



Trigger to Triumph: The Parent's Guide to Reframing Emotional Triggers

We see the world and our experiences in this world not just through our eyes, but also through a lens that is colored with our past experiences, our traumas. Throughout our life and especially in our childhood, we form patterns, our coping mechanisms based on how we relate to our caregivers and other caring adults in our life. And the same coping behaviors stay with us through and into our adulthood. Although we can rid ourselves from any responsibility of how we formed those patterns, we can't rid ourselves from the responsibility of whether we choose to live exactly the same way or not especially when they are impeding us from forming healthy relationships with people we love and care for and in many ways passing on our traumas to them, more specifically our children.

And here lies your decision. Do you want to relate with your children exactly the same way your parents related with you or you want something better? You know what better is.

Although knowledge is not enough for a complete transformation of your relationship with self and with others, it sure is the first and one of the most important steps towards it.

So here in this worksheet we are going to walk through a framework to look at our triggers from a fresh perspective, to understand what lies beneath it. And let me tell you how amazed you will be when you find that most often your triggers have nothing to do with the present. It's a deep-seated hurt that longs to be healed and a new incident, in the present can feel someone scratching at the old wound.

So what is a trigger?

"Triggers are those little things that set off a cascade of emotions within us, often leading to feelings of distress and unease. They can be anything from a specific word or smell to a particular place or memory. Understanding triggers and their effects is crucial for our overall well-being. Triggers have the power to disrupt our daily lives, causing emotional turmoil and making it difficult to navigate through our day-to-day activities. They can stem from past experiences, especially those from childhood, shaping the way we react to certain stimuli as adults." --

Dr. Gabor Mate

Our childhood experiences play a significant role in shaping our triggers in adulthood. By understanding the root cause of our triggers, we can begin to unravel the complex web of emotions they evoke.

In parenting in very simple terms, a trigger could show up as-

Seeking control over your child's actions

Irritability over messiness

Feeling of rage or anger over disobedience, questions from children

Permissiveness

Burnout

Fear based parenting

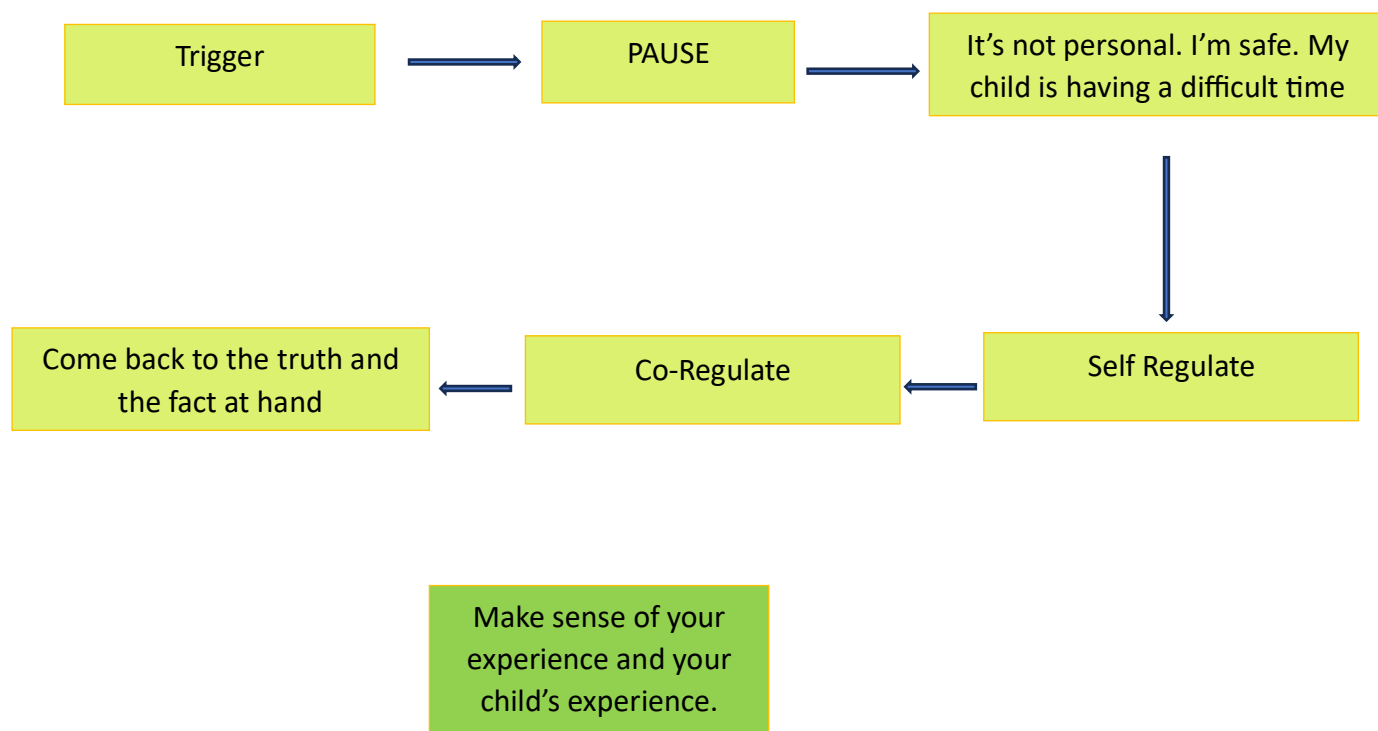
Constantly feeling on the edge, hurt, angered and more

Or any other emotion that makes you feel overwhelmed and swept away with it. As if you have no control over your mind or body.

On the surface these might look like very justifiable responses, but when you try to look deeper, you will understand the deep-seated emotion that goes along with it. It is not about what your child's behavior is, it is about how you can move away from being explosive and be able to respond in a way that will help you to communicate what you really want to communicate, hold boundaries not through anger but with patience and calm. Accepting that you can feel all your emotions and be in control (not suppression), acknowledging your own emotions and making sense of them can help you become more solution focussed, more response-able in the moment.

Actionable steps I help parents with to become more response-able in the moment

When you are triggered in a situation with your child, you can use these actionable steps to re-center yourself.



The 5 R Framework to relook at your triggers

Before we begin with this, remember to bring your full awareness to your thoughts & emotions. This is a great exercise when done with complete focus and determination to work this out. And the best way you can do this is also by beginning with a mindfulness exercise. It could be deep breathing, orienting exercise or any other.

Let us look at the trigger.

Something happened that left you unsettled, angered, hurt, frustrated, fearful, raging or probably it was another emotion. What was the incident?

The incident must have left you with several thoughts. Like – I’m not loved. I don’t belong. They don’t think I’m worthy. They don’t think I’m capable. I’m not enough. No one cares. I’m being disrespected. Or probably it was a different thought. Write it down here.

What feelings did it leave you with? Remember feelings and thoughts are different. Feelings are the emotions that arise within you. Your feelings are an emotional memory that you might not even remember. When our body feels the feeling, it forms a thought and gathers evidence from our life to corroborate the emotions. Feelings are – angered, hurt, frustrated, unsettled, etc.

Do you remember a time from your childhood when you felt a similar emotion? More often than not, our triggers bring back implicit memories from our childhood, not even realising that they were there. It is our body responding to events that are very similar to our experiences from childhood, making us respond in exactly the same way a child would respond.

What did you believe about yourself in that moment? Whatever the thought was, it is ok. Close your eyes, look at the child you were and bring your awareness to what that child is experiencing.

Now without intellectualizing, what would you say to that child. How would you hold that child and soothe him/her. What do you think that child would have needed in that moment? Can you give that to that child?

Now while we have tried to examine where this feeling might be originating from, showed some compassion to the hurting child within us, it is important for us to be able to put it into its rightful place.

This is 5 R Framework inspired by Dr. Gabor's work that will help you create a reframe around what you do with the said thought. The compassion and understanding you bring to yourself, is the same understanding you will be able to bring to your child, your partner and all other relationships including with self. This is not a one and done solutions, it is about learning to rewire how you look at life and it can happen with consistently staying curious and practicing this reframe.

RELABEL –

Now let's go back and look at the incident at hand, the emotions and thoughts it evoked. The incident must have brought back memories from childhood, but vis a vis the present moment, it's just a thought. Not necessarily a truth. We are not negating what we are feeling or thinking but creating a new neural pathway by accepting that what we have believed all this while might not be the complete truth. And there could be many reasons explaining our experience. Like, what we are assuming other person wanted to do or say could be completely different from what they actually were feeling.

REATTRIBUTE-

This thought, that you've carried with yourself was once a protective mechanism for you. Easier to believe in those moments as a child who is dependent on adults for every emotional or physical need, that there was something lacking in you rather than believing that your parent or your attachment figure was incapable to provide for the said need.

This worked for you then, but it is not working anymore. This protective belief is not helping your relationships, it's only stopping you from being open to understand the other side of the story, the other perspective.

REFOCUS-

Now it's time for you to focus your attention to a different, healthy, uplifting, enjoyable activity for 20-30 minutes. The idea is to move away from your self-deprecating thoughts. We are doing this to create new healthy neural pathways to break the age long unhealthy patterns.

REVALUE –

Now let's take a fresh look at these negative thoughts about yourself. How have these thoughts helped you & how is it helping you today. What did you actually need in the moment when you were triggered? Maybe you

needed to be understood, cared for, loved, respected, heard. So, how is this belief about yourself (E.g. I'm not loved. No one cares. No one respects me. They are trying to show me down. Everyone is out to get me) helping you to fulfill your need? How much is this thought impeding your relationships and your life? Weigh in.

If it has helped you and supported you, brought you peace, then good. But if not let's look at what we can do so that instead of staying in hurt and self-limiting, self-deprecating thoughts we can find how to fulfil those needs.

RECREATE -

Knowing your intentions, gives you a reference point for where you wish to go. Whether in profession, personal relationships, or even a relationship with self, having an intention helps you stay on the path. If you have not already set your intentions, do it now. What is your intention with this relationship. What do you want to achieve, or receive through this relationship? Now write down this with compassion for self, with honesty and authenticity. Now with this intention that you created with authentic contemplation, plan out your way of how you can help yourself achieve that.

Change happens through consistency. You did not become an Usain Bolt the first time you ran or walked. 😊

Please show yourself the same compassion today as well. What happened in the past, how we lived, the patterns we let rule in our life and relationships might not be our doing, not by choice, but today you can make a choice of living the same way or not. And I want you to know you have much more in you than you have given yourself credit for.

Wish you the best in your healing journey. <3

Warm Love

Jaspreet

Creator of [Raising Resilience](#) & Safe & Sound Protocol Provider

P.S. - If you need more support in your parenting journey, healing and making sense of your trauma or even your relationship with self, you may email me at support@themindfulfamily.in

Also, leave feedback if you found this resource helpful. Looking forward to hearing from you.

ABOUT JASPREET



Helping PARENTS with actionable steps and tools to create unique solutions for their unique family challenges.

In addition to working towards Child and Women safety in India, Jaspreet is also the creator of **RAISING RESILIENCE** a comprehensive parenting program to help parents completely overhaul their relationship with their children, while raising confident, respectful, cooperative and resilient kids.

Jaspreet is a certified **Parent Coach from Jai Institute of Parenting**, and trained in **Healing Trauma & Addiction**. Her mission is to help her clients achieve the results they desire, and that alone encourages her to be open to different therapeutic modalities because not everything works for everyone. She believes that while knowledge and Mindset is a key part in transformation, many people feel stuck in nervous system states that stop them from making the changes they truly desire. And after seeing many clients struggling with their trauma responses and feeling stuck, she decided that if she wanted to support them, she needed to give them better tools to be able to break the cycle they were feeling caged in. To serve this purpose, she also offers **Safe and Sound Protocol**, 5 hour long, non-invasive, music intervention **designed by Dr. Stephen Porges** for Nervous System regulation so their coaching and learning can yield better results.

She is deeply inspired by the works of Dr. Gabor Mate, Dr. Stephen Porges, Dr. Dan Siegel, Dr. Erica Komisar to name a few. Her work with clients draws from Polyvagal Theory, Inner Child work, Attachment Science, IFS, SE, Neuroplasticity etc. Although she works primarily with parents, she also works with clients who are not parents and are suffering from disclosed, undisclosed or undiagnosed generational trauma, neurological differences, behavioral difficulties, sensory sensitivities, anxiety, panic and much more.

When not meeting clients, or attempting to change the world, you will find her reading a book, going on random ice-cream drives with her daughter, watching a food show with her husband, cuddling or playing with her dogs or even watching a good C/K drama.

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