



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Illness

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

Hi Folks,

Well...we are officially in the summer season; but with the nonstop rain we've had here recently in New England, one would have thought the monsoon season was upon us again – not today though. A great day weather-wise....and personally a good day for me when I am able to complete this newsletter – as mentioned before - a labor of love...but it still holds challenges for one who is still learning how to master the keyboard, let alone the computer!!! Slowly but surely, I am getting there.

I like to think that we here at the Surviving Spirit are also - *slowly but surely* moving along. Very excited that our website has been visited by 62 countries since November 2010 – wow!!! We have reached all of North America, most of South America & Europe, many parts of Asia, and several countries in both Africa & the Middle East. That is pretty cool.

Our web store is also coming along – we have posted some great items recently in the Books, Music, Art, Crafts, Videos & Quilts and more to come. Please check it out when you can - <http://store.survivingspirit.com/webstore/>

On a personal note I'll be appearing on a Radio Show to promote the Surviving Spirit & what we are about along with my music and advocacy endeavors on July 14th, 8pm Eastern Standard Time – here's the info:

[Community Matters - Online Talk Radio with Bill Murray](#)

“The host of "Community Matters" and "Stop Child Abuse Now" (SCAN), public safety advocate Bill Murray, has a special mission: to address the issues of child abuse. The primary goal of the show is *education, prevention and support for recovery*.

The show airs Monday through Friday for an hour and a half, and then on Sundays, we are on air for two hours. All shows start at 8pm Eastern, 7pm Central, 6pm Mountain and 5pm Pacific.

Everyone is welcome to join us by calling in, or you can listen on line and join the live chat room that is open during the show. All shows are archived, so you can listen anytime.”

Here's a great quote that exemplifies those who we share in these newsletters, our website resources and to all of you on this mailing list.

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen." - Debra Gray

Here are a few creative endeavors to share from Deborah Hall & Dr. Jaime Romo – we hope in time to be able to promote their creative healing expressions from our web store. Please note – we have always been about inclusiveness – one does not have to list their creative works with us in order for us to promote them via the newsletter – so please send us your info - contact-us@SurvivingSpirit.com

1] [Singing Heart Jewelry](#) - Handcrafted jewelry designs by Deborah Hall [her creative works **are incredible!!!**]

“My inspiration comes from nature and her many gifts - shells, stones, bones, seeds, pearls, wood, sea glass and gemstones, which I find on my strolls along the beach, or source in Africa and around the world. Many of the beads are hand made in remote villages using methods that have been employed for hundreds of years.

My studio and home are at the foot of the Kogelberg Mountains at the southernmost tip of Africa, set in a nature reserve.”

2] [Dr. Jaime Romo – author, advocate & educator](#)

Jaime promotes healing from abuse and the prevention of child sexual abuse, particularly abuse by religious authorities or in the context of religious settings.

He has created a wonderful Workbook – *“Healing the Sexually Abused Heart: A Workbook for Survivors, Thrivers and Supporters”*

“Don't let abuse dominate your life or the life of someone you know! If you are a survivor of sexual abuse, this workbook is your key to a new life. Written by survivors themselves, it offers you insight and resources that can lead to your recovery and healing. If you seek to support the life-long journey of survivors, you will find here the foundation to truly make a difference. What are the stages of recovery? What can you do to reach these stages? What can you do to help others?”

I'm honored to know Jaime as a fellow participant on the Oprah Winfrey Shows that focused on males sexually abused as children – another good guy doing good things to help others.

3] What can I say about Chato Stewart? Lots!!! Chato is another great example of someone doing wonderful things to address the stigma and discrimination around the issues of “mental illness”. He is a husband, father and mental health advocate. “He is an artist and the cartoonist behind the Mental Health Humor cartoons. He creates positive, provoking, and sometimes even funny cartoons! The cartoons are drawn from his personal experience of living with Bipolar Disorder. Mr. Stewart strongly believes that there is power behind humor. His motto is humor gives *help, hope and healing*. His goal and mission is to tap into humor and use it as a positive tool to cope with the serious and debilitating effects of mental illness.”

[YouTube - Chato Stewart Stand Up For Mental Health Comic at the DBSA 2011 for Bipolar Disorder](#) 9:32 minutes long – this is very funny folks!!!

& [Chato Stewart's FREE E-BOOK | Mental Health Humor](#)

4] From my good friend Sara Martel, fellow board member of the Surviving Spirit and one heck of a published writer comes these helpful, healing resources -

[YouTube - The newest way to work out - w/ Laughter](#) – 1:03 minutes long w/ more videos posted

[YouTube - Laughing Yoga Laughter Exercise 1](#) with Piers Cross 2:35 minutes long – he too shares more resources from his page

[YouTube - Laughter Yoga Exercise](#) - Dr. Madan Kataria 4:47 minutes long – with an additional 13 video postings

5] The Internet can be a powerful tool and resource – here’s an organization that can help with all kinds of social activities to get out and about and break free of *couch potato – itis*.

[Meetup](#) – “Meetup is the world's largest network of local groups. Meetup makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face. More than 2,000 groups get together in local communities each day, each one with the goal of improving themselves or their communities.

Meetup's mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. Meetup believes that people can change their personal world, or the whole world, by organizing themselves into groups that are powerful enough to make a difference.”

6] I’ve known Howard D. Trachtman for many years now and glad to know him as another great example of someone doing the right in helping others – here is some helpful information and his reaching out looking for more resources to share.

“I maintain a directory of warm lines - compassionate peer-staffed listening lines at [Warmlines](#) Please share this resource with others and let me know of any I may have missed. Also at that website is sign up for free Yahoo Groups, one on warm lines and another on peer-run-respites, an alternative to hospitalization.

You may also want to visit [Restraint Free World](#) - a collection of resources on r&s elimination. Please feel free to suggest new content for the website.

I am also the NAMI Consumer Council Restraint & Seclusion [Elimination] Committee Chair. You are welcome to join our listserv. We also have monthly toll-free conference calls on the 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm.”

Co-Executive Director Metro Boston Recovery Learning Community and Executive Director Boston Resource Center & Hope Recovery Learning Center c/o Solomon Carter Fuller DMH GROUND FLOOR 85 East Newton Street Boston, MA 02118-2340

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www.MetroBostonRLC.org

7] Here’s a few helpful Peer Support Resources via Facebook – [Unveiling the STIGMA: Mental Illness - Depression - Suicide Prevention](#)

8] & [Bipolars Supporting Bipolars](#) – peers helping peers

9] This powerful article comes to us from my good friend and valued Advisory Board Member, Pat Nemece, PsyD, CRC, CPRP - <http://www.patnemece.com>

It is a *long read* [twelve page to print out!!] but well worth it.

[The Long Shadow of Trauma](#) – *Childhood abuse may be our number one public health issue* - by Mary Sykes Wylie, Ph.D. - a senior editor of the [Psychotherapy Networker](#)

“Unfortunately, the issue remains an uphill fight. Politically and socially, child abuse continues to be a taboo subject. Van der Kolk recalls sitting at a dinner next to former Surgeon General David Satcher in 1999, who told him about a new plan to address the adolescent suicide epidemic in the United States. "That's just great," van der Kolk replied, and began telling him about the Trauma Center's interventions to stem an adolescent suicide epidemic in South Boston. Mentioning the ACE studies and the astonishing correlation between child abuse and suicide, van de Kolk added, "I'm so glad you'll be making this connection publicly, so that the issue of child maltreatment will get more attention." Satcher responded, "Well, no, we left that out of the report—it's way too sensitive a topic."

We've come a long way in our understanding of trauma. No one any longer denies the fact that wars can ruin the lives of soldiers and their families. **But when it comes to**

physical and emotional violence within the family, advocates like van der Kolk insist that society continues to avoid the grim evidence. As he puts it, "We don't seem ready to acknowledge that the largest danger to our women and children isn't Al-Qaeda, but the people who are supposed to love and take care of them."

10] I had the good fortune to perform a few weeks ago at the [Creating Connections through Dialogue](#) Conference held in Beverly, MA at Endicott College – it was a powerful event filled with lots of great workshops and presentations; one of which I had the good fortune to witness and I would like to share some information with you about this truly powerful play. Elizabeth Kenny created quite the buzz with her performance and I am sure you will be hearing more from her and her story of hope and healing.

[Sick](#) – “Elizabeth Kenny was a healthy thirty-two year-old woman who went to the doctor for a common ailment. A year and a half later, she was being escorted by hospital orderlies to a coffee shop along with the rest of the level 5 patients from the psych ward.

Sick, a new performance written and performed by Seattle monologist Elizabeth Kenny, and collaboratively created with New City Theater Artistic Director John Kazanjian, explores a patient’s two-year odyssey inside the most advanced healthcare system in the world — an odyssey that almost killed her. It investigates how treatment by well-meaning, sophisticated practitioners for a common gynecological issue plunged her into a downward spiral through the complex medical and mental health establishments.”

11] Katie Jay website helps to reinforce what Elizabeth Kenney has to share -
- [Daughter of the American Drug Companies - Katie Jay’s web page](#)

“The most vital thing a human can do with suffering is learn from it. In thirty-five short years I’ve had just about every terrible thing you can imagine come across my path. Some experiences I brought on myself and some were brought upon me. The journey to sobriety is about letting go of those experiences and all the hatred and shame attached to them.

Within every tragic tale is a happy ending begging to be heard. My happy ending is waiting for me and I will not rest until I arrive there.”

12] [Spread the Word to End the Word](#)

“Everyone has a gift and the world would be better off if we recognized it.” – *Timothy Shriver, Chairman and CEO of Special Olympics.*

I pledge and support the elimination of the derogatory use of the r-word from everyday speech and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

The R-word is the word 'retard(ed)'. Why does it hurt? The R-word hurts because it is exclusive. It’s offensive. It’s derogatory. **The R-word is hate speech.** See why supporters think the R-Word is hurtful when used in jokes or as part of everyday speech.

How "retardation" went from a clinical description to a word of derision

When they were originally introduced, the terms “mental retardation” or “mentally retarded” were medical terms with a specifically clinical connotation; however, the pejorative forms, “retard” and “retarded” have been used widely in today’s society to degrade and insult people with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, when “retard” and “retarded” are used as synonyms for “dumb” or “stupid” by people without disabilities, it only reinforces painful stereotypes of people with intellectual disabilities being less valued members of humanity.”

13] Help Wanted:

a] [The Zany Angels Dance Theatre Company](#) is an accomplished and consciously healing dance theatre company looking for administrative and managerial volunteers.

Are you passionate about the Arts? Do you want to be of service to the Arts?
Do you believe that the Arts can change and heal survivors and allies of trauma?
Do you have a few hours a week to make a difference by bringing soul rocking dance and theatre to others?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please contact Rythea at Rythea@crocker.com or 413-586-7390

You can also purchase Rythea Lee’s powerful book on healing, “*Trauma into Truth: Gutsy Healing and Why It's Worth It*” at our web store - <http://store.survivingspirit.com/webstore/books.html>

b] [Azalea Blossom Inc.](#) - Dedicated to the awareness, prevention, and education of domestic violence and child abuse through music, multi-media, and the Arts.

Margaret Bernstein & the good folks at Azalea Blossom are also looking for board members and some volunteers.

PO Box 273 Rensselaerville, NY 12147
Telephone: 1-518-797-9737 Fax: 1-518-797-9537
contact@azaleablossom.com

We hope to have Margaret’s incredible music posted to our web store soon.

I can personally and professionally vouch for both of these folks and the organizations that they are a part of.

c] The Surviving Spirit is also looking for a few dedicated & passionate board members and volunteers. We can use your time and your talent; what creative gifts can you share

with us? What business skills and acumen can you offer to help us achieve our Mission and our Vision for the Surviving Spirit? Do you have time to help us? Please let us know.
contact-us@survivingspirit.com 603-625-2136

A shout out and a most gracious ***Thank You*** to Barb Stadtmiller for helping to bring our accounting into the 21st Century and *out of the shoebox!!!!*

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.

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

[The Surviving Spirit Speakers' Bureau](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

[Michael Skinner Music](#) - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse, & Mental Health through music, resources, & advocacy

[Michael Skinner Music Facebook Page](#) - Friends, Music & Advocacy

[Michael Skinner Music YouTube Page - live performance of "Brush Away Your Tears" – a song written for those hurt as children](#)

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