



Optimal Wellness:
Practical Tools to Heal from
Complex Trauma for Youth and Young Adults
Mr. Fidel T. Rodriguez
Omo Awo Ifaseye Adesanya

· WE ARE ·
WHAT

we
REPEATEDLY
do

EXCELLENCE,

— *therefore,* —

IS NOT AN ACT,

· BUT A ·

HABIT

(ARISTOTLE)

Topics Covered

- 1) Optimal Wellness
- 2) Overarching Goal
- 3) Mind Body Spirit Model
- 4) Complex Trauma
- 5) Breath, Chi and Sage
- 6) Wellness
- 7) Root Causes of Trauma
- 8) Significance of Culture
- 9) The Hero's Journey
- 10) Meditation
- 11) Healing Circle Dialogue

Questions to be answered

- What is Optimal Wellness?
- Why principles, character and grit are important in making personal change and paradigm shifts in thinking?
- Is there an interconnectedness with wellness and cultures?
- Can trauma be healed with wellness tools?

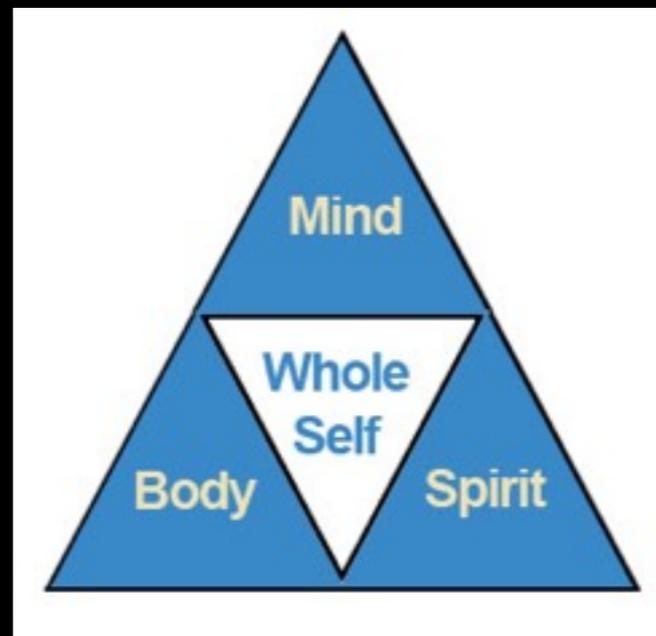


What is Optimal Wellness?

Optimal Wellness –A state of optimal well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.” Wellness practitioners believe that optimal well-being requires a balance between wellness dimensions that comprise the whole person. - World Health Organization

Spreading Seeds Main Goal

Self-mastery - the power to control one's actions, impulses, or emotions.
Self-control.



Know Thyself – Informed by the Greek Aphorism to Know Thyself and the universal concept that to understand one self is to understand another person. Socrates also referred this aphorism to a long-established wisdom.

The Mind, Body, Spirit Model

Building Character Based on Principles



The Mind Body Connection

Complex Trauma:

describes both children's exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature, and the wide-ranging, long-term impact of this exposure.

These events are severe and pervasive, such as abuse or profound neglect. They usually begin early in life and can disrupt many aspects of the child's development and the very formation of a self. Since they often occur in the context of the child's relationship with a caregiver, they interfere with the child's ability to form a secure attachment bond. Many aspects of a child's healthy physical and mental development rely on this primary source of safety and stability.

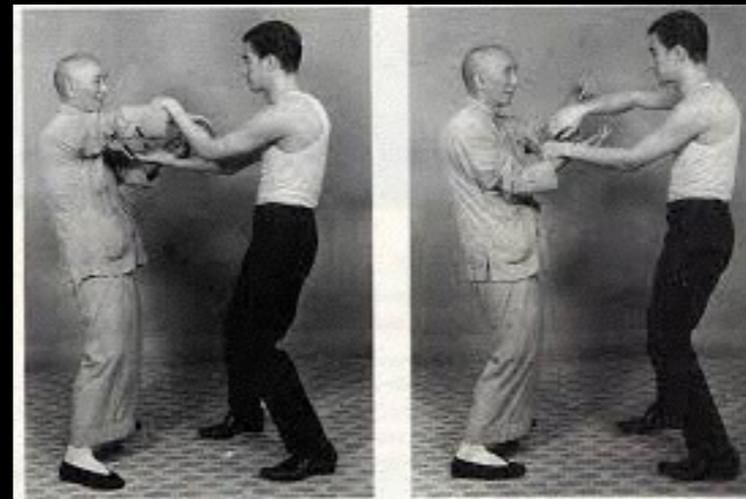
Programs Basic Principles

- 1) Learn to keep inwardly calm and clear in the midst of violent chaos
- 2) Not forgetting the possibility of disorder in times of chaos

The Book of The Five Rings - Minamoto Musashi

Principle of the Day

Self-discipline – The ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it.



“Self-discipline begins with the mastery of your thoughts. If you don't control what you think, you can't control what you do. Simply, self-discipline enables you to think first and act afterward.” - Napoleon Hill

7 Breaths

The English word spirit is derived from the Latin word spiritus, meaning breath. For the Greeks, the spirit is known as Pneuma, a term which also means breath. . In India, the spirit is also associated with prana, a term which in Sanskrit, means breath.

Chi / Qi

In traditional Chinese culture, chi is an active principle forming part of any living thing. Qi is frequently translated as "natural energy", "life force", or "energy flow".

Sage / Salvia



Burning white sage and “smudge sticks” (the process of harvesting sage stems and tying the stem together into a “smudge stick”), was and is used for cleansing and purification (Gilmore 1977, Kindscher 1992).

White sage or “man sage” was perhaps the most important ceremonial plant of the Cheyenne (Hart 1976). The leaves were burned as an incense to cleanse and drive away bad spirits, evil influences, bad dreams, bad thoughts, and sickness. – United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service - Plant Guide



Smudging is a way to cleanse a person, place or an object of negative energies, spirits or influences. The smudging involves the burning of sacred plants then, either passing an object through the resulting smoke, or fanning the smoke around a person or place.

When burned, sage releases large amounts of negatively charged ions into the air. These bond to positively charged ions already in the air produced by power lines, cell phones, TVs, and other electronics. The positive and negative charges neutralize each other, cleansing the energy in the air.

An excess of positive ions has been found to cause damage to cells in the human body, effect brain function, and cause feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression by lowering serotonin levels in scientific studies.

Low serotonin levels may lead to anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, tension headaches, and over eating. Serotonin is a hormone that is produced in the brain.

Serotonin, like dopamine, is a neurotransmitter. Serotonin helps the body maintain a happy feeling, controls mood, aids in sleep, and reduces anxiety. While serotonin is associated with the brain, roughly 90 percent of the serotonin in the body is located in the blood platelets and the digestive tract.

What is wellness?



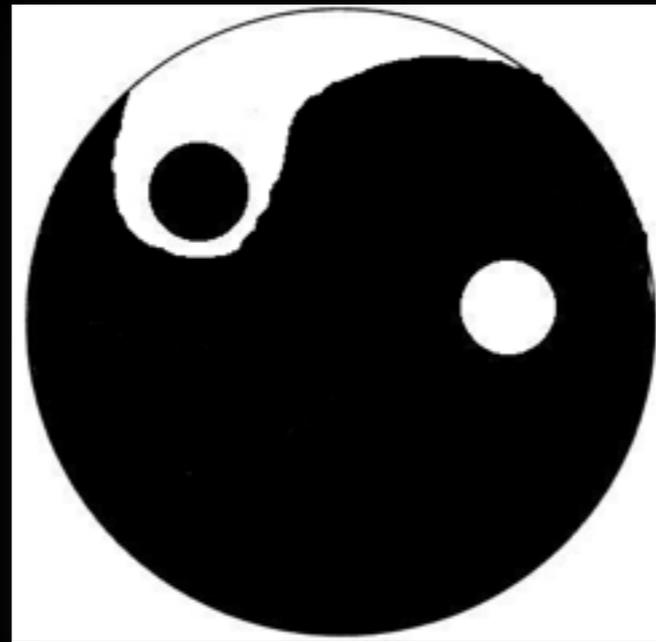
Wellness

Wellness is generally used to mean a healthy balance of the mind, body and spirit that results in an overall feeling of well-ness, and as an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence.

-Halbert L. Dunn, M.D. (1896– 1975)

High Level Wellness(1950's) -an integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable. It requires that the individual maintain a continuum of balance and purposeful direction within the environment where he or she is functioning." He also stated that, "wellness is a direction in progress toward an ever-higher potential of functioning.

-Halbert L. Dunn, M.D. (1896–1975)



What can make our Wellness become imbalanced or our equilibrium thrown off?



When we have been traumatized, what is effected?

Mental Health

mental health – a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being.

Equilibrium & Wellness

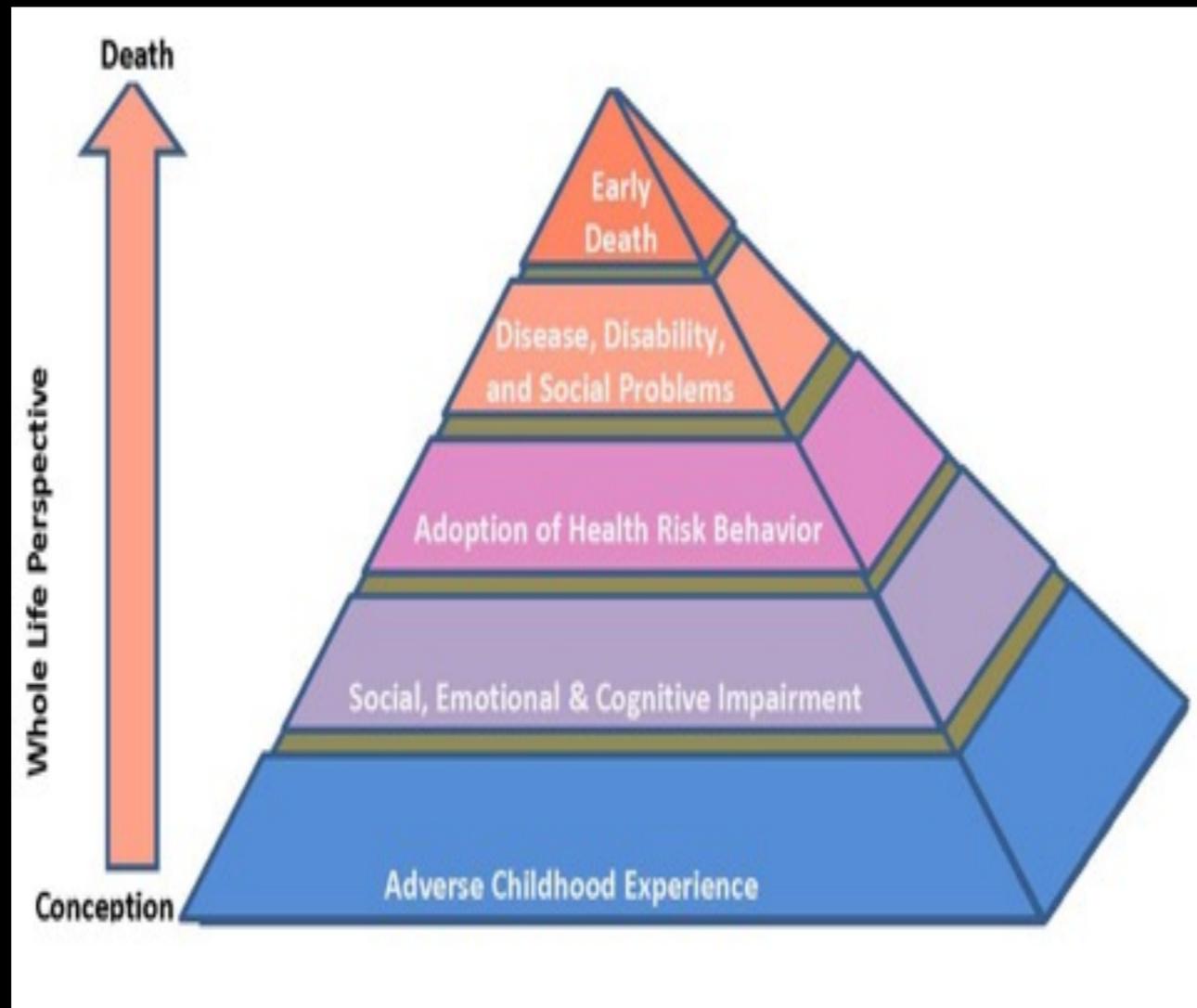
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Traumas can upset our equilibrium and sense of well-being. Wellness activities can bring equilibrium back, hence balance.

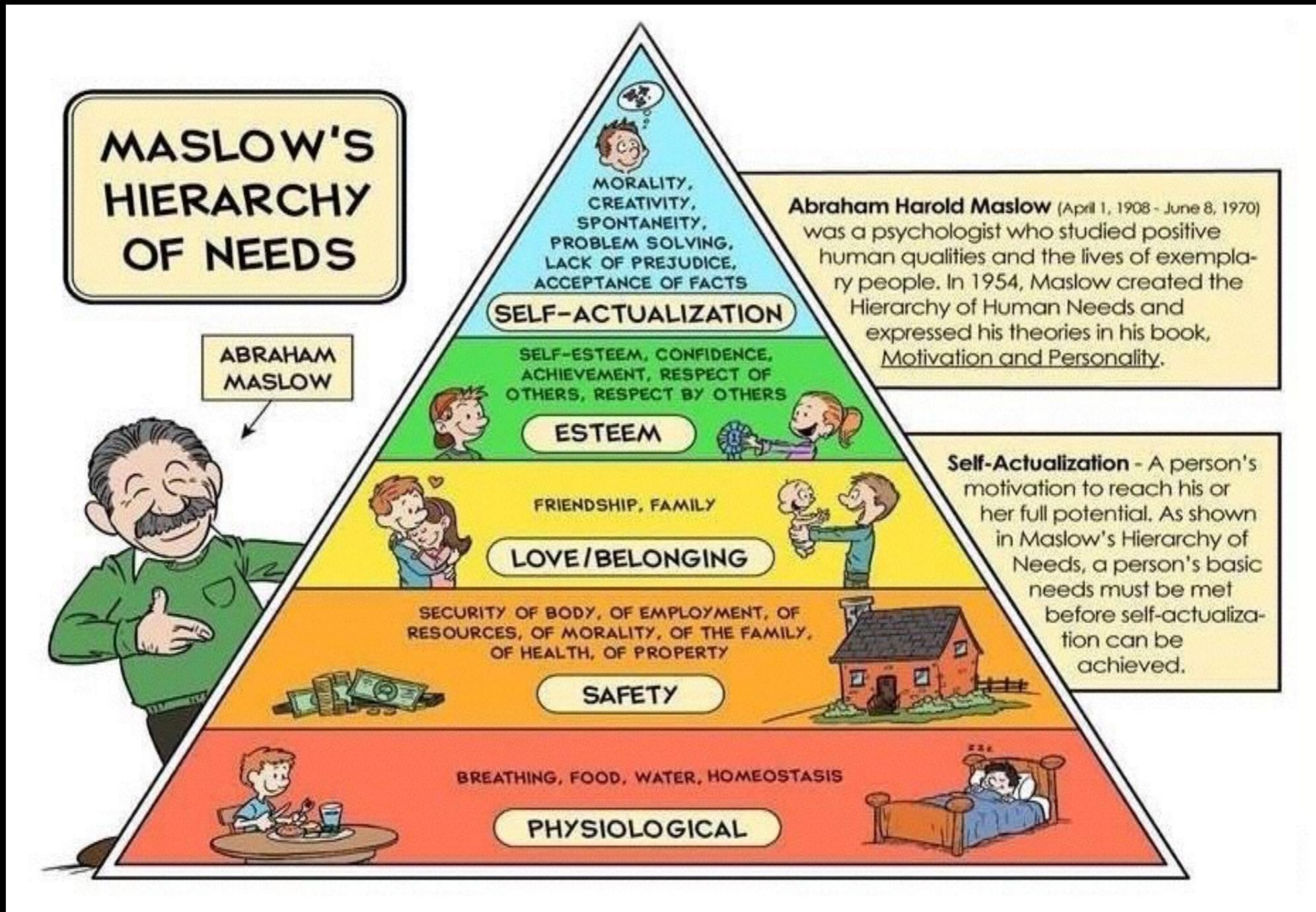


Root Causes

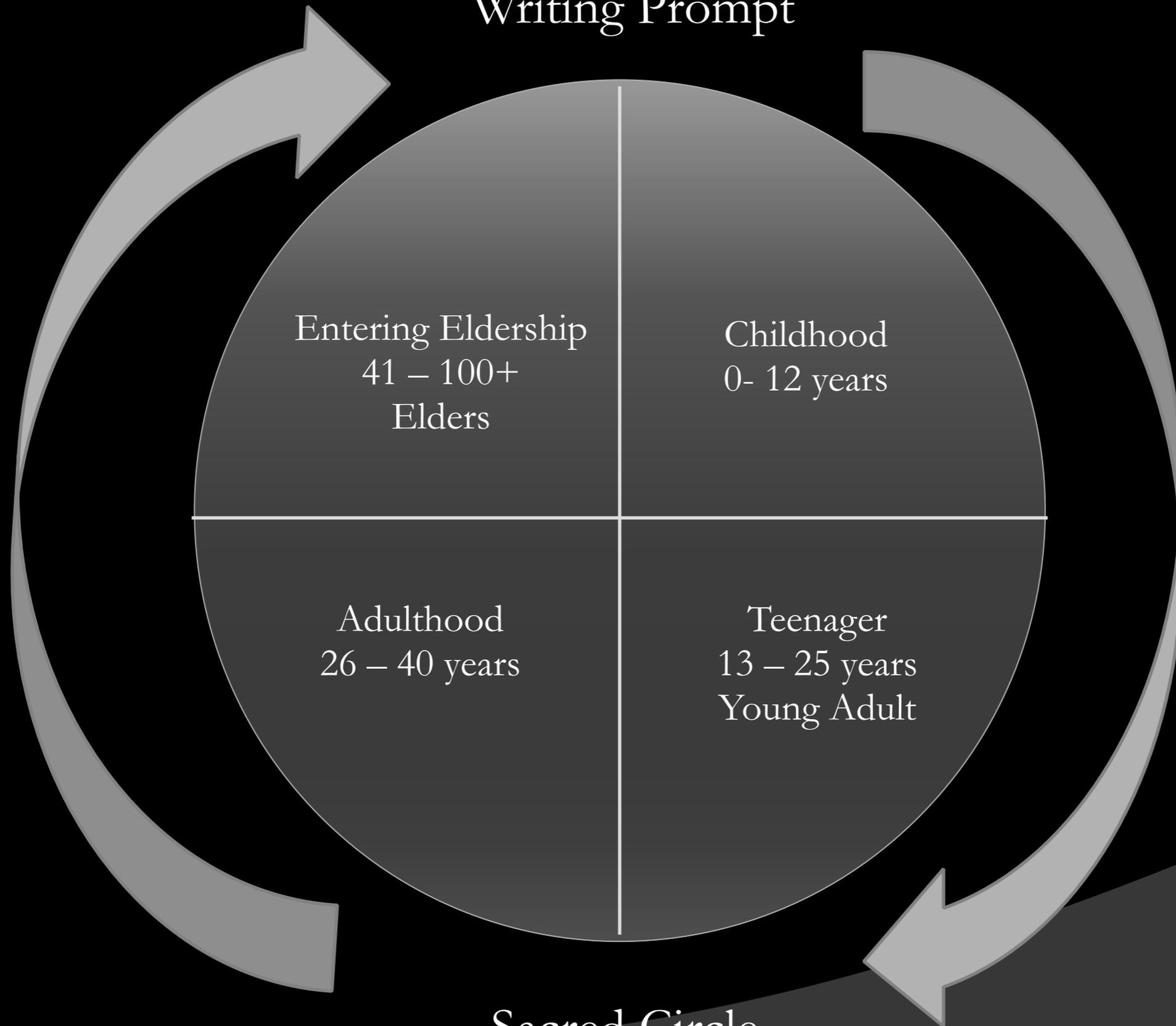
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES)



A Model To Heal



Cycle of Life Writing Prompt



Sacred Circle

Writing to Heal: Utilizing the Personal Narrative as a Tool to Identify Archetypal Wounds and Begin the Process of Empowerment



Healing Trauma: Violence-Related Trauma and Its Impacts On Communities

What is the significance of culture as it relates to our wellness?

Culture

- the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group i.e. the youth culture, etc.
- development or improvement of the mind by education or training.
- a particular form or stage of civilization, as that of a certain nation or period i.e. African; Greek; Asian etc.

What we have termed wellness is embedded in our cultures.



Ghost Dance 1890

Referred to as the "round dance", this ritual form characteristically includes a circular community dance held around an individual who leads the ceremony. It was used in many community rituals. Often accompanying the ritual are intermissions of trance, exhortations and prophesying. The dance would reunite the living with the spirits of the dead and bring peace, prosperity, and unity to native peoples throughout the region.[2] The basis for the Ghost Dance, the circle dance, is a traditional ritual which has been used by many Native Americans since prehistoric times.



Oglala Lakota at Pine Ridge



CHINA



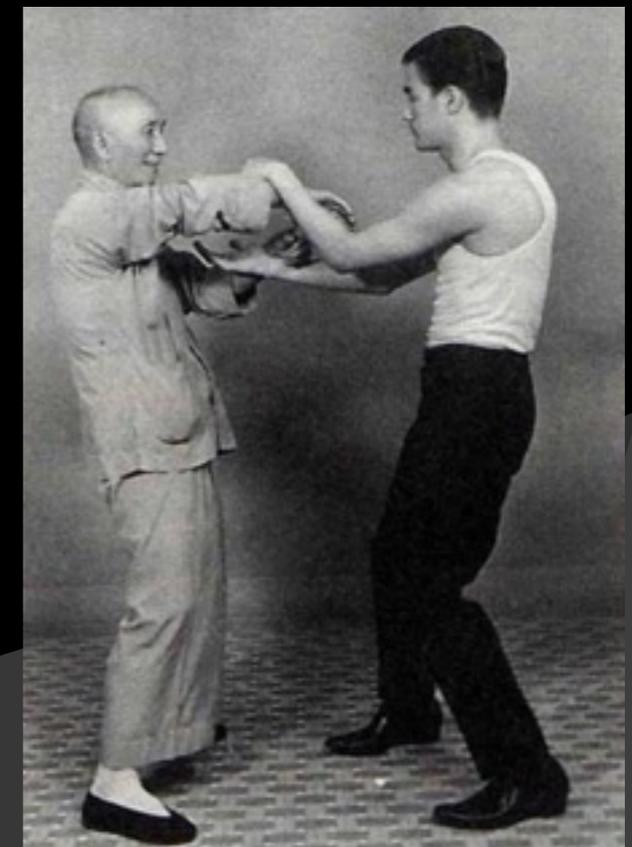
"Knowing is
not enough
we must apply

Willing is
not enough
we must do."

Bruce Lee



Kung Fu





AFRICA



CARIBBEAN

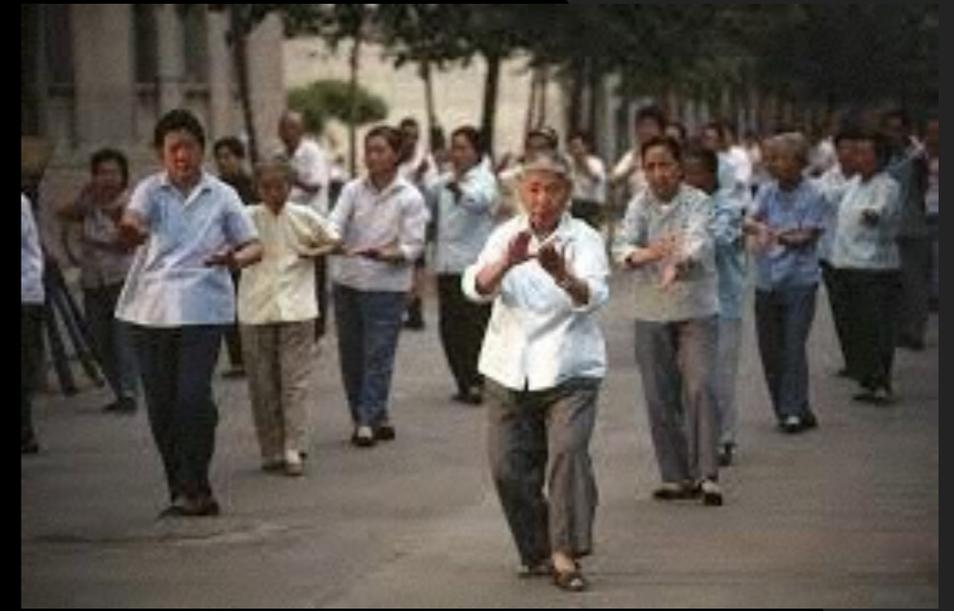


LATIN AMERICA





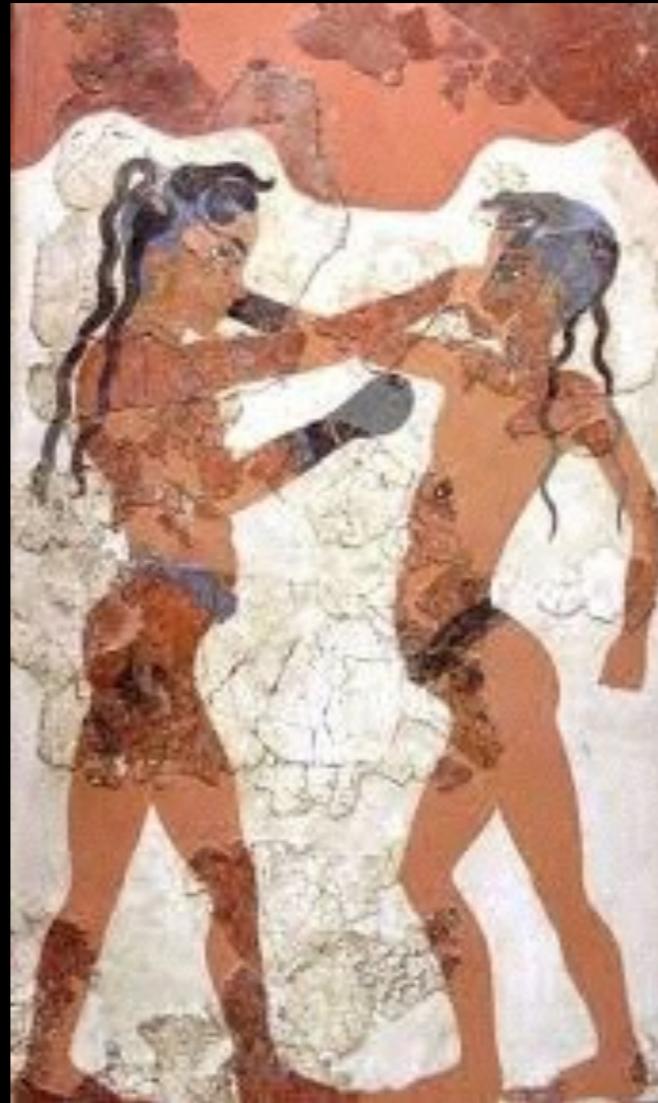
CHINA



TAI CHI



JAPAN



KARATE





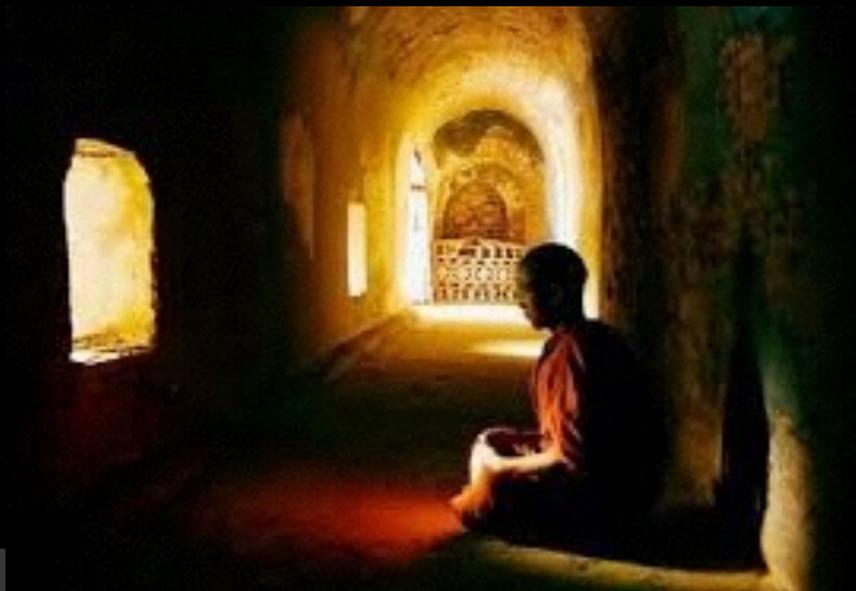
INDIA



YOGA



MEDITATION





MEXICO



Danza Mexica



Physical Exercise

Improved self-esteem is a key psychological benefit of regular physical activity. When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain.

Endorphins also trigger a positive feeling in the body, similar to that of morphine. For example, the feeling that follows a run or workout is often described as "euphoric." That feeling, known as a "runner's high," can be accompanied by a positive and energizing outlook on life.



Martial Arts – Kung Fu/Ijo Ija with Sifu Earl White

Meditation Practices



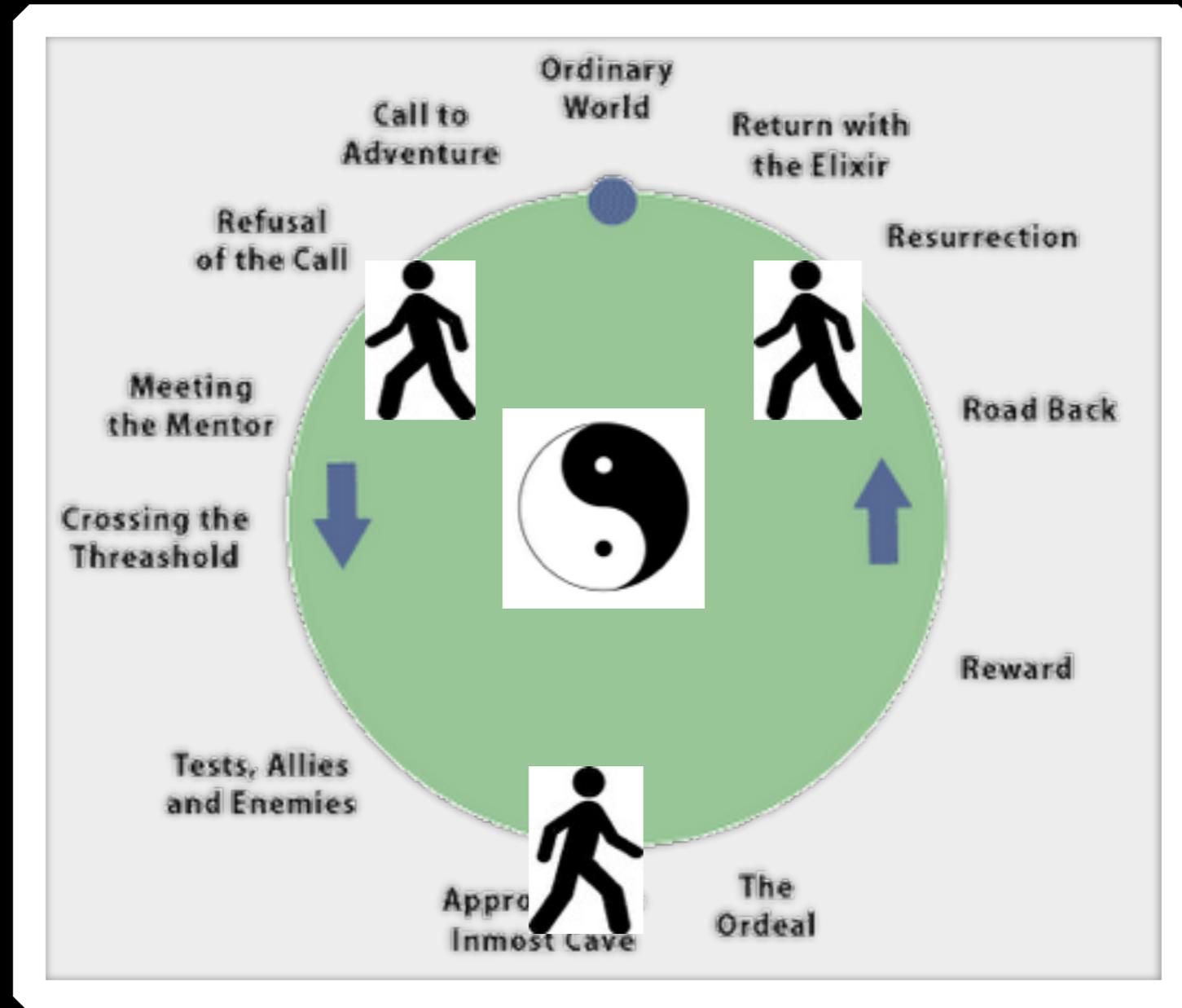
“take time each day to commune with nature and to silently witness the intelligence within every living thing.”

-Deepak Chopra



The Hero's Journey

Separation



Return

Initiation

Key Elements of Hero's Journey

Separation— You are in one kind of reality or place in which you are separated. Something happens to shake that world up.

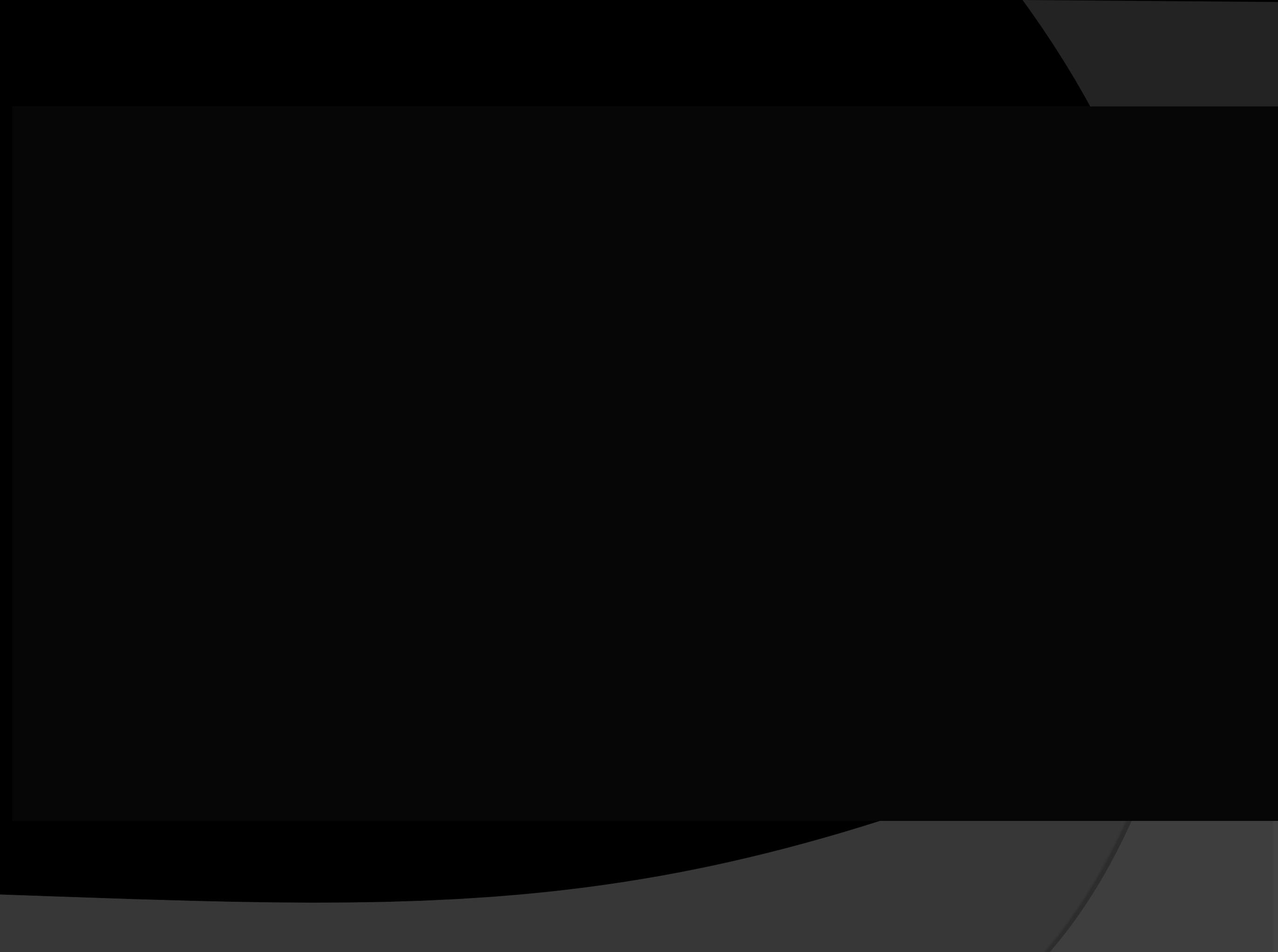
Initiation- You are put into another situation in which you are initiated in some manner. You go on a journey where you face certain tests and challenges. Slaying the Dragon/obstacles.

Return- The return to tell the story, a return to the community to tell the story.

The Hero's/Heroine's Journey

Its the journey of life, its clear patterns to guide you through. We are born, we go through childhood, adolescents, adulthood, we go through adventures, you struggle with inner conflicts and finally you become a hero/heroine, you slay the dragons, you succeed conquering all the demons you step over thresholds, finally you have arrived.

We get old, we die, but within this short story we have to have some reason to this existence. All ethnic groups, classes etc... have the same patterns.



“They say if you speak to somebody at the level of the mind, then you’ll speak to their mind. If you speak from your heart, you will speak to their heart. But, if you speak through your life, and your life is the story. Then you’ll change lives. That’s what mythical beings do.”

-Deepak Chopra M.D

The Hero's Journey is every person's journey through life, and the challenge to make the heroic choice.

This is the human's potential journey, one of learning how to move from separation and alienation to understanding one's connectedness with all life – all the races, nations, religions, species – by giving back to the whole in a contemporary, meaningful way, and thus finding meaning, “happiness,” and purpose in life.

“What everybody is looking for...is to fulfill the highest, truest expression of yourself as a human being, that’s what we are all looking for, I don’t know anything more powerful.” - Oprah

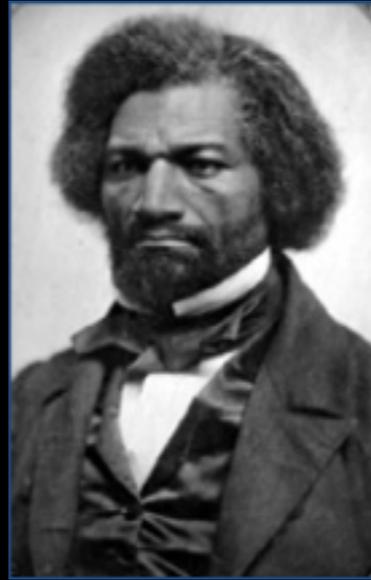
“The privilege of a lifetime is to be who you are.” -Joseph Campbell

“The real privilege is getting to use who you are to elevate the higher good in everyone else. That is the purpose of leadership. How do you use your life to elevate the life of someone else?”
-Oprah

Meditation: a precise technique for resting the mind and attaining a state of consciousness that is totally different from the normal waking state. It is the means for fathoming all the levels of ourselves and finally experiencing the center of consciousness within.



Healing Circle
Dialogue and Reflection



"The lesson taught at this point in human experience is simply this, that the man who will get up will be helped up; and the man who will not get up will be allowed to stay down. Personal independence is a virtue and it is the soul out of which comes the sturdiest manhood. But there can be no independence without a large share of self-dependence, and this virtue cannot be bestowed. It must developed from within." – Fredrick Douglass

Bibliography and Website Links

Books

- **The Mind Body Code: How to Change the Beliefs that Limit Your Health, Longevity, and Success by Dr. Mario Martinez**
- **Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome by Dr. Joy Degruy Leary**
- **The Hero of a 1000 Faces by Joseph Campbell**
- **The Heroine's Journey by Maureen Murdock**
- **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change by Stephen R. Covey**
- **The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching Adapted for a New Age by John Heider**
- **The Art of Peace: Teachings of the Founder of Aikido by Morihei Ueshiba and John Stevens**
- **The Book of Five Rings: A Classic Text on the Japanese Way of The Sword by Miyamoto Musahi**
- **Peace In the Hood: Working with Gang Members to End the Violence by Aquil Basheer, Christina Hoag and Pete Carroll**
- **The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told by Alex Hailey**
- **Hearts and Hands, Second Edition: Creating Community in Violent Times by Luis J. Rodriguez**

Videos

- **The Connection: documentary revealing the ground breaking research by world leading experts in mind body medicine and true stories of recovery - <http://www.theconnection.tv/>**
- **Angela Lee Duckworth: The key to success? Grit - <http://youtu.be/H14bBuluwB8>**
- **Nadine Burke Harris: How Childhood trauma affects health across a life time http://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime#t-950972**
- **Meditation Curbs Violence in High School - <http://www.nbcnews.com/watch/nightly-news/meditation-curbs-violence-at-san-francisco-schools-378464323951>**

Thank you

Tichaonana - We will see each other again

IN-LA KECH –

Tu eres el otro yo (You are the other me)

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