

# Episode\_28\_Spectrum\_of\_Trigger\_Types

Sun, Aug 13, 2023 12:11PM 24:46

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

triggers, husband, feel, recovery, lord, spectrum, tap, conversation, starting, emotions, helped, hope, boundary, wounds, partner, pam, moments, typically, disagreement, body

## SPEAKERS

Pam B., Lyschel, Bonny

---

- P** Pam B. 00:03  
Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace.
- L** Lyschel 00:06  
And I'm Michele Burkett with hope, redefine.
- B** Bonny 00:08  
And I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us. Welcome back to another episode of hope for wives. Today, we are continuing our discussion around triggers.
- P** Pam B. 00:25  
So ladies, there
- B** Bonny 00:26  
is I think what I've heard us talk about is a spectrum of trigger types. And now in Episode 11, we were very specific that triggers typically our physical, big time triggers, right AFTER D DAY typically enact our threat response, and so we feel it more viscerally in our body. But But what I'm hearing is there is a spectrum of triggers. And I'd like to talk about that what are the spectrum of triggers, our listeners could experience?
- L** Lyschel 00:56  
I think the word spectrum is the word that helps all of us normalize our different experiences. I

I think the word spectrum is the word that helps all of us normalize our different experiences. I run, I run group online groups, there are moments where someone might be in the group or in an individual coaching session. And as they're replaying or retelling a story, they are feeling some of the similar feelings because they're re iterating. The stories they're becoming triggered. But is it like triggered like, they're, they're so overwhelmed by their experience, that they're a puddle on the floor? No, it's not right, it's not to that level, I would say that's a 10. She's probably sitting more at like a one or two. But the interesting thing is, is that oftentimes, we don't notice those we don't we're not attuned to the one or twos, right, the lower caliber things that set us off a little bit. Case in point, sorry, I'm full of personal examples, because clearly, I've figured out, I got a lot of triggers, I get really triggered when my world feels chaotic, and then I walk in my home, and my house is destroyed. And I have a lot of people in my house who helped me with the destruction, right. And so, and at first, it's very subtle, it's a very small trigger, and then it goes unattended to, eventually it will feel like a 10. So it starts probably at a two, and it will escalate over a course of time, I think that it's important for us to recognize that there is a spectrum, if I can catch that trigger at a two, I'm going to have a different success rate with it, versus once it gets to attend. And suddenly, I'm explosive, I'm yelling, I'm throwing stuff in a trash bag that was never intended to be thrown away, because everyone's pigs and we have nothing nice, right? Like I go to that space. And so I think it is important for us to be able to see that there is this spectrum. Not all of them are tense. But I know that in the early stages of healing and recovery, the multi dimensional partner trauma model is the very first phase is safety and stabilization. And so typically, your 10s are showing up in the safety and stabilization. It's when you start to move into that grief, anger and mourning, in even in post traumatic growth and the reconnection phases of that model that you start to experience more subtle triggers. And what I find to be common was that women who are further in their healing journey will be frustrated when they have a small trigger, because they think they should be gone. And they're like, I thought I got past this. So when Pam answered the question in beginning will triggers ever end, they will. But they also may just look different. They're not always going to be a 10.

P

Pam B. 03:45

Because I could also go there, I could I have in the past. And I think I'm better at catching it at one or two and knowing what my triggers are. So I still have, it's not like the thing that triggers me ever just completely disappears, they still have memories. There's still certain names on TV shows that can remind me of a betrayal of a wound. And I still have that memory. It's not like it goes away. But it doesn't have control over me anymore. So there's there's that aspect of the spectrum. Then there's moments where my husband and I even though we're in a really great recovery, it doesn't mean we're two identical people, we still have disconnects, we still have disagreements and conflict, but we handle it and we approach it much different than we used to. I can still get upset over something that he's done and I can still feel if I say triggered I can still feel my body start to shake. I can feel something in the pit of my stomach. I can feel like oh oops, something's gonna go out of control. I need to do something I can Still feel trigger ish. So there's that spectrum too. It's not like it was in the first days, weeks, months, even the first year of discovery of the betrayals and deceptions that I remember very, very vividly where it was literally handicapping. I couldn't see, I couldn't speak coherently. I couldn't do any I couldn't even stand up, I had to sit down. I couldn't really function for maybe almost an hour. So there is that spectrum between something just mildly reminding me or like I said, a current disagreement. And I feel myself starting to go down that road. And the very early days of my wounding where it was just so handicapping.

B

Bonny 05:59

I love what you said, Pam, about the intensity being on the front end. to lash out, you said a word that was pivotal for me. And that was to attend to what was happening. As this as the triggers were becoming more subtle. I realized that although I'm a feeling person, I didn't have feeling words. I felt things but I didn't know their names. And I know that sounds crazy. Because isn't that part of what our guys are struggling with to?

P

Pam B. 06:33

This? It sounds crazy to me at all? I totally relate to what you're saying. Language is so language empowering. Yeah,

L

Lyschel 06:41

I think it's a little crazy. But I think it's a little crazy.

B

Bonny 06:45

Thanks, thanks. Very well articulated, it could be crazy. No. But as, as I became more aware of my emotions, it helped me to attend to myself more in the moment, because I started practicing feeling my feelings outside of triggers. or I shouldn't say feeling my feelings, I started practicing identifying my emotions outside of triggers. And so when the subtle ones would pop up. For me, it is a certain tone of voice. Low shell, it's slow for you. For me, it is condescending. What do you think? Why are you doing it that way? You know, that was my hot button. When I was able to say, hey, when you speak to me in that way, I feel dismissed. I feel patronized. And I feel that you don't see that I'm an equal partner in this marriage. And when I was able to verbalize those things, I was empowered. It helped me not feel quite so triggered by what he was saying. Because I could stand up for myself. So yes, I think attending to you and what you need and starting to unpack your feelings, those feelings underneath that trigger, will help you disarm that trigger. And that's really not the question. We talked about the spectrum. But I think as you get to the more subtle triggers, being more aware of yourself is going to help you dissipate them. So let's, let's ask a kind of a different question. What if someone else in the betrayed wife's world is triggered? What would that look like? Or what some scenarios that you could explain?

L

Lyschel 08:39

I think it's important for us to recognize that our husbands can get triggered and are triggered. And I know that part of the journey for my husband and I has been I would come to him and vulnerability and say I feel triggered by something in me expressing my trigger, he would become triggered, because suddenly I've triggered shame. And now he's responding with aggression, defensiveness, he's or maybe he's just completely disconnecting and ignoring whatever I've just said, because he doesn't know how to handle any of it. Which then guess what that does? That triggers me again. And suddenly we're in a triggered tornado. And it is a hot mess. Right. And so I think there's a lot of empowerment with as we continue to heal and

grow, and we grow in our own hat on our own self awareness. There is something that begins to happen for us where we start to recognize and we have awareness for another person as well. So I have the ability to come in and even preemptively set this conversation up with my husband to say, hey, I need to talk to you about something hard to do. Do you feel like you're in a space to be able to handle that? Now, my husband has a tendency to be a people pleaser. So he answers with Yes, all the time, when he doesn't really know if he's ready or not, but he'll say yes. So I stepped into it. And suddenly, I'm recognizing a lot of the familiar things that are part of his trigger patterns where he's getting defensive, and he's wanting to hate, one of the things he does in his trigger is he wants to convince me that my trigger is not really accurate, which I keep coming back to saying you don't get to decide about my trigger, it's mine, stop taking it from me and stop telling me that it's wrong. You're welcome to our therapy sessions. So all of this to say, there isn't there is an importance there. And there's an empowerment because now that I have an awareness that my husband gets triggered, I have the ability to have a different boundary in our communication and our conversations. So if I noticed him getting into a really high escalated triggered space, I'm not going to stay there, I'm not going to stay in that conversation with him, I'm going to do what I need to move out of that, because it's just not healthy for us to stay, or both of us are triggering the other, we're not going to get anywhere, right. But the other thing I would add to that is it took a lot of maturity, I think I'm gonna use that word maturity on my part, and growth. Because for the longest time, there was absolutely no way that I was gonna let my husband have triggers. Those were mine. Right, like I was in so much pain. And that was the only way that I knew that I was communicating my pain. So if he got triggered while we were talking, it just, it made me feel so minimized. I don't know if that makes sense, the way I'm trying to explain it. But it was like he, as he was stepping into his own recovery work, it's like my brain, what are my thoughts for that he should be fine, he should be stable, he should be able to handle all my mess, because I'm learning this language. And so now I need to tell him all my language, and he better hold it and do the best job ever. And wasn't

P

Pam B. 12:21

gonna ask a question. Were you shooting all over your partner?

L

Lyschel 12:25

Absolutely. Absolutely. I was. I was even shitting on me. I was like, I shouldn't be allowed to be triggered and mad, right? Like I was all over the place. And so that was really important shift for me. And for us as a couple to recognize he does get triggered. And he does have permission to have triggers. But he also has to work through his triggers, and learn how to regulate just the same as I do.

P

Pam B. 13:00

We are asked to I mean, we got your you're describing my marriage tune in, we learned a really powerful tool, called the tap out. And what it requires for me is to stay very tuned into what's happening in my body. What's happening with Pam, as we have these difficult conversations. If I see my partner, if I see my husband starting to also go down that spiral that he's experiencing my emotions, and he emotionally can't withstand it. And I sense that his tone of voice is

increasing or speeding up, or his body language or his facial expressions are starting to overwhelm me. I can say, hey, we neither one of us we. And let me also say that preface this that I went to my husband with this process, not when we were in that state, and said, Hey, here's this tool I've learned, I can put my hand up and say either one of us can put our hand up and say, Hey, I'm feeling overwhelmed. Can we tap out of this conversation? Can we put a pause on a timeout? whatever language you want to use, so that I can go self soothe, take care of myself do self care? And can we come back to this conversation? In half an hour an hour? You know, it's seven o'clock after dinner. That's not a good time. Okay, what is a good time? So the person who does the tapping out, it's on them to come back and restart the conversation. That happens because we all get outside of our window of tolerance, especially early in recovery. There's a lot of big heavy emotions on both sides. We're all learning how to get better at feeling. And so that gave us a pause to go and sort of calm down and regroup and breathe and ground. Remember what it was we were Trying to get to, and come back and restart that conversation and that has saved. You know, our history was we would go around for six hours, we just laugh about it afterwards, that was our pattern, we would go back and forth and back and forth for six hours, because neither one of us would give up or given. And then the fight became about the fight, right. But this really, really increased our communication and ability to like each other.

**B** Bonny 15:32

And there was no coming back at my pattern. I was the pursuer. Wait, we've got to talk about this. We got to resolve this because my brain was fired up until we resolved and connected, his brain was fired up because he's trying to protect himself. Because the the emotions are so overwhelming. That's his trigger. I hear you're tapping out while I I didn't utilize the tap out as much I had to allow him to tap out. So containment boundary around me was that I would not pursue him to the bathroom or wherever we was going. And I hear this. I hear partners and I hear of betrayers who pursue each other when the other wants some space. The key to our successful tapping out was partly me allowing him to but the second was that he came back, he came back. So in recovery, even when he wasn't in solid, good recovery. Just early, sober, he came back. And that just that in itself helped me feel connected, that he's coming back.

**P** Pam B. 16:40

Yeah, otherwise perspective, if the other person doesn't come back, or if you just walk away. That's one of the four horsemen of Goldman's indicators of divorce stonewalling its abandonment and rejection and refusal to participate in relationship to not have that conversation. And that's why the tap out makes it an agreement that Okay, we're coming back at seven o'clock. And if one person doesn't come back, then there are the smaller. You're right. It was so hard. It was harder for me when my husband tapped out. It was so hard for me to go. But I want to talk about those eyes. You know, I still wanted to talk and I still had things to say. And yeah, it was really, really hard for me, to allow my husband to tap out of a conversation.

**B** Bonny 17:27

It got easier as he came back more. That's why I'm emphasizing that I can more easily let him go because I started to trust or maybe just safety. Maybe I had safety and knowing he's got to honor what he said, because he was consistently doing it over time. Oh, wait, do we have any

hope to offer our listeners.

P

Pam B. 17:53

The hope that I would offer is that triggers can be managed, you can learn you can learn tools, methods, insights, that that will help you navigate and serve your trigger triggers. They're not going to just go away, they have a purpose. As Dr. Sherry points out, there's some work that needs to be done there. There's, there's wounds that deserve and need to be tended to when healed. But there are tools. And we provide some of them in our show notes, here and in our other episode. And I would just encourage you, when you're in those moments, to invite the Lord in with you. Invite the Lord and just see you here, you know what you're going through, that you're not going through it alone. The Lord knows those places in your heart, those cracks in those wounds that maybe maybe no other human will ever really be able to see. But the Lord knows them, the Lord sees them. And you're not alone.

L

Lyschel 19:15

The hope I want to extend to women is don't I'm not going to offer this as a spiritual platitude. I really do believe this in my core, the deeper your roots in identity get in who you are in Christ will drastically impact your triggers. Typically our triggers are rooted in lies. Right there is familiar nests there is definitely our body keeping score, and bringing things back into the light letting us know hey, we're in danger. We've done this before. However, this is also a second Corinthians 10 battle, because we are we are not we are not fighting against flesh and blood, we are fighting against something much bigger than that. I know that in my own personal story, because I gave that example about the slow talking from my stepdad. And I don't know if you caught it. But what I said was, what it was communicating to me was that I was dumb. And that's why it hurts so bad. That's why the chair came in there. But the truth is, right, and the truth will set me free. The truth is, is that I'm not dumb. And so as we gain those tools, and those tools are just sitting in the truth is I start to experience a trigger, I can combat or battle that with truth. So I can feel that as I'm growing and healing, I can begin to identify, well, my body is responding in a way that feels like I'm triggered. What is going on here? Oh, I see it. Someone's talking to me in a slow tone. It's making me feel it's communicating to me that I'm dumb. But the truth is, I'm not dumb, right? And it doesn't matter how that other person continues, even if they say I'm dumb. That is not true. Because my identity is solid, and Christ. And it's a journey to continue to keep going to the Lord and saying, but what you say is the truth. So my hope for our listeners would be sometimes we want so many formulas to fix these things. And we forget how to include Jesus in the story. And he truly is where our hope has to come from. And where we're going to find healing and all these different places, triggers boundaries, safety, self care, all of it. So that would be my hope there would be to just Yeah, that'd be it. Tada,

B

Bonny 21:59

peace out. I have the same. I have the same hope. I want to copy Mothma it's not exactly copying. I'm just gonna read Psalm 16. Because it says, keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge, I say to the Lord, You are my Lord. And apart from you, I have no good thing I say of the holy people who are in the land. They are the noble ones, and whom is all my delight. Those

who run after other gods will suffer more and more, I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips. Because Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup and you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance, I will praise the Lord who counsels me. Even at night my heart instructs me, I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices and my body will rest secure. When I read that I had chills, that the Bible even talks about our bodies like this, that they need security. My body also will rest secure because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead. Nor will you let your faithful One see decay. You make known to me the path of life, you will fill me with joy and your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Ladies, thank you for joining us today. We hope to be a bright spot on your recovery journey. If you'd like to leave us a question or comment, please use the contact button on our website. Hope for wives and that's hope FLR wives.com. Also, if this podcast has helped you, please leave a five star rating or review on iTunes to help other people find us. But and when we reach 500 reviews, Apple podcasts will promote us in a different way and more consistently. So that 500 mark is really big for us and it's coming. Thank you in advance. Yes, thank you for in advance and we will talk with you again. Bye