

Emotional Healing with Freespotting: Rapid Healing Without Talking

Talk/Video Transcript

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By Fiona De Vos

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Freespotting experiences, tips and other practical info, why we have traumas, how to release and heal traumas, how Freespotting works, trauma healing diagram, earthquake break, and more.

Heal emotional traumas, issues and pain rapidly, without talking about them, with Freespotting. Workshop by Fiona De Vos.

We'd like to thank Nico Anastacio, Rizza Estadola and the rest of the Victory Church Community for organizing this event, and Yvette Co of Ginhawa Art Cafe for the beautiful venue and works of art.

What is Freespotting?

Freespotting is a **simple method for healing emotional traumas, issues and pain**. With Freespotting, we can heal traumas **effectively and rapidly**. By healing effectively, we mean not just coping with pain, or controlling or managing the pain, but **removing the pain once and for all**. And by healing rapidly, we mean **processing, releasing and healing traumas in days, hours, even minutes**. That's in contrast to years or a lifetime of therapy, drugs or medications, or distractions.

Also, in Freespoting, there's **no need to talk**. About painful or embarrassing memories or issues, or about anything else, for that matter.

Freespotting is **very simple to learn and do**. You can do it yourself, anywhere and anytime.

Why heal traumas?

When we heal our traumas, we become **calmer, more relaxed, happier and healthier**.

Healing our traumas also gives us freedom. **Freedom from unhelpful negative emotions and painful memories**. And the **freedom to be who we're meant to be and to live the life we're meant to live**.

Also, healing our traumas will lead to **fewer conflicts, less fighting, less violence, and more peace in our world**. As we heal ourselves, we help others heal and we help the world heal.

What do we mean by trauma?

Trauma means wound. Traumas are **wounds caused by painful experiences that overwhelm us**.

Traumas **can be big or small**, and may be caused by various things, such as:

- accidents, rape, crime, war, disasters,
- the death of a loved one, break-up, divorce,
- physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse,

- loss of income, injury, illness,
- hurtful comments, insults, humiliation, rejection, disrespect, failure, and so on.

Traumas **can be caused by a single event**, like a car accident. **Or by repetitive or multiple events**, such as repeated abuse during childhood.

There's also such a thing as **vicarious trauma or indirect trauma**. That is, being traumatized by witnessing or learning about someone else's trauma. For example, when we hear about a friend or family member's suffering or see someone being abused, we may also get traumatized indirectly.

What are the effects of trauma?

The effects of trauma include:

- intense painful emotions, such as anger, fear and sadness,
- irritability, anxiety, depression, avoidance of triggers or reminders of the trauma,
- racing thoughts, paranoia, nightmares, flashbacks, hallucinations and delusions.

Traumas can also cause headaches, nausea, physical pain and even physical illnesses.

Many people experiencing these—anxiety, depression, racing thoughts and so on—may be diagnosed as having a mental illness or a psychiatric disorder. Schizophrenia, ADHD, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and so on.

But what are mental illnesses or psychiatric disorders?

In psychiatry, the current theory is that mental illnesses or psychiatric disorders are caused by chemical imbalance in the brain. However, some psychiatrists say that the chemical imbalance theory is still unproven. That there is no evidence that mental illnesses are caused by chemical imbalance. In any case, if there really is chemical imbalance, what is the cause of the chemical imbalance?

Also, some people, including psychiatrists themselves, say that mental illnesses or psychiatric disorders don't exist. That they are merely labels. What we call mental illnesses or psychiatric disorders are simply **normal expressions of emotional suffering**.

Emotional suffering, intense painful emotions, anxiety, depression, racing thoughts and so on are not illnesses, disorders, diseases or defects. They're not abnormal. On the contrary. These are **normal responses to painful experiences or traumas**.

How do people cope with trauma?

One of the common ways in which we deal with traumas is by **distracting ourselves**. With food, alcohol, smoking, games, social media, and so on. These provide **temporary relief**, but they **do not address the underlying cause of the pain**.

Another way some of us cope with traumas is by **taking psychiatric drugs or medications**. These medications are like pain relievers. Again, they may provide **temporary relief**, but they do not address the underlying cause of the pain. So **the pain keeps coming back**, which means you would have to rely on the drugs for life.

On top of that, these drugs are harmful in the long run. Side effects include increased depression and anxiety, increased suicidal feelings, chronic illness, such as obesity, diabetes, heart attack and kidney failure, and even early death.

Another way we usually deal with trauma is by **talking to a therapist or a friend, or journaling**. Again, these can provide **temporary relief**. But as some of you may have noticed, no matter how many times we repeat the same stories over and over again, **the pain is still there**. Talking or writing about the pain is just a way to cope with it, not a way to remove it.

So how can we remove the pain? To answer this question, we first have to look at how trauma is lodged in our bodies.

How is trauma lodged in our bodies?

When we have a painful or distressing experience, ideally, we respond by **allowing ourselves to feel our emotions fully**. To grieve a loss, feel the pain, and process the experience fully so that we can **release the negative emotions**.

But there are times when we are not able to do that. Sometimes **the experience can be so intense that we are overwhelmed** by it. We may even get disconnected from reality, from our surroundings or from ourselves.

Sometimes we **judge our emotions as wrong or bad**. Sometimes we **suppress them**, just like when we were kids and our parents told us to stop crying. Or we **deny our emotions** because we're ashamed of them, or simply don't know how to deal with them. We say to ourselves, I'm not sad, I'm not envious, I shouldn't be angry, and so on.

Because of these things—overwhelm, and judging, suppressing and denying our emotions—we are **not able to fully process our experience**, and trauma gets lodged in our bodies.

How can we release trauma? How does Freespotting work?

So how can we release trauma? The 13th-century poet Rumi wrote, **the cure for pain is in the pain**. We release trauma by **revisiting the painful memory, but this time, without getting overwhelmed, and without judging, suppressing or denying our emotions**.

To **prevent overwhelm**, we can **focus or concentrate on an external object**. This is our anchor, something stable we can hold on to while processing, something that **grounds us or keeps us connected to the present moment**. When we revisit a memory while concentrating on an external object, it's as though **we're not only inside the memory, but also outside it**. We don't only feel the pain of the memory, we're also able to see the memory from the outside. In Freespotting, the external object we concentrate on can be a finger, a pen, a spot on the wall, or any spot.

And **instead of judging, suppressing or denying our emotions**, we **allow ourselves to totally feel them**. There are **no right or wrong feelings or emotions**. If you feel so much anger that you want to kill someone, that's absolutely OK. **It may not be OK to do that, but it's OK to feel that**.

Now, by revisiting painful memories, we may feel intense pain and that may be unpleasant. It may feel like the pain is going to swallow us. But it won't swallow us. **It's temporary and it will pass**.

It's absolutely OK and it's safe to feel old feelings. Feeling old feelings and knowing that they're old and belong to the past is healing. We're not repeating the traumatic situation, we're only allowing ourselves to fully experience the appropriate response to the traumatic situation.

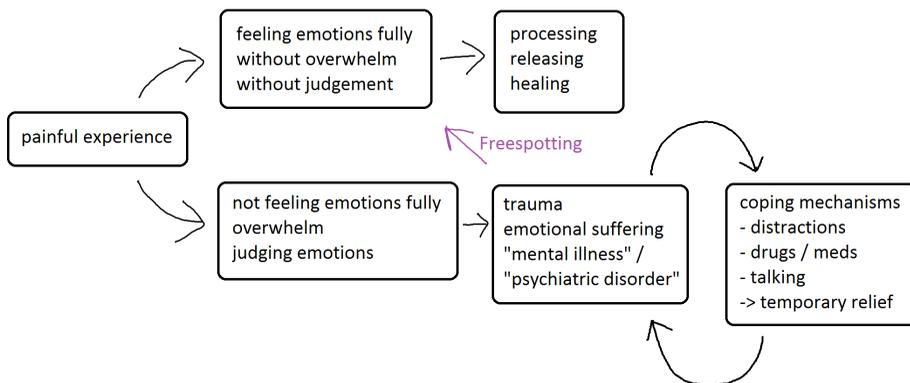
By (1) revisiting our painful memories while (2) focusing on an external object and (3) allowing ourselves to feel our emotions without judging them, we are able to finish processing what was left unprocessed before, release our painful memories and emotions, and finally heal ourselves.

So again, what are the three elements that make Freespotting effective and efficient?

1. Revisiting painful memories.
2. Focusing on an external object, to prevent overwhelm and to stay connected to the present moment, and
3. Allowing ourselves to feel our emotions without judging.

It's the combination of these three things that make Freespotting effective and efficient. So it's not just revisiting painful memories and getting lost in our thoughts. It's not just focusing on an external object, without feeling our emotions fully. It's doing all three together.

Trauma healing diagram



How to do Freespotting?

The steps for doing Freespotting are very simple. Step 1. **Think of something that's bothering you. If necessary, intensify your emotions by imagining the details of the experience.**

Step 2. **Stare at a spot, and allow memories, thoughts and feelings to come up without judging. Also, allow any body sensations or reactions, such as crying, shaking, sighing, and so on, to happen.** These are all normal ways to release trauma.

How do we know it works?

After a Freespotting session, many people **feel calmer, relaxed and lighter.** Some people may feel sleepy or tired. Some may not feel a difference right away, but feel it in the following days. As though something in them has shifted.

The old triggers or trauma reminders don't hurt anymore. The old painful memories aren't painful anymore. The memories themselves aren't erased, but the charge or the sting is gone.

Also, addictions and cravings get less and less, or disappear. And you feel less irritable, less nervous, calmer, more relaxed and happier overall.

Some experiences processing with Freespoting

Once, I forgot my bag somewhere. It contained cash, valuables and important documents. I was so nervous and afraid that the bag would get stolen. It was a very strong kind of fear, I would say excessive and totally out of proportion for the situation. I felt so much tension all over my body, even after I got back where I'd left the bag and found the bag still there, all contents intact and nothing got stolen. Later that day, I was still feeling so bad and tense. So I did Freespoting on the experience.

A lot of memories came up. Like when I was in high school and my wallet got stolen, and along with it, the only letter of my sweetheart at the time, who had recently migrated to the other side of the world. I also remembered when a roommate stole some of my things. When someone stole my wallet while I was on the train. And when I was a kid and a favorite cassette tape of mine went missing. I had left it in my dad's car and somehow I had this feeling that it had ended up in my dad's other family's house.

And then, the next thing that came up while processing was this feeling that my dad got stolen or taken away from me, from our family, by another woman. I finally understood, not just mentally but really deeply understood, why I had such a strong fear of

losing things and people. It's because someone so important in my life was taken away from me when I was a kid.

Also, going back to the bag, I had this strong fear that if we would lose our important documents in it, I would have to do a lot of work replacing them. I was reminded of the tough time we went through after my mom died, when we had to do a lot of paperwork while grieving.

At the time I also had this fear that my mom's assets would all go to my dad and his other family, since my parents weren't officially divorced, divorce being impossible to get in the Philippines. It was a very stressful time, with fear, grief and anger all mixed in.

All these things, and many other things, came up while I was processing. At the end of the session, I felt so light and relieved.

Before this session, I had actually already **processed** some of my abandonment wounds. Not only my dad leaving our family for another woman, and my mom's death, but also **things I had no memory of**, like my dad going abroad to work when I was two or three years old. Also, **things that I had long forgotten**, like my best friend moving to a different province, and the deaths of an aunt, as well as my beloved pets.

And apart from obvious traumas, like the deaths of loved ones, I've **also processed less obvious traumas**, like the pain of being compared and judged, which is very common in our society due in part to our schooling system. But because we're so used to it, we don't realize that it actually affects us.

Another thing I've experienced is **freespotting on a person I wanted to avoid**. The first time I freespotted on him, feelings of

being disrespected came up. I was reminded of times when I felt disrespected by this person as well as by other people at other times. But even after that session, I still wanted to avoid this person.

During my second freespotting session on him, feelings of being left out came up. Again, I was reminded of times when I felt left out or ignored by this person, as well as by other people. After this session, I already felt better about seeing this person, but still not totally OK with it.

So I did another round of freespotting. And this time, feelings of being judged came up. And again, I was reminded not only of the times when I felt judged by this person, but also by other people—family, friends, teachers, classmates, and so on. This illustrates that **when we freespot a person or a thing, different layers or aspects of our traumas may come up at different times.**

Another thing I and some other people have observed is that **when you do freespotting on a person**, say, someone who pushes your buttons, **this person's behavior towards you changes.** This shows that we really are connected in ways we may not be aware of.

I've also processed hurtful comments from family, friends and classmates, being humiliated, being hit with a belt when I was a kid, being punched, feelings of not being good enough, a serious illness, and so on. These are just some of my experiences while processing.

Your own processing will be unique to you. You may process **big traumas, small traumas, obvious traumas, less obvious traumas, simple traumas, multi-layered traumas, traumas from a long time ago, recent traumas.** You may remember

things you've long forgotten, things you have no memory of. You may cry, shake, sigh or feel tension.

Whatever happens, remember that it's OK to feel whatever you're feeling. You're only allowing yourself to experience normal responses to painful situations that belong to the past.

When to do Freespotting

You can do Freespotting **anytime, whenever you feel like it.**

You can also do it **whenever you feel triggered by someone or something. Whenever you feel intense emotions, such as anger, fear or annoyance, or whenever you feel stressed.**

You can also do Freespotting **whenever you have strong cravings.** For food, alcohol, smoking, games, social media, pornography, and so on. Usually, addictions are a way for us to avoid our feelings.

Also, **if you're feeling numb or you can't remember traumatic experiences** even when you're trying to, you can simply **wait until the next time you get triggered or have a craving**, and do Freespotting then. Or you can simply do Freespotting on **things that are bothering you right now**, as they may be connected to deeper issues.

How long it takes to heal trauma

Single-event traumas can usually be processed, released and healed in less time than repetitive or multiple traumas. For example, trauma relating to a car accident can be processed in minutes, whereas repeated abuse will need more time.

Give yourself all the time you need. This will be different for different people. But in the beginning, you might want to give yourself at least 30 minutes per session. And there's no time limit. **Just listen to your body and trust yourself.**

Where to do Freespottting

You can do Freespottting **anywhere**. Whenever you feel bad, you can allow yourself to totally feel what you're feeling while staring at any spot. For example, if you're feeling stressed or triggered at work or in school, you can stare at a spot on the wall.

If you want to be discrete about it, you can hold up a book and pretend you're reading, and process while looking at a period or a dot on a letter *i* in the book.

And of course, doing Freespottting **in private may allow you to feel and release your emotions more comfortably**. So you can process at home. Or if you're in a public place, you can go to the bathroom and process there.

Some Freespottting tips

Be gentle and patient with yourself.

If you lose concentration, that's OK. Just go back to the spot. We improve concentration by practicing concentration. You'll get better at it the more you do it.

Trust God or your concept of the Divine. Trust yourself and your healing process. Trust that things will be processed and released at the right time.

Why the name Freespotting?

The name Freespotting was inspired by a related method, called **Brainspotting**. Brainspotting was developed by Dr. David Grand, a psychotherapist based in New York.

The main difference between Freespotting and Brainspotting is that Freespotting sticks to the three elements for healing trauma, that is, revisiting painful memories, focusing on an external object, and allowing ourselves to feel our emotions without judging. Whereas Brainspotting adds other things to these three elements, and has many variations and recommended practices. For example, in Brainspotting, you look for a spot where you feel tension the most, or where you feel calmness or groundedness the most.

Based on my experience and research, we can do without these things, and **keep the process very simple**.

We call Freespotting Freespotting because:

- We're **free to choose any spot**. This makes it **simpler and easier to do anywhere and anytime**.
- It's **free of charge**. This **makes healing accessible to anyone**, regardless of financial capability.
- We're **free to do it ourselves**. Instead of relying on experts, we **place the power of healing into our own hands**. Taking responsibility for our own healing is empowering.
- FREE can also stand for **Focusing while Releasing Emotions Etc**, where Etc stands for painful memories, negative beliefs, negative energies, and so on.

- And of course, free stands for the **freedom we'll enjoy when we heal ourselves**. The freedom to be who we're meant to be and to live the life we're meant to live.

Freespotting session

So now, we'll have a Freespotting session. I will first guide you through the steps and then you can process on your own for about 20 minutes.

Before we start, I'd like to ask everyone to please not look around during the Freespotting session. Even though we're in a shared space, we can do our best to respect each other's privacy.

I usually start with a short prayer. Feel free to do the same, or to meditate, or have a moment of silence.

So we will now start. **Step 1. Think of something that's bothering you.** It could be a **painful or uncomfortable or embarrassing memory, experience or situation**. It could be an annoying person. Or negative beliefs like I'm not good enough, nobody loves me, or they don't respect me. Or it could be a life-threatening situation like a car accident.

If your emotions are not intense enough, imagine the details of the experience. What happened? What did you see, hear or feel? What did someone do to you? What did someone say to you? How did you feel the moment you knew something bad was about to happen?

Step 2. Stare at a spot—for example, the tip of your finger or pen—**and allow memories, thoughts and feelings to come up without judging.** Avoid judging yourself or your thoughts and feelings as bad or wrong. **Allow yourself to totally feel**

your emotions. Don't suppress or deny them. It's OK to feel whatever you're feeling.

Other memories, thoughts and feelings may come up. Just remember to **keep focusing on the spot.**

When your emotions are no longer intense and no other memories or thoughts come up, you can stop. Or, if you want to process more memories, repeat Steps 1 and 2. Think of other things that are bothering you, intensify your emotions if necessary, keep staring at the spot, and allow memories, thoughts and feelings to come up without judging.

When you're done, you can simply pray, meditate, sit in silence, write, or do anything that won't distract others who are still processing.

[20-minute processing]

Now that the 20 minutes are over, let's close our eyes. Relax. And ask to feel the deepest, purest divine love.

[Q&A, discussion]

Thank you ♥

Love Joy Peace