



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 September 2015

Hi folks,

Well another month has passed and we are well into September...say it ain't so. My morning walks and time in the back yard are showing me the signs that Fall is approaching, leaves are starting to turn, nights are cooler and yet, it is still officially summer. Yikes!!

Such is life and the changes we all have to face...many of us face change because of health issues and it should not be a time to be ostracized and stigmatized if one has to deal with mental health concerns. Sadly, it happens far too often, for so many and this only prolongs the healing process. We cannot heal in isolation, condemnation, shaming or blaming. The stigma of “*mental illness*” is hurtful and soul shattering. We still have a long way to go before society stops and ponders the question to themselves, “*What happened to you?*” and no longer says, “*What's wrong with you?*”.

Fortunately, until that day arrives, there are many great organizations and people out there doing the right thing to help create change. September is recognized as a time to celebrate Recovery and raise Awareness on Suicide. We are grateful to be able to share information about some of these events and the people and organizations who are actively being a part of the solution. Kudos to all!!

Also, I have always believed, ***that everyone is creative***, and when we embrace our creative spirit, we flourish as human beings, too many times we've been knocked about in life, that is true...but taking time to nurture one's creative spirit will help in the healing process. Please take a few minutes to read the post pertaining to creativity....and do share your creative thoughts and passions if you wish. We'd love to know.

Take care, Michael Skinner

“Sometimes we try so hard that we fail to see that the light we are seeking is within us.” As We Understood - Al-Anon

1] [Embracing Creativity - Sorting Out Your Life](#) – Psych Central - Jenise Harmon, MSW, LISW-S - Psych Central is a psychotherapist with a private practice in Columbus, Ohio. She works with adults, adolescents, couples, and groups. She also provides distance counseling via Skype.

Creativity. It's a word that adults either love or run away from, claim for themselves or deny the very

existence of.

Creativity is a characteristic prized in children. Did you ever create forts with sheets and a kitchen table, or play cops and robbers, house, or act out a TV show? Creativity is fun!

Children use their creativity to open up their minds, to learn and to enjoy themselves. Creativity is as basic and natural as breathing, and as useful as intellect.

Children create constantly, both with their hands and with their minds. They can look at a paperclip and imagine hundreds of uses, see dragons in the clouds, or invent invisible cars that fly.

But as people get older, the push for creativity diminishes. Creativity is often relegated to drawing, making music, or writing. People who don't consider themselves artistic may falsely believe that they are not creative.

But creativity is much more than art. It is a part of nearly everything we do. And the more the creative brain is used, the stronger it becomes.

The belief that some people are not creative is false. Creativity is everywhere. When an executive leads her company in a new direction, that's creativity. When a teacher finds a better way to explain a mathematical concept, that's creativity as well.

Creativity is the force that propels people forward, that allows an object or idea to come out of a place where there was nothing before. To create is to grow and change. Creativity is about culture and learning and problem solving.

Simply put, creativity is vital to life. For people who struggle with mental illness, creativity can be a lifeline. Men and women who are able to consider new ways of thinking or behaving can improve their lives. Therapists who try different modes of treatment, or seek innovative ways of understanding a problem, have an edge over therapists who are not able to branch off and think creatively.

Men and women who are able to harness their creativity find themselves with an ever-growing treasure trove of ideas and solutions. *What is a better way to learn how to ride a bike? How can I use my skills to get a higher paying job? How can I save more money? How can I make a difference in the world?*

There are many benefits of engaging in creative thinking. Here are just a few of them.

Creative thinking:

- Improves problem-solving
- Helps people think 'outside the box'
- Increases playfulness
- Makes life more enjoyable
- Allows for self-expression
- Improves life
- Encourages discovery and growth.

One of the keys to harnessing creativity is to let go of your expectations. If you allow yourself to explore seemingly ridiculous ideas, you may find that those ideas are radical and powerful.

Creativity is not just for children. It's for everyone. Embracing creativity is a way to experience life and growth and joy and healing.

[More articles by Jenise Harmon](#) @ Psych Central [all short, insightful reads]

- [5 Easy Ways to Improve Self-Esteem](#)
17 May 2015
- [The Power of Kindness](#)
09 Mar 2015
- [10 Tips for Finding a Great Therapist](#)
03 Mar 2015
- [When Love Hurts](#)
14 Feb 2015
- [The Power of "NO"](#)
08 Feb 2015
- [10 Things to Say to a Loved One Who Struggles with Depression](#)
27 Jan 2015
- [True Greatness: The Pain of Hidden Illness](#)
21 Jan 2015
- [Dear Daughter: 5 Life Lessons for My Child](#)
17 Jan 2015
- [3 Steps to Battle Self-Hatred](#)
16 Jan 2015
- [Should You Make Your Child Apologize? A Therapist's View](#)

"The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves and not to twist them to fit our own image." One Day at a Time in Al-Anon

2] ["Schizophrenia~Learning To Thrive"](#) - YouTube 3:05 minutes - Please check out this wonderful video created by a dear friend and fellow Surviving Spirit Board member, Mary Ann Goughler.

A video Biography of Living, Thriving w/Schizophrenia as well as being a Wife, Mother, Grandmother and Being an Artist, Published Poet, Accomplished Professional & Mental Health Advocate.

Hi to all, I am a self- employed, self-taught Artist, Writer, Speaker, Mental Health Advocate and Educator who has struggled with Schizophrenia. I've been married 22 years to a wonderful man, have a terrific dog that helps me get through the day and I'd like to offer support/hope to all those who suffer from mental health concerns, while trying to lift the stigma attached to it. I love life, try to live it to the fullest and have lots of stories to tell. Humbly, Marushka, aka..Mary Ann Goughler. Please feel free to contact me at magoughler@yahoo.com, comment under any post, and I can also be found on [LinkedIn](#). Thank You

Mary Ann will be a guest on the National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse Radio – [Stop Child Abuse Now](#) – Tuesday 09/15/2015 8pm EST, 5pm PAC

Tonight's special guest is [Mary Ann Goughler](#), Sharpsville, PA, an abuse survivor and advocate as she struggles with Paranoid Schizophrenia, PTSD and depression. She says, "I have overcome a great deal and share my personal story of growth so I can give hope to all people who suffer from any type of Mental Health issues. They/we can lead full and productive lives. I am living proof."

"Each indecision brings its own delays and days are lost lamenting over lost days. . . . What you can do or think you can do, begin it. For boldness has magic, power, and genius in it." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

3] [16 Voices From the First National March for Mental Health Dignity](#) - The Mighty - Sarah Schuster

Sarah is the mental health editor at The Mighty. She thinks every day should be a mental health day. Follow her on Twitter [@saraheliztweets](#), and send your story/compliments/presents to sschuster@themighty.com

On August 25 in Washington, D.C., for the first time in U.S. history, mental health groups and individuals from across the country joined forces to march for the dignity of those who live with mental illness.

The event was organized by [Destination Dignity](#), a collaborative project spearheaded by groups like [The Campbell Center](#), [The Center for Dignity, Recovery and Empowerment](#), [Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery](#), [Mental Health America](#) and the [New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services](#). The driving idea behind the event: mental health is as a basic right, and those who experience mental health issues deserve to be treated with dignity.

At a rally at the National Mall, speakers addressed issues like high levels of unemployment, incarceration and homelessness among those with mental illness. Destination Dignity hopes to bring attention to issues like underfunded mental health services, negative portrayals of mental illness in the media and a fragmented mental health system that often requires a person to be in crisis to access help. For those who attended the event, it was a chance to be part of the first national movement of its kind for an issue that historically has been left in shadows. The Mighty spoke to some supporters about why they were there to support this cause. [Read the entire article & see some great photos](#)

"Stand for what is right, even when you stand alone." Unknown

Related articles for this event # 4, 5, 6

4] [Destination, Dignity: Focus on a Broken Criminal Justice System](#) - Mad In America – Susan Rogers

There was a lot said, shouted, chanted and sung about the rights of individuals [such as myself] who have mental health conditions at the March for Mental Health Dignity on the National Mall on August 24.

The march - which was sponsored and supported by a list of advocacy organizations as long as your arm - had two basic demands: changes in policies that obstruct recovery from mental health conditions, and changes in society's treatment of individuals who have such conditions.

Under this broad umbrella, two objectives stand out for me: an end to the unconscionable levels of incarceration, not only of people with mental health conditions but of everyone, and an end to the criminalization of mental health and substance use conditions.

The United States has less than 5 percent of the world's population, but it has almost a quarter of the world's prisoners. And more than half of them have a mental health problem, according to the most recent report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

People like us - that is, people who live with mental health challenges - are less likely to be released on bail, and we have longer jail and prison terms. Even when we are released, we are more likely to incur technical probation violations.

But, worse, we often become targets while incarcerated. Human Rights Watch recently reported that prisoners with mental health conditions are routinely physically abused by guards. [Read the entire article](#)

“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

5] [Why Dignity Is Our Destination](#) By Eduardo Vega - Huffingpost

Eduardo Vega is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mental Health Association of San Francisco, and Director of the Center for Dignity, Recovery and Empowerment, collaborating partners of Destination Dignity!

As the counterpoint to pervasive stigma, discrimination and civil rights restrictions experienced by people with mental health conditions, and the broad range of negative or marginal supports from their communities worldwide, “Dignity” has become the rallying cry for change in mental health services and public perception, domestically and internationally.

Today, Monday August 24, 2015, a historic moment will occur in Washington when, for the first time ever, people living with mental health conditions will lead supporters and dozens of diverse organizations to raise public awareness of the need for change for the millions of Americans impacted by mental illnesses under the banner of "Dignity" for mental health.

The first national Destination Dignity Mental Health March on Washington will be convened at 12 noon with a rally including national leadership from dozens of organizations. Organized by the grassroots Destination Dignity Coalition, the event is being led by people who live with mental health conditions and their supporters to create a "tipping point moment" for progress.

Why do we focus on dignity? Because people everywhere, faced with pain and problems face awful personal dilemma around disclosure, discrimination and shame, including often the restriction of their basic human rights. Because there are not enough positive resources for support when someone feels desperate, even considering suicide. Because in some settings yet, supports and services can feel more like punishment than care.

Dignity is every human's birthright, one value that can cut across all cultures and situations. All too

often, those of us with mental health challenges have experienced their dignity being taken , though, by stigma and discrimination, forceful, demeaning and negative treatment, by silencing and shame.

Many millions of Americans, up to 25 percent of the entire population on any given day, live with mental health conditions or psychological distress. Despite often debilitating challenges, the vast majority live successful lives, contribute to their families and communities, and serve crucial roles in every domain and professional field.

Yet people who live with mental health challenges, mental illness symptoms and psychiatric disabilities remain the most stigmatized group of people in many cultures, facing demonizing portrayals in the media, prejudice, ridicule, and shame. Millions of people have reasons to legitimately fear talking about their challenges or reaching out for support in their most difficult moments. In this culture of systematic discrimination in health, education and career, harsh treatment and coercive interactions that are all too often experienced as punishment rather than treatment, over a 40,000 people trapped by isolation and despair die each year by suicide.

Recovery happens. It is happening. [Read the entire article](#)

“My message is the practice of compassion, love, and kindness. Compassion can be put into practice if one recognizes the fact that every human being is a member of humanity and the human family regardless of differences in religion, culture, color, and creed. Deep down there is no difference.” Dalai Lama

6] [Our Destination Is Dignity](#) by Ron Manderscheid, PhD Behavioral Healthcare

Executive Director - [National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors](#) & Adjunct Professor,, Department of Mental Health , Bloomberg School of Public Health Johns Hopkins University

With the clarion cry, “**Our destination is dignity**,” they set out across the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on one of the hottest days of our southern summer. They came from all corners of America - California, Georgia, and New York - with the solitary purpose of seeking dignity for all persons with mental illness. What a noble goal for very honorable people.

The Destination Dignity March proved to be a landmark event in the annals of American mental health. Almost a thousand people gathered on the National Mall at noon on August 24 to demand the simplest of things, that which most of us take for granted and never think twice about - basic human dignity. Just imagine being required to seek one’s own basic human dignity. The National Mall has never before been witness to such an event.

Many present had been robbed of their human dignity by traumatic events in their lives, by stigma from their neighbors, by a care system that did not care. Now, they were here to reclaim that simple human dignity loudly and proudly. They were here reclaiming the voice they had lost in their own past.

“**What do you want?**” In unison, they responded, “**Dignity!**” “**When do you want it?**” “**Now!**” they shouted, “**Now!**”

You might ask, where does one find basic human dignity. I suspect it is near the corner of recovery and respect, and just down the street from support and good friends. [Read the entire article](#)

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I'm changing the things I can't accept." Angela Davis

7] [Dr. Brene Brown – Word of Mouth, NH Public Radio](#) - audio 14:58 minutes [please note, scroll down to second separate audio link for her portion of the show]

Looking to deepen your relationships, professional satisfaction, and personal innovation? Then it's time to get vulnerable. We speak with TED Talk superstar Brene Brown, whose research says that exposing our secret selves is the most daring way to live.

[Dr. Brené Brown](#) is a University of Houston-based researcher and academic who is now author of two best-selling books, based on years of data. Her message: authentic human interactions, innovation, professional satisfaction and meaningful relationships are only possible when we dare to expose our vulnerabilities and confront our shame, and that ultimately, boldly doing battle with the self means sometimes landing flat on your face. Her new book, ***Rising Strong*** is about how to get up, dust yourself off, and be willing to do it all over again.

[Rising Strong](#) - When we deny our stories, they define us. When we own our stories, we get to write the ending.

Social scientist Brene Brown has ignited a global conversation on courage, vulnerability, shame, and worthiness. Her pioneering work uncovered a profound truth: Vulnerability the willingness to show up and be seen with no guarantee of outcome is the only path to more love, belonging, creativity, and joy. But living a brave life is not always easy: We are, inevitably, going to stumble and fall. It is the rise from falling that Brown takes as her subject in "***Rising Strong***." As a grounded theory researcher, Brown has listened as a range of people from leaders in Fortune 500 companies and the military to artists, couples in long-term relationships, teachers, and parents shared their stories of being brave, falling, and getting back up. She asked herself, "What do these people with strong and loving relationships, leaders nurturing creativity, artists pushing innovation, and clergy walking with people through faith and mystery have in common?" The answer was clear: They recognize the power of emotion and they're not afraid to lean in to discomfort.

Walking into our stories of hurt can feel dangerous. But the process of regaining our footing in the midst of struggle is where our courage is tested and our values are forged. Our stories of struggle can be big ones, like the loss of a job or the end of a relationship, or smaller ones, like a conflict with a friend or colleague. Regardless of magnitude or circumstance, the rising strong process is the same: We "reckon" with our emotions and get curious about what we're feeling; we "rumble" with our stories until we get to a place of truth; and we live this process, every day, until it becomes a practice and creates nothing short of a "revolution" in our lives. Rising strong after a fall is how we cultivate wholeheartedness. It's the process, Brown writes, that teaches us the most about who we are.

[Brené Brown: The power of vulnerability](#) - TED Talk

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is

accepted as being self-evident.” Arthur Schopenhauer

8] [What I Did On My Summer Vacation: Surviving and Helping Others Learn from a Boyhood of Sexual Abuse](#): Martin C. Calder, Paul M. Hambke: Amazon.com: Books

From the Inside Flap - "What I Did On My Summer Vacation, is an exceptionally powerful and empowering contribution to the field of healing and prevention of child sexual abuse for two reasons. It makes more visible the still under represented experience of male survivors. Secondly, it does so in a way which does not perpetuate the usual safety mechanisms that are used to talk about such a distressing issue. It is achieved by the uncompromising imagery, language and description of Paul's testimony.

This is important because society's chronic tendencies to veil the issue inhibit survivors' scope for healing, as well as children's access to safety. For example, calling it child sexual 'assault' instead of 'abuse' or 'molestation' immediately makes children equal to adults - conceptually, perceptually, and legalistically. The images speak for themselves. They do not allow any hiding place from the reality of what a child goes through. They challenge the cliched advice survivors hear to forget the experience and move on.

Another challenge to this is effectively made by Paul's descriptions of dissociation, flashbacks and triggers. This is backed up by [Martin Calder](#)'s section which provides further known information, on these phenomena as well as the wider social environmental factors that influence a child's vulnerability. He also gives an outline of these as applied to Paul's experience, and as such integrates an individual case within the broader spectrum.

“Both authors are very articulate in enabling an excruciatingly painful subject to be addressed in a focused and succinct way - for survivors, their supporters, professionals and towards the broader public intelligence about child sexual assault.” Elizabeth Tidhar Helpline Manager [Mosac](#) United Kingdom

Mosac is a voluntary organization supporting all non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused. We provide various types of support services and information for parents, carers and professionals dealing with child sexual abuse.

You can purchase the book directly from Paul for twenty dollars, including postage:

Paul Hambke 202 West Keller St. Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 phambke@gmail.com

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

9] [Sacred Relic Studio](#) – Julie DeRosa

Julie DeRosa is a self taught assemblage artist who creates mixed media shrines. She has exhibited in several shops and gallery shows in and around Rhode Island.

Her work is about personal transformation. Using discarded materials and adding elements [relics]

created by her, her pieces speak to creating and holding onto hope, which is to her, sacred. She finds this expression has been a very real and tangible means of living with a mental illness with grace.

"My work consists of assemblage pieces that I refer to as Shrines. Truly mixed media in nature, I try to create individually unique and meaningful pieces. In any given shrine you may find natural material such as moss or twigs, or silver trays and costume jewelry, to old hardware and elements that I feel speak to the work I am creating.

All work is created by me in my home studio. I am largely inspired by nature and spirituality. All elemental pieces in each Sacred Relic Studio sculpture are cast, and hand painted by me.

Art is an essential part of my life; it centers me, and brings me great joy and peace. Art has a way of 'waking' up my soul, and I sincerely hope that it will have the same effect on you!"

[I {heart} Rhody: Artists ~ Julie DeRosa ~ Pawtucket](#) – Article Interview

1. **Tell us about your work** - I like to call the assemblages that I make ‘shrines’. Typically, I will use found and recycled materials as well as create one or more of my own elements for the pieces using a molding and casting process with resin. Each resin piece that I create is hand sanded, given a coat of primer then hand painted and sealed with polyurethane to protect the finish. Most of my themes seem to revolve around personal transformation. Using discarded materials and adding elements (relics) created by me, my pieces speak to creating and holding onto hope, which is to me, sacred. This expression has been a very real and tangible means of living with a mental illness with grace. My greatest desire is that my work conveys hope and healing to anyone who chooses to bring the work into their home.
2. **Is there a story behind the name of your business?** - Since I create multiple components in each piece requiring attention to detail, I have to concentrate and focus. These are quiet times for me when I can be in my solitude and a wonderful sort of alchemy happens, and an almost sacred hush in my soul occurs when creativity and quiet mingle. It is as if, at these times, I am finally at home with myself. [Read the entire article](#)
3. **Any advice for new/wannabe makers?** - Don't be afraid to make mistakes! They are the best teachers!!!!

Julie is also the Director of Training for the -

[Mental Health Consumer Advocates of Rhode Island - Oasis Wellness & Recovery Centers](#)

“You use a glass mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul.” George Bernard Shaw

10] [This is the best drug commercial you will ever see](#) – The Shrug – video 1:33 minutes

Nature Rx brings us a spoof of a prescription drug commercial that's too funny because it's painfully true. Sometimes the best medicine can be simply turning off the screen and going outdoors. What are you waiting for? Try nature today!

“Results may vary. Golf is not Nature.”

“Our basic identity, the core of who we are as human beings, is valuable. Our lives have meaning, purpose and significance. Without this fundamental understanding that each and every one of us are people of unlimited worth who are created capable of reaching our greatest aspirations, we live in spiritual poverty.” AJ French

11] [Upworthy: Things that matter. Pass 'em on.](#) Democracy - Diversity and Equality - Economics - Environment - Health - Humanity and Culture - Justice - Science and Technology

12] [Weebly Website Builder: Create a Free Website, Store or Blog](#) - ***Your idea needs a great website.*** It's surprisingly easy to create a unique website, blog or online store.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” Aesop

13] [Photos give powerful visibility to chronic illness](#) – Art Beat PBS News Hour

Erica Lupinacci and Allie Cashel both have chronic illnesses. But unless they tell you, there’s almost no way to know that — they don’t “look sick” or “act sick” most of the time. And this, they both say, can be difficult.

“I think a lot of people, when you say you’re sick and when you tell someone your diagnosis, it can go two ways,” Lupinacci said. “Either because it’s invisible, they assume that it’s not that big of a deal and that you’re okay - or people assume that you can’t do things. They see you as just your illness. They don’t see you as a full person with dreams and goals, that you’re just like everyone else, but with an extra challenge.”

Recently, Cashel and Lupinacci have addressed that problem head-on in a book by Cashel and web campaign called “Suffering the Silence,” which is aimed at enabling those with chronic illness to discuss their illness publicly and on their own terms. Participants write the name of their illness on their arm and pose for a photograph with their hand covering their mouth. A small paragraph under the photograph tells the participant’s story. The campaign began with the series of photos, like the ones pictured here, but anyone can post their own image online with the hashtag #SufferingTheSilence.

The pictures and captions are powerfully honest, painting a picture of a complete person — not just an illness.

“That’s really what we’re trying to do with the site and with the campaign,” Cashel said. “Focus honestly on what life is like with chronic illness, but also not to harp on it, to find ways we can integrate it into our daily lives in a positive way.”

For many people with chronic illnesses, finding a space like the web campaign, where they describe their experiences on their own terms, is difficult, Cashel said.

“These illnesses affect so much more than our bodies,” she said. “They affect our friendships and relationships; they affect our identities. And I think that’s really hard to talk about.”

Currently, approximately one person a day posts their image online. But the campaign is not just about those on the site. It's also about helping those with chronic illness who may not want to pose for a portrait or write up their story yet.

"A lot of people reached out and have said they've used the portrait to communicate to their loved ones what it's really like to live with this," Cashel said. "And that's what we wanted from the start, we wanted this to be a platform to use to help people communicate their experience." [Learn more](#)

About the Book, "[Suffering the Silence](#)" by Allie Cashel

Allie Cashel has suffered from chronic Lyme disease for sixteen years—but the medical community refuses to recognize her symptoms as the result of infectious disease. In ***Suffering the Silence: Chronic Lyme Disease in an Age of Denial***, Cashel paints a living portrait of post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, featuring the stories of chronic Lyme patients from around the world and their struggle for recognition and treatment.

The book will be published by North Atlantic Books, a health and wellness publisher based out of Berkeley, CA, distributed by Random House. Available in stores September 8, 2015.

"He has not learned the lesson of life who does not every day surmount a fear." Ralph Waldo Emerson

14] [The Grass Gets Greener](#) - Inspiration For Bullying Survivors – Melissa Wilson

A site for survivors of childhood bullying who are still struggling with the effects bullying has had on them. This site will help inspire and empower you to overcome those effects and become the person you are meant to be.

The Grass Gets Greener represents hope and optimism. Sometimes you may feel as if other people have a better life than you, that the grass is greener on their side of the fence, so to speak. Well, this site is here to provide you with inspiration and support to help you overcome the effects of being bullied that can make you feel that way. This site is here to show you how to not only get back to the person you used to be, but to help you become the person you are meant to be. **To show you how the grass gets greener for you!**

So who am I and what makes me qualified to run this site?

Great question! Well, I'll start by saying that I am a bullying survivor myself. Now, it's still not easy for me to say that, but I have finally reached a point where I can. I know all too well what it is like to be where you are right now. I know what it's like to feel all alone in what you're going through. I know what it's like to feel like you can't trust anyone. I know how hard it is to move on. But, I have, and I know you can too! [Learn more](#)

Recent Episodes:

Tackling Your Issues to Get to Beyond Surviving – Episode 46 - Rachel Grant joins me to share her story of how she has been able to overcome the effects of childhood sexual abuse to get to a place in her life now that is what she calls beyond surviving.

Responding to Unexpected Challenges In a Healthy Way - Episode 45 - Margo Rose joins me to share her story of how she has been able to navigate her way through loss and deal with unexpected life challenges by becoming more prepared and less scared.

Surviving the Abuse of a Psychotic Parent - Episode 44 - Susannah Birch joins me to share her story of how she's been able to heal after nearly being killed at the age of two and a half when her mother had a psychotic break.

Becoming a Surviving Spirit through Hope, Healing and Help - Episode 43 -Michael Skinner joins me to share his story of how he's gone from growing up in an abusive home to being stigmatized for his mental illness to becoming the survivor and advocate he is today.

Moving from Victim to Survivor to Thriver - Episode 42 - Svava joins me to share her story of how she has overcome childhood abuse to become not only a survivor, but a thriver, and how she is helping others do the same.

Please note, Melissa is always looking for guest to share their narrative of Hope & Healing. MS - melissa@thegrassgetsgreener.com

“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.” Carl Bard

15] [THE BEGINNING AND END OF RAPE](#) by Sarah Deer - Kirkus Review

A blunt, trenchant exposé on the history and impact of sexual violence on indigenous tribal nations. For more than two decades, MacArthur Fellow Deer (Law/William Mitchell Coll. of Law; co-editor: *Sharing Our Stories of Survival: Native Women Surviving Violence*, 2007) has been an activist for sexual and domestic violence survivors in Native American communities. The vast knowledge and shrewd assessment skills she brings to this book give the issue the acknowledgment it desperately deserves. Though averse to calling the rape of American Indian women an “epidemic,” a moniker she feels depoliticizes it, the author views the harrowing matter as a direct result of colonialism. Though only one issue of many daunting tribal governments today, she writes, the sexual assault of native women is an atrocity historically plaguing Indian tribes, and it should rightly be deemed a “crime against humanity.” As a member of the Muscogee nation, Deer imparts passion and resolve into chapters condemning rampant criminal impunity via federal laws that disregard the framework of tribal sovereignty, discussing the conundrum of sex trafficking, and how and why contemporary feminist theory fails to wholly address the situation at large. She then looks beyond the statistical data delivered in early chapters to propose diverse reform efforts that address victims’ needs and legal rights. A particularly humbling section focusing on the journey of an imprisoned rape survivor puts a human face on the crisis and personalizes it beyond hard facts and disquieting details. While Deer maintains that these dire acts of violence form complex legal and humanitarian complications with no elementary resolutions, she offers a variety of viable, proactive, and creative solutions and reformative proposals in an effort to rectify what she believes has become a “seemingly hopeless reality.”

An incisive and imperative academic study.

“I think the challenge is to take...difficult and painful times and turn them into something beneficial, something that makes you grow. Michelle Akers”

16] [Thacher Exhibit Showcases Native American Resilience through Basketry](#) - University of San Francisco

USF’s Thacher Gallery will showcase more than 40 handcrafted baskets woven by Native Californians between the 18th and early 20th centuries, beginning Aug. 24.

Interwoven: Native California Basketry Arts from the Missions Forward highlights how indigenous basket weaving survived and evolved during the Spanish colonization in the mid-18th century.

The exhibit will coincide with the canonization of Fr. Junipero Serra, the Spanish priest who built several California missions and whom Pope Francis will declare a saint when he visits Washington, D.C. in September. That’s not by accident. The settling of California can be viewed from different perspectives after all, says Glori Simmons, gallery director.

“The fact that Interwoven coincides with Fr. Serra's canonization invites us to examine the legacy of the missions and colonization from a Native American point of view,” Simmons says. “It encourages students to ask questions and seek the truth about the past. At the same time, we hope that visitors will begin to see that history is not separate from the present, but created by us in the moment.”

The basket selection, which is made up of samples from world-renowned Chumash and Pomo weavers as well as from several other California tribes, is drawn from the collections of three California missions. The exhibit will feature functional baskets such as cradle-boards - used to carry babies - as well as baskets that were made just for trading with Europeans.

Interwoven was designed by USF graduate museum studies students, led by Stuart McKee, associate professor of design. A complimentary exhibit, Interwoven: Indigenous Contemporary, will feature art by Native Americans currently living in California. That exhibit opens on Nov. 16, just as Interwoven: Native California Basketry Arts from the Missions Forward wraps up.

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant. If it did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome. Charlotte Bronte”

17] [Calm Your Mind and Boost Your Creativity with Adult Coloring Books](#) – Mindful – *Taking time for what matters*

A new breed of coloring books are designed to give stressed-out grown-ups a mini-meditative experience.

No longer are coloring books just for kids—they have expanded into a wonderful way to boost adult creativity and help improve mental health. The company [Michael O’Mara](#) has created a line of beautiful, intricate, and wildly successful adult coloring books, which dominate Amazon’s bestseller list. The coloring books aren’t just for fun—they offer users an experience of “flow,” a mental state in which one becomes so immersed in an experience that time and space and self no longer disrupt the present moment.

These coloring books are fun and diverse, with themes ranging from intricate gardens to classic comics. The books are a relaxing and creative way to be in the moment, where you're biggest problem is trying to remember where you left your pencil sharpener.

There are a variety of different coloring books to choose from, but if you're looking for a place to start there are several books specifically designed with mindfulness and anti-stress in mind. Check out this book from illustrator Emma Farrarons called [*The Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-stress Art Therapy for Busy People*](#).

"Just for Today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision." Al-Anon

18] [3 Time Management Tips That Will Improve Your Health and Productivity](#) – James Clear

I study successful people across a wide range of disciplines - entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, and more - to uncover the habits and routines that make these people the best at what they do. Then, I share what I learn in my popular email newsletter.

My weekly emails will show you how to...

- Use small habits to multiply your mental and physical performance by 10x.
- Beat procrastination and shave wasted hours off your workweek.
- Overcome your inner fears and actually follow through on what you set out to do.

Join over 200,000 others and sign up [below](#). [scroll down at his site]

Just enter your email below to join my weekly newsletter. As a welcome gift, I'll send you a free copy of my popular guide, ["Transform Your Habits."](#) [download his free E-book, "*Mastering Creativity*" also]

I write about behavioral psychology, habit formation, and performance improvement. My work has been covered by dozens of major media outlets like TIME, Entrepreneur, Forbes, and more. Over 150,000 people read my articles each week.

I don't have all the answers, but I'm happy to share what I've learned so far. Want to hear more? You can read my full story [here](#).

The central question I'm trying to answer through my work is, "How can we live better?"

Time management can be tough. What is urgent in your life and what is important to your life are often very different things.

This is especially true with your health, where the important issues almost never seem urgent even though your life ultimately hangs in the balance.

1. **Eliminate half-work at all costs.** - In our age of constant distraction, it's stupidly easy to split our attention between what we should be doing and what society bombards us with. Usually

we're balancing the needs of messages, emails, and to-do lists at the same time that we are trying to get something accomplished. It's rare that we are fully engaged in the task at hand.

2. **Do the most important thing first.** - Disorder and chaos tend to increase as your day goes on. At the same time, the decisions and choices that you make throughout the day tend to drain your willpower. You're less likely to make a good decision at the end of the day than you are at the beginning.
3. **Reduce the scope, but stick to the schedule.** - I've written previously about the importance of holding yourself to a schedule and not a deadline. There might be occasions when deadlines make sense, but I'm convinced that when it comes to doing important work over the long-term, following a schedule is much more effective. [Learn more](#)

"We cannot seek or attain health, wealth, learning, justice or kindness in general. Action is always specific, concrete, individualized, unique." Benjamin Jowett

19]] [How to Manage Time With 10 Tips That Work](#) – Entrepreneur

Chances are good that, at some time in your life, you've taken a time management class, read about it in books, and tried to use an electronic or paper-based day planner to organize, prioritize and schedule your day. "Why, with this knowledge and these gadgets," you may ask, "do I still feel like I can't get everything done I need to?"

The answer is simple. Everything you ever learned about managing time is a complete waste of time because it doesn't work.

Before you can even begin to manage time, you must learn what time is. A dictionary defines time as "the point or period at which things occur." Put simply, time is when stuff happens.

Which time describes the world in which you really live, real time or clock time?

The reason time management gadgets and systems don't work is that these systems are designed to manage clock time. Clock time is irrelevant. You don't live in or even have access to clock time. You live in real time, a world in which all time flies when you are having fun or drags when you are doing your taxes.

Practice the following techniques to become the master of your own time:

1. Carry a schedule and record all your thoughts, conversations and activities for a week. This will help you understand how much you can get done during the course of a day and where your precious moments are going. You'll see how much time is actually spent producing results and how much time is wasted on unproductive thoughts, conversations and actions.
2. Any activity or conversation that's important to your success should have a time assigned to it. To-do lists get longer and longer to the point where they're unworkable. Appointment books work. Schedule appointments with yourself and create time blocks for high-priority thoughts, conversations, and actions. Schedule when they will begin and end. Have the discipline to keep these appointments.
3. Plan to spend at least 50 percent of your time engaged in the thoughts, activities and

conversations that produce most of your results.

4. Schedule time for interruptions. Plan time to be pulled away from what you're doing. Take, for instance, the concept of having "office hours." Isn't "office hours" another way of saying "planned interruptions?"
5. Take the first 30 minutes of every day to plan your day. Don't start your day until you complete your time plan. The most important time of your day is the time you schedule to schedule time.
6. Take five minutes before every call and task to decide what result you want to attain. This will help you know what success looks like before you start. And it will also slow time down. Take five minutes after each call and activity to determine whether your desired result was achieved. If not, what was missing? How do you put what's missing in your next call or activity?
7. Put up a "Do not disturb" sign when you absolutely have to get work done.
8. Practice not answering the phone just because it's ringing and e-mails just because they show up. Disconnect instant messaging. Don't instantly give people your attention unless it's absolutely crucial in your business to offer an immediate human response. Instead, schedule a time to answer email and return phone calls.
9. Block out other distractions like Facebook and other forms of social media unless you use these tools to generate business.
10. Remember that it's impossible to get everything done. Also remember that odds are good that 20 percent of your thoughts, conversations and activities produce 80 percent of your results.

“Don't let people pull you into their storms. Pull them into your peace.” Kimberly Jones

20] [National Recovery Month](#) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with a mental and/or substance use disorder to live a healthy and rewarding life.

Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery, just as we celebrate health improvements made by those who are managing other health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. The observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. Since these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population, Recovery Month provides a vehicle for everyone to celebrate these accomplishments. Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities around the country celebrate National Recovery Month. They speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share their success stories with their neighbors, friends, and colleagues. In doing so, everyone helps to increase awareness and furthers a greater understanding about the diseases of mental and substance use disorders.

Now in its 26th year, Recovery Month highlights the achievements of individuals who have reclaimed their lives in long-term recovery and honors the treatment and recovery service providers who make recovery possible. Recovery Month also promotes the message that recovery in all of its forms is possible and encourages citizens to take action to help expand and improve the availability of effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services for those in need.

[The Recovery Month theme](#) is carefully developed each year to invite individuals in recovery and their

support systems to spread the message and share the successes of recovery. The theme 2015 is Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!, which highlights the value of peer support in educating, mentoring, and helping others. The theme also invites individuals in recovery and their support systems to be catalysts and active change agents in communities, and in civic and advocacy engagements. It encourages individuals to start conversations about the prevention, treatment, and recovery of behavioral health conditions at earlier stages of life.

Materials produced for the Recovery Month observance include print, Web, television, radio, and social media tools. These resources help local communities reach out and encourage individuals in need of services, and their friends and families, to seek treatment and recovery services and information. Materials provide multiple resources including SAMHSA's National Helpline 1-800-662 HELP [4357] for information and treatment referral as well as other [SAMHSA resources for locating services](#).

History - Over the years, National Recovery Month has inspired millions of people to raise awareness about mental and/or substance use disorders, share their stories of recovery, and encourage others who are still in need of services and support.

Recovery Month began in 1989 as Treatment Works! Month, which honored the work of substance use treatment professionals in the field. The observance evolved into National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month in 1998, when it expanded to include celebrating the accomplishment of individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. The observance evolved once again in 2011 to National Recovery Month to include all aspects of behavioral health. [Learn more](#)

“As I walk. As I walk. The universe is walking with me.” from the Navajo rain dance ceremony

21] [Working to Recover, or Adjusting to Illness?](#) - Futurehealth - By Lewis Mehl-Madrona, MD, PhD

Paris Williams [2012] has marvelously summarized the existing research on recovery from psychosis in his book, Rethinking Madness: Towards a Paradigm Shift in our Understanding and Treatment of Psychosis. Many of us were not surprised when the research failed to support the currently dominant bio-medical model of psychiatry. A 2015 panel at the American Psychiatric Association's annual meeting in Toronto confirmed that even more research is accumulating to question the benefits, if any, of the long-term use of anti-psychotic medication. Paris raises the question, why doesn't research change anything? In my day-to-day practice of psychiatry in a hospital setting, I continue to see the same story being enacted, the story that Paris questions [through the use of data]. That story is considered absolute truth - that psychosis comes from diseased brains, must be treated with drugs that block dopamine receptors [among others], and requires life-long treatment lest the person relapse. A recent Huffington Post article strongly supported that point of view, pointing to one research study showing that the longer the duration of untreated [with medication] psychosis, the worse the outcome. Studies must be read with caution - even those that support our position. The Huffington Post author, a NAMI member [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill] and the mother of a child diagnosed with psychosis, didn't notice that the "untreated" patients were actually being exposed in an oscillating manner to high-dose anti-psychotic medications, which they would take and then stop. This is the dominant pattern in the United States, and certainly not the case in the developing countries covered by the World Health Organizations' studies of schizophrenia, in which people's exposures to medications were either brief or non-existent. Other studies continue to accumulate to support these conclusions.

Drug company sponsorship of research can build careers in psychiatry. Doing drug research builds respectability and confers status. I have learned the hard way that psychotherapy research is tremendously less respectable than pharmaceutical research. Again, why is this so? Perhaps sociologists can tell us.

The trigger for this essay is the upcoming visit of Ron Coleman and Karen Taylor to Maine. They represent the Recovery Movement in Mental Health. As is often the case, Ron began as a patient, escaped the psychiatric system with the help of his friends, and started helping others to escape and recover in his native Scotland. Karen, a psychiatric nurse, joined him at some point, and together they have made a substantial impact upon people in such diverse places at the U.K., Italy, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. The gist of their story is that people who get diagnosed as having psychosis can recover; they can get well. Of course, I agree with that. Throughout my life, I have worked with people who have had the psychosis label as they work to recover. Barbara Mainguy and I wrote a recent paper about over 50 of these people and how they fared [positively]. The work is sometimes slow, sometimes exciting, requires patience and acceptance that people don't always make the choices we want them to make, but that perseverance will further, as the I Ching often says, and recovery will happen.

I believe wholeheartedly in what Ron and Karen are doing. We want to participate in starting a recovery house and community in Maine, but I can't see, in my wildest dreams, how this movement could ever enter mainstream psychiatry. For one, it's peer led. Mainstream psychiatry is required to be physician led. When I say required, I mean by the government....

However, the literature, as reviewed by Dr. Williams, points to peers being at least as effective as professionals, and probably more so... [Read the entire article](#)

[Lewis Mehl-Madrona](#), MD, PhD, is the author of the "Coyote" Trilogy. His work discusses healing practices from Lakota, Cherokee and Cree traditions, and how they intersect with conventional medicine via a social constructionist model. He has been writing about the use of imagery and narrative in healing since the 1980s and is certified in psychiatry, geriatrics, and family medicine. His research collaborations include work on various psychological conditions, issues of psychology during birthing, nutritional approaches to autism and diabetes, and the use of healing circles to improve overall health outcomes.

My personal goals include the furthering of a paradigm shift within medicine, psychiatry, and psychology toward aligning with indigenous knowledge systems and providing healing activities more in line with what traditional cultures have offered. I am interested in our creating new science that is not the same old, same old linear boredom of Newton and conventional statistics, but that uses complexity theory and quantum physics concepts to explore our world, and, more importantly, to find ways to help each other to heal and to grow and change.

My website will cross-reference the developing website for the Coyote Institute which is now at www.coyoteinstitute.us

To contact me by snail mail: Dr. Lewis Mehl-Madrona Coyote Institute P.O. Box 556
Augusta, Maine 04332 Telephone: 808-772-1099 Fax: 207-626-1902
Email: mehlmadrona@gmail.com

My discussion group is coyotewisdom@googlegroups.com Click here to visit my [Facebook Page](#). I invite you to become my friend on Facebook. I announce all my workshops and events there.

“A loving heart is the truest wisdom.” Charles Dickens

22] [The Amish: Shunned . American Experience](#) . WGBH PBS

What is it like to be cut off from your faith and your family? The Amish: Shunned follows seven people who have chosen to leave their closed and tightly-knit communities for the outside world, knowing they can never return. Each has paid deeply for their decision. Estranged from loved ones, these former Amish find themselves struggling to make their way in modern America.

“Prosperity is a great teacher; adversity a greater.” William Hazlitt

23] [September 7th-13th is World Suicide Prevention Week and September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day](#)

[Download PDF](#) [Download PDF in Spanish](#)

Reaching out to those at risk of suicide

According to the recently released World Health Organization (WHO) report: Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative, over 800,000 people die by suicide across the world each year. The report notes that this estimate is conservative, with the real figure likely to be higher because of the stigma associated with suicide, lack of reliable death recording procedures, and religious or legal sanctions against suicide in some countries.

We may not be able to pinpoint the exact figure, but we do know that each individual suicide is a tragic loss of life. It is hard to imagine the extreme psychological pain that leads someone to decide that suicide is the only course of action. Reaching out to someone who is struggling can make a difference.

‘Preventing Suicide: Reaching Out and Saving Lives’ is the theme of the 2015 World Suicide Prevention Day [WSPD], an initiative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention [IASP] and the WHO, a co-sponsor of meetings and events related to WSPD 2015.. Since 2003, WSPD has taken place on 10th September each year. It serves as a call to action to individuals and organizations to prevent suicide. This year, the theme encourages us all to consider the role that offering support may play in combating suicide.

The act of showing care and concern to someone who may be vulnerable to suicide can be a game-changer. Asking them whether they are OK, listening to what they have to say in a non-judgmental way, and letting them know you care, can all have a significant impact. Isolation increases the risk of suicide, and, conversely, having strong social connections is protective against it, so being there for someone who has become disconnected can be life-saving.

Reaching out to those who have been bereaved by suicide

Suicide is devastating for families, friends and community members who are left behind. They may

experience a whole range of emotions, including grief, anger, guilt, disbelief and self-blame. They may not feel that they can share these overwhelming feelings with anyone else. Therefore, reaching out to those who have lost someone to suicide is very important.

As a result of the stigma surrounding suicide, those who are bereaved by suicide are often perceived differently from those who lose a family member through another cause of death. People who are bereaved may find that they are avoided by people who don't know how to broach the subject or offer their condolences. Or they may just feel that others do not understand the intensity of their emotional response to the death of their loved one.

Once again, a pro-active approach and offering a sympathetic, non-judgmental ear can make all the difference. Giving someone who has been bereaved by suicide the opportunity to talk about their loss, in their own time, on their own terms, can be a precious gift. Allowing them to express their full range of feelings can be cathartic, and can help them to take the first small step in moving through their grief. Starting the conversation may be difficult, but it will almost certainly be appreciated.

Reaching out to put people in touch with relevant services [Learn more](#)

"I was always looking outside myself for strength and confidence, but it comes from within. It is there all of the time." Anna Freud

24] [Thoughts to share & Labor Day musings](#) - Michael Skinner

"Life is a succession of lessons, which must be lived to be understood." Ralph Waldo Emerson

Take care, Michael, Mary, 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](#)

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

