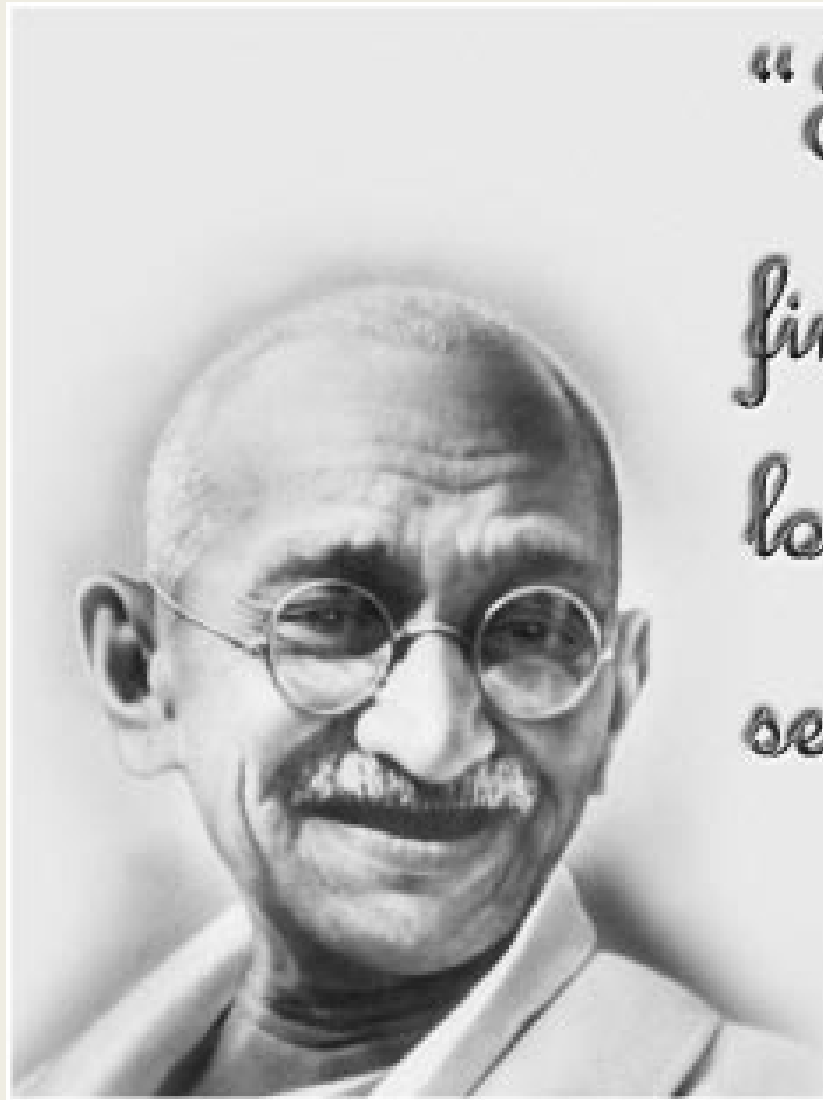




SELF CARE SECOND HAND TRAUMA OR HOW WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES TO STAY SANE

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*“The best way to
find yourself is to
lose yourself in the
service of others.”*

~ Mahatma Gandhi

www.memorymuseum.net

What is Second Hand Trauma(Compassion Fatigue)?

Is the process of change that happens because we care about other people who have been struggling, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time, this process can lead to changes in our psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being.

What are the signs?

- Affects people differently
- It is cumulative, the effect on case managers (workers) intensifies over time and with multiple clients
- It is persistent, it affects all areas of workers lives, including emotions, relationships, and their own views of the world

What are the signs?

- Feelings of Vulnerability

Hearing traumatic stories can cause workers to question their own safety and feel that they and their loved ones are vulnerable.

Examples: paranoid about being followed, worrying that you children will be sexually abused, kidnapped, etc.

What are the signs?

- Difficulty Trusting

After hearing accounts of abuse within intimate relationships – through battering acquaintance rape, and child sexual abuse – trusting someone can be difficult.

Examples: feeling like you are better off alone, hesitance to meet new people, questioning the behaviors of loved ones, etc.

What are the signs?

A Changed View of the World

Interactions with traumatized people can change a worker's ability and willingness to see the world as a good and safe place for themselves and those they love

Examples: feelings of pessimism, cynicism, anger, hopelessness, and injustice about the world; these feelings can lead to diminished empathy and resentment towards victims and isolation, etc.

**I DON'T HAVE
TRUST ISSUES,
I JUST KNOW
BETTER.**

PICTUREQUOTES.COM

What can be done?

Know you're A – B – C's

- **Awareness** – Workers need to take time to self-reflect. Journal writing, therapy, and talking with supervisor, co-worker or friend are examples of good habits that build self-awareness.
- **Balance** – Maintaining healthy boundaries between work and home life is important. Developing non-trauma related interest and hobbies are critical. Learning to relax through meditation, quiet activities, or exercise can be emotionally restorative.
- **Connection** – Having supportive co-workers can help reduced isolation and give opportunities to share feelings or experiences. It is also an important way to develop and nurture trusting relationships.

THINK ABOUT

What are some ways that you have changed over time because of your work?

THINK ABOUT

What sort of problems or people do you find it especially easy to empathize with?

THINK ABOUT

What are some ways that caring about people that struggle affects you?

Chapter from “Just One Thing” developing a
Buddha brain one simple practice at a time,
by Rick Hanson, PhD

Take In The Good (p.17)

What should we do about compassion fatigue (CF)

- Being impacted by CF is a predictable outcome of being in a job that is focused on helping others while they're trying to overcome sometime very difficult life obstacles

What are your options?

1. Try to stop caring so much
2. Stop empathizing with people
3. Stop feeling committed
4. Stop feeling responsible
5. Quit your job

Those are options, but there are better options!

What helps?

- **Coping** with CF means learning to live with this process so that you can do your job. Accepting that some CF is part of the work and learn to manage it effectively on day-to-day basis.



What helps?



- Help prevent CF from becoming severe and problematic
- Help manage CF during times when it

Good coping strategies



- **Escape** – getting away from it all, physically or mentally (books, movies, day off, etc.)

Good coping strategies

- **Rest** – having no goal or time-line, doing something relaxing (lying on the grass watching the clouds, taking a nap, getting a massage, etc.)



Good coping strategies

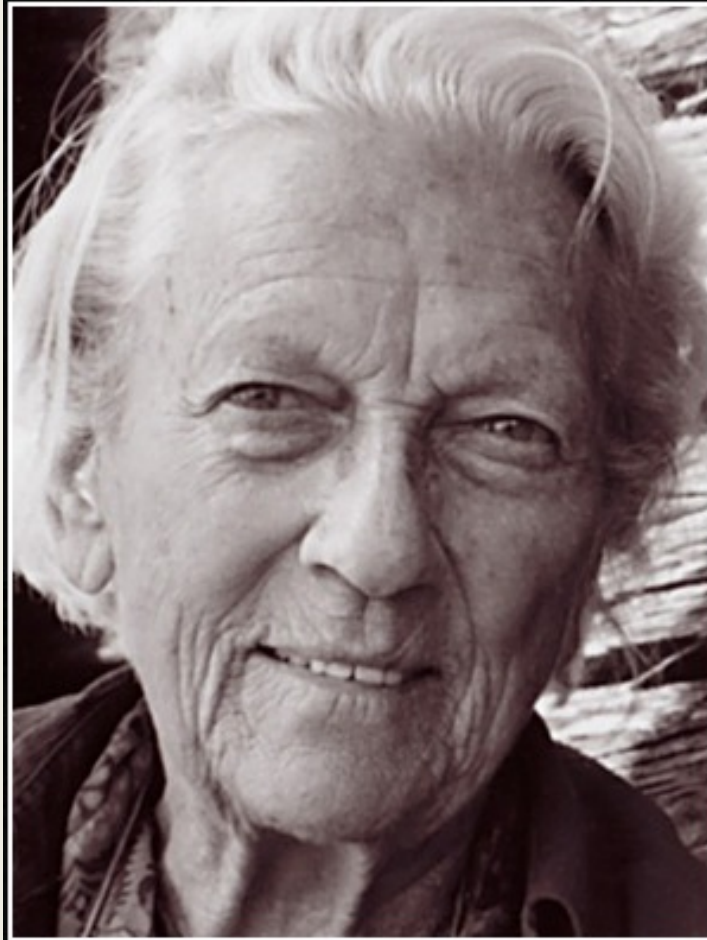


- **Play** – activities that make you laugh or lighten your spirits (playing with a child, being creative, being physically active, etc.)

THINK ABOUT

What are three activities you do regularly or enjoy doing that can help you cope with CF?

Why do these activities help you in coping?



One travels to escape from it all, but that is the great illusion: It cannot be done, since one travels with one's mind.

— *Ella Maillart* —

AZ QUOTES

Transforming CF

- Means something deeper than just coping with it. Over time, you can come to question your deepest beliefs about the way life and the universe work, and the existence and nature of meaning and hope.
- Transforming CF means identifying ways to nurture a sense of meaning and hope.
- Finding ways to stay connected to important sources of meaning and hope in your life, even when you are being challenged will help you transform your CF.

Some ways to connect (reconnect)



Some ways to connect (reconnect)

- Reminding yourself of the importance and value of your work
- Staying connected with family, friends, & colleagues
- Noticing and deliberately paying attention to the “small things” – sipping a cup of coffee, the sound of the trees

Some ways to connect (reconnect)

- Marking transitions, celebrating joys, mourning losses with people you care about through traditions, rituals, or ceremonies
- Taking time to reflect (reading, writing)
- Identifying and challenging your own cynical beliefs
- Undertaking growth-promoting activities (learning, being creative)

THINK ABOUT

What are three activities you do regularly or enjoy doing that could help you transform CF on a deeper level?

THINK ABOUT

What do you think the difference is between coping and a transforming activity? Could something help you cope and be transformational at the same time?

In the end, it's not
the years in your
life that count.
It's the life in
your years.

-Abraham Lincoln



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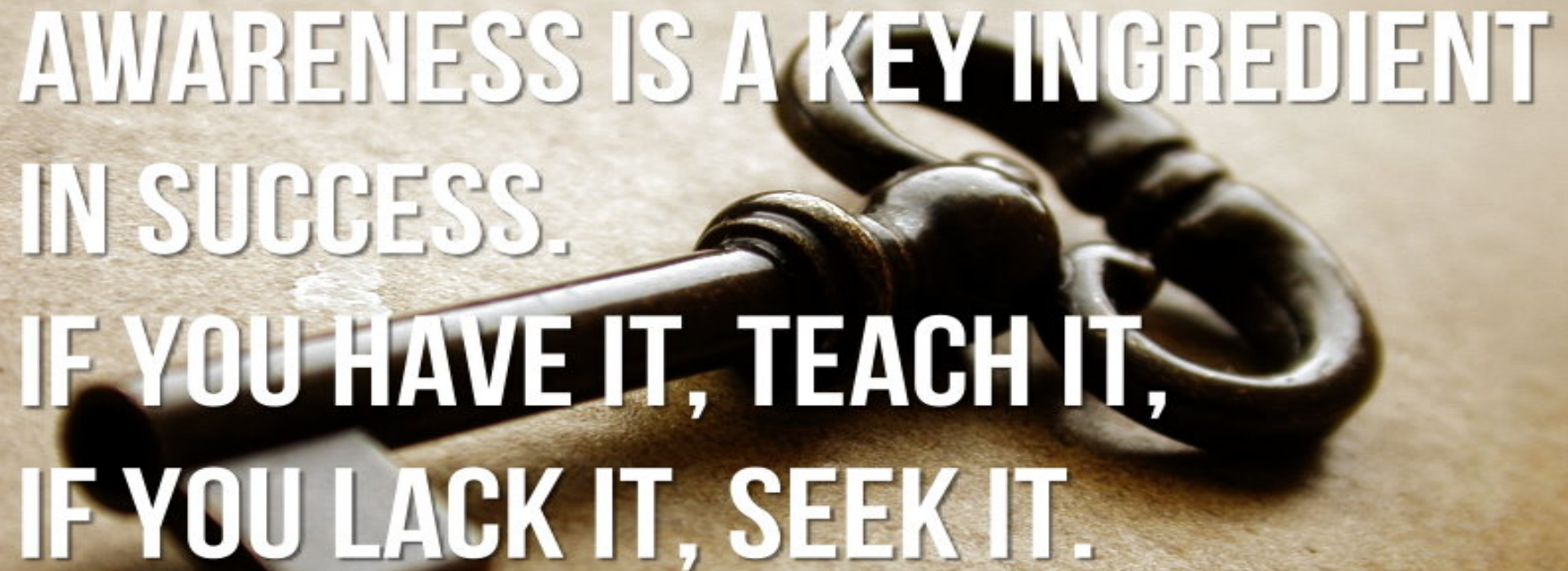
Be Grateful (p.79)

Three important themes

Considering a long-term action plan to help you address CF, there are three important themes to keep in mind:

- 1. Awareness**
- 2. Balance**
- 3. Connection**

AWARENESS



**AWARENESS IS A KEY INGREDIENT
IN SUCCESS.
IF YOU HAVE IT, TEACH IT,
IF YOU LACK IT, SEEK IT.**

~ Michael B. Kitson

WWW.DAILYINSPIRATIONALQUOTES.IN

AWARENESS

Can help you identify and understand your own reactions and the practice of awareness itself can also be good for helping you address CF

- Check with yourself regularly
- How are you feeling (emotionally and physically)
- Do you know why you're feeling certain way
- How early do you notice something is off with you (uncomfortable, stressed, annoyed, tired, etc.)

A self-awareness check can help you
figure out:

- Potential risk factors that
you're exposed to
- How you are responding

- ✓ Deliberately keeping your mind and your body in the same place, will help you to be aware of what you're doing while you're doing it
- ✓ If you can stay more aware in this sense (feeling present and connected) while you are working, CF may be less likely to develop
- ✓ This is a lot easier said than done, but it is possible. Being aware of your actions and reactions can help your experiences of your own and others' pain feel more manageable

Draw a picture of a pig



What does it mean?

- Toward the top of the paper – You have a tendency to be positive and optimistic.
- Toward the middle – You have a tendency to be a realist.
- Toward the bottom – You have a tendency to be pessimistic and may be prone to behaving negatively.
- Facing left – You have a tendency to believe in tradition and be friendly; you may also be prone to remembering dates well.
- Facing Right – You have a tendency to be innovative and active, but may often forget dates and may not have a strong sense of family.
- Facing front – You have a tendency to be direct, and may enjoy playing the role of devil’s advocate; you also are prone to neither fearing nor avoiding confrontational discussions.
- With many details – You have a tendency to be analytical, but may be prone to being cautious or struggle with trust.
- With few details – You have a tendency to be emotional and to focus on the larger picture rather than focusing on details. You also have a tendency to be a great risk taker and may sometimes be prone to reckless and impulsive decisions.
- With less than 4 legs showing – May indicate that you are living through a major period of change and as a result you may be prone to struggling with insecurities.
- With 4 legs showing – You have a tendency to be secure and to stick to your ideals; however, others may describe you as stubborn.
- With large ears – Indicates how good of a listener you are (the bigger, the better).
- With a long tail – Indicates how intelligent you are (the longer, the better).

THINK ABOUT

Spend some time reflecting on how you're feeling (physically, emotionally, and spiritually).

How did you feel when you woke up this morning?

How do you feel now?

Are you aware of anything out of the ordinary? If so, what might be related to?

THINK ABOUT

What is your opinion of the statement that “pain is inevitable but suffering is optional”?

Do you see this as relevant to your experiences of CF? If so, how?

BALANCE



BALANCE

Is particularly important in couple of areas:

- Balancing your personal needs with the demands of your work
- Balancing really demanding work with less challenging work

Work – Life Balance

- Take a break (daily, weekly, monthly, and annually) to balance the rest of your life with your work
- Making sure that each work day includes some for breaks for meals, physical activity and rest
- Taking time away from work for rest and relaxation, for friends and family, spiritual renewal, and professional development
- Spend time with people whom you don't have to take care of, or rescue

Balance on the Job

Is not just about balancing work with other important aspects of your life; it is also about finding a balance within work that will allow you to working a sustainable way

Case management work is rarely a sprint, it's a marathon therefore you need to be thinking about working now in ways that help make sure you can still be doing this same work two years from now if you want to

THINK ABOUT

Complete this sentence five times,
in five different ways: “I sometimes
find it difficult to balance

_____ with
”

THINK ABOUT

What are two issues or themes around which you most frequently feel as if you struggle to find balance?

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Buddha brain one simple practice at a time,
by Rick Hanson, PhD

Relax Anxiety about Imperfection (p.190)

Connecting with Other People



Connecting with Other People

Social Support

- Connecting meaningfully with people you like and care about
- Connecting with personal and professional communities

Community

A true community is a group of people who know each other, share experiences and values, and reach out to one another in good times or in times of need or distress. Different communities provide different types of support, so belonging to more than one can be valuable.

THINK ABOUT

What are two communities that are important to you? How do they “feed you” and help you feel supported and connected?

What makes you feel connected?



**“IF YOU DON’T LIKE SOMETHING, CHANGE IT. IF
YOU CAN’T CHANGE IT, CHANGE YOUR
ATTITUDE.”**

MAYA ANGELOU

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Buddha brain one simple practice at a time,
by Rick Hanson, PhD

Aspire without Attachment (pg. 126)

Working Protectively

The way you *think* about your work and do your job has a big impact on your experiences with second hand trauma.



How Do You Think About Your Work

Can you answer the following questions:

1. Why do you do this work?
2. Do you know what you're doing in your work, and why?
3. How do you measure success in your work?
4. What can you control in your work?
5. What are the costs and rewards of this work, and how are you personally changing?

THINK ABOUT

Which of these sets of questions do you feel like you struggle the most with and why?

Which of these question areas do you feel you are strongest in and why? How does your thinking in that area help protect you from second hand trauma.

How You Do Your Work

- **Change some of the things that bother you** – change some of the things that you can control (i.e. if something is grim and dirty – clean it up)
- **Intentionally make choices when you can** – make choices about things you can control
- **Connect with (or disconnect from) people** – take small breaks, including time out from conversation, let your mind go to positive, secure or comforting thoughts

How You Do Your Work

- **Try something different at work** – look for opportunities to do something different from your usual work (write an article, offer to teach a workshop, etc.)
- **Write about your experiences at work** – making brief notes about your experiences can be helpful. Over time it can also help you learn about your job and yourself

How Do You Do Your Work

- **Find ways to retain or regain perspective during the day** – little ways to connect briefly with things or thoughts that nurture or refresh your spirit (looking at pictures of loved ones)
- **Invest in professional networks and relationships with colleagues** – knowing people who do similar work and sharing resources, strategies and stories helps bridge the isolation
- **Find more than one healthy habit** – one good strategy will not be enough

THINK ABOUT

Which of the practices above do you already do well and why?

Which of the practices above do you not do so well? Why are these hard for you?

What other healthy working habits can you think of that may help you lessen and manage second hand trauma in your job?



DON'T
BE AFRAID
TO FAIL.

**BE AFRAID
NOT TO TRY.**

3

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Do What You Can (pg. 146)