Twitter Thread by QC



QC
@QiaochuYuan

one of the wildest things i've had to repeatedly relearn is that emotions only feel like they last forever if you resist them

if you open up to them they flow through you like water

you can feel like total shit about yourself or your life, all of your worst fears can feel objectively and eternally true, and then one big enough cry later you're completely outside of that reality. just transported somewhere else entirely

calling it "emotional processing" makes it sound like a skill you have to learn but i'm still convinced it's mostly about unlearning - there's a natural process that animals allow effortlessly that we actively train children to interrupt in a million ways

when an impala is captured by a predator it plays dead; if the predator goes away it literally shakes off the experience until it's able to move normally

https://t.co/nVT1QVSfhl

meanwhile, human children are raised as follows:

sit still. be quiet. don't make a fuss. don't start laughing or crying in the middle of the classroom. you wouldn't want to bother the other children would you

https://t.co/eQrBaVnjM4

> hey remember how we went to school where we spent 8 hours a day for over a decade having what our bodies could do completely under the control of authority figures
>
> boy i wonder if that had any lasting effects
>
> — QC (@QiaochuYuan) November 13, 2019

@DougTataryn taught us that the three main somatic approaches to releasing an emotion are "sound, movement, and breath" and we teach children to suppress all three for hours every day

this kind of thing is why i never felt comfortable with sitting meditation and why i wouldn't recommend other people start there if they have any kind of trauma history at all. you're just practicing a freeze response. we need sound, movement, and breath

https://t.co/279Ux8VTNp

> meditation does not have to involve sitting down, you do not have to be still, you do not have to be quiet, you do not have to be alone, you do not have to be in a group, you do not have to be inside, you do not have to control your thoughts, you do not have to control anything
>
> — QC (@QiaochuYuan) January 5, 2022

"After being hurt, an infant will cry loudly and continuously and, if permitted to do so, will seem to recover from the hurt very quickly. After being frightened badly, an infant will scream and shake and perspire."

https://t.co/6hWSv4dJJO

> also wow the co-counseling link above has some good stuff, here's a few choice quotes. interesting claim here that "discharges" happen in a specific order: grief (tears), then fears (trembling, shivering, laughter), anger (loud words, movement), boredom (talking, laughter) pic.twitter.com/Qley3DOOKf
>
> — QC (@QiaochuYuan) January 5, 2022

"Apparently babies - given a chance - would keep themselves free from hurts simply by their natural discharge of painful emotion. In our culture, no baby gets very much of a chance because..."

"...the discharge of her painful emotion is interfered with and shut off so repeatedly that to shut it off becomes an automatic pattern accompanying the hurt."

periodically i see takes along the lines of "oh man wouldn't society be so much better if we taught children how to process their emotions in school"

my statement on such takes, now and forevermore:

https://t.co/5hC01nxa9X

> broke: school should teach more important stuff, such as [basic skill possessed by all animals and actively destroyed by school]
>
> woke: school should not exist
>
> — QC (@QiaochuYuan) April 30, 2020

once i attended a memorial service for an acquaintance who had killed herself

not a single person cried. a friend of hers who went up to the podium to say something almost cried but then she *stopped herself*

because apparently it would have been... *inappropriate*???

i hope we can work towards a society in which people feel like they are allowed to cry when their friends die