



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

Hello Folks,

February 2011

I hope all is well for everyone, no complaints here except that it is snowing – again!!! Oh well, it is what it is – especially when one lives in New Hampshire.

I can take some consolation with the knowledge that in a few weeks time I will be in Hawaii – a first for me and quite excited with this. Especially for the event I will be participating in and the company of people I will be with. Sharon Wise, David Fuller, Tonier Cain and I will be presenting a panel on - “Survivor Leadership in Developing Trauma Informed Systems” at –

The IVAT 8TH ANNUAL HAWAII CONFERENCE March 8-10 at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu HI - The Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma (IVAT) is an international resource and training center at Alliant International University. You can learn more at - <http://www.ivatcenters.org/>

We are also involved in presenting at several other events taking place during the conference – one will find us speaking at the Women’s Community Correctional Center – very cool!!!

To learn more about my dear friend Sharon Wise, please visit - http://www.alteredstatesofthearts.com/index_files/Page1599.htm

Tonier Cain has been doing some incredible things and she has a powerful film documentary called “Healing Neen” – do check this out!!! - <http://www.healingneen.com/>

David Fuller is a peer support specialist for those impacted by trauma and abuse.

I’m also excited to be going into the recording studio tomorrow to record and film two songs to post to the “Lemon Meringue” website and You Tube to help in the promotion of this play in raising awareness on childhood abuse. We will be performing the songs “Brush Away Your Tears” and “Lemon Meringue”. My friends Chris Schindler on bass guitar and Roy D’Innocenzo on lead guitar along with several other friends to sing the choruses for the songs will be part of this endeavor – this will be fun and it will help in breaking down the silence and shame associated with childhood sexual abuse. To do all of the above mentioned things in the company of friends is truly a blessing.

“Friendship is a Sheltering Tree” – Samuel Taylor Coolidge

Please note that both of these songs are currently posted at the website – “Brush Away Your Tears” is off my album “Waitin’ For a Train” and the version of “Lemon Meringue” was recorded off of a cell phone while putting the song together – it is only a rough sketch of the song.

You can learn more about this play of a man struggling to overcome the effects of childhood sexual abuse at - <http://lemonmeringue.org/>

Lots going on with the Surviving Spirit – please check out our new banner at the website - www.survivingspirit.com designed by our own Barbara Burke who certainly exemplifies what a Surviving Spirit is all about – she is proof positive of the healing power of the creative arts. Please read the Logo Design posted at the site and you’ll understand why.

We also had the good fortune to have Jolan Rivera, the Assistant Professor for the School of Community Economic Development at Southern NH University teach a workshop on development and grant writing for our nonprofit – it was insightful and ever so helpful. We even brought our ‘teacher’ an apple for class!! He will be doing lots more to help us in our goals and mission to help those impacted by trauma, abuse and mental health concerns – this is great!!!

We’ve also added a lot of new resources and more to come - <http://www.survivingspirit.com/resources.html>

And here’s some more fellow Surviving Spirits doing good things to help others:

1] Our good friends at Altered States of the Arts – Promoting Recovery Through Art have some great quotes from some well known authors and artists – we know the Creative Arts help us in our healing journey, but it doesn’t hurt to remind ourselves of that.

“The Power of Art to Heal”

http://www.alteredstatesofthearts.com/index_files/Page7244.htm

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” – Maya Angelou.

2] Sound Therapy Radio -"Be Kind to the Mind" <http://soundtherapyradio.com/>

Sound Therapy delves into the intricate world of the creative mind, interweaving great music, lively guest interviews and insightful discussion. Join host J Peachy and guests as they share fresh, inspiring perspectives on creative expression, issues of mental wellness, health & disability, and offer alternatives in self-care and personal well being.

Sound Therapy You Tube – “Stand up for Mental Health” - Melanie Rose talks about her comedy and how she has used it to turn around her personal circumstances.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/soundtherapyradio#p/u/8/i4Wsx1aMFyI>

3] R.E.A.C.H. Growth Workshops [Realize, Educate, Act, Create, Help] - “Rising Above Stigma and Injustice” <http://www.reachworkshops.org/>

Chrys Rosen believes that everyone has some innate talent or gift that can be awakened with gentle encouragement and support. She sees those with mental health issues as people that often display great abilities and creativity. Unfortunately, their talents are often overlooked and replaced by some version of societal or self stigma. She is convinced that given the right environment and support that people can creatively achieve and contribute to society in positive ways. [And we at the Surviving Spirit echo those beliefs]

4] On Point – WBUR w/ Tom Ashbrook - Senator Scott Brown and Male Sexual Abuse

<http://onpoint.wbur.org/2011/02/21/sexual-abuse-brown> - you will see a tab to click on and listen to the show.

With guests –

Mikele Rauch, trauma therapist with Brookline Psychological Services in Brookline, MA. She's a member of MaleSurvivor.org, working with male and female victims of sexual abuse and religious and physical trauma.

Howard Fradkin, psychologist, working with male survivors of sexual abuse. He is on the board of directors of Malesurvivor.org, a non-profit organization that helps men and boys overcome the trauma of sexual abuse.

Jarrod Noftsgger, survivor of childhood and teen sex abuse

All of the guests did GREAT, as did the call in listeners – lots of helpful information was shared. And it was neat to hear folks on the radio who you know.

5] Safe Harbor – Alternative Mental Health <http://www.alternativementalhealth.com/>

Thousands of people around the world have recovered from mental disorders and now enjoy the simple pleasures of a drug-free life. Most were told this was impossible. Many others have been able to significantly reduce their dependency on psychiatric medication. Commonly these people find that underlying their "mental" disorders are medical problems, allergies, toxic conditions, nutritional imbalances, poor diets, lack of exercise, or other treatable physical conditions.

Their website has testimonials, over 100 articles, and a directory of alternative mental health practitioners. You can also get information from their bookstore, support groups, email lists, and free monthly newsletter.

6] Charles Sakai's mental health blog - "Up and Down Time" is connected with the DBSA [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance] Colorado state organization and contains lots of helpful news items, concerns and interests associated with mood

disorders. I met Charles back in 2009 at the Alternatives Conference – another good guy helping others with useful information. <http://upanddowntime.blogspot.com/>

7] Testimony - Inside Stories of Mental Health Care - <http://www.insidestories.org/>

The project started in 1999 when over 50 users or former users of the British Mental healthcare system were filmed talking about their experiences of care between the 1930s and 1985. The interviews are now kept in the archives of the British Library, and are a valuable educational resource for anyone wishing to learn about institutional life from an inside perspective. Now in its second phase, Testimony aims to use this material, both on this website and within a series of exhibitions and events, to increase understanding and challenge attitudes towards those who use mental health services.

8] Medical News Today - PTSD research findings - Hormone May Explain PTSD Risk In Women - "Post-traumatic stress disorder is associated with PACAP and the PAC1 receptor." <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/217401.php>

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

<http://speakersbureau.survivingspirit.com/> - Speakers' Bureau

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Surviving-Spirit/138180506227288> – Facebook – Surviving Spirit

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

www.new.facebook.com/profile.php?id=635415804%20 – Facebook - Michael Skinner - Friends, Music & Advocacy

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