

Wisdom Circle - Healing
March 2016

Words of Wisdom

“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 healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares.”

~Henri Nouwen

“Healing,' Papa would tell me, 'is not a science, but the intuitive art of wooing nature.”

~W. H. Auden

“For me, singing sad songs often has a way of healing a situation. It gets the hurt out in the open into the light, out of the darkness.”

~Reba McEntire

“It's when we start working together that the real healing takes place... it's when we start spilling our sweat, and not our blood.”

~David Hume

“The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”

~Rumi

“It has been said, 'time heals all wounds.' I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone.”

~Rose Kennedy

“Scars have the strange power to remind us that our past is real.”

~Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*

“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.

“Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason.”

~ Novalis

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

~Marcel Proust

Readings

“Living” by Jason Shiner, from *The New Yorker*, reprinted in The Best American Spiritual Writing 2008. Ed. Philip Zaleski

Just when it seemed my mother couldn't bear

one more insane orange pill,
my sister, in silence, stood at the end

of the bed and slowly rubbed her feet,

which were scratchy with hard, yellow skin,
and dirt cramped beneath the broken nails,

which changed nothing in time except

the way my mother was lost in it for a while
as if with a kind of relief that doesn't relieve.

And then, with her eyes closed, my mother said

the one or two words the living have for gratefulness,
which is a kind of forgetting, with a sense

of what it means to be alive long enough

to love someone. *Thank you*, she said. As for me,
I didn't care how her voice suddenly seemed low

and kind, or what failures and triumphs

of the body and spirit brought her to that point—
just that it sounded like hope, stupid hope.

“Scars” by William Stafford

They tell how it was, and how time
came along, and how it happened
again and again. They tell
the slant life takes when it turns
and slashes your face as a friend.

Any wound is real. In church
a woman lets the sun find
her cheek, and we see the lesson:
there are years in that book; there are sorrows
a choir can't reach when they sing.

Rows of children lift their faces of promise,
places where the scars will be.

**"KEEPING QUIET" By Pablo Neruda
—from Extravagaria (translated by Alastair Reid, pp. 27-29, 1974)**

Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth, let's not speak in any language; let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment without rush, without engines; we would all be together in a
sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea would not harm whales and the man gathering salt would look at
his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars, wars with gas, wars with fire, victories with no
survivors, would put on clean clothes and walk about with their brothers in the shade,
doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused with total inactivity. Life is what it is about; I want no
truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving, and for once could do
nothing, perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness of never understanding
ourselves and of threatening ourselves with death. Perhaps the earth can teach us as when
everything seems dead and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve and you keep quiet and I will go.

Questions for Reflection:

- When you are healing – whether from physical illness, injury, or emotional or spiritual injury – what do you need from others?
- Do you have any scars? What story does your scar tell about healing?
- Have you ever experienced healing that you would describe as a “miracle”?

Spiritual Exercise

A barrier to healing is when we fail to acknowledge the ways we are wounded – physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

Art is a great way to reflect on our woundedness without judgment. During the next month, set aside an hour of time when you know you will not be disturbed. Gather art supplies – paper, crayons, paint, glitter, whatever suits your fancy. Create art representing you physical, emotional, and spiritual body. It can be a realistic or highly abstract. Follow your intuition. But as you create your art, be open to reflecting on your places of woundedness and wholeness. See what emerges. Are you surprised at what you created?

Wisdom Circle – Healing Session Plan

This session plan is a suggested guide, not a rigid set of rules. You may adjust this plan as you feel is appropriate in your group.

Gathering & Welcome (~5 min)

Chalice Lighting (~2 min)

Optional Chalice Lighting Reading:

By Samuel A. Trumbore

Teach my heart healing words. Show me the words that help rather than harm. Instruct me in the verbs that bring energy, the nouns pointing to the real, the adjectives describing your subtleties. Reveal to me how words can be offered in a way that connects rather than separates, that develops trust and eschews suspicion, that opens the heart and relaxes the mind. Amen.

Check-In (20-30 minutes)

As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that is lifting your spirits, and one thing that is weighing you down. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.

Business (10-20 minutes)

Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...

Discussion (60 minutes)

Introduce Topic. Take Turns Reading aloud the “Words of Wisdom.”

- When you are healing – whether from physical illness, injury, or emotional or spiritual injury – what do you need from others?
- Do you have any scars? What story does your scar tell about healing?
- Have you ever experienced healing that you would describe as a “miracle”?

Silent Reflection (~2 minutes)

First Responses (Share in the order you feel moved)

Cross-Conversation (Ask questions that invite deeper reflection; Speak from personal experience, and use “I statements”; Avoid explaining or judging)

Final Thoughts (Share in the order you feel moved)

Gratitude (5-10 minutes)

Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session.

Closing

Optional Song:

“Meditation on Breathing” (Sing 3-5 times. If your groups feels up to it, you can sing it multiple parts.)

When I breathe in,
I breathe in peace.

When I breathe out,
I breathe out love.

Meditation on Breathing 1009

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(Melody) C Am F C

When I breathe in, _____ I'll breathe in peace. _____ When I breathe

(Descant)

When I breathe in, I'll breathe in peace.

(Drone)

Breathe in, Breathe out,

C Am F C *Fine*

out, _____ I'll breathe out love. _____ When I breathe

Fine

When I breathe out, I'll breathe out love.

Fine

Breathe in, Breathe out