The Healing Practice of Healthcare: The Transformative Value of Caregiving

finding the soul of caregiving

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Welcome. A simple question:

“Are you a better person because of your experiences as a caregiver?”

This is the topic of our discussion today.
What do you see?

Objectives

- Explore our faith commitment and unique calling to the healing ministry as an heroic journey and spiritual practice. (Faith)
- Integrate our work as a participation in the archetype of the wounded healer in which Jesus is the example par excellence thus deepening our identity as a caregiver (Identity).
- Be able to recognize, cope with and prevent compassion fatigue in recognizing our spiritual strengths and limitations. (Action)
C. G. Jung considers psychic energies as universal, archetypical, and impersonal and are identical in all individuals and show themselves in specific achievements, possibilities, aptitudes, and attitudes (CW 8:26). As such, they assist, guide, and support caregiver and patient in seeking insight and wisdom.

Jungian analyst M. Ester Harding, in *Psychic Energy: Its Source and Its Transformation* speaks of this transformative process: “For it is not that these individuals are more consciously heroic or more deliberately unselfish than before. The fact is that in them consciousness has changed” (12).

Harding stresses how Jung differentiates three important urges motivating psychic life: the drive to activity, the reflection urge, and the so-called creative instinct (21).

**Objective One:**

Explore our faith commitment and unique calling to the healing ministry as an heroic journey and spiritual practice.

- Your call to be a chaplain—To enter into the mystery of healing and transformation. What is your story?
- What is heroic about your calling?
- Did you ever consider your work as a spiritual practice?
Your call to be a caregiver as a chaplain-To enter into the mystery of healing and transformation. What is your story?

- Please turn to your neighbor and each share a short reflection in what drew you to chaplaincy
- A father’s fear of illness
- Group Discussion

Healing

- The complexities of Healing
- Who is changed in the healing encounter?
  - William Augsburger
- The Story of John- A Vignette
What is so heroic in what you do?

- The Archetype of the Hero’s Journey
  - What is an archetype?

- The archetype of the hero
  - Joseph Campbell and the Hero’s Journey
    - The call
    - The descent
    - The return

- Caregiving (Chaplaincy) as an heroic journey

Practice

- What is a spiritual practice?
  - What are some examples of a spiritual practice?
  - Prayer

  - Almsgiving
    - Different faith traditions
      - Lent
      - Day of Atonement
      - Ramadan
      - Buddhist tradition of almsgiving to the poor

  - Fasting
    - Isaiah 58:6ff
    - Corporal works of Mercy

- Is the work you do a spiritual practice?
Objective Two:

Integrate our work as a participation in the archetype of the wounded healer in which Jesus is the example par excellence thus deepening our identity as a caregiver (Identity).

- The Archetype of the wounded healer
- A History of the Archetype of the wounded healer
- Transference and Countertransference
- What is your experience?

Objective Three

Be able to recognize, cope with and prevent compassion fatigue in recognizing our spiritual strengths and limitations. (Action)

- What is compassion fatigue?
- How is it avoided?
Finding the Soul of Caregiving

- What is the soul of something
  - Soulful
  - Soul food
  - Body and Soul

- Conclusion:
  - Caregiving is a spiritual practice
  - The practice of healthcare is a spiritual practice
  - The practice of caregiving is healing and transformative for both the client and the caregiver.

Conclusion

The Healing Practice of Healthcare:

- Expands our faith and our identity as spiritual care chaplains that leads us to action in the service of others

- This action between the caregiver and the one served leads both caregiver and the one being served to transformation and healing.

- The journey of caregiving is a living out of the archetype of the hero and the archetype of the wounded-healer that is the heart of the Christian tradition.

- The practice of healthcare becomes the sacred ground for the caregiver’s spirituality and spiritual practice.