This is Our Time: Our Dignity, Our Destiny

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An effectively caring person is the most 'dangerous' revolutionary you can let loose. -Harvey Jackins

Recovery is very personal. Our work changes lives.

Our words have power, our essence has energy.

The more in tune we are with our authentic self, the more effective we engage and support others on their journey to mind/body/spirit health. That journey is both on a micro-level and a macro-level.

Outline

- Evidence of what is not working.
- Evidence of what is working.

  An invitation to challenge your way of thinking.
- Ideas for creating a socially just and inclusive system (outside work)
- Changing the inside – My Journey (Micro work)

EVIDENCE - WHAT IS NOT WORKING

- A 2006 study found that adults receiving behavioral health treatment in the public system die decades prematurely due to preventable conditions.

- 1955 - Began a psychopharmacological revolution.

  The disability rate due to 'mental illness' has risen from:

  one in every 468 Americans in 1955

  to one in 76 in 2011

EVIDENCE - WHAT IS NOT WORKING

- U.S. population is about 319 million. As of Dec 2011 there were 2.24 million prisoners in the US. More than half of them have a mental health problem. The US has the highest rate of imprisoning people in the world, between six to nine times the prison rate for Western European countries.

- Child abuse and neglect cost the U.S. almost $94 billion per year, according to a 2001 report. Some of the direct and indirect costs include medical care, mental health, child welfare, special education, juvenile delinquency, law enforcement, the judicial system, incarceration, hospitalization, chronic health problems, and others.

Let's take a moment to reflect

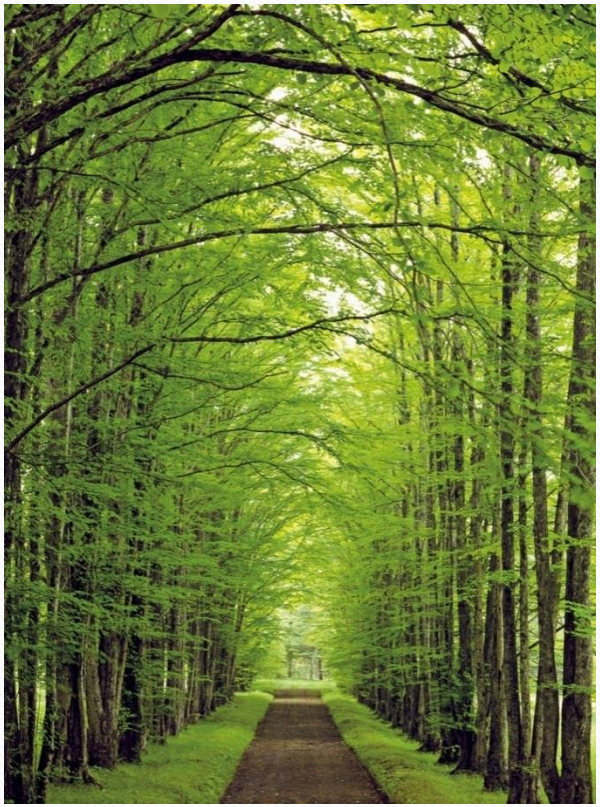
The only true freedom we have is the freedom to decide how to react to those things which are beyond our control. It is the only true freedom because it is the only one that won't be taken from us. – Paraphrased from E. Weisel

What's within you is stronger than what's in your way – No Barriers (motto)

EVIDENCE - WHAT IS WORKING

Peer-respite - Second Story in Ca.

A 2 year study found that peer-respite guests were 70% less likely to use inpatient or emergency services compared to a control group that did not use respite services. The control group had similar characteristics eg, similar diagnoses, service use history, demographics, etc.



EVIDENCE - WHAT IS WORKING

Western Lapland, Finland has the best outcomes in the Western World for first-episode psychosis. Why? They conceptualize emotional problems as problems in communication. Focus is on understanding the service user and letting the service user lead.

Psychosis doesn't exist within the individual, it resides in the in-between spaces.

It is essential to create safety and a trusting relationship.

EVIDENCE - WHAT IS WORKING

Consider the possibility:

When people go into isolation it is a means of self-protection.

Taking that a step deeper we can begin to understand the possibility that it isn't so much isolation as it is perhaps actually going into a deeper state - a collective unconsciousness.

EVIDENCE - WHAT IS WORKING

Speaking for myself - When I have been in an altered state I am experiencing catastrophic vulnerability, spiritual emergency, often accompanied by a deep experience of oneness with the universe.

My senses are heightened. I need a supporter to show respect and acceptance for the invisible gap between people and to be interested in my inner experience. Dare we risk being vulnerable? Dare we risk thinking differently?

Let's take a moment to reflect

MANY THINGS ARE WORKING

The voice of peers is becoming more powerful.
How is it working for providers?
For family members?

The NCMHR successfully advocated for close to $1M per yr of funding that increased the number of Statewide Consumer Networks from 18 to 31.

A BIG PERSPECTIVE…

Many generations have fought battles (for civil rights, human rights, freedom, social justice, liberty, etc); now the battle has come down to us. We live in the information age but it is also an age of passive receptivity where critical thinking is missing from our institutions; it is missing from some of our minds too.

The invitation is to think differently,
to think critically about your own thinking.

EXPLORING TOGETHER

What can you and I do to build a culture of wellness and recovery, of liberation and freedom, of dignity and self-determination?

Government plays an important role in creating opportunities for everyone to flourish. Creating a socially just culture depends on each and everyone of us as well as our leaders, our government, our public institutions across all departments not just human

service departments

BIG PICTURE PERSPECTIVE

Public services need to be based on greater levels of personal choice, personal responsibility and co- production.

We are making advances in understanding new ways of addressing learning difficulties & mental health needs and recognizing the importance of the personalization of education.

We are beginning to change how we socialize, work, learn, and communicate. Technology is opening many doors and we need to work boldly and concisely to eliminate social and health care inequality so everyone may access quality services/treatment, supported by inclusive policies and procedures.

BIG PICTURE PERSPECTIVE

To promote positive mental health and well-being we need to address issues of poverty, unemployment, homelessness and we need to provide appropriate supports for individuals and groups at higher risk.

Our failure to break these cycles has lead to substantial long-term costs across many domains (financial, emotional, environmental, etc).

BIG PICTURE PERSPECTIVE

We need to raise the profile of mental health and well-being in the work environment.

We need annual well-being audits

We need an expansion of flexible (accommodating-for-everyone) working arrangements

Need better training for managers so that they understand the impact they have on the mental health and well-being of their employees.

We need an across the life span perspective (pre-natal and early childhood to seniors)

Promoting well-being for everyone is vital in meeting the diverse future challenges we face in our rapidly changing society.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING FOR EVERYONE

To achieve social justice & emotional well-being for everyone we need a strategic and visionary approach that involves:

A. Better use of science and other evidence that link interventions affecting well-being across the lifespan

B. More effective and transparent decision-making based on analysis of interventions taking into account broader and longer-term benefits.

C. Effective cross-government coordination, collaboration, integration & action

D. High level of government commitment to develop and implement a new approach. This new strategic approach must be informed by a breadth of dialogue and we must be clear about the values and expectations of society that we will seek to address.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING FOR EVERYONE

E. An economic assessment of potential interventions

F. New ways of incentivizing government departments so there's sustainable meaningful results

G. Inclusive strategies that reflect input from diverse stakeholders, including the people that are most impacted.

H. Approaches and strategies need to optimize mental capital and well-being as well as social equality and social inclusion.

DIGNITY AT THE HEART OF ALL POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING

We face major challenges and a great deal of uncertainty going forward.

On the other hand we have a enormous resources to meet those challenges.

Mental health, dignity and well-being for everyone should be at the heart of all policy and decision-making in government and private industry.

Let's take a moment to reflect before exploring -

What is your recovery story?

What’s your story?

Think about your own story for a moment.

Think about your own personal catastrophe if you've lived life you've experienced a catastrophe.

What were you feeling and what was helpful to you to grow beyond the spiritual emergency or the catastrophic vulnerability?

My Story

It is through relationship and understanding oppression

that we have the courage to find and speak our deepest truth.

I experienced such a profound lack of safety that it led to my clinging to anyone who offered a safe harbor or anything that could numb the pain.

At 16 years of age I couldn’t reconcile the irrationality of my life and of the world.

I had nowhere to go where I felt safe enough to try to get accurate information.

On one hand I saw such peace and love in my community and in the world and on the other hand I saw and experienced fear, violence and war.

One day the cacophony boiled over into a spiritual emergency.

Looking back forty years I now understand what happened.

In a heroic act of integrity my mind reached for the authentic Lauren in an attempt to find meaning and purpose in my life.

I needed support, an anchor, so I could move from monologue to dialogue; where I could awaken into a genuine, honest and respectful relationship.

Instead, I got locked up in a mental institution, put on increasingly heavy doses of psychopharmaceuticals and labeled with chronic schizophrenia. As you might imagine this made my life a little more confusing.

It added layers of hurt, humiliation, misinformation and self-doubt.

MY STORY… THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED

The story continues to unfold.

Consciousness is still transforming, insights are being revealed, wisdom expands.

What drives me? A wind, a light, a strong desire accompanied by a focused tenacity to find my truth. Who am I? What is my life's mission, my purpose?

LESSON 1: THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING WRONG WITH ME

Someone wise told me there was never anything wrong with me.

It meant understanding the larger social context of my spiritual emergency which required that I understand the impact of trauma on myself and others and that I understand the dynamics of oppression on myself and others.

LESSON 1: THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING WRONG WITH ME

Emotions give us important information about who we are.

Emotions tell us when something important is happening in our lives, something perhaps worth paying attention to.

I have found that emotions are an invitation to come to understand on a deeper level – what I am experiencing, what my body and mind are trying to tell me.

LESSON 2: BELIEVING IN MYSELF

A well known advocate told me "I believe in you".

This contradicted everything - THE STORY - I told myself.

Impact of trauma – is someone there? Often, no. We are smart; we stop asking for support and attention that is not there. (Taking personal responsibility, not our fault).

What would your life look like if you believed completely in yourself? If every thought, every experience, every everything in your life was fused with meaning and purpose, wisdom and truth?

Lesson 3:
LETTING GO AND BECOMING UNRECOGNIZABLE TO MYSELF

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Emotional release work - inquiring, imagining, expressing whatever came to my mind with trusted allies.

Letting go of rage and fear, hate and terror.

Grieving - for those targeted by oppression and for those who were taught to be oppressors.

Letting in love, beauty…

LESSON 4: THE WISDOM OF THE HEART

We get a more accurate picture of reality by listening to how we feel rather than paying attention to how we think.

Our body is very wise.

LESSON 4. THE WISDOM OF THE HEART (CONT.)

To explore the unknown it is important to let go of what you know.

The invitation is to start in the place of not knowing and using our curious inquiry.

Have a clear intention to want to know what is there, being aware of all your senses as well as texture, dimension…

LESSON 5:
LISTENING TO MY HEART LEAD ME HOME TO MY SOUL

What I know to be true is my experience.

My heart knows what is true before the mind does.

When I engage in inner battle I don't know where home is. However, when I open my heart and mind and embody inner peace, I know that home is everywhere I go.

LESSON 5:
LISTENING TO MY HEART LEAD ME HOME TO MY SOUL

The love and dignity within the story we tell, fuels our destiny.

In summary – my spiritual emergency was in fact my minds attempt to re-connect with my soul.

With a clear intention we can create loving relationships in community and every breath supports the embodiment of our vision; then we can savor the unfolding manifestation of our allignment.