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The Space Between

Surviving and Healing



Healing can begin now. The human work of
change, connection, and growth



Opening Overview

- Part I — Survival Makes Sense
- Part II — Then We Ask People to Change
- Part III — Healing Doesn't Behave Like a Checklist
- Part IV — Healing Happens in Relationship
- Part V — Turn the Mirror Around
- Part VI — What Becomes Possible?

People already demonstrate extraordinary capacity to adapt. Our challenge is to create relationships, communities, services, and systems where they could use that capacity for something beyond survival.





I. Survival Makes Sense

People adapt to what they experience. There were things about me I once wanted to get rid of.



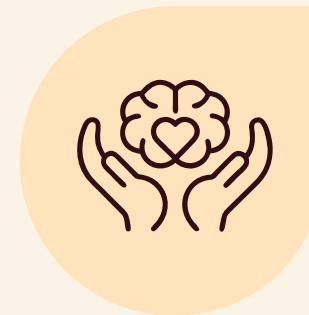
Dignity

How much of this is who I am, and how much of this is who I learned I needed to be?



Empathy

I was working with the information and tools I had.



Respect

If I can extend that curiosity to myself, respect also means honoring the intelligence of survival.



Freedom

Understanding myself without condemning yourself.





II. Then We Ask People to Change

Change creates loss, even when we're changing for the better. If I give something up, what replaces it? Giving up an unhealthy coping mechanism doesn't immediately give you a healthy one.

"Stop using."

"Just Leave"

Then what?

Understand what the substance provided → build other ways of meeting those needs → increase connection, safety, coping, purpose, and choice → substance use becomes less necessary as a survival strategy.



III. Healing Doesn't Behave Like a Checklist

Progress can be real without being perfect.

- Our love of measurable progress
- Progress and struggle can exist at the same time
- “Starting over” is often a lie we tell ourselves

Healing isn't the absence of hard moments. It's having more choices inside of them.

IV. Healing Happens in Relationship

Healing relationships don't erase the evidence of our past.
They give us new evidence to consider.



Rescue says:

I'll do this for you.

Connection says:

I'll be with you while you do it.



V. Turn the Mirror Around

Healing-centered practice must change the experience of our systems.

“Failed to engage.”

- Voice
 - Choice
 - Person – Centered
 - Strength – Based

Nobody hangs their ACE score at the door when they clock in for work.





VI. What Becomes Possible?

Healing is not about returning to who we were. It is about having the freedom to become.

What's wrong with you?

What happened to you?

What's wrong with you?

What helped you survive?

What do you need now?

What is possible from here?



Thank you.



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