



Conscious Life presents

TRAUMA SUPER CONFERENCE

Acupuncture and hypnotherapy for mind-body healing

Guest: Mona Chopra

Disclaimer: The contents of this interview are for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This interview does not provide medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical or psychological condition.

[00:00:10] Jaia Bristow

Hello, and welcome back to this Trauma Super Conference. My name is Jaia Bristow and I'm one of your hosts. And today I am very, very delighted to be welcoming Mona Chopra. Welcome, Mona.

Mona Chopra

Thank you. Thanks so much for having me here.

Jaia Bristow

Thank you for joining us today. So, Mona, you're an acupuncturist, a hypnotherapist, and a meditation instructor, as well as the co-founder of One Circle Wellness Center, a holistic care center in New York. You've been immersed in the field of mind body medicine for over two decades now, addressing the root and branches of suffering and helping people connect with their inner resources in order to support healing and growth. So maybe you want to start by telling us a little bit more about your work and how it connects to trauma.

Mona Chopra

Yeah, thank you. Well, without going too much into it, I would just say the word trauma, I mean, you on this conference have experts and people who speak about it, are going to speak about it much more thoroughly and intelligibly than I will, but just to say it has come to mean so many different things in different ways.

But I guess on some basic level, what I would say is that there is a disruption in the flow of energy in a system when there is something that the organism experiences as trauma. There is some kind of disruption in a fluid flow of energy. And the different modalities that I work in, particularly acupuncture, are designed to re-establish a healthy flow of energy.

And of course, energy is also one of these words that's come to mean lots of different things and it just gets thrown around, but it actually is everything. So, energy is the physical body. Energy is the physiological processes of the body. Our thoughts are energy. Our, what we call, emotions are energy. And so as an energy practitioner, as an acupuncturist, it's really seeing, one, doing an assessment to see, in this particular person, where does it seem like there are blocks?

[00:02:38]

Where might there be a pattern that is sort of caught in a loop? And how can we work to adjust the energy field in this system to bring about a healthier flow? I also, as you mentioned, do hypnotherapy, and I also practice Emotional Freedom Technique, or tapping, and those are additional ways that one can work with people who are suffering as a result of, I guess in some way we all have certain kinds of trauma.

That's one idea. We've all experienced trauma. And then I would say there's like gradations or levels or different types of trauma. And what we do know is it's not something that typically just in a very regular, ordinary way, chatting about or speaking about, necessarily resolves. Hypnotherapy, Emotional Freedom Technique, are also working on an unconscious level, or addressing the level of the subconscious.

Tapping also works with the energy of the body and using the meridians. That's a little bit about it. In some way, Chinese medicine, it's a full system of medicine. So it's saying, someone comes to you in some way, there's some kind of suffering or there's some way in which there's an off-ness, how can you adjust it? And it really has tools to address those disruptions, all kinds of disruptions. And particularly with trauma, it is often best in combination with other modalities, maybe there's some other therapies along with it, not as a standalone.

Jaia Bristow

I love that. I really find it interesting that, as you say, it's all energy work and your definition of energy, energy is kind of everything. And trauma can be like that when energy isn't flowing in some ways and so that your energy work using different modalities, whether it's acupuncture or tapping or hypnotherapy, to help bring back the flow where things are getting stuck.

I've got this image of a little stream or something and then things getting a bit stuck in the stream and that you're sort of helping clear that and allowing things to flow more naturally. And I also appreciate that, like you were saying, trauma can mean different things to different people and there's bigger and smaller traumas which will create, I guess, bigger or smaller blocks in this little stream that I've imagined aflow.

And so I'm curious about do you have different modalities you use depending on the, I don't know if blockage is the right word, yeah, how do you choose what to use for each individual?

Mona Chopra

Yeah, it's such a good question. Well, if I can just, I guess, respond to your question and go a little back here to say some people will come and say I am experiencing PTSD or I've had this trauma and on my intake form, there is a question, have you experienced trauma in your life? And it is always very interesting how people respond to it, or don't. People are like no. And then they're telling me their story and it's like, parents were divorced, car accident, assault survivor.

And then others are like, yes, whatever, something that others might deem as something small. So I guess what I want to say is that people are not necessarily coming and saying, oh, I'm coming for treatment because I have trauma. They may say ever since I was a kid I just have a bad stomach, I just have a sensitive belly. And, of course, that can be due to many causes.

[00:06:55]

And one of the ideas in Chinese medicine is usually there are multiple etiologies to any given... It's like infinite causes and conditions, as they say in Buddhism. But, sometimes, so they may come and present with this is my presenting issue. And then in the unwinding and unfolding, one, of their story with the words they say, but, two, what I can find with the tools of assessment that I would use.

Which include things like pulse diagnosis, checking the pulse, which include palpating the meridians of the body, which include listening to their story and how they're telling it and their body language as they tell it, and where there are pauses, et cetera. All of that may reveal that there could be something we could call trauma.

And then the next question of how best to address it. So sometimes people do come specifically like, I want acupuncture, I'm not interested in hypnosis, for example. So it's like, okay, that's the modality. That can be a way in. But if in my head I'm thinking this person would really benefit from some hypnotherapy, I may suggest it to them.

Sometimes people will come, they've done lots of talk therapy, they have lots of understanding, there's analysis, there's desire, but it's like, still, I get scared every time I am in an intimate relationship and it starts to get serious. I know this is due to this issue, and I know this and I know that, and I see this a lot and yet still.

So, that's where sometimes a modality where you can go, in some way, I think about that working in acupuncture is like working with, on some level, it's like working with the unconscious. It's working, the body as the unconscious mind in a way. And so it can be a way like, okay, you've done this sort of talking aspect and have a certain type of understanding, but the body still hasn't caught up, you could say, with where your understanding is.

How can we bring the body along with where this is? So that might be one way. Sometimes, for example, I had a patient whose mom didn't live in New York but was just coming to visit. And my patient had good results coming for acupuncture. So she said, I'd love to bring my mom for an acupuncture treatment. And it's acupuncture, it's not so much like a one time modality, but maybe she has lots of pain and one treatment can do a lot.

So I said, what is going on? She said she has a fear of elevators. So in that case, I suggested to her, I actually think hypnotherapy is going to be the more effective modality to work with, with that case. Because one acupuncture treatment, I'm not so sure what it's going to do. Let's go a little bit more, while it's unconscious, direct using hypnotherapy to be like, let's address this fear.

One of the things that's really wonderful about acupuncture is, okay, so I gave the example of someone who's done lots of psychotherapy, that kind of work, and then there are some who are not inclined in that way or who just aren't inclined in that way, who maybe there's resistance, maybe, whatever. That's not the culture they're accustomed to. That's just not their thing.

Acupuncture is a wonderful way in, and sometimes it opens things up. Like someone, for example, years ago, he'd come for a shoulder injury. And he didn't really want to talk about much else, but we were working with the shoulder injury. And then in the course of time with the acupuncture treatment, I believe he began to share about issues he was having in his relationship.

[00:11:20]

And I still remember because it's not always so clearly stated, he said, I came for my shoulder, but I think I really came to open my heart. And there was just a way in which acupuncture was a gateway to being able to open things up. And then maybe, I don't know if he did, but maybe he would then be more open to, like, oh, maybe there is something to talk a psychotherapist about or address in some other ways that he wasn't really... Because it's all part of it, right? If there are blocks, they are blocks. So that's where it's part of the pattern. It can be part of the pattern.

Jaia Bristow

Absolutely. And I think it's really interesting, right, because you've got this, on the one hand, acupuncture, which is like working with energy, but very much in the physical body, working with meridians, working with symptoms, like you say, people will come and it doesn't need to be like, you don't need to label it trauma or not trauma. You don't even need to label it.

I saw my acupuncturist the other day, and I was like, I just had COVID. And then I saw her a couple of weeks later, and I just had the flu after COVID. So I've had it all recently. And she was like, to her, it didn't really matter whether it was COVID or the flu or something else. She was like, what are your symptoms? I need to know your symptoms. Did you have a cough? Do you have a sore throat? Do you have hot flushes? Do you have fatigue? Do you have headaches? Do you have body aches?

And those were much more interesting to her to work with because she can put those in the Chinese medicine framework. And that's what I'm hearing you say as well, it's not so much about labeling trauma or not trauma. It's about understanding the symptoms in a framework that makes sense to you and seeing which meridians need working on, where there might be a blockage, that kind of thing.

And then on the other hand, I hear that you have hypnosis. And that that's working very much with the subconscious, so slightly different to working with the physical body, and that there it's useful for fears, and that the two can also go together. So, again, with talk therapy, talk therapy can take you a certain way, and then you realize that you have these patterns, and becoming aware of one's own patterns is definitely the first step in working with them.

But sometimes you have all this awareness and you get a bit stuck, and you don't really know what the next step is. So things like hypnotherapy can be really supportive of that, or acupuncture, or maybe together, and vice versa as well. When you work with the physical body, it can actually open up emotions.

I've had big releases of emotions when I've had acupuncture, where we've been working with something, and suddenly maybe I'll start having physical jolting or shaking as something releases physiologically, or maybe I'll start feeling really sad and want to cry as something releases. Or, most recently, we worked on my lungs and heart after COVID and the flu, and then I came back, and then I had this stuff happen on the more psychological level around relationships and heart.

And I was curious, maybe that was because of the work I've done with my acupuncturist, or maybe it's because of the ancestral healing work I'm doing, or who knows? And in some ways it doesn't matter because all these modalities can work together. And I love that. And I know that you use acupuncture and hypnotherapy together often to do something called hypnopuncture, which I'm fascinated by. So tell me more about that.

[00:14:57] Mona Chopra

Okay, thank you. Yeah, thank you for sharing your experience. And that's exactly right. I mean, you just said it exactly how it is, which is we do all this translation, of course, because we live in this modern world where more of the common knowledge is the biomedical paradigm. So people will say migraine and COVID, whatever, but, exactly right, if we really stay in the Chinese medicine language, then those labels are not so important.

We're taking the information to understand, because ten people with COVID are going to have ten different patterns. Ten people with migraines, it's going to be different. It's not the migraine point. I wish, I mean, I don't wish, but to make it easier, in a way.

So hypnotherapy and acupuncture, both modalities that I work with, that I have found to be just profoundly, profoundly, life-changingly healing for me, for myself as a patient, as a person, and that I do in my work. And so I had been practicing as an acupuncturist for a while before I studied hypnotherapy. And as I was actually, even in my training, I began to feel like, wow, I think acupuncture itself is a very powerful induction.

In hypnotherapy, we talk about the induction process of just helping to bring a person into this state of, actually, deeper awareness. And I began to explore and play with bringing the two together. So I was mentioning earlier, sometimes people, let's say, they're not so inclined to talk about things, but they'll come and get acupuncture and maybe there'll be some emotional release that will happen as a result. So that's sort of one way.

And others are really interested, like, what are you working on and what are we doing? And one of the things that acupuncture and Chinese medicine can provide is a whole other language for understanding one's experience that I find, and I have seen in others, it can be incredibly empowering. Rather than thinking, like, I guess I'm just a person who is always so stressed and anxious. What if one were to understand that there's an insufficiency of the yin energy, and what's needed is to nourish that yin.

And there are reasons for that yin depletion, and we may know and be able to identify some of them. Wow, you had high fevers as a child, or, oh, you were put in an incubator soon after birth, or you had some childhood trauma, et cetera, et cetera. And some we might not be able to know the why.

But being able to think about, ah, so somewhere, for example, maybe in those first seven years of life, there was some sense of safety that was taken away, there was some nourishment that wasn't received and some feeling of secure, safe attachment, adequate nourishment, that was not received.

And there are channels that work with these energetics. So, in Chinese medicine, we have what are called primary channels. And then we have this set of channels known as extraordinary vessels or constitutional vessels. And one of those, which we call the Sea or the Ocean of Yin, which is sort of like it feeds the rivers that are the primary channels, but these are more like reservoirs, and the energy is deeper in the body.

And so, again, if someone would say, ever since I was a kid, I just didn't sleep well, it's like, okay, what does a young child have insomnia for? What's that about? And so sometimes bringing it to

your question, sometimes telling, speaking with the patient about we're working with this channel known as the Sea of Yin, this is where the trajectory runs. It develops early in life.

[00:19:28]

And if there were any disruptions in its development as a result of maybe a childhood trauma, again, it could be something during even childbirth, definitely not necessarily in the realm that someone has a conscious awareness of, that that itself can be part of a hypnotherapy process. Understanding what we're actually doing as we're working with the energy, it can take one out of just feeling victimized by one's circumstances, or just labeled as I guess I'm just depressed, I have depression, or I am depressed, but actually being able to see this is what we're doing.

So the names of the points, many of them are incredibly poetic and very evocative. The center of the altar, inner gate. There is a point on the foot, and it blows my mind, the Chinese name translates to, it's all rather patriarchal, of course, but anyway, it translates to grandfather, grandson. So I like to say grandparent, grandchild.

And it is on a channel that relates to in utero, that really relates to preexisting the differentiation into yin and yang, that sort of stem cell material, that undifferentiated material is this channel we call the Chong or the Sea of Blood, which precedes the sea of Yin and the sea of Yang.

To tell a patient that while, you know, that itself begins what I think of as a hypnotherapy process. Because the truth is we're walking around in hypnotic trances all the time. Anxiety is such a powerful trance. It is powerful. It is focused. It's all I can think about. And these are, maybe we will say negative, or unhelpful. They keep us kind of trapped and tight and contracted.

And there can be other ideas and other trance states that are actually more reflective, I would say, of something truer and that can bring a kind of liberation. And sometimes it is through, like, the portal is a point and is the name of a point. So the language itself of Chinese medicine, I think, it provided me with a lot, in terms of my hypnotherapy. So even sometimes when a patient just wants to come for hypnosis, I will find myself wanting to use some of this language when I hear their story.

And it becomes so clear to me, this might be a block in this channel and I wonder if I just tell them about it, what that might shift. I often think about how, I don't know if you're familiar with or the listeners are familiar with this book by John Sarno on back pain. One of his books was called *Healing Back Pain*. And many years ago he wrote it, it was pretty revolutionary at the time, where he was arguing that there's emotional ideology to much of back pain.

And there's many people who just read the book. They just read the book and they do not have back pain anymore, so just actually having this idea. Okay, so bringing it back, further back, to your question. So sometimes when people are coming explicitly for hypnopuncture, what I'm doing is I'll do my intake from Chinese medicine so I have a sense of where I sense what's needed from that paradigm.

And I'm also listening with the ear of a hypnotherapist for maybe parts of the story that may need addressing. Maybe there's words that there's a charge to that I can observe. So then I would have the person rest on the treatment table and already begin a process of telling them what they're going to do and sort of weaving the acupuncture needling process, unless a person is quite anxious about that, in which case we just sort of do it and get it over with and then move on to it.

[00:23:49]

But actually, it's like letting people know we're entering into this place. We're going into a portal here, and we're going in through this passage to enter another place. And in that place, then I might use some of these hypnotherapy processes where maybe what's needed is to go back to a time, a significant event, sometimes that's needed. Or to go back before some event in which the person is saying, ever since then, I've just never been the same. Something's been different.

So maybe we go back and just really get them to associate into what was that state before things changed, before you felt this sort of cloud come upon you, or this anxiety or whatever. That's just an example. Or maybe they have a specific thing. It's like my first grade teacher made fun of me when I stood up to speak. So then maybe, if it feels safe and comfortable, we go back to that event in this established field of safety.

And because acupuncture can just regulate the nervous system, I mean, that's not the traditional Chinese medicine language, but we know this. It has this effect of bringing people more into a parasympathetic state in which healing happens. If you can be in that state, and then, okay, can we look at this thing? It can be a much safer place and a much more conducive state in which to work through some of these things, because now the body is not necessarily getting triggered.

Jaia Bristow

Absolutely. And that makes a lot of sense. We were talking earlier about how in Chinese medicine and acupuncture, you take the symptoms rather than the label and you apply that to this framework that already exists, this beautiful language, which is so poetic despite being very patriarchal and hierarchical but if we forget that side, this beautiful language which also embodies a lot of natural elements and nature inside, and so finding that flow and that balance.

And so then using the two. This is what I love about what you're sharing and about acupuncture in general, is that whilst it starts with symptoms, it goes back to the roots. It's not like a lot of Western medicine where they also look at symptoms rather than the root, but they look at symptoms, put a plaster on the symptom and get you out the door. And that's just the way it works, because that's the way it works.

So whereas this is taking a more holistic approach, but it's still starting with the symptoms. And then when you bring in the hypnotherapy along with the acupuncture, I can really hear how the two go hand in hand, because you can use the same framework and then bring the hypnotherapy in. And as you say, when you're talking about the nervous system and the parasympathetic, yes, the parasympathetic system, we know that's how trauma works.

It dysregulates the nervous system and then it's when the nervous system hasn't had a chance to re-regulate that we have these moments that are frozen in time and in our bodies and that's frozen energy. So when we're working with energy, working with the nervous system and relaxing it, and then using the subconscious to feel our body in this relaxed state, and you take our mind back to that moment, but re-regulate the nervous system and keep the nervous system regulated whilst we travel back to this time where it was all jarred, that makes a lot of sense to me why it would work so well, why you'd have acupuncture and hypnotherapy together to do this kind of trauma healing work. So I think that's fascinating and thank you for sharing.

[00:27:53] Mona Chopra

Thank you. Thank you. That sum up was beautiful. Thank you, really. And I would also add it's receiving acupuncture and using hypnotherapy to anchor in resources that are beneficial. It's also like a very potent time and place to...

Jaia Bristow

Could you say more about anchoring in resources?

Mona Chopra

Sure. There's a saying in Chinese medicine. Where the mind goes, the chi follows. So when you're resting there getting acupuncture, it's a conducive time to, for example, call forth, let's say someone is struggling with feelings of a lack of confidence and really mired and really struggling with lack of self worth or just anxiety, connected with all of this, but they can think about something in their life where they feel really at ease, where they feel confident, where they feel like, yeah, I got this. Oh, that's easy.

So we could kind of bring them into that state, go into that memory and then rehearse that again and again and again, really get them to associate into that state. We'll call it a resource state where they do feel confident. Maybe it's confidence in making their chai. Who cares? It doesn't matter. The bodily experience is like, I got that. Someone else will be very anxious, is it cardamom, does it matter how much?

But the body knows that state of ease. I'm just giving a small example. So you can actually then get them to anchor. Anchor is to kind of bring in, really feel it. And acupuncture is like a journey is happening during an acupuncture treatment, old patterns are being loosened up, they're being disrupted, and there's new possibilities for energy to flow differently. So if in that state, we can bring in some bodily feeling and also memory of a time when a person felt, whatever it might be, at ease, relaxed, confident. So that's one way. Another way when I say anchoring...

Jaia Bristow

Before you say the other way just so that I understand, I just want to make sure I'm clear. So you, for example, you're working with a patient and you get them to, if it's someone with anxiety or with lack of confidence or something, so you get them to remember a state or a situation where they feel very confident. So, like, making chai. Loving the cultural references, by the way.

So for example, making chai or cooking or doing something where they do feel confident, and so that they can really feel into that and feel that in their body. And then you guide them and you get them to stay connected to that feeling. And you guide them to a memory or to a feeling where they're not confident, or you just get them to cultivate that confidence from that moment? That's the bit I'm unclear on.

Mona Chopra

Beautiful question. Both. You can do either. So sometimes it's just, okay, but ultimately you want to make sure that it translates because it could just stay there. And often a person, often, so often, if we're like, I'm terrible at boundaries, I can never say no. Typically, I've had experiences, of course I

say no, it would be impossible to live through life if I never had a single boundary. It's not even possible, but we typically don't think of it that way.

[00:31:50]

So that's just a little side note point that it's like even getting people to see, that is confidence. If you can just make your cup of tea and you feel comfortable making it. But then, yes, absolutely, what you're saying is so ideally, then, once you sort of associate into the state, we go over it again and again, kind of almost accentuate it, and then, again, this is all based on a person feeling safe to go into any particular memory, but let's just assume they are.

So then with that feeling of, like, feeling resourced, feeling what the body feels like, feeling light, feeling the chest open, feeling like no big whoop, feeling like you can notice the sun outside as you make your tea because it's like this is no big deal. Then you might have them walk into that scenario where they go to give the speech or whatever.

Jaia Bristow

And feeling it. And then if they're going into, again, I hear it's really important to stay safe, to not be retraumatized and to only go as far as one is able to. And that at any point, we can come back to the now, to the present, or go back to the I'm making my tea, and how that feels and that confidence then.

Mona Chopra

That's right.

Jaia Bristow

Yeah. I guess that was it. It wasn't really a question.

Mona Chopra

Yeah. What was I going to say here?

Jaia Bristow

I don't know, but you were saying there was a second way of anchoring as well, which you were going to share.

Mona Chopra

Yes. What was I going to say? This isn't what I was going to say, but also adding that so, of course, one can do this whole anchoring process without acupuncture. It's something that's done in hypnotherapy. A common tool is anchoring and in which case you might then have a person, let's say, they are in their resource state, feeling calm or feeling equanimous or feeling confident or feeling what have you.

You might then say, and just take your thumb and index finger, take a deep breath in. As you exhale, feel yourself anchoring this feeling, letting it come into your body, letting the cells of your

body listen deeply and feel it. And know that when you are outside and you're taking the subway and you notice that there may be some of these uncomfortable feelings arising, all you have to do is take your thumb and index finger, take a breath and your body will remember.

[00:34:16]

So this is a kind of anchoring tool and bringing the acupuncture in, sometimes what I would say is, and your body knows that, and then I'll just tap on where there's a point and say and all you might need to do is to simply remember this point and the whole body will remember this pattern, this way of being. You can simply bring yourself into it by simply tap, tap.

Jaia Bristow

This is once again how hypnotherapy, acupuncture, and even tapping, can all work together. And I see that the bit that I had not quite got was how the acupuncture can then help really anchor into the body and sort of become familiar and keep like the word anchor, I guess, integrate into the body those feelings. I think that's the bit I had missed.

I got the okay, we go, we make our cup of chai, we feel the confidence in our body. I think I missed the part of, oh, and then the acupuncture helps that. And then if you're not doing acupuncture and you're just doing hypnotherapy, you can do these points like you've just described, which is fantastic. I definitely want to try that out.

Mona Chopra

Yeah. I think part of it is just simply that when one is receiving acupuncture, again, it is this idea, you're moving energy, it's a moving thing. So whatever happens in that, whatever we bring into the mind field in that time, there's so much more possibility, I think, than just sort of sitting or just laying there without that.

So in that sense, it's like the stream was a little clogged in its pattern, and the water flows in this very particular way where those blocks are. And now we're, with the acupuncture, taking out, removing some of these rocks. So now, what can you do when the water is flowing here? With a certain word, we know words move energy. A word can be the most powerful needle.

One of my acupuncture teachers used to say this sentence, she would say, never put a needle in a patient until you've already done the treatment. And I think her thing was your words, all of it, the intake, it's all part of it. It's all part of it. Words can be powerful, acupuncture needles. You know.

Jaia Bristow

It's fascinating. And I love that there's words that can be, like you say, acupuncture needles. And again, it makes sense that the hypnotherapy and acupuncture would go so well together when you're talking in this way that there's these reminders to your body, whether they're the pressure points, whether they're words, whether they're needles.

There's these reminders to your body of how to activate the parasympathetic system, how to relax the nervous system, how to remember a sense of calm or confidence or whatever is needed. And this is a totally different modality, but it's coming to me, so I just want to bring it in. I did some ayahuasca ceremonies earlier this year and I had these incredible visions and understandings.

[00:37:25]

And then I had this thing where it was don't forget. And I could feel this point on my forehead. And whenever I'm going through something now, I feel like that's something I can do, right, where I just sort of press this point on my forehead and I take a breath and it's like I can not just remember, but bring back, to some degree, the state I was in and what I was working on at the time.

And there's these other things that I've talked about before. I have on my wall, for example, I can see it now, where it says, it's just TV. And that reminds me of a state of when I used to work in TV production and things would get overwhelming and stressful and that was our catchphrase, which would just bring everyone's energy down.

So those are just two examples from my life of either a point, physical point, or words, which just really help me when I feel myself getting in this activated, triggered state of stress or overwhelm or misunderstanding or confusion that can just immediately bring me back down. And that's using different modalities.

One was just literally working in a busy office, but having a great boss who used to every time just be like, calm down, it's just TV. And as soon as we'd say that, we'd all take a break and have a cup of tea. One was taking Ayahuasca and having these insane visions. And you're talking about hypnotherapy and about acupuncture and about tapping, and I really see that we have these different modalities and how they can support us to, yeah, these points to really anchor it in our bodies.

And so that when we get too caught up in our minds and, again, I know you're a meditation mindfulness instructor, so this plays as well, when we get caught up in our minds, it can be hard sometimes to come back down into our bodies. We learn through practice. But to have these points, to have these words, to have these phrases, to help us connect back into a different state sounds incredible and really useful.

Mona Chopra

Yeah, beautiful. Thank you for sharing your experiences. And I love that you brought those two contrasting ones, the Ayahuasca journey and you're working in television. And I feel like something you said also hit such a key point that I do feel is absolutely essential and maybe it's obvious, but worth underlining, when you said, oh, and maybe just having a great boss. I think with all of it, this thing is happening in a relational field.

And so I think the acupuncture is, and there's research on acupuncture and PTSD, and I didn't go into it all, we know it promotes release of neurotransmitters and endorphins, et cetera, the regulation of the nervous system. Hypnotherapy is similar. But also it's the relational field that can enable so much profound transformation and really freedom from...

Jaia Bristow

In fact, my next interview is with Meg-John Barker, where we're going to be talking about exactly that. So to anyone watching and listening right now who wants to know more about relational trauma and trauma playing out in the relational field, as you say, tune in to that interview. So, Mona,

I'm aware of time. Did you have a second anchoring method that you wanted to share, or was that what we've already talked about?

[00:40:49] Mona Chopra

I think that was whether it's using a gesture or a point, so a person would know they can press a point. I think in terms of anchoring, yeah, I think that's what I was... I'm just going to take a moment to see if there is something else I wanted to say.

Jaia Bristow

So whilst you take a moment, I'll just remind everyone what we've covered so far. So we've covered this idea that acupuncture is working with energy blockages in the body, in the energetical body and the physical body. Hypnotherapy is working with the subconscious. We've seen how the two can go so well together, along with other modalities like tapping, and there are plenty of others as well.

To really bring in the subconscious and the physical, to go back to memories where the blockages were created and bring in either confidence, or to bring it to calm the nervous system in that moment. We've talked about this, about anchoring the resources we need to be able to do that. We've talked about how it's important to be safe, not to be retraumatized. So it's useful to do this kind of work with a professional like you.

And once we've done this work, there are things we can do on our own as well. If we know that there's a point or a gesture or a phrase or a word to really anchor those feelings and call upon those states, call upon those resources that we've cultivated in the moments that we need them, because life can be overwhelming, and it's not always possible when life's overwhelming, to be like, okay, well, I'm going to do half an hour of meditation now.

So to be able to call on those states when we're noticing that we're getting activated is fantastic. Is there anything else you would like to add before we come to an end?

Mona Chopra

I think this is one thing worth mentioning because it is an area where there's been a lot of research is in auricular acupuncture, the ear acupuncture. And one of maybe the most common anchoring techniques actually that I use is placing an ear seed on particular ear points. And there's a particular point which we call Shen Men, another poetic name. It translates to spirit gate and it happens to be on the part of the ear that the auricular branch of the vagus nerve passes through.

So we can needle that point, but then to give people something to take home, we apply a little seed with medical tape and it's something they can press on, even if you don't have the seed you can press on it. And having people know that they can simply press on this point and combining it with hypnosis, it's like maybe when they're doing it in the session there's the images that they call forth, maybe for them what would be calm would be like a vast open sea or maybe, there's bringing all of that together so then when they're just in their life having a struggle, pressing that point also will have those associations.

Aside from physiologically what we know it's doing. That was just I thought important because the ear acupuncture work is so applicable in community settings. It is applicable where people have

had mass traumas and in a large scale where having a one to one very time intensive work may not be possible. People can easily do ear acupuncture and it is done around the world for people who are struggling and it can really bring a lot of relief.

[00:44:33] Jaia Bristow

I love that because I love it for two reasons. One, because it's fantastic that it's so accessible and that it's something that can be done with needles if you're on an acupuncture table, but that can also be done at home afterwards. And I love it because you brought in something that I think is really important. We were talking about feelings and stuff, but for some people it's hard to connect to the felt sense in their body and they work more with images.

So, again, whether you're working with acupuncture or hypnosis or hypnopuncture, that sometimes you can call upon not just necessarily a state but an image that is calming for you. Like you say, whether for some it might be the vast open sea or it might be being under a tree or I don't know what's calming. Each person has their thing, so it might be being in the hubbub of a city if that's what's calming for someone else.

And so I think it's really important to bring that in, that it's not all about just the physical feeling. There's other ways of bringing about calm. So it might be a sense of calm through an image rather than just felt in the body. So thank you for that. Mona, this has been fantastic. Thank you so much for your time today. How can people find out more about you and your work?

Mona Chopra

So I have a website which is www.peopletreewellness.com, and it's spelled people, P-E-O-P-L-E, tree, T-R-E-E, wellness.com. My little play on the pipal, P-I-P-A-L, tree under which the Buddha is said to have gained enlightenment. But on my website, people can find my email and phone number and YouTube channel and can reach out to me that way. And I'm happy to hear from folks who have listened to this and maybe have questions or are looking for resources wherever they live. Yeah, they can feel free.

Jaia Bristow

Brilliant. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed this conversation and it's given me a lot to think about and a lot more avenues to explore.

Mona Chopra

Thank you. Thank you so much.