

Trauma, Addiction and Spirituality

by

Robert Grant, Ph.D.



Editor's Note

Dr. Robert Grant addressed the assembled participants at the 2007 Guest House Summer Leadership Conference in New Orleans, LA. His address generated much comment and discussion among the participants.

The address was transcribed and edited by Dr. Grant for *Guest House Review*. It is published here as the first in a two-part presentation of his ideas on trauma, abuse, addiction, and the challenge of healing among the Church's ministers.

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Introduction

Many people have been seriously affected by traumatic events. Some may not meet the clinical

psychiatric criteria for “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD) or some other kind of trauma-related disorder. Yet, this doesn’t mean that they haven’t been affected. In addition a lot of the psychological terminology that you have heard regarding post-traumatic stress or trauma reflects surface manifestations of more profound shifts that occur for victims in their identity structures, world views, and images of God in the wake of traumatic events.

“The Box”

Most of the time we are *asleep*. We’re asleep at the wheel of life and the culture’s job is to put us to sleep and keep us that way. We collude together as a species, in every society, to avoid the more distressing, complex, and uncontrollable aspects of life. When I was growing up, no one ever told me that what I was being taught in school or by the culture was a single socio-historical version of reality. No one ever told me that. They just told me that this is the way it is, this is life, this is Reality.

I believe that every culture inserts its citizens into a language system and a belief system that is not of one’s choosing. Each of us is uncritically placed into a preordained paradigm, belief system, language system or value system and we have no perspective by which to critique or challenge that approach to reality. We simply absorb it. Without this process, the individual would become marginalized or excluded from society, and would face threats to survival as a human being.

I’ll call this prepackaged version of reality “the box.” It is like a map, the cultural and linguistic map that is given to organize and make sense of reality. People can usually deal with, and make sense of, everything that occurs within “the box” because there’s language, theory, rituals, healing protocols, and the like to help organize and work through life’s events. Now whether or not these elements are effective is another matter. It’s just that when things fall within the framework of one’s “box,” we typically feel that there’s some way to work with these things.

Sometimes, however, things happen that are outside one’s frames of reference. This is trauma. These things are not supposed to happen or, if they do happen, they aren’t supposed to happen to *me* but to people on the other side of the world... or people living in another city, or the inner city, or some other place... but it’s not supposed to happen to me. If it does happen to me and falls within my cultural “box,” then I’ve got some kind of theological or spiritual framework that says it’s been given to me by God as a test, or *Insh’Allah*, it’s the will of Allah. In other words, God is testing me. God has given me a trial. Whether scientific or religious, our “boxes” are frameworks that make sense of reality and trauma when it happens to me.

The problem is that most individuals don’t even know that they have a “frame of reference” until forced outside of it. Nobody talks about this. Consequently, all that trauma victims know, at first, is that they are confused, disoriented and can’t make sense of what has happened to them.

Typically what most people do when they are confused, disoriented and in a space they don't understand is that they go to others and seek validation. The problem is that these individuals typically go to others who are in the very same "box" or framework that the trauma victim was just involuntarily ejected from. In addition, people in the "box" are not too excited to hear about another's experiences outside the boundaries that challenge their "boxes," sacred cows, and beliefs. These individuals tend to minimize, pathologize, shame, marginalize, punish, or re-abuse trauma victims. So trauma victims usually have only two options: they either stay on the margins of society and remain marginalized (i.e., homeless, mentally ill, criminal or revolutionary), or they edit their traumatic experience and then cram it back into their pre-trauma world view and belief system. After all we are mammals and, like other herd animals, we want to get back into "the box" where it's comfortable and we can be with others.

The cost of doing the above is usually some form of psychiatric distress or problem. In biblical terms this type of individual has bitten from the fruit of knowledge. He or she now "knows" something that he or she doesn't want to acknowledge consciously because it is going to challenge everything that s/he has used to hold understandings of reality, identity and God together. Most people would prefer to suffer some form of post-traumatic stress, or the negative effects of an addiction, rather than risk opening up Pandora's Box and throwing everything of value into question. I believe that most psychopathology and addictions are designed to keep oneself and others away from the implications of the victim's traumatic experience, that is, the implications that this traumatic experience has for everything the victim has used to hold him/herself together and establish some form of *terra firma* to stand upon.

Culture originally puts people to sleep. Trauma wakes them up, pulls back the curtain of social denial, and shows them aspects of life that they would prefer not to know because these things are too threatening and too frightening. Addiction is one way of lulling oneself back to sleep. Anything can be used as an addiction, anything that distracts, numbs, overworks and keeps me diverted can be used as an addiction. Humans in general are addictive creatures. They're always looking for ways not to accept what I would call the existential truths or realities of human existence.

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Existential Truths

Many of us have failed to realize that we are going to have to die to our socially constructed selves, to our socially constructed versions of reality, and even to our uncritically accepted images of God that were picked up in childhood, if our addictions and traumas are to be overcome. There are lots of biblical references for this, lots of spiritual teachers in Christian and other religious traditions that talk about this.

Everything taken for granted or held sacred is going to have to be re-evaluated. We need to get to the bare essence of what it means to be a human being. Now, no person voluntarily embarks on this journey. Everyone goes kicking and screaming because there is no guarantee that they are going to survive. Everyone intuitively knows that, if she or he lets go of certain foundational things that s/he will then have nothing left to stand on. The result can be a loss of will to live or even insanity, depending on how well put together someone is. Most people intuitively know that trauma takes away the taken-for-granted or the *status quo* and thus the things that one needs to believe in and hold onto.

These losses instigate quakes or tectonic shifts in the core psyche and spiritual depth of people. Earthquakes occur when the plates of the earth shift. This is what trauma does to people. It shifts the foundations upon which they have built their lives. Most tragically it is very hard to find dialogue and validation in these broken, shifted places. Most people do not want to go there because they intuitively know that they will have to die, psychically and spiritually, if they are to discover health and rebirth. They sense that they could be transformed in the process but there is no guarantee, especially when road maps through this territory are in short supply. In essence, trauma puts victims on a path – often alone, without maps or guides, shaken and lost – that spiritual adepts have been walking for thousands of years.

Trauma and Addiction are Brother and Sister

Trauma victims and addicts are like brothers and sisters. Whenever you find one you almost always find the other. Wherever trauma is discovered, there is almost always some kind of substance abuse or addiction lurking around; and, whenever substance abuse or addiction is found, trauma is almost always in the background.

I'm not a big fan of the disease model of addiction even though I wouldn't deny the bio-chemical or the biological sub-strata of addiction. Most of my clients with addictions are un-recovered trauma

victims who are using substances or process addictions, not only to numb or distract themselves, but also to stay away from what is about to be discussed.

Getting One's Bearings

Most of those who are pushed outside their frames of reference will have a hard time figuring out what has happened to them. There is almost no one who can help them articulate what happened and help them understand the predicament they are in. If, however, they do figure out the situation then they have a very big existential issue to confront. Once they realize that they are outside their socially condoned frames of reference... that they stand outside socially accepted "boxes"... then they have to confront the fact that *all they have are "boxes."*

Think about this for a minute. Nobody tells trauma victims that there are only "boxes." Rather they are told that what they believed *before* their trauma IS "reality." That is the way it is. Once trauma victims realize that they are outside their frames of reference and that there are, in fact, many cultural versions of reality then it is only a short step to the realization that "all there is are 'boxes.'" And, if that's the case, then what's the truth and how do I live?

Trauma victims at this point are in what the bible refers to as the "desert." They are "be-twixt and between." The old ways (frames of reference) don't work and the new ways have yet to appear. This liminal space is quite anxiety-provoking and many people get lost in some form of nihilism. Life becomes meaningless; everything becomes relativized and there is no sense of orientation or direction. It is hard to hold or accept any truth-claim on any matter. This situation characterizes the post-modern world. Linguists and philosophers have de-constructed almost every truth-claim that humans have come up with and demonstrated quite brilliantly that because of the inherent structure of language it is impossible to say anything rock solid about reality.

The Core

Trauma victims end up in similar territory. Their taken-for-granted approaches to reality ("boxes") have been de-constructed by what their traumatic experiences have exposed about the socially constructed and human nature of reality. Simultaneously a vertical deconstruction and horizontal deconstruction take place.

Horizontally, external reality has been challenged; it has broken apart or been destroyed. Examples of this will be provided shortly. Vertically, one's identity structure of who s/he thinks s/he is, is challenged by trauma. On some level every trauma victim knows that s/he is a tentative and socially constructed cohesion, and underneath this construction is no-thing, i.e., no core self that is a "given" entity or identity, even though psychologists talk a lot about a core self. The core self is actually an

achievement; it is not a given. A lot of things can go wrong developmentally, for example, miscues and deprivations that can leave individuals scarred or deformed at their core, or in extreme cases, without a core sense of self. These individuals are often referred to professionally as having personality disorders.

The core self is an achievement, a project from the start. There is literally “nobody home” at the core of any human being. This is my opinion, but it is backed by almost every major religious tradition. All humans are essentially no-thing at the core. The only time anything is put in place at the core is when a child gets consistent, caring, loving feedback from his/her caregivers. An evolving child is able to integrate this interpersonal feedback and build up some type of internal coherence.

The core is not a substantial or reified something. It’s more like the result of a great deal of conditioning and inner weaving. For many it becomes like a fibrous piece of wood. This core, like any piece of wood, has numerous gaps, cracks or fault lines. This is due to the fact that humans are imperfect beings who are raised and formed by imperfect beings. No one gets a perfect up-bringing.

Trauma has a way of finding these gaps and fault lines in both identity structures and world views. It drives splitting wedges into these gaps.

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The metaphor here is splitting wood with either an ax or splitting wedge. My dad taught me a lot about splitting wood. First off, wood is very coarsely and densely integrated, so one can’t just drive a wedge into wood indiscriminately because it will pop the wedge right out again, especially if the wood is dry. So one has to look for either a ring or a crack in the wood and then drive the wedge into that spot. When the wedge is placed properly one can hear the wood begin to split. It can be heard struggling to hold its integrity, but it is beginning to fall apart. Placing a second wedge properly, in conjunction with the first, eventually opens up the whole thing. Yet, the wood will try fiercely to hold itself together and even punish you with effort and injury if the wood cutter is not careful and focused. This is what trauma does. If trauma hits individuals where there is not a crack or ring, then it bounces off and does not threaten the integrity of the whole. This is why some people, when exposed to trauma, are not traumatized; the trauma did not hit a weak spot in that person’s version of self, reality,

or God. Typically, however, when trauma “gets inside” the individual, it leads to post-traumatic stress and various kinds of health-related problems and/or addictions.

Many of the people that I have treated have had multiple experiences of trauma, over the whole life span, with different perpetrators. In essence, they have splitting wedges and axe cuts throughout their fibrous core and are thus barely holding themselves together. Hence, the need of many unresolved trauma victims for some form of addiction. For a time at least, addiction can serve as a kind of “glue” for wounded personalities, but at what cost?

This all sounds very dark. Right? One of my dear friends, Don Bisson, is an excellent spiritual director. He calls me the “Dark Knight,” the butcher of sacred cows. Yet, letting one’s sacred beliefs come under careful scrutiny and possibly die is an essential passage or “way forward” for many people. Again, many religious and spiritual traditions point in this direction. Mythologically speaking, what I am referring to is Dante’s “descent into hell,” or going into the tomb or Keva in Native American terms. This is Christ in the tomb before his resurrection. Trauma victims have to go down, I believe, into what their traumas reveal about self and life before they can come out the other side.

One can’t just medicate these exposures. One can not remain above this material without incurring severe costs. Trauma victims have bitten from the fruit of knowledge. Adam and Eve couldn’t pretend they weren’t naked anymore after they ate the forbidden fruit. Once traumatized, individuals can’t pretend that the world and self are the way they had been characterized by society. Therefore, victims either work through these kinds of realizations or they are destroyed by them. This is because on some profound level they know something that they don’t want to know on a conscious level.

When one begins to lose what s/he was taught and believes, then things start to look hopeless. People risk falling into the void and into despair. Life doesn’t seem worth living. It is hard to know what is right or wrong, or how to live. But if one can sustain the descent, the stripping of uncritically accepted values and beliefs, then such an individual has the potential to come out the other side as a very profound human person. The greatest people in human history have typically become great, not in spite of, but because of their traumatic experiences. Ignatius was nearly killed on a battlefield and left to die. John of the Cross was tortured by his own confreres and put in prison. Looking at the lives of almost every church father and mother, they grew up in the midst of plagues or catastrophes, were surrounded by cultural upheaval and war, and often underwent numerous traumas of their own.

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If we take Christ and read the New Testament from the perspective of a trauma survivor, then it is quite clear that he had at least six Criterion A Events according to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or DSM. He had a price on his head as a kid. I'm sure he had some questions about who his biological father was. People were trying to kill him, at several different times in his life. His best friends betrayed him. He was publicly humiliated, scourged and crucified. That's a lot of trauma. I believe that Christ became what he was supposed to become because of his traumas. More specifically, he fully became himself – he developed the core or essence of his person – because he learned the lessons of his wounds. The question is then what does one learn from trauma?

One thing, and this is something that addicts know from their substance abuse support groups, is that we are not in complete control of our lives. In fact, any of us could die at any moment. We are *limited and finite*. As a result there are so many things we can't do or accomplish.

Secondly, there are *no guarantees* in life. This is in spite of how hard one works or how disciplined s/he is. Things can still go wrong. There are just too many contingencies.

Along the same lines, there is *no security in an absolute sense*. One's home, assets... everything can be taken away in an instant. The issue, once one begins to accept all the insecurities that go with human existence, is that there are really only two things that matter: the care and love of other people and being connected to "something greater" than oneself. Biblically, these are the first two or greatest commandments.

The problem is that the ego – the socially constructed self – fears these commandments because it does not want to acknowledge its own inherent vulnerability and dependence. It wants the world to revolve around itself. It wants to be self-sufficient and without injury.

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Once a trauma victim realizes that money, power, degrees, privileged birth status, gender, skin color

will not protect him or her from the effects of trauma, then some strike out in search of something more substantial. They re-evaluate the priorities they have absorbed from the consumer-driven social world. Some realize that the culturally-endorsed version of the good life is a wasted life. It's a life based on power, status, consumption, competition and accumulation.

An authentic life tries to discern why one is here. This is usually discovered in and through one's pain and trauma. When broken in pieces and unable to put oneself back together again, one may learn that it is only through the love and care of other people and being connected to the Spirit that one find his/her true nature and reason for living. These individuals learn from their own experience that nothing else in this world matters more than reaching out to and caring for others who are in distress.

This is one reason why most talented healers are wounded healers. It is in and through their own journey and the care they receive along the way that helps them discover their life's calling. They use their wounds (*trauma* in Greek means "wound") as bridges of compassion and connection to others who have suffered a fate similar to their own. They want to spare people the useless suffering that comes from not being properly accompanied. It is actually in and through their wounds, and possibly having lost everything they once cherished, that they come home to themselves. The husk has to be stripped before the seed can fall. One has to lose his life in order to find it.

The Meaning of Suffering

This is why I'm really interested in authentic suffering. I don't try to take it away from people. It's often the only thing powerful enough to keep them on the journey of transformation. Trauma exposes life in its rawness. One either works the territories exposed by trauma, or is destroyed by them (through the use of psychological defenses, addictions and other ways of avoiding the truths of human existence).

I believe in the power of redemptive or legitimate suffering. Here people have to learn that what's actually causing their suffering is a refusal to acknowledge what they learned from their traumatic experience. *Suffering is an unwillingness or inability to integrate the implications of one's traumatic experience into wider understandings of reality.* Buddha referred to suffering the "crashing of the ship of one's illusions on the rocks of reality." Thomas á Kempis calls suffering the "gymnastics of eternity." Think about this for a minute. If one wants to go to the Olympics as a gymnast, then s/he has to start training from an early age, most likely as a child. S/he has to learn tumbling, apparatus, ballet and stretching in order to go to the Olympics.

What if one wants to go to eternity? What if she or he wants to be one with the Father in heaven or however one characterizes the divine? This individual is going to have to embark on a life-long journey of training and letting things go. This is what suffering demands – to let things go (for

example, uncritically examined beliefs) that are causing one to suffer.

Let me give you an example that many readers can relate to. I grew up as a Catholic. My sister was a religious and we went to Catholic schools our whole lives. I even went to a Catholic graduate school. I've been around religious and clergy my whole life either as a Catholic lay person and professional, or as a consultant to dioceses and religious orders around the world.

When I was growing up, priests and religious were pretty much viewed as semi-divine by children. The only difference for me was that I had a sister who was a religious, so I knew that nuns were just girls in skirts. My classmates didn't have that vantage point. Even then I was still in awe of priests and religious. So in the cultural map or world view I was given, I didn't know that priests and religious might sexually act out, might have sexual addictions, might be married, may have fathered kids... namely, all the things that the general public has heard in the last twenty years.

So what does someone do, if he is a child who has been given a certain version of reality and then encounters a priest or religious who molests him? Let's just say he touches the boy inappropriately. How would a child make sense of that 40 years ago? It's not supposed to happen. Right? It doesn't even exist in the child's imagination; therefore, it has to be an accident or mistake. The priest must have been moving his hands in another direction to get something else and accidentally touched the boy's penis. Perhaps the child doesn't even know that something was wrong because he was too young to know about sexuality. There couldn't be anything wrong.

Essentially, it wouldn't compute. It wouldn't fit into his mind-frame or frame of reference. If it occurred in a contemporary setting, the child might run to someone and say something happened and that this is not appropriate. Thirty or forty years ago, however, even in America, it would have been a very hard thing for a child to get his or her head around such an event and then go to someone to talk about it. But some did. And, what was the response from people who shared the same box or belief system formerly held by the child? "You must be making it up or you're really bad for having said such a thing." Typically humans shoot the messenger, the one who has been outside the taken-for-granted.

In essence, trauma victims are prophets; they know things about life that the rest of us do not want to know. Ideally, the masses should listen to these individuals but it's too threatening. What they have to say could take down the entire social framework and leave everyone in the desert, lost and confused. So rather than honor the communiqués of trauma victims, society tends to punish, pathologize and reject what they see and say.

When broken in pieces and unable to put oneself back together again, one may learn that it is only through the love and care of other people and being connected to the Spirit that one will find his/her true nature and reason for being here.

Paradigm Shifts

Have you ever read Kuhn's work on paradigm shifts? If you have, you know that "boxes" don't change just because somebody introduces new information. Just talk to Galileo and a few people like him. Typically most people are resistant to new insights because they shake the foundations of how people stand in reality. Yet at the same time, if citizens could accept this knowledge, then the collective mindset would be much more in-tune with the fundamental aspects of life and not just the sides of life that people use to create an illusion of meaning and security.

In some way trauma is a "severe mercy" or "dark grace." Humans encounter and make contact with the divine in ways that they would never imagine. I always thought that I would somehow encounter God triumphantly. I'd figure it all out and know why I'm here. I'd read scripture intensely and I'd have all the answers. But actually that approach that took me farther away from the divine. It was through my brokenness and wounds, through tasting the dust of my own humanity when I was face down in the dirt, that I began to realize what I am at core and that I can't really make it in this world without others, without being in relationship to – and working intimately with – others. So I stopped striving for perfectionism and so many other ego achievements. I tried to be more comfortable with being a basic human being who needed others, direction from God, and a great many other things. In fact I'm very needy. This acknowledgement brought me to people just as Thomas, the disciple, was brought to Jesus. Jesus said to Thomas: "know me by my wounds." That's a very profound statement. Know who I am by how I have been wounded and how I carry my wounds, that is, in a way that exemplifies dignity, and development, compassion and transformation.

This is my insight today. In essence, I've been purified and reborn in and through my wounds. I believe that we heal people in and through our comfort with our own wounds. We don't heal people by talking down to them as though we have all the insights into their problems.

Tomorrow the situation could be reversed, and in my life it actually has been... many times. I've been on the other side of the table much of my life. I am on this side today but tomorrow could be on the other side again. This is due to the fact that life could take me down because I'm human. I'm

limited, and I can't manage everything on my own. Life has too many contingencies. There are too many things that I can't keep hold of and that can go wrong.

This is both scary and paradoxical. Most people don't want this kind of spirituality. They want the more New Age, feel good, "get into the sunlight where everything's pure and clean" kind of spirituality. I don't believe that's really where we develop a substantial kind of rooted spirituality. I believe it's through our personal distress and pain – while being held reverentially by others in that pain – that people come to accept their humanity and are no longer ashamed of it. In no longer being ashamed of one's humanity, it becomes nearly impossible to turn away from the distress of others because they are my brothers and sisters. We are all struggling with the challenges of this existence together.

The ego and its frightened nature needs to step aside. In so doing the soul (spiritual core of the individual) can ascend. The soul is where the Spirit is already in harmony with the individual. It is in the other's vulnerability and humanity that I encounter myself and the Spirit. When we share this space with dignity then we grow together. This is considered "sacred space" in most spiritual traditions. This is where people drop their façades, their cover stories, and share from their hearts. Typically it takes a lot of suffering to stop pretending that one is better than the average person, especially if that other is mentally ill or debilitated in some way.

This is another reason why I don't take away people's suffering. Carl Jung referred to suffering as "the refiner's fire." It is one of the few things powerful enough to get people to drop their pretenses, re-order their priorities, and discover what's important.

Look at all the people in the world who are driven by work, money, addiction and see how disengaged they are from people and the world around them. Many act as if they have life by the tail. When one of them develops a heart attack or addiction then they get shot out of the sky. Like Paul who was knocked off his horse, they are brought down to earth and possibly realize that all they have been working for is ephemeral and not very substantial. If they are lucky they will find a few people who will love and care for them in their broken state. These individuals will most likely reinforce what I have been saying.

What is important are one's relationships with others and caring for others in a similar position. When such individuals wake up from their socially induced coma, they get a second chance; they are reborn in the Spirit and most often go into some kind of social advocacy work or healing ministry. That is, they begin to do something that isn't just about them, but something that capitalizes on what they have been through in order to help others. This is amazing. I never would have imagined, throughout my youth and adulthood, that I would come closer to people and God through my brokenness and woundedness. I've gone all over the world and worked in more than twenty countries. I've done

workshops in Papua, New Guinea and places you wouldn't imagine. I've gone where people have limited English ability and they still recognize me and I recognize them in the place where we are all the same, where we can be rendered helpless and powerless. Where we can not make it on our own. Where we need others and where we need to be connected to Something greater than ourselves. This knowledge transcends all races, genders, colors and religions. This is where community is formed and healing discovered.

If one is willing to drop the façade and speak from this place within him/herself, then anything can happen. There is nothing more powerful than a wounded human being who is comfortable and not ashamed of his/her wounds. She or he doesn't glorify them, spiritualize them, use them to make people feel guilty, or induce them to take care of him/her. S/he has dignity in that space and says, "Here I am. Come and meet me in this place. I am not afraid."

That's someone I want to follow and that's who most people want to follow. Not somebody who comes in with all the answers; someone who has everything mapped out and nailed down. That's too much for people. This is what hagiographers have done. They have sanitized the lives of the saints. They take out all the human elements and trauma from the lives of these individuals.

Most people don't know that Francis was a prisoner of war and nearly died in a prison camp. In my opinion this was his conversion experience. Yet, the hagiographers want to make the saint so spiritually profound that the average person cannot relate to him or her. But in reality it is in and through the saint's humanity that s/he became spiritually profound.

In closing, if we stay too much on the level of psychiatric manifestations of trauma and addiction, then we miss the more profound transformations that can take place. The soul is touched, if not awakened by trauma. It has been affected, and if we can help people get in touch with what is happening on this level, then they can start moving in the direction of transformation.

This is why many addicts are some of the deepest people I've ever met. They come in and talk about ruining their families, careers, jobs, and health. Maybe even somebody died because they were drunk while driving. These are things that most people hide. Right? Can you think of people who go in and start telling a group all their problems and shameful episodes? You don't get too many social points for doing that, especially at work if you are trying to climb the ladder. But imagine a person who comes in and says "Here I am, this is what I've done. I'm ashamed of it in one way but I'm not going to hold the shame in a way that's toxic. I'm trying to make amends. I am trying to live a better life more in tune with my spiritual core."

This person is transparent. A healed addict, who has gone through all the Twelve Steps, is capable of this kind of real intimacy. But the culture doesn't teach us how to be capable of such intimacy because we are so into image-management. We are constantly managing images. We want to be loved for

what we are not. We learn this as kids. Our true self isn't lovable enough so we develop a false self, a façade.

The false self doesn't draw true love. People love what they see, but that's not really the individual. So how can such an individual take this kind of love seriously? Addicts in recovery and trauma victims learn that they have to be themselves, i.e., their basic human self, warts and all (!) in order to receive any benefit from love.

There is nothing more powerful than a wounded human being who is comfortable and not ashamed of his/her wounds.

About the Author

Robert Grant Ph.D. is a consultant and trainer to church, healthcare, business, military and welfare organizations in the areas of trauma, cross-cultural issues and spirituality. He has helped several dioceses, religious orders and conferences of bishops and major superiors develop their policies and procedures on matters related to ministerial abuse.

He is author of the following books:

Healing the Soul of the Church: Ministers Facing Their Histories of Abuse and Trauma.

The Way of the Wound: Spirituality of Trauma and Transformation.

Living and Working in Environments of Violence: A Manual for Humanitarian Workers.

A Comprehensive and Integrative Approach to the Treatment of Trauma.

A Healing Response to Terrorism: A Handbook for Psychological and Spiritual First Responders.

Vicarious Trauma: A Handbook for Professionals Working with Victims of Trauma.

I Love a War Veteran: A Handbook for Families, Veterans and Professionals dealing with the effects of Combat Stress and Trauma.

All publications can be purchased directly from Robert Grant at rw_grant@hotmail.com. *Way of the Wound* and *Healing the Soul of the Church* can also be purchased from The Guest House Institute by contacting Colleen Richards at crichards@guesthouse.org or 1-800-626-6910 ext: 1207.

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In this presentation I am going to try to bring together the fields of Philosophy, Psychology, Spirituality, Theology, Cultural Anthropology, and Addiction Studies.