

Crossing The River:

Promoting Authentic Healing and Countering The Educational, Social, Psychological, and Medical Trauma Train



I've About Had it with the "Trauma Train!"

It's as if the goal is to extend and amplify the trauma instead of healing it.

Who says that having had a traumatic experience changes the goalposts and our expectations of ourselves to find a way to heal and succeed? Even in social discourse, notice how nearly every wound, hurt, or unfortunate circumstance becomes "traumatic." In theatres, Black trauma (captivity, discrimination, poverty, police brutality, etc) often goes unresolved, unchallenged, or is the platform for yet another appearance of "the great white hope." African Americans and others who are oppressed too often use the trauma that has resulted from oppression to evoke relief from the oppressor. Many will contrast older, more violently inflicted trauma with milder forms of today and use them as markers of progress.

Social programs - from self-care groups to those administering psychotropics - engaging in the trauma train - are **curing us into a permanent sickness**. This trauma train obscures our highest aspirations and undermines our determination to create the life we want for ourselves, our families, and people. Educational programs morph a student's unfortunate circumstance into an "at-risk" identity which too often guides their lifelong movement in the world - alternating between living up to their imposed identity or "proving them wrong."

Not to be outdone by social-emotional trauma, the medical and pharmaceutical industries are awash in trauma training. They make "*watching your diabetes*" (trauma) and "*controlling your high blood pressure*" (trauma) the norm - the goal. Healing is impossible or too much to ask, and none of the typically prescribed medicines direct the body to heal the emotional, chemical, or social imbalances causing the trauma.

Whether social, psychic, or physical trauma, the secret message is the same: **healing is no longer the goal; it is beyond your reach**. The helpers watch over us, watching our trauma like some scripted trauma movie for enjoyment and profit.



This is not our traditional helping way. Not the African way. Not the African-American way. We acknowledged the deep hurts. The Blues amplified them to make them clearer targets for healing! Wednesday night prayer meetings, the ring shouts, and our ubiquitous call and response were but a few cultural tools for using the community and spiritual energy for healing and power.

We didn't even worship Jesus for Jesus. The biblical stories we authentically entered were elevators from despair to

deliverance, from **"I can't to I did!"**



The elders, like my mother, Reverend Maggie Tucker-Wright, would say, **"Everybody has their cross to bear"** or **"their river to cross."** We knew that our families and communities were made more potent by those who healed their wounds, carried their crosses, and crossed their rivers. During her counseling, she'd say, "Baby, now, if you don't heal this, then what happened to you at 12 will become a prison for you for life." She'd then add, **"It's only a test so that you will have a testimony."** If they refused to get on what she thought was a healing path, she would stop seeing them and always leave a door open for when they changed their minds.

There's a **HUGE** difference between acknowledging, discovering, and examining our psychic and physical wounds for healing them vs. using the injuries or our unfortunate circumstances to become

satisfied with shattered dreams, compromised desires, anemic efforts, or worse-induced delusionary progress.

The oppressor has and will continue to feed the latter - using the powers of suggestion ([nocebos](#)), prescription, fear, or reward to transform the process into the goal. We are not to ever get to the other side of the river. They - and increasingly we - make revealing the depths of our trauma, our discovering new triggers, or our managing our injuries the desired destination or the best for which can hope. Swimming in circles or treading water has replaced the natural and African cultural injunction to heal - no matter what. That's what our ancestors did during the horrors of our legal captive experience in the Americas.

When we need help or need our hurts attended to, it makes sense that we gravitate to ideologies, stories, people, therapies, medicine, spiritual communities, groups, and even movements that will listen, "see us," and accept us - warts and all. The perceived or actual goodness of their attention makes it more difficult to discern when "being seen" becomes a prison or, worse - a portal for manipulation. When we choose a different path with the actual goal of healing our blood pressure, depression, or other trauma, they warn us that we may die. They give us the statistics to prove that our way won't work and tell us that we're on our own.

That makes it even more challenging to walk away from the affirming attention to face the certainty of sadness, scare, and the negative talk we'll encounter while we stumble - learning to transform our wounded bodies and souls into praising affirmations of ourselves into lessons, and into decisive actions and success - for ourselves, our families and our people.

Oppressors will pay handsomely for our trauma stories, poems, novels, testimonies, and programs. They'll pay us with attention, status, leadership roles, and money as they pay us to display other precious private parts - not for our positive transformation, but for their enjoyment, anemic catharsis, or who knows what. We take the handsome reward determined to make good of it, knowing that we deserve it without the desperate display. All the while, we become oblivious to our new home - **the sunken place**.

They will even let some of us get in on the trauma-train business providing or certifying stages, pulpits, prizes, temples, bookshelves, tenure, screen-plays, group parties, and private counseling - all promoting the healing imposter.



“If trauma can be passed on from generation to generation, so can healing!”



In fact, that we are here means that more healing has been passed on than trauma!
Let's water the seeds and not the weeds.

Our ancestors are crying that we have abandoned them - preferring to follow the captor's lead - attending to our trauma while ignoring or minimizing our healing.

Let's change that. Let's learn to use the [Warrior-Healer-Builder tools](#) to do just that.

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