



*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*

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter June 2012

*"I have learned that some of the nicest people you'll ever meet are those who have suffered a traumatic event or loss. I admire them for their strength, but most especially for their life gratitude - a gift often taken for granted by the average person in society." - Sasha Azevedo*

Hi Folks,

In the last issue we spotlighted the recognition of May as Mental Health Awareness Month; the month of June is being recognized by many as a time to focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] Awareness. We at the *Surviving Spirit* agree, although we like to say Post Traumatic Stress [PTS] and not use the word "disorder". And as noted in the last issue, there is a growing group of concerned folks and organizations looking to change the word "disorder" to *injury*...whatever terminology you choose, it is important that we learn all that we can about it. It has been said before, but "*knowledge is power*" and by educating ourselves about the long term effects of post traumatic stress, we help not only ourselves, but those we care for and interact with in our daily lives.

There have been a lot of inroads made for raising awareness on post traumatic stress, but we still have a long way to go in erasing the stigma and discrimination that can still be associated for those affected by PTS – whether they are a child abuse survivor, survivors of sexual assault, military veterans, survivors of disasters and so much more. It is real and the impacts can be felt throughout one's lifetime. The good news, there are all kinds of helping treatments and ways to heal from the effects of traumatic injuries, whatever they may be. Please do visit some of these helpful resources in educating yourself and others about post traumatic stress. Let's try to remove some of the fears and worries that can surround trauma and abuse.

*"Only Thing We Have to Fear Is Fear Itself" - Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Speaking for myself, learning all that I have [and still learning] how my own trauma and abuse experiences have shaped my life, has helped me to grow as a person and to understand that I am not "crazy" or "weak"...just that horrible things were done to me and that did affect my development, mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually as a young boy and teenager. Now when I am "triggered"...I have learned to recognize that this will pass, to not fight it anymore, to just be in the moment...and if that means I need

to deal with the sadness, the losses or the fears....well that is okay because they are only temporary and it will pass.

*“Sometimes a breakdown can be the beginning of a kind of breakthrough, a way of living in advance through a trauma that prepares you for a future of radical transformation. - Cherrie Moraga*

Here are some resources and information to share in regards to some advocacy and education efforts being undertaken by some of us here at the Surviving Spirit: Lynn Tolson was a recent guest on the Michal Madison Show last Tuesday and I will be a guest this Tuesday June 26<sup>th</sup> at 9pm EST.

[The Michal Madison Survivor's Show with Lynn Tolson by O A B I Voices United Network | Blog Talk Radio](#)

[Michal Madison Watercolor Portrait Artist and advocate](#) - *"artistic expressions of a journey to freedom"*

*“There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds.” – Laurell K. Hamilton*

And Surviving Spirit board member Rachel Grant has her book *“Beyond Survival – The Final Stage in Recovery from Sexual Abuse”* available as an excerpt and it can be also purchased as a PDF

[Surviving Guidebook Excerpt](#)      [Link to purchase PDF](#)

Please note that Rachel posts some helpful healing tips and advice each week at our [Surviving Spirit Facebook page](#)

*“The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.” – Judith Lewis Herman*

We would be remiss if we did not share our own Resources Pages at the Surviving Spirit website – lots of great resources offering *Hope, Healing & Help*

1] [Resources - Trauma, Sexual Abuse and Incest - The Surviving Spirit](#)

2] [Resources - Peer Support and Help for Trauma, Sexual Abuse, and Incest - The Surviving Spirit](#)

3] [“Trauma into Truth: Gutsy Healing and Why It's Worth It”](#) - from our good friend Rythea Lee, author, musician, artist, dancer and so much more – a powerful book for the healing journey.

*“Discover your ultimate goodness no matter what pains or traumas you have lived through”*

*“Anything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone.” – Fred Rogers*

*Please note that we are including some Facebook pages as resources...they can be of tremendous help for peer support and healing resources.*

*"The ax forgets, the tree remembers." - African proverb*

4] [PTSD Survivors of America](#) - PTSD effects **not only** veterans, but civilians who have experienced traumatic events. This is what separates us from other organizations. We want to help **all** people who live with PTSD.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder exists due to many variations of one simple occurrence, trauma. There are many charities that help most of these types of PTSD; however, they are made to help different groups of people individually: women, minorities, children, veterans, seniors, and so forth. These organizations are doing great work, but why focus on individual types of PTSD? Instead, unite all survivors of PTSD with a common cause.

4a] [PTSD Survivors of America Facebook Page](#)

5] [PTSD Awareness Month: June 2012 - NATIONAL CENTER for PTSD](#) - The mission of the National Center for PTSD is to advance the clinical care and social welfare of America's Veterans through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders.

*“Childhood trauma does not come in one single package.” – Dr. Asa Don Brown*

6] [Journey to the Lighthouse: Childhood Abuse and PTSD Survivors' Diaries](#) – Facebook

“I hope to offer some comfort by sharing my own child abuse experience, struggles, reflections, questions and resources - as I take on an incredibly difficult healing journey with those who are on the same path.”

“It is essential that we maintain our efforts in becoming aware of how abuse affects our children, and continue sharing our knowledge with the community. By doing so, we significantly increase the possibility that someday no child will have to endure being neglected, beaten, molested, or verbally assaulted, or have to cope with the aftermath of their abuse as they grow into an adult ever again.”

*“The shock of any trauma, I think changes your life. It's more acute in the beginning and after a little time you settle back to what you were. However it leaves an indelible mark on your psyche.” - Alex Lifeson*

7] [Life after Trauma](#) - *Stories, support, and resources for trauma survivors and people with PTSD.*

Dr. Frank Ochberg – How are traumatic memories different from other memories?

**Characteristics of Traumatic Memory:**

*Frozen, Exist outside of normal time, Non-verbal, Possess heightened reality  
Tremendously persistent, Stored differently in the brain, Difficult to fit into the "story" of one's life*

Also posted, a video with Dr. Frank Ochberg explaining the nature of trauma memories.

Understanding, if only in a limited way, how traumatic memory functions allows someone with PTSD to understand more about what is happening in their mind and why PTSD can be so resistant to change. Dr. Ochberg does a good job of explaining this in the video when he describes the difference between verbal memory and non-verbal memory, which he terms VAM and SAM. Trauma memory is a deeply rooted memory that was created under extraordinary conditions. Understanding the power of this special kind of memory is the first step to understanding and coping with PTSD triggers.

*“Doesn't matter how tough we are, trauma always leaves a scar. It follows us home, it changes our lives, trauma messes everybody up, but maybe that's the point. All the pain and the fear and the crap. Maybe going through all of that is what keeps us moving forward. It's what pushes us.” - Grey's Anatomy*

8] [Memory, the Amygdala, and PTSD](#). Psychology Today - A neurobiologist explores the amazing capacity of the brain to rewire itself at any age. Susan R. Barry, Ph.D.

9] [Military with PTSD](#) - *Seeing it from both sides* - To help all families living with someone who has PTSD.

9a] [Military with PTSD Facebook Page](#) - *A place to discuss all aspects of military with PTSD.*

10] [Military Rape Crisis Center](#) - *Supporting survivors of Military Sexual Trauma*

10a] [Military Rape Crisis Center Facebook Page](#)

Every four hours a sexual assault or rape is reported in the United States Armed Forces. The Military Rape Crisis Center is there, providing immediate crisis care, support, legal assistance, and hope to all survivors of Military Sexual Trauma and their loved ones.

We are privately funded. All of our services are free of charge for Military Sexual Trauma survivors. [*Hopefully someday, all survivors of trauma and their loved ones will have services free of charge to help them heal*]

*“Care of the soul...appreciates the mystery of human suffering and does not offer the illusion of a problem-free life. It sees every fall into ignorance and confusion as an opportunity to discover that the beast residing at the center of the labyrinth is also an angel.” - Thomas Moore*

11] [Pursuit of Truth](#) - The mission of the Vertigo Charitable Foundation is to work to reform from the bottom up the justice system's response to adult survivors of child sex abuse who seek legal redress against their abusers. The Foundation's initial project is to produce a documentary film entitled, *“Pursuit Of Truth: Adult Survivors Of Child Sex Abuse Seeking Justice,”* which will identify serious flaws in the legal system and provide specific recommendations to make the system more just and equitable in addressing the special aspects of such cases.

12] The 15th Annual Stop Mind Control and Ritual Abuse Today [SMART] Conference -August 10 -12, 2012 at the DoubleTree Hotel near Bradley International Airport  
16 Ella Grasso Turnpike, Windsor Locks, CT

Internet conference information:

<http://ritualabuse.us/smart-conference/> [smartnews@aol.com](mailto:smartnews@aol.com)

#### Conference Goals

- To help stop future occurrences of ritual abuse
- To help survivors of ritual abuse
- To name the groups that have participated in alleged illegal activities
- To unite those working to stop ritual abuse

*“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.” Kahlil Gibran*

*“Our lives are transformed as we actively take part in fully living our lives with all the fear and heartbreak which become the keys to our healing and transformation when we live our lives compassionately.” - Thomas Moore*

*Thanks & take care, Mike, Rachel, Lynn, Mary, Zsuzsi, Cynthia, & John*

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](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

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