



The Surviving Spirit Newsletter – Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

Hi Folks,

January 2011

Let me begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year – wow!!! 2011 – How time flies by “when you’re having fun.”

Time flies by and so does the snow in my little corner of the world, I’ve had enough shoveling for the year, but it appears there is lots more in store – oh well. It does look pretty though, and it’s not such a bad thing to have some ‘down time’ because you can’t do much else. For those of you who are “baby boomers” like myself, I think of the Mitch Miller Chorus singing “oh the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful...let it snow, let it snow, let it snow”. I used to love hearing them sing as a kid along with the Beatles, the “British Invasion” and Petula Clark singing “Downtown” - it still brings a smile to my face thinking of the joy they brought to me a long time ago.

Lots going on with the Surviving Spirit – new updates and resources soon to be added to the website and the web store should be finished shortly. There were a few more snags and setbacks than we originally anticipated, but we’re getting there. Very excited [and honored] that some folks from Ghana requested to be put on the mailing list – the internet has created so many possibilities for all of us in our respective advocacy endeavors. Please visit them at their Facebook page to offer support and friendship - [Mindfreedom Ghana](#)

And please visit us at our Facebook page by clicking on the tab posted at our website or via – <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Surviving-Spirit/138180506227288>

We are creating a few sections on the website to offer support and we could use your help. First off, we are setting up a Lending Library – we need books, videos, DVDs, etc that offer *hope, healing and help* for trauma, abuse and mental health concerns – but they must be in good condition. Our mailing address is posted at the end of this newsletter. We plan to add additional website resources but if you know of some helpful Peer Support websites, blogs or newsletters, please let us know. And we have set up a Creative Arts Resources Section to share information and help for those who want to pursue their creative endeavors – both professionally and just for the fun of it. We hope to have all of this posted in the next few weeks along with tweaking the News & Events Section of the website to start adding content.

And now for some hopeful and helpful resources from these fellow *Surviving Spirits*:

1] Grace Karen Sweet who I have the pleasure of knowing will be interviewed on The Dr. Peter Breggin Hour for the Progressive Radio Network on Monday, January 24, 2011 @ 2p.m.PST/ 3p.m.CST/ 4p.m.MST/ 5p.m. EST

You can hear the show via this link - [Please note that the show will be archived]
<http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-dr-peter-breggin-hour/>

Grace advocates for natural wellness in mental health and is a Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher. She trains Mental Health Service Providers to use Laughter Yoga as a therapeutic intervention in their work and has presented workshops and trainings nationally. - *The Shortest Distance Between Two People is Laughter* ~ Victor Borge

You can learn more about Grace at The Average Miracles Foundation - www.averagemiracles.org - Healing through Laughter for Those Who Endure Mental Distress

2] This video clip is 21:58 minutes long, but it is well worth watching and listening to. For anyone who has been affected by trauma, abuse, serious health issues or a mental health concerns and knows of stigma and discrimination, please do take a listen to Aimee Mullins talk of how – “our language affects our thinking”. This is quite powerful folks and thanks to Sara Martel [Surviving Spirit board member and dear friend] for sharing this inspirational clip – Aimee Mullins: The opportunity of adversity

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/aimee_mullins_the_opportunity_of_adversity.html

The thesaurus might equate "disabled" with synonyms like "useless" and "mutilated," but ground-breaking runner Aimee Mullins is out to redefine the word. Defying these associations, she shows how adversity -- in her case, being born without shinbones - actually opens the door for human potential.

A record-breaker at the Paralympics Games in 1996, Aimee Mullins has built a career as a model, actor and activist for women, sports and the next generation of prosthetics.

“Whatever you can do or dream, begin it.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

3] “boys cry too” - A Story of Hope, Forgiveness, Redemption and Change

Written by John Mark Clubb – I am honored to know John as a fellow participant from the two shows Oprah Winfrey did on males being sexually abused as children and excited to be able to share the news about his book release. This link gives you the opportunity to hear John’s part on the show - [More from the show](#) [1:32 minutes long]

This memoir is a groundbreaking account, from a man's perspective, of the effects of sexual abuse on all aspects of the victim's life. John speaks out about the details of his abuse and the family culture that enabled generations of abusers to victimize its children. His searing openness throws a spotlight on the darkly kept secrets of childhood sexual

abuse, and his story will serve as an inspiration to everyone who longs to embrace their own healing journeys.

<http://www.johnmarkclubb.com/index.htm> "Abuse does not have to be a life sentence"©

"As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

4] The *2010 Mental Health Humor Cartoon* e-book is being "exclusively" distributed by my friend and fellow advocate Chato B Stewart. He has a great way of using humor to soften the pain and suffering that often accompanies mental health issues. I think his work is great – so there's an 'unbiased' opinion – humor is always a good thing. If you would like to distribute this e-book on your blog or website, please contact him at ChatoBStewart@yahoo.com!

Mental Health Humor Cartoon e-book is published as a *Portable Document Format (PDF)*. You'll need an Adobe Reader to view the e-book. If you don't have Adobe Reader, you can use the Adobe Reader link and download a free copy <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/humor/2010-mental-health-humor-cartoon-e-book-link>

5] Jim Hallowes' *HIGHLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE: The Trait of High Sensitivity - Insights into how to successfully navigate the unique situations and challenges that arise for people with the trait of high sensitivity and the people in their lives*. He has some helpful resources and information posted at - <http://www.highlysensitivepeople.com/>

There is a pretty good listing of traits displayed on the Home Page – for those of you who struggle with this concern, this may be able to help. I know I fit into this category and sometimes just knowing that you are not alone with what you deal with can be of great value in gaining more insight and mastery over the issues we contend with.

6] Paul Linden PhD, of Aikido of Columbus & the Columbus Center for Movement Studies has a free e-book on body awareness as a path of centering and re-empowerment. He often describes this work as bodyfulness (the complement to mindfulness). The book is titled *Reach Out - Body Awareness Training for Peacemaking - Five Easy Lessons*

Though peacefulness is usually thought of as a psychological or spiritual state, *Reach Out* approaches it as a body state. The book teaches five short, simple, practical lessons which show how to develop kindness, inner strength, and a peaceful attitude. This body state is the foundation for effective conflict resolution and peacemaking. Free download at - <http://being-in-movement.com/reach-out> [43 pages]

7] Lisa Bri is an activist, educator, writer and lots more via her website and blog for the Dissociated Survivor. She shares a lot of information and resources that pertains to this often misunderstood health concern. It is also a great resource for Peer Support as she shares links to a variety of other websites and bloggers that touch upon the issues of dissociation and all that it entails.

Please visit - www.dissociatedsurvivor.com - For my sister and brother survivors

On a personal note, this is something I still struggle with and don't like to talk about, but as part of my healing journey I know I need to stop being afraid of it – I think that the stigma and discrimination I've experienced because of my PTSD and depression health matters has caused me to try to avoid this and hide it – but no more, it is what it is.

“For us to succeed in our dreams, we need to trust our self, for there is much beauty on the way to living.” - Sharon Rain

8] Rich Bylott of Long Island, NY, friend and fellow Oprah Show participant [on Males sexually abused as children] has written a powerful play that encompasses the early stages of recovery to forgiveness, happiness and living free. It has already received incredible feedback from a few selective screenings and now I am really excited that he has commissioned my music to be a part of this worthy endeavor.

We are seeking survivors (male and female) who would like to act and/or participate in this upcoming production to be performed in New York City - casting for a female to play a major role as a therapist, as well as a male and a female for smaller speaking roles and to participate in other scenes.

Also searching for the following individuals:

- * Survivors who would like to sing in 2 major scenes (you don't have to be a professional singer to participate).
- *Extras for various scenes * Stage hand and prop design * Lead guitarist
- * Female vocalist * Two female dancers

If you are interested or know a survivor that would like to be part of this production please contact Rich at Rich@lemonmeringue.org Cell: (516) 635-1399 or Facebook - [Lemon Meringue](#)

Rich had a speaking part on her shows [and more to come] -

<http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Full-Episode-200-Adult-Men-Who-Were-Molested-Come-Forward-Video>

We met many years ago at a conference for survivors where he was displaying his art and I was performing and presenting – to reconnect via the Oprah Winfrey Shows and what it entails is really exciting. Not to mention the many other 'projects' going on from the synergy of those shows. The Surviving Spirit is creating a section on our website to showcase the creative works and advocacy efforts of the men who took part in these shows – this is both exciting and highly inspirational for what these men are doing in helping to address childhood sexual abuse.

Please keep the Surviving Spirit in mind for your next event when you need a talented and inspirational keynote or workshop presenter. Please visit our Speakers' Bureau for all of your needs - <http://speakersbureau.survivingspirit.com/>

You can help the Surviving Spirit in its Mission to help others affected by trauma, abuse and mental health concerns with your *Time, Treasure or Talent*. We are a 501[c]3 organization, so any and all contributions are tax deductible. To learn more please visit - <http://survivingspirit.com/donate.html>

“Dedicate some of your life to others. Your dedication will not be a sacrifice. It will be an exhilarating experience because it is an intense effort applied toward a meaningful end.” - Dr. Thomas Dooley

Take care, Mike

ps. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know.

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A diagnosis is not a destiny.

www.survivingspirit.com – Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts

Speakers’ Bureau - http://survivingspirit.com/Speakers_Bureau.html

www.mskinnermusic.com - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse, & Mental Health through music, resources, & advocacy

www.youtube.com/mcstrain - live performance of "Brush Away Your Tears" from TV show interview

www.new.facebook.com/profile.php?id=635415804%20 Facebook - for friends, music, & advocacy!! [Mike Skinner’s page]

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"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi