



*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 2025**

Hi folks,

I'm grateful that spring has finally arrived, I've had enough snow. The month of March also highlights awareness for these three events:

1] [National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities](#) (NACDD) -NACDD's 2025 theme, We're Here All Year, emphasizes that community, accessibility, and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities should be recognized and championed every day — not just in March.

NACDD's mission is to work with State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to empower people with developmental disabilities, their families, and allies to build welcoming and supportive communities through policy and practice ensuring that people with DD can live a self-directed life in the community.

2] Brain Injury Awareness Month – [Brain Injury Association of America](#) - The Brain Injury Association of America leads the nation in observing Brain Injury Awareness Month in March each year. Join our My Brain Injury Journey campaign.

[Concussion: Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatments](#) @ Healthline

3] [Women's History Month](#) is an [annual observance](#) to highlight the [contributions of women to events in history](#) and contemporary society. Celebrated during [March](#) in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, corresponding with [International Women's Day](#) on March 8, it is observed during October in Canada, corresponding with the celebration of [Persons Day](#) on October 18.

Music To Share - [Stand by Me](#) performance by Michelle Skinner & Michael Skinner - A song to celebrate all those who have been by our side when the going got tough. We heal in community, not in isolation.

*“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being.” - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*

*“You must love in such a way that the person you love feels free.” Thích Nhất Hạnh*

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*“It's so essential to happiness to speak your truth out loud - because this sharing of your core pain is what creates a necessary healing shift - from negative beliefs about the world - to positive beliefs - and frees you up to be able to fully view life with meaning, purpose and connection with others.” - Karen Salmansohn*

*“Always hold firmly to the thought that each one of us can do something to bring some portion of misery to an end.” Author Unknown*

The Symphony of Sensitivity© by Samantha Syrnich TLC [Verses of the Heart – Echoes & Ink](#)

When you're deeply sensitive, love is ecstasy—an all-consuming fire that melts through the soul. Music is godlike, a river of sound that baptizes the spirit in emotion.

Heartache is a wide, somatic wound, an ache that pulses through the bones, echoing in the marrow of existence. Visual natural beauty is jewel-drenched, wild bliss, a shimmering, sacred hymn sung in light and shadow.

Tension and conflict are not just discomfort; they are a poison that seeps into every cell, tightening muscle and mind alike, leaving the body humming with an invisible bruise.

Joy is a tidal wave, sweeping high, crashing low, leaving behind both euphoria and longing. Silence is a cathedral, vast and echoing, where the heart hears its own whispers.

To feel deeply is to live in a world of amplified color, sound, and touch—both a blessing and a burden, a symphony of wonder and ache.

*“You must love in such a way that the person you love feels free.” Thích Nhất Hạnh*

*“Before sunlight can shine through a window, the blinds must be raised.” - American Proverb*

1] [Elaine Crocker: A Story of Resilience, Transformation and Impact @ She Exist Magazine](#)

Article Excerpt:

*Elaine Crocker's* life is more than just a story—it's a testament to the power of perseverance, healing, and the unwavering strength of the human spirit. For over two decades, she has dedicated herself to helping others, using her own experiences to inspire and uplift those facing adversity.

Elaine's journey was shaped by the harsh realities of childhood trauma and sexual assault. Without a strong support system or positive outlets, she struggled through juvenile delinquency and years of drug addiction. Many would have seen these challenges as insurmountable, but Elaine refused to let her past define her future.

Through rehabilitation, community support, mentorship, and faith, she not only found the strength to heal but also the determination to help others do the same. Her transformation is proof that with the right support and resources, anyone can reclaim their life and rewrite their story.

Elaine didn't just survive—she thrived. She became a mentor to young girls, providing them with the guidance she once longed for. She founded Yet Stand, Inc., an organization dedicated to empowering survivors and advocating for education, outreach, and support for those affected by trauma.

Her impact extends beyond mentorship—she turned her pain into art. Elaine wrote and produced “Yet I Stand”, a powerful stage play based on her own experiences. This annual production has been performed for over a decade, touching countless lives and shedding light on the resilience of survivors.

[Yet Stand Inc](#) – Supporting Youth, Women, Families

*“Forget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you are going to do now and do it.” William Durant*

*“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being.” - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*

2] [The one change that worked: I committed to therapy – and began to chip away at my grief and depression](#) by Ammar Kalia - Mental health @ The Guardian

Artifice Excerpt:

When my mother died, my mental health fell into decline. I tried everything from CBT to mindfulness, until one day something finally shifted.

I used to think I was great at therapy. From 17 to 23, I saw a total of four therapists for anywhere between two weeks and three months. Each time, I would sit in their quiet, softly furnished rooms and reel off the story of why I was there: my mum had been diagnosed with terminal cancer when I was 15 and given six months to live. She survived, but I continued to live in fear as she relapsed, then went into remission and finally died four years later. I gave them the narrative, talked about how my relationships or work were adding to my stress, then took on their tips, from [cognitive behavioural therapy](#) to [mindfulness](#).

I was a conscientious student, eager to implement their advice so I could continue coping. Once my allotted number of sessions was up, I would leave, knowing that if things began to feel stressful again, I could return and pick up new strategies. Therapy was a tool and I felt confident using it.

Except, at 23, things fell apart. I was unemployed and living at home with my dad, applying for jobs and constantly being reminded of my mum’s absence. I was running away from romantic relationships and feeling a rising sense of dread at the state of my life. Depression set in and the future seemed pointless.

As my mental health deteriorated, I realised I needed to return to therapy, but the NHS waiting times were too long and I could no longer rely on university services for free sessions. I began searching privately. I ventured to one session where the therapist stared at me silently for 50 minutes as I cried and then charged me £80 for the pleasure. After a few months, though, I found another professional, with a similar Asian background to mine and a wealth of qualifications.

At our first session, rather than telling my story, we spoke about my day and how I was feeling in the moment. I left feeling strange about having paid for, essentially, a chat. Still, I went back the next week and this time discussed my mum and my living situation, about the pressures and expectations I placed on myself and how life wasn’t panning out the way I thought it might.

*“You have trust in what you think. If you splinter yourself and try to please everyone, you can't.” - Annie Leibovitz*

*“It’s not enough to have lived. We should be determined to live for something. May I suggest that it be creating joy for others, sharing what we have for the betterment of person-kind, bringing hope to the*

*lost and love to the lonely.” – Leo Buscaglia*

3] [After the Bridge Documentary - Official Trailer](#) - William Kellibrew

The true story of a 10-year-old boy who bears witness to the ruthless execution of his mom and brother. Against all odds, this young survivor harnesses his inner strength to embark on a transformative journey to learn and help others.

*“The best minds in mental health aren't the docs. They're the trauma survivors who have had to figure out how to stay alive for years with virtually no help. Wanna learn how to psychologically survive under unfathomable stress? Talk to abuse survivors.” - Dr. Glenn Patrick Doyle*

*“I need to listen well so that I hear what is not said.” - Thuli Madonsela*

4] [What To Know About "Brain Flossing"](#) by Carolyn Steber @ Bustle

Article Excerpt:

“Brain Flossing” Will Help You Chill Out In Minutes.

[Flossing your teeth](#) leaves your mouth feeling clean and refreshed, so imagine how good it would feel if you could do the same thing to your brain. Even though you can't literally get in there with dental floss (bummer) you can create a similar effect with “[bilateral stimulation](#)” music — a trend that's going viral on TikTok that's said to [help improve anxiety](#), stress, and focus.

Also called “[brain flossing](#)” or “brain massage,” bilateral stimulation is a type of sound that bounces between your right and left ears. It creates a panning effect that makes it seem like the tune is gliding from one side of your brain to the other, kind of like floss. For a good example, check out this [link from TikTok creator @flaircontentbyamber](#).

If you have anxiety, ruminating thoughts, or distracting [symptoms of ADHD](#), then you might experience an immediate sense of calm while listening to bilateral music — and that's all part of its appeal. Under @flaircontentbyamber's video, one person said, “Why did this make me start crying? Pure relief.” Another wrote, “It quiets my ADHD and lets me focus.”

Creator @living.withadhd also [posted a bilateral song](#), and it's since gained nearly 500,000 likes. “I can literally feel it moving from one side of my brain to the other,” one person wrote in the comments. Another said, “This is the first time I've felt that flossing/pulling/tingling feeling in my frontal lobes. Weird but nice.” Here's what to know about brain flossing, according to an expert.

According to [Dr. Caroline Fenkel, LCSW](#), a therapist and chief clinical officer at [Charlie Health](#), bilateral music is designed to engage both the right and left hemispheres of your brain in a specific pattern that promotes relaxation, focus, and even emotional processing.

“The rhythmic left-right stimulation helps calm the nervous system, similar to how bilateral stimulation is used in [therapies like EMDR](#) [eye movement desensitization and reprocessing],” she tells Bustle. “It

supports emotional processing [...] making it easier to work through feelings without being overwhelmed.”

*“I believe music is like medicine. Like a good tonic, it can open your mind, strengthen and possibly even cure you. Music can work on many levels, and nothing I know of possesses the healing force that exists within music.” - Burning Spear*

*“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” – Charles Dickens*

5] [The Aftermath of a Police Officer's Critical Incident: Adam's Story](#) @ The LOVE>hate Project

Article Excerpt:

My name is Adam and I have been a Police Officer in Wisconsin for 23 years. I am also a Certified Peer Specialist in Wisconsin. I began my law enforcement career in 2001 after serving as an active duty United States Army Military Policeman. In April 2016, I was involved in a critical incident that changed my life forever when I used deadly force on someone who armed themselves with a hatchet inside a busy department store. This person died.

I suffered in silence for many years after my critical incident and I am ashamed for the ways I poorly coped. I still feel shame for the ways I coped and treated people. I find it hard to believe that nobody realized or even had a gut feeling that I was not doing well. I could not have been that good at hiding my poor coping strategies, or was I? I have always wondered if people were slowly watching me self-destruct because they did not know what to say to me, how to help me, or they simply did not want to get involved.

It has taken me many years to get back on track. There are many different coping strategies people may use after experiencing trauma. They may be good and healthy, or they may be bad and unhealthy. My coping strategies were bad, unhealthy, self-destructive, and dangerous. I used alcohol, marijuana, casual sex, and self-harm as some of my poor coping strategies for years after my critical incident.

My poor coping strategies easily put my relationships, job, and health at risk, but I did not care. I wanted to escape from what I was feeling. I wanted to numb my emotions, my thoughts, my body, and any memory of taking someone’s life. I wanted to feel better even if only momentarily. I was selfish, reckless, and I did not care how my self-destructive and dangerous behavior may have affected my family, friends, children, co-workers, and the public.

There were many times after my critical incident that I did not want to go to work. This was not because I had other plans or that I was hungover from consuming too much alcohol, another one of my poor coping strategies, but because I just wanted to stay at home and isolate myself from the world. I wanted to lock all the doors of my home, close all the curtains, and shut everyone out of my life—which I did many times for many years. Sure, I called in sick from time to time, but on one occasion, I intentionally injured myself so that I didn’t have to work. I used an old 12-inch adjustable steel wrench to cause superficial injuries to my left knee. I struck my knee a dozen or more times, enough to cause redness, abrasions, and bruising, and limped into the local emergency room. I explained to the doctor and nurses that I had tripped and fallen down walking out of the back door of my house and struck my

knee on the steel covering of an underground septic tank. My story was believable enough. I received X-rays of my knee, a prescription for pain medication, and crutches. I was discharged from the emergency room with a doctor's letter releasing me from work for about one week. This occurred during a busy holiday work week. Although I was not able to truly celebrate the holiday, this deception got me out of work and I was able to enjoy the time alone at home.

5a] [The LOVE>hate Project](#) - ENDing Interpersonal Violence - Promoting Love & Forgiveness

*“There is a moment in our healing journey when our denial crumbles; we realize our experience and it's continued effects on us won't "just go away". That's our breakthrough moment. It's the sun coming out to warm the seeds of hope so they can grow our personal garden of empowerment.” - Jeanne McElvaney*

*“Learning to distance yourself from all the negativity is one of the greatest lessons to achieve inner peace.” - Roy T. Bennet*

6] [Inner Compass Initiative](#) - Your life. Your story. You choose.

Across the world, people are asking if psychiatric diagnoses and drugs are the best way to understand and address the challenges that come with being human. Are you asking this too? If so, the Inner Compass Initiative is at your side to help you discover a new story so you can write your next chapter – informed and confident.

- Confront challenges often overlooked in the mental health industry, like tapering and withdrawal
- Find new confidence as you broaden your knowledge in our well-researched content library
- Start your next chapter drawing on the wisdom of thousands of people and their stories

*Helping you make more informed choices about all things mental health: diagnoses, drugs, and drug withdrawal.*

[Stories Library](#) -In late 2025, we're launching our Stories Library, a live database developed from thousands of accounts of navigating the mental health system and psychiatric drug withdrawal. In the meantime, here's a preview of what's to come. You'll find here the stories of people with firsthand experience of the mental health industry—accounts of harm and hope, breakdown and breakthrough, and above all, the power of our own stories to challenge and rewrite the scripts we've been given.

The Stories Library honors and amplifies the voices of those with firsthand experience of psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, because our stories are too powerful, vital, and varied to be told by anyone else. As you read you'll discover insight and expertise in the truest sense (from the Latin *experitus*: “tried, proved, known by experience”), as well as new and hopeful ways to approach the future. Here's how the library can do that for you...

*“Variety of form and brilliancy of color in the object presented to patients are an actual means of recovery.” - Florence Nightingale*

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

7] [Trauma Healing Publications](#) by author Agnes Wohl, LCSW, Gregory W. Kirshen and others

Agnes Wohl is a Traumatologist, author, and speaker who assists survivors in recovery from the profound effects that catastrophic events have had on a person's physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, interpersonal relationships, and the self.

*Reading the Child Within: How Bibliotherapy Can Help the Victim of Child Sexual Abuse: Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*

*Fawn's Touching Tale: A Story for Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused (Help for Sexually Abused Children)*

*Betrayal of the Body: Group Approaches to Hypo-Sexuality for Adult Female Sufferers of Childhood Sexual Abuse*

*Group Psychotherapy for Psychological Trauma Edited by Robert Klein and Victor Schermer*

*Casualties of Childhood: A Developmental Perspective on Sexual Abuse Using Projective Drawings*

*Silent Screams and Hidden Cries: An Interpretation of Artwork by Children from Violent Homes*

*Ice Breaker Game for General Groups, Sexual Abuse, and Eating Disorders*

*"If you get, give. If you learn, teach." – Maya Angelou*

*"We don't need no more danger; we don't need no more difficulties, we don't need no more misunderstanding, and we don't need no more violence. We need the people to see each other and know of each other, feel each other, touch each other, share with each other, and change hearts with each other." - Burning Spear*

8] [Aspen Michael's Truth of Survival and Healing](#) - My Truth. My Survival. Radical Healing.

Aspen Michael's Truth of Survival, Radical Healing, and Spiritual Liberation

I am a survivor of unfathomable child sexual abuse by the Catholic Church - targeted, conditioned, and ritualistically assaulted from age 6 until 18. But more importantly, I am a warrior who broke free from religious conditioning to discover my true divine connection and purpose.

Before my first incident of abuse, I was an innocent and vibrant boy full of imagination and possibilities. The Catholic Church didn't just steal my childhood through abuse; they attempted to steal my direct connection to the divine through systematic spiritual conditioning. They taught that only they could interpret and channel God's will, that only they could receive divine guidance. This conditioning, spanning generations in Catholic families, is perhaps their most insidious form of control.

What my abusers never realized was that even as they tried to break my spirit, my warrior soul was protecting other boys, saving lives, and maintaining a pure connection to divine love that no institution could truly sever. I was a childhood warrior who became a man - not just a survivor, but a divine agent

of transformation.

The abuse I endured was unthinkable dark and ritualistic - brutal acts veiled in religious ceremony that left deep wounds in both body and soul. The trauma was so severe that my brain blocked these memories through dissociation, only allowing them to surface in July 2022. But even during those years of repressed memories, my spirit was quietly gathering strength, guided by forces far more ancient and pure than any institutional religion.

When my memories began to surface, I made a profound choice - to abandon my celebrated career as a technology executive and focus every resource on healing. But this wasn't just about personal healing. I realized I had a greater purpose: to break cycles of generational trauma and help others reclaim their direct connection to divine love.

*“We need to start work with the idea that we're going to learn every day. I learn, even at my position, every single day.” - Chanda Kochhar*

*“It is for every normal human being to be an artist. It is his divine heritage, every child is an artist. Human society kills it in us before we reach maturity.” - Dudley Crafts Watson*

9] [Consumer Advocate Network \(CAN\)](#) - Consumer Advocate Network is a 501(c)(3) established in Washington, DC in 2003

MISSION - CAN empowers consumers seeking behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use) services by supporting them through our lived experience and established community networks.

GOALS -To ensure consumers have every opportunity to recover through treatment. We believe that every consumer should participate in their own recovery by exercising choice. CAN is here to help YOU take a leading role in your treatment.

March is **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**, a time to highlight the importance of inclusion, support, and access to quality healthcare for individuals with developmental disabilities. At **Consumer Advocate Network (CAN)**, we are committed to creating a space where every individual—regardless of their diagnosis—feels heard, supported, and empowered to live a fulfilling life.

### *Understanding Developmental Disabilities*

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions that affect physical, learning, language, or behavioral development. These conditions—such as autism, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities—can impact daily life, but with the right **support, services, and self-advocacy**, individuals can thrive.

### *How Consumer Advocate Network Supports Individuals with Developmental Disabilities*

At CAN, we recognize that acceptance and access are key to ensuring individuals with developmental disabilities receive the care and resources they deserve. We support our consumers by:

Encouraging Self-Acceptance – We foster a judgment-free space where individuals can embrace their unique experiences and strengths. Your diagnosis does not define you—your resilience does.

Providing Peer Support & Advocacy – Our trained specialists, all with lived experience, help consumers navigate healthcare challenges and stand up for their needs.

Connecting to Essential Services – Whether it’s medical care, therapy, community programs, or financial assistance, we ensure consumers can access the right resources to maintain their health and well-being.

Promoting Inclusion & Awareness – We advocate for a world where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, ensuring that individuals with developmental disabilities receive equal opportunities in healthcare, education, and employment.

*“I learned compassion from being discriminated against. Everything bad that's ever happened to me has taught me compassion.” - Ellen DeGeneres*

*“We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.” – Dr. Loretta Scott*

10] [What It Really Means To Be A Cycle Breaker](#) by Gray Chapman @ Romper

Article Excerpt:

Internet discourse may have diluted the concept — but as a mom with PTSD, it’s still useful and real.

*“We see you, cycle-breakers.”*

I encounter this phrase regularly on TikTok and Instagram and I am, without a doubt, the target audience.

Like so much modern-day online parenting content, at its best the term inspires solidarity and a shared vulnerability. Coming from actual mental health professionals, the term is useful. And the work is difficult. After enough use, though, the meaning gets warped. The term is inevitably flattened. Now, when I see influencers or parenting gurus touting their appreciation for cycle-breakers, I’m not so sure I feel seen as much as marketed to.

It will still be cloaked in “refreshingly honest” sentiment, but underneath, what you're ultimately receiving is a sales pitch. A course, a PDF, a membership, a workshop, all available at the link in bio. You could almost forget that the "cycle" we're trying to break here is [the cycle of abuse](#).

Internet pandering aside, we know that [adverse childhood experiences](#) can indeed be passed along from one generation to the next, behaviorally and perhaps even [biologically](#). And research shows that parents who were exposed to trauma as children themselves process the daily challenges of parenting [very, very differently](#) than those without adverse childhood experiences.

Cycle-breaking is the idea that we, as parents who experienced trauma, are doing the hard work of healing so future generations don't have to. Parents with PTSD (or in my case, [C-PTSD](#)) might find their flight-or-flight responses activated by their own kid’s behavior (check); might grapple with

painful or scary memories unexpectedly resurfacing during otherwise mundane moments (check); might struggle to connect with and stay present with their kids (check). Might even feel a very confusing and bizarre strain of envy in watching their partners or themselves give to their children what they, as kids, deserved but never received. (Big check. My husband's an awesome dad, and also, it's super weird to feel jealous of my kids on that front.) As one resource succinctly [puts it](#), trauma “does not preclude us as parents from experiencing the love and joy associated with parenting, but may create a more complicated journey.”

*“Love and peace of mind do protect us. They allow us to overcome the problems that life hands us. They teach us to survive... to live now... to have the courage to confront each day.” - Bernie Siegel*

*“Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without.” - Siddhārtha Gautama*

11] [How to Deal With Anxiety: 7 Tips for Coping When You Feel Anxious](#) by Lauren Geall @ Stylist

Article Excerpt:

Step away from unhealthy coping mechanisms - We all have coping mechanisms we turn to when things get tough, but unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as alcohol and ignoring your emotions, can make things worse. Making sure your coping mechanisms are making a positive difference is an important first step in dealing with anxiety.

“Though turning to stodgy foods or alcohol might seem the most tempting way to calm anxiety, it won't help you in the long term,” explains Pablo Vandenabeele, Bupa health insurance's clinical lead for mental health.

Some healthy coping mechanisms Vandenabeele recommends include getting outside for a 15-minute walk (everyday, if possible), laying off the caffeine, eating healthy, drinking plenty of water and getting enough sleep.

Tackle any anxious avoidance - If you find yourself starting to avoid things that make you anxious, you could be struggling with anxious avoidance. A form of negative reinforcement that strengthens feelings of anxiety, anxious avoidance is a common outcome of anxiety – but that doesn't mean there aren't things you can do to break the cycle.

To do this, you'll need to take small (but challenging) steps towards confronting the thing you've been avoiding. Once you're there, you'll also need to identify how to calm yourself down – and then repeat the process over and over again until your anxiety subsides.

“Once you have begun to interrupt the cycle, your brain will realise that it's not so bad after all and you will find the anxious feelings will diminish, reinforcing to your subconscious mind that you are safe and nothing bad will happen,” Jacqueline Carson, a psychotherapist, hypnotherapist and meditation teacher, previously told *Stylist*.

Use the five senses technique to calm yourself down - Also known as the 54321 method, this simple exercise is an effective tool to use when you're feeling overwhelmed by anxiety and need some head-space.

To get started, all you need to do is name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

“This technique can be used whenever we feel stress, anxiety or overwhelm coming on,” Chloe Brotheridge, hypnotherapist and author of *The Anxiety Solution*, explains for *Stylist’s Strong Women*.

“It can also be used in bed at the end of the day to help you to switch off or before a meeting you’re nervous about to help you to feel centered and calm beforehand. It’s a quick and simple tool that could be used daily as part of your routine or whenever you need to ground and calm yourself.”

*“The art of healing comes from nature, not from the physician. Therefore the physician must start from nature, with an open mind.” - Paracelsus*

*“[E]very child is an artist until he's told he's not an artist.” - John Lennon*

12] [The Science of Stress and How Our Emotions Affect Our Susceptibility to Burnout and Disease](#) by Maria Popova @ [The Marginalian](#)

Article Excerpt:

How your memories impact your immune system, why moving is one of the most stressful life-events, and what your parents have to do with your predisposition to PTSD.

I had lived thirty good years before enduring my first food poisoning — odds quite fortunate in the grand scheme of things, but miserably unfortunate in the immediate experience of it. I found myself completely incapacitated to erect the pillars of my daily life — too cognitively foggy to read and write, too physically weak to work out or even meditate. The temporary disability soon elevated the assault on my mind and body to a new height of anguish: an intense experience of stress. Even as I consoled myself with [Nabokov’s exceptionally florid account of food poisoning](#), I couldn’t shake the overwhelming malaise that had engulfed me — somehow, a physical illness had completely colored my psychoemotional reality.

This experience, of course, is far from uncommon. Long before scientists began shedding light on [how our minds and bodies actually affect one another](#), an intuitive understanding of this dialogue between the body and the emotions, or feelings, emerged and permeated our very language: We use “sick” as a grab-bag term for both the sensory symptoms — fever, fatigue, nausea — and the psychological malaise, woven of emotions like sadness and apathy.

Pre-modern medicine, in fact, has recognized this link between disease and emotion for millennia. Ancient Greek, Roman, and Indian Ayurvedic physicians all enlisted the theory of the four humors — blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm — in their healing practices, believing that imbalances in these four visible secretions of the body caused disease and were themselves often caused by the emotions. These beliefs are fossilized in our present language — *melancholy* comes from the Latin words for “black” (*melan*) and “bitter bile” (*cholera*), and we think of a melancholic person as gloomy or embittered; a *phlegmatic* person is languid and impassive, for phlegm makes one lethargic.

And then French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes came along in the seventeenth century, taking it upon himself to eradicate the superstitions that fueled the religious wars of the era by [planting the seed of rationalism](#). But the very tenets that laid the foundation of modern science — the idea that truth comes only from what can be visibly ascertained and proven beyond doubt — severed this link between the physical body and the emotions; those mysterious and fleeting forces, the biological basis of which the tools of modern neuroscience are only just beginning to understand, seemed to exist entirely outside the realm of what could be examined with the tools of rationalism.

For nearly three centuries, the idea that our emotions could impact our physical health remained scientific taboo — setting out to fight one type of dogma, Descartes had inadvertently created another, which we’re only just beginning to shake off. It was only in the 1950s that Austrian-Canadian physician and physiologist Hans Selye pioneered the notion of *stress* as we now know it today, drawing the scientific community’s attention to the effects of stress on physical health and popularizing the concept around the world. (In addition to his scientific dedication, Selye also understood the branding component of any successful movement and worked tirelessly to include the word itself in dictionaries around the world; today, “stress” is perhaps the word pronounced most similarly in the greatest number of major languages.)

*“Physicians need to be good technicians and know how to prescribe, but for healing to occur they also need to incorporate philosophy and spirituality into their treatment. We need to feel as well as think.” - Bernie Siegel*

*“A smile doesn’t cost a cent, but draws a lot of interest.” - Unknown*

13] [Stressed? Sick? Swiss town lets doctors prescribe free museum visits as art therapy for patients](#) by Jamey Keaten @ AP News

Article Excerpt:

NEUCHÂTEL, Switzerland (AP) — The world’s woes got you down? Feeling burnout at work? Need a little something extra to fight illness or prep for surgery? The Swiss town of Neuchâtel is offering its residents a novel medical option: Expose yourself to art and get a doctor’s note to do it for free.

Under a new two-year pilot project, local and regional authorities are covering the costs of “museum prescriptions” issued by doctors who believe their patients could benefit from visits to any of the town’s four museums as part of their treatment.

The project is based on a [2019 World Health Organization report](#) that found the arts can boost mental health, reduce the impact of trauma and lower the risk of cognitive decline, frailty and “premature mortality,” among other upsides.

Art can help relax the mind — as a sort of preventative medicine — and visits to museums require getting up and out of the house with physical activity like walking and standing for long periods.

Neuchâtel council member Julie Courcier Delafontaine said the COVID crisis also played a role in the program’s genesis. “With the closure of cultural sites (during coronavirus lockdowns), people realized just how much we need them to feel better.”

She said so far some 500 prescriptions have been distributed to doctors around town and the program costs “very little.” Ten thousand Swiss francs (about \$11,300) have been budgeted for it.

If successful, local officials could expand the program to other artistic activities like theater or dance, Courcier Delafontaine said. The Swiss national health care system doesn’t cover “culture as a means of therapy,” but she hopes it might one day, if the results are positive enough.

Marianne de Reynier Nevsky, the cultural mediation manager in the town of 46,000 who helped devise the program, said it built on a similar idea rolled out at the Fine Arts Museum in Montreal, Canada, in 2019.

She said many types of patients could benefit.

“It could be a person with depression, a person who has trouble walking, a person with a chronic illness,” she said near a display of a feather headdress from Papua New Guinea at the Ethnographic Museum of Neuchatel, a converted former villa that overlooks Lake Neuchatel.

*“When artists give form to revelation, their art can advance, deepen and potentially transform the consciousness of their community.” - Alex Grey*

*“Live every day as if it were going to be your last; for one day you’re sure to be right.” – Harry Morant*

14] [The Healed Heart by Rae Luskin](#) @ You Tube 1:43 minutes

There was a time I curled deep inside myself—  
Wounded.  
Broken.  
Believing I wasn’t enough.

But slowly, through scribbles, art, music, and dance...  
I found myself again.  
And with that, I discovered the essence of healing.

This video is the essence of my story. I believe when we share our story, we open out... we can help survivors know they are not alone. It is important for friends and family to know the depths of our pain so that we can connect in a deeper more authentic way. If we want to stop the silent epidemic of sexual abuse people need to see and hear it in ways that don't threaten or make them shut down.

Art has been my way through. Storytelling is how I continue to heal.

Together, we can turn pain into purpose.

*“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*

*“Healing is more about accepting the pain and finding a way to peacefully co-exist with it. In the sea of life, pain is a tide that will ebb and weave, continually.*

*We need to learn how to let it wash over us, without drowning in it. Our life doesn't have to end where the pain begins, but rather, it is where we start to mend.” - Jaeda DeWalt*

***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***

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

Twitter <https://x.com/SurvivinSpirit> <https://x.com/MichaelSkinne11>

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