

**July 8, 2018 Sermon: Mirrors, Triggers and Soothers, Oh My!  
by Susie Leonard Weller, M.A. (509) 499-1423 or [weller.susie@gmail.com](mailto:weller.susie@gmail.com)  
(PP Slide of Mirrors)**

When Linda Michals first asked me a few months ago to give today's sermon, she suggested that I focus on something I was learning. Little did she know that I was in the midst of some intense and painful mirrors and triggers in my life, as well as the desire to heal some inherited generational family drama! I've noticed there's a high link between the **misery to motivation ratio that can serve as a catalyst for seeking additional help and resources!**

Today's **Daily Word** focuses on **COMFORT** in the midst of walking through the **Valley of Sorrows** as described in Psalm 23. It does not minimize the reality of the pain during difficult times. Instead, it reminds us that we are not alone, the Spirit of God is with us—no matter what we're feeling or experiencing. This Presence is always with us, whether the circumstances change or not!

**Greater stresses require greater skills** to cope with them with grace rather than to remain stuck in a valley of despair. How many of you would agree **that we are going through challenging times—personally, as a country and in our larger world?** **AGNT Leader, Jim Kenney, author of *Thriving in the Cross-Current: Clarity and Hope in the Midst of Cultural Sea Change*** describes 2 waves of the old and new values crashing in this transitional period.—such as being a **global citizen, rather than an isolated nation** with strong eddies of turbulence resisting evolutionary changes.

**(PP Slide of the Holy Family Being “Detained”)**

In this clash of national priorities, I am grateful the AGNT Board of Directors, along with representatives from other religions, wrote a letter to President Trump speaking out on behalf of immigrant children not being separated from their parents and stopping this trauma. ‘

**(PP Slide of the 3 Major Layers of the Brain: Higher Stresses Require More Skills)**

**OVERVIEW:** Today I'll be sharing **4 key resources** as we walk through the valley of darkness.

1. I want to help you understand why you or others might feel triggered more easily than some. I'm going to briefly describe the **realities of trauma, also known as ACE's** and how they impact us and others. I call this the **5 Faces of Fear**. Gerald Jampolsky, said there are **2 basic emotions—fear and love**. When we get triggered, our brains downshift to react in fear and to seek protection from the “them's” in our life.
2. I will also explore **5 “F”s of FUNctioning well under stress**, also known as **Resiliency Skills**. I will describe the shift from **PSTD to PTG Post Traumatic Growth**.

3. An **ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY and S.U.M.** empowers us to live our USCNI vision and mission.
  4. Finally, I'll describe the how to use **S.O.S.** or ways to **Soothe Our Soul** when distressed.
- 

### **(PP Slide of The Emotional Brain Down-Shifting Under Stress)**

1. Let's describe our current Valley of Darkness by facing our **mirrors and triggers** as symptoms of the impact of stress & trauma, and understand why we get stuck in the 5 Faces or expressions of Fear. The architecture & biology of the brain is literally changed by stress. The Survival Brain can become hyper-vigilant to guard against danger. When my 2-year old Susie is driving the car, it is an accident is waiting to happen!

### **(Power Point Slide of Adverse Childhood Experiences—ACE's Study)**

Kaiser Permanente in San Diego, CA started researching in 1985 the factors that affected both children and adults to get sick more often and the roots of disease. They interviewed over 17,000 patients, who were 75% white, with an average age of 57 years old, middle class income and college educated with jobs providing health care –not low income families of color. The researchers were shocked by the results.

This is called the **A.C.E.'s Study** of Adverse Childhood Experiences or Trauma. **They are: 10 risk factors. These include:**

#### **ABUSE:**

Physical Abuse  
Emotional Abuse  
Sexual Abuse

#### **DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY SYSTEM**

Mother or Caregiver Is Treated Violently (Domestic Violence)  
Substance Abuse  
Mental Illness  
Separation or Divorce Impacting Caregiving & Consistent Access and Support for the Child  
Incarceration of a Family Member

#### **NEGLECT**

Physical  
Emotional

Each additional factor creates more impact on the immune system, with 4 or more having significant adverse health effects. (12.5% had 4 or more stressors that they link to a higher risk of 20 + years of earlier death)

**(PP Slide on the ACE's Creating Higher Risk Factors)**

**So, why am I sharing this information with you???** May it support you to grow in compassion and loving kindness for yourself and others where it is easy to judge and criticize their reactions & choices.

On a personal note, I've experienced 6 of these ACE's factors and I think it impacted my immune system being at higher risk for getting 2 types of cancers within the last 12 years. I've found that EMDR has been a very healing tool. Also, I've been studying: ***It Didn't Start With You: How Inherited Family Drama Shapes We Are and How to Heal from it*** by Mark Wolynn.

On the flip side, this trigger has been a catalyst for my soul's mission to advocate on behalf of at-risk families and why I served Head Start Families and taught parenting classes through the Community Colleges of Spokane for 24 years.

**(PP Slide of How we ShiFT Gears Matters)**

Are you Down Shifting or UP Shifting?

**The difference between a 4-letter word and ShiFT—is how we manage the F's in our life—Fears or FUNctional Responses**

**(PP Slide of the 5 Faces of Fear)**

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1. Fight  | Get Angry  |
| 2. Flight | Leave or Avoid the Situation                                 |
| 3. Freeze | Do Nothing, Remain Passive or Under Function                 |
| 4. Forget | "Numb" Out Through Alcohol, Drugs, Food, TV, Over-work, etc. |
| 5. Fix    | Attempts to Control Others or the Situation or Over Function |

Which of these 5 primitive coping methods do you most identify with?

If we were to do a brief experiment identifying the stresses in your life, within our USCNI Community, in our region, country and world, how would you name them?

**\*\*SODA VINEGAR EXPERIMENT (Include the trigger about USCNI looking for another minister.**

The Art & Practice Workshop that Linda Michal has been teaching here and will offer it again this Fall, also identifies addresses these triggers and how our brains DOWNSHIFT UNDER STRESS.

Remember, greater stresses require greater skills! We'll re-do this experiment before I conclude my talk today with a different result.

We have a choice—to DOWNSHIFT under stress or to UPSHIFT.

Let's look at the 5 "F's of FUNctioning well under stress

**(PP SLIDE of the 5F's of FUNctioning Well or Up-Shifting)**

Here are 5 ways to soothe our body, emotions, mind and spirit

1. **Face** Face the Reality of the Current Situation, VS. a Use a Spiritual-Bypass
2. **Feel** Feel Whatever I Am Feeling, So that I Can Heal It, Not Just Stuff It
3. **Frame** Re-Frame Whatever Happened to See the a New Perspective
4. **Focus** Focus On What I Can Change or Control; I Let Go of What I Can't Change
5. **Forgive** Forgive Myself & Others. ccept What Is; Get Unstuck & Move Forward

**\*\*\*(RE-DO THE VINEGAR/SODA EXPERIMENT WITH COTTON BALL SOOTHERS)**

**(PP Slide: RESILIENCY TRUMPS A.C.E.'S) (AND RESILIENCY CARDS)**

**(Include skills and tools from the A&P as Soothers—HeartMath, Compassion, Ho'oponopono, EMDR, EFT Tapping, A & P Workbook Pages, Re-framing Challenges as not AGAINST Me but FOR me and my growth)**

Give example of **Lincoln High School in Walla Walla, WA** using a trauma-informed approach to school discipline and decreasing school suspensions by 85% & the Resiliency Cards!

**GRATITUDE IS A KEY "GEAR SHIFTER" to Upgrade or UPshift our response—instead of reacting.** It re-frames our mirror and trigger as a portal to our healing and opens us to receiving the gift from uncomfortable situations.

We heal all the generations when we do our personal work of healing. The **Phase 3 Worksheet of A & P invites quantum healing beyond time and death. This is confirmed in Mark Wolynn's book: *It Didn't Start With You—How Inherited Family Drama Shapes Who We Are and How to Heal From It.***

I believe we were **born for these times of darkness** and evolutionary & cultural transitions. By recognizing and healing our own pain we develop compassion for others. This is part of our calling. **The September 13, 2018 Unity World Day of Prayer Theme is: Courage to Heal.**

2. A newer outreach promoted by **AGNT is called Engaged Spirituality.** They are developing a new curriculum called **S.U.M or Spiritually-grounded Social Uplift Ministry.** It aligns with our USCNI vision and mission statements and encourages us to **INSPIRE & EMPOWER TRANSFORMATION—personally, within our community and radiating to a larger world.**

**(PP Slide of S.O.S. = Soothe Our Soul)**

In conclusion I want to share with you a final tool: **SOS—Shift to SOOTHE OUR SOUL**

**S = Stop, and soothe** your body, emotions, mind and spirit—BREATHE in Spirit's Calmness  
(We can't out think the adrenaline and cortisol flooding our body. The Survival Brain has to be calmed down first before we can engage our higher thinking and spiritual skills!)

**O = Observe** your thoughts and feelings in response to this trigger or mirror

**U = Uncover the underlying, unmet need** and understand how to meet it in healthy ways

**L = Listen and Learn** to practice a **Loving Response** to whatever happens. Sometimes, the L is also for **Letting Go** of what no longer serves us, or is not ours to do.

**When you're triggered by a mirror or event, remember to UPSHIFT your response and allow the comforting and soothing presence of Spirit to lead you through your valley of darkness!**

**During our Community Gathering and Think Tank this afternoon, let's remember to practice our best resiliency skills and Up-Shift our responses to each other for creative possibilities!**