



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 2016

Happy New Year folks,

Wow, another year...and I still want to write 2015 on my checks...yeah, I'm still old school, I'm 'on-line' enough, don't need to take my banking there. Heck, there's lots of thing about me that are old school...and proud of it. And yet very excited when I learn something new on the computer or my cell phone [thanks to my 12 year old granddaughter].

Well, the snow has finally arrived here in New Hampshire and my back is reminding of this morning's shoveling and roof raking *exercise*. Still grateful to be able to do it...though driving home last night in the snow storm was no fun, a 2 ½ hour meeting and I just wanted to get home, 30 - 40 miles an hour was the top speed for the highway...about a mile and half from home, there it was, a sea of red lights. Hopefully, no one was hurt from the traffic accident that tied things up for awhile. Yes, winter is back.

I hope everyone survived the holidays in tact – some thoughts of mine regarding the holidays and the physical pain of depression and healing - [Season's Greetings & Happy Holidays????](#)

January is **Human Trafficking Awareness Month**, there is so much that could be shared just on that topic alone.

Back in 2005, I was asked to present at a conference addressing Slavery & Trafficking as a survivor at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. I wrote this song for that event, “[Brush Away Your Tears](#)”.

I learned back then, there are more slaves in the world today, than at the height of the slave trade, we need to end this, please be a part of the solution.

Wikipedia has an extensive listing of organizations addressing human trafficking - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_organizations_that_combat_human_trafficking

Here is a blog post I wrote last year about the song, the conference and my own personal *awareness*, into the world of trafficking - [“BRUSH AWAY YOUR TEARS”© - It shouldn't hurt to be a child](#)

And Frederick Lane has a few articles to share on the topic as well, short reads, but worth it - <http://www.fredericklane.com/category/crimes/sex-trafficking/....>

Slavery and human trafficking are huge...we need to acknowledge this and take the steps needed to help end this nightmare.

Well, I believe there are a fair amount of diverse resources shared here to help in you in your endeavors. I've also started a new section at the end – **Additional Resources** – 4 more great tidbits of information, but abbreviated, please do visit the appropriate websites.

Sincerely, Michael Skinner [MS]

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“Use Your Gifts In Service, Turn Your Pain To Purpose, Be Creative And Fully Expressed, Be A Creative Activist” Rae Luskin

- 1] [The Creative Activist](#) Book - Rae Luskin - *Make The World Better, One Person, One Action At A Time*

Do you feel there is something significant you are meant to do?

Do you long to have a life of meaning and impact? The Creative Activist is an inspiration toolbox for seekers of all kinds. It contains thirty-six stories from people who have embraced their personal power

and creative gifts to create change in the world around them. In these pages are also practical exercises and journal questions that will help you to; find your voice to speak your truth, discover your passion and purpose, build successful collaborations, turn your gifts into positive action, and become a confident leader. This book lights a path to help you see, understand, and believe in all you were meant to be.

The Creative Activists are ordinary people, just like you and me, who are eager to make a positive difference in people's lives, communities, and the world through their imagination, creative thinking, and unique expression. They teach, bridge gaps, foster understanding and take action to make the world better. It does not matter what job or position you hold, where you live or how old you are, everyone has a sphere of influence. You have your own unique gift and talents, ideas and solutions. The world needs your voice and vision.

Rae is the founder of Art and Soul Connections and The Winning Adventure. A lifelong learner she has studied with Mary Morrissey, Lisa Nichols, Jack Canfield, Janet and Chris Atwood (certified passion test facilitator), Brendon Bouchard, Steve Harrison and Lisa Sassevich to name a few. For over fifteen years she has been a leader in using creative expression to nurture self-worth, resilience, healing, and social change. Sharing her personal story of child sexual abuse she inspires and motivates people to turn their pain into purpose. Community partners have said "Rae is passionate about her work as an advocate for healthy children and families...her transformational work has the potential to prevent abuse across the world. " She is the author of Art from My Heart and a contributing author to Shine the Light, Sexual Abuse and Healing in the Jewish Community and Learning from Failure. [Learn more](#)

[Creative Activists Facebook Group](#)

"Give yourself full credit for your courage and for maintaining the fire and light of your true self deep within. You protected the precious, original self that has always been there. Care now for yourself by appreciating your authenticity, your spontaneity, your humor, compassion, and, of course, your empathy." Linda Martinez-Lewi

2] [Better Days](#) – A Mental Health Recovery Workbook, by Craig Lewis

This book helps those aspiring toward recovery and also those in recovery, because it addresses and challenges the individual - in very real, basic and honest ways - to make significant cognitive adjustments in how they live their lives. The beauty of this curriculum is that people want to do it and don't consider it a chore, a demand, or a requirement, because every page subtly encourages the individual to think in realistic and forward-moving ways. This allows them to feel good about doing the work. I based this book on my personal life and recovery, and every page has been used successfully in peer group settings.

"Better Days is a mental health recovery workbook. It will help anyone reading/using it figure out ways to live a happier, healthier and more stable life." Craig Lewis

Craig Lewis is a Certified Peer Specialist living and working in Massachusetts. He has struggled immensely with mental health issues throughout his life, but he has successfully transformed this into a life of wellness. He has embraced his recovery process, producing remarkably beneficial results. He has discovered that he has innate skills and capabilities for helping others in their recovery, and he has been able to help many people improve the quality of their lives, which is life-affirming for him. He

does this by tapping into his lived experience to help others transcend their own struggles. He is sincerely committed to his recovery and helping nurture the recovery and wellness of all with whom he comes into contact. Craig is successfully working as part of an outreach team at a human services agency in Boston, Massachusetts. He also tours the country, speaking about his lived experience, sharing his struggles and triumphs to help others.

Craig's workbook, is down-to-earth in the sharing of thoughts, ideas & tips that help make sense of one's challenges with mental health concerns and trauma. Healing can happen, and his simple straightforward ideas make it easy to grasp and work with, especially if one is struggling. MS

Better Days - [Facebook Page](#)

“We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion.” Max de Pree

[Punks In Recovery](#) - is intended to spread the word about mental health recovery to those of us who have a connection to the punk rock world and the many diverse communities of people with whom we share commonality. This website is also for family, friends and supporters of those of us who struggle, as a reminder that we can and do get better. This is a place to learn that you are not alone and that you don't have to suffer in silence. So many of us are in pain on the inside yet feel beaten down by the stigma and shame that society and our own community, often forces on us for experiencing mental health struggles. This is a place to become inspired to take healthy steps toward improving your quality of life so you can be a happier and healthier person. As we know, the punk scene is rife with dysfunctional people who engage in reckless behaviors and often self-medicate. For a very long time, I was one of those people too. This website is meant to help you feel empowered to take more control over your life. Hopefully, this website will help you feel more supported in taking steps to make healthy adjustments in your life that will bring about peace of mind, increased happiness and a greater sense of control over how you live, interact with others, and get your needs met. You are not alone. I am living proof of a person, and a punk rocker, who was once very mentally unhealthy and extremely dysfunctional and I have successfully rehabilitated myself. Nowadays, I am living a happier and healthier life and I want to help my peers do the same. We all benefit when we address the topic of mental health in our community. ***Recovery is real.***

[“You're Crazy” - Volume One](#) by Craig Lewis [Paperback – Lulu

“You're Crazy” Volume One compiles twenty-five first-hand accounts of people from the punk scene who live with mental illness, addiction and trauma.

['You're Crazy - Volume Three'](#) - Call For Contributions

“Trying to suppress or eradicate symptoms on the physical level can be extremely important, but there's more to healing than that; dealing with psychological, emotional and spiritual issues involved in treating sickness is equally important.” Marianne Williamson

3] [How Childhood Trauma Can Make You A Sick Adult](#) - Dr. Vincent Felitti -Video 7:15 minutes

The Adverse Childhood Study found that survivors of childhood trauma are up to 5,000 percent more likely to attempt suicide, have eating disorders, or become IV drug users. Dr. Vincent Felitti, the study's founder, details this remarkable and powerful connection.

[Vincent Felitti](#) - Big Think

A renowned physician and researcher, Dr. Vincent J. Felitti is one of the world's foremost experts on childhood trauma. Leading the charge in research into how adverse childhood experiences affect adults, he is co-principal investigator of the internationally recognized Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, a long-term, in-depth, analysis of over 17,000 adults. Defying conventional belief, this study famously revealed a powerful relationship between our emotional experiences as children and our physical and mental health as adults. In fact, the ACE study shows that humans convert childhood traumatic emotional experiences into organic disease later in life. Revolutionary at its inception, Felitti's groundbreaking research remains extremely relevant to today's health care models. [Learn more](#)

4] [Big Think](#) - Videos, articles, and tips to help you succeed, from the world's leading experts

“The same person who seeks help can also offer it.” Judi Chamberlin

5] [How Not to be a Slave to Your Brain: Mindfulness for Mental Health](#) – Dr. Mark Epstein -Video 5:51 minutes

Big Think and the Mental Health Channel are proud to launch Big Thinkers on Mental Health, a new series dedicated to open discussion of anxiety, depression, and the many other psychological disorders that affect millions worldwide.

One of the classic definitions of mindfulness is that it helps us avoid clinging to what is pleasant and condemning what is unpleasant. In this video, psychiatrist Mark Epstein relays information about the practice of mindful meditation and its many mental health benefits

Mark Epstein, M.D. is a psychiatrist in private practice in New York City and the author of a number of books about the interface of Buddhism and psychotherapy, including *Thoughts without a Thinker*, *Going to Pieces without Falling Apart*, *Going on Being*, *Open to Desire and Psychotherapy without the Self*. His latest work, *The Trauma of Everyday Life*, was published in August of 2013 by Penguin Press. He received his undergraduate and medical degrees from Harvard University and is currently Clinical Assistant Professor in the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis at New York University.

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.” Albert Einstein

6] [Mental Health Channel](#) – Changing Minds - All episodes

The Mental Health Channel is a new online network that's changing the conversation through inspiring true stories.

What is the Mental Health Channel? - It's a channel like you'd see on cable, but on the web. This is where all TV is headed. We thought we'd get here first.

Why MHC? - Because everyone can benefit from better mental health.

What's Our Mission? - Create engaging, enlightening, informative programming, commercial free, to help all viewers improve their mental health.

Who Funds Us? - MHC is underwritten by philanthropic gifts to the Mental Health Fund of the Greater Houston Community Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit corporation.

“Man's heart, away from nature, becomes hard.” Luther Standing Bear

7] [The Growing Field of Ecotherapy](#) - James Hamblin - The Atlantic

Why some doctors are writing prescriptions for time outdoors

The first time J. Phoenix Smith told me that soil has healing properties that can help thwart depression, I just nodded slowly.

Smith is an ecotherapist, a practitioner of nature-based exercises intended to address both mental and physical health. Which means she recommends certain therapies that trigger in me, as a medical doctor, more skepticism than serenity: Listen to birdsong, in your headphones if necessary. Start a garden, and think of the seeds' growth as a metaphor for life transitions. Find a spot in a park and sit there for 20 minutes every week, without checking your phone, noting week-to-week and seasonal changes in a journal.

Ecotherapy is a fledgling profession, still unrestrained by such things as “standards of practice” and “licensing requirements.” It can mean regular outdoor sessions with a therapist or simple exercises undertaken on one's own, and can be part of a general approach to well-being or a supplement to treatment for a medical condition. [It is not intended as a replacement for standard evidence-based treatments.]

Smith almost lost me at the part about not checking your phone. But I couldn't dismiss her out of hand. Her certainty that she is doing something great for people was disarming. Plus, she has a background in public health: She worked in HIV prevention for 20 years, until she was laid off in 2010.

After Smith lost her job, aimlessness led to stress, which led to depression. But she found solace on long hikes in the Northern California hills, and was inspired to volunteer at a garden in East Oakland. “I remember walking into the garden, and I immediately felt better,” she told me. “I just saw wealth and abundance. There was food growing, and flowers. It really helped to shift my thinking.”

Smith became so convinced of nature's healing powers that she decided to start a consulting company, EcoSoul, predicated on the idea that “bringing forth your medicine is a way of honoring your ancestors, your highest self, and the earth.” The next year, she was part of the first class to graduate from the ecotherapy certificate program at John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill, California.

Ecotherapy training programs are springing up around the country, but the one Smith attended was launched by a pioneer of the movement: Craig Chalquist, the chair of the East-West Psychology Department at the California Institute of Integral Studies. When I tracked him down, he shared some

familiar advice: “If you hold moist soil for 20 minutes,” he told me, “the soil bacteria begin elevating your mood. You have all the antidepressant you need in the ground.”

What was it with these guys and dirt? It turned out that Smith and Chalquist were referring to a study published in *Neuroscience*, a prestigious journal, that had found that soil bacteria called *Mycobacterium vaccae* increase serotonin in the brains of mice, much like Prozac and similar medications. It’s a stretch to apply this preliminary finding to humans - ask your doctor before replacing your psychoactive medications with dirt.

But other research, conducted with actual humans, does support the idea that spending time in nature makes people healthier. Children with ADHD who regularly play in parks have been found to have milder symptoms than those who spend more time indoors, for example, and therapeutic-camping programs have been found to decrease relapse rates in substance addicts. Such findings generally have more to do with mood and behavior than basic biology - but mood and behavior are intimately tied to physical well-being. Social connection, for instance, is one of the most important factors in human health. And communal green spaces foster that. [Read the entire article](#)

“If you're struggling, you deserve to make self-care a priority. Whether that means lying in bed all day, eating comfort food, putting off homework, crying, sleeping, rescheduling plans, finding an escape through a good book, watching your favorite TV show, or doing nothing at all – give yourself permission to put your healing first. Quiet the voice telling you to do more and be more, and today, whatever you do, let it be enough. Feel your feelings, breathe, and be gentle with yourself. Acknowledge that you're doing the best you can to cope and survive. And trust that during this time of struggle, it's enough.” Daniell Koepke

8] [Advice From a Loving Bitch](#) - Rythea Lee, Therapeutic Performance Art - 20 episode online show

Each show is 5-7 minutes long and has a theme that is interactive and participatory. The shows use emotional education, humor, and theater to teach people about the intricacies of self-hatred and how it can be transformed into compassion, action, and love. They are aimed at breaking the isolation and loneliness that people face everyday and offering very accessible tools for healing. *Oh and the shows are funny, did I say that?*

“Healing is edgy.” Rythea Lee

[Episode 1](#) – You Tube 6:03minutes - Warning: *It's edgy and I curse a lot but it's also very loving.*

This Episode deals with the Self-Hating Voice and how to begin to recognize its painful powers. Humor is the best medicine when dealing with the parts of you who rip you to shreds. Let Rythea walk you through how it works and get your first assignment towards learning how to love yourself. Interactive self-healing through Humor.

[Episode 2](#) - You Tube 5:08 minutes -This Episode's theme is the Inner Child. Who is our Self-Hating Voice attacking when it goes after you with criticism and judgment?

Why does it attack our most vulnerable selves? What does that look like? Let Rythea walk you through how it works and give you your second assignment towards learning how to transform.

WHY MAKE THIS SHOW? - I have been a counselor with a private practice for 21 years, working with survivors of trauma and abuse and I am intimate with the pain and challenges people live with in terms of loving themselves. I see self-hatred, perfectionism, and judgment deeply embedded in the lives of my clients, friends, and family. It's relentless and insidious and it comes from a lifetime of survival, trauma, and loss.

I have also had the privilege of helping people change these unconscious, internalized patterns and grow an empowered, loving inner witness. There are skills and tools that support healing and anyone can learn them. People can heal and shift how they talk to themselves in their own mind and can evolve how they see their own worth. How we treat ourselves profoundly impacts our relationships, work and family choices, personal and professional goals, our outlook in general, our health, our ability to express ourselves and our ability to heal. I can't think of anyone I know who would not benefit from learning self-loving practices. Tools for core change: that's what this project is all about.

I hope you will subscribe and be part of this incredible journey with me as the videos are released. I hope you'll share the videos widely with people who need them. Thanks for listening, caring, healing, and doing what you do. It makes a big difference.

Rythea Lee www.Rythea.com www.facebook.com/selfhealingthroughhumor twitter: [@alovingbitch](https://twitter.com/alovingbitch)

"Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart.." Pablo Casals

9] [Research Shows Health Benefits of Music](#) - Jacob Devaney – **Uplift** – *We Are One*

Scientists are now supporting the claim that Music is Medicine

There are many mindfulness practices to stimulate inner awareness, increase health, and elevate our mood. Now we can add to that list practices such as listening to Mozart with your full being while sipping tea, singing a pop-song out loud while you drive across town, or losing your body to ecstatic dancing. Scientific research now shows us the ways that music has a physiological effect on our bodies and can improve concentration, relieve stress, act as an antidepressant and more.

"Music's beneficial effects on mental health have been known for thousands of years. Ancient philosophers from Plato to Confucius and the kings of Israel sang the praises of music and used it to help soothe stress. Military bands use music to build confidence and courage. Sporting events provide music to rouse enthusiasm. Schoolchildren use music to memorize their ABCs. Shopping malls play music to entice consumers and keep them in the store. Dentists play music to help calm nervous patients." Mental Health, Naturally: The Family Guide to Holistic Care

Take a moment and listen to Billie Holiday's *Lady Sings the Blues* and you will be transported to another time. Sing along with her and you may ooze with the feelings as if they are your own. Crank up Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* and you will be filled with emotions you may have never known existed. This capacity to feel is core to having compassion, yet music also has a profound effect on cognitive processes and learning also.

"Auditory biology is not frozen in time. It's a moving target. And music education really does seem to

enhance communication by strengthening language skills.” Nina Kraus, Professor of Communication Sciences, Neurobiology & Physiology, and Otolaryngology at Northwestern University

Musical entrainment creates connection both internally and externally which can be seen when watching a whole crowd dance to a live band, or the people around you sobbing at an opera. Science explains this as an aspect of mirror neurons, which are a form of mimicking that can happen emotionally and physically. Maybe a song will give you chills, make you cry, or spontaneously start jamming on an air guitar, or dancing uncontrollably. In the study, *The Neuroscience of Music*, published by the Department of Psychology at McGill University, Montreal, researchers found preliminary scientific evidence supporting claims that music influences health through neurochemical changes in four domains: reward, motivation and pleasure; stress and arousal; immunity; and social affiliation.

“The potential therapeutic effects of music listening have been largely attributed to its ability to reduce stress and modulate arousal levels. Listening to ‘relaxing music’ (generally considered to have slow tempo, low pitch, and no lyrics) has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety in healthy subjects, patients undergoing invasive medical procedures (e.g., surgery, colonoscopy, dental procedures, pediatric patients undergoing medical procedures, and patients with coronary heart disease.”

– [The Neurochemistry of Music](#)

It is no surprise that music has been used in ritual and ceremony since the beginning of time. Women share playlists for the delivery room to welcome new life. You can even hire a hospice harpist to help the transition from a terminal disease. Music education has also been shown to help children’s developing brains. So it is only natural to place it in a category for mindfulness, meditation, and healing.

“Music is a language of energy, a “vibe” of emotions and joy. It speaks to our core desires and feelings. It speaks to our core desires and feelings. It spans language barriers and political borders, making it a powerful means through which humans can connect.” Patrick Groneman

Music is also a reflection of culture. In today’s world we are experiencing an unprecedented fusion of ideas through the internet and technology. We are re-mixing historical themes, embellishing forgotten ideas and combining belief systems across time and societies. For instance, electronic dance music has captured wide acclaim as DJs and producers improvise with musical tools that have the ability to drop samples, mix, change tempo and induce ecstatic states of consciousness. This music has become central to the emerging transformational, or visionary culture that is influencing our world view through integrating art, spirituality and technology.

As with everything else, it is our conscious intention or lack of it, that makes the difference in our experience. Try exploring new music when you want to get out of a rut. Just as you are what you eat, you should choose your music wisely because it is influencing the way you feel whether you notice it or not.

“It is hardly possible to build anything if frustration, bitterness and a mood of helplessness prevail.”
Lech Walesa

10] [Uplift The World](#) – UPLIFT

Imagine a place where poets and artists meet with scientists and ecologists, where indigenous elders gather with visionary youth. Where conscious evolutionaries meet with doctors, farmers, and teachers and each one comes to the circle to learn, share and discover what limitless possibilities emerge when we unify our gifts and passions for the greater good of all. Where our greatest challenges are recognized as our greatest gift – the opportunity to come together and create a world we love.

Combining the gift of intimate live events with the power of the internet to reach the world, UPLIFT is a bridge of love and consciousness into real world action, guided by a fundamental vision of Sarvodaya – Sanskrit meaning: *“Upliftment for all”*.

“We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.” Marie Curie

11] [“I Can See Clearly Now”](#) - Johnny Nash - YouTube 2:45 minutes [*A great song! MS*]

A Billboard Hot 100 Chart #1 hit song, written and recorded by Johnny Nash. It was a single from the album of the same name and achieved success in the United States and the United Kingdom when it was released in 1972. It was covered by many artists throughout the years, including a 1993 hit version by Jimmy Cliff, who re-recorded it for the motion picture soundtrack of Cool Runnings.

I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

I think I can make it now, the pain is gone
All of the bad feelings have disappeared
Here is the rainbow I've been prayin for
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

Look all around, there's nothin but blue skies
Look straight ahead, nothin but blue skies

I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)
Sun-Shiny day.

“Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.” Stella Adler

“All art requires courage.” Anne Tucker

12] [ICYMI: How Art Therapy is Helping Children Raised in Poverty](#) - Lauren Ingeno - Drexel News

Blog

Ninety-four percent of patients at Drexel's Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services have been exposed to one or more childhood traumas, according to a survey conducted by the center.

A recent feature story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* put a human face on the statistic. It profiles Xavier Johnson, 12, and his brother, DeShawn, 9. Both live in a North Philadelphia public-housing project that is surrounded by violence and drug dealing.

The boys find solace in an art therapy program run out of the 11th Street health center through a collaboration with Spring Garden School. Now in its second year, the program uses a "trauma-informed" approach that targets children living with severe stressors who may not necessarily seek out behavioral health care, faculty from the College of Nursing and Health Professions explain in the story.

From the *Inquirer*: - *It's one of many ways health-care providers are starting to work under the assumption that virtually all children in poor neighborhoods are growing up with trauma, and that even small interventions could transform the outlook not just for the child, but for the whole family.*

The 11th Street health center, which opened in North Philadelphia in 1996, recently doubled its size to about 34,000 square feet, adding space for art, dance, and music therapies. From its primary-care offices to its dental practice, pharmacy, fitness center, and teaching kitchen, the entire center works from this "trauma-informed" care model.

"Instead of asking, 'What's wrong with you?' we ask, 'What happened to you?'" said Patty Gerrity, director of the center and an associate dean at Drexel's College of Nursing and Health Professions. "We just assume everyone's been traumatized, and we don't want to retraumatize them."

The story struck a chord with readers: It's been shared nearly 6,000 times on *Facebook*, and was picked up by dozens of media outlets, including the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Fresno Bee* and the *Connecticut Post*.

The 11th Street health center is continuing to find the best ways to implement trauma-informed care into its practices and gathering evidence to back up those methods. The Center for Health Care Strategies recently awarded the center with a grant to participate in a multi-site initiative to do just that. With the funding, 11th Street plans to develop an integrated health care model throughout the center, which focuses on treating a patient's mind, body and spirit – not just the disease. Staff members will participate in monthly workshops to learn more mind-body methods, and mindfulness practices will be added to the center's clinical settings.

Gerrity, the center's director, is hopeful that the initiative will help its providers better serve more children like Xavier and DeShawn, along with their family members. [Learn more](#)

"The great evil of our present Insane Asylum System lies in the fact, that insanity is there treated as a crime, instead of a misfortune, which is indeed a gross act of injustice." The Prisoners' Hidden Life: Elizabeth Packard, 1868

13] [Linda Andre, Doctors of Deception: What They Don't Want You to Know about Shock Treatment](#) – Psych Central – Gillian Fournier

Linda Andre's *Doctors of Deception: What They Don't Want You To Know about Shock Treatment* is a book that is impossible to ignore. The book was written by a shock treatment victim who lost a profound amount of valuable memories and skills because of treatment that she was given essentially without her consent. She once was an award-winning writer and photographer and now she has become a force to be reckoned with. This book struck a chord in my heart because her descriptions are so well written and so absolutely heart-wrenching that it is impossible for anyone to erase once they have read it.

The first chapter of this book is all about Andre's life before and after shock treatment. Her first-person account of forgetting herself [not her name, all the things that made her unique] and what it is like to know you've forgotten something very important and having no clue what that might be is touching and threatening at the same moment. But surprisingly, that isn't the worst part - the worst part is that no one will believe you. Andre describes the loss of memory that results from shock treatment:

Your memory is not a component of your self, like your hair color or temperament. You don't lose it like you lose a suitcase. Your memory - the sum total of all you have ever thought, seen, smelled, heard learned and done in your life - is your self. When it is gone, you are a diminished person, and if enough of it is gone, you are a different person.

After the first chapter readers will already find themselves horrified by what it must feel like to lose everything important to them, but sadly, more horrors are in store. The book goes on to mention The Final Solution (the Jewish genocide during the Nazi years in World War II-era Germany) and the terrible public relations strategies that were - and in some cases still are - employed to make sure people don't rise up and outlaw shock therapy. The Final Solution had a precursor and that idea was experimentation, sterilization, and elimination of the mentally ill. That idea did not begin with the Germans. The idea came from one of America's finest, a Nobel Prize winner, Alexis Carrel, who thought that the mentally ill should be gassed to death.

Germany took the concept to the labs and began experimenting on the mentally ill as if they were lab rats. Such things as drugging them to sleep, injecting them with viruses, forcing them to breathe in carbon monoxide and even lobotomies were used because scientists felt that mentally ill people were subhuman. Mental institutions of the time are said to have killed nearly 300,000 people through these experiments.

One of the most troubling aspects of this book is the history behind ECT: The first shock treatment was a complete mistake. A scientist injected his patient with too much insulin and then decided her mind was more stable after the coma [probably due to brain damage]. This mistake made Manfred Sakel devote the rest of his life to intentionally overdosing patients to try to replicate the result. Later on, Ugo Cerletti noted that pigs who were zapped on the sides of their heads with electrodes seemed to be OK after the experience. It did not appear to kill the pigs because after the shock they would eventually get up and move about in a more docile manner. The complete history is even more horrifying. [Learn more](#)

"I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence." Frederick Douglass

14] [Shock Device Safe As Eyeglasses? 89 Days to Say No](#) - Mad In America – By Lauren Tenney, PhD, MPhil, MPA, Psychiatric Survivor

The electroshock device, the actual machine that is used to deliver shock treatment (electroconvulsive treatment/ECT), is currently a Class III device as categorized by the Food Drug and Cosmetic Act of 1976. The FD&C Act requires all medical devices to be placed into one of three categories: Class I (general controls); Class II (special controls); and Class III (premarket approval)” (FDA, 2015, p. 81,224i).

Under FDA standards, a medical device is placed into Class III when its risks and benefits have not been assessed to a degree that allows it to be placed into Class I or Class II, and thus there is potential that its risks outweigh its benefits. A Class III device is one that either was in existence prior to 1976 and is therefore referred to as a pre-amendments device, or if it has come onto the market since 1976 and its manufacturer claims it is similar to a pre-1976 device, it is referred to as a post amendments device.

To help decipher this, I turn to the must-read groundbreaking work of Linda Andre, *Doctors of Deception: What They Don't Want You to Know about Shock Treatment*.ii Andre tells the sordid history of the shock device and resulting procedure., crafting a meticulously-detailed account of the horrors of electroshock. Concerning the FDA's classification system, Andre wrote:

“Class III is the high-risk classification for those devices for which general controls or performance standards are insufficient. The FDA defines Class III devices as those for which ‘benefits have not been shown to outweigh risks’ and which present ‘a potential unreasonable risk of injury or illness’ when used as directed by the manufacturer for their intended purpose. The degree of oversight necessary to ensure maximum safety was known as ‘premarket approval’. The name reflected the fact that even though a device might have been on the market for many years, its status was similar to that of a new device. It hadn't proven itself to the FDA. Its manufacturers would, when called on by the agency, have to submit a premarket approval application (PMA) in which it would have to prove its safety and efficacy” (p. 139).

As discussed by Andre (2009) and the FDA (2015), over the decades there have been multiple attempts to down-classify the shock device to a Class II device, which would classify the shock device as safe and effective. This would put the shock device in the same category as eyeglasses or wheelchairs—other medical devices that are Class II, requiring “special controls.” [Read the entire article](#)

Lauren's article also contains the link to submit your comments to the FDA.

I have a copy of Linda Andre's book – it is powerful, well-researched and full of documented information and equally compelling, is her personal testimony of her experiences with ECT and the damage it wrought upon her mind, body and spirit.. I wish everyone would read the book...MS

“I do not judge people by the scriptures of their faith or the scars from their past, I embrace them by the content of the Hearts.” Dodinsky

15] [Lou Reed was given electroshock therapy at New York psychiatric hospital](#) - Daily Mail Online

Wrapped up in a bed sheet and with a rubber block between his teeth, 17-year-old Lou Reed was carefully placed on a wooden gurney for treatment.

He was given no anesthetic and just a muscle relaxant to calm him as the two electrodes were placed on his head.

Two orderlies barely older than him lay across his chest and knees to brace him for what was to come.

Then a doctor flipped a switch and the musical genius who would later found the Velvet Underground convulsed in agony.

Lou Reed had just had his first taste of electroshock therapy - a treatment he was given in part because of his sexuality.

Reed's parents had sent him for 24 sessions at two day intervals at the Creedmoor State Psychiatric Hospital in Queens, New York during the summer of 1959 because of his mental health issues.

But it turned him even further away from them and Reed thought to himself: ***'He had read Frankenstein: now he was living it'***.

Author Aiden Levy writes that going through such trauma at such a young age cemented Reed's anti-establishment views, his hatred of the system and his refusal to conform. [Read the entire article](#)

"To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respect and enhances the freedom of others." Nelson Mandela

16] [Lou Reed's sister: singer's electroshock therapy wasn't for homosexuality](#) - Music - The Guardian

Days before Lou Reed's posthumous induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, his sister wrote about long-held rumors concerning the musician's mental health treatment and history.

Merrill Reed Weiner said she hoped the piece would provide "clarity and context" to Reed's childhood, which has been subject to increased scrutiny since he died of liver disease in October 2013. In the essay, she disputes rumors that he was sent to electroshock therapy for homosexual urges and that he was abused by their father.

"For all those whose families' lives were damaged by the pervasive medical thinking of the time, I hope to offer solace and comfort," wrote Weiner, a psychotherapist. She published the story on the online publishing site Medium.

She said that as a teenager in Long Island, New York, Reed avoided socializing and was very anxious, sometimes hiding in his room to avoid meeting people.

"Panic attacks and social phobias beset him. He possessed a fragile temperament. His hyper-focus on the things he liked led him to music and it was there that he found himself."

She said that at 16, he started gigging in New York City, experimenting with drugs and closing off

communication with his parents.

Reed had returned to a state of high anxiety and avoidance, when a psychiatrist recommended electroshock therapy. “Each of us suffered the loss of our dear sweet Lou in our own private hell, unhelped and undercut by the medical profession,” Weiner said.

Weiner struck down the rumor that Reed was sent to electroshock therapy because he had homosexual urges. “My parents were many things, but homophobic they were not,” she said.

But she acknowledged that the treatments were a mistake that tore apart the family and disputed claims that their father hit Reed. [Read the entire article](#)

“You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy.” Kahlil Gibran

17] [Interacting with Autism](#) – Understanding - a video based resource

VOICES FROM THE SPECTRUM: The neurodiversity of autistic individuals

THE PARENTS’ PERSPECTIVE: Parents open up about how their lives have been changed by autism

SENSORY ISSUES

CAUSES: The role of genetics and environmental factors in Autism Spectrum Disorder

DIAGNOSIS: To explore the value of early diagnosis

PREVALENCE: Exploring the reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of children being diagnosed with autism

IN THE MEDIA: How autism has been represented in popular culture and in the media

THE VACCINES CONTROVERSY: The history of alleged relationship between autism and vaccines

[About](#) - [Interacting with Autism](#) is a video-based website that presents the most reliable evidence-based information currently available on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

This website is designed primarily for those on the spectrum and their families, as well as educators and healthcare workers, to help them make informed choices about what approaches might be most effective for any specific individual diagnosed with autism. By making this information accessible and documenting how it is currently being used by actual families, the website strives to offer hope about what is possible for those on the spectrum. We are especially interested in reaching families from ethnic communities and economic groups who are usually under-served and whose children typically do not receive early diagnosis. For that reason, the website is multilingual - accessible in English, Chinese, and Spanish. We would like to appreciate Educational Services Exchange with China (ESEC) for their partnership in producing the Chinese version of this project and to thank Dr. Danny Yu for his facilitation in the translation efforts

“Nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing true or beautiful makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we are saved by love.”
Reinhold Niebuhr

18] [Nation Inside](#) - Join Nation Inside in fighting for safer and healthier communities by challenging the U.S. criminal justice system.

We want to work with you in mobilizing your community to fight against the sprawling criminal justice system and to be a voice for human rights. Working together we can cast light on injustice and build grassroots power for change. We cannot win this fight without you.

Mission - Nation Inside is a platform that connects and supports people who are building a movement to systematically challenge mass incarceration in the United States.

[About](#) - Nation Inside is a project of Working Narratives with our homebase in Wilmington, NC.

We are still in the process of launching Nation Inside. If you see a problem or have a great suggestion about how to make Nation Inside better, please let us know: info@nationinside.org

Nation Inside is a community of people dedicated to changing the U.S. criminal justice system.

We do this by using our collective voices to

- spark public dialogue about criminal justice
- educate policy makers
- develop strategies for safer and healthier communities.

The Nation Inside community includes parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, educators, clergy, activists, artists, policymakers, and others concerned about our family, friends, and neighbors behind bars, as well as the larger social, moral, and economic implications of criminal justice policy.

Ultimately, we seek to reduce our society's over-reliance on incarceration.

We are outraged at criminal justice policy in our country today. Our name refers to the nation inside our nation, a population behind bars that is equal to the size of other countries, and touching millions of families from every political party, religion, and community in the U.S.

- More than 1 in 100 adults are behind bars, making the U.S. the world leader in incarceration, ahead of countries like Russia, Iran, and Turkey.
- Most of the people locked up in the U.S. are African American or Latino, even though crime is roughly equal across all racial groups.
- The vast majority of people in prison or jail are in for nonviolent crimes, often drug offenses, which are social problems that could be dealt with more fairly, safely, and economically.
- Some states spend more money on criminal justice than on education, and treat juvenile offenders too harshly, which creates a veritable pipeline from schoolhouse to jailhouse.

[Storybank](#) - Everybody's got a story or a perspective about the criminal justice system. What's yours? Here, you can easily upload video, audio, or text; and you can check out other people's stories.

You'll need to sign in or create an account to upload your story.

"The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares." Henri Nouwen

19] [Lawsuit seeks more help for mentally ill jail inmates](#) - Frank Stoltze - 89.3 KPCC News

Frank Stoltze is an award-winning correspondent who currently covers criminal justice and public safety issues for KPCC.

Frank reports on racial bias, community policing, gangs, the use of force, technology, and generally what works and what doesn't at law enforcement agencies in the region. fstoltze@kpcc.org

Seeking to end what they call the "Skid Row to jail cycle," civil rights lawyers go to court Monday to argue that new federal reforms fail to help mentally ill people get the care they need as they are released from Los Angeles County lockups.

"This case is about homelessness prevention," said attorney Mark Rosenbaum of Public Counsel. "By failing to provide needed assistance...the county sends mentally disabled homeless people back to the streets of Skid Row."

Monday's hearing is the first in the case. Public Counsel is seeking to intervene in a lawsuit brought by the U.S. Department of Justice against L.A. County. That case resulted in an "historic" agreement in August to provide better treatment, according to federal officials.

The provisions will "usher in a new era" for treatment of mentally ill inmates in the county's jail system, U.S. Attorney Eileen Decker said at the time. LA County jails house as many as 3,500 mentally ill people a day.

But Public Counsel lawyers argue the agreement falls short because it create discharge plans that connect people to social services. They are representing former jail inmates who suffer from mental illnesses.

"I was released from jail at 2 a.m. with no notice," said Derrick Thomas. "I received no information about community resources, and the only thing they gave me was my clothes."

Thomas, a former Army sergeant who served two tours in the Persian Gulf War, has been cycling between the jails and Skid Row since 2009, according to Public Counsel.

People like Thomas need an immediate referral to a social worker, and transportation, advocates said.

"Re-entry - the transition point from custody back to society - is a very vulnerable moment, and that

moment is an opportunity to connect mentally disabled people with the services that will keep them out of jail and off the streets,” said attorney Alisa Hartz of Public Counsel.

“When I was released, I was given a 30-day prescription for Risperdal, which I couldn’t fill because I had no money and didn’t know there were free pharmacies,” said Royal Williams, 44, who’s been homeless for 20 years and suffers from bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and depression, according to Public Counsel.

Williams said he had “three pieces of paper listing maybe 50 places for housing, mental health care, and drug and alcohol treatment. I didn’t know which ones would be good for me.”

“Mentally, I wasn’t in a place where I could figure out who to call or where to go, so I threw the lists away.”

“Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputations can never effect a reform.” Susan B. Anthony

20] **Zen Things**

Do one thing at a time
Do it slowly and deliberately
Do it completely
Do less
Put space between things
Develop rituals
Designate time for certain things
Devote time to sitting
Smile and serve others
Make cleaning and cooking become meditation
Think about what is necessary
Live simply

*“You are the one that possesses the keys to your being. You carry the passport to your own happiness.”
Diane von Furstenberg*

*Many years ago, a friend's gift of the book, **Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life**, by Thomas Moore, helped me create my daily practice for healing and peace ...& I'm still a work in progress. MS*

21] [Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life](#) by Thomas Moore

Goodreads - In this special twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Thomas Moore’s bestselling **Care of the Soul**, which includes a new introduction by the author, readers are presented with a revolutionary approach to thinking about daily life - everyday activities, events, problems, and creative opportunities - and a therapeutic lifestyle is proposed that focuses on looking more deeply into emotional problems and learning how to sense sacredness in ordinary things.

Basing his writing on the ancient model of “care of the soul” - which provided a religious context for viewing the everyday events of life - Moore brings “care of the soul” into the twenty-first century. Promising to deepen and broaden the readers’ perspectives on their life experiences, Moore draws on his own life as a therapist practicing “care of the soul,” as well as his studies of the world’s religions and his work in music and art, to create this inspirational guide that examines the connections between spirituality and the problems of individuals and society.

“Thoughtful, eloquent, inspiring.” - San Francisco Chronicle

“I soulfully recommend it without reservation.” - John Bradshaw, author of *Homecoming*

“If one can only see things according to one's own belief system, one is destined to become virtually deaf, dumb, and blind.” Robert Anton Wilson

Additional Resources:

22] [Live Thoughtfully](#) - A more thoughtful approach to life - Jake Mcspirit

Jake is a writer and spiritualist, often writing about the resolution of common life issues. Find his **free ebook** "A Brief Guide To A Transformative Perspective" at [LiveThoughtfully.com](#).

Author of [13 Things to Remember If You Love A Person With Anxiety](#)

& He is a writer for hire, find info: [JakeMcspirit.com](#)

“There is enough strength within you to overcome anything in life.” Lailah Gifty Akita

23] [10 Compassionate Ways to Support Loved Ones Suffering from Depression](#) – Carmen Sakurai – LifeHack -

Mommy. Life Strategist. Teacher. Advice Columnist. Foodie Wannabe. Writes for Lifehack, SheKnows & Ricky Martin's Piccolo Universe.

Grab my [Tips to Get Un-Stuck, Un-Stressed, and Live a Life You Love!](#) - **It's FREE!**

By subscribing to my newsletter, you will also gain access to my cheat sheet: “10 Things to Tell Yourself Every Morning for a Better, Happier, and More Successful Day!” & **It's FREE**

24] [Why Rape and Trauma Survivors Have Fragmented and Incomplete Memories](#) - TIME by Jim Hopper & David Lisak

[James Hopper, Ph.D.](#), is an independent consultant and Instructor in Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He trains investigators, prosecutors, judges and military commanders on the neurobiology of sexual assault.

Welcome to my website. - I have several pages about child abuse – how prevalent it is, its potential

effects, where to learn more and, if you're looking, how to find help for yourself or someone you care about.

I also have a page on mindfulness and kindness as inner resources that anyone, including those abused as children, can cultivate to reduce their suffering and increase their freedom and happiness.

My goal is to provide scholarly knowledge and resources, in ways accessible to any interested and motivated person – young or old, highly educated or not.

In January of 2016 I will (finally) launch a new, state-of-the-art and more extensive website.

I was a founding board member of 1in6, a nonprofit devoted to helping men who've had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences as boys live happier, healthier lives; I authored the pages of 1in6.org from 2008 through 2011. I have served (2010-2014) on the board of directors of Stop It Now!, a nonprofit that prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.

In recent years my consultation and training work has largely focused on sexual assault, especially "the neurobiology of trauma" (e.g., see this [Washington Post](#) op ed and this [YouTube video](#)).

[David Lisak, Ph.D.](#), is a forensic consultant, researcher, national trainer and the board president of [1in6](#), a non-profit that provides information and services to men who were sexually abused as children.

His research and applied forensic work on non-stranger rapists has helped guide rape prevention and response policies in major institutions, including the U.S. Armed Services and numerous colleges and universities.

His research on male survivors of childhood sexual abuse has helped focus public attention and spur new initiatives. He is a founding board member of 1in6, a national non-profit devoted to helping men who were sexually abused as children.

Dr. Lisak has conducted workshops and trainings in all 50 states, in Canada, and overseas. He also serves as an expert witness in both criminal and civil cases, and has testified in state and federal courts across the country.

Himself a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, Dr. Lisak was one of three men profiled in the documentary, [Boys and Men Healing](#).

& He is the creative force behind the [Bristlecone Project](#) – Men Overcoming Sexual Abuse

“Some people still hold [the] view that restraints help psychiatric patients feel safe. I've never met a psychiatric patient who agreed.” Elyn Saks

25] [PTSD & Yoga for Therapy](#): Stories of Healing - Denise Kersten Wills

When Sara talks about the benefits of practicing yoga, the 56-year-old from Boston uses the same terms as other yogis: being grounded and present, gaining an awareness of her body and its strength, feeling

calm and in control of her thoughts. But as a victim of physical and sexual abuse who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Sara experiences these things a little differently.

“We are a conspiracy of hope and we are pressing back against the strong tide of oppression which for centuries has been the legacy of those of us who are labeled with mental illness. We are refusing to reduce human beings to illnesses.” Pat Deegan

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](#)

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[@SurvivinSpirit](#) Twitter

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