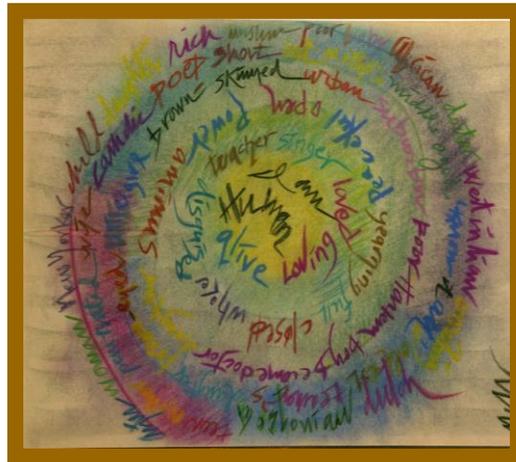


Touched to the Core...today, we should be weeping What happened to: "Lead with Love?"

(With an Excerpt from: "Powering the Mind ... Self Study then Build a Bridge to Someone")

By Paula Kliger, PhD



It is November 16, 2015, 3 days after the devastating terrorist attacks in Paris. Innocent human beings ... 129 lives now pronounced dead. 352 were wounded and, at this hour of my writing, we still await word on 96 remaining in critical condition. My heart is broken; my soul weeping as a deep inner, invisible heart reaches across all boundaries of space and time to declare my LOVE and, more than ever, to say: We are all connected.

Each and every day I am intimately involved in the lives of people. I practice as a clinical psychologist, a psychoanalyst, a leader who teaches, coaches and mentors students, new colleagues, workers and leaders across the spectrum of organizations. I have been dedicated to saving and healing lives, to valuing the human experience overall, and encouraging those with whom I work daily to instill hope and to lean toward realization of their highest potential in order to spread what they have learned on their own inner journey and to make a positive difference in the progression of humankind. Perhaps this has been a naïvely conceived mission ... a

declaration of what we call “magical thinking,” you might say, but this ethical (moral) imperative comes from someplace. It comes from my own personal history that, like all human beings, serves as the driver and guidepost for my thoughts and perceptions, my attitudes and beliefs, my feelings, judgments, and actions. We are all shaped and influenced by our history.

That being said, I think I am figuring something out. My husband, Paul, said to me awhile back in a moment of frustration: “The world is mentally ill!” (We had just heard of some other painful unimagined tragedy.) My ears perked up when he spoke these words. I was curious about this line of thinking— and I thought, more needed to come out. I thought: “frustration” is true, but he was really on to something. I soon realized what it was... he was introducing a conversation to me that we all need to be having but have not been able to start because we **ARE** unaware of a blind spot of which we are the primary subject. Here goes....

I believe that we are a society embedded deeply in a **state** of cumulative trauma. If opened to it, we could trace back to recent or present, individual and collective, difficult and pivotal life events. We could bring to the surface the traumatic past, mixed with our predisposing intergenerational vulnerabilities. The fact that we are living out a traumatic story (our own constructed individual and collective awareness, an actual **state** of mind and being) is mostly a blind spot of unawareness to us. We need to protect ourselves from the full realization of our individual undigested past, the unresolved trauma and its effects: Like long standing feelings of a gnawing pain and suffering, learned helplessness, a haunting undercurrent of fear and anomie, and numbness and denial like “sleep-walking through life,” or a tendency toward hyper-vigilance and emotional oversensitivity in the face of even normal, stressful situations. These are some of trauma's visible and invisible consequences, as well as a reflection of current and inherited attempts at coping.

Self-study is the answer if we are to heal and Lead with Love.

Before these past few days, weeks, and recent months, we could see clearly the manifestations of this trauma (the cause) everywhere around the world -- in the Boston Marathon bombing, the Post Office shootings, not to mention the Aurora, Colorado theatre shooting and Shady Creek massacres of 20 plus children and adults, the ISIS/L threats of terror, centuries-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Arab Spring building well after the millennial celebration and continuing across the Middle East and Africa; the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the questions of human and civil rights violations, the residuals of apartheid, genocide, the holocaust and internments, and slavery, around the globe. We only need to reflect on the need for guns, bombs, bunkers, new borders, and other perceived required protections. We are hurting. We are terrified. And we often think, feel, judge and act on our circumstances as if blindfolded because we are unconscious of our history, unconscious of the life-shaping drivers – the good, bad and ugly life experiences – unconscious of the potential for constructive and transformative meaning - filled lessons (a la Viktor Frankl) that could lead us to awareness of a higher, human self that knows we are all connected.

We humans tend to have two possible responses to our perceived fears, when “bad things” happen, and our pain and suffering. Some of us work very hard to camouflage or hide our past and the ghosts, and make believe we are invincible and all powerful. Many of us resort to repressing painful experiences all together, believing that we can avoid feeling or tasting the pain, or act as if we can cast it out. We think we can avoid “bad” from happening by acting ***as if*** the trauma and its effects do not exist. We might externalize the responsibility for the ‘bad thing happening’ or the pain and suffering to someone else or some other cause removed from individual’s mental or emotional self.

On the other hand, some of us work very hard to anticipate and decode all the signs of the potential 'bad thing' beforehand, imagining that we can ward it off or strike first before a something or someone can hurt us.

We fear that there is no place to feel safe, at peace and at home ... inside or outside of us. Even when we look to what we believe are reasonable, even helpful distractions—to TV or movie entertainment or the internet, to friends and family on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram—for a modicum of relief and hope to soothe us and to settle down our fears, anxiety, and feelings of powerlessness, there is little to be found. In fact, our unconscious trauma filled with undigested feelings, impressions, and memories are often heightened or aggravated by our distractions. The '**unresolved**' can feel like a pervading body snatcher...an internal ghost, acting on you but you cannot see it. You can only feel it, spreading out, through your physical, emotional and intuitive bodies. Many describe feeling trapped inside themselves, in an emotional and spiritual war, unable get out. I suspect this is why so many incredible human beings are driven to utter despair and seeking a way out, surprise us when they end their lives. However, the internal ghosts, fears of something bad happening, can also take the form of an altered state that must find a way to protect him/herself for fear of annihilation. This unconsciously driven fearful self may drift toward influences that are dark and offer a promise of relief from the internal ghosts, the fears of being hurt and harmed, or overcome by whatever is feared by finding psychological and physical weapons to use as the real or imagined protection needed to survive or, at the very least, to feel a temporary sense of power over those one anticipates will be first to hurt and harm.

If we are to find a sense of safety, security, and personal empowerment, a place for inner soothing, peace of mind, moments of joy and fulfillment, a place called home, we must work through what is the 'unresolved' inside ourselves ... And then we will be motivated to heal our

communities, and heal our global psychological, emotional and spiritual traumas.

No doubt—this becomes an ***awesome challenge for any human being and yet it is the opportunity of a lifetime.*** The human being who is actually the most frightened, who is the most terrified, ultimately subscribes to ideologies that manifest a black or white, absolutist mindset, and comes to believe in using dominance, submission and terror as a means to manage their fears and to dominate and control others. These, often intellectually gifted, human beings also find it the most difficult to accept human vulnerability as a potential strength, and to gain insight into their own internal historical ghosts. They hold onto the delusion of omnipotent strength and the possession of weapons and material wealth; they find it hard to recognize their unconscious blind spots of trauma, especially unresolved relational hurts, humiliations, emotional pain and suffering, and the results of insecurity, feelings of powerlessness and fear of being caught off guard again. The consequences of a lack of deeper self-reflection, self-examination, and self-discovery as well as empathic understanding of and connection with others underlie the eventual construction of a rigidly held belief system, a walled off empathic feelings and a defensive mindset, impersonal attachments and a character style ready for acting aggressively. An aggressive stance of striking first, hard and continually, becomes an inner path of being, driven by Fear and destruction, rather than Leading with Love, a path of human transformation and progression.

We are a vast interwoven mosaic of intergenerational lives ... How can we ever imagine, ever envision pulling this off...? How can we make true reparative, restorative, life generative healing happen in such a complex world where there are infinite permutations and interpretations of how to live and stories of life's experiences? *The complexity of the meanings of life stretch beyond any one person or local community or one nation or block of nations'*

imagination.

And yet, the fact that multiple generations of humans co-exist around our globe provides the most profound evidence of our inherent connectivity and underscores the potential for us to gain the needed understanding of our individual pasts, to listen and learn from each other the messages of the present, to bring our past into focus in the present with new and deeper understandings... and to find our way to a new psychological, emotional, spiritual and interpersonal acceptance of our collective home as humans together on this planet.

In a way this new home ... a new internalized way of thinking, feeling, relating, living ... ***being human first*** might be seen as analogous to finding life in outer space ... except the outer space is within... our new space frontier.

As we awaken ***this new space within,***

we create hope,

we *can* instill hope,

and then **LEAD WITH LOVE.**