



A Primer on Posttraumatic Growth

Richard G. Tedeschi, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Boulder Crest Institute for Posttraumatic Growth

Bluemont, VA

Distinguished Chair, Boulder Crest Institute

Professor Emeritus, UNC-Charlotte

Developer of PTG concept with Lawrence Calhoun at UNC Charlotte

Author/Editor of several books on Trauma, Bereavement, and PTG

Clinical Psychologist in practice for 40 years



BOULDER CREST
INSTITUTE



V I S A P R O E L I O



BOULDER CREST
INSTITUTE

BOULDER CREST



VIS A PROELIO

Trauma--Broadly defined

- Threat to cognitive or psychological integrity-- a severe challenge to individuals' past ways of understanding the world and their place in it, their personal identity.



Trauma & Cognition

Challenging or shattering the assumptive world
or core beliefs about

- benevolence
- safety
- predictability
- controllability
- vulnerability
- self-esteem
- morality (moral injury)

Posttraumatic Growth is both a process and an outcome: The experience of *positive changes* in oneself as a result of the *struggle* with traumatic events.

Changes are transformative and involve *changes in perspective*.



Posttraumatic Growth domains are empirically derived.

New Possibilities

Relating to Others

Personal Strength

Appreciation of Life

Spiritual and Existential Change

- PTG is not a new concept.
- PTG is found in the wisdom literature of the great religions.
- PTG examples are found in stories and literature across time and cultures.

Resilience vs. PTG

- Resilience: “The ability to *recover* readily from illness, depression, adversity or the like.” The ability to regain shape.
- Also, *resistance* to adversity.
- Versus PTG: a new level of functioning and perspective--*transformative* responses to adversity.



PTG Recipe

1. Appreciating and using dialectical thinking.
2. Constructing meaning.
3. Seeking, finding, reminding, and constructing benefits for oneself and others.
4. Establishing and maintaining a future orientation with altered priorities.
5. Constructing a coherent narrative, “missions” that transform loss into something good.

A model for working with the trauma and loss.

Described in:

Clinical Texts

- Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999, *Facilitating Posttraumatic Growth*.
- Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, *Helping Bereaved Parents*.
- Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006, *Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth*.
- Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2013, *Posttraumatic Growth in Clinical Practice*.

Self-Help

- Tedeschi & Moore, 2016, *The Posttraumatic Growth Workbook: Coming Through Trauma Wiser, Stronger, & More Resilient*.

Why an “Expert Companion?”

- Without companionship, expertise is hollow.
- Downplay expertise.
- Stories need to be told, and experiences need to be understood--this takes time and good listening.
- Learn the unique experience of the person telling the story, be the learner not the expert.

Expertise about Trauma

- No “time limits.”
- It is a gradual process.
- There are great individual differences.
- Time itself isn’t so important.
- The assumption that a traumatized or grieving person is going to go through certain phases or stages in a predictable sequence is not helpful.

Expertise about Trauma

- There may not be “closure.”
- Those suffering loss continue to be attached.
- Look for alternatives to talk, other ways of expression.
- Action can be a proxy for talk, especially in men.
- But trauma survivors may get more than recovery.
- Trauma survivors often must re-understand everything, and this can lead to *Posttraumatic Growth*.

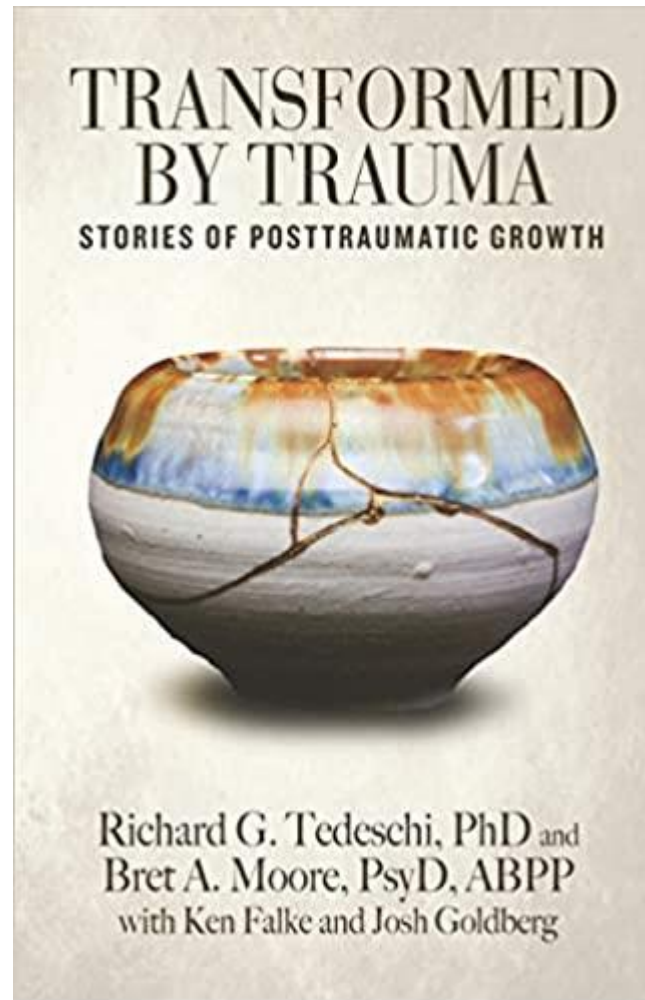
Bottom Line

- *The Expert Companion Educates*
- *The Expert Companion Helps with Emotions*
- *The Expert Companion Helps with Intrusive Thoughts*
- *The Expert Companion Helps Sort Out What to Believe*
- *The Expert Companion Helps Shape New Identity of*
- *One Who Contributes and Serves*

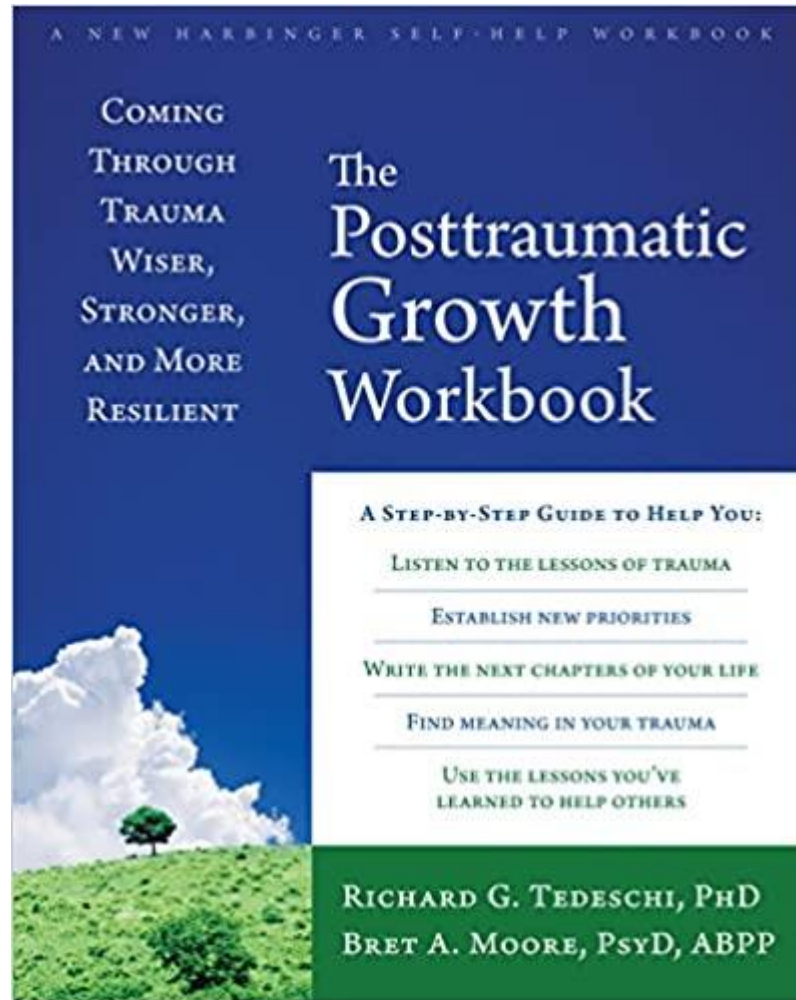


BOULDER CREST
INSTITUTE

Transformed by Trauma



VIS A PROELIO





A FINAL THOUGHT

If you approach the trauma survivors with whom
you work humbly, attentively, and with respect
your reward will be:

*Vicarious posttraumatic growth--wisdom for
everyday life and your own traumas.*