The background of the slide is a dramatic, high-contrast photograph of a stormy sea. The water is dark and turbulent, with white foam from the waves' crests. The sky above is a heavy, dark grey, suggesting an approaching storm or late evening. The overall mood is somber and powerful.

Despair, dignity and hope:
finding the roots of resilience through the three
languages of traumatization

Josefin Grände



Loneliness is the foundation to traumatization...

...throughout our lives closeness to others is our primary tool to deal with terrifying experiences and to regulate our fear (...)

The one thing that convert a stressful situation to a trauma is that it's endured in loneliness.

Hope - hopelessness as emotion/affect?

...or as cognitive scripts

Hope is defined as the process of thinking about one's **goals**, along with the motivation to move toward (**agency**) and the ways to achieve (**pathways**) those goals.

Snyder 1995

Goals
Agency
Pathways.



“The body keeps the score” (van der Kolk) –
not only of adversity

“The concept of dosage revolutionized how we think about
trauma...and it’s going to do the same for resilience.”

Sherry Hamby, 2021

The cornerstones of PTSD

Memory

Meaning

Intrusive memories
Activating symptoms (ex anxiety)
Overwhelming/numbed feelings

”Mastery”

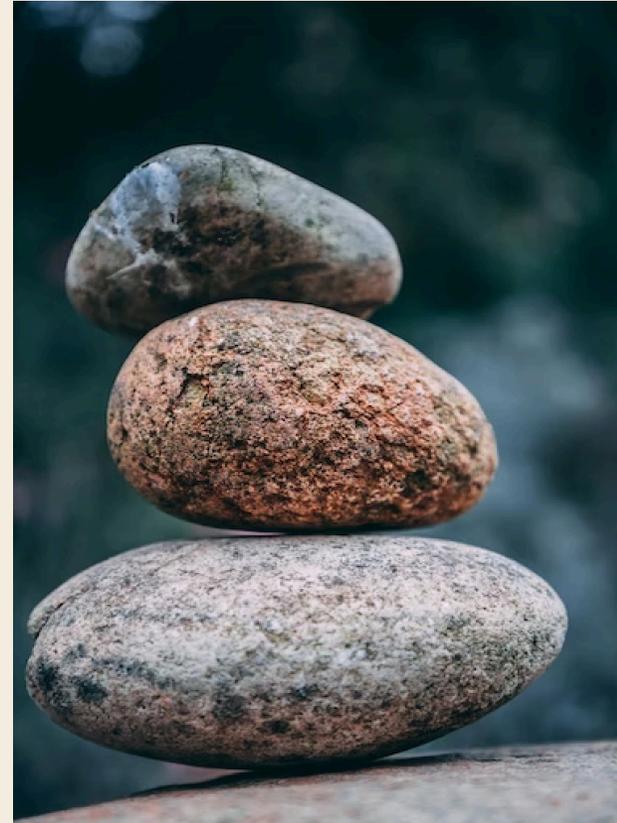
The three languages of traumatization

- Cognitions
- Emotions/affects
- Somatic/ bodily sensations

...or...

- Mind
- Heart
- Body

...each has it's own story of what you've been through





Trauma bonding

- Enander, Viveka (2008) Women leaving violent men; a crossroad of emotion, cognition and action. Gothenburg University
- Lahav, Y. (2021) Painful bonds: Identification with the aggressor and distress among IPV survivors [Journal of Psychiatric Research](#) Volume 144: 26-31

The "meaning" of trauma, ex

- I'm helpless
- I'm broken
- I'm weak
- There is something fundamentally wrong with me
- I'm dangerous
- I'm not lovable
- I'm to blame
- I'm soiled
- I can't trust myself
- I can't trust others
- The world is dangerous
- There is no hope



Social responses to violence

Positive social responses:

- Connected to faster recovery, lower levels of stress, more cooperation with others
- Decreases the risk to suffer from and increases the possibilities of recovering from PTSD

Negative social responses:

- Connected to more long-lasting and intense stress, more diagnoses, lower tendency to tell/cooperate
- Increases the risk to suffer from PTSD
- Groups that are already suffering from oppression and discrimination are at bigger risk to be exposed to negative social responses.

Charuvastra A.(2008), Richardson, C., Wade, A. (2009), Maercker A.et al (2013) Journal of traumatic stress (2021), vol 34;5



Social acknowledgement refers to "how a person who has experienced trauma perceives social empathy and understanding by experiencing that the community attributes **courage** and **dignity** to survivors because of what they have experienced. "

Maercker, Hiplert & Burri 2016, s 617

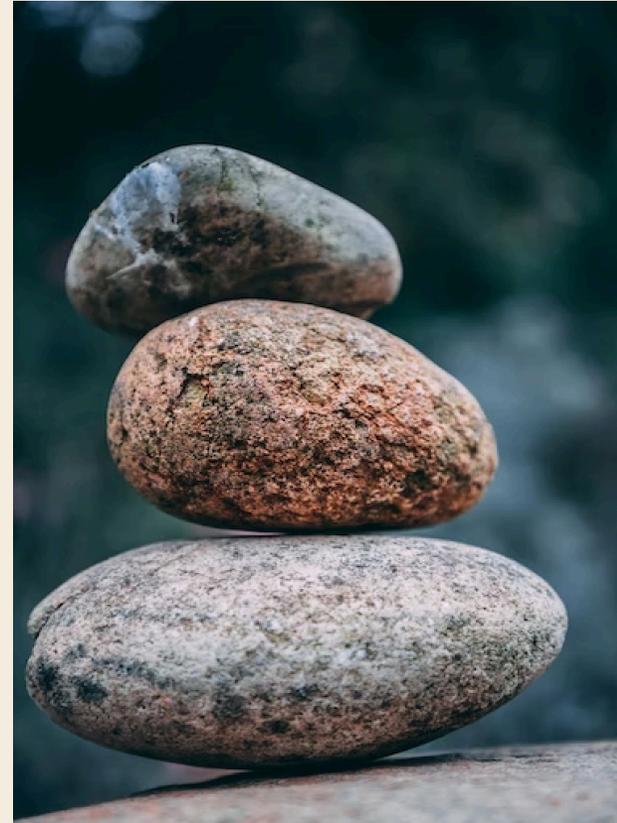
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...each has it's own story of what you've been through – **and what you have managed!**



- Everyone subjected to violence makes resistance
- The function of resistance is to protect oneself or others, and to preserve dignity
- Resistance is often subtle and strategic, builds on risk assessment
- Broad definition of resistance: thoughts, feelings, actions
- Highlights agency, resilience and rationality with respect for situation (violence)

- Explore resistance in violent situations, in daily life, in the relationship; mirror and consolidate;

”What did you do? What did you think? I hear that you...I’m amazed that you managed to...Where did you get the strength to....?”

responsebasedpractise.com

Resistance

To highlight resistance is to strengthen hope work

- Reduces feelings of shame and guilt (deactivating affects)
- Makes violence and perpetrators strategies visible
- Increasing sense of coherency in one's experiences and story
- Towards an altered "meaning" of trauma
- Increased sense of agency, capacity and dignity
- Builds on someone (us) bearing witness to resistance, thereby reexperience their story and the concept of themselves in a (sometimes) altered way
- Enhances faith in one's own capacity, helps with self regulation, promotes further change

Example resistance

T: "...And then what happened?"

S: "I couldn't do anything, it feels kind of awkward and weak to think about. I was just silent after that."

T: "If we just stay with that for a bit. You stayed silent from that moment. Why do you think that is?"

S: "I don't know? Because I was afraid? "

T: "Just try to sit and remember how it felt like in your body the moment you got silent"

S: "Well I remember now that before, when I screamed, he just grabbed me harder. I was really scared and it hurt here (showing). I just wanted it to end."

T: "Ok, so you kept silent so that he would stop hurting you and let go?"

S: "Exactly"

T: "So you kept quiet to protect yourself? That sounds like a really smart strategy considering the situation."

S: "I didn't think about it like that".

T: "Do you remember what you were thinking about then?"

S: "Well actually I was not just scared. I was also angry. So angry. That's why I screamed at him before, not just because of the pain. Everything was so unfair. And I just knew that if I didn't shut up I might say something about what he had done to my mom. But that would only make it worse for her afterwards".

T: "That's resourceful. By managing to keep quiet you protected both yourself and your mum!"

Offender Strategies and Victim Responses

- If the offender tries to isolate the victim, virtually any way in which the victim refuses to be isolated can be a form of resistance.
- If the offender tries to humiliate the victim, virtually any way in which the victim tries to retain her dignity can be a form of resistance.
- If the offender tries to control the victim, virtually any way in which the victim tries to retain freedom can be a form of resistance.
- If the offender tries to blame the victim, then virtually any way in which the victim “knows” or “feels” that they are not to blame can be a form of resistance.

Alan Wade, Centre for Response Based Practise

Example Eric

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3W1D0XS0pg>

The meaning of violence: "I'm no one"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EyAiEjtCC8>

The story of being someone



Samverkan mot våld –
("Cooperation against violence")

She refused to cry when her dad was beating her

She put a lot of clothes on before going to bed

While he was raping her she was thinking about her mother's meatballs

She was cutting her hair in a way she knew he didn't like

While he was coming at her she slowly moved to the door of the children's room, so that she could close it with her foot

He was an expert in finding new streaming series his dad would like, to keep him occupied

She hid money so that the children could get ice-cream once a month

He found a neighbour lady that looked at him with care and pride

She had a code word with her cousin so that she could signal when help was needed

She was making jokes covering up when he got drunk at dinner partys, so that others wouldn't be offended by him, which would have lead to escalation and later violence

He found friends with families as "messy" as his to preserve a sense of community and dignity

She used her sleeping pills the nights she knew he was going to rape her

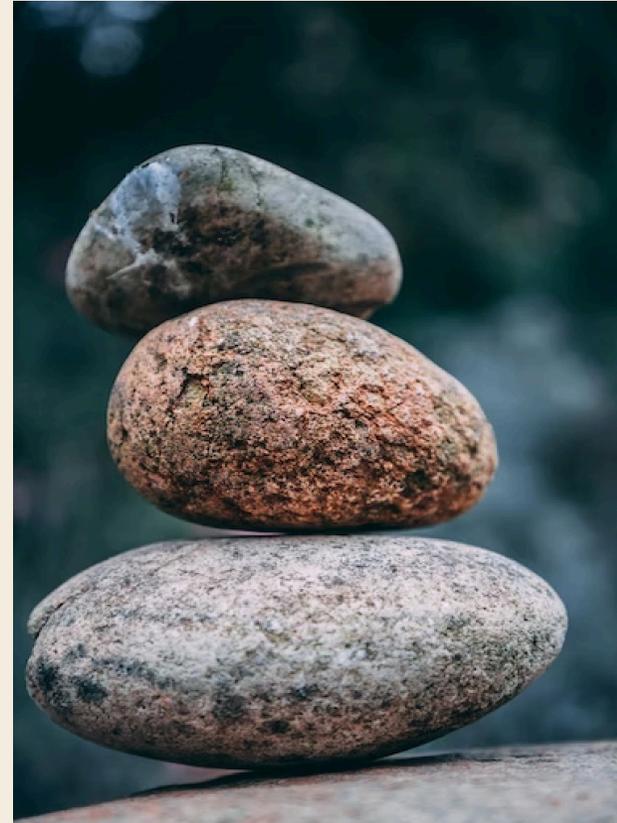
The three languages of resistance

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...each has it's own story of what you've been through – **and what you have managed!**



Explorative affirmations, acknowledge strengths and resistance

- Where did you learn so much about safety?
- Where did you get the power to stay calm even though you were so terrified?
- How did you manage to stay so strong even when things looked so dark?
- Where did you get the strength to keep quiet so that the children wouldn't hear what was going on?
- Where did you get the wisdom to know that it wasn't your fault, even if others told you it was?

What examples do you have of survivors resistance?

Resistance/agency as pathway to verbalize violence

T: Do you remember what you felt in your body?

G, 5 yo: I was so hot.

T: How come you were hot?

G: I was under my daddy's coat for a long time.

T: How did it feel under the coat?

G: I was still scared, but not like before.

T: Do you want to tell me more about before? What happened?

G: I thought maybe the wall was going to fall down on me.

T: Where were you when you thought that?

G: In the sofa. In the living room. I had been watching on the iPad.

T: So you were in the sofa. Tell me more about the wall.

G: My mummy and daddy were behind the sofa. The screams were so loud, I thought the wall were going to brake. And smash me. I've seen that, you know, that houses can fall and hurt people, even kill them.

T: Did you have the coat there?

G: No, I was running to the hallway and got the coat,. It's really big, even if the wall fell I think it wouldn't hurt so much if I was under it.

T: So even though you were so scared you managed to run to the hallway and back. That's so brave! Were you afraid someone would notice you?

G: Really scared, but I did like this (crouching) and I was really really quiet.

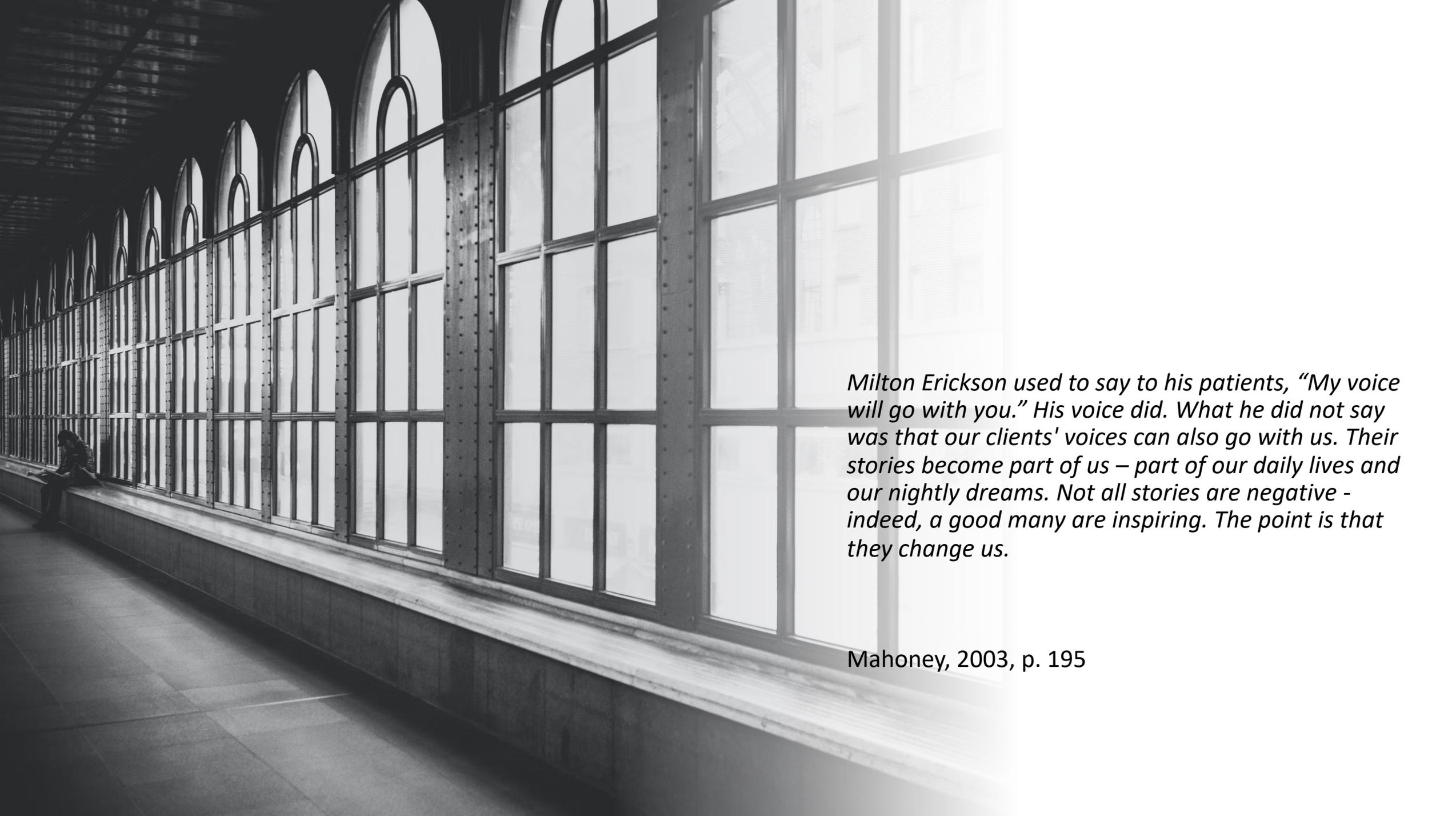
T: So you found out a solution to protect yourself, even though you were so scared, that's so smart.

G: Thank you! (quickly looking up, proud smile)...

...but when I was running back with the coat I saw the blood. I didn't know there were going to be blood. I know it was mummy's, but I haven't told her that.

T: Why didn't you tell her that?

G: Because when I saw it I was thinking she was going to die. And I think she is really scared of dying. I don't want to die. But maybe the coat would have been thick enough if he had tried to beat me too.



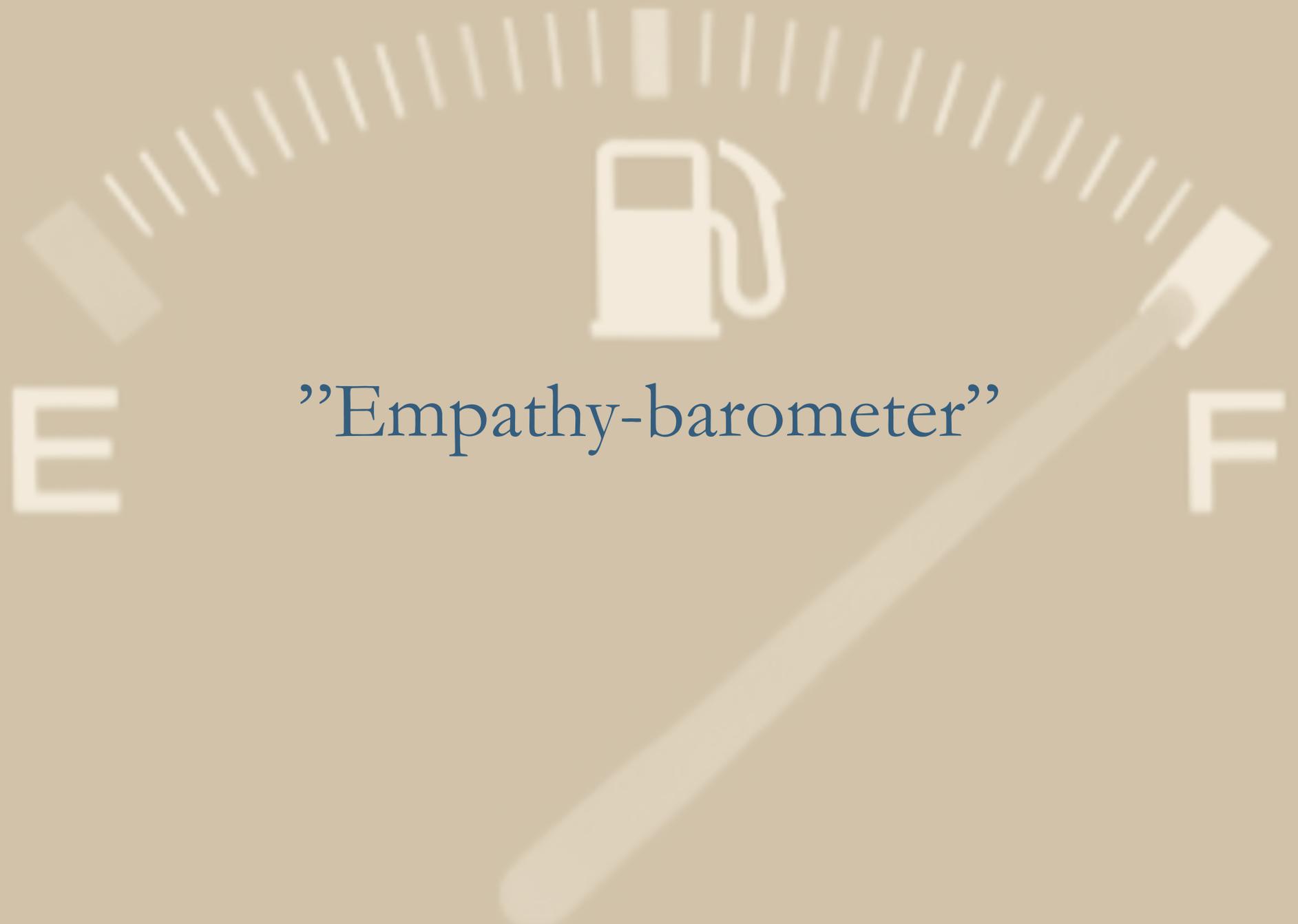
Milton Erickson used to say to his patients, “My voice will go with you.” His voice did. What he did not say was that our clients' voices can also go with us. Their stories become part of us – part of our daily lives and our nightly dreams. Not all stories are negative - indeed, a good many are inspiring. The point is that they change us.

Mahoney, 2003, p. 195

Our body as channel to adversities; and as
pathway to protect hope

Hopefulness - Hopelessness

While not in themselves emotions, are affect-laden phenomenons



”Empathy-barometer”

Tools for empathy regulation

- Mirroring (body, face, breathing); switch off (or, at times turn up)
- Lean back, mindfulness (body, contact, breathing)
- Regulate creation of images, "imagery"
- If not possible, change images

The point is not to decrease empathy, but to control it!!

Rothschild 2006



Loneliness is the foundation of traumatization...
and connection is the foundation of regulation
and healing

...That's what I think is my main lesson from working with violence all these years. There is no other option than to get close. And if you get close, you get close. If the person is going to get through this I really have to be there. If me myself are going to get through this I really have to be there. There sometimes will be pain.

Therapist , Gründe 2015

Hope as collective action: in mind, heart and body



Photo by Jeppe Schilder



Photo Sahand Minae/UN Women