



NATIONAL  
**BIKUR CHOLIM**  
CONFERENCE

***Understanding Trauma and Providing Comfort***

***Virtual Event with the National Bikur Cholim Conference***  
**February 24, 2025**



TIRZAH FIRESTONE



**“The past is never dead.  
It’s not even past.”**

**—William Faulkner**

**Our lives are the current  
blossom on a  
family tree that is  
thousands of years old**



Those whom  
we tend carry  
within them  
generations  
of history,  
the wisdom  
and the  
traumas of  
their people



# Interoception

*Inner focus and awareness of our subtle physical sensations;  
Mindful self-attunement*



# Attunement

*Kinesthetic and emotional sensing of another being*



# Minding the “Window of Tolerance”

*The zone of arousal within which we can comfortably grow.*



# Witnessing

*Being fully present with another human being without judgment or agenda, taking in their lived experience*





# The Healing Power of Witnessing

*“Being witnessed allowed me to survive.”*

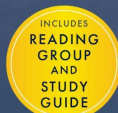
“... *Wounds into Wisdom* is for anyone who has suffered trauma, either directly or in a family whose generational trauma is buried. It helps readers uncover suffering and use it to help others—the final stage of healing...”

—Gloria Steinem

## WOUNDS *into* WISDOM

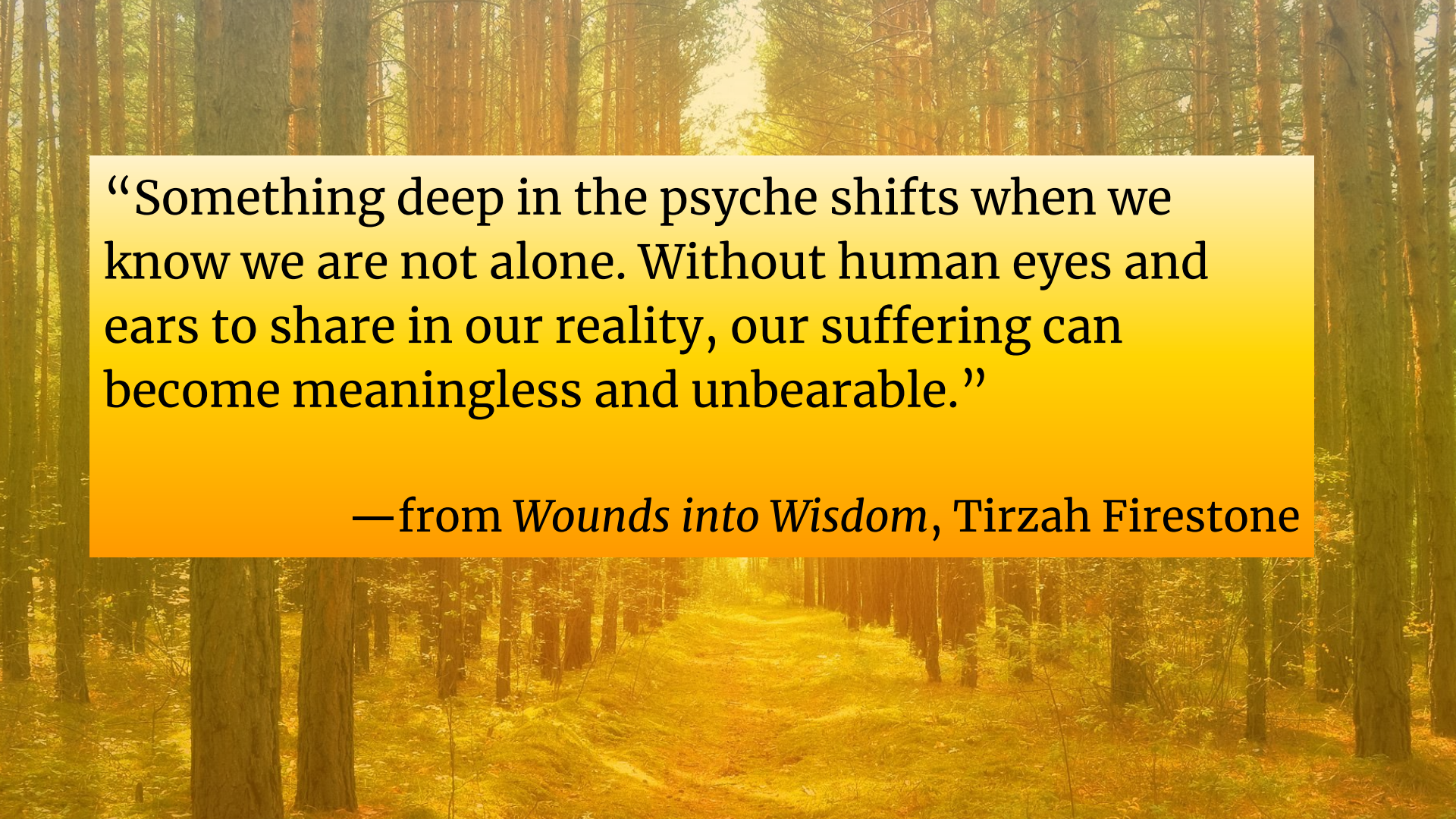
HEALING INTERGENERATIONAL JEWISH TRAUMA

WITH NEW PREFACE



Rabbi Tirzah Firestone, PH.D.

FOREWORD BY GABOR MATÉ M.D.

A photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and a path leading through them. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting either sunrise or sunset. The trees are mostly evergreens, and the ground is covered in fallen leaves and low-lying vegetation. A semi-transparent yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing text.

“Something deep in the psyche shifts when we know we are not alone. Without human eyes and ears to share in our reality, our suffering can become meaningless and unbearable.”

—from *Wounds into Wisdom*, Tirzah Firestone

# Trauma

*Greek for “wound”*

Trauma is the residue of any deeply distressing life experience that overwhelms our coping capacities.

*“Trauma is anything the body perceives as too much, too fast, too soon.”*

—Resmaa Menakem

# Intergenerational Trauma

The unhealed residue of extreme life experiences that is transferred to future generations.

*“I am a Jew, and there are scenes of the Holocaust that are indelibly etched in my mind, even though I was not alive at the time.”*

—Chemi Shalev

# Collective Trauma

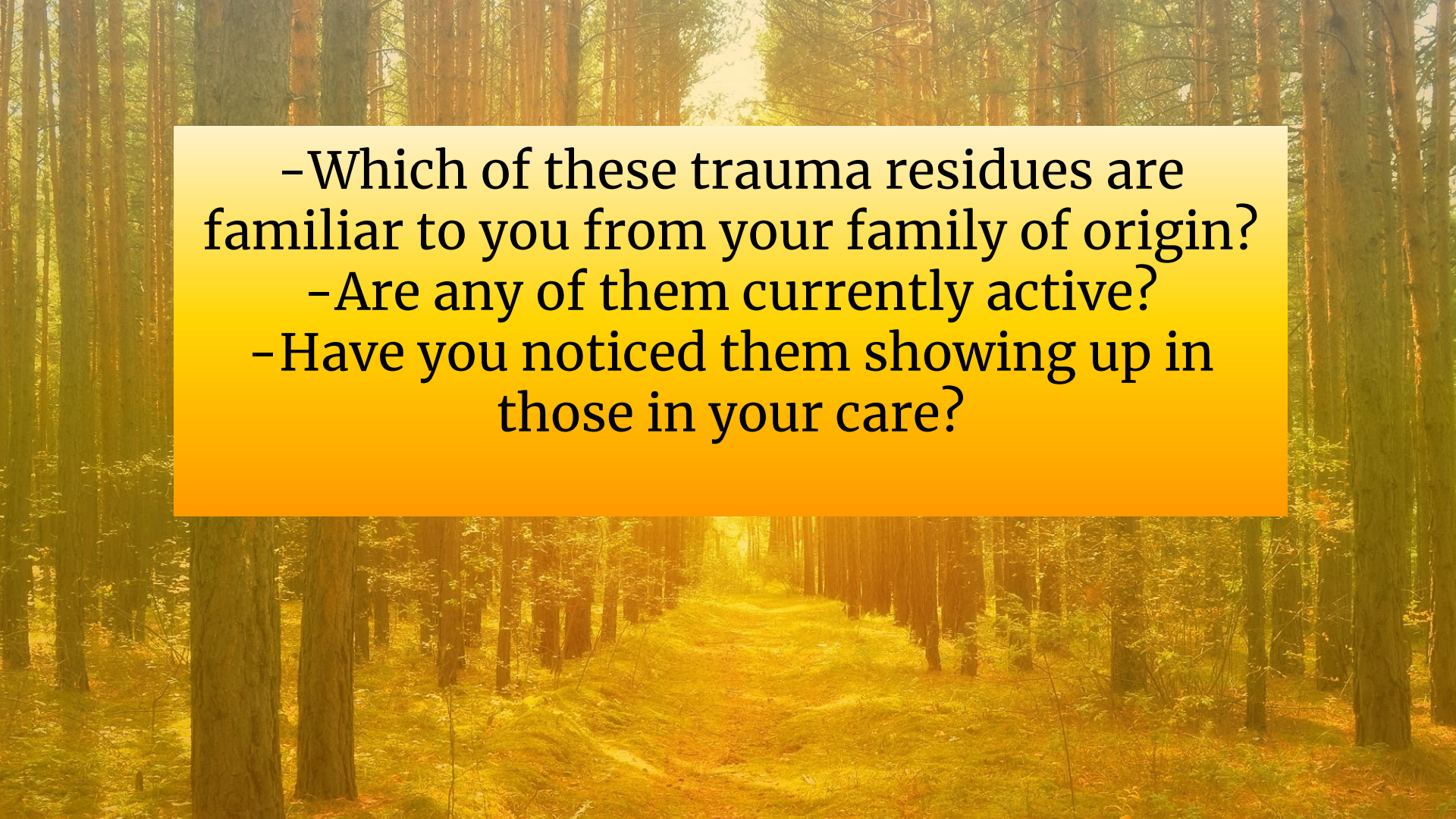
An event or series of events that shatters the experience of safety for a group or groups of people.


*“Collective trauma is... a shared experience that alter(s) the narrative and psyche of a group or community.”*

—Leia Saltzman

# The 4 Hallmarks of Trauma

1. Dissociation (psychic numbing)
2. Hyper-Arousal (hyper-reactivity)
3. Isolation (feelings of shame)
4. The Tendency to Repeat or Reenact Injuries on ourself or others

- 
- A photograph of a forest path with tall, thin trees and sunlight filtering through the canopy. The image has a yellow-to-orange gradient overlay, particularly in the center where the text is located.
- Which of these trauma residues are familiar to you from your family of origin?
  - Are any of them currently active?
  - Have you noticed them showing up in those in your care?

A photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and a path leading through them. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. A semi-transparent box with a yellow-to-orange gradient is overlaid in the center, containing the text.

How do you stay within your own  
Window of Tolerance, so you can  
remain grounded in your work  
with others?





# Waterfall Breathing



# **Four Affirmations**

**I accept myself as I am, for who I am.**

**I honor myself for coming into the world  
to be of service to others.**

**I forgive myself for  
my limitations and mistakes.**

**I envelope myself in self-love.**



Connecting to the  
loving and wise  
legacies of our  
ancestors





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