Navigating Minefields and Surviving Torrential Waters on the Servant’s Journey

*Leading through Transformation of Heart and Soul into Relationship and Community*

Indiana Annual Recovery Month Symposium (IN ARMS)
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The Art and Science of Life – a Taxonomy and Perspective

- Navigating Minefields
- Surviving Torrential Waters
- Leading a Servant’s Journey
- Transformation of Mind-Body and Heart-Soul
- Relationship and Community
Historical Overview

• Why We Are or How We Got Here?
• Where are we going from here or who will we be when we leave?
• What are we going to do/be here?
The Story I’m Making Up . . .

• "Life Hack" - ‘the story I’m making up,'" Brene’ Brown
• “Telling your reading of the situation.”
• Admission: “it can't be 100% accurate."
• “honest, it's transparent, and it's vulnerable.”
• Vulnerability: “bandwidth for people to relate and trust one another.”
• When you say "the story I'm making up," Brown says that it conveys "I want you to see me and understand me and hear me, and knowing what you really mean is more important to me than being right or self-protecting. “ (Being “right” vs. being “happy”..)
Individual Issues and Internal Forces

- Issues and Dysfunction
- Pre-Occupational Hazards
- Co-Dependency
- Baggage We Pack/Carry/Share
Health, Stress, and Addiction

• Obsession and compulsion
• “Powerlessness and unmanageability”
• Complexity of Addiction: brain disorder, bio-psycho-social – spiritual malady
• Dis-ease concept (core as total self-centeredness)
• Education/Treatment – peer support communities
• Connection: health, mental health, and addictions
• Stress and Distress / Stretch and Panic Zones
An Emerging Paradigm

- Great Depression: the Individual
- The “isms”: alcohol & other drugs
- Human Doing vs. Human Being
- Avoidance/Escape Mechanisms
- “Social acceptability” does not equal stability.
Eight Dimensions of Wellness

- **Emotional**—Effective life coping life, create satisfying relationships
- **Environmental**—Good health and occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being
- **Financial**—Satisfaction w/ current and future financial situations
- **Intellectual**—Recognize creative abilities and find ways to expand knowledge and skill
- **Occupational**—Personal satisfaction & work enrichment
- **Physical**—Recognize needs, active physically, nutrition, sleep
- **Social**—Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system
- **Spiritual**—Expanding a sense of purpose and meaning in life
- **Integrative-Functional-Whole Health & Wellness/Medicine Focus**
Self Care: Words to Ponder

• “Biology is Biography“
• “Issues are in the Tissues”
• Valuing and affirming (us and others)
• Avoiding burnout: enhance self-care to thrive
• Intercept & Redirect, the Elevator Metaphor
• Balancing the Wheel Metaphor (VanEpp)
• Other Ways to Detoxify and Stay Healthy?
“The Basics”: Tricks of the Trade

• Mind-Body-Soul Work
• “Spiritual and/or/not Religious”- something for everyone or nothing, whatever works.
• Reading sacred or helpful literature
• Individual Accountability and Support
• Community Identification/Group Belonging
• Service Work: serving someone besides self
How We “Get There”

• Commitment – prioritizing action
• Religiously attending to Spiritual/Other
• Daily Discipline and Maintenance
• Wishes, Hopes, and Dreams – Maintaining the Visions with Feet on the Ground
• Appropriate Activity, Outlets & Behaviors
Issues of Concern to Hold at Forefront

• The Imperfection of Progress & Practice
• Balance, Normalcy, and Moderation
• Obstacles and Distractions: Self and Other
• Daily Reprieve: temporary detours inevitable
• Attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving
• “Holding the tension” and space, spirit, or presence.
Outreach and Mission: Philosophy, Motivation, & Application

- Body of Community: connectedness, we are them, and they are us?
- “Giving Getting or Taking” leads to meaning, purpose, and serving something larger than ourselves or others.
- Treating people with dignity & respect
- “Attraction Rather Than Promotion?” and/or Coercion
- Treatment and/or Punishment: “both/and, not either/or
- “Carrying the message” not the person
- Working harder than they are, scaffolding, realistic expectations
- Playing the game: don’t feed into/start it. /“Choose battles (wisely)”
- Meet them where they are and take them where they need to be
- Cultivating opportunities & creating desire for intrinsic motivation
Limits & Boundaries, Separation & Detachment

- Setting Healthy Limits and Boundaries
- Can we separate personal & professional lives? yes & no
- “Giving up” vs. “detach w/love” (Al-Anon)
- Giving up vs. surrender and the peace of letting go
- Liabilities & the challenge of taking risks on people.
- Don’t “knock yourself out,” literally.
- Loving them (and us) to death, literally
- It’s not about us, not personal, we’re not that important.
- Everybody has a process, ours is not necessarily theirs, but we still have the authority and influence.
- Don’t lose your own soul/family while “saving” world.
- “You can only do so much”
External Forces/Occupational Hazards

- Institutional Barriers & Resistance
- Critical System and Outside Issues
- Seemingly Insurmountable Obstacles
- Occupational Hazards: challenging or toxic people and/or environments
Institutional Barriers and Resistance

What are they for you/group & system?

• Management Philosophy
• Language and Application
• Use/abuse power & authority & response
Critical System and Outside Issues

- Organizations & Individual Elements
- Complexities and Variables
- Staffing and resources
- Safety & security amid volatility/hostility
Seemingly Insurmountable Obstacles

• Uncertainty & “negative capability”
• “Truth uncompromisingly/ragged edges”
• Where do we draw the line?
• Obstacles and Catalysts
• Losing our baggage on this flight is a necessity!
• Proactive, reactive vs. going off or ballistic
Occupational Hazards

- Challenging and toxic people and/or environments
- Turf issues and power struggles
- Office and party politics
- Bureaucracy & Budgets/People & Paper
- Competition vs. collaboration & compromise
Seeing the Beauty and Changing the Beast

• “The System”
• Generational Cycles: Socioeconomic Factors and Constraints
• Overlapping and gaping systems
• How all of this affects our ability to stay healthy and stable and help others do the same.
Cultivating Life in the Garden

- Care of the Self
- Care of the Family
- Caring for Others
- Caring in Community
Real or True Collaboration

• “Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

• The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and the sharing of resources and reward.”

--The Wilder Foundation (Griffith, 2000)
True Community

• Spinning our wheels: it’s hard enough to make a difference when we work together
• Don’t carry the whole load yourself.
• Going it alone vs. teamwork & collaboration - relationships
• Standing in different parts of same field.
• Uniting and Becoming One: mergers, acquisitions, and hostile takeovers
Thinking Big & Working in the Trenches: Incorporating Realistic Expectations

• What is our definition of expectation?
• High-low, unrealistic expectations is a setup.
• Moving toward realistic expectations
• Most people will rise to the occasion
• What is my part? Taking ownership and authority – empowering the powerless
Need for “Greatness” in Leading and Serving with Heart and Soul

• The Power of Leading in Servant hood
• “Servant-Leader” Characteristics
• Rhetorical Style in Competent Action
• Fully Human & Functionally Superior
• Giving Assent, Buying In, Ownership, Authenticity – trust and commitment
“The Power of Servant Leadership”

“The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” — Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant as Leader, 1970
Characteristics of “Servant-Leader”

- Listening (is so much easier)
- Empathy and Understanding
- Morality and Ethics
- Healing and Wholeness
- Awareness & Persuasion
- Foresight and Conceptualization
- Commitment to the Growth of People
- Building Community
- Trustees and Stewardship
“The servant, by definition, is fully human. The servant-leader is functionally superior because (they) are closer to the ground --- (they) hear things, see things, know things, and (their) intuitive insight is exceptional” (32).

The Obligation: “Able servants with potential to lead must lead and, where appropriate, they must follow only servant-leaders” (35).
Once we become more at peace with embracing the inevitable, and hopefully come to terms with the occasional or regular chaos, instead of becoming unhealthily dependent on, or relishing, some false need for absolute order and certainty, we can do good things through the faith we build in ourselves and others and the strength we are given from outside us.
“Enchantment is a spell that comes over us, an aura of fantasy and emotion (and ecstasy) that can settle on the heart and either disturb it or send it into rapture and reverie. . . . The soul has an absolute, unforgiving need for regular excursions into enchantment . . . Like the body needs food and the mind needs thought.” (ix)
“Enchantment encourages the artist to work with the scientist, the politician with the priest. A philosophy of enchantment assumes that political strife and street crime result from an anxious loss of home and homeland, or a drying up of imagination and the spirit that offers hope. Enchantment inspires a deep and unconditional compassion. . .” (381)
“For those of you involved in the profession of assisting (families and children), though the demands you face appear limitless, the impact you have not only transcends beyond any particular age or generation, but also to the individuals, families and communities here and now. You are to be commended for making such a positive difference in the lives of so many.” (Unknown)
“Care of the Soul” - Thomas Moore

- “Enrichment of identity”.
- “Causal thinking to story & character”
- What is the Sense of Urgency
- “Not a project of self-improvement.”
- Not “problem solving” but “fostering depth, interiority, and quality to flourish.
- “Soul is its own purpose and end.”
- “Inspires deep and unconditional compassion.”
“Care of the Soul” - Thomas Moore

• “Gifts of Depression” (see footnotes-H/O’s)
• “The Healing Powers of Depression”
• Embracing & moving thru melancholy vs. “wallowing in the (insanity or) symptom”
• “Learning from depression what qualities the soul needs”
• How comfortable do we become in our “dysfunction”? Or is it dysfunction?
• The Spiritual-Emotional Solution
“We know we are well on our way toward soul when we feel attachment to the world and the people around us and when we live as much from the heart as from the head. We know soul is being cared for when our pleasures feel deeper than usual, when we can let go of the need to be free of complexity and confusion, and when compassion takes the place of distrust and fear. Soul is interested in differences among cultures and individuals, and within ourselves it wants to be expressed in uniqueness if not in outright eccentricity.”
“Therefore, when in the midst of my confusion and my stumbling attempts to live a transparent life, I am the fool, and not everyone around me, then I know I am discovering the power of the soul to make a life interesting. Ultimately, care of the soul results in an individual “I” I never would have planned for or maybe even even wanted. By caring for the soul faithfully, every day, we step out of the way and let our full genius emerge. Soul coalesces into the mysterious philosopher’s stone, that rich, solid core of personality the alchemists sought, or it opens into the peacocks’s tail—a revelation of the soul’s color and a display of its dappled brilliance” (Moore, 304-5).
What is the Sense of Urgency?

“Care of the soul is not a project of self-improvement nor a way of being released from the trouble and pains of human existence. It is not at all concerned with living properly or with emotional health. . . .”
“Care of the soul touches another dimension, in no way separate from life, but not identical to the problem solving that occupies so much of our consciousness. We care for the soul by giving it time and opportunity to reveal itself, and by living life in a way that fosters depth, interiority, and quality in which it flourishes. Soul is its own purpose and end.”
Guided Meditation: “The River”

• “Peace is not external or to be sought after or attained. Living mindfully, slowing down and enjoying each step and each breath, is enough.”

• “Mouth (neck) yoga,” smiling, flexing the facial muscles, walking, and breathing

• “Dirty dishes, red lights, and traffic jams are spiritual friends upon the path of mindfulness. The most profound satisfactions, the deepest feelings of joy and completeness lie as close at hand as our next aware breath and the smile we can form right now. . . “ (Kotler in Peace)
Thank you for allowing me to share this journey, peace be with you all!

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