



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 January 2015

“We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity.” Malcolm X

Greetings folks and wishing everyone a Happy New Year of *Hope, Healing & Help*,

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Earlier this week we honored the legacy and the hard work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and all those who took part in the Civil Rights Movement. I hope I live to see the day that there is a Civil Rights Movement on a worldwide scale to help those impacted by trauma, abuse & mental health challenges. And society finally addresses the silent epidemic of child abuse in all of its forms, that there is caring and understanding for those hurt by the traumas of life and to end the fears, stigma and discrimination placed upon those labeled “mentally ill”.

I also hope to see the day that we can ***put aside all of our differences and unite together*** to address our Human and Civil Rights that have been so long denied.

“We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.” J.K. Rowling

“We are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond.” Gwendolyn Brooks

“All for one and one for all, united we stand divided we fall.” Alexandre Dumas

Take care, Michael Skinner [MS]

“A choir is made up of many voices, including yours and mine. If one by one all go silent then all that will be left are the soloists. Don't let a loud few determine the nature of the sound. It makes for poor harmony and diminishes the song.” Vera Nazarian,

1] [15 Quotes on Truth-Telling and Breaking Silence](#) – Big Voice Pictures

“In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like

a pistol shot.” Czesław Miłosz

Big Voice Pictures is a production company creating films shedding light on truths. We believe, when the time is right, that the truth can set us free. We believe sharing our truth is best done in community, with other truth tellers. Then we like to spread truth far and wide-creating ripple effects, and inspiring others to do the same.

We've been encouraged by others who have walked before us.

As we wind up 2014, we'd like to leave you with some truth gems from some of our great thinkers, leaders, authors and celebrities. Perhaps some resonate for you? Consider writing a few down which speak to you, and keep them nearby to inspire you.

In the meantime, may your hearts and New Year be filled with truth!

“Truth never damages a cause that is just.” Mahatma Gandhi

“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth.” William Faulkner

“What is the source of our first suffering? It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak. It was born in the moment when we accumulated silent things within us.” Gaton Bachelard

“Tell your stories, if people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better.” Anne Lamott [Learn more](#)

“The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.” Ben Okri

2] [Post-Traumatic Growth](#) – Roland Bal

The Healing process of a client is auto-directive. It is not the therapist who leads the therapy process but the inherent intelligence of the client. [Read the entire article](#) [unable to copy material from his website, MS]

“Take rest, a field that has rested gives a beautiful crop.” Ovid

3] [Defining Peer Support](#) - Shery Mead; Intentional Peer Support

Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain.

When people find affiliation with others whom they feel are “like” them, they feel a connection. This connection, or affiliation, is a deep, holistic understanding based on mutual experience where people are able to “be” with each other without the constraints of traditional [expert/patient] relationships.

Further, as trust in the relationship builds, both people are able to respectfully challenge each other when they find themselves re-enacting old roles. This allows members of the peer community to try out new behaviors with one another and move beyond previously held self-concepts built on disability, diagnosis, and trauma worldview. The Stone Center refers to this as “mutual empowerment” [Stiver & Miller, 1998].

Peer support starts with the basic assumption that meaning and perception are created within the context of culture and relationships. Our self-definition, how we understand and interpret our experiences, and how we relate to others is created and developed from the direct and indirect messages we get from others and the messages we get from dominant cultural beliefs and assumptions. We find that many of us who have used mental health services have been told what we “have,” how “it” will be treated, and how we must think about arranging our lives around this “thing.” We have then begun to see our lives as a series of problems or “symptoms” and we have forgotten that there might be other ways to interpret our experiences.

Because of this, we have felt different and alone and “other-than” much of our lives, leaving us in relationships that have been less than mutually empowering and more often than not, destructive and infantilizing. We have learned to understand our experiences as signs of illness while burying histories of past violence and abuse. We have lost our power and our choices in most relationships. We have learned to either “act as if,” or we have become dependent on professional interpretation of our every day experiences. It is not uncommon for us to then offer [and ask for] help based on this model. [Learn more](#).

“... [To] take something from yourself, to give to another, that is humane and gentle and never takes away as much comfort as it brings again.” Thomas More

4] [Waking up from sadness: Many find trouble getting off antidepressants](#) - Al Jazeera America

Denise Scott had just one day to go before she would feel free.

“Two drops in the morning and two drops at night,” Scott said of her last dose of liquid Klonopin.

A disabled mother of two, Scott had been tapering off the panic-disorder medication for 40 weeks - an incremental measure taken to reduce what is commonly referred to by medical professionals as discontinuation syndrome, fiercely negative physical and psychological reactions to the decrease of such drugs in the system.

Scott was prescribed the Benzodiazepine, Klonopin, along with a slew of antidepressants in 2011 after a cold-turkey attempt to stop taking Zoloft landed her in a psychiatric ward for extreme suicidal thoughts - a first for her. For Scott, getting off the Klonopin and the Zoloft felt more like horrible withdrawals from toxic substances, and she’s not alone.

While getting onto antidepressants is as simple as getting an increasingly common prescription and popping a pill, weaning off the drugs can seem insurmountable, if not impossible, because of these negative side effects. The result is an increasing number of Americans who have become married to their drugs to avoid the pain of getting off them.

“People can get started on the drugs for anxiety, obesity, menopause. You see people prescribe the drugs for anything under the sun,” said [Dr. Peter Breggin](#), an expert in psychiatric withdrawal with a private psychiatry practice in Ithaca, N.Y. “I think they’re among the most difficult drugs to come off - harder to come off than alcohol and opiates.”

.....“Women have far more hormonal changes than men in their lives,” said [Dr. Samoon Ahmad](#), founder of Integrative Center for Wellness in New York. “Just because something may be happening at a given point in their life doesn’t mean they have a diagnosis of major depression.” [Learn more](#)

“Most of the shadows of life are caused by standing in one's own sunshine.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Today I pray for the wisdom to build a better tomorrow on the mistakes and experiences of yesterday.” Al-Anon

5] [Powerful Photos Depict Veterans Who Use Art Therapy To Heal](#) – Huffington Post

This photo series originally appeared in the February issue of [National Geographic Magazine](#) - Healing Soldiers Behind the Mask - Revealing the Trauma of War [very powerful folks, includes short audio tracks from the vets & spouses @ National Geographic. MS]

Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan often return home with wounds that can't be seen on the surface: brain injuries resulting from the shockwaves that follow explosions.

Some veterans, including service members at Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, have attempted to cope with the challenges they face through art therapy.

...take a look at images captured by National Geographic photographer Lynn Johnson of these veterans and their loved ones

“I had this muzzle on with all these wounds and I couldn’t tell anybody about them.” Marine Cpl. Chris McNair (Ret.) Afghanistan 2011-12

“I thought this was a joke,” recalled Staff Sgt. Perry Hopman, who served as a flight medic in Iraq. “I wanted no part of it because, number one, I’m a man, and I don’t like holding a dainty little paintbrush. Number two, I’m not an artist. And number three, I’m not in kindergarten. Well, I was ignorant, and I was wrong, because it’s great. I think this is what started me kind of opening up and talking about stuff and actually trying to get better.”

Hopman is one of many service members guided by art therapist Melissa Walker at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), which is part of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, in Bethesda, Maryland. Images painted on their masks symbolize themes such as death, physical pain, and patriotism.

“Sometimes you find yourself saying, I wish ... I would have lost a body part, so people will see-so they’ll get it.” Army First Sgt. David Grieg Iraq 2008, Afghanistan 2012 [Learn more](#)

“The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.” Abraham Lincoln

6] [Blast Force - The Invisible War on the Brain](#) – National Geographic

Brain trauma from blast force is the signature injury of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, afflicting hundreds of thousands of U.S. combat personnel. Although unseen, the damage strikes deeply into a soldier’s mind and psyche.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, between 2001 and 2014 some 230,000 soldiers and veterans were identified as suffering from so-called mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), mostly as a result of exposure to blast events. The variety of symptoms associated with the condition—headache, seizures, motor disorders, sleep disorders, dizziness, visual disturbances, ringing in the ears, mood changes, and cognitive, memory, and speech difficulties—the fact that they resemble symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the fact that exposure to blast events often was not logged in the early years of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq make it impossible to pin down casualty figures.

Despite the prevalence of the condition, the most fundamental questions about it remain unanswered. Not only is there no secure means of diagnosis, but there are also no known ways to prevent it and no cure. Above all, there is no consensus within the medical community about the nature of blast-induced injury or by what mechanism blast force damages the brain. [Learn more](#)

*“I really do think that any deep crisis is an opportunity to make your life extraordinary in some way.”
Martha Beck*

7] [Ten Disability Awareness Lessons Learned From Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr](#) – Karen Wang

My children and I just finished reading a new book titled, [“My Daddy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”](#) by Martin Luther King III. It’s a warm, intimate biography that explains a turning point in American history from the perspective of a child. At the heart of the book are the lessons that Dr. King modeled for us in his lifetime regarding nonviolence, personal excellence, interdependence and justice.

As I plan for my children’s future, I find myself returning to those lessons for guidance. Human rights are for everyone, and we still have a long way to go on our journey. Here are 10 quotes from Dr. King that are relevant to human rights and disability awareness.

1. *“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*
2. *“It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.”*

Every time we choose to stand up for someone being treated unjustly, we are in fact standing up for everyone. When I advocate for the best services for my son, I am also advocating for future students.

3. *“Since being in India, I am more convinced than ever before that the method of nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice*

and human dignity.”

Dr. King traveled to India to learn more about nonviolent resistance in April 1959. This quote comes from a radio speech delivered on his last day in India. It’s a good reminder that being visible and gentle in our words and actions will have a more lasting impact than hurtful behavior.

4. *“People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”*

There’s plenty of fear surrounding disabilities and disability awareness, but organizations like the [Friendship Circle](#) prove that personal relationships can break down walls of misunderstanding.

Friendship - *Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't Walk in front of me; I may not follow... Just walk beside me and be my friend.*

“Find the good. It’s all around you. Find it, showcase it, and you’ll start believing in it.” Jesse Owens

8] [Redefining Mental Illness](#) – NYTimes.com T. M. Luhrmann

TWO months ago, the British Psychological Association released a remarkable document entitled “Understanding Psychosis and Schizophrenia.” **Its authors say that hearing voices and feeling paranoid are common experiences, and are often a reaction to trauma, abuse or deprivation.** “Calling them symptoms of mental illness, psychosis or schizophrenia is only one way of thinking about them, with advantages and disadvantages.”

The report adds that anti-psychotic medications are sometimes helpful, but that “there is no evidence that it corrects an underlying biological abnormality.” It then warns about the risk of taking these drugs for years.

And the report says that it is “vital” that those who suffer with distressing symptoms be given an opportunity to “talk in detail about their experiences and to make sense of what has happened to them” - and points out that mental health services rarely make such opportunities available.

The implications are that social experience plays a significant role in who becomes mentally ill, when they fall ill and how their illness unfolds. We should view illness as caused not only by brain deficits but also by abuse, deprivation and inequality, which alter the way brains behave. Illness thus requires social interventions, not just pharmacological ones.

The rethinking comes at a time of disconcerting awareness that mental health problems are far more pervasive than we might have imagined. The World Health Organization estimates that one in four people will have an episode of mental illness in their lifetime. Mental and behavioral problems are the biggest single cause of disability on the planet. But in low- and middle-income countries, about four of five of those disabled by the illnesses do not receive treatment for them. [Read the entire article](#)

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” Mother Teresa

9] [6 Year Old Kendrea Johnson Hangs Herself?](#) [police left to ponder – “I don’t”, [Invisible Children](#)]
Star Tribune Today

Thank you Brandon Stahl & David Chanen at the Star Tribune for writing [this article](#) giving voice to the elephant in the room that is dangerous and suicidal behavior of very young children in child protection. No one wants to hear it and no one wants to address this, but it is a very real problem of great consequence to children and our communities.

As painful as this conversation is, without it, dangerous and suicidal behaviors will continue to be an issue for abused and neglected children in need of protection [in & out of the system].

As a CASA guardian ad-Litem, I see this awful suicide as the tip of the iceberg that is the under-treatment [resources/response/coordination/services] provided to the poor young souls unlucky enough to be born into a dangerous and dysfunctional family.

Children traumatized severely enough to be removed from their birth home don’t have coping skills to mend themselves or manage the behavioral problems that follow from what has been done to them.
Considerations:

Judge Heidi Schellhas shared a list of children from four to fourteen forced to take psychotropic medications. It was a very big list – nationally, between a third and one half of children in CP are proscribed psychotropic medications. Label warnings about the dangers of suicide for consumers of these powerful medications are not there for nothing. Suicidal ideation is very real. Fully formed thoughts of suicide for five year olds – what’s that like?

I’ve written about suicides of young people over the years; the most pertinent article to this case is 7 year old foster child Gabriel Myers who hung himself and left a note about how he hated Prozac.

We the people have avoided this conversation for many years. Until we have it, the prisons will remain full, schools will struggle to teach children with unmanageable/dangerous behavioral problems, and we will read about suicidal six year old boys and girls.

They are children and they need our help. Mike Tikkanen [Learn more](#)

“Our Age of Anxiety is, in great part, the result of trying to do today’s job with yesterday’s tools and yesterday’s concepts.” Marshall McLuhan

10] [Attempted suicide among young people can be reduced by 50 percent](#) - Medical News Today

A new study published in The Lancet outlines a programme for preventing suicidality among young people. The results provide strong endorsement for a method whereby school students learn to discover signs of mental ill-health in themselves and their friends, while they are also trained to understand, interpret and manage challenging emotions. The European study was led from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden, and researchers now hope to see the method reach a large number of young people in European schools.

At a global level, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the age group 15-29. Only road traffic

accidents cause more fatalities in this age group. At the same time, there has been a lack of knowledge about which strategy is best for preventing suicidal behaviours in young people. A major EU-funded study which embraces more than 11,000 school students from 168 schools in ten EU countries has therefore evaluated different strategies for prevention of suicidality in young people.

The Awareness Programme which was developed by researchers at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and Columbia University in the USA. It is a method whereby students learn both to recognise signs of mental health problems and cultivate good mental health with short lectures, posters in classroom environments and a more comprehensive brochure to take home. Students were also invited to take part in supervised role-play where they could explore their emotions and learn coping strategies for a variety of difficult life situations that could lead to suicidal behaviours. The educational programme lasted five hours over four weeks.

The study provides results showing the effectiveness of the Awareness Programme - which gives students a tool to exercise influence over their mental health - in preventing attempted suicide and serious suicidal thoughts with plans how to commit suicide. One year after completing the programme, the number of attempted suicides and serious suicidal thoughts and planned suicides in this group was 50% lower compared with the control group. In the two other groups, where the responsibility for the students' mental health rested exclusively with the teacher or professional health care personnel, the proportion was the same as in the control group. [Learn more](#)

“We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot.” Eleanor Roosevelt

11] [How Self-Acceptance Affects Depression in LGBTQ Individuals](#) - Healthy Place, America's Mental Health Channel - Vanessa Celis

How can you love yourself and have self-acceptance and yet deny part of your true identity? Is such a feat even possible? This is a problem that is common among many people within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community [LGBTQ]. Unfortunately, many LGBTQ individuals cannot come out due to safety reasons. If they were to come out as gay or transgender, they risk the scary chance of getting kicked out and ending up on the streets. They can even lose their jobs. So while the world proudly declares that we must be unashamed of our true selves, society's reaction toward many LGBTQ people is a contradiction. And it has very negative effects on the mental health of LGBTQ individuals. A lack of self-acceptance can even worsen depression in LGBTQ individuals.

When you think about it, it isn't too hard to see why so many LGBTQ people have issues with mental health. I have experienced this first hand in the several past months as I've experienced depression while struggling to accept my gender identity [I identify as genderqueer]. At first, I was in denial and thought it was just a phase. I tried my best to fit in and be “normal” in women's clothes and tried to present myself as very feminine. This only has worsened my depression and made it harder to love myself. I have slowly realized that not accepting my gender identity has been dangerous for my mental health. [Learn more](#)

[About Vanessa Celis, Author of The Life: LGBT Mental Health](#)

Hi, I am Vanessa Celis and I consider myself a loving and compassionate person. You can usually find

me reading or writing prose and poetry. I identify as pansexual and support the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) community one hundred percent. I'm Hispanic, vegan, a feminist, and a lover of animals.

I also suffer from depression and anxiety, but I am trying my best to not let it define me. ***Living with Mental Illness is Hard***

I find strength in reaching out to others who have similar backgrounds as me. By sharing our stories, we can bond together and create a safe community where we can help each other heal. It's impossible to do it alone. In the past, I have used alcohol and cutting as self-medication to help me deal with my mental illness. [Learn more](#)

"The ideals which have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been kindness, beauty, and truth." Albert Einstein

12] Elizabeth Kenny's "SICK" on [TEDMED - On a scale of 1-10, how crazy are you?](#) 15:09 minutes

& [TEDMED 2014: Elizabeth Kenny](#) – YouTube

Actor and playwright Elizabeth Kenny performs an excerpt from her play dramatizing a horrifying journey through the American medical system.

"Feisty and brash, with a wicked sense of humor...a gut-wrenching immediacy one won't soon forget."
- The Seattle Times

Actor and playwright Elizabeth Kenny was a healthy thirty-two year-old woman who went to the doctor for a common ailment. A year and a half later, she was in a locked level 5 psych ward. Her two-year odyssey inside the United States' healthcare system inspired Elizabeth to write and perform a one-woman show, Sick. Following a successful run in Seattle (during which it was extended five times), Sick has been touring the nation. Next, Elizabeth co-wrote a play with rock music that explored the untold stories of Seattle's women of grunge. Elizabeth lives in San Francisco, where she's working on a film version of Sick, teaching storytelling workshops, and writing a new script that explores the phrase "what we know about the brain is..."

[Shady Lane Productions](#) - *Sick*, a performance written and performed by Seattle monologist Elizabeth Kenny, and collaboratively created with New City Theater Artistic Director John Kazanjian, explores a patient's two-year odyssey inside the most advanced healthcare system in the world-an odyssey that almost killed her. It investigates how treatment by well-meaning, sophisticated practitioners for a common gynecological issue plunged her into a downward spiral through the complex medical and mental health establishments. It examines the ways that the intricate threads woven between health care providers, pharmaceutical makers, insurance companies, and medical educators unknowingly conspire to undermine patient care. This is the story of everyone trying hard to get it right...but getting it wrong anyway.

"Kenny's story is a damning one that should be seen by psychotherapists, the pharmaceutical industry, and you." - Seattle Weekly

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate.” Albert Schweitzer

13] [WELCOME TO MY WORLD](#) – Duane Katene

No matter what you have gone through and what others have gone through, you are still you. To embrace happiness, to find your passion and to love yourself, remember these things were never taken away from you. Nothing can stop you from rediscovering yourself. The greatest journey always begins with YOU.

I am a husband to an amazing, intelligent and beautiful woman.
I am a father to three amazing, intelligent and beautiful daughters.
I am a writer for the real world.
I have Maori, Jewish and English heritage.
I don't believe in writing genres.
I don't believe in boxing in written expression.
I believe that writing has no bounds or rules.
I believe in journaling.
I love hugs.
I am quirky.
I am interested in breaking gender stereotypes.
I am interested in overcoming stigma towards mental health.

I am offering services as a peer support worker/ mentor for those who have been affected by sexual abuse and mental health.

I am also available to speak at any conferences, panels, festivals and symposiums and at any other public or private, government or non government events to do with mental health , sexual abuse and writing.

[Neon Signs](#) is the life of Damian King as a sexual abuse survivor. He details this as a series of journal entries which span six years of his life. These express through fragmented thought, short stories and poetry what it feels like to have been sexually abused and how that impacts every aspect of his life. It is within these entries that he often describes himself as a neon sign because his childhood sexual abuse has attracted everything to him from suicide ideation to addiction and anxiety.

“People can purchase the book here - [Smashwords – Neon Signs](#) – or they can email me for a free PDF copy. I am a self-published writer so I don't have any hard copies as yet. Neon Signs is based on my experiences with the aftermath of childhood sexual abuse It is a journal that includes poetry, short stories and other expressions I am in a good place at the moment and would really love to share this book with as many people as I can.” Duane Katene

“A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes.” Mahatma Gandhi

14] [Down Syndrome No Barrier To College Degree](#) - Disability Scoop

Ezra Roy waited underneath the glare of the arena lights Saturday with 800 other students from Texas

Southern University. He wore the standard-issued cap, gown, mortarboard and liberal arts sash. It was graduation day, and the 26-year-old would receive his bachelor's degree in art, magna cum laude.

With his dad, Alvin, tucked into a back corner of the huge arena, the magnitude of the moment was not lost on family, friends or the countless strangers who have cheered on Ezra Roy along the way. "I've gotten so many calls from other parts of the country," 58-year-old Alvin Roy said. "They're rooting for him hard."

Three days after his son was born, a doctor announced that the premature baby also had Down syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes growth and intellectual delays. The diagnosis devastated him initially, he remembers. But soon, he pulled himself together, looking at Ezra, and thinking, "It doesn't matter. You're still my son. We're not going to accept you have Down syndrome in a defeatist way. That's not the end of it."

While the young man sat with his classmates, eagerly waiting for the ceremony to get underway and to receive his diploma, Alvin Roy savored the moment. "I always wanted him to do good, but to get to this point, I'm pretty excited," the proud father said. "I'm pretty choked up."

As a child, Ezra Roy loved watching him paint. "I'd watch his eyes, they'd light up when I used certain colors," the elder Roy said. For years, he encouraged Ezra, using colors to teach him, training him to paint and draw. They broke down complex problems into smaller, more manageable pieces. That lesson has been one that he shares as he teaches art to half a dozen or so students with disabilities each week, he said.

Overcoming obstacles Ezra graduated from Texas Southern University with honors over the weekend, earning a bachelor's degree in arts. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and at Houston City Hall. [Marie D. De Jesus/Houston Chronicle/TNS] [Read the entire article](#).

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." Albert Einstein

15] [Disability Scoop](#) - Developmental Disability News

Founded in 2008, Disability Scoop is the nation's premier source for developmental disability news. With daily coverage of autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and more, no other news source offers a more timely and comprehensive take on the issues that matter to the developmental disability community.

Readers include parents, caregivers, educators, professionals and people with disabilities themselves. What's more, lawmakers and the nation's most influential disability advocates rely on Disability Scoop to stay in the know.

For regular news updates, sign up for our [free e-newsletter](#) and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). [Learn more](#)

"We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer

sufficient proof that everything can be taken away from man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." Viktor Frankl

16] [New York City Voices](#) - Winter 2015 is available for viewing - **Ward Stories**, A column organized by Dan Frey, Interim Poetry Editor

For this winter 2015 edition, we feature three poets, each with their own style and message. R. Martinez Jr. makes addiction real for his readers in *Love is a Drug*. Paul Chipkin grows into a peaceful man through his poem *I Am That I Am*. Beryl Khabeer explains that our soul is beyond the material world in her poem *Brooching SOUL*. I hope that you enjoy as much as I have.

And I am now collecting articles for the summer 2015 edition, write to newyorkcityvoices@gmail.com
Thanks! Dan Frey

"When obstacles arise, you change your direction to reach your goal; you do not change your decision to get there." Zig Ziglar

17] [Healing Trauma - Inner World: Somatic Experiencing](#) – YouTube 9:25 minutes

"Trauma as a portal for transformation...." Michele Bernhardt

Our Inner World Guide Michele Bernhardt reports on a healing technique designed to release trauma buried deep inside the body. We meet [Peter Levine](#), the developer of Somatic Experiencing, and Ray, a Marine badly wounded in Iraq but now much improved as a result of Peter's therapeutic approach.

www.healingquest.tv PBS

[Season 12 Trauma Resource List - Healing Quest](#) - Healing Quest TV – PBS &

[Season 12 Archives - Healing Quest](#)

"Transformation is not five minutes from now; it's a present activity. In this moment you can make a different choice, and it's these small choices and successes that build up over time to help cultivate a healthy self-image and self esteem." Jillian Michaels

18] [Call-for-Stories](#) - Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Personal stories help move listeners and can influence lawmakers and decision-makers on important issues. The Bazelon Center is in need of individual stories from people who are willing to speak to the media or who will allow us to use their stories to promote our mission. Please email us if you have experience with any Bazelon-related topics.

Note: Please do not use this form to seek advice or assistance. The Bazelon Center cannot provide individual assistance. However, protection and advocacy systems for people with disabilities exist in every state. To find contact information for yours, visit the [National Disability Rights Network](#)

Please keep submissions to 500 words or less. We encourage you to let us know if you have photos or video pertaining to the issue. If your story fits with one of our communication initiatives or appeals, we will contact you before using it. Thank you for sharing your story, and for your support of the Bazelon Center and its mission. [Form link](#)

[Who We Are](#) - **Mission and Vision**

The mission of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is to protect and advance the rights of adults and children who have mental disabilities. The Bazelon Center envisions an America where people who have mental illnesses or developmental disabilities exercise their own life choices and have access to the resources that enable them to participate fully in their communities.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved.” Helen Keller

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

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](#)

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