

# THE COST OF CARING... COMPASSION FATIGUE

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CONFERENCE 2025

# GOALS...COMPASSION FATIGUE

- The Source
- The Symptoms
- The Solution







# COMPASSION FATIGUE

*When  
you've  
got  
nothing  
left  
to  
give*



# SOURCE WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

- Secondary PTSD
- Vicarious Traumatization

- **Burnout**

# COMPASSION FATIGUE TRAJECTORY

- The Zealot Phase
- The Irritability Phase
- The Withdrawal Phase
- The Zombie Phase
- Pathology vs. Renewal/Maturation

FEELING A BIT BURNED  
OUT?





# Menu of Misconceptions\*

- 1. I will “fix” the problem...make everything O.K... save the world...
- 2. I am responsible for outcomes.
- 3. If I care enough, everything will be O.K.
- 4. The sufferer/victim will appreciate everything I do for them.
- 5. I will have enough resources (time, money, material,
  - skills and training) to fix things.
- 6. Significant people in my life will support and approve my
  - absence from our relationship while I invest in this
  - compassionate mission.
- 7. I know what I’m getting into.
- 8. I can do it alone.
- 9. If I’m spiritual enough, I can deal with the stress
  - of working with suffering people.
- 10. My definition of success is.....

# FIRST DIAGNOSED IN NURSES





# DISCUSSION- SOURCE

# SYMPTOMS

- Decreased Productivity
- Feelings of Incompetency
- Cynical Attitude ...  
“Helping the Crazyes!”
- Resistant to Helping Others



# SYMPTOMS (CONT.)

- Lessoned Compassion
- Decreased Pleasure
- Increased Stress and Anxiety



A composite image showing soldiers in a trench. In the foreground, a soldier is seen from behind, looking towards the right. In the background, another soldier is visible, and a ghostly, translucent figure of a soldier stands in the distance. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a night or low-light environment.

# P.T.S.D.


ISN'T ABOUT WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH YOU  
IT'S ABOUT WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO YOU

Creative Pictures By Larry Mann






OF COURSE I'M  
AVAILABLE...



Charles R. Figley, co-  
author of *Compassion  
Fatigue: Coping With  
Secondary Traumatic  
Stress Disorder in Those  
Who Treat the  
Traumatized*

# THE COST TO CARING...

- “There is a cost to caring. Professionals who listen to clients’ stories of fear, pain, and suffering may feel similar fear, pain, and suffering because they care. Sometimes we feel we are losing our sense of self to the clients we serve. Therapists who work with rape victims, for example, often develop a general disgust for rapists that extends to all males.



Those who have worked with victims of other types of crime often 'feel paranoid' about their own safety and seek greater security. Ironically, the most effective therapists are most vulnerable to this mirroring or contagion effect. Those who have enormous capacity for feeling and expressing empathy tend to be more at risk of compassion stress"

# WHO IS AT RISK?

- Healthcare workers
- Teachers
- Pastors
- Business leaders
- Political leaders
- Law/Customer Service
- First Responders
  
- In other words.....YOU!



# WHEN AM I MOST VULNERABLE?

1. When I have not spent much quiet time alone
2. When I have not had enough rest
3. When life is difficult
4. During times of change
5. After a significant victory
6. When life is going smoothly



# I AM MOST VULNERABLE WHEN...

- HUNGRY
- ANGRY
- LONELY
- TIRED
  
- Bored
- Anxious
- **D**epressed





# DISCUSSION - SYMPTOMS

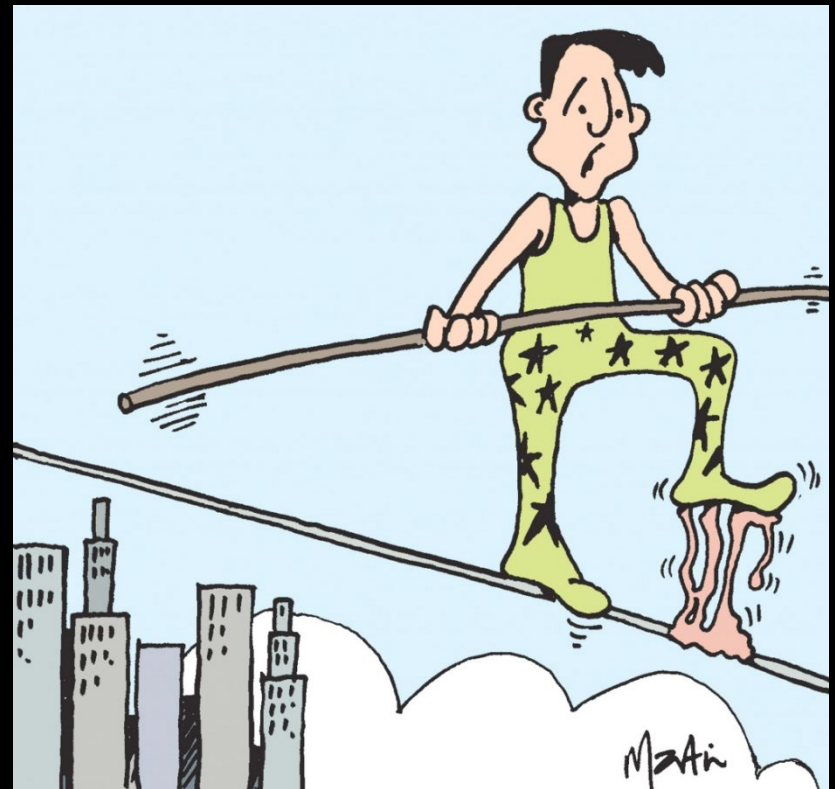
# THE SOLUTION: HEALTHY RHYTHM OF LIFE

- “Habits of My Heart?”
- What does “healthy rhythm” look like?



# DEVELOP A “MASTER SCHEDULE” OR “IDEAL WEEK” (LARSON)

- Quiet Time
- Physical Exercise
- Study
- Meetings
- Family Time
- Day Off
- Healthy Rhythm



# FINDING MY “WHY?”

- FINDING MY PURPOSE IN LIFE
  - TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OF MY HEART, SOUL, MIND AND STRENGTH
  - TO DO WHAT NEEDS DONE
  - IN THE PLACES WHERE THE NEEDS ARE GREATEST

# “WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT?”

- Why we exist
- Core values
- Mission
- Vision
- Intention (Strategic Plan)
- Means (Tactical Plan)
- Commitment to our ministerial community



# Taking a 'Whole-Person' View

Physical

Intellectual

Emotional

Social

Spiritual



- **Physical –**

- Body purity
- Hygiene
- Exercise
- Rest

# THE PLESS MODEL

- Nutrition
- Health Care
- Moral purity











# THE PLESS MODEL

- **Intellectual**

- What we think about
- Prayer/Meditation
- Thought life
- Self talk

- “As a person thinks...”



# WOULD YOU CONSIDER...

- Journaling the journey?







**Brilliance** UNABRIDGED  
Audio

FEATURING THE 21-DAY BRAIN DETOX PLAN

# SWITCH ON YOUR BRAIN



The Key to PEAK HAPPINESS,  
THINKING, and HEALTH

DR. CAROLINE LEAF



**AEE**

Ballu University  
Executive Education

# Rewire your brain

Neuroleadership  
applies the findings of  
neuroscience  
to the art of leadership.

Profile  
Magazine  
2012



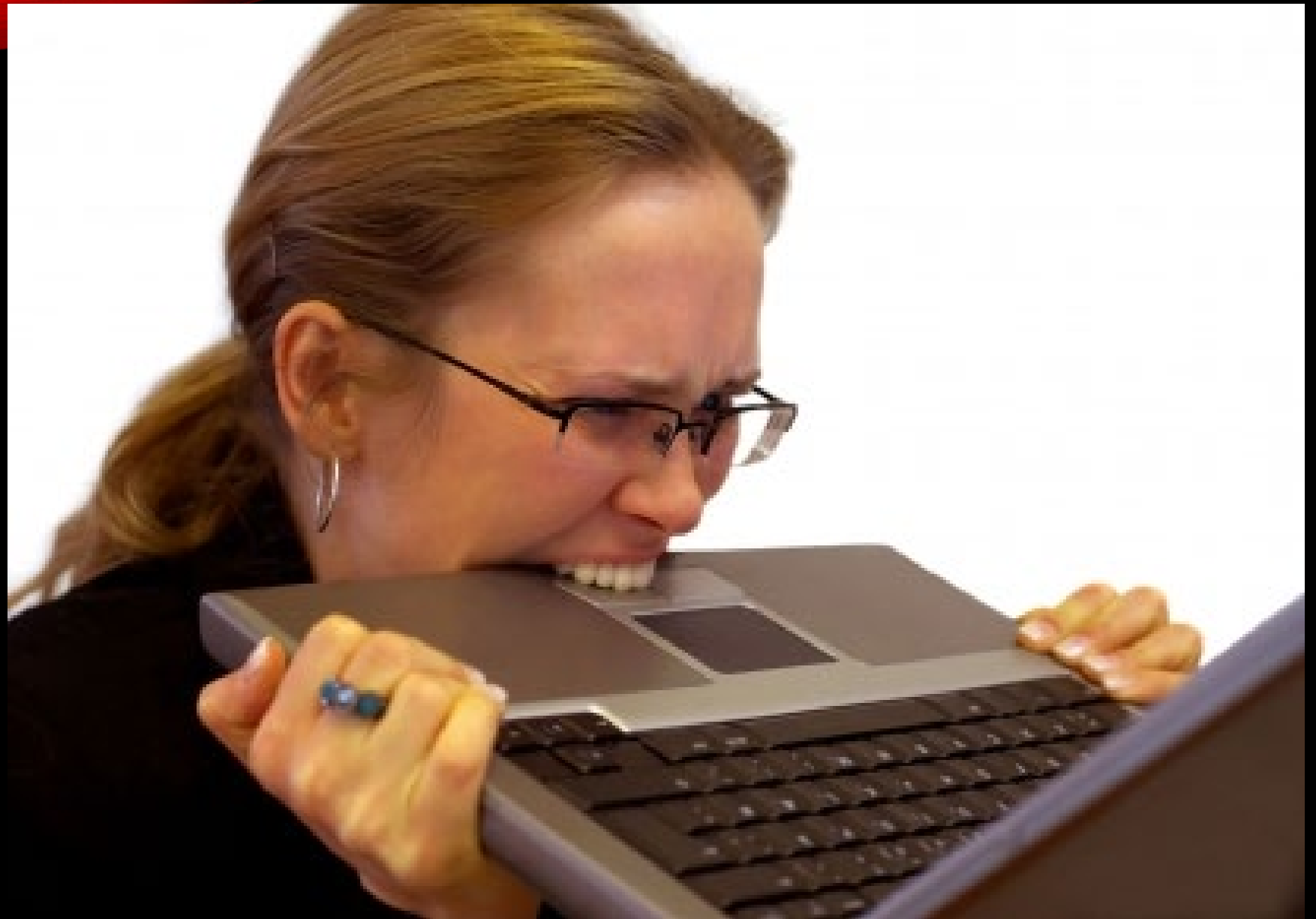
- **Emotional**

- Feelings
- Making major decisions

# THE PLESS MODEL

- Don't clam up!
- Don't blow up!













# THE PLESS MODEL OF BALANCED HEALTH

- **Social**

- Spouse
- Friends

- Loyalty
- Encouragement
- Confidentiality



# BONDS

- **THE DIVORCE PROOF MARRIAGE**
  - **PRAY TOGETHER**
  - **LAY TOGETHER**
  - **PLAY TOGETHER**
    - .....**STAY TOGETHER!**







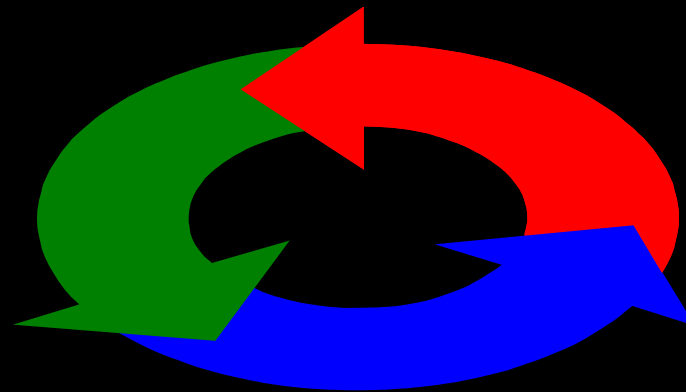






# BOUNDARIES IN A WIN-WIN MARRIAGE

- FROM PARENTS
- FROM PEERS
- FROM WORK
  - ...DEVELOP EXIT AND ENTRY RITUALS



# THE POWER OF A PAIN PARTNER FRIEND

Not overly impressed with you

Importance of a friend


Similar interests...can see world through your eyes

Asks second and third questions

Stays out of their autobiography

Not overwhelmed by your honesty and transparency

Has your back...loyal to your welfare



The heartfelt  
counsel of a friend is  
as sweet as perfume  
and incense.  
Proverbs 27:9





# EAGLE UP ULTRA





# BUILDING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

- PROVERBS:
  - 17:17 “LOVES AT ALL TIMES”
  - 18:24 “CLOSER THAN A BROTHER”
  - 27:6 “WOUNDS FROM FRIEND CAN BE TRUSTED”
  - 27:10 “DON’T FORSAKE THEM”





# THE PLESS MODEL

- **Spiritual Our Sense of Mission**
  - Foundational to all other areas
  - Spiritual Disciplines
    - Inward
    - Outward
    - Corporate

FIRST "WHY" ..... THEN  
"WHAT"



# STAYING IN TOUCH WITH THE SOURCE OF LIFE

- TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES
- **INWARD**
  - MEDITATION, PRAYER, FASTING, STUDY
- **OUTWARD**
  - SIMPLICITY, SOLITUDE, SUBMISSION, SERVICE
- **CORPORATE**
  - CONFESSION, WORSHIP, GUIDANCE, CELEBRAION

# PURPOSE OF THE DISCIPLINES IS NOT THE DISCIPLINES

- Training for a marathon is not the purpose of a marathon
- Spiritual Disciplines are NOT an end to themselves
- They are a means to an end
- They focus our attention, give us rest and perspective
- Helps us to re-calibrate our 'MISSION IN LIFE'

# EXAMPLE OF A MARATHON RUNNER

Start small with  
disciplined training

Gradually build up  
endurance

On the day of the  
race....

Show up and do  
what needs to be  
done





Pessimists struggle with what causes them to feel stressed, whereas optimists spell it backwards...d-e-s-s-e-r-t-s



# WHAT PEOPLE REMEMBER ABOUT US?

- How we lived
- How we loved
- How we left
  - **FINISH WELL!**

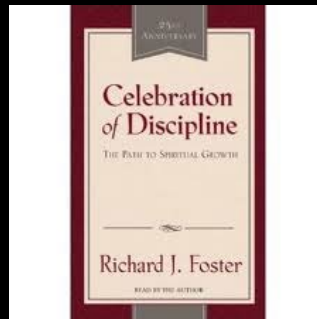




THANK YOU!

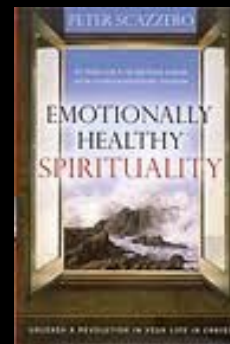
# SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR TRANSFORMATION

- *Celebration of Discipline* (Richard Foster)
  - Inward Disciplines – meditation, prayer, fasting, study
  - Outward Disciplines – simplicity, solitude, submission, service
  - Corporate Disciplines – confession, worship, guidance, celebration



# SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR TRANSFORMATION

- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Peter Scazzero)
  - Prayer – scripture, silence, solitude, study
  - Rest – ‘Sabbath’, rest, simplicity, play, recreation
  - Work/Activity – service/mission, physical health
  - Relationships – emotional health, family, community



# SOURCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

- Charles R. Figley, co-author of *Compassion Fatigue: Coping With Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*
  - Beaton, R. D. and Murphy, S. A. (1995). "Working with people in crisis: Research implications". In C. R. Figley (Ed.), *Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized*, 51-81. NY: Brunner/Mazel.

# WITH APPRECIATION...

- Rev. Samuel Wood ([sam00913@yahoo.com](mailto:sam00913@yahoo.com) or 316.655.0423) for additional information regarding Compassion Fatigue education and training.



