

# NO FAMILY LEFT BEHIND 2015: HELPING VETERANS AND FAMILIES RESTORE THE SOUL AFTER WAR

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Restoring Our Warriors and  
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# The Peace Prayer of St. Francis



Lord make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, Joy.

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much  
seek

to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love.

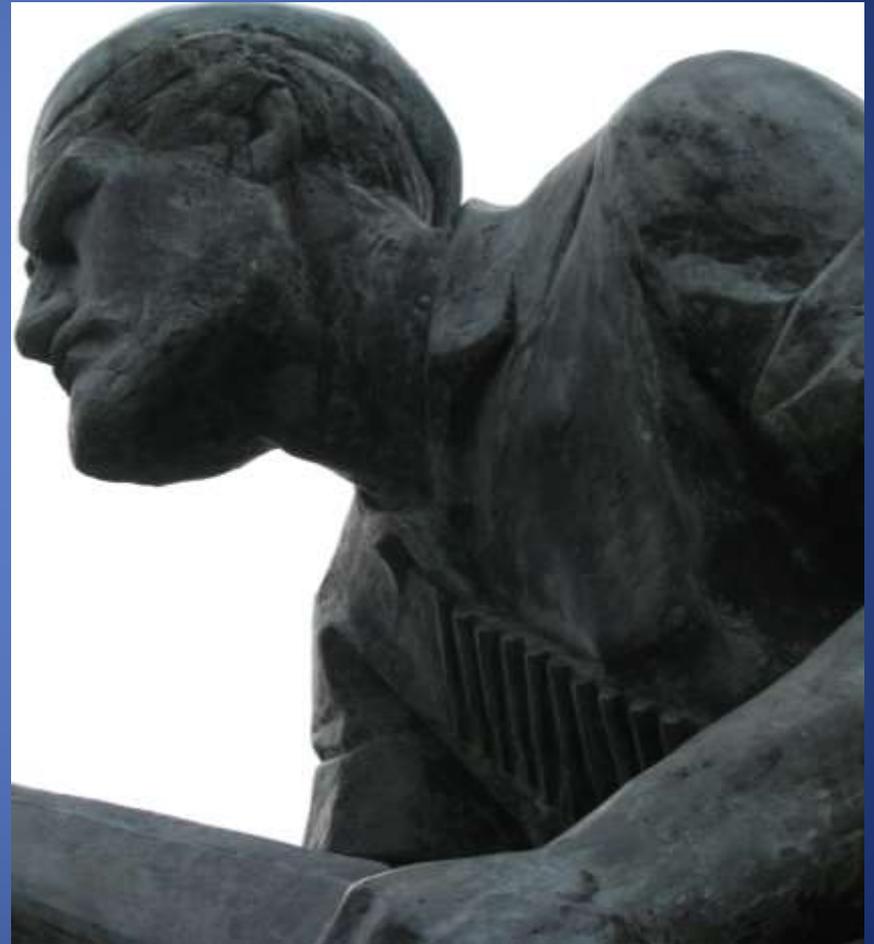
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal  
life.

# WAR AND THE SOUL

Military service and combat transform everything about us:

- \*not just brain chemistry or stress disorder, but also
- \*body, mind, heart, soul
- \*personal and community relationships
- \*philosophy and morality
- \*identity
- \*place in history and culture
- \*place in the cosmos

Our transformational efforts must address all these



# THE WARRIOR

A Universal Archetype with a Unique Spirituality





# THE WOUND

Trauma (Greek) =

A stabbing or piercing wound

Holism = body, mind, heart and spirit in community with transcendent meaning

Transformation and wounding during military service and warfare is inevitable and ubiquitous.

Tru

“Rescue my soul from the sword.”

*Psalm 22*

“It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul!”

Shakespeare, *Othello*

“My soul has fled.”

Art, VN combat vet

# INVISIBLE WOUNDS

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

20% active duty, 40% Guard and Reserves

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

33% of female troops

25% of male troops

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Up to 100% of exposed troops

# Some Veterans' Psycho-Social Issues

All occurring in the military and veteran populations in 2 – 3 times the civilian proportions

- Suicide
- “Accidents”
- Homelessness
- Unemployment
- Marriage difficulties and divorce
- Family difficulties
- Childlessness
- Serious and chronic health issues
- Culture shock
- Trouble with and in the criminal justice system
- Impact of all issues on families, culture, communities and nation.

# Two Paths Home

## \* Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Civilian – Military – Veteran – Civilian

## \* Post-traumatic Spiritual Development

Civilian – Military – Veteran – Spiritual Warrior - Elder

## SOME TRADITIONAL AND HISTORICAL NAMES FOR WAR TRAUMA

We know of more than 80 names the invisible wound has had since ancient times:

- PTS; OPERATIONAL STRESS DISORDER: 2014...
- PTSD: 1980
- WAR NEUROSIS: mid-20<sup>th</sup> century
- BATTLE FATIGUE: World War II
- SHELL SHOCK: World War I
- SOLDIER'S HEART; DA COSTA'S SYNDROME; IRRITABLE HEART; THE EFFORT SYNDROME: American Civil War - WWI
- NOSTALGIA: Swiss; *HEIMWEH*: German; *Maladie du Pays*: French; "Homesickness", 1600s
- *ESTAR ROTO*: "To be broken", Spanish, 1600s
- "An evil spirit sent by the Lord..." Bible

# MORAL TRAUMA IN WARRIORS: SOME WORLD SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

Lakota – *Nagi napayape* – The spirits leave him

Navajo – “defenders” and “aggressors”; only aggressors suffered moral trauma

Hopi – *tsawana* – A mind in terror

*qa tutsawanavu* – living unintimidated by terror

Korea – *Han* – deep unresolved wound; injustice that must be set right for the soul to be at peace

Xhosa (Eastern Cape South Africa) - *Kanene* ("K-u-n-e-nn-y") - the warrior's insight into the depth and burden that follows him

*Ukubula* ("Oo-koo-boo-la") - confessional telling of what you have done, told to the community.

Community's role is to tolerate the pain of listening no matter how difficult that may be. Modern application: Truth and Reconciliation Committee. In this way the community carries the burden and pain of what happened, and the warrior is forgiven and healed from his private suffering.

Maori (New Zealand) – *tapu* – a sense of sacred being. When there is violence, a wound or a crime, *tapu* becomes negative and must be set aright through healing the harmed relationships.

# “PTSD”

Post-traumatic soul distress

+

Post-traumatic social disorder

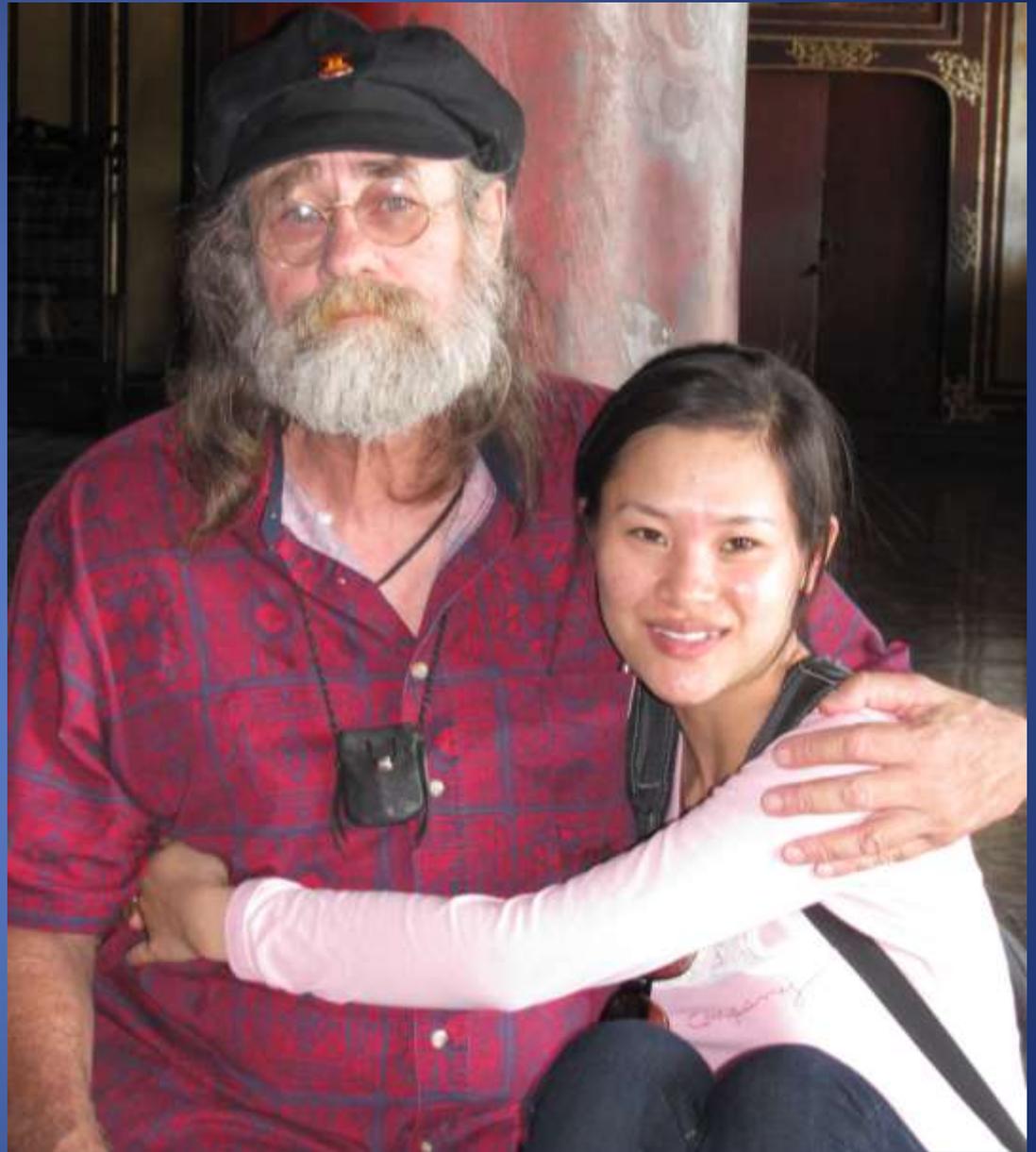
necessitate

Post-traumatic spiritual development

# Viet Nam: No traumatic breakdown

“Please keep bringing your  
veterans back so I can  
heal them with my love.”

Nguyen Thi Ngoc



# TEACHINGS OF “MR. TIGER”

NGUYEN TAM HO, MEKONG DELTA, VIET NAM

Veteran of 25 years of combat



“The wound is to the heart,  
not the brain.”

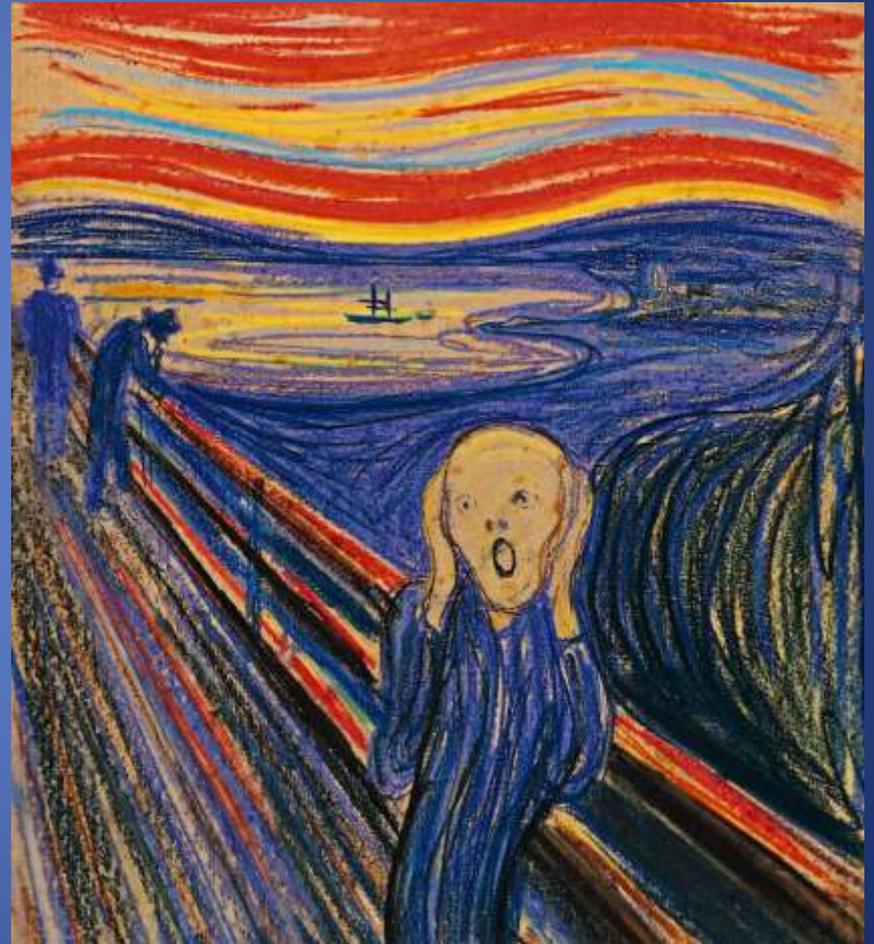
“Sorrow, not survivor’s guilt.”

“The bullet is the messenger  
of karma.”

“To prevent PTSD, stay  
home.”

# WHAT IS PTSD?

- Heart wound
- Moral wound
- Social disorder
- Interrupted initiation
- Identity crisis
- Love and intimacy crisis
- Stuck in the Underworld
- The Soul's cry of distress



# Soldier's Heart Transformational Model



# WARRIOR AND SPOUSE:



Odysseus and Penelope:  
An Archetypal  
Relationship

“They also serve who only  
stand and wait.”

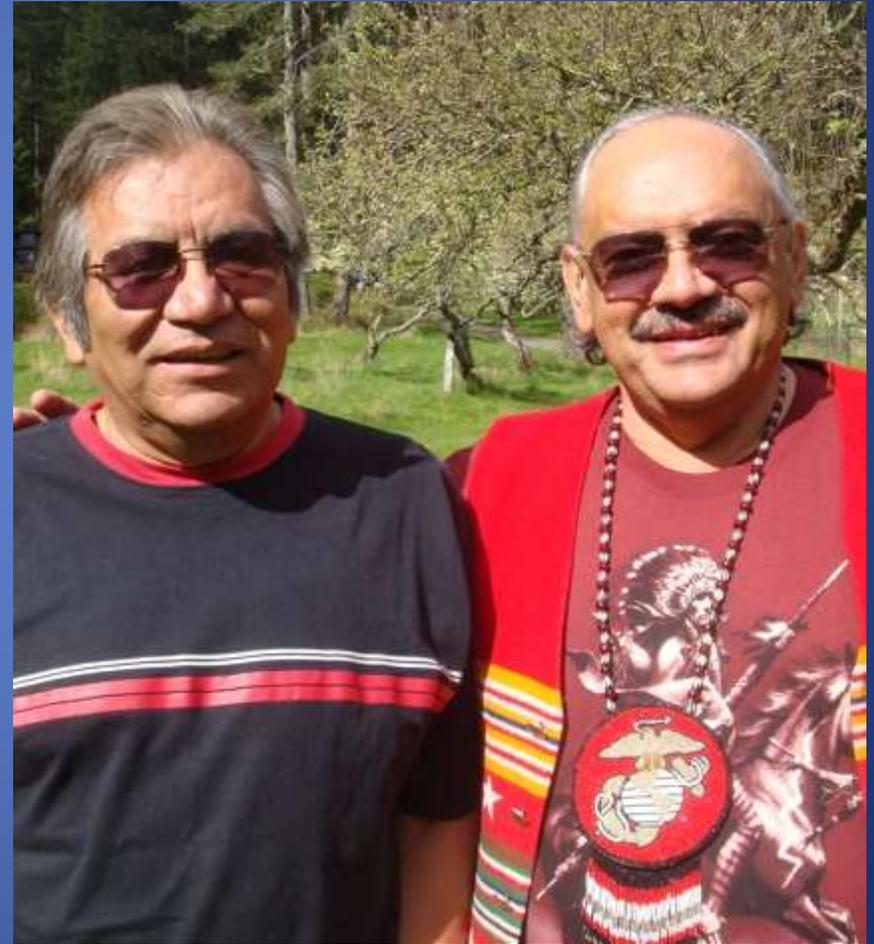
John Milton

# SOLDIER'S HEART MODEL

- Know that there is hope and that healing and transformation are possible
- Do not pathologize
- Do not marginalize
- Do not impose your own interpretations
- Do not separate military and civilians; encourage each to serve the other
- Accept trauma as a portal for transformation, initiation, and a source of life wisdom
- Accept the survivor as your guide to the Underworld
- Accept warriorhood as a lifelong identity and journey
- Seek forms of creative expression, corrective experiences, restorative action and meaningful spiritual practice
- Veteran and spouse becoming “battle buddies” on the homecoming journey
- Walk the moral and spiritual journey together
- Allow yourself to be transformed
- Rebuild identities and restore the warrior archetype

# Necessities of Return

- Isolation and tending
- Affirmation of warrior destiny
- Purification and cleansing
- Storytelling
- Restitution in the family and community
- Initiation as an Elder Warrior



# SITTING BULL

**“Warriors are not what you think of as warriors. The warrior is not someone who fights, because no one has the right to take another life. The warrior is one who sacrifices himself for the good of others. His task is to take care of the elderly, the defenseless, those who cannot provide for themselves, and above all, the children, the future of humanity.”**





## “MEDICINE CHIEF OF WARRIORS”

How do you define your identity and relationship to warriors?

# PSYCHOSPIRITUAL ISSUES FOR VETERAN AND FAMILY HEALING

\*Catharsis

\*Forgiveness

\*Reconciliation

\*Rehumanization

\*Reintegration

\*Restoration

\*Restitution

\*Witness

\*Service

\*Redemption

\*Meaning

\*Blessing

# Spiritual Redemption After Service: Some Practices

- Honoring the Fallen: altars, rituals, memorials and prayer
- Reconciliation: sharing with family members, other vets, former foes, civilians, politicians; receive overdue awards
- Corrective experiences
- Philanthropy: leaving good behind
- Legacy: family service history; it doesn't begin or end with me
- Expressive arts: transform energies; tell stories; create
- Storytelling: remembrance and teaching
- The family as veteran
- Prayer and blessings: sanctifying service and sacrifice

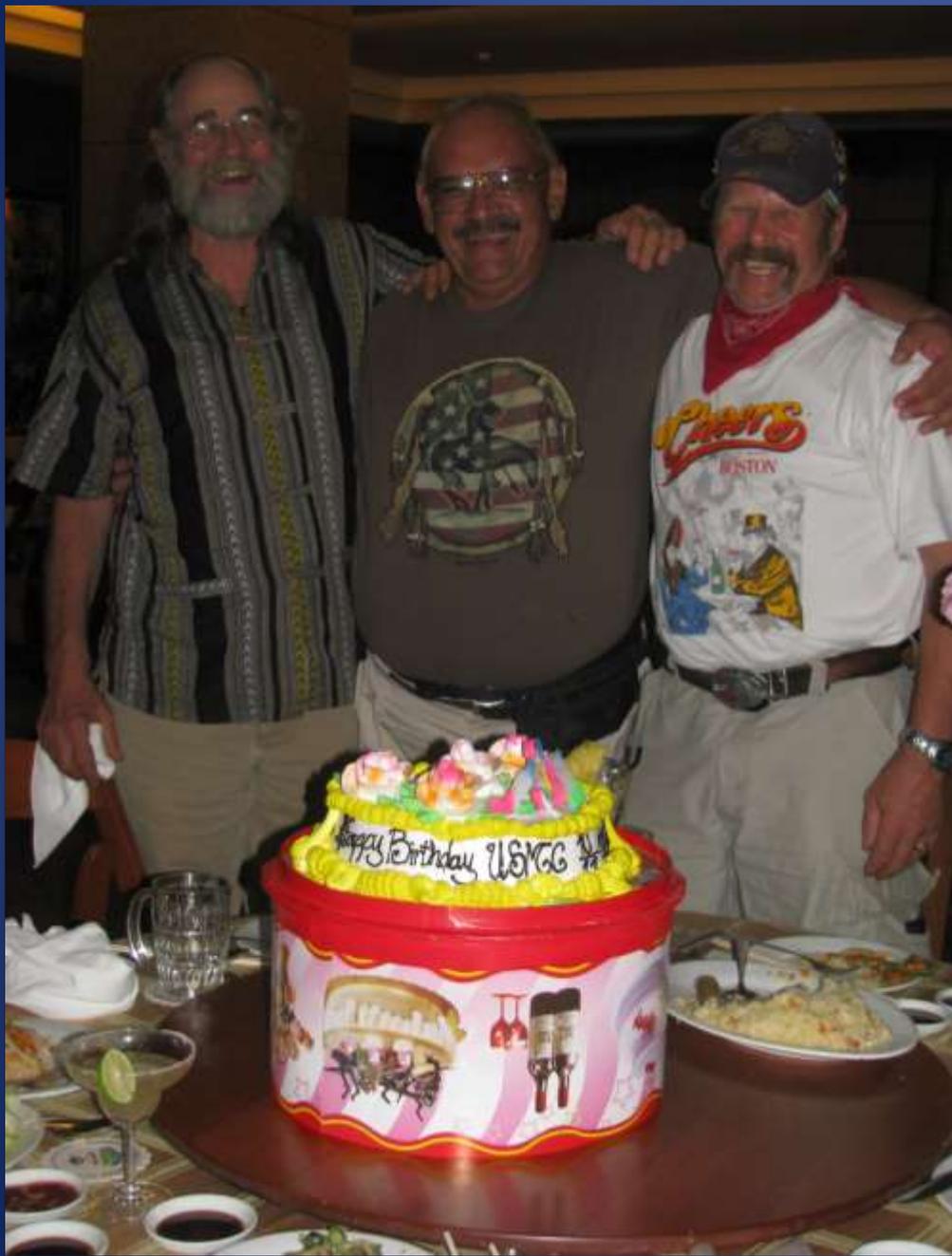


***In Dachau I made a powerful  
discovery. No power exists  
in the world that is capable  
of destroying humans as  
spiritual beings.***

***Karl Roder***

***“Nightwatch”***

***Inmate from 1933-45***



Care providers:

\*Medicine Chief of Warriors:

Strive to be one!

Vets and Families:

\*The Spiritual Warrior's Path

Walk it together!

THANK YOU AND BLESS YOU!