



Touchstones Project

a monthly journal of Unitarian Universalism

December 2021

Healing



Introduction to the Theme

Some of what is said or written about healing is superficial, like "time heals." George Orwell wrote, "They say that time heals all things, / they say you can always forget; / but the smiles and the tears across the years / they twist my heart strings yet!" A sentiment like "time heals" creates a chasm between the person who says it, and the wounded person who hears it. Obviously, it is an attempt at kindness, but it ignores the pain of the present moment, ignores a horizon that is impossible to see, ignores the fact that time by itself is not a physician. As Worth Kilcrease writes, "Time doesn't heal, it's what you DO with the time that does." Since healing should

not be a solitary endeavor, especially in our congregations, it is what WE do with time that heals.

The meaning of the word healing goes back to the 13th century Old English sense of "restoration of wholeness." By contrast, the meaning of the word cure goes back to about the same time, but "to restore to health or a sound state," from Old French *curer* and directly from Latin *curare* "take care of." Over time, cure has come to mean "eliminating all evidence of disease."

The Rev. Fred Recklau in *Partners in Care: Medicine and Ministry Together* offers a thoughtful, extended comparison of cure versus healing. He writes, "Cure alters what is; Healing offers what might be. Cure is an act; Healing is a process. Cure acts upon another; Healing shares with another. Cure manages; Healing touches. Cure seeks ultimately to conquer pain; Healing seeks to transcend pain. Cure ignores grief; Healing assumes grief. Cure encounters mystery as a challenge for understanding; Healing

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Healing & Repairing the World

Healing isn't simply curing, fixing, or repairing someone or something unless it is done with extraordinary respect, care, and, especially, love. The Hebrew word, *Tikkun*, means "fixing" and the word *Olam*, means "world." The term *Tikun Olam* is typically translated as "repair the world" or "mend the world." It first appeared in Jewish texts in the 3rd century. Since the 1950s, the phrase and concept *tikkun olam* has broadened to include *mitzvot* (commandments), *tzedakah* (justice and righteousness), and *g'milut hasadim* (acts of loving kindness). This third element, acts of loving kindness, takes us toward the concept of healing the world. One meaning of healing is "making whole." Healing the world means to make it whole. The need is clear and so is the demand: to love the world is to help heal it!

A Theme-Based Ministry Project

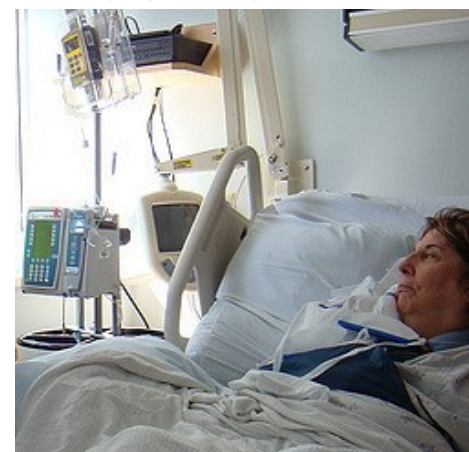
This project is supported by subscriptions from Unitarian Universalist congregations.

Wisdom Story

The Cleaning Woman

Dawna Markova

When I was in the hospital, the one person whose presence I welcomed was a woman who came to sweep the floors with a large push broom. She was the only one who didn't stick things in, take things out, or ask stupid questions. For a few minutes each night, this immense Jamaican woman rested her broom against the wall and sank her body into the turquoise plastic chair in my room. All I heard was the sound of her breath in and out, in and out. It was comforting in a strange and simple way. My own breathing calmed. Of the fifty or so people that made contact with me in any given day, she was the only one who wasn't trying to change me.



One night she reached out and put her hand on the top of my shoulder. I'm not usually comfortable with casual touch, but her hand felt so natural being there. It happened to be one of the few places in my body that didn't hurt. I could have sworn she was saying two words with each breath, one on the inhale, one on the

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Repairing the World

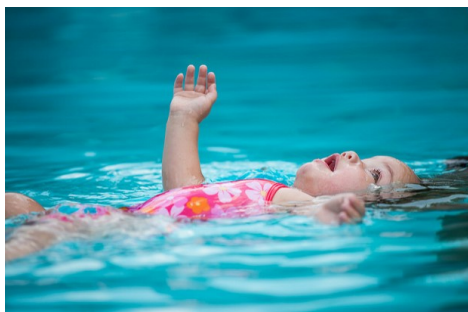
You're Not the Fear

(Continued from page 1) **Wisdom Story**
exhale: "As . . . Is . . . As . . . Is . . ."

On her next visit, she looked at me. No evaluation, no trying to figure me out. She just looked and saw me. Then she said simply, "You're more than the sickness in that body." I was pretty doped up, so I wasn't sure I understood her; but my mind was just too thick to ask questions

I kept mumbling those words to myself throughout the following day, "I'm more than the sickness in this body. I'm more than the suffering in this body." I remember her voice clearly. It was rich, deep, full, like maple syrup in the spring. . . .

I reached out for her hand. It was cool and dry. I knew she wouldn't let go. She continued, "You're not the fear in that body. You're more than that fear. Float on it. Float above it. You're more than that pain." I began to breathe a little deeper, as I did when I wanted to float in a lake.



I remembered floating in Lake George when I was five, floating in the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island when I was seven, floating in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa when I was twenty-eight. Without any instruction from me, this Jamaican guide had led me to a source of comfort that was wider and deeper than pain or fear.

It's been fifteen years since I've seen the woman with the broom. I've never been able to find her. No one could remember her name; but she touched my soul with her compassionate presence and her fingerprints are there still.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/16906>

Who Am I?

Hurry Up and Heal???

Dana Bolger

...My friend said to me, "Stop calling yourself a victim. You're a *survivor*."

...To be a victim is to be fresh, still smarting, an open wound. Weak, disempowered, passive.

To be a survivor is to be strong, (pro) active, healthy, and productive. To have progressed.

...Compulsory survivorship depoliticizes our understanding of violence and its effects. It places the burden of healing on the individual, while comfortably erasing the systems and structures that make surviving hard, harder for some than for others. *You are your own salvation. You are your own barrier to progress.*

...The cult of compulsory survivorship ignores the cyclic nature of healing. The good days. The bad days. Healing is nonlinear, messy, disruptive, and unpredictable. ...We carry trauma in our bones.

...We want to believe violence's impacts are finite. We want to believe that healing is constant and progressive. Perhaps deep down we know this is not true. We cling to it for our own comfort. We insist victims perform resiliency for our own peace of mind.

The relentless imperative to "hurry up and heal" is an appeal to smooth over your rough edges and Move On. Get back to being a productive member of society. ...Performing our survivorship benefits the privileged (who seek to remain comfortable in their ignorance) and the powerful (who are deeply invested in managing the anger of the marginalized).

...I don't know what to call myself these days. Victim/survivor feels inadequate. I want new language. I want new structures and systems and institutions that affirm and support instability, and anger. Source: <https://www.survivingtherapistabuse.com/2014/12/hurry-up-and-heal-an-article-from-feministing-com/>



May We Be...

An Altar from the Broken Fragments of our Hearts

Rev. Tom Owen-Towle

...We all belong to the "fellowship of pain," Schweitzer's phrase for the largest unofficial organization in the universe. As we are bound together in sorrow, so we can be bound together in healing.

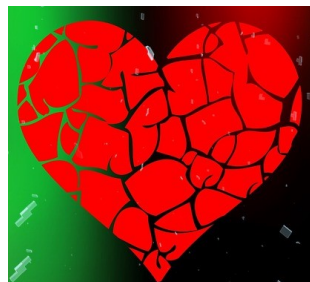
...The word *care* finds its roots in the Gothic *kara*, which means lament. Therefore, the basic role of a friend or companion or caregiver is to become someone with whom you can grieve, experience sorrow, and share support.

...Our mission ...is to be strong enough to deliver care and weak enough to receive care. We're called to be caregivers not caretakers. We can't resolve to take care of another person's concerns; we can only give steady and appropriate care in the face of stress, sorrow, and suffering.

...We can't transcend suffering; however, we can sometimes transform it. The purpose of a theologically deepening existence is to manage comebacks, to be born again and again and again.... Our human dignity lies neither in innocence nor in despondency but in new beginnings, in being scarred and healed a thousand times, and in becoming seasoned, gnarled persons.

May we be understanding, for there are folks needing to avoid some pain right now. May we be encouraging, for there are others needing to face and deal with pain. May we be tough, for there are still others needing to be challenged to stop wallowing in pain. And may we be gentle, for there are those trying to endure some pain and attain sufficient courage. Life is truly about building an altar from the broken fragments of our hearts.

Source: *Theology Ablaze* by Tom Owen-Towle



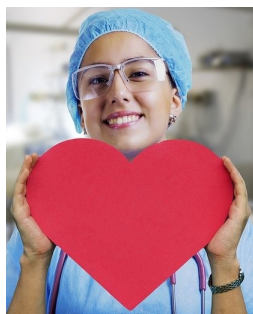
Readings from the Common Bowl

Day 1: "Healing is a mystical, undefinable experience that is part of being human."

Susanna Barlow



Day 2: "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



Day 3: When you don't give people the chance to say, "I hurt," they end up saying, "I hate." Don Wheat

Day 4: "The wound is the place where the Light enters you." Rumi

Day 5: "Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them." Leo Tolstoy

Day 6: "As my sufferings mounted, I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation—either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Day 7: "And in the end, we were all just humans... drunk on the idea that love, only love, could heal our brokenness." Christopher Poindexter

Day 8: "The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world." Marianne Williamson

Day 9: "Everyone keeps telling me that time heals all wounds, but no one can tell me what I'm supposed to do right now. ... I know all about time and wounds healing, but even if I had all the time in the world, I still don't know what to do with all this hurt right now." Nina Guilbeau

Day 10: "Somewhere we know that without silence, words lose their meaning, that without listening speaking no longer

heals, that without distance closeness cannot cure." Henri J.M. Nouwen

Day 11: "The human heart has a way of making itself large again even after it's been broken into a million pieces."

Robert James Waller

Day 12: "Did you want to see me broken? / Bowed head and lowered eyes? / Shoulders falling down like teardrops. / Weakened by my soulful cries. / You may shoot me with your words, / You may cut me with your eyes, / You may kill me with your hatefulness, / But still, like air, I'll rise." Maya Angelou

Day 13: "The wounds that never heal can only be mourned alone." James Frey

Day 14: "We don't want to survive. We want to be healed."

Joyce Meyer

Day 15: "My heart was broken and my head was just barely inhabitable." Anne Lamott

Day 16: "Our wounds are often the openings into the best and most beautiful part of us." David Richo

Day 17: "Maybe we just live between hurting and healing." Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Day 18: "A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal." Steve Maraboli

Day 19: "Don't ever discount the wonder of your tears. They can be healing waters and a stream of joy. Sometimes they are the best words the heart can speak." William Paul Young

Day 20: "It's not forgetting that heals. It's remembering." Amy Greene

Day 21: "The soul is healed by being with children." Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Day 22: "Just like there's always time for pain, there's always time for healing." Jennifer Brown

Day 23: "We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved.



They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy." Pema Chödrön

Day 24: "Hearts are breakable. ...And I think even when you heal, you're never what you were before." Cassandra Clare

Day 25: "It takes skill to be real. Time to heal each other." Tupac Shakur

Day 26: "The emotion that can break your heart is sometimes the very one that heals it...." Nicholas Sparks

Day 27: "The truth is, in order to heal we need to tell our stories and have them witnessed.... The story itself becomes a vessel that holds us up, that sustains, that allows us to order our jumbled experiences into meaning. ...As I told my stories of fear, awakening, struggle, and transformation, and had them received, heard, and validated..., I found healing." Sue Monk Kidd

Day 28: "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." John Muir



Day 29: "I have found deep meaning in the Hebrew phrase *Tikkun ha' olam*, [which means] 'repair of the world,' for surely the world, wonderful as it is, is broken." Richard Gilbert

Day 30: "It is strange how often a heart must be broken before the years can make it wise." Sara Teasdale

Day 31: "They say time heals all wounds, but that presumes the source of the grief is finite." Cassandra Clare



Faith and Theology

Healing Power

Rev. Lynn Strauss

There was a time when farmers on the Great Plains, at the first sign of a blizzard, would run a rope from the back door out to the barn. They all knew stories of people who had wandered off and been frozen to death, having lost sight of home in a white-out, while still in their own backyards.

How many of us have wandered off in the storms of our lives? Haven't we suffered the wounds of our culture...? Don't we keep trying one path after another, aiming ourselves toward healing and wholeness only to be disappointed again and again?

Many of us are lost in the white-out ...of our own backyards. We are in need of a rope, a lifeline to lead us back home—home to our hidden wholeness. Home to our place of soul.



The whole history of religion can be read as a search for healing—from magic to mystic, from one healing ritual to the next—spiritual trial and error.

The ministry of Jesus offered new paths to healing. No sacrifices necessary, just a laying on of hands—body and spirit healed with a touch of holy presence or a meal shared.

Each era, each culture presents the wounds of human living in particular ways. What kind of blizzard do you wander in? How are you lost? How are we broken and separated from our potential for wholeness?

...Some of us might think we are just fine. Some of us might feel we have lived a happy and fairly uncomplicated life. Some of us might feel we have been spared any childhood wounds or any existential angst.

...Perhaps some of the farmers out on the Plains didn't think they needed to run a rope to the barn. When the storm came, they had no way home.

I believe we are all in need of healing for we all live in a broken world. We all live in the storm of hate and violence, of war and guns, of climate change and deforestation. We all live in the world of economic inequality and isms of all kinds.

...In both Jewish and Christian services, there are regular prayers for healing; it is assumed that all families are touched by illness and grief. Since the earliest of times in the church and temple, and certainly in pagan and earth-based cultures, the link between physical healing and spiritual healing was assumed. Herbal medicines were applied with chanting and incantation. The body and the soul were believed to be mysteriously connected.

Perhaps some of us are still mystics. I can't explain or prove the existence of the soul, but ...I believe, there is a part of ...us that is divine and sacred. I believe this ...is a potential source of healing energy. It is the part of us that experiences true intimacy, it is the part of us that sings, laughs, writes poetry, and prays... and bakes bread.

...You know some religions break bread symbolically.... There isn't a culture or a religion in the world that doesn't understand bread as nurturing both body and soul. The sharing of bread reminds us that we feed one another....

We humans, lovely and diverse as we are, broken and hurting as we might be, we humans have the power of healing within us. In our acts of kindness, we heal. In our feeding the hungry, in our love and care for each other, we heal.

...There are ropes to healing, lifelines all around us—we just have to reach out for them. We just have to believe in soul force.

The good news is that not only are we in need of healing, but we are also sources of healing. We can all be as lifelines to one another. Don't you know this to be true? Can't you think

of someone who has saved your life in some way?

...Abraham Joshua Heschel suggests that humans are meant to do more than survive. ...In the midrash from *Genesis*, Heschel suggests there is love/ relationship beyond survival—humans are also meant to be in relationship with the holy.

According to Heschel, "Man is not only a creature constantly in search of self, but also a creature God is constantly in search of."

...You don't have to believe in God..., to find meaning in these ideas, you merely have to acknowledge your own longing for healing and wholeness. Your own longing for something you can't quite see, name or understand. Your longing for love and relationship that is deep and sustaining.

...Perhaps there are ropes and lifelines being thrown out to you every day. Aren't there? Can't you imagine some moments or words or glimpses—something that has caught your attention and promised something new, something comforting?

...Being present with one another in community is to ...create and call forth healing powers. Sometimes this is ...prayer, sometimes it is ...bread communion. Sometimes it rises as we sing, as we share joys and sorrows.

Wherever we open our hearts in empathy and compassion, healing energy is there... and it blesses the giver.

...One purpose of Beloved Community is to assist one another in healing our spirit, in finding our wholeness, in repair of our soul.

...We here are tangled together in the mystery called community. Here we struggle to find integrity, to know our soul force. ...Here nourish one another unawares. Here we become lifelines for each other. This is life and death work, ...grace beyond survival.

Let us pray, not for our own healing alone, but for the healing of ...all—for the healing of the broken world.

Source: <http://www.uucr.org/sites/default/files/sermons/transcripts/Healing%20Power.pdf>



Family Matters

Hospital de Bonecas, where dolls go to be healed

The *Hospital Real de Todos-os-Santos* (*All Saints Royal Hospital*) was a major hospital in Lisbon, Portugal that was built between 1492 and 1504. It was badly damaged in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, which was one of the deadliest earthquakes in history. That area of Lisbon was vulnerable to earthquakes because the ground is unstable. Given the extensive damage from the earthquake and the fire that followed, the hospital was never fully rebuilt, and was finally demolished in 1775.

Following that, merchants and farmers began to gather over these ruins to sell fruits, vegetables, and other items. In the 19th century, it became the main market where Lisboners did their daily shopping. It was called the *Praça da Figueira* Market and had the hustle, bustle, and smells of any outdoor market. The name, *Praça da Figueira*, means “square of the fig tree.” Today there are just five fig trees in the square, with no sign of the original trees.

This area became the site of a major renovation now known as the *Pombaline Baixa*. The word *Pombaline* honors Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the first Marquis of *Pombal* because he directed the construction of this area after the 1755 earthquake. The Marquis employed construction techniques that made the buildings earthquake and fire resistant. They were so innovative that the area was recognized as the first modern city in Europe, and, in 2017, received tentative status as an UNESCO World Heritage site because of its anti-earthquake construction. (*Baixa* is a Portuguese word the means low. The *Baixa* is the “lower” town, or what is the downtown in Lisbon.)

In about 1820, a woman, Carlota da Silva Luz, opened an herb shop at the market. She would sit in front of the shop and make and sell cloth dolls. Miss Carlota, as she was affectionately known, would also welcome children with their dolls, and sometimes the children said that their dolls were ill.



According to legend, this kind, old lady always had a special word or two for the dolls to make them feel better as she repaired these simple cloth and clay dolls. This led to the founding of the doll hospital, *Hospital de Bonecas*, in 1830.

Miss Carlota is so famous that she appears as a ghost to Harper Blaine in the 2014 novel, *Revenant*, by Kat Richardson. Blaine has to go to the *Hospital de Bonecas* to rendezvous with Quinton Purlis. As she walks across the *Praça da Figueira* she “sees” the Lisbon earthquake. When she arrives at the doll hospital she has a brief conversation with the ghost of Miss Carlota dressed in black and sitting in front of the shop as she repairs a doll.

The *Hospital de Bonecas* is housed in an 18th-century Pombaline row house on the north side of the *Praça da Figueira*. Like most row houses, it is rather narrow in width, but very deep, and it is six stories high. The *Hospital de Bonecas* now has a retail shop on the first floor and occupies the four or five rooms on the fourth floor for both the hospital and a doll museum. The shop sells dolls and doll clothing and accessories including Mariquita Perez and Paola Reina dolls from Spain, Schildkröt dolls from Germany, and duplicates of vintage-style doll clothing that they make.

The *Hospital de Bonecas* is special because it has been in operation for almost 200 years, and because there are not that many doll hospitals in the world. There are at least 75 doll hospitals in the United States, but the oldest one, the New York Doll Hospital founded in 1900, closed in 2009. The Doll Hospital in Melbourne, Australia was founded in 1882 and it is still in operation.

The *Hospital de Bonecas* is also special because of the care it takes with each doll. The current owner is Manuela Cutileiro. Miss Carlota was her father’s godmother. When Lilia Dinah da Silva Luz Tavares was next in line with no heirs of her own, Ms. Cutileiro, who was

like a daughter to her, took over. This “family” business has existed for five generations. It is also special because its museum is home to some 4,000 dolls from all over the world.

Ms. Cutileiro along with three additional “surgeons” received their restoration certifications from the *Ricardo Do Espírito Santo Silva Foundation*, a museum, cultural, and training center whose mission is to protect and conserve traditional arts.

They receive dolls and stuffed animals from all over the world. A diagnosis is made when they arrive and it is described on a tag that accompanies the doll. They “heal” about 40 dolls a week with various repairs and return them to their owners. And they usually have a four-month backlog.

Lauren Frayer writes, *Manuela Cutileira does triage on incoming patients. “First we do a checkup, create a chart and assign a bed number—like you would in an ordinary hospital,” Cutileira, the hospital’s owner, explains. “Then we try to figure out what the treatment should be. If it’s a simple procedure, we’ll inform the family right away of the cost. And if it’s something more complicated, they may have to leave the patient here overnight for more tests.” But this is no regular hospital.*

In the hospital’s main operating room, a technician ...performs a double leg transplant.

... “We accept all types of dolls. We can fix anything, from the oldest porcelain dolls to the newest Barbies and Kens,” says Cutileira.... “That’s what makes our hospital unique.”

“...These dolls are cherished pieces of family history,” she says. “They have all the meaning in the world.”

...The walls are lined with spare body parts from “organ donor” dolls—odd arms and legs, and assorted sizes and colors of big, blinking glass eyes.

Aside from all the dolls that are repaired and sent home, Cutileira and her ancestors have amassed one of the largest permanent collections in the world, with ...thousands of dolls: from 19th-century German celluloid dolls, to collector’s edition Barbies, to some of the oldest known multiracial dolls from Portugal’s African colonies.

Cutileira has no idea how much all of this
(Continued on page 7)

Being Broken, Wanting Wholeness

(Continued from page 1) **Introduction**

encounters mystery as a ready channel for meaning. Cure rejects death and views it as defeat; Healing includes death among the blessed outcomes of caring. Cure may occur without healing; Healing may occur without cure. Cure separates body from soul; Healing embraces the soul. Cure tends to isolate; Healing tends to incorporate. Cure combats illness; Healing fosters wellness. Cure fosters function; Healing fosters purpose." Cure has to do with the body, while healing has to do with emotions and the soul. And when a cure is not possible in cases involving a disability, a chronic illness, or a terminal illness, we are wise to pursue healing.

Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. is Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine at UCSF School of Medicine and the Founder and Director of the Institute for the Study of Health and Illness at Commonweal. Her 1996 book, *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal*, has as its premise that we can become each other's healers. Remen states, "We thought we could cure everything, but it turns out that we can only cure a small amount of human suffering. The rest of it needs to be healed, and that's different." As she notes, "Healing is not a work of perfection or expertise. We are all healers. We heal with our wholeness, our humanity, all of our life experience, even our wounds. Our own wounds make us gentle with the wounds of others and able to trust the mystery of healing, not as a theory but from lived experience. Our vulnerability connects us to the vulnerability in others in compassionate and loving ways." Remen continues, "Healing is actually a worldview, a cosmology.... For a healer, the world is not broken and in need of fixing... the world is hidden. Everything and everyone has in themselves a hidden wholeness, a potential for growth, a dream of themselves. A healer reminds people. A healer befriends dreams. A healer is a feeder of dreams."

In *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel in a first-person account of American Frederic Henry serving as a Lieutenant in the ambulance corps of the Italian Army during World War I, Ernest Hemingway wrote,

"The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places." That strength at the broken places is always a result of a healing process that restores wholeness.

But what is wholeness? In *The Language of Silence: From Darkness to Silence*, Swedish writer Dhyana Giten writes, "I was 9 years old when I had my first glimpse of wholeness. It was early Christmas morning and I was standing in my pajamas in the living room and looked out of the large windows. Outside the white snowflakes silently singled down toward a snowclad landscape. Suddenly I was filled with a feeling of being one with the slowly dancing snowflakes, one with the silent landscape. I did not understand then that this was my first taste of meditation, but it created a deep thirst and a longing in my heart to return to this natural and effortless experience of being one with the Whole."

Wholeness is a sense of connection, of harmony, of depth, of integration. It emerges as we embrace our consistencies and contradictions, our gifts and flaws, our past and potential, our wounds and our blessings. As Parker Palmer reminds us, "The divided life is a wounded life, and the soul keeps calling us to heal the wound."

The phrase "being broken, wanting wholeness" comes from Unitarian Universalist minister Marilyn Sewell. It is a statement about the human condition, which is not either/or but both/and. Not only can we be broken and want wholeness, but we can be broken and whole at the same time when our brokenness is incorporated into our wholeness. Parker Palmer continues, "Most of us know from experience what a divided life is. Inwardly we feel one sort of imperative for our lives, but outwardly we respond to quite another. This is the human condition, of course; our inner and outer worlds will never be in perfect harmony. But there are

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The Pinwheel Shaman

We Heal Together

Brandon Kohrt

...Emotion regulation to reduce distress appears to be a fundamental human behavior that doesn't just happen *within* us, but *between* us. We're constantly consoling others and being consoled, from instances of unforgettable disappointment to life-changing traumas. Unfortunately, [helping practices are] ...burdened by the expectation that *self*-regulation skills must be mastered to achieve wellbeing.

...If emotional processes are bound up with social rupture, ...they're likely to play a role in social repair. ...Emotions work a bit like a social immune system: social relationships provoke an emotional inflammatory reaction when something threatens them. But there are also ways to dampen that response and avoid a state of social sepsis, bringing people back into the fold when relationships have been ruptured.

...Seeing others in a state of despair can bring us to tears. ...However, ...we can reframe the suffering of others even when we feel it for ourselves. We ...[can] make sense of it and alleviate it.

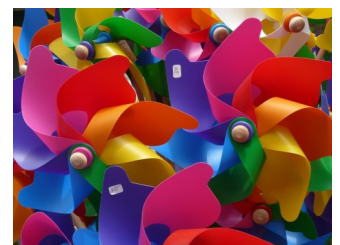
...Being helped by others is not a sign of weakness: it is fundamental to what we do and who we are. We should be willing to seek help when we need it, and to connect with others who are in distress.

...One day, when my wife and I were arguing, ...our four-year-old daughter came over with a colorful pinwheel. ...

She'd been taught to use it when she was feeling angry or upset. Once she experienced the emotional

contagion of distress from my wife and me, she brought the pinwheel to us, on her own initiative, as something both symbolic and physiological to do together. She was our little shaman, doing what humans have done to support one another for hundreds of thousands of years. She knew that we heal together.

Source: <https://aeon.co/essays/we-have-evolved-powerful-mechanisms-for-healing-one-another>



Nature's Meditation

The Healing Power of Nature

Rebecca Lawton

"The longer the trip, the more healing occurs," says the geologist Peter Winn, who has been leading expeditions down the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon since the 1960s. "Healing happens for people almost without exception."

...How nature heals hadn't been researched until 1982, when

Tomohide Akiyama ...coined the term *shinrin-yoku* (forest bathing) to describe ...getting into the woods for body and mind renewal, to counter lifestyle-related health issues.

The tradition was already ages-old in Japan, but naming it went hand in hand with making recommendations for best practices....

...Studies showed that just 3 days and 2 nights in a wooded place increase the immune system functions that boost feelings of wellbeing for up to 7 days. The same amount of time in a built environment has no such effect. ...Response includes increased awe, greater relaxation, restored attention, and boosted vitality.

...Eastern-based mindfulness ...and meditative traditions align ...closely with human oneness with nature.

...There's an evolutionary component to that oneness. "Not only were we part of nature as we evolved," Kathleen Wolf says, "but we were dependent on it. We had to rely on our senses, our intuition, and our responses in order to find food, water, shelter—the absolutely important things. We hunted or grew our food; we carried it back to the tribe."

..."For decades, I've believed that I'm part of nature," Winn says, "not separate from it or 'above' it. Many years ago, I ... learned to meditate. Eventually I found that just hanging out on desert rivers had the same effect as meditation...."

Source: <https://aeon.co/essays/why-forests-and-rivers-are-the-most-potent-health- tonic-around>



Real Isn't How You Are Made

(Continued from page 5) **Family Matters** is worth....

"We are a hospital, and all patients are valuable to us. They're all treated equally," she says. "We know we have lots of dolls here that are valuable, but they're all the same to us. You can't put a value on your sentiments."

There are 3 short videos about the *Hospital de Bonecas*.

1. Charming interview of Manuela Cutileiro (in Portuguese with English subtitles). See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0OhkekPEFY> (2:02)
2. Feature video in English. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpjYFWTEeWQ> (2:10)
3. Photos of the hospital set to music. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BV-77xiwhaA> (1:32)

Source: Touchstones

Family Activity: *Becoming Real*

Read or watch a version of *The Velveteen Rabbit* (first published in 1922) by Margery Williams and illustrated by William Nicholson. (There are many different, illustrated versions of the story.) See *The Velveteen Rabbit: Told by Meryl Streep* (abridged, but captures the essence of the story) at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_m054tLKvs (6:09) or *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams - Full Classic Version at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng13xakqtqs> (25:51) or *The Velveteen Rabbit* (animated version) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKJLrgJ8B-U> (24:48), which is based, in part, on the story but gives a major role to the wind-up tin soldiers, or *The Velveteen Rabbit* version that shows all of the text as well as the illustrations at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVGijPLiUgE> (21:03).

After reading or watching *The Velveteen Rabbit* and one or more videos about the doll hospital, consider exploring the following questions, some of which relate to the *Hospital de Bonecas*.

1. Are the dolls that are sent to the *Hospital de Bonecas* important to their owners? What makes the dolls important? How do you think they feel when their doll comes home after four months and is like new?

2. Repairing a doll can be quite difficult. Why do you think the doll surgeons do this work with such love and skill?
3. What are your favorite toys? Why?
4. The Velveteen Rabbit wanted to be real. "The Skin Horse explained, 'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.' " Which of your toys do you love? What makes them special to you?
5. Have you ever had a toy that was broken? How did you feel about that? Was it able to be fixed, or did you have to throw it away?
6. Ms. Cutileiro does not believe in throwing things away that can be fixed. She asks, "If we get ill or break our arms, are we to be thrown away?" Of course, the answer is no because we are important. Our toys are important if we believe they are important. How do our toys become important to us?
7. The Skin Horse explains the process of becoming Real to a child. He says, "'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'" Why might keeping a doll or toy that was worn-out be important? Do you have some old toys that are special to you? Do you remember when they were new? What memories do you have of playing with them? Are those memories important? Why?
8. How do/can you care for your toys?

Family Activity: *Thrift Gifts*

Take your children to a thrift store and look for slightly used toys that can be taken home and spruced up with a little bit of paint and glue and new clothes, etc. Work with your children to make the repairs and then take them back to the thrift store as gifts to other children, or donate them to a place that will give them away free.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Theme for Discussion Healing

Preparation prior to Gathering: (Read this issue of the journal and *Living the Questions* in the next column.)

Business: Deal with any housekeeping items (e.g., scheduling the next gathering).

Opening Words: “When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, ...and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.” *Henri J.M. Nouwen*

Chalice Lighting: (James Vila Blake) adapted (In unison) *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, to serve human need, and to help one another.*

Check-In: How is it with your spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? (2-3 sentences)

Claim Time for Deeper Listening: This comes at the end of the gathering where you can be listened to uninterrupted for more time if needed. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes, and to honor the limit of the time that you claim.

Read the Wisdom Story: Take turns reading aloud parts of the wisdom story on page 1.

Readings from the Common Bowl: Group members read selections from *Readings from the Common Bowl* (page 3). Leave a few moments of silence after each to invite reflection on the meaning of the words.

Sitting In Silence: Sit in silence together, allowing the *Readings from the Common Bowl* to resonate. Cultivate a sense of calm and attention to the readings and the discussion that follows (*Living the Questions*).

Reading: “I have always felt deep within myself that I do not trust that I am already OK as I am, and that I do not trust that life takes care of me. But now I discover a silent place in the depth of my inner being, where I am already one with life, where I am OK as I am. It is also a silent inner place of healing and wholeness, where I can find a love and acceptance for that which is imperfect within myself.” *Dhyan Giten*

Living the Questions: Explore as many of these questions as time allows. Fully explore one question before moving on.

1. Have you experienced healing? What were the circumstances? What surprised you?
2. Have you ever tried to change what can only be healed by acceptance or embrace? What was the result?
3. Where do you need healing now? Are you ready to accept that healing?
4. What tasks of healing need to wait? Which one needs to happen presently?
5. How have you attended to healing in others?
6. What is your part to play in the healing of the world?
7. How do you understand the difference between being a victim and being a survivor? Is there something beyond both? What might it be?
8. What is the role of your congregation in being a companion to suffering and an instrument of healing?

The facilitator or group members are invited to propose additional questions that they would like to explore.

Deeper Listening: If time was claimed by individuals, the group listens without interruption to each person who claimed time.

Checking-Out: One sentence about where you are now as a result of the time spent together exploring the theme.

Extinguishing Chalice: (Elizabeth Selle Jones) (In unison) *We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.*

Closing Words: Rev. Philip R. Giles (In unison) *May the quality of our lives be our benediction and a blessing to all we touch.*

The Courage to Heal

(Continued from page 6) **Introduction**

extremes of dividedness that become intolerable...” and these undermine the possibility of healing and wholeness.

We heal by recognizing and accepting the wounds, by taking small steps forward, by having a faith in a hidden wholeness that we can reclaim, by finding solace in silence, by sharing our story with others and listening to theirs, by forgiving others and our self, by letting go of what holds us back, by holding on to what gives us hope, and by crying and laughing at the betrayals and slights, and then working to overcome them. Shakespeare’s Prince Hamlet addressed “the Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune.” As he noted, “To be, or not to be, that is the question.”

Healing is a decision “to be.” Theologian Paul Tillich wrote about the “courage to be,” and healing takes courage. It is a decision to begin the transformation from victim to survivor, from dis-ease to ease, from desolation to consolation, from misery to joy, from brokenness to wholeness. While there is nothing easy about the journey, the destination is the “gift to come down where we ought to be.”

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