



Healing the Mind, Body & Spirit 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 March 2022

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Please note excerpts are shared from all of the above – the full article is posted online.

1] [On Loving Another Person](#) – [Hope Works Community](#) - Larry Drain

Notice good things about each other. A lot.

Don't keep it a secret. The more you tell people thank you the easier it is to be thankful.

Never let a disagreement be the measure of the character of the person you love.

Never let the refusal to disagree be the measure of your character.

Be honest, but be kind. We can tolerate many things in life. Most of us though have a real problem with someone being hateful particularly when they tell you that they are only hateful because they really love you.

Be generous with attention. Lovers shouldn't have to work for it.

Have a short memory for hurt feelings.

Treasure appreciation.

Know that loving someone doesn't mean they will never mess up. Give them the same grace you hope they will give you.

Know that all they love in the world doesn't prevent people from struggling in life, with themselves and with each other.

Know that it is easier to love someone if you think your life has purpose.

Know that without your time something will always be wrong with our time.

Do things that are good for each other. On purpose. Don't look for the chance. It will never come. Plan for it.

Have some things that are you and your partners that you share with no one. Have some things you

share with everyone.

Celebrate the success of the people you love.

Look and see how many times a day life invites you to treat the person you love as important. Look and see how often you accept the invitation.

Know that being loved enables you to love others more often and more easily.

Try to remember as much as you can (often you won't) that fights are about finding out how the two of you can win rather than about which one will lose.

Talk a lot about good times. The bad times tend to talk for themselves.

Listen. It is the first step to others taking what you say serious.

Laugh with each other. You forget how if you don't practice.

Try your best to not spend much time thinking about what you have to put up with. You tend to find more things to put up with the more you think about them.

Don't take bad times personal. Take good times very personal.

Know that no matter how much you know or how much you care sometimes it just doesn't go well. You are both stuck being human beings.

Know that people will always tend to carry their baggage unless you allow them to put it down

“To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

“Mistakes are the portals of discovery.” James Joyce

2] [RAMPD - Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities](#) - RAMPD's mission is to amplify disability culture, promote inclusion, and advocate for accessibility within the Music Industry

[RAMPD Official Launch Party](#) [Live from GRAMMY Museum Experience™ Prudential Center] – YouTube – 52:17 minutes

[Our Story](#) - RAMPD is a fast-growing coalition dedicated to making disability inclusion and access a reality in the mainstream music industry. It was founded in May of 2021 by award-winning recording artist and advocate Lachi after a public talk between the [Recording Academy and several disabled artists](#) revealed that there is a serious lack of visibility, access, and representation for professional disabled artists.

Co-founder and internationally acclaimed touring artist and speaker [Gaelynn Lea](#) - along with a team of esteemed founding members - put out a call through RAMPD for artists, music professionals, and allies

to sign up for pre-launch. RAMPD received hundreds of responses; proof the time is now to amplify disabled music professionals. Demonstrating what accessibility and inclusion looks like in the real world, RAMPD meets with leaders from top music firms, labels, publishers, and nonprofits, forging visionary partnerships that will forever advance the industry.

Disability Culture is a celebration of people who identify as disabled, while acknowledging the vast diversity of the disability experience and each person's inherent and equal worth. It is unapologetic, creative, innovative, adaptable, imaginative, and rooted in problem-solving. It is based on the premise that disability needs to be seen, respected, included and celebrated. It includes our worldviews, our perspectives, our contributions, our art, our words, and our music. Disability Culture, at least in part, is a vibrant and thriving counter-response to the exclusion, marginalization, and oppression historically and currently experienced by many disabled individuals.

“Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad.” - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“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

3] [Adverse Childhood Experiences, the Brain, and Sleep](#) by Glenn R. Schiraldi, Ph.D @ [Psychology Today](#)

There are many strategies you can use to improve your sleep and your brain.

Key points

- Disturbed sleep is common in survivors of adverse childhood experiences.
- Effective strategies can improve sleep duration and quality.
- Better sleep translates to better mood, health, and functioning—and greater capacity to rewire negative neural imprints from childhood.

Many of us don't realize how too little or poor quality sleep affects mood, brain function, and brain health. Improving sleep is especially important for survivors of [adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs) who wish to feel and function optimally.

Too Little Sleep - Experts now recommend seven to nine hours of sleep nightly for most adults. Sleep shortage, particularly less than six hours per night, is a stressor linked to higher risks for the following:

- Psychological problems—such as [anxiety](#); [depression](#); poorer [memory](#), [concentration](#), and [decision-making](#); worsening of posttraumatic [stress](#) disorder ([PTSD](#)) symptoms; [cognitive decline](#); and Alzheimer's disease.
- Physical problems—such as fatigue, pain, weight gain, plaque buildup in the arteries, heart attack, stroke, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, autoimmune disorders, kidney problems, diabetes, cancer, and death from all causes.
- Inflammation—which might contribute to most, if not all, of the conditions mentioned above. There is a vicious cycle with sleep shortage, obesity, and inflammation. Sleep shortage leads to weight gain, perhaps because people become too tired to exercise and because sleep shortage

causes the release of [hormones](#) that increase hunger and promote snacking. Fat cells then release inflammatory chemicals, which cause or worsen many conditions that interfere with good sleep.

Benefits of Good Sleep.....

[Glenn R. Schiraldi, Ph.D.](#), has served on the stress management faculties at The Pentagon, the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, and the University of Maryland, where he received the Outstanding Teacher Award in addition to other teaching and service awards. His 14 books on stress-related topics have been translated into 17 languages, and include *The Adverse Childhood Experiences Recovery Workbook*, *The Resilience Workbook*, *The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook*, and *The Self-Esteem Workbook*. The founder of Resilience Training International (www.ResilienceFirst.com), he has trained laypersons and clinicians around the world on various aspects of stress, trauma, and resilience.

“A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor’s book.” – Irish Proverb

“There is strange comfort in knowing that no matter what happens today, the Sun will rise again tomorrow.” - Aaron Lauritsen

4] [10 Minutes of Mindfulness Changes Your Reactions](#) by Rasmus Hougaard, Jacqueline Carter and Gitte Dybkjaer @ [Harvard Business Review](#)

Leaders across the globe feel that the unprecedented busyness of modern-day leadership makes them more reactive and less proactive. There is a solution to this hardwired, reactionary leadership approach: mindfulness.

Having trained thousands of leaders in the techniques of this ancient practice, we’ve seen over and over again that a diligent approach to mindfulness can help people create a one-second mental space between an event or stimulus and their response to it. One second may not sound like a lot, but it can be the difference between making a rushed decision that leads to failure and reaching a thoughtful conclusion that leads to increased performance. It’s the difference between acting out of anger and applying due patience. It’s a one-second lead over your mind, your emotions, your world.

[Research](#) has found that mindfulness training alters our brains and how we engage with ourselves, others, and our work. When practiced and applied, mindfulness fundamentally alters the operating system of the mind. Through repeated mindfulness practice, brain activity is redirected from ancient, reactionary parts of the brain, including the limbic system, to the newest, rational part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex.

In this way mindfulness practice decreases activity in the parts of the brain responsible for fight-or-flight and knee-jerk reactions while increasing activity in the part of the brain responsible for what’s termed our executive functioning. This part of the brain, and the executive functioning skills it supports, is the control center for our thoughts, words, and actions. It’s the center of logical thought and impulse control. Simply put, relying more on our executive functioning puts us firmly in the driver’s seat of our minds, and by extension our lives.

One second can be the difference between achieving desired results or not. One second is all it takes to become less reactive and more in tune with the moment. In that one second lies the opportunity to improve the way you decide and direct, the way you engage and lead. That's an enormous advantage for leaders in fast-paced, high-pressure jobs.

[Here are five easily implemented tips to help you become more mindful:](#)

"Life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved." – Winnie the Pooh

"There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up." – John Holmes

5] [Covid infection increases risk of mental health disorders, study finds](#) by Melody Schreiber @ [The Guardian](#)

Researchers note need to follow patients after recovery for any emerging disorders

Having Covid-19 puts people at a significantly increased chance of developing new mental health conditions, potentially adding to existing crises of suicide and overdoses, according to new research looking at millions of health records in the US over the course of a year.

The long-term effects of having Covid are still being discovered, and among them is an increased chance of being diagnosed with mental health disorders. They include depression, anxiety, stress and an increased risk of substance use disorders, cognitive decline, and sleep problems – a marked difference from others who also endured the stress of the pandemic but weren't diagnosed with the virus.

"This is basically telling us that millions and millions of people in the US infected with Covid are developing mental health problems," said Ziyad Al-Aly, chief of research and development at the VA St Louis Healthcare System and senior author of the paper. "That makes us a nation in distress."

The higher risk of mental health disorders, including suicidal ideation and opioid use, is particularly concerning, he said.

"This is really almost a perfect storm that is brewing in front of our eyes – for another opioid epidemic two or three years down the road, for another suicide crisis two or three years down the road," Al-Aly added.

These unfolding crises are "quite a big concern", said James Jackson, director of behavioral health at Vanderbilt University's ICU Recovery Center, who was not involved with this study. He is also seeing patients whose previous conditions, including anxiety, depression and opioid use disorder, worsened during the pandemic.

Research like this shows the clear need to follow patients in the weeks and months after even mild Covid diagnoses and to seek quick treatment for any emerging disorders, the experts said. "If we apply attention to it now and nip it in the bud, we could literally save lives," Al-Aly said.

More than 18% of Covid patients developed mental health problems, compared with 12% of those who

did not have Covid, according to the [study](#) published on Wednesday.

The study followed more than 153,000 patients who tested positive for Covid in the Veterans Affairs health system between March 2020 and January 2021, and compared them with other health records: to 5.8 million people who did not test positive in that time, but lived through the same stresses of the pandemic, and with 5.6 million patients seen before the pandemic.

Among all patients who developed new mental health problems during the pandemic, the Covid patients were significantly more likely to develop cognitive problems (80%), sleep disorders (41%), depression (39%), stress (38%), anxiety (35%) and opioid use disorder (34%), compared with those who didn't have Covid.

The study looked only at patients with no history of mental health diagnoses in the past two years. It compared those hospitalized for Covid versus other illnesses, and compared outcomes to thousands of flu cases. The study also adjusted for factors like demographics, other health conditions and other factors.

[The results were all clear: Covid has a marked effect on mental health.](#)

“Enjoy yourself. It's later than you think.” – Chinese Proverb

“Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.” – Unknown

6] [A Brief But Spectacular take on change and healing](#) - PBS NewsHour Video 3:36 minutes

Homeboy Industries has been part of Hector Verdugo's life for over 16 years. He's now their associate executive director, but he first received their guidance after getting arrested at 14 years old. Based in Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries and its founder Father Greg have helped Verdugo and other men like him recognize their full potential. Here's his Brief But Spectacular take on change and healing.

6a] [Homeboy Industries](#) - Homeboy Industries is the largest gang rehabilitation and re-entry program in the world. For over 30 years, we have stood as a beacon of hope in Los Angeles to provide training and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated people, allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community.

“We imagine a world without prisons, and then we try to create that world.” - Father Greg Boyle, Founder

6b] [Homeboy Industries - Stories Behind the Mission](#) – YouTube 3:11 minutes - Located in downtown Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries provides hope and job training for formerly gang involved and previously incarcerated men and women so they can redirect their lives and become contributing members of society. By utilizing a combination of donations and social enterprises, Homeboy Industries is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose innovative model of therapeutic wraparound services has helped the organization become one of the most successful reentry programs in the United States.

See daily inspirational videos from [Homeboy Industries on Facebook](#):

“It’s easy to judge. It’s more difficult to understand. Understanding requires compassion, patience, and a willingness to believe that good hearts sometimes choose poor methods. Through judging, we separate. Through understanding, we grow.” - Doe Zantamat

“We all have ‘issues’ because we all have a story. And no matter how much work you’ve done on yourself, we all snap back sometimes. So be easy on you. Growth is a dance. Not a light switch.” - John Kim

7] [California’s first surgeon general on Covid: ‘Greatest collective trauma’ of a generation](#) by Maanvi Singh @The Guardian

Dr Nadine Burke Harris is an expert on how childhood trauma can affect health. That proved to be valuable expertise during the pandemic.

When Dr Nadine Burke Harris was first appointed [California](#) surgeon general, she set out to address the toxic stress and trauma plaguing the state’s most vulnerable residents.

Then the pandemic hit. Suddenly, she found herself having to guide millions through statewide shutdowns, and persuade scared, skeptical Californians to get vaccinated against Covid-19 and wear masks to prevent the virus’ spread.

Burke Harris, who resigned this month, said the pandemic is “probably the greatest collective trauma of our generation,” and she, like all Californians she was sworn to serve – will have a long road ahead processing the last two years.

Reflecting on her three years as surgeon general of the most populous US state, Burke Harris warned that “the health consequences of this pandemic will continue, even after the virus itself is contained.”

More than [82,000 Californians have died from the virus](#), and during Burke Harris’ last week the state continued to tally about 200 deaths a day. The state, which was the first to enact stay-at-home orders two years ago, has seen the coronavirus overwhelm hospitals, exacerbate health inequities and disproportionately burden Black and brown Californians.

When Burke Harris was named the state’s first-ever surgeon general in January 2019, she stepped into a historic role – one that California governor Gavin Newsom created just for her. Only three other states have surgeon generals. Drawing on her expertise as a pediatrician who specialized in recognizing and treating early childhood trauma, she made it a priority to screen children across the state for signs of extreme stress.

By early 2020, her office had just launched an initiative to train health providers across the state to screen for childhood trauma and abuse and respond with appropriate care. When Covid-19 hit, “everyone had to put a lot of things on pause, to respond to the pandemic”, she said. Her office decided they couldn’t delay the training program. “Because we’re desperately going to need it,” she said.

So far, more than 20,000 providers have been trained. Guided by Burke Harris and the surgeon general’s office, California also enacted a first-in-the-nation law requiring insurance providers to cover

screenings for what pediatric health specialists call “adverse childhood experiences” – including the loss or death of a parent, abuse or neglect – which studies have correlated with a number of chronic health conditions later in life.

Two years into the pandemic, [an estimated 200,000 children in the US](#) have lost parents or caregivers. Many more have seen loved ones hospitalized with prolonged illness, or crushed by the stresses of navigating a pandemic with inadequate social safety nets. All that distress, Burke Harris said, will be a heavy burden for children to process – and the state will need to continue investing in helping them do so. [Read the entire article](#)

“One of the greatest awakenings comes when you realize that not everybody changes. Some people never change. And that’s their journey. It’s not yours to try to fix for them.” - Unknown

“When the world feels like an emotional roller coaster, steady yourself with simple rituals. Do the dishes. Fold the laundry. Water the plants. Simplicity attracts wisdom.” - Unknown

8] [Loneliness - Safe Space Radio](#) - This episode is about loneliness: what it is, why so many of us feel it, and the surprising toll loneliness takes on our physical and mental health. The health effects of chronic loneliness are akin to smoking 15 cigarettes every day—it literally shortens our lives. Yet it can feel vulnerable to name it when we feel lonely. This show examines the risk factors for loneliness, the influence of social media, and how creative approaches to loneliness can leave us more connected and resilient. We also explore why two groups in particular—teens and the elderly—are most at risk for chronic loneliness. We combine compelling storytelling with practical expert guidance to give you the tools you need to start your own courageous conversations.

[Safe Space Radio](#) - The show about subjects we'd struggle with less if we could talk about them more.

Safe Space Radio inspires courageous conversations, reduces stigma, shame and isolation, and fosters compassion and public health.

Founded in 2008, Safe Space Radio is a public health intervention on the air. We have broadcast over 300 episodes and received numerous national awards for mental health, stigma reduction, social justice and radio production. The first season of our four-part miniseries, [Can We Talk?](#), broadcast in May 2019 for Mental Health Awareness Month. Our second season is broadcasting throughout 2020 and 2021 in response to immediate need. Two long-form specials, [Out-Takes](#), on suicide prevention among LGBTQ teens, and [Still Here](#), on caregiving and dementia, both broadcast nationally in 2016. Our podcast is used in training programs for healthcare professionals, therapists, and teachers as they learn to address the needs of underserved populations.

8a] [Recovery Through Music with Michael Skinner](#) - Safe Space Radio – [A little blast from the past, May 20, 2013]

Songwriter Michael Skinner used music as a way to heal from the abuse he suffered as a child. Michael talks about his adult experiences with PTSD, his often-frustrating encounters with the mental health system, and his efforts to resist the stigmatizing label of “mental illness.” He also explores songwriting as an important healing tool in his life, and how he has been able to incorporate advocacy and support for other abuse survivors into his life as a professional musician.

[Safe Space Radio @ Facebook](#)

“Sometimes you get what you want. Other times, you get a lesson in patience, timing, alignment, empathy, compassion, faith, perseverance, resilience, humility, trust, meaning, awareness, resistance, purpose, clarity, grief, beauty, and life. Either way, you win.” - Brianna Wiest

“Do not waste time thinking about what you could have done differently. Keep your eyes on the road ahead and do it differently now.” - Karen Salmansohn

9] [National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy's \[NARPA\] 2022 Annual Rights Conference - October 26 - 29, 2022 Newark, NJ Doubletree Newark Airport](#)

[Request for Workshop Proposals – PDF](#)

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL DEADLINE MARCH 31, 2022 - Selected presenters will be notified by April 30.

NARPA’s mission is to support people with psychiatric diagnoses to exercise their legal and human rights, with the goals of abolishing forced treatment and ensuring autonomy, dignity and choice.

NARPA is seeking proposals which address strategies, ideas, programs, and emerging practices.

Workshops will be selected based on adherence to the NARPA mission with an emphasis on diversity and multicultural perspectives.

NARPA’S mission is to support people with psychiatric diagnoses to exercise their legal and human rights, with the goals of abolishing forced treatment and ensuring autonomy, dignity and choice.

“This is for everyone who tries. Who tries to learn, tries to grow, tries to respond kindly and wisely, tries to recognize their own issues instead of blaming everyone else. This is for everyone who tries to be their best even when they’re not feeling their best. I see you. I appreciate you. And I hope you know you make the world a better place, just by being you.” - Lori Deschene

“A mistake that makes you humble is better than an achievement that makes you arrogant.” - Unknown

10] [Can making art help with depression and PTSD? Science is finding out](#) : Shots - Health News : NPR [Podcast - six minute listen]

Art and music therapy seem to help with brain disorders. Scientists want to know why.

When Michael Schneider's anxiety and PTSD flare up, he reaches for the ukulele he keeps next to his computer.

"I can't actually play a song," says Schneider, who suffered two serious brain injuries during nearly 22 years in the Marines. "But I can play chords to take my stress level down."

It's a technique Schneider learned through [Creative Forces](#), an arts therapy initiative sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, in partnership with the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

It's also an example of how arts therapies are increasingly being used to treat brain conditions including PTSD, depression, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

But most of these treatments, ranging from music to poetry to visual arts, still have not undergone rigorous scientific testing. So artists and brain scientists have launched an initiative called the [NeuroArts Blueprint](#) to change that.

The initiative is the result of a partnership between the Johns Hopkins International Arts + Mind Lab Center for Applied Neuroaesthetics and the Aspen Institute's Health, Medicine and Society Program. Its leadership includes soprano Renée Fleming, actress and playwright Anna Deavere Smith, and Dr. Eric Nestler, who directs the Friedman Brain Institute at Mt. Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine.

One goal of the NeuroArts initiative is to measure how arts therapies change the brains of people like Schneider. [Read the entire article](#)

“The medical profession has come a long way in recognizing the healing benefits of art. My hope is that someday the arts will be considered as significant in everyone’s lives as breathing fresh air, eating clean foods, and performing physical exercise.” - Renee Phillips

“Art has always been the raft onto which we climb to save our sanity. I don’t see a different purpose for it now.” Dorothea Tanning

11] [How to Live With the Anxiety and Grief You Can’t Escape](#) by Elle Hunt @ [Pocket](#) - *Your own private corner of the web to spend quality time with great articles.*

There are ways to help alleviate the very worst of your stress, whether through support, sleep or radical self-care.

At a time when all life’s challenges have been amplified by the pandemic – and awareness of burnout, at home and at work, has never been higher – stress might seem to be our baseline condition. For most of us, these periods of pressure pass relatively quickly. Even serious stress can be temporary and, given the chance to recover, we usually will. “But emotional resilience won’t solve everything,” says Rachel Boyd, from the mental health charity Mind. “Some of the causes of stress are very challenging to cope with, even when we feel OK.”

Many of our everyday challenges have been amplified by the pandemic and its consequences for the economy and society. Those living with financial hardship, health conditions, or caregiving responsibilities, in particular, may feel there is no end in sight. But even if stress seems essential to your circumstances and you don’t have the option or the resources to change them, there are ways you can support yourself.

Take Your Stress Seriously - Short-term bursts of stress can be weathered without a negative impact and can even be productive, says Victoria Zamperoni, senior research officer for the Mental Health

Foundation. “But if stress is really intense, frequent or chronic, that’s when you see it having knock-on effects ... and the threshold will be different for everybody.”

Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child [distinguishes](#) between positive, tolerable and toxic stress (the terms refer to the effects on the body, not the stressful event or experience itself – though questions of context, intensity and duration are relevant). Toxic stress response can result from strong, frequent or prolonged adversity without adequate support – and the health effects can accumulate and last for a lifetime.

When your situation is so overwhelming, protecting your wellbeing can seem irrelevant or even impossible. But it’s important to take whatever steps you can. Ongoing stress can cause or exacerbate many serious health problems including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, heart disease and heart attacks, and stroke. It impairs your memory, thinking and judgment in the present, and has been linked [to developing depression](#), anxiety and perhaps even Alzheimer’s disease.

“Stress is a really important physical influence and it deserves to be taken seriously,” says Zamperoni. “If someone is struggling, they should reach out for help.”

Be Aware of the Bigger Picture - “Stress is often a legitimate response to difficult circumstances, that no amount of resilience or self-care can overcome,” Boyd says. Much prolonged stress is a product of poverty, financial struggle and health conditions and exacerbated by cuts to benefits and support services. So any discussion of ways to cope must acknowledge that the solution lies in structural societal change, such as welfare reform, more protective labour laws and more support and resources for caregivers.

Middle-aged women, in particular, shoulder the burden, often working full-time while also caring for young children and elderly parents. “It’s unfair to put all of the responsibility for staying healthy on the individual,” says Zamperoni. “At the same time, that social change is often slow – so people do need resources they can draw on in the meantime.”

Find Solutions That Work for You - Everyone’s experience of stress is different, says Zamperoni. “Stressors can vary by your environment, your past and present, and the social or economic situation you find yourself in.”

Even genetics inform our stress response, meaning [other people’s strategies](#) won’t necessarily help you; the key is to come up with your own. Public Health England’s [Every Mind Matters](#) online tool helps people come up with a personalised “mind plan”.

“You could say, ‘I’ve got to learn to cope’, but there are specific things that will help you,” says Paul Gilbert, a clinical psychologist and the founder of the [Compassionate Mind Foundation](#). “What’s going to help you with your elderly relatives is not going to be what’s helpful on a Covid ward. [Different stressors](#) require different solutions.” [Read the entire article](#)

“Some of the most generous people have no money. Some of the wisest people have no education. Some of the kindest people were hurt the most.” - Steve Wentworth

“Sometimes you get what you want. Other times, you get a lesson in patience, timing, alignment, empathy, compassion, faith, perseverance, resilience, humility, trust, meaning, awareness, resistance, purpose, clarity, grief, beauty, and life. Either way, you win.” - Brianna Wiest

12] [‘I forget everything’: the benefits of nature for mental health](#) by Damien Gayle @ The Guardian

As campaign launched to enshrine right to green space, Bolton woman describes how ‘tranquility walks’ helped her through lock-down.

During Covid lockdowns, Sharon Powell felt alone. She was caring for her father, 90, who was deteriorating from Parkinson’s disease and dementia, and looking after him had become increasingly difficult.

Social life in her community in Johnson Fold, Bolton, had been Powell’s escape from the pressure at home, but when Covid restrictions were introduced “everything was just gone”. She was depressed, anxious and having panic attacks “like a washing machine on full spin”.

Doctors had prescribed Powell pills for a host of ailments, mental and physical – “that much medication I’m surprised I don’t sound like a set of maracas when I walk”, she said. “But ... having suffered with mental illness for the past 30 years I knew that this had got beyond where medication could help.

“Medication can only do so much when you’re stuck in four walls.”

That was when a nurse at her local surgery put Powell in touch with Trisha Goodwin, a social prescribing link worker at Bolton GP Federation. “Trisha mentioned about going on walks, and I was like, well, I love walking and if it’s a small group I don’t mind,” Powell said. She now credits Goodwin’s suggestion with having helped saved her life.

In response to a dramatic increase in mental health referrals around the pandemic, Bolton GP Federation and the Woodland Trust worked together to create a programme of “tranquility walks”, focusing on woodland, water and relaxation as a space to deal with anxiety.

The group met at Barrow Bridge, a short walk from Powell’s home. Led by a Woodland Trust officer, they rambled through woodland on the [Smithills estate](#), a site recently bought by the charity.

It was a place Powell already knew and would visit to think. “But since doing the tranquility walks the thinking time has taken on a whole new meaning because I’m taking notice of the sounds, the smells,” she said.

“The running water, because there’s a stream ... and the birds’ song and the rustling of the leaves and the wind ... it’s just nice to take time out. It’s lovely and it’s on my doorstep.”

Vicky Entwistle, who works at the estate and led walks, said groups would stop to listen to branches and leaves swaying, or to watch dappled light through the canopy, an experience many found transformative.

“It shows the importance of getting more nature to people’s doorsteps to help boost our health everyday, and the clear benefits of social prescribing with nature,” she said. Wildlife Trust is backing [a petition](#) to call on the government to enshrine in law a right to access to nature.

The fortnightly Smithills tranquility walks have continued for a year now, and members of the group have formed strong bonds, Powell says. But she goes out more, when health permits it. She has become an advocate for open spaces, volunteering at Smithills – and sharing a newfound passion for mycology with her granddaughters.

“I just forget everything when I’m out,” she said. “All my worries and stresses of home, stresses of family, and just lose track of time.”

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” - Desmond Tutu

“I hope you find love, but more importantly, I hope you’re strong enough to walk away from what love isn’t.” - Tiffany Tomiko

13] [15 Documentaries About Mental Health to Stream Now](#) by Nakeisha Campbell @ PureWow

We applaud Hollywood for stepping up their game with films that explore the complexities of [mental health](#)—whether it’s an indie flick about dysfunctional families or a [coming-of-age](#) romance about a teen with schizophrenia. Although these titles spark important conversations, there’s still a stigma surrounding mental illness...and this needs to change.

Fortunately, there are several documentaries about mental health that focus on bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression and more. These movies also shed light on how these conditions can affect relationships and loved ones. [Keep reading](#) for 16 eye-opening documentaries to stream on [Hulu](#), [Amazon Prime](#) and more.

13a] [RELATED: 12 Mental Health Podcasts to Listen to Between Therapy Sessions](#)

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” - Maya Angelou

“You’re so hard on yourself. But remember, everybody has a chapter they don’t read out loud. Take a moment. Sit back. Marvel at your life; at the mistakes that gave you wisdom, at the suffering that gave you strength. Despite everything, you still move forward, be proud of this. Continue to endure. Continue to persevere. And remember, no matter how dark it gets, the sun will rise again.” - Unknown

14] [Brains Don't Slow Down Until After Age of 60](#) @ Healthline

- The human brain doesn’t slow down with aging until after people reach 60 years old, according to a study that included data from 1.2 million people who participated in an online experiment.
- Researchers suggest a healthy brain maintains much of its effectiveness and efficiency well into older age.
- Experts say mental stimulation, healthy lifestyle, and stress management are crucial to

maintaining our brain health.

If you get to middle age feeling like your brain is slowing down, it might just be in your head. Because it's actually not in your head.

A [new study Trusted Source](#) out of Germany found that the human brain typically stays as quick as ever into a person's 60s, which means that what we perceive as slowing down is actually the body's response time, hindered by outside factors. [Read the entire article](#)

"Be the reason someone still believes in magic, truth, authenticity, compassion, intelligent conversation, loyalty, courage, and love that doesn't have an agenda." - Brooke Hampton

"Maybe your life purpose isn't supposed to be a thrill-seeking narrative. What if you're meant to be the sunshine to someone's stormy day? Or the voice of clarity to a frantic mind? You don't have to be a superhero to save the world." - Unknown

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

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

A diagnosis is not a destiny

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