

Vocational Renewal: Fire and Breathing Spaces

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Themes

- Standing in the "Tragic Gap" (P. Palmer)
- Compassion Fatigue – who, why, & remedies
- Thin Places
- Being fully present – "Am I Here?" technique
- Silence.....Music.....
- Third Things
- The "Left-overs" of Ourselves
- Conflict and Disputing the Passage
- Taking heart so that we can give heart
- Power of Gratitude & a chance to begin again
- PRACTICES

Fire

•Poem by Judy Brown

Resource for Vocational Renewal and Relationships with Families and Colleagues

***Whirlwinds and Small Voices –
Sustaining Commitment to work with
Special-Needs Children***

Amy McConkey Robbins and Clarence
McConkey
Lucas Park Books (2010) and
www.amazon.com

www.amymcconkeyrobbins.com

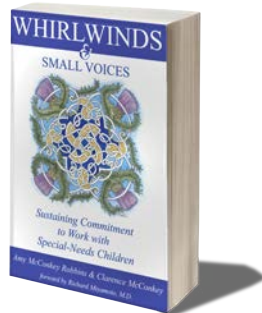
Whirlwinds & Small Voices

Sustaining Commitment to Work
with Special Needs Children



Available at: Amazon.com

Published by Lucas Park
Books



Parker Palmer – ***A Hidden Wholeness***

•The Tragic Gap:

The gap between, on one side,
the hard realities of our life and
work as they are, and on the
other, what we know to be
possible.

Podcast: [www.couragerenewal.org/podcast/
tragic_gap](http://www.couragerenewal.org/podcast/tragic_gap)

Rediscovering what brought you to this Profession

“Is the life I’m living the life that wants to live in me?” (P. Palmer)

Complete the Following:

“I felt I was where I was meant to be when.....

Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping
 - Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, care giving systems
- May be related to
 - Providing care
 - To the system
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
 - Altruism
- Trust breeds healing (Paul Brenner, M.D.)

Celtic Notion of Thin Places

- What are some examples of Thin Places in your work?

Practices

1. Keep a file/collection of small victories
2. Ask patients to leave you emails or voice messages about good things, not just problems
3. Identify poems, quotes or songs that speak to you, express your emotions, identify your purpose, give meaning, just make you feel good
4. Write about your work satisfaction, what brought you to the profession.

It’s gonna be a bright, sunshiny day....



A Paradox

“I will love the light for it shows me the way. Yet I will endure the darkness for it shows me the stars.”

- Og Mandino

Discouragement

At the end of a long, hard, crummy day I feel.....
 The futility of my small role vs. the enormity of the problem: One Starfish at a Time
 Geo. Harrison: "Watch out now/take care, beware of thoughts that linger/winding up inside your head/the hopelessness around you/In the dead of night/ Beware of Sadness"

Compassion Fatigue

- As carers, part of job is to hold hope for others when they are unable to hold it for themselves.
- So, must be mindful of our capacity to hold hope.
- Compassion Fatigue – a condition that erodes that capacity; a consequence of treating others who are hurting. May have a physiological basis – empathy comes at a cost sometimes
- CF may lead to Burn Out. People who experience Burn Out CAN'T DO IT ANYMORE
- It is professionally unethical to neglect self-care.

Compassion Fatigue

- The negative aspects of helping
- The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to
 - Providing care
 - To the system
 - Work with colleagues
 - Beliefs about self
- Burnout
- Work-related trauma

Eric Gentry* Antibodies in Compassion Fatigue Resiliency

1. Self-regulation. Relaxation of muscles, Breathing, visualization, slowing of heart rate
2. Intentionality. Ability to maintain your covenant - to remain within your integrity despite what is going on in your periphery (ability to follow path in which you aim yourself) NOTE the areas where you're inclined to breach your integrity.
3. Connection/Support. Employing 2 or more peers to serve as support for you.

*founder of Compassion Unlimited

Eric Gentry* Antibodies in Resiliency (con't) Compassion Fatigue

4. Recognize when receiving trauma-inducing info. Television; internet; newspaper; Work stories; Films; Books. Monitor the input you receive.
5. Avoid "either-or" thinking; shift to "both-and"
6. Practice good self-care. Everyday, incorporate activities that replenish you from among these domains: Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Social, Intellectual, Professional.

*founder of Compassion Unlimited

ProQOL

Self-report inventory for compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. By B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009.
www.isu.edu/~bhstamm

Music

"Is it really possible that we can sing when we don't feel like singing, that the singing itself lifts us up from the dark mood of overwork, disappointments and worries? To the mind-boggling renewal of the spirit through the ages, the discovery has been made that after rainy days there flows always a season of clear shining."

McConkey Robbins and McConkey, from *Whirlwinds and Small Voices*



PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION ACTIVITY

John O'Donohue

"When you really listen to music, you become detached from the world; indeed you enter another world **within the shelter of music.....**"

Our work/Our Home Life

A Whole Person: A Whole Professional who is not Consumed by my Work...Is it possible?

"This is not a life of simplicity but a life of multiplicity....." (A.Morrow Lindbergh)

The Phaedrus: "May the Inward and Outward person be as one..."

"Living from the Inside Out" (C. Rogers)

Giving the best of ourselves to our work and leaving only the left-overs for home/family

Practices

1. The "Am I Here?" practice
2. Be mindful of what you talk about outside of work time; social connections
3. Physical exercise
4. Parker Palmer's Authenticity Series (webcast)
5. Music, artistic expression of any kind
6. HUMOR – film, books, etc.

People Bring Themselves – or a version of it

- People bring a past and a present to anything they do
 - Their schemas and beliefs
 - Their stigma beliefs
 - Their social support systems
 - Positive support
 - Negative support
 - Their history of trauma and illness
 - Their families and close others
 - Their economic situation
- **Who do bring to your work and your life?**

Conflict

"Have you not learned.....from those who disputed the passage with you?" - Walt Whitman

- Ever-present Conflict
- White Hat Approach
- Naming the Conflict; Energy
- Fondness vs. Kindness
- Time does NOT always heal (H Nouwen)

New Inspirations

Why we need them
 Dust and the Windows of our Mind
 The Search for new ideas in our work
 Creating space for inspiration

Complete the following: "I have found new inspiration when"

I've Got An Implant (Chris Barton)

CHORUS:

You'll have an implant, a bionic ear,
 You'll have an implant, and you will hear,
 Your mom and your dad, your sis and your dog
 Your Grandma your Grandpa and even your frog



I got an implant, a bionic ear,
 I've got an implant, now I can hear,
 My teachers my friends, my MP3, the doorbell, the
 phone, and especially ME!
 I've love my I-M-P-L (hey, I heard that) A-N-T.

Power of Gratitude

"Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are....."

- Mary Jean Irion

- Van Kaam & Muto: the "more than" or "less than"
- JNIs that accumulate
- Gratitude in those from whom we least expect it
- "I wish God had given me a different brain!"
- It's contagious! (Christakis & Fowler, in Thompson (2009)
- Let them say of me/I was one who believed/In sharing the blessings/I received (G. Scheer)

The Big Difference

"Feeling appreciative thoughts and living accordingly makes the difference between appraising one's life as ultimately meaningful or ultimately meaningless."

- Van Kaam & Muto

Full Circle

"I slept and dreamed that life was joy. I woke, and found that life was service. I meditated, and behold! I found that service was joy."

Rabindranath Tagore

Resources/Practices

- ❖ Gratitude Journal
- ❖ Keep file of positive letters, comments
- ❖ The "Am I Here?" practice
- ❖ Putting thoughts on paper - Celebrate small victories or lay your burdens down in writing
- ❖ Exercise; artistic expression; hobbies
- ❖ Be the Watcher of your emotions (Tolle)
- ❖ Time with those removed from your work
- ❖ Behavior changes mood – so change your behavior (i.e., act happy)

"Under One Sky" (TuneUps, Barton & Robbins, 2008)

Under one sky there are oceans deep, Under one under sky, there are mountains steep

Under one sky they are all a part of everything.



Under one sky there's a baby's cry; under one sky a mother's lullaby

Under one sky we are all a part of everything.

CHORUS: And when we look up, from wherever we are –

We see one sun, one moon, and a million, billion, trillion, zillion stars

Under one sky..... “

Under one sky some use hands to talk, under one sky some need help to walk

Under one sky we are all a part of everything. Under one sky there are birds that sing; under one sky there are dreams with wings

Under one sky we are all a part of everything.

CHORUS

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