

## Resilience as scaffolding embodied affectivity

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### Introduction and overview

I'm really honoured to be here, and I'd like to thank Anthony Korner for inviting me, it's been a thrill.

I love Jack Block's account of resilience, as a 'characteristic ability to dynamically and progressively 'adapt to stress' in *specifically unrehearsed* yet effective ways as required by existing circumstances' (Block, 2002, p.4, my emphasis).

Resilience is a *characteristic* ability, so it's something about you, about your personality. But it's *dynamic*, it changes and it shifts; and it's progressive, you get more skilled at it, to *adapt* to stress. You do this in *unrehearsed* ways, which intrigues me: that element of spontaneity and freshness and openness. They are unrehearsed, but they are *effective*, 'as required by existing circumstances' – where you find yourself right now.

When I look through the literature on resilience - and believe me I did that in preparation for today - the research catches the following elements.

First, there's the capacity positively to *reappraise* stimuli - reappraisal.

Secondly, there's also that sense that you should be able to be in control and see things as a challenge.

But the vein of the literature I really like, thirdly, is where researchers emphasise that you need to be able to *use* intense and relevant signals, rather than avoiding them - signals coming in at you from the world, and also signals coming at you from within your own body - both environmental, and bodily. And this is not just in the moment, in demanding current situations, but also in long-haul endurance.

A further and less acknowledged part of resilience, which Block emphasises, is a wilful playful regression. He talks about 'a looser, less directed organisation of the individual's personality in the interests of surmounting or easing a problem' (Block 2002, p.4). This is in real contrast to a linear narrative of increasing control and increasing expertise. The thought that you'd actually let go and be a little bit looser is novel, and makes a lot of sense to me. Block says this is 'in the

interests of surmounting or easing a problem', because with trauma, you actually can't control everything. It's beyond your control, it's shocking, it's overwhelming. So if you're going to reach for control and positive reappraisal, trauma is going to ask you a few serious questions. I like the notion of this spontaneity, regress, or playfulness, where you might even for example make room for play under rocket fire (Cohen, Pat-Horenczyk, and Haar-Shamir 2014).

I'm a personality person, so I care about individual differences. Why are some people more able to bounce back, or to grow, after adversity, where others experience a significant decline, either in their own mental health, or in social integration and how well they get on with their friends, or in how creative and flourishing they can be?

Here up front is my summary of what I see resilience as conferring upon us. Resilience is something that enables us to avoid the costs to our thought, to our emotion, and to our relationships of being negatively impacted, not just by the external world but also by our inner bodily economy, in ways which may have been prolonged by what we ourselves do. We can ask, have we ourselves sometimes done something which has added to the trauma, or to the stress that we experience? Have we prolonged and intensified it in some way? We are trying to cope, we are responding to it, we are defending against it, but we may accidentally nonetheless contribute to its impact on us. For me, resilience is trying not to do that. Resilience is getting out of your own way. It is trying not to intensify the impact of challenges through your own coping mechanisms and defensive processes.

### **Resilience frameworks**

I'll give a first thumbnail sketch of our resilience framework. Resilience is a scaffolded skill. It has to enable you to work with what *you've* got. So that takes into account both traits – some traits you enter the world with, others which are acquired – and intersubjective process – what can you tolerate? can you tolerate falling apart and then reassembling? Thinking of resilience as a scaffolded skill also includes the context – in what context do you find yourself, at a civic level, and culturally as well?

Resilience research in psychology – such as a recent paper in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* – homes in on one global mechanism, and that's 'positive appraisal' (Kalisch, Müller and Tüscher 2015). I say, yes, great - but then, what contributes to positive appraisal? I want a deeper, more complicated story. That's what I'm going to try to give you now, for what it's worth. When Kalisch et al ask what's related to positive appraisal, they say brain function and background. Well, could I ask, what's *not* due to 'brain function and background'? I actually can't think of anything. Perhaps how high you jump when a car backfires that's probably not much to do with background, that might just be innate temperament, I'm not sure.

But I like what Kalisch et al say about reappraisal. They say it involves 'taking a different mental perspective': it involves detecting new aspects of the situation, and this enables you to implement more positive appraisals (Kalisch et al 2015, p.14) – though they acknowledge this might be difficult in trauma.

Now I'm getting interested here, because Silvan Tomkins says that what really helps you to take a different mental perspective is curiosity, interest and surprise – the positive affects. These positive affects may make you a bit blithe or flaky, but they really help you to reorient in the current environment.

I'm thinking, hmmm, there might be another line of thought here. I know that psychologists always are critical, I'm sorry about that - I'm well-disciplined in that regard - but the account given by Kalisch et al is pretty cognitive, and neglects the affects and emotions. It's individualistic too, it doesn't look at the intersubjective and the social. They assume that change derives from seeing the environment differently, but perhaps they neglect the *inner* environment. Yes, re-appraisal is a kind of metacognitive ability, so in one way it's about the inner environment. But that's not what I mean by the inner environment. They also neglect meta-*affective* features, which I'll illustrate with a couple of case studies. Reflection on how you *access* what's going on in your body makes a big difference, I think, to how capable you are of tolerating what is going on in your body.

So here's a framework which isn't just referring to brain state and background. I'm trying to flesh out a fuller picture, not just of resilience but of well-being too. We can list a vast array of ingredients here up front, potential resources for the dynamic, dispositional organisation of the scaffolded personality. I'll talk briefly in turn about affective features; intersubjective features; the sense of self; metacognition; language and metaphor; audience uptake and social context; and cultural backdrops to identity. Which aspects of this array of resources help you to be resilient will depend on what the world throws at you, and on your history: and all this will be driving what your inner world might be throwing at you in the face of trauma.

If I have a setback and I've got a ready-made shame schema waiting to be activated, my inner world will become my worst enemy. Over and above any single discrete stressor from the external world, I'm going to chant 'I knew this was going to happen, I'm a fake and a phoney and I deserve this', etc. Something of what I bring to the situation potentiates this response, activating any weaknesses in my resilient capacity to bounce back. So there are *conative* and *affective features*, including inbuilt things like temperament, but also *affective style* which I'll talk more about later.

Then you've got *intersubjective features*. I'm not as interested here in attachment as in *attunement* (Trevarthen, Gratier, & Osborne 2014). I'm interested in *trust*, both as a trait, and as a state-specific thing, driving whether or not you trust a particular individual. One thing we pick up, in terms of our implicit affective history with others, is whether or not that other person is going to be there to soothe me if I'm distressed. Can I trust their grip on reality? You know, if they say the walls are blue, and I trust them, I'm not even going to bother looking: I'll say the walls are blue, because I trust them as a source of epistemic warrant.

Also *play* is important in ways I will suggest. Then when it comes to *self-other boundaries*, one can only really enjoy the permeability of boundaries of self if those boundaries have come into play in the first place. Otherwise it feels like fragmentation and disorganisation. But if I've got a flexible set of boundaries, then states like absorption and flow are going to be highly pleasurable to me, where I get that 'as if' loss of self, and I can enjoy that, though it may not be enjoyable for everyone. I'm also interested in how *agency* develops, and what its functions are (Deans, McIlwain, & Geeves 2015).

Then there is another sense of self, the self as an object of reflection - when you think about yourself, how much do you feel that the self is integrated? Or are there parts of it that are partitioned off, because you've been told that those bits are not quite so worthy of love? Or

you've been shamed for certain aspects of self, so that not all parts of self are equally embraced in an integrated personal narrative?

Next, because I'm interested in rumination and reflection, consideration of the *metacognitive* or meta-affective features of how we experience our inner life can, I think, save us. We try to be wise, we try to know ourselves, and that's why we ruminate. Rumination can intensify the distress we feel. So it's hard to distinguish rumination on one's experience from a reflective access which allows you a lighter, more multiple or flexible perspective, more like a mindfulness that's informed by curiosity, interest and surprise. As a realist, I like the ideal of being able to stay in the face of reality, and to use the stimuli it throws your way. It's fine to have a psychic reality which is playful and pretend - I don't see that as a fantasy escape, I see that as a construction, a memorial construction out of elements of experience that might be infinitely preferable to the experiential world that you're in at a given moment.

In the work I do with yoga practitioners, we see how *language* and *metaphor* can enable us to mind our bodies in different ways; literally to incorporate the knowledge of others through the way that they speak about us or speak to us, about our bodies or about our experience (McIlwain & Sutton 2014). I'm also influenced by Sue Campbell's (1997) work on audience uptake: there are certain feelings and emotions that don't form unless someone is there to catch the spark, to leap the gap between people. I don't think that a social person is just there to receive an already formed emotion - the reception is, rather, part of the formation. If you're bearing witness and then you're denied that uptake, if you're called sentimental or bitter, for example, the listener has then moved the play from the history of past wrongs against you to a personality deficit of yours - *you* are bitter and you are sentimental. Such a listener is not prepared to look at the history of what has gone down: such a response can be very powerful because sometimes you don't see it coming. Being dismissed is a terrible thing, particularly for minority groups, as Campbell says - in contrast, no one calls someone holding a bomb bitter. So *audience uptake* and *social context* are absolutely crucial to resilience, as is the *cultural backdrop* to identity which I'm not able to get on to much today.

### **Developmental contributions to resilience: the positive affects**

Now I'll zero in on developmental aspects of resilience: first, the positive affects. I love this image from the Glasgow art gallery for all sorts of reasons - optimising the positive affects.



Developmental contributions are *conserving* positive affects, which are, in some form, innate. I'm in the company of Darwin and Tomkins and Panksepp there. Silvan Tomkins (1962) thought that affects were the adjuncts of the drives, and that they were more powerful than the drives. So it wasn't just nurture and sex and all that sort of stuff: for Tomkins, affect is in a sense just the social medium. I've written before about the clash between Freud and Tomkins (McIlwain 2007). Tomkins thinks the positive affects spontaneously offer you fresh perspectives on the world, they promote a focus on variation and what's new, instead of only what's similar or analogous to past experience.

If someone is too giddy and happy, we tend not to take them seriously intellectually, because they are seen as flaky. But I think, all strength to them (Fredrickson 2001). Lambie and Marcel (2002), in one of my favourite articles of all time, suggest that the positive affects they take us out of ourselves and focus us on the external world. That's a by-product of secure attachment – you're safe so you explore, nobody is trying to eat you or kill you right now, there are no predators, so you can explore your environment. It might be useful later on: when someone is trying to eat you or kill you, you know where to run and hide: but in the short term, it's about exploration.

Facing our inner world with curiosity, interest and surprise is the strongest way to go. So the manner of attending to the inner world matters. With *rumination* you can get immersed at the level of self - 'why me?', at a sort of generalised level rather than a specific level - and you can roil, like a leaf trapped in a stream with nowhere to go. With Anthony Arcuri and then with Alan Taylor and Andrew Geeves, we've explored the phenomenology of rumination, and what it is people ruminate about. We distinguish rumination from reflection, where in contrast reflection sets you free, it's a different way of responding to your own inner world (McIlwain, Taylor, & Geeves 2010).

Lambie and Marcel (2002) say you start with this bodily clout, and it's somatosensory. Then there's your manner of attending to it: it's either analytic, where you take it apart, or synthetic, where you say for example 'I'm filled with joy'. Then you appraise the meaning of it, because the bodily clout in emotion is *intentional* in the philosophical sense, it *points* to the world, it's telling you something about the outer world in the first instance, and you have to work out what's going on. None of this is necessarily conscious at this stage, appraisal is not necessarily conscious. And *then*, and if and only if other things are added, you get to conscious experience. (I see Lambie and Marcel, interestingly enough, as offering a mainstream equivalent to Freud's fabulous diagram in chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams*: there's the stimulus, and then the mnemonic traces, and then you have unconscious thought, and other things get added on and you get conscious thought).

All this is precisely what can come apart in the process of defence. You can try not to experience your body, sort of playing possum – 'I'm not really here, I'm not really in a body'. Or I feel, 'something's going on in my body', but I may be alexithymic – I don't want to name it, I don't want to know about it, I'm not going to chunk it in culturally meaningful units. In other words, these patterns of emotional responsiveness can all get dismantled: George Bonanno's work with child sexual abuse survivors has used this kind of model (Bonanno et al 2007).

So, what optimises the positive affects? Strong positive affects are potentiated by certain life experiences. This means a secure base of *attachment*, but also *attunement*: I love Stern's

example (1998), where a nine-month-old baby is reaching for a toy, and going ‘Ahhhhh’ like that. And in the form, intensity and timing of her ‘Ahhhhh’ and the reach, her mother is doing a terrific shimmy with her upper body which is exactly in tune with the child’s rhythm of movement and the intensity of movement. The mother is not just going ‘Ahhhhh’ and reaching for the toy as well: she is actually conveying to the child, in another sensory register, ‘I see your pleasure, your pleasure is affecting me, but I am a separate-minded other, who is seeing your pleasure and sharing in it in some ways’. So rather than talking about *theory* of mind, or ‘mentalisation’, I like to talk about the *pleasure* of other minds. Lots of things happen in that moment. You become aware, if you’re the baby, of the reality of your pleasure, the embodied aspects of it, and it’s not being encroached or impinged upon by the mother. The mother is leaving a sensory space, and possibly even a temporal space, for the child to initiate this exchange, and it’s an improvised chorus of play.

Winnicott says these sorts of experiences are what promote a dawning awareness of the lived specificity of the particular body you inhabit (Winnicott 1991; Phillips 2007). For example, I dream about being someone who *doesn’t* jump when a car backfires, but I do jump, and really high. So I’ve got to learn to be resilient with what *I’ve* got, which is a fairly full and intense affective array. There’s no point in me aspiring to be like my friends who are cool and easy going. I’ve got to learn to live in the body in which I find myself.

Something I’m not so keen about with yoga philosophy is that it sometimes treats the body as husk, something that you should distrust, and ignore, and override. For me, I *need* my affects, to know whether or not I should trust someone, or what hunches I should follow. So the dawning awareness of the body is the beginning of an epistemic trust in one’s own grip on the world, on reality. Reality testing falls out of that. You’ve got to be able to tolerate and use bodily feeling. Fonagy shows that that’s not the case for absolutely everyone: it’s quite difficult for some people to allow bodily feeling to even arrive (Fonagy & Target 1998). And the capacity to tolerate and use bodily feeling can be undermined by physical illness. Or if you’re an elite athlete, if you’ve got pain and you need to kick that goal anyway, then you may have to override quite imperious sensations of bodily pain.

### **Case Studies in Affect Development**

I’ll give you examples of work with some of my students on how children tolerate strong inner feelings, on the nature of affective embodiment and how complex that can be. These first two projects were done here at Westmead Children’s Hospital, a real thank you to Westmead for housing them and making us welcome.

Maddie Ferrari looked, with Geoff Ambler and me, at what children said when they were transitioning in their management of diabetes, Maddie worked with little kids coping with type 1 diabetes. They have to take insulin either through multiple daily needle injections, or with an insulin pump for subcutaneous transfusion. Maddie found that when they were predominantly using needles, some children had something of a mind-body disconnect. They had to eat when they weren’t hungry – jelly babies, juice drinks – and they had to take insulin when they were actually feeling very ‘bright’ and energised. But when they transitioned to the insulin pump, they could go back to a more epistemic trust: they could just key into their body and not have to be so top-down or cognitive in their coping style (Ferrari, McIlwain, & Ambler 2018).

Now I'll use another student's work to show you how negation is used to bypass the experience of fear. This is research with Caroline Dale and with Dr Angela Morrow here at Westmead. Caroline looked at 21 young patients, between 7 and 17, who either had to have monthly Botox injections, or were being treated for cancer. She looked at differences in the children's capacity to tolerate and avow in language, to another person, their embodied responses to physical experiences. We found that there were some intersubjective copers and some autonomous copers. Some kids coped by not really wanting to hang around people. They preferred to do it on their own, although they often held people in mind. One little girl in our focus group was great at naming it, and it cost us dearly in a hilarious way. She said in the focus group:

I'm a little scared [*fear*], but then if I get this done it will be over and done with [*coping attempt: focus on positive*], but it's just that I'm a little scared [*fear*] because when the needles go into me [*horror in her voice*] ..., so yeah.

Well, everyone just scattered. We lost our focus group. That was it, we couldn't do more research with the group that day, because she was cool, she could put it in language, but no one else could even bear to hear it with the *f* emotion she had in her voice.

In another case, a little girl had said things like 'oh, only babies cry', and 'it's just really weird when people see other people cry'. So she was definitely negating fear, and in our line-by-line coding here we coded for negation. But this negation of fear was sidestepped by the use of yellow post-it notes. The girl is talking about fear, and she just puts a yellow post-it note on her nose. So Caroline, the researcher, puts a yellow post-it note on her nose as well, and says 'we could be cockatoo birds'. And the little girl goes 'cockatoo bird!', embracing it, to the delight of everyone. Caroline interprets this in light of Izard's beautiful research on children who feel meta-emotions (Izard et al 2000). They discussed young boys who felt shame co-assembling every time they felt fear, which is a very common one for masculinity. Here, this is a little girl who's got the same thing going down. When you have a sense of shame regarding the experience of fear, then play and storytelling might be more useful to you, might allow you to communicate more freely. So this little 7-year-old girl had said things like 'only babies cry', so she wanted to be very brave, and she was *very* brave. But once the post-it notes were on, well 'cockatoo bird' could have a totally different set of experiences. Here's what the little girl said:

Well, cockatoo bird, when she first had her Botox she was very frightened, and she didn't know what was happening. So cockatoo mum bird was very afraid about what was going to happen. So she was very scared that she thought something like, she didn't know the mask was going to work, the laughing gas.

A totally different story, and an absolute tribute to Caroline Dale as a researcher, all with the aid of a post-it note.

### **Embodied Affectivity**

Going back to theory – what if you are open to the meaning, the mental meaning, of what's going on in your body? What if there is an undefensive, spontaneous openness to the action tendencies of emotion? Researchers can make emotion very cognitive, very disembodied. But Darwin says emotions once were actions, that's why they're so hard to regulate. Rage was smashing your opponent, fear was running away. These action tendencies are vestigial now, but they still animate our body as if we're getting impelled into action. And they are promoting trial actions, to be received and permitted in a playful way, or they can bring hunches or creativity.

I'm interested in the permeability of the boundaries between self, world, and other. My earlier research was on new religious movements (McIlwain 2009). I found that people prone to new religious movements were highly absorptive personalities, so I'm interested in that openness to the world that some people have. In Maddie's study of children with diabetes, we found that some little kids had all their friends as part of their distributed system of management, *if* they liked their friends. If they didn't like their friends they weren't part of the system. Their boundaries are completely intact, and completely permeable at the same time. But other children, if others reminded them about their insulin levels, or tried to help them or soothe or whatever, they got very annoyed. That was because there was a lot of shame around being seen to be different. So the world might be there, the intersubjective coping possibilities might be in your environment, but whether or not you can allow yourself to use them depends on things that you bring to that situation that are the residue of your history.

The residue of that history includes your sense of self as agent, and your sense of experienced contingency (Fonagy & Target 1998). Contingency is at work in those interactions with a baby leading and a mother following, with the child getting that luxurious sense that 'someone's following me and responding to me'. It's initially just experienced, but then, once it's repeated, once it's sought, once the child leaves the space or fakes a sneeze to get the mother's attention, to get her back into the play, then you've got agency happening. The pleasure in that, in being able to be a cause that produces effects from the world, is quite a wonderful thing, that spontaneity and embodied trust in having a go. Part of resilience is not feeling that everything has to be controlled in advance. Not everything *can* be controlled, and in fact good things happen in the moment if you're able to improvise with the people you happen to find yourself with. You know, if there happens to be a saxophonist and a double bass player and a drummer in the room, things can happen, as it were.

So there is such a thing as 'meta-skill'. Skill has chunked, well-rehearsed automaticities as part of it. But in the moment, you might also put things together spontaneously in new combinations and new ways, with movements unfolding in real time rather than being entirely chunked and pre-rehearsed. For me, the people that can take their abilities to their upper limits, which is involved in flow experience, are the people who can risk getting it wrong. That's why I like Block's notion of being able to relinquish control in a wilful playful regression. Some people can risk being bare and imperfect, trying out new ways on the fly, in the social arena, or practising in public. That's one of the hardest things about yoga – you're being asked to move in a way that you've never moved before and everybody else is around you as well. There's an intense vulnerability to that when we're adults that just wasn't there when we were children: if you've ever done a kids' yoga class, you've just got to keep the poses coming, because it's 'okay, what next? Hand stand? Ok!' - no problem at all.

This is a sense of agency that doesn't fetishize control, which is such a Western tendency that we have. But there's still a sense of competence, mastery, self-efficacy, all those other words that are seen as absolutely part of well-being and health in our culture.

We can also look at the sense of self as an object of reflection. Here you're ahead if you've got minimal dispositional shame, if you're not too prone to shame. We can all be shamed, but some of us come ready packed, so to speak, we've got a packed lunch of shame, we just unwrap it when the occasion demands. We can go to higher limits of shame than people who don't have that head start in being high dispositionally in terms of shame.

Also helpful is minimal false-self compliance. This is where you feel, if your big brother says that babies don't cry, then you feel you shouldn't cry, even if you're feeling very sad or afraid.

Rather, what you want are self-belief, confidence, and compassion – you're aware that others are fallible, and you're part of that humanity, so compassion can come back to you, it's springing from self-compassion rather than self-esteem (Neff & Vonk 2009). And you want to be comfortable with a fallibility of self. If you haven't been shamed for getting it wrong, you'll have a go. You might get it wrong; but if you just got it wrong, that doesn't matter. Then fallibility is not a disaster leading to loss of love. In contrast, if you've got those malformed schemas, then that's a different picture. But setbacks don't *necessarily* activate shame.

My student Penelope Faure studied people who were resilient in the face of retrenchment. We started off with interviews, and followed up with a quantitative study. One phrase we loved, this was an Irish guy, he said that you're resilient if when you get retrenched from your job you 'hit the reload button rather than the panic button'. You refresh the screen, you think 'I'm not sure I really enjoyed that job anyway, gee there are *people* in the world, there are things called weekends, I can get a job that I actually like instead of one that I just have to go to, etc'. Penelope found this was more likely with those that were psychologically minded. That's a big individual difference variable. Some people didn't really have theory of mind, didn't imagine for example that Penelope would be useful to them, it never occurred to them that she might be able to facilitate their transition into a new job. Also the people who were psychologically minded were much more likely spontaneously to express gratitude to her.

Finally we can talk about context: civic support and cultural support. My student Wesley Tan looks at human trafficking, at victims and carers (Tan & McIlwain 2015). This is where the demands and the uniqueness of trauma really show. A victim of trafficking is often a sacrificial child, a child who is not seen, or doesn't feel themselves valued as other children. Then, once they're trafficked into a new culture, it's almost like they are in a cult, they become socially encapsulated. They are severely mistreated: some had their hands dipped in bleach, undiluted bleach. They are dismissed, they are stripped of power, they sometimes have to sleep in the same room as the dog, young children have power over them, they are stripped of humanity. Wes has studied such experiences in the context of how some victims' imprisonment ended, and how some regained a sense of freedom. One, at the moment of possible escape, sees an open gate, says 'I don't deserve this life', and bolts. She doesn't know the neighbour, but she trusts that that neighbour will be better than what she's got; is shocked to discover that the police can be a source of help, that victims have rights, that others will help them. Initially, when people are victims of human trafficking, they are led to believe that if they go to the police in the new country the police will not be on their side, they will be seen as criminals. But somehow, in that one case, you have self-belief, existential courage, trust in specific others, and a hope or realisation that the system is more supportive than corrupt in the place they happen to find themselves.

### **The Demands and Uniqueness of Trauma**

Most resilience literature, though, is based on stress and hassles, not on traumatic experiences like that. So much of the psychology doesn't translate all that well. Trauma, as *you* know, I don't have to tell you this stuff, is overwhelming, life-threatening; the experience often stays outside of language and without meaning; sometimes it's disavowed, so in a sense it never ceases

arriving, because it's never been processed. The stimulus doesn't undergo full processing all the way through to language, and it may not be integrated into a life narrative.

In the moment of trauma, one endures. Elizabeth Behnke is a phenomenologist: she's remarkable, she's got a beautiful paper called 'Enduring', and another called 'Ghost Gestures', about the signature patterns that we come to have in our body that signal our affective history (Behnke 1997, 2012; McIlwain & Sutton 2014). These two genres of coping response, these distinct forms of dissociation, have been picked up by Giesbrecht and colleagues (2008). Firstly, there can be imperfect information processing in the name of defence, that's when you don't get much beyond experiencing the bodily clout of the trauma, you don't allow meaning or language or avowal: as Bonanno says in the context of childhood sexual abuse, this is a kind of flight when no flight is possible, when even escape escapes you. Or, secondly, there can be a partitioning off, where you leave the experience in an unintegrated self-state, unlinked to the rest of the integrated personality by any self-reflective processes.

It's not easy to reappraise trauma positively, because it's so global in its impact. Trauma threatens your assumptive worlds, bringing a loss of trust in others. The world is just a source of overwhelm. You may internalise 'badness' to give meaning to why the trauma happened, or you may idealise the other, the perpetrator. There is a saying that it is better to be a devil among angels than an angel in hell. You leave in place the hope that the other person might do good by you if you take on board some of that badness yourself.

So – for survival? Our memory research suggests that it would help to stay specific: there are advantages to episodicity, to remembering *particular* past experiences, and in contrast a focus on generalised memory tends to be associated with depression and negative states like rumination. I'm not totally a fan of positive reappraisal, because I think we should see the negative as negative. Rather than avoidance of traumatic experience, or taking it on as self-blame, or opting to idealise or pardon, or any of those forms of possible appraisals, I suggest 'understand' might be the option. Understand the randomness of some of it, rather than excessively narrativising it, or seeing it as something that you merited in some way. And 'forgive', if possible (Worthington and Scherer 2004).

Bromberg's powerful paper on psychoanalysis 'Standing in the Spaces' (1996) addresses intersubjective scaffolding, the opening up of the possibility of the interlinking of self-states through the presence of another. It's like you're both in a reverie together. The therapist is not offering interpretations, but is offering a space, a witnessing for words to arise from the experiencer themselves, to incorporate the capacities of another person. The therapist offers potential for audience uptake, to allow fresh meanings to form, or for experience to be signified in language at all and brought to awareness. Bromberg says you have to hope perhaps to move beyond dissociation to conflict, where you recognise that there are different self-states, with different assumptions and beliefs. You accept that there are complex narratives, and that there are fallible others. You also recognise, I think, that there are random elements, like you were simply in the wrong place when the tsunami hit. There are things that are undeserved and beyond your control. You can understand that, not as an eschewing of agency or a shunning of it, but as contextualising what agency you do have. You start to see what things truly are in response to you, and what might be the product of something else, of for example another person's traumatised unconscious repetition of their history. You have the chance to view things from many vantage points because, or if, you have the reflective capacities that come from positive affects, and the permeable sense of self as both agent and object.

To me, the goal in the case of trauma is not so much positive reappraisal as understanding. The goal is a reconfiguring of self as innocent and undeserving, because nothing one could do could deserve trauma. That's what I've seen in a lot of cognitive behavioural trauma work, saying to a child 'do you really think it's appropriate punishment of even a very bad girl that your father sold you to his mates for drugs when you were ten?'. For the kid to realise 'actually no, that's not usual, that's not normal' is something. The goal is also the capacity to trust and rely on specific others, rather than lose trust altogether in others; and the capacity to find one's own words, and to integrate the experience to a degree.

In very fast overall summary – here is a list. What does resilience make more likely? Resilience makes more likely the experience, across a broader array of situations of:

- a pleasurable sense of agency, absorption, flow
- exhilaration and creative freedom – surprising oneself
- to be linked to friends without wearing them out
- being able to shield and protect others from what is personally impacting, while still being able to share what is going on
- to feel complex and fallible, and worthy of love
- to have realistic discord in relationships without the excessive overlay of unconscious schemas
- and to be able to repair and forgive
- to be able to persist in achievements without burnout
- to be able to reflect on the past rather than ruminate
- to have few no-go zones in one's own history
- to have overarching narrative integration that is culturally received

Thank you so much, and sorry it was so fast!

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