



*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 November 2014

Hi Folks,

Welcome to another edition of the Surviving Spirit, and here we are in November – wow!!! Hard to believe that the end of this year is upon us and darn it, the cold is already here in New Hampshire. I hope this is not a harbinger of things to come. We shall see. Not a good sign of winter for the folks in upstate New York being buried under so much snow already.

For many of us, it is also a time of the year that heralds the holiday season. That can have a mixed message for so many who have been impacted by trauma, abuse and mental health challenges in their lives. With that in mind, there are several resources shared to offer some help and coping strategies to navigate this time of the year that may be difficult for so many.

I am grateful for the knowledge of how the trauma and abuse in my life shaped my experiences during the holiday season. It is still a difficult time for me, but the awareness of how and why has helped me to deal with the stress and anxiety that comes up. We do heal, but it can take time..being gentle and compassionate with ourselves helps our healing journey. Extending those feelings and thoughts to others goes a long way in sharing Hope, Healing and Help – we all deserve it.

Once again, a lot of resources have been shared. I'm always mindful to offer a variety of topics to pique people's interests. And deeply grateful to all of you working to help make the world a better place, Thank you!

All the best, Michael Skinner

*“You have extraordinary power within you to overcome life's difficult challenges.” Lailah Gifty Akita*

1] [A Rooted Mind](#) – *Saying yes to beauty, wellness and deeply rooted mental health* - Beth Gager

*A Rooted Mind* offers a simple pathway into wellness for those of us who have experienced what the world calls mental illness. Learn how to find your way back from the lost and broken places and into your own unique path.

No matter how lost you have seemed to the world and/or to yourself, *A Rooted Mind* gives you the same opportunities that the author has had. Through personal sharing and gentle guidance, the author offers a pathway for you.....

Author Bio - Beth Gager has a Master's Degree in Counseling from the College of William and Mary and has worked in the mental health field for many years. Her inspiration for this book comes from the hardest thing she has had to do so far in her life, which is to go to the places that our world calls mental illness. She has been inspired by the many beautiful people she has met who have been called to walk a similar path. She is grateful that she has found a way to come back from that place where she appeared to be lost. Her life purpose is to share the amazing beauty and grace she has found on her journey out of the hard places and into the joyful places. Her message is for others like her that want to walk out of the dark tangled woods where they have been trapped and find their way into the bright green meadow that is calling to them from the quiet place that lives inside their heart. She loves to walk, write, and dance and longs to sing with the guitar. She lives with her two children in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Authors blog - <http://arootedmind.blogspot.com>

*“Love yourself enough to set boundaries. Your time and energy are precious. You get to choose how you use it. You teach people how to treat you by deciding what you will and won't accept.” Anna Taylor*

2] [Marushka's Art Universe on Etsy](#) - Mary Ann Goughler

Welcome to the most stunning, breathtaking, high quality digital jpg downloads in the Universe. Each download is 300-600+ dpi in clarity. Beautiful for your smart-phone, wallpaper, computer screen-saver, or for you to enjoy in a frame. You can use any type of paper such as card-stock or regular printing paper. Using 100lb drawing paper prints out great! In the very near future I will also be selling my original one of a kind oil paintings on linen, sketches, watercolors, etc.

[Mary Ann Goughler](#) - Board of Directors - The Surviving Spirit – Mental health advocate, artist, writer, blogger, speaker – lived experience of schizophrenia [“In a Nutshell”©](#) website

*“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.” Brene Brown*

3] [Why Trust Is Worth It](#) – YouTube 3:12 minutes - great insight & thoughts on trust. And some great dancing - In Collaboration with Cirque Du Soleil

*“I can't make past wrongs disappear, but I can take actions that will help me to let them go. When I make amends, I do what I can to correct the situation. Then I can put the past in its rightful place and leave it there.” Courage to Change*

4] [Why French Kids Don't Have ADHD](#) - Marilyn Wedge, Ph.D - Psychology Today

In the United States, at least 9% of school-aged children have been diagnosed with ADHD, and are taking pharmaceutical medications. In France, the percentage of kids diagnosed and medicated for ADHD is less than .5%. How come the epidemic of ADHD - which has become firmly established in the United States - has almost completely passed over children in France?

Is ADHD a biological-neurological disorder? Surprisingly, the answer to this question depends on

whether you live in France or in the United States. In the United States, child psychiatrists consider ADHD to be a biological disorder with biological causes. The preferred treatment is also biological - psycho stimulant medications such as Ritalin and Adderall.

French child psychiatrists, on the other hand, view ADHD as a medical condition that has psycho-social and situational causes. Instead of treating children's focusing and behavioral problems with drugs, French doctors prefer to look for the underlying issue that is causing the child distress - not in the child's brain but in the child's social context. They then choose to treat the underlying social context problem with psychotherapy or family counseling. This is a very different way of seeing things from the American tendency to attribute all symptoms to a biological dysfunction such as a chemical imbalance in the child's brain. [Read the entire article](#)

[Marilyn Wedge, Ph.D.](#), is a family therapist with more than twenty years of experience helping children, adolescents and families. She is the author of two books, both published by W. W. Norton: *In the Therapist's Mirror: Reality in the Making*, and *Suffer the Children: The Case against Labeling and Medicating and an Effective Alternative* [published in paperback with the new title: *Pills are not for Preschoolers*]. Her latest book, on ADHD in the United States and abroad, is forthcoming from Penguin/Gotham. Dr. Wedge blogs for the *Huffington Post* and her work has appeared in *Babble*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Natural Health*, *People Magazine*, *L. A. Parent*, and many other publications. She has been interviewed on CBS-San Francisco, *San Diego Living*, and on national public radio [NPR].

Dr. Wedge is the originator of "strategic child-focused family therapy," which empowers parents to help their children heal without labeling them with so-called "psychiatric disorders" or medicating them with psychotropic drugs.

*"Let me remember that the reason for making amends is to free my own mind of uneasiness."*  
*The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*

5] [Listen With Your Heart](#) - YouTube video FYI - when you have 5 minutes to sit, listen to some incredible music, read & reflect

*"Sometimes we try so hard that we fail to see that the light we are seeking is within us."* *As We Understand*

6] [Ooops! I forgot...again](#) - TBI Survivor [traumatic brain injury] - Support for TBISurvivors

Forgetfulness. The ol' memory don't work the way it used to. Are we getting old? Yes, we are getting older, but we've also had a TBI.

The information we need is buried somewhere in our noggin all right, we just can't dig it out because of that "damn brain injury." It's as if our brain is a big filing cabinet, and the contents of the filing cabinet has been dumped all over the floor. We know that what we are looking for is in this big pile of papers, but how are we going to find anything in that mess?

So, once again, we are left scratching our head because we forgot something. Maybe it was an appointment. Maybe we said we would do something for our kids. Maybe we forgot our best friend's name. Whatever it was, it was meaningful or important, it was something we said we would do or

something we should know. We feel terrible and we beat ourselves up because we forgot. [Learn more](#)

[About - TBI Survivor](#) - In 1975, Jeff Sebell experienced a TBI, during the summer before his junior year in college. He suffered frontal lobe and brain stem injuries, and was comatose for 30 days. Jeff returned to college five months after his car accident, and finished college one semester late, earning a BA in Economics. After college, he worked as a disc jockey and music director at a radio station in Colorado. Following that, he worked in a family manufacturing business for nearly 25 years.

Jeff was active in supporting other survivors referred to him by the, just forming, National Head Injury Foundation in the early 80's. As a result of his involvement, he was appointed to the founding Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Head Injury Foundation, and spoke at the first statewide brain injury conference in Massachusetts. Since that time he has continued to write and speak, focusing on "living a fulfilled life after brain injury", and was credited in the book, "Brain Injury Advocates", by Sue Hultgren, with the first use on the web of the term, "TBI Survivor". [Learn more](#)

*"Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot." Nigerian Proverb*

7] [10 Easy Art Therapy Techniques To Help You De-Stress](#) – Priscilla Frank, Huffington Post

Art therapy is a form of therapy that encourages creativity and self-expression as vehicles to reduce stress, improve self-esteem, increase awareness and help remedy trauma. While many other forms of therapy depend on verbal language to express feelings and overcome personal obstacles, art therapy allows for other, more abstract forms of communication. This tactic makes room for elements of the subconscious that perhaps are not yet ready or able to be verbalized come to the surface.

You do not have to be an artist to enjoy the benefits of art therapy. In fact, most of the exercises rely not on the final product you create but on the therapeutic, meditative ritual of the creative process. If you're intrigued by the process of relaxation through artistic imagination, we've compiled a starter kit to get you on your way. [Learn more](#)

*"It's not what other people believe you can do, it's what you believe." Gail Devers*

8] ["Trigger Points: Abuse survivors experiences of parenting"](#) - collecting personal essays for an anthology

Our goal is to create awareness for survivors of childhood sexual and physical abuse, who are now parents. It's true what they say, becoming a parent changes everything. How one continues his/her process of healing after having a child is part of that. The anthology will focus on what it has been like for you as a parent, a physical and/or sexual abuse survivor, to raise a child.

Editors – [Dawn White Daum](#) & [Joyelle Brandt](#) [www.facebook.com/triggerpointsanthology](http://www.facebook.com/triggerpointsanthology)

Joyelle and Dawn are both survivors and parents. They have struggled with the effects of the abuse on how they parent.

*"If our culture never allows us to be honest about what happened to us and the effects it has had on us,*

*how are we expected to break the cycle?"*

Email your personal essay of no more than 1,500 words to [triggerpointsanthology@gmail.com](mailto:triggerpointsanthology@gmail.com) Please include a short bio and feel free to include any social media links. You may remain anonymous, if you choose to do so.

Essay must not have appeared in a published collection before. If published on your own blog, that's fine.

Deadline for submissions is January 31, 2015. We will notify writers whose essay has been accepted by March 31, 2015. Writers will receive a \$20 contribution payment via pay pal by April 14, 2015.

We will only ask for non-exclusive rights to your work. You will be free to do as you please with it, once it is published

*"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny." Frank Outlaw*

9] [The Secret Dual Lives of People Living With Mental Illness](#) - David Rosenberg, Slate.com

For many years, [Liz Obert](#) woke up, got dressed, went to work, and acted as if everything was fine. Once she returned home, however, she found herself lying around depressed, feeling hopeless and full of dread. Diagnosed in her early 20s with depression, Obert said she tried therapy and medication, but nothing seemed to work until around five years ago when a psychiatrist diagnosed her with bipolar II disorder and put her on mood stabilizers.

Although she's had a few medication tweaks since then - "that's kind of the life of someone who has bipolar" - Obert said she has for the most part been in a good place.

Obert feels the dual life she led for so long isn't unique for people who suffer from mental illnesses and who "must mask their symptoms in order to function in the outside world."

In 2013, she decided to begin a series that dealt with the realities of what it means to put on a brave face while simultaneously coping with forms of depression. Starting with herself, Obert took two photos: one that showed the person she chooses to present to the world, and a second portrait that presented an image of how she existed behind closed doors when feeling depressed.

"I hope to give a glimpse to the viewer about the internal lives of people who struggle with disorders that are often misunderstood," she wrote in an artist statement about the series "[Dualities](#)."

Dualities looks at the hidden and visible worlds of people living with mental illness.

*"A single act of kindness may have a long trajectory and touch those we will never meet or see. Something we casually offer may move through a web of connection far beyond ourselves to have effects that we may never have imagined. And so each of us may have left far more behind us than we may ever know." Rachel Naomi Remen*

10] [The Butterfly Effect: Pay It Forward](#) - Rae Luskin

A butterfly could flap its wings and set molecules of air in motion, which would move other molecules of air, in turn moving more molecules of air- eventually capable of starting a hurricane on the other side of the world. His ideas were scoffed at and ridiculed for decades. But then 30 years later scientists came to the conclusion that it was accurate and viable.

The same theory applies to the decisions or actions we take now, no matter how small they are. What we think and do matters and plays a huge role in determining the quality of our lives and the lives of others. We all have a tremendous sphere of influence; family, friends community, co-workers. We have no idea what our impact can have on other people – just smiling or saying have a great day may start a personal transformation for some people.

This is why Gandhi's famous quote "*Be the change you want to see in the world*," is so effective. It shows how one decision to change our personal world can end up inspiring others to do the same.

[Read the entire article](#)

*"You can't have a better tomorrow if you're always thinking about yesterday." C. Roth*

11] [To The Secondhanders: Those Who Love People Who've Survived Abuse](#) - Gregory Brown

November 6th, 2007 was the day everything changed for me. That was the day I learned that my father had sexually abused my three sisters for many years during our childhood, and it had gone on in the very home in which I'd lived. It was on this autumn day that a great moral struggle began inside of me, and my understanding of reality, truth, and the past began the long process of a complete overhaul.

I'd like to direct my words to all of the siblings, the parents, the children, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, significant others, and neighbors of people who have survived or are currently surviving abuse at the hands of someone in their closest circles of trust. In other words, this is for those dealing with the secondhand effects of the abuse of a loved one by a loved one. [Learn more](#)

Gregory Brown is a member of [The 5 Browns](#) and brother to The Foundation for Survivors of Abuse founders Desirae and Deondra Brown .

The 5 Browns are delivering on their dream to wake up classical music by introducing it to the widest, largest and most excited audience they can find. Whether performing individually or together in various combinations from duo to complex five-piano arrangements, The 5 Browns reveal a deep connection to the intent of their material while bringing a fresh energy and dynamic character to the color and tonal spectrum of their sound.

The 5 Browns tour extensively and have performed in numerous venues including the Grand National Theater in China, Suntory Hall in Japan and, in the United States, The Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, Symphony Hall in Chicago and Alice Tully Hall in New York City. Individually and collaboratively, they have soloed with orchestras around the world, including the National Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony, the San Antonio Symphony, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre de chambre de Paris.

In addition to touring, The 5 Browns are published writers. Their book, *Life Between the Keys*, a lighthearted collection of personal stories, was published by Phoenix Books in March 2009.

The group was also featured in a PBS TV special, “The 5 Browns In Concert” which aired on PBS stations throughout the country.

[The Foundation for Survivors of Abuse](#) - Working to remove the Statute of Limitations to provide justice and healing for survivors of abuse

*“If you are going through hell, keep going.” Winston Churchill*

12] [Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#): Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky, Connie Burk Amazon.com Books

A longtime trauma worker, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky offers a deep and empathetic survey of the often-unrecognized toll on those working to make the world a better place. We may feel tired, cynical, numb, or like we can never do enough. These, and other symptoms, affect us individually and collectively, sapping the energy and effectiveness we so desperately need if we are to benefit humankind, other animals, and the planet itself. Through Trauma Stewardship, we are called to meet these challenges in an intentional way - not by becoming overwhelmed but by developing a quality of mindful presence. Joining the wisdom of ancient cultural traditions with modern psychological research, Lipsky offers a variety of simple and profound practices that will allow us to remake ourselves - and ultimately the world.

*“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Eleanor Roosevelt*

13] [If we were abandoned](#) – Monica Cassani – Beyond Meds

If we were abandoned...if abandonment is an issue for us...the way to start healing is to stop abandoning ourselves. We need to unlearn that. We do that by, in baby steps, learning to trust ourselves. We do it by paying attention to our feelings and never ignoring what we know is right for ourselves. This is a practice since we've forgotten or never known how to do it.

The thing that strikes me most about this is the idea that we must be true to ourselves and in that we must be willing to feel. If we are not willing to feel all the ways we've been hurt and to acknowledge to ourselves that pain we cannot heal. It is an abandonment of self to not feel. It made me think of this article which I've always loved and in fact the title has become a mantra of sorts for when I am facing any difficulty...physical, emotional or spiritual, actually. For me it's worked for all of those things. [Learn more](#)

*“Writing is the painting of the voice.” Voltaire*

14] [You can't heal what you don't feel](#) - Nicole S. Urdang M.S., NCC, DHM, Holistic Psychotherapist.

Can you imagine a life without one of your five senses? Maybe, but it certainly isn't something you would joyfully embrace. Even if having all five senses means you sometimes see, smell, hear, touch, or

taste things that elicit a negative reaction, you understand the gift of having all five far eclipses those unpleasant moments.

Being human comes with the ability to experience life in many different ways, through a body, a brain, and a spirit. You may not always think so, but your emotional range is also a gift. Though you will face negative feelings on and off throughout your life, you probably would not give up the ability to feel simply because, sometimes, emotions are incredibly painful or challenging.

There are many ways people try to avoid unpleasant feelings, and addictions top the list. Engaging in obsessive-compulsive or addictive behavior pushes unpleasant thoughts and feelings out of conscious awareness. Sometimes, that can seem like paradise; unfortunately, the long-term negative effects outweigh the short-term gains of numbness and forgetting, as once the drug or activity is over, all those painful feelings come back. Let's face it, if addictions really worked, we would all be addicts. Who doesn't want a bit of relief from life's stresses? The problem is they are a short-term fix. It takes great courage to move through dark emotions but ignoring them, or sweeping them under the cognitive rug, just makes them less accessible for healing. [Learn more](#)

*"It is the privilege of wisdom to listen." O.W. Holmes*

#### **Some resources to help with the holidays:**

15] [Mindful Grief: 3 Ways to Manage Your Sorrow](#) - Ashley Davis Bush, LICSW

We, in our Western culture, are particularly skilled at avoiding painful feelings. Our society supports us in our endeavors to distract ourselves by offering a full range of numbing opportunities: alcohol, drugs, shopping, gambling, and assorted screen devices for our addictive consumption. It is easy to avoid feeling the full range of sorrow, pain, hopelessness, anger, and anguish associated with grief.

Mindfulness - the practice of nonjudgmental present awareness—is often touted in the mental health field as a miracle cure, as the golden ticket to resilience and coping. Mindfulness practices are said to soothe anxiety, lift depression, minimize chronic pain, and reduce stress. The problem for griever is that mindfulness asks the griever to be present with the very thing that they're trying to avoid. So what can mindfulness do for the heart-searing pain of losing a loved one?

Quite a lot, as it turns out.

Being mindful allows the griever to feel and observe the pain without being swallowed by it. The act of being present with pain, being mindfully observant, is healing. Such presence allows the painful emotion to surface and shift. [Learn more](#)

*"Learn to listen and listen to learn." unknown*

16] [Suggestions for Dealing with the Holiday Blues](#) - Grief Support at Legacy Connect

It is important to recognize it is not unusual to feel sad or depressed during the holiday season or around other special dates -- anniversaries of births or deaths or special occasions. Holidays and special dates can trigger an episode of the blues, feelings of loneliness, depression and melancholy, especially

if one is still in an active grieving process.

Here is a list of suggestions [to help you cope](#):

*“Believe you can and you're halfway there.” Theodore Roosevelt*

17] [Handling the Holidays](#) - Therese Rando, Ph.D.

One of the most painful issues for you to deal with is how to survive the holidays after the death of the person you love. Because holidays are supposed to be family times, and because of the extraordinary [although unrealistic] expectation that you should feel close to everyone, this time of year can underscore the absence of your deceased loved one more than any other time. The important thing to remember is that you and your family do have options about how to cope with the holidays. These are a [few things to keep in mind](#):

18] [Grief Healing: Loneliness and Solitude in Grief](#) - Useful information on care giving, grief and transition - for anyone coping with loss

*“Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone.” Paul Tillich*

If you are among those traveling the winding path of grief, you're probably quite familiar with both these sides of being alone: loneliness and solitude.

With an overwhelming sense of missing the one you love comes the crushing awareness of all that you have lost. You'd give anything to be together again, if only long enough to be relieved of your *loneliness* and to be reassured that your loved one is still a part of your life.

At other times you may feel a need for *solitude*. You'll want to be by yourself, to get away from other people and withdraw temporarily from the pressures and decisions of daily life. This need to turn inward, to reflect on your loss, to get in touch with your innermost feelings is common and not to be feared. In fact it can be a helpful time for you to find your tears and figure out where you are going from here. [Learn more](#)

*“The first duty of love is to listen.” Paul Tillich*

19] [Getting through the Holidays](#) - The Surviving Spirit Resources page - 21 additional resources

*“I walk slowly, but I never walk backwards.” Abraham Lincoln*

20] [The Trauma Treatment Handbook: Protocols Across the Spectrum](#) - Robin Shapiro  
Amazon.com Books

The therapist's go-to source for treating a range of traumatized patients.

With so many trauma treatments to choose from, how can a therapist know which is best for his or her

client? In a single, accessible volume, Robin Shapiro explains them all, making sense of the treatment options available, their advantages and disadvantages, and how to determine which treatments are best suited to which clients.

*“When you have nothing at all to create, then perhaps you create yourself.” Carl Jung*

21] [Misinformation in psychiatry](#) – YouTube 13:16 minutes - Dr. Terry Lynch

Dr. Terry Lynch is an Irish medical doctor, psychotherapist and author. Terry is a campaigner for change in mental health, from the psychiatric/medical model to a holistic understanding. In this video, Terry sets out some of the key points of misinformation within the public understanding of psychiatry and psychiatric practice. The contents of this video should not be taken as an endorsement of ceasing psychiatric medication without adequate supports, as to do so can result in significant problems including, on occasion, the need for hospitalization.

[Beyond Prozac: Healing Mental Distress](#) - Dr. Terry Lynch - Amazon.com Books

Lovelessness and loneliness cannot be explained by chemical changes in the brain and cured by the ingestion of drugs. Lovelessness and loneliness, like anxiety and depression and all the ways of expressing distress which are called mental disorder, are part of what it is to be human, but part that can be understood, diminished and banished from our lives simply by caring wisely for ourselves. Terry Lynch understands and cares wisely for us all. His immense warmth and humanity are revealed on every page of this book. “It is truly a book for our time and for all time”. Dorothy Rowe, psychologist, author, columnist.

*“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.” Phillips Brooks*

22] [Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World](#) – by Richard F. Mollica, M.D. - Director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma [HPRT] of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. [Website book order – Amazon Books](#)

*Everywhere and constantly human beings are subject to terrible violence - be it natural or man-made. It has happened in New Orleans, New York, India, Iraq, Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, Ivory Coast. But long after the levees have been reconstructed, after the war criminals have been brought to justice, the question remains - can people heal, and if so, how?*

Richard Mollica has spent more than thirty years helping victims of trauma. Now he draws from hundreds of interviews, years of research, and his counseling experience to show us a new way of helping people overcome their pain. The key to this? **People have an inherent ability to heal themselves. And the lessons we can learn from the survivors of such trials and extreme situations can even teach us how to cope better with everyday life.**

Here is a passionate, humanitarian voice of hope in a cruel and violent world, telling us all we can do more than survive - we can find strength and healing no matter what we have experienced.

*“We are stronger than our circumstances.” Mastin Kipp*

23] [National Center for Trauma-Informed Care](#) and Alternatives to Restraint and Seclusion [NCTIC]

[A webinar by Richard Mollica, MD](#) - presenting an exciting new model for working with highly traumatized refugee communities that is applicable to serving trauma survivors worldwide. The H-5 model is receiving global attention as something new, culturally relevant and effective. The model consists of 5 dimensions centered around the trauma story:

- Human Rights
- Humiliation
- Healing [self care]
- Health Promotion
- Habitat & Housing

Recording: <http://nasmhpd.adobeconnect.com/p28vbm02xet/>

Includes a document that was shared with the webinar.

[http://www.nasmhpd.org/docs/NCTIC/THE\\_NEW\\_H5\\_MODEL\\_TRAUMA\\_AND\\_RECOVERY.pdf](http://www.nasmhpd.org/docs/NCTIC/THE_NEW_H5_MODEL_TRAUMA_AND_RECOVERY.pdf)

[Richard F. Mollica, MD, MAR](#), is a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma [HPRT] at Massachusetts General Hospital. Since 1981, Dr. Mollica and HPRT have pioneered the medical and mental health care of survivors of mass violence and torture in the United States and abroad. They developed one of the first clinical programs for refugees in the United States. HPRT's Harvard Trauma Questionnaire [HTQ] became the first culturally validated instrument to measure trauma/torture and psychiatric symptoms of PTSD in refugee populations. The HTQ is used worldwide and has been translated into over 30 languages. Under Dr. Mollica's direction, HPRT conducts clinical, training, policy, and research activities for populations affected by mass violence around the world. He is also currently active in the development of a global health training program focusing on trauma and recovery. This Global Mental Health: Trauma and Recovery Certificate Program is the first of its kind in global mental health and post-conflict/disaster planning and clinical care. The course sponsored by Harvard Medical School is two weeks live in Orvieto, Italy, and five months online.

Dr. Mollica has published over 160 scientific manuscripts. His book, [Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World](#), is currently available in most bookstores.

*"Life can break you, but only you can fix the mending of your heart and soul." Leah McGee*

24] [The Science of Suffering: Kids are inheriting their parents' trauma. Can science stop it?](#) - Judith Shulevitz, New Republic

Is Trauma Genetic? Scientists Say Parents Are Passing PTSD to Kids

Lowell, Massachusetts, a former mill town of the red-brick-and-waterfall variety 25 miles north of Boston, has proportionally more Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans than nearly any other city in the country: as many as 30,000, out of a population of slightly more than 100,000. These are largely refugees and the families of refugees from the Khmer Rouge, the Maoist extremists who, from 1975 to 1979, destroyed Cambodia's economy; shot, tortured, or starved to death nearly two million of its

people; and forced millions more into a slave network of unimaginably harsh labor camps. Lowell's Cambodian neighborhood is lined with dilapidated rowhouses and stores that sell liquor behind bullet-proof glass, although the town's leaders are trying to rebrand it as a tourist destination: "Little Cambodia."

At Arbour Counseling Services, a clinic on a run-down corner of central Lowell, 95 percent of the Cambodians who come in for help are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. (In Cambodia itself, an estimated 14.2 percent of people who were at least three years old during the Pol Pot period have the disorder.) Their suffering is palpable. When I visited Arbour, I met a distraught woman in her forties whom I'll call Sandy. She was seven when she was forced into the jungle and 14 when she came to the United States, during which time she lived in a children's camp, nearly starved to death, watched as her father was executed, and was struck in the ear by a soldier's gun. She interspersed her high-pitched, almost rehearsed-sounding recitation of horrors past with complaints about the present. She couldn't concentrate, sleep at night, or stop ruminating on the past. She "thinks too much," a phrase that is common when Cambodians talk about PTSD. After she tried to kill herself while pregnant, her mother took Sandy's two daughters and raised them herself. But they have not turned out well, in Sandy's opinion. They are hostile and difficult, she says. They fight their grandmother and each other, so bitterly that the police have been called. They both finished college and one is a pharmacist and the other a clerk in an electronics store. But, she says, they speak to her only to curse her. (The daughters declined to talk to me.)

The children of the traumatized have always carried their parents' suffering under their skin. "For years it lay in an iron box buried so deep inside me that I was never sure just what it was," is how Helen Epstein, the American daughter of survivors of Auschwitz and Theresienstadt, began her book *Children of the Holocaust*, which launched something of a children-of-survivors movement when it came out in 1979. "I knew I carried slippery, combustible things more secret than sex and more dangerous than any shadow or ghost." But how did she come by these things? By what means do the experiences of one generation insinuate themselves into the next?

After a century of brutalization and slaughter of millions, the corporeal dimension of trauma gives a startling twist to the maxim that history repeats itself. Yael Danieli, the author of an influential reference work on the multigenerational dimensions of trauma, refers to the physical transmission of the horrors of the past as "embodied history." Of course, biological legacy doesn't predetermine the personality or health of any one child. To say that would be to grossly oversimplify the socioeconomic and geographic and irreducibly personal forces that shape a life. At the same time, it would be hard to overstate the political import of these new findings. People who have been subject to repeated, centuries-long violence, such as African Americans and Native Americans, may by now have disadvantage baked into their very molecules. The sociologist Robert Merton spoke of the "Matthew Effect," named after verse 25:29 of the Book of Matthew: "For unto every one that hath shall be given ... but from him that hath not shall be taken." Billie Holiday put it even better: "Them that's got shall have; them that's not shall lose."

But daunting as this research is to contemplate, it is also exciting. It could help solve one of the enduring mysteries of human inheritance: Why do some falter and others thrive? Why do some children reap the whirlwind, while other children don't? If the intergenerational transmission of trauma can help scientists understand the mechanics of risk and resilience, they may be able to offer hope not just for individuals but also for entire communities as they struggle to cast off the shadow of the past.

[Read the entire article](#) [*Please note, a long read, but worth it*]

*"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end." As We Understood*

Take care, Mike, Mary, Zsuzsi, Becky, Cynthia, Lynn & Mary Ann

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – [mikeskinner@comcast.net](mailto:mikeskinner@comcast.net)

*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](mailto:mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com) 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

[@SurvivinSpirit](#) Twitter

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