



## **Soul in Crisis: Why Cultural Healing Must Replace the 'Mental Illness' Fiction**

**by Maureen B. Roberts, PhD**

*"No lie can live forever."*

*"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."*

~Martin Luther King

Looking at the entire 'mental health crisis' from a soul-centred perspective, I see a lot of so-called 'mental illness' as a reflection of cultural 'soul loss' and decry the spiritual poverty of a psychiatric model which views the rare gifts, insights and abilities which many sufferers - particularly of schizophrenia - have as 'mental illness.'

Consider, if you will, the following plight of a young man, Tim, who has been diagnosed as 'mentally ill':

*In the past I've been on other 'medications' that were even worse: more toxic and more side-effects. The problem is that these 'biological psychiatrists' are in control in our society - and they have threatened (in what I think is a vulgar display of power and abuse of human rights) - that if I give up this drug and then relapse into psychosis, then they may forcibly administer this, or other drugs. So for purely practical reasons - the reality of the dominant paradigms and powers in our society - I have to tread and plan very carefully when considering alternatives. It would also be true to say that I am more scared of what these drug-obsessed biological psychiatrists will do to me than of psychosis and the schizophrenic condition itself. These, after all, for me have joyful and positive - as well as fearful - sides. When I was first admitted to hospital, I tried (unsuccessfully) to refuse the drugs, feeling strongly that I needed spiritual help and guidance instead. Shamanism, as such, is new to me, although I gather that some of my experiences could be considered to be of this type. I'd*

*imagine that shamanism, combined with Jungian understanding and psychotherapy, would form a potent and deep healing method.*

It is an unavoidable, natural 'law' of the psyche that what is not consciously honoured - by any culture, or individual - is fated to forcefully erupt, often through chaos, depression, suicide, social catastrophe, psychosis and pathological upheavals from the unconscious depths. In this sense, much of what is diagnosed as 'schizophrenia' is what we could call a needed remedial inversion of Western cultural bias and its attendant consumerism and pathology. With increasingly disastrous consequences - and as the blind being led by the blind - we nonetheless remain hell-bent on tackling the 'mental health crisis' from within the stifling confines of a medical paradigm which, ironically, has no place for soul and little regard for the valid complaints of often deeply soulful sufferers.

Psychiatry and psychology, after all, have as their root word 'psyche', the Greek term for that elusive butterfly 'soul' and the name of the human goddess who, in a myth that dramatizes soul's need for love, travelled alone to the Underworld and suffered deeply in order to retrieve its treasure. (The descent, or lowering of energy as 'depression', in other words, is essential to the human journey as embodied myth).

### **The 'Mental Illness' Consumerist Fiction**

With little regard for myth as a meaningful context for suffering, we - as converts to the comparatively arid 'consumerism' fiction - pride ourselves that we are progressively 'de-stigmatizing' and talking openly about 'mental illness', yet in reality we have simply eclipsed silence, closed institutional doors and stigma with another cultural fiction, one which reductively views acute psychospiritual distress as just another 'illness' to be treated, or production-line 'managed' by biologic medicine and the toxic drugs that are euphemistically called "medications".

Tim's fears and concerns epitomise the dilemma faced by thousands of victims of what I perceive to be a dangerous cultural trend, based on the cultural fiction that there is such an objective medical reality as 'mental illness'. As one who empathises with the plight of many folk labelled as 'mentally ill', I share in this book concerns which are oriented around an increasingly urgent need to radically re-vision the entire field of mental illness, health and psychiatry from a soul-centred medical perspective. Ultimately, though, as Tim's testimony - one of many poignant, often tragic tales that have been shared with me - brings home, the vision I offer for cultural healing is about the fate of real human lives, which is inextricably bound up with the healing and serving of soul as the qualitative essence of human life, if it is to be lived, wrestled with and celebrated in all its fullness, vibrancy, meaning, earthiness, imaginal richness, pain and joy.

Indeed, as a soul-centred psychiatric therapist, I am disturbed that so many folk have been conned by the threefold 'myth of mental illness', that is, the 'them and us' cultural fiction which assumes firstly, that there is such a medical fact as 'mental illness', secondly, that there are certain folk who are 'mentally ill', while 'the rest of us' (presumably) aren't; and

lastly, that 'mental illness' is a treatable biologic sickness, just like diabetes, Alzheimer's, or cancer. I believe that immeasurable harm is being done to individuals - and to the cultural psyche at large - by such pseudo-medical circular reasoning, sheep-like credulity, quick-fix consumerism and blind homage to the biologic dogma that masquerades as 'psychiatric care'.

In blatant disregard of these fictions, I reassess many people who've been diagnosed as 'mentally ill' and end up reassuring them that they're anything but - hardly something that would apply to the comparatively objective diagnosis of a broken ankle, or diabetes. I do not, in other words, view as 'mentally ill' those who have been hastily, or conveniently labelled as such and who come to me for private therapy, or other kinds of help. As someone who deals with politicians, other practitioners and the media, I see, instead, a vast gulf yawning between the culture's need to scapegoat as 'mentally ill' certain wounded people, or individuals who do not conform, or share its values - people who are not perceived as 'normal', or who are victims of abuse - and the perceptions, concerns and values of many sufferers themselves.

### **Control & Delusion Masquerading as Medicine**

I see, as well, a cosy alliance between the Government, the psychiatrists they appoint to oversee the Mental Health System, and the drug companies whose glossy propaganda brochures - aimed for the most at well-meaning and distraught relatives - ensure that sufferers remain sick and under the control of the drug-based psychiatry which has convinced so many that they are 'mentally ill' and can't survive without psychiatric 'help' and 'medication.' Indeed, psychiatry's ploy to ensure continued 'consumer' demand is akin to that of a plumber who never fixes the plumbing, but instead hands out endless amounts of disposable earplugs so that people can't hear the dripping taps.

I also see completely sane people detained in psychiatric hospitals, people judged (through non-medical circular reasoning) to be 'mentally ill' because they deny that they're ill and so refuse to take medication, or because they are irritable, or angry at not being allowed to go free.

I see psychiatrists living lacklustre, stressed, depressed, angst-ridden, even suicidal lives of 'quiet desperation' that pass for health and normalcy, psychiatrists who believe that 'mental illness' is a 'chemical imbalance', or 'brain disease', even though there is no medical proof of such claims. I see this biologic psychiatry - through its lack of self-criticism, fanatical adherence to materialist dogma and intolerance of individual uniqueness - becoming a dangerous tool for social control and normalization.

I see tired, visionless politicians desperately hoping that more funding, de-stigmatizing, hospital beds, reshuffling of resources, expensive reports, Government-appointed psychiatrists and biologic research will 'solve' the crisis.

And I see a vast gap between a rich and powerful medical elite who, through the support of drug companies, Government funding and Schizophrenia Fellowships, maintains a legal and financial stranglehold over often poor, homeless, alone sufferers, who have no legal right or physical ability to refuse forced treatment, and who cannot afford to pay for the kind of drug-free, healing therapies that most of them relate to and would prefer, but which the Government refuses to fund.

What alarms me, in addition, is the other side of the same coin: the number of people who unquestioningly accept a diagnosis of 'mental illness' without questioning the medical credibility of such a label, or instead of viewing their, or their relative's suffering as a natural, human response to their painfully unique and often valuable experiences. What I see, in other words, is that the label 'mental illness', far from being a verifiable fact, is more often than not a value judgment reflecting our own fears, taboos and cultural biases toward biologism, competitiveness and consumerism.

### **Cultural Scapegoating vs Personal Soul-searching**

In this sense, as a quick-fix, technocratic culture which believes that anything can be made to tap-dance to monetary tunes and polite policies, we are, I suggest, too busy looking at 'mental illness' as a 'problem to be solved' (by funding and biologic band-aiding), instead of honouring, as the great soul-centred psychiatrist C. G. Jung did, the needs of 'soul', including its need to pathologise and crystallize its vast spectrum of pain and joy into wisdom, compassion, living art, and the art of living a meaningful, natural and fully human life.

To move in the opposite direction by scapegoating unhappy, traumatised, suicidal, grieving, wounded and schizophrenic persons as 'mentally disordered', cleverly absolves the rest of us from the need for personal soul-searching and conveniently detracts from any serious cultural criticism, including an urgently needed critique of a soulless medical model which, ironically, may well be exacerbating, not alleviating the high incidence of suicide, depression and psychosis.

Instead of accusing already suffering people of being 'ill', perhaps we should therefore be seeking to cure the 'illness' of a society which cannot accept emotional, relational and spiritual suffering as essential to the human condition, or addressing the illness of a psychiatry which has deleted 'soul' from its vocabulary and lost the ability to heal in favour of becoming a business dispensing toxic drugs to 'consumers'; or exposing the illness of a Government which remains willfully blind to psychiatry's human rights violations, abuses of power and materialist dogma.

Many others - including various relative and carer-based organizations and fellowships professing to be 'concerned' for sufferers' well-being - still cling to psychiatry's biologic fantasy and so betray those whom they claim to be helping. It has become a fashionable trend among 'consumers', practitioners, politicians and drug companies to compare depression, for example, to a blood nose, or broken ankle, but such pseudo-medical attempts

to dump all human suffering into the 'biologic' bin, betray both a willful blindness to the lack of medical proof of such beliefs and a muddled lack of appreciation for the psyche's unique needs, qualities and responses to pain.

### **Biologic Arrogance & Dogma**

By the same token, one frequently comes across a hubristic boast that biologic medicine will one day discover the physical source of - hence cure for - emotional or 'mental' disorders. This kind of presumption and arrogance reeks of biologic dogma and its metaphysical cum materialist bias, which refuses to acknowledge the equal 'reality of the psyche', hence refuses to appreciate that psychiatry as (ostensibly and once-upon-a-time) the 'art of curing the soul', requires personal qualities and skills, as well as training, education, modes of consciousness and experience of a kind, depth, richness and scope that biologic medical training does not even begin to touch upon.

Furthermore, a materialistic psychiatry, because it denies its opposite, has nor room for appreciating the spiritual needs of folk who are (therefore) often wrongly diagnosed as 'mentally ill' and in need of medication and/or incarceration. Given this conflict between sufferers' often spiritual needs, experiences and values and psychiatric biologism and authority, I am disturbed by the blatant contrast between the gratitude, empathy, friendship, enthusiasm, respect and trust with which sufferers respond to my work and approach to therapy, and the reactions of biologic practitioners, politicians, Government mental health staff and Schizophrenia Fellowships, who for the most respond with blank incomprehension, hostility, fear, mistrust, willful ignorance, moral cowardice, or indifference. Indeed, instead of supporting sufferers by condemning the toxic drugs and forced "compliance" as a breach of the medical Hippocratic Oath and an abuse of human rights, the latter Fellowships tend to side with biologic psychiatrists and with drug companies (who sometimes fund them), in viewing sufferers' denial of sickness and 'non-compliance' with medication as problems to be overcome with bullying, or forcing sufferers to accept that they're 'ill' and need to take damaging drugs.

Perhaps, then, instead of bemoaning the 'mental illness' epidemic, it would be more fitting to talk about the sickness of a psychiatry which in many instances rationalizes its own bigotry, paranoia and neuroses (concerning irrationality, spiritual crises and soul) by negatively projecting them onto others who are conveniently labelled as sick, hostile, or resistant to damaging 'treatment'. Perhaps we should talk, as well, about the sickness of a society which has spawned such arrogant and pseudo-medical reductionism, a society whose temples of worship at its cities' centres are the towering financial buildings which sanction the altars of its consumerist priesthood.

### **Schizophrenia vs Cultural Soul Loss**

From a soul-centred psychiatric perspective, the mess which the mental health 'industry' finds itself in isn't, then, primarily a political, or economic issue, as vital as these issues are further down the track. It is first and foremost a crisis of a culture suffering soul loss,

uncertain identity, lack of self-criticism and loss of a sense of spiritual integrity and direction. It is the crisis, at the same time, of an impersonal, ineffectual, obsolete psychiatric model which a growing number of folk are no longer willing to believe, defer to, or trust with the well-being of their loved ones and themselves.

Indeed, many sufferers of schizophrenia offer deep insight into the sickness, soullessness and materialistic madness of psychiatry and our drug-obsessed culture. They are usually brilliant and imaginative people (that is, if they have not been brain-disabled by psychiatric drugs), who would rather talk about shamanism, Jung, crystals, dreams, visions, UFO-logy, animal guides, myth, religion, poetry, art and nature than about 'mental illness', diagnostic manuals, or chemical imbalance. In many other cultures, schizophrenia sufferers are valued as acutely sensitive, gifted people, who are potential healers, prophets and shamans. But although many sufferers see psychiatry itself as delusional and sick, few 'normal' individuals listen to their insights. After all, schizophrenic folk are 'mentally ill', 'disturbed', or 'paranoid', hence not to be taken seriously. Yet how few 'normal' citizens consider psychiatric consumerism, pseudo-medical dogma and human rights abuse to be deluded, ill, or disturbed.

The following insights typify the level of understanding shared by many sufferers of schizophrenia:

*It is horrifying to think that many of these doctors who are supposed to be healers will, without a second thought, substitute drugs in place of compassion. In a hospital, they tell you that you are sick - that there's something wrong with you. No wonder a hospital is a bad place to be insane in. The only reason you are sick to begin with is because you think you are. Now everyone around you is telling you that it's true. There is something wrong with you. You're not like everyone else. It's frightening. Somewhere along the line the world got really screwed up. The truth could set all of us free, I think. Maybe someday it will. My head is starting to hurt now . . .*

[Letter to from Steve, schizophrenia sufferer in Canada]

I recently read in a Mental Health Newsletter an account of a schizophrenia sufferer, whose relatives viewed as 'odd behaviour' his giving away of personal possessions and request that friends right wrongs done to one another. From a soulful angle - that is, a more universal perspective free from cultural bias - giving away possessions and asking friends to right wrongs are hardly symptoms of 'illness', but rather commendable gestures which Christ himself would have condoned. Could it be, in other words, that schizophrenia sufferers' values, views and experiences threaten our own cultural biases and blindness, such that we avoid having to face our own demons by accusing sufferers, not ourselves, as being the ones who are 'odd', or 'ill'?

## **A Psychiatric Evaluation of Psychiatry**

I suggest, then, that it's time we lamented the sickness of a psychiatric 'system' which hastily labels and band-aids symptoms, instead of responding with empathy, compassion, humility and healing therapy to each person's unique story and needs. We need, as well, to examine the questionable motives and ethics of politicians who publicly present themselves as heroes - on the grounds that they are addressing 'mental health reform' - when all the while they are refusing to fund healing alternatives and neglecting their moral responsibility to denounce the harm, pseudo-medical dogma and human rights abuses perpetuated by the drug-based psychiatry which Medicare continues to waste billions of dollars of funding on.

While politicians with huge salaries and cosy offices give polite public speeches about 'mental health reform', I - with no funding and scant support - am meanwhile left to do what I can to help and heal the fragile and powerless victims of political policies which endorse psychiatric 'care' of a kind which, to many sufferers, is the equivalent of hell, or a living nightmare. If, in other words, politicians are serious about 'mental health reform', let them prove their goodwill and sincerity by taking seriously the complaints of sufferers, relatives and concerned practitioners against biologic psychiatry, its inability to heal, the human rights abuse it enforces, and the drug company propaganda it thrives on.

All in all, from the perspective of soul, it is psychiatry which is sick, deviant, and in need of help. In shifting our focus to a consideration of what is wrong with biologic psychiatry itself, we could begin spotlighting, for instance, the psychiatric profile of psychiatrists and others who need to perceive, treat, control and persecute others as 'mentally ill', 'disturbed', or 'abnormal', simply because they have different, often deeply spiritual values, personalities, experiences, priorities, or perspectives on life.

### **Psychiatric Pseudo-religious Persecution**

In this persecutory sense, psychiatry has taken over the role once held by corrupt religious priesthods, threatening non-violent people with the equivalent of banishment to Hell - compulsory treatment, ECT, forced injection, incarceration and inquisitional appeal hearings - if they don't confess to being 'ill', or don't go along with the biologic dogma espoused in the psychiatric Bible, the DSMIV. In terms of what we could call an archetypal pattern of behaviour, the only difference between the two 'priesthods' is that the biologic mock-religion is based on materialism instead of spirituality. This kind of dogmatism, social control and intolerance - especially when it masquerades as 'medicine', or 'care' - surely needs to be a cause for outrage and deep concern.

And yet we Australians are not an unspiritual people; if anything, we are simply constipated and slumbering in this area and need to unblock the dams by a diet of soul food that will stimulate the sacred energies that lie dormant within us all, to flow freely again. We live, after all, in a deeply sacred land, whose original caretakers are deeply spiritual people married to the Earth, people of the Dreaming who can teach us a great deal about freedom from material greed, respect for Nature and for ancient and timeless wisdom, perhaps even help each of us tap into our own ancestral roots.

Interestingly, Jung came up with his hypothesis of a 'collective unconscious' - his own description of the worldwide 'Dreaming' - mainly through his psychiatric work with schizophrenic patients, who were apparently tapping into this deepest, mythographic layer of the human psyche. So what's in a name? Everything, when it comes to labeling folk 'accused' of having a 'mental illness'. Contrary to Juliet's angle in Shakespeare, a rose by another name can smell far sweeter than its original soulless label. Sometimes, for instance, I call my schizophrenic friends 'potential shamans', since shamans as 'divinely mad' mediators to the powerful realms of myth and vision, are highly regarded in cultures which thrive on remaining in touch with the sacred, its gods, energies, and sense of all-pervasive soul; in short, with archetypal powers which schizophrenic folk are likewise attuned to, but have not yet learned to work with creatively and authoritatively, hence the affinity between schizophrenia and mystical, shamanic, or visionary ability.

### **Schizophrenia: Face to Face with the Divine**

Which reminds me of an anecdote. Recently, I attended a dignified and subdued 'mental health forum' in Adelaide Town Hall. A polite, wealthy and respectably dressed psychiatrist got up to speak, confessing to her compassion and pity for the poor, often homeless "mentally ill", whom she hoped to rescue. When she confessed, "There but for the grace of God go I," I smiled to myself at the irony of such a misguided notion. What to this psychiatrist was a tame and safely abstract metaphor, namely 'God', is to many psychotic individuals an overpowering reality that underpins a vivid, exotic and detailed inner life, the scope, power, terror, vibrancy, richness and emotional depth of which leaves the dullness and emptiness of psychiatric statistics, labels, platitudes and routine for dead,

If schizophrenia is in many cases a spiritual crisis, it follows that practitioners restricted to a biologic paradigm will be unlikely to be able to help sufferers in the ways many want and need to be helped. Most sufferers understandably resist drug-based 'treatment', since they are, in place of it, seeking a different, less patronizing kind of help and understanding - from people who share their values and interests and respect the reality of their experiences. Perhaps that's why they trust me. I don't, in other words, see before me poor 'mentally ill' people needing to be pitied, patronized and 'treated', but rather highly individual, intelligent, artistic, sensitive, soulful, fascinating, shrewd, funny, kind, often both tormented and inspired, joyful and anguished people, who care deeply for the fate of our world and who usually have a deep respect for nature and the sacred, people who are neither domineering, self-centred, aggressive, competitive, greedy, disrespectful, or patronizing toward others.

Overall, when we look at the stark discrepancy between the authoritarian rigidity, sterile jargon and polite rhetoric of biologic psychiatry, politicians and drug companies, and the vibrantly soulful experiences, concerns, values and views of sufferers, a clear pattern of opposition emerges. Small wonder, in other words, that sufferers refuse medication, or resist going to GPs and psychiatrists who, more often than not, have no experience of, respect for, or soul-centred education about 'spiritual emergency' (a term coined by Stanislav Grof, MD).



## **Psychiatric Human Rights Abuse**

Accordingly, I suggest that we forget asking ourselves how we are to respond to what political 'mental health reform' rhetoricians lament as the 'twin evils of stigma and discrimination'. More pertinent questions might include, "What can we do about the sickness of a 'brain chemistry' dogma, which would rather talk about chemical imbalance, brain disease and cerebral labels than about personal crises? What about the twin evils of badgering already fragile, traumatised and suffering people into believing they're 'mentally ill', then bullying, or coercing them into taking toxic drugs?" While we're at it, let's toss in the 'evil' of not allowing folk who've been accused of being 'mentally ill' a medical defence at Guardianship Board appeal hearings.

Having opened up this cultural can of worms, may I make a suggestion - one that is aimed at the healing of our entire culture - just as worms air and prepare the soil for new growth? Instead of doggedly pursuing a quest to 'de-stigmatize mental illness', I recommend that we do away with the label 'mental illness' altogether and instead use descriptive language that reflects, dignifies and validates sufferers' own perceptions of their experiences, terms such as initiation, spiritual crisis, rebirthing, unresolved conflict, trauma, loss, grief, sadness, anxiety, despair, anguish, lack of meaning; soulful language reflecting the sometimes agonising human experiences which (often) anguished poets and artists have forged into some of the greatest art, poetry and music the world has known. Both Vincent Van Gogh and Hermann Hesse suffered from schizophrenia, which is a twin-edged sword, a marriage of heaven and hell. Take away the wound and you often destroy the gift that resides in it.

I feel and see all this and am stricken with a sword through the heart by what I see, for like schizophrenia, the gift of 'vision' is a twin-edged blade. But I see, as well, a way through the labyrinth, if enough of us choose to embrace the courage, moral responsibility, belief in ourselves, truthfulness, passion and heart to struggle through it together.

Firstly, if we are to resolve the 'mental health crisis', instead of scapegoating more and more people as 'mentally ill' and identifying symptoms with sicknesses, we must each do some serious soul-searching of our own. I suggest, as well, that we explore the underlying relational, spiritual and cultural causes of and reasons for people's depression, anxiety, psychosis and suicidal urges. And ironically, that may include a consideration of how biologic dogma and medicine are part of the problem.

What is also urgently needed, before more lives (including those of psychiatrists) are lost through suicide, or irreparably ruined through drugs or forced incarceration, is a ruthless psychiatric critique of psychiatry itself, an examination of its ruling delusions and biases, such that psychiatry is forced to give account of itself by being subjected to the same scrutinizing gaze which every other facet of society and human nature is capable of enduring: the ruthless, all-embracing, detached yet merciful eye of psychological truth.

## **Cultural Bias & Healing**

Behind all our actions and reactions lurk archetypal forces, unrecognized biases and powerful, irrational energies which manifest the all-pervasive 'law' of interacting contraries (Tao), the basis of the dynamics of Nature and of the perennial wisdom that informs all the great religions, myths and philosophies of the World. Psychiatry - in spite of its arrogant attempt to sever itself from nature and universally timeless wisdom - is not exempt from Tao; indeed, the more one resists being jerked about by the puppet-strings of such forces, the more one is controlled by them.

It is not easy, or pleasant to unveil such festering cultural wounds, but healing - individually and collectively - demands that we own and confront the dark side of our lives and so unearth the valuable and healing truth that lies hidden in shadow. Anything less than such ruthless honesty with ourselves will doom the 'mental health crisis' to decay further into chaos, death and increased suffering.

The most dangerous - and most successful - liar of our time, Adolf Hitler, once said, 'The bigger the lie, the more people will believe it.' All that is needed for lies and the evil they spawn to flourish, is that good people do and say nothing. To sin by silence, when we should be speaking the truth, makes cowards of us all. If we are to lay claim to being a caring, just community, then we must not allow the fate and well-being of thousands of frail, gifted and wounded people to reside in the hands of Governments, drug companies, psychiatrists and Guardianship Boards which do not allow people accused of being 'mentally ill' a medical defence by a reputable, soul-centred practitioner who has evaluated that they are not "ill" in the first place.

What vanishes with the inevitable deletion of the 'mental illness' phantom from our language, is precisely the authoritarian medical model on which the 'mental illness' industry thrives. In its place, we are left with the tragicomical human drama that we all share, in which we are all equals, and through which we can all help one another limp and struggle, with empathy and mutual respect. This is my passion and vision for a shared journey of self-discovery which can heal, dignify and liberate us all.

### **Love of Power vs the Power of Love**

The lines of necessary conflict are being drawn, between the love of power and the power of love, between authoritarian hierarchies which keep sufferers sick, disempowered, dependent, abused, imprisoned and humiliated, and a community of caring equals, which through soulful therapy, kindness and a renewed honour for nature and the sacred, re-empowers and nurtures everyone. Eventually, all humane, intelligent and morally responsible relatives, politicians, mental health workers and carers will be forced to decide whom to side with - those who are motivated by power, monetary gain and a denial of soul - or with the sufferers who are all too often the harmed pawns of powerful industrial, medical and political elites. I plead with those who have sided with the power of love, to help and support those of us who are fighting for the rights, health, dignity and freedom of people wrongfully accused of being 'mentally ill.' As well we, the community - sufferers, carers, healers, lawyers and human rights activists - need to pool our resources and set up a safe

and just alternative network - one that is based on compassion, openmindedness, renunciation of control and authority and a validation of the values, soulful experiences and human rights of sufferers.

I realise, of course, that much of this vision for reform is challenging, provocative, unsettling, possibly even threatening and disturbing to some, but sometimes - in line with Buddhist teaching - we need to be shocked through truth (administered by the 'wrathful deities') into wakefulness. I therefore invite those who serve the love of truth through the truth of love, to help put an end to the lies, tyranny and powermongering that masquerade as 'psychiatric care'. In the end, the fate and well-being of our entire society will, I believe, depend on whether love or power wins the day. I can only hope that the power of love will prevail.

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