



*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 June 2023**

Hi folks,

Welcome to the the June issue of the Surviving Spirit Newsletter.

Summer is officially here but here in my little corner of the world there's been lots of rain and temperatures 10-12 degrees below normal. As I type this it is raining out...but the sun is trying to peak through!

June is also a time to recognize -

[PTSD Awareness Month](#), [African-American Music Appreciation Month](#), [LGBT Pride Month](#),  
& [Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month](#)

*“When angry, count to four; when very angry, swear.” — Mark Twain*

*“I’m not lazy. I’m just exhausted from fighting my way through every single day.” – Mimi Love*

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*“When the alarm bell of the emotional brain keeps signaling that you are in danger, no amount of insight will silence it.” – Bessel van der Kolk, MD*

*“Instead of saying ‘I’m damaged, I’m broken, I have trust issues.’ I say ‘I’m healing, I’m rediscovering myself, I’m starting over.’” – Horacio Jones*

- 1] [5 Reasons People May Deny Their Trauma History](#) by Kaytee Gillis, LCSW-BACS @ Psychology Today

*Myths about parenting keep people from recognizing the truth*

**Key points**

- Messages such as "Honor your parents" and "Love is unconditional" contribute to messages that force survivors to deny their reality.
- Reading and self-educating are steps toward healing and empowering oneself to overcome one's history.
- While conversations around trauma are becoming more normalized, we still have a long way to go toward healing.

[Kaytee Gillis, LCSW-BACS](#) - is a psychotherapist and author with a passion for working with survivors of relationship and family trauma and the LGBTQ+ community. Her work focuses on assisting survivors of psychological abuse, stalking, and other non-physical forms of domestic violence and family trauma. Her first book, *Invisible Bruises: How a Better Understanding of the Patterns of Domestic Violence Can Help Survivors Navigate the Legal System*, sheds light on the ways that the

legal system can perpetuate the cycle of domestic violence by failing to recognize patterns that would otherwise hold perpetrators accountable and protect survivors. Her recent book, [\*It's Not High Conflict, It's Post-Separation Abuse\*](#), highlights the ways perpetrators use the court system to continue to abuse. Gillis has been featured on iHeart Radio, Shaye Ganam's Radio Show, The Dr. Wendy Walsh Show, CP24 News, and other outlets. She provides training on recognizing patterns of domestic violence and family trauma, and helping survivors move forward.

*“Don't let someone get comfortable with disrespecting you.” Unknown*

*“Trauma survivors' "problem" is NOT that we can't endure hard things. We've been enduring hard things for most of our lives-- you don't know.*

*It's more that our nervous system is exhausted & misfiring when it comes to things that the rest of the world thinks "should" be "easy.” - Dr. Glenn Patrick Doyle*

2] [Trauma-Informed Care and PTMF Reduce Self-Harm, Seclusion, and Restraint in Acute Inpatient Psychiatric Setting](#) by Richard Sears @ Mad in America

*Implementation of the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF) and staff psychological stabilization training leads to a decrease in self-harm and restrictive interventions in one inpatient psychiatric unit.*

A recent study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* suggests that adopting a Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approach in inpatient psychiatric settings can significantly reduce self-harm and the use of seclusion and restraint.

**Richard Sears** teaches psychology at West Georgia Technical College and is studying to receive a PhD in consciousness and society from the University of West Georgia. He has previously worked in crisis stabilization units as an intake assessor and crisis line operator. His current research interests include the delineation between institutions and the individuals that make them up, dehumanization and its relationship to exaltation, and natural substitutes for potentially harmful psychopharmacological interventions.

*“Once you start spending enough time with enough toxic people, you run the risk of losing some of your own empathy, simply because you aren't ever being given any.” - Ramani Durvasula*

*“Even when it makes no sense, practice trusting more in what you feel and sense is calling you and take heart to follow it. Your heart is the place of courage amidst the discomfort, unknowns, in-betweens.” - Aesha Kennedy*

3] [Turning pain into power: How a grieving mother transformed a neglected block near Detroit into a village of beauty and opportunity](#) by Meg Dunn @ CNN

Every parent's worst nightmare is losing their child. Shamayim Harris has lived through that nightmare – twice.

On September 23, 2007, her 2-year-old son, Jakobi Ra, was struck and killed in a hit-and-run in

Highland Park, a suburb of Detroit.

“I literally thought that I wouldn’t be able to function or be alive or anything,” she recalled.

In 2021, she experienced that heart-wrenching loss again when her 23-year-old son, Chinyelu, was shot and killed while doing a neighborhood watch in his community.

As she faced her profound grief, she also discovered her strong determination to channel it into something good. For the last 15 years, her trauma has fueled her mission to transform her struggling, neglected community into a vibrant village.

*“I needed to ... change grief into glory, pain into power;”* said Harris, who is known as Mama Shu. *“I just tried to transform it into something bearable and something beautiful.”*

3a] [The Avalon Village – Blight to Beauty](#)

& [Video 8:52 minutes](#) - She spent 15 years transforming a derelict Detroit block into something beautiful. Now she's ready to transform the world @ CNN

*“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.” - Kahlil Gibran*

*“Instead of spending your energy on hating your enemies, use it to love your friends a little harder.”*  
*Unknown*

4] [The 5-step "military method" for falling asleep in minutes](#) by Jonny Thomson @ [Big Think](#)

- The military method is a sleep technique practiced by the U.S. Army to help soldiers sleep under any conditions, including gunfire.
- The method consists of five steps, focusing on progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and guided imagery to achieve a calm and peaceful state.
- Incorporating the military method into a nightly routine can improve sleep habits and overall well-being.

[Jonny Thomson](#) teaches philosophy in Oxford. He runs a popular Instagram account called Mini Philosophy (@philosophyminis), which is the result of the conversations with his students and a somewhat masochistic obsession with reading dry philosophical books. Although Jonny centers around philosophy, he loves to write about all manner of subjects. Under the increasingly strained title of a 'philosophy' blog, he's turned his hand to the origins of life, linguistics, developmental psychology, time travel paradoxes, psychoanalysis and unpacking classic novels and poetry. His first book is called “Mini Philosophy: A Small Book of Big Ideas.”

*“Earn your success based on service to others, not at the expense of others.” - H. Jackson Brown Jr.*

*“It’s easy to make a buck. It’s a lot tougher to make a difference.” – Tom Brokaw*

5] [Calling All Artists! Submit Art for the 2024 IOD Calendar](#)

We are currently inviting artists to submit artwork to be considered for the Institute on Disability's (IOD) 2024 Calendar. For over 20 years, we have produced beautiful, full-color calendars featuring 13

original works of art coupled with inspirational quotes. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your talent on a global scale.

**Eligibility:** This competition is open to the public. All artists working in two-dimensional mediums may submit their work for this contest and do not need to have professional experience to participate.

To preview the IOD calendar, [take a look at the 2023 IOD Calendar](#).

*“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.”  
- Lao Tzu*

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

6] [Heidi Love](#) – Author-Sailor-Activist - *Dreams can be bigger than fear.*

Emerging from violent crime as a child, and inspired by a five-year sailing odyssey from Maine to French Polynesia, Heidi Love embraces the belief that we can rise above trauma to live our boldest dreams.

[Books](#) - **Knowing Acts:Engage in Healing** by Heidi Love · art by Linden O’Ryan

*Knowing Acts* is a rich and engaging workbook to inspire a personal journey of healing. For those suffering from overwhelming emotions. This customizable workbook uses original healing art, music, poetry, and mindfulness to guide the reader through a calming practice for emotional balance.

Laughing at the Sky: A Memoir of Transcendence

Rising above childhood violence and a mother’s madness, Heidi Love sails a small boat 12,000 nautical miles from Maine to French Polynesia—her lifelong dream. A tribe of badass women guide her five-year odyssey as she discovers remote island societies and rediscovers herself. Reminiscent of Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild* and Tami Oldham Ashcroft’s *Adrift*, Love fuses themes of healing and transformation with daring adventure.

*“You cannot heal what you do not acknowledge, and what you do not consciously acknowledge will remain in control of you from within, festering and destroying you and those around you.”-Richard Rohr*

*“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” – Martin Luther King, Jr.*

7] [Helping Survivors](#) - Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence

Helping Survivors is part of a growing movement of concerned citizens, survivors, and professionals working to ensure the right of every person to build a life free from the devastating consequences of sexual assault and abuse.

The website [helpingsurvivors.org](http://helpingsurvivors.org) was founded by Helping Survivors, LLC. Incorporated in Delaware, Helping Survivors, LLC is a national organization comprised of individuals dedicated to helping

survivors of sexual assault and abuse. We work towards this goal daily by providing our website's visitors with:

- Educational content reviewed by a diverse group of experts
- First-hand commentary from survivors and professionals who work with survivors
- Legal resources to seek justice
- Connections to organizations helping to protect and heal

*The mission of Helping Survivors is to heal, educate, and empower survivors of sexual abuse, sexual violence, and domestic violence.*

*“Trauma is perhaps the most avoided, ignored, belittled, denied, untreated, and misunderstood cause of human suffering.” - Peter Levine*

*“Try to understand the blackness, lethargy, hopelessness, and loneliness they're going through. Be there for them when they come through the other side. It's hard to be a friend to someone who's depressed, but it is one of the kindest, noblest, and best things you will ever do.” Stephen Fry*

8] [‘I couldn’t outrun my trauma’: nobody talks about parenting with complex PTSD](#) by Nikkya Hargrove @ The Guardian

I never defined what I experienced as a child as traumatic, and I never once thought of myself as a victim or a survivor, until I became a parent.

In 2019, just before the pandemic changed our lives, I was diagnosed by our couple's therapist with complex post-traumatic stress disorder [CPTSD] during one of our sessions. Through my tears, I tried to make sense of his words but found myself angry. Angry that I was being called a survivor while sitting in front of my wife, who didn't have such a burden to carry. Of course, she had her baggage – but in my eyes hers had always been lighter.

I was angry that she could never understand what it felt like to be abandoned by your parents, the two people who were supposed to always be there. She'd never had to question their love for her, or dissect her childhood stories searching for the truth. I was also angry that it took so long to name what I'd been living through for years: anxiety, the inability to remember my past, difficulty taking criticism, the inability to contain my emotions when I felt hurt, my lack of trust in others.

*“You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.” – Michelle Obama*

*“Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future.” - Robert H. Schuller*

9] [America is facing a mental health crisis](#) by Bernie Sanders @ The Guardian

Young people are grappling with challenges that no generation in modern history has been forced to deal with. They need our help now.

his country faces a longstanding mental health crisis, exacerbated by the isolation, fears and uncertainties of the pandemic. This crisis affects all generations, but has been especially devastating for young people.

In America today, 40% of parents report being either extremely or very worried that their child is struggling with anxiety or depression.

And they are right to be worried.

According to a recent survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one out of every three teenagers in America reported that the state of their mental health was poor. Two out of every five teenagers felt persistently sad or hopeless. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people age 15 to 24 in the United States. Nearly 20% of high school students report serious thoughts of suicide and 9% have made an attempt to take their lives.

*“You have two hands: One to help yourself, the second to help others.” – Audrey Hepburn*

*“There is no timestamp on trauma. There isn't a formula that you can insert yourself into to get from horror to healed. Be patient. Take up space. Let your journey be the balm.” – Dawn Serra*

10] [The Easiest Way to Silence Your Inner Critic](#) By [Daniel Oropeza](#) @ [Lifehacker](#)-Mental Health

If you're stuck in a toxic feedback loop with yourself, here's how to break free.

The way we talk to ourselves can be decidedly harsher than the way we talk to others. In fact, many of us are stuck in a toxic feedback loop with ourselves that is more damaging than we might think. And part of the problem of a negative inner monologue is that we've become so accustomed to speaking to ourselves that way that we don't even realize we're doing it. Even though we might not be conscious of it, our minds and bodies are still affected by it.

But there is a way to break free of your inner critic once and for all—with one easy trick from a therapist.

[Dr. Peter Attia](#), author of [Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity](#), explained as a guest on an [episode of Huberman Lab](#) that he used to have a severe case of toxic self talk that stemmed from an addiction to perfectionism, as it related to performance. From childhood, he felt a rage within him anytime he didn't complete a task to his very high standards. This would manifest in violent ways, like breaking windows and screaming at people (and himself), ultimately spilling outwards to everyone around him.

You don't have to necessarily be punching walls to want to improve how you talk to yourself, though. We all have a relationship to ourselves that dictates how we feel, act, and are perceived in the world and by the people around us. And you can improve it.

*“Delusional pain hurts just as much as pain from actual trauma. So what if it's all in your head?” – Octavia E. Butler*

*“To close your eyes will not ease another's pain.” – Chinese Proverb*

11] [Incremental is Transformational for Healing](#) by Gretchen Schmelzer

No one ever learned to walk by walking. It's hundreds and hundreds of attempts and so many different motions and muscles and movements that come together that allows us to learn to walk. And healing is a lot like that too. It's hundreds and hundreds of attempts and different motions and muscles and movement that come together to allow us to heal—to do something new, do something again. To reach forward. To move again in our lives, in our hearts, in our relationships.

I am talking about healing from trauma, but I could just as easily be talking about grieving the loss of a spouse or child, or the loss of a job, or the loss of a marriage. I could be talking about the physical healing from hip surgery or knee surgery or stroke or heart surgery. All of these things have their own trajectory. All of these things heal in pieces, in increments over time.

I think one of the most helpful things you can learn while you are healing from trauma is that you heal in steps. You loosen things up, you untangle them, you increase your range of motion, you expand your capacity to hold things. It's the coming together of all of the pieces that allow you to move freely again. It's not one set of moves and it's not the same set of moves for each person.

*“Bad things do happen how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have – life itself.” – Walter Anderson*

*“A lot of people who have experienced trauma at the hands of people they've trusted take responsibility, and that is what's toxic.” – Hannah Gadsby*

12] [Stop Mind Control and Ritual Abuse Today](#) [SMART] Conference August 2023 - Very Low Prices until July 1<sup>st</sup>

[The SMART conference](#) will be online on Saturday August 19th and 20th. We will be presenting several excellent speakers including Wendy Hoffman, Rainer Kurz and Neil Brick.

We have extremely low prices until July 1st. Please write [smartnews@aol.com](mailto:smartnews@aol.com) if you have any questions.

The purpose of S.M.A.R.T. is to help stop ritual abuse and child abuse and to help those who have been ritually abused. We work toward this goal by disseminating information on the connections between secretive organizations, ritual abuse, and mind control and by providing resources to survivors of child abuse, ritual abuse and mind control.

*“The mind replays what the heart can't delete.” – Unknown*

*“People start to heal the moment they feel heard.” – Cheryl Richardson*



13] [Gay and trans people deserve to live without persecution in the US. Why is that so hard?](#) by Margaret Sullivan @ The Guardian

*Conservative activists in America are doing everything they can to treat LGBTQ people as less than human.*

Pride Month is here, and this year it's happening in a tough environment.

American corporations – although eager to declare their support for LGBTQ+ people in order to better market their products – are often quick to retreat when protests follow.

Far worse is the onslaught of discriminatory legislation, and accompanying hateful rhetoric, in a growing number of states. These new laws and regulations are particularly aimed at transgender individuals, who are continually portrayed – including too often in the media -- as some sort of dreaded societal problem about which something must be done.

*“Trans people have a right to exist and participate in society. This shouldn't be controversial,” - Parker Molloy*

And, of course, this is all part of a broad and determined effort to go after these communities as part of what some glibly term “the culture wars,” but which often amounts to the politics of cruelty.

There's an ugly strategy here.

[Margaret Sullivan](#) is a Guardian US columnist writing on media, politics and culture

*“You wake up every morning to fight the same demons that left you so tired the night before, and that, my love, is bravery.” – Unknown*

*“You don't have to save me, you just have to hold my hand while I save myself.” – Unknown*

14] [How this faith-based town is helping end homelessness](#) - YouTube 5:07 minutes

In an area around Austin, Texas, sits Mobile Loaves & Fishes, a community that could help provide an answer to chronic homelessness. Reporting for TODAY, NBC's Harry Smith visits the village and learns why the plan has proven results.

*“Wounds won't heal the way you want them to, they heal the way they need to.” – Dele Olanubi*

*“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.” – C.G. Jung*

***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](#)

[mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com](mailto:mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com) 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

[@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***