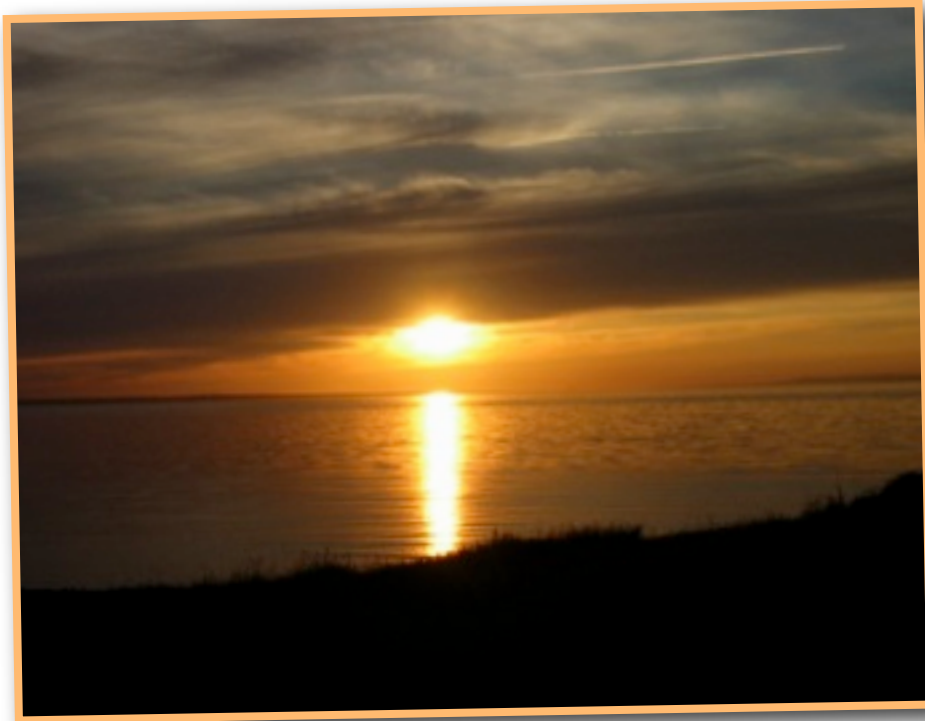


# **Reflections and Ideas for Healing and Growth**



**Negotiating between the Dark and the Light**

November 18, 2011



## **PREAMBLE TO THIS PERSONAL MESSAGE ABOUT HEALING**

I pulled these thoughts together over many years to come to terms with the pain that can come with life and living, and they have served me well. A year ago I wrote them down, and shared them with someone very special to me. Since then, I have realized just how many of us struggle with deep pain. There are many wonderful ideas for healing out there, and many experts to help us with our unique issues, and I encourage folk to seek out and avail themselves of such help as needed. I believe that while pain can guide our lives tremendously, it is only when our lives are not trapped and stagnated

by pain that we can find our way to actualize our unique creative potential.

These are not professionally accredited ideas, but I have offered counseling services for decades, and I have explored many of the issues we all struggle with at some time or the other in our lives, fairly intensively. I share these ideas with you here - maybe it will help you on your own healing journey, and complement your other efforts. You can start this journey with no more than a pen and pad.

But even if you are not on any journey of healing, you may (I wrote will, originally, that is how sure I am of this!) find that the key strategies of journalling and painting big will deepen your life in immeasurable ways, and strengthen you on your own journey of life. They have transformed and expanded my life beyond measure.

P.S.

Of course, there are many other key topics that are closely related to this one - guilt and forgiveness come to mind right away. The subjects of duty versus responsibility, and tolerance versus compassion also interest me. I have some thoughts about these subjects that I shall share in future notes. You may be interested.

P.P.S.

... Also sharing photographs I have taken over the years, negotiating between the dark and the light. I hope you enjoy them and that they inspire you on your own creative journey. xoxo

## **Personal Reflections on Healing, first shared Nov 11, 2010**

**Dearest,**

I am writing because I intuit some of your deep, hidden pain, though we have not really had a chance to talk much. I am so sorry I am not a more real part of your life. Nonetheless, I want to write a few things which I hope will help you on your journey. I don't need to know about your issues - you may or may not want to share, and either way is fine to me.



### **The Power of Journalling**

I start off by telling you to journal, and I want to say, do it, do it, do it. Get foolscap paper, and write and write, and if you can't write, write I can't write

this, again and again till you reach the point when you will; and once you reach that point, write and write - when I reached that point, my hand could not write as fast as the thoughts were spilling out of my head and heart - and keep at it till you reach that moment when you feel the energy shift within you, and you know you are on the other side of pain, the issue, the violence, the grief, the hurt, the anger, the rage, the fear, the disappointment, the whatever. All the facts of your story will remain the same, but you will no longer be victim to it, you will be powerful beyond it. It may take weeks or months - took me three months - but when you reach the turning you will know. Don't loose faith.

### **Personal Power**

What you will have done is claimed your personal power - the power that is yours alone, and only comes from your deepest self, the one who is your truest friend, who is always waiting for you discover her, to see him, - it comes from no where else. Once you find her, you will never feel alone - you write and he will come - and if

you have the courage and good fortune to find her in your early years, your life will be enriched beyond measure, and you will experience the journey of life in a truly deep way. I only found her in my mid forties.

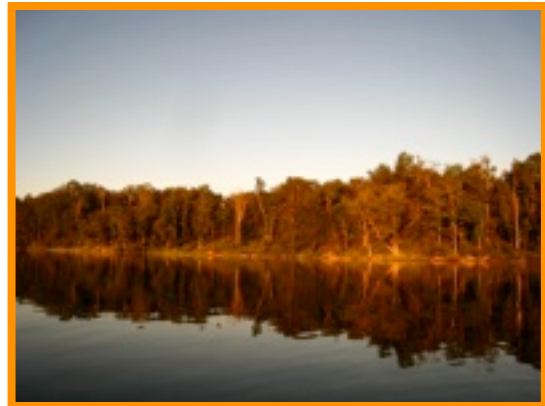
### **Deep Grief**

As for real deep pain and hurt and abuse, well we know we all experience pain in different forms; but sometimes it may seem or be like we have been at the receiving end of the worst possible kinds.



This may be true, but deep grief also comes with a gift that others who do not have these experiences can never have - it deepens the soul and self at a level that others will never be privileged to experience; this very deep understanding of the

strange complexities of life just does not come to them. Many blind themselves to this potential in life - because they are afraid to embrace the darkness and the pain - and they may fluff it over with alcohol, or drugs or things or avoidance, or good works, and, yes, sometimes, they may make out fine in life, fine enough but not deeply. It takes big courage to engage with the dark pain - but it is also as simple as writing it out.



### **Right Brain Left Brain Balance**

Now these pages of writing are not for pondering upon and rereading - remember there is nothing there that you don't already know, so you don't need the pages to remind you. You need the writing to get it out of your controlled left, logical brain

by letting your right intuitive brain do its sweeping in all the dark hidden corners first. After you have done this sweeping well enough, you can let your logical left brain put the next steps in line for you. It will serve you well then.

### **On Rumination**

Tear up the pages and burn them or bury them - you don't need them. They are there to let out the hot level of pain and anger and even guilt out - but if you keep reading them, in the written words or in your mind,



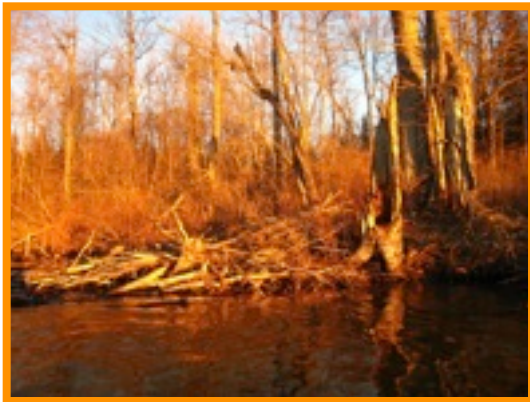
that is ruminating - that is, going over things again and again, past the point where you can get

anything good out of them. The word ruminating comes from how cows have two stomachs, I believe - and they have to keep chewing, storing, regurgitating and chewing their cud again - something like that I think - but even they have to shit it out in the end. So must you. Otherwise it all gets cold in your gut and chokes you up.

### **The Scab Image**

This is how it is - you have a wound, and it bleeds and hurts - then the bleeding stops and a scab forms and the pain lessens, and then you pick at it, break the scab, and the blood pours out again, and the pain rushes in; then the bleeding stops and a scab forms and the pain lessens, and then you pick at it, break the scab, and the blood pours out again, and the pain rushes in; then the bleeding stops and a scab forms and the pain lessens, and then you pick at it, break the scab, and the blood pours out again, and the pain rushes in ....

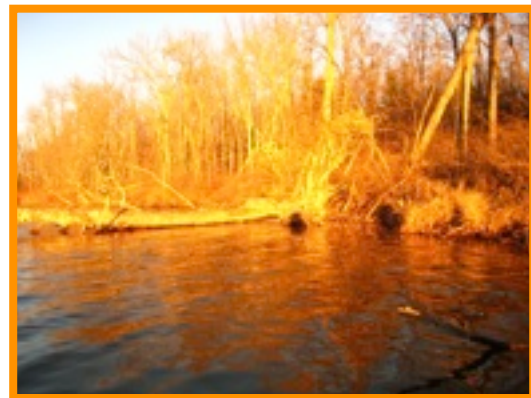
You get the picture! ... some people can't let the wound heal. When you learn to stop the ruminating, the wound heals, the scab falls away and a scar forms. You will not forget your experiences in life, but the wound is no longer a bleeding wound - it has healed. And in time the scar fades and does not preoccupy you every moment. Your energy moves on, because there is always a lot more to experience in life.



### **Personal Power versus Victim Energy**

Another thing about being a victim versus having personal power: If we hang on to victim energy, we carry the pain of being immobilized and trapped in pain, justified or otherwise. But if we can find a spot where

we can take some personal responsibility for our situations - 1%, 5%, 20% - whatever, we transform our personal energy from victimization to personal power - we empower ourselves; once you learn to do this, you can work your way through tough issues. I always look at this when I am upset about anything - I look for where I might have been a little bit responsible, no matter how hurt, or angry or let down or betrayal I feel. Once you understand this, you forgive yourself and let it go - because there is nothing more for you to learn from that experience - You have other things to explore in life!



It is presumptuous and counterproductive to the principle of the gift of life to hang on to punishing the self - you are meant to move on. Life is all

about cycles, new cycles and renewal. Don't stay stuck in old ones - the seasons are all about new growth. Life is all about growth. Take what you have learned and let it serve you and maybe others in the next phases of your life.

### **Painting Big**

I tell you also to paint - paint big - find a wall, or get flip chart paper and put the paintbrush in the paint and make marks - do it, just do it - and you will find it will complement your journaling. It is the other way of expressing all the things bundled up in us - our fears, anger, emotions - all that voiceless stuff - you express it soundlessly. Again, this is not necessarily for show and tell, but after you do it enough, you may find you are painting incredible things - but don't go looking for lesson plans on how to paint - just do it, and do it big.

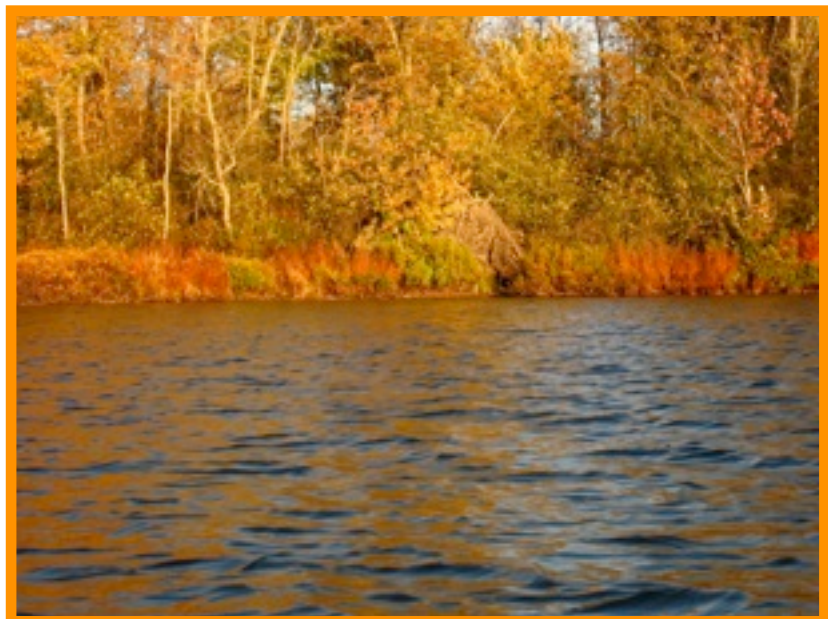
I did this once on my bathroom wall - first a tree trunk, then leaves, then giant

gladioli! First I was terrified, then I thought, oh, you can always paint over it - years later, they are still there, congratulating me on my priceless step forward!

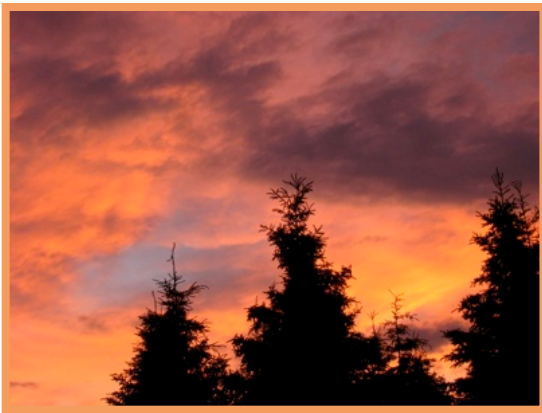
### **Nature**

I say also, if you can do your explorations in the context of nature, you will increase the benefits of the writing and painting, and you will augment your healing tremendously. Go be mindless in nature for a while.

When you have journaled enough, or even throughout the process - go lie on Mother Earth, the penultimate mother, the penultimate provider, nurturer



and teacher, and let your pain flow into the earth. I have learned to have a great deal of respect for Mother Earth from Grandfather William Commanda. She is the penultimate Mother - and she provides for all our needs - food, air, water, shelter etc - but she can also help us come to terms with our pain. They say experiences or training that take place in the context of nature have a bigger influence on people, behaviour, relationships etc. than learning in buildings, workshops, conferences. And



you can do it alone. Certainly I have found my kayaking experience has deepened my understanding of many things in a way I can't easily explain - after a summer of kayaking, I know my mind is sharper than ever.

So, go lie on a beach or lakeside if

you can and cry your pain out to Mother Earth; press your heart against hers; and let the Water wash you clean again. Then let it go - let her do her job to transform the dark energy. Let the wind blow in. You don't have to dwell there any more - LET IT GO. And by connecting with her, you keep Mother Earth strong too - that is the essential principle of inter-connection - we impact each other - and Ignite!

### **Mothers**

Talking about mothers, I remember when I worked in Corrections, I was shocked when I realized how many peoples' issues were related to their mothers; I also remember what German Psychotherapist Bert Hellinger said (founder of (Hellinger Institute - focussed on Family Constellation Systems), whose work became linked with Grandfather Commanda's at one point, who also once worked in Durban, where I was born, and who learned important things from the Zulu People) - I wrote a letter to my mother, he said, and I told her, You are just an ordinary woman. You are human like everybody else. Thank you for who you have been in my life.

He took Mother down from the artificial pedestal - once he was able to do that, he was able to value her own strengths, and not have expectations that she could possibly be the icon on the pedestal. He also said, Don't try to escape the Mother - you simply can't! But you can develop a realistic, meaningful relationship with her. The earlier you learn to do this, then so many more meaningful experiences will be part of your relationship with her - realistic ones - ones that belong in the Circle of Adults - you are in that circle now - here we have to meet each other in the zone of compassion - we have to be gentle with each other.



And with them, parents as with others, sometimes in the end you will have to decide to leave them

to heaven, as the book goes. Do that, and their issues, shortcomings or deficiencies will be theirs to deal with. You don't have to be zapped or drained by them forever.

### **Ancestors**

And another thing - Bert Hellinger learned from the Zulu People the importance of the energies of the ancestors. Indigenous Peoples of the Americas know this. One part of my prayer goes like this - I ask my ancestors for help with things I am struggling with - especially the ancestors I feel closely connected with. Funny how fast they deliver. They do constitute a dynamic energetic dimension active in our lives, and it is both helpful and powerful when we learn to come to terms with them, acknowledge and honour them.

### **Prayer**

(This is how the rest of the people part of my prayer goes - I acknowledge the living people for what they teach me - first a thank you to the ones who support me, next I acknowledge the ones who challenge me and

thus force me to find my stronger self, and third, I say a prayer for those who need my help - that teaches me empathy and compassion. Then I turn to myself, and acknowledge my own strengths and pray to achieve my best potential. Finally, I acknowledge the ones who are truly wise and inspirational. Of course my prayer is larger than this and includes all of nature and life - and when I am done with it, I never feel alone - I feel connected with every thing. But more about that in another note!

I have called on some special ancestor friends of mine to help with your energy shift, and I am sure it will happen in a way that you will feel deeply. Now you go do your work.

### **Life is a Journey**

Life is a journey, and you make the road by walking it. I always like to think that I am in apprenticeship for the rest of my life! Now you take charge of the rest of your life! Find something to focus your passions on and keep your eyes on that light!

It is the creative element that

moves you on in life. I want now to add something about creative pursuits, beyond the writing and painting, in the healing journey of life - that is, the idea of having many creative outlets on hand ready to activate, so when life slows you down with its lumps, you get going on some creative activity, and keep that cat's ball - you know the one with the metal circles - keep your ball moving and your heavy self along - you will find if you have a big repertoire of creative pursuits in your basket, one or the other will get you going again!

Many Years ago, at Grandfather Commanda's Millennium Peace Gathering, his friend Wayquay wrote this song - Grandfather Sent Me on a Walk to Make Medicine out of Pain - then she sang, Navigate! Ditto!

With lots of love, R

