

NOTES ABOUT HEALING

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The concepts of Healing and Healer are often associated with God, medical and/or lay health care providers and physical healing. From a professional perspective we may not be comfortable thinking of ourselves as healers or about our healing potential. It is our belief that reading this special issue can provide healing connections. We would like to prepare you for the experience by inviting you to spend a few minutes in a short exercise. Please read the following guidelines and then take a few minutes to follow through with the activities.

Move into a comfortable position and take a few minutes to relax your body and mind. You might consider closing your eyes and taking a few gentle breathes in and out to help free any tension or tightness. As you focus on your breathing let any thoughts and self-talk move away. Spend a few quiet minutes just slowing down a little as you focus on your gentle breathing. When you are ready, continue with your reading.

Healing is a multidimensional experience that is difficult to capture in a linear, one-dimensional medium such as writing. A quiet mind and relaxed body will facilitate different reading experiences.

We reflected on what we had learned about our own per-

sonal and professional healing as we created this issue and came away from working on it with an intense new appreciation for the difficulty of using written language when speaking about healing experiences. Many healing stories, when told in person are rich, glowing accounts through which the meaning of healing stands strongly. Sometimes, these same stories sound flat when written. There is much more to examine about the nonverbal aspects of narratives about healing. Some of the energy related to healing seems only to be able to be seen or shown in person. The limitations of written language in relation to healing are striking to us.

Healing has been defined as "a process of bringing parts of one's self together at a deep level of inner knowledge, resulting in an integrated, balanced whole with each part having equal importance and value; may also be referred to as self-healing or wholeness" (Dossey & Guzzetta, 1995, p.6). Balance and wholeness are common healing concepts. It is important to remember that healing the whole person transcends physical healing and embraces the spiritual and emotional dimensions of self. The following examples of healing are offered here as illustrations. Some are taken (sometimes paraphrased) from narratives in this journal, authors are acknowledged. Oth-

ers are from friends, family and clients.

THOUGHTS ABOUT HEALING

"Healing is being able to embrace my imperfection. When I was able to learn that my breaks need not be hidden, that they bring me strength, I felt breaking taking place." (Diane Beurele)

"Healing means being able to care for myself. It includes all of my daily rituals such as exercise, nutrition, and spirituality that are practices showing my love and care for myself." (Albert Kunnen)

"For me, healing is the freedom to be myself."

"Healing is a journey of learning to 'see myself.' I need a nurturing relationship with myself to be able to see myself." (Patti Wallace)

"A process of becoming aware of our patterns and being open to transforming them into loving and caring behavior toward others." (Veda Andrus)

"A letting go of one's pain so as to allow one's self to achieve health. Mending one's spirit. Recognizing and accepting myself as a whole person." (Arthur Soissons-Segal)

"Feeling of belonging."

"Healing means access to unconscious parts of myself. Experiences that offer me precious opportunities to bring my unconscious into consciousness are healing for me."

"...means discovering and learning from challenges and opportunities." (Fay Loomis)

"Healing potentials emerge as friendships/relationships develop. Friendships have healing dimensions." (Gayle Kipnis)

"...recognizing body/mind/

spirit connections and caring from that perspective. The environment is essential for healing." (Everts Loomis)

"For me, healing implies ef-



forts to find a place of balance. A kind and gentle view of myself as being 'in process' rather than having failed or achieved a healing goal gives me permission to see myself and my world options more broadly, to look at possibilities more openly." (Lyda Hill)

"Healing means recognizing the connection between mind, body and spirit. It means knowing that the healer is within; the power to change is inside." (Nancy Oliver)

Healing perceptions and experiences are unique and dynamic; they are personal and universal. During the final phase of preparing this special issue a healing dream occurred. It is shared here:

MY HEALING DREAM

"I was in a large terminal or station. There were many travelers moving about and they were all carrying books. I did not have a book. I had a large tin cup in

my hand. I approached the travelers with an extended hand asking if the book they were carrying had a spicket. 'I need to fill my cup with knowledge.' I explained. I walked through crowds of travelers with books, but my cup remained empty.

As I walked down the corridor I noticed a man and woman sitting very close together on the left side of the bench. Their backs to me, and I could see a large book propped up on the bench right next to the man. It appeared as if the man had his arm around the book as he would around a woman's shoulders. I hurried to the bench and asked the man, 'Does your book have a spicket? I need to fill my cup with knowledge.' The man shook his head and seemed sad to say 'No.' As I turned to leave the woman said, in an almost reproachful tone... 'too bad she doesn't see the knowledge within herself:' End of Dream.

HEALING EVENTS

Sometimes people say that there has been a significant event that precipitated a healing experience. We have included several experiences from the narratives published in this issue and from colleagues.

"A group experience in which I was pushed to go beyond my limits and fears and scale walls I scarcely know I had erected. This weekend was followed by my encounter with my storyteller." (Diane Beurele)

*Fay Loomis describes "multiple events." Hers is a story of a chronology of her healing

journal and the meaning it had to her.

"A woman acknowledged and accepted my learning disabilities. Her statement that, 'you are one of us' led me to feel connected with a group of others with similar disabilities. This led to my new appreciation of my abilities. This was a "WOW" experience for me, a moment when the fog lifts and the trail brightens. A moment of commitment to a healing journey." (Arthur Soissons -Segal)

"Discovery of a book left for me by my client who was dying of AIDS. Awareness of his death at the moment of my discovery of his book led to poetry coming from me as a way to heal my fears of death."

"I volunteered to initiate and direct a Certificate Program in Holistic Nursing. This began my remarkable journey of person, mutual, and universal transformation and healing." (Veda Andrus)

"I began with seeing my father's recovery despite physician's prediction of death as eminent; a validation that there was more to 'medicine' and healing." (Evarts Loomis)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT HEALING

There are no universal truths about healing. Healing is an action, a process, an activity of daily living, and our bodies, minds, and spirits have unpredictable healing potential.

Readers of this journal are aware of professional responsibilities and discipline specific areas of practice. Does healing "fit" in our work? Who heals the body, mind, and spirit? Who are the healers? Are they doctors, nurses, priests, ministers, rabbis, psychologists, social workers or are

they the individuals we call clients or patients? Are there modalities or techniques that facilitate healing? It was important to us that a forum be provided to learn a little more about healing and healers from other helping professionals. Perhaps to hear answers to these questions.

In the spirit of a journal whose "single mission is to publish narratives with good literary quality that contribute knowledge on ways of helping others and creating social change" (Abels, 1995, p. 1) we offer our vision for this special issue. Our dream is that one person will have a new experience or insight about healing. Sharing is healing. Respect for the diversity of all of the readers of this Journal leads us to dream that each reader will pick up one idea that will help them to think about healing in a new way. That reader will then pass that new learning on to one new person and a ripple effect of healing will be in place.

Reading and writing about healing provoked creative healing energies. We would like to share this story that emerged for Lyda during our work on these notes about healing.

A HEALING STORY

"Once upon a time I held healing magic. My grandmother gave it to me when I was three because I was very, very angry at my mother. She had told me I wasn't allowed to eat the sand at the beach. I needed this magic to calm down so that I wouldn't bite my mother. If I had done that I would have gotten in trouble and had to go to bed early. My grandmother held my hands open and

very gently placed the magic in my right hand. She said to close my hands quickly, go out and stand by my favorite tree, and close my eyes until I counted to five. When the time was up she touched my shoulder quietly and whispered in my ear that it was time to put the magic in my pocket. I had to use my other hand to check to see that I didn't have a hole in my pocket where the magic could slip out. Then I put my magic healing away. I felt better right away. I didn't bite my mother. She didn't notice that she had barely escaped. I smile now when I think of my grandmother, that healing magic stays with me and I am able to use it whenever I need it. Once in a while it has slipped away and I have had to look for it a little bit, but I always have eventually found it. I would like to help other people be able to do that to."

Recently we heard a social worker say, with incredible determination, that "she was not a healer" and we stopped and wondered why. □

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