



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 August 2022

Hi folks,

Welcome to the August Edition of the Surviving Spirit Newsletter.

I created these two music videos for the [International Human Trafficking and Social Justice Conference](#) - *Uniting the global community to learn, connect, and collaborate to combat human trafficking and promote social justice* in September - I could not perform live due to my commitment at the [NYAPRS Conference](#) and Open Mic on the same days!! Honored to be a part of both these events.

Grateful for my friend Bob Catalano of Bob 'Cat' Studio helping me to record and produce these creative works.

Songs of Life, Love, Loss & Hope - Set 1 - Healing Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health Injuries - YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sOd1-EvpRI&t=53s> 20 minutes

Songs of Life, Love, Loss & Hope - Set 2 - Healing Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health Injuries - YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jc0GLP91vWE&t=3s> 26 minutes

4 songs in each set.

Take care, Michael

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

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“No amount of support or generosity justifies someone treating you badly. This includes parents.” - Sarah Crosby

- 1] [Friendship Squad \(How to Start One\)](#) /Peer-to-Peer Friendship Project – City Voices Online

Start Your Own Friendship Project with This Easy-to-Follow Guide And I Will Help You Every Step of the Way Free of Charge – Dan Frey

What is it? The Friendship Squad is a Mutual Aid Project for social support. This document [[PDF @ website](#)] can help you to create your own Friendship Project.

Write a Summary of Your Project’s Purpose - I wrote mine here:

<https://www.cityvoicesonline.org/friendship-squad-description/>

Basically, my purpose was to connect people who were secure in their recovery from mental health and/or addiction challenges and who have a solid support system with people who may be struggling, lacking support, lonely and/or isolated.

“Friendship consists of a willing ear, an understanding heart, and a helping hand.” – Frank Tyge

City Voices Online - Media and Community-building Projects

“Again today

When considering all labeled “mentally ill,”

I am more common than unique.

When considering all labeled “normal,”

I am more unique than common.

And,

I find more salvation when focusing on

Whatever commonalities I share with each.” - Jacek Haciał

“Not all storms come to disrupt your life, some come to clear your path.” - Paulo Coelho

2] [Collecting Glitter](#) - Sharing stories of Light, Love, and Leadership after Surviving Narcissism, Abuse, Domestic Violence, Parental Alienation, Trauma Bonding, and More. Success after Stockholm’s Syndrome! Healing and Hope. Love After Loss

Recent post - [Burning the Bridge](#) - **No Longer Allowing Abusive People Access to You** -

After the ending of a abusive relationship, you may look back and notice a pattern of having toxic friendships, work-relationships, or even bonds within your own family unit. Abusers are drawn to people with certain characteristics. Since they foresee they are likely to be abusive in the relationship, they tend to look for partners who exhibit traits of empathy, forgiveness, loyalty, naivety, and oftentimes lack boundaries.

“Keep my anger from becoming meanness.

Keep my sorrow from collapsing into self-pity.

Keep my heart soft enough to keep breaking.

Keep my anger turned towards justice, not cruelty.

Remind me that all of this, every bit of it, is for love.

Keep me fiercely kind.” - Unknown

“Feeling compassion for ourselves in no way releases us from responsibility for our actions. Rather, it

releases us from self-hatred that prevents us from responding to our life with clarity and balance” - Tara Brach

3] [Study examines why the memory of fear is seared into our brains](#) – Science Daily

Experiencing a frightening event is likely something you'll never forget. But why does it stay with you when other kinds of occurrences become increasingly difficult to recall with the passage of time?

A team of neuroscientists from the Tulane University School of Science and Engineering and Tufts University School of Medicine have been studying the formation of fear memories in the emotional hub of the brain - the amygdala - and think they have a mechanism.

[Science Daily](#) - Your source for the latest research news

“Awareness is so much better for me than closing out all feelings, shutting out people, withdrawing from living. No matter how hard the truth is or what the facts are, I prefer to know, look at, and accept this day.” - As We Understood, Al-Anon

“No man can think clearly when his fists are clenched.” - George Jean Nathan

4] [We Can Hear Your Voices Now](#) – YouTube 2:29 minutes

Lyrics, Music and Sung by Jeanette Westbrook. Produced, Engineered and Recorded by Andrew Westbrook

Written for the launch of the book, [WOMEN UNSILENCED](#): Our Refusal to Let Torturer-Traffickers Win by Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald from [Persons Against Non-State Torture](#)

4a] [Unsilenced \(Acoustic\)](#) – YouTube 3:01 minutes

This is the Lyric Video for the song, "Unsilenced", written by Peter Cribb & Bob Ryan (C)2022. The song was inspired by the work of Jeanne Sarson & Linda MacDonald, especially their recently published book, "Women Unsilenced."

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

“There are many examples of how the repression of our suffering destroys our empathy for the suffering of others.” -Alice Miller

5] [Alice Miller - Child Abuse and Mistreatment](#)

What is it? - Humiliations, spankings and beatings, slaps in the face, betrayal, sexual exploitation, derision, neglect, etc. are all forms of mistreatment, because they injure the integrity and dignity of a

child, even if their consequences are not visible right away. However, as adults, most abused children will suffer, and let others suffer, from these injuries. This dynamic of violence can deform some victims into hangmen who take revenge even on whole nations and become willing executors to dictators as unutterably appalling as Hitler and other cruel leaders. Beaten children very early on assimilate the violence they endured, which they may glorify and apply later as parents, in believing that they deserved the punishment and were beaten out of love. They don't know that the only reason for the punishments they have (or in retrospect, had) to endure is the fact that their parents themselves endured and learned violence without being able to question it. Later, the adults, once abused children, beat their own children and often feel grateful to their parents who mistreated them when they were small and defenseless.

This is why society's ignorance remains so immovable and parents continue to produce severe pain and destructivity – in all “good will”, in every generation. Most people tolerate this blindly because the origins of human violence in childhood have been and are still being ignored worldwide. Almost all small children are smacked during the first three years of life when they begin to walk and to touch objects which may not be touched. This happens at exactly the time when the human brain builds up its structure and should thus learn kindness, truthfulness, and love but never, never cruelty and lies. Fortunately, there are many mistreated children who find [“helping witnesses”](#) and can feel loved by them.

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.” - Mark Twain

“Assumptions are nothing more than lies that we are telling ourselves. This creates a big drama for nothing, because we don't really know if something is true or not.” - Don Miguel Ruiz

6] [Mental Health in the Workplace by Giving Voice to Depression](#) - Listen online for free on SoundCloud – 19 minutes

Organizations focus on The Bottom Line. But too seldom do they make it a priority to understand this bottom line: The people they employ are human beings.

They may work with or as cogs in a corporate machine, but they are not machines. And their well-being, including their mental health, needs to be considered. It is not just the right thing to do for the health of employees, but for the health of businesses as well.

Geoff McDonald, a former top exec at Unilever tells his personal story of the toll being pushed too hard for too long took on his body and mind. He now speaks across the globe about the need to address and prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace.

[Stream Giving Voice to Depression](#) - Depression affects more than 300,000,000 worldwide. So basically, if you don't have it yourself, you know someone who does. Giving Voice to Depression was founded to start discussions that reduce stigma and promote understanding. We look at depression from many angles. A journalist with depression pre-produces short (7-10 minute) interview segments, and then the sister co-hosts, who both live with depression, comment on the issues presented. The episodes are informative and hopeful-- and seldom depressing. It's time to shine some light on depression's

darkness! Join us.

“I am bent, but not broken. I am scarred, but not disfigured. I am sad, but not hopeless. I am tired, but not powerless. I am angry, but not bitter. I am depressed, but not giving up.” - Anonymous

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.” - Glenn Close

7] [Stop drinking, keep reading, look after your hearing: a neurologist’s tips for fighting memory loss and Alzheimer’s](#) – Memory by Gaby Hinsliff @ The Guardian

When does forgetfulness become something more serious? And how can we delay or even prevent that change? We talk to brain expert Richard Restak

You walk into a room, but can’t remember what you came in for. Or you bump into an old acquaintance at work, and forget their name. Most of us have had momentary memory lapses like this, but in middle age they can start to feel more ominous. Do they make us look unprofessional, or past it? Could this even be a sign of impending dementia? The good news for the increasingly forgetful, however, is that not only can memory be improved with practice, but that it looks increasingly as if some cases of Alzheimer’s may be preventable too.

Neuroscientist Dr Richard Restak is a past president of the American Neuropsychiatric Association, who has lectured on the brain and behaviour everywhere from the Pentagon to Nasa, and written more than 20 books on the human brain. His latest, [The Complete Guide to Memory: The Science of Strengthening Your Mind](#), homes in on the great unspoken fear that every time you can’t remember where you put your reading glasses, it’s a sign of impending doom. “In America today,” he writes “anyone over 50 lives in dread of the big A.” Memory lapses are, he writes, the single most common complaint over-55s raise with their doctors, even though much of what they describe turns out to be nothing to worry about.

Coming out of a shop and not being able to remember where you left the car, for example, is perfectly normal: it’s likely you just weren’t concentrating when you parked, and therefore the car’s location wasn’t properly encoded in your brain. Forgetting what you came into a room for is probably just a sign you’re busy and preoccupied with other things, says Restak.

“Samuel Johnson said that the art of memory is the art of attention,” he says....

“Self-discipline is self-caring.” - M. Scott Peck

“Increasing the strength of our minds is the only way to reduce the difficulty of life.” - Mokokoma Mokhonoana

8] [Prisoner Rehabilitation Through the Universal Power of Music](#) - Jail Guitar Doors

Changing Lives One Guitar At A Time - Jail Guitar Doors goes into the prisons, jails, and juvenile

detention facilities all around this nation bringing with us the undeniable, UNIVERSAL POWER OF MUSIC to help our fellow imprisoned human beings onto the right track toward successful reentry.

[Jail Guitar Doors songwriting workshop](#) - Chino Institute for Men (CIW) - YouTube 5:02

“I have seen and experienced the healing powers of music many times throughout my life, but nothing has compared to the profundity of the transformation I have witnessed working with inmates.” - Astra Kelly – Teaching Artist, Richard J Donovan Correctional Facility

The last 30 years saw an experiment in using a purely punitive approach to crime. It’s been a dismal failure, and our country is finally waking up to this sad fact. Organizations interested in safer and more just communities have had to step into the breach of this disaster to heal the wounds.

Jail Guitar Doors USA has accepted this challenge.

We’ve all read the statistics, and we’ve all seen the shocking charts and graphs.

- 5% of the world’s population.
- 25% of the world's prisoners are in the U.S.
- 80,000+ human beings in solitary confinement.
- 50,000+ serving life without even the possibility of parole.
- More than 70% of those paroled failing to stay out.

Jail Guitar Doors USA works toward a more fair and just America.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing musical instruments and mentorship to help rehabilitate incarcerated individuals through the transformative power of music.

Using the medium of collaborative music and songwriting for everyone, we strive to achieve measurable rehabilitative outcomes. We seek to advance new solutions to diminish prison violence and recidivism. We support organizations that engage in policy reform efforts and partner with social service groups to help people in prison successfully rejoin the outside world. And we actively work to educate leaders and decision-makers on how to bring real reform to the criminal justice system.

“We are not our trauma. We are not our brain chemistry. That’s part of who we are, but we’re so much more than that.” - Sam J. Miller

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” - Fredrick Douglass

9] **Insightful & Informative Newsletters:**

9a] The Key Update - [National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse](#)

– <https://www.mhselfhelp.org/the-key-update-latest/> August issue

To sign up, contact Susan Rogers - susan.rogers.advocacy@gmail.com

9b] [Trauma Informed Tuesday Newsletter](#) – Published by the [CPTSD Foundation](#) [complex post traumatic stress disorder]

Contact Us - <https://cptsdfoundation.org/contact-us/>

9c] [Mad In America – weekly newsletter](#) - Contact Us - info@madinamerica.com

[Mad in America](#) - Science, Psychiatry and Social Justice

“I can't give you a sure-fire formula for success, but I can give you a formula for failure: try to please everybody all the time.” - Herbert Bayard Swope

“There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in” - Leonard Cohen

10] [Mental Health Affairs](#): The Final Solution to the Mental Health Crisis

Hi Friends!

I wanted to take this time to extend a publishing opportunity!

My site, the J. Peters blog, **Mental Health Affairs?**, often publishes the work of other authors in the mental health community. We publish a wide array of material, from prose to poetry and everything in between. Check out the site again here: <https://mentalhealthaffairs.blog/>

The submission guidelines are all listed on this page: <https://mentalhealthaffairs.blog/submitting-blogs-pitch-query-letter/blog-submission-guidelines/>

How to submit, whom to email, and information about our editorial process are listed on this page: <https://mentalhealthaffairs.blog/submitting-blogs-pitch-query-letter/>

For more information about our site, what is **Mental Health Affairs?** Here: <https://mentalhealthaffairs.blog/why-mentalhealthaffairs-org/>

Warmly, Max (J. Peters)

“Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.” - Khalil Gibran

“No amount of therapy can or self care can make up for scarcity of food & drink, time, or financial resources.” - Whitney Goodman

11] [Marcus Mumford: ‘I was sexually abused as a child’](#) by Laura Snapes @ The Guardian

Mumford & Sons frontman has said that his debut solo single is about ‘*the first of a string of unhealthy sexual experiences at a really early age*’

Marcus Mumford, front-man of the band [Mumford & Sons](#), has said that he was the victim of childhood sexual abuse.

“Like lots of people – and I’m learning more and more about this as we go and as I play it to people – I was sexually abused as a child,” he told [GQ magazine](#). “Not by family and not in the church, which might be some people’s assumption. But I hadn’t told anyone about it for 30 years.”

Mumford’s parents were international leaders of the Vineyard Churches, a neocharismatic evangelical Christian denomination.

Mumford said that his recently released debut solo single, Cannibal, reflected on experiences that took place when he was six years old.

“Take a deep breath to remember you are the child who lived through survival mode and the empowered adult who chose their healing.” - Dr. Nicole LePera

“But no matter how much evil I see, I think it’s important for everyone to understand that there is much more light than darkness.” - Robert Uttaro

12] [Sanity is a Full-Time Job](#) - The Craig Lewis Guide to Surviving the Impossible

‘The Craig Lewis Guide to Surviving the Impossible’ is written by a human being who learned the hard way the difference between being alive and truly living. This book is intended to help you figure out whatever it is that you need to figure out. If you do the personal work that you need to do, whatever that work may be; you will experience improvements. The bottom line is this: You, the person reading these words, you have the power within to heal and become whoever you were born to be. That is the path that this author has chosen. May your journey result in healing, peace and love. The Craig Lewis Guide to Surviving the Impossible features 15 passages and worksheets intended to encourage the reader go within themselves and to try to figure out how to heal what is hurting them.

12a] ["You're Crazy" Volume Two](#) - First-Hand Accounts of Surviving Trauma

"You're Crazy" Volume Two is a collection of 20 personal stories written by twenty punk rockers from around the world. All of the writers have experienced trauma, addiction, and mental health struggles.

As you read these stories, you will know both the pain and the beauty that make these uniquely brilliant human beings who they are today. We are unapologetic for surviving. Instead, we choose to live the lives we deserve.

We hope that others like us will read these stories and recognize that they, too, have the power to create the better lives they want.

After all, we are Punk Rockers!

“What if you moved through the world as if you were easy to be loved? Because I promise you, you are easy to love.” - Sonalee Rashatwar

"You don't need to find a lesson in your trauma." - Jordan Pickell

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

[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 "By My Side", "Joy", "Brush Away Your Tears" & more @ [Michael Skinner – You Tube](#)

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