

RECLAIM YOUR POWER



Heal Your Triggers
Experience Emotional Freedom

By Linda Manning, Transformational Coach

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INTRODUCTION

My Story

HI!

I'm Linda Manning

I'm a transformational coach and healer. I help my clients release limiting beliefs and triggers so they can experience their true personal power, freedom and joy.

What makes my process unique is that I combine powerful healing processes with information and wisdom accessed directly from your guides.

As a coach and healer I've helped many people release triggers so they can reclaim their power. Throughout this e-book, I will be sharing real examples but with different names and some different details to protect confidentiality.



Going to Jail



A Personal Story about Getting Triggered

This is an embarrassing story – but most stories about triggers are.

When our children were young, my husband and I decided to take them to an amusement park on a sunny Sunday afternoon. As we got near the parking lot, the guard who was directing traffic decided to hold up our lane – even when there was no oncoming traffic. The drivers in our lane started honking at him, which only made the officer hold up traffic longer.

Eventually, he let cars into the parking lot, but by then the parking was full. As we exited the lot, my husband pulled over and asked the cop why he had held up traffic. The officer got furious and started yelling at us. This really upset me and I found myself completely triggered. Out of my mouth flew 4-letter words I hadn't intended to say!

Things went rapidly downhill and soon my husband got arrested and put into jail! Two long years later, we went to court and the charges were dropped but the trauma and stress (and legal bills!) from that situation stuck with us for a long time.

From my studies as a healer, I knew about triggers and I was determined to get the gifts from this very challenging situation. As we meditated, journaled and discussed what happened, my husband and I were both able to look at how we had each gotten triggered. We found ways to heal those parts of ourselves. As a result, my husband made peace with his brother for the first time and I learned how to judge myself and others more kindly.

Acting out when you are triggered can lead to breakdowns AND breakthroughs. They can be a catalyst to amazing growth.



CHAPTER ONE

What is a Trigger?

Defining Trigger

At the 2022 Oscar Awards, Will Smith shocked the world by storming onto the stage and slapping Chris Rock. This very public display of uncontrolled emotion was a dramatic – and highly visible - example of what can happen when someone gets triggered.



A trigger is when a person or situation brings on an instantaneous emotional reaction – often beyond what the situation warrants.

History of Triggers

The term trigger was first used to describe the reaction that soldiers were experiencing after returning from war.



Many noticed that even though the soldier was now safe, things like the sound of a car backfiring could lead them to panic, run for cover, or grab a gun. Clearly, just because a situation was over didn't mean it couldn't still have impact.

Over time, therapists and healers recognized that not just war, but many kinds of trauma linger in our system long after the event is over. Interestingly, it isn't just big events that can lead to something triggering us. Often small moments, that we might not even remember, can lead to a triggering event.

Case Example



Imagine you are in elementary school. You come home very pleased about a project – you couldn't wait to share it with your parents.

Unfortunately, when your parents got home, they were tired from work or distracted with tasks. You told them about your project, but you didn't receive much reaction or even got brushed off.

Your interpretation of events was “I'm not good enough” and “No one wants to hear from me.”

Now it's decades later. You finished a project at work that you are proud of. But subconsciously you've held onto the belief that you aren't good enough and no one cares about your accomplishments.

Instead of celebrating, you sigh and stay quiet. Since you don't let anyone know what you did, you don't get noticed – proving to yourself that your story was right. Despite the years, inside you still feel like an unworthy child who wants approval.

Creating Triggers

All of us have had experiences like that. Small moments of perceived rejection or distress that led to us creating a belief about ourselves, others or the world.



As children we are especially likely to generalize our beliefs. So rather than saying, "Mom was tired, I'll tell her later" it becomes "I'm not worthy."

Rather than a belief being limited to a certain situation, it generalizes to all situations "No one thinks I'm worthy."

This happens so quickly and automatically that it's easy to forget about the original event even as we hold on to the belief.

Real Case



Tina called me crying. Her adult daughter was angry with her and Tina felt completely devastated. While most people don't like it when their children are mad at them, Tina's over-the-top response let me know this was a trigger for her.

As Tina and I explored why this was so upsetting to her, she realized that her real fear was that her daughter would abandon her. More questions helped her realize that this was directly related to how she felt when her father had left the family years earlier.

To release the grip of this memory, I had Tina do some exercises where she reconnected with her inner child and released the feelings of abandonment.

By the end of the session, Tina was able to assess the situation with her daughter much more objectively. She saw how her daughter's comments were based on love and that she had no intentions of abandoning her. Tina and I came up with a plan for what she would say to her daughter. She reported to me later that they had a great weekend together.

Releasing Triggers



The real work of managing and releasing triggers is to understand where the triggers come from, rewrite our interpretations of the past and embrace all parts of ourselves.

Linda Manning



CHAPTER TWO

Causes of Trigger

Trigger Causes



A trigger can be caused by anything that reminds us of the past – a sound, a color, the quality of someone’s voice, what someone is saying or doing, even watching a movie or TV.

Trigger Causes

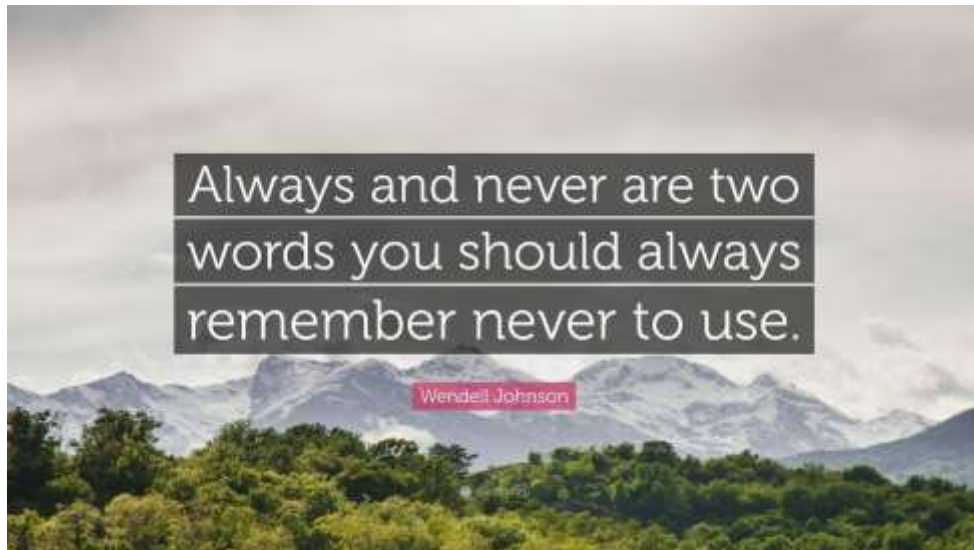
Triggers can come from a single difficult event or a series of small “micro traumas.” Triggers can bring on different emotions from sadness to distaste to outrage. It’s impossible to fully avoid triggers as they can happen unexpectedly.

Common Triggers

- Betrayal
- Being ignored and disapproved
- Challenged beliefs
- Feeling unwanted or too needed
- Feeling of insecurity
- Loss of control and loss of independence
- Rejection
- Unfair and unjust treatment
- Violation of values

Trigger Clues

Clues that you have a hidden trigger are the words “always” or “never.” Like, “I always mess up” or “I never get treated with respect.”



Notice words like “should” or “shouldn’t.” For example, “People shouldn’t boast” is a clue that sometime in your youth you were probably shamed for boasting.

Other clues are in how we judge other people. Behaviors that really bother us in others can help us discover our triggers.

Real Case

John found one of his employees, Jessica, very annoying. She was constantly trying to get herself invited to meetings and put on projects. No matter how much responsibility he gave her, she just always seemed to want to do his job instead of her own.

John prided himself on being laid-back and easy going. When I asked him if Jessica reminded him of anyone, he was surprised to realize she was a lot like his mother.

As we explored why Jessica triggered John, we looked at decisions he had made in childhood. His mother's "pushiness" had embarrassed John and he was determined never to be like that. Jessica being pushy subconsciously brought up that embarrassment over and over.

To fully heal the trigger, John needed to explore the ways that he was pushy. He learned the gifts that pushiness had and how necessary it can be in certain situations. He saw that by rejecting pushiness, he was also giving up some of his personal power. Over time, John learned to appreciate and accept that part of himself. He and Jessica never became best friends but as he healed himself, John noticed he could say no to Jessica without being triggered.





CHAPTER FOUR

Managing Triggers

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers



TIP #1 Identify your triggers

Being aware of the situations that can trigger you emotionally is a great start. It's the pathway to healing your past and creating a more powerful future. Since it's impossible to escape all triggers, you can instead manage and grow from them. Ask yourself:

- **What does my spouse/co-worker/boss/child/friend or parent do that really bugs me?**
- **What behaviors or news really bother me?**

Tip #2 Plan for triggers

If you know you are going to be in a situation that triggers you (like visiting your family of origin), plan ahead for how to handle it. For example, if it bothers you that your mother always has to have the last word, come up with a mantra that supports you like "What my mother says has no power over me."



Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #3 Meditate



Many people find that by teaching themselves to slow down their breathing and focusing on something positive, they have more control over their reactions.

Tip #4 Love Yourself



Imagine yourself at the young age when the trigger began. Then send love to that part of you. Wrap yourself in a hug, say kind words to yourself, ask what your young self needs, and picture sending it to them.

Tip #5 Be Easy on Yourself



Everyone gets triggered sometimes so try to resist judging yourself harshly. Instead, practice being kind to yourself, no matter what. The more you practice self-kindness, the less often you are likely to be triggered.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #6 Exercise Regularly



Exercise gives us positive hormones that can help manage triggering events.

Tip #7 Talk it Out



Most people have difficulty identifying and managing triggers on their own. Getting some coaching, healing or therapy can help you move through the process much more quickly.

Tip #8 Give Yourself Some Space

If someone is really bothering you, step away. Sometimes you aren't emotionally prepared to respond calmly. Giving yourself some space can be just what you need to get perspective and do the work of identifying and understanding your triggers.



Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #9 Journal



Write down what is bothering you and what you believe about it. Then look for patterns. You may notice that similar issues come up for you. That's definitely a clue that this is about your response not about the situation.

Tip #10 Find the Gifts



There are always gifts in difficult situations. Triggers are a chance for you to heal something from the past. As part of the work of exploring triggers, you may want to look for how they have benefitted you. For example, maybe the “I’m not good enough” belief helped you learn to be helpful and supportive or work harder. Maybe your trigger about feeling disrespected led you to engage in work to improve justice in the world. Appreciating the gifts from triggers can be a powerful step towards changing your relationship with them.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #11 Connect to the Past



Since triggers come from our past, we need to search there for the cause. When you take the time to investigate our triggers you may be able to remember other times in your life when you felt similarly. You may want to ask some of these questions:

- **What or who does this remind me of?**
- **When have I felt something similar?**
- **How old do I feel?**
- **What beliefs do I have about this? (Look for should and shouldn't)**

Take time to connect to the past. Sometimes it's obvious. Other times it may be subtle. It could take a while to understand what this particular trigger relates to.

When my husband thought about why he decided to question the police officer, he realized that the man reminded him of unresolved feelings with his brother. That insight opened up new ways to deal with the trigger.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #12 Reinvent the Past

Have you ever seen the bumper sticker, “It’s never too late to have a happy childhood?” Remember most of our memories are not fully accurate and their greatest impact is in the way we interpreted them.

For years I was angry with my mother for how she treated me in high school. And while it’s true that it wasn’t ideal, it took me a long time to realize that my reactions and interpretations were part of the problem. Once I owned my part in it, I was able to change how I acted around her – and many of our challenges disappeared.



So take time to rewrite your story. Go back to the time your trigger began and imagine a different outcome or a different interpretation of the outcome. See if you can release the beliefs about yourself that diminish you and instead bring in more empowering ones.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

TIP #13 Be understanding



Remember that EVERYONE has triggers. Most people are not intending to make you feel bad – they are going through their own stuff. Even if they do have ill-intent, you can reclaim your power by looking at how you are reacting and why you feel that way and learn how to manage them differently.



Tip #14 Focus on the Positive

What we focus on tends to increase. If you focus your energy on what you DON'T want, you're likely to get more of it. So take a moment and think about what you DO want in a triggering situation. For example, if you want the other person to listen to you more, try focusing on when they do - even a little. Notice what you like about the other person.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

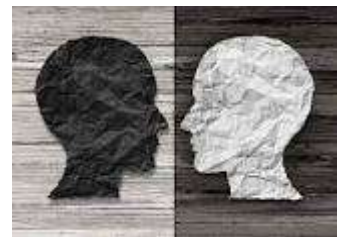


Tip #15 Treat Yourself as You Wish to be treated

It's easy to focus on how others treat us,. However, the most important thing to consider is how you treat yourself. If you are mean to yourself, others are likely to treat you similarly.

Work on changing your inner messages to self-appreciation and love. Honor yourself, listen to yourself, respect yourself. You may find that, by changing how you treat yourself, fewer people or situations will trigger you.

Tip #16 Embrace the Gray



When you look at the world in terms of black/white or right/wrong (“How I see the world is right and how you see it is wrong”), you are likely to get triggered often.

Consider this, are you more committed to being right than to releasing triggers? Many of us choose anger over peace because we are so committed to being right. Letting go of being right can open the door to healing.

By being open to more than one interpretation of events and allowing other people to have values that are different from yours without having to be wrong, you can greatly reduce your triggers.

Tips on Managing Your Emotional Triggers

Tip #17 Create Positive Triggers

Triggers can be positive too. Do you have positive feelings when you smell the ocean, see the first snow of the year, taste your favorite food, see someone you love?

Put yourself into situations where you feel good. Refill your cup by noticing and appreciating all the things that ARE working.



Real Case

Beth loved Sean, her husband of 5 years, but she was frequently triggered by him.

Beth and Sean had different decision making processes. Beth thought things through for a long time. Once she made a decision, she was ready for action. On the other hand, Sean would often decide quickly but then change his mind. Every time Sean changed his mind, Beth would get triggered.

As we looked at patterns in the relationship, I encouraged Beth to find ways to honor her process AND Sean's. As she let go of thinking her way was right and his was wrong, Beth realized that before coming to a conclusion, she needed to give Sean time to change his mind. She let go of the "my way is right" thinking and started to appreciate his perspective. As Beth did this, she noticed Sean was no longer triggering her.

Before long, they worked together and decided on a house to buy – something that had previously seemed impossible.





CHAPTER FIVE

Managing Relationships

Communicating Your Needs

So far we've talked about the inner work for managing triggers. This alone can radically change your life and help you reclaim your power. However, there are also times when you need to speak up for yourself!

Just because you recognize that something is a trigger doesn't mean you shouldn't try to change it. Triggers make you overreact so it's important to deal with them internally first. However, after doing the steps listed above, you may decide you also want to change the outside situation.



One of the ways you'll know you are ready to discuss a situation is when you can stay calm doing it. If you can't talk to someone calmly, do more inner trigger work first.

Remember that when you talk to someone it may trigger them. You may need to be patient and allow them to manage their emotions. But whether or not it resolves the issue, just speaking up can be a positive step.

Preparing to Communicate

When you are ready to talk to someone about something that triggers you consider the following:

- What they did that triggered you
- How it made you feel
- Your interpretation of the situation
- Your vision for what you DO want
- Possible solutions
- How to get their buy-in



For example,

Trigger: “When you said you didn’t want to spend time together tonight,

Feeling: I felt disappointed and frustrated.

Interpretation: My interpretation is that you aren’t putting the same quality of effort into this relationship – but I realize you might view it differently.

Vision: I want us to have a great relationship where we can both feel loved and supported.

Solution/get buy-in: I’d like to solve this. Would you be willing to work with me to find a solution we both feel good about?”

When Communication Isn't Enough

Many relationships and situations have been improved or saved when one or both partners work on their triggers.

However, sometimes- especially when only one partner does the work- a relationship may need to end. Healing our triggers reconnects us to our personal power and inner wisdom. When we learn to love all parts of ourselves, we may find that we want a new partner or job that matches this new self-love and self-honoring.

When triggers are healed, we can make more objective decisions about what we truly want and choose situations that align to the future we desire.



Case: Overcoming a Trigger

Marilyn was excited to get a new boss. When Paul joined the company, he seemed charming and visionary. But before long, the dark side of Paul came out. He was often nasty and unreasonable – and seemed to enjoy it. Marilyn found herself working longer and longer hours trying to meet his demands.



Marilyn realized that Paul was like a past boyfriend whose self-involvement left her feeling insecure. But Marilyn had done a lot of personal work after the breakup. When Paul started showing his true stripes, Marilyn was able to see him clearly. She was initially triggered by Paul, but it wasn't long before Marilyn was able to look at him objectively instead of personally. While she could have stayed, Marilyn decided to change jobs. She no longer felt the need to please someone who didn't treat her well.



CONCLUSION

GETTING SUPPORT

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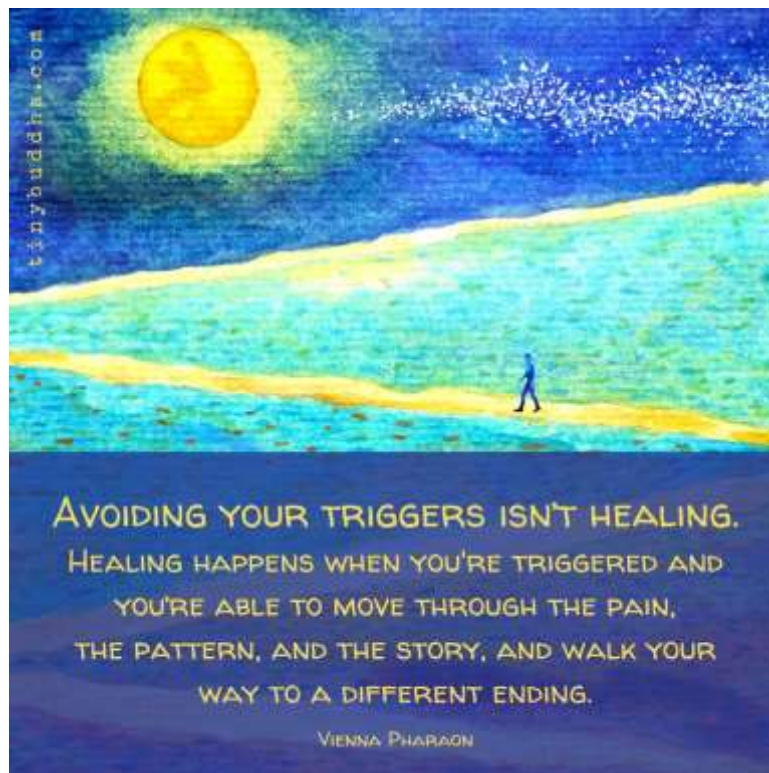
Getting Support to Reclaim Your Power

Healing triggers can change your life! Try the many suggestions in the e-book and see what happens. I'd love to hear how you have used this to reclaim your power!

Some triggers are easy to identify and release while others are buried deep in the subconscious and require some support to identify and release.

I have helped many clients transform their relationships with themselves and others and reclaim their power. Let me know if I can support you.

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