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# FLASHBACKS

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A flashback is a timeless moment taking one back to where one least wants to go. The body remembers what occurred; the brain is a powerful organ, one we little understand. The flashback represents unfinished business, a choice-less choice, unacceptable solutions, and an attempt to master something you cannot control or handle. The individual having this symptom may be unaware of triggers to flashback(s) such as the noise of a helicopter flying overhead, a loud bang nearby, a smell of a dead animal, a color, or the sound of a foreign language which can lead to suddenly finding oneself in another place. The lack of control and not



being able to trust your body, shattered assumptions ... everything that has been trusted is suddenly gone. The body is paralyzed – in a “frozen state.” This is a dangerous way to live because you can be *called away* to a different place at any time. You may hear the term “dissociate,” which is to be in one place physically but not present emotionally. This is a key symptom in post trauma, a timeless state when you are an involuntary witness to your traumatic past. Flashbacks do not have to control your life. One must take back control. It is crucial to discover triggers to flashbacks or dissociative moments. These “black holes” must be filled. The task is to fill those holes with healthy emotion, with living in the present to your new “normal.”

It will take time to reach a healthy place, to learn what triggers a flashback or dissociative episode although some triggers may become more obvious than others to you, some obvious to those around you. It is important to work at becoming receptive to listening when others may tell you about a trigger they have noticed. It may be hard to hear at first – you may not want to talk about it, but you may appreciate this knowledge when avoiding the trigger leads to greater inner peace and eventual healing. The goal is to hold the memory in your grip, rather than being held in its. You can visit it at will, by choice, rather than in its timetable, so that the memory is “enough,” bearable, rather than “too much.”

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