

Understanding Core Wounds & The Emotional Pain Map

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Part I: What Is a Core Wound?

Modern science tells us that infants cannot and do not see themselves as fully separate from their mother [until sometime between 6 and 24 months of age](#). And it makes sense. Watch an infant look at the world; it's pure curiosity, wide-eyed wonder, and openness. They also freely express their needs. No newborn has ever decided not to cry when they were hungry because, *"I don't want to be seen as needy."* This openness, awe, and freedom of expression is difficult to put into words, but essentially, it is the experience of complete unity with unconditional love.

But then, as a natural part of development, something shifts.

We begin to perceive ourselves as *separate*. From unconditional love, from everything.

It's important to note that this is simply a perception, not reality. We can never truly be separated from unconditional love. But to the nervous system, this perceived rupture is devastating. It can feel like the literal embodiment of being kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

And in order to make sense of this experience, the psyche must come up with a reason *why*.

This is where **core wounds** come in.

The Origin of Core Wounds

A core wound is a deep-seated belief that says:

"I am separate from unconditional love because..."

These beliefs are not formed through logic; they are felt conclusions, rooted in early nervous system experience. Based on our upbringing, this "because" can take many forms:

- *I'm not good enough.*
- *I'm too much.*
- *I'm unlovable.*
- *I don't belong.*

- *I'm not safe.*
- *I'm alone.*
- *I'm a burden.*
- *I'll always be abandoned.*

Each one of these beliefs births a **compensating personality** — a set of behaviors and traits developed to prevent us from ever feeling that pain again.

But here's the paradox. The very belief we're trying to escape becomes the lens through which we interpret everything.

And because it was embedded before we had words, it can't be solved with talk alone. It must be felt, met, and released in the body.

What do core wounds and Santa Claus have in common?

Think of a **core wound** like a childhood belief in Santa Claus.

As a child, you believed in him completely. The entire world seemed to confirm it. Cookies were eaten, gifts appeared, and grownups went along with the story. It felt *real*.

But eventually, something shifted. You started to question. You noticed inconsistencies. And then... *you saw the illusion*.

Once you saw it clearly, you didn't have to **try** to stop believing in Santa. You simply...didn't.

The same is true of your core wound.

Once you recognize that "*I'm not good enough*" was never true to begin with, not because you proved otherwise, but because it was **made up by a scared nervous system** trying to protect you, the whole compensating pattern begins to collapse.

If you'd like to explore this further within yourself, here are some common examples of Core Wound Beliefs & their Compensating Personality Patterns.

Part II: Core Wounds & Compensating Patterns

Core wound beliefs express as personality patterns to compensate for the underlying pain. Basically, the pain of separation from unconditional love seems easier to bear if it makes sense. It also gives us something to strive for, in the misguided attempt to return to the unconditional love that never actually left us.

Core Wound Belief	Compensating Personality Pattern
I'm not good enough	High achiever, perfectionist, over-giver
I'm too much	People-pleaser, emotional suppressor
I'm unlovable	Chameleon, hyper-vigilant attacher
I don't belong	Outsider, lone wolf, hyper-independent
I'm not safe	Controller, anxious planner, hyper-responsible
I'm a burden	Quiet supporter, invisible helper, resentment holder
I'll be abandoned	Clinger, conflict avoider, appeaser
I'm bad / shameful	Over-functioner, moralizer, self-punisher
I'm not seen	Performer, entertainer, validation seeker
I'm weak / broken	Overcompensator, fixer, chronic self-improver

Important Note: It is possible to be affected by more than one. Regardless, these patterns aren't "bad." They're brilliant survival strategies! But they aren't *you*. They're who you became when love felt conditional.

Part III: Finding the Core Wound in the Body

These core wounds don't just live in the mind — they imprint themselves in the **nervous system** and the **tissues of the body**.

That tightness in your chest before you speak your truth. The clench in your belly when you feel like a burden. The tension in your shoulders from carrying “everything.”

These are not random. They are the body's intelligent way of holding unprocessed experience. The good news? What's held can be met. What's met can be felt. And what's fully felt can finally be released.

That does not mean you have to relive every moment or uncover every memory. The body already knows the way. With curiosity, compassion, and just enough stillness to feel what's here, the old patterns begin to soften. Sometimes it's a breath, a tremble, or a tear. Sometimes it's just the quiet realization that the story you've carried isn't true anymore. Healing begins the moment you stop trying to become someone else and begin to come home to yourself.

When inquiry and practice like this is paired with deep presence, nervous system attunement, and intentional integration, it helps the body remember what it's always known:

You were never broken. You were never alone. You don't need to *become* anything to be worthy of love.

You already are. You could never be separate from unconditional love, even if it feels like it. This love is your birthright, your true essence. And it's calling you back to it, right this very moment.

Part IV: Emotional Pain Mapping

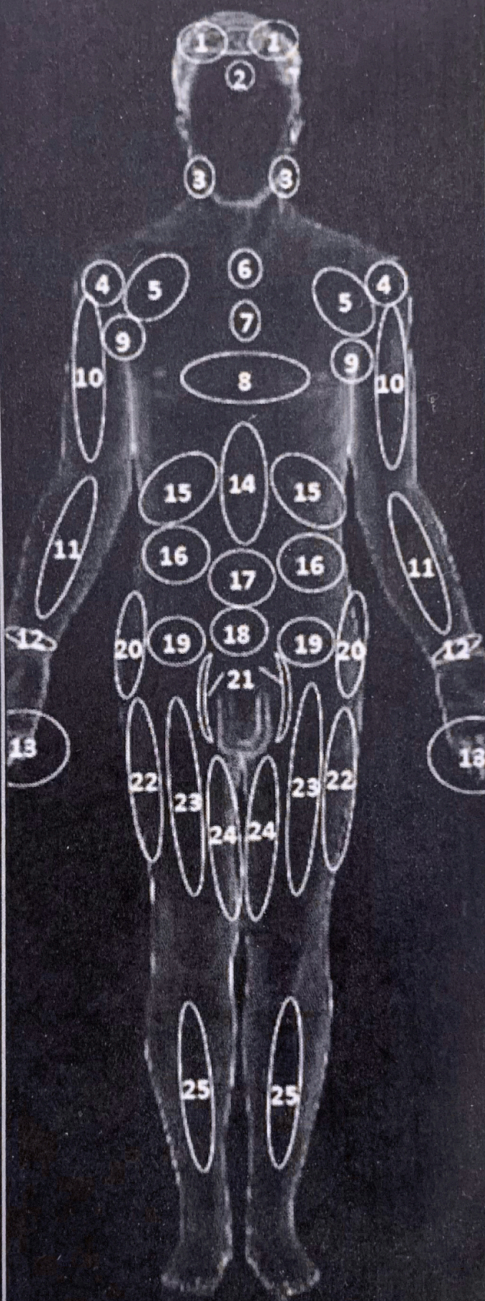
The emotional pain map combines wisdom from traditional Chinese medicine, Indian ayurvedic medicine, and modern Western physicians like Dr. John Sarno and Dr. Gabor Maté. It helps point the way to where common beliefs, repressed emotions, and trauma patterns become “stuck” in the body. Think of pain in these particular areas as your body’s “check engine light,” asking you to look more closely at what’s going on in your life.

How to use the emotional pain map:

1. Treat this resource as a guidepost, not gospel. Some of what is there may resonate with you, or it may not. Sometimes, your shoulder may hurt because of repressed emotion, and sometimes it may be sore because you worked out too hard the previous day. So, simply use the emotional pain map as an invitation to look deeper into what your body may be trying to tell you.
2. This resource is highly effective for chronic pain that has lingered for weeks, months, or years, especially if it has resisted all “traditional” treatments like physical therapy, ice, and pain medication. Unfelt emotions may be the culprit.
3. If you do find something that resonates, you may wonder, “Okay great, what do I do with this information?” Luckily, awareness of the emotion behind the pain is **the** most important step. It represents you finally listening to your body. Then, ask yourself what you would change in your life to address this new information. For example, let’s say you have pain in a spot correlating to “overextending emotionally.” Where in your life can you set firmer boundaries to protect yourself? There’s almost always an action step you can take to move in the direction of releasing the hold these unfelt emotions have on you.

Right Side

- 1 Busy mind focused on thoughts
- 2 Opening to all perceptions
- 3 Judgements held rigidly
- 4 Defensive when given advice
- 5 Wanting or undeserving of nurture by Dad/men
- 6 Holding self back/can't express your love
- 7 Hopelessness
- 8 Heart shielded from Love/Love is painful
- 9 Pick people who can't nurture
- 10 Controlling others
- 11 Over extending with thoughts/concerns
- 12 Early childhood trauma with males
- 13 Holding on to the past
- 14 Letting go of control
- 15 Anxiety
- 16 Suppressed rage
- 17 Can't process negative emotions/ shutting down
- 18 Detached/undigested emotions/ shutting down
- 19 Ideas about being a man/woman
- 20 Envy and feelings of violation
- 21 Pleasure is sinful /Sexual Trauma
- 22 Impatience
- 23 Fear of going forward with new ideas
- 24 Fear of intimacy
- 25 Fear of stepping into your path of power

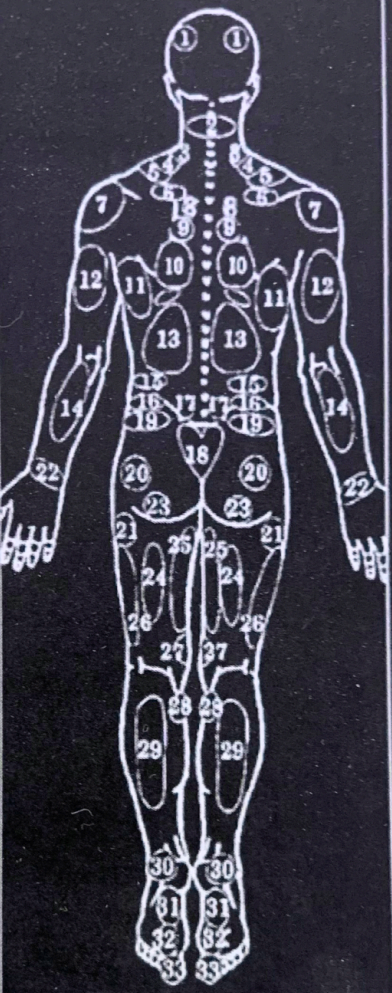


Left Side

- 1 Busy mind focused on feelings
- 2 Opening to all perceptions
- 3 Denial of self
- 4 Undeserving, not acknowledged
- 5 Wanting or undeserving of nurture by mom/women
- 6 Holding self back/can't express your love
- 7 Hopelessness
- 8 Heart shielded from Love/Love is painful
- 9 Betrayed by love or life
- 10 Fear of receiving from others
- 11 Overextending emotionally
- 12 Early childhood trauma with females
- 13 Holding on to the past
- 14 Letting go of control
- 15 Anxiety
- 16 Sadness & bitterness
- 17 Can't process negative emotions/ shutting down
- 18 Detached/undigested emotions/ shutting down
- 19 Feelings about being a man/woman
- 20 Resentment and painful relationships
- 21 Pubic bone -Pleasure is sinful /sexual trauma
- 22 Frustration
- 23 Fear of going forward with feelings
- 24 Vulnerability
- 25 Fear of others not accepting your power



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LEFT SIDE	BACK OF BODY	RIGHT SIDE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negative thoughts about self 2. Separation from higher self. 3-5. Blame self, blamed by others, blaming others 6. Responding to blame 7. Controlled by others / pleasing others 8. Passive aggressive / judgemental towards self 9. Heart break 10. Everyone's a victim 11. Shame 12. Defenceless, helpless, fear of receiving 13. Want to be someone else 14. Overextending to prove good enough 15. Self-sabotage 16. Pissed off at self 17. I don't deserve to be happy 18. I'm not worthy of connecting to my Higher Self 19. Jealousy & envy 20. Anger at women, mother 21. Sadness & disappointment 22. Childhood trauma with women 23. Deep seated inner rage 24. Taking life too seriously 25. Vulnerability 26. Frustration 27. Fear of being persecuted for being who you are 28. Not liked by females 29. Women don't support you 30. Rigid 31. Think power is from controlling 32. Heart closed to love 33. Bitterness 	<p>BODYMAP</p>  <p>ENLIGHTENED HEALTH</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negative thoughts about others 2. Separation from higher self. 3-5. Self guilt, made to feel guilty, see others as guilty 6. Responsible for everything that happens 7. Controlling others and self 8. Passive aggressive/ judgemental towards others 9. Fear the abuse of love 10. Fear of doing 11. Not good enough 12. Life is a struggle 13. Worry about everything 14. Overextending to prove you're good enough 15. Not enough abundance 16. Pissed off at Life 17. Can't be myself, must please others 18. I'm not worthy of connecting to my Higher Self 19. Resentment and vengeance 20. Anger at men 21. Compulsions and co-dependency 22. Childhood trauma with father 23. Deep seated outward rage 24. Powerless 25. Fear of intimacy 26. Impatience, not enough time to do it all 27. Fear of being persecuted by others 28. Not liked by men 29. Men don't support you 30. Rigidly holding on to old ideas 31. Think power comes from controlling things 32. Lost sweetness and joy of life 33. Bitterness

If you'd like to dive deeper into either Core Wounds or the Emotional Pain Map, email greg@enlightened.health to set up a consultation call or an exploratory appointment!