Breathing Grace...
Processing Pandemic Realities

April 2022

Carolyn Klassen
Wired for Connection

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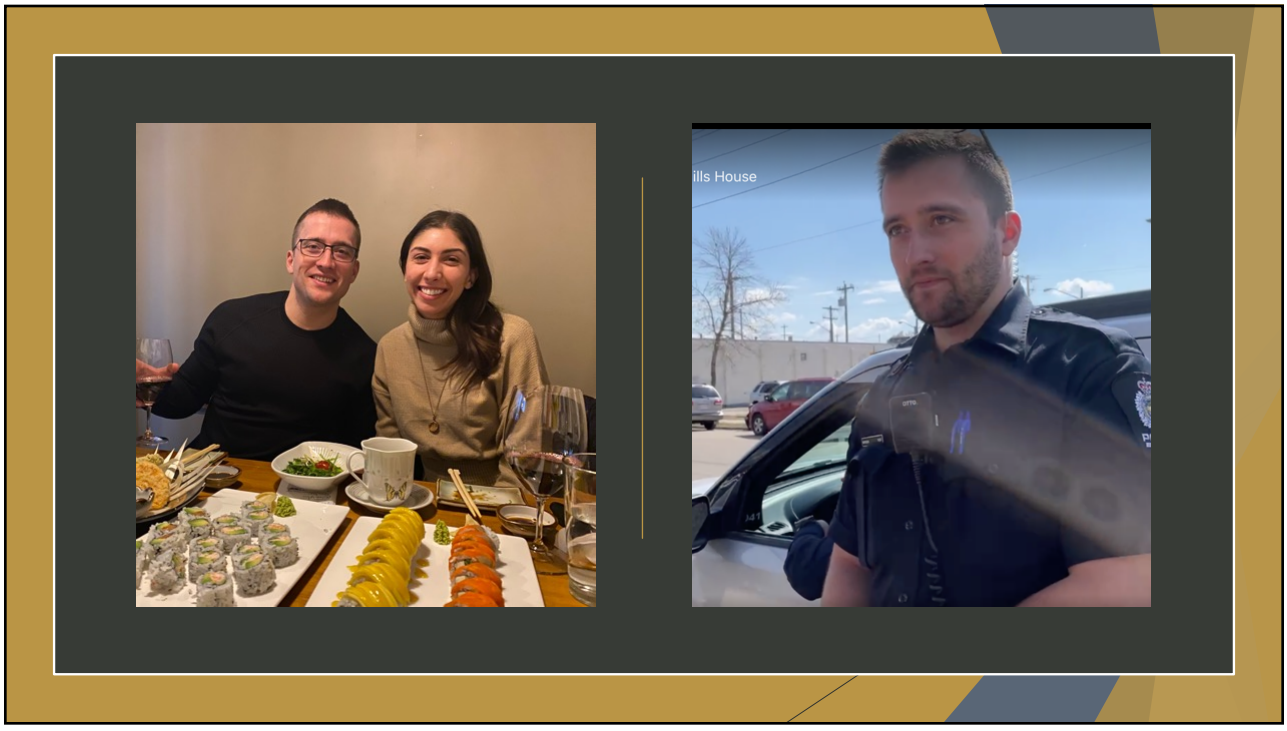

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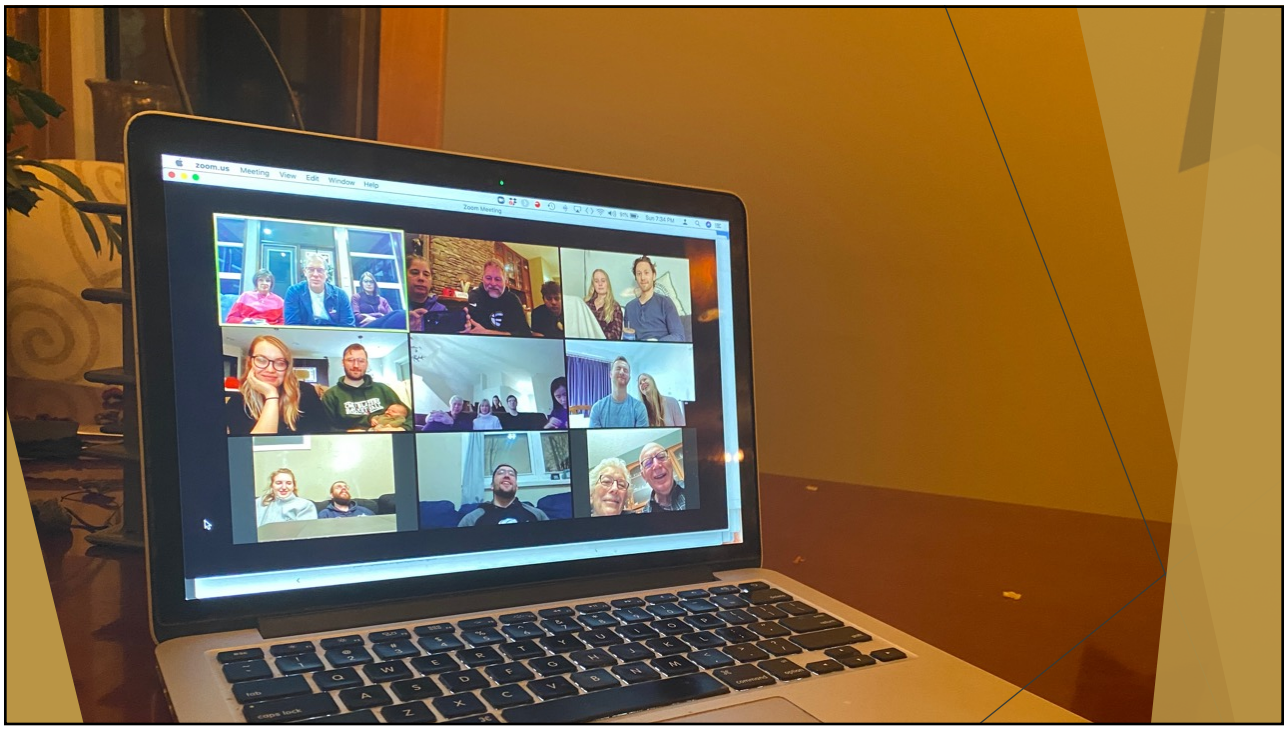

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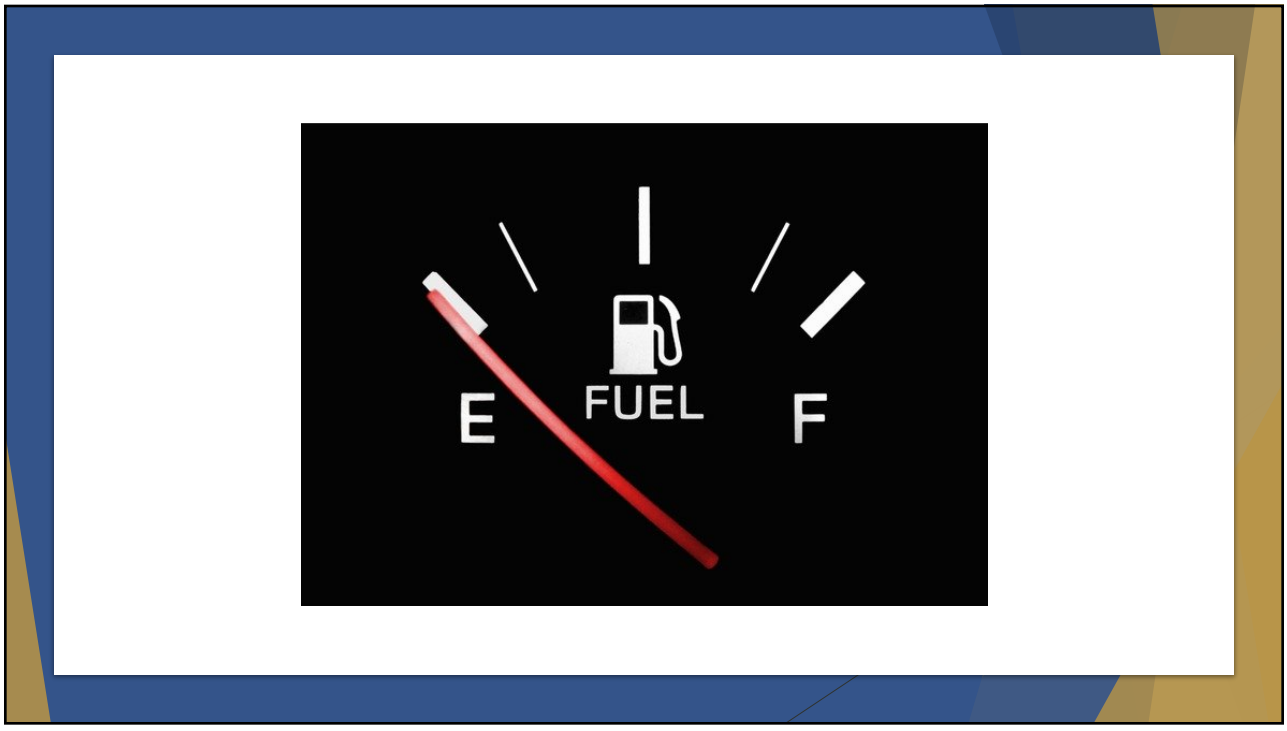

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We are all a little fragile these days

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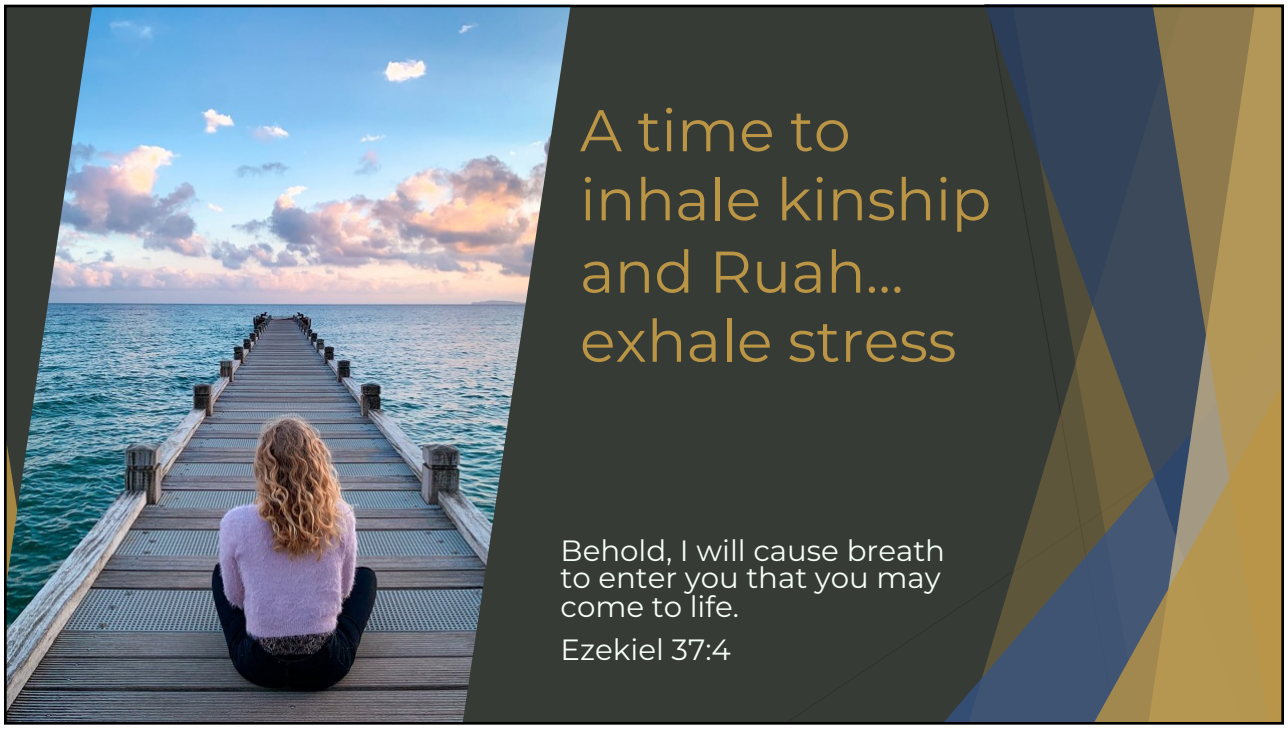
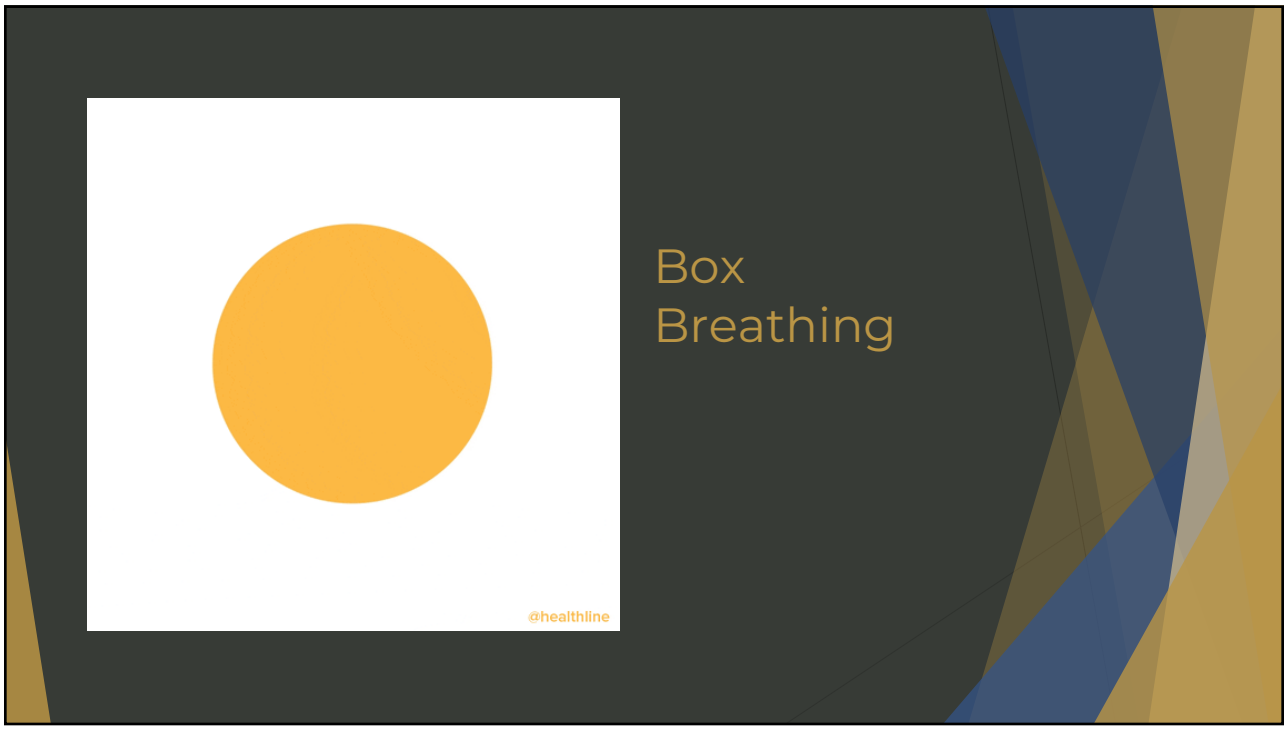

A time to inhale kinship and Ruah… exhale stress
Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life.
Ezekiel 37:4

10



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This is—
and will continue to be– a time of Stress/Distress that creates pain

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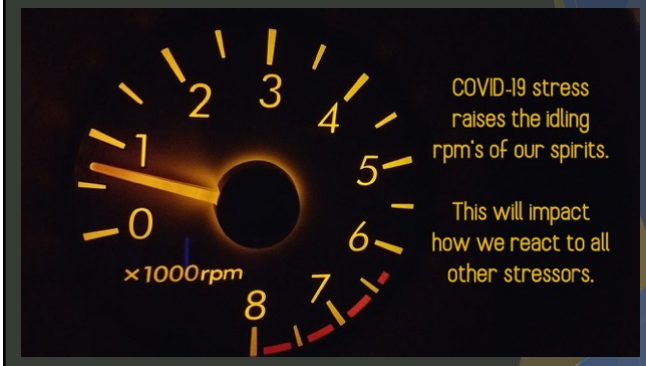


Recognizing the multiple factors of stress/hurt

- What has and is impacting your RPM's?
  - Parenting stressed children
  - Concern for loved ones
  - Loneliness/Isolation
  - Lack of leisure/friend contact
  - Technology hassles
  - Constant changes in restrictions
  - The "unknowing-ness" of COVID-19—When will it end? How will Omicron play out?
  - Political/social division
  - Decision Fatigue: How do I do right when there is no "right" answer?
  - Etc. etc

16

17

What do/did you Grieve?

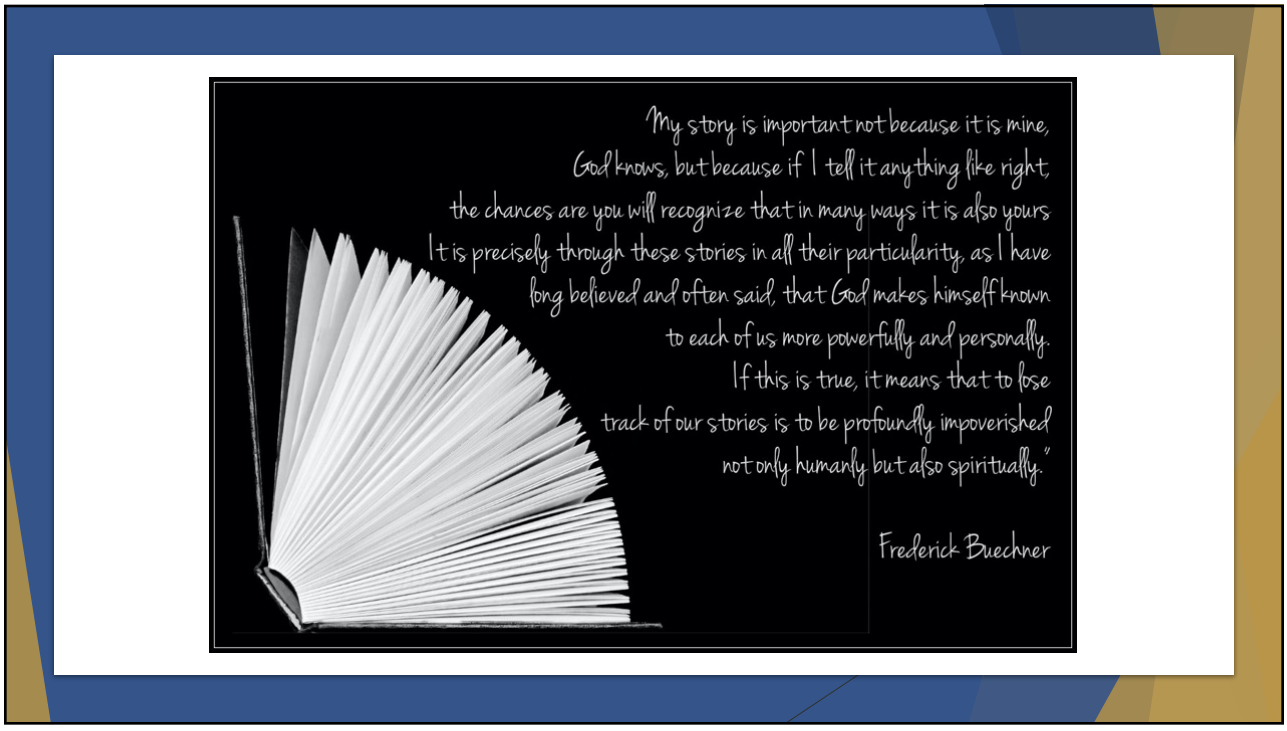
- Restaurant with friends
- Weddings or funerals
- Alone time at home
- Weekday lunch with friends
- Banter during work meetings
- A movie at the theatre
- Breaks from the kids while they are out doing their thing
- Being able to see people's faces-microfeedback
- Hug from a friend
- Driving in the car to work
- Interesting stories from your partner about the day
- Vacation via an airplane
- The hoped-for Christmas/New Years that got changed at the last moment
- And on, and on and on,

for months and months…

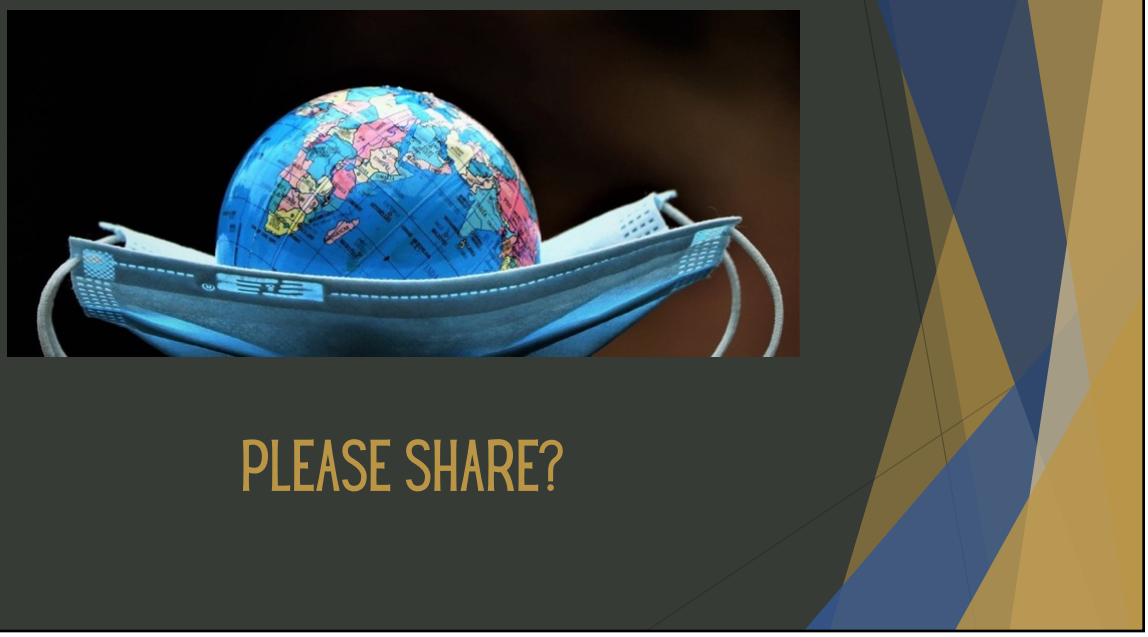
18

Grief
Loss
Longing
Lost

19


"My story is important not because it is mine,
God knows, but because if I tell it anything like right,
the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours.
It is precisely through these stories in all their particularity, as I have
long believed and often said, that God makes himself known
to each of us more powerfully and personally.
If this is true, it means that to lose
track of our stories is to be profoundly impoverished
not only humanly but also spiritually."
Frederick Buechner

20



21

SHARE TOGETHER?

1. What is one way you noticed the pandemic impacting/affecting your body?
2. What is one strategy your body used to cope with pandemic stress?
3. What is a loss/struggle you had during the pandemic that not many (or any) would know about?
4. In what way are you different now than before March 2020? How has the pandemic changed you?
5. You are about to enter a difficult/challenging conversation. You aren't sure how it will go—what are the messages you hear internally that would try to hold you back?

22

Debrief

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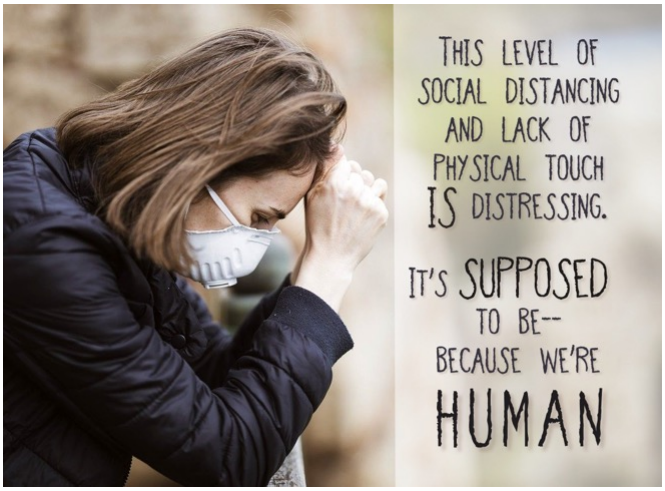

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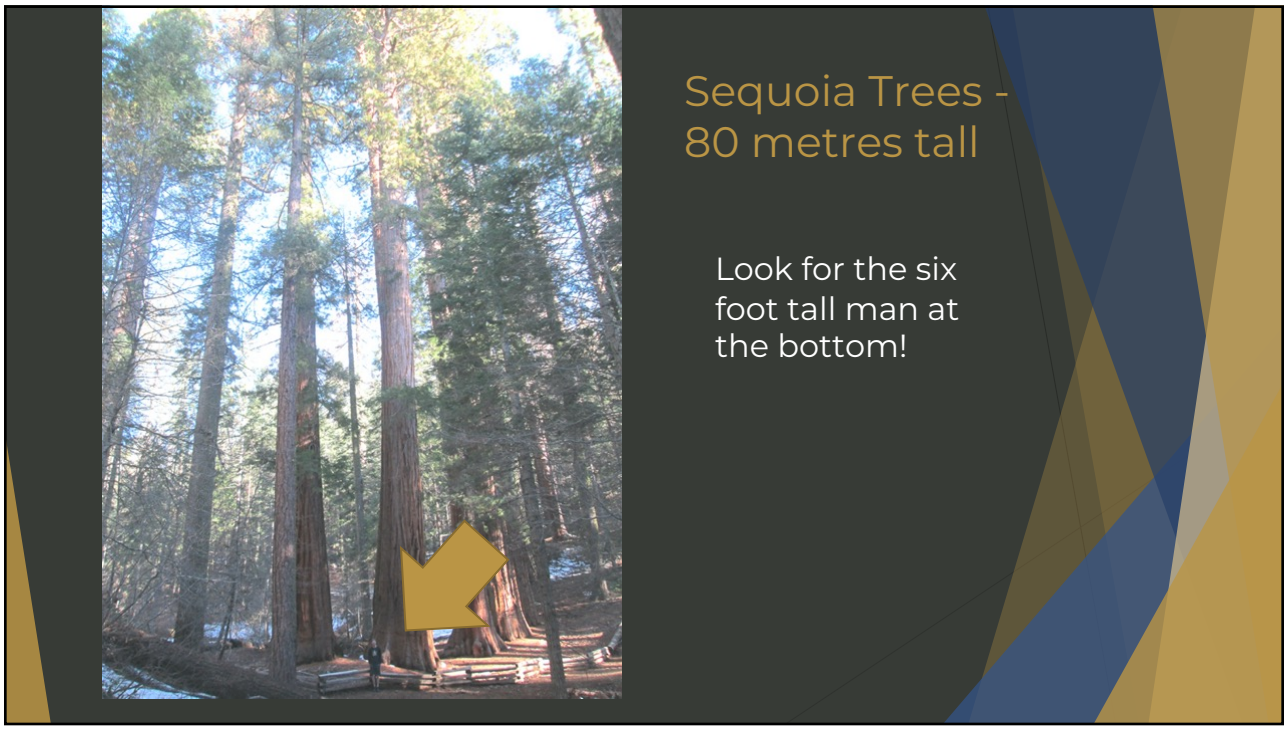
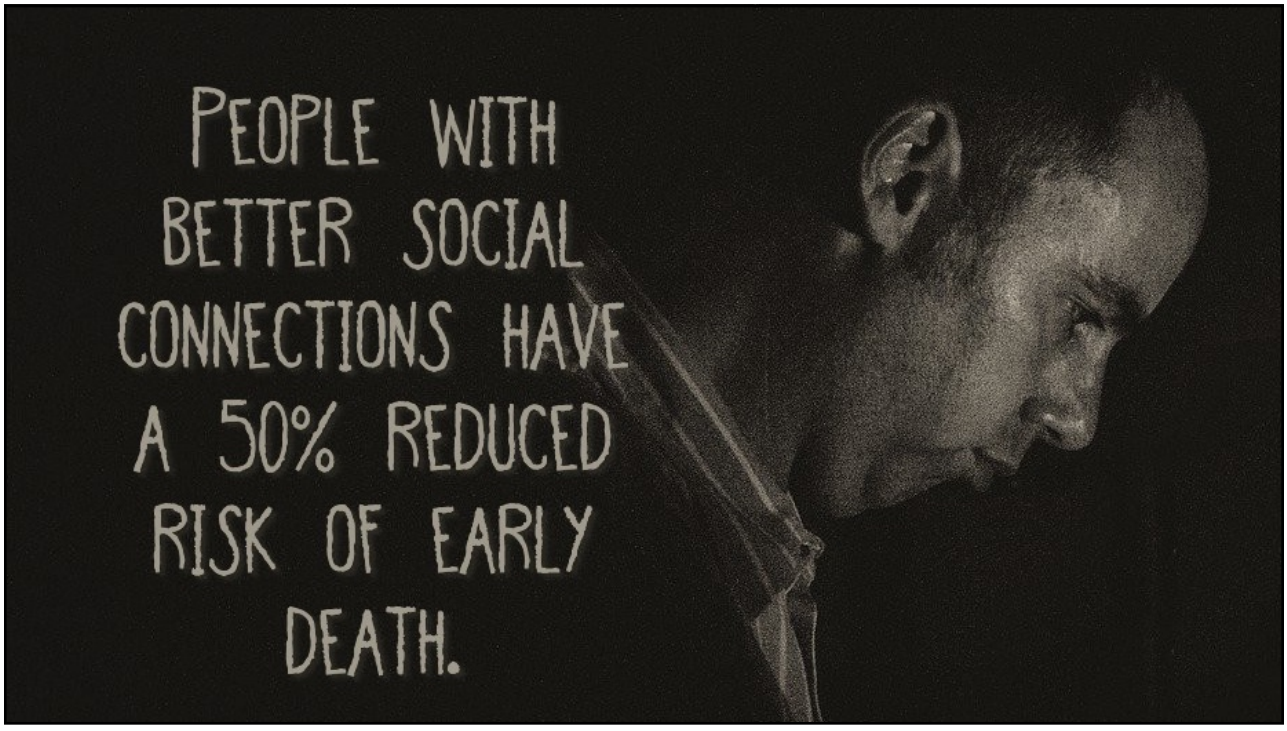

Sequoia Trees -
80 metres tall
Look for the six foot tall man at the bottom!

25

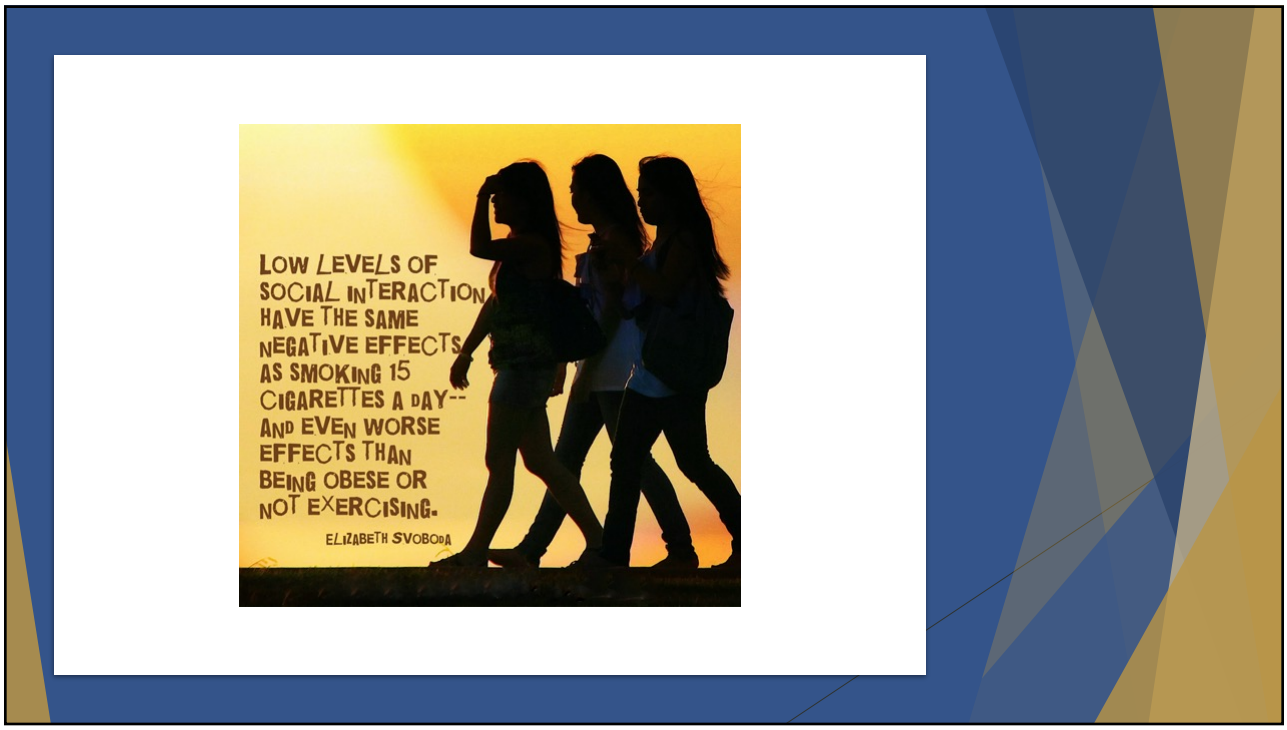
26

We are
wired for
connection

27


PEOPLE WITH
BETTER SOCIAL
CONNECTIONS HAVE
A 50% REDUCED
RISK OF EARLY
DEATH.

28

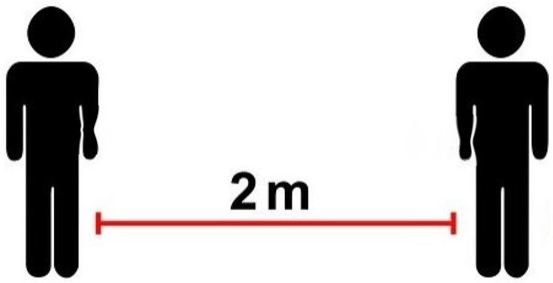

LOW LEVELS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION HAVE THE SAME NEGATIVE EFFECTS AS SMOKING 15 CIGARETTES A DAY-- AND EVEN WORSE EFFECTS THAN BEING OBESE OR NOT EXERCISING.
ELIZABETH SVOBODA

29

Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period.
Robert Waldinger

30

THE VERY THING--CONNECTION--
THAT IS AS ESSENTIAL TO HUMANS
AS FOOD, WATER, AND OXYGEN
IS WHAT THE VIRUS COVID-19 USES TO SPREAD.



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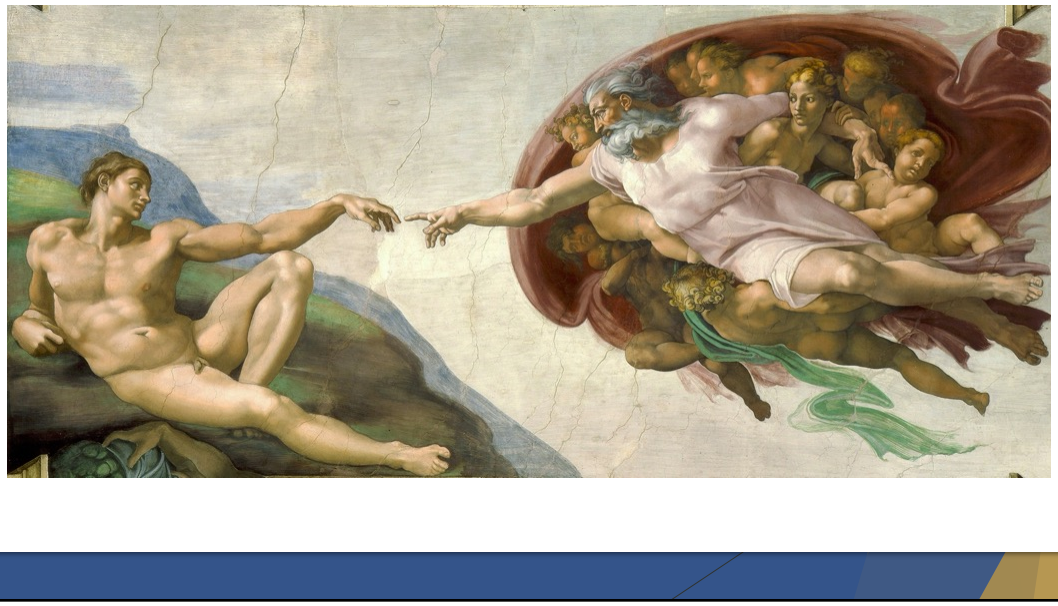

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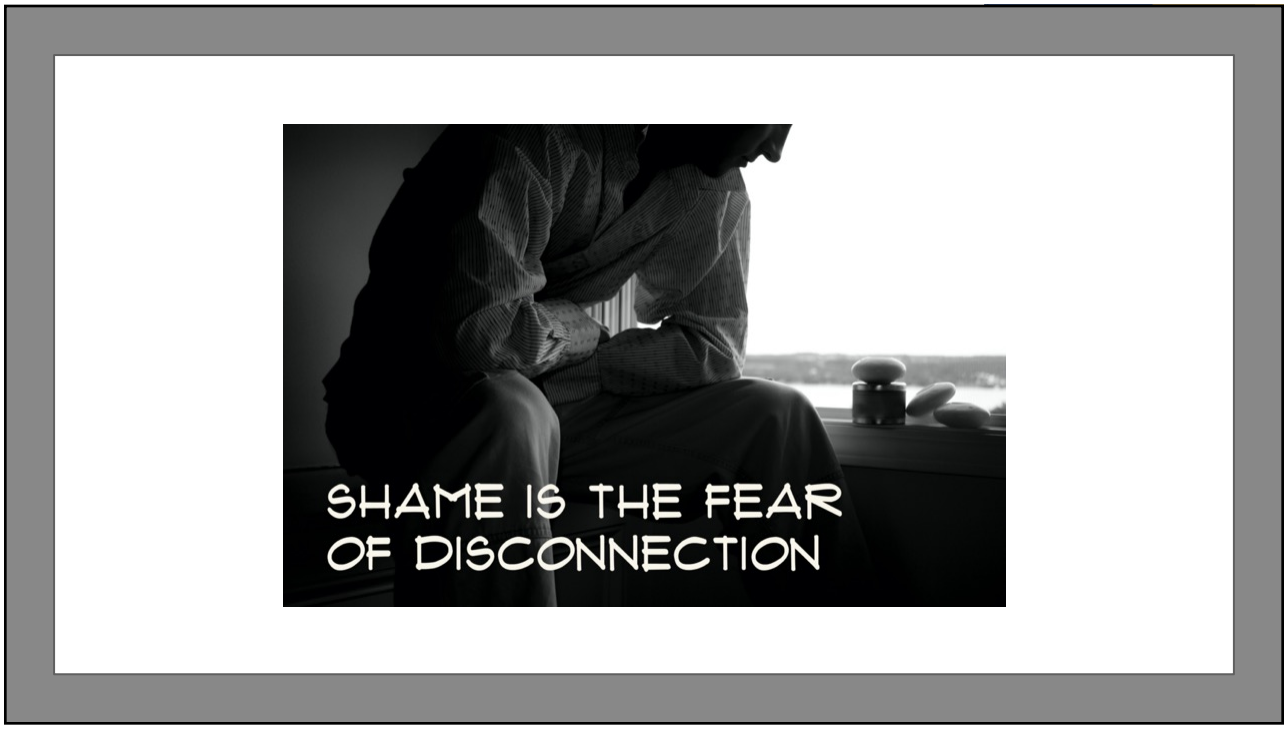
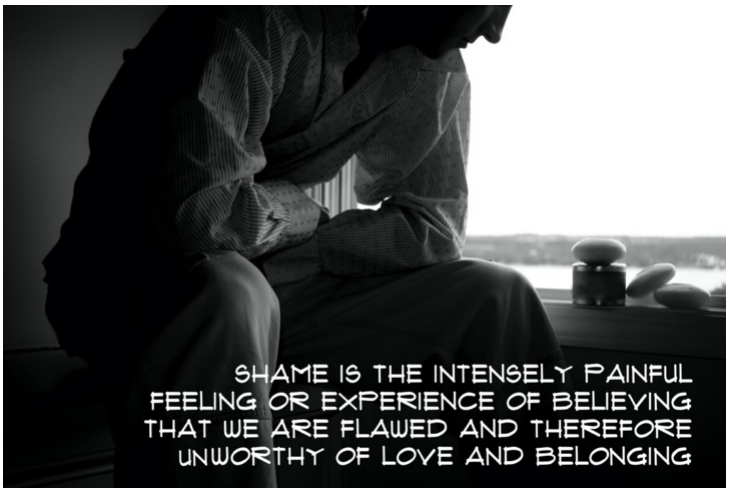
We are wired for connection
It was hard even before the pandemic.
PHOTO BY IAN MCCLAUSLAND

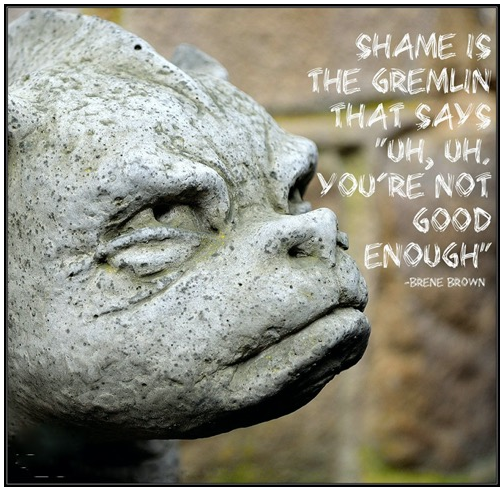
35


SHAME IS THE FEAR OF DISCONNECTION

36


SHAME IS THE INTENSELY PAINFUL FEELING OR EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVING THAT WE ARE FLAWED AND THEREFORE UNWORTHY OF LOVE AND BELONGING

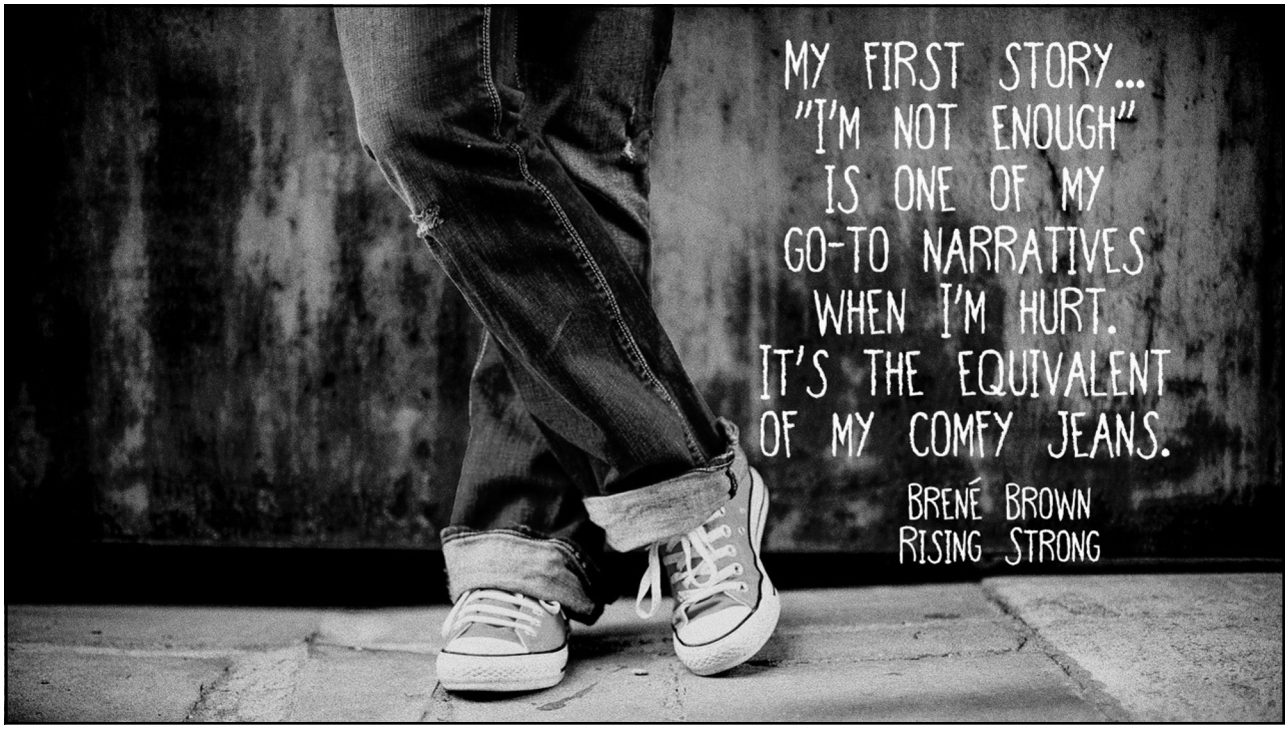
37


SHAME IS THE GREMLIN THAT SAYS "UH, UH, YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH"
-BRENE BROWN

38

We are wired
for story.
We are
meaning-makers

39


MY FIRST STORY...
"I'M NOT ENOUGH"
IS ONE OF MY
GO-TO NARRATIVES
WHEN I'M HURT.
IT'S THE EQUIVALENT
OF MY COMFY JEANS.
BRENÉ BROWN
RISING STRONG

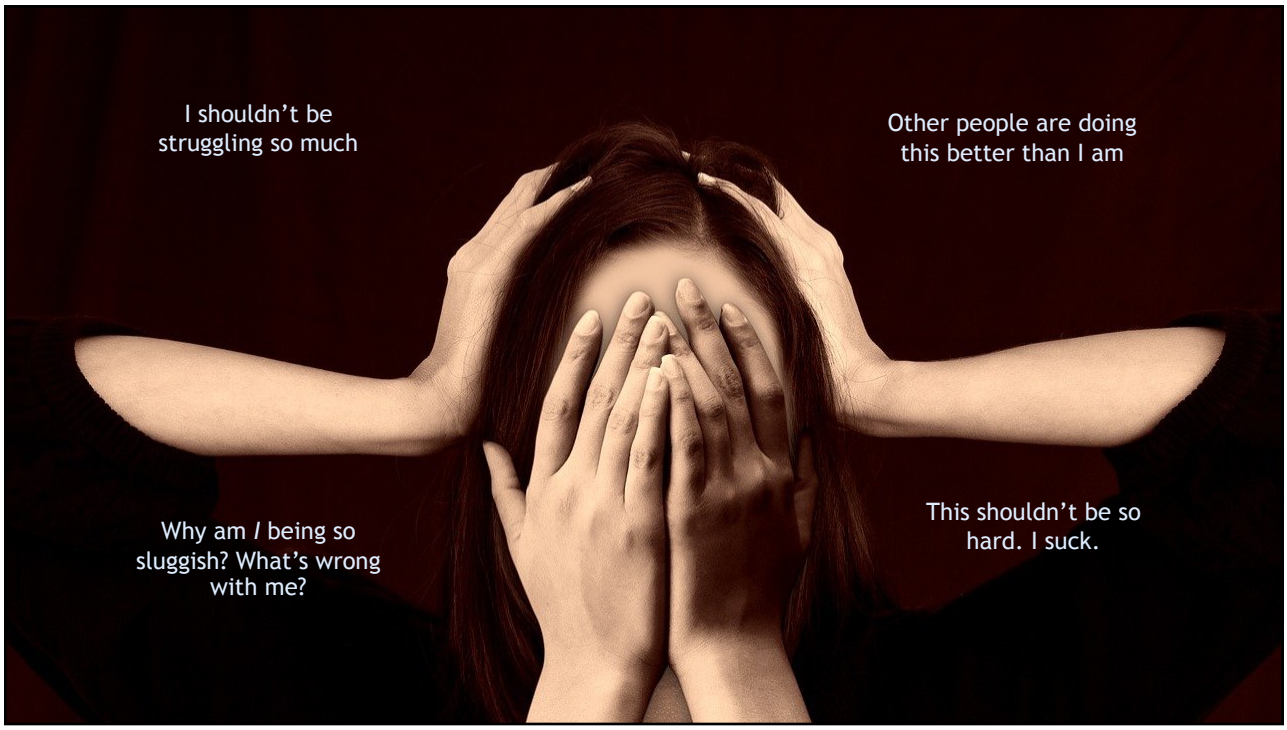
40

The story I tell myself is…

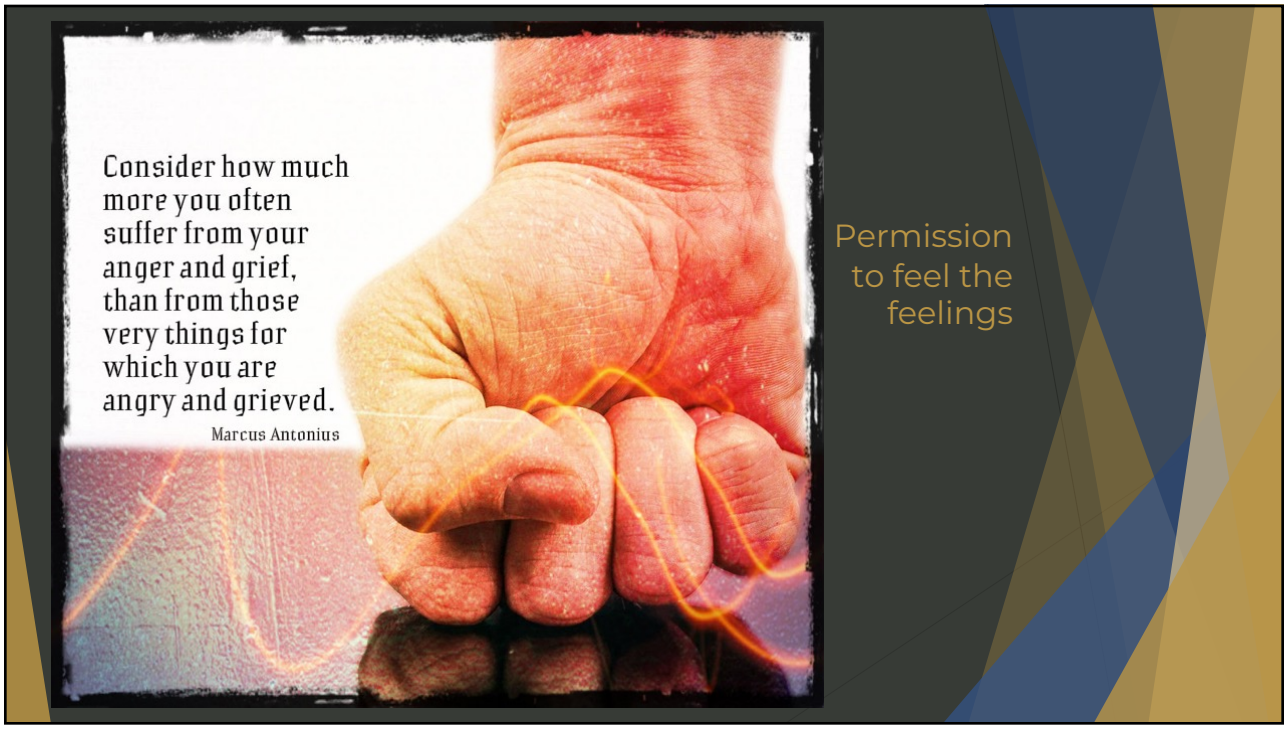
41

Conspiracy: connecting the dots without realizing that we are adding information that isn't there
Confabulation: A lie told honestly

42


I shouldn't be struggling so much
Other people are doing this better than I am
Why am *I* being so sluggish? What's wrong with me?
This shouldn't be so hard. I suck.

43


Consider how much more you often suffer from your anger and grief, than from those very things for which you are angry and grieved.
Marcus Antonius
Permission to feel the feelings

44

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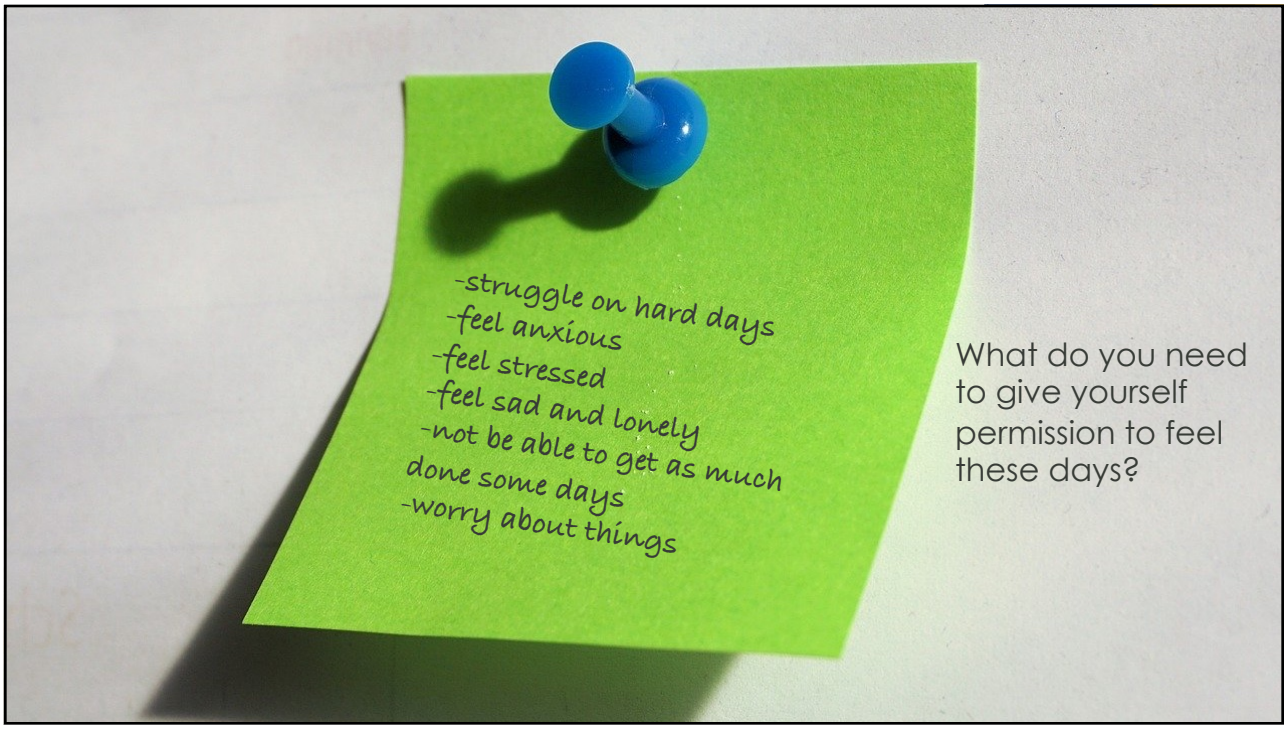

-struggle on hard days
-feel anxious
-feel stressed
-feel sad and lonely
-not be able to get as much done some days
-worry about things
What do you need to give yourself permission to feel these days?

46

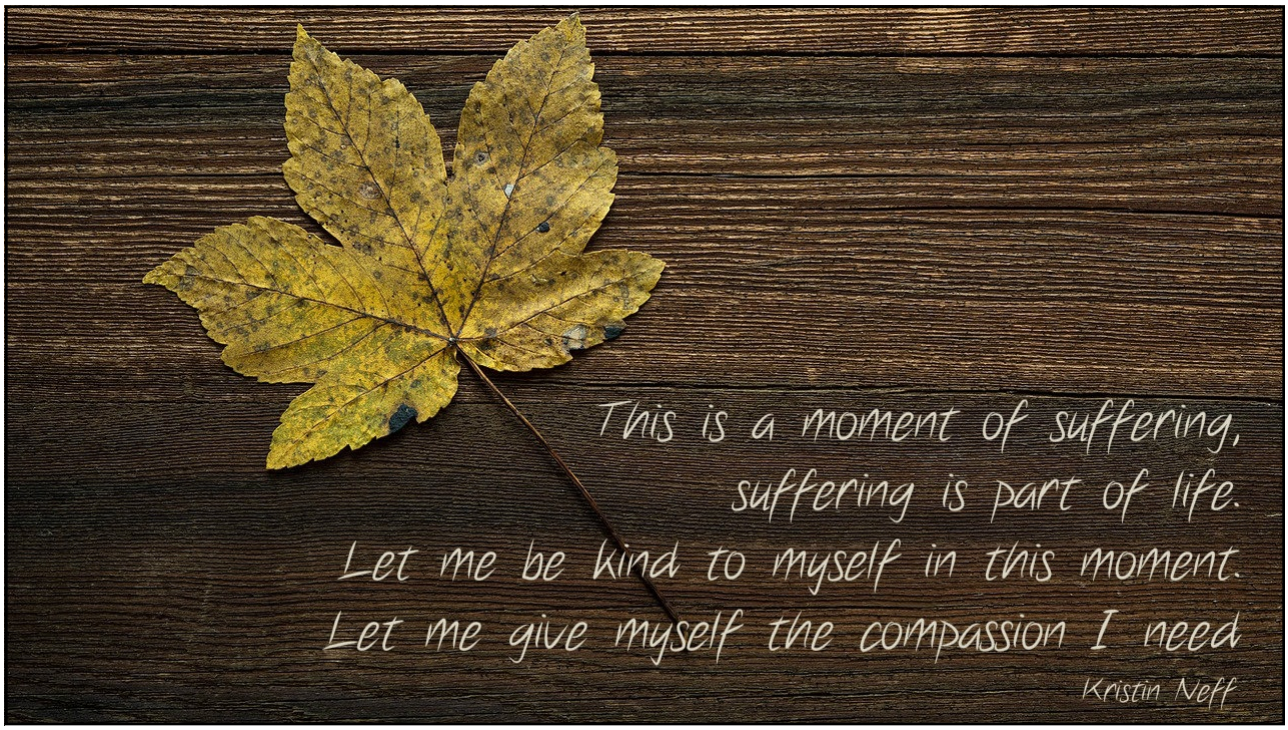
I give myself permission to:

47

Self-Compassion

1. Self-kindness
2. Mindfulness
3. Common Humanity

48



49

I give myself permission to:	A way I can demonstrate more compassion to myself:

50

All behavior is a form of communication

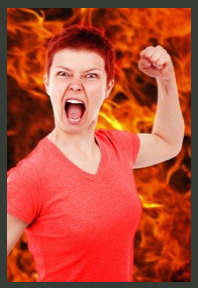
51

All behavior is a form of communication

- Notice:

  What different behaviors you noticing now?

- What do you imagine (or know) these behaviors are communicating?



52

Gritty Grace

53

One way grace shows up in my life
BICK'S
Dill Pickles
No Garlic

54

55

56

Mercy

57

Only the soul that ventilates the world with tenderness has any chance of changing the world.
Gregory Boyle

58

I give myself permission to:	A way I can demonstrate more compassion to myself:
One way I can extend gritty grace and/or revolutionary mercy to myself:	

59

When we hit a wall, we assume we must scale it on our own.

60

Make a thoughtful choice

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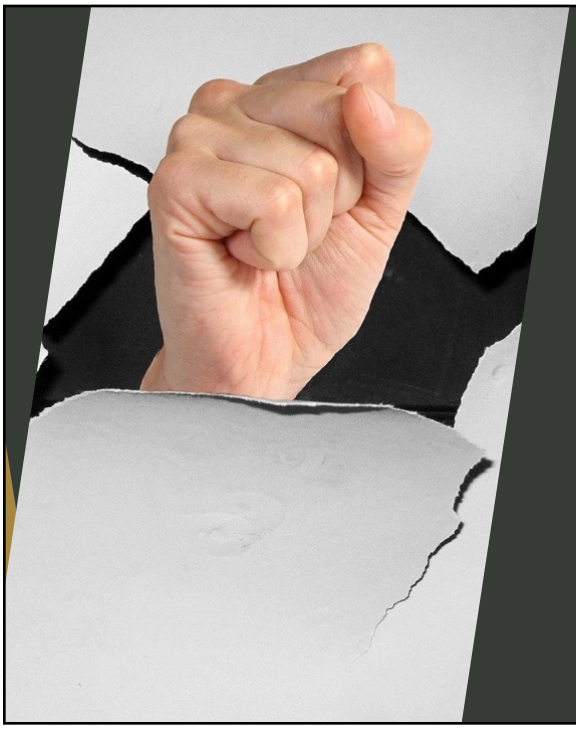

Break through a wall can be an expectation—

- At times, it's is an unfair burden
- At times, it is an exhilarating victory.

62

Sometimes, the wisest thing to do is to curl up against the wall and take a rest.

- Leaning against the wall can be the courageous right decision

63

We don't have to do this alone. We were never meant to.

64

I give myself permission to:	A way I can demonstrate more compassion to myself:
One way I can extend gritty grace and/or revolutionary mercy to myself:	One small way it would be good for me to risk connection with myself or others:

65

66

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DEFINE YOURSELF RADICALLY AS ONE BELOVED BY GOD. THIS IS THE TRUE SELF. EVERY OTHER IDENTITY IS ILLUSION.
BRENNAN MANNING

68

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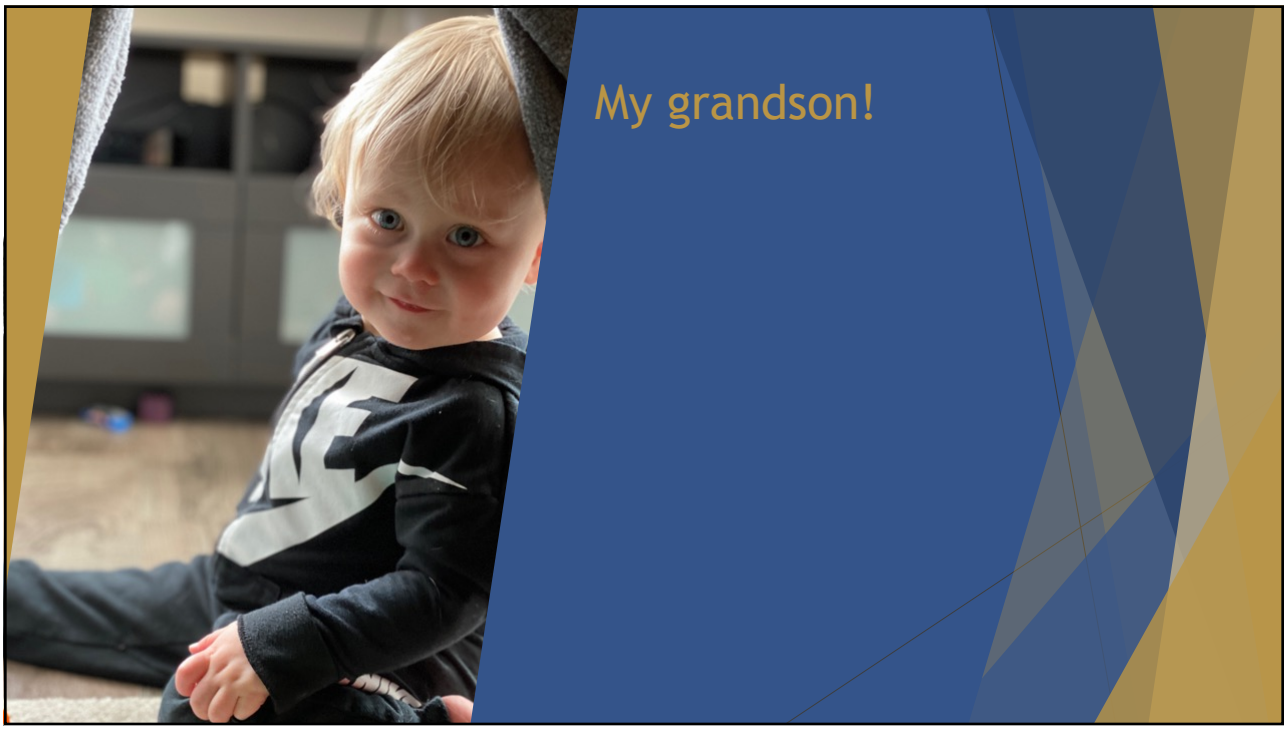

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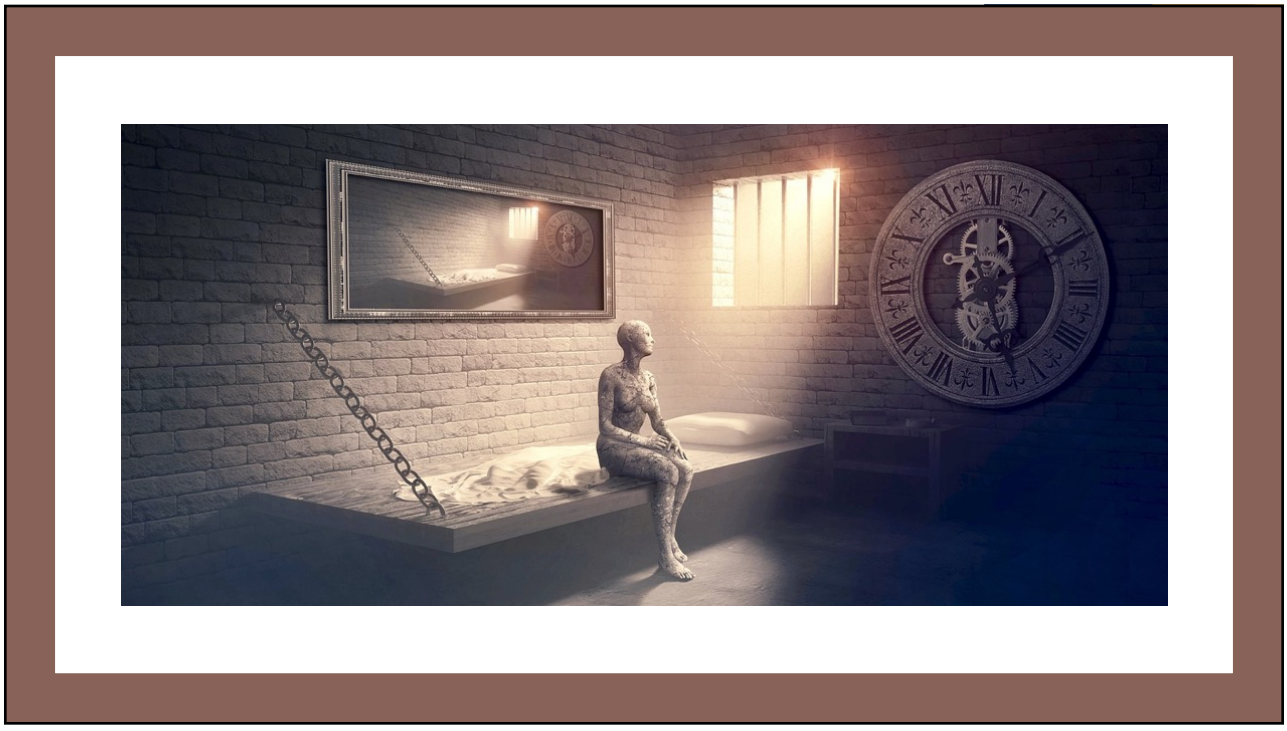
Solitary confinement is the worst kind of torture. Human beings are social animals. Human beings need to communicate, need to be loved, need to touch other people.
Maziar Behari

75



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FAITH

78

Mark 5:24

24 Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. **25** A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding.

79

Mark 5:24

. **26** She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.

80

Mark 5:24

27 She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe.

81

Mark 5:24

28 For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

82

Mark 5:24

30 Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?”

31 His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

83

32 But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done.

84

To note…

1. Faith co-creates her healing here by working together with Jesus

85

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2. Jesus let the crowd in on the healing—at personal risk to himself.

86

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3. Jesus listens to the “whole story”—WOW

87

To note…

1. Faith co-creates her healing here by working together
2. Jesus let the crowd in on the healing—at personal risk to himself.
3. Jesus listens to the “whole story”—WOW
4. The ”Markan Sandwich” at work

88

34 And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”

34 Jesus said to her, “Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you’re healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague.”

The Message

89

34 And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”

34 Jesus said to her, “Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you’re healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague.”

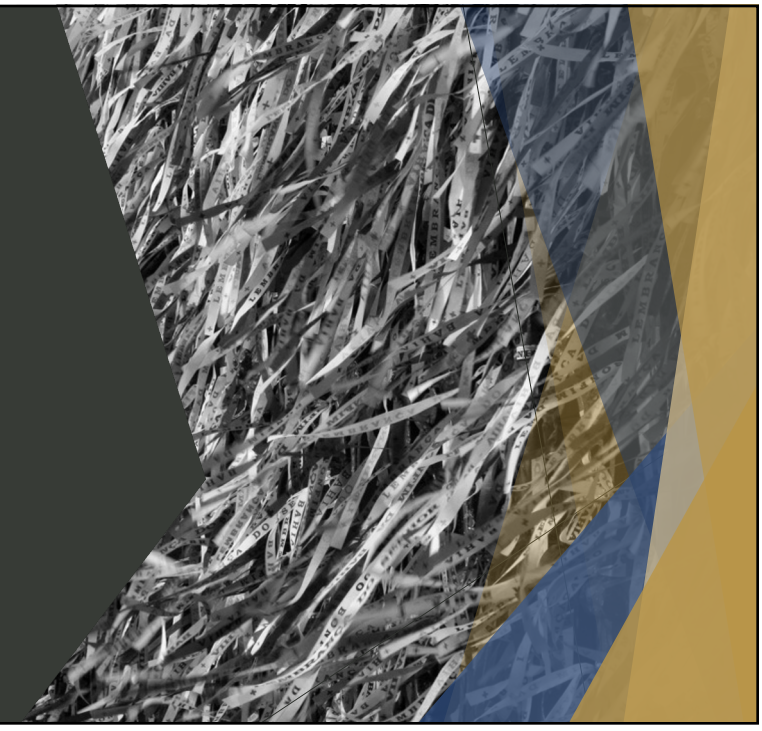
The Message

90

THIS IS *NOT* THE STORY I WANT

91

FAITH HAS
WRECKED MY LIFE



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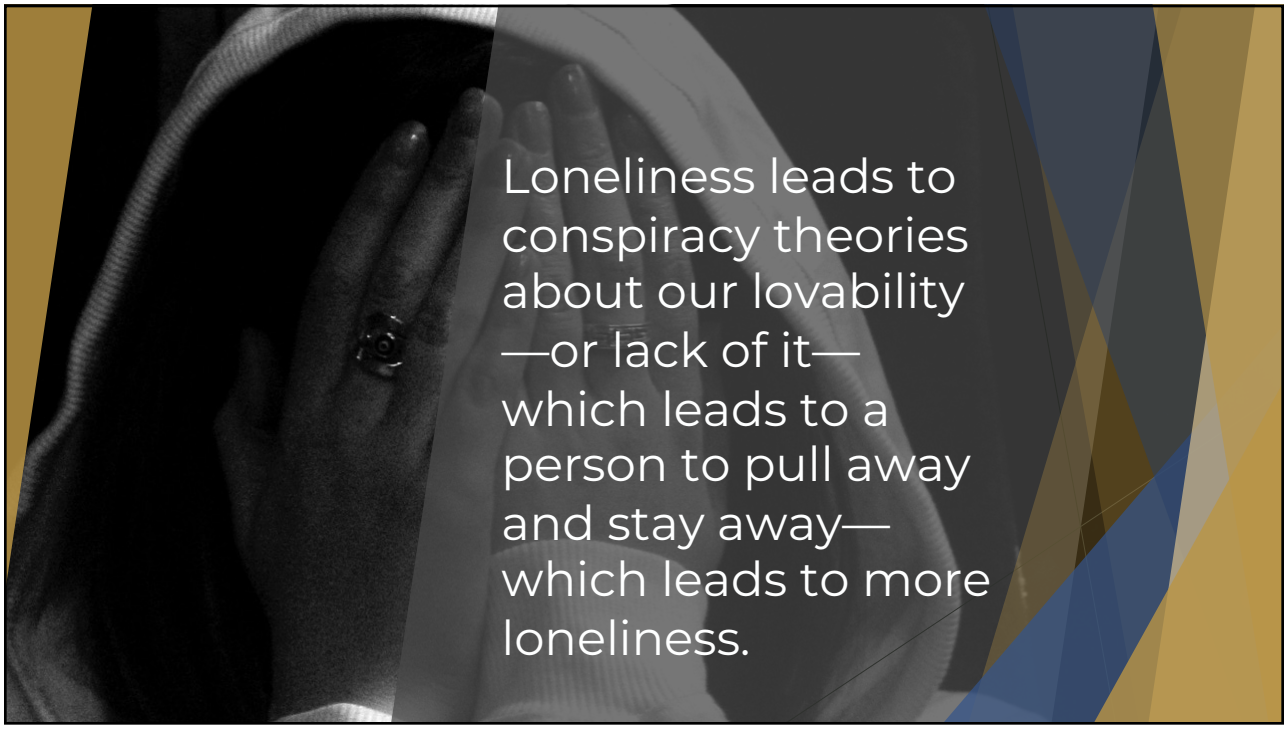
94

“People don’t want to be around me because they don’t like me.
There’s no point in trying to connect because no one is going to want to be with me.
If people wanted to be with me, I wouldn’t be lonely in the first place.
I’m just going to be disappointed and even lonelier when I try and fail—so why try?”

95


Loneliness leads to conspiracy theories about our lovability —or lack of it— which leads to a person to pull away and stay away— which leads to more loneliness.

96

97

Expected: "You're not welcome"

But instead got: "Come, tell me your whole story"

98

Expected: “Get out of here. You’re broken”

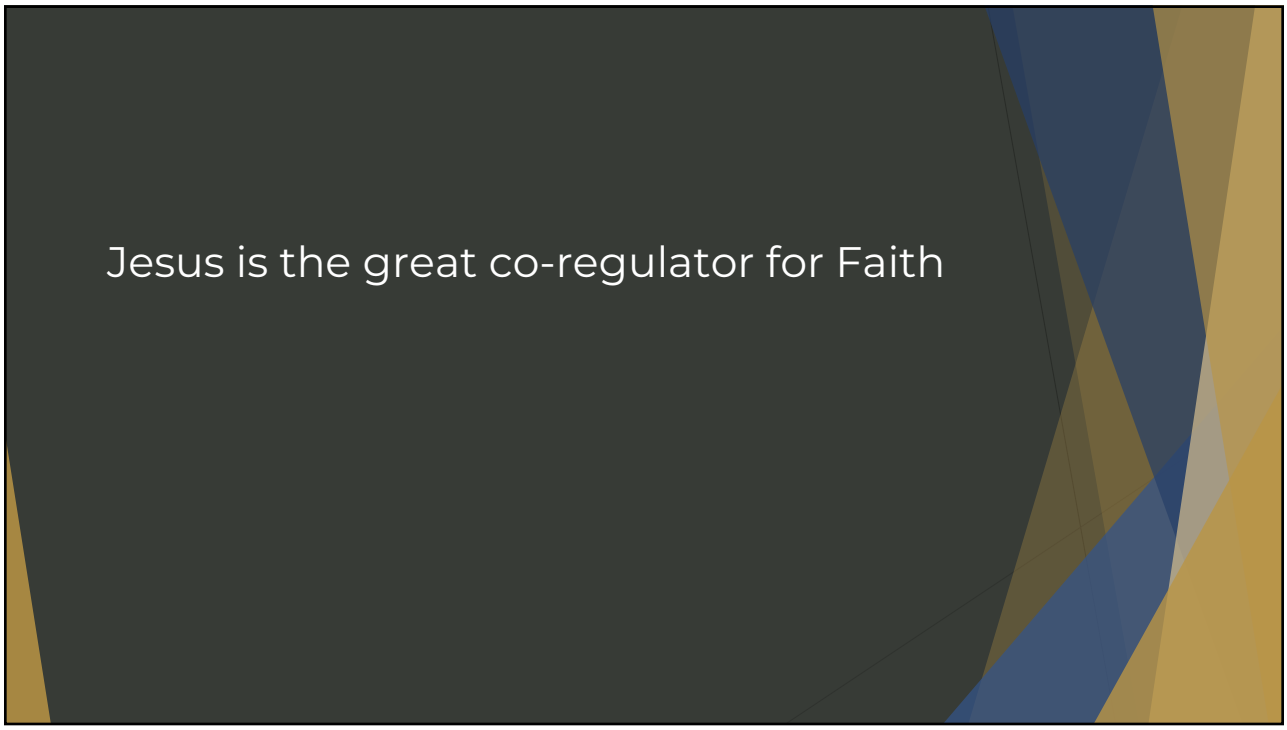
Jesus said: “Daughter, your faith has healed you”

99

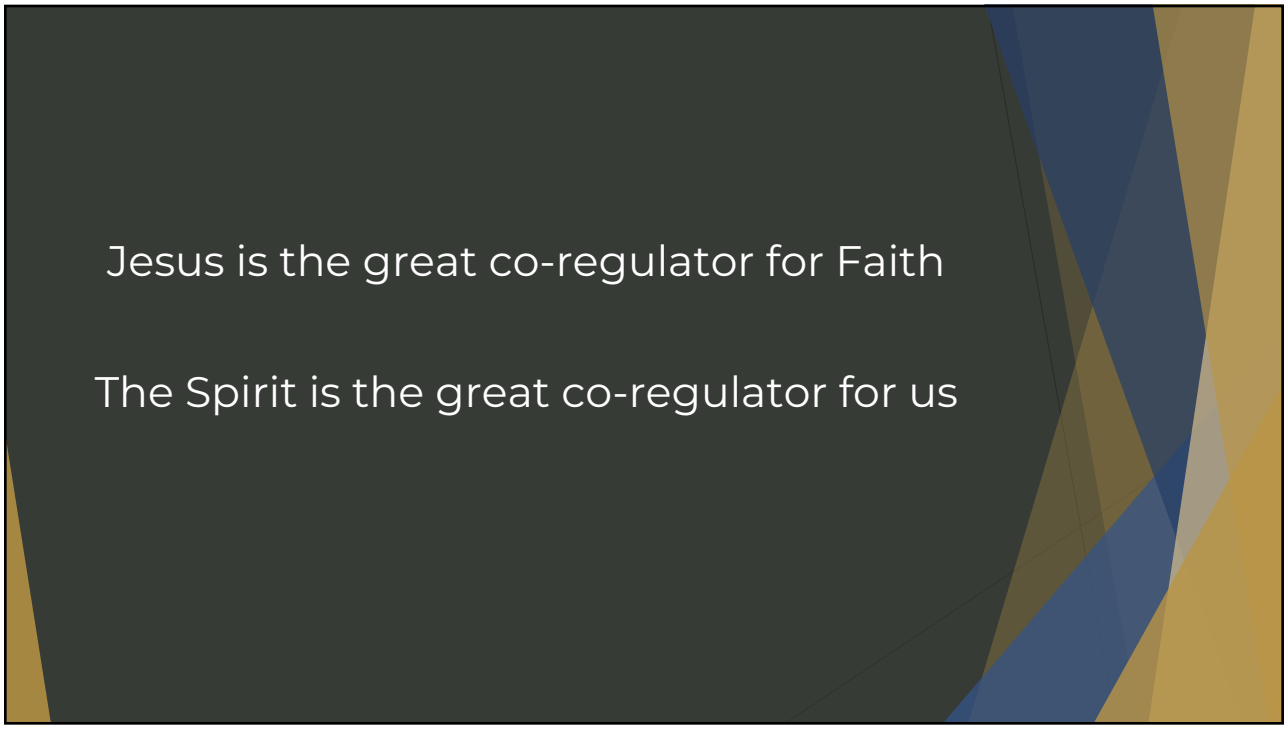
Expected: “Get back into your isolated box of loneliness”

Jesus said: “Go and be freed”

100


Jesus is the great co-regulator for Faith

101


Jesus is the great co-regulator for Faith
The Spirit is the great co-regulator for us

102

Behold the One beholding you, smiling
Anthony De Mello

103

One of the definitive moments
in my life was realizing that
most of us are brave and afraid
in the exact same moment
all day long.
Brené Brown

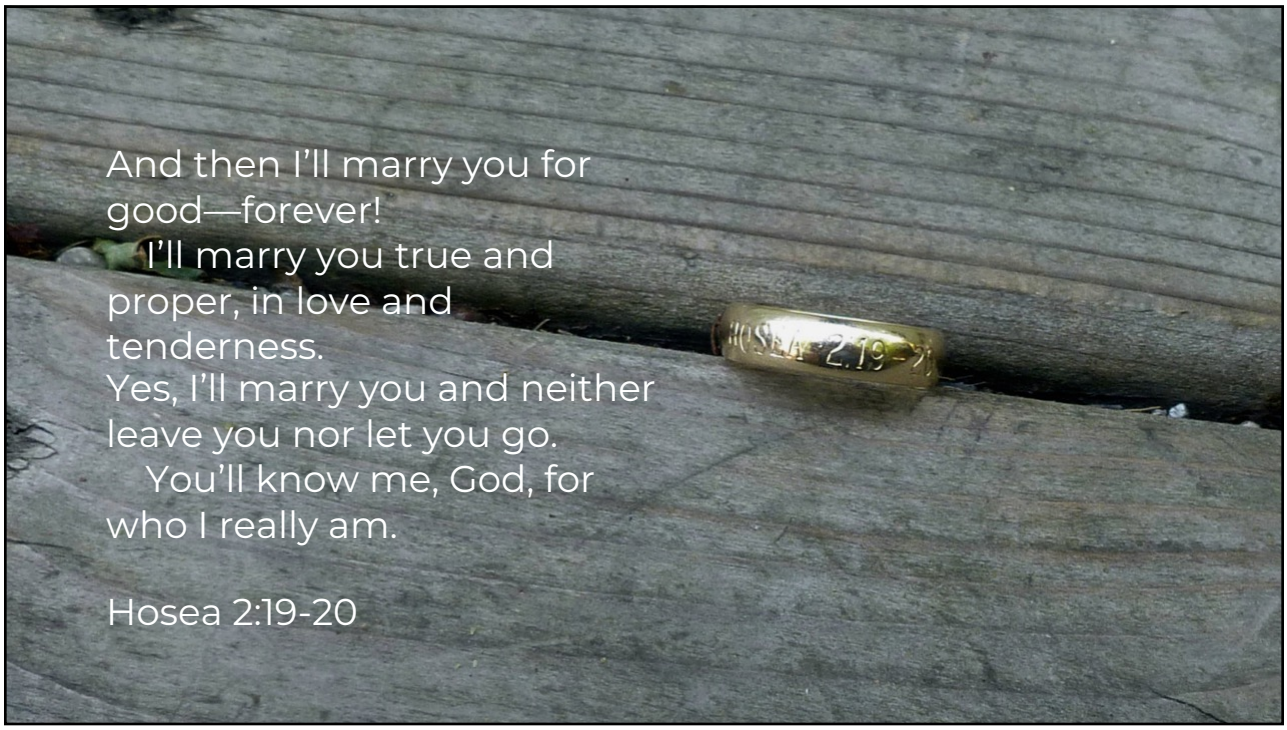
104

To invite God into our fear
transforms the way we relate to it.

105

11 Years Ago
See your memories
Carolyn Klassen
January 10, 2011
just won a CHVN radio station contest by knowing the only word in the English language with 3 double letters in a row...I never win anything...and when they ask me why I know the answer, I say, "cuz I'm a geek!"--first thing that pops into my head! Never put me on the radio again.
Like
Comment

106


And then I'll marry you for good—forever!
I'll marry you true and proper, in love and tenderness.
Yes, I'll marry you and neither leave you nor let you go.
You'll know me, God, for who I really am.
Hosea 2:19-20

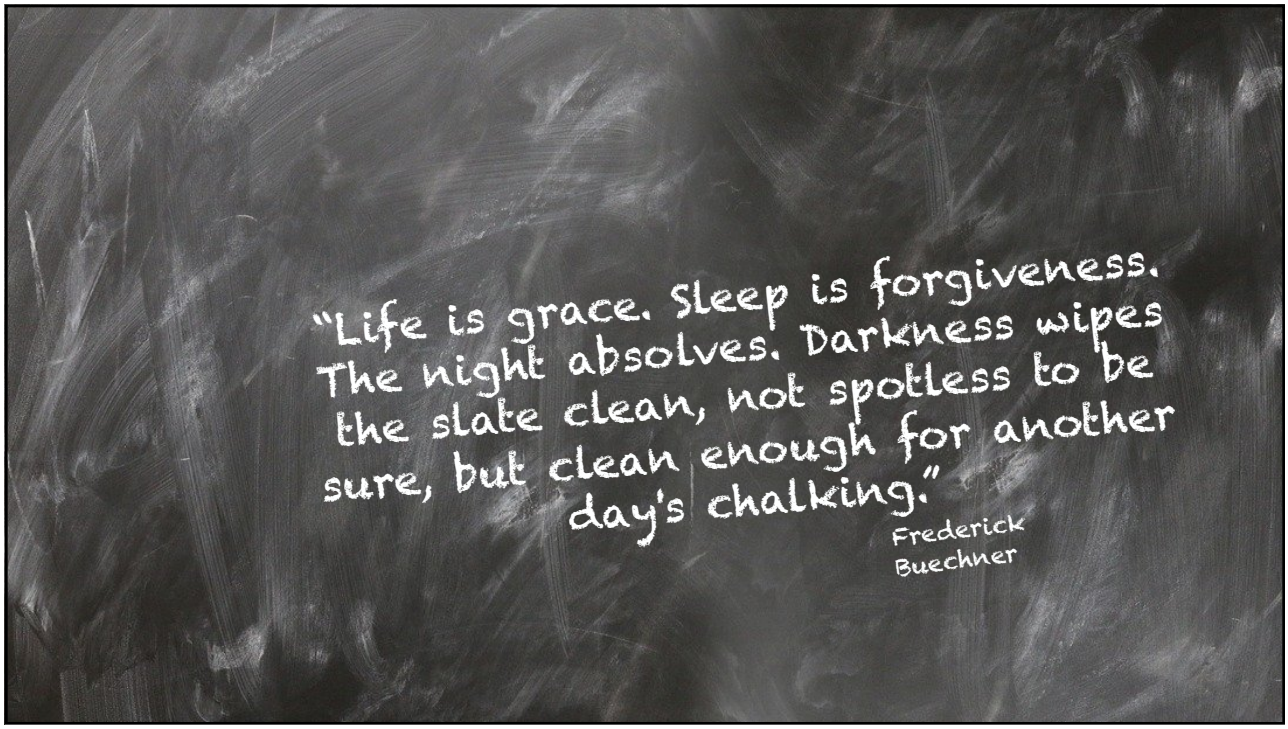
107

AM 680
CJOB

108

Where does God want to co-create opportunities for connection with you?

109


"Life is grace. Sleep is forgiveness. The night absolves. Darkness wipes the slate clean, not spotless to be sure, but clean enough for another day's chalking."
Frederick Buechner

110