



Healing Collective Trauma

Guest: Thomas Hübl

Alex Howard: Welcome everyone to this session where I'm really happy to be talking with Thomas Hübl. Hi Thomas, thank you for joining me.

Thomas Hübl: Hey, Alex, I'm happy to.

Alex Howard: So in this session we're going to be exploring what I think is a really important part of the trauma jigsaw, which is understanding collective trauma. And I think this is all the more relevant in the current landscape that we find ourselves in as well.

Just for anyone that doesn't know Thomas, just to give his professional background.

Thomas Hübl was born in Vienna, Austria, and studied medicine for several years before abandoning his studies to spend four years in retreats, devoting himself to meditation. This led to a fundamental and revelatory opening. And in the years since then, Thomas has become known internationally as a modern mystic and spiritual teacher whose work integrates the core insights of the great wisdom traditions with the discoveries of contemporary science.

He is the founder of the Academy of Inner Science, a unique institution utilizing a distinctive approach to exploring consciousness, human evolution and the junctures between mysticism and science.

Since 2004, Thomas has maintained an active schedule of speaking, teaching and training people from all walks of life. And his book on *Healing Collective Trauma* will be published in fall 2020.

So, Thomas, I think a good place for us to start here is just by defining a few pieces, because people use terms like trauma and I think can often mean quite different things.

So perhaps you could start by just, when you speak of trauma how are you defining it? And then let's broaden that also to the idea of collective trauma and how you would define that?

Thomas Hübl: Let's say trauma, let's call it a trauma response, because trauma usually is being seen by somebody who has a car accident or is in a war situation is a kind of a massive impact. And that's true we are in very overwhelming moments usually but in fact, what happens is something that happens within us and that is an intelligent attempt to deal with a strongly overwhelming moment, or a situation, or chronically overwhelming situation in our child time, for example.

So because often trauma comes up as this, 'oh, my God', it's a word that describes pain and difficulty, which is true, that's the origin. But what happens in us, as I look at it, is a very intelligent attempt to survive in a better way. And I believe that attempt in our nervous system that responds grew over most probably hundreds of thousands of years, or longer throughout our evolutionary journey as human beings and is now here to help us or help us to survive better in critical moments.

What happens is that when there is something overwhelming, this can be a shock trauma or also a developmental trauma, like an attachment trauma through our child time, or very difficult phases in our development where we are under enormous inner stress, and at the same time there is a moment of fragmentation that happens in the nervous system to split off the part.

I often say trauma is like a big screen, like a TV screen and there is a crazy war scene, let's say. At one point somebody takes a remote control and mutes the scene and then you still have a crazy scene, but it's kind of "phuf." And then somebody takes the TV and throws it into the ocean and you still see the movie playing, but it's sinking into the ocean and at one point it disappears in the dark. And that's, I believe, that's one way, of course metaphorically, how to describe trauma.

So in that fragmented part there is still a strong process going on, but it's kind of pushed outside of the frame of the subject's awareness. And there it's still going on but without sound and after some time, without knowing, like without awareness.

So let's say a trauma is that internal fragmentation that has an aura of hyper stress and a numb part where we can't feel ourselves. Like that room is dark, somebody turned off the light and closed the room. And so that's trauma and then, of course, trauma didn't start with us.

So maybe let's say in Europe or in Germany, Austria, so our parents or grandparents that were somehow part of the Second World War in some way were traumatized; and there's more and more studies and I'm sure you touched this already with other speakers that there's a transgenerational trauma transmission.

But then in my work over the last 18 years, I saw in many groups and then intentionally because I studied that subject. We all come into a collectively traumatized world, so we didn't start on a white sheet of paper, there's a lot of stuff that we are being born into. And so that collectively traumatized world made the trauma after effects normal.

And I think everyone knows if I had a big wound on my arm and you said to me, "Thomas, why aren't you taking care of your wound?" I said, "What kind of wound? I'm walking like that". And but I always complain to you about serious inflammations I get, and then you say, "Yes but Thomas, if you don't take care of your wounds, it's clear that you will have all this inflammations and some of them might be life threatening because you need to put a bandage and you need to take care. You take antibiotics or whatever you do, but take care of this wound." And so I believe if the collective trauma that we grow up in makes us believe that we, that actually certain symptoms we saw from day one on, we felt from day one on

but they actually became part of that's the way the world is and I think we need to wake up from that.

So there are three levels and I think that's important for our conversation somehow.

Alex Howard: There is something that is very striking to me as you talk about it. You mention that with individual trauma that we can normalize to that, often we forget that impact.

It strikes me that almost the more shared the more collective that trauma is, the more likely we are to not notice it because if we have an individual trauma and no one else has experienced that, we have some contrast that shows us that our experience is different, when everyone is sharing in that trauma it can be very hard to see that.

Thomas Hübl: That's very right, because I also felt that when I worked with clients, let's say, that were born at the end of World War Two and let's say in Germany. That there is one person traumatized when many other people have been traumatized as well.

So there is an entanglement of the individual trauma with the collective trauma instability of the collective field. So that's why usually in the person's nervous system and it's important for the healing process. But as you said, we have been born into situations that we biographically don't even remember because they didn't happen within our lifetime but the after effects, all the TV sets that are in the ocean down there that are still showing movie scenes, they are still operating, that stuff didn't end, it's just muted and drowned in our collective subconscious.

So as you said, and I believe there is a high importance not only in understanding health and chronic health issues, but in understanding the connection between our worldly experience and our spiritual evolution. That we understand that certain symptoms that we grew up with and grew up in, in our society, they are actually trauma symptoms. But because my parents might have had it, my teachers might have had it, many people that I met in the grocery stores as a child might have expressed it. So it seems to me like that's how the world is.

As a child, you grow up and say, well, many people have similar things going on. But I think it's time to point those out because they are not part of the normal bricks of the house. These are ice bricks within the walls of the house of humanity. And that's important because they have serious symptoms and issues they create, those ice bricks that we can discuss. But those, if we don't address them to their root, in their root. So we will just deal with the fire fighting and dealing with symptoms the whole time. So that's why I think that conversation is very important.

Alex Howard: And I just think to really land this concept of collective trauma with people, perhaps you can give a few examples of collective traumas.

What would be some real life examples of this?

Thomas Hübl: Of course, a collective trauma is like massive wounds that the collective went through. I'd say that there's a kind of a collective tribal trauma response.

So, for example, that now it looks like that many people tried to collaborate a lot, so we try to come together and do things together. So we learned over hundreds of thousands of years of living in tribes that sticking together in times of crisis and supporting each other lets us survive better than ignoring each other.

So for sure there's this tribal trauma response, but then there are massive wounds like dictatorship's wars, natural catastrophes, pandemics, and second genocides, like the Second World War leave tremendous traces and trauma comes, like in the spiritual traditions it's called karma and here we call it today trauma. But what does it mean? It's information that couldn't be processed and experienced the moment it happened.

So for somebody, for most of the people, I think that ended up in concentration camps, the intensity and the craziness of the daily experience and I have heard some and I am sure that there were even worse things than I have heard, that people who needed to survive is so overwhelming that you need to disassociate that part of yourself in order just to stay there and go through it.

And since millions of people went through it, the amount of unprocessed information is enormous. So that somewhere lingering around outside of the awareness of people living to be like us.

So we are able to have this conversation right now. But without that collective trauma response, maybe you and I would feel terrible emotional pain, would see horrible images and visions of people dying in concentration camps. All that information is beautifully kept out of our awareness for a reason. But once that's a chronic state, we pay a price because I often say trauma is like, when I ask you, Alex, what's your fridge doing now?

Alex Howard: Keeping my food cold, I hope.

Thomas Hübl: Right, it's keeping it cold and your freezer is most probably freezing some of your food and keeping it below zero. Who is paying the electricity bill for it?

Alex Howard: Me.

Thomas Hübl: Right. So when we say dissociation and trauma, it's not that it happened, it's happening ever since and every month we are paying a price, so that's important.

To fragment part of my nervous system off, split it off and to keep it there takes a lot of energy. So the more inner fragmentation I carry, actually the more energy I need to invest, the higher is my electricity bill to keep it that way, to keep it frozen like your fridge keeps your food cold.

And that mechanism is important because that works in the collective psyche too, it's all of us together. So we all have shares in the collective trauma denial, basically.

Alex Howard: That's a very elegant way of explaining it, it's very helpful. And I think perhaps it's a good place to say, I want to come in a little bit, some of the impacts of this, but I think it's probably a good place to explore; I know you talk about the idea of traumatized fields.

So perhaps a little bit about that, that's probably a helpful way of giving some more context.

Thomas Hübl: So traumatized fields means that I believe that right now, for example, our two nervous systems and everybody who is listening right now, we create, it's not only just there is a separate laptop called Alex, there's a separate laptop called Thomas. And there are many separate laptops that are streaming this conversation right now.

So there might be this individual part of us, we all live, I often say we live in transpersonal nervous systems and we are a personal sculpture within a much bigger library. And so let's say our personal life is floor 5 to 15 in a library that is much, much bigger, has many, many more floors with books, books, information that humanity accumulated, because I believe our bodies are not 40, 50, 60 years old. There are hundreds of millions of years old and all that evolution life gave us to take care of. So our cells, our bodies, our organs, our emotions, our thinking, we didn't develop all of that, we just came in and we developed within that development. Which means that we are actually enjoying the fruits of many of our ancestors going through crisis and obviously surviving it, so that we can be here today. And so there is the whole information that comes up to us and between us I believe.

So there are the processors that we call our nervous system and our brain, our bodies, but I believe there is a cloud function between us. So when I feel you at the basic relational building block for every attachment of every child is, I feel you feeling me, I feel you feeling me.

So because trauma and relation are inherently connected, because inappropriate relation usually causes trauma and we all carry the remedy, which is relation, appropriate relation. But it starts with I have the capacity to feel you and I feel how you feel me and vice versa. And that creates between us a coherence in-between our nervous system.

And now everybody who's listening becomes part because we listen with attention to this cloud computing system. And so we can call that cloud computing system also a field, but the field didn't start with us because life is living, has been living, is living, and will be living hopefully for a long time. And so there is a whole cloud computing throughout the generations going on so big data didn't start with us, it started already hundreds of thousands of years ago.

And so in that field, there's a lot of information, some of it is accessible. But I have seen moments with groups and also with very big groups where it was very clear that we as a group, for example, hit that collective denial. And that literally we hit, there was a palpable signpost that was written, the end of the conscious universe that all our perception couldn't, it was very clear we couldn't penetrate an invisible wall. But we felt the effect of the denial and usually moments later, a lot of information shows up in the conscious awareness of a group which is connected to the collective trauma.

And I have seen the same process happen many, many times. And so that's what got me interested in collective trauma because it started to happen in my groups without me literally looking for this. And then I understood, wow we are living 24/7 in the tension of that conscious, unconscious field and our individual life problems and issues are actually small shares of a huge shadow company that we all fund.

It's like we are shareholders in the collective unconscious enterprise, it's a field, it's like a big corporation.

Alex Howard: Yeah. I want to just go back to what you said earlier that also really struck me, which I think relates very much to this which is that there is something which is also deeply intelligent about a trauma response, both on the individual level but also on this collective level, that it's allowed society to move forward, its allow people to continue to function.

But there is also, just as there is on the individual level, what I'm feeling is there's also an enormous cost, an enormous price that's paid for that on a collective level. Perhaps say a little bit about what some of the consequences of this are?

Thomas Hübl: Yeah, like in trauma. That's beautiful and I'm happy that you brought it back, that we underline we are dealing with an intelligent process. And that reminds me that we look at all our personal patterns when they started as kids, when we tried to deal with our fears, when we tried to deal with our shaming or with many things that were really difficult for us, we tried to do the best.

Every pattern, every defense pattern, anything that we installed in our bodies; the distancing, the disembodiment, the fragmentation it was all intelligence attempts to deal with the situation in the best way possible. Maybe it's outdated today and we're suffering more from the side effects than the benefits. But it's very important that you brought it back and it's true on the societal level as well.

I think technology, what we are doing right now gives us a good hint because we are data streaming right now. So this is an online conversation, so means we are using the data connection between your home and my home to stream that data. And as long as that's fluid and the data connection is great, we can have a fluid conversation. So that's presence and that's relational capacity.

But trauma fields reduce coherence and data flow through unconscious patches in our nervous system and between us. So the relationality is being downgraded and that means that like our conversation and every five seconds, it's kind of stuck. And many people know this from intimate relationship conflicts like in our connection to our kids or in work relations.

When we say we had a difficult moment, we met such a downgraded field. So data streaming as we do it right now is a present relation because I often say, integrated history is presence, unintegrated history is the past.

The past is not what happened because what happened that is integrated sits here between us, it's our present interaction. But what often disturbs us in life are feelings, body sensations and thoughts that are not connected to the current experience. That's what we call, we are not present or we are regressive.

A regression is information that shows up like, I have a lot of fear to make a business decision. But that fear has nothing to do with the business decision. And often we try to apply coaching tools when in fact it needs an exploration that that fear is an integration question, not a coaching question. Because oftentimes we are very skilled normally, but not when we are regressive and many intimate relationship situations show that.

So one symptom is that the relational capacity gets downgraded and we operate on way less intelligent modes or levels. And the other is that I think a kind of a pandemic trauma symptom is the split between what we think, our emotional experience, and our body awareness, that the mind, emotions and body are fragmented.

So what we say or what we think and what we feel and do is not the same. So that's why authenticity is inner coherence, inauthenticity is that I tell you, 'oh, Alex I'm great', but I feel very sad and I'm not happy in my life, but I try to sell you in a way that I am fine, and that's just one blunt example.

But the incoherence between the word and the experience and in the mystical in the spiritual exploration, let there be light. At the beginning of creation God says, "Let there be light." Which means that the world is creative and the world and the creation of light and not two, it's one.

The energy and the world is the same. But it's also a kind of a description of all of our lives, because creation is not that it happened. When people say the six days of creation like God created the world in six days. That's happening through us, it's not that it happened and now we're running around that game board. It's happening through our creativity every moment when we invent new technologies, new science, ways of dealing with the pandemic right now. That's how we participate in that creative process.

But if mind, body and emotions are split, the data streaming within the body is reduced. And that always leads to a downgrade of the inner feedback capacity in the system, and the lower it gets, the more side effects it's gonna have.

And since we grew up, it's like when we walked around in a world where the window has cracks and we always see the world through that window. And then we're so used to the cracks that we don't see them anymore, so when they interact with people, when they make decisions, then we respond to climate change, we see the world through unconscious cracks and these are just two samples and they can be expanded into the collective sphere where we see social absencing, social, as Otto Scharmer puts it, like absencing is a nice word, it's kind of the parts of our society where we are less aware and where social pathologies emerge, that we try to take care of symptomatically, but not to their root, which the root is collective traumatization.

Alex Howard: And yet when it comes to beginning to heal collective trauma one of things that was in my mind as you were speaking that earlier on in your teaching career, my understanding is that you were strongly focused on contemplative practices. And then this awareness of trauma became it's almost like you found yourself moving in that direction because that's what was emerging and becoming clear.

But part of what can really help in the metabolizing and the processing of trauma is still those contemplative of practices.

And so I would be curious to hear how that helps, partly also in this alignment that you mentioned in terms of mind, heart and body awareness, how one can begin that process of healing?

Thomas Hübl: It goes hand-in-hand like individual trauma, ancestral trauma, collective trauma are like Russian puppets. So they're all connected, my individual trauma, let's say example, somebody's parents are not able to really emotionally take care of the child, they neglect the child. That's a function of their traumatization and their traumatization most probably is a function of their parents traumatization. So there's a whole net of trauma coming up our ancestral streams.

At the same time, a lot of resilience is coming up in capacity, so they're coming together. So my individual experience and maybe my childhood trauma or ACEs, adverse childhood experience studies show very well how large is the number of children that go at least through one adverse childhood experience.

So when we look at individual, ancestral, collective trauma. First is that we often see healing starts always with the innermost circle of intimacy, me with myself. And so we start to take care, often through relational practices or maybe trauma therapy or through skilled support and facilitation. To help to integrate part of our personal biographical trauma history.

I believe often, then we touch on it, because they're entangled with ancestral trauma. So I've seen with many, many clients that the healing process works well and then from a certain moment, ancestral trauma comes up. So when we go into that, we increase the map and the spiritual or contemplative practices deal a lot with how can I increase my awareness of life? And here's something very important; that spiritual development is often put like into something airy and cloudy. But in fact, it's something very grounded, what does it mean?

It relates to something, like a small child that starts to crawl around, everyone who has a child or took care of children. Children always have the coolest thing ever, and the coolest thing ever now is crawling, it's much faster than just trying to move in the bed, now I can explode a room. And then when the child goes and at the beginning, it's just kind of an impulse, then the child embodies that impulse, it grows through my nervous system, through my muscles and my skeleton system grows and I am body crawling.

And then as a moment when I'm looking at you Alex and I see, 'you are quite tall and I'm down on the ground, and I'm looking at you walking through the living room'. And then I thought, 'wow, actually, crawling was the coolest thing ever, now walking becomes the coolest thing.'

And from that moment on, I will try to lift myself up, get myself on my feet, practice every day until I can also walk through the room. Maybe at the beginning it's shaky, but then I can do it, but what happens? Crawling was my identity, I've put so much energy into crawling and it was hard at the beginning. And then an impulse, which is energy becomes an ability and then the ability becomes a capacity.

The difference between an ability and a capacity is that capacity is held in space. Which means I can already do other things while I'm walking. There was a time in my life where walking occupied my whole processor capacity. And now I can walk and talk to one of my clients or students on the phone or to my wife, but what happened?

The subject, me, of one level of development became the object, which means in me the next bigger level of development. So I can lay in bed, I can crawl around, I can walk, I can go for a run and maybe I can one day run a marathon, let's say it goes up and up.

So puppets within, puppets within, puppets and the perspective becomes more complex. So subject, object, transcendence. It's important, why is it important? Because if we work with collective fields, most probably we are deeply identified with them. And that's why your question is very important.

What I've learned so far is and I'm still also by myself in the exploration of learning more about collective trauma because it's a big jungle to walk into.

What I've learned so far is that it's like, let's say you grew up in this room and you never left the room that you're in right now and then somebody asked you, 'hey Alex by the way, how does the house look like?'

Alex Howard: You only described the room. I see these walls, I see out this window, I see this desk and that's my world.

Thomas Hübl: That's your world. So in order to expand your perspective, you can make assumptions. Maybe you can make some calculations if you are good at math, but we don't have an outside perspective.

Nobody ever went out of his or her nervous system to look at how the world really looks like, and then came back in. Like in a submarine, you look and then you come back in and say, 'oh, well, the world looks like that'. No, because nobody ever has been outside of that collectively traumatized field.

So we all look through cracks in our windows, trying to find out, because I don't even know what you look like really. I only know how you look like in me, I see Alex in my own perception. If you really look the way I see you, if you really are the person I see, I need to find out through resonance, through relation, like when we communicate we can fine tune our awareness of each other.

But we can never be fully sure that what we perceive and who is there is the same.

That's why humility is so important that I say, yeah, I can only say what I feel when I meet you and I can express myself, but I can never be sure and say, Alex, this is how you are. Why?

Because I know I'm looking through cracks not only of my own, of my ancestors and my collective past, that might distort how Alex looks to me versus the one that is really happening there in you. And so through resonance we fine tune the cloud computing because we all happen in this non-separate universe. But trauma induces that you and I might be separate.

That's the basic trauma symptom that we live in a world where we often feel separate within an interdependent world that is not separate.

Alex Howard: Part of the impact, I guess, of contemplative practices is one is expanding one's capacity.

Maybe say a little bit about how that that is helping support this process.

Thomas Hübl: Right. So when I know, okay, if at least I know from my own child time that there were issues that I need to take care of in order to get more integrated. What does it mean more integrated?

To make space that the past that has been excluded finds a way in and enriches my experience to become more vital, to become more healthy, most probably more coherent. We have higher ratios of expression, so we have more possibilities available in life. So there's more energy available for life, for being alive and it improves my relational capacities.

So there are things that I can learn and practice myself like self-awareness, self-regulation and how I express myself, I can pay attention and practice certain things. Then I expose myself to more feedback, I can see myself through your eyes, and through her eyes, and through his eyes and get feedback that helps me to see what I cannot see.

So I involve myself actually in a growth process. But with this, I also train my relational capacities and the good news is that we have the remedy in us. The remedy is presence, the remedy is relation, the remedy is a deeper inner connection to ourselves and others, the remedy is ethical correction. Because at the base of every trauma often is an ethical kind of violation of the law of life.

So that we correct that ethical violation and we call it the restoration process. And if we restore life, then the flow of life throughout the generations is going to be more smooth and transmits more vitality and expression.

I think one way to say that is, if I deepen my own self, my relation to myself, I improve my relation to you or to people around me, to my family, I restore my relational network because that's part of my immune system, that's the water I'm living in. And then I also create more awareness, I practice systems and we presence because we presence is the remedy for collective trauma.

Because as we said, we are collective shareholders of that shadow company. So maybe we need to have more board meetings to decide what we do with all the energy that we invest there. And so in our board meetings, which means healing spaces for collectively

traumatized areas. We can sign up voluntarily to become integration systems for the past, we collectively had to suppress in order to go through very rough times. Saying again, as you mentioned before also, that it's an intelligent process too, the suppression. And of course, our contemplative practice is another deep resource that we can apply.

My wife and I founded a nonprofit initiative the Pocket Project some years ago that deals with collective trauma integration globally. And there's one lady on our board of the organization that is a professor in Tel Aviv, also a collective trauma researcher, psychology professor. And she made some research on communities here in Israel and what creates resilience. And the top two factors of resilience is relational community building as what's the relational awareness and faith. Like a spiritual dimension that I feel connected as part of something bigger than my personal experience and that I'm part of a relational network and that made the difference in communities in terms of resilience in crisis.

Alex Howard: How important. Just thinking about the restorative or the processing, so I'm thinking on an individual level of trauma. That sometimes just becoming aware of what's happened is enough and other times it's necessary or if possible, helpful to let's say; we had a traumatic incident with a parent, to have an attempt at some kind of clearing process with that parent to say, I need you to know that this is the impact that had on me and it wasn't okay, for example.

I wonder on a collective level as one has more awareness and starts to see those traumas that perhaps hadn't been seen before that the collective presence has obviously enormous potential.

But how important is it that sometimes there's, where possible actions or there are things, actions that are taken as some way to try and repair or to heal or to move forward?

Thomas Hübl: Very important. I want to say a few things. One is, in my experience of working with many people on traumatic content. Is that when something happens, let's say at age 4, somebody goes through an abusive moment or a traumatizing moment and it couldn't be integrated then with the parents, let's say. So it stays like a frozen area, it's kind of a hostage in time.

So there's a 40 year old person sitting in my office but the trauma is stored on a file that is at the age of 4. So in the library I go to floor number four, with my own nervous system, I find a relation. I talk to a 40 year old person but while I do that, I find a relation to where the trauma content is actually stored.

So I create a 40 year old conversation while the person shares with me, why the person comes to me. And then at the same time, I find already a relation to that place. And that's in a way also what parents do, because if you hold a baby you can feel, you can attune, you can speak in the right way, like in the rhythm that doesn't overwhelm the child. Why? Because I can feel a 5 month old baby, but doesn't mean I become a baby.

My nervous system knows how to feel a baby, that's why I slow down my voice, I find the right rhythm that doesn't overwhelm the nervous system of the child, but I'm still holding the perspective of a grown up. And the same thing we apply also in the individual healing.

And I think it's important because often the emotional content and the downgrading in the nervous system, the data flow, the feedback loops, the hormone system, the nourishment in the body stay in that reduced area of functionality and we can turn that on by bringing witnessing, which is very important, somebody sees what happened to me.

Alex Howard: Yes.

Thomas Hübl: Then correction, like restoration, empathy, love and the right ingredient to 4 year olds needed in order to digest the experience and integrate it into further development.

So that's one thing, and then I had one sick client, and it's a very strong story. And they said the teacher, at school, said to the person, to his parents, "listen, your child's misbehaving" and was very critical of the child, and then the father came home and didn't speak a word to the child for half a year.

Alex Howard: Wow.

Thomas Hübl: The punishment. Half a year later, the parents were called back to school again or needed to see the teacher and then it turned out that it was a mistake, the teacher spoke about another child. And that person was very hurt, my client was very hurt of course and there was trauma in the person because it happened to him when he was 6 or 8. And then I ask the client later in the process, did your father ever apologize? And then he said, "never. He didn't speak a word about it."

When we as parents, we know that even if we overreact or, we see that our reaction, even in a smaller way disturbed our child, we can come and restore things and that puts the responsibility back to where it needs to be, that brings leadership, that brings restoration. And the child learns, even sometimes the disturbing things, but they can be integrated.

I'm not talking about abuse, I'm talking about daily situations where the parents are stressed and then they overreact. Even in those moments, we see good leadership also in organizations is exactly that. That I know what I can own or re-own and restore or an intimate relationship there's small injuries, let's say, and we restore them so we heal, so there are no scars.

And I believe in collective trauma work, that's true too, since in-between countries, for example, that were at war or ethnicities where genocides happen. I believe the healing needs to lead up not prematurely, but needs to lead up to an action that is an effect of the restoration process that can heal. Otherwise, the two countries or ethnicity will stay entangled and it will have symptoms. It creates symptoms continuously and even throughout the generations.

And we see this, for example, in Spain and Barcelona, Madrid and Barcelona again and again, the wound that is breaking open and underneath is unintegrated trauma material. And often it's also the cause for ongoing conflicts that come up 50 years, 100 years later again and again and again.

So I think, yes, that's a very important factor to action, but not prematurely, because people sometimes think, oh, I forgive you, as if forgiveness is a mental action, like a politically correct thing. But it's only when the energy is right, then it's a natural consequence to pick the fruit.

When it's ripe, not when it's sour, then it doesn't have a restorative effect and then it's not the appropriate action.

Alex Howard: And I think people watching this will be able to feel the difference when someone has apologized for something in a way that they really felt it. That something really landed versus someone said words, and those words didn't really mean anything, those words didn't really go anywhere.

And I'm mindful of time Thomas. But it makes me think also I know another piece of your work is around coherence and it just makes me think about, there needs to be some sort of coherence or alignment in terms of where that is coming from. Maybe you, we haven't got so much time, but to say a few words about that.

Thomas Hübl: Yeah. Coherence means, as we said before, like one of the major pandemic trauma symptoms is that the mind, emotions and the body do not speak the same energy or the same information.

And so in my internal fragmentation, I will send out fragmented information as my communication. And that has a probability to create the fragmented response back if my environment is not aware of it and can host me in my fragmentation. That's how reactive patterns happen between people.

So, for example, often when children trigger their parents, then they trigger a fragmented part of the parental fragmentation, and then the parent overreacts. And as I said before, we are not talking about the abusive situation, it's even enough that I sometimes feel short and I say, not now. Instead of why did I say that? I can include my child or when my child comes and says, "Papa I'm scared" and I say "you don't have to be scared." Like you don't have to be scared instead of, "oh, I feel you're scared, so come to me and let's have a look at it". Creates emotional resonance, leadership and creates a whole other intimacy. But if the father or the mother is not, is too busy internally, so then we say 'it's okay, it's okay'. But then the child sits with fear because the child is already scared, don't tell me "don't be scared" when I'm already scared, it doesn't help me. And these are small things, but they are big things.

And coherence is that I grow that I can ground and for children it's very important I can ground my experience again and again back within my body. I can come through stress, into relaxation, through stress, into relaxation. And this creates in myself, I can be active, I can also work very hard for three months, and work 15 or 16 hours a day but I know when I go to sleep, I can regulate my nervous system to have a regenerative sleep.

But if I'm chronically stressed, I cannot do that, my sleep will hit the edge of my chronic stress pattern and I will not feel recharged, even if I sleep a lot. And so debt regulation is part of coherence so that my mind, my emotions and my body can speak one language, and

coherence spreads. Same as fragmentation has a tendency to spread and involve other people in patterns.

Coherence does the same or coherence we can also call presence, when I'm coherent I'm also present. So I'm listening to you and I'm fully with you. My body can feel your body, my emotions feel your emotions, my mind listens to your mind. And there is an alive conversation between us with a data connection and coherence means that, that's pretty good.

Incoherence means it's kind of we hit the edge of the communication capacity. And so in the restoration process, coherence is a healing factor, because if a team leader or a CEO in an organization, or a doctor, or a psychotherapist, of course, has a high degree of inner coherence, then the whole organization, the office, the clients, everybody happens within that. And that creates a whole different environment than when politicians or leaders are very fragmented and polarized, it shows in the system. And we see it around the world in some areas, how fragmented interiors create split societies, we see the effect of leadership and the response of the field, so to speak.

Alex Howard: Thomas I'm mindful of time. There's many more questions I'd like to ask, but I think we need to call that an end.

People that want to find out more about you and your work, what's the best way for them to do that?

Thomas Hübl: Yeah. One way is thomashuebl.com. Another one is pocketproject.org that's our collective trauma initiative, where in fact, right now during this pandemic crisis, we also have set up a nonprofit support system, a collective trauma prevention system. Because now we are in it a new potential collective trauma reactivating old collective trauma.

So I've set up free online calls with many trained facilitators and it's corona.pocketproject.org and or pocketproject.org is the main website of our organization.

And then of course, there are many, many online classes on these two websites, I think everything else is reachable.

Alex Howard: Fantastic, Thomas, thank you so much for your time today, I really appreciate it. It's been a fascinating contribution.

Thomas Hübl: Thank you Alex.