

Quotations about Woundedness and Suffering

For whatever reason God chose to make man as he is – limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death – He had the honesty and courage to take His own medicine. Whatever game He is playing with His creation, He has kept His own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that He has not exacted from Himself. He has Himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. When He was a man, He played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace and thought it well worthwhile. – Dorothy Sayers, Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World

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Spirituality is about what we do with our pain. – Richard Rohr, Adam's Return

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The spirit of the Gospels has not been handed down in a pure state from one Christian generation to the next. To undergo suffering and death joyfully was from the very beginning considered a sign of grace in the Christian martyrs—but grace cannot do more for a human being than it could for Christ.

Those who believe that God himself, once he became a man, could not face the harshness of destiny without a long tremor of anguish, should understand that those who give the impression of having risen to a higher plane, who seem superior to ordinary human misery, are those who resort to the aids of illusion, exaltation, and fanaticism to conceal the harshness of destiny from their own eyes.

The person who does not wear the armor of the lie cannot experience force without being touched by it to the very soul. Grace can prevent this touch from corrupting him, but it cannot spare him the wound. Having forgotten this all too well, Christian tradition only rarely recovers that simplicity that renders so poignant every sentence in the story of the Passion. – Simone Weil, from The Iliad, or the Poem of Force

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Without your wounds where would your power be? The very angels themselves cannot persuade the wretched and blundering children on earth as can one human being broken in the wheels of living. In love's service, only the wounded soldiers can serve. – Thornton Wilder

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Francis of Assisi taught me that there is a wound in the Creation and that the greatest use we could make of our lives was to ask to be made the healer of it. – Alan Paton

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Jesus brought us a new life in ultimate vulnerability. As a child he was dependent on the care and protection of others; he lived as a poor preacher without any political, economic, or military power; and he died nailed on a cross as a useless criminal. It is in this extreme vulnerability that our salvation was won. – Henri Nouwen

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How strange that we should ordinarily feel compelled to hide our wounds when we are all wounded! Community requires the ability to expose our wounds and weaknesses to our fellow creatures. It also requires the ability to be affected by the wounds of others...But even more important is the love that arises among us when we share, both ways, our woundedness. – M. Scott Peck

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My heart is transformed by the smile of trust given by some people who are terribly fragile and weak. They call forth new energies from me. They seem to break down barriers and bring me a new freedom.

It is the same with the smile of a child: even the hardest heart can't resist. Contact with people who are weak and who are crying out...is one of the most important nourishments in our lives. When we let ourselves be

really touched by the gift of their presence, they leave something precious in our hearts.

As long as we remain at the level of “doing” things for people, we tend to stay behind our barriers of superiority. We ought to welcome the gift of the poor with open hands. Jesus says, “What you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me.” – Jean Vanier

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To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly save from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell. – C.S Lewis, The Four Loves

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Living as we do in a world that suffers so much, two opposing possibilities can easily tempt us: either to turn our backs and live oblivious to the pain or to allow the pain to overwhelm us and despair to take up residence in our hearts. The truly faithful option is to face the pain and live joyfully in the midst of it. Those who suffer most remind us of how tragic and arrogant it would be for us to lose hope on behalf of people who have not lost theirs. They are teachers of joy. – Joyce Hollyday, Then Your Light Shall Rise

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Healing

a poem by D.H. Lawrence

I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly that I am ill.
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help
and patience, and a certain difficult repentance,

long, difficult repentance, realization of life's mistake, and the freeing
oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.

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Where we stumble and fall is where we find pure gold. – Carl Jung