



*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 April 2021**

Hi folks,

April is National Child Abuse, Sexual Assault Awareness and Childhood Sexual Abuse Prevention Month. This is a song of mine I wrote many years ago to all the survivors of childhood abuse-past and present. You deserve healing and support.

Once again I've tried to create a mix of articles, videos, music, books, podcasts, resources, etc, that offer Hope, Healing & Help. As the saying goes, *“Take what you like and leave the rest.”*

Take care, Michael

[“Brush Away Your Tears”](#) – You Tube

Chorus

Brush away the tears from your eyes my child  
The world don't want to see you cry  
Brush away the tears from your eyes my child  
The world don't want to hear you cry

And though it's not right you've got to carry on with your life – please try  
The world don't understand, sticks its head in the sand - and hides  
I wish I could take your hand, try to help you understand my child  
You've got to carry on, your story must be told – sometime

Repeat Chorus

When you're standing all alone, reach inside to carry on - dear child  
Find the ways to be strong, though they may break you down inside  
Your spirit is still alive so look around and you'll find -  
A friend who'll hold your hand, will try their best to understand your life  
So till then please carry on, find the ways to be strong my child

The song was also used in the film documentary - [Boys & Men Healing From Child Sexual Abuse](#)

**Excerpts: [Male Survivors of child sexual abuse/Boys and Men Healing Documentary](#) – YouTube**

**Contents List:**

- 1] To All the Abused Kids Who Are Dealing with the Consequences as Adults... By Jen Hinkkala @ Tiny Buddha
- 2] Work addiction can be harmful to mental health by Teena J Clouston @ The Conversation
- 2a] The Conversation is a nonprofit organization working for the public good through fact- and research-based journalism. - Academic rigor, journalistic flair
- 2b] Coping With Trauma: Workaholism - Practicing Resilience for Self-Care & Healing by Miriam Njoku @ ACEsConnection
- 3] Understanding Trauma's Impact on Four Types of Memory [Infographic] @ NICABM
- 4] Anne M. Lauren – Writer, Speaker & Advocate
- 5] Write for Better Humans by Coach.me @ Better Humans - We especially want to hear from writers who are from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
- 6] The Surprising Benefits of Unconditional Positive Regard by Nir Eyal
- 7] Finding The Way Home: The Importance of Perspective for Alienated Children – Karen Woodall
- 7a] When A Narcissistic Parent Coaches A Kid To Reject You - Surviving Narcissism – YouTube
- 7b] Parental Alienation - In the eyes of the specialists – YouTube
- 7c] Ryan Thomas – Adult child of Parental Alienation & What Age Do Kids Know They're Lied To – YouTube
- 8] Luka – Song – You Tube 3:50 minutes - “I wanted to write about child abuse...I had to think of how to write about a subject that no-one talks about.” - Suzanne Vega
- 8a] Luka - The story behind the song – YouTube 5:44 minutes - A short documentary
- 9] Living & Thriving with Rustie MacDonald - Online Radio – BlogTalkRadio
- 10] Sound And Silence Why Both Are Important by Andrew Weil, M.D.
- 11] Fact-sheet for child abuse and trauma survivors – Blue Knot Foundation
- 12] Life Behind Blue Curtains: A True Crime Memoir of an Amish Woman's Survival, Escape, and Pursuit of Justice by Lizzy Hershberger

*GO BOLDLY - Jean M. Olson*

*“May you be brave enough to expose your aching woundedness and reveal your vulnerability.  
May you speak your deepest truths, knowing that they will change as you do.  
May you sing the music within you, composing your own melody, playing your song with all your heart.  
May you draw, paint, sculpt, and sew, showing the world your vision.  
May you write letters, poetry, biography, slogans, graffiti, the great novel, laying bare your words to love and hate.  
May you love even though your heart breaks again and again.  
And until the end of your days, may your life be filled with possibilities and courage.”*

1] [To All the Abused Kids Who Are Dealing with the Consequences as Adults...](#) By Jen Hinkkala @ Tiny Buddha

*“The feeling of being rejected, disapproved of, or conditionally loved by one’s primary caregivers is a monumental, long-lasting burden for a child to carry. It produces chronic shame, guilt, and anxiety. The child is blamed for doing something wrong and in doing so learns to perceive themselves as being bad.” - Darius Cikanavicius, [Human Development and Trauma: How Childhood Shapes Us into Who We Are as Adults](#)*

You’re safe now, but you weren’t before.

Before you were abused.

If your experiences were anything like mine, you were told that you were worthless on a daily basis, that your feelings and needs didn’t matter, and that you would never be deserving or worthy of love. Your lived experiences were denied, and you questioned your reality.

Your needs and wants were never met, and you learned that in order to stay safe, you had to put others’ needs before your own.

When conflicts arose with others, you blamed yourself because the people around you always did. I still struggle with this even now.

**You were taught that you were not enough. That you had to please others in order to be somewhat worthy for a fleeting moment.**

You lived on high alert, bracing yourself for the next insult, anticipating being devalued and demeaned. There was little rest from it, so you learned to be silent. You suppressed your feelings and needs, knowing they wouldn’t be honored, and you hid parts of your personality because you knew you would never be accepted for who you are.

You were complicit in your own suppression, and you became unaware of your own wants, desires, and

even feelings. Your self-hood was stripped away.

You were told you were [too sensitive](#), too needy, too emotional, and that you didn't see or perceive situations accurately. You were told you were dumb, too fat, too thin, and/or too self-absorbed.

When you tried to stand up for yourself, you were told that you were not living in the real world. That everything that was happening to you was your fault.

Standing up for yourself was dangerous, and you were led to believe that you didn't have that right.

**This unsafe environment was where you grew up. It was where I grew up too. Where your first memories were formed and where you learned about yourself and the world through your parents' actions and responses.**

You carried your pain silently as a child and were groomed to [accept abuse](#).

Your abusers told you it was love—that they treated you that way so that you would become a better person. Yet, in reality, this just made you easier to control and manipulate. With no sense of self or personal value you could be defined in any manner, and you'd blindly accept that definition.

They told you that you were incompetent, and you didn't question it because you had been taught that others' opinions had value and yours did not. Therefore, any statement made by your abusers had to be true.

You were taught that you were bad. All of your actions, thoughts, and behaviors were wrong, and you were fundamentally unworthy.

If you were fortunate, as you grew, so did your awareness of your situation, and you began to break free. You cut the toxic ties of your childhood and began to cultivate a sense of self-worth.

Perhaps you did what no one should have to do: cut off your parents or primary caregivers. You are safe now, but a part of you still struggles to recognize that.

**If your experiences of formative abuse were at all like mine, you know how hard it was to break free and unlearn what you were taught about yourself and the world.**

It's easy for others to take advantage of you and abuse you because of your experiences growing up and your [low self-worth](#). For me, this manifested in one-sided friendships in which I would give and give and receive very little in return.

Abuse is so normal to you that you find yourself drawn to it as if it's home.

You now find yourself being abused in romantic relationships, in friendships, and in your place of employment.

I had romantic partners who told me I was ugly, that they were only with me out of convenience. I had friends who told me how flawed I was and how lucky I was to have their crumbs of friendship.

It feels so normal, so natural, so much like what you were used to. Yet it shouldn't be!

**You wonder why you wind up in these situations, why you don't see them for what they are, and why you cannot seem to break free of this vicious cycle.**

On some level you know these relationships and situations are abusive and unhealthy, but because you were never taught to trust yourself and your instincts were disarmed, you question your reality and even deny it.

Even now I have to make a conscious effort to recognize the [signs of unhealthy relationships](#), and I have had to learn that being seen, feeling supported, and being truly cared for are normal aspects of a healthy relationship.

When others show you kindness and attention you feel undeserving, and you even question their motives.

You slink out of the spotlight because when you were in the spotlight before, you were ridiculed and abused.

You shrug off compliments, diminish accomplishments, and let others take the lead.

You fear speaking up for yourself or offending anyone. People-pleasing is a way for you to get recognition and love, so you go out of your way to do what you can for others, even at your own detriment.

When you're wronged and hurt, you accept the abuse, even now, and you take full responsibility for others' actions even when they are in the wrong.

I have taken responsibility for my friends' poor treatment of staff at a restaurant, and even my partner's sexist, racist comments. I shouldn't have taken responsibility for any of this.

If you've done all these things as well, know that none of this is your fault.

The past you fought so courageously to overcome whispers in your ear even in the present. You tell yourself that you're fine and you've grown, but the past haunts you when you least expect it.

For me, the past rears its ugly head in the face of success, when I'm consistently being treated well by others, or whenever I accomplish more than I had originally expected to. It's as if the past me struggles to allow the me in the present to feel confident, accomplished, and happy.

Because you grew up on high alert anticipating abuse, you question and analyze others' actions. You find yourself asking, "Do they really care about me? Have they given up on me? Is there something they are not telling me?"

**You want to trust others, but you don't know how. You want to be loved, but you were never taught what love feels like.**

In social situations your emotional energy is consumed by protecting yourself and anticipating threats that are no longer real. You overreact to being teased, and you never allow yourself to talk too much because you feel unworthy of being the center of attention.

You were taught that others are more important than you, so you hold back when you have something important to say.

Because of my past I used to withdraw from social situations. I had very few friends and would pull away from people out of fear of being discarded. It has taken me years to learn that I am worthy of friendship, and I now have supportive networks of friends in my neighborhood, at work, and at school for the first time in my life.

Trusting that others have your best interests at heart is extremely difficult for you, but again, this is not your fault. The people that should have supported and protected you when you were growing up, were out to destroy you.

When you sense you are being rejected, you overreact and reject the other person first.

When you sense that you are being excluded, you exclude yourself before others can.

In disagreements, you don't stand up for yourself and instead give in because you were taught that standing up for yourself creates drama, and you are not worthy of being validated.

You are overly accommodating, and you compromise even when you shouldn't. I am only just now learning to take the lead at work and to voice my opinions with confidence.

**None of what happened to you was your fault, but now you must learn how to let go of these maladaptive coping mechanisms.**

Now you need to learn that you have a right to [boundaries](#), that you have a right to be treated fairly and respectfully, and that your feelings and needs are valid. I know this will take time; it has taken me many years.

In emotional situations you need to learn not to react impulsively, but to step back and ask yourself, is the perceived threat real, or am I reacting based on how I was treated in the past?

You need to surround yourself with people who see your value and accept you for who you are, because this is what healthy relationship looks like. Stop making excuses for others' ill treatment of you and remember that you don't need to take responsibility for their toxic behavior. That is for them to own, not for you.

In social situations you need to [learn to take compliments](#) and claim the spotlight when you have something interesting or valuable to say. You deserve to be seen and heard, and you no longer have to suppress or edit yourself.

Go out of your way to do things that help you affirm your self-worth and value. Make lists of all of

your good qualities and all of the things that you have accomplished. You have a right feel proud of what you've achieved and where you are in life.

You were never told that you were loved, that you were smart, or that your needs mattered. Now you must learn how to love yourself and find ways to affirm your own needs and desires.

Tell yourself I am worthy, I deserve to be loved, happy, and respected. Tell yourself I am safe now.

[Jen Hinkkala](#) is a PhD student, researcher, and teacher of music and arts education in Canada. As a researcher Jen strives to understand what factors and experiences lead to higher levels of wellness, resiliency, self-care among arts educators. You can find her new [Facebook group for adult children estranged from their parents here](#).

*“Have a belief in yourself that is bigger than anyone's disbelief.” - August Wilson*

*“You get to the point where your demons, which are terrifying, get smaller and smaller and you get bigger and bigger.” - August Wilson*

2] [Work addiction can be harmful to mental health](#) by Teena J Clouston @ The Conversation

As a culture, we've come to value [growth and productivity](#), making paid work not only a necessity, but a [central concern](#) in peoples' lives. Yet this attitude towards work is harming us more than it's helping, with research showing that workaholism (also known as work addiction) is a growing problem in the [industrialised world](#). And according to the findings of a recent study, work addiction is linked with [poorer mental health](#).

Work addiction is a [clinical condition](#) characterised by an obsessive and compulsive interest in work. People usually work more than they're required to, either by the workplace or because of financial need. Other characteristics include being concerned about their performance at work, rigid thinking and perfectionism, which is often [projected onto others](#).

People with work addiction are driven to work excessively, despite the [detrimental impacts](#) this has on their personal health and wellbeing, and relationships. People at risk of developing work addiction often have low self esteem, experience doubt about their performance at work, or have obsessive compulsive [personality traits](#).

Numerous studies have shown the negative impact of work addiction on mental health. But a [recent study](#) on workers in France investigated why work addiction happens to better understand the impact it has on mental and physical health.

The researchers looked at a total of 187 workers from a range of different occupations and demographics, who were asked to answer four different questionnaires. They found that high work demands and people who worked in high pressure roles – for example managers with greater responsibilities – were the most significant factors contributing to the risk of work addiction.

Where this was accompanied by working longer hours than required and having an obsessive approach

to work, there was an even greater risk of developing work addiction. Women were also shown to be more predisposed to developing work addiction than men. Although it's not entirely clear why women were more likely to develop work addiction, [other research](#) has had similar findings.

Workers with depression were twice as likely to develop work addiction compared to those without a mental health issue. Poor quality of sleep, high levels of stress and low levels of overall well-being were also identified as high risk factors.

Although this study's sample size was small, previous research has also shown that work addiction is associated with depression, stress, sleep disorders and [lower mental health](#). [Burnout](#) and [exhaustion](#) were also reported.

**Mental health** - Work addiction is more common in industrialised countries where [work performance](#) is a measure of success. This suggests that [neoliberal ideas](#) about work are influential in increasing the risk of work addiction. These ideas place pressure on intensifying workloads and performance at work in order to promote economic growth. They also focus on increasing a person's responsibilities at work.

Given the harms of work addiction, radical changes in both workplaces and society will be necessary. As [I have argued](#) before, this would require society to stop viewing work as a pivotal tool of performance and growth, and instead place greater value and importance on the health and wellbeing of the worker, both individually and collectively.

Support and change can actually happen in the workplace itself, which is why it's important for employers to recognise and address work demands in a positive way. For example, one study has found that increasing job security and [opportunities for development](#) lowered the risk of work addiction.

[Other studies](#) have suggested that work-life balance interventions could reduce the risk of work addiction. For example, if workplaces actively reduce working hours in order to give employees a chance to spend more time with their family, it can actually result in better work performance. And, fewer working hours may also reduce family conflict for workers, as employees are able to engage in family time more meaningfully.

Promoting work-life balance has also been shown to increase both [physical and psychological health](#), and personal resilience for workers. Balancing time and energy used on work and personal life helps people feel better – subsequently both improving mental and physical health.

All this suggests that workplaces should develop work-life balance initiatives, provide opportunities for career development and increase job security to prevent work addiction from happening. These changes may also lower stress and absenteeism while improving performance.

But not all workplaces have these kind of strategies in place – and they can be hard to implement because of our culture's focus on performance and economic growth. If you're concerned you have or are developing work addiction, address the problem now if possible.

Seek support at work by talking to managers and peers if you can, ask for performance feedback, or even see if there is a way you can work to reduce some of your working hours. Speaking to mental

health and wellbeing services can also help. If you don't have support in your workplace, try talking with friends and family, and ask for their help in refocusing your time – such as having them remind you to take breaks from work.

Of course, better work-life balance will help, but this can be a very hard thing to do as it requires adjusting daily patterns and changing how you think and feel. But if you're able to balance work with other activities – such as seeing family and friends, exercising, or enjoying hobbies – your [mental health and wellbeing](#) will improve.

[Teena J Clouston](#) - Professor in Occupational Therapy, Life Balance and Well-being, Cardiff University - My research interests are focused on how neoliberal capitalism impacts on stress at work and how living a more meaningful and balanced life can enhance health, wellbeing and resilience. My most recent book on this, 'Challenging stress, burnout and rust-out: Finding balance in busy lives' particularly explores how neoliberal capitalism impacts on stress at work, work-life or occupational balance and creates the stress and pressures of our modern lifestyles. I purport a focus on a meaning orientation in life as opposed to productivity and growth to address this at individual and social levels. I am also interested in how facilitating wellbeing in organisational cultures can support health, wellbeing and resilience.

I have also researched and published papers on the teaching of care and compassion in health and social care practice; integrated teams, professionalisation and professional identity in health and social care practice and problem based learning

2a] [The Conversation](#) is a nonprofit organization working for the public good through fact- and research-based journalism. - *Academic rigor, journalistic flair*

2b] [Coping With Trauma: Workaholism](#) - Practicing Resilience for Self-Care & Healing by [Miriam Njoku](#) @ ACEsConnection

What is the difference between working hard and being a workaholic? Workaholism is glorified in our society and the term is often misused, making it difficult for people suffering from it to know they have a problem. Before childhood trauma research gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, there was no understanding of trauma and its consequences on a person's life as adult, the link was not made between beating or neglecting a child and how it impacted the adult child's mental health, intimacy or relationships down the road. Workaholism (also known as work addiction) can be an aftereffect of trauma. It is important to note that trauma is not the only cause for workaholism.

When we think of addictions, our mind directly goes to drugs, alcohol, gambling, shopping, overeating but rarely to workaholism. It is also called the "respectable addiction" and is often found in perfectionists who live their life addicted to pressure and productivity. Do you constantly have work on your mind? Do you procrastinate yet obsess about the work you "should be doing"? Do you work all the time, yet feel like you are not doing enough or you are lazy? Do you get anxiety thinking of the work that you are not doing? These are signs of work addiction/workaholism. [Read the entire article](#)

*"The scars you can't see are the hardest to heal." - Astrid Alauda*

*“Go easy on yourself. Whatever you do today, let it be enough.” - Unknown*

3] [Understanding Trauma’s Impact on Four Types of Memory](#) [Infographic] @ NICABM

Trauma can have a profound impact on a person’s memory . . .

. . . and traumatic memory can affect not only the brain, but also the body and nervous system as well.

But conceptualizing how trauma can impact the different types of memory can be challenging, so we created a free tool that breaks down this process.

If you’d like to print a copy for yourself, just click here:

Part 1: Four Different Types of Memory: [Color](#) or [Print-friendly](#)

Part 2: The Four Types of Memory in Action: [Color](#) or [Print-friendly](#)

Part 3: How Trauma Impacts the Four Different Types of Memory: [Color](#) or [Print-friendly](#)

(Please be sure to include the copyright information. We put a lot of work into creating these resources for you. Thanks!)

3a] [Blog - NICABM](#) [National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Health]

*“Stand on your own two feet and fight like hell for your place in the world.” - Amy Jacques Garvey*

*“People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.” – Rob Siltanen*

4] [Anne M. Lauren](#) – Writer, Speaker & Advocate

My name is Anne Marie Lauren, MTS. I believe in the power that Love Consciousness has to pull humanity out of our past motivated by victimization and survival patterns.

In order to do so, we must recover our histories whole, care for our present, and bravely bring to life the equitable, peaceful, and just world that currently lives within the confines of our imaginations.

I'm so confident about both the need for this work and the success of this framework because of my own life story. As a childhood incest and illness survivor, I used a multi-modality approach of spiritual, psychological, and physical tools to heal and manage the consequences of developmental trauma.

I'm realistic with the challenges of healing in a world still devoted to systemic abuse. I accept where we are as a world and commit to sharing my story, my approach, and the healing tools I've learned along the way to contribute to helping others heal their brains, bodies, and beings from the internalization, normalization, and justification of violence.

I envision a peaceful and prosperous world to be cared for and enjoyed by future generations and want

to help make it so.

[Anne Lauren - The Language of Healing](#) – YouTube 18:25 minutes

[Feeling Fridays @ Five](#) Podcast- Generational Incest/Sexual Abuse -Dynamics/Symptomology 04/16/21 by Linda Vidi MS LAC CLC CPT - Self Help

Linda Vidi interviews Anne Lauren a survivor of generational incest. Anne M. Lauren is an author and activist with a Master of Theological Studies degree. She shares her story of childhood trauma and recovery through writing and public speaking as a medium to express the significant intersections and urgent demands between spirituality, psychology, healing, and justice on individual and collective levels.

[Publications](#) – one of many posted at the website:

[Three Healing Modalities To Manage Complex Trauma](#) by Anne M. Lauren @ Better Humans -

These types of therapies may be unfamiliar to you, but they helped me rebuild from Complex-PTSD

*"With these frameworks [EMDR, IFS, & ACT] integrated into a holistic care approach, I hope that survivors of Complex Trauma can feel confident that they have the tools to simultaneously find and fix the root causes of their present triggers, lovingly manage their competing and unpredictable parts, and compassionately accept themselves into committing to the lifestyle of healing."* [Read the entire article](#)

*"Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we'll ever do."* - Brené Brown

*"People start to heal the moment they feel heard."* - Unknown

5] [Write for Better Humans](#) by Coach.me @ Better Humans

***We especially want to hear from writers who are from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.***

All writers for Better Humans are paid. All articles are behind the Medium paywall.

Please be sure you read [About Better Humans](#) for more background about what we publish.

We are very selective about what we take, and we receive hundreds of article proposals every month. This guide will help you understand if your article is a good fit and improve your chances of becoming a writer with us if it is.

For all articles, you must provide evidence that the advice you're giving works. This evidence is usually your own experience. Your introduction should tell the reader the results you got (or didn't get), and why they should trust your advice.

[Better Humans](#) - The world's most trustworthy advice on self-improvement by those who have done it themselves.

*“We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.” – Maya Angelou*

*“Learn to listen, listen to learn.” - Al-Anon*

## 6] [The Surprising Benefits of Unconditional Positive Regard](#) by [Nir Eyal](#)

Beyond its meaning in therapy, the practice of unconditional positive regard can improve your self-confidence and authenticity, and help you motivate others.

In 1967, a catchy tune by The Beatles, [“All You Need is Love.”](#) became the anthem for the Summer of Love. The Flower Power culture embraced the song and its message, “love is all you need.” If someone had asked humanistic psychologist [Carl Rogers](#) what the song meant, he might have said, *“Unconditional Positive Regard!”*

Although it didn’t quite roll off the tongue the same way, Rogers introduced the concept nearly a decade before the Beatles song, it has the same basic message: empathy invokes change.

Rogers emphasized the importance of unconditional positive regard in healthy personality development, and his work has implications beyond the lab or therapist’s office. Treating ourselves and others with unconditional positive regard can improve our lives in many ways.

### **What is Unconditional Positive Regard?**

Unconditional positive regard is defined by humanistic psychologists to mean expressing empathy, support, and acceptance to someone, regardless of what they say or do.

Unlike other practitioners of his day who offered therapies like behaviorism, which were quick to confront how poor choices hurt us, psychologists like Rogers started by validating their clients’ feelings, withholding judgment, and offering support.

Known as [“client-centered therapy.”](#) this treatment emphasizes the healing power of human connection. While Roger’s theory shifted the psychology landscape, it didn’t only benefit therapy seekers.

According to Rogers, problematic behaviors like overeating, drinking too much, and procrastinating aren’t altered with confrontation, judgment, or punishment; they are remedied with compassion, understanding, and acceptance.

In his view, people are wired for self-actualization, or the need to fulfill our potential. However, painful experiences like being bullied, shamed, or judged thwart our growth.

Unconditional positive regard restores hope by showing us we are loved and accepted. From Roger’s lens, when people feel safe, honesty follows. And being honest with ourselves and others is crucial for change.

### **What is an Example of Unconditional Positive Regard?**

Unconditional positive regard means offering compassion to people even if they have done something wrong. A therapist practicing unconditional positive regard would respond with compassion to a person in treatment who may have gambled away their savings, lied at work, or mistreated a friend. It is striving to respond with understanding rather than contempt for the individual.

However, unconditional positive regard does not mean unconditional acceptance. We should be careful to not enable others to continue to act in harmful ways out of our desire not to hurt their feelings. Rather, having positive regard means treating people as fallible human beings regardless of what they do, even if we don't like what they've done.

Whereas judgment and shame elicit defensiveness, acceptance fosters safety, which invites honesty and self-exploration. It's offering the sort of grace we wish others would offer us when we fail.

Let's say a friend borrowed your new car and brought it back with a dent. Instead of asking, "What on earth happened?" a person-centered therapist would advise you to say, "I see you feel awful. Do you want to tell me what happened?"

In our daily lives, question asking can help us gather information, but in certain tense situations, querying can come across as accusatory and judgmental.

Sometimes it's hard to withhold our reactions, especially when behavior catches us off guard. For instance, if a co-worker spilled coffee on your laptop, you might be tempted to shout, "Why can't you be careful?" But in this case, extending unconditional positive regard by saying, "We all make mistakes," might be a better choice of words.

New parents know it can be stressful to leave their baby with a sitter for the first time. When an anxious mother says, "I'm terrified to leave my baby with a stranger," the person-centered therapist doesn't say, "What evidence do you have that your child is unsafe?" Instead, they respond with, "You love your child so much, I can see why you're worried." In Roger's view, providing empathy and acceptance allows people to open up and share more.

Researchers have found unconditional positive regard can benefit us and the people in our lives in many ways.

A [2018 study](#) found that athletes who received unconditional positive regard from their coaches were more motivated to play sports and felt more confident. When adversity cropped up, they rose to the occasion and took on new challenges. Most likely, positive regard sparked their inner enthusiasm and love for the game.

On the contrary, athletes who were criticized were less secure, less motivated, and more likely to burn out. [Education researchers](#) also suggest that students who receive unconditional positive regard from their teachers are more motivated to succeed.

The takeaway: unconditional positive regard can spark self-betterment, which can help us lead more meaningful lives. [Social scientists](#) also state that using this technique can keep us emotionally fit in several ways.

## How Does Unconditional Positive Regard Facilitate Self-Actualization?

According to Rogers, unconditional positive regard helps us reach our highest potential, also known as “[self-actualization](#).” While psychologist [Abraham Maslow](#) believed few people are self-actualized, [Rogers](#) saw striving towards growth as part of the human condition.

Relationships that encourage openness, creativity, and honesty foster self-actualization by letting us know it’s okay to think, feel, and behave the way we do. [Studies](#) show self-actualization can help us solve problems creatively, embrace change, and cultivate deep and meaningful relationships. Self-actualization also ignites our “inner spark,” which helps us pursue our goals, even when obstacles stand in our way.

## How Does Unconditional Positive Regard Breed Self-Confidence?

In 2009, [Susan Boyle](#) auditioned for *Britain’s Got Talent*. The 46-year-old hardly looked like your typical pop star with her untamed curly hair and crooked teeth. Before Boyle sang, the audience sneered at her appearance. But when she belted out “[I Dreamed a Dream](#)” from *Les Misérables*, the judges were stunned.

When reporters asked Boyle about the audience’s initial criticism, she replied: “I know what they were thinking, but why should it matter as long as I can sing? It’s not a beauty contest.” In other words, Boyle didn’t accept their criticism.

In the end, Boyle didn’t win the competition, but she signed with Columbia records. At 47, she turned her hobby into a profession. None of this would have happened if rejection had ruined her confidence.

Sharp words and judgment can shrink our confidence, but unconditional positive regard, for ourselves as well as others, can bring it back. After the audition, one of Boyle’s favorite singers, Elaine Paige, called her a role model and praised Boyle for pursuing her dream.

## How Does Unconditional Positive Regard Bolster Motivation?

While Rogers considered unconditional positive regard necessary for successful therapy, research suggests it’s beneficial in the workplace as well by increasing [motivation](#).

A [2018 study](#), published in the *British Journal of Management* found that employees who received unconditional positive regard from their colleagues felt valued, which enhanced their motivation, job performance, and job satisfaction. These collaborative relationships also cultivated a sense of inclusion, which heightened workplace morale.

When it comes to goal-setting, mindset matters. Let’s say we set out to exercise more, be less [distracted](#), or go to bed on time. At the outset, if we call ourselves “lazy,” or “lacking self-control,” our internal narrative can evoke false beliefs that influence our behaviors by reducing our motivation to change.

When we strive to make changes or meet new goals, [research](#) suggests positive self-regard can unleash

[intrinsic motivation](#), which is the “desire to do something for its own sake.” Taking on challenges that interest us can make us more motivated and more [self-determined](#).

How Does Unconditional Positive Regard Foster Authenticity?

Social worker and shame researcher, [Dr. Brené Brown](#) says authenticity is “the daily practice of letting go of who we think we’re supposed to be and embracing who we are.” [Rogers](#) said authentic people are comfortable with vulnerability and approach others with openness and curiosity. In short, authenticity builds intimacy.

But frequently, our authentic self is shut down by shame, judgment, and criticism. Perhaps someone once told us we were “too sensitive,” “not talkative enough,” or “too nerdy.” Or maybe we were teased for not following the crowd in some way. These messages convey that it’s not okay to be who we want to be.

As a result, we’re forced to choose between living out our values and feeling rejected (usually by those we need and love most) or changing our views to fit in. Often, we’d rather ignore some aspect of ourselves than feel left out.

When we make choices that don’t line up with our values, we often look back in regret. For instance, we may forgo giving a speech or applying for a promotion because we’re afraid of embarrassment or not being able to live up to expectations on the job. But turning down opportunities that can help us become who we want to be because we’re scared of social rejection, stymies our growth and taints our self-perception.

Insecurity and self-doubt may hinder motivation, but unconditional positive regard can dismantle shame, which helps us stay true to ourselves, even when others doubt us.

### **Behavior Change is Identity Change.**

If we are to alter the way we act, we need to change the way we see ourselves. Extending ourselves towards unconditional positive regard and [self-compassion](#) invites us to live out our values without fear.

It can be easy to associate unconditional positive regard with “feel good” psychotherapy, but as studies show, the practice can bolster self-motivation, confidence, and foster authenticity.

Perhaps we want to run a marathon, write a book proposal, or develop our ability to be [indistractable](#); whatever the aspiration, compassion and acceptance can get us there. It’s all we really need.

*“A friend is someone who understands your past, believes in your future, and accepts you just the way you are.” - Helen Keller*

*“We must learn to lean on others, and sometimes accept others’ leaning on us. We must share our experience, strength, and hope with others so that we can all grow. We can’t do it alone.” - Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics*

7] [Finding The Way Home: The Importance of Perspective for Alienated Children](#) – Karen Woodall

*“Both clinicians and forensic practitioners should distinguish parental alienation (rejection of a parent without legitimate justification) from parental estrangement (rejection of a parent for a good reason). Alienated children, who were not abused, engage in splitting and lack ambivalence with respect to the rejected parent; estranged children, who were maltreated, usually perceive the abusive parent in an ambivalent manner.”* [Read the entire article](#)

[About Me](#) – Karen Woodal - I am a writer as well as a psychotherapist and I am known around the world for my work with children who suffer from induced psychological splitting after divorce or separation (also known as parental alienation).

I write about my work with children and families on this blog and about the wider social influences that impact upon families as they go through divorce.

My major focus is on treatment of the induced psychological splitting which is caused when children are unable to hold different realities in mind, this has been called parental alienation for many years but is in fact a defense mechanism which is readily treated therapeutically when it is properly understood.

I offer coaching and therapy to everyone affected by parental alienation and have a high rate of success both within the family courts and outside of it, in successful reunification of alienated children and families.

I am now focused almost entirely on working with families beyond reunification, where the tasks of recovery are obvious and treatment routes are desperately needed.

Parental alienation is a serious form of child abuse in which the harm done to children is often not recognised until much later in the child's life.

My research work as a PhD candidate at [Regents University](#) is focused upon understanding the impact on adults of unresolved psychological splitting in childhood.

You can hear more about parental alienation in this [radio programme](#) made by Philippa Perry for Radio Four in 2019.

7a] [When A Narcissistic Parent Coaches A Kid To Reject You](#) - Surviving Narcissism - YouTube  
14:33 minutes

Too commonly, when a family is in turmoil, a narcissistic parent will overtly coach a child to reject another adult, usually the other parent, or grandparents, or extended family members. If you are the one being rejected you are at a distinct disadvantage as you attempt to maintain healthy ties with that child. Psychotherapist Dr. Les Carter speaks into this difficult situation. Dr. Les Carter is a best selling author and therapist who lives in Dallas, Tx. He has conducted many workshops and over 60,000 counseling sessions. Are you ready to break free from the controllers in your life? If so, sign up for Dr. Carters brand new course [Free to Be HERE](#)

Books by Dr. Carter: [The Anger Trap: Free Yourself from the Frustrations that Sabotage Your Life](#)

[Enough About You, Let's Talk About Me: How to Recognize and Manage the Narcissists in Your Life](#)

7b] [Parental Alienation - In the eyes of the specialists](#) – YouTube 15:51 minutes

Specialists talk about Parental Alienation in interviews filmed on location at the PASG 2019 International Conference (Parental Alienation Study Group) in Philadelphia, USA, in September 2019. English and Icelandic subtitles available.

Videos with each specialist can be found here:

[Amy Baker - The Four-Factor Model](#): Ways to identify Parental Alienation

[William Bernet - Historical Highlights](#):

[Ben Burgess - Crazy Making Issues](#):

[Linda Gottlieb - Reunification and treating alienated children](#):

[Jennifer Harman - Targeted parents and the effects](#):

[Steven Miller - Evidence Based Science](#):

[Karen Woodall - A Trans-Generational Trauma](#):

[Nick Woodall - A Splitting of the Self](#)

[Shawn Wygant - Third Party Alienation](#):

The video is produced by Equal Parenting Rights Association, Iceland, [www.foreldrajafnretti.is](http://www.foreldrajafnretti.is) All rights reserved ©

7c] [Ryan Thomas](#) – Adult child of Parental Alienation & [What Age Do Kids Know They're Lied To](#) – YouTube 5:31 minutes

*“What we do not repair, we repeat.” - Unknown*

*“People don’t always need advice. Sometimes all they really need is a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to understand them.” - Pat Deegan*

8] [Luka](#) – Song – You Tube 3:50 minutes

*“I wanted to write about child abuse...I had to think of how to write about a subject that no-one talks about.” - Suzanne Vega*

8a] [Luka - The story behind the song](#) – YouTube 5:44 minutes - A short documentary by Top 2000 a gogo from 2018 (Dutch Public Television).

*“Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul.”  
- Dave Pelzer*

*“So often survivors have had their experiences denied, trivialized, or distorted. Writing is an important avenue for healing because it gives you the opportunity to define your own reality. You can say: This did happen to me. It was that bad. It was the fault & responsibility of the adult. I was-and am-innocent.” The Courage to Heal by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis - Ellen Bass*

9] [Living & Thriving with Rustie MacDonald](#) - Online Radio – BlogTalkRadio

I host this show in a down to earth, organic style that is reflective of experience and humility. I believe that things should be made simple, comfortable and with compassion. The purpose of my show is to offer a variety of topics that inspire, motivate and make the audience challenge themselves. I want to motivate the very change that we need in this world. I want to inspire Understanding. This weekly show will offer insight for the Mind, Body and Soul

[Dr Ivy GE on Living & Thriving with Rustie](#) - Dr. Ivy Ge is a professor, speaker, coach, and author of The Art of Good Enough. After careers in business, engineering, and pharmacy, she pursued her childhood dream of being a writer and helping other women reach their goals. Her mission is to show women that the key to joy and fulfillment is not to wrestle with their weaknesses but to value and capitalize on their strengths. As a multi-genre author and a working mother, she has successfully transformed her life by enhancing her strengths and applying research-proven, practical tools for work-life balance. Her writings and interviews have been featured on MSNBC, PBS, Thrive Global, Working Mother magazine, Parentology, and The Times of India, Harvard Business Review, Midwest Book Review, and Publishers Weekly.

[The Art of Good Enough: The Working Mom’s Guilt-Free Guide to Thriving While Being Perfectly Imperfect & Life Transformation Journal](#)  
<https://ivyge.com>

[Iram Gilani on Living & Thriving with Rustie](#) - Iram Gilani is a name you will remember. She was born & raised in Pakistan, where she encountered molestation, abuse, & misogyny from a shockingly young age. Never knowing a stable, safe environment she struggled with vulnerability& creating friendships when she moved to the US as a teenager. Despite her painful past, Iram was determined to achieve a college degree.

Before she had the chance to complete her education, she was married off by her family. Before the final ceremony that would have solidified the unwanted marriage, her would-be husband disappeared, leaving her behind. Shortly after this, Iram was encouraged to return home to Pakistan for another arranged marriage. It was there that she became the victim of brutal gun violence. She was shot in the face, her lower jaw all but blown away in the attack. Miraculously, she survived, and the mysterious nature of the attack remains uncovered.

*Today's Reminder - “I will make an effort to blend gentleness with firmness to add a note of harmony to my relations with others instead of tearing and destroying. I will realize that the wounds made by*

*sarcasm are slow to heal, and may defer the longed-for improvement in my life.” - Al-Anon*

*“Distance sometimes lets you know who is worth keeping, and who is worth letting go.” - Lana Del Rey*

10] [Sound And Silence Why Both Are Important](#) by Andrew Weil, M.D. @ [Integrative Medicine & Healthy Living](#)

*“As a practitioner and teacher of integrative medicine for the last thirty years, it has been my personal mission to drive research, education, and clinical practice to advance a philosophy of health that addresses mind, body and spirit. I believe that integrative medicine is the future of medicine and health care.” - Andrew Weil, M.D.*

Sound and silence have a direct, powerful influence on emotions. We seldom acknowledge this fact, yet it is self-evident – we become anxious when we hear sirens or people arguing, sleepy when we hear a lullaby, focused by the hypnotic repetition of chanting.

Most people are unaware of the effects of sound and silence on the body and mind, even in the midst of the [noise pollution](#) so characteristic of cities. It is vital for your emotional health to take control of the soundscape that surrounds you. If you cannot escape disturbing sounds, the new technology of noise cancellation gives you a way to protect yourself from them. Noise-canceling headphones detect environmental noise with built-in microphones and generate signals that neutralize it; they are readily available and affordable.

Another possibility, especially useful in the bedroom, is to mask [annoying sounds](#) with white noise, which sounds like hissing air or rushing water. Portable white noise generators are also readily available and affordable, and there are larger systems that can cover offices and whole houses. Some allow you to select from a range of sounds, from ocean waves to rain.

Apart from neutralizing or masking unwanted sounds, you can, of course, choose to listen to those that have positive effects on your moods. Unlike most electronic sounds, sounds of nature, such as wind blowing through trees and water running over rocks, are complex and may “nourish” the brain in some way. We evolved with the sounds of nature, and the relative lack of them in our artificial environments of today may be yet another cause of emotional malaise.

There are many ways to bring healing sound and silence into your living space. Dr. Weil has a set of very large, bass wind chimes that he uses to help focus his attention on his breathing.

**Sound And Silence** - Cultivating silence can also serve as an antidote to the emotionally unsettling effects of sound and noise. By making an effort to experience silence regularly, even if briefly, our well-being – physical, mental, and spiritual – can feel supported. If silence scares you, dip into it briefly but often to become tolerant to it and lose any fear of it you may have. It fosters mindfulness and all the mental and emotional benefits of bringing full conscious awareness to the present moment.

If you search them out, you can discover oases of relative quiet in big cities: in libraries and reading rooms, museums, houses of worship, parks, and gardens. Most hospitals have meditation rooms, and can offer an escape from all the stress-inducing sounds of the wards and corridors, even if only for a

few minutes here and there. You can also take advantage of quiet times of the day and night, getting up just before dawn when most of the world around is not yet stirring. The evening dusk can be almost as quiet, as well as nighttime silence. Should you happen to find yourself awake in the middle of the night, instead of trying to go back to sleep, soak up the silence, feel grateful for it, and focus on your breathing until you drift off. Cultivate silence in your life and let it heal and refresh you whenever you encounter it.

*“When wounds are healed by love, The scars are beautiful.” - David Bowles*

*“There is a power in nature that man has ignored. And the result has been heartache and pain.” - Anasazi Foundation*

11] [Fact-sheet for child abuse and trauma survivors](#) – Blue Knot Foundation

Fact\_Sheet\_Survivors.pdf:

[https://www.blueknot.org.au/Portals/2/Fact%20Sheets%20Info/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Survivors.pdf](https://www.blueknot.org.au/Portals/2/Fact%20Sheets%20Info/Fact_Sheet_Survivors.pdf)

Blue Knot Foundation – [National Center of Excellence for Complex Trauma, Australia](#)

Free downloadable Fact Sheets:

- [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) including Face Masks](#)
- [Survivors - Towards Recovery](#)
- [Family and Friends - Supporting Recovery](#)
- [Workers in Diverse Settings - Trauma-informed Practice](#)
- [Managers - Trauma-informed Service Delivery](#)
- [Health Professionals - Working with Complex Trauma](#)
- [General Practitioners - Understanding Complex Trauma](#)
- [Memory Factsheets](#)
- [Talking about Trauma - with General Public](#)
- [Talking about Trauma - For Health Service Professionals](#)
- [Talking about trauma - For General Practitioners and Primary Health Care Providers](#)
- [Identity and Belonging](#)
- [Trauma Resolution & Healing](#)
- [What is Childhood Trauma](#)
- [What is Complex Trauma](#)
- [Intergenerational Trauma](#)
- [Understanding Trauma](#)
- [Stress Response](#)
- [Trauma Response](#)
- [Emotions and Arousal \(incl. Dissociation\)](#)
- [Coping Strategies](#)

A number of these fact sheets for different audiences were informed by Blue Knot Foundation’s nationally and internationally acclaimed [Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery](#) and were made possible through funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. Additional fact sheets have since been developed and

drawn from more recent research and Blue Knot publications.

Blue Knot Foundation has also developed videos that complement and enliven the information presented in the fact sheets. [Click here to view our video series>>](#)

*“Instead of saying, "I'm damaged, I'm broken, I have trust issues" say "I'm healing, I'm rediscovering myself, I'm starting over.” - Horacio Jones*

*“Even the smallest shift in perspective can bring about the greatest healing.” - Joshua Kai*

12] [Life Behind Blue Curtains](#): A True Crime Memoir of an Amish Woman's Survival, Escape, and Pursuit of Justice by Lizzy Hershberger

When Lizzy Hershberger turns fourteen, her schooling ends at eighth grade, and she has no choice but to leave home to work as an unpaid maid for another family. To avoid being shunned by her ultra-conservative Swartzentruber Amish family and community, Lizzy is forced to abandon her dreams because they are “too worldly.” After being raped by an Amish deacon over two dozen times, Lizzy makes her first attempt at “jumping the fence” to pursue a non-Amish lifestyle. But without any modern life experience or education, Lizzy must decide whether the risks of this unpredictable and dangerous world are worth losing the ties to her Amish friends and family forever. Almost thirty years later, after she has created a new life for herself, her small community is rocked by disturbing sexual assault allegations. Lizzy must decide whether to keep silent for her newly-created family’s sake or come forward against the church to advocate for the Amish children she left behind. In 2019, Lizzy Hershberger successfully brought her abuser to justice in an extraordinarily rare case addressing sexual abuse in the Amish church. She faced death threats and intense pressure to stop telling her story. Lizzy refused to back down, and she forged ahead to spark a national movement bringing awareness to the prevalence of sexual assault in isolated communities protected by religious liberties. This gripping true crime memoir reveals the truth behind one of America’s most revered and secretive religious sects—hidden behind the blue curtains of the Amish lifestyle.

Lizzy Hershberger grew up Swartzentruber Amish in southern Minnesota, and still lives in Amish bluff country where she and her husband of 24 years raised four children.

Lizzy is the cofounder of Voices of Hope, a national support network for women, and speaks at their conventions and conferences. She has also served as president of her children’s 4-H Club, the Saddle Club, and as an Awana Leader, and School Board member. She testified as a former Amish expert witness and helped win a major case for her county that resulted in a cleaner environment for the community.

Most recently, [Lizzy’s story](#) was featured in the February 2020 issue of Cosmopolitan Magazine.

Through telling her story, Lizzy has turned dark periods of suicidal episodes, deep depression and anxiety, into stepping stones of recovery, living in gratitude and opportunities to make a difference. Through sharing her story, she was able to release the old Amish habits and beliefs that no longer serve her while remaining grateful for the positive experiences Amish life provided, including a love for gardening, hiking, horseback riding, listening to thunder and rain, and reading. Lizzy’s memoir, *Behind Blue Curtains* was published by Nauset Press in March of 2021.

[Behind Blue Curtains](#): A True Crime Memoir of an Amish Woman's Survival, Escape, and Pursuit of Justice: Hershberger, Lizzy, Eagan, Molly Maeve:Amazon.com: Books

*“In a world plagued with commonplace tragedies, only one thing exists that truly has the power to save lives, and that is love.” - Richelle Goodrich*

*“Because we were treated neglectfully and abusively in our young years-when we most needed self-love to be mirrored-it was difficult to hold onto... We take up the challenge of learning to love ourselves, through our highs & our lows, when we are finding acceptance from others and when we are being closed out and rejected.” - Maureen Brady*

***Thank you & Take care, Michael***

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

***Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.***

***A diagnosis is not a destiny***

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

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[@SurvivinSpirit](#) Twitter

[Michael Skinner Music](#) - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health - Music, Resources & Advocacy

Live performance of "Joy", "Brush Away Your Tears" & more @ [Michael Skinner – You Tube](#)

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