



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

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

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

Hi Folks,

I hope all is well for everyone...lots going on here, which can be a good thing, but at times it can feel quite overwhelming, especially when we have come into the Holiday Season and what that can represent. Also, for those of us in the geographical areas that are now seeing less daylight, that lack of sunshine can play havoc upon so many [yours truly] with Seasonal Affective Disorder [SAD]. Thank goodness for the invention of those light boxes!!! That said, it is also a time for celebrating and giving thanks for what we do have to be grateful for – and in this newsletter, *the Surviving Spirit* hopes to touch upon some of that with resources and information to share that can help us not only survive the holidays, but thrive – because we all deserve that. Those of us who have been impacted by trauma, abuse and/or a mental health concern have already shown great strength and resiliency in our abilities to survive overwhelming circumstances and obstacles, but it doesn't hurt to learn how we can move past these trying times and build new memories and traditions.

“The most beautiful people I've known are those who have known trials, have known struggles, have known loss, and have found their way out of the depths.” - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

1] “Surviving the Holidays” – [The California Black Women's Health Project \[CABWHP\]](#) – Healing for the Mind, Body & Soul - publishes issue guides with thorough analyses of health policy issues addressing mental, emotional and physical health. [Incredible website – lots of information & resources!!!]

2] [“Dread nots: surviving the holidays with spirit intact”](#) - Escape the holiday dreads: handling family and stress - by Marcia Eckerd, Ph.D.

3] Gift From Within - PTSD Resources for Survivors and Caregivers - [How to Cope with PTSD and the Holiday Season](#) – Great tips and advice from Dr. Frank Ochberg, Dr. Angie Panos and others. [This generated a lot of responses when we shared this last year]

4] [PTSD: Why You Need to Tell the Truth](#) – “My husband and I recovered from PTSD. We have the scars to show for our efforts. But we are here. We are reasonably sane and happy. We made it. You will too.” Also from their website –

a] [Holiday Celebrating with Post Traumatic Stress](#) b] [Holiday Survival Tips for Dysfunctional Families](#)

5] [“Surviving the Holidays”](#) - by Grief Share, an international network of grief recovery support groups.

“In past years, the Christmas holiday season may have been a time of great anticipation and excitement ... but this year, the prospect of facing the holidays without your loved one may cause anxiety and dread. You are not alone. Here you can connect with support, encouragement and advice to survive the holidays.”

“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.” - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

6] Find help and healing for the hurt of separation and divorce. [Divorce Care - “Surviving the Holidays”](#)

Divorce Care is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life’s most difficult experiences. Don’t go through separation or divorce alone.

7] [Tidings of Conflict and Joy: Surviving the Holidays](#) - By Brett R. Williams, MFT

“Help with the emotions late in the year typically focuses on the “holiday blues,” but there is very little press regarding the tension and conflicts that erupt during a season that’s supposed to be about peace and joy. **Intimate relationships are the proverbial canary in the coal mine — the first to be affected by stress and tension.**”

*Please note that we need resources to post for our **Surviving the Holidays** and **Grief Recovery** sections of the *Surviving Spirit* website that we are expanding upon - <http://survivingspirit.com/resources.html> – so please do send us at that info ASAP to Mike.Skinner@SurvivingSpirit.com . **Thanks!!!***

I am always amazed at how many people do indeed reach out to you, whether you have a website, a blog, a published article, musical cd...whatever the medium...and you freely share what you have experienced in life with the hope that it may help someone else. This resource was sent to me by a college student who had used my [own website](#) for resources and information to help in understanding her dad better [a Viet Nam vet] and she used some of the resources for her studies – pretty cool!! She really did dig deeply into my website as she read all of the articles posted there and after reading one in which I vented my frustration of speaking out and how it impacted you on the ‘*dating scene*’, she offered this resource to help me and asked if I would share it as a link to help others [and I will].

FYI – this is the articles she read that helped elicit her response. [Many Voices – Words of Hope for People Recovering From Trauma & Dissociation](#)

8] “The process for coping with PTSD is difficult one but those who understand it have a better chance at dealing with it and nurturing a long lasting relationship.” - [Online Resources For Dating with PTSD](#) Folks, the fact that this is posted at a website for dating is a huge step in helping to break down stigma and discrimination.

9] Dr. Cindee Grace (naturopath) is offering her e-book - [Holistic Self-Care for Post Traumatic Stress and Dissociative Identity](#) online to the public for free.

“Cindee Grace has written a treasure trove of healing wisdom, inventive, user-friendly technique and mind-body-spirit methodology for people wrestling with posttraumatic stress and dissociative identity.....this book will be a godsend to scores of survivors of even the worst kinds of trauma and abuse.”

Belleruth Naparstek, LISW, author of “[Invisible Heroes: Survivors of Trauma and How They Heal](#)”

For more information, please visit - www.archive.org/details/HolisticSelf-careForPost-traumaticStressDissociativeIdentity

10] “Emotional abuse scars the heart and damages the soul.” [You Carry the Cure In Your Own Heart](#)

Attorney and author Andrew Vachss has devoted his life to protecting children. Parade Magazine asked Vachss, an expert on the subject of child abuse, to examine perhaps one of its most complex and widespread forms - emotional abuse: What it is, what it does to children, what can be done about it.

“Emotional abuse of children can lead, in adulthood, to addiction, rage, a severely damaged sense of self and an inability to truly bond with others. But if it happened to you there is a way out.” - [Andrew Vachss](#)

"Many of us spend our whole lives running from feeling with the mistaken belief that you can not bear the pain. But you have already borne the pain. What you have not done is feel all you are beyond that pain." - Kahlil Gibran

["Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do." – Confucius](#)

The Surviving Spirit has long advocated for raising awareness on the issues and concerns of trauma, abuse and mental health and how it affects all of us, regardless of the gender – we also recognize that for far too long the trauma and the abuse that males experience has long been overlooked by far too many, here are some resources to help shed some more light on to these areas of concern.

11] The P. Luna Foundation Proudly Presents - Male Abuse Awareness Week - December 1st through 8th, 2011

For more Information on this great cause to help abused boys and young men go to - <http://help4guys.org/>

12] [Tyler Perry's open letter to the Penn State 11- year-old victim/survivor](#) [very powerful!!!]

Perry writes to a boy involved in the Penn State scandal to tell him he is a courageous survivor. - "Do you know that at the young age of 11 you had more courage than all the adults who let you down?"

As part of the Oprah Winfrey Shows last year on [Males Sexually Abused as Children](#), I was truly impressed with how gracious and caring Tyler Perry was off camera - one never truly knows how so many of the Hollywood *stars* really are as people, but he is the real deal and down to earth – as was Oprah.

13] Champ Choga [Curtis St. John] was also part of those shows and here is a really good interview with him and Dr. Richard Gartner of [Male Survivor](#) on CNN - [Cnnradioreportsa11](#) talking about the Penn State abuse and more – 8:28 minutes long

14] [Anxiety & Depression Magazine | Men with Anxiety & Depression | Fall 2011 | | bphope](#) - Guys diagnosed with both depression and anxiety, take a double blow to their masculine self-image. In the clinch, though, accepting the fact and asking for help shows true guts.

“Fear is really self-defeating,” he says. “You need to perceive your willingness to seek treatment to deal with depression and anxiety as a sign of strength. Asking for support is the manly thing to do, a sign that you’re taking control of your life.”

15] The [2nd Bi-Annual 24 hr TAALK-A-THON](#) to End Child Sexual Abuse takes place on December 10th and 11th, 2011

They will host a 24 hour internet radio show with guest speakers each hour covering a variety of topics related to child sexual abuse awareness, prevention and support. Hear 40+ speakers from around the world with the brightest minds and the biggest hearts. It's an event you won't want to miss!

The Surviving Spirit is proud to be a part of this with [Cici Porter](#) [our Speakers' Bureau, [artist](#) and [musician](#)] and Michael Skinner both taking part in this ground-breaking event.

16] Judith Haire is one of our authors [[“Don't Mind Me”](#)] and a dear friend based in the UK. She is co-editing a new book dealing with the very sensitive subject of suicide. She is looking for contributors to share their stories of surviving a suicide attempt or of being profoundly affected by the suicide or suicide attempt of a loved one. The book proceeds will go to charity. If you would like to contact Judith to discuss this further please write to her via her contact page at www.judithhaire.vpweb.co.uk

17] Last but certainly not least – a time to share of the passing of a dear friend and fellow Advocate - Glenn Koons, a big man with a big heart and a gentle soul – he will be missed by so many for all that he did to help others and also for being a good guy. I shall miss my talks with him on music, advocacy....and yes our talks of dating women and so much more...The Alternatives Conference this year surely missed his presence.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved. It is in the most trying times that our real character is shaped and revealed.” - Helen Keller

“Passing Leaves” – [Gayle Bluebird](#)

Glenn was the same everywhere - Big bold dependable, He eased into every situation - Never announced or scheduled ahead, He was there just When you needed him, Lending a hand, Fixing, adjusting, Microphones, calling Names up to stage and remembering them - We will miss him, like the seasons that imperceptibly Change - The leaves that fall With summer ending, Leaves of gold and red Gifts, we say thank you for, and waiting for winter frost we think of Glen among the leaves, our forever Friend

15] [Glenn Koons – Death of an Advocate](#) – Pete Earley is a storyteller who has penned 13 books including the New York Times bestseller [The Hot House](#) and the 2007 Pulitzer Prize finalist [Crazy: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness](#).

“Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone.”- Margaret J. Wheatley

Thanks & 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 - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Speakers’ Bureau](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

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

