

Family Trauma Institute

TRAINING PROFESSIONALS TO
BECOME FAMILY TRAUMA EXPERTS

Video Transcript

Kill the Spider: Strongholds and the Trauma Story

Here I present the strongholds to them and let's watch this unfold here as mom accepts it. It's a big moment for her. There's a bunny trail that we could've gone down where mom blames herself. We don't go down that bunny trail, and I'll just share with you why in a second.

It's a shame. Now, this is just this theory, but for whatever reason, my gut tells me that your son Dexter doesn't always, if you look at the strongholds right behind the symptoms, that sometimes if you really, really get down to it, he feels that, "Sometimes I'm damaged. I'm never good enough. I'm worthless. I am what I am. I cannot change. I do not deserve to be loved." And we can see some of this where he self-sabotages himself. I don't know if he despises the parents. I don't know if he feels hopeless or withdrawn, but do you think as a mom that deep down your son has any of these false beliefs about himself?

100% all of them.

These are arrows to your son's heart that's got to be removed. Because if we don't remove these arrows, they are going to cause toxins that are going to stay with him the rest of his life. And I'm not sure what put these arrows in his heart, maybe it's a combination of many, many things. Do you have any guesses as a mom? And this isn't to give him a get out of jail free card for his behavior. I'm not about that at all. I'm just trying to determine what might be some of the routes. Do you have any guesses, Cynthia, as to what might have brought these arrows about your son's heart?

Well sure, everything is my fault. So of course, there's something that I did as a mother.

No stop. That is not true.

I agree with her.

Thanks, Mitch.

I love you, too.

Okay.

Well, we can come back to this. It's not important for tonight to figure out the exact thing. It does say that I wanted to give you an intervention to take these arrows out. I don't know how they started, which comes first, the chicken or the egg. But what I want to do is I want to get rid of this spider. I want to attack it. I want to get it out of Dexter's life, and I want to get it out of your house. It's overstayed its welcome, and needs to get kicked on its butt out of the house.

Michael, let me ask you this, what was your opinion as you watched this from mom? Did you think this was a game changer? If so, why or why not?

Well, I think for mom, I think that she would attach to that. I think it gave her some relief to know it's not her, but you could hear that, I mean, everybody is

laughing, but there's tension in that laughing, because I think that she's probably incurred a lot of blame underneath all of this. And so, I like the idea of the metaphor, because it puts it in an other context for mom that it's not her. It's not all her. And this is an interactional problem. Dexter needs to use, use his own skills, he just doesn't know how to use them right. And so this creates this spider, and so we want to kick it out. And I like that, because it's objectifying the problem. So it's more palatable to talk change to the family. Does that make sense?

Very much so. And why do you think I didn't go on a bunny trail of when mom would go ... I could've crushed it. I could have been like, "Yeah, mom, what you're saying ..." yeah, why do you think I left off here?

You would have lost ... the angels would have left the room, I can guarantee you that. Because we would go, and then we would get lost. And then, the direction that you had would have taken a different turn. And that's what I find is common in treatment.

And I think also as you said, you've got to know when to hold them, know when to fold them, know when to walk away. And I'm holding my cards here, because I don't have to go any further than this. I can be Johnny Appleseed, and plant seeds right now, and I don't have to go all the way, yet. At all the way meaning, I don't have to get to the root cause yet.

The other thing that I like about this approach, Scott, is that you don't have to necessarily address that piece, because as all of this starts to change, mom's strongholds will start to change, I'm sure.