

## Understanding the Relationship Between Kundalini and Trauma

Physically speaking, *trauma* is a contraction of energy frozen in the body. This is also what the egoic self is, a contraction of energy. Frozen fear. Traumatic memories and patterns are an element of the egoic self, and function in the same way that the egoic self does. Fear holds the patterns in place. With trauma, this contraction causes disempowerment and disorientation. *Kundalini energy* pushes up against these contractions, whether they are egoic or trauma-based. The more contractions an individual has (or one could say, the more fear they have, the more trauma they have, or the more beliefs that they have) the more painful kundalini energy will be.

These contractions' natural movement, or we could say the nature of the body, is to release and relinquish this stuck energy. When a person relaxes or stops controlling their internal experience, the body is able to initiate this process. But when this release begins to happen, the emotions stuck within the contraction will begin to be experienced. For this reason, people are often afraid of the natural movement that wants to happen. That fear then keeps the contraction frozen in place.

Kundalini is just bodily energy, and it functions in the same way SE practitioners are used to seeing the body function - it's just *more*. More pressure, more pain, more dysregulation, more intense spontaneous body movements, more of all of the symptoms of trauma we're used to seeing in our clients.

Trauma is caused by frozen fear, by an inability to complete defensive and orienting responses that mobilized at the time of the trauma because fear told us freezing was the safest option. Thus, until it is processed, it embeds that fear, and a sense of disempowerment, helplessness, or disorientation in the system. This can be broadly experienced or subtly experienced, depending on the person's context.

Regardless of a person's trauma history, kundalini causes a sense of disempowerment and disorientation, but the process by which it does this can be described in a different way than the way in which I have described the trauma process. Kundalini energy pushes against the contractions in the body with incredible force. The contractions are embedded with feelings of disempowerment and disorientation, as stated above, and the very process that is trying to free them, kundalini, creates disempowerment and disorientation. But the disempowerment and disorientation caused by kundalini on its own are not problematic in the way traumatic disempowerment and disorientation are. Kundalini causes these states because its function is to force the contractions to release. It causes disempowerment because it, or we could say the wisdom of the body, has an agenda that's completely

outside of the agenda of our egoic self. The more it exerts its own will, the more “our” will is crushed. Literally, physically crushed.

The egoic self believes “I can control my feelings,” and “I need to control my feelings.” Kundalini, or you could say the body, or our true nature, wants to disempower our sense of “I,” which is just a contraction. It wants to disempower our belief that we can control, or that we need to control life. The sheer force of it causes disorientation because its function is to disorient the sense of self, and to RE-orient us to a completely new way of being. This way of living arises primarily from the body, instead of the mind. The mind becomes secondary, a tool of the body, instead of the other way around.

Returning to traumatic contractions and egoic contractions: while they function in the same way, it’s important to keep in mind that more is still more. All of us have been disempowered by our culture and by those around us. All of us have been told explicitly or implicitly that we’re not good enough the way we are, that our impulses are bad and need to be controlled. Not all of us have been raped, beaten, emotionally abused by a parent, experienced systemic racism, or had a life-threatening accident.

For someone without much trauma, kundalini process is much easier. There is less fear, less contraction, less overall disempowerment, etc. It is always terrifying to go beyond the sense of self, but with an egoic self that is more empowered and oriented, it is so much more doable. Surrender means experiencing less terror, despair, and helplessness than it does for someone with a lot of trauma.

For someone with a lot of trauma, there is a lot of disempowerment infusing the system. There is less access to the defensive responses and thus less of a sense of internal safety. The disempowerment that comes from mistreatment or threat is associated with more intense terror and despair. It’s associated with the person’s scariest moments. The surrender that’s asked for is thus as terrifying as the person’s total unprocessed trauma. Once you add the disempowerment and disorientation kundalini causes, you have quite a mess. It is usually impossible for these folks to allow k to do its work without trauma support. The egoic self needs empowerment and orientation. This reduces the overall level of fear in the system and shifts the association of surrender with trauma.

To sum up, kundalini is just the energy of the body, and it functions in the same way SE practitioners expect the body to function. It seeks the full healing and release of all trauma, but beyond that, all unnecessary contractions (or fear or beliefs) in the mind. It seeks the release of the egoic self center. People with trauma need special consideration when they are navigating kundalini process.