

Study Notes on the Difference between Repression & Dissociation

Quote by Tom Hawkins: “A mental process by which a person persistently resists the recall of a painful memory or the expression of an emotion to the extent that the brain eventually blocks it from consciousness. Some researchers define it differently or totally deny the existence of this dynamic.” -

Dissociative Identity Disorder

The following excerpts of meaning were extracted from ***The Truth about False Memory Syndrome*** by James G. Friessen, Ph.D.

Repression

- Forgetting happens gradually over a period of time.
- Used to block painful memories.
- Recorded in the active mind (hippocampus)

- Voluntary
- Is an active process
- Memories return gradually

- Helps make things appear better than they were, not worse
- Processed repeatedly to make what happened more acceptable
- Memory is subjected to interpretation and re-interpretation over a period of time throughout the person's life. Can be modified to be acceptable. The original event becomes increasingly difficult to recall accurately. Can be modified until forgotten.
- Mind uses repression to see the world through “rose colored glasses.”
- 1st person’s memory feels like, “it happened to me.”
- As memory returns, distortion clears about specific event.
- As memory returns, the memory doesn’t come and go, but feels more like a heavy load.
- Once repression is removed, memory and emotion do not go away – has to be processed or they now just have the hard

Disassociation

- Forgetting happens instantly without thinking.
- Used to block painful memories.
- Not recorded in the hippocampus, but in an isolated part of the brain.
- Involuntary
- Disconnects like it never happen.
- Memory returns suddenly. When the flashback occurs, the recorded event returns complete with images, feelings, and body sensations.
- Makes things appear like they never happened
- Not processed

- Not modified, not interpreted, or reinterpreted. Returns with little distortion when returning, it can be like reliving the original event.

- 3rd person’s memory feels like, “happened to someone else.”
- Memory has to point of conflict with other information in the mind
- Memory can be disconnected again from the memory because it was stored elsewhere. ? pg 32
- Memories of abuse seep into daily life
- Experience recorded memory precisely.

event to deal with without the coping mechanism

— If there are misconceptions, those are recorded too

— Distortions can be recorded from a purposeful mislead (like someone dressing up as another person) – Distortions include time and place, fatigue, clarity, or sequence of the event. Difficulties if a person was drugged could distort

Disassociation has specific behaviors: (Appendix B, pages 195,196)

- Sudden mood shifts
- Denial of actions observed by others
- Forgetfulness (despite high intelligence)
- Evidence of internal dialogue
- Flashback – 4 or more suggest DID

Recommended Reading:

- The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D. (secular, do not agree with some of it including the Yoga, but good information otherwise to consider)
- Who Switched off my Brain? By Dr. Caroline Leaf
- The Truth about False Memory Syndrome James G. Friesen, Ph.D.

