



A VETERANS INDEPENDENCE

POST-TRAUMATIC WISDOM

Language for Something that has no Language



JULY 4, 2026

VETERANS COURAGE

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Dedication

To My Mother during the Air Force Years

Nadine Helene Miller

To My Mother during the Veteran Years

Jean Mieko Oka

To My Mother during All Years

Surinder Kaur Dosanjh

Through the smiles, laughter, tears and sorrow ...

Thank you for being "*My Mother*"

Love

Your Son

Foreword

July 4th, 2026. 250 Years, Happy Birthday to our country the United States of America.

How does one say thank you for all the blessings in life. Some that I welcomed with an open heart and smiles. Others, I would not wish upon anyone. Nonetheless, blessings arrived and I could not tell if they were good or bad. Until life told me with a stark reality.

This guide is my attempt to address both the good and bad as they emerged into my life's experience. It was originally meant for my eyes only. Not as a story for others, but a reminder of how far I had fallen, how I almost died, and what made me get back up.

That's it.

To express this, I borrow language and vocabulary from any corner of this earth and my only thought in doing so was to utilize it respectfully. I use religious, spiritual, philosophical, mystical and scientific terms interchangeably while trying to honor their original concepts. Some of their concepts make sense to me, others, well, I'm not that evolved.

Somewhere along the way, I lost. Lost it all.

Somewhere along the way, I found it. Found it all.

This is my journey during the post-military years, but more importantly to me, post-ego years. It's a front row seat to the fall of ego, the on-going annihilation of ego, the collapse, the shattering, the grace, the kintsugi gold, the blue crow and finally the arrival of the integrated divine whole...which I call love.

Infused with a music of love, vibration of love and the only way I could express it is and was with poetry, prose, stories, basically writing down my thoughts as they emerged. Just trying to make sense of it all. I asked myself, can I be the only one going through this? The answer is no. So life, yes, somehow life, made me of all people, me, an American Legion Chaplain.

When life hands you lemons...what's the phrase? You make lemonade.

Life handed me something that had no language ... so here is my attempt to give that something a language.

Life handed me Death

I took it and sang a song ... of Love to Death

And behold, Life

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Prologue | Veterans Spiritual First Aid

Sitting alone, 3am, Military Veteran. Who speaks the language for something that has no language. I do. So go, embark on a journey to align with spiritual principles, energies, essence, and soul to pave your way back home. Which home, what home, where is home...who knows...just go.

Introduction

I was walking alone. Nobody understood my journey. That's when, in the silence, a path emerged, a door was opened and without knowing, I stepped through the threshold.

As a result, a language, words emerged and I wrote them down as a guide or in this case, a combined voice to render my veteran soul some spiritual first aid.

Starting Point: Spiritual Principles

I didn't know there was an order, a sequence on how spiritual first aid is administered. But here's what worked for me:

1. **Truth:** I fully surrendered to a universe, a cosmos that I didn't understand ~ so I called it a spiritual glow..."Grace."
2. **Awareness:** I didn't want anyone else's "make believe" stories, so I grounded my reality in what my five senses could observe, had lived, and only said or did things that felt "true" to me.
3. **Patience.** I did the thought exercise, the physical actions of work and let the outcomes completely, 100%, reside with Grace. Daily small wins is what I call them.

Energy Alignment: Divine Archetypes

I did away with the confusion and falsehoods of what everyone was trying to tell me, show me or teach me because they knew better. On my knees, bowing to Grace, I was made aware of an inner energy, a trapped energy, a submerged energy that was not allowed to breathe.

1. **My Left-Brain Archetypal Energy:** Logical thinking, everything had to be in a straight line, 90-degree angles and all scientific, grounded in the 5 senses of reality. It was the only energy that was allowed to exist in my Military, Veteran mindset.
2. **My Right-Brain Archetypal Energy:** Creative thinking, outside-of-the-box mentality and magic, fantasy, illusion, delusion, or anything mystical was not allowed to persist. This was referred to as being an "outcast" and had no room in society.

I didn't know it, but life put me on a path to combine the two energies into a new "me." I modified what society wanted from me, or how they wanted me to live, survive, or even interact with people.

Essence: Spiritual Renewal

Where I found myself was in “no man’s land.” A lost warrior walking on a path to straight to hell, to complete annihilation of my very essence, to death. It was in that downward spiral that I “let go.” It was at that moment, that the “something” emerged. It emerged when I was in isolation, in parks, by the ocean, in a solitary jail cell that a consistent, persistent nudge kept interrupting my thoughts.

Perhaps it’s because I was broke, penniless and the drugs and alcohol were no longer available. I’m sure that’s part of the journey that when supplies are diminished; All that’s left was this raw, unshakeable true version of “me.”

The “Dark Night of the Soul or Dark Shadow” or you can say my psychological demons, spiritual demons, called embarrassment, shame, guilt, self-sabotage on and on and on stating that “I’m not worthy,” just go disappear and die ... that’s when I refused to sell or give my last part of my essence, my soul ... I refused to give up on that which I called “love.”

Soul: The Integrated Whole

I would make a final stand. A mental stand, a physical stand, a stand made from the last breath of the tiger within me. I faced my inner demons, the devil within, the dark shadow, the mind-bending, psychological falsehoods, the curses, the spells, the omens, I faced them head-on ... named each vice and shattered them with Grace.

I built a psychological, spiritual firewall based upon divine warriors. The foundation of this firewall was based upon a grace of love, grounded in faith. Nothing, no one, no spirit, no thoughts, nothing could penetrate my firewall except love. In that moment, I realized that I was in “no man’s land” not a Military Active-Duty identity nor a person integrated back into society as a veteran civilian identity. I was stuck in neutral waiting for something or someone ... and then it emerged. It was a term ... the liminal space ... now I had a vocabulary, a label and I could face it directly. So I did.

I merged my inner state of understanding (my two energy archetypes) with my principles while naming the negative forces implanted in me and mapped it to my five senses of reality ... the external world. What emerged was my new ability to allow, yes, to allow *grief*, *sorrow* and *sadness* pass through my spiritual firewall, hear them, have compassion for them, and give them up to Grace. And they left. They would appear every now and then, but I would follow the same process and they left me again. I repeated this every day until they only showed once in a blue moon. All that remained was a field of love.

The door opened, I crossed the threshold and found that I was on a path towards home.

Science: PTSD, Growth + Reactive Attachment Disorders

I'm appreciative of the disciplines of science that have put a vocabulary of knowledge into practices to help veterans. Every now and then, the psychologists would refer to something called the DSM-5. Later I found that it was short for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition that the [American Psychiatric Association](#) published.

They started to put a new vocabulary in front of me like, CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), PTG (Post-Traumatic Growth), Bi-Polar, PTBD (Post-Traumatic Bereavement Disorder) and then RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder). Some of it helped, it was well intentioned, and proved to be a good starting point. But like in the current world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – it was subject to bias, toxicity and that person(s) life view, i.e. hallucinations. It became clear that they required data points, statistics and math to prove they were correct. Nothing wrong with that...but like AI, it all depends on how reliable the input data was. So it boiled down to Trust. For me, I trust the science to provide a vocabulary to augment my life, not run it.

The Journey Continues ...

As these new vocabularies started to emerge that would provide further insights and labels for each phase that I was going through. In addition to spiritual and scientific terms, there emerged an alchemist's vocabulary with words like *Nigredo*, *Albedo*, *Citrinitas* and *Rubedo*. I'm sure there are other words in eastern religion and philosophy but I only know fragments of those languages based on Sanskrit, Gurmukhi etc. So I started to put one foot in front of the other ... one thought in front of the next ... one action at a time ... and started to walk.

If you are walking down a similar road, just know that other warriors are on a similar path and that you are not alone. Whether we ever meet or talk ... this guide is shared with you from my place of love ... from an inner light grounded in faith, hope, love and divine patience

The concepts, stories and poems emerged over the years and they are made available as standalone documents found at: <https://www.veteranscourage.org/chaplains-corner>

- *Principles of Spiritual Faith*
- *Divine Energy Archetypes*
- *Spiritual Renewal Guide*
- *The Integrated Soul*



From that place of love, this American Legion Chaplain grants you “[Permission To Walk in Peace](#)”



No Man's Land



The Eyes Say it All

How did the look of love penetrate my humble existence? I was merely spinning my yarns during my life here on earth. Then it hit me all at once with a power, an energy, a force that shattered my reality.

What is this invisible connection to a world that is felt but never seen. How are we born into it and yet think that we are so far removed from it? Where do I go to reconnect with this feeling called love?

Here, consideration is given to a path traveled by Warriors, in this case, US Military Veterans. A journey towards becoming connected with life that is beyond scientific or psychological understanding

These are the questions addressed from a Veterans perspective in facing both good times and bad. The source of this knowledge is based upon firsthand experience over the course of 40 years.

The humble honor of sitting by hundreds of Veterans while in hospice and conducting the We Honor Veterans Pinning Ceremony. The humble honor of leading Military Honors at Veteran funerals. The solemn duty of folding our flag and presenting it to the next of kin whose eyes convey their loss from deep within their soul. It is in that moment that strength, courage and love are conveyed from the Chaplain or Captain of the Honor Guard to the Warriors family.



The Lost Warrior

Abandoned by what one thought was true and the truth. Isolated as a result of not knowing what reality is or has become. The downward spiral plummets one into depression, anxiety, and ultimately despair as all hope is lost.

You stand in no man's land. On one side is the life you once had, Military Warrior, purpose, mission-driven, duty, honor, and fulfillment. On the other is the entry point back into the civilized, civilian society from whence you came. You no longer understand either world and so here you are, in between worlds, in no man's land as a Lost Warrior.



The Road Home

Who will find you in the darkness of no man's land? *It is I.*

Represented on earth by the wearers of many personas. Religious figures, medical practitioners, caregivers, but the one who will understand your plight is the person who once stood where you stand. They will shine their light, their words will be few for their eyes will do the talking of love, compassion, and sympathy.

They will shine the light on what is blocking your path forward. A choice will be presented to trust the light and begin the first few steps towards the journey of healing, recovery and eventually back onto the road home.

Home where the *Spirit of the Warrior* resides. This is where you will mend the fragments of your mind, heal the tattered pieces of your heart and renew your life's purpose. Destiny awaits, a new chapter is beginning and the past no longer holds your Soul hostage. *You are free!*

Lost on the Path No More

I looked at the Devil and he smiled

I looked at God and he frowned

I looked at Mankind and was shunned

The Path headed to sorrow

The Path headed to despair

The Path headed to goodbye

From where, I don't know

From where, came a voice

From there, I was Lost on the Path No More



Chaplain's Commitment

For Grace, an Amazing Grace...found me on my knees in no man's land. There was no judgement or opinion or blame or tormenting laughter for my predicament. There was only love, compassion and sympathy for one who was lost.

I wasn't familiar with the *dark stain, negative energy* or *dark night of the soul* that caused me to suffer. There was no rational or logical way to heal this, cleanse this, or purify this pain which I didn't know existed in me. But the destruction of my life and all who were in it was plain to see.

The good people at Veterans Affairs, Vet Centers, Veteran Service Offices and the American Legion all did their part to patch this life back up. However, that dark shadow still hovered over me and I couldn't see it. No amount of breath work, PTSD therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Grief counseling and attending religious services could remove what I couldn't see. They all did their part to temporarily alleviate the pain, but so did alcohol, drugs and other mind-numbing activities.

It wasn't until I stumbled across the texts describing the rituals that Warriors had to do, before they could go back to civilian society, which removed the soul injury. Every culture had their own version of spiritual cleansing to remove and expunge the "*dark night of the soul.*" These ceremonies were meant to remove the negative energy or state of mind that caused a Warrior to violate their morals, ethics, and do the atrocities required in war. Even the non-combatants, by association, were and are inflicted.

So it began, without any prior experience, my journey led me to sit bedside with Veterans in hospice and conduct a We Honor Veterans Pinning Ceremony. I would read a Certificate of Appreciation, and a poem I penned (pictured below), affix a pin and render a hand salute. The energy in the room would shift, the Veteran would take on an aura of calmness, of peace. At first, I didn't have the vocabulary to describe what was taking place, now I do. It's a grace beyond my comprehension, a love without limits and sincere appreciation for life.



American Legion Ceremony

Today, a new American Legion tradition is about to take place with a Chaplain leading the Ceremony of Spiritual Renewal. The first of which I conducted on March 29th, 2025 at Oak Hill Dignity Memorial, 300 Curtner Road, San Jose, California. The ceremony will be a part of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day observance.

The ceremony is similar to the national We Honor Veterans observance that is conducted for Veterans in hospice. The additions include a sword, wreath, certificate, poem and pin.

The Sword



The Wreath



The Pin



Our Country, our Citizens and our Veterans recognize that symbols play an important role in recognition of one's service. Our National Flag, the Eagle, the Wreath, Dog Tags, and a Warriors armament are just a few of the representations. Together with the symbols of fire, earth and water, we acknowledge the purification and cleansing properties associated with divine grace.

"In God We Trust"

Official Motto of the United States of America

"One Nation Under God"

The Pledge of Allegiance

"So Help Me God"

US Military Oath of Enlistment

"For God and Country"

US Military Chaplain Corps, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars



The Journey Within



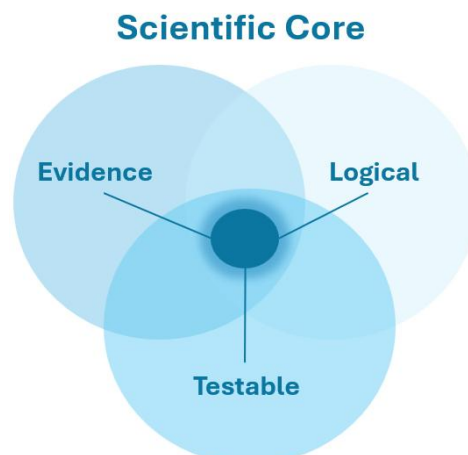
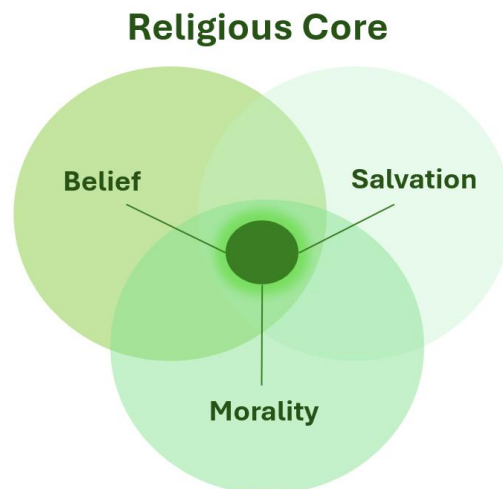
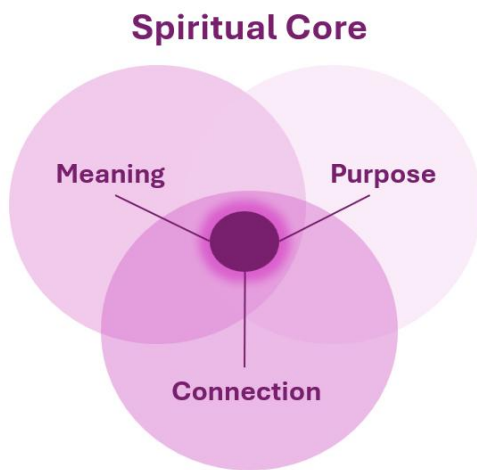
Spiritual Fitness

Personal Identity

The path to understand one's personal identity will take several passages of time. These passages start from when you are a baby, then a child, then a youth, then an adult and finally a senior. Each passage introduces new experiences, new vocabulary to describe those experiences and new insights.

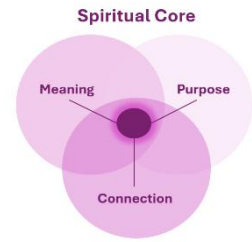
Towards some people, you'll grow closer. Towards others, you'll start to drift away. Whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, the passages of time will start to shape your identity. One may think they are a "persona" a mask that they wear in society i.e., student, cousin, athlete etc. however, there is one constant throughout these changes. That is your Spirit.

To put things into perspective, the following core principles emerged for me as a starting point. These allow an individual to understand how much attention they are applying to each core principle.



Spiritual Core

Your essence, Your being, You.
Your emotions, feelings and instincts, You.
Your laughter, Your tears, Your fears, Your joy, You.



Meaning

Not every whisper of the wind needs to have a meaning. So why would one think that their life has to have a meaning? Is it not enough to exist? The simple fact that one is alive, breathing, and able bodied is enough for the Spirit. What it actually *means* is that You are life and are alive. That's it.

Purpose

The direction that your life will head is based on destiny. You are destined to live life a certain way. Any deviation will produce results born out of fate. Your choices will determine whether you are on the path of destiny or fate. Your motivations, intentions and reasons will only mask (similar to the persona identities) of what your actual significance is. In actuality, You are an expression of the divine and your life's significance is to exist.

Connection

The cosmos is already connected, are You? The moment one becomes aware that they are not in control of the universe, planet earth or the direction of blood-flow within their body, is when the opportunity of "connection" presents itself. Rather, it is the removal of an obstacle called "ignorance" that enlightens the individual to what was already present, the Spirit.

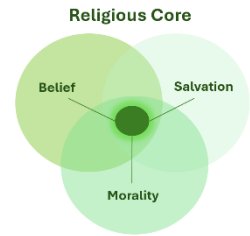
This is where Spiritual Guides can assist with the removal of ignorance. This is the pathway to the removal of the "dark night of the soul" and the negative stain on one's life. It's like counting numbers i.e., one may think that number counting starts with one, two, three and overlook that there might be something before the number one, as in zero.

This is where the Spiritual Guide opens the door to not only a new direction, but when the person is ready, multiple new directions into different concepts of dimensions and reality will become apparent. This is when the feelings of abandonment, isolation and loss start to dissipate and an evolved, new "You" emerges. It appears as a new identity but it's actually the original "true" version of you with a new appreciation for life and a renewed Spirit. A *Light of Love* will emanate from you and no longer do the questions of meaning and purpose confuse you. You are aligned with your destiny, you make decisions easily and a peaceful, calm demeanor takes hold of "You".



Religious Core

God, the Almighty
The Beloved, The Divine, Lord
Holy, Sacred and Loved



Belief

For the heavens told me so. It has been written, spoken, sang and preached from many religious faiths about Almighty God. There are traditions, stories, miracles and homage paid throughout the history of our species. One does not require evidence from the external and it is enough to “believe” in what our heart says. It is felt, it is real, it is presence, it is alive, it is Faith.

Morality

Scriptures from the holy texts provide the language on how to live according to the standards of society and principles associated with a good person. These clarify decisions whether to take life or save life, to hurt or to heal, and whether to clutch onto egoic ideals versus letting go to higher scruples. One of the greatest gifts we have is the power to choose.

Salvation

Integrity in place. Living according to the holy texts and observances provides a path forward to becoming more conscientious and responsible. One becomes mindful of their thoughts, words, deeds and actions. It is from this place of understanding that healing begins with humility, gratitude and the opening to an *Amazing Grace*.

Military Veterans in the United States come from diverse religious backgrounds. The Department of Defense does its best to ensure that the religious tenets of each faith are respected while maintaining the discipline required as a military person. Not all personnel of rank and file may adhere to religious tenets and may observe agnostic or atheistic beliefs. Nevertheless, none are abandoned. From my perspective, there exists no duality, it’s non-dual, it’s all one. We decide how we observe things and what language to give that “something” that has no language.

Military and Veteran Chaplains fill the role of respecting their fellow Warriors and when appropriate, administering the rituals associated with the Warriors choice of worship. From our Oath of Enlistment, to serving, to becoming a Veteran and then eventually saying farewell to this life, God’s Grace is ever-present.



Philosophical Core

More than I, Are You
Together, We
The Infinite, The Eternal, The Everlasting



Reality

There is a moment when a Warrior realizes what they have become. It is a moment when everything aligns and the person looking back at them in the mirror stands with Grace. It's the best version of themselves. Unfortunately, it can also be the worst version of themselves if they are rudderless and have not heeded the call for self-discipline. In either case, the eyes of reality cannot hide the person behind the mask, their persona.

Ethics

What is the value placed on life? A Warriors answer will provide an indication of where their moral compass is. Their behavior is a perfect example of whether their words match their deeds. It signifies whether their principles and values carry over from the Warriors ethos or whether they live according to different norms when social or professional matters arise. Duty and Honor are just empty vocabulary words without the gravitas of the Spiritual and Religious core principles. When those words become imbued with the Divine, that's when a Warriors Creed arises.

Truth

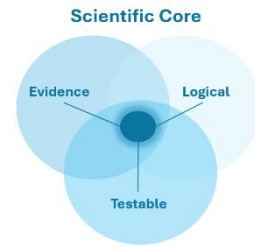
Humbled. Humility. Gratitude. Grace. The truth follows in that order if one is on that path towards a Spiritual Renewal. It's an accounting of one's authenticity. The real "You." The one that is born, is living, is surviving and is on the path to healing. Self-realization, self-mastery, self-taught, self-broken, self-made, self-loved. Humbled beyond time, a humility arises from the spark of the Divine. Your choices are going to be made bare for all to see. Transparent, factual, sincere and honest become part of your lexicon. There is no hiding from the source of the Cosmos. You are the Cosmos. Letting go of false expectations and understanding the path to handle the "dark night of the soul" will liberate You. It's what the Alchemists call *The Magnus Opus* of Nigredo, Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo. Eventually leading the "Humility of Receiving."

Most are stuck in Nigredo, the downward spiral and continue to operate from a negative ego. This guide will help you get past that into Albedo, *The Light*, where a new "You" emerges. Then Citrinitas where a new "We" is forged, through integration of the divine energies. Together the cosmic serenade begins as you hear the music from the heavens. Then, Rubedo, now "You" control the dark shadow. No more fear, no more anxiety or depression, only Love.



Scientific Core

It was love at first sight
 An equation only the heavens knew
 Whispered to a Scientist unbeknownst



Evidence

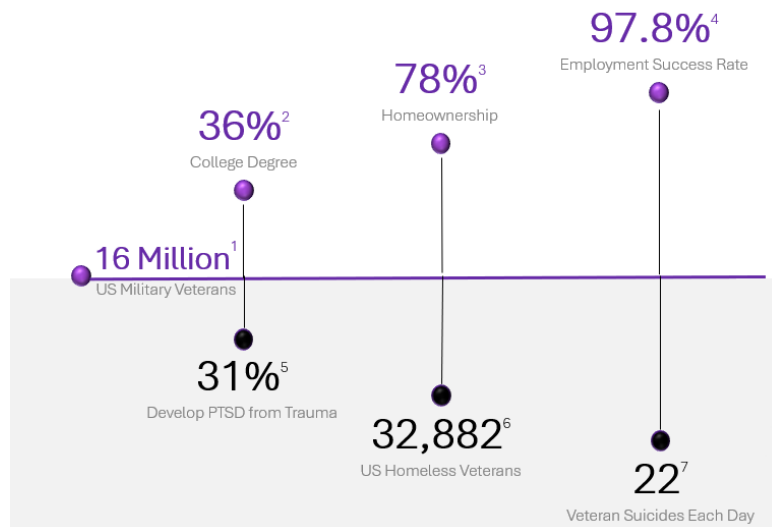
And stood the tree. Roots deep. Leaves gone. So it was observed. So it was measured by the span of time. Calculations and reporting complete, onto the next. Facts, numbers, the stuff of the five senses that could be accounted for, experiments repeated and results follow suit. There was no evidence of a soul in any of this work, however, geometry suggests otherwise.

Logical

I have the proofs! The equations do not lie! Convinced that logic was the sparrow that started to sing in the tree. The hunter raises his bow, lets loose the arrow and it at first, travels half the distance to the sparrow. It then travels half of that remaining distance. And then half of that until it starts to “halve” infinitely and thus never hitting the sparrow. The land of five senses says otherwise as the sparrow drops from the tree. The logic to sacrifice one’s life for Duty, Honor and Country is illogical to most of society, except to the Spiritual Warrior. One who stands while others run away.

Testable

Life is a test. How many billions of humans do we need to repeat the test of survival, of thriving or failing and dying. We wake up each day and get to live out the experiment of human life as best as we can. We test our health, our ability to make cognitive decisions, our emotion, feelings and behaviors in each breath that we take. Our results are handed to us by societies success markers. Are we happy, healthy, financially stable, in a position to build a home, family and an abundant life. Or are we continually making the same mistakes with addictions, abuse, negative moods, thoughts and behaviors? Veterans with mentors succeed. Veterans who are abandoned and stuck in “no man’s land” unfortunately spiral towards suicide, 22 fellow Warriors, every day.



1. Population: census.gov
2. College: data.census.gov
3. Homeownership: statista.com
4. Employment: bls.gov
5. PTSD: pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
6. Homeless: usich.gov
7. Suicide: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Life's Essence

Our life is a gift. We may overlook the fact that our biology, our internal chemistry and all the laws of physics do not ask for our permission to exist. They just do what they need to do without any fuss or bother. So the question arises, who or what is in charge of this piece of the universe that we call “ourselves?”

I call it “Life’s Essence.” You may utilize similar vocabulary that suffices your understanding, interpretation and your current position at this moment in time. Interchangeably, words like God, Love, Faith, Grace, Beloved, Divine, Lord, the Everlasting, the Infinite, the Eternal...words in English and words in other languages may suffice your beliefs, intellect and heart.

Whichever phrase or expression works for you...let it work. If you meet the Spiritual Mystics, Religious Masters, Philosophers or Scientists enjoy their tapestry of words and let them weave a narrative of “Spiritual Renewal” into your life. After all, they are attempting to provide language for something that has no language.

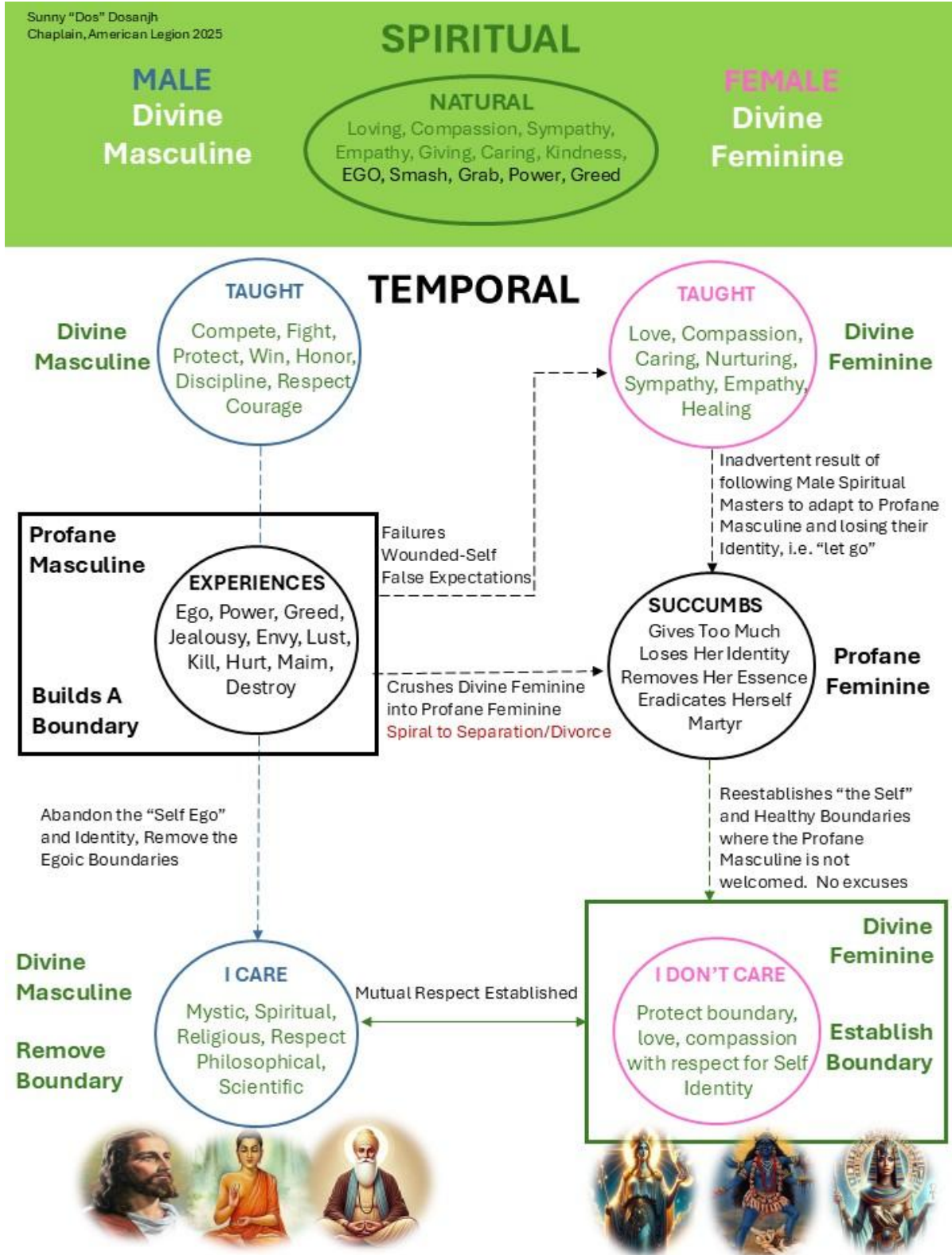
*So Life Ushered into Me a Breath
I Felt That Warmth of Love
And I was Home*



Divine Masculine and Feminine Integration

The non-dual, the infinite eternal, what cannot be named...felt, understood, but has no words.

Illustration purposes only: Energies are mapped to biological male & female as examples



Truth | The Spiritual Glow of Grace

Truth

Awareness

Patience

Spiritual

- A direct, personal experiential realization, inner knowing, non-conceptual insights
- Independent of doctrine, texts or authority i.e., felt resonance
- Inner certainty of presence as an eternal flow of energy from source

Religious

- Agreed upon philosophical & social norms constructed by groups & cultures
- Collectively agreed upon i.e., religious rituals, dogma and agreed adherence
- Institutional authority obtained by doctrines, sacred texts or authoritative teachings

Scientific

- Systems of truth, constructive mathematics, logic or structured theory
- Useful, predictive & practical in practice, i.e., scientific models that produce results
- Evidence based, provable by testing theories and postulations

Acceptance

- Staying curious, update beliefs with evidence
- Obey divine command and align every act with sacred law
- Aware of presence, meeting the moment as it is, surrender to the divine flow of grace

Uncontaminated by Thought | Presence Aware of Itself | Fully Accepted & Directly Felt

Awareness versus Fear | Reinterpret the Flow of Grace

Truth

Awareness

Patience

Physical

- Threats in your physical environment trigger the fight, flight or freeze actions
- Faster heartbeat, quick breaths, muscle tension and heightened senses
- Patience in the moment is required to *change fear into awareness*, change the interpretation

Psychological

- Perceived threats, psychosis, demonic attacks translates to fear, uncertainty, doubt or death
- The danger is not real, but the mind believes it is and the body reacts the same way
- Re-label the *noise of "fear" into the spiritual signal of "awareness"* the need to pay attention

Spiritual

- Fear causes ego reactions, when faith wavers, doubt creeps in with a separation from truth
- Replace ego with presence, the threat with observation, and reactivity to mastery
- Rise above the primitive mind and stand in the "seer" rather than the "seen"

Transform the Label

- Reframe the emotion of fear to awareness in the moment
- Upgrade the interpretation to emotional grace, spiritual clarity, and psychological strength
- Transform the fear from something happening to you to awareness as a tool you use

Re-label Fear into Awareness | Pay Attention | Act with Faith

Patience | The Natural Response to Life's Situations

Truth

Awareness

Patience

Stay Calm

- Build the inner spiritual conditions where patience becomes the natural response
- Endure the situation without losing your center, sense of spiritual self-love
- Not reactive to distractions around you...remember the signal of grace, not noise

Anchored By Purpose

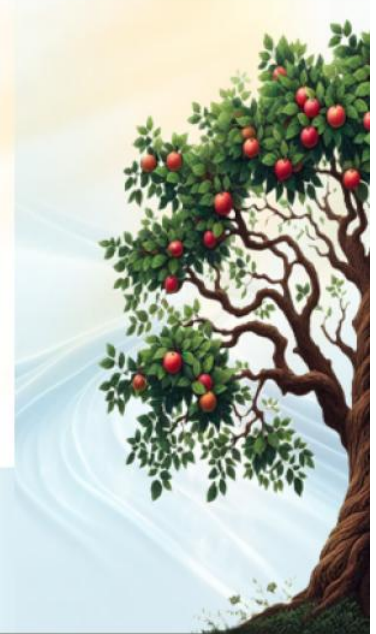
- Your patience will be quickly drained when circumstances overwhelm you
- Remember "**why**" you're enduring the moment, i.e., self-love, compassion, gratitude
- Move with the intention of self-love, i.e., spiritual grace, and not reaction

Shorten Time Horizon

- Stay within the moment and allow the next step to emerge from grace
- Remember to breath the next breath as an intended breath, not reactive breath
- Reduce scale to the next right action, do what is in front of you, not far off into the future

Small Rituals

- Breath with intention, inhale, hold, exhale cycle
- Repeat a spiritual mantra that focuses on the moment, not past or future
- Visualize that you are taking each breath, thought, word and action with grace



Stay in the Moment | Anchor to Grace | Allow Grace to Bring Forth the Next Step





Testimony



Too Much Love with No Where to Go

Enduring Love Under Separation

The transition from loss of love...without knowing where to turn, how to turn, who would understand the constant pain of sorrow, of devastation, of soul crushing loss again, and again, and again, and again, and again...

For me, it was each time I had to say goodbye to my two young daughters...

It killed my soul, again, and again, over and over ... for 10 years ... saying goodbye ... until I wanted to say goodbye to myself.

It was when everything broke inside of me ... mentally, physically, spiritually, logically ... just everything broken, shattered and I couldn't hold a single thought anymore ... that is when the light entered.

In jail, in confinement, in solitary ... I was not afraid anymore to let go ... so I surrendered to God. Thus, the music began, a new rhythm, a new melody, a new song ... and it said:

- Rebuild your life
- Stabilize your income
- Care for your parents
- Support your children
- Find a home that nourishes you
- Live from coherence, not chaos

The new musical harmony from God's Grace evoked a feeling that proclaimed, "*this is not a second chance.*"

This is your **True, First Chance**, because you're finally *The Integrated Soul* ... Whole enough to live it. So began my journey into a realm of consciousness that was grounded in an imagined, but felt, *Faith*.

Human Spiritual Evolution

Emergence of My Personal Faith

The origin of that faith, that light, entering my life was a mystery that was slowly unfolding to me. It's as if a distant flame got closer. The glow became brighter. Then a small visible fire emerged that got warmer. Eventually, the heat was warm enough to embrace me without burning me.

In that moment I realized that a power greater than my understanding had become a reality in my life ... so in my limited understanding of the moment, I called out to God. I didn't know how, therefore my mind reached for fragments of stories that I had encountered over time. Gnosticism, mysticism, shamanism, paganism, atheism, quantum mechanics anything that I thought was the God of my understanding. Eventually, in isolation at a house, in a park, by the ocean, in the woods, and in a jail cell, they emerged one by one ...

Jesus the Christ: Sacrificial love, forgiveness, compassion

Guru Nanak Dev Ji: Equality, humility, service, remembrance

Lord Shiva: Destruction of ego, transformation, inner fire

Lord Buddha: Awareness, equanimity, liberation

It slowly became apparent to me that I did not discover them, I did not choose them, they chose me. It was my final surrender, it was the letting go of me, my ego, my life, my identity.

Not that I was anybody high or low or anyone special, but because I was seeking, praying and had humbled myself enough to fall to my knees.

Shattered, broken, torn, shredded to pieces, unrecognizable by society, discarded, locked away ... these are not my tears that fall, but they are from a Soul that was once whole but now is broken ... I'm ready to leave, to die, to go where the *invisible living* become the *invisible dead* ... in that moment ... in the silence ... the Divine approached as;

Jesus the Christ: for my *heartbreak*

Guru Nanak Dev Ji: for my *service*

Lord Shiva: for my *shattering*

Lord Buddha: for my *awakening*

The Threshold

Moving Past the Guardian at the Gate

This Divine, awakened experience for me has a name: **“The Threshold”**

Every major transformation phase that emerged for me correlated to three gates:

Gate 1: *Liberation* {Freedom} I’ve crossed it with Faith. I’m free, sober, disciplined.

Gate 2: *Restoration* {Health} In progress with love for body, mind, spirit all aligned.

Gate 3: *Vocation* {Wealth} Spiritual, Financial. This is where the resistance appears.

The resistance is not a flaw. It’s a *Guardian at the Gate*. It asks: “Are you ready to live as the *Whole Person* you claim to be?”

This is where the blocked path existed for me; the resistance experienced *at Gate 3*. In order for me to receive wealth, to act with purpose, to be of service, I had to evolve as a new identity in order to reintegrate into this world. Gate 3 is where my new body of life became visible to family, friends, community and society. Gate 1 was introspection, Gate 2 was physical exertion and meditation ... now Gate 3, I required a new approach, a new method.

Gate 3 Methods

Each gate had a doorway for me. For Gate 3, the following methods were used to move closer to the threshold at the doorway ...

- **Identity anchoring:** No longer the ego-driven person, but a person forged by faith
- **Tiny daily actions:** Breathe, slow down, observe, do 1-3 tasks per day, not unlimited
- **Purpose before motivation:** Action creates motivation; become the rhythm of life
- **Service as fuel:** Helping others dissolves ego, self-doubt and welcomes Grace
- **Spiritual alignment:** Prayer, fasting, meditation ~ mind, body, spirit act as one
- **Embodied discipline:** Exercise, nutrition, rest ~ self-respect for the life within
- **Narrative rewriting:** I’m not the person who fell; I’m the person who rose

These are not theories. I read about variations of these tools by those who rebuilt empires, movements, and nations. Now they are used by me to cross the threshold, Gate 3 is open.

The Last Gasp of Resistance

Look How Easy it is to Live Here

They are not vices; it's the way things are ... it's in your nature: **"The Realm of Evil"** as whispered to me in every waking moment.

Spiritual Firewall: The *Threshold* that cannot be crossed by evil

At every turn I was falling prey to the powers of evil. These negative energies whose labels would include negative forces, demonic entities, energy "sucking" vampires that diminished my inner light and were constantly in my mind. It's as if spells, curses and bad omens had been thrust upon me, unbeknownst to me and kept me pinned down in a pit of darkness. I couldn't understand what was going on until I started to name the experiences:

Destructive Ego, Hatred, Anger, Jealousy, Envy, Lust, Greed, Gluttony, Alcohol, Drugs, Self-Sabotage, Imposter Syndrome, Sloth, Procrastination, Anxiety, Depression, Despair, Suicidal Thoughts...

In that downward spiral ... I saw that life in this current body was going to die ... so I surrendered to the God of my understanding. The Warrior Spirit was always there but deeply buried by the vices. So, I drew strength from multiple sources of education, experiences and traditions in order to make one final stand ... then I invoked from the heavens the Spiritual Warriors to stand by me in this battle ... build the Spiritual Firewall I did.

Emerged from the Light into my mind, heart and soul:

Lord Hanuman: **Strength & Devotion**

Anchored my will, stabilized my mind, and fueled my disciplined action

Archangel Michael: **Protection & Courage**

Cut through my fear, dissolved psychic interference, and fortified my spiritual perimeter

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji: **Humility & Truth**

Aligned my ego with service, sharpened my discernment, and restored righteous clarity

This Spiritual Firewall removed the confusion caused by the negative, demonic, evil forces by integrating the Spirit of the Divine. **Nothing crosses that threshold**, *nothing gets past them without my conscious, spiritually aligned thought process.*

Spiritual Awareness: That's when all fear, uncertainty, evil and doubt left me. My eyes, heart, and soul became aware of something primal, something true ... I was in a new space.

Liminal Space

The In-Between: Where Ego's Die & Souls Awaken

Where I found myself was in a space between *Grace* and a *Broken Spirit*. The threshold where the old world is gone but the new world hasn't fully formed. It's been described as the hallway between identities, the dawn between night and day, the spiritual "pause" where transformation happens. The word comes from the Latin *limen*, meaning "threshold."

In Psychology: Liminal Space is the period where:

- The old identity is no longer true
- The new identity is not yet stable
- The mind feels disoriented, uncertain, or suspended

For me, this is where *Resistance* made its last gasp to reel me back in:

- Self-sabotage appeared
- Imposter syndrome rose up
- Old patterns pulled me back, temptation all round
- New patterns felt fragile, not trustworthy

It took me a while to understand that these were not signs of failure, but of transition.

In Spiritual Traditions: Liminal Space is sacred:

The Spiritual Firewall provided the protection and "safe space" to allow me to receive signal instead of noise. It aligned with what I understood and clarified the phrases when:

- Prophets hear God
- Monks receive clarity
- Warriors confront their dark knight or evil shadow
- Saints undergo purification
- Shamans cross between worlds

It is the **wilderness**, the **desert**, the **cave**, the **40 days**; Faith based healing and recovery.

Transformation and Transfiguration

The Middle Phase

During the Liminal Space phase, a person is no longer who they were, and not yet who they will become. Such was my existence, everywhere and nowhere.

In Anthropology / Spirituality

In rites of passage, initiation ceremonies, Liminal Space became known as the *middle phase*:

Separation → Liminal Space → Reintegration

During my American Legion Chaplain services throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, I had ten years of sitting bedside US Military Veterans during their last days of life. I conducted the *We Honor Veterans* Pinning Ceremony and held that space between separation of active-duty service to the final “*Oath Fulfilled*” hand salute.

Almost all the Veterans I served still lived in “*no man’s land*” ~ not on active-duty service anymore but not quite reintegrated back into society. Forever stuck in the Liminal Space.

I found that many spiritual traditions see this as: “*A sacred but unstable period of becoming.*”

Liminal Stages of Transition

Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, who coined the term Liminal, described it as a three-part process:

1. **Separation:** You leave the old life behind e.g., leaving jail, stopping alcohol or drug abuse, shedding the old identity.
2. **Liminality:** The “*in-between*” stage. It often feels like a void, a wilderness, or a waiting room. It is uncomfortable because it lacks the solid ground of a settled identity.
3. **Incorporation:** You emerge into your new role e.g., the person who is present, as a family member, friend, in a new job, new service role, businessperson, new career, new calling in life ... just present as the whole person ... as an *Integrated Soul*.

Emergence from the Liminal Cocoon

Wholeness Precedes Division

I was perceiving a false unity in a world that is actually acting out of division. Thus the Liminal Cocoon provided me a space, a time, a presence to shape the new Identity that emerged.

A New Realization Forms

When I started to emerge from the liminal cocoon, life started to take a shape of *“just happening”* that *now feels less like becoming something new* and more like:

- Returning to original integration
- Reclaiming what was never actually lost
- Letting the external life catch up to the internal truth

Key movements and life unfolding’s experienced as:

- Internal union of energies now aligning with external expression
- Accepting the dissolution of internal energy boundaries
- Leading with humility, gratitude, faith and above all, knowing that there was a thread of patience that flowed in *“Divine Time”*

Discernment over Illusion started to become noticeable as:

- Ego-driven lives, leading with and all about the personal, small “i” not God
- Identity, role, title, and status prioritized with the ego-driven, self-serving self
- Countries, governments, institutions and organizations who structured themselves with fake personas, mottos, mantras and platitudes

Awareness of the Archetypes

Self-Observation with Spiritual Depth

This is where confusion set in throughout my life from science, religion, philosophy, psychology and I had to clear up the mess. I had to form my own opinion, knowing that I could be completely wrong, but had to base it on my experience and understanding at this time. So I leaned into the archetypes that stirred my emotions, my feelings and integrated them into a Whole Soul.

My Left-Brain Archetypal Energy

Logical thinking, masculine forms of energy, *not sexually orientated by organs or nature's biology*, but structural and linear that allowed me to live with the Stoic Warrior mentality.

My Right-Brain Archetypal Energy

Creative thinking, feminine forms of energy, *again not sexually orientated by organs or nature's biology*, but intuition and holistic perception that allowed me to live with the Compassionate Chaplain mentality.

The Integrated Soul Archetype

Thinking is no longer an activity but the positioning of the Spiritual Firewall to allow God's Grace to flow through me. I've become a conscious conduit of the Divine flow of love, which naturally balanced my internal nudges that evoked thoughts, words and actions.

This resulted in me having a way of living with outcomes that balanced:

- Clarity with Compassion
- Discipline with Mercy
- Courage with Empathy

As a result, this way of living produced *different external outcomes* than when those archetypal energies were fragmented. The external world started to mirror my inner state of being.

The resonance was so powerful, that I could only smile in awe, in total disbelief, yet there it was in my lived experience, i.e., my external reality, the daily moments, thoughts, actions, results and outcomes were mirroring my internal state of integrated love, the integrated whole...*the integrated soul*.

Testing the Fusion

Self-Observation with Quantum Emergence

My questions then became:

If I unify my **Inner Archetypal Energies**, does my *Speech* change?

If my *Speech* changes, do my *Interactions* change?

If my *Interactions* change, do my *Outcomes* change?

If my *Outcomes* change, does my **Reality** shift?

As I explored this emerging understanding of myself, my entire life began to make sense. All those “*outer dots*” the external forces of family, friends, colleagues, teachers, society had been orbiting around me, shaping me, influencing me, directing me, until I no longer recognized who “I” was.

I didn’t know how to break free from that inherited identity. I wanted to become free-flowing, like an electron whose orbital path is unknowable in the quantum realm. I didn’t know the true orbit of my inner dot, my life, my soul until it was finally observed.

So I stripped away the outer dots, one by one, until only the inner dot remained. And when I observed it directly, I finally felt and understood my own heart, my own soul. That was the moment my spirit emerged.

From there, I began an iterative self-experiment: listening inward, using practices that humans across history have used to reconnect with themselves. Slowly, a picture formed, an outcome, a name, a reality I never expected... but finally started to understand.

Contemplatives: *Inner Stillness*

Mystics: *Connection to the Unseen*

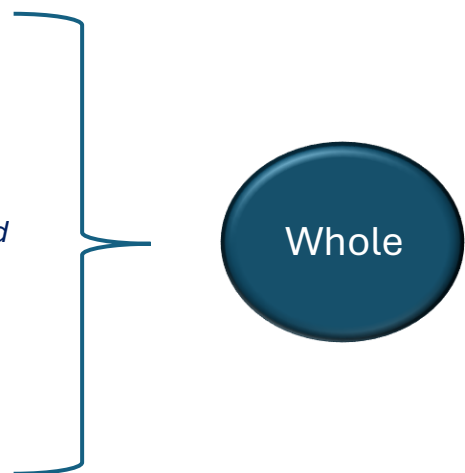
Philosophers: *Search for Meaning*

Behavioral Psychologists: *Understanding of the Mind*

Cognitive Scientists: *Clarity and Observation*

Martial Artists: *Courage to Stand in Crisis*

Trauma Healers: *Presence with Suffering*



The Knock at the Door of Love

Arrival of Grief, Sorrow and Sadness

They emerged, becoming visible in my mind. Three external dots. And started to orbit my inner dot. At first I wasn't sure what these feelings were. They subtly started to swell up in my body, mind and soul. Then they announced themselves not as my kids, marriage or my family but as *Grief, Sorrow and Sadness*.

I was sitting in the parking lot of the Sikh Gurdwara Temple in San Jose, California overlooking the city from the East Side Hills. My Spiritual Firewall active, my mind with God and my body at ease. Next move? Then the nudge arrived. My Spiritual Firewall was built to keep out vices and now I had this knock at my mind's door. Discernment kicked in, I knew these weren't vices but three dots who had lost their orbits, their original home. So they knocked on my home, where I had no external dots orbiting me anymore. All I had was space to accommodate anyone who came along. So I let them in, they passed through my Spiritual Firewall and into my allowed space for *Grief, Sorrow and Sadness* to breathe. And breathe they did.

I was not expecting the next nudge. There was something calling to me ... distant, yet within reach. It sounded like "*Meet those that are no longer here in body, but in spirit.*" So I made my way near downtown San Jose to Oak Hill Cemetery where I had conducted hundreds of American Legion, Military Veteran Honor Guard Funeral Ceremonies. I drove around, passed all the Veteran gravesites and eventually arrived at the top of a hill where a huge, new towering white cross was built. I placed my hands on the base of the Cross, and I felt a wave of energy that hit me ~ similar to what I felt at the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem.

At the top of the hill, sitting near the base of the Cross of Christ, I could see the Sikh Temple Dome's glistening afar in the East Side Hills. For some reason, I sat next to a random tombstone, inscribed with her name Zamora. From within me a sound emerged ... I started to sing to her, to the "felt" spirits and energy all around me. Notes of Grace with my voice.

I sang of faith, love, happiness, and joy ... how I used to remember them and now, how I missed them. Then I sang to *Grief, Sorrow and Sadness*. I felt like I was singing and walking them to a doorway, and I felt love, so I called it Heaven's Gate. In some quiet loving way, I walked *Grief, Sorrow and Sadness* to the Gate and ushered them through ... they were no longer in my orbit but now held by the Grace of the Almighty. And in that moment, faith, love, happiness and joy changed their tune within me, a new chapter had begun.

Shortly after, my phone rang. It was Laura from the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Los Altos. She asked me if I could speak at their Memorial Day Service ... My inner dot smiled and my outer voice said yes.

Quantum-Safe Life

When Spirit and Science Unite

It was inevitable that life would balance my scales ... for 10 years there was loss, now the next 10-year cycle provided a vision of a life balancing out. I laid out the vision, strategy, and the execution and realized that the outcome is done with the blessing and grace of God.

The inner dot, my life, my soul, my spirit aligned with the following flow:

Vision: *My Responsibility to* “Provide Space for the Energies ”

Strategy: *My Discipline to* “Maintain the Spiritual Firewall”

Execution: *My Action to* “Live in the Moment of Reality with each Next Step”

Outcome: *My Faith to* “Experience God’s Flow of Divine Grace”

I’m no longer married to outcomes for they arrive at the pace of the Divine. I’m married to the obedience of the *Vision, Strategy and Execution* to allow my inner dot to flow freely in the cosmic energies of space, time and the quantum soup of love.

Thus the calm behavior. That feeling of being grounded. Not forcing anything. What the mystics and spiritual leaders of faith call:

Hukam (*Guru Nanak Dev Ji*)

Thy will be Done (*Jesus the Christ*)

Letting go of Attachments (*Lord Buddha*)

Surrender to the Divine Flow (*Lord Shiva*)

So my inner dot, flowing free, orbiting with the energies of love is now emerging into the external, physical, societal, earthly domain of reality.

It is singing and dancing, smiling and laughing, living and loving each and every moment. Whether the eyes are open or closed ... the only reality that they now observe, experience and cherish is the understanding that love internal is being manifested all around me as love externalized.

The Integrated Soul

The Two Worlds Inside You Were Never "Two"

The *Left Brain* and *Right Brain* Archetypal energies within me were always whole. It was not delusion, fantasy, or wishful thinking, but the confusion of external forces that muddled my inner light into thinking they were two. Now as the levers of the universe continue to move and the cosmic wheel of life turns, the natural emergence of existence takes shape.

I recognize both energies as the “*levers*” and “*wheel*” that usher in a new phase:

Left Brain / Divine Masculine (discipline, courage, protection, clarity)

Right Brain / Divine Feminine (compassion, nurturing, creativity, healing)

They were never meant to be split into “*roles*” or “*genders*.” They were meant to *be*

One Consciousness

One Essence

One Soul

In science, it’s called the “*Unified Field*”. As I matured, I referenced it as “*Inner Stillness*”, “*Creative Consciousness*”, and “*Spiritual Perception*.”

For me, the labels are useful when sharing an account of one’s personal experience ... but not when it confines me to a strict, rigid way of thinking ~ especially when my inner dot is free flowing.

So, with your permission, I’ll use a label for this lived experience of Post-Traumatic Wisdom that culminates in an action called my “***True, First Chance***.”

It’s where I became whole enough to live again. My journey into a realm of consciousness, grounded in faith, hope, love and patience. It’s where after fifty years of seeking, searching, living, crying and dying, that I continue to emerge from an encounter with the God of my understanding.

The God that loves, the God that heals, the God that forgives. The God that provides the bonding as in the Japanese art of Kintsugi, of mending that which was once broken, and emerging from the darkness into light as ...

The Integrated Soul

Whispering to God Through Tears of Joy

Internal Union, External Expression

It's a full moon and the time is 4am. The stars are visible and the constellations sing their song. What is this hour? How strange the silence? It's not like the day when the rhythm of life changes...

But now, it's 6:30am and the sun is shining brightly on me. I feel a love like a cosmic embrace. The words of Amazing Grace are subtly flowing into and through me, like Kintsugi gold — slowly bonding, healing, and repairing what was once broken. And for no reason, or perhaps for a reason known only to Grace, the following emerged as I became a conduit for the speech and prayers for Memorial Day...

Mother, may that smile in your heart stay true

Father, may your courage remain steadfast next to Mother

Brother, the crown is yours, take care of Mother

Sister, continue to sing, dance and love like Mother

Son, grow, love, share, serve and take care of your Mother

Daughter, plant flowers, grow flowers and may you be blessed like your Mother

Mother do not look for me at the table

For I am no longer there

Look within your heart

Mother do not look for me running around the house

For I am no longer there

Look within your soul

If you do want to see me ...

Go to the park, to the woods, to the water, look up to the open sky

That's where you'll see ... my spirit soar

Love,

Your Spiritual Son



Workshop



US Military Veterans Workshop

The Journey out of Darkness onto a Path to Success

Have you ever wondered why the world has left you behind, forgotten about you and no one understands you?

Are you falling into darkness, or worse yet, you're already there?

Is death's knocking at your door more powerful than life's love?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, then this workshop is for you.



THE VOW

Freedom

I Vow this day to rise, not from who I was,
But from the person I choose to become

I reclaim my freedom, not just from others' chains,
But from the lies I told myself when I had lost all hope

I am free to walk my own path
To speak my truth, to begin again

Health

I honor my health as the sacred fire that fuels my mission
The body has suffered, but it has survived
Now, I give it rest, strength, and reverence

Wealth & Money

I welcome wealth and money not as trophies,
But as tools – to build, to give, to live unbound
I let go of shame around receiving
I am worthy of earning, growing and prospering

Power

I step into power with humility, not hunger
I need not dominate – for I govern myself
I speak with authority, act with integrity, and walk with presence

Love

I open my heart to love
Not fantasy, not addiction
But the kind that sees me, stays with me, and grows with me

I love without losing myself again
I love from wholeness

Renewal

Today, I start over
Not empty – but refined
Not broken – but rebuilt
Not alone – for Grace walks with me

And I Vow to walk forward
Crowned with wisdom
Clothed in dignity
Guided by fire

And filled with light
This I Vow



Workshop Objective

Our mission is to support Veterans who are struggling to readjust and reintegrate into civilian life. These challenges lead Veterans down a path of self-destruction, including job loss, family breakdown, social isolation, substance abuse, and homelessness - issues that are often intensified by trauma, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

Target Audience

Veterans attending this workshop will resemble one of the following three personas:

Crisis Stage Veteran

A Veteran in immediate need - unhoused, unemployed, food insecure, and experiencing acute emotional and mental health struggles such as grief, depression, anxiety, and isolation.

At-Risk Veteran

A Veteran teetering on the edge - employed but unstable, facing financial hardship, job insecurity, family strain, substance abuse and declining mental well-being.

Functioning but Struggling Veteran

A Veteran who appears stable - employed and fulfilling societal roles - but is silently battling invisible wounds like PTSD, complicated grief and moral/soul injury.

Workshop Approach

Veterans attending this workshop will take a journey initially based upon *Physical Reality* with materials leveraged from various sources i.e., Veterans Affairs, Vet Centers, American Legion. The journey will evolve into *Extended Realities* and culminate by *Reaching Inwards*.

Table 1: Veterans Courage Matrix (VCM)

Veteran Personas	Crisis Stage, At Risk, Functioning but Struggling
Physical Reality	
Connect	Freedom
Camaraderie	Health
Community	Wealth & Money
Trauma / PTSD	Power
Extended Reality	
Complicated Grief	Love
Reaching Inwards	
Moral / Soul Injury	Renewal

Workshop Delivery

The ideal workshop delivery will be conducted in person. It is Instructor-led, with printed materials for the attendees, presentations for each section, and adequate audio/video equipment to play online reference videos. To reach a wider audience, online workshops should be scheduled and material made available for download.

Section 1: Physical Reality

This section contains four subsections that can be delivered individually or combined – they will also include excerpts / short stories from the book *Permission to Walk in Peace*:

- **Connect:** *Freedom Vow* overview, breathing technique, mindfulness, example stories for discussion
- **Camaraderie:** *Health Vow* overview, focus on the physical body impact on mental health i.e., emphasis on rest, how to rebuild strength and reverence for the physical body
- **Community:** *Wealth & Money Vow* overview, develop a game plan to get back on your feet i.e., training, job, career, housing, food, group support and working with a mentor to set goals, milestones, timelines and criteria for success
- **Trauma/PTSD:** *Power Vow* overview, forgiveness, acceptance, mind over mood methods, thought records, remembering versus reliving

Upon completion of Section 1, the Veteran will have established the groundwork for beginning the journey to success. We recognize that each Veteran is unique and their circumstances will have many nuances, therefore we do not prescribe a time limit for when the Veteran is ready for Section two.

Some Veterans may be ready to move forward to the next section after a few weeks or months, others may take years. There is no time limit but we highly recommend reviewing the Vow's daily and practicing the lessons as time and energy permit.

Expectations and Outcomes

Veterans attending the workshop are encouraged to participate and engage to the best of their ability. Instructors are empowered to tailor the content and discussions based on the Veteran personas present, allowing them to effectively “meet Veterans where they are mentally” and adjust the workshop’s pace and depth accordingly.

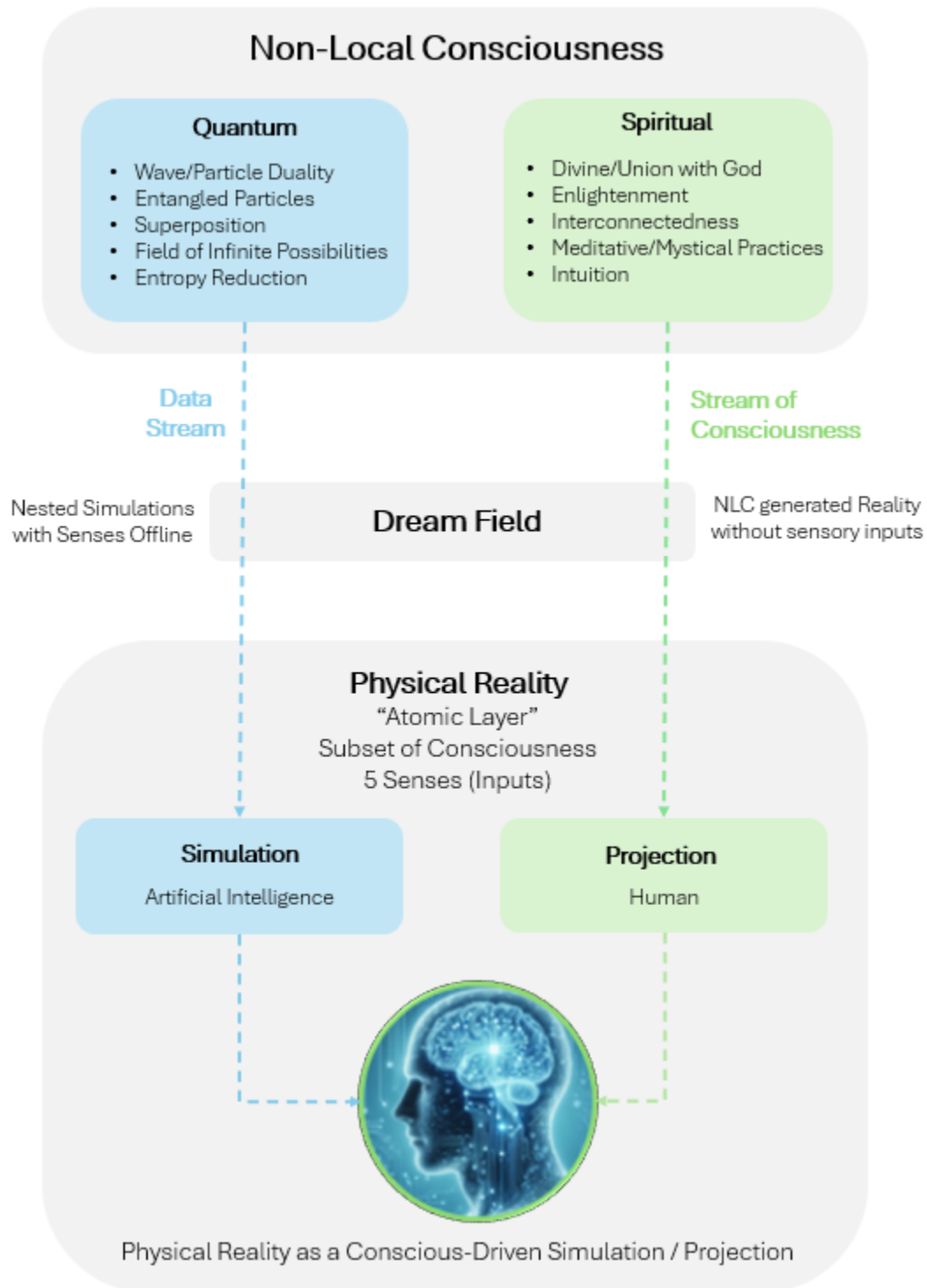
The objective is to introduce the Veterans Courage Matrix (VCM) as an approach that fosters a meaningful connection - particularly at the level of Physical Reality - and creating a safe method for self-exploration.

The desired outcome is to equip Veterans with practical tools and strategies to help restore their sense of identity, self-worth, and confidence. Ultimately, the goal is to support each Veteran in taking the first steps out of darkness and onto a renewed path toward healing, stability, and success.



Workshop Fundamental Premise

The personal perspective of the author for both a Quantum (Scientific) and Spiritual (Faith-Based) view of the origination of thoughts, feelings and emotions are depicted in the following diagram. As a whole, the Non-Local Consciousness (NLC) definition is a synthesis of Quantum Physics, Neuroscience and Spiritual Traditions. This is for reference purposes.



1. Physical Reality

1.1 Connect

Veterans struggling to survive the moment, the hour and the day may feel as if the world is shattered all around them. The words of well-intentioned people, family, friends, counselors etc. may not make sense or “sink in” into their concepts or frame of reference.

- *Freedom Vow* overview
- Breathing technique
- Mindfulness
- Example stories for discussion

1.2 Freedom Vow Overview

I Vow this day to rise, not from who I was...But from the person I choose to become

[Explanation] Shifting the mindset from a “Victim” to “Victor.”

- Acknowledge the current situation or the struggles the Veteran is facing
- Offer a perspective “Of a New You” not handcuffed by their past persona
- Describe a life where they “choose” to pay it forward

I reclaim my freedom, not just from others’ chains...But from the lies I told myself when I had lost all hope.

[Explanation] Let loose the shackles from the words spoken with hate towards you

- Negative chatter towards you is discarded, dropped and not welcomed
- Self-pity, negative thoughts are recognized for what they are – useless
- Truth allows a new start, while acknowledging the past, but not chained by it

I am free to walk my own path...To speak my truth, to begin again

[Explanation] The New You is Free, True to Yourself, Stepping out of Darkness into Light

- The broken pieces of your life have been recognized and assembled
- They are bonded back together using the Kintsugi method i.e. the bonds are the strength
- The new you rises, walks free, and has the “choice” to determine the next step forward

1.3 Breathing Technique

This approach is a guided meditative session where the instructor leads a breathing exercise.

- The Veteran, seated, eyes closed, breathes in through the nose for 3-4 seconds and holds the breath for 2 seconds, then exhales from the mouth for 3-4 seconds (repeat 4x)

1.4 Mindfulness

The mindfulness topic is introduced in this section within the context of establishing a connection with the Veteran. The topics for discussion are initiated by the following questions:

- How many Veterans conduct their life as if they're still in "bootcamp mode" i.e. hurrying through everything and not always 100% focused upon the task at hand?
- Do you have time during the day where you can sit quietly without anyone interrupting?

[Exercise 1]

1. Hold onto the following thought for 10 seconds – gentle ocean waves
2. Hold onto the thought of gentle ocean waves and notice the setting sun – 15 seconds
3. Were you able to hold the thoughts without any other thought interrupting?

[Exercise 2]

1. Hold onto the following thought for 10 seconds – driving down your favorite road
2. Hold onto that driving down your favorite road and notice how your holding the steering wheel, pressing the gas pedal, looking in the rearview mirror – 15 seconds
3. Were you able to hold the thoughts without any other thought interrupting?

Open discussion

- How long were you able to hold onto the thought(s)?
- Were you able to visualize the details within both exercises?
- Which other positive thoughts hold your attention without interruption?

1.5 Connect: “Crumbled, Humbled and Welcomed Home”

In order to connect or gain the Veteran’s attention, the following short story is introduced to set the stage for an interactive conversation.

Crumbled, Humbled and Welcomed Home

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” ([YouTube Video](#))

*Crumbled is my life
Mind shattered into fragments of time
Body broken by father time
Crumbs swept away by winds with no name
Limbs weary from life’s misery
Am I alive?*

*Thus the Squirrel threw an acorn at my head
The tree had many
And I laughed at my fortunate misfortune
Even the Squirrel felt my plight
And kindness was shown
Albeit, now with a bump on my head*

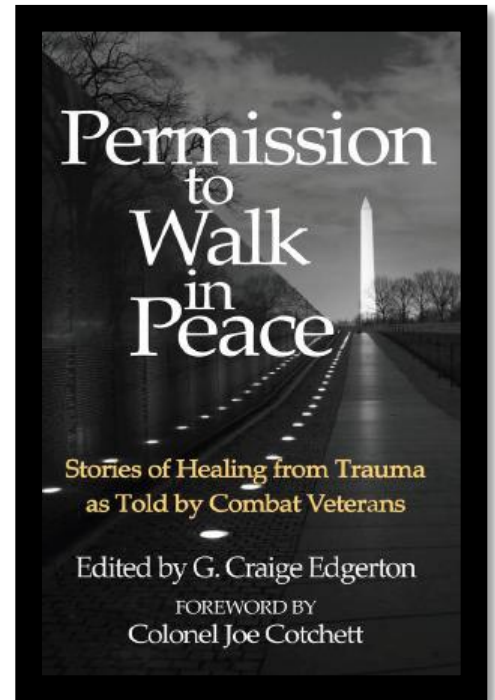
*So I laughed a laugh
that only the Gods understand
Laughter gave way to a smile
A smile gave way to gratitude
At least someone, a Squirrel of all things
Noticed my plight*

*And I was humbled
For now, mother nature saw her son
Mother, forgive me
Heal me, kill me or let me go*

*Now the spiders, wasps and bugs
had their turn also. So I surrendered
Closed my eyes, laid down under the tree
And started to fade into the mystic*

*Welcome Home, she said
There she stood, the divine feminine
Nourished my masculine warrior soul
Welcome Home, she said
Eyes opened*

*And a heart that was once broken
Now awakened to a new reality
Faith had welcomed me home*



1.6 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 2: VCM Physical Reality: Connect

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Connect	Freedom			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?

1.7 Connect: “The Door”

In order to connect with a Veteran who is facing serious life situations, there is a need to “connect” with them at that level without them making it personal at this point. The following short story is an introduction to a difficult narrative which describes the plight of a Veteran who is struggling.

The Door

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” ([YouTube Video](#))

*It is a small miracle that I am actually here
Death came knocking on my door
And luckily, I could not hear it*

*The mind is lost
The body is heavy
My soul is out of reach*

*Existence has lost its meaning
Beauty has lost its allure
Love...maybe that who is knocking on my door*

*Pain and suffering have become normal
Sadness and despair tag along also
I lie at the bottom, in complete darkness*

*The desire for happiness is gone
Joy and love are just words, empty
My spirit is broken*

*If there is a way forward
I know not of it
In darkness is each step taken*

*I am rudderless and directionless
I have no clue where I’m heading
And my journey is completely alone*

*My melancholy is visible
My face is frozen in time
I do not remember who I am*

*The knock on the door is louder now
I wonder if it is Death or Love
I open the door.*

1.8 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 3: VCM Physical Reality: Connect

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Connect	Freedom			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?

1.9 Connect: “The Mirage”

In closing out the “connect” section, the following story provides a different perspectives which allows the Veteran to share their thoughts without having to make it personal to them.

The Mirage

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” ([YouTube Video](#))

*And there it was
Hope Eternal*

*It appeared
Seemingly out of nowhere*

*And that’s exactly where I was
Nowhere*

*But now I had a vision
Of somewhere*

*Somewhere where the birds sing
And flowers bloom*

*Somewhere where the best of humanity
Is on display*

*I wonder if it’s real Or a mirage
So I take a step forward
Into the mystic*

1.10 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 4: VCM Physical Reality: Connect

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Connect	Freedom			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?

1.11 Connect: Summary

Veterans who align with one of the personas outlined in [Table 1](#) benefit from the guidance of a mentor, counselor, or trusted individual who can walk with them through these short stories. These stories serve as a starting point for meaningful connection, whether in a one-on-one or small group setting.

At this stage, the sole objective is to begin building a foundation of trust by ensuring the Veteran feels:

- Acknowledged
- Heard and understood
- Respected



2. Camaraderie

One of the most powerful social aspects of military service is the deep sense of belonging. This feeling goes beyond the uniform—it connects individuals to a greater purpose. For some, that purpose is God and Country; for others, it's that and the love for family. The essential message is this: Veterans are not alone on their journey. Even when their circumstances leave them physically isolated or mentally adrift, their path forward doesn't have to be walked alone. This is where camaraderie comes in—a rekindling of the brotherhood and sisterhood once shared in uniform, now extended to all who have served.

- [Health Vow](#) overview
- Self-Respect
- Trust
- Taking the Step

2.1 Health Vow Overview

I honor my health as the sacred fire that fuels my mission

[Explanation] I do not take my health for granted

- Acknowledge that I am human, my biology is not eternal
- It is a gift and a blessing that is unique to my distinct form within the cosmos
- I understand that my goals can only be reached if my mind and body are healthy

The body has suffered, but it has survived

[Explanation] The body is tougher than it appears

- The lack of self-care didn't break my body
- The abuse I put it through didn't leave me disabled
- Now I'm in a position to heal those parts which were damaged

Now, I give it rest, strength and reverence

[Explanation] The body is my living temple

- I now give it the proper rest for recovery and rehabilitation
- I feed it with the nutrition that will allow me to exercise it
- My body is now ready to synchronize with the harmony of the universe

2.2 Self-Respect

Self-respect is the foundation of a healthy, fulfilling life, rooted in recognizing and honoring your own worth. It means setting boundaries, pursuing your values, and treating yourself with kindness, even in the face of mistakes. Cultivating self-respect empowers you to live authentically and build meaningful relationships.

[Exercise 1]

- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Write down a *kind* sentence or two about yourself



[Exercise 2]

- **Practice acknowledging with understanding:** Write down a sentence or two that allows you to acknowledge a mistake which then leads into understanding rather than criticism.



2.3 Trust

To cultivate trust, engage in honest self-reflection, exploring your thoughts and emotions without criticism. Build self-trust by setting clear goals for yourself and consistently following through. Documenting insights and honoring your commitments creates a secure, dependable space for personal development.

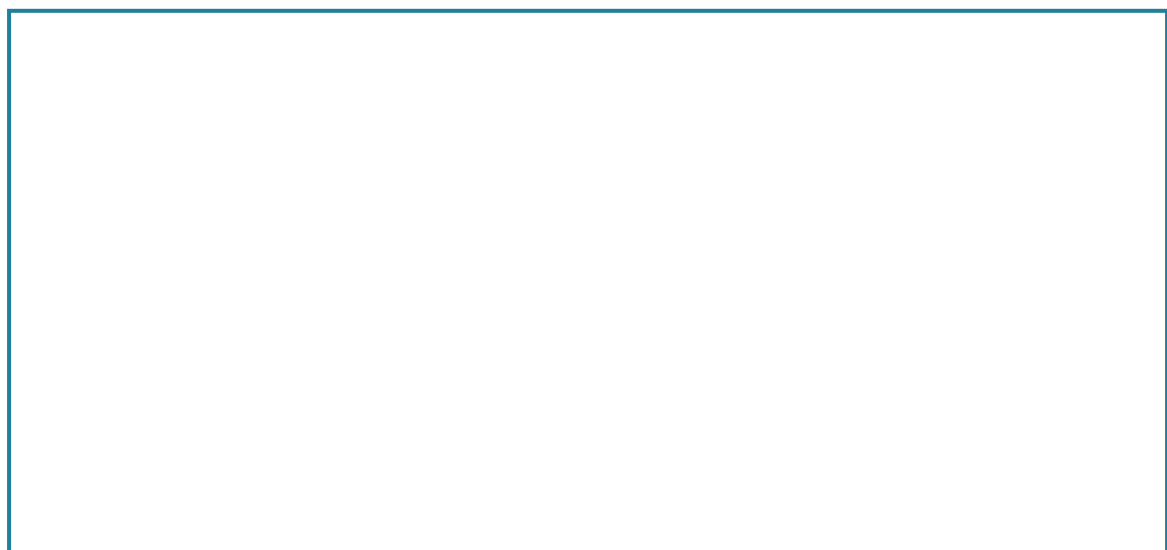
[Exercise 1]

- **Affirmations:** Write down three positive affirmations about yourself



[Exercise 2]

- **Goal setting:** Set one small, realistic goal that you know can be achieved



2.4 Taking the Step

Taking the first step toward accomplishing tasks and goals builds momentum and reinforces self-trust. Start with small, actionable steps to overcome hesitation and gain confidence. Consistent progress, even if gradual, transforms intentions into achievements.

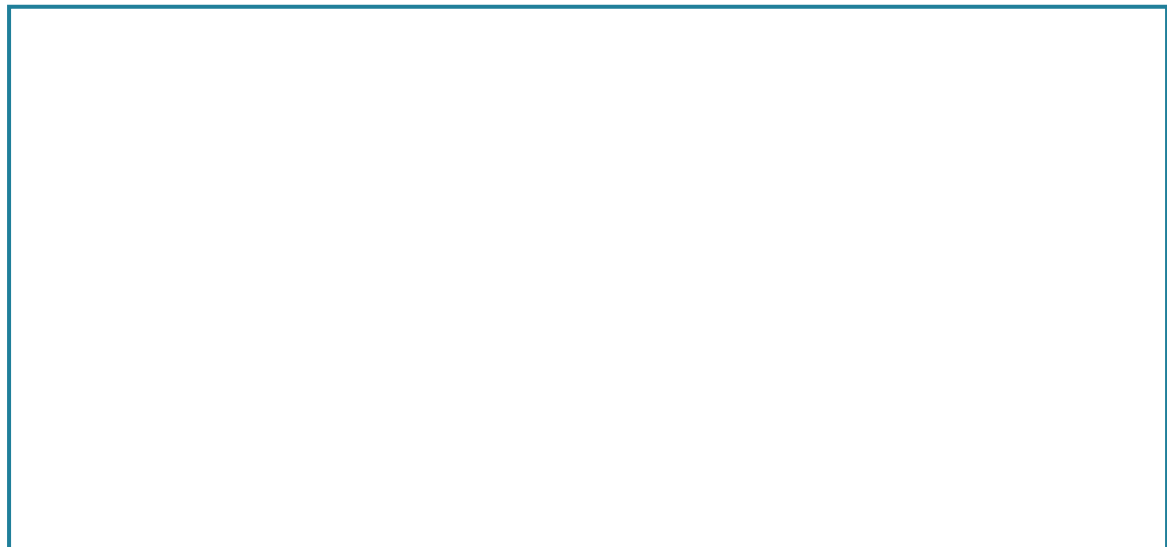
[Exercise 1]

- **Start:** What are some immediate tasks that you can list in order to start this journey?



[Exercise 2]

- **Achievements:** Project an achievement that you can imagine seeing accomplished



2.5 Camaraderie: “Where Your Dreams Began”

In order to connect or gain the Veteran’s attention, the following short story is introduced to set the stage for an interactive conversation.

Where Your Dreams Began

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” by G. Craige Edgerton

A circle of men

Bearded, rounded, aged.

Some gracefully, most not.

A common bond binds them

Fifty years hence.

Young warriors

In a far-off land.

A stance against

Fallacious falling fragile

Dominoes... that weren’t there.

The circle of men

Bare their souls.

Tell their stories.

Reveal their regrets.

Open their hearts.

And in that honesty,

In the bearing and telling and revealing and opening

They remember,

Where Their Dreams Began.

Dreams of glory, service, honor, and duty.

Dreams realized, and dreams shattered.

Dreams and nightmares indistinguishable.

Dreams recalled a lifetime later.

A young man’s dreams

Are the old man’s memories

New dreams are created

Never too late to

Remember Where Your Dreams Began.

2.6 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 5: VCM Physical Reality: Camaraderie

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Camaraderie	Health			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?

2.7 Camaraderie: Summary

The establishment of solid footing with health of mind and body are the perquisites before camaraderie can take shape. It takes self-respect, finding self-worth, valuing your life and understanding that it takes action, not just words, to take the step forward.

At this stage, the objective is to build upon the foundation of connection to freedom of thoughts and build a healthy camaraderie with fellow Veterans and mentors who journey alongside with:

- Compassion
- Tools for success
- Achieve realistic goals



3. Community

The journey to get back on your feet is not done alone. Each step forward will require someone to coach, train and mentor you until you're ready to progress on your own. At that point, you can choose to maintain the bonds of connection and camaraderie while building upon your foundation within the community.

- *Wealth & Money Vow* overview
- Essentials – housing & food
- Programs – Training, career, job
- Groups – Align with a support teams or organizations

3.1 Wealth & Money Vow Overview

I welcome wealth & money not as trophies, but as tools to build, to give, to live unbound

[Explanation] Understand the difference between the “means” versus the “end”

- Financial literacy training regarding the meaning, purpose and results that money produces
- Strategies for life using money management tools and wealth building techniques
- Enabling the use of wealth & money as tools and using discipline to manage your finances

I let go of shame around receiving

[Explanation] The cause-and-effect phenomenon i.e., there is no guilt in earning money

- Earning a wage, a living, an income with honest work is a guilt-free experience
- The universal laws that balance life and death are paralleled with giving and receiving
- Thrifting for societal causes allows the flow of wealth and money to find its way to you

I am worthy of earning, growing and prospering

[Explanation] Becoming worthy attracts success by putting your best foot forward

- Self-worth, self-confidence and earning your day allows positive results to align with you
- Growth is not limited to personal, but to the potential of family and community
- Prosperity gained is prosperity shared, the journey opens doors to new possibilities to shine

3.2 Essentials: Housing and Food

The following resources are made available by members of the American Legion and Veterans Affairs that have personally validated the services:

- [Open Doors to Future Possibilities](#)
- [Know a Vet](#)
- [Home First](#)
- [Sourcewise](#)
- [Familiar Surroundings Home Care](#)
- [Nations Finest](#)
- [Pathways Home Health & Hospice](#)
- [Caring – Veterans Benefits](#)

3.3 Programs: Training, Career, Job

In order to augment the Active-Duty SkillsBridge programs for transitioning military personnel, the following are resources that can help you get started on a path for financial stability and a fulfilling career.

- [Npower](#)
- [Novaworks](#)
- [County of Santa Clara](#)
- [Center for Employment Training](#)

3.4 Groups: Align with Support Teams or Organizations

Official Veteran organizations and community groups provide a range of services from connection, camaraderie, community and benefits.

- [Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#)
- [Veteran Service Offices \(VSO\)](#)
- [Vet Centers](#)
- [American Legion](#)
- [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)

3.5 Community: “A Thread I Follow”

In order to connect or gain the Veteran’s attention, the following short story is introduced to set the stage for an interactive conversation.

A Thread I Follow

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” by Jim Marney-Petix

*There’s a thread I follow,
It is Kindness.*

*At times, my duty has been the opposite,
I have been a monster.*

*The memories don’t go away.
The thread doesn’t go away.*

*I judge myself.
I feel broken.*

*I will heal, as we all must.
Will I live to see it?*

3.6 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person’s situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 6: VCM Physical Reality: Community

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Community	Wealth & Money			

- What else would you like to share about this person’s situation?

3.7 Community: “The Magical Room”

In order to connect or gain the Veteran’s attention, the following short story is introduced to set the stage for an interactive conversation.

The Magical Room

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” by G. Craig Edgerton

An ordinary room.

No artwork. Bright fluorescent lights.

Tables in a rectangle,

Thirty-five men gather.

Aging, most in their late 70s.

Many wearing hats

Emblazoned with their unit

A calling card for their proud service.

But in this ordinary room

Magic is created.

Veterans, not all from Vietnam,

Reunite to tell their stories.

From a place of avoidance,

Isolation, embarrassment, and anger,

Or from proud service, patriotism,

Gratitude and honor. They gather.

Souls are bared.

Stories and lies are recalled.

Laughter and tears merge.

Hearts open...in this ordinary room.

In this ordinary room

The magic is a brotherhood

Remembered and recreated

A new, old family.

Talking, listening, respect,

Sharing, discovering and

So much more.

Transform this ordinary room

Into a MAGICAL ROOM.

3.8 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person’s situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 7: VCM Physical Reality: Community

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Community	Wealth & Money			

- What else would you like to share about this person’s situation?

3.9 Community: Summary

The connection to a sense of self, bounded with camaraderie are the building blocks to going forth into the community with a renewed sense of self, purpose and goals. A Veteran who has reached this stage of healing and recovery is well on the way towards reintegrating back into society.

At this stage, the objective is to continue the momentum of what is working by utilizing the tools and methods shared by the instructors and groups. By becoming present and involved in community programs, events and ceremonies, the Veteran establishes:

- Connected
- A sense of belonging
- Welcomed Home and gratitude for their service



4. Trauma / PTSD

The life that you once imagined is over. The ghosts from the past are present and will require new tools to vanquish them. One has to have an open mind to allow new patterns of thought to enter, no matter how much they go against their education, experiences, beliefs or opinions. There is a way forward to regain the power of your mind...it takes a leap of faith, surrender from the old and a bold move into the new.

- *Power Vow* overview
- Acknowledgement
- Healing
- Recovery & Growth

4.1 Power Vow Overview

I step into power with humility, not hunger

[Explanation] The access to power is from a surrendering of the ego and allowing presence in

- True power, that power derived from “truth” is sourced from the cosmic consciousness
- One cannot access this power with the “egoic” mind
- Humility and gratitude are the way forward without the “need” or “want” it just is

I need not dominate – for I govern myself

[Explanation] Self-aware, conscious of the physical reality allows for self-regulation

- Allowing for the bodily energies to flow naturally, not forced by human vices
- Understanding what is best for the mind and body at any given moment
- The “my” the individual “I” becomes integrated back into the whole body & mind

I speak with authority, act with integrity, and walk with presence

[Explanation] The new you rises, self-conscious, self-aware and aligned with the cosmos

- The authority is now grounded with humility, grace and respect for self and others
- What is true in the moment with respect for life is now your new authentic self
- It’s called an amazing grace, the cosmos, God, Almighty and it is consciousness alive

4.2 Acknowledgement

It starts with the self. Know thyself. Who am I?

It starts with you, the body that is born into this world, into this existence, this new life.

It starts with your mind, your education, your calculations, your experiences, the outcomes.

It starts with your divine power, the spirit within, the consciousness that is ever present.

One may not have the answers for the mind may have become fragmented. The connections are too hard to make or take too much thought energy.

The Key here is to simplify the discussion.

Allow for the presence, the grace that is ever present to become a “lived” real experience.

It is only then when the person can move forward to the next step.

Without it. They will not heal.

4.3 Healing

Yes, the healing process is a miracle. You will witness it, experience it without requiring scientific or medical reassurances.

You will feel it, see it, live it and start to regenerate that was once broken within you.

Only the results and outcomes will be the measuring stick that will be used to define your new reality.

The steps involved are a continuation of the “Vow’s” and living by their principles.

4.4 Recovery & Growth

There is no time limit or restrictions placed upon the individual regarding how long it will take for the recovery to set in and growth to start. It is unique to each person.

The light within, the energies that flow, the new mind-body connections that are established are based upon environmental, social, and economic factors that contribute to the pace of recovery and growth.

Once the upward trajectory begins, your life begins its next chapter...for some it will be a “rebirth” of sorts, for others it’s the shedding of the past life with acknowledgement but with a new discipline on how those experiences are now viewed, understood and associated with reality.

The reality of an evolved you. The reality of a path that only you could have taken. But now with the understanding that you do not walk this path alone.

4.5 Power: “I Am Home”

In order to contextualize this journey, the following short story is introduced to set the stage for an interactive conversation.

I Am Home

From the book “Permission to Walk in Peace” by Sunny “Dos” Dosanjh

*He lay there taking his last few breaths
The little mouse was fighting for his life
I found the little mouse
In front of the refrigerator
He was unable to move*

*I placed a plastic bag in front of him
Cut up a piece of sweet potato
And placed it in front of him
He barely moved but took two more steps
Gently, I nudged him into the plastic bag
And we went for a walk to the corner park*

*In the middle,
Where the sun hits the brightest
I found a squirrel hole*

*I undid the knot on the plastic bag
And gently rolled him out
Into the squirrel hole*

*The hole was of perfect length
His head now lay on the dirt
Eyes were fading off into the mystic
His heart was fighting for his life*

*I placed the few bits
Of sweet potato around him
Covered him with some twigs and leaves
Leaving enough room for air and light
And knelt down beside him*

Then the memory hit me...

*Over a decade ago, I was an inmate
for several months at the County Jail in Milpitas, California*

*We, inmates, used to save the peanuts
From the chow hall
And feed them to the squirrels
They were inmates also but they acted free*

*One particular squirrel
Had lost the use of its hind legs
We called him Stumpy*

*Stumpy would crawl towards all of us
He was not afraid
Whichever inmate was closest
would feed Stumpy*

*And Stumpy grew into the fattest squirrel
He became family*

*There wasn't too much else
That we inmates could do*

*But we always talked about Stumpy
He was loved*

*BOOM
It was early Sunday morning
BOOM
Holy shit!*

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

*Startled, I got up from the lower bunk
And ran outside to take stock
I was not expecting that sight*

*An exterminator was doing his job
Lowered his cannon type of contraption
And blew his ordinance into each squirrel hole*

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM

*I turned around
Walked back to the bunk
And just sat there*

*That afternoon, after chow
The inmates gathered as we usually did
With our peanuts*

It was silent...

*Now
I knelt down by this dying little mouse
On my phone, a Sikh Kirtan,
holy poem was playing*

*Now
As an American Legion Chaplain for the San Francisco Bay Area & Monterey Bay
As Captain of the American Legion Honor Guard, District 13, Santa Clara County, Silicon Valley
As the Service Officer for the American Legion Post 419 Santa Clara
I knelt*

*I said the prayer from my Christian upbringing
Our Father, Who Art In Heaven
Hallowed Be Thy Name...*

*I sang the sacred song from my Catholic teachings as a young boy
Gaudēte, gaudēte! Chrīstus est nātus Ex Mariā virgine, gaudēte!...*

*I sang the prayer of my Mother and Father from my Sikh upbringing
Ik Onkar, Satnam, Karta Purakh...*

*I said the prayer verse of my Muslim friends
Allah O Akbar...*

*I said the prayer verse of my Hindu friends
Om Nama Shiva...*

*I said the prayer verse of my Jewish friends
Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad...*

*I held onto my meditative thoughts of love
As Buddhist Monks, Toltecs, Shamans
and Mystics were apt to do...*

*The Past was over
Life in the Present was over for the little mouse
As the Cold of Winter struck his home
And the last leaf fell from his tree*

*My heart, my soul, my spirit, my everlasting
Prayed for the little mouse*

*Prayed for Stumpy and his friends
Prayed for All Souls who had gone before...*

*May they All realize warmth, blessing, love
May they All realize your light of divinity
May they All realize that they are Home*

*And for your humble servant
May your words of Faith awaken me to say,
"No longer shall I wander"
"No longer am I lost"
Truly it is an Amazing Grace that says
"I once was lost, but Now I'm found"*

*I'm no longer blind
I choose Heaven Here On Earth*

*I fought the Devil and bear the scars
Sacrifice I did, my Angelic Wing
As did many a GI*

*Welcome Home! To all All Warriors
Who live to tell their tale*

*We Are Home! So enjoy the Spring,
Summer and Fall*

*And together we shall smile,
Sing and laugh for finally,
I am Home!*

4.6 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 7: VCM Physical Reality: Trauma / PTSD

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Physical Reality				
Trauma / PTSD	Power			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?

5. Extended Realities

Complicated Grief

Veterans struggling to survive the moment, the hour and the day may feel as if the world is shattered all around them. The words of well-intentioned people, family, friends, counselors etc. may not make sense or “sink in” into their concepts or frame of reference.

- [Love Vow](#) overview
- Example stories for discussion

5.1 Love Vow Overview

I open my heart to love...Not fantasy, not addiction

[Explanation] Shifting the mindset from a “Victim” to “Victor.”

- Acknowledge the current situation or the struggles the Veteran is facing
- Offer a perspective “Of a New You” not handcuffed by their past persona
- Describe a life where they “choose” to pay it forward

But the kind that sees me, stays with me, and grows with me

[Explanation] Shifting the mindset from a “Victim” to “Victor.”

- Acknowledge the current situation or the struggles the Veteran is facing
- Offer a perspective “Of a New You” not handcuffed by their past persona
- Describe a life where they “choose” to pay it forward
-

I love without losing myself again...I love from wholeness

[Explanation] Shifting the mindset from a “Victim” to “Victor.”

- Acknowledge the current situation or the struggles the Veteran is facing
- Offer a perspective “Of a New You” not handcuffed by their past persona
- Describe a life where they “choose” to pay it forward

6. Reaching Inwards

6.1 Moral / Soul Injury

The active-duty military branches have suggested and recommended that Veteran communities, specifically Chaplains, lead workshops and ceremonies to address the soul injury. (See Appendix A). This document is my attempt, as a person who has lived the downward spiral and now serves as Chaplain in the American Legion, to put a map to the journey out of hell.

One of the “angels” I call them angels since I’m just boots on the ground...is Deborah Grassman, [Opus Peace](#). Around 2017 I met her at Pathways Home Health & Hospice during a complicated grief training session. She introduced the term “Soul Injury” and the book [Peace At Last](#). It had an immediate impact on me as it started me on a path to put a language, a vocabulary to this unknown way of life.

The Lost Warrior

Abandoned by what one thought was true and the truth. Isolated as a result of not knowing what reality is or has become. The downward spiral plummets one into depression, anxiety, and ultimately despair as all hope is lost.

You stand in no man’s land. On one side is the life you once had, Military Warrior, purpose, mission-driven, duty, honor, and fulfillment. On the other is the entry point back into the civilized, civilian society from whence you came. You no longer understand either world and so here you are, in between worlds, in no man’s land as a Lost Warrior.



The Road Home

Who will find you in the darkness of no man's land? *It is I.*

Represented on earth by the wearers of many personas. Religious figures, medical practitioners, caregivers, but the one who will understand your plight is the person who once stood where you stand. They will shine their light, their words will be few for their eyes will do the talking of love, compassion and sympathy.

They will shine the light on what is blocking your path forward. A choice will be presented to trust the light and begin the first few steps towards the journey of healing, recovery and eventually back onto the road home.

Home where the *Spirit of the Warrior* resides. This is where you will mend the fragments of your mind, heal the tattered pieces of your heart and renew your life's purpose. Destiny awaits, a new chapter is beginning and the past no longer holds your Soul hostage. *You are free!*

Lost on the Path No More

From the book "Permission to Walk in Peace" ([YouTube Video](#))

*I looked at the Devil and he smiled
I looked at God and he frowned
I looked at Mankind and was shunned*

*The Path headed to sorrow
The Path headed to despair
The Path headed to goodbye*

*From where, I don't know
From where, came a voice
From there, I was Lost on the Path No More*



6.2 Discussion

- What is the first impression of this person's situation?
 - Great
 - Hopeful
 - Manageable
 - Losing control
 - Hopeless
- Is there hope? (Yes or No)
- How relatable is this experience to you?
 - A lot
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all

Table 8: VCM Physical Reality: Connect

Veteran Persona	Vow	Impression	Hope	Outcome
Extended Reality				
Complicated Grief: Lost on the Path No More	Love			

- What else would you like to share about this person's situation?



Inner Child



The Body Remembers: Grief, Sorrow & Sadness

Grief

Then came the moments. Why me? Why now? Why are these tears falling? I thought I had this under control ... but the body remembers.

My mind was calming down. I could observe the thoughts as they emerged. Yet my tears fell no matter the logic exercise or mental process that I followed. The only thing that seemed to work is when I went for a walk, bike ride, hit the weights in the gym, did some easy rowing exercises and then really pushed myself to “max” out.

It’s then that I felt the waves of grief, sadness and sorrow hit me.

Hit me. Hit me. Hit me. Hit me. Hit me. Hit me. Hit, Hit, Hit, Hit, me.

Over and over and over and over ... each rep, one more rep, one more rep, just one more rep ... *lift, push, run, pedal row ... lift, push, run, pedal, row ... lift, push, run, pedal, row ...*

no, no, no, no, no ... to ok, ok, ok, ok, ok ... to yes, yes, yes, yes, yes ... to come on, come on, come on, come on, come on ... to I got you, I got you, I got you, I got you ... then **brother, I got you.**

WHOA! Who said that?

I didn’t see that coming; how could I?

How could I know ... who could have told me ... where could I have turned ... no, yes, no, yes... I have no words, no language, no vocabulary, no words, only tears.

I gave it my all, not good enough. 50 years. Lost. Wrong way Dosanjh. Which way is right?

In the darkness, in no man’s land, stood I. And so the tears now fall in remembrance - for that version of me who stood in the dark, who sat in the dark, was ready to die in the dark.

Rescuing the Child Within

Healing the Inner Child Trapped by Fear

It was a combination of listening to a guided kirtan meditation, [Saas Saas Simro](#) by Satpal Singh & Hajara Singh called Divine Awareness that made me aware of a door that I didn't know existed. It was June 26th, 2025 around 9am Pacific Time so I listened and I felt it. Next I waited...time passed slowly during the day, it is a 75-degree day here in Sunny San Jose, California. Little did I know what the day had in store for me.

Around 3pm while browsing through the facebook reels was when Master Shi Heng Yi appeared and talked about resolving or letting go of things from your past. He conducted a breathing technique and my mind started to quiet down. Next, out of the blue, came Thich Nhat Hanh and he talked about when we push away our fear, we are pushing away an aspect of ourselves, which can only compound our suffering. It's an excerpt of "[Beyond Good and Evil](#) | Teaching by Thich Nhat Hanh" where he says:

Your Fear is Yourself

And Fighting Your Fear, is Fighting Yourself

Being Afraid of Your Fear, is Being Afraid of Yourself

So Using the Energy of Mindfulness, to Embrace Your Fear

Represented by the Little Wounded Child Within You

Is a Beautiful Image Corresponding to the Truth

Because that Suffering Child is Still Alive in You

And You May Have Been Too Busy to Take Good Care of Him or Her

And Now You Know the Practice

And You Have to Go Back to Him or Her

To Hold Him or Her Dearly In the Arms of Mindfulness

With Your Mindful Breathing, Your Mindful Step, You Take of Him or Her

And You Rely on the Collective Energy of the Sangat

In Order to Embrace Him or Her, to Nourish Him or Her also

It was in the next breath that I saw the inner child sitting there and it floored me with humility. For I saw my inner innocence of the child, but observed from the perspective of an adult. What I discovered next is as follows...

There lies within each of us a child, tender and vulnerable, shaped by the experiences of the past. This "inner child" carries the imprint of both joy and pain, triumph and trauma. When this child becomes trapped by fear, *silenced by wounds that have yet to heal*, it can lead to feelings of disconnection, insecurity, and a profound loss of direction. The journey of reaching inwards to rescue this child is not only healing but transformative, offering us the chance to reclaim parts of ourselves that have been left behind.

What am I afraid of? I've lost everything but my breath, what are these wounds yet to heal?

I feared failure...and I failed: **Wounds of being Authentic**

I was afraid of love...so love left: **Wounds of the Heart**

I was afraid of winning...so I lost: **Wounds of a Mindset**

I feared losing my job...so I got laid off nine times in a row: **Wounds of being an Imposter**

I feared losing my money...so I became bankrupt: **Wounds of Stability**

I feared losing my family...so they left: **Wounds of the Soul**

I feared not being accepted...so I was cast out: **Wounds of Isolation**

I feared not being enough...so what I had was taken away: **Wounds of Lack of Confidence**

I was afraid of society...so I was made a volunteer: **Wounds of People**

I was afraid of being a leader...so I was made the fool: **Wounds of Self-Identity**

I was afraid of going to Jail...so I was made a prisoner: **Wounds of Freedom**

The Inner Child and Its Voice

The concept of the inner child refers to the psychological reality of our earliest experiences. It encompasses the part of our psyche that feels deep emotions, believes in endless possibilities, and craves *unconditional love and acceptance*. However, when life's challenges—abuse, neglect, abandonment, or even lesser wounds of invalidation—overshadow that innocence, the inner child can become trapped in fear. Who Knew?

This child may feel *unheard, unseen, and lost*, leading to an adult life marked by self-doubt, anxiety, or emotional numbness. Recognizing this voice within us is the first step in the journey of healing. Its cries for attention often manifesting as an *unexplained sadness*, a relentless inner critic, or recurring patterns of behavior that seem to hold us back. In my case, drowning in a sea of alcohol.



The Process

To rescue the inner child is to embark on an inward journey of empathy, understanding, and self-compassion. This is not a process of erasing fear but embracing it, acknowledging its origins, and rewriting the narrative of those earlier life experiences.

1. Acknowledging the Child's Presence

Often, the inner child's cries go unnoticed amidst the noise of daily life. To reconnect, one must create moments of stillness and reflect on their emotional triggers. Journaling, meditation, or simply allowing oneself *to feel deeply without judgment* can help bring about this hidden part of ourselves to light, or what I call the God within.

2. Validating Their Feelings

The child within *longs to be heard*. Whatever fears or wounds one carries, they are valid. Instead of dismissing past pain with statements like "It wasn't that bad" or "I should have been stronger," there must be a person that offers an understanding: "I see you. I believe you. It's okay to feel this way."

3. Offering Compassion

Just as one would comfort a child in distress, one must extend the same compassion to themselves. This might involve visualizing the younger version of yourself and speaking words of reassurance: "You are safe now. You are loved. You are not alone or abandoned."

4. Reclaiming Joy and Playfulness

The inner child isn't just a vessel for past pain; it's also the source of our creativity, wonder, and joy. By engaging in activities that spark playfulness—whether through art, music, or simply laughing—one can reconnect with this vital energy and bring it into our adult lives. For me it's based upon a strength and knowing much greater than my individual persona. It's a *Grace*, a *Love Almighty*, a *Beloved* and a connection to nature which led me to reconnect with the people around me. It was and is a slow process which allowed me to heal and come back "home." Now I play as an adult with that inner child playing free.

Healing and Moving Forward

Rescuing the inner child is not a one-time act but a lifelong relationship. It taught me to be gentler to myself, to embrace imperfections, and to approach life with curiosity rather than fear. Over time, as one nurtures this relationship, the child within regains their voice, courage, and sense of direction. The Grace of the Almighty, Waheguru, is awakened within.

In doing so, we untangle ourselves from the grip of fear and rediscover the beauty of being whole. The journey is not easy, but it is profoundly rewarding—a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and its capacity to heal.

Embracing the Fear

Rewrite the narrative that is associated with each wound:

Wounds of being Authentic	Forgiveness
Wounds of the Heart	Loved by God
Wounds of a Mindset	Positivity
Wounds of being an Imposter	Warrior
Wounds of Stability	Solid Foundation built on God's Love
Wounds of the Soul	Uplifted Spirit
Wounds of Isolation	Acceptance
Wounds of Lack of Confidence	Each Moment is God's Grace
Wounds of People	Smile at the God Head in You, Everyone & Everything
Wounds of Self-Identity	Now I recognize the God Within
Wounds of Freedom	Ego Gone, Love Remains with a Sunny Smile

The Journey Continues...

The child within us may have been lost, but they are never beyond reach. By turning inward with courage and compassion, we can rescue this vital part of ourselves and usher in a life of authenticity, joy, and freedom. For in embracing the child trapped by fear, we ultimately find our way back to ourselves. Our way back home and in my case, the Sun now shines from within me.

PTSD & RAD Meet Grace & Love: **Returning Home**

And so, after the tears fell, after the breath slowed, after the inner child revealed himself, another truth emerged; one that the scientists, the clinicians, the researchers at Stanford University, VA Palo Alto, Minnesota VA, Harvard University, and [BrainyAct](#) have been trying to articulate in their own language. A truth that I lived before I ever understood it. A truth that I carried in my body long before I carried it in my mind.

The Truth

Trauma may not begin in adulthood

Trauma may not begin in the military

Trauma may begin in childhood ... and then it waits

It waits in the nervous system

It waits in the breath

It waits in the silence

It waits in the body

It waits in the child

And when the Warrior falls ...

When the uniform comes off

When the mission ends

When the identity dissolves

The first trauma rises again. Not to punish, but to be seen. Not to destroy, but to be healed. Not to overwhelm, but to be acknowledged.

This is where PTSD and RAD meet

This is where Science and Spirit meet

This is where the Child and the Warrior meet

The Researchers describe it with clinical precision

Amygdala hyperactivation, prefrontal suppression, hippocampal fragmentation, cerebellar dysregulation, corpus callosum disruption. They speak of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), attachment wounds, developmental trauma, sensory processing deficits, executive dysfunction. They map it with fMRI machines, cognitive tests, bilateral integration scores, vestibular assessments.

But beneath all of that

Beneath the data

Beneath the charts

Beneath the terminology

Lies the same truth I saw in meditation, in breathwork, in grief, in sorrow, in the gym, in the tears:

The child within the veteran is ***still alive***

The child within the veteran is ***still waiting***

The child within the veteran is ***still asking*** to be seen

PTSD is the Warrior's wound.

RAD is the Child's wound.

And when both wounds exist in the same person, the fall is deeper, the silence heavier, the darkness darker.

Stanford University's Trauma Labs have shown that childhood trauma disrupts the development of the prefrontal cortex. Yes, that part of the brain responsible for decision-making, emotional regulation, and executive function.

Palo Alto VA research shows that military trauma lands on a nervous system already shaped by earlier wounds, amplifying hypervigilance, dissociation, and freeze responses.

Minnesota VA and Harvard University trauma neuroscience confirm that the body stores trauma as incomplete motor responses. These are the very movements that were never finished, breaths that were never completed, ***cries that were never heard***.

And **BrainyAct** — the work being evaluated by Stanford, VA Palo Alto, Minnesota VA, and Harvard offers a structured way to complete those movements, finish those breaths, and hear those cries.

Not through talk. Not through analysis. Not through logic. But through the body.

Through movement

Through rhythm

Through bilateral activation

Through vestibular regulation

Through sensory integration

Through breath

Through repetition

Through compassion

The same way **I healed.**

The same way the child within me **was rescued.**

The same way the Warrior within me **stood back up.**

The scientists call it bottom-up processing.

I call it Grace

The clinicians call it bilateral stimulation.

I call it Love

The researchers call it neuroplasticity.

I call it the return home.

Because when the child is rescued, the Warrior can rest.

When the child is heard, the Veteran can breathe.

When the child is truly seen, the Soul can rise.

This is where PTSD & RAD meet.

After grief, after sorrow, after the inner child, after the wounds, after the rewriting of the narrative. Because the science is not separate from the spirit. The science is simply the vocabulary for what the soul already knows.

The body remembers

The child remembers

The Warrior remembers

And now ... finally ... the adult remembers too

The institutions studying BrainyAct are not evaluating exercises. They are evaluating whether structured movement can reconnect the adult veteran with the child who was wounded long before the uniform was ever worn.

Whether the nervous system can reorganize itself.

Whether the body can complete the motor responses frozen during trauma.

Whether the mind can rebuild the pathways that allow emotional regulation, memory processing, and relational connection.

Whether the Warrior can come home.

And so the journey continues ... from childhood trauma to military trauma to post-military collapse to spiritual renewal to scientific understanding to the integrated soul.

The child within me may have been lost, but never beyond reach. The warrior within me may have fallen, but never beyond rising. The Veteran within me may have suffered, but never beyond healing.

For in rescuing the child trapped by fear, I rescued the warrior trapped by memory.

And in rescuing both, I finally rescued myself.

The path home begins here.

And now, the PTSD & RAD chapter in my life unfolds as a

Language for Something that has no Language



Poetic Soul



The Warrior's Candle

May I Melt Away

Giving All My Love

And Light Up Your Life

The Sun Does Shine

The sun does shine

This hill sees it first

I'm on the dark side of the hill

With some form of magical patience

The sun continues to rise

And now it shines on my side of the hill

Little did I know

That the sun never moved

It was me, who hid in the darkness

But now, I can see the light

Naha Love

The sun says hello

The moon says goodbye

The earth held in their cosmic dance

My eyes open to reality

Dreams now a distant memory

And here ... I am

The silent observer

An output of that cosmic spark

Human, conscious, alive

Naha, What a Dance!

Naha, What a Spark!

Naha, Love!

The Floor of Love

Broken, Shattered and Tattered

Lay I on the Floor

Lost, Defeated and Broken

Lay I on the Floor

Never was I Turned Away

By the Embrace of the Floor

Always Room for One More

To Lie Down on the Floor

It Listened, Held Me and Let My Tears Fall

Absorbed by The Floor

Until One Day I Realized, Who Was Holding Me

The Floor of Love

The Floor of Grace

Lord, Here I Am

Jail Cell Floor

Life's Bottom Floor

Alone on the Floor

Yet You are Solid Under Me

You Stabilize Me

Whether on Carpet, Wood, Grass,

Sand, Mud, Stone or Concrete

You Stabilize Me

I Can Feel You

Wherever I Lay Down

For You Are Always

Holding Me

*It is Tough Love
But it is Love
The Floor is Barren, Low and Humbling
But Now I See Everything Above Me*

*And the More I Look Up
All I See is Your Cosmic Embrace
Your Cosmic Dance*

*Trees Provide Me Shade,
Birds Sing Me a Song
Sun Shines its Rays of Warmth
A Breeze Passes by for Breath*

*I Close My Eyes
And Fade Off
Into that Mystic Realm of Love*

*Mother Nature
Thank You
For Embracing Your Son*

The Cracks

*I Walk the Pavement
It is Cracked in Multiple Places
So I Carefully Step Over the Cracks*

*I Ride the Bike Lane
The Pavement is also Cracked
So I Coast Over the Cracks without Peddling*

*I Drive on the Road
It is also Cracked
So I Adjust my Speed*

*Every Path of My Life is Full of Cracks
I Accept it, Now I Embrace it
And I Fill Them With Kintsugi Gold*

Sobriety to Sovereignty

*Long did you love me the wrong way
Embrace me you did with false words
Lost was I in that dark narrative*

*Moments of bliss
Yes, there were some
Not all was lost
But nothing was found*

*Fleeting was the moment
More was needed
To keep the illusion alive
Until more killed reality*

*Life became distorted
Unlivable in the negative state
So began the downward spiral
Death came a knocking*

*I opened the door
And it was Life
Saying you have another moment
So began my sovereignty*

Love Had Come To Stay

*Humbly do I serve the day
Little did I know
The day was serving me also
How was I to know
That love had come to stay*

*At first, I thought I was dreaming
How could the morning be so nice
No noise, no noise, no noise
Only the grace of God
Floating around, through and within me
How was I to know
That love had come to stay*

*Permits, shmermits
Emails, gmails
CEOs, CTOs, CXOs
How was I to know
That love had come to stay*

*So go ride the bike I did
Face the Sun I did
Mission accomplished, I did
And now I know
Love had come to stay*

They Once Did Smile

*Their smiles say it all
Three little birds perched upon the windowsill
Little did I know that the moment would last forever*

*Darius, Shereen and Chanel
Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
Intertwined, flowering as love divine*

*Now in Manteca, the frame of life rests
The sun shines on them
Reminding me of what I had lost*

*But today is a new day
The sun also rises, As does it set
And today is another daily farewell
Disguised as a kiss shining on the three little birds*

*Yes they have flown away
New flowers have come their way
But once upon a time
In my garden
They once did smile*

Last Breath of the Tiger

WHERE DID IT BEGIN?

The Wind told me so

WHERE DID IT BEGIN?

The Howl of the Wind told me so

WHERE DID IT BEGIN?

The Dying Howl of the Wind told me so

WHERE DO YOU GO?

Onto That Path

WHERE DO YOU GO?

To the Journey Forever More

WHERE DO YOU GO?

To the Land of my Forefathers

WHO WERE YOU?

I Was That Which the Wind Whispers Of

WHO WERE YOU?

I Was That Last Word ... Spoken With Love

WHO WERE YOU?

I Was That Last Breath of the Tiger

Sher means "Tiger" (or "lion" i.e. Baba Sher) in Punjabi
I'm named after my Great Grandad, Sher Singh

Appendix A

1. **US NAVY:** Spiritual Readiness

https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/CHIEF%20OF%20CHAPLAINS%20INSTRUCTIONS/5153.1%20CH-1.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

2. **US AIR FORCE:** Society and the Soldier's Soul: Is the Warriors Purification Ritual Needed or Possible in Modern America?

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/AD1022998.pdf>

3. **US MARINES:** Spiritual Fitness Leader's Guide

[https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/MCRP%206-10.1%20\(SECURED\).pdf](https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/MCRP%206-10.1%20(SECURED).pdf)

About the Author

I'm *Sher Ranjit Singh Dosanjh*. Family and friends call me "Sunny" or by my military nickname "Dos" and have embarked on a journey to help Military Veterans. Multiple Veteran organizations assisted me when I hit hard times, essentially everything in this workshop, and this is my attempt to share what worked for me and now I'm in a position to pay it forward.



I have been fortunate to be helped by the counselors at the VA, San Jose Vet Center and Kaiser's CDRP, Chemical Dependency Recovery Program.

At the San Jose Vet Center, the counselor introduced a writing class for us Veterans to share our thoughts and feelings. What started out as a few scribbles turned into eight Veterans co-authoring the anthology "[Permission to Walk in Peace](#)"



As I recovered, I ended up volunteering in Veterans Hospice with Pathways and sat by the bedside of many a Veteran in their last days over the past ten years. My next step was to volunteer with the American Legion Honor Guard where I served as Captain for District 13 Santa Clara County & Post 419 City of Santa Clara, California. Eventually, I was appointed Chaplain and have had the humble honor of conducting invocations, benedictions, speeches, eulogies and various other ceremonies.

I started [Veterans Courage](#) to collect my thoughts and I've dabbled with high tech tools for my other initiative called [Dosanjh USA](#). My hope is that I can combine the tools of high tech (Quantum, AI, Extended Realities, Data, Cybersecurity & Cloud) in an [easy-to-use mobile application](#) that is Veteran specific.

This workshop is a culmination of 10 years of counseling, therapy, losing everything and how I'm getting back up.

My goal is to inspire, encourage and live with Love
This I Vow



Veterans Courage

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VETERANS COURAGE