



6 STEP EXPLORATION OF TRAUMA SOUL CARE

"You have been wounded in many ways. The more you open yourself to being healed, the more you will discover how deep your wounds are. You will be tempted to become discouraged because, under every wound you uncover, you will find others. Your search for true healing will be a suffering search. Many tears still need to be shed. But do not be afraid. The simple fact that you are more aware of your wounds shows that you have sufficient strength to face them." (Henri Nouwen)

LOVE

God cares about every detail of our lives. His mercies are new every morning. His grace is sufficient. He is our strength when we are weak. God loves us – *always, no matter what.*

I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3)



"If we could just be, for a few minutes each day, fully where we are, we would indeed discover that we are not alone and that the One who is with us wants only one thing: to give us love." (Henri Nouwen)

GRIEF

God is with us in our grief, pain, fear, and shame. While it's often frightening to experience our losses and feelings, God's steadfast love will comfort us as we grieve all that we'd hoped would be different.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear." (C.S. Lewis)

HOPE

When we are open to holding on to possibility every day, we can live with hope-filled anticipation, to what God will do in and through us.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

"When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope." (Henri Nouwen)



Chronic Joy

Visit chronic-joy.org for more resources.

WORTH

Whether we've understood it or not, we've always belonged to our Heavenly Father, who ascribes the highest value to each of us. Our worth is determined by Him, not by others, the past, or our too-often misguided internal compass. God's voice says, "You are a pearl of great value, and I love you, *always and forever.*"

So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:31)

"When I trust deeply that today God is truly with me and holds me safe in a divine embrace, guiding every one of my steps, I can let go of my anxious need to know how tomorrow will look, or what will happen next month or next year. I can be fully where I am and pay attention to the many signs of God's love within me and around me." (Henri Nouwen)

PURPOSE

Before we took our first breath, God had a purpose for our lives. Traumatic pasts don't change the fact that God has a purpose. Our experiences can make us afraid, angry, or bitter, but God invites us to be compassionate to ourselves and others. We have superpowers to sense others who've experienced trauma and can offer compassion to them.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

"I am finding that when I choose to let go of my ... wishes and trust that my life is precious and meaningful in the eyes of God, something really new, something beyond my own expectations, begins to happen for me." (Henri Nouwen)

JOY

Even though the past is often a barrier between us and experiencing joy, being curious about joy and celebrating the good things can help our brains learn to notice them more often.



The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. (Psalm 118:24)

"Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day." (Henri Nouwen)

"Forgive yourself for survival patterns you picked up while enduring trauma." (Toby Mac)



Chronic Joy

chronic-joy.org/trauma