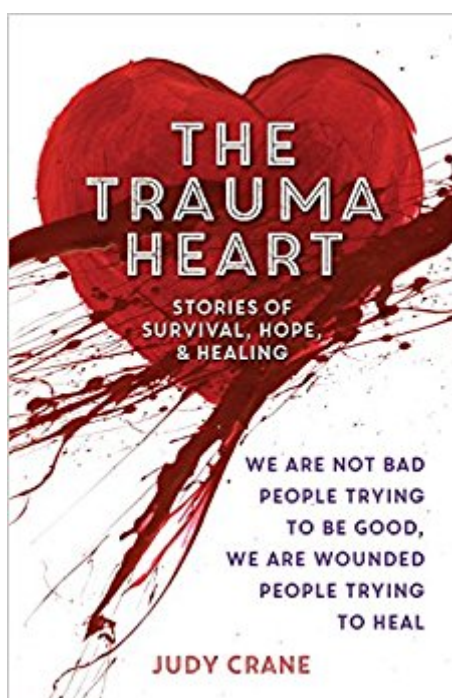


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# The Trauma Heart: We Are Not Bad People Trying To Be Good, We Are Wounded People Trying To Heal--Stories Of Survival, Hope, And Healing



## Synopsis

The majority of people addicted to substances or process addictions such as relationship disorders, eating disorders, self-harming behaviors, gambling or pornography are trauma survivors. Many people caught in the web of addiction don't identify as trauma survivors until their personal, familial, intergenerational, and in-uterine history is exposed. Unfortunately, relapse is inevitable without trauma resolution that can only take place once their history is exposed. It is only when that happens that the behavior disorders will finally make sense. For almost 30 years Judy Crane has worked with clients and families who are in great pain due to destructive and dangerous behaviors. Families often believe that their loved one must be bad or defective, and the one struggling with the addiction not only believes it, too, but feels it to their core. The truth is, the whole family is embroiled in their own individual survival coping mechanismsâ•the addicted member is often the red flag indicating that the whole family needs healing. In *The Trauma Heart*, Crane explores the many ways that life's events impact each member of the family. She reveals the essence of trauma and addictions treatment through the stories, art, and assignments of former clients and the staff who worked with them, offering a snapshot of their pain and healing.

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## Customer Reviews

Judy Crane (Ocala, FL) earned her B.A. at Rutgers and M.A. from New York Institute of Technology. She is a Certified Addiction Professional in Florida, Certified Sex Addiction Therapist, a Certified Hypnotist, EMDR and a specialist for healing trauma and PTSD. Her presentation and seminars on trauma, resilience, PTSD and sexual trauma resolution are known throughout the world. She has nearly three decades of experience working in both residential and

outpatient settings. She is the founder of The Refuge • A Healing Place, which grew to become one of the foremost leaders in treating trauma/PTSD and addiction. She is also the founder of Spirit2Spirit Healing, offering trauma training to professionals and healing trauma intensives to clients. Most recently, she established The Guest House, in Ocala, Florida, a luxury treatment center offering cutting-edge treatment for trauma and addiction in an elegant setting.

Introduction In 1996 it became very clear to me that chronic relapse in alcohol and substance abuse had a more profound cause than just the substances themselves. I looked at the core issues, the family system, and the trauma events that impacted addicts. Often sober people were angry and dry drunks. Often addicts picked up other behaviors, sober from substances but in sex or relationship addiction, self-harming, eating disorders, gambling, gaming, pornography, or a multitude of other behaviors. Or they had many years in recovery but were ready to commit suicide. That was my impetus to start a program that addressed trauma along with addiction. As you read *The Trauma Heart* you'll understand how excellent visceral, cellular, trauma treatment can break the cycle of chronic relapse in all addictions, and mood disorders and behavior. I speak at and attend many conferences and often attend the presentations of my colleagues. However, I have absolutely become a groupie of Dr. Gabor Maté. For years I trumpeted our belief that trauma work needed to be done along with addiction work, and that 90 percent of addicts and many other people have trauma. It was hard to make that case with hard-core addiction professionals who had focused solely on the addiction and perhaps a dual diagnosis. I walked into Dr. Maté's presentation one fateful day and, for the first time, heard a professional assert with grace and compassion that trauma is core, and relapse is to be expected if the trauma is not resolved. I went to every presentation of Dr. Maté's that day and have read his work. What also impressed me was that he had been doing his own trauma work, and as a result he recognized in utero and intergenerational trauma, that addiction was a disease of broken or dysfunctional relationships, and that building relationships and healthy attachment assisted in the healing process. I felt so joyful for our industry that we were being validated by such a prestigious yet humble man. He worked in the trenches in Canada with street addicts, many plagued with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and a myriad of health issues. Dr. Maté's belief in compassionate care and the healing process, his ability to identify with addicts with his own behaviors, his recognition that addiction is so much more than substances, and his understanding of the role of neurotransmitters in trauma and addiction are vital to understanding and healing this brain disease. Others in our industry believe as I do, including pioneers whom I respect and admire such as Dr. Patrick Carnes, Judith L. Herman MD, Dr. Peter A. Levine, and

Bessel van der Kolk, MD, but no one has given the message as passionately and as in sync with what I know. Trauma can be identified and healed no matter what your survival/coping behaviors are, if you are willing to do the very deep work and to do it in tandem: trauma and addiction, trauma and behaviors, trauma and mood disorders. I believe these are interdependent. When I was in treatment in August 1987 my counselor told our group, 'Look to the right of you, and look to the left of you, only one of you will make it.' The odds were not good. That didn't engender a lot of hope! Out of a community of fifty, only three of us were clean and sober after a year. I was one of the fortunate committed threesome, and we stayed connected. So I paid attention. I was always self-willed, too bright for my own good, but this disease brought me to my knees over and over again until finally I could no longer get high. My tolerance was so monumental, I could only maintain so I would not get sick. The ghosts of my past would come. My childrenâ•sixteen, eighteen, and nineteenâ•had given up hope. My mother had raised my youngest, my middle daughter left the house for her own journey, and my son was in and out. One time he returned home to this scene: I had broken a mirror and was holding a sharp edge to my wrist. I threatened that if he didn't help me to get some alcohol or drugs, I would kill myself. With great disgust he said, 'Go ahead,' and walked out the door. That was my bottom. I called my sister and begged for another trip to detox. With her children on board she stopped and got me a fifth of VO that I drank on the way. I was already in withdrawal. I called myself the 'Detox Queen of the Western World," a self-effacing remark that just dripped with the poison of guilt, shame, and remorse. I had been to detox many times over the years and Camden detox did not want to see my face again. One of the mental health techs scoffed at me and said I was never going to get sober, I was one of those, 'constitutionally incapable' of finding recovery. I was devastated, but deep down I agreed with her that I was a hopeless case. I was in detox six times in six weeks that summer when my sister came 'just one more time.' This was a different, new detox. The staff were kind and compassionate, and I was a wreck. I had such shame, guilt, and remorse. I truly believed I was a horrendous person because of the things that were done to me and the things I had been capable of in my addiction. Those things haunted me and frightened me. One of the staff gave me a book, *Adult Children of Alcoholics* by Janet G. Woititz. In the beginning of the book is a 'Laundry List' of signs and symptoms. I read it over and over and fell apart. I wailed and snotted and cried for a very long time. Some of the characteristics of an adult child of alcoholics are: 1) We become isolated and afraid of people and authority figures. 2) We become approval seekers and lose our identity in the process. I always described myself as a chameleon, for example, 'Tell me who you want me to be.' 3) We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism. 4) We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it

is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults.<sup>5</sup>) We have 'stuffed' our feelings from our traumatic childhood and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (denial). At ten years old, I found a dead man at a construction site near our home. He had fallen asleep or was drunk, and had frozen to death. It was in the newspaper but no one ever talked to me about the horror and terror I felt, and I never talked about it. These 'secrets' are very common in the families of trauma survivors, and are part of addiction and coping behaviors. There were many traumatic events that I just didn't talk about; instead, I medicated the feelings and the pain. The secrets I held kept me sick and wounded. The list went on and I was stunned to think it wasn't just that I was a bad seed or black sheep; maybe it was more than that. This Laundry List is not just for alcoholics. Dysfunction and trauma in any family system can produce these characteristics. The staff was trying to convince me to go to treatment after detox and I resisted. After all, I'd been to treatment and it 'didn't work.' That evening they showed a video, *Soft Is the Heart of a Child*. The film was about an alcoholic father, out of control and angry, the mother very co-dependent and focused on him, and three children. The youngest was a little girl, terrified and hiding. The middle boy was angry, distant, and acting out. The oldest boy was trying to care for and protect his siblings, an adult before his time. When the lights went on, tears were streaming down my face. In that film, I saw myself as the little adult-child whose job was to hold the family together; my acting-out sister; and my two other sisters needing my protection. At the same time, I saw the cycle extending to my own children; they were lost in the morass of my addiction and taking on the necessary roles. It was time to break the generational cycle. I went to my counselor, agreed to treatment, and began my very early trauma work. For the very first time in my life I followed directions and did everything I was told. I was very broken, could no longer read at any length, stumbled a lot, and could not make a decision to save my soul. I had to call my sponsor and ask very simple questions like blue shoes or red, shower or bath, and what am I feeling? Oh, that's what anger feels like; that's what sadness feels like! I had no idea about emotions because they had been driven down so deep for so long. The good news is that, after eighteen months, I regained all of my cognitive functioning, my memory, my physical well-being, was able to make decisions, and I was finally very connected to my emotions. My relationships were healthier and deeper. Healing my 'trauma heart' has been the greatest gift and I continue that work today with my own therapist because as long as I live, life brings challenges. I face them in the here and now and if I don't, I pay the price of deeper pain. I hope this book brings you the gift of hope. I believe in the healing properties of love, compassion, witnessing, genuineness, and, most of all, hope. As you move forward through *The Trauma Heart*, I think you will identify and find answers. I

believe you will experience hope and great possibilities for healing, living the life you choose, and, most of all, dreaming big. Before we get to the story of a young man named Zac, I want to introduce a poem by the Persian poet Rumi called 'The Guest House.' The Guest House is the name of my newly opened treatment center in Ocala, Florida. Like the poem, trauma treatment ultimately invites 'the guest' to be aware of it all. Be aware of everything that surrounds the trauma, makes up the trauma, makes up you, and then invite it all in so that you may embrace it. We must invite in all of the elements of our life, and yes, that means inviting in the pain, breathing in all that is presented, feeling and experiencing life to its fullest. Through reading this book you'll come to realize what I mean. Welcome! ©2017 Judy Crane. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *The Trauma Heart: We Are Not Bad People Trying to Be Good, We Are Wounded People Trying to Heal* • Stories of Survival, Hope, and Healing. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Publisher: Health Communications, Inc., 3201 SW 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442. Â Â

Addicts of all stripes, in accordance with their twelve step programs, locate the beginning of their histories at the point of their first drink or drug, or their first addiction-generated crisis. There's nothing inherently wrong with this traditional methodology. It makes a good start on confronting the addiction and its consequences. However, the ghastly hard and cold statistical fact is that this is rarely sufficient to prevent relapse. Judy Crane reaches much further back in the addict's history, not only to the years before the onset of addiction, but all the way back into early childhood. Crane notes that the prevalence of PTSD, and consequent addiction, amongst military vets, for example, may not be due to war trauma, but may in fact be rooted in childhood trauma; the war experience being merely a catalyst or trigger that exposes the earlier trauma. Judy Crane's position is that whilst childhood sex abuse may be a common cause of childhood trauma, and is certainly the one that is currently, and rightly, getting a great deal of media attention, it may not, in fact, be the leading cause of childhood trauma. Abandonment and neglect, in a hundred different forms, may be a far more common cause of childhood trauma. And this way of anticipating and preventing relapse is the starting point of her excellent book. Arguably, this fine work has been a couple of decades in the writing. Crane has drawn on a long and distinguished clinical career at the frequently ugly coalface of addiction to articulate this thesis. Is it completely original? Probably not. In various earlier theatres of the addiction treatment industry, others before her have stated bits and pieces of what Crane here draws together into a total solution - asking the right questions, not being distracted by the colourful and often tragic pantomime of active addiction, making an accurate diagnosis and helping

the patient to come to terms with the truth about the origin of their addiction. This, of course, is a very tall order. And it probably won't be solved by this book alone. But 'The Trauma Heart' will nevertheless make a huge contribution to the lives of both diagnosticians and their patients. 5 stars.

I've read many books on addiction and mental health, but Judy's new book struck a chord for me. Her mantra, "when you unravel the trauma story, the behaviors make sense," is special. It gently reframes the shaming labels of selfishness and self-centeredness to one of self-preservation. The behaviors, though not the best, were for the purpose of protection and self-preservation. That notion can give someone the space to want to try to change. Three practical take-aways of Judy's work that I use daily are witnessing, messaging, resolving: Witnessing: is connecting with emotions you feel, then and now, when you are re-experiencing a trauma event. Judy helps you discover how to connect with what you felt then and now as an observer of yourself in that re-lived trauma. That's healing in and of itself. Messaging: is recognizing the flawed core self-belief messages delivered to you as a child. Her "double bind" example of two conflicting messages -- "you're not good enough" and "how dare you outshine me" -- resonated with me. Bad childhood message can box you in. Becoming aware of those messages in everyday situations is powerful. Resolving: unraveling the trauma stories, witnessing the feelings, and becoming aware of the harmful messaging still alive today, all help resolve and heal the cellular trauma in the body. Whether you're part of the 2 million in recovery, or the 20 million thinking about recovery, or the 15 million experiencing depression, or the 40 million struggling with anxiety, Judy's book can help you heal at some level and get back to living life.

This book was very interesting and even though I work as a staff member in a treatment facility, I learned a lot more about trauma and addiction and The pain that "keeping secrets" can cause. The book kept my interest In that it spoke about actual clients but then went back to the root of what causes ptsd, trauma, addiction.... It all goes hand in hand. I enjoyed the book and highly recommend it.

This is THE book on trauma, addiction, and PTSD. Judy Crane not only talks about PTSD, but she also talks about addiction as a symptom of underlying trauma, something most recovery books fail to recognize. In addition to delving deep in the 'heart' of trauma, Crane gives many real examples of various types of intense and extreme trauma such as both physical and emotional abandonment, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, and general family dysfunction. Even adoption is identified

as a wound from which it can be difficult to recover. Crane clearly lays out that addiction and emotional wounds will continue to surface in various and surprising ways and will not be resolved without addressing and re-processing underlying trauma. She goes to the source of addiction and co-occurring disorders and clearly states that addicts and those struggling with PTSD are not 'crazy' and that there is a reason for suffering. Our bodies will not let us forget what happened to us as long as we ignore or sweep our feelings of shame, guilt, abandonment and self-hatred, as well as our past, under the rug. There is a reason for unrelenting struggle, and there is a way out if one utilizes the many resources available including inpatient and outpatient therapy which access the nervous system, 12 step meetings, and a solid support system. This book along with Van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score*, Patrick Carnes' *Betrayal Bond*, and *When Someone You Love Suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress* provide a comprehensive explanation and treatment trajectory for anyone struggling with addiction, PTSD, or inter-relational difficulties. You are not crazy. You are not hopeless. You deserve a life of love and happiness.

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