

SURGERY

It is important to realize that the body experiences surgery as a profound threat. The fact that you consented to it makes no difference to the physiology of the experience that your body will undergo when it is worked upon during the surgery.

Look at it this way. Firstly, the body is anesthetized which is a maintained altered state of deep relaxation, numbing and stillness. In modern times anesthetics have been vastly improved. Nonetheless, the body-mind can experience the anesthesia as a near death ritual.

Secondly, your body may experience the surgical procedure as a physiologically invasive act, an entrapment, an attack, perhaps all three, with no way to respond to it defensively. That is, by executing a flight or fight response. The anesthesia and the strapping onto the surgery table are in fact instilling a freeze state to provide the surgeons the stillness necessary to perform their duty with your body.

Even though the parasympathetic freeze state is being managed the natural defensive orienting responses of fight and flight may be activated and imprinted upon the subconscious memory. Perhaps, while you are unconscious everything in your body says, "Run, rip these straps off and run. They are cutting into your body. Fight them. Do not let them hurt your body." These autonomic defensive impulses, albeit at a subconscious level, become suppressed in the bodily tissues and intrinsically seek the discharge of survival energies aroused. These subconscious undercurrents for discharging provoked survival energy can be easily triggered post-surgery for some time after the event.

Dealing with your recovery process

"As one goes in, so they come out."

If your surgery was due to an emergency, you would not have been able to prepare for the event. *Preparation influences the quality of recovery. I will address this later.*

The elements of your experience prior to the traumatic event, the traumatic event itself and the subsequent experiences including hospitalization, surgery and outcomes may become merged and compounded in the memory banks of the body and mind. It is important to understand and heal these elements and relationships through resourcing needs, discharging traumatic stress and reevaluating life plans accordingly through proper attention, integration and regulation of oneself and relationships. This may be done through counselling and trauma resolution procedures with a specialist.

Preparation for a Scheduled Surgery

Months Before:

Resource yourself:

Intend and plan for success regarding all levels of the surgery, make sure that there are not any surprises: If you can, meet your doctor and discuss

- the procedure,
- your concerns, and how you can both, work together for success physically, emotionally, mentally, and energetically.

Familiarize Yourself

Make sure that you understand enough of the procedures to feel resourced. (Perhaps, you may feel more resourced by knowing less about the procedure.) Your doctor can describe what is going on, as needed. Also, the internet may have information to assist, even videos of surgical procedures if you are so inclined can be of great assistance.

What you should know:

- Who will do the surgery, who will be in attendance?
- The specific anesthesia and its specific effects to the nervous system; and whether you will be injected or given a mask.
- If appropriate, ensure that a local anesthesia is used along with the general anesthesia.

Scheduling Personal Supports

Weeks & Days before the Surgery

- Make sure you are not in an unresolved space/place immediately before the surgery.
- As you get closer to the surgery, work primarily with resourcing your thoughts and emotions and not accessing new material.
- Provide yourself thoughts of positive suggestions regarding the surgery. Example: The doctor and hospital are there to support and assist me in my healing.

For the Day of Surgery

- Who will take you there? Who, if anyone, will be there as you are wheeled in for surgery?
- What do you want/need to take with you during your hospitalization?
- Allow yourself to surrender to the procedure, to surrender into the stillness of the anesthesia as a matter of fact, (not as a magical or mystical experience, as this may add a difficulty to the body memory.) This surrender can be as a resource., Allow yourself to focus into your surrender knowing you are doing so, simply for your own healing purposes.
- Who do you want to be there as you come out of surgery, ... as you regain consciousness?
- Who will take you home from the hospital?

Recovery period

- What supports and resources are necessary for your recovery period?
- Often, people feel depressed or even psychotic after surgery, be discerning for this possibility.

Learn to manage traumatic stress with assistance from a Trauma Healing Specialist

- **Learn to feel and listen to your body's experience** and become familiar with letting go into altered states through tracking sensations and images. E.g. Imaging going down steps, underwater, into clouds, being on a rocket that goes out of gravity to feel the weightlessness and while observing these images in your mind to be tracking the sensations in your body.
- **Feel and negotiate** prior traumas in order to build-up your body's natural resiliency.
- **Stop over-coupling** and fusing past experiences with that of the surgery. Unresolved traumatic stress of past events could drive unnecessary activation. We can deal with these in our sessions.

For Further Information:

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