

Healing the Inner Child: *Timewarps and Trauma*

YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST.

That's what we say anyway. Science fiction plays around with time travel, sure. And it's got a whole bag of tricky themes involved in it. Michael J. Fox in "Back to the Future" has to jump through all sorts of hoops to make sure his Mom marries his Dad—or otherwise he won't exist. But what if there were some kind of useful, even healing truth to be found in such paradoxical storylines? In fact, both commonplace spiritual wisdom and modern physics suggest that the single, linear timeline we think in terms of is not the whole story.

Consider inner child work, for instance. This is where the adult, conscious you "reparents" parts of yourself. Current you recovers and experiences—in safe, controlled doses—the suppressed feelings and possibly also lost memories of traumatic experiences you may have had while growing up. Just as the inner layers of a pearl must be solid to support the outer—these younger versions of you are still present and active in your attitudes and choices. They can have a lot to do with your level of fulfillment in all areas of life. They set the tone of your default assumptions—often expressed in simple "core sentences," like "I give a lot, but I don't get," or "money doesn't flow easily to me."

Until recently, I thought of this valuable healing as a completely internal process—certainly not

anything related to "time travel." You've got disturbing experiences that overwhelmed your integrity and left imprints on your nervous system. You clear them. Yes these experiences are about the past, but healing them only changes something in your brain. It doesn't change anything "in the past." But I'm beginning to wonder about that.

Among psychics and clairvoyants, the consensus is that "time doesn't exist in the spirit world." Search "spiritual time," or "time in the spirit world," and you will find a variety of statements about how the experience there is one of "no time," or "all time at once." One blog speaks about a "reality outside of linear time, where time does not exist and all potentialities exist together."ⁱ Interestingly, that "all potentialities exist together" begins to sound like some interpretations of modern physics and cosmology.

For decades Niels Bohr argued that light in the famous "double slit" experiment existed fundamentally as a smear of probabilities over all possible paths. Only measurement by the observer caused the wave of potentialities to collapse into a photon right here just now. Deeply disturbed (as were many) by the idea that all that was "out there" was a mathematical abstraction that generated solid reality differently depending on how we looked at it—Hugh Everett found a way around this. In 1957, he managed to juggle the math in

such a way as to remove any influence of the observer. But the cost of this was—all the possible paths were real and existed in parallel universes.ⁱⁱ

Bohr said "no," at which point both Hugh and his "many worlds" interpretation then fell into obscurity. Fast forwarding now, we find quantum physicists and cosmologists, having graduated from "string theory" to "membrane theory," arguing fiercely about whether their equations work best assuming there are 10 dimensions, or rather 11. Bang—yes, the Big Bang itself—resolves the argument in favor of 11. But once again only at the cost of assuming parallel universes in which every possible outcome takes place.ⁱⁱⁱ And meanwhile science fiction, which usually foreshadows the hard theories, has gone wild with "alternate history" stories.

But to get practical with this we need some at least crude way to imagine our lives from the perspective of "no time," and "alternate lifelines." So, say that you as your "higher self" are hovering



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above the linear time span of your entire life. Spread out along this line are snapshots of your body as it evolves from infancy through how it looks at the present moment. At some point in your life, however, crucial traumatic events branched you into two parallel lifelines. In one you were not traumatized, in the other you were. You notice that on the traumatized lifeline, you seem to get older faster, look way less happy, and so on. There might be several of these trauma branches, but we'll just look at one.

Now we look at the less happy trauma lifeline and notice that it splits. On one track, you go on with business as usual and deteriorate more. On the other, however, either on your own or with professional help, you go back and successfully reparent the inner child that experienced the original trauma branching. And here something really amazing happens. This lifeline now jumps back over onto the happier, more fulfilled track on which you never experienced the original trauma.

So, you haven't changed "the past," because there is no single "the past." There are many. But you have moved from a timeline in which certain events traumatized you to another in which similar events happened, but they did not traumatize you. How can this be?

Here is why I have begun to think there is some truth, or at

least value in this model of what happens in successful reparenting work. At the point of the trauma branching, an inner self is "frozen in time." Neurology tells us that, during the original overwhelm, raw implicit memories never get processed by a hippocampus that has gone offline. So they never reach the left brain, where we assimilate them and make them part of the story of who we are.^{iv} If they had reached it back then, the experience by definition would not be traumatizing. In a word, part of you is not with you in the present, adult timeline.

"Trauma" comes from the German word "dream," and these memories are trapped in a nightmarish unresolved present. In shamanism, successful inner child work might well be called "soul retrieval." The most effective way I've found to do inner child reparenting is to visit these encapsulated selves in their nightmare and share the experience and a safe amount of their feelings with them. So guess what, it makes a funny kind of sense to say that they "were" not alone then because you yourself have gone back and supported them in their stuck, timeless "present."

If you do this carefully and well, it means that the trauma child completes this original experience now with a helper, with some support literally from the future that she or he did not have in her or his frozen version of the past. As of "now," this one "had" a helper. You are there with her or him, saying: "Look we made it,

and I've come back to help you through this, and we're now living in a present where you are safe."

Since the trauma depends not on the events but on the reaction to them, by being there with the trauma child as the unprocessed memories and feelings around them finally unfold and move forward—the child has help that prevents the events from being traumatizing. So both the inner child and the adult now find themselves on the timeline in which there was no trauma. Yes the events happened, but the visit of the adult self from the future "prevented" them from creating damage. It is like Michael J. Fox making sure his parents got married.

I might say that this is just a kind of mind game except for experiences like the following. I help a woman do reparenting work successfully around some crucial experiences. Towards the end, a "lost" memory pops up for her. She suddenly "remembers" an angel appearing one night at her window to give her comfort and energy to survive her out-of-control parents. I tell her to look closely at the angel. She does, and then she says: "Oh my god, it's ME." ▲

ⁱ<http://myspiritcare.com/articles/clairvoyant-sight-into-the-spirit-world>

ⁱⁱ"Parallel Worlds, Parallel Lives," search YouTube

ⁱⁱⁱ"Parallel Universes," BBC, search YouTube

^{iv}Dan Siegel, *MINDSIGHT* (New York: Bantam, 2011)