



Demystifying Psychology

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Hello everyone, I'm Tatijana, and I'm here to demystify what psychology truly is—hint, it's not just about "soft" rainbow fluff and unicorns. As a psychologist, I'm a super observer, listener, questioner, and reflector. These skills are at the heart of my work, whether I'm in a therapy session helping individuals navigate personal challenges or in a boardroom fostering leadership, team, and culture development.

MYTH DEBUNKER #1: THERE'S NOTHING "SOFT" ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY

Let's clear up a common misconception: psychology isn't soft. It's deeply rooted in science and integral to every decision you make. Whether you believe our existence is shaped by the divine, astrophysics, or a combination of both, our psychology drives our actions and choices.



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NAVIGATING A WORLD IN FLUX

Our world is at a pivotal moment. From social justice movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too to global economic shifts and environmental upheaval, the need for change is pressing. The rapid pace of disruption—from AI advancements to societal changes—has pushed our psychology to its limits. Evolutionary biology is remarkable, but it's slow. Our brains need help adapting to the 21st-century climate.

In recent years, countless leaders have confided in me, saying, "What's wrong with me? I'm doing my job, but I just don't care like I used to." This is burnout—a real and growing issue. Statistics show that 60% of leaders globally are on the brink of clinical burnout, and over 80% of high performers report burnout. Yet, only 18% of leaders feel confident in their ability to support their employees, with communication, emotional intelligence and compassion cited as top struggles.

Given the quality, quantity, and speed of change, resilience, stress tolerance, and emotional intelligence are predicted to be the top-most in-demand organizational skills by 2025 (WE Forum).

PSYCHOLOGY: THE NEW "HARD"

Think of your psychology as a system of systems:

- **Cognitive Systems:** The analytical, thinking, intellectual you.
- **Emotional Systems:** The instinctual, feeling, emotional you.
- **Behavioral Systems:** The processes that guide your behavior.
- **Physiological Systems:** Your nervous, cardiovascular, muscular-skeletal, and digestive systems—the physical sensations in your body.
- **Contextual Systems:** External influences like education, social, cultural, and socio-political systems.



Imagine you're at a live orchestra performance, experiencing the awe-inspiring sound of a Beethoven symphony. This magical experience is a result of all the musicians playing in unison. Similarly, your psychology is like an orchestra, where all systems must function well together to perform optimally.



WE ARE EMOTIONAL BEINGS WHO THINK

Here's a fundamental law of our nature: we are not rational beings who feel; we are emotional beings who think. Out of the millions of bits of information your brain processes per second, over 80% is emotional and instinctual, often outside of your awareness. Ignoring your emotions means disregarding a crucial source of data.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: YOUR SUPERPOWER

Emotional intelligence isn't about being emotional; it's about harnessing the power of your emotions. You have three 'brains'—one in your skull, one in your heart, and one in your gut. The one in your skull has three layers: the brain stem (your personal dragon, focused on survival), the emotional brain (your emotional commander), and the pre-frontal cortex (your rational, decision-making CEO). The oldest parts of your brain are emotional and instinctual, making it impossible to avoid emotions.

Evolution has equipped you with the tools to experience a range of emotions because they are your most valuable source of data. Honing your emotional intelligence is about building these biologically-based capabilities for optimal functioning.

SURVIVING, HEALING, AND THRIVING

The past few years have been a rollercoaster, and while the pandemic is mostly behind us, its lingering effects remain. We're seeing a lack of concentration, low motivation, and high levels of burnout. Just because the immediate trauma has subsided doesn't mean its impact has disappeared. We need time to regenerate our systems, moving from survival to thriving.

We're also facing a new pandemic: cynicism and negativity. Doom scrolling and constant exposure to negative news are taking a toll. Negativity sells because it soothes our biological negativity bias, an evolutionary trait from our hunter-gatherer days. This bias makes us more susceptible to negative stories, fueling cynicism, which sounds smart and rational but often leads to inaction and despair.

REKINDLING YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

You are born with the tools to grow, adapt, and flourish. It's time to rekindle your birthright. Emotional intelligence is like a muscle that needs regular exercise. By strengthening your EQ, you build a foundation for a fulfilling life and create a legacy for future generations.

Psychology is not just "hard"; it's essential. Embrace your emotions, harness your cognitive abilities, and lead a life where personal and professional success is intertwined. Let's turn challenges into opportunities and make impactful work both meaningful and enjoyable.

Sincerely *Tatjana*