

“I recognized winter. I saw it coming (a mile off, since you ask), and I looked it in the eye. I greeted it and let it in. I had some tricks up my sleeve, you see. I’ve learned them the hard way. When I started feeling the drag of winter, I began to treat myself like a favored child: with kindness and love. I assumed my needs were reasonable and that my feelings were signals of something important... I asked myself: What is this winter all about? I asked myself: What change is coming?”

— **KATHERINE MAY,**
*Wintering: The Power of Rest and
Retreat in Difficult Times*

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The very relationship with the other
is the relationship with the future'

— EMMANUEL LEVINAS

Foreword

This book is based on what I have learned. My dedication to trauma work grows out of twenty-one years of professional experience and study, which I have fully integrated into this work. I come from a Jewish family. My parents and grandparents, who survived the second world war, struggled to combine their daily lives with the pain and suffering they carried. Witnessing their overwhelming feelings, and seeing how impossible it was for them to express those feelings, made me a trauma-sensitive child.

This book takes a closer look at the nervous system and early trauma. What I write about is far from complete, and it is not the only truth. There are many ways to look at the consequences of trauma — and of course the body contains much more than just the nervous system. I believe the body is a miracle in its own right.

I have learned about the depths of trauma by studying IoPT (Identity oriented Psychotrauma Therapy). The theory used in this book is based on the work of Dr. Franz

Ruppert, the founder of processing early trauma in group therapy. He uses a personal intention to make contact with the subconscious parts of our psyche, combining theoretical knowledge with a methodology that brings old wounds back into consciousness. I am deeply grateful for his dedication and his profound work in the trauma field.

This book is intended to be as accessible as possible, so that anyone can read it — no prior knowledge of trauma required. The content is written with a broad view, though it is primarily grounded in the depth of how an IoPT process works. It supports people in making an inner shift to heal trauma in a titrated way.

In IoPT we look at ourselves and at the different parts in us, which hold valuable information for us. We have a healthy adult I or self and we have parts that help us manage and survive life. Underneath this we also have parts that carry our pain, they are burdened with attachment wounds from our childhood. We can detect parts as voices, thoughts,

emotions, sensations or images we may become aware of internally during a normal day in our lives.

Another way of working with trauma and internal parts in a one-to-one session is Internal Family Systems (IFS). This approach is more experiential than cognitive in its path to healing. I am a licensed IFS therapist and a qualified and certified IoPT therapist. Throughout this book, I draw on the knowledge of both frameworks.

At the end of this book, you'll find blank pages where you can write down your own notes.

DR. FRANZ RUPPERT

This book is based under Dr. Franz Ruppert teachings, a professor of psychology in Munich. He developed the trauma processing methodology known as Identity-oriented Psychotrauma Theory and Therapy (IoPT). This method uses intention-setting as the entry point into a therapeutic process. In doing so, we raise awareness of trauma and begin healing the scars it has left in our psyche. This way of processing engages the body's own self-healing capacity and supports the development of a healthy psyche.

Dr. Ruppert gives seminars worldwide and has written several books on his work in the trauma field. I highly recommend his books for anyone wishing to explore this subject in greater depth.



The beginning of our life

The circumstances of our early life shape the landscape of our adult life. This is not about fixed destiny — it is about the very first seeds of bonding with our mother, who is the very first attachment figure in our lives. This book explores how our nervous system develops and begins to map our world from the very beginning. It offers insight into how relational trauma and the nervous system are connected to that beginning.

As human beings, we are wired for connection — wired to make contact with those around us. When we are young and our environment is not conducive to healthy connection, and the parents themselves are a source of stress in the child, relational trauma can take hold and safe attachment is put at risk. This unsafe early attachment leaves scars, and these scars can surface when we grow up and enter our own new intimate relationships.

I have a dream, a dream about self awareness in us as parents, that we are able to get to know our own trauma biography, so we become the parents we want to be. When we change something in us, it will change something in the next generation. Like a drop of water, causing ripples, spreading wide. The drop we are has an impact on the ripples, the children we raise.

When I speak about parents in this book, I am referring to biological and non-biological parents alike.

I invite you to keep asking yourself questions about what you read in this book. Never take the information in this book as the ultimate truth—it is simply a way to shift your perspective on life.

The drawings

Each chapter in this book is accompanied by beautiful drawings, created by my dear friend and fellow trauma therapist, Daphne Hooiveld.

About the drawings: each one features a lemniscate — the infinity symbol — chosen for its endless, unbroken form. This single fluid, moving, flexible line connects the head, the heart, and the lower body. All the drawings are the visual counterparts of the words in this book. The drawings are merely an interpretation of the explanations in the book. You are openly invited to see what you see, and to ask yourself a reflective question: ‘What do I experience when looking at this drawing.’ ‘Are there any emotions coming up?’



