius).

Dr. Wes Avram, the Minister at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church gave a brilliant sermon about what we abstract from our life experience, what we remember and how it shapes our lives. He spoke of our veterans and the tormenting memories associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

It is a painful memory, a gift that keeps on giving, popping up out of nowhere when least expected. It is a landmine waiting to be triggered and exploded by a smell, sound, or quick movement. Always there — a matter of time waiting to destabilize, waiting to overwhelm a life that had been dedicated to service and to love of country.

Some suggest that PTS for PTSD can never be removed. After all, pain and trauma are part of life. Some of us had difficult childhood's that impacted us in our adult life. We never forget some of those difficulties and obstacles.

For most of us early childhood traumas tint and taint the hues of our daily existence. For most of us they do not control our life they simply impacted our perception of life. When it becomes too much for us we try to talk it out with friends and family. If that is not successful we reach out to trained professionals and religious figures who can help us to understand our past and let it go.

In that sense on Memorial Day, when we say don't forget to remember, we are ultimately suggesting that we keep in mind the acts and actions we deem as important from times past.

This Memorial Day weekend we focus our attention on those who have served our country and have made sacrifices for our freedom. What we must remember is that those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress are trapped in that perpetual "Groundhog Day" film where events reoccur and then repeat and repeat it again.

There is a way out and there are thousands of professional men and women dedicated to defeating the cycle of sadness and despair. With years of training and experience this army of helpers strives to make the lives of our veterans better. Of this there is no doubt.

The question is what is the key to just stopping the "Post Traumatic Stress movie" that runs and ruins the lives of our veterans and their families? Here is my answer.

It is the 3Rs Reflection, Reasoning and Re-symbolization.

Reflection: To look back at difficulties and passed dangers provides us with opportunity to gain perspective and a greater understanding of past conflicts.

Reasoning: It's one thing to look back and quite another to figure out how, why, where and when a trauma occurred. That becomes the basis for deeper understanding on both conscious and unconscious levels

Re-symbolization: Here's where the magic comes in to play. Any healing process whether it be on a psychological, philosophical, theological or even a psycho-physiological level must involve re-symbolization. On a psychological level it may be thought of as new insights. On a philosophical level it may mean embracing a more encompassing perspective. On a theological level it is generally thought of as forgiveness.

If you consider this notion of re-symbolization in general it is nothing more than letting go of something that disturbs our human balance. If it is as simple as that why don't we just let go of those things that disturb us and quickly re-establish homeostasis or balance within our system whenever we need to?

It's one thing to know that cigarettes aren't good for you, it's quite another to quit smoking. It's one thing to know that a balanced diet is best for us it's quite another to walk by a bakery or a candy store as if it were not there.

What makes re-symbolization so difficult? The answer is simple — it is our unconscious process. Things that are in our unconscious have two qualities.

- They have a profound impact on the way we perceive events around us. The unconscious colors our perception and often determines our reality.
- The unconscious is below our level of awareness. It is like the keel on a ship we do not see it but it has a profound impact on the stability of our ship of state — our lives.

If re-symbolization is an essential aspect of rebalancing our system how can we make it work? The answer is simple it is access. We can access the unconscious process through an altered state of consciousness. In other words, find the unique key for that particular trauma for that particular individual. It is as simple as decoding the messages that we send when the right questions are asked. These correct questions elicit responses from the unconscious that reflect the deep feelings that we have around critical issues. This is particularly true when trauma is associated with an issue.

We go to the dentist when we have a toothache to have it fixed. The first question usually relates to the reason for our visit. The answer is simple I feel pain. At that point we simply point our finger to the troubling area. The dentist looks and after

explaining his diagnosis offers a treatment plan. It usually boils down to “I will fill or pull it.”

The therapeutic process should be just the same. You find somebody qualified whom you can trust. Discuss the psychological pain you feel and what it is doing to you. The therapist like a psychological “safecracker” will access the content of your unconscious and help you to re-symbolize the meaning that you gave it at the first time and place when you experienced the trauma.

It is as complicated and simple as all that — access, insight and a new and more appropriate decision or simply re-symbolization. The message shown by nonverbal behavior what we call the NVL or Non-Verbal Leak The Goodfield Method™ is the key to that precise access.

On Memorial Day we look to those who have made sacrifice and consider those still suffering from the traumas suffered that resulted in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We must remember to remember and employ the new tools available to help our veterans to find a perspective that operationally lets them forget that which has controlled their lives in so many painful and destructive ways. There is an answer to PTSD and that is a deep insight and clear action.

After the service was over we went to the [National Memorial Cemetery of Phoenix](#) and walked among our military looking at the field of flags that flew honoring the™ lives they lived. The sun was getting hotter as we drove back in a self reflective silence.

Memorial Day was here as it is, every day for veterans.

May God bless them all.



©Goodfield Institute LLC 5/29/2017