



*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 secret to living the life of your dreams is to start living the life of your dreams today, in every little way you possibly can.” Mike Dooley*

*“Do not wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect.” Alan Cohen*

Hi Folks,

Wow, 2013...another New Year and wishing all of you the joys, hopes and dreams that the New Year may offer and bring to you as you work on new ideas, resolutions, opportunities, self examination, trying new things...and old things, new goals, plans, dreams and ambitions. Whatever they may be, wishing everyone all the best in your pursuit of these endeavors.

*“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” Saint Francis of Assisi*

Our hopes and plans for *The Surviving Spirit* are to be expanding and improving our Website Resources and the newsletter – some of which is being worked on now. Slowly but surely we are getting there...a work in progress. All of our Board members are also quite busy with their undertakings of work and creative projects.

For myself, I will be starting the recording process soon for my fourth album, *“Truth, Love & Light”*...very excited to be doing this. It has taken me a bit longer to get to this stage due to the surgery I had a few years ago that involved the removal of my left thumb joint – it has taken a while for my fretting hand to get back in shape to do this. This has been another teaching lesson for me in the art of learning patience...sometimes I can be a slow learner, but with time, I eventually get there.

Once again we have compiled some helpful and insightful resources to share with you and very excited to open up with some ‘new’ things for the *New Year* from Rachel, Beth & Debbie. Despite some of the pain and turmoil going on in the world, there are still so many others doing what they can to help make the world a better place – the resources we are sharing in this newsletter are some great examples of that...

1] Fellow board member Rachel Grant is pleased to offer her newly published guidebook, *Beyond Surviving: The Final Stage in Recovery from Sexual Abuse*

[Rachel Grant Trauma Recovery & Relationship Coach](#)

In the world of recovery, there has been a shift from using the word "victim" to "survivor" when describing those who have been abused. This new label conveys strength-to empower and to embolden you as you begin the journey of recovery. While moving from victim to survivor is an important step in the healing process, it does not go far enough in framing an identity that leads to a thriving and powerful life.

In *Beyond Surviving*, author Rachel Grant, provides an understanding of the three stages of recovery-victim, survivor, and beyond surviving-and offers survivors guidance and tools for reaching the third stage of recovery. Based on cognitive behavioral techniques, neurological science, the power of language to heal, and Grant's personal journey, *Beyond Surviving* teaches you how to actively challenge and break the patterns of thought and behavior that result from sexual abuse. It explores how different areas of life are impacted by abuse and communicates valuable skills for gaining a new perspective that inspires action and change. It provides an opportunity to reflect and practice these new skills through exercises and assignments.

[Available for purchase](#) in paperback or Kindle on Amazon or [download](#) a free excerpt.

2] [\*A rooted mind...Reflections on saying yes to beauty, wellness and deeply rooted mental health\*](#) - Beth Gager, singer, writer, advocate, peer and a gentle spirit

These past few years I have been working really hard on getting what I need in my life. I have been pushing myself to be what I need be in the world. I had covered myself up and held myself down for a long time because I had experienced so much pain and disillusionment with my experiences when I was in and out of the hospital and I needed to work at getting my life back together. I forgot who I was for a while and I needed to find my center again. I needed to uncover my roots and feel my feet on the earth. I needed to stretch my arms toward the sun. I needed to let the breeze be my gentle friend. But now, step-by-step, I have done that. My roots are strong. My fingertips know how to touch the sky. I have uncovered myself bit by bit and now I can see who I am again when I look in the mirror. And now, I am ready to be in a different place. I don't have to be covered up but I also don't have to push anymore.

*It's about letting the quiet that is inside me also surround me. It's about beauty. And I say yes.*

3] [Deborah Louise Trueheart - Living Into Wholeness](#)

I have many passions, which include the evolution of consciousness and spirituality, complimentary holistic health and a non-disease approach to mental health, and

creativity. These passions culminate in the development of a curriculum called, *"Living Into Wholeness."*

Since we are all connected, I believe we see ourselves in each other. We gain and give strength, hope, courage and inspiration to each other by sharing ourselves. The Native Americans say that our story is medicine. My desire is to hold a mirror up to you of your own beauty, your own magnificence, your own wholeness and your own Divinity. May you find medicine in my story.

*"We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves, otherwise we harden."* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

4] [Increasing Self-Compassion in PTSD - Countering Negative Beliefs and Thoughts about the Self](#) by Matthew Tull, PhD @ About.com Post Traumatic Stress

Many people with a [diagnosis of PTSD](#) struggle with self-compassion. The [symptoms of PTSD](#) can be very intense and can [disrupt many areas of a person's life](#). As a result, people with PTSD may start to experience feelings of guilt or shame, have negative thoughts about themselves, or feel worthless or like a failure.

A lack of self-compassion can have a huge impact on recovery from PTSD. A lack of self-compassion may decrease motivation to continue through those difficult moments [in treatment](#). It may increase feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

*[Folks, we all need and deserve self-compassion, whatever your struggles may be]*

5] [‘Homeless Yoga’ And ‘The Art Of Panhandling’](#) by Kevin Sullivan – producer/WBUR Staff – Here & Now [Please note, this link allows you to hear the audio clip for the radio show {16:09 minutes long} and a full story on *The Pilgrim Magazine* – worth listening to and reading...*powerful and insightful*]

Thumbing through Wednesday’s Boston Globe, back in the Metro section, there’s a story about a man found dead Tuesday on a park bench in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood. Police suspect he was homeless, and won’t be able to identify him for a few days. His story may never be told. But the stories of other homeless people, written in their own words, are being told.

James Parker, a columnist with the [Atlantic](#), last year began publishing “*The Pilgrim*” with help from Boston’s historic Cathedral Church of Saint Paul. Each issue contains stories, essays, poems, even comics, written by the homeless. It started when Parker began a writers’ group for the homeless at the church. “As soon as these guys started writing, I became aware instantly that I had some amazing material,” Parker said. The stories are stark and serious, ironic and funny.

[Read the December 2012 issue of The Pilgrim](#) *Pilgrim Magazine* PDF

[\*The Pilgrim\*](#) is a journal produced by members of Boston's homeless community, published by the Cathedral Church of St Paul, and dedicated to the proposition that homelessness is a state of acute pilgrimage. It features poetry, memoir, prayer, reportage, jubilation and despair. To quote one of our regular writers: *"This paper is real. It don't get realer than this."*

*"It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."* Nelson Mandela

6] [\*The Irish Times\*](#) – Slow progress in mental health service as tide goes out on Victorian-era hospitals

Many patients say an understaffed community mental health service has left them isolated and disempowered. Miriam O'Shea was looking for help. She had spent several months in a psychiatric hospital, where she was treated for bipolar disorder. But after she was discharged and looked for support in the community, she felt she couldn't find any.

"Drugs work for some people but for me they just numb my emotions," said O'Shea, who left hospital last February. *"I needed the kind of peer support in the community and the kind of therapy that treats you as someone with emotional and spiritual needs. I couldn't find any of that . . . All I was being offered was medication and more medication."*

*"Keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again, and you will grow stronger until you have accomplished a purpose – not the one you began with perhaps, but one you'll be glad to remember."* Anne Sullivan

7] [\*Dark Side of the Brain\*](#) - The National CBC Television Video clip 8:12 minutes

New research suggests that when the brain is in a resting state, it isn't as dormant as previously thought, CBC's Kelly Crowe reports on new research to help heal "mental trauma"...

CBC interviews a woman who experienced multiple gang rapes between 11 - 14 and all of the different diagnoses she was given - bipolar, schizo-affective disorder, depressive disorder, borderline, etc, etc.

*This is a fascinating and informative report that is well worth watching to help understand how trauma severs the connections in our brains for so many of us impacted by trauma and abuse and some new thoughts and ideas on healing. The brain scans of a 'normal' brain versus a traumatized one helps put it into perspective.*

8] [\*Childhood Trauma Leaves Its Mark On the Brain\*](#) - Science Daily

It is well known that violent adults often have a history of childhood psychological trauma. Some of these individuals exhibit very real, physical alterations in a part of the

brain called the orbitofrontal cortex. Yet a direct link between such early trauma and neurological changes has been difficult to find, until now.

"This research shows that people exposed to trauma in childhood don't only suffer psychologically, but their brain also gets altered," explains Sandi, Head of EPFL's Laboratory of Behavioral Genetics, Director of the Brain Mind Institute, and a member of the National Centers for Competence in Research SYNAPSY. "This adds an additional dimension to the consequences of abuse, and obviously has scientific, therapeutic and social implications."

*"We heal the past by living in the present." Marianne Williamson*

9] ['Sliver Of Sky,' Barry Lopez Confronts Childhood Sexual Abuse:NPR](#) audio clip 44:18 minutes

[Barry Lopez](#) is known for writing about the natural world. His books include *Arctic Dreams* and *Of Wolves and Men*, where he explores the relationship between the physical landscape and human culture. But in a new essay in the January issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Lopez writes that he was sexually molested by a family friend when he was a boy, and says the man was never brought to justice.

The abuse began when Lopez was 7 years old. The man, named Harry Shier, oversaw the alcoholism treatment for a relative of Lopez's mother at the sanatorium Shier supervised in North Hollywood, Calif. He presented himself as a doctor. Lopez writes that Shier said there was something wrong with Lopez, and that the rape was treatment for that problem.

Lopez, who lives in Oregon, says this piece is the hardest he's ever written.

[Sliver of Sky - Confronting the trauma of sexual abuse](#) *Harper's Magazine*

"The advantage that I had," he says, "is that I've been a writer all my life, and I had somebody at *Harper's* - Chris Cox - who was an exceptional editor, who could do what I could not do, which is I could not find and hold the emotional distance that I needed from this material in order to write about it in the way that I thought I had to, *which is, in the end it's not about me, it's about us.*"

*"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the voice at the end of the day saying, I will try again tomorrow." Mary Anne Radmacher*

10] [Showcase your art. Create your own free website](#) - an online Art Portfolio

Your Website. Your Way. Change colors, text, backgrounds, pics and more to create your own unique site

11] [Etsy](#) - Your place to buy and sell all things handmade, vintage, and supplies

12] [ReverbNation](#) - The best tools for musicians and the best music for everyone else.

Home to Over 2.72 Million [Musicians](#), [Venues](#), [Labels](#), and Industry Professionals

13] [Webs - Make a free website & get free hosting](#) Create a Free Website:

- Easy Website Building Tools
- Professional Website Templates
- Powerful Business Applications

14] [Hayden Kian – book publishing](#) - Donna Kshir & Sandra Potter also with [Dreamcatchers for Abused Children](#)

As accomplished authors who have been published both professionally and self-published, we know firsthand there are many routes you can take to complete the publishing process.

You can spend months and sometimes years submitting your manuscript to agents and publishers, and a majority of the time your manuscript is deleted, unread. As an alternative you choose to self-publish, but the process is a long and complicated process that tends to feel like you are trapped in a nightmare.

We at *Hayden Kian* want to change all that. We want to make the process as easy and convenient as possible.

*“No human relation gives one possession in another - every two souls are absolutely different. In friendship or in love, the two side by side raise hands together to find what one cannot reach alone.” Kahlil Gibran*

15] **Survey from the Office of Victims of Crime** - Adult Survivors of Child Pornography Production

Are you an adult survivor of child sexual abuse that involved sexually explicit images taken of you when you were age 17 or younger? If so, please consider helping others by taking this survey, which aims to find ways to help meet the complex needs of victims of this crime.

The survey is funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime. It asks about help you received, barriers to getting help, and suggestions for improving how victims of these crimes are treated by police, prosecutors, courts, and counselors. It also includes a few general questions about the crimes that you experienced. You are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer and you will not be asked for any information that could identify you.

[Click here to find out more information and take the survey.](#)

*I was sent this Survey due to my affiliation with the RAINN Speakers Bureau....I'm hopeful that my responses can help others, but it certainly took the wind out of my sails for a few days due to what it dredged up. I think my first act of defiant advocacy was when I was eight or nine years old and scooped up a pile of magazines containing child pornography that were in my parents basement – full of fear, I took them over to the woods across from my home and buried them....*

*“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” Theodore Roosevelt*

*Finally, some words of wisdom and compassion from Deb Trueheart along with a few articles addressing the horrific tragedy in Newtown, CT.*

“This has also been a time of deep contemplation for me after the latest school shooting in Connecticut. I seek within myself to find the soul-level response to these events. When I go to my deepest wisdom and seek the highest guidance, I continue to be called into *Oneness Consciousness*, which reminds me that we are all interconnected and interdependent and that violence evolves out of a place of alienation; that real solutions require a change in social attitudes and practices that alienate whatever/whoever we don't like, don't agree with, or are afraid of and call it “other.”

“My sense is that the more we develop awareness and practices that reach out, in goodwill and loving kindness and help create communities where difference is honored, where we truly act on the notion that we are all one, then we create a place of belonging for all. This is the world I want to live in; the one I choose to help create. We all long to know we belong. When we have that, I believe there is a supreme sense of safety.”

*“The world is changing because we are changing it. And that makes me understand at least what kind of person I'd like to be...to seek ways, big or small to heal the world. That to me is spirituality and one's soul.” Carl Safina*

16] [It Shouldn't Take a Tragedy to Improve Treatment New York Times](#) By Harvey Rosenthal - Executive director of the [New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services](#)

The recent tragedies in Newtown and elsewhere are especially abhorrent to those of us in the mental health community, particularly since studies have shown that people with mental illness are 12 times [more likely](#) to be victims of violence, and no more likely to be violent, if they are [not substance abusers](#).

Nonetheless, horrific acts of violence are inevitably associated with mental illnesses, often because the motivations for them seem unfathomable, and they end up getting sensationalized front page coverage.

This has led to a wholesale vilification of conditions that [1 in 5](#) Americans share. That's the sort of profiling that has been the fate of some racial or religious groups.

17] [Mass Murder: Is There a Mental Health Issue?](#) Huffington Post  
By Michael Friedman, L.M.S.W. Adjunct Associate Professor, Columbia University  
Schools of Social Work and Public Health

From time to time, a person with a severe mental illness (or [assumed to have](#) a mental illness) commits a murder that makes headlines. As the tragic slaughter of children and teachers in Newtown, Conn. illustrates, the reactive call to address "the mental health issue" is entirely predictable. Sometimes the call to improve mental health policy and practice comes from people trying to distract us from issues such as gun control. But often it comes from politicians, journalists, and social advocates (even mental health advocates) who sincerely believe that addressing the so-called mental health issue could reduce mass murders in the United States. Are they right? Are there interventions that would reduce the incidence of mass murders?

Those who call for addressing the mental health issue in criminal violence have disparate and often unclear views of what can be done to help. But, despite their differences, they appear to share three highly questionable assumptions.

18] [Let's Stop Blaming The Mentally Ill](#) [Arizona Daily Star](#) By Lollie Butler - director of the program [Heart to Heart](#), through the National Alliance for Mental Illness of Southern Arizona.

There is a bloody war being waged in America; gun advocates versus those who would ban guns. This "civil" war may go on for a long time.

Meanwhile, those suffering from mental illnesses unfairly shoulder the blame for atrocities committed against the innocent. This is an unreasonable situation. Armed persons firing into crowds, whether at schools or shopping malls, defies reason and causes all of us to feel vulnerable. It also takes its toll on those with mental illnesses. Words like "crazy" and "deranged" fly across the front pages, and the mentally ill in treatment, saddled with severe funding cuts and ongoing social stigma, take it on the chin.

A 2009 study in the Archives of General Psychiatry states, "If a person has severe mental illness without substance abuse and a history of violence, he or she has the same chance of being violent during the next three years as any other person in the general population." "It's unproductive to besmirch a whole group of people recovering from (mental) illnesses as if they are all dangerous - when in fact, they're not," says Duke University medical sociologist Jeffery Swanson.

*"Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized, in the first it is ridiculed, in the second it is opposed, in the third it is regarded as self-evident." Arthur Schopenhauer*

Take care, Mike, Mary, Zsuzsi, Rachel, Cynthia & Mary Ann

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**