



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 December 2022

Hi Folks,

Season's Greetings....the holidays are upon us, a time of joy for many and also a time of turmoil...so please do take care. *Lots of self-care* if this is a hard time of the year for you [it is for me].

On that note, a few resources to share:

[Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping](#) - Mayo Clinic

Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.

[How to Cultivate A Better Holiday](#) by Rebekah Brown @ [CPTSDfoundation.org](#)

& A few songs to share:

[Stand By Me](#) – YouTube 5:07 minutes - Live performance of "Stand By Me"...a great song and I love to play this tune and give thanks to all of those in my life who have stood by me, through the good and the bad. *Thank you!!!*

I'm loving this song and wanted to share with all of you impacted by trauma, abuse, life, loss, grief...you're still here - Kudos to you!! This is not her official video, but it has the lyrics.

[Unstoppable](#) - by Sia - w/lyrics - YouTube 3:49minutes

[Sia - Unstoppable](#) (Official Video - Live from the Nostalgic For The Present Tour) - YouTube 3:46 minutes

May you have Hope, Healing, Peace & Safety in your life, Michael

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

“Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn’t you - all of the expectations, all of the beliefs - and becoming who you are.” - Rachel Naomi Remen

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“If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.” - Fred Rogers

“Many survivors insist they’re not courageous: ‘If I were courageous I would have stopped the abuse.’ ‘If I were courageous, I wouldn’t be scared’... Most of us have it mixed up. You don’t start with courage and then face fear. You become courageous because you face your fear.” - Laura Davis

1] [Why “Toxic Positivity” Isn’t Positivity at All](#) by Sasha Heinz, Ph.D., MAPP @ [Psychology Today](#)

We should throw the term into the buzzword dump.

Key points

- “Toxic positivity” is not a toxic level of authentic positive emotions. It is emotional avoidance and invalidation.
- Authentic positivity never denies reality.
- You can acknowledge your very real pain and simultaneously experience genuine positive emotions like love, inspiration, and hope.
- Positivity isn’t glib, it’s the leavening agent of our flourishing and requires deliberate effort and emotional adulthood. [Read the entire article](#)

Sasha Heinz, Ph.D., MAPP, is a mindset coach, developmental psychologist, and the founder of Mind Your Mind: The Mental Fitness Club for Women. She holds a Ph.D. in Human Development from Columbia University, a Master's in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard College. She’s been quoted in *The Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, and many other outlets.

Sasha specializes in the science of getting unstuck and how to close the gap between who you are—and who you want to be. Find Sasha’s newsletter, podcast, and programs at [DrSashaHeinz.com](#).

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” - Nelson Mandela

“The best relationships in our lives are the best not because they have been the happiest ones, they are that way because they have stayed strong through the most tormentful of storms.” - Pandora Poikilos

“Just like there's always time for pain, there's always time for healing.” - Jennifer Brown

2] [Neuroscientists Say Multitasking Literally Drains the Energy Reserves of Your Brain](#) by Olivia Goldhill @ Pocket

“Often what you really need in that moment isn’t caffeine, but just a break.”

Does your morning routine consist of checking emails, browsing Facebook, downing coffee, heading to the train while Googling one last idea, checking notifications, more coffee, and going through your work email? The myriad activities crammed into your morning, and the constant switching between them, is likely making you very tired.

When we attempt to multitask, we don’t actually do more than one activity at once, but quickly switch between them. And this switching is exhausting. It uses up oxygenated glucose in the brain, running down the same fuel that’s needed to focus on a task.

“That switching comes with a biological cost that ends up making us feel tired much more quickly than if we sustain attention on one thing,” says Daniel Levitin, professor of behavioral neuroscience at McGill University. [Read the entire article](#)

[Olivia Goldhill](#) - I’m an investigative journalist at [STAT](#), where I write longform features and investigations. My first book, *Psyched*, on the race to control the psychedelic market, and how these treatments challenge the very foundations of the mental health industry, will be published by Bloomsbury in 2025.

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking.” -Steve Jobs

“Every broken heart has screamed at one time or another: Why can't you see who I truly am?” - Shannon L. Alder

3] [How the "Mental Illness" Label Helps and Hurts](#) by Sarah An Myers @ Psychology Today

How can we give truth to the diverse range of human experience?

Key points

- The "illness model" in mental health can imply that something is broken, leading to the search for a "fix" and competition for resources.
- The idea of mental "illness" can cause fear that interferes with acceptance and heightens shame and anxiety.
- One positive aspect of the "illness model" is that it acknowledges personal suffering.

[Read the entire article](#)

Sarah An Myers is a freelance writer who earned her Master of Arts in psychology and behavioral neuroscience from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her research focuses on novel computational and therapeutic methods for treating and diagnosing mental disorders. Sarah has worked at the American Psychological Association (APA) and Washington University in St. Louis. She has been published at *Huffington Post*, *New York Daily News*, *Yahoo!*, *Free Inquiry*, *The Mighty*, and more for topics on human rights and mental health. From 2018 to 2022, she spoke for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in the St. Louis chapter to more than thousands of students, gala attendees,

parents, and educators. Find her on Twitter [@sarahanny](#).

3a] [Living As An Outlier](#) & Insights into schizophrenia.

“Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans.” - John Lennon

“Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.” - Margaret Mead

4] [A Straight Talking Introduction to the Causes of Mental Health Problems](#) (second edition) by John Read and Pete Sanders - [PCCS Books](#)

What causes mental health problems? Nature or nurture? Brain and biology? Genetic inheritance or social environment? Revised and updated, this concise book explains what we know today about the origins of mental distress, drawing on the latest research from across the world. The answer is of course a bit of everything in combination – because the human body and brain are shaped by the environments we inhabit and what happens to us. Human distress is caused by loss, trauma, violence, childhood abuse, social injustices, poverty and deprivation. How well we are able to cope with these stressors likewise depends on a multiplicity of factors and is unique to each individual. An essential addition to the *Straight Talking Introduction* series, the book supports the call for more understanding of the social determinants of mental wellbeing. It adds to the arguments for treatments that do not rely on the busted hypothesis of neurochemical imbalances.

4a] [PCCS Books](#) is an independent mental health publisher.

We want a better deal for everyone who seeks help for emotional distress – better understanding from practitioners and society, better responses and more choices from services and better outcomes from treatments. Our aim is that our publishing reflects these goals.

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.” - Robert Louis Stevenson

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

5] [The Psychology of Parts: Dissociation, IFS, and the Multiple Yous Inside Your Head](#) by Niall McKeever @ The Weekend University

Recent developments in neuroscience, as well as the growing evidence base for “parts-based” psychotherapies such as Internal Family Systems (IFS), schema therapy, and transactional analysis are showing that not only is the mono-mind paradigm scientifically inaccurate, it's also harmful to our mental health.

It leads to the sensation of feeling like we are the “controller” of our experiences, often causing internal conflict, as well as guilt, shame, and self-criticism when we are unable to live up to the demands of our inner drill sergeant.

"What we commonly think of personality “disorders” then, are not a result of a unitary mind “shattering” into multiple fragments as is commonly assumed. Instead, individuals with diagnoses such

as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) are very much like the rest of us, with the only difference being that they've experienced such significant trauma, that their "parts" get dissociated and disconnected from the rest of the system.

Therefore, a key ingredient in psychological health is being able to lead and manage the many different parts that exist within us, so that we can create a state of internal harmony and coherence between them. In short, we need to learn how to treat our many different selves in just the same way that a loving parent would treat their children. " [Read the entire article](#)

Niall McKeever, MSc is a writer and entrepreneur with a passion for making great ideas more accessible. He does this via [his blog](#) and [The Weekend University](#), which aims to make the best minds and ideas in psychology more accessible to the general public. You can follow the project on [YouTube](#) or listen to [the podcast](#).

5a] [Internal Family Systems](#): An Accessible Introduction

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is an evidence-based form of psychotherapy that was developed by Dr Richard Schwartz, PhD.

It's built on the premise that each of us are made up of a system of sub-personalities, or "parts" which coexist within us like an "internal family" that influences our decision making and behavior.

The IFS approach explores how the different parts of your personality system interact, with each sub-personality treated as a separate entity with its own motivations, fears and desires.

5b] [The Weekend University](#) We believe in a world where everyone has access to a world class education in how to most effectively manage their psychological well-being, and realize their full potential.

We also believe that a great deal of human suffering is unnecessary, and caused because we don't properly understand the human mind, and how it works. Therefore, by improving our understanding of the mind and developing greater levels of self-awareness, we can free ourselves from unnecessary suffering, realize more of our potential, and create a world in which as many people as possible can thrive.

The Weekend University's mission is to make the most important, evidence-based ideas from psychology more accessible, so that you can use the knowledge to improve both your own quality of life, and the lives of those around you.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." - Benjamin Franklin

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched — they must be felt with the heart. -Helen Keller

6] [From homeless to city hall: the Hmong American mayor making history in Oakland](#) by [Maanvi Singh](#) @ The Guardian

Sheng Thao says her experiences will help her lead the city through its severe housing crisis.

At the steps of city hall, surrounded by supporters and a gaggle of press, Oakland's new mayor-elect Sheng Thao exhaled.

"It's been a long journey," she began. "We've been through a lot to get to this moment right here."

Just 15 years ago, Thao was living in her car with her infant son. She had just escaped an abusive relationship and had nowhere to go. This week Thao, 37, became the first Hmong American woman to lead a major US city, the youngest Oakland mayor in 75 years and the first renter to hold the position.

"There have been so many people in this beautiful city that have held our hands and lifted us up," she said on Wednesday, in her first press conference since her history-making victory.

The daughter of refugees who fled Laos during a genocide, Thao was born and raised in [Stockton](#), California, the seventh of 10 children. She left home at 17, and in her early 20s fled an abusive partner while pregnant with her son Ben. She spent months sleeping in her car or on stranger's couches before she was able to secure a shelter. [Read the entire article](#)

"You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated." - Maya Angelou

"Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do." - Rob Siltanen

7] [A Brief But Spectacular take the narrative about people who commit violent crimes](#) – YouTube 3:25 minutes

Keith Wattlely is the founding executive director of UnCommon Law, a group that helps people who are serving life sentences navigate the parole process. He shares his Brief But Spectacular take on changing the narrative about people who commit violent crimes.

7a] [UnCommon Law](#) - Justice Done Differently.

UnCommon Law supports people navigating California's discretionary parole process through trauma-informed legal representation, mental health counseling, legislative and policy advocacy, and in-prison programming led by those who have been through the process themselves.

Discretionary parole is the most overlooked contributor to mass incarceration.

"Transformation is my favorite game and in my experience, anger and frustration are the result of you not being authentic somewhere in your life or with someone in your life. Being fake about anything creates a block inside of you. Life can't work for you if you don't show up as you." - Jason Mraz

“We are healed of a suffering only by experiencing it to the full.” - Marcel Proust

8] [Why most men don't have enough close friends](#) by [Madeline Holcombe](#) @ CNN

Friendships aren't just about those you sit with on the school bus or play alongside on your childhood baseball team — they are a core component of the human experience, experts say.

But making and retaining deep, meaningful friendships as an adult is hard, especially for men, according to research.

Less than half of men report being satisfied with their friendships, and only about 1 in 5 said they had received emotional support from a friend in the last week, compared with 4 in 10 women, according to a [2021 survey from the Survey Center on American Life](#).

The falling off of friendships between men begins around middle and late adolescence and grows starker in adulthood, said Judy Yi-Chung Chu, who teaches a class on boys' psychological development at Stanford University in California. And those who do maintain friendships with other men say they tend to have lower levels of emotional intimacy than women report.

“Boys don't start emotionally disconnected; they become emotionally disconnected,” said Dr. Niobe Way, a researcher and a professor of applied psychology at New York University. [Read the entire article](#)

“I'm not everything I want to be, but I'm more than I was, and I'm still learning.” - Charlotte Eriksson

“It is important for people to know that no matter what lies in their past, they can overcome the dark side and press on to a brighter world.” - Dave Pelzer

9] [What It's Like to Live with Childhood Trauma](#) – YouTube 19:31 minutes

In this eye opening interview, childhood trauma survivor Jacob Moore opens up about his memories of childhood trauma, how it actually affected his childhood, and the impacts on his mental health.

He also discusses - His relationship with his parents

How the life-changing event that occurred with one parent traumatized him and how this led to unhealed trauma

The emotions that resulted from His past, various misdiagnoses of mental illness

His road to healing

9a] Get access to hundreds of LIVE workshops with the [MedCircle](#) psychologists & psychiatrists:

PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Narcissism/NPD, Overcoming child abuse, Types of therapy, counseling, types of medication, and other mental health treatment options ^ Documentary style patient spotlight videos

“Don't feel bad about feeling bad. Don't be frightened of feeling afraid. Don't be angry about getting angry. There is no need to give up when we are feeling depressed. Nor should we be dismayed at the grief which often accompanies the outgrowing of anything which needs outgrowing. We can be glad

that our soul is speaking to us and pushing us onwards. We frequently need to persevere with a period of inner turmoil before the dust can settle and be swept out the door.” - Donna Goddard,

“A healer's power stems not from any special ability, but from maintaining the courage and awareness to embody and express the universal healing power that every human being naturally possesses.” - Eric Micha'el Leventhal

10] [Madwomen in Social Justice Movements, Literature, and Art](#) from Vernon Press

Madwomen in the Attic is excited about the publication of “Madwomen in Social Justice Movements, Literatures, and Art,” forthcoming from Vernon Press (2022). One of its editors is MITA co-founder Jessica Lowell Mason and its other editor is MITA member and featured writer, Nicole Crevar.

There is certainly a need for more books on madness and mental healthcare written by and for people whose bodies and life trajectories have been directly affected by mental healthcare systems and practices, and this is one book that affirms Mad people and people affected by the mental health systems as knowers and producers of historical, theoretical, social, creative, and other knowledges on the subjects of consciousness, the mind, madness, mental health, and psychic and bodily existence.

Check out the beautiful cover of the book, designed by Vernon Press and artist Gwynne Duncan, whose larger body of work is viewable online on her [website](#).

10a] [Madwomen in the Attic](#)

10b] [National Women’s Studies Association \(NWSA\) Conference Presentation 2022](#) - Madwomen & Social Justice – YouTube 16:49 minutes

“Mad Feminist Ingenuity at the Edge of Rage: Gathering Theory and Stories to Challenge Epistemic Injustice” at the National Women’s Studies Association’s 2022 conference on the bell hooks-inspired theme of “killing rage.” A performative presentation and celebration of the ingenuity in our soon-to-be-published edited collection, Madwomen in Social Justice Movements, Literatures, and Art (Vernon Press).

“Believing the lie that time will heal all wounds is just a nice way of saying that time deadens us.” - Jonathan Nolan

“My heart will still ache sometimes. Maybe more often than not. I think it's possible to be healed without feeling whole.” - Monica Hesse

11] [Get Reading: This Is How Books Can Impact Your Mental Health](#) by Christina Quaine

We’ve long known that we can find comfort, solace and help in the pages of a book, and now research has confirmed that reading can be good for our mental health.

Reading a book is one of life’s biggest joys, but could it also be a way of coping with the difficult times in life, from [bereavement](#) to relationship problems, and life in lock-down?

New research suggests that reading could be hugely beneficial for our mental health, with classic books written by authors such as William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens being proven to help relieve depression and chronic pain. In a 2020 study published by Oxford University Press, “challenging language” was found to send “rocket boosters” to our mind that can help [boost our mental health](#).

The mental health benefits of reading are something that Dr Paula Byrne certainly believes in. She is an author and founder of [ReLit](#), a charity which promotes bibliotherapy for mental health. She and her colleagues run workshops in schools, prisons and halfway houses and they host a week-long bibliotherapy summer school which is open to all. [Read the entire article](#)

“My depression is cyclical. When feeling down, I must remember each episode has a beginning, middle, and end.” - Larry Godwin

“The greatest win is walking away and choosing not to engage in drama and toxic energy at all.” - Lalah Delia

12] [3 Unmet Basic Needs and Their Effects on Our Relationships](#) by Annie Tanasugarn, Ph.D., @ Psychology Today

How childhood voids can impact our romantic relationship patterns.

Key points

- Schemas formed in childhood go hand in hand with how consistently a child has their most basic needs met.
- Traumatic experiences often leave a child with “holes” in their emotional development that remain unmet even when they are adults.
- A lack of love in childhood can increase the risk of mental health issues in adulthood.

If your [childhood](#) was less than ideal, you’re not alone. Many of us have experienced childhoods that included family turmoil, unstable living conditions, violence between caregivers, betrayal, abandonment, emotional or physical abuse, or neglect. These kinds of [traumatic](#) experiences often trigger a pattern where instability, unpredictability, or inconsistency lead to one or more of a child’s basic needs going unmet. [Read the entire article](#)

Annie Tanasugarn, Ph.D., is a recognized doctor of psychology and Certified Trauma & Addiction Specialist who helps individuals increase the quality of the relationship they have with themselves. Dr. Tanasugarn believes that the quality of all our relationships begins with how we treat ourselves. She specializes in early trauma, emotional addictions (“push-pull” relationships), and unhealthy behavior patterns, which can affect the quality of a person’s life. Her goal is to help empower individuals in building a solid sense of self-love by aligning their goals with their needs. Her mission is to provide clients a safe place for reflection that fosters insight and self-discovery in helping them reach a place of self-awareness and self-love.

12a] [Understanding PTSD](#) by Annie Tanasugarn, Ph.D. @ Psychology Today

How generational trauma, patterns, and habits impact adult wellness.

“Where humanity sowed faith, hope, and unity, joy’s garden blossomed.” - Aberjhani

“I show my scars so that others know they can heal.” - Rhachelle Nicol

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