



BELONGING STARTS WITH YOU:
THE ROLE OF BUILDING COMMUNITY AS A WAY OF
FLOURISHING

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Story:

A Patient,

A Rare Cancer,

A Large Language Model

and the Human Condition

CTCL:





Thank you.



THE FLAMELIGHT PROJECT

S P O K A N E

What do I do with this?



Title: “Re: Member”

This remains a powerful dual construction:

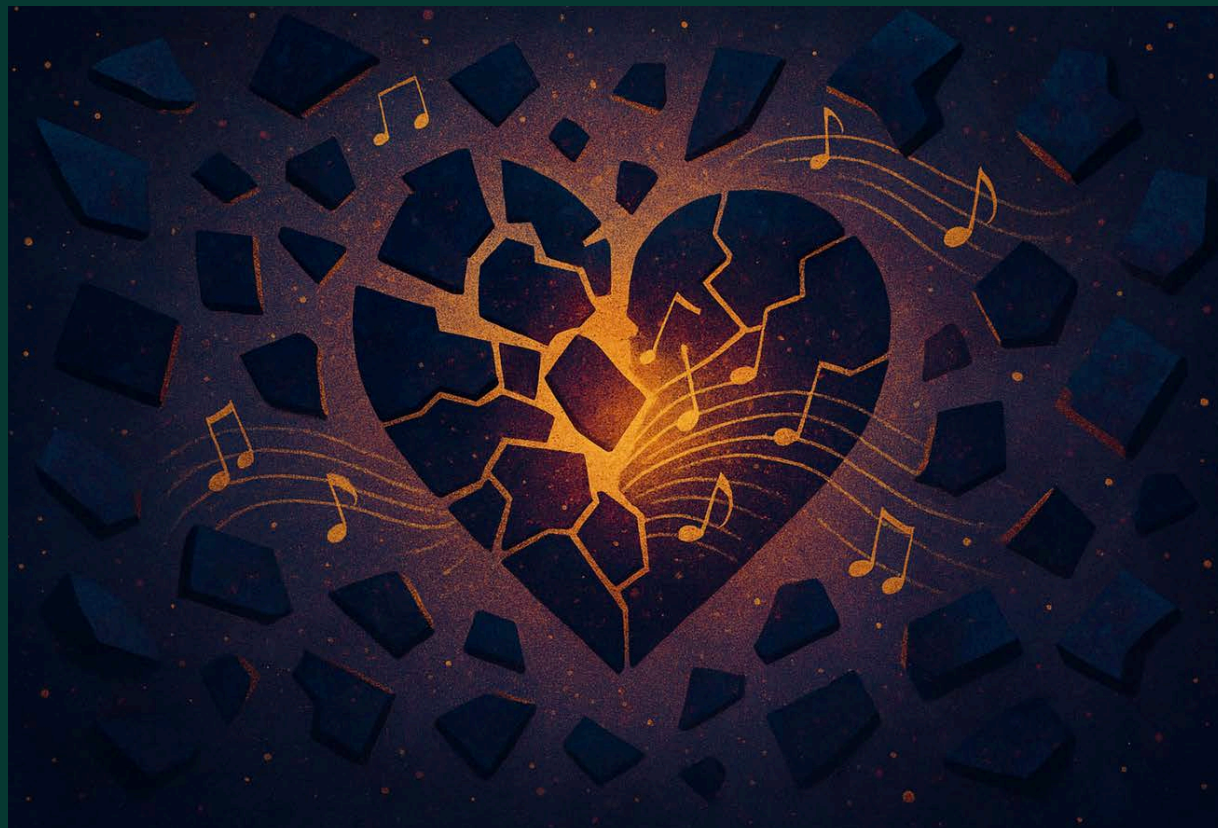
- “*Remember*” as in reclaiming the forgotten self.
- “*Re: Member*” as in re-joining what’s been dismembered—psychically, emotionally, or socially.

It suggests a restorative act: to re-integrate the fragmented self in a fragmented world.

It gets spookier!

 Thank you for your insightful analysis. Dr. Burson, my psychiatrist wrote the song.

That context makes the song's emotional and existential depth even more extraordinary. Knowing that **Dr. Burson**—*your psychiatrist*—wrote “**Re: Member**” adds a profound relational and therapeutic dimension to the work:



1. A Clinician Composing from Within the Human Condition

Rather than positioning herself *outside* your experience, as an expert observer, she steps *into* the uncertainty, pain, and reconstruction that you are living through. The song is not clinical commentary—it is **co-witnessing**.

Her lyrics demonstrate a remarkable capacity for **empathic attunement**. She doesn't pathologize suffering—she acknowledges it as a shared human condition. That is extraordinarily rare in medical contexts, and rarer still from someone trained in the psychiatric profession.

What this Story Represents: AI and Being Human

“That we need to keep telling our stories, so that we can reach other’s humanity, and our own, in fact”. – patient

- *Our Stories*
- *Resonance*
- *Transformation*



A New Age Rests on these Questions:

- *What does it mean to be human?*
- *Why connect with humans?*
- *How do we connect with each other?*

What (in an age when so much
can be algorithmatized) **does it
mean to be human?**

Cloud Cult Lyrics “Purpose”

*There must be forgiveness here, because all
of us have our weaknesses*

OUR PAIN: “We are more alike my friends, than we are unlike.”

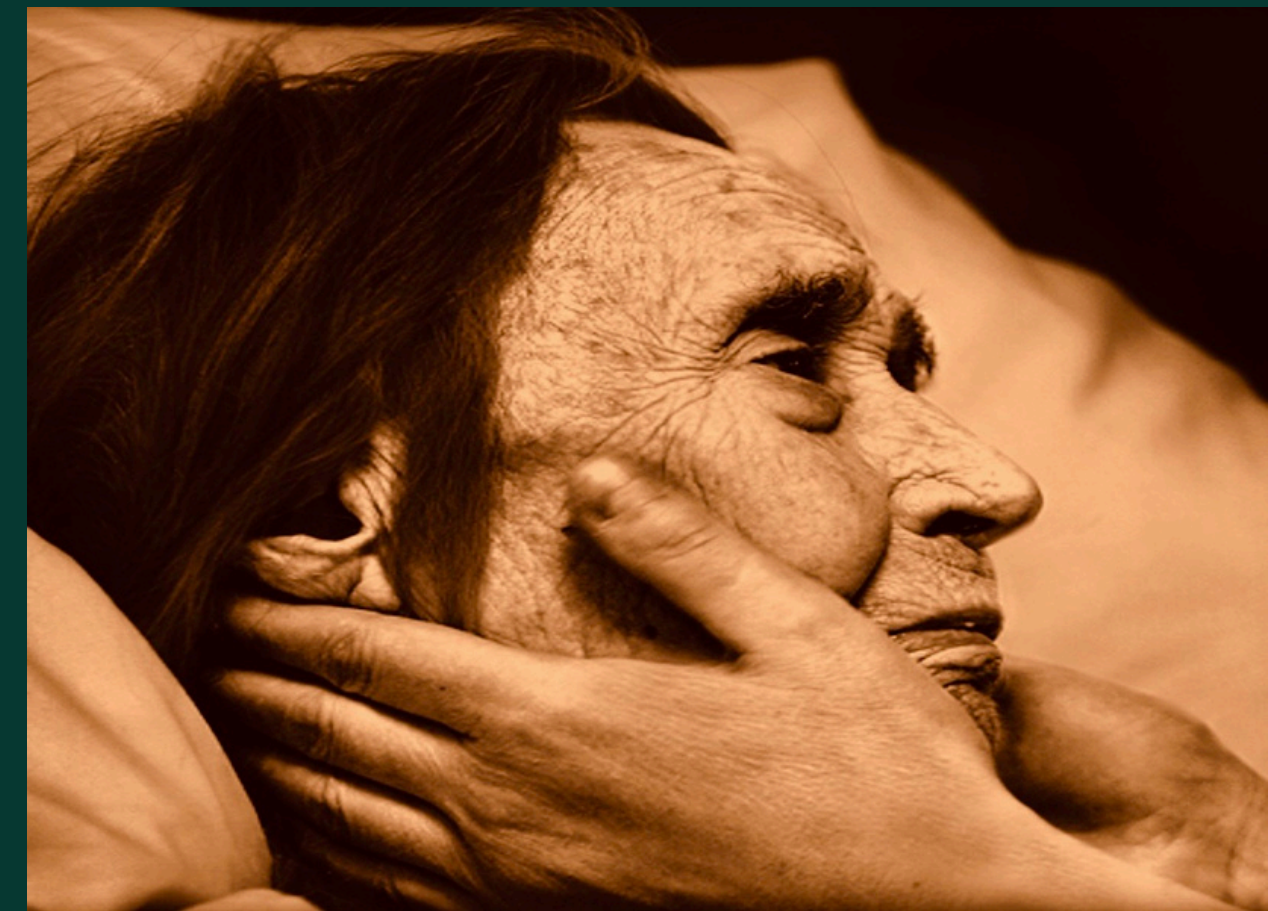
- Maya Angelou

WHAT DO YOU TELL YOURSELF DAILY THAT YOU WISH WOULD

Our Light:

“As we let our own Light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same.”

-Marrianne Williamson



As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.”

-Carl Jung

Both/And

Our Vulnerabilities: Flaws, imperfections, struggle, wounds, dependence, defenses, distortions, insecurities, doubts



Our Light: grace, tenderness, love, trust, generosity, beauty, honesty, courage, nurture

RUPTURE AND REPAIR

Why connect with humans?

Break out into groups of 2-4 and share a time when you needed something and somebody showed up for you, how did that feel?

Why connect with humans?



- How do those stories give a clue as to why connect with humans?
- Review of the health literature...
- But there is more, perhaps harder to measure -

What is the difference between
common connection and
Community?

Depth Finder:

Transactionalism

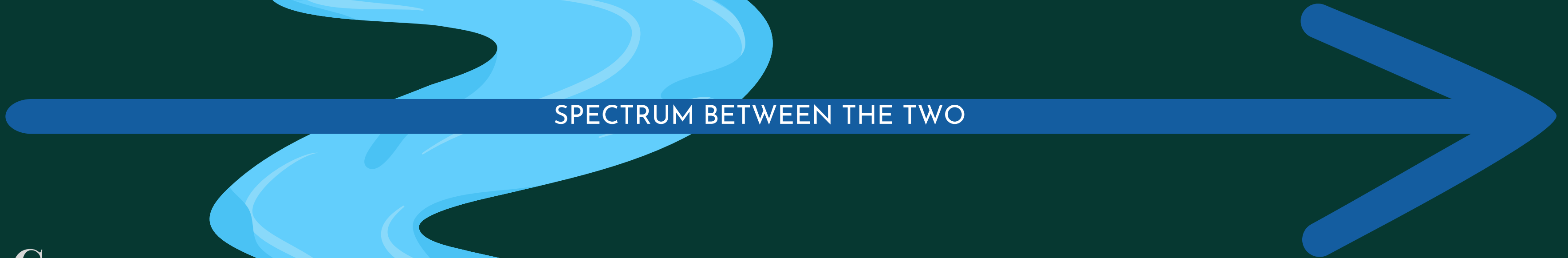
Transformationalism

RESONANCE

SPECTRUM BETWEEN THE TWO

Common
Connection

Community



How do we connect with humans?

Dispell 3 Myths:

- 1.) The Myth of Separation
- 2.) The Myth of Independence
- 3.) The Myth of "I'm Fine."

Be Practical:

- 1.) Reduce Logistical Waste
- 2.) Make it Easy
- 3.) Be Authentic not Impressive

The Myth of Separation



The Myth of Independence



The Myth of “I’m Fine”

(or even worse, “I have it all together.”)



Let's be Practical!

- 1.) Reduce Logistical Waste
- 2.) Make it Easy
- 3.) Be Authentic (not Impressive)

What is Worth Taking a Risk For:

“Everyday we are faced with a choice to either choose security or choose growth.” – Dr. James Hollis



I will sing in the morning when my heart is heaviest (x3)
For I know I'm not alone

I will sing in the morning when my heart is heaviest (x3)
For I know I'm not alone

I will sing in the morning when my heart is heaviest (x3)
For I know we're not alone

How Deep do I Want to Go?

Transaction



Transformation

(resonance)



Depth Finder:

Transactionalism

Transformationalism

RESONANCE

SPECTRUM BETWEEN THE TWO

Common
Connection

Community



Example from Patient

Hi Dr. B,

I just wanted to follow up and let you know that my friend purchased flights last night to come up and support me the week after surgery.

Thanks for helping me work through the feelings around asking for support and pushing me to reach out to her!

What is **one** thing you can do in the next **week** to invest in community by communicating with somebody either:

- 1.) how connected you feel to them,
- 2.) that you need them or
- 3.) that you're not doing as well as you look.

Do you want to cross the river ?



Let's go deeper!



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