

LIBERTY SOLUTIONS NOW

Podcast Episode 3

Topics: Ego Identification, Defense Mechanisms, & Trauma

OUTLINE:

- Recap of prior two episodes
- The four men and the elephant example
 - Demonstrates the difference between left brain intellect and right brain holistic intelligence
- What is the ego? What is its purpose?
- “Ego identification”
 - Identification with Ideologies
 - Identification with Roles and Status
 - Co-opted Institutions
 - Identification with Mind
 - Present Moment Awareness
 - Unconscious Mind Identified Individuals
- Elliot Rodger Case Study
 - Mainstream Psychologists/Psychiatrists Don’t Actually Know What Happened
 - Elliot’s Background
 - The Deepest Fears
 - Ego Defense Mechanisms
 - Projection
 - Avoidance
 - Denial
 - Displacement
 - Compensation
 - Rationalization
 - Attitudes of Traumatized People
 - The Nature of Trauma

- How Traumatization Occurs
- Animal Releasing Trauma Example
- The Process of “Letting Go”
- Dumb & Irrational Behaviors of Traumatized People
- Unresolved Trauma and Sub-Optimal Decision Making
- Elliot’s Increasing Levels of Traumatization & Delusion
- Your Reality Acting as a Mirror
 - Unresolved emotions will create more situations in your life that recreate these emotions
- Elliot as a Possible Drug Addict
- Artificially Produced Dopamine & Its Abuse
- A Note on Elliot’s Racism & Sexism
 - It wasn’t taught to him by anyone; It was a byproduct of unhealthy coping mechanisms
- Conclusion

Transcript:

Alright, welcome to the show. My name is Justin Bauman. This is episode 3 of “Liberty Solutions Now.” My website is libertysolutionsnow.com. Today is Monday, February 14th, 2022.

RECAP

In the last episode we reviewed r-complex selective focus and how getting triggered into the r-complex part of the brain limits what you’re able to perceive within and around you. We talked about the left and right brain hemispheres of the brain and what the functions of each are. Remember, the left side is said to be the masculine side of ourselves and it's responsible for logic, analytical thought, science, and math. The right side is the feminine side of ourselves and it’s responsible for holistic thought, intuition, artistic ability, creativity, and compassion. Then we addressed right and left brain imbalance. Imbalance is created through imbalanced use of the brain. For example, if you’re only engaging in logic and analytical thought and aren’t exercising your creativity or compassion, then you’ll become left brain imbalanced. Doing the opposite would cause you to become right brain imbalanced. Next we talked about how brain imbalance creates mind and worldview schisms, which are distortions of the perception of self and the outside world. The left brain imbalanced take on a dominator/master role and the

right brain imbalanced take on the role of slaves. Don't forget that there are individuals that are imbalanced to BOTH sides of the brain. What this means is in one context they'll behave like a dominator towards those they see as beneath them and in other contexts they'll behave as slaves around those they perceive as being above them. This dynamic can be witnessed in corporations, within the police and military, and lots of other environments. We left off by saying that it is only through the balancing of the brain that all parts of the brain can work properly in unison and give the individual the opportunity to see themselves and the world around them as it actually is.

Before I get into "ego identification", defense mechanisms, and trauma which are the main topic of today's show, I want to discuss the difference between left brain intellect and holistic intelligence. These two things are NOT the same thing. The difference can be best understood with a picture.

THE FOUR BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

This is a picture of four blind men examining different parts of an elephant in an attempt to figure out what it is. Unsurprisingly, each of them came up with four very different answers. "It's a snake." "It's a rope." "It's a tree" etc. The truth is, it was none of these things. It was an elephant when acknowledged in its totality. Each of the blind men were only using left brain analytical thought to try to determine what exactly they were dealing with. In addition, they were up close to the elephant and only focused on one part of it unbeknownst to them. If the blind men had sight and could step back from the scene to take a look, then they would see clearly that they were dealing with an elephant. They'd realize each of them were partially correct, but not totally correct. Being able to use your sight, step back, and look at the whole picture is what holistic intelligence is. You need both the left and right brain hemispheres working in unison to have it. With just left brain intellect, a person is just one of the four blind men, getting lost in the trees and completely unable to see the whole forest from a zoomed out perspective.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MIND AND THE EGO

In this episode, I wanted to revisit why people fail to see the truth or refuse to accept the truth. First we need to understand what the "ego" is. The ego is the part of the human psyche responsible for giving us the ability to perceive ourselves as being separate from others. Without it, you wouldn't know where your body ends and someone else's begins. You'd have no ability to distinguish yourself from your cat or from some inanimate object. For this reason, you can clearly see why living without an ego would

be a big problem. You would have a very difficult time surviving and would be doing all sorts of crazy things that would put your life in danger. You'd shove food into other peoples' mouths thinking that you're feeding yourself. You could end up wandering recklessly into traffic without realizing you're endangering your own life needlessly. You may jump off a cliff thinking you could fly, mistaking your identity as being that of one of the birds in the sky, etc. Having an ego is equivalent to having a useful tool. It is a useful survival tool in and of itself and it is definitely needed. Problems begin to occur though when the ego becomes the ruler of the mind, creates fictitious identities that are not who you really are, and refuses to just be a tool any longer.

EGO IDENTIFICATION

When the ego becomes the ruler of the mind, you've gone into a state of ego identification. What is "ego identification?" When you are in ego identification, what you are essentially doing is identifying with something that is not the essence of who you actually are. This could be a particular role that you play, such as a job, hobby, or familial role. You hear people say things like "I am a businessman" or "I am a surfer." "I am a mother." "I am a bum etc." These are all roles that people are playing. These people aren't actually these things. If you stopped being a businessman, surfer, or mother, you would still exist. You would still be here. You wouldn't die if you stopped playing these roles. You'd still be alive and be playing different roles instead. The same thing goes for your physical body as well. Lots of individuals identify with the physical body they are inhabiting because they think that's them. However, the body is always changing. You grow older, and you look different. In fact, if you think back to when you were a child and compare your body then to what it looks like now, I'd venture to say it looks pretty different now in comparison. Where did that child go? The child disappeared. You could even say, the child has died. Even though this is the case, what has still remained since the very beginning is your self-perpetuating sense of awareness. The silent observer is the only piece of you that has been constant and it has never changed. So what you really are is consciousness having the experience of being a human being. The human being is the experience, not your identity.

IDENTIFICATION WITH IDEOLOGIES

Now people don't only attach their identities to their physical bodies, the roles they play, a race, or to being a citizen of a certain country. Strangely enough, they also attach their identities to thoughts and concepts. Most of the time, they're not even aware they've done it. A lot of these are of the religious or political nature. It's pretty common if you

start attacking someone's religion right in front of them, they'll become angry. Why is this? It's because they have unconsciously created an identity out of their beliefs and have attached themselves to them. So if they think they ARE these beliefs, and you attack the beliefs, this person will perceive you as attacking them directly. Their minds will literally interpret this as you physically attacking their physical body. If this is the first time you're hearing about these concepts I know it could sound very strange. Just closely observe other people and even yourself at times and this is what you'll see. You can have beliefs without attaching yourself to them though. This is a much healthier way of being in the world. You can tell who the people are that aren't unconsciously identified with their beliefs. These people are the ones you're able to have open religious or political discussions with. They'll never get defensive or angry if one of their beliefs gets questioned or challenged and as a result will end up being the most interesting people to talk to. They're the only ones you're able to have productive discussions with. Unfortunately, these types of people are pretty rare, but it is something that has to change if the bulk of humanity is to survive in the future. The reason why is because as long as you're identified with beliefs and defend them like you would your physical body, you will never discover the truth and that means suffering. The truth doesn't care about who you are or what you feel comfortable with acknowledging. The truth is just what it is. Unwavering, and immutable. Unchangeable.

IDENTIFICATION WITH A ROLE OR STATUS IN A COMMUNITY

In case you haven't noticed, almost no one wants to know what the objective truth is. They want to be the arbiter of truth themselves. They desperately want the truth to be something they feel comfortable with, will allow them to feel good all the time, and let them lead the kind of life that they want to live. Almost every time, if truth is to be discovered and lived in harmony with, personal sacrifice, altered behavior, and a transformation of consciousness is required. This is why if you were to create a poll and ask a large, representative sample of the population what they value and prioritize most in life, the truth won't even be a consideration. You'll likely get answers like friends, family, money, and status.

Imagine someone that has grown up in a particular religious organization since they were a child. Their parent's are part of this church, much of their extended family, and even all of their friends. Many of their opportunities for socialization had come and still continue to come from the church. Let's say they've even become employed by the institution and have served many different roles. Let's now say through decades of involvement, this person has now worked themselves up to a position where they are now the head pastor of the church. Let's pretend this is a megachurch too. Thousands

of people every week now pile into these church services every week to see this person talk. They're now making a respectable income doing this. All the hard work has finally paid off. But there's a problem. This head pastor of this church notices within themselves that there is a longing to learn more. "There's gotta be more out there than what I've been told," he thinks. "There's gotta be more than what I'm teaching on Sunday services." So he decides he's going to go wherever his research, contemplation, and meditations take him without any resistance. He thinks he's ready for the journey and whatever he'll discover but he has no idea what's coming. He has no idea of the choices he's going to be forced to make. Eventually the layers of the onion start gradually getting pulled back and then finally the core of the onion of what is actually happening in the world is finally reached. Upon getting to this point, the pastor is ambivalent. On one hand, he is relieved and at peace for having arrived at this destination. There is no more cognitive dissonance, the confusion has been cleared up, and he now feels his foundational knowledge is built upon rock instead of sand. On the other hand, he is completely horrified. Although he has become enlightened to some of the highest metaphysical, spiritual truths in the universe, he has also become very aware of the very ugly truth of the condition of the world and why it is this way. The most horrifying thing for him isn't so much the current conditions as it is realizing his own role he's personally played unconsciously in creating and maintaining those conditions. Out of his own ignorance, he thought he was doing something positive in the world, and superficially at times, perhaps he did at least through community outreach events he helped to organize. However, the harm he now realizes he's done dramatically outweighs any sort of superficial good he's convinced himself he's done.

MIND CONTROL. Without knowing it, he recognizes that he's been mind controlled his entire life and as a result of his position in the church, he's been mind controlling everyone else he's been speaking to through the beliefs he's been giving them. With dread, he knows now he has to make the toughest choice he's even had to make in his life. Does he ignore the truth, stick his head back in the sand, and continue to do what he's been doing for the sake of keeping his job that's supporting his family, giving him status, and allowing him to be a part of a community? Or does he do the right thing? Does he turn his back on the church, find a new job, risk losing all his friends and family, and dedicate his life now to speaking out against the deceptions all in the name of Truth and altruism? What god does he really serve? Will he continue to serve the god of falsehood, destruction, and death or will it be the god of Truth, prosperity, and life even if that may mean living a more difficult life. MATTHEW 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Mammon" is referring to "money" here.

If the pastor's decision was to choose illusion over truth in this situation even though it is harming others, it stems from identification with the ego and attachment to it. The pastor is benefitting too much from the falsehood and illusion the church endorses. It serves his own life well. He may not want to give up all the good things that come from it in his own personal life. However, if he were to choose illusion, he wouldn't be a servant of God at all. He'd be serving himself at the expense of the Truth and the expense of others. He'd ultimately be serving his own ego. He'd be serving his own human sense of self.

CO-OPTED FIELDS & INSTITUTIONS

This dynamic has played out in the past and continues to play out in every field and nearly every organization. This doesn't just take place in church settings. This takes place in the field of education, health, science, technology, and a lot more fields. Ignoring truth for the sake of personal gain takes place in government institutions, corporations, smaller businesses, and even charities.

Some people do this because they don't actually care about other people, because they're psychopathic. Others fear what they'll lose or don't want to give up what they could gain. Ultimately, there's only one reason people do this. For those of you familiar with the bible, these people have erected a golden calf to worship. This golden calf is called the human ego.

Now let's talk about a different way ego identification manifests.

IDENTIFICATION WITH MIND AND EMOTIONS

Lots of people lose themselves in their own minds, thoughts, and emotions. Most people use their minds unconsciously in a completely dysfunctional way. An author I like that has released a lot of content on this is named Eckhart Tolle. He's a German spiritual teacher who wrote the books "The Power of Now" and "A New Earth." Those are the two that I've read and I think are the most popular today. Anyway, people use their minds in such a way that creates enormous amounts of suffering for themselves. There tends to be an enormous amount of excessive, compulsive, useless thinking that never stops. So many think this is just how life is and that you just have to find ways to cope with it. So they do. They do it in the most unhealthy ways imaginable. They turn to drugs, alcohol, distractions, and rationalizations just to name a few. They also try to

“win” their way out of suffering in the external world through success and achievements thinking that’s what will shut the voices up. For example, if a voice in their head is telling them that they’re a loser and need to take action then they’ll take the message the voice is delivering to them at face value and try to accomplish something. This doesn’t work though because this isn’t what causes the voices to quiet down once and for all, although it may help temporarily. They just keep telling you to do more, more, and more endlessly. Although you won’t completely stop the voices, and you wouldn’t want to anyway because that voice as an inner critic can be quite useful to you to an extent, and you can still live in such a way where your thinking isn’t compulsive and causes you suffering.

PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS

The real solution to make living with your mind manageable is to disidentify from the mind and come back into present moment awareness. There is no negativity and unhappiness when you are fully present and conscious. When you’re experiencing compulsive, negative self-talk, what’s typically happening is that energy is unconsciously being given to particular thoughts and to the mind as a whole. This is done through the mechanisms of resistance and attachment. Whenever you resist or become attached to a thought or emotion, you give power to that thought or emotion. When you resist or hold on to an emotion, you’re telling your own brain that this emotion is important so “give me more of this.” This is what’s being done unconsciously even though most aren’t aware this is what they’re doing. You will never be able to achieve peace living in a state of chronic resistance or attachment when dealing with the contents of your own mind. The only way to win the game is to opt out of it altogether. You do this by “letting go.” How do you “let go?” You do this by failing to engage in resistance or attachment. In order to “let go” you accept the current moment exactly as it is right now without judgment, no matter what. It doesn’t matter what sort of thoughts or emotions you’re experiencing at the moment. Fully accept them and feel them fully. Be willing to feel the emotions without going into the thinking mind. Fully feel the sensations in your body that lie behind each emotion. The only way out is through. When you do this, what you’ll notice is all the power has been taken away from the thought or emotion and now it will eventually just fade into the nothingness from which it came. Then keep repeating as necessary.

“Letting go” isn’t a technique that you employ here and there when you experience really strong emotions. It’s a way of life. It’s a lifestyle modification just like how changing your diet is a lifestyle modification. You’re not supposed to do it temporarily to get some result in the future and then stop. You’re supposed to continue to do it to live a good life moving forward.

IDENTIFY WITH THE OBSERVER SELF INSTEAD OF THE MIND

Before you can even let go of a thought you have to first be aware that you're thinking to begin with. You do this by disidentifying with the mind and instead, identifying with your observer self. This is the part of you that lies above the mind and all of its contents. Once you're reidentified with the silent observer self then you now have the ability to nonjudgmentally "watch" the contents of your mind, regardless of whether those are thoughts or emotions. From this position, you have now reclaimed your free will and can now consciously choose what you want to do with the contents of your mind. You can continuously accept whatever comes up over time, resist, or hold on to thoughts and emotions. Although you still may be strongly tempted to resist or hold on to certain thoughts and emotions, it will now be your own choice as to what you decide to do with them unlike before when you were completely identified with your mind and had no free will.

CONSCIOUSNESS RECAP

First, before we go any further, we're going to talk about consciousness a bit differently than how I talked about it in the first episode of the show. In the first episode I mentioned how consciousness was the ability to recognize patterns and assign meanings to them and then gave the examples of the doctor and the car mechanic as having high consciousness because of the specialized knowledge they have in their professions. Having high consciousness holistically speaking isn't just about having specialized knowledge and being able to accomplish a particular task in the physical world though. It's also about understanding how your own mind and body work and with this knowledge having the ability to optimally direct them in a way that serves you in a positive way. This is just as important as being able to complete tasks in the physical world. The reason why is because if you don't have your mind right this will lead to a very specific type of thinking and very specific types of emotions that will compel you to take actions that are destructive and against your own best interests and the interests of others.

UNCONSCIOUS MIND IDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS

So what happens when you don't disidentify with the mind? This is the state most individuals exist in most of the time.

Most individuals aren't even aware that the actions they're taking are impulsive reactions to their own thoughts and emotions. These unconscious individuals externalize the causes of their own suffering. They project the cause of their internal states onto other people, events, and things and then recklessly act upon whatever their mind compels them to do in the moment. These types of people can be very dangerous to deal with. They're not taking personal responsibility for the emotions and thoughts that arise within them and they're not taking personal responsibility for resolving them in a productive way. This isn't to say that you shouldn't hold others accountable for wrongs done to you that provoked a negative emotional state within you. I'm talking about creating a separation between you and your mind so that in any given moment, you have the ability to act in the most rational way possible. In some cases, when someone makes you feel angry for example, the most rational option may be to do nothing and just let the emotion pass through you. In other situations, if your rights are being violated, it may make the most sense to take action in response. To make this more concrete, if you get triggered and are made angry by someone's tweet on Twitter, nearly every time, the best thing to do is to do nothing, ignore it, and move on. If, however, a criminal is trying to break into your house to rob you, then it makes the most sense to spring into action by grabbing your firearm out of your safe and preparing to defend yourself.

So the reason why these unconscious people are dangerous and very unpredictable is because they are completely identified with their mind. When this is the case, the individual has no free will. The individual is going to be totally controlled by the whims of whatever emotional states pop up, whether they're rational or irrational and be led around like a puppet on a string.

WARNING!

I want to dive deep into a particular case study to illustrate what failure can look like if one fails to disidentify with their mind and reconnect with their observer self and the present moment.

Let this serve as a warning.

Failure to do the things that have been talked about so far is one factor that can result in pretty severe mental illness and criminal behavior.

ELLIOT RODGER CASE STUDY

A very insightful case of this is that of serial killer Elliot Rodger, who ended up killing six people and injuring 22 others before finally killing himself on May 23, 2014. He wrote a 131 page manifesto explaining his own personal history and thoughts over time right up until the “Day of Retribution” when the killings took place. The reason he gave for doing what he did was because women hated him and at the age of 22 he was still a “kissless virgin.”

I read the entire manifesto more than once and I think if you have the right prerequisite knowledge to give you the proper context, you could learn a lot from the story about the destructive nature of ego identification, how it leads to what many doctors would call mental illness, and what can be done to prevent these indiscriminate murder sprees in the future.

Ego identification isn't the only issue the tragic story of Elliot Rodger illustrates. It wasn't just ignorance of how the mind works that led to all this pain and suffering. It also came from the ignorance of the basics of social dynamics and how attraction works between men and women. That'd have to be a different episode of the show though.

REGULAR PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE OFF THE MARK

I've been pretty disappointed with how psychologists have broken down the case of Elliot Rodger online. The couple of psychologists I watched were only really interested in slapping a variety of labels on Elliot and then blaming the diagnoses for the behavior he exhibited. People speculated he may have had asperger syndrome, schizoid personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, psychopathy, and a lot more. This is a very superficial way of analyzing what happened and it is also very unhelpful ultimately. They just made it sound like these things were bound to happen because of all these “illnesses” he had when in reality he actually developed these illnesses over time. Giving mentally unwell individuals tons of different labels that only describe the symptoms does nothing to help anyone understand root causal factors and ultimately accomplishes nothing. You need to understand the underlying psychological dynamics that took place that created all of these symptoms people call antisocial personality disorder and psychopathy for example. So what specifically was the “root causal factor?” The root causal factor here was the dysfunctional relationship Elliot had with his own mind, thoughts, and emotions.

ELLIOT RODGER'S BACKGROUND

Elliot grew up affluent and never knew lack when it came to acquiring his basic survival needs. There was never any massive traumatic event that occurred that can be said to have shaped Elliot Rodger into the killer he ended up being. The biggest event you could point to is the divorce of his parents but this occurred pretty early on in his life and by reading the manifesto you can clearly see there wasn't just one event that dramatically changed him. It was a slow and steady deterioration over time.

He appeared to be a pretty normal child and there were no red flags. He had male and female friends but from an early age, he did display strong jealousy towards other kids. He started to perceive differences between him and the "cool kids" starting at the age of 9. He became very self-conscious of this and started to notice it was these "cool kids" that tended to get the good things in life he wanted. He quickly began to see them as enemies and life as a competitive struggle. He perceived that there were those few that could thrive and have everything they wanted and everyone else just had to suffer with whatever they could get. Here, by the way he starts to think, you can see that he's failing to take personal responsibility for his own emotions and blames his negative emotions on others. This is where he started to go wrong immediately at the age of nine. He labeled the cool kids as his "enemies" because in his failure to take personal responsibility for his own emotional states, he perceived them as being the direct cause of why he had to continuously suffer. Anyway, through his comparison with himself and others, this contributed to low self-esteem in childhood that never went away.

THE FEAR OF "NOT BEING GOOD ENOUGH"

This low self-esteem and negative self-concept, which are ideas about who you think you are, were derived from a strong fear of not being good enough. It persisted into his teenage years and into adulthood.. He hated the popular kids but wanted to be one of them at the same time. When someone is afraid of not being good enough and they don't see a way to become good enough to fulfill their desires and quiet the mind, then what you may start to see is them expressing HATE for those that have the things they want and create distorted perceptions of them in their minds. Why? It's an ego defense mechanism. To avoid confronting feelings of inadequacy later on in the story, Elliot began to label attractive women as "depraved animals" and those they chose as their mates as "barbaric, wild, beast-like men." This is an ego defense mechanism known as "projection."

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: PROJECTION

Now how does this help him to avoid feelings of inadequacy? It's because any self-hatred that would've otherwise been directed inwardly towards himself, is now redirected outwardly towards other people. These other people become objects of the hate using this ego defense mechanism instead of the self. This protects the individual from experiencing potentially very painful emotions that may come up from looking very deeply inward. It's a self-deception and a distortion of reality and occurs because of the coping mechanism of "projection." You can also see him using this coping mechanism in different ways he'd interact with and talk about his family in the manifesto. He developed a resentment for his dad for not being more financially successful because he thought if he could share in some of his dad's financial success, he'd have success with women and could finally be happy. The truth is, Elliot had an abundance of resentment for himself. It was easier to resent his dad instead and blame everything on his dad's bad financial decisions rather than acknowledge his own feelings about himself and deal with them. It was also easier than taking personal responsibility for his own actions in the world that would help him to get what he wanted. In the story, he'd even call his own mother "selfish" for not marrying any of the rich men she dated. He thought if she married one of them then he'd be able to share in some of the wealth as a stepson and get what he wanted that way. He uses "projection" again here because he was the one that was actually being "selfish" because he was trying to force his mother into a marriage she didn't want for his own selfish interests. It's important to note that it's very likely Elliot Rodger wasn't aware he was even doing this. I think he actually genuinely believed his mother to be a "selfish" person. If this was the case, the ego defense mechanism of "projection" was distorting his perception of the external world and he was convinced his perceptions were the truth.

"Projection" wasn't the only ego defense coping mechanism he was using though. There were several others.

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: AVOIDANCE

In middle school, he used "avoidance" a lot. He did this by playing lots of video games, particularly World of Warcraft. The purpose of "avoidance" is to distract oneself so that negative emotions don't have to be felt and confronted. Although some of this could be healthy in moderation, especially when dealing with very strong, intense emotions, you will never escape them permanently. They will bubble back up to the surface sooner or later and then they'll have to be dealt with. If they're not, eventually some very dire consequences can result. So very early on as soon as Elliot recognized these unwanted

emotions within himself, he engaged in “avoidance” a lot and it worked for a time, but it was temporary.

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: DENIAL

“Denial” was another one you see him use. He just generally refused to admit he was the problem and claimed that it was everyone else that was the cause for his suffering and unfulfilled desires. There were parts in the story where he moved to Isla Vista, CA, which was a college party town and he’d ask his roommates if they were virgins. When they’d talk about their sexual experiences, he would refuse to believe them. Why? It’s because to acknowledge what they were saying as true would shine a light on himself and his own perceived inadequacies. He’d be forced to ask himself, “why haven’t I had similar experiences?” “Why have they been able to get what they wanted and I haven’t?” Asking these questions would’ve forced him to come head to head with painful emotions he’d been trying so hard to not feel. He also denied how he was perceived in the world. Despite being seen as the “weird” shy kid, he kept referring to himself as a “magnificent gentlemen” throughout his manifesto.

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: DISPLACEMENT

The next defense mechanism I noticed was “displacement.” Initially, because he felt he couldn’t take his negative emotions out on strangers, he became verbally abusive towards his friends and family. This was perceived as a more socially acceptable way to vent. He ended up becoming so emotionally toxic though that his stepmother kicked him out of the house and the few friends he did have eventually ended up wanting nothing to do with him anyway. So that didn’t work out for him. But while it lasted, he was able to vent his toxic emotional states to friends and family and get some cathartic relief out of it. This also allowed him to avoid confronting his deep rooted, painful emotions in a healthy and constructive way.

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: COMPENSATION

Then there was “compensation.” Someone is using compensation when they attempt to feel better about themselves by focusing on and emphasizing one part of their life while ignoring and deemphasizing another part of their life they feel inadequate in. Elliot would brag about having traveled to many different countries at a young age and point out that many other people never got to do that. He’d say this as if it made up for his terrible social life and thinking about this allowed him to feel superior to others for a time. The other way Elliot engaged in “compensation” was buying very expensive

clothing and try to make himself look as good as possible. He tried to do this to attempt to compensate for the fact that he didn't have a social life, many friends, or a girlfriend. By going over the top, in one area of life, it allowed him to feel better for a time.

EGO DEFENSE MECHANISM: RATIONALIZATION

There was also the technique of "rationalization." He used "rationalization" as an ego defense mechanism to temporarily feel better in the moment by giving meaning to the suffering he experienced. His desperate attempts to make himself feel better resulted in him deluding himself into thinking he was something he wasn't. It resulted in "delusions of grandeur." He tried to rationalize his past suffering to feel better in the present moment. He writes, "I see the world differently than anyone else. Because of all of the injustices I went through and the worldview I developed because of them, I must **be destined for greatness**. I must be destined to change the world, to shape it into an image that suits me!" He did experience some injustices, that was true. The majority of them though were imagined. They were created by his own mind. At the end of the story, the "Day of Retribution" which he called his murder spree was his ultimate rationalization. His desire to run away from his own negative self-talk was so strong, he was willing to rationalize his murder spree as being a righteous act so he wouldn't have to face them. He was willing to die in the aftermath if it meant he didn't have to ever confront his own emotions....and that's exactly what ended up happening.

THE ATTITUDES OF TRAUMATIZED PEOPLE

Elliot ultimately developed an attitude that screams, "If I can't have it, no one can." This is actually a pretty common attitude people develop. Some live with this attitude chronically but even more develop it acutely, which means it only develops temporarily in an emotionally charged situation and then eventually goes away. You'll see this occur a lot acutely in those that have a dysfunctional relationship with a significant other. Maybe their partner cheated and now they get filled with rage, jealousy, and fear because they don't want their partner to be with anyone else. Most of the time, these strong emotions don't lead to an act of evil, but in some situations they do. Why does this happen? It's because there is a fear of feeling one's own feelings deeply. It's particularly about the feelings they have towards themselves that have been lying dormant. There are deep insecurities that have been unaddressed that they hoped they'd never have to come face to face with. They hoped they'd never have to ask themselves, "What does my boyfriend or girlfriend cheating on me say about me?" "Was

I right to think I wasn't good enough?" "I knew they'd see the real me. I knew I wasn't good enough. This confirms it." These people don't think they can handle and work through this properly and even heal themselves of their own toxic attitude towards themselves eventually. Lots of people don't even realize there is a way to handle and work through their trauma properly. So they try to get rid of it whatever way they think they can to try to feel better. Some individuals even think they need to murder their cheating girlfriend or boyfriend and their lover to finally feel better because just the thought of them continuing to be together is emotionally unbearable.

There's another attitude that's prevalent in the world that tends to go hand in hand with this first one. It's one that says, "Since I have suffered, I will cause suffering to others." It's the same thing with this attitude. Elliot seeing others around him suffering less than him or even seemingly having more enjoyable lives than him would force the painful emotions he was trying to avoid to come up to the surface of his conscious mind and he didn't want to experience any of that pain. If he could bring everyone else down to his level, then he thought he wouldn't have to ever confront his own feelings about himself. If others failed just like him, then that would cause him to feel better about himself and not have to deal with uncomfortable emotions. Where do we see this nowadays? He engaged in elaborate fantasies of how he'd tear others down, which were a form of escapism and avoidance for him. Elliot writes, "I began to have fantasies of becoming very powerful and stopping everyone from having sex. I wanted to take their sex away from them, just like they took it away from me. I saw sex as an evil and barbaric act, all because I was unable to have it. This was the major turning point. My anger made me stronger inside. This was when I formed my ideas that sex should be outlawed. It is the only way to make the world a fair and just place. If I can't have it, I will destroy it."

THE NATURE OF TRAUMA

We've touched on trauma but we need to be more clear now on what exactly it is. There are parts of the manifesto that only make sense if you have some understanding of what trauma is and how it works.

"WAKING THE TIGER: HEALING TRAUMA" BOOK

Lots of my understanding of trauma comes from Peter Levine, who is an internationally recognized trauma therapist who has been working with patients for over forty five years. He holds doctorates in both medical biophysics and psychology and is the author of trauma healing books, which include "Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma" and "In An Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness."

STEREOTYPICAL TRAUMATIC EVENTS

Trauma is difficult to clearly define. People think of certain events as being traumatic events when they provoke very strong emotional responses. The types of events that come to mind are engaging in warfare, car accidents, plane crashes, the death of a friend or family member etc. However, even seemingly small, mundane events can still be traumatic to an individual.

TRAUMATIZATION DYNAMICS

When someone has become traumatized, what happened was some event has caused the body to build up a massive store of energy that never got released. To better understand this we need to explain what the body does when it is experiencing a stress response to a stimulus. A traumatic event happens and a rush of adrenaline floods the body and creates the urge to fight or run away. This is the fight-or-flight response. The individual becomes traumatized when the body is unable to successfully carry out either of these actions to completion. So according to Levine, when the nervous energy provoked by the stress response can't be resolved in some way, the body shuts down and goes into what's called the "freeze response." This can be seen in both humans and animals. The inability to have completed either the "fight" or the "flight" action creates a surplus of energy that needs to go somewhere. To deal with this surplus of energy created by the adrenaline and other stress response hormones, the body ends up storing it in its own muscles.

This trauma energy can be stored in the muscles for years and if not dealt with properly, can slowly build so much chronic tension in your body, that it can start to pull your bones out of alignment. So unresolved trauma not only has psychological effects but very real physical effects as well.

This is a video of an animal shaking out its trauma energy. It's releasing the energy from its body after a traumatic situation.

Contrary to popular belief, trauma is something everyone has experienced. It just affects each person with different intensities. Unresolved trauma pretty much has a grip on everyone whether they are aware of it or not.

TRAUMATIZATION MANIFESTS DUE TO THE BIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO AN EVENT, NOT THE EVENT ITSELF

Since trauma is experienced from severe biological reactions to events and not the events themselves, the stimulus that can cause trauma often appears normal and mundane. Even for very common experiences like getting lost in a grocery store as a child or breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, if the emotions aren't properly dealt with at the time, it can lead to traumatization.

“LETTING GO” BOOK

Talk therapies won't work if you're dealing with an individual traumatized like this. This ineffectiveness is what Elliot Rodger experienced after having gone to multiple psychologists and psychiatrists with no effect. It must be dealt with on the physical level and through the process of “letting go” or “surrender.”

DUMB PEOPLE? OR JUST TRAUMATIZED

Trying to live in a highly traumatized condition and not being aware of any of this information results in a multitude of highly irrational and impulsive behaviors that can be witnessed in humans. I used to mistake these highly traumatized individuals that act out in strange and destructive ways as dumb. I didn't have the knowledge I do now at the time. You don't see these strange behaviors in the animal kingdom though. Levine continues on by saying this is the case because of the development of the neocortex in humans. The neocortex gives us the conscious ability to decide what we'd like to do with our emotions. Suppression, and repression are common choices, which only push the emotions back down into the subconscious mind by refusing to look at them with the conscious mind. Escapism is a popular choice too which include alcohol consumption, digital media use, and excessive socializing. It becomes difficult to sit alone before unresolved trauma begins to resurface in the form of anxious thoughts, worry, fear, or depression. The problem is the unwanted emotions don't permanently go away using suppression, repression, or escapism. They just go into the subconscious mind and will continue to control you in ways you're not conscious of. You'll just end up seeing trauma rear its ugly head through destructive reenactments of the same or similar situations that caused it to begin with until it gets resolved.

YOUR DECISIONS AND TRAUMA

Unresolved trauma affects your everyday life by changing the way you make decisions, establish relationships, and develop your self-image. This influence is deceptively easy

to overlook. Have you ever caught yourself overreacting in ways that really don't make much sense when you think about them later? You know you overreacted, *why was it so hard in the moment to stay calm and centered?* Trauma likely played a role. The triggering event reminded you subconsciously of a similar traumatizing event that happened in the past. Having been reminded of this, your memory interpreted the situation as reliving that experience, and the corresponding trauma bubbled up to the surface to try to be released from the body.

AS TRAUMATIZATION INTENSIFIES...

Let's get back to Elliot Rodger. Throughout the story, you could see Elliot becoming progressively more and more traumatized. And as he became more traumatized, his dysfunctional coping mechanisms were taken to the extreme and forced his perceptions of himself and the external world into deeper and more disturbing delusions. This resulted in not only more extreme delusional thinking but also out of proportional emotional responses to events, and even more strange and seemingly irrational behaviors. You could see the unresolved trauma building up throughout the manifesto because what he says about other people, his evolving worldview, and his behaviors become increasingly disturbing and vile.

TRAPPED IN TOTAL DELUSION

Late into the story, when he was attending Santa Barbara Community College, he would see a couple in one of his classes and for that reason alone would drop it in anger and disgust. In other situations, he would see an attractive woman in his class and then upon learning she had a boyfriend would drop the class as well. That's how extreme and ridiculous his behavior became due to unresolved trauma. As the trauma accumulated, less and less stimulus was required to trigger strong emotional reactions because the unresolved traumatic energy was desperately trying to release itself. There was so much unresolved trauma that it got to a point where if a stranger failed to look at him or failed to smile at him when she looked at him as he was passing by all of the intense emotions would come up and he'd become enraged over it and claim he was being rejected. The rejection was completely imagined but the trauma made him think it was real.

THE WORLD IS A MIRROR

The built up trauma became so intense and he was in so much self-loathing that he began to project that onto others and hate everyone else around him indiscriminately.

He began to hate his roommate Spencer just for being around him. This is what he had to say, "I could hide the details of my lonely, celibate life from the rest of the world, but I couldn't hide it from Spencer. The fact that I never had any girls over to my room was clear enough that I was an undesirable outcast, and I hated when people knew this about me and judged me for it. Spencer was there to witness it all and I would eventually come to hate him just because of that."

He came to hate his little brother as well because Elliot and his family could tell early on that his brother Jazz was going to have no issues socializing, making friends, and having girlfriends when he got older. Elliot started hating him just because Jazz had the potential to grow up to be one of the "popular kids" he hated yet always wanted to be like. Just the thought of Jazz potentially growing up to have a successful social life was too much for Elliot to handle because it shined a light on his own shortcomings. So much so that on the "Day of Retribution" he had plans to actually kill his baby brother and his step mother if she got in the way.

His hate eventually extended to all of humankind.

In fact the very first sentence in his manifesto is as follows, "Humanity...all of my suffering on this world has been at the hands of humanity, particularly women."

Here's what he says at the peak of his delusion, "Humanity has never accepted me among them, and now I know why. I am more than human. I am superior to them all. I am Elliot Rodger ... Magnificent, glorious, supreme, eminent ... Divine! I am the closest thing there is to a living god. Humanity is a disgusting, depraved, and evil species. It is my purpose to punish them all. I will purify the world of everything that is wrong with it. On the Day of Retribution, I will truly be a powerful god, punishing everyone I deem to be impure and depraved."

To help make it more clear for you what exactly was happening in the passage I just read, what happened was he felt such strong feelings of inferiority, to cope with it, his brain reconstructed his egoic identity, which was his self-image, into a god superior to everyone else and would punish everyone for being the way they are.

STRESS HORMONE ADDICTION

This is just my own speculation but to me it appears that peoples' brains end up getting addicted to stress hormones at some point after a period of time of engaging in negativity. I don't know if it's the cortisol, adrenaline, noradrenaline or a combination of

all the stress hormones that become addictive. They get a rush out of indulging in negative thoughts and emotions much like you do when you hit a bong. People get a sick, twisted pleasure upfront out of it. The problem is, this indulgence is self-destructive and there a lot of pain is mixed in with the short-lived “hit” of pleasure.

It’s strange to think people can get addicted to a drug their own brain is generating instead of a drug taken in from the external environment, but that is exactly what seems to be happening.

I haven’t read this anywhere from any experts in their fields to verify my speculation but my model seems to work because you will see it appearing to happen everywhere and people will even admit to this being their subjective experience. I even see myself being tempted by negatively regularly even after recognizing these dynamics. I definitely have a lot more work I need to do on myself to completely overcome this.

Also, Elliot’s habituated negative thinking patterns locked him into a dysfunctional default way of being. Through neuroplasticity, habitual negative thinking patterns can actually physically affect how the neural traits in your brain express themselves!

DOPAMINE IN NATURE AND IT’S ABUSE

In a healthy, properly functioning human being, dopamine production is triggered when they have accomplished something positive. Most of these accomplishments are perceived by the brain to have aided in survival in some way. This is the purpose of the neurotransmitter, dopamine. It incentivizes us to keep engaging in activities that aid our survival in the natural world so that we may continue to survive in the future. Dopamine is supposed to incentivize doing positive and empowering things for ourselves and others. Eating food, having sex, completing a housing project are all examples of activities that give us dopamine.

However, this reward system can become dysfunctional as can be seen in the case of Elliot Rodger. Over time, he couldn’t get enough dopamine through the positive empowerment of himself or others because he absolutely refused to address and overcome his fear and to take action. So to get dopamine to feel good temporarily he began to get it from negativity through the disempowerment of everyone, including himself.

Elliot didn't think he could get the success he wanted so he wasn't able to get any dopamine from having good friends or a relationship with someone from the opposite sex. He couldn't "win" that way and reap the rewards. So he then sought to get dopamine to feel good in different ways. One of the ways he did it was insulting his friends and family. He insulted them so he could feel superior to them to get a dopamine rush. It was a way for him to artificially induce a dopamine rush in himself in a way that nature never intended. Something else he would do is splash coffee on couples he'd see out in public that he was jealous of and claim it felt good to strike at his enemies. He even went as far as purchasing a super soaker, filling it with orange juice, and spraying the juice all over a group of people playing kickball. All of this seems ridiculous to level-headed folk and it is. But it was knowing that he was ruining other people's fun that gave him the dopamine hits he was craving. Instead of rewarding him for being constructive, he was now directing his brain to reward him for being destructive.

A NOTE ON ELLIOT'S SEXISM AND RACISM

Elliot did not learn to be sexist or racist from his family, or any other person or institution. This is what so many content creators tried to say about him after his killing spree. They said things like Elliot was evidence that misogyny and sexism is culturally endorsed in mainstream American society and that's why he wrote what he did and had the views that he did. That is not true. He hated everyone. These people have not looked deeply enough at this case. It's an overly simplistic, superficial, and incorrect assessment of what happened.

Elliot wasn't taught racism. He became that way on his own by unconsciously using his mind in a dysfunctional way. He was projecting his own feelings of inferiority onto people of different races to try to feel better about himself. From there, his mind used whatever ammunition it had to convince himself of their inferiority so he could feel superior. He had to paint them as inferior in whatever way he could to accomplish this. Oftentimes, this was done using physical characteristics because this was the most obvious aspect of the other person that could be observed. He called one of his roommate's friends an "inferior, ugly black boy" in his manifesto. He also called one of his former hispanic roommates an "ugly animal" that had a "pig face." At a party Elliot went to he then referred to an Asian man there talking to some white girls as an "ugly asian." Racist comments were a symptom of projection, an ego defense mechanism Elliot used all the time.

Just like with racism he wasn't taught misogyny from his environment. He was just projecting his own self-hate onto an entire sex because that way he didn't have to sit with the negative emotions he felt towards himself. As long as the girls were the problem in his mind and not him, he could stay safe from his own emotions.

He didn't want to take responsibility for his own ignorance, inaction, and feelings so he blamed women and the popular boys no matter what their race was.

THE BOTTOM LINE IN THE ELLIOT RODGER CASE STUDY

Not addressing the root causes which were ignorance, fear, and healing trauma correctly results in an individual developing a severely distorted view of themselves and the world as a coping mechanism that they become absolutely convinced is true. They begin to actually love themselves in a disingenuous, dark, twisted, and dysfunctional way. They start to empower themselves in the mental and emotional realm in a twisted, distorted way. They start to see themselves as superior to others in a twisted, distorted way. All this leads to twisted, distorted actions in the external world. They twist perceptions however they need to in their minds to allow themselves to avoid confronting fears of not being good enough, feelings of inadequacy, feelings of powerlessness, and feelings of inferiority. If the desire to suppress unwanted emotions is strong enough, there is no limit to how irrationally the mind will twist perceptions to make that very suppression happen and keep it that way.

Elliot thought he needed a great amount of wealth, power, expensive clothes, good looks and a nice car to get the social life he wanted. Something else that was interesting about this story was that Elliot saw an abundance of evidence around him that told him you don't have to be rich, tall, good looking, and dress well necessarily to get girls. While some people that don't have these things may interpret this as good news, Elliot didn't perceive this as good, encouraging news at all. He saw this as strong evidence of his personal inferiority because all the stuff he thought was supposed to work didn't. All the reasons he thought he wasn't getting girls were all proved wrong, which made him feel worse instead of better, because this proved to him there was something uniquely wrong with him. There was something certainly wrong with him but it wasn't some unfixable, broken part of his being that he thought it was. What he didn't realize or refused to recognize was that it was a combination of his inability to overcome fear, present himself properly and understand social dynamics that were the problems. He still hung tightly onto wealth, power, and expensive cars as being the reasons though

because to have to acknowledge there was something deep within him that was the cause of his failure was unbearable to consider.

Ego defense mechanisms were abused to the extreme by Elliot on the subconscious level to avoid his unwanted emotions, and this is what created the serial killer he ended up being.

Whenever these strong emotions did come up, his own fear shut down his consciousness and being run by the r-complex of the brain, it made him think everyone and everything was out there just to spite him. Like what we already talked about in the first two episodes of the show, Elliot was an example of a person who was brain imbalance and was completely ruled by the reptilian and mammalian parts of his brain chronically, which inevitably led to more and more brain damage. The rational neocortex ended up stepping down from the CEO position of the brain for most of the time. With the r-complex and mammalian brain firmly in control of the ship as CEO, the neocortex was given the task of merely rationalizing emotions instead of thinking rationally like it was supposed to.

He failed to see the world was mirroring him. All the emotional toxicity he put out was being reflected right back at him so he responded by screaming and attacking the mirror instead of changing the person he saw in the mirror.

Just as a side note, I think it's interesting that he actually referred to his Day of Retribution as the Final Solution, which is what Adolf Hitler called his plan to exterminate every Jew on earth. It makes you wonder if everything I talked about here applied to the causal factors that led Hitler to being what he became.

So that was the tragic story of Elliot Rodger. There was certainly a lot to learn from it. In summary, Elliot Rodger died a childish, ignorant, fearful coward but he at least gave us the opportunity to learn very valuable lessons before he died.

It's easy to think all bad people are just born evil and there's nothing you can do about it. It's an appealing belief to have because that would mean all you have to do is imprison or kill all the evil people and then the problem would be solved. You wouldn't have to take the personal responsibility to learn how consciousness or the mind works at all. Although some really are born psychopathic, it's very rare. The vast majority of people we would call evil became that way over time and there are underlying patterns that can be recognized that contribute to it.

This was a very dense, heavy episode. I encourage you to listen to this episode multiple times and go through it slowly. Don't be afraid to pause it at certain parts and think about the concepts so you can really understand them well. This information is critical to understand to make sense of what you're seeing out in the world. It may be easier for some of you to read through this material at your own pace. Don't forget I also include the transcripts for each episode on my website at libertysolutionsnow.com.

I'm going to be leaving links to the books I mentioned in the show notes so you can check those out if you're interested as well.

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