



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,

Greetings to all and wishing you a belated Happy New Year – 2012 wow!! Another new year and that corny and clichéd phrase, *time flies*, does ring true when we stop to think of all that we have been involved in and trying to do in our respective lives, both personally and professionally. And there is never enough time in the day to do all that we sometimes want to do. But then again, maybe we are trying to do too much and we need to take time to stop and “*smell the coffee*”.

When we are trying to raise awareness on the issues and concerns of trauma, abuse and mental health, I know that many of us try to tackle and take on too much. The issues are important...but we need to take care of ourselves in these endeavors. I'm aware of this and yet can be as guilty as the next person in not taking time for myself – this year I plan to work on that dilemma. New Year's Day had me ‘*visiting*’ the hospital because of severe chest pains and this found me being tested by all kinds of neat devices and being ‘wired up’ to many more. They liked me so much, that my visit was extended for another day for more tests – the good news, I'm okay and it was indeed stress related from my “work-a-holism”, some serious family matters **and** the concerns brought on by the recent diagnosis of my girlfriend's breast cancer.

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." Albert Einstein

Cancer – how that word instills so much fear into us. I know it has caused a lot of concern for my dear partner, Mary...again the good news, it was caught early and the two surgeries seemed to have removed all that was cancerous. She still has to face the chemotherapy and radiation to make sure it is all gone. I have also been mindful of how two good friends of mine, Ed and Patricia, are also dealing with their respective cancer concerns.

Mary, Ed and Patricia are indeed ***Surviving Spirits*** and they have long exemplified all that is good in people by their respective advocacy efforts to help others. Because I know them so well, I am also aware of their trauma and abuse histories and that is why I am sharing this with you.

I have known for a long time how trauma and abuse affects our physical health in so many ways – what my girlfriend and my friends are now struggling with only brings that

point home front and center. So it is important to gently remind ourselves to be aware and take care of ourselves if you have known trauma and abuse in your life.

“When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure.” Peter Marshall

With that in mind, here are some helpful links related to these concerns along with some other great resources.

1] Early Trauma, Diet and Cancer: Holocaust study probes links - <http://healthland.time.com/2009/10/29/early-trauma-diet-and-cancer-holocaust-study-probes-links/>

2] Childhood trauma and cancer connection - Google Scholar [lots of resources/info]

http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=childhood+trauma+and+cancer+connection&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholar

3] Please Google - **childhood trauma and cancer connection** and you will find all kinds of information

4] Trauma and Chronic Disease - <http://www.nicabm.com/trauma-and-chronic-disease/1/confirmed/>

5] Study Links Child Abuse, Cancer Risk - CBS News - <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/06/25/health/main5113472.shtml>

“Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime.” Herbert Ward

6] From our good friends at the - [Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center](#) – a webinar on "Poverty and Mental Illness" with Amy Zulich and Donita Diamata

Thursday, February 16, 2012 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Pacific 2:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m. Eastern

In this webinar, we will examine the impact poverty has on mental health and well-being and the complacency we have as a society and within the mental health system that people diagnosed with mental health issues are generally poor. This issue is part of a greater, on-going conversation intended to prompt change in the mental health system and create supports that help people.

Web Access: www.readytalk.com/ Code: 8200138

Phone Access: 1.866.305.2467 Code: 518298#

You must log into both the web interface and teleconference to see and hear the presentation. To receive an invite to register for these events, send an e-mail to: rsvppeerlink@gmail.com with the title of the webinar as the subject.

“As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation - either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course.” ~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

7] This website is dedicated to Morgan Leslie Segal, whose tragic suicide might have been prevented if she had access to better information.

[Helpguide](#) helps you help yourself to better mental and emotional health with easy-to-read, ad-free articles that offer information, hope, and effective self-help choices.

“Healing comes with the gift of life...but we must seek it in each other to unleash its full potential.” R L Pete Housman

8] [The Veterans Crisis Line](#) connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, [chat online](#), or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

9] [Recovery is Real: Patient-Turned-Mentor Shares Story of Hope and Offers Support to Others](#)

Howard Trachtman can serve as a role model to us all. He lives to tell the tale of an incredible journey of recovery from schizoaffective disorder. If there is ever any doubt that recovery is possible, we can all be inspired by this story. The extremely gifted Howard was just 16-years-old when he entered MIT to study artificial intelligence and management and build robots. Two years into the program, he had his first psychotic break.

On a personal note, I am honored to know Howard....another good guy who is busy helping others.

10] Our friend and valued Board member Rachel Grant has written some great thoughts and insights around the issues of abandonment – please do check it out – [I've Got Abandonment Issues](#)

Rachel, is a Trauma Recovery & Relationship Coach, who shares resources, personal stories, communication techniques, and strategies for overcoming past abuse or improving relationships and communication.

“Your instincts may tell you that you can’t survive if you experience feelings. But they are leftover child instincts. They’re the ones that first told you to freeze your feelings. They themselves are frozen and haven’t grown with the rest of you. These instincts don’t know that you’re far more capable of learning to cope with overwhelming emotion now than when you were a [child].” Beyond Betrayal by Richard Gartner

Rachel will also be writing a guest article next month on Caring for the Caregiver - So many are helping their friends, partners, spouses, family members, etc, etc, that many times they forget to take care of themselves. If you have information and resources for us to share, please send it to Mike.Skinner@SurvivingSpirit.com

And while we are talking about guest articles and commentaries, that is something we want to do more of this year with the newsletter, so please send us your thoughts and ideas. We look forward to hearing from you – thanks!!

"Society cannot understand because victims don't tell; victims don't tell because society does not understand." Mary Ann Ricciardi

11] “The Single Biggest Barrier to Resolving the Child Sexual Abuse Epidemic is Silence” and the folks at [TAALK](#) [Talk About Abuse to Liberate Kids] have once again pulled off an incredible non-stop [24 hour TAALK-a-thon](#) Diane Cranley, Svava Brooks and the rest of the staff did an incredible job with this show. There are so many great guests and interviews to listen to.

We at the Surviving Spirit are grateful that they included our own Cici Porter and Mike Skinner as their guests. Scroll down to hear Mike at 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm December 10th and Cici at 5:30 am-6:00 am December 11th

Cici is also part of our [Speakers’ Bureau](#) and one of our featured musicians and artists in our [web store](#) – please do take a look.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men and women." - Frederick Douglass

12] Speaking of the Surviving Spirit, one of our authors Linda Leone has won a Book of the Year Award [Autobiographical Abuse] from [Books and Authors](#) for her book ["ESCAPE: How I Fight the Demons of My Past and Win"](#) – this powerful story is available for sale from our web store. Well done Linda!!!!

The Surviving Spirit is also very excited with a whole new listing of books and art to share in next month's newsletter – some great stuff from some great people offering *Hope, Healing and Help* through their creative endeavors. We hope to have them all posted within the next few weeks.

"Each of us has a gift to share...none are insignificant...the gift of laughter, the gift of strength, the gift of love...let the light of your gift shine for all to see and feel...you never know who might need it." - Michael Powell

13] [The Icarus Project](#) - Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness

We are a network of people living with and/or affected by experiences that are often diagnosed and labeled as psychiatric conditions. We believe these experiences are mad gifts needing cultivation and care, rather than diseases or disorders. By joining together as individuals and as a community, the intertwined threads of madness, creativity, and collaboration can inspire hope and transformation in an oppressive and damaged world. Participation in The Icarus Project helps us overcome alienation and tap into the true potential that lies between brilliance and madness.

"Dance as though no one is watching you. Love as though you have never been hurt before. Sing as though no one can hear you. Live as though heaven is on earth." – Mark Twain

*We found this to be a **very cool idea** – a Survivor's Vacation retreat – boy could we all use one of these!!!*

14] 1st Annual Survivors Rejoice Retreat/Vacation

When: Meeting: June 16, 2012, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm; After-Meeting Events: June 16/17

Where: A Holiday Inn Resort located in Kissimmee (near Orlando), Florida (USA). (Note: For those wishing to stay on-site, we have secured a special rate for 2-bedroom suites and the Resort has waived the resort fee.)

Brief Description of Retreat: This interactive retreat/vacation is being planned by survivors for survivors and is expected to be both informative and uplifting, where professional speakers will speak about Domestic Violence, Rape/Sexual Abuse, PTSD/Disassociative Identity Disorder, the healing journey and dignity.

To Register and for Additional Information: Please go to the following password-protected web page: http://www.kwiksurveys.com/?s=OCDEHH_721fb76d . A password box will appear and you must type in the password: survivors . (Note: All information that is entered is also password-protected and can only be viewed by the Administrator.) If for some reason you are unable to access the registration and information link/page, you may also contact Bridgette Rodriguez/Survivors Rejoice at

brid1234@aol.com , 786-308-1739, and/or
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/groups/173111932781563/> .

Tom Scales of [Voice Today](#) will be one of the featured speakers - VOICE Today is breaking the silence and cycle of child sexual abuse worldwide through Awareness, Prevention, and Healing. Child Sexual Abuse is a silent epidemic. 1 in 4 Girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthday, only 1 in 10 will ever tell and 90% of abuse is by someone they know love and trust! There are an estimated 39,000,000 survivors in the US that need a VOICE!

15] And finally our good friend, fellow board member and computer savvy person, Lynn Tolson [author of [Beyond the Tears](#)] has set us up with a Twitter account – yup....we are moving ahead in the social media world. Don't worry, we are only sharing weekly 'tweets' of helpful resources and news – so if you want to follow us, please visit - <https://twitter.com/#!/MichaelSkinne11>

All the best to you and yours & 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

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[The Surviving Spirit Speakers' Bureau](#)

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