

# THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANXIETY AND INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

## Spiritual Realm

- \* Connection to something bigger than ourselves
- \* In the absence of religion, this is often found through connecting to nature and creativity.
- \* Connecting to a sense of purpose and meaning also connects us to something bigger than ourselves.
- \* Connection to ancestors: The ancestral element is both identifying family trauma that is not yours and reconnecting to rituals, traditions, and stories that nourish.

## Need for Certainty

- \* The need for certainty often derives from the highly sensitive person's acute awareness of change, loss and death.
- \* When we can work toward accepting our "fundamental human ambiguity", as Pema Chodron says, we learn to accept uncertainty and the ego softens into the reality that we have control over very little.
- \* The need for certainty is both a spiritual and emotional invitation.

## Self-Trust/Inner Parent

- \* Self-knowledge + Self-love = Self-trust
- \* The intrusive thought is a flare from the inner Self to grow self-trust through turning inward.
- \* When you have a solid adult you can provide your own solid reassurance and are less afraid of mistakes.

## Emotional Realm

- \* Many children learn to retreat to the safety of their thoughts in order to manage the big feelings that threaten to overwhelm them. Daniel Siegel calls this "leaning to the left."
- \* When we don't attend inward and have spent a lifetime pushing down difficult feelings they bubble over and pop out the top in the form of intrusive thoughts.

# The Roots of Anxiety & Intrusive Thoughts

## Cognitive Realm

- \* Accurate information: Many people don't know the truth about sexuality, love, high sensitivity, transitions.
- \* Learning to work with thoughts: Douse with truth then avoid reassurance-seeking.
- \* Feeding the mind healthy and stimulating images/ideas
- \* Shame: the ultimate false belief.

## Physical Realm

- \* The body is our roadmap and wise messenger, yet we often learn to disconnect from the body early in life as a way to manage pain. Moving toward practices that help you heal somatically is an essential component to inner work. This might be yoga, 5-rhythms dance, mindful walking, somatic experiencing.
- \* We also ask, "Where am I off-kilter in terms of sleep, hormones, substances, exercise?"

## Family Trauma

- \* There's an element of your pain that didn't start with you.
- \* When you can identify the stories you're carrying that aren't yours, you can hand them back.

## The Metaphor

- \* Jung: We pathologize because we have forgotten how to mythologize.
- \* We take everything at face value, what Jeremy Taylor calls "mistaken literalism."
- \* Intrusive thoughts are metaphors pointing the way to integration.