

My name is Maria Macarenco, I work as a clinical psychologist in the army and I also have my private practice. Last month I've been admitted to a PhD program at Bucharest University (Romania), with a project about the influence of prenatal trauma and adverse childhood experiences upon the debut and development of autoimmune diseases and for that I will do several studies, one of them will be with the Intention Method. I will see if this method will have an influence upon the disease.

When we are talking about autoimmune diseases, of course we are talking about a split between the body and the i, this is available for all kinds of illnesses. But what is characteristic for autoimmune illnesses is that the body doesn't recognize anymore a part of itself, considering it non-self, so at the biological level the immune system fails in self-recognition and confuses a healthy cell, a healthy tissue, as being external aggressor 'this is not mine, I have to destroy this enemy'.

I was very curious whether this biological confusion of the immune system has a correspondent at the psychological level, so a few month ago I 've started a pilot study on autoimmune diseases with the Intention method and what I have seen so far were the following:

- there is never a single trauma behind the illness. Usually we'll find:
- a trauma of love, which is not a single trauma, it is a period of daily traumatization in captivity- meaning at home
- we will find identity trauma- which again, is not a single trauma, it is a period of rejection of who you are from the part of the attachment figure, usually the mother
- of course we can find a big T trauma behind the autoimmune disease, like existential or loss trauma. But we won't develop autoimmune diseases because of a single trauma, and if we

look closer, we will find identity or attachment trauma which have happened before this big T trauma and because of them our psyche is already weakened to process this single traumatic event. So the big traumatic event is only the trigger for the disease, but not the cause.

- we will find a high level of intraggression or repressed fury. The child, cannot manifest healthy fury toward the initial aggressor which many times is a parent, so in order to stay in the relationship with the attachment persona, the child has to repress his/her fury. And when I repress my fury I take the aggressor inside myself. And the aggressor is manifesting indirectly, through the illness. As an adult I still cannot directly manifest my healthy fury. But on the inside I aggress myself with the illness.

- and we will find that the person does not recognize inner parts as being self, just like at the biological level. You don't recognize trauma part so you don't recognize the suffering, which means you are identified with an aggressor, you become the aggressor toward yourself by rejecting yourself. 'this is not mine'. Or you are already confused and mistakenly take your part as being someone else, usually the aggressor. 'this is not me'

So we are here to explore together what kind of trauma we'll find behind the autoimmune disease, when do we decide that a part of us is not ours anymore or who we are protecting? To whom we are loyal?