



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 2016

Hi Folks,

A season of change, we've gone from hot, sweltering summer days, to some down right chilly nights here in New Hampshire.

I go out every morning with my first cup of coffee to stare off into the forest, standing barefoot on the grass; well, these last few mornings have found the temperature in the high 30's, lets me know, that soon, it will be time for shoes out there and then boots...oh well.

Seeing the changing of the leaves is always nice, till they fall down and they cry out to be raked.

Some pretty cool resources to share this month and I'm very excited to be a part of a few of them. Honored to participate in the **Destination Dignity Rally & March in Washington, DC**...once again I get to bring my guitar, sing some songs and share a few words. Also, grateful to have a chapter in the book, **“You Can Help: A Guidebook for the Family and Friends of Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault”**, and be interviewed for the, **Journey to the Heart FREE Online Summit - Are you ready to THRIVE after trauma?** Very cool!!

Please allow me to share one more musical indulgence...I'm drumming again with the rock band, **Full Throttle** on the weekends and having a ball!!! I'll share the [band's Facebook page](#), so please check it out, Like us, scroll around, learn about the musicians, check out the photos and hear some live videos of the band performing in various venues. Still amazed that a cell phone can record these. Wow!

Take care, Michael Skinner

“If you would be loved, love, and be lovable.” Benjamin Franklin

Newsletter Contents:

- 1] Destination Dignity - Destination Dignity Rally & March October 10, 2016 Washington, DC
- 2] You Can Help: A Guidebook for the Family and Friends of Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault
- 3] MS LifeLines® - Connect One-on-One The Peer Connection Program

- 4] Golden Rule of Self-Care: Be As Kind to Yourself As You Are to a Friend by Sarah Noel
- 5] Angel of Nanjing - Remember How To Fly – A film by Jordan Horowitz & Frank Ferendo
- 6] Journey to the Heart FREE Online Summit - Are you ready to THRIVE after trauma? Svava Brooks
- 7] How toxic people choose to react – to your reaction ~ Lilly Hope Lucario - Healing From Complex Trauma & PTSD
- 8] The Difference Between Chronic Fatigue Syndrome And Extreme Tiredness By Amy Marturana
- 9] Peer Specialist Training and Certification Programs: A National Overview
- 10] Why Antidepressants Don't Always Work - And What Can Make a Difference - Hey Sigmund - Karen Young
- 11] Antidepressant makes bones weaker by slowing down new growth - New Scientist
- 12] These Are The Young Black Women Making Art About Mental Health - Because it's OK not to be OK. By Priscilla Frank Arts Writer, The Huffington Post
- 13] Made for Freedom - Fight Human Trafficking with Style! Handmade by Survivors
- 14] Marblehead survivor of domestic violence establishes pet nonprofit - Marblehead Reporter By William J. Dowd
- 15] What Do EMDR, Running, and Drumming Have in Common? By Lisa Danylchuk
- 16] And Talking About It - Share Your Story - Hey Sigmund - Karen Young

“We share in the certainty that people labeled with mental illness are first and above all, human beings. Our lives are precious and are of infinite value.” Patricia Deegan

“I believe it is a spirit of hope that gathers us here together today.” Patricia Deegan

- 1] [Destination Dignity](#) - Destination Dignity Rally & March October 10, 2016 Washington, DC

The moment has come to reframe mental health as a basic right that must be realized in the context of human dignity. The Destination Dignity March, a collective effort of thousands affected by mental health conditions, is a crucial step in this direction for a healthier America.

On any given day, more than 60 million Americans, up to 1 in 5, are living with mental health and substance use conditions. Although these issues can be disabling, with the right support and services people go on to live meaningful lives. As parents, employees, leaders, families and professionals these people contribute to their communities at every level.

Despite this, Americans with mental health conditions remain the only group of people who it is considered acceptable to ridicule, dismiss and discriminate against. A legacy of prejudice and serious injustices in how our nation addresses mental health remain barriers to recovery, fostering despair, isolation, and the death by suicide of over 40,000 Americans annually. Especially for people with the greatest needs, stigma and discrimination continue to work against the hope, respect and community support that are essential to mental health.

This must change! It is time to step out of the collective closet and stand against stigma that has kept people silent, ill and alone. It is time for all those affected by mental health conditions to claim dignity, and to show strength and solidarity for change across America.

Together with our supporters **WE DEMAND DIGNITY. WE DEMAND CHANGE.**

In a unified voice with supporters, providers, family and friends, people living with mental health conditions will call for an end to unconscionable levels of unemployment, incarceration, homelessness and disability. An end to under-funding of services, harsh practices and fail-first systems in which involuntary status is requirement for care. An end to negative portrayals and scapegoating. An end to a society in which people with mental health conditions die up to twenty-five years before the rest of the population. A beginning to a new era in which every one faced with mental health challenges is supported to get the right kind of help when needed, and valued in their communities nationwide.

10 AM - 11 AM Pre-Rally Meeting/Registration at the Reflecting Pool

11 AM - 1 PM Entertainment, rally, and presentations from international leaders

1 PM - 2 PM March through downtown Washington, D.C to the Washington Monument

2 PM - 3:30 PM Photos at the Washington Monument

3:30 PM

Disburse! [Route Info](#)

[Click here to download a shareable PDF to help us spread the word about Destination Dignity.](#)

Even if you can't join us in Washington, D.C. on October 10th, you can still join the rally! With the power of the Internet, we can magnify our message and demand dignity around the country (and the world).

Ways to participate in the [Digital Rally](#):

- Follow Destination Dignity on Facebook and Twitter, and ask your friends to do so, too!
- Tell us what dignity means to you! Use #MHDignityMarch to join the conversation.
- Share stories, photos, videos - whatever medium you prefer - to tell your story and have your voice heard. [Learn more](#)

“Don't turn your face away. Once you've seen, you can no longer act like you don't know. Open your eyes to the truth. It's all around you. Don't deny what the eyes to your soul have revealed to you. Now that you know, you cannot feign ignorance. Now that you're aware of the problem, you

cannot pretend you don't care. To be concerned is to be human. To act is to care." Vashti Quiroz-Vega

2] [You Can Help](#): *A Guidebook for the Family and Friends of Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault*

[Rebecca Street, author](#)

Millions of Americans experience sexual trauma. One in four females and one in six males are sexually abused before the age of eighteen. At least ten percent of people who were sexually abused in childhood will have periods of complete amnesia for their abuse, followed by experiences of delayed recall. In addition, every 107 seconds, another American is sexually assaulted. Each year, there are about 293,000 sexual assaults. Sixty-eight percent of those assaults will go unreported.⁴ Nearly one-third (31%) of all rape victims develop PTSD sometime during their lifetime. And children are three times as likely to be victims of rape than adults.

The statistics are staggering. And yet, because sexual abuse and assault top the list of taboos in our society, there is a pervasive secrecy that keeps millions of victims in the shadows. Survivors are discouraged not only from speaking about the crimes themselves, but from even speaking about the emotional and psychological ramifications. Unfortunately, this stigma further exacerbates the deep and persistent shame they already carry as a result of the wounds inflicted upon them. Somehow, we must all learn to wear our scars proudly. But if the tragic events of our lives are regarded as dirty secrets that must be kept at all costs, how is that possible?

All survivors need advocates. They need to tell their stories and they need loved ones to participate in the healing process. Recovery does not occur in a vacuum. However, for a myriad of complicated reasons, too often those in the best position to help - the family and friends of the victim - feel the least prepared to do so. Accordingly, their default position ends up being silence, not because of callousness but because of feelings of powerlessness. Any survivor will tell you, silence is the biggest obstacle to recovery.

The catalyst for *You Can Help* was a conversation I had with a close friend while still living in Los Angeles. My friend came to me one afternoon for guidance because she wanted to help someone dear to her recover from the ravages of sexual abuse. There was something redemptive in that exchange as I realized that I could transform the suffering from my own abuse into an instrument of healing. At the time, I found it surprising that there were no books addressing this need and realized then (and even more so now) that such a resource would help countless people and fill a big hole in the existing literature on sexual trauma. And so I began writing down the suggestions I gave to my friend. The book has been through numerous incarnations since then and what began as homespun wisdom turned into a decade long exploration and research project.

I have been fortunate to have many advocates for You Can Help and thanks to them and perhaps especially to [RAINN](#) (The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network which is the largest such organization in the country) and also to Dr. David Lisak of the [Bristlecone Project](#), I was able to broaden my scope and begin a process of interviewing and selecting survivors for what was to become Part Two of the book. It is here that my research took a dramatic and powerful turn. Indeed, the overwhelming outpouring of brave victims' stories and experiences has been truly life changing.

[You Can Help Contributing Survivors](#) & [Learn more - book introduction](#)

“...Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.” William James

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.” Helen Keller

3] [MS LifeLines® - Connect One-on-One](#)

The Peer Connection Program - Whether you're living with MS yourself, or you're a care partner, family member, or friend, calling Peer Connection is a great way to connect with someone you can relate to.

Peer Connection matches you to a patient or care partner ambassador for one-on-one conversations by phone. You can ask questions, share stories, and get the perspective of someone who understands what it's like to live with relapsing MS and who may have once had the same questions as you.

It's really easy to get started: **Just call 1-866-783-5189**

We're available Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 8 PM ET, and Saturday and Sunday, 9 AM to 5 PM ET.

When you call, you'll answer a few questions to help us find the right MS LifeLines Ambassador for you. Then you can choose a convenient time to schedule your first call. That's it! You're connected.

[Learn more](#)

[What is MS?](#) If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with relapsing multiple sclerosis, here are five things you'll want to know right now.

“I have learned silence from the talkative; tolerance from the intolerant and kindness from the unkind. I should not be ungrateful to those teachers.” Kahlil Gibran

4] [Golden Rule of Self-Care: Be As Kind to Yourself As You Are to a Friend](#) by Sarah Noel, MS, LMHC © Copyright GoodTherapy.org. All rights reserved.

Imagine your best friend comes to you deeply distraught-her father died six months ago, and her mother's health is rapidly deteriorating. Over the past year, she has been consumed with managing care and legal issues, making funeral preparations, and grieving. Naturally, some things at work and at home have slipped through the cracks here and there. She comes to you feeling sad, helpless to stop her mother's decline, and angry at herself that she just can't seem to get it together.

What would you say to her? You probably would comfort her and remind her that she is only human. You would tell her that having to deal with the practical and emotional issues associated with aging/dying parents while managing a full-time job, a spouse, and children would leave anyone feeling overwhelmed and spread too thin. You might even suggest she take some time for herself to get a massage, order dinner in, and ask for more help from her partner and children with some of the household responsibilities. You probably would also offer to help her in any way that you could.

Now, let's shift gears. What if you were the deeply distraught friend? Would you be as understanding and compassionate with yourself as you would be with a friend? For many people, the answer, quite simply, is no. While we tend to be gentle and patient with our loved ones, we all too often hold ourselves to cruelly unrealistic standards. We have a tendency to berate ourselves for not being superhuman. If this sounds like you, take a step back and think about what you're doing. If you are attacking yourself in the midst of an already stressful situation, you are only depleting the resources available to help you cope. If this has been your default position for some time, it will be challenging to change this type of thinking, but here are some tips for getting started.

First, instead of launching an attack on yourself, step back and assess the situation as objectively as you can. Ask yourself what would make the situation easier to deal with. You might realize you just need a break. If so, make taking a break a high priority-whether that means scheduling a massage, planning a weekend away, or simply taking a nice stroll outside. Just do something that feels good to you. You might be surprised at how refreshed you feel. During challenging times, the essential questions should not be, "How can I tear myself apart?" Instead, ask, "How can I make myself more comfortable?"

Second, your objective assessment of the situation likely will reveal that you have entirely too much on your plate. Jam-packed schedules seem to be the norm these days, so when a crisis hits, there is very often no way to make room for handling the crisis while maintaining business as usual. Give yourself permission to ask for help. Whether that means reaching out to family, friends, and colleagues for help, hiring help, or a combination of both, don't be afraid to ask for what you need. People generally want to be helpful, especially to loved ones facing challenging times. In fact, people probably have told you to let them know if they can help. So, do it-let them know how they can support you.

Finally, accept your humanness. Challenging times do require you to dig a little deeper and find more than you think you have, but you must remember that you are still human and you have limits. As these limits emerge, accept them and be as kind to yourself as you would be to a dear friend. *You deserve it.*

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in. Leonard Cohen*

5] [Angel of Nanjing - Remember How To Fly](#) – A film by Jordan Horowitz & Frank Ferendo

This is a documentary about a man that saves people from committing suicide. He helps counsel them and reminds them why they are here.

It is inspiring and helps you remember that it might be bad right now, but it will get better and just because you feel sad doesn't mean you won't make an impact later in life, or do something important. Don't harm yourself, because you can be taking away someone else's lifeline: maybe you don't feel that way, but the person that will need your help years from now will thank you.

[Angel of Nanjing \(Trailer\)](#) – YouTube 2:09 minutes

The story of Chen Si, a man who patrols the Yangtze River Bridge in China saving people who try to

commit suicide.

[Who Am I? - Remember How To Fly ♥ My Survivor Scrapbook ♥](#)

Thank you for being curious and stopping in!

My name is Kristy, and I am passionately building an online community of survivors.

This blog is a place where I talk about healing trauma. I reach out to survivors of rape, domestic assault, and violent crime to help provide support while they are recovering, or in crisis.

Previously, I was diagnosed with chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In some sense this will never go away because my trauma is considered by physicians to be complex: I suffered several traumatic events throughout my life including multiple rapes and a violent hostage situation.

However, I am not a victim: I am a survivor. I work hard to help others find the strength to switch into this mode of being.

I have an BA in Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence from the University of Toronto. I focused on the development of wisdom and decision making in my studies. I am an avid Bön Buddhist, and consider myself a spiritual healer and Lightworker. I love to game with friends whether it be with card games, boardgames, or video games. I also adore crafting, especially small things for dolls and figurines!

Love and Light to you.

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.” Amelia Earhart

6] [Journey to the Heart FREE Online Summit](#) - Are you ready to THRIVE after trauma? Svava Brooks

Are you ready to focus on what you can do to heal and restore after trauma? It is in focusing with your intention on what you can do that the shift starts to happen.

I know you are tired of feeling broken and are fed up with suffering from shame and pain because of childhood abuse or trauma. I have been there.

That is why you don't want to miss this summit. There is more hope here, there is more healing support available to you, and the time is NOW.

Please join my FREE Audio Summit to hear more than 20 experts (therapists, coaches, teachers, authors, healers, and more!) offer a variety of life-changing information about how to heal spiritually, physically, and emotionally from abuse or trauma.

This FREE Audio Summit was created to help you overcome trauma or abuse by offering proven tools and techniques to bring lasting change into your life.

Participants will learn:

- How to overcome anxiety and change your mindset.
- Key techniques to emotional wellness.

- Essential techniques for finding peace and joy after trauma.
- Why self-love is important for healthy relationships.
- How important good nutrition is to recovery.
- How creativity and writing can play in your healing.
- How to really “THRIVE” after trauma with a connection to your body, mind and spirit.
- Powerful self help tools to release tension and trauma from your body.

And MUCH MORE, including ways you can restore hope and find transformative healing now!

You can register here: <http://www.thejourneytotheheart.com>

If you are excited about this event, please help me get the word out about this life-changing event by joining the ThunderClap campaign. Together, we can reach all the people who need this vital information.

Yes, you can heal, restore, and live a wholehearted life. Start today by joining this awesome Thunderclap campaign!! <http://bit.ly/2c4NxIO>

***Much Love and Light,
Svava Brooks***

P.S. Don't forget to join the closed online Facebook group for the Journey to the Heart summit participants. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/867880486664657/>

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

“We can pave the way for calm, reasonable communication only if we first find healthy outlets for our own negative feelings.” Al-Anon

Additional Resources:

7] [How toxic people choose to react – to your reaction](#) ~ Lilly Hope Lucario - Healing From Complex Trauma & PTSD/CPTSD - *A journey to healing from complex trauma.*

8] [The Difference Between Chronic Fatigue Syndrome And Extreme Tiredness](#) By Amy Marturana

Viewed as a made-up disease for years, CFS is finally getting attention in the medical community.

9] [Peer Specialist Training and Certification Programs: A National Overview](#)

The Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health is a multi-disciplinary collaboration that focuses on improving social, emotional, and behavioral health.

[Peer Cover FINAL 4 – Peer-Specialist-Training-and-Certification-Programs-National-Overview-2016-Update.pdf](#)

10] [Why Antidepressants Don't Always Work - And What Can Make a Difference](#) - Hey Sigmund - Karen Young

The presence of hope can be just as powerful as its absence. Just ask anyone with depression. Depression is a devastating illness that thrives on hopelessness. This sense of hopelessness can be worsened when medication, often taken as a last resort, fails to deliver any relief. New research finds clues as to why antidepressants don't work for everyone.

11] [Antidepressant makes bones weaker by slowing down new growth](#) - New Scientist

12] [These Are The Young Black Women Making Art About Mental Health](#) - *Because it's OK not to be OK.* By Priscilla Frank Arts Writer, The Huffington Post

It's OK not to be OK. This is the mantra behind "Unmasked Women," an art exhibition exploring the current state of black mental health for young women in the United Kingdom. Nicole Krystal Crensil, a 24-year-old assistant project manager from north London, was inspired to put together the show, frustrated by the lack of resources available to young women when they need it most.

13] [Made for Freedom - Fight Human Trafficking with Style!](#) Handmade by Survivors

The Made for Freedom team is passionately pursuing a world without sex trafficking. It is our mission to help end human trafficking in three important ways, Prevention, Restoration & Awareness

14] [Marblehead survivor of domestic violence establishes pet nonprofit](#) - Marblehead Reporter By William J. Dowd

Marblehead native Jordan Ross, 35, understands firsthand the hardship people in crisis endure to find shelter for their pets.

"I was homeless and struggled for almost a year," said Ross. "Like most people with pets in a crisis situation, I had a hard time figuring out what to do with Jazz."

It was 2007, and Jazz was then Ross' five-year-old black Lab.

Jordan Ross Executive Director - PetsEmpower Pets Inspire Healing
50 Milk Street Boston, MA 02109 Jordan@petsempower.org (617) 386 6192

15] [What Do EMDR, Running, and Drumming Have in Common?](#) By Lisa Danylchuk, EdM, LMFT, E-RYT, at GoodTherapy.org

Nope, this isn't a strange riddle where someone is found in the desert in a scuba suit. The answer to the question posed above is actually pretty simple: brain integration.

16] [And Talking About It - Share Your Story](#) - Hey Sigmund - Karen Young

One of the best things about being human is that pretty amazing things can happen when we share 'stuff'. This is a big part of what Hey Sigmund is about. We love conversation and we'd love you to join.

We all have a story to tell. Every single one of us. Everyone has loved, lost and learnt. It's part of being human. Nothing feels better than hearing from somebody else who's been there. If you have a story to tell or some wisdom you've picked up along the way, we would love you to share it here – you'll never know how many people will be needing to hear exactly what you have to say. Conversations make a difference. We are happy to consider any submission that fits under our banner of being human ... that should be broad enough for you!

The integrity of the information on Hey Sigmund is really important to us. Because of this, we only publish guest articles that are written from expertise or personal experience. If you work in the area you are writing about or have personal experience with the issue you are discussing, we'd love to hear from you. We don't publish articles written by representatives of SEO companies for the purpose of providing backlinks.

Please send your submission to karen@heysigmund.com

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

Some uplifting music to close out this month's newsletter, enjoy....

[Queen - We Are The Champions](#) - a great song to sing along with and help bolster the mind, body & spirit!!

“If I stop to kick every barking dog I am not going to get where I'm going.” Jackie Joyner-Kersey

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

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

