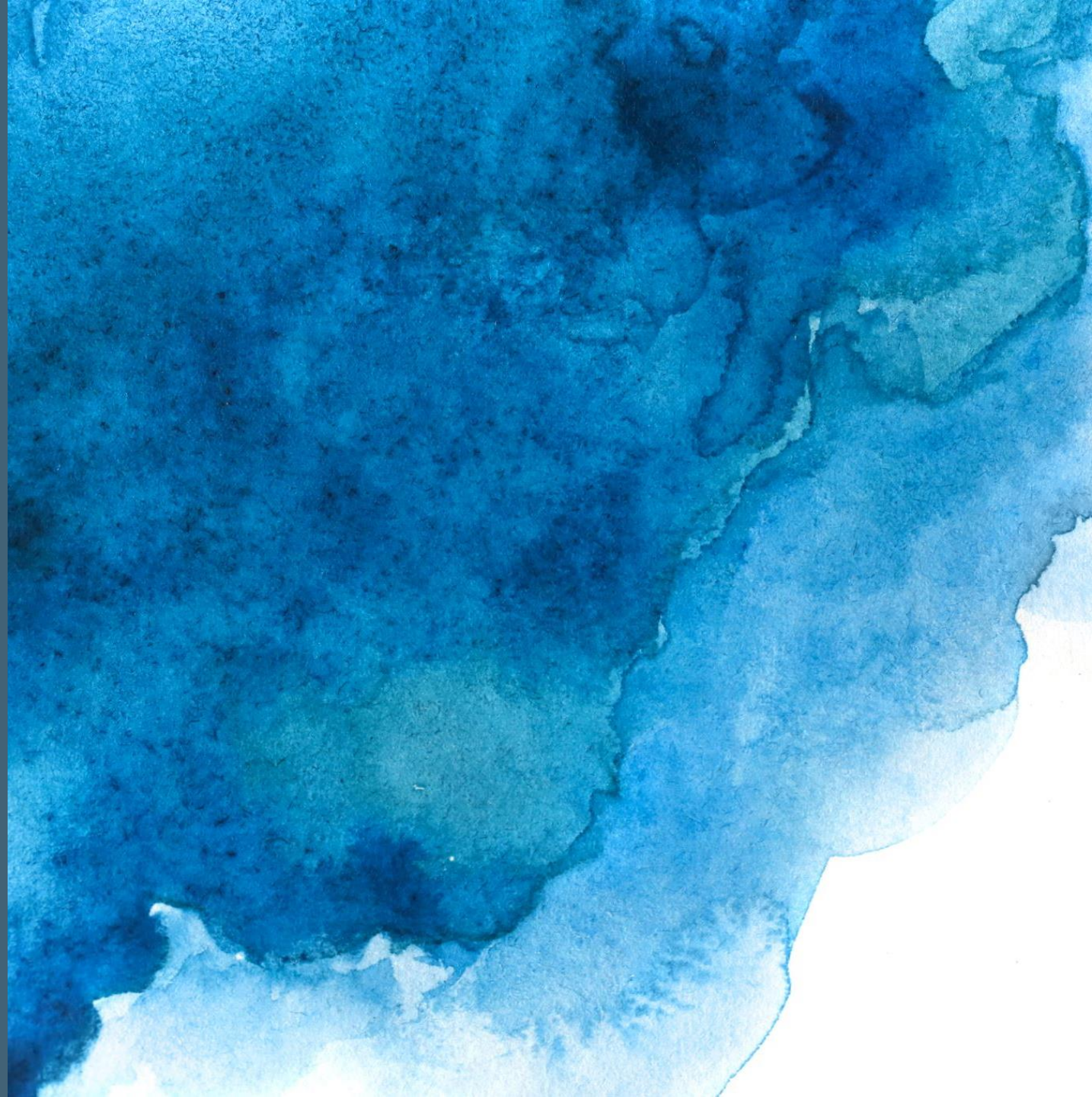


# ALLOWING VULNERABILITY

*Journey School*

*June 27, 2024*



CONSCIOUS

SUFFERING

# VULNERABILITY

FROM LATIN *VULNERARE* (TO WOUND)

”CAPACITY FOR BEING WOUNDED”

*“Vulnerability is not knowing victory or defeat;  
it’s understanding the necessity of both”*

*Brene` Brown      Daring Greatly*

FIRST LINE OF THE WORK

“I AM WORKING ON MYSELF”



## Alan Watts on Allowing Vulnerability

“If, when swimming, you are caught in a strong current, it is fatal to resist. You must swim with it and gradually edge to the side. One who falls from a height with stiff limbs will break them, but if he relaxes like a cat he will fall safely.

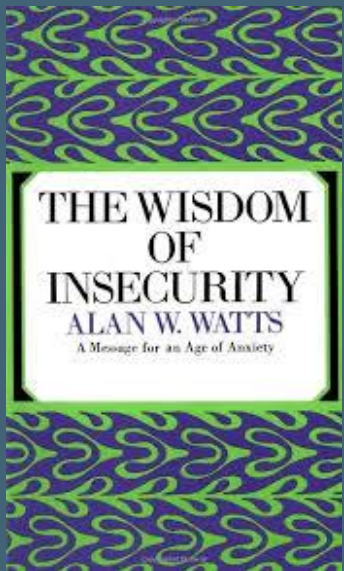
To remain stable is to refrain from trying to separate yourself from a pain because you know you cannot. Running away from fear is fear, fighting pain is pain, and trying to be brave is being scared.

From this follows, quite naturally, absorption. It is no effort; the mind simply does it by itself. Seeing that there is no escape from the pain, the mind yields to it, absorbs it, and becomes conscious of just pain without any “I” feeling or resisting it. It experiences pain in the same complete, unselfconscious way in which it experiences pleasure. Pain is the nature of this present moment, and I can only live in this moment.

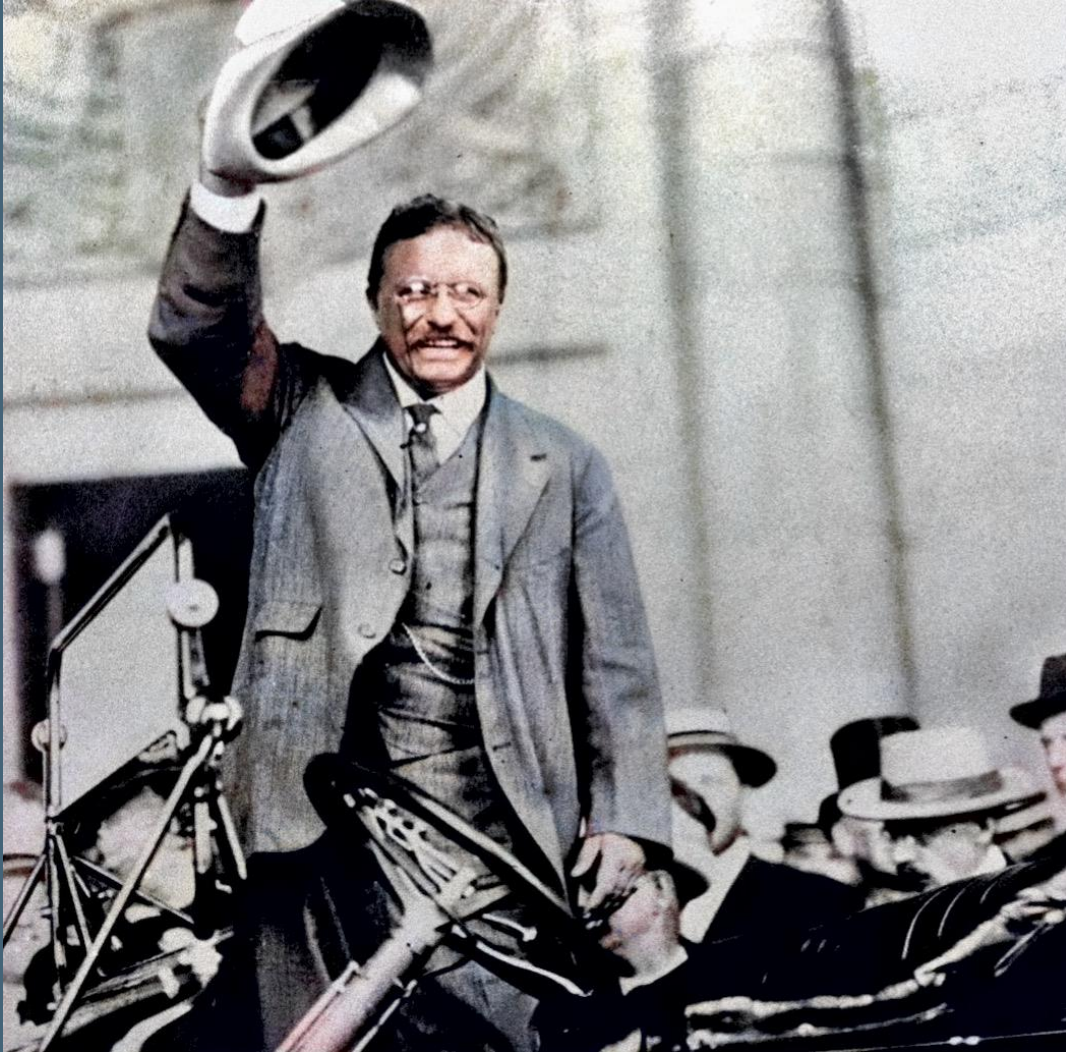
Perhaps the most exasperating thing about “me”, about nature and the universe, is that it will never “stay put”. ...

For the perishability and changefulness of the world is part and parcel of its liveliness and loveliness.

This is why poets are at their best when speaking of change, of the transitoriness of human life.”



## Theodore Roosevelt on Allowing Vulnerability



### IN THE ARENA: CITIZENSHIP IN A REPUBLIC

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again,

because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause;

who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and, who at the worst, if he fails, ***at least he fails while daring greatly.***

Theodore Roosevelt  
April 23, 1910  
Sorbonne, France



## Brené Brown Examining our Defensive Postures with Vulnerability

### *Daring Greatly*

“We must dare to show up and let ourselves be seen.  
This is vulnerability. This is daring greatly”

“Vulnerability is not knowing victory or defeat;  
it’s understanding the necessity of both; it’s engaging. It’s being all in.

“Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability  
determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose”

“The level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable  
is a measure of our fear and disconnection”



# VULNERABILITY THE ARMORY CREDO ( Mechanical Programs for Happiness)

*”Vulnerability is the last thing I see in me, and the first thing I look for in you”*

## THE COMMON SHIELDS



- FOREBODING JOY
- PERFECTIONISM
  - NUMBING

## THE UNCOMMON SHIELDS



- VIKING OR VICTIM
- FLOODLIGHTING
- SMASH AND GRAB
  - SERPENTINING
- CYNICISM, CRITICISM, COOL, AND CRUELTY





## FOREBODING JOY



- Approach Joy with deep foreboding
- “Waiting for the other shoe to drop”
- Everything is going well. Disaster might be right around the corner
- “Too good to be true”
- “Worry is planning on a bad outcome”

## SOLUTIONS

- Practice Gratitude
- Learn to use as a *reminder* not as a *warning shot*
- Imagine human connectedness & a power greater than us

# PERFECTIONISM



- A defensive move to minimize blame judgement and shame
- "If I do everything perfectly, I can be immune"
- Not the same as striving for excellence
- Not the key to success
- Causes anxiety, paralysis, missed opportunities

## SOLUTIONS

- From "What will people think" to "I am enough"
- Self compassion
- Appreciate our shared humanity " we all go through this"
- Mindfulness (Self Observation)
- Leonard Cohen: "There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in".



## NUMBING

- Can take many forms:
  - Alcohol, drugs, eating
  - Social media
  - Busyness
  - Disconnection

## SOLUTIONS

- Self survey
- Are my choices *nourishing me or are they reprieves from vulnerability*
- Connecting with others
- Belonging to something larger than ourselves

## VIKING OR VICTIM



- **Zero sum game**
- **“If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re probably on the menu”**
- **Soldier’s mentality – PTSD** Trained aggression and emotional detachment, tolerate pain, overcome fear of injury or death
- **Lawyer’s mentality – Aggression and detachment**
- **Physician/Healthcare Provider burnout – Pacesetter:**  
**“If you need any help, just ask, but remember, it’s a sign of weakness”**



## SOLUTIONS

- **Connect with others in your field – “Your struggle is my struggle”**
- **Wholeheartedness**
- **Acknowledge the traumas**
- **Recognize toxic workplace**

# FLOODLIGHTING

- *Mis Using* vulnerability
- Oversharing
- Testing loyalty and tolerance in a relationship
- Hotwiring a new relationship
- Not reading the room.. How we are pushing people away

## SOLUTIONS

- Do your own work first as much as you can
- Share only with those who you have a cultivated relationship or setting (Journey partners or groups)
- Self Observe:
  - “Why am I sharing this?”
  - “Is this sharing in service of a connection I haven’t earned?”
  - “Am I genuinely asking for what I need?”
  - “What outcome am I looking for?”



## SMASH AND GRAB



- **Hasnamuss energy (short cut solutions with no aim or integrity)**
- **Smashing appropriate boundaries with intimate information, then grabbing attention and energy you can get your hands on**
- **Needing drama for its energy**

## SOLUTIONS

- **Requires self awareness**
- **Recognize the mechanical and self - serving nature of this activity**
- **“What need is driving this behavior?”**
- **“Am I trying to reach , hurt, or connect with someone specifically/”**

# SERPENTINING



- **Avoidance, evasiveness, non- committal**
- **Inconsistent behaviors to dodge vulnerability ... No Aim**
- **Rationalization**
- **Procrastination**
- **Prevarication (avoid telling the truth, sly lying, evading)**

# SOLUTION

- **Self observation**
- **Setting clear aim – Real Will to move forward**
- **Turn and face your vulnerability**

# CYNICISM, CRITICISM, COOL, CRUELTY



- **Hasmamuss energy by cutting off emotional center**
- **Immature deflection “Whatever”, “Totally lame”, “Who cares?”**
- **More than Armor...A weapon to keep vulnerability at a distance**
- **Reflexive criticism**

## SOLUTIONS

- **Be willing to enter the arena**
- **Humility**
- **OK to be “Uncool”**
- **Connect with a supportive group**





St Teresa of Avila

Let nothing disturb you,  
Let nothing frighten you,  
All things are passing:  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things  
Those who have God lack nothing;  
God alone suffices.

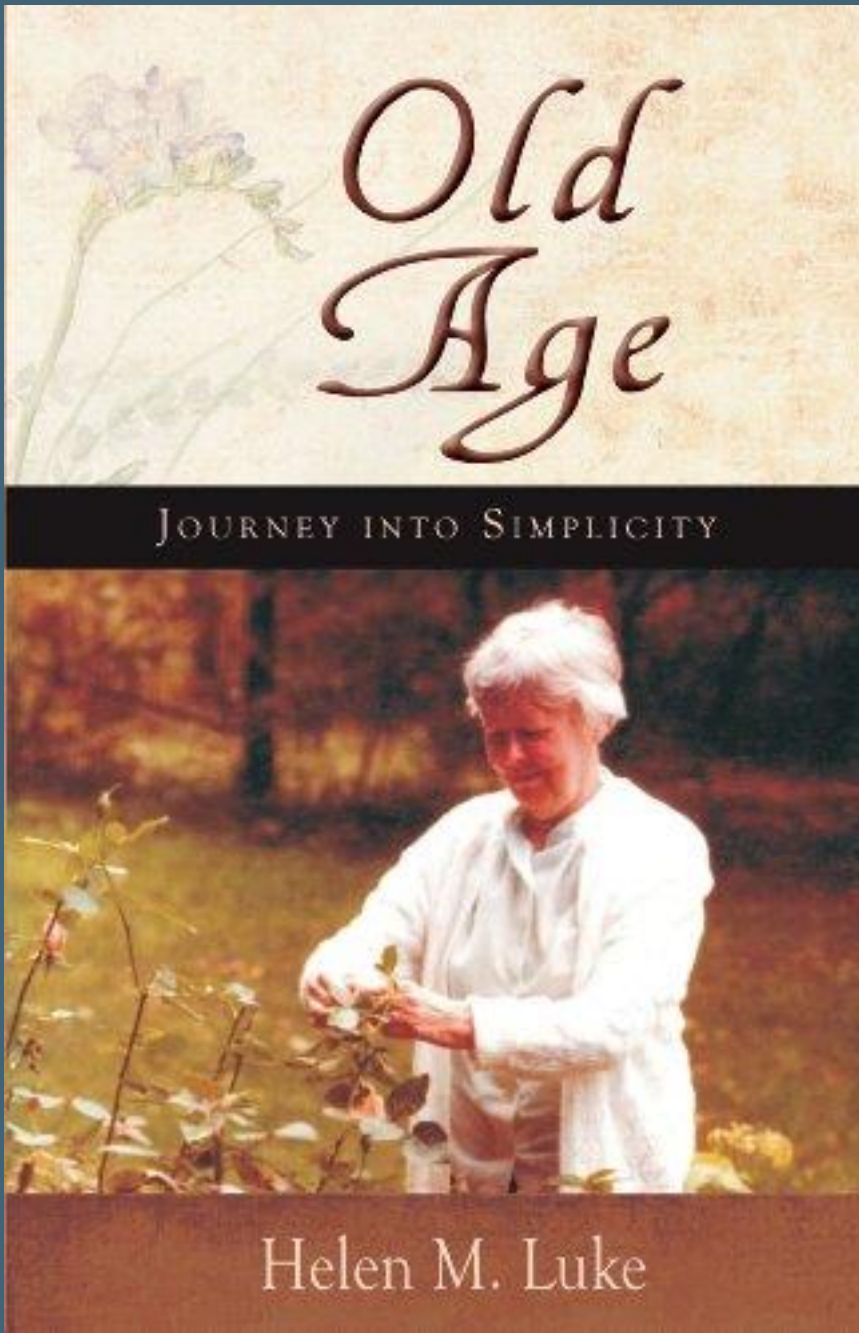
SECOND LINE OF THE WORK

“I AM WORKING FOR MY COMPANIONS”



*Never morning wore to evening, but some heart did break*

*Walter Langley 1894*



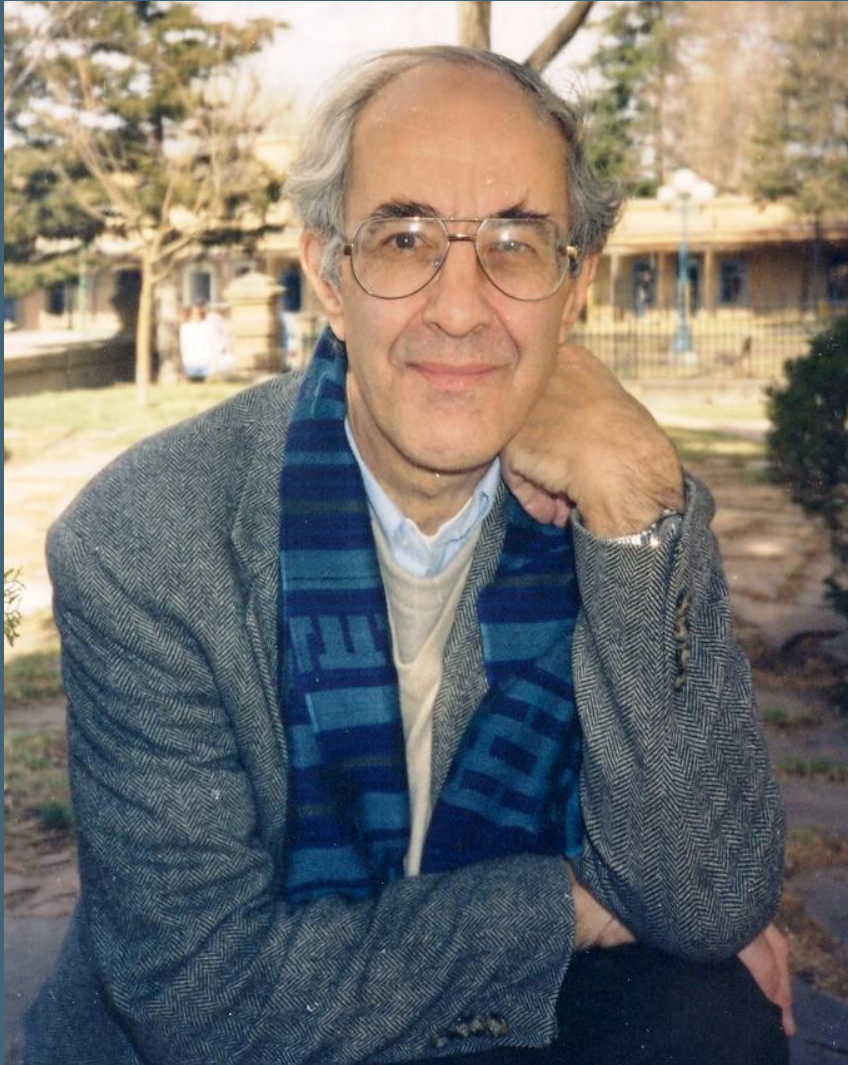
“Take a load off, Fanny and you put the load right on me”  
Robbie Robertson. *The Weight*”

This is reminiscent of the term “undercarriage” – that which bears the weight of a vehicle above the wheels – which is an image of the meaning of suffering in human life....

Only when we suffer in the full sense of the word do we *carry* the weight.

Thus, we begin to build the “undercarriage” of suffering upon which the superstructure of our lives may securely rest and under which the wheels may move freely over the earth.

The four wheeled chariot is an ancient symbol of the Incarnation, and the thought of suffering as the undercarriage fits perfectly into this image.”



The word *compassion* is derived from the Latin words *pati* and *cum*, which together mean “to suffer with”.

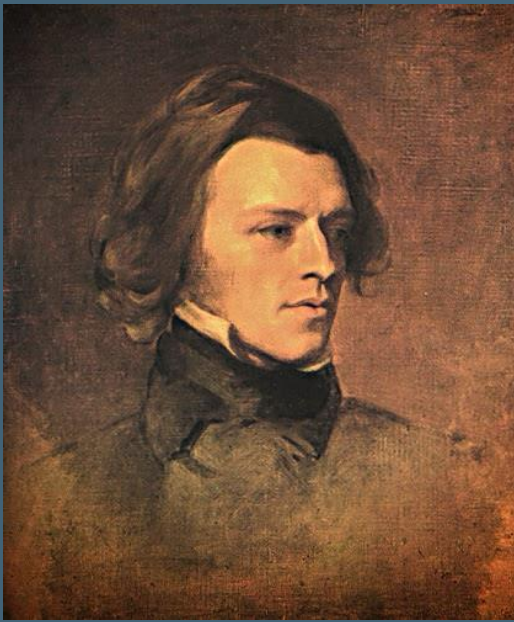
Compassion asks us to go where it hurts,  
to enter into places of pain,  
to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.

Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery,  
to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears.

Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak,  
vulnerable with the vulnerable,  
and powerless with the powerless.

Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.”

Henri Nouwen: *Compassion: Reflection on a Christian Life* p 3-4.



Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

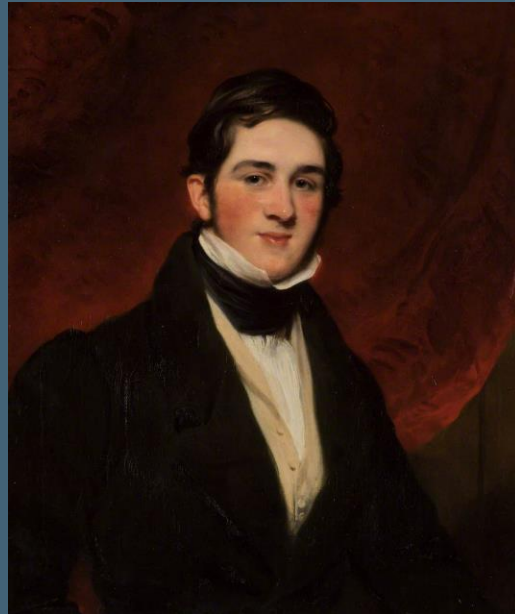
That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more:  
Too common! *Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.*

I hold it true, what'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
*'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.*

Alfred Lord Tennyson    *In Memoriam. A.H.H.*



Emilia Tennyson



Arthur Henry Hallam









# LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE: AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS ALS

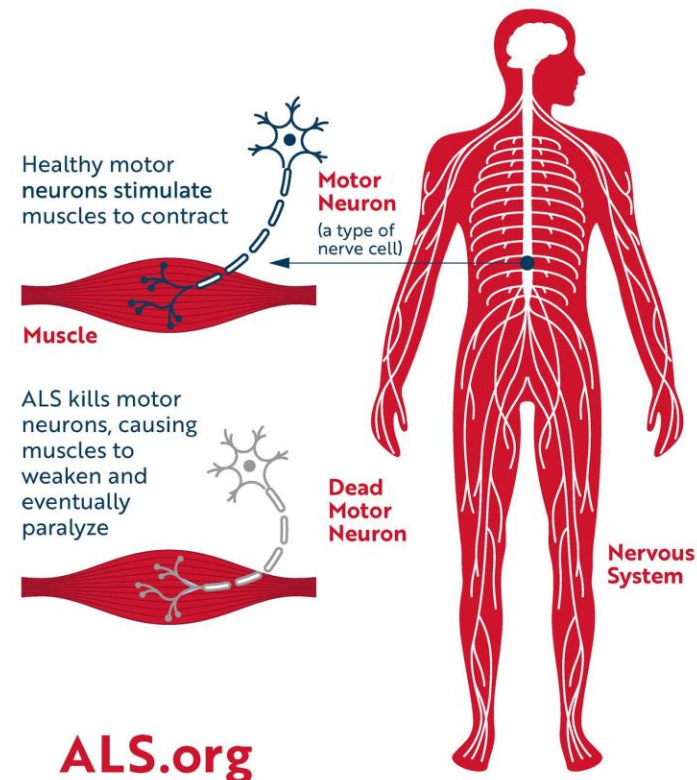


## WHAT IS ALS? a·myo·tro·phic lateral sclerosis

ALS is an always fatal neurodegenerative disease in which a person's brain loses connection with the muscles. People with ALS lose their ability to walk, talk, eat, and eventually breathe.

ALS usually strikes people between the ages of 40 and 70, but it can strike anyone at any time. In the past year, over 20,000 people living with ALS were served through our chapter network.

Although there is not yet a cure or treatment that halts ALS, scientists have made significant progress in understanding what causes ALS. But their work is not done. Together, we work toward a cure.



ALS.org

## LOU GEHRIG'S FAREWELL SPEECH



“ Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got.

Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans.

So, I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for.”

CONSCIOUS SUFFERING  
*AND*  
ALLOWING VULNERABILITY

“Pain is the nature of this present moment, and I can only live in this moment.”

Alan Watts



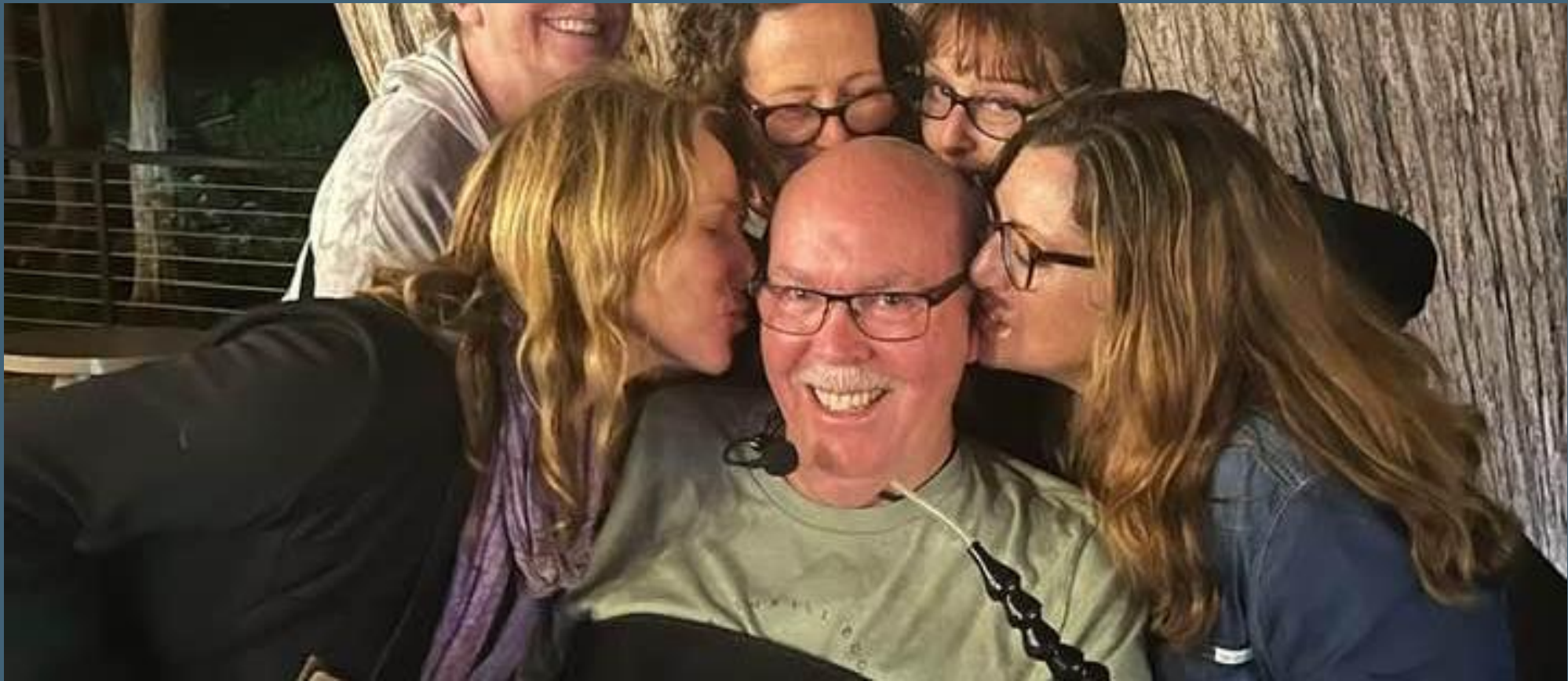














THIRD LINE OF THE WORK

“ I AM WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF EARTH AND HUMANITY”

# ALS HEROS

ADY BARKIN & FAMILY



BRIAN WALLACH & FAMILY



JIM BYRNE AND FAMILY



“The credit belongs to the man  
who is actually in the arena”

Theodore Roosevelt



“We all have a life.

We all leave behind us ripples that change the world.

All I know is we have to look at life in that moment with the cards we are dealt.

And with those cards, figure out how to play the best hand possible”

Brian Wallach

SHARING