

Post-Traumatic Growth

PSYCHOEDUCATION · MEANING AND CHANGE AFTER VERY HARD EXPERIENCES

How people can change through the struggle with trauma, and why growth and pain can sit side by side

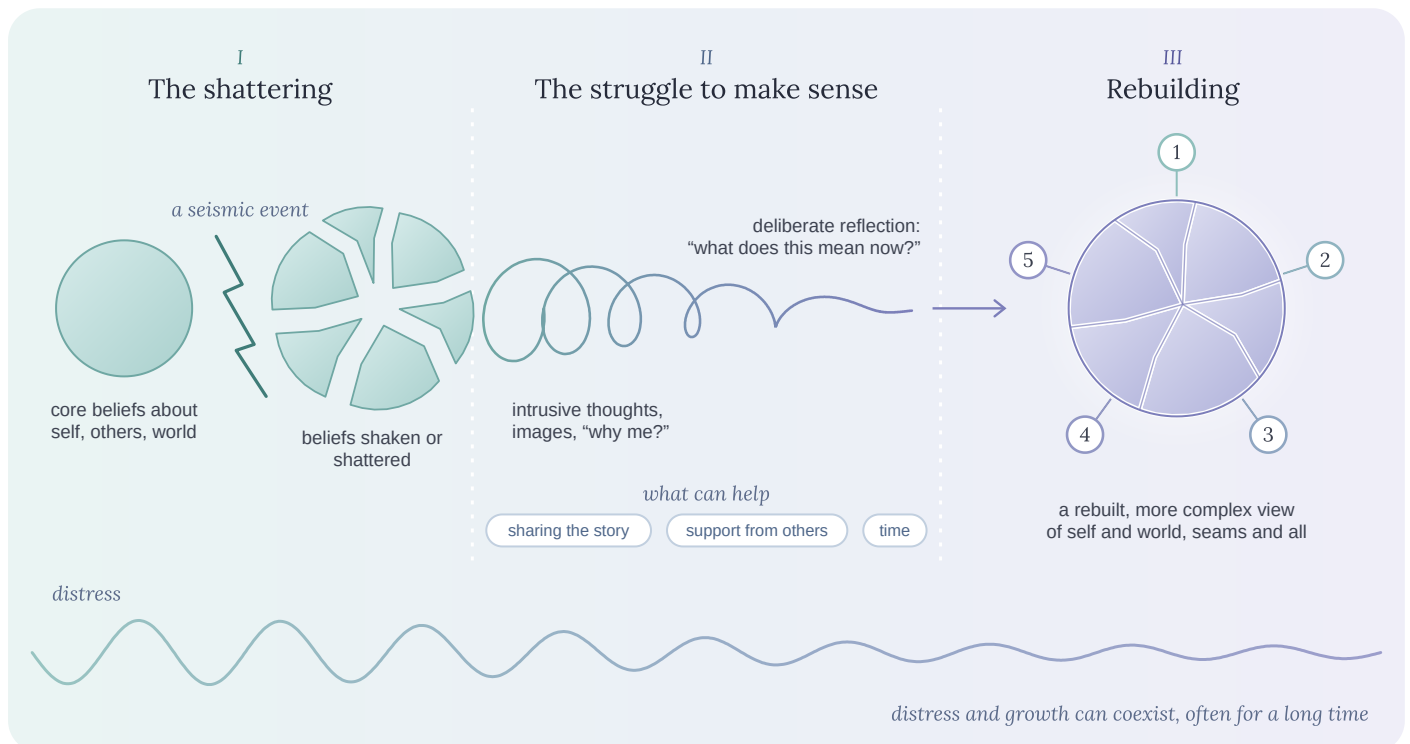
Post-traumatic growth describes positive psychological change that some people experience as a result of struggling with a highly challenging life event. It does not come from the event itself, and it is not something anyone has to find in order to heal. This resource explains how growth can unfold, where people often notice it, and ways to reflect on your own experience at your own pace.

Before you begin

You don't need to feel grateful for what happened, or see it as meaningful. Some people notice growth, some don't, and both are normal. Take what is useful, leave what isn't, and stop at any point.

01 How growth can unfold

based on Tedeschi and Calhoun's model



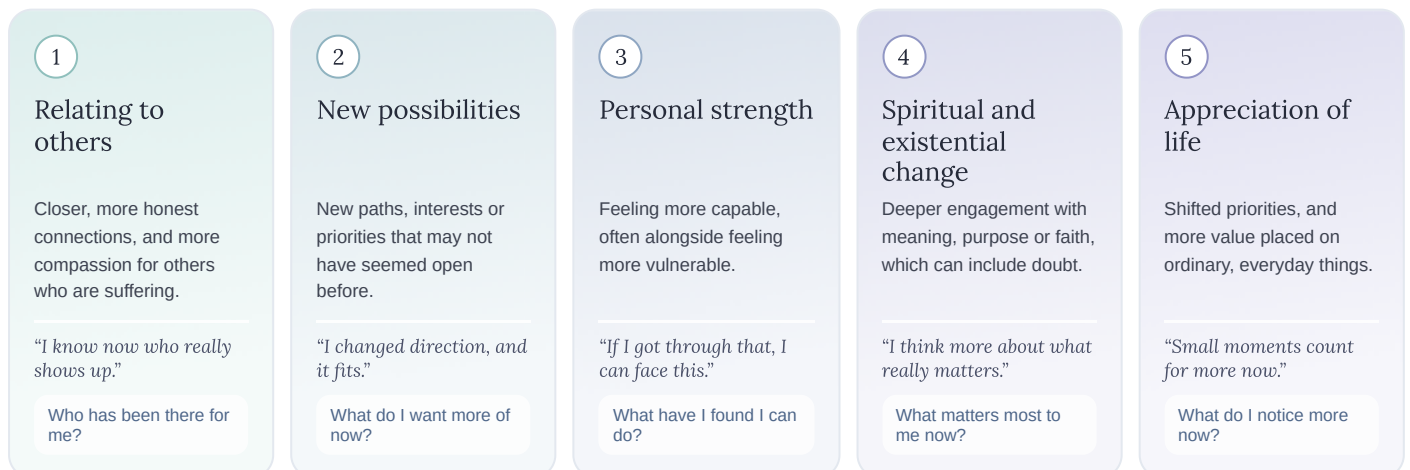
The shattering. A very hard event can shake the beliefs we rely on, such as that the world is safe, fair or predictable, or that we are in control.

The struggle. Early on, thoughts often intrude uninvited. Over time, with support and by sharing the story, reflection can become more deliberate.

Rebuilding. Beliefs may be rebuilt in a way that makes room for what happened, sometimes with changes in the five areas below.

02 Five areas where people often notice growth

not everyone notices all, or any



— Growth comes from the struggle, not from the trauma itself. —

03 Growth, held carefully

what growth is, and what it isn't

GROWTH IS NOT ...	MORE ACCURATELY
● A silver lining	Growth comes from the struggle with what happened, not from the event itself. The event can remain entirely unwanted.
● A requirement or a test	Many people recover well without noticing growth. Its absence is not a failure, and no one should feel pressure to find it.
● The end of pain	Distress and growth often sit side by side, sometimes for a long time. Growing does not mean the hurt is over.
● The same as resilience	Resilience usually describes staying steady or bouncing back; growth describes change that goes beyond where someone was before.
● Always what it seems	Research suggests how much growth people report doesn't always match measured change, so it helps to notice what has shifted in daily life.
● Something to rush	Where growth happens, it usually unfolds gradually, over months or years, and often only becomes visible looking back.

04 Reflecting on my own experience

optional · go gently, and skip anything

Area of growth	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	What shows me this in daily life
① Relating to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
② New possibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
③ Personal strength	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
④ Spiritual / existential	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
⑤ Appreciation of life	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

Both can be true

What this has cost me

what I have lost, or am still grieving

What I have learned or become

through the struggle, not because of the event

What has helped me begin to make sense of it:

Someone I could share more of my story with:

A gentle reminder

You don't need to find meaning in what happened, or be thankful for it. Growth, if it comes, sits alongside loss rather than replacing it, and it can take its own time.

GO AT YOUR OWN PACE

Thinking about difficult experiences can bring up strong feelings or memories. You can pause, skip a question or come back another time. If reflecting becomes overwhelming, consider talking it through with someone you trust or a qualified professional.

SOURCES

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The five areas reflect the domains described by Tedeschi and Calhoun; wording here is original and is not the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory.