Why Can't They Just Get Over It?

Why hard things stay with some people, and what helps

Think of a broken arm.

If a child breaks their arm and nobody takes them to the doctor, it still heals. But it heals crooked. Years later it still aches, and they use it differently without knowing why.

Hard things that happen to kids can heal crooked too. You can't see the hurt inside, but you can often see what it causes.

Think of a smoke alarm.

A smoke alarm is supposed to go off when there's a fire. But some alarms go off every time you make toast.

When a child grows up with a lot of yelling, fear or hurt, their body learns to always watch for danger. So their "alarm" goes off very easily, and it keeps doing that when they grow up, even when they're safe. They might:

- Get angry fast, or blow up over small things
- Try hard to keep everyone happy, and can't say no
- Drink, use drugs, or gamble to make the noise stop
- Work all the time so they never have to slow down
- Push people away, or can't trust anyone
- Feel nothing at all
- Not sleep, get sick a lot, or always feel tired

These are only a few examples. It can look many other ways too.

It's not really about the drinking.

From the outside, the drinking or the anger looks like the problem. So people try hard to stop it. But it's like pulling the top off a weed. If the roots are still there, it grows back, sometimes as something else.

The roots are the old hurt underneath. When the roots are cared for, the rest often starts to ease on its own.

What helps it heal

Some kids have someone who helps them feel steady when hard things happen: a safe grown-up, a grandparent, a teacher, a friend, even a pet. Someone who notices, listens, and stays close through the big feelings until they feel safe again.

That steadiness is like a cast. It helps the arm heal well. But even an arm that healed well can still ache on a cold day, years later. That doesn't mean it didn't heal.

Not every child had someone like that, and that's not their fault. But it's never too late. A grown-up can still find that steadiness, through people who care, through support, or by learning it themselves. Sometimes healing comes quickly, and sometimes it takes time. Either way, no one has to carry the pain forever.

If nothing like this ever happened to you.

That's just how your life went. You don't have to know how it feels to understand that it hurts.

If something happened and you were fine.

Maybe it was short, or you were older, or someone helped you feel steady. Not everyone had that.

So why would someone get help?

For the same reason you'd see a physio for a bad knee. Counselling, support groups and self-help books are like physio for the inside. They help the person learn what nobody showed them: how to feel safe in their own body, and how to find their way back to themselves when the alarm goes off. It's not weakness. It's tending to the roots.

How you can help

- Don't say "just get over it."
- Don't compare it to what you went through.
- Look underneath. Ask yourself what might be going on inside them.
- Be patient. Healing takes time.

Want to understand more?

Until Suddenly It Did is Erika's story of finding her way back, with gentle practices you can try. Scan for the free *Supporter Pack*, for the people standing beside someone who's healing, at **gentleholisticwellness.com/unseen**

This handout shares general information, not therapy or a diagnosis. If someone is in danger or thinking of hurting themselves, call **9-1-1** *or call or text* **9-8-8**.

Erika Burton, BSW · Gentle Holistic Wellness gentleholisticwellness.com