Session Eighteen

TIM RESIDE'S HOPE & SURVIVAL STORY – PART 3
"BECOMING A WOUNDED HEALER"

"Suffering was giving birth. Humility was being born.
By earthly measures he was a shattered man; by heaven's, a broken one."
—Gene Edwards
A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness

KEY POINT: Because most of us know suffering, we are called to live as "wounded healers." Our wounds do not disqualify us; by God's grace, they can become sources of compassion, healing, and hope.

"Other-Care" Improves "Self-Care":

I have learned that self-care and "other-care"—social support, community involvement, and caring for others—belong together. While self-care matters, it can become unhealthy when it turns inward too much.

Together, self-care and other-care create a more balanced healing-recovery journey and reflect the Christian call to love God, others, and our selves (Matthew 22:34–40).

BROKENNESS AND WOUNDEDNESS:

Brokenness and **woundedness** are related but distinct: <u>woundedness</u> names our shared human pain, while <u>brokenness</u> is where that pain meets God's grace and can open the way to community, healing-recovery, and new perspective.

- Community is a spiritual space of mutual vulnerability where people gather around shared weakness rather than strength. A support group is an example of such community. In that space, transparent vulnerability becomes courageous, initiative-taking humility.

By brokenness, I do not mean permanent damage, uselessness, or defectiveness. I mean that life is complex, and those complexities affect spirit, mind, emotions, body, and relationships in ways that create real vulnerabilities.

- Our wholeness remains grounded in being created in God's image and likeness. Health may fluctuate across these areas, but our worth before God is fixed and absolute.

Sin, sinning, addiction, weakness, frailty, brokenness, and woundedness remain real conditions that must be acknowledged, addressed, and worked through. Nevertheless, wholeness is already ours, even amid brokenness and woundedness, because it belongs to our created nature as from God.

The Declaration of Independence reflects this religious and philosophical understanding of inherent human worth in Thomas Jefferson's words:

- *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

- In other words, some truths are nonnegotiable and nontransferable because they are inherent to us as children of God.

METAPHORS THAT EXPLAIN "BROKENNESS"

- **The Computer System Model:** A needed patch or crashed subsystem does not make the whole computer worthless. Likewise, bipolar disorder is a localized vulnerability, not a total system failure; I remain a whole person.

- **The Mosaic Concept**: A mosaic becomes beautiful through fractured pieces; the cracks help form the image rather than ruin it.

- **The Kintsugi Philosophy**: Broken pottery repaired with gold treats damage and repair as part of the object's beauty and history.[1]

- **The Ecosystem Model**: A forest remains whole while adapting to drought, weak soil, or damaged trees; local vulnerabilities do not destroy the whole system.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous:** Steps 1 and 2 name powerlessness and the need for a Power greater than ourselves to restore us, but not to shame or discard us.

Every person carries vulnerabilities or systemic challenges. Naming them does not make us defective; it makes us human. Acknowledging a need for help shatters denial, egocentric self-reliance, and self-sufficiency.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF POWERLESSNESS:

- **Victim Mentality**: Powerlessness is not helpless victimhood; it is honest acceptance that willpower alone is not enough.

- **Lack of Accountability**: Admitting limits does not erase responsibility; it calls us to participate in healing-recovery.

- **Permanent Weakness:** Powerlessness is not lifelong helplessness; it can begin healthier choices and daily responsibility.

NOTES:

ORIGINS OF THE "WOUNDED HEALER" CONCEPT

The "wounded healer" concept is often traced to Swiss psychiatrist **Carl Gustav Jung** (1875–1961), who taught that personal suffering could deepen a healer's insight, resilience, and compassion.

- A 2022 study supports this idea, reporting that 82% of applied psychology graduate students and faculty in the U.S. and Canada had experienced mental health conditions.[2]

Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932–1996) later expanded the idea in *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*.

- Nouwen, a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, and writer, connected spirituality, theology, and psychology for both Protestant and Catholic readers.

- After a distinguished teaching career at Notre Dame, Yale, and Harvard, Nouwen stepped away in 1985 to live and work with people with intellectual disabilities. Their love and acceptance renewed his sense of belonging and taught him that true worth rests in love, vulnerability, and presence—not achievement or status.

"Nobody escapes being wounded. We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.

"The main question is not, 'How can we hide our wounds?' so we don't have to be embarrassed, but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?' When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers

— Henri Nouwen

The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society.

THE POTTER'S HOUSE OBJECT LESSON:

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

"'Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.' Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

"And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."

—Jeremiah the Prophet

Jeremiah 18:1-4

King James Version[3]

When God finds us broken and wounded, He does not cast us aside. He cherishes us as His own, reshaping our lives and renewing our purpose in keeping with His original vision.

Even our imperfections become part of His transforming work, guiding us toward greater maturity, fruitfulness, and fulfillment.

NOTES:

FINDING MY UNIQUE PATHWAY:

After my traumatic bipolar-related breakdown in 1979, I felt bitter toward God and others. It seemed that everything I had gained—and everything I had hoped for—had been taken from me.

Over time, I began to accept my circumstances and recognize my need for help. That acceptance opened the way to renewed hope and purpose.

As I practiced self-care and learned to cope more effectively, I began to trust again that God loved me and still had a purpose for my life. I came to see that He was leading me toward a way of living in which my own wounds could deepen my compassion and help me care for others.

MY "REPURPOSED POT" MANIFESTO

"I am broken and wounded, yet hopeful; even on difficult days, I believe in bright tomorrows."

"I am broken and wounded, but my struggles do not have the last word; with grace and support, I begin anew each day."

"I am broken and wounded, but my worth is unchanged; pain affects my life, not my identity."

"I am broken and wounded, yet innately whole. My bipolar disorder has no known cure today, but healing-recovery is my lifelong path to nurturing wellness. Beyond this life, I trust God for ultimate cure."

"I am broken and wounded, but never alone; God and those close to me love, accept, and forgive me."

"I am broken and wounded and called to serve as a wounded healer."

NOTES:

FOUR REASONS WHY THE WOUNDED HEALER MINDSET WORKS:

1. **Altered Focus:** Caring for others turns my attention outward. Focusing on their needs gives me a temporary break from dwelling on my own physical and emotional pain.

2. **Restored Purpose:** Helping others gives new meaning to my struggles. What I have lived through can help me understand, guide, and comfort someone facing similar challenges.

3. **Deepened Connection:** Supporting others with similar experiences reminds me that I am not alone. Instead of feeling uniquely broken, I find connection with fellow travelers who also know suffering.

4. **Renewed Sense of Choice:** I cannot control every part of my health, but I can choose how to respond and contribute. Rather than seeing myself only as someone receiving care, I recognize that I can also offer care and make a difference in my community, i.e., among those relationships given to me to love and serve.

IDENTIFYING "WOUNDED HEALER" OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOURSELF:

Turn Your Scars into Strengths

- **Reflect on** your diagnoses, life challenges, experiences, and coping tools. Consider how they have equipped you to support others.

    - List three insights that your pain or mental health journey has taught you that others may not fully understand.

    - Write these insights under the heading *"My Specialized Knowledge."*

- **Ask:** "Who might benefit from hearing my story?" Consider those you may be especially equipped to comfort—the newly diagnosed, younger generations, or isolated peers.

- **Ask:** "What do I wish someone had told me at my lowest point?" Let your answer guide the hope and practical support you offer others.

REMEMBER: Being a healing presence does not require a professional degree or great physical energy. Consider these four pathways of service and choose one that fits your current capacity:

- **The Listener:** Offers calm, nonjudgmental presence to someone in distress, without toxic positivity.[4]

- **The Logistics Guide:** Shares practical tools, resource tips, and simple systems that reduce the burden of chronic illness or complex medical care.

- **The Storyteller:** Shares setbacks and victories to reduce stigma and help others feel less alone.

- **The Group Helper:** Assists with a support group or other gathering by welcoming participants, helping with setup, or supporting the facilitators—small acts of service that help others feel safe, included, and cared for.

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH:

In 2001, Nancy and I began serving through Bright Tomorrows, opening a new chapter of ministry shaped by my own brokenness, woundedness, and healing-recovery journey.

Bright Tomorrows (www.brighttomorrows.org) has been a nonprofit organization since 1997. Through the years it has consisted of clergy, mental health professionals, individuals with mental health concerns, and family members.

Bright Tomorrows' mission is to reflect Christ's compassion by promoting mental health, supporting healing-recovery, and helping churches care for those affected by mental illness.

BT's objectives include reducing stigma, educating faith communities, connecting churches and community resources, and offering encouragement, spiritual support, and practical resources to individuals and families affected by mental illness.

In 2009, the BT Board installed me as President, and Nancy joined the Board as Secretary-Treasurer.

NOTES:

INSPIRATIONAL TEXTS:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

<u>For it is in giving that we receive</u>;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi
(also known as the Peace Prayer)

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
—Jesus of Nazareth
Luke 6:38

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."
—Paul the Apostle
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
—Jesus of Nazareth
Acts 20:35

ENDNOTES

1. The philosophy of **Kintsugi (金継ぎ, "golden joinery")** treats brokenness not as a reason for disposal or shame, but as a valuable chapter in an object's history. Instead of hiding cracks, this traditional Japanese art form highlights them using natural lacquer mixed with powdered precious metals like gold, silver, or platinum. **Google:** The Philosophy Behind Kintsugi: Finding Beauty in Brokenness (https://www.veltra.com/en/travelguide/tokyo/kintsugi-philosophy/)

2. Devendorf, Andrew R.; Lewis, Stephen P.; Miller, Rose H.; Muehlenkamp, Jennifer J.; Rottenberg, Jonathan; Stage, Dese'Rae L.; and Victor, Sarah E. (2022, June 22). "Only Human: Mental-Health Difficulties Among Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychology Faculty and Trainees." *National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology Information.* Retrieved July 1, 2024, from https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35731143/.

3. All Scripture references in Syllabus Eighteen are from the New International Version (NIV) translation unless otherwise indicated.

4. "Toxic positivity" is the pressure to maintain positive thinking or faith language no matter how painful, tragic, or difficult a situation may be. It dismisses and invalidates real human experience by replacing honest emotions with forced optimism, and it overlooks the spiritual, psychological, and physical healing-recovery value of vulnerable grief and lament.

DISCLAIMER: The eighteen video chapters and syllabi are meant for information and education only, not clinical advice. Tim Reside is not a healthcare provider; he seeks expert guidance for his own care. Please consult medical professionals before making health decisions.