At its highest and best caregiving includes the dentist, giving to himself or herself and giving to his or her client. The statistics on stress, burnout, addictions, and career dissatisfaction in dentists poignantly show that this reciprocal giving to the client and him or herself is often absent in dentists.

Here is a collection of articles from the In a Spirit of Caring website to help dental caregivers care for themselves.
The "wounded healer" and what it means for dentists.
By Lynn Carlisle

The Wounded Healer - From the book In a Spirit of Caring, 1994, Chapter 13.

THE WOUNDED HEALER

The idea of the wounded healer has run, like a current through the history of health and healing. In ancient times, the predecessors of modern doctors were shamans, witch doctors, priests and medicine men and women. These ancient doctors often became a "healer" because of a personal experience with a physical, emotional or spiritual illness or disease. If they did not have a personal transformative experience, they went through rites of initiation that gave them an experience of their inner world and how it influenced their outer world. Their life experience in combination with their skills as a doctor, counselor, teacher and priest helped them in their roles as facilitators of healing.

ORIGINS OF THE WOUNDED HEALER

The Greek mythological figure Chiron is often called the origin of the idea of the wounded healer. According to this myth, during a battle Chiron was wounded in the knee with a poisoned arrow. The wound was incurable, but because Chiron was immortal he could not die, nor could he be cured. Chiron, who was a centaur half man and half horse, became the greatest teacher of medicine of his time because of his wound. He taught many early Greek physicians. Among them was Asclepius, who, in Greek mythology is regarded as the father of healing and medicine. A central teaching, which Chiron passed onto Asclepius, was the wisdom available to him through acknowledging his woundedness.

A central theme in Jean Auel's book Clan of the Cave Bear is the relationship between the crippled Shaman, Creb, and the heroine, Ayla. Because of their disabilities, both in their own way were outcasts. Creb's disability was his physical deformities and Ayla's was her heritage; she was not of the Clan but of the Others, a different race. Their experiences of these disabilities led to their effectiveness as the healers of the Clan.

Wounded healers still exist today within each of us. This idea has been forced underground because of the myth of perfection, of omnipotence, of being the all-knowing and all powerful one, which we have taken on like an ill-fitting cloak. We do not acknowledge our wounds, our feelings of failure when a procedure does not go well, our feelings of not doing enough when we are unable to figuratively or literally save the life of a person, the feeling of loneliness and isolation in our work with our patients, and feelings that no one else has the doubts and problems we have.

Paradoxically, these experiences and feelings are the ones that enable us to be more effective doctors as we enter the lives of our clients and understand their fear and anxiety because we have experienced similar fears and anxieties in our own lives. Our feelings of fear and failure often provide us with the greatest opportunities for learning, growth, and change as we struggle to make sense out of what on the surface seems senseless. Larry Dossey, M.D., in Beyond Illness writes:
The greatest healers, however, do not participate in this myth of perfection. They sense their own limitations as surely as they know their strengths. They know the necessity of illness in human life and its dynamic interrelatedness with health. For them the light and shadows are both essential ingredients of healthiness, and they do not attempt to ignore one in favor of the other." (Beyond Illness, Dossey, Larry, 1985, p.195-6)

VALE OF TEARS

Most effective doctors have gone through a vale of tears, a time of trial and tribulation, in their personal or practice life. This vale of tears has transformed their world view, their vision of what doctoring means to them. L.D. Pankey talks about how his mother's premature loss of her teeth at an early age of 42, led to his commitment to devote his dental career to saving teeth. "It was a letter from my mother who said, 'I am happy you are doing well in your practice, but I hope you are not doing to your patients what has been done to me. I have had all my teeth out and now have dentures. This has been the unhappiest experience of my life'."

Pankey said in relating how he felt that "The shock of it all and the considerable thought I gave it opened the door to a vision that the dentist's responsibility and goal should be to save patient's teeth for a lifetime, if at all possible." The experience of his mother and his own experience of doing similar treatments "to other people's mothers, what another dentist had done to mine sickened me". It led to his decision "I would never take out another tooth as long as I lived". (A Philosophy of the Practice of Dentistry, Pankey, Davis, 1985) In a lecture he gave sixty years later, his voice still quivered with emotion, as he described his feelings at the time he received his mother's letter.

Bob Barkley described a similar feeling of failure at his inability to help one of his favorite high school cheerleaders save her teeth. "Extremely anxious to help, I assured her that if she improved her brushing we could do wonders. Then I prescribed only such repair work as seemed absolutely necessary. Even these holding action estimates seemed monumental to a young family with four small children. The next time I saw her I could have cried she had committed dental suicide in another dental office and was waiting for her gums to heal before getting dentures.

"Never again" I told myself, "will I allow my holding action to cost more than tooth removal and dentures. In my office, it will be cheaper to keep teeth than to lose them. I will make prevention pay off." (Successful Preventive Dental Practices, Barkley, 1972) Both Pankey and Barkley's wounds led to a series of events that transformed their lives and changed the practice of dentistry.

My own experience of wounding came as a result of a series of events that included a divorce, a malpractice suit, the "Semmelweiss" effect of being one of the first people to introduce holistic health and wellness in my city, my decision to sell my practice and later my decision to stay in practice.

For other dentists, their experience of wounding came from the loss of key team members, mistakes in treatment or diagnosis, failed restorations, bad results, disgruntled patients, malpractice suits, financial difficulties and the myriad of other instances of wounding that are part of a dental practice.
The central theme in all these people's experiences was a deep dissatisfaction, a feeling of being incompetent, of having failed of being wounded that led to a transformative experience that gave a greater vision, a sense of new meaning and purpose to their professional lives. The deep dissatisfaction and feelings of failure led them to the hero's journey.

**PAIN AND SUFFERING**

**Doctoring involves pain and suffering, both our clients and our own.** In our professional life, we work with people who are in pain and are suffering. Usually, when our clients are experiencing pain and suffering, they are not fully themselves. Often, the fear and anxiety (fear results from that which is known, anxiety results from that which is unknown) that pain and suffering cause can make the patient childlike and sometimes crazy (they are not in touch with what is going on within themselves). This fear and anxiety manifests in anger, crying, whining, cancellations, postponing treatment, endless questions, vindictiveness, lawsuits, denial, and many other manifestations of human emotions. This pain and suffering includes the overt or covert patient hostility referred to in chapters four and eight that dentists are exposed to.

Cathy Kamensky, Laura Museo and Sandra Naiman wrote an article titled "Who's Killing the American Dentist" about this patient hostility. **They felt patient hostility resulted from the lack of control the patient has when dental work is done and "it is a deeply somatic response to the violation of a private space".** In their words the dentist gets emotionally "zapped" by the patient's hostility.

Sometimes, in our treatment and interactions with patients, there is just pain and suffering and life does not make sense. Doctors feel impotent because they do not understand why so much pain and suffering occurs in people's lives, including their own.

We have been taught largely through modeling experiences to wall ourselves off from this pain and suffering. **We distance ourselves at a time when our human presence is most needed by our clients.** We use these same defense mechanisms with our own pain and suffering. It fails miserably as the statistics on divorce, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, failed partnerships, and burn out in doctors illustrate.

I believe the block to experiencing our fears and our pain and suffering is that these fears will get stuck and we will be unable to rid ourselves of them. It is another paradox, that to go through pain and suffering we must acknowledge and express the presence of pain and suffering in our lives; to be open to it and allow it to flow through without trying to justify our fear and anxiety or blame others. We must confront and wrestle with our own pain and suffering before we can help others with their pain and suffering.

Psychologically healthy people are in touch with their feelings and can fully express these feelings. This expression helps the feelings to flow through and not get stuck. In Modern Man in Search of a Soul, Carl Jung wrote

*No one pays the doctor for his introspective efforts: and moreover, we are generally not interested enough in ourselves. Again, we so commonly undervalue the deeper aspects of the human psyche that we hold self-examination or preoccupation with ourselves to be almost morbid. We evidently suspect ourselves of harboring rather unwholesome things all too reminiscent of a sickroom. The physician must overcome these resistances in himself, for who can educate others while he remains*
uneducated? Who can enlighten his fellows while still in the dark about himself, and who can purify if he is himself unclean?

Bernie Seigel wrote of his experience in how "This expanded outlook helps a doctor to inspire hope, give with the heart as well as the head and hands, keep ego in the background and share major decisions with the patient. Such an approach rewards the physician as well as the patient. The love returns in words and looks of gratitude, in cards, and letters and in little gifts for the office, all of which restore you. A doctor who acts out of love doesn't burn out. He or she may be tired physically, but not emotionally".

BEETING A WARRIOR

My vision of a person centered doctor as a warrior is one of a doctor who experiences the sadness, fear, and hurt from his mistakes, his inability to help and cure all of his patients. He feels the frustration of not being understood by his patients, colleagues and coworkers. In this sadness, fear and hurt, he is brave and fearless enough to still reach out and touch the ground of goodness he believes exists in human beings. This process awakens his "sad and tender heart" and allows him to share this heart with others. By acknowledging his wounds, he brings light into the darkness generated by his fear and anxieties. His fears become unstuck instead of stuck.

Working with our own and others pain and suffering requires an understanding of the tradition of human warriorship that is founded upon the belief that "there is a basic human wisdom that can help to solve our world's problems". This tradition has existed in many cultures at many times in our history: Native American Indian, Tibetan Shambhala teachings, Japanese samurai tradition, the Christian and Jewish traditions of which King Arthur and King David are examples.

Chogyam Trungpa, a Buddhist meditation master, scholar, and artist, gave the following explanation of the Shambhala vision of warrior ship:

Warriorship in this context is the tradition of human bravery, or the tradition of fearlessness. The key to warriorship is not being afraid of who you are. In the face of the world's great problems, we can be heroic and kind at the same time. There is something basically good about our existence as human beings. Unless we can discover that ground of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others. The essence of warriorship, or the essence of bravery, is refusing to give up on anyone or anything. (Shambhala The Sacred Path of the Warrior. 1984)

In this kind of warriorship, when you appreciate yourself, your mind and body, "you begin to contact the fundamental notion of basic goodness in yourself. Developing tenderness toward yourself allows you to see both your problems and your potential accurately". This kind of gentleness toward yourself and appreciation of yourself provides the ground for helping yourself and others. So, in the Shambhala vision of warriorship, one who is a warrior is brave and fearless because he has discovered the touchstone of his own basic goodness and in touching his own goodness is able to perceive similar goodness in others. The gentle warrior has learned how to help and heal from going through the vale of tears his wounded ness created. This leads him to develop tenderness, caring, compassion, gentleness and appreciation for himself and others.

REACHING OUT
If you experience your wounds in isolation, without the help of others, your chance of healing yourself and helping others is problematical. The expression of my own wounds is helped greatly by the presence of supportive people and groups in my life. There are five groups that provide me with precious support when I reach out to them (and when I do not).

- One is a group that includes my wife, family and friends outside of dentistry. They are my companions on my life's journey and are able to help, love and support me when I am wounded. They are also wonderful playmates to take me into the world of re-creation that talks, walks, playing and hanging out with them provides.

- Second are my coworkers, the people I work with on a daily basis. I am most influenced by these people, because they are most available to me. They often can sense when something is going on with me before I am consciously aware of it. If I am disturbed by a patient, or by a mistake I have made, they are wonderful listeners when I express my feelings of frustration, hurt or anger. A hug, an understanding glance, from them helps me to know I am understood. This was not true early in my career, but as I became more understanding, respectful, and empathic toward my coworkers they mirrored these attitudes to me.

- The third group is my clients. I find that as I have expressed my humanness and vulnerability, they have responded with support and compassion. Through my practice newsletter, our client advisory board, and my one to one interaction with my clients, I have increasingly shared more of myself with results that have startled me.

My client's gratitude and support have been one of the most serendipitous experiences of my life. Initially, I thought I was sharing for my clients benefit, that I was being a good helper by being genuine and congruent. This did help my clients, and they began expressing their concern, their gratitude and appreciation for me. In helping them, in caring for them, they reciprocally did the same for me.

- The fourth is a study group of fellow dentists. I helped organize this group in 1977. Our initial focus was on technical aspects of dentistry, particularly restorative dentistry, and occlusal/muscle/temporomandibular joint dysfunction. Gradually, as we came to trust each other, we began to discuss our feelings about our personal and professional lives. We discussed our hurts and frustrations with cases that had failed; our exasperation in carrying out changes in our practices, our financial problems, the clients and staff with whom we were frustrated.

We asked each other's advice on cases, on how to work with difficult staff or client problems. We talked of our personal lives. During our time together, there have been divorces, marital problems, bankruptcies, heart attacks, burn out, problems with children, law suits, poor investments, and unfulfilled hopes, dreams and visions. There have also been moments of joy and achievement as we attained financial goals and honors, as children married, as articles were published, as opportunities to give back to dentistry arose, and there was recognition of the member's achievement of technical excellence in the practice of dentistry. We became friends, counselors and teachers to each other. We came to love each other.

In some unique ways, this group and the fifth group listed below are the most valuable to me. They are the most valuable, because they alone have the depth of understanding about me as a dentist because they are fellow dentists. Only they
have experienced what it is like to be a dentist with the attendant highs and lows. They have the wealth of their life’s experience as a dentist to draw upon to understand my trials and tribulations as a dentist. As we came to trust, care and love each other, this common bond helped us to enter each other’s world and express a deep empathic understanding of what it was like to be a dentist.

- The fifth group is an extended family of dental professionals in the U.S. and Canada. I have met these people because of my attendance and facilitation of workshops exploring the dimensions of the person centered approach in dentistry. It has been invaluable to me to interact with fellow travelers and to share common hopes and frustrations with the path we have chosen.

**WHO WILL HEAL THE HEALERS?**

Cecil E. Burney, Jr., a Jungian psychotherapist, captured the essence of this collegial bond beautifully in his poem "The Legacy after the Fact".

Who will heal the healers?
If not the healers themselves?
Knowing each other
Trusting each other
Touching each other
Finding each other again and again with tenderness.

Who will heal the healers?
If not the healers themselves?
Putting aside the demands of profession
And healing each other not with power
but with love.

Who will heal the healers?
If not the healers themselves?
Music itself is healing for them.
Lame Chiron taught Asclepius to heal
but he also taught music:

"He educated them to be physicians
and turned their minds to music
And made them into just men."*

Who will heal us?
If we do not heal each other?

With love
And with companionship
And with empathy
And with joy.

We enter the play of our life together
And become whole
Singing and playing and loving and healing.

There is justice for us where we venture to go.

*Philostratus, Heroicus

Legacy After the Fact by Cecil E. Burney, Jr. Reprinted by permission of Frank B. Burney, Executor, Cecil E. Burney, Jr. Estate
Take care of yourself doc!
By Lynn Carlisle

From the book *In a Spirit of Caring*, 1994, Chapter 14.

"Take care of yourself, doc!" A client once said that to me when I told him I was going through a tough time in my life. This is excellent advice. The saying that you can't give from empty pockets is very appropriate for dentists. The emphasis of dental school, continuing education seminars, articles and books is on what the dentist needs to do to provide care for his clients. In the dentist's role as a caregiver, there is the potential for the dentist to focus on giving his best care, skill and judgment to his clients and patients. The danger for the dentist is that he does not also give to himself. When one feels wounded one needs to take time to heal.

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

At its highest and best caregiving includes the giver of care, here the dentist, giving to himself and giving to his client. The statistics on stress, burnout, addictions, and career dissatisfaction in dentists poignantly show that this reciprocal giving to the client and himself is often absent in dentists. There is a danger in writing a book on helping that an implied message is that helping and caregiving is a one way process from the dentist to his client. I don't feel that this is true. I feel the dentist needs to give to himself in direct proportion to the care he gives his client.

Dentistry often is hard work and is the source of dis-stress for the dentist. A myriad of factors lead to dis stress: the rapidity of change in the dentists and clients lives, economic stresses, mistakes, the threat of malpractice suites, unrealistic client or patient expectations, dissatisfied clients or patients, staff or team problems, practice management problems, cash flow problems, financial difficulties, unrealistic expectations by the dentist, the perfectionistic and reductionistic residue of dentists training, third party encroachments in dentistry, the "busyness" problem, feelings of not doing or being enough, worrying, fear, anxiety etc. The list often seems endless.

There is a tendency to think, as I wrote in the first Dr. Becoming letter, that if only I find the magic ingredient(s) then all my problems will be solved and there will be no stress in my life. This is an unrealistic expectation. Life is a collage of hopes, fears, joys, problems and frustrations. This life cannot be avoided. The challenge is how do we respond to the hopes, fears, joys, problems and frustrations in our lives. How do we care for ourselves as we respond to these challenges?

The challenge of responding to the fears, frustrations and problems in our lives is enough to make all of us Buddhists, to view all of the happenings in our lives as just "grist for our mills"; to view these happenings with interest and curiosity but without attachment, without getting bound up in the What ifs? Ain't it awfuls and other thoughts that usually accompany the negative happenings in our lives. This would be a significant accomplishment and it is one I aspire to, but I haven't achieved it yet. At this time, my life goal is to get the butterflies in my stomach to fly in formation, as Rob Gilbert said in his quotation "It's all right to have butterflies in your stomach. Just get them to fly in formation."
I am intimidated by writing about caring for the caregiver. I am concerned that I will preach and act like I have solved all of my life's problems or I will be a cheerleader and say if only you think positively everything will be O.K.. I haven't solved all my problems and I will probably do a little cheerleading. This is probably why I aspire to getting my butterflies to fly in formation.

QUOTES

Truckloads of books have been written on what to do to change parts of people's lives that they don't like. Often these books both help and hinder one in his quest for happiness. This is probably due to the paradoxical nature of life. I am a collector of quotes and would like to share the following quotes with you. There will be a paradoxical nature between some quotes. Life is often paradoxical.

"Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared." Eddie Rickenbacker

"When you make a mistake, admit it. If you don't, you only make matters worse." Ward Cleaver

"The last of the human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." Viktor Frankl.

"Good people are good because they've come to wisdom through failure." William Saroyan

"I've had much to worry about - most of which did not happen." Walt Whitman

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Albert Einstein.

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." Carl Jung

"If I had a formula for bypassing trouble, I would not pass it round. Trouble creates a capacity to handle it. I don't embrace trouble; that's as bad as treating it as an enemy. But I do say meet it as a friend, for you'll see a lot of it and had better be on speaking terms with it." Oliver Wendell Holmes

"There is a miracle in every new beginning." Hermann Hesse

There will always be problems, challenges and stresses in our lives because it is the nature of our work and of being human. As these quotes suggest, it is how we respond to these events that make a difference in our lives.

KATZ'S WORK ON THE HARDY DENTIST

Cliff Katz, a dentist and psychologist, has applied Suzanne Kobasa's work on the hardy person to dentistry. Kobasa found a cluster of personality factors in executives who were more resistant to stress. Kobasa labeled these people Hardy types. Kobasa found three general characteristics that these people shared. CONTROL: The belief that they could control or influence the events in their life. COMMITMENT: A deeply felt commitment to the
institutions and activities in their lives. CHALLENGE: The anticipation of change as an exciting challenge to further development.

- CONTROL
- COMMITMENT
- CHALLENGE

The three C's

Katz wrote a beautiful essay "In Search of the Hardy Dentist". Katz's research in dentistry confirmed the findings of Kobasa. In his research, he related Hardiness to the level of perceived stress and career satisfaction in 300 randomly selected practicing dentists of the Texas Dental Association. The dentists who scored low on the Hardiness scale were more likely to rate dentistry as stressful and were less likely to feel satisfied with their choice of dentistry as a career. (Katz's series is available on the In a Spirit of Caring web site.)

Katz did a review of the literature on stress among dentists and found that many personality characteristics of dentists as a group contribute significantly to their stress levels. These researchers discussed the perfectionistic, high achiever, Type A, rigid, authoritarian, conservative and highly pragmatic characteristics of most dentists as predisposing these dentists to high levels of stress.

Paradoxically, many characteristics that have enabled these dentists to be successful in the technical aspects of dentistry are a hindrance in times of rapid change and in the presence of problems and frustrations. In times of turbulent change these strengths become weaknesses. In turbulent times, Katz feels the personality characteristics of openness, flexibility and a high tolerance for ambiguity are more appropriate in coping with change. Katz states "In other words, the degree of stress in dentistry appears not to be a function of characteristics of dentistry, but rather a function of the characteristics of the person who is practicing dentistry."

Katz's experience with dentists, whom he would describe as hardy, leads him to believe that these people were not born this way, but they have learned to be hardy. He states "Becoming Hardy is a process of growth and change that may take many forms, but always takes time and concerted effort."

There it is again the emphasis on learning, growth and change and creating conditions that support and facilitate positive change. The difference is that this time the emphasis is on creating these conditions for the caregiver so he can heal his own wounded ness. When he is wounded the dentist needs to embark upon the hero's journey through the vale of tears, which trials and tribulations create, to heal himself.

CREATING HEALING RITUALS

Rituals are usually seen as meaningless exercises or rules that are imposed from without and are discarded or are mindlessly done. When rituals come from within they are powerful enablers of change. To go through the vale of tears that the trials and tribulations of dentistry create, I feel it is important for the dentist to create healing rituals in his life. My definition of a ritual is an activity that when repeated often enough assumes a meaning of its own and creates meaningful change in one's life. Rituals are important facilitators of healing and give meaning to life transitions and events. The healing rituals cluster about nutrition, exercise, relationships, humor and play, positive focusing, knowing yourself and
your personal history, creating meaningful work, honoring sacred moments, the ability to give and receive love and a belief in a higher power.

**Nutrition anything that nourishes** - The root meaning of nutrition and nurture is the same "nutrire" to nourish. In respect to diet, nutrition is the science or study of a proper balanced diet to promote health. Dentists are well schooled in the importance of diet and health. What about the other things we take in? Do we surround ourselves with people who support and nurture us? Do we give as much time or more thinking about what is right in our lives as we do with what is wrong? Do we take time in our life to create through images what we want our life to be? Have we created external and internal environments that nourish us (home, office, gardens)? Does our dental practice nurture us?

**Exercise to put into action or employ** - Traditionally, exercise is thought of as exercising the body as in the proper amount of aerobic exercise. Do you exercise your other aspects? Do you put into action your knowledge of what is good for you? Do you exercise your intellect, your creativity, your ability to learn? Do you put yourself in situations that are good for you and avoid situations that are destructive? Do you get the proper kind and amount of exercise food, and rest? Do you change negative thought patterns into a positive focus?

**Relationships** - As mentioned in other chapters, have you created healing relationships with others in your life? When you are troubled are there people and groups in your life you can turn to for help?

**Humor** - Norman Cousins described laughter as internal jogging. Life is often so ridiculous that it should not be taken seriously. Is there an abundance of humor, of joy in your life? Humor is healing if it is affectionate, spontaneous and warm. Do you engage in activities that make you laugh; that bring you joy? Is one of these activities your dental practice? Who are the people in your life that you have fun with? Do you spend a significant amount of time with them? When life gets ridiculous can you laugh at the absurdity of it all?

**Play** - All of us are childlike and love to play. Play gives us a chance at re-creation. "Play, Richard Cabot said, keeps the soul alive." Katz’s research on the Hardy dentist showed that the dentists that had balance in their life between work and play can cope better with stress. Often, dentist’s leisure activities are as intense as their work life. They carry their obsessions into their play on the tennis court, on the golf course, in the garden. Does your play revitalize you? Does it give a sense of re-creation?

**Positive focusing** - Our thoughts, both positive and negative, are the most powerful determinants of the quality of our life. Thoughts are metaphysical energy that can drain us or enervate us. Rolling Thunder, an Indian medicine man said:

"People have to be responsible for their thoughts so they can learn to control them. It may not be easy but it can be done."

He emphasized the importance of speaking with good purpose and not paying attention to unwanted thoughts, of continually making choices to think with clear and pure minds. He said "you can think what you choose --- If they (unwanted thoughts)
keep coming into your head, just let them alone and say, 'I don't choose to have such thoughts'.

The theme of positive focusing, of focusing on what is right, what is good, true and beautiful is common to all religions and cultures. It has been a difficult lesson for me to learn that I am responsible for my thoughts. Thoughts do not happen by accident. I can change them and by changing them I determine the quality of my life. I can make my butterflies fly in formation.

Knowing yourself and your personal history - Socrates said it first "Know yourself". Do you know what your stress buttons are? Do you know how your personal history - the schooling, family and personal events that have shaped you? Do you understand how these events are manifested in your life?

Most dentists are practicing or recovering perfectionists. This myth of perfection that is instilled in dentists in dental school (and by the way you were brought up) needs to be replaced with the recognition of the dentist's humanness. David Burns wrote that "Fear always lurks behind perfectionism. Confronting your fears and allowing yourself the right to be human can, paradoxically, make you a far happier and more productive person".

Knowing that your personal history from dental school and your family contributed to the unrealistic expectation of perfection and replacing it with more realistic expectations is foundational to caring for yourself. Dentists are high achievers. They have successfully jumped over many hurdles on their way to becoming a dentist. Mistakes and failure are not handled well by most dentists and yet they happen. James Joyce said "Mistakes are the portals of discovery". Knowing yourself and how you respond to events is important. This self-awareness is the beginning of changing destructive habits, beliefs and thought patterns -- especially the myth of perfection.

Creating meaningful work - There is a difference between a job and a career or a profession. A job is something you do to earn money to pay the bills and to enable you to do things you enjoy doing. A career or profession is work that you do because you enjoy it of and for itself. Noel Coward said "Work is much more fun than fun."

One of the biggest stressors in dentistry is the perception of dentistry as a job. There was a time in my life when I physically shuddered as I contemplated going to the office or even as I drove by my office on weekends. Many dentists feel trapped by the income they derive from dentistry. They need the income from dentistry to support the things they enjoy doing. Or they feel so deep in debt that they cannot envision a way to leave dentistry or to do what they want to do in dentistry.

This brings us to the issue of money and the issue of how much is enough? Emmett Miller defines money as "stored human time and energy and as such it is a sacred trust and must be used wisely and for good". Money is a vehicle for placing a value on the life energy you invest in helping your clients to attain what they want. It is your attitude toward money that determines whether it will be a synergistic or destructive force in your life. It can be a great facilitator to live an enriching life or it can be very destructive if we always feel as if there is not enough.
An important question is how much is enough? One of the Rockefellers replied to this question "Just a little bit more". This attitude is like a horse chasing a carrot on a stick and results in continual dissatisfaction.

I have come to value a life of voluntary simplicity. Duane Elgin defines Voluntary Simplicity as "a manner of living that is outwardly more simple and inwardly more rich: an integrative way of living that balances both the inner and outer aspects of our lives, a deliberate choice to live with less in the belief that more of life will be returned to us in the process".

**The ability to give and receive love** - Love is a heavily charged word and has many different meanings in different contexts. I like Hugh Prather's definition of love. "Love expands: it not only sees more and enfolds more, it causes its object to bloom. --- We need other people, not in order to stay alive, but to be fully human: to be affectionate, funny, playful, to be genuine." Love is a belief in the basic goodness of life. The ability to give and receive love is the affirmation of our reason for being. It gives meaning and direction to our life. It is our connection with the divine and sacred and it is how the divine and sacred are manifested in our lives.

**Honoring sacred moments** - There are many sacred moments in our lives; times when we feel connected with the divine source in our lives. These moments can be noticed by the feelings of peace, joy, well-being and love in our deepest being. Some examples of sacred moments are: watching a beautiful sunset, laughing with friends, a look or gesture of gratitude from a client or co-worker, meaningful walks or talks with your spouse, feeling "in the zone" when playing your favorite sport, meditation or prayer, watching animals, realizing the sacred nature of life, responding well to a situation that usually stresses you to your limits, a simple or complex procedure done well with a client. There are countless other examples of sacred moments. These moments happen frequently in our lives, yet we do not take the time to honor them, to appreciate them, to let them seep into our consciousness and permeate our sense of self-worth.

But give me a problem that hurts, bothers or worries me and watch the time I spend paying attention to the problem by dwelling on it and letting it consume my life by forcing out all other aspects of my life.

Recognizing the sacred moments in your life and honoring these moments by letting them fill your life with joy, peace and love is the best work you will do in your life. Venerate sacred moments by spending more time in your life recognizing them, enjoying them, feeling them and letting them radiate throughout your life.

**Belief in a higher power** - Belief in the supernatural is common to all cultures. It has many forms: religion, spirituality, belief in the unknown mystery of life. This belief in a higher power, in the divine and sacred, sustains people through life's greatest trials and tribulations. Meditation, contemplation, quiet time and prayer are the common ways people connect with the divine and sacred. I have come to recognize that my career in dentistry is a spiritual journey and has aspects of the sacred and divine.

**Professional counseling** - There are times when a part of caring for yourself involves asking for help from skilled empathic professional counselors such as psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers or clergy members. These skilled
counselors can serve as guides to help you gain understanding and perspective on the problems that are bothering or haunting you.

These healing rituals help caregivers restore and heal themselves on their life journey. They give meaning and direction to their personal and work life and enable them to help their clients heal.
What are your top 10 strengths as a dentist?
By Lynn D Carlisle DDS

Most of us, as dentists, spend most of our time focusing on correcting our weaknesses. We generally don’t have trouble doing this.

But when challenged to list our strengths, it is more difficult.

Can you list your 10 top strengths as a dentist?

Angeles Arienne, PhD, a cultural anthropologist, suggested we should spend as much time focusing on what is right as we do on what is wrong.

Additionally, there is a field that is called "Strengths Based Management and Leadership". Rich Green, DDS, Director Emeritus of the Business Systems Development Department at The Pankey Institute, has written several articles on this for dentists: Strengths based Management in a Dental Practice.

Where are the leaders in dentistry today? - Part I

Rich works with the Gallup group and studied under Don Clifton PhD whose research on the strengths of great leaders led to Clifton's title as the "Father of Strength Psychology". This landmark 30-year research project led to Gallup's revolutionary conclusion that maintains that we perform best when we focus on building our strengths. This bucks the conventional wisdom that encourages us to focus on fixing our weaknesses.

When asked what his greatest discovery was from three decades of leadership research, Clifton said:

A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths - and can call on the right strengths at the right time. This explains why there is no definitive list of characteristics that describes all leaders.

Tom Rath and Barry Conchie of the Gallup group have written an excellent book on "Strengths Based Leadership". The book includes an access code to take Gallup's "StrengthsFinder" program. Amazon.com: Strengths-Based Leadership (9781595620255): Tom Rath, Barry Conchie: Books

Block out time to create - without interruption - a list of your strengths. See if the strengths you have listed are similar to your personal strengths. If you take the "StrengthFinder" compare your list to what they identify.

Focus on these, own and celebrate them; then use them daily.
Do your best - let go of the rest: wisdom from Henry Tanner (and the Cub Scouts)
By Lynn Carlisle

When I was growing up, I was a Cub and Boy Scout. It was a great experience for me. Many of the lessons I learned then are still with me today.

One of them was "Do your best". It was the Cub Scout motto and I think it is a good motto for a dentist - much better than perfection and even excellence.

Perfection is not attainable and excellence can be an arbitrary standard.

When we do dental treatment, there are many variables. We may not be able to attain an arbitrary standard.

However, doing your best under the circumstances is very achievable.

A few years ago, I attended a meeting honoring Henry Tanner's 50 years in dentistry - there were many glowing tributes to Henry from dentists who had been his students at USC and The Pankey Institute. At the end of the meeting, Henry talked about what he thought was important in dentistry. (See the Tanner article below.)

One of the things he said has stuck with me - "Do your best and let go of the rest". As I heard him say that I thought, "That is the Cub Scout motto!".

Some things come full circle.

A day with Henry Tanner, DDS - honoring his fifty years in dentistry.
The importance of regular personal retreats
By Lynn D Carlisle DDS

Most years at this time (late summer) I go on a personal retreat. It is a time of reflection, renewal, refocusing, re-energizing and re-creating. I suggest you do it also.

Why? Because life and dentistry can be stressful and we can lose our enjoyment of practicing dentistry.

Personal retreats can keep you in sight of what is most important. What are the criteria I use for a personal retreat? (These are guidelines - the important thing is that the retreat takes you away and allows you to focus on what is important in your life.)

- It is a physical place within 2-3 hours of your home. (It can be farther away, but the logistics of accessing it can prevent you from using it frequently.)
- It needs to be in or next to nature.
- It needs to be 3-4 days or longer.
- It is quiet.
- It is a place where you feel at peace, relaxed and restored.
- It is a place you have experienced the above feelings.
- It is a place where you can just chill out, veg, contemplate or meditate.
- It is solo or at a place of planned contemplation like a monastery or church retreat.
- The simpler and less expensive, the better.
- Retreat yearly or as needed.

The focus should be on not doing, but being and staying present in the moment or now. (If someone asks "What did you do? the answer will probably be "Mostly nothing".)

Where have I gone? The Y-camp of the Rockies, my old Boy Scout camp when it was not in session, Shambhala Center in Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, church retreats, Forest Service campgrounds, backpacking, and skiing to name more than a few.

I am leaving tomorrow with a destination that is unknown (it will be in my beloved Colorado Rockies).

Where have you gone for your personal retreats? What criteria do you use for your personal retreats?
Up against the wall? Stumped? You may be dealing with a predicament instead of a problem.

By Lynn Carlisle

Most dentists are practicing or recovering perfectionists - When confronted by a problem we cannot solve we often blame - either ourselves or the patient.

I wonder if L.D. Pankey stayed awake at night worrying about a problem. I wonder if Harold Wirth stayed awake at night worrying about a patient. I wonder if John Anderson ever stayed awake at night worrying about a procedure he had done that had not gone well. I was too shy and in awe of them to ask these questions. I wish I had. I suspect that they did experience these problems. For life gives us all problems and predicaments that cause us to stay awake worrying and mulling them over in our minds.

I wonder: if they were confronted by problems and predicaments they could not solve, if they looked at an x-ray of a crown they had cemented and there was a short margin, if they had a patient with occlusal/muscle pain that they could not help, if they had a patient they could not get along with. I wonder if they felt frustrated - like they had failed when these situations arose. Again I suspect that they did. I hope so, because I have had these situations arise and I felt frustrated and felt like I had failed.

I believe all dentists are presented with these kinds of problems and predicaments. At times every dentist feels the tendrils of failure and frustration wrapping around him or her. It goes with being a dentist and human being. It is why I wrote about the Wounded Healer in my book In a Spirit of Caring.

The Wounded Healer exists in all of us who practice dentistry. Wounding can come from a variety of directions: the loss of key team members, mistakes in treatment, failed restorations, bad results, disgruntled patients, malpractice suits, financial difficulties, being too busy or not busy enough and the myriad other instances of wounding that are part of practicing dentistry.

As dentists, we are remarkably successful in solving the dental problems our patients bring us. Our training has made us excellent problem solvers. It seems when we become adept at solving problems; we are presented with more complex problems to solve. We feel pride at our ability to solve dental problems. This becomes a major part of our self-image.

If this is so, it also creates a predicament. When confronted by a problem we cannot solve we often blame - either ourselves or the patient. If our self-image includes being a superior problem solver and we cannot solve a problem then the potential is there for us to feel like a failure. Most of us do not tolerate failure well. There is a myth of perfection in dentistry that is destructive to the people in dentistry.

Most dentists are practicing or recovering perfectionists.
It comes from our training in dental school and is reinforced from the lecture platform in continuing education courses. Often it is enforced by emphasizing the penalties that mistakes and failures create for the patient. This advice and emphasis are well meaning. It is to help us not make mistakes that create iatrogenic problems that will harm the patient. There are consequences when we make mistakes or fail. Yet, we are human beings who make mistakes. This creates a paradox that is difficult for many dentists to resolve. Can my self-image of being a good dentist tolerate mistakes or failure?

David Burns wrote that "Fear always lurks behind perfectionism. Confronting your fears and allowing yourself the right to be human can, paradoxically make you a far happier and more productive person." The fear that lurks behind perfectionism is the fear of failure. The fear of failure creates a predicament with our self-image as a good problem-solving dentist. Can we do anything with this predicament?

**A valuable lesson can be learned from philosopher Abraham Kaplan.** Kaplan distinguished between problems and predicaments. He said that problems can be solved; predicaments can only be coped with. Richard Farson in his book Management of the Absurd writes that "A problem is created by something going wrong, by a mistake, a defect, disease or a bad experience. When we find the cause, we can correct it. A predicament, however, paradoxically as it may seem, is more likely to be created by conditions we highly value. That is why we can only cope with it." Dentists highly value being excellent problem solvers. Yet the better they become at problem-solving the more they will be presented with predicaments.

Ah! **Problems can be solved; predicaments cannot be solved, they can only be coped with.** This distinction helps. Farson says that "a predicament is often made worse when we treat it like a problem." Problems require analytic thinking to solve them. Analytic thinking is something dentists are comfortable with and excel in.

**Predicaments require interpretive thinking.**

"Predicaments require interpretive thinking. Dealing with a predicament demands the ability to put a larger frame around a situation, to understand it in its many contexts, to appreciate its deeper and often paradoxical causes and consequences. Alas, predicaments cannot be handled smoothly." Dentists are not as comfortable in the ambiguous realm of interpretive thinking.

Problems are no longer problems when they are solved. Predicaments hang around and constantly challenge us. Being a dentist is a predicament. We will always be confronted with the fact that we are human beings who practice dentistry. A part of being human is that on occasion we will make mistakes and feel like failures.

This is not a problem and it cannot be solved. This is a predicament and something we need to cope with. There is freedom in predicaments. They "cannot be handled smoothly." We do not have to handle predicaments perfectly. We do not need to be perfect to be a dentist. We can only do our best in coping with predicaments and let go of the rest. Sometimes we do not need to do our best when confronted by a predicament.

**I wonder** what L.D. Pankey, Harold Wirth and John Anderson would say about problems and predicaments?

Richard Farson can look at the world of management from a contrarian perspective. He examines many old line myths of what makes a good manager or leader and exposes them as the paradoxes they really are. He presents the idea that life is absurd, that human affairs are irrationally paradoxical instead of rational. Farson encourages the reader to go beyond the conventional wisdom of management theory and recognize how paradox and absurdity play central roles in managing and leading people.

This is a small (170 pages) book that can be read quickly. However, it is not a quick read, it causes you to pause and think about the implications of what Farson is saying. It can be exasperating as he challenges your traditional views of management. Yet it gives you the gift of fresh, innovative insight to timeless human relations problems. The gift comes from prodding you to rethink your assumptions of what works as a manager or leader.
Do stressful thoughts about your dental practice keep you up at night?
By Lynn D Carlisle DDS

Recently, a young dentist I am mentoring asked me if I ever couldn't go to sleep at night because I worried about a dental patient or procedure I had done that day or a problem in the office - if what I had done wasn't good enough or that there would be a problem.

I said no. He seemed relieved.

Then I followed by saying "I wake up in the middle of the night and worry about a dental patient or procedure gone wrong". He was discouraged by my answer, because he thought that when he became a wise elder like me, he wouldn't be worrying.

The French call this "bêtes la nuit" which means "Beasts in the night". (It is also called "hour of the wolf"). Worrying like this is a beast. Your paranoid imagination takes over and you ruminate like a cow endlessly rolling the worst case scenario over and over again. (Another definition of ruminate is a cow endlessly chewing its cud).

You feel this is truly paranoia and you want to stop, but you still ruminate.

This kind of rumination is not paranoia which is a psychotic state, but it feels like it in the middle of the night.

Here is how Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) described this in Autobiography of Mark Twain, The complete and authoritative edition, Volume 1:

> With the going down of the sun, my faith failed, and the clammy fears gathered about my heart. ---- Those were awful nights, nights of despair, nights charged with the bitterness of death. ---- But as a rule they could not stand the daylight. They faded out and shredded away and disappeared in the glad splendor of the sun. They were creatures of fear and darkness and they could not live out of their own place. The day gave me cheer and peace.

Ruminating over problems or perceived problems is viewed as normal. Most people do this. But it is abnormal. This "little voice in your head" is not you. This was an amazing discovery for me and it made all of the difference in deflating the beasts.

> For most of us, worrying is part of being a dentist. We do very complex procedures, in a demanding physical environment, and
For most of us, worrying is part of being a dentist. We do very complex procedures, in a demanding physical environment, and in a stressful psychological atmosphere. We want to help people and we want to do well. When we don't achieve this, we feel bad. We wake up in the middle of the night and ruminate.

Knowing that other people experience the "Beasts of the night" helps. One of my favorite quotes is by Walt Whitman, an early American writer and poet. He said "I've had much to worry about in my life - most of which didn't happen". This is true of the vast majority of the problems we worry about.

Shamans in indigenous cultures advised their tribe members to add "and that's a story that doesn't need to happen" immediately after a troubled thought crossed their mind.

I do this.

**Meditation, contemplation and praying also help break the cycle of endless worry.**

Meditation is listening to and prayer is asking for help from a higher source.

One of Meditation's prime goals is to quiet the mind so you can listen. Buddhist's liken the mind to an untamed wild horse. Your mind ruminating in the middle of the night is like a wild horse. Meditation calms the wild horse.

**Here is a Cherokee story that illustrates this:**

An old Cherokee is telling his Grandson about the fight that is going on inside himself. The fight is between two wolves. One wolf is represented by anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other wolf is filled with joy, peace, love, hope, generosity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, truth, compassion and faith in humankind.

The grandson asks, "Which wolf wins, Grandfather?"

The simple reply was "The one I feed".

The best way I have found to stop the "beasts in the night" is to bring "conscious attention" to my mind and the thoughts that are running through it. These thoughts have been labeled; "the little voice in my head", ego, the little self, tapes, thinking, mental diarrhea, and mental static.

These thoughts are always present, but most of the time we are not aware of them. Being present and noticing them takes the power away from them.

**I don't judge these thoughts as I bring "conscious attention" to notice them.** Surprisingly just noticing them takes the emotion out of them. Then I turn my attention to the now. I get out of my mind and put my attention on my

"The best way I have found to stop the beasts in the night is to bring conscious attention to my mind and the thoughts that are running through it."
breathing and the feel of my body in bed. **Power breathing**

(You can do the same thing during the day, by bring your "conscious attention" to what is running through your mind and then noticing what is going on in your immediate environment.) Jacob Needleman calls this exercise "having your thoughts, but not being had by them".

**I do this - again, and again and again.** This exercise goes back at least to Marcus Aurelius, 2,000 years ago **Looking for a great (timeless) summer read?**. It is present in one form or another in all religions. Current books that go into much more detail are *The Power of Now* by Eckart Tolle and *Why Can't We Be Good?* by Jacob Needleman. **New addition to the ISOC top ten reading list - Why Cant we be Good?**.

Father Thomas Keating, a Trappist monk of St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, has written a book on "Centering Prayer" titled *Open Mind, Open Heart, The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*. Father Keating is a Christian mystic who has recaptured the contemplative tradition for Christians and other interested seekers.

All of the above books are available on [http://www.amazon.com/b/ref=usbk_surl_books/?node=283155](http://www.amazon.com/b/ref=usbk_surl_books/?node=283155)

**Prayer gives up your problem to a higher source.** A blues song phrase says "When your worried, give it up, hand it over, get down on your knees and pray". Good advice. I use "The Lord's Prayer".

This obviously is just skimming the surface. Many generations have discovered and applied these timeless wisdom teachings.

**You will find that if you stick with these meditations and prayers - again, and again, and again, and again "like water dripping on stone", that over time, you will be the master of the "beasts in the night" instead of being the hunted.**
What primitive cultures can teach dentists and dental team members about health and wellness

By Kirsten Carlisle, BA

Indigenous cultures have a wealth of knowledge to help us cope with our work stress and "civilized society". My wife, Kirsten Carlisle wrote this article in 1997 after attending Angeles Arrien's workshop at "Rocky Mountain Rendezvous (RMR). It was published in our dental practice newsletter and has been republished 3 times on ISOC in response to challenging times - like now.

Primitive man in civilized clothing. Eight Universals that sustain health and well being.

Lecture notes by Kirsten Carlisle

This summer at our annual RMR meeting in Keystone, I had the privilege of attending a two-day workshop with Angeles Arienne. Angeles is an anthropologist and Basque folklore specialist who teaches cross-cultural myths, symbols, and rituals. She is core Faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Menlo Park, CA, and at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

She has lectured nationally and internationally and has appeared on radio and television sharing her cross-cultural work on myth and symbol. She has written several books and has a new one coming out in January 1998 called "Signs of Life."

Angeles became curious about common cross-cultural themes regarding maintaining health and promoting well-being. She found eight themes present in 94% of the cultures today. Many of the themes are familiar but she had a refreshing outlook and there were additional perspectives that seemed important as well as enlightening for me. Here are some of my notes:

1. Diet - (Present in 100% of all cultures)

Although the physical diet is important and each society has formulas for healthy eating, Angeles stressed the diet for mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. The questions to ask are: Is our self-worth as strong as our self-critic? Is the good, true and beautiful as strong as the diminished in our thinking? Do we spend as much time thinking about what is right as we do on what is wrong? We need emotional first aid and a spiritual diet to keep ourselves healthy. (Some suggestions will follow.)

"Do we spend as much time thinking about what is right as we do on what is wrong?"

--Angeles Arrien, PhD
2. **Music - (Sound and Sonics)**

Singing, dancing, storytelling, and silence are all aspects of this theme in health.

Angeles maintains that we all need to sing and dance. It is an extremely important form of expression and release. (It is also a lot of fun.) We should ignore people who are critical of our voice or style of dancing and go ahead and "Just do it!"

Music is a highly individual matter. We need to respect the difference in musical tastes (even teenagers deserve respect—there is a reason they choose the music they do.) She suggests that we write down our favorite all time pieces of music. We can tell a great deal about the stages of our lives, our values, tastes, etc.

Another important form of expression is story telling. We need to be interested in our own story as well as the story of others. (I really like this one— I became enthralled in stories—the longer the better.)

We also need to be comfortable in silence as this is our time with ourselves and hopefully when we are at ease.

One way to tune into our dis-ease would be to ask the question; "When did I stop singing and dancing? When did I stop enjoying my story and/or the stories of others?

When did I become uncomfortable in silence?"

3. **Humor - (Fun and Play)**

Angeles found that the greatest healers have a sense of humor. Humor opens people up if it is affectionate, spontaneous and warm. Sarcastic humor, on the other hand, can be harmful.

The things to ask yourself are: "What is my idea of fun and play? Who makes me laugh? Who can I count on to have fun with?" These people are healing agents in our lives.

She pointed out that where you lose your sense of humor is where you are attached. I do not laugh as loudly as others do in reference to my maternal likeness.

4. **Creativity - (having a creative purpose)**

"Let the beauty of what you love, be what you do."

If your creative purpose is not fulfilled in your job, it is good to have a hobby or outside interest that will satisfy this need. If you do not have a hobby, try to recall what totally absorbed you as a child. Often you can rekindle this interest.

(These are all the notes I have on this section— I think it is because this is the area I personally neglect.)
5. **Support Systems -- (The energy of love is gratitude, appreciation, and recognition)**

The saddest thing is unexpressed love. The USA has the largest market for pets and stuffed animals - this is deferred love. **There are four ways in which we acknowledge one another -- character, appearance, skills and the impact they have on us.** The most damaging way we can treat another person is by neutralizing them -- treating someone as an "it".

Take stock of your support systems: We need support from our family; we need spiritual support, emotional support, and professional support. The most healing and rewarding relationships are both/and -- a two-way relationship of giving and taking.

The shadow side of love is fear and indifference.

6. **Environment --** Our environment can sustain us or be a doorway to disease.

- **Nature** -- We need at least an hour a day outdoors -- in the fresh air with natural light. (It does not work to save up six hours for the weekend.) Connecting with nature is a good way to connect with ourselves.

- **Internal environment** -- Ask yourself which room you spend the most time in. This room should reflect your personal tastes, it should have colors that you like, and it should have things that are important to you. Each person in the family needs their own space -- to decorate, to be private, to reflect their style. Your work space should also be "yours".

Angeles recommends that someone who is recovering from an illness should recuperate in the room they are most active in (not the bedroom). Being in this room helps the person desire activity -- hence a desire to recover.

- **Deep internal environment** --

  A good place to check yourself in this area is by asking the question "Is my self-worth as strong as my self-critic? We need to consciously nurture our self-worth, some people unwittingly nurture the self-critic. Self-love, self-trust and self-respect are all essentials to our self-worth. Being able to confide in ourselves is the true meaning of confidence.

  She asked where we have our self-esteem bank -- is it professionally, personally or creatively? We all have areas where we feel more assured and areas that we tend to feel more or less inadequate. It is wise to acknowledge ourselves when it is appropriate and be gentle with the areas that could use improvement. At the end of each day take a nightly review- take note of what is working, do not dwell on the negative.

  With ourselves and with others we need to enhance self-worth by motivating, empowering and inspiring. Guilt trips and intimidation produce the opposite effect.

7. **Belief in the supernatural --**
This theme is associated with faith -- "something unknown can support me". This can be religion, spirituality or the unknown mystery. We commune with the "higher power" by praying. There are three kinds of prayer -- asking, gratitude and worship. We ask for guidance, for things and comfort. Hopefully, we are thankful for answered prayer is worship to the higher power.

8. Exercise --

The body is designed to move. Finding the appropriate physical exercise can enhance and prolong life. The most important movement however is change. By celebrating and honoring the marker times of life -- Birth, adolescent initiations, marriage and death, we can move through the stages of life with greater ease.

We need to look at how we make room for the new in our lives. Angeles suggested that we do something new on each date of our birthday, 12 times a year. In this way we can practice, learn and give up our resistance to change; because change happens whether we want it or not. The more resilient and adaptable we are, the easier life can be for us.

She suggests that we follow the example of the snake. It takes four or five days to shed the old skin. It is a difficult painstaking process, but once it is out the snake never looks back.

Change is the universal exercise.

Life is simple if we adhere to the four-fold way:

- Show up
- Pay attention
- Tell the truth without blame, judgment or attack.
- Do not have attachments to outcome.

We need to comfortable in both the inner and outer world. Walk the mystical path with practical feet.

"Change is the universal exercise."

-- Angeles Arrien, PhD

*Rocky Mountain Rendezvous was a transformational experience for many dentists. It was hosted yearly, starting in 1981, at Keystone, Colorado for almost twenty years by the Bob Barkley Foundation. I had the privilege to serve on the Barkley board for this time. (LDC)

Angeles Arrien's *The Four Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary* is an excellent resource. [http://www.spiritofcaring.com/snip/125.htm](http://www.spiritofcaring.com/snip/125.htm)
The Soul's Journey and relationship-based or health-centered dental practices.
By Lynn D Carlisle, DDS

Mike Schuster is a passionate person and reader. Frequently, I am the beneficiary of his missives.

Here is a William James quote he recently sent me after our discussions on the challenges of spreading the word on health-centered practices:

Willing endurance of suffering and grief is the price that you have to pay for conscious fidelity to any cause that is vast enough to be worthy of the loyalty of a lifetime.

The path to a relationship-based or health-centered practice is not an easy one. Often, you are bucking the currents of patient ignorance, governmental and insurance company's interference, the dental status quo, and your own demons.

When you choose the cause of relationship-based or health-centered dentistry you are hearing the call of your Soul's Journey and "a cause that is vast enough to be worthy of the loyalty of a lifetime".

In this era of "Don't worry, be happy" and "life is a bitch and then you die", you feel like a failure if everything does not work out as fast as you want and plan for or helpless in the face of the sorrows of life.

Life does not live this way; it is a combination of joy, happiness, worry, suffering and grief. You feel battered or uplifted by the currents of life.

This is what L.D. Pankey talked about when he said you have to "Pay the Price". When I first heard him say this, I thought it meant that I would pay a short term price for a lifetime full of rewards. Now, I know this is not true. I continually pay the price as a human being living this thing called life.

One of *four noble truths of Buddhism is "Life is suffering". For years, I resisted this tenant; choosing instead to believe that if I paid the price, I would have no suffering. Now I know suffering is a part of life.

I have recently read three *destiny books - "The Spirituality of Imperfection" by Kurtz and Ketchum, "Reflections on the Art of Living - A Joseph Campbell Companion", and "Why Can't We Be Good" by Jacob Needleman PhD. (I encourage you to read all three.)
The message in all three of these books is the same and can be summarized by Joseph Campbell's reminder that we:

 Participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world.

*The obvious lesson... is that the first step to the knowledge of the highest divine symbol of the wonder and mystery of life is in the recognition of the monstrous nature of life and its glory in that character: the realization that this is just how it is and that it cannot and will not be changed. ...All societies are evil, sorrowful, inequitable; and so they will always be. So, if you really want to help this world, what you will have to teach is how to live in it. And that no one can do who has not himself learned how to live in it in the joyful sorrow and sorrowful joy of the knowledge of life as it is.*

We cannot cure the world of sorrows, but we can choose to live in joy.

This is how you find your bliss - to use Campbell's famous statement of "Follow your bliss" - by entering into the world of sorrow, experiencing it and coming back from this world to find joy in the sorrows of life. This is Campbell's Hero's Journey.

I constantly have to relearn this paradoxical lesson.

---

*A destiny book is a book that comes into your life and opens a new world and/or helps you understand something with which you are struggling. It changes your life's destiny.*
Reading List on Caring for the Caregiver

By Lynn D Carlisle

*The Spirituality of Imperfection, Storytelling and the Search for Meaning*. Ketcham and Kurtz

*Why Can't We Be Good?, Jacob Needleman* [http://www.spiritofcaring.com/snip/122.htm](http://www.spiritofcaring.com/snip/122.htm)

*The Essential Marcus Aurelius*, translated and introduced by Jacob Needleman and John Piazza,

*The Power of Now*, Eckart Tolle

*Money and the Meaning of Life*, Jacob Needleman

*Open Mind, Open Heart, The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*, Thomas Keating

*Life Launch, A Passionate Guide to the Rest of your Life*, Fredrick Hudson

*A Philosophy of the Practice of Dentistry*, L.D. Pankey and William Davis

*The Four Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary*, Angeles Arrien

*Kitchen Table Wisdom*, Rachel Naomi Remen

*The Road Less Traveled*, M Scott Peck


All are available at Amazon Books: [www.amazon.com/books](http://www.amazon.com/books)
How to join *In a Spirit of Caring*

All of these articles and many more on Caring for the Caregiver are available on the *In a Spirit of Caring* web site at [http://www.spiritofcaring.com/public/department14.cfm](http://www.spiritofcaring.com/public/department14.cfm). To join, go to: [http://www.spiritofcaring.com/public/Membership_has_its_advantages.cfm](http://www.spiritofcaring.com/public/Membership_has_its_advantages.cfm)

**Distribution rights:** The downloadable material is copyrighted. You are free to distribute it to others without any deletions or changes, and with full attribution to the authors - including contact information. With permission in advance, we are happy to make edits to suit your space requirements or editorial needs. Lynn Carlisle @ webmaster@spiritofcaring.com