

PROCESSING Feelings

Helping Children Heal from Trauma and Suffering

By Dr. Michael Obsatz – April 2026

Many children experience abuse, trauma, neglect, bullying, and ostracism. Day after day at school, some children are marginalized, shamed, or physically assaulted.

I experienced all of the above. I did tell my parents, and they did call the school. Nothing was done about it. No one helped me process what I experienced or how I felt about it or myself. It was easy to believe there was something wrong with me. I took everything that happened to me personally. Nobody said "It is not about you. It's a system of power, domination and control. There are always victims and you came along.

In the 1960's we learned about the idea of processing. Dr. Eugene Gendlin wrote about "felt sense" and the importance of "*Focusing*." Therapist Carl Rogers taught about "*unconditional positive regard*." Patient therapy changed to "client-centered therapy."

I believe that young people become addicted to screens and social media because they do not have the opportunities or skills to process their emotions and experiences. Anne Wilson Schaef wrote a book called "*Living in Process*." Our lives are a continuous unfolding of events and challenges. Change is inevitable.

When one learns to process experiences with trusted others, that person can feel supported, understood and valued. Processing takes commitment and time. In our world, we have time to travel to the moon, but no time or interest in processing what children are experiencing.

In the world of Empire Consciousness, there is emphasis on power, domination, fear, control, scarcity, hierarchy and competition. The child is taught to seek external validation, and the interior landscape of the child may be ignored.

Some helpful processing tools include the following questions:

How are you doing?

Is there anything you'd like to talk about?

What feelings are going on inside?

Would you like to share what you are feeling with me?

Do you feel angry, disappointed, ashamed, worthless, sad, scared, etc.?

What would you like me to do about this?

How can I help?

Would you like any suggestions about what you can do about this?

We must, as a culture, start encouraging the PROCESSING of feelings for children. Built-up pain and emotional isolation can result in violence and addiction. Screen addiction is a cry for help.

In "*When Society Becomes an Addict*," Anne Wilson Schaef warns us that a great deal of addictive behaviors come from a lack of self-love, maturity, navigational skills, and emotional connection.

In "*Success is the Quality of Your Journey*," Jennifer James writes that we need to appreciate the complexity and inner life of all living beings. This begins with valuing ourselves, and seeing the value and lovability of all living beings. Oneness Consciousness — spiritual and emotional connection results in peace and not war, compassion and not narcissism, connections and not addictions.