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words

## (Potentially) traumatic events

Ruth Reed

'Traumatic' events rip up the rule book of life. The ultimate impact depends not only on qualities of an event itself, but on its antecedents and consequences. Moreover, the meaning ascribed to the experience by the individual and the responses of friends, family and societal structures, determine whether the path that follows is one of guilt and shame or acceptance and recovery. Assumptions about others' experiences are often mistaken, being filtered through the imperfect lens of one's own internal world. Placing 'potentially' before 'traumatic' gives credence to the capacity for human growth and resilience, rising from the ashes of adversity.

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