



Sacred Art of Living  
Center for Spiritual Integration

## SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN

### How to Accompany Others & Ourselves Through Suffering

Richard Groves  
Sacred Art of Living



## SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN

➔ DIAGNOSING SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

- MEANING
- FORGIVENESS
- RELATEDNESS
- HOPE

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CHAPLAINCY &  
SPIRITUAL CARE




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AMERICA'S FIRST CHAPLAIN. JOHN HURT



Church attendance      Religious affiliation

Never      Protestant

Twice a year or less      Catholic

Several times a year      Jewish

1-3 times a month      Other

Weekly     

Several times a week     



1976



Chaplain Intervention	Religious Affiliation
Prayer	No affiliation (None, atheist or agnostic)
Ritual	Buddhist
Conversation	Hindu
Others	Jewish
	Mormon
	Muslim
	Protestant
	Catholic
	Orthodox Christian
	Other Christian
	Other
	Unanswered

**Chaplain's Ideological Leanings**

	Social Issues %	Political Issues %
Conservative/very conservative	53	55
Moderate	28	29
Liberal/very liberal	16	13
No answer	3	3
	100	100

Q40.A1. Figures may not sum to 100%, and combined categories may not sum from their component parts, due to rounding.  
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE





Sacred Art of Living  
Center for Spiritual Integration

ART OF LIVING & DYING  
Workshop Series

Co-Founders Richard & Mary Groves  
Bend, Oregon USA in 1996

Soul & Science of CAREIVING

ART OF LIVING & DYING  
World Work

22,000+ Professionals from North America, Europe,  
India, Asia & Australasia

ATTITUDES ABOUT SPIRITUAL CARE  
Pre-test: Are We Really Meeting Our Patients' Needs?

- 89% of both staff and patients felt it was important to talk about spiritual care
- 11% of patients said professionals asked about spiritual concerns

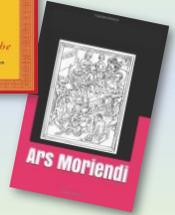
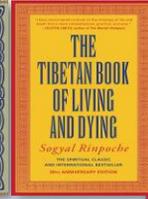
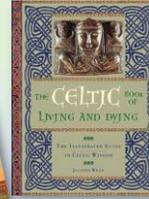
Puchalski, C. and McSkimming, S., 2018



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BODY REPRESENTING:  
Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Ukraine, Iran, India, Sudan, New Zealand, Canada, Israel, Poland, Nigeria, South Africa, Columbia, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Japan, Taiwan, The Philippines & China



"Spirituality in Medicine," Medical Students from twenty two countries with Professor Richard Groves at Nicolaus Copernicus University, Bydgoszcz Poland, December 2018



LIBRARY  
OF HUMANITY'S  
WISDOM & EXPERIENCE

### Ars Moriendi

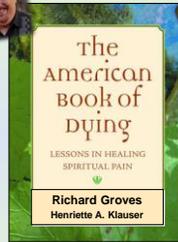


### Medieval Death

Paul Binski



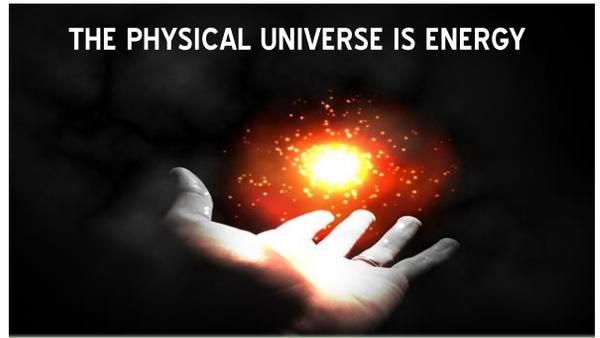
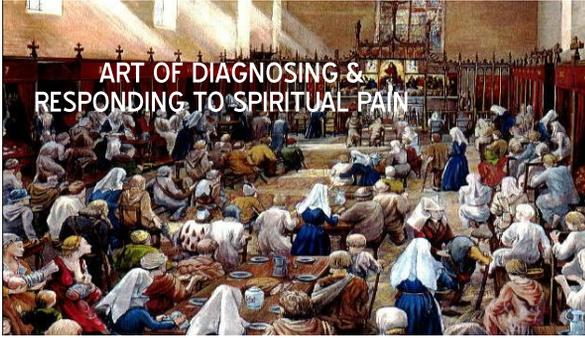
### The New York Times

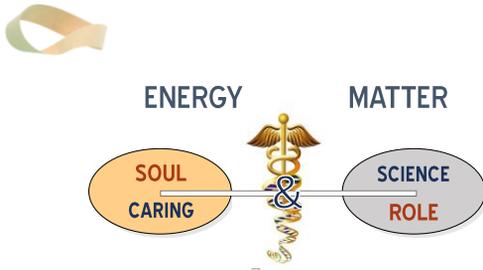


"Groves' texts reveal ancient-modern wisdom about living and dying..."

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## DEFINITION OF HEALTH



"The state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being... not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

World Health Organization

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## WESTERN MEDICAL MODEL

Truth is what you can measure and quantify

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**Within most science-based medicine the words meaning, suffering and soul do not compute**

Medline search shows that psycho-spiritual terms are seldom made in medical literature, and then, mostly in a religious or historical context or in reference to pathological concerns

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## A NEW DEFINITION FOR HEALING



The ability to adapt and self manage in the face of social, physical, emotional and spiritual challenges

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## WHAT IS SOUL?



While no one can give a precise definition of the soul, we all experience what it feels like. It is the sense of something greater than our individual self...

Dr. Albert Schweitzer

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“When people are overwhelmed by illness, we must give them physical relief, but it is equally important to encourage the spirit through a constant show of love and compassion. It is shameful how often we fail to see that what people desperately require is human affection. Deprived of human warmth and a sense of value, other forms of treatment prove less effective. Real care of the sick does not begin with costly procedures, but with the simple gifts of affection, love, and concern.”

His Holiness, The Dalai Lama and Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Joint Statement to the United Nations



## SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN

### DIAGNOSING SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

➔ MEANING  
FORGIVENESS  
RELATEDNESS  
HOPE

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StChristopher's  
More than just a hospice  
RESEARCH CENTRE

### TOTAL PAIN RESEARCH



"WHOSE PAIN IS IT?"



"The way in which care is given can touch the most hidden places..."

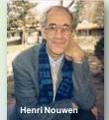
Dame Cicely Saunders



Cecily Saunders, MD



WE ARE THE MEDICINE



Henri Nouwen

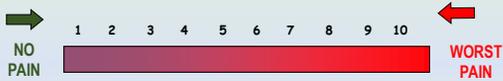
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### PHYSICAL PAIN SCALE

#### VISUAL ANALOG SCALE



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### EMOTIONAL PAIN SCALE

#### HAPPY FACE - SAD FACE SCALE



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## SPIRITUAL PAIN SCALE

**HOW ARE YOU WITHIN YOURSELF?**

COMPLETELY PEACEFUL	GENERAL WELL-BEING	EXTREME ANXIETY
1	2	3
4	5	



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## DIAGNOSE

### Διά Γνωσής



- ❖ To see through
- ❖ Get to the bottom of
- ❖ Know the origin

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## FOUR QUALITIES OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

MEANING                      FORGIVENESS

JUDGMENT  
VS.  
COMPASSION

RELATEDNESS                      HOPE

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**SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT**  
Measuring Enough Self Assessment



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Read each item and choose the response that best describes you.
2. Circle the number that corresponds to your choice.
3. Total the numbers for the four qualities. Higher numbers indicate higher spiritual health. Only mark a 1 or 2 for each item.

**MEANING**

1	2	3	4	5
Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people

How do you feel about the details of things and people?

**FORGIVENESS**

1	2	3	4	5
Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me

How do you feel about a wrong done to you?

**RELATEDNESS**

1	2	3	4	5
Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me	Hard to get over a wrong done to me

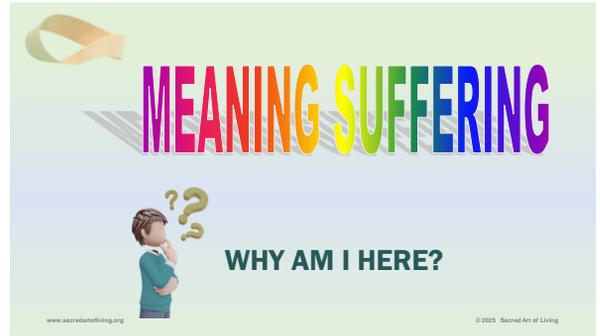
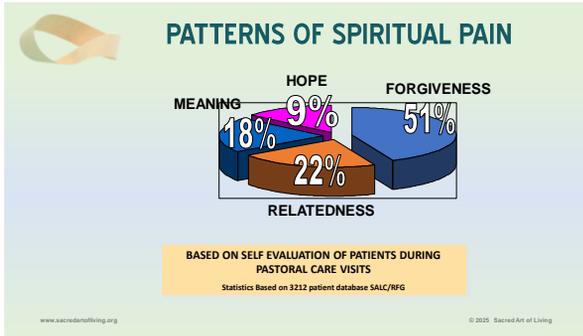
How do you feel about a wrong done to you?

**HOPE**

1	2	3	4	5
Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people	Like to know the details of things and people

How do you feel about the details of things and people?

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### Spiritual Health Assessment

PATIENT \_\_\_\_\_  
CAREGIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

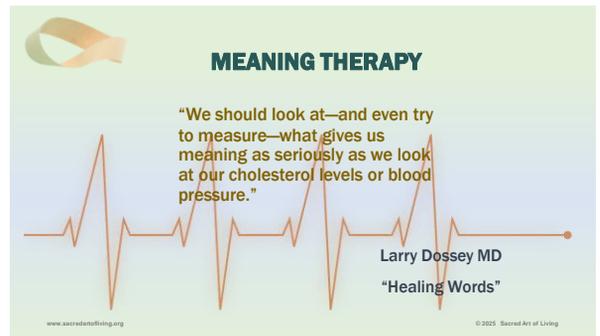
CIRCLE THE FEELINGS THAT MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBE "HOW YOU ARE WITH YOURSELF" TODAY. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD A MORE PERSONAL COMMENT AFTER EACH SCALE.

**MEANING SCALE**

1	2	3	4	5
Life is filled with purpose and meaning.	I feel generally motivated.			Life has become meaningless.

PERSONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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### EMOTIONAL STATES OF MEANING SUFFERING

- Depression
- Feeling lost
- Confusion
- Nothing matters
- Feel unworthy
- High Anxiety



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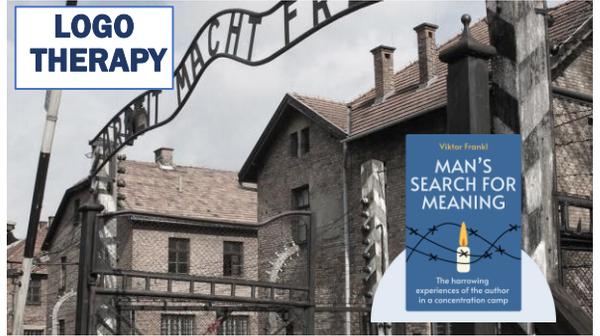



### SPIRITUAL REMEDIES FOR MEANING PAIN

-  Communion with Nature
-  LOGO-therapy
-  Dreams/Journaling
-  Guided Visualization
-  Contemplative Practices



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**TENTH PRINTING INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS...**

**the American Book of Living and Dying**  
Lessons in Healing Spiritual Pain

実用スピリチュアルケア

**Libro Americano Sobre la Vida y La Muerte**

Professor Richard Groves

RANDOM HOUSE

PENGUIN CLASSICS

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**REAL LIFE STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION**

Annie

Heather

Park

Henry

Larry

Dorothy

Andrew

Sara

María Elena

What is the quality of my presence?



What is the quality of my life?

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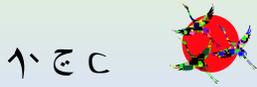
DEMON OF BUSYNESS



DE-PERSONALIZED CARE



ISOGASHII = BUSY



KOKORO  
=  
MIND  
HEART  
SOUL

NAKU  
=  
LOSE  
DIE  
GO AWAY FROM



DEMON OF MISTRUST



FATIGUE & BURNOUT

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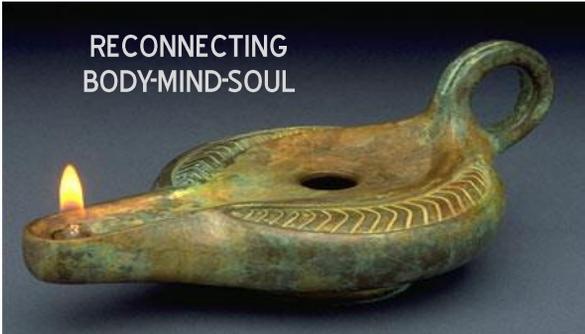
Compassion  
**Fatigue**

**Burnout**

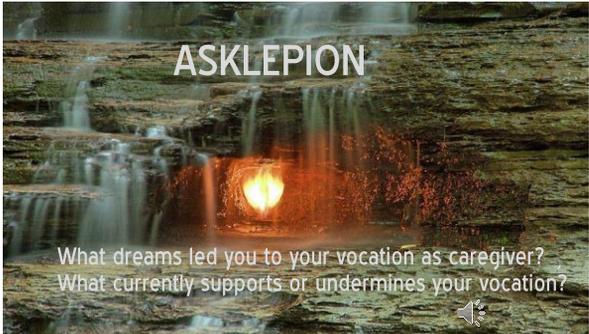
To the degree demands from environment exceed resources we have stress...



ΘΕΡΑΠΕΙΑ  
(Therapy)



RECONNECTING  
BODY-MIND-SOUL



ASKLEPION

What dreams led you to your vocation as caregiver?  
What currently supports or undermines your vocation?



## MY EXPERIENCE OF "SPIRITUALITY"

1. What words or phrases do you associate with the term "spirituality"? Can you remember the first time the word began to have a meaning for you?
2. What feelings do you have, or do you associate with spirituality?
3. Complete: "For me, spirituality is \_\_\_\_\_"

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## THE WAY IT IS

There's a thread you follow.  
 It goes among things that change.  
 But it doesn't change.  
 People wonder about what you are pursuing.  
 You have to explain about the thread.  
 But it is hard for others to see.  
 While you hold it you can't get lost.  
 Tragedies happen; people get hurt  
 or die; and you suffer and get old.  
 Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.  
 But you don't ever let go of the thread.

—William Stafford



## INTERSECTION OF SOUL & ROLE



**Identify your thread...**






## SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN

**DIAGNOSING SPIRITUAL SUFFERING**

**MEANING**  
**→ FORGIVENESS**  
**RELATEDNESS**  
**HOPE**

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# FORGIVENESS PAIN

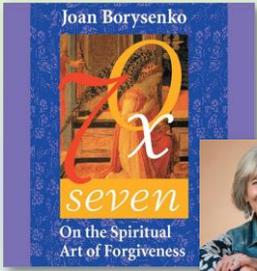


**WHAT DO I NEED TO LET GO OF?**

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Any attempt, indeed even the smallest step towards forgiveness, is guaranteed to enhance the immune system thereby contributing to greater body-mind-spirit balance.




Dr. Joan Borysenko  
Psycho-neuro-immunologist

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## Spiritual Health Assessment

PATIENT \_\_\_\_\_  
 CAREGIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CIRCLE THE FEELINGS THAT MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBE "HOW YOU ARE WITHIN YOURSELF" TODAY. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD A MORE PERSONAL COMMENT AFTER EACH SCALE.

### FORGIVENESS SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
I feel a deep sense of reconciliation towards myself and others.	There are no outstanding areas that are calling for forgiveness in my life.		I feel a strong sense of unforgiveness towards myself and/or another.	

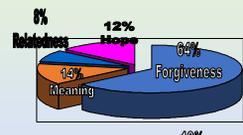
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THE BEST WAY OUT IS ALWAYS THROUGH...

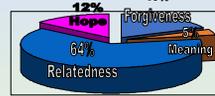
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PATTERNS OF SPIRITUAL PAIN BY GENDER



Based on the responses of 1379 men between the ages of 45-65 in nine hospice programs representing various regions of the U.S.



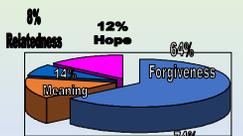
Based on the responses of 1522 women between the ages of 45-65 in nine hospice programs representing various regions of the U.S.



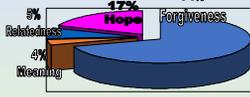
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PATTERNS OF SPIRITUAL PAIN AMONG COMBAT VETS



Based on the responses of 284 men between the ages of 50-65 in nine hospice programs representing various regions of the U.S.



Based on the responses of 402 men who served in the armed forces and were engaged in active combat (ages 36-82) from all branches of the military service.

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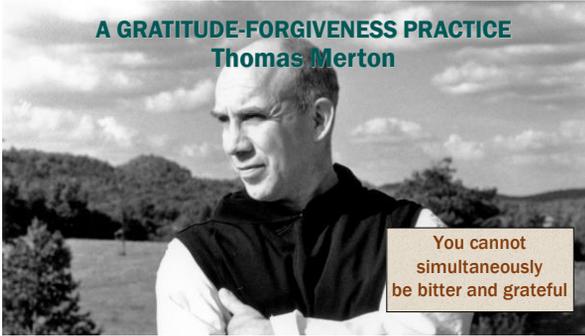


PAIN WHICH IS NOT TRANSFORMED IS ALWAYS TRANSMITTED Richard Rohr



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**SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN**

DIAGNOSING SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

- MEANING
- FORGIVENESS
- ➔ RELATEDNESS
- HOPE

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**RELATEDNESS PAIN**

WHAT AM I COMMITTED TO IN LIFE AND DEATH?

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**SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

CARE RECEIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
 CAREGIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

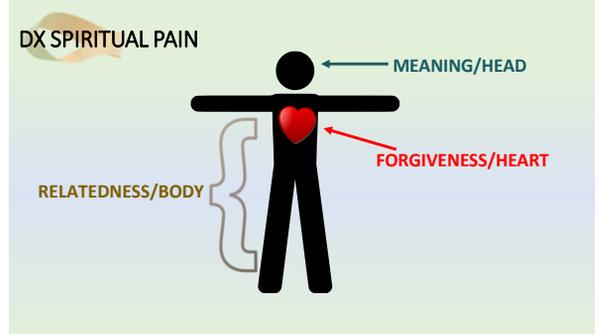
CIRCLE THE FEELINGS THAT MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBE "HOW YOU ARE WITHIN YOURSELF" TODAY. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD A MORE PERSONAL COMMENT AFTER EACH SCALE.

**RELATEDNESS SCALE**

1	2	3	4	5
I feel a strong sense of connection with the persons and things that matter most to me.		Most important areas of my life seem balanced.		I feel seriously alienated from someone/thing that is important to me.

PERSONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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**OUR RELATIONSHIP TO DISEASE**

**HEALING  
 VS.  
 CURING**

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**DIS-EASE IS A LANGUAGE**

**OFFERING IMPORTANT DATA TOGETHER WITH  
 A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PAY ATTENTION TO OUR DEEPER SELF**

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## HOW IS IT THAT PAIN & SUFFERING “ HEALS” ?

**Alleviation of pain is good...  
but not the Ultimate Good**

**From time to time a person  
experiences transformation  
through tragedy**



**HIPPOCRATES**  
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## A CRITICAL DISTINCTION

**Pain vs. Suffering**

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## PAIN IS BIOLOGIC

-  **PAIN** = an unpleasant sensory and/or emotional experience
-  **PHYSICAL PAIN** = a body experience
-  **EMOTIONAL PAIN** = primary or secondary to another dimension of total pain



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## SUFFERING IS LINGUISTIC

-  When we assign meaning to the experience of physical or emotional pain

**OR**

-  When we generate physical or emotional pain from our thoughts or stories



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## HUMAN SUFFERING

A unique capacity to endure pain for the sake of another



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## HUMAN SUFFERING

A unique capacity to endure pain for the sake of another



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## MEDICAL MODEL

Focus of Interventions



Unresponsive to interventions

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Michael Kearney, MD  
Medical Director  
Sacred Art of Living

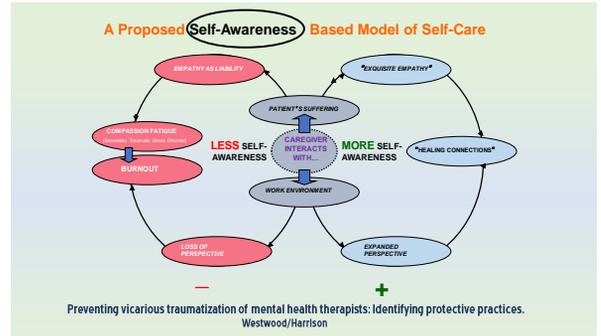
The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

JAMA<sup>®</sup>  
The Journal of the American Medical Association

### TRANSFORMING SUFFERING: KEY TO DEEP HEALTH CARE REFORM

- Western Medicine has no model to help someone live *through* their suffering
- Most suffering is not fixable... healing is finding a way through the suffering
- If the suffering person even begins to attend to soul, the psyche responds a thousand-fold

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## GRIEF & RELATEDNESS

Our response to the loss of someone or something which was important to us



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### DEMON OF LIMITED RESOURCES



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### NAMING YOUR TRAGIC GAP



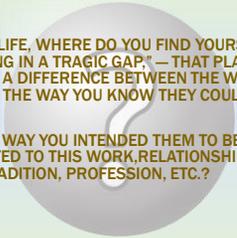
A GAP BETWEEN THE WAY THINGS ARE  
AND THE WAY WE KNOW THEY MIGHT BE...  
Parker Palmer



### ASKING A COURAGEOUS QUESTION

IN YOUR LIFE, WHERE DO YOU FIND YOURSELF  
"STANDING IN A TRAGIC GAP." — THAT PLACE WHERE  
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY THINGS  
ARE AND THE WAY YOU KNOW THEY COULD BE.

OR— THE WAY YOU INTENDED THEM TO BE WHEN YOU  
COMMITTED TO THIS WORK, RELATIONSHIP, COMMUNITY,  
FAITH TRADITION, PROFESSION, ETC.?



### NAMING YOUR TRAGIC GAP



A GAP BETWEEN THE WAY THINGS ARE  
AND THE WAY WE KNOW THEY MIGHT BE...  
Parker Palmer



## SPIRITUAL-EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PAIN

**DIAGNOSING SPIRITUAL SUFFERING**

**MEANING**  
**FORGIVENESS**  
**RELATEDNESS**

➔ **HOPE**

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# HOPE PAIN



**WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR ME?**

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## SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

CARE RECEIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
CAREGIVER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CIRCLE THE FEELINGS THAT MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBE "HOW YOU ARE WITHIN YOURSELF" TODAY. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD A MORE PERSONAL COMMENT AFTER EACH SCALE.

### HOPE PAIN SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
I feel hope-filled and optimistic.	I generally trust what the future holds for me.		I am experiencing deep depression and hopelessness.	

PERSONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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## HOPE THERAPY



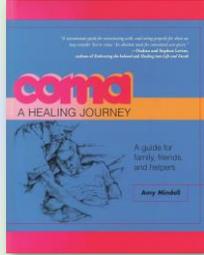
The degree to which hope plays a role in dealing with cancer is undeniable... yet there is a reluctance to admit its influence when the health care system focuses exclusively on the physiology of cancer.

**O. Carl Simonton MD**

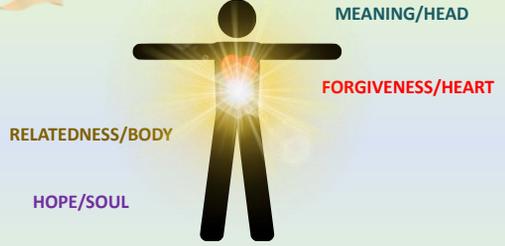
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### COMMUNICATING WITH PERSONS IN ALTERED STATES



### DX SPIRITUAL PAIN



### VIDUI A SPIRITUAL LIVING WILL



RABBI NADYA GROSS RABBI ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI



### VIDUI וידוי



A Living Spiritual Will



## VIDUI: A LIVING SPIRITUAL WILL



- A Jewish inspired practice for Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement
- Statement making peace with God, the Other or the Universe
- Both a communal and individual ritual
- A kind of “Living Spiritual Will”

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## VIDUI: A PRACTICE FOR DYING



- We never know when death will be
- Whether alone or accompanied – we are ultimately alone
- May our transition be peaceful
- VIDUI is a practice of surrender



## VIDUI: A NEW BEGINNING

-  Writing a VIDUI takes time
-  An opportunity for enormous self compassion
-  Write and revisit your VIDUI annually
-  Start with your address and proceed through the four dimensions of spiritual suffering



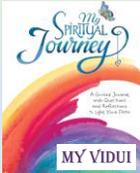

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## FOUR ELEMENTS OF A VIDUI

*as adapted by Art of Living & Dying*

- **MEANING**  
Did I do what I came here to do?
- **FORGIVENESS**  
What/who is it time to let go of?
- **RELATEDNESS**  
Gratitude/grief – for others and self
- **HOPE**  
Blessings and wisdom for those left behind



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## VIDUI: TO WHOM SHOULD IT ADDRESS

- ? To whom/what/where am I surrendering myself
- ? What does spirituality/the Divine mean to me
- ? Who would I want to keep/see/read my VIDUI
- ? Imagine if this was a document you wanted to be shared at the time of or after your death...



**VIDUI**  
A Living Spiritual Will

**ELEMENTS OF A VIDUI**

- 1. PRAYERS - Accompanyments
- 2. AFFIRMATIONS - Surrender to the Divine
- 3. GRATITUDE - Acknowledgment
- 4. REQUESTS - Ask for Forgiveness
- 5. OTHER - Additional

Prayers and affirmations are optional.

MY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

To whom do I surrender my Will for safe keeping? \_\_\_\_\_

## A VIDUI WORKSHEET



## BEGINNING YOUR VIDUI



- Begin by focusing on issues related to MEANING
- In your Life Review, can you identify a 'thread'?
- What 'story' has motivated you through your life?
- Is there an unresolved 'Tragic Gap' you wish to name?
- How have you contributed to the world, your family, your own soul journey?
- Often MEANING isn't about great accomplishments but about loving, letting love in and caring for yourself and others



Sacred Art of Living  
Center for Spiritual Integration

ART OF LIVING & DYING  
Workshop Series

IN FALL 2026  
Becoming  
**A** namcara  
APPRENTICESHIP  
The Art, Science & Practice of Sacred Relationship

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541 610 9208





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Responding to  
Spiritual Suffering

**MODULE FOUR**  
Transforming  
Spiritual Suffering



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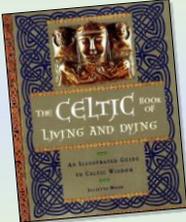
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A 1500 year old global tradition  
spanning centuries and cultures



**ANAM CARA**  
Sacred  
Caregiving  
Relationships



**BÁS SONA**  
May you have  
happy death

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**WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS**

**#3 THE ONLY WAY OUT OF  
SUFFERING IS TO LEAN INTO  
THE PAIN...**

Celtic Tradition



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**ANAMCARA TRADITION**

“May you have the commitment to know what has hurt you, to allow it to come closer to you, and, in the end, become one with you.”

—Celtic Wisdom, 6th Century



**DIE BEFORE YOU DIE...**  
**So that when you die,**  
**You will not die.**

— Universal Wisdom from the Ars Morendi



**Ars Morendi Manual**  
**1450 AD Woodcut**

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**PERSONAL REFLECTION**



- Bring to mind someplace in your life where things are not working well.
- Reflect on the wisdom from Fintan's Teaching to lean into the pain rather than avoid it...
- Consider how the teaching: “die before you die” might apply to this situation.

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**Sacred Art of Living**  
*Center for Spiritual Formation*

A Global Network of Prayer

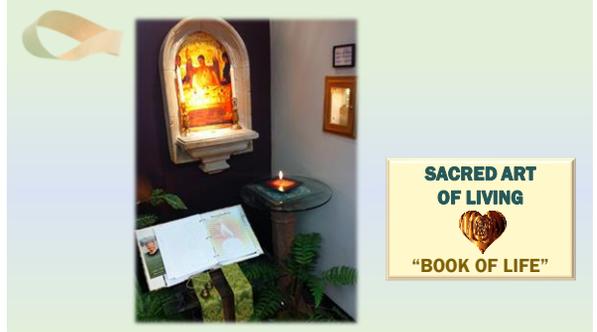
Please send your prayer requests to the Desk of Life through the SACL website at [www.sacredartofliving.org](http://www.sacredartofliving.org)

We will forward them to the nearest church and community of contemplative prayer around the globe.

**STORY OF THE SACL BOOK OF LIFE**

St. Patrick's Chapel at SACL

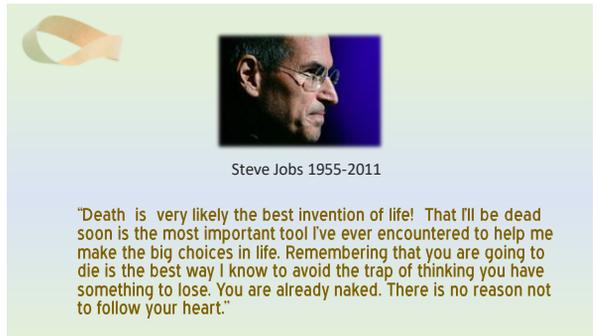
### INTENTIONS SENT WORLD WIDE



**SACRED ART  
OF LIVING**  
  
**"BOOK OF LIFE"**



### THE SACRED ART OF REMEMBERING



Steve Jobs 1955-2011

"Death is very likely the best invention of life! That I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."



## FINAL COURAGEOUS QUESTION



**“Tell me, what is  
it are you going  
to do with your  
one wild and  
precious life?”**

**Mary Oliver**