



*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 May 2013

*“Develop an attitude of gratitude, and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation.” Brian Tracy*

Hi Folks,

Aahh...gratitude, and how to cultivate that when down and out from life's troubles and our respective challenges with trauma, abuse and mental health. I know for myself it has helped me immensely when taking the time to acknowledge the good in my life despite whatever horrors, hurts and losses I have known – it is not an easy task for me at times. But the payoff is huge.

I always take time to reflect upon the good friends in my life who have stood by me no matter what...even when my post traumatic stress and depression issues were ravaging my mind, body and spirit – they didn't waver in their support and I will never forget that and I am so grateful for their love and friendship. I think of all the wonderful people I have met since my *'breakdown/breakthrough'* back in 1993. So many of us have been hurt by life, but we found a common bond from our healing journey and shared experiences and now we have friendship that grew out of sorrow and suffering – not bad, so that too I am grateful for.

I am grateful to all of you in your advocacy endeavors and helping of others who struggle and who allow this newsletter to be sent to you...and thankful for the sharing that you do with it – ***Thank You!***

So perhaps take a moment to think of what you are grateful for in your life....and let us be thankful for the wonderful shared resources in this newsletter.

I recognize that there are a lot of resources to look at and don't expect anyone to be able to get to all of them – but in the age of *"Tweeting"*, *instant messaging* and *texting*, etc...it is still nice to be able to take some time to read about others who are helping to make the world a better place.

Speaking of resources, please do send them to us to share in future newsletters and from our website – and if I have forgotten to share your info, please *'gently'* remind me.....

I was a guest on this show last night and we covered a lot of ground; music, creativity, martial arts, peer support – good and bad, trauma, abuse, mental health, meds, loss of children/alienation, hope, healing, and help and so much more – please check it out when you can. Here’s one response of many I received –

*“Great job!!! I wish they would make all psychiatrists and treatment providers listen to the show”*

### [Survivors World - Butterfly Dreams Talk Radio w/ Trish McKnight](#)

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and Michael Skinner devotes his speaking and his work to bring attention to that very cause. Helping to see past the diagnosis and medications to what lies underneath that might have caused the traumatic events which haunt us with PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, and for some Dissociation and various types of Personality Disorders.

*"We rely upon the poets, the philosophers, and the playwrights to articulate what most of us can only feel, in joy or sorrow. They illuminate the thoughts for which we only grope; they give us the strength and balm we cannot find in ourselves. Whenever I feel my courage wavering, I rush to them. They give me the wisdom of acceptance, the will and resilience to push on." Helen Hayes*

### 1] [Wellness Works Initiative](#) – Art, Poetry, Song & Video

What is the Wellness Works Initiative? Peerlink, the National Empowerment Center, and the other Consumer and Consumer Supporter Technical Assistance Centers—the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse, NAMI Star Center, and the Family Cafe TA Center – are showcasing original creative work expressing what wellness means in our lives and for our communities.

We hope the Wellness Works Initiative will help raise public awareness about the importance of embracing a wellness-based perspective, in mental health services as well as our communities at large. We embrace a holistic approach and endorse the eight dimensions of wellness - Emotional, Financial, Social, Spiritual, Occupational, Physical, Intellectual, and Environmental - as proposed by Peggy Swarbrick and supported by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

I’m honored to be a part [“Walk With Me - music & lyrics and “Brush Away Your Tears”- live video performance] of the many creative artists, musicians and poets featured at this website – *please do visit and be inspired*

I’M NOT IMPRESSED WITH YOUR TITLE AND DEGREES  
COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING DO MORE FOR ME  
CAN YOU SHOW ME, SHOW ME YOUR HUMANITY  
INSTEAD OF TALKING, TALKING DOWN TO ME

CAN YOU SIT WITH ME, CAN WE TALK A WHILE  
AND THEN I KNOW YOU WOULD SEE ME SMILE  
OH I KNOW, YOU WOULD SEE ME SMILE      Walk With Me © Michael Skinner Music

*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.” Melody Beattie*

## 2] [Sound Therapy Radio](#) *"Be Kind to the Mind"*

Sound Therapy delves into the intricate world of the creative mind, interweaving great music, lively guest interviews and insightful discussion.

Join host J Peachy, Lauren, June and Megan and guests as they share fresh, inspiring perspectives on creative expression, issues of mental wellness, health & disability, and offer alternatives in self-care and personal well being.

Join us every Tuesday at 7pm on CJSF 90.1 FM, and online at [cjsf.ca](http://cjsf.ca). In addition, all episodes are archived. In addition, we broadcast [video portions](#) of our radio content on local community television, contact us if you want our program in your region.

*"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." Marcel Proust*

## 3] [Where is the Self in Treatment of Mental Disorders?](#) By [John M. Grohol, Psy.D.](#)

The focus for most treatment professionals is on a patient's symptoms and the alleviation of symptoms. Few professionals delve into how a disorder — like [bipolar](#) disorder or clinical [depression](#) — changes our identity. Everything we know about ourselves. Everything we thought we knew about ourselves.

That's why this recent piece in the NYT Magazine by Linda Logan exploring this issue is so interesting and timely. [Link posted below]

Our identities as unique individuals with well-worn and familiar roles in life - mother, confidante, partner, employee - are quickly stripped away when a new label takes over: patient. Inpatient. Psychiatric inpatient. In all of society, there is almost no worse label that could be applied.

Mental health professionals across all professions - psychiatry, psychology, social work, etc. - should be more aware that this loss of self identity is a very real component of some people's mental illness and subsequent treatment. It should be addressed as a regular component of mental health treatment, especially when the loss is acutely felt.

*“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.” Albert Schweitzer*

4] Linda Logan, New York Times article - [The Problem With How We Treat Bipolar Disorder](#) [Long read, but well worth it folks]

How much insult to the self is done by the symptoms of the disorder and how much by the drugs used to treat it? Paradoxically, psychotropic drugs can induce anxiety, nervousness, impaired judgment, mania, hypomania, hallucinations, feelings of depersonalization, psychosis and suicidal thoughts, while being used to treat the same symptoms. Before getting to the hospital, my daily moods ranged from bad to worse, each state accompanied by a profound depth of feeling. The first drug I was given was amitriptyline (Elavil), which, in the process of reducing my despair, blunted all my other emotions. I no longer felt anything. It was like going from satellite TV to one lousy channel.

Over the years, I've talked to clinicians about why the self is rarely mentioned in treating patients who suffer from mental illnesses that damage their sense of who they are. If anything, it seems that psychiatry is moving away from a model in which the self could be discussed. For many psychiatrists, mental disorders are medical problems to be treated with medications, and a patient's crisis of self is not very likely to come up in a 15-minute session with a psycho-pharmacologist.

5] [Suicide Survivors Volunteer To Lead Prevention Effort Through Multimedia Public Forum Project](#) - Aims To End Stigma, Shame, Anonymity  
By David Crary, AP National Writer

Suicide survivors are leading a nationwide effort to prevent suicide through conversation and an end to anonymity.

They look intently at the camera, some impassively, some with smiles, all of them aware that they've just shared with an online audience a most personal story: *Why they tried to kill themselves.*

By the dozens, survivors of attempted suicide across the United States are volunteering to be part of a project by a Brooklyn-based photographer, Dese'Rae L. Stage, called "*Live Through This*" - a collection of photographic portraits and personal accounts.

6] [Live Through This: Life on the Other Side of a Suicide Attempt](#) I am still seeking attempt survivors to share their stories for *Live Through This*.

*"PEACE: It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of these things and still be calm in your heart."* Author unknown

7] American Association of Suicidology's "What Happens Now?"  
blog: <http://attemptsurvivors.com/>

[What happens now?](#) | Exploring life after a suicide attempt or suicidal thinking by Craig A. Miller

This week's post is by Craig A. Miller, who contributed a strong post earlier about the difference between not wanting to die and wanting to live. Here, he talks about moving forward. Visit Craig's website at [Thisishowitfeels.com](http://Thisishowitfeels.com).

"Why?" As a suicide attempt survivor I can't tell you how many times I have sat with people and tried to give them an answer to that question. When doctors would ask I would become frustrated, because they should be the ones with the answers. When family would ask I would feel guilty, because anything I said was misinterpreted as blame. And when friends would ask I would just become quiet, because no one could ever really understand what I was going through. For all the years I struggled with suicide and all the times I sat with family, friends, and doctors trying to understand why, I was never really able to come up with anything that truly explained it. It wasn't until I sat alone and tried to find the answer for myself that I was finally able to do so.

*"One person can make a difference and every person should try." John F. Kennedy*

8] [Bristlecone Project](#) David Lisak, Phd Speaker/Trainer/Consultant

**We will send a message:** *We were wounded. Now we thrive. We are your neighbors, your fathers, and your sons.*

**The Vision:** A mosaic of photographs and words that portray the reality of men who were sexually abused as children...

**The Focus:** The present, not the past. Who each man is. What defines him. What is the focus of his life. Each man will be portrayed through a series of photographs, a brief written portrait, and his own voice.

**The Purpose:** To portray this reality - who we are now, living meaningful and dignified lives - to the many men who feel isolated and stigmatized by what happened to them. And to portray this reality to whole communities through the Bristlecone website and public exhibitions.

**Participate** Each man will be portrayed through a series of photographs, a brief written portrait, and his own voice. If you or someone you know might be interested in participating in this project, or for more information: Write to David Lisak at: [david@davidlisak.com](mailto:david@davidlisak.com)

bris-tle-cone - A high-altitude pine of western North America that thrives despite high winds, cold temperatures and thin soils. Bristlecones can live thousands of years, and so can be used to correct radiocarbon dating. Also used as a metaphor to describe the unique strength and will of the [lin6](#) men who were sexually abused in childhood.

*[David is the real deal; I am honored to know him as a friend and a fellow advocate and proud to be a part [along with my dear partner, Mary] of this healing endeavor to help others.]*

*"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." Ralph Waldo Emerson*

9] [Mad in America](#) Mission Statement - The site is designed to serve as a resource and a community for those interested in rethinking psychiatric care in the United States and abroad. We want to provide readers with news, stories of recovery, access to source documents, and the informed writings of bloggers that will further this enterprise.

The bloggers on this site include people with lived experience, peer specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, program managers, social activists, attorneys, and journalists. While their opinions naturally vary, they share a belief that our current system of psychiatric care needs to be vastly improved, and, many would argue, transformed. <http://www.madinamerica.com/writers/#bloggers>

*When "I" is replaced by "WE", even illness becomes wellness.*

10] **The Key Update** is the free monthly e-newsletter of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse <http://www.mhselfhelp.org>

Here you'll find the latest information on mental health and consumer/survivor issues. We include updates on important issues, linking you to news sources, funding opportunities and the most recent developments in the consumer/survivor movement. You'll also find conference announcements and job postings from across the nation.

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*"To be ill adjusted to a deranged world is not a breakdown." Jeanette Winterson*

## 11] **Words of Wellness**

As part of our vision to foster wellness and recovery, the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey [CSPNJ] Institute for Wellness and Recovery Initiatives offers this newsletter, *Words of Wellness*. This publication features information and resources to help people to achieve and maintain wellness. You can read related content, or access previous editions on our website, [www.welltacc.org](http://www.welltacc.org). We are eager to share the information in *Words of Wellness*, and we're very happy when you share copies of the newsletter with your friends and colleagues. Feel free to make photocopies. However, we put a lot of effort into this newsletter, and we would like to get credit.

If you would like to photocopy the newsletter as is, or forward it to interested parties, we welcome that. You might also want to recommend that others subscribe directly or access the newsletter online.

12] **Mental Health Humor Newsletter** - Chato B. Stewart  
<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/humor/>

**Chato Stewart** 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.

Chato B. Stewart is a Florida board [Certified Recovery Peer Specialist](#) - A (CRPS-A). Chato is also the 1st place winner of the DBSA 2009 Facing Us Video Contest. In his powerful public service announcement, he tells his personal story of living with a mental illness through a montage of his cartoons. Adding to his little list of accomplishments is being part of the 2010 DBSA Stand-Up for Mental Health comedy night and being invited back for the 2011 Conference to be a Stand-Up comic in the show.

May Is Mental Health Awareness Month and we are drawing 31 Heroes and posting them each week. You will get a few extra emails in May. Please help us by Tweeting and sharing the heroes with your friend. [www.mentalhealthcartoons.com](http://www.mentalhealthcartoons.com)

*“Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy - the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.” Brené Brown*

13] **Your Voice in Sheffield Mental Health** - a Magazine and Website for Service Users, Carers and Professionals [United Kingdom] <http://www.yourvoicesheffield.org/>

Please do check out this helpful newsletter and their website and our good friend Judith Haire's article on EMDR - Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing Therapy. It's on page 11 via this link - No 67 Spring 2013 <http://www.yourvoicesheffield.org/media/YV67final.pdf>

14] And please note, we are also honored to share and sell Judith's powerful book on her healing journey at our [website/web store](#) – “Don't Mind Me” is the story of her dysfunctional childhood and teenage depression, her abusive first marriage and experience of rape and domestic violence, her terrifying descent into psychosis and her recovery.

15] Given it is Mental Health Awareness Month, we would like to share another one of our author's book –

**"Institutional Eyes"** by Denise Ranaghan

"Institutional Eyes" is an all-too-real account of a young woman's struggle with mental illness and addiction. When author Denise Ranaghan was twenty-one and scarred from a lifetime of alcoholism and physical abuse, she fled her dysfunctional family for a hitch in the U.S. Army. Shortly after, she found herself deteriorating and unable to function in an adult world. Why was her sanity in jeopardy? And - WHY WASN'T ANYTHING HELPING?

At first Denise looks for quick and painless solutions; then, in rehab, she courageously begins to work her way through the problems of Borderline Personality Disorder, depression and substance abuse.

*"One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star."*  
*Friedrich Nietzsche*

16] **MS - My Story** *A Collection of Inspirational Voices Stories about Living with Multiple Sclerosis* Edited by Liz Pearl PK Press 2012

*"They never give up. They dream big and reach far. They think positively and believe faithfully. They love deeply. They demonstrate courage, determination and gratitude. They smile, laugh and sing. They rejoice and celebrate life. These are the inspirational voices of MS - My Story."*

Liz Pearl, M.Ed., is an educator and therapist specializing in psychogeriatrics and the expressive art therapies. She is the co-editor of *Mourning Has Broken - A Collection of Creative Writing about Grief and Healing* (KOPE Associates, 2004, 2007) and the editor of *Brain Attack - The Journey Back - A Unique Collection of Creative Writing about Stroke Recovery* (KOPE Associates, 2005), and *Living Legacies - A Collection of Writing by Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women Volumes I, II & III* (PK Press, 2008, 2010, 2011).

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Link to PK Press <http://at.yorku.ca/pk/ms.htm> Liz Pearl, M.Ed. Therapist /Editor [Liz\\_pearl@sympatico.ca](mailto:Liz_pearl@sympatico.ca)

*"You can't patch a wounded soul with a Band-Aid."*

17] [Dr. Gabor Maté on the Stress-Disease Connection, Addiction and the Destruction of American Childhood](#) - Democracy Now! - A daily independent global news hour with Amy Goodman & Juan González [article/transcript & video]



From disease to addiction, parenting to attention deficit disorder, Maté's work focuses on the centrality of early childhood experiences to the development of the brain, and how those experiences can impact everything from behavioral patterns to physical and mental illness. While the relationship between emotional stress and disease, and mental and physical health more broadly, is often considered controversial within medical orthodoxy, Maté argues too many doctors seem to have forgotten what was once a commonplace assumption, that emotions are deeply implicated in both the development of illness, addictions and disorders, and in their healing.

Dr. Maté is the bestselling author of four books: *When the Body Says No: Understanding the Stress-Disease Connection*; *Scattered: How Attention Deficit Disorder Originates and What You Can Do about It*; and, with Dr. Gordon Neufeld, *Hold on to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More than Peers*; his latest is called *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*.

*"I've always thought of wholeness and integration as necessary myths. We're fragmented beings who cement ourselves together, but there are always cracks. Living with the cracks is part of being, well, reasonably healthy"* Siri Hustvedt

18] [Bring Your Life Into Balance](#): A free self-guided program for becoming a healthier, happier you

Stress or mood swings rock everyone's balance from time to time. However, when too much stress, anxiety, depression, or worry interferes with your health, career or personal relationships, it's time to make a change. No matter how difficult things seem, by learning how to harness overwhelming stress and manage your emotions, you can become healthier and happier, and have a more positive effect on those around you.

Daily life can seem like a never-ending ride, leaving you feeling frustrated, anxious, depressed, and unfulfilled. But it doesn't have to be this way; you can get off the emotional rollercoaster. You can bring your life into balance by learning more about:

- Stress and how to avoid becoming overwhelmed.
- Why your emotions matter to you and to others.
- What you can do to harness the energy of your emotions and make them work for you.
- How you can become calm, energized, focused and more aware of yourself and others.

*"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."* Albert Schweitzer

19] [Dealing with Depression](#): Self-Help & Coping Tips to Overcome Depression

Depression drains your energy, hope, and drive, making it difficult to do what you need to feel better. But while overcoming depression isn't quick or easy, it's far from impossible. You can't beat it through sheer willpower, but you do have some control—even if your depression is severe and stubbornly persistent. The key is to start small and build from there. Feeling better takes time, but you can get there if you make positive choices for yourself each day.

Recovering from depression requires action, but taking action when you're depressed is hard. In fact, just thinking about the things you should do to feel better, like going for a walk or spending time with friends, can be exhausting. It's the Catch-22 of depression recovery: ***The things that help the most are the things that are the most difficult to do.*** There's a difference, however, between something that's difficult and something that's impossible.

*“If a man comes to the door of poetry untouched by the madness of the Muses, believing that technique alone will make him a good poet, he and his sane compositions never reach perfection, but are utterly eclipsed by the performances of the inspired madman.”*  
Socrates

A 'gentle' reminder that the Surviving Spirit is nonprofit 501C3 and your gift of time, talent or treasure is greatly appreciated.

Take care, Mike, Mary, Zsuzsi, Rachel, Cynthia Lynn & 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*

[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](#)

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