

## Engaging With the 'Dark Side'

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*Dedicated to people who do good, everywhere.*

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A few years back at a Social Ecology Research Group meeting, we were shown some statistics about the severely run down state of our planet and of humanity. Several students admitted to feeling overwhelmed and depressed. I believe that in the face of the hard facts of our current global reality such feelings are not the sole domain of Social Ecology students. Many people have a similar reaction when confronted with the latest human or ecological catastrophe in the mass media.

James Nachtwey, who calls himself an 'anti-war photographer', appeared on the *Oprah* show a few years ago. He was interviewed about his book *Inferno*, a collection of photographs 'disclosing some of today's harshest examples of man's inhumanity to his fellow man.' From '...Somalia's famine to genocide in Rwanda, from Romania's abandoned orphans to the lives of India's 'untouchables', from war in Bosnia to conflict in Chechnya.'<sup>1</sup> When asked what the 'ordinary'<sup>2</sup> individual can do in response to his photos, Nachtwey paused for a long moment and then said, 'When confronted with images of pain and suffering, don't shut down or turn away. Stay engaged. Force yourself to be moved by what you are seeing...Keep it alive emotionally within yourself'.

Nachtwey is right that we must not shut down in the face of suffering. Feeling something about what we see is the first condition towards making a difference. But of course this is easier said than done. There are limits to what even kind and caring people are able to tolerate emotionally, and there are real dangers in exposing ourselves to a lot of suffering and pain. This is particularly true for those of us who are at the front line of human tragedy. This includes, but not limited to, people working in fire and rescue services, ambulance officers, police officers, counsellors and psychotherapists, youth workers, domestic abuse support worker, rape support workers, teachers, ministers of religion, prison officers, doctors, nurses and other hospital staff. It also includes agents of change or activists. These are people whose life's work is aimed at making things better for various social groups, animals, the environment or individuals. By the nature of the work they do, they receive a disproportionate dose of the 'dark matter' of life. One of the worst dangers in being exposed to a high dose of 'dark matter' is to become overwhelmed and disillusioned. I think of it as being tempted by the 'dark side'. The temptation is to begin to believe that darkness is all there is.

In my profession we call this condition 'burnout' or 'secondary traumatisation', others might focus more on exhaustion or other physical symptoms. Whatever you call it, what happens is that we can temporarily lose our ability to feel hope and see the beauty and goodness that are also in the world and in humanity. Our perception goes out of balance and we focus more on the 'half empty' part of the glass instead of the whole glass. We now know a great deal about what happens in the brain at such times, but I don't have enough room to go into it in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jamesnachtwey.com/> (Last accessed 9th May 2017)

<sup>2</sup> The word 'ordinary' here refers to people whose work does not normally involve engaging with planetary and societal problems.

this short article. The important point is that burnout or secondary trauma is not imaginary and it is not a result of weakness or a character flaw. It is a very real neurological and therefore psychological, spiritual and physical condition and it can affect anyone who has a great deal of exposure to the dark side of life.

When we are confronted with a reality that looks like it is all darkness, when we witness or hear about gross injustice or cruelty, the assault on our limbic brain can cause us to experience a strong sense of danger and threat. We can get angry, feel deep sorrow and despair, and we might feel we would just like to get away and avoid the whole thing. We can feel so threatened by it all that our natural instinct is to protect ourselves from that horrible darkness. These are a result of our natural, mammal fight, flight, and freeze instincts.

Darkness in the outside world has the power to trigger our own internal darkness. Our internal darkness, or 'shadow' as Carl Jung called it, contains everything that we prefer not to touch, see or acknowledge within ourselves. It's can be the 'no-go' zone within us. For many people the shadow contains a good deal of pain and woundedness. But even without much personal trauma, any caring and empathetic human being is likely to be affected by the suffering of others. In fact, the more empathetic you are, the more likely you are to be affected. Of course, it is empathetic people that are more likely to be drawn to helping others. People who have a great capacity for empathy are the ones who can be more vulnerable because they feel more and can identify more deeply with the suffering of others.

The purpose of this article is to discuss how you can support yourself and take care of yourself better while you try to help others, and what areas or issues you need to pay particular attention to. I'm interested in this both as a psychotherapist and an activist myself.

It is important to pay attention to this for two reasons. One, because you are important. You must not become another casualty of the very thing you are trying to resist, correct or help. If that happens then the injustice or violence has just claimed another casualty and another 'victory' in a way. The second reason is that those who do good need to be able to continue their work sustainably, or there will be no one left to work to make the world a better place and help others. The world is wounded and it is full of suffering. We need activists and everyone who does good to do their work for as long as it is needed. I'd hate to think what can happen if all those who try to do good end up burning out and becoming casualties too.

### **Avoidance**

One of the ways that we can respond to an external or internal threat is by withdrawing emotionally and/or physically. This is what people do when they close Nachtwey's book and turn away from it. Avoidance is part of our limbic (mammal) flight response and it makes perfect biological sense. When our ancestors were threatened, getting away kept them alive long enough to have babies, which is why we are all here.

Way back when I still lived in Israel, there was a long period of time when I stopped watching the news and reading the newspapers. I just couldn't cope with the relentless barrage of bad news, anxiety and negativity. My own avoidance did not stop me from criticising others for theirs. I accused friends and family of avoiding reality and of not caring enough about others, while I was doing the same thing.

My experience as a psychotherapist has been humbling. It taught me to be much more compassionate with others and with myself. I used to think of avoidance as a problem, but now I can understand—rather than judge—the tendency to avoid the dark side of life. The degree of avoidance is probably an indication of the depth of pain that is within us, or the depth of empathy we are capable of feeling towards others. One of my clients says that avoidance is the ‘shock absorber of the soul’. I think this is the perfect description of the role of avoidance. It cushions and protects us from a fall on a hard surface and the injury it can cause. The point is, it’s natural.

Paradoxically, a common way of avoiding the dark side can be to develop a strong desire to ‘do something about it’. Although we would often believe and tell ourselves that we are acting in the best interest of those we are trying to help, there is a possibility that we might be trying to ‘fix’ the situation so that the ‘bad’ thing will go away and not hurt *us* anymore. Under such circumstances we operate out of our *own* need (to feel safe and deflect the danger away from us), rather than in response to the need of those whom we are trying to help.

I know that I am no longer effective as a therapist when I find myself offering solutions, or preaching to my clients, at the expense of true engagement and presence. At such times I almost always discover that I am avoiding discomfort and protecting myself from having to engage with pain. Of course there is always need for practical solutions and help. In fact there are many situations where this is exactly what is needed. But I do sometimes wonder about some forms of activism or programs that focus on ‘fixing’ and problem solving and that avoid engaging with those who are suffering. It’s always useful to ask, ‘Whose needs are being met in this situation?’ We ask this question regularly in our profession to make sure we are really working for the benefit of our clients, and aren’t getting confused between our needs and theirs.

There is no doubt that spiritual practices such as meditation for example, are enormously beneficial. We now know for a fact that meditation helps to develop the prefrontal cortex of the brain and to calm the limbic brain. But it is possible and unfortunately very common for people to practice meditation or follow other spiritual practices as a way of avoiding or ‘medicating’ pain, anxiety or discomfort. It can be a way of trying to get a shortcut to bliss and wellbeing, while bypassing our feeling and the darkness in ourselves and in the world. Trying to look at life as ‘all good’<sup>3</sup> is as unrealistic as seeing life as all suffering and pain. In Tibetan Buddhism, monks regularly contemplate their own death and suffering. Their aim is to expand their consciousness so that they can grasp the totality of life, as they believe Buddha was able to do. They believe that to avoid the dark side is simply to be out of touch with reality (The Dalai Lama, 1997).

The dangers of engaging with darkness are obvious and our defenses are natural. However, our avoidance takes us further away from doing good, and also from ourselves. It can cause us to overlook important things that we need to address within ourselves. So, how can we engage with the ‘dark side’ without acting defensively on the threat that we experience?

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<sup>3</sup> People who use spirituality as an escape from pain or discomfort imply that spirituality has something to do with an all ‘positive’ or perfect perception of reality. I believe that true spirituality has more to do with facing reality for what it really is, the good and the bad, light and shadow, the joyful and the painful the beautiful and the ugly.

### **Seeing the bigger picture**

Some clients try very hard to convince me that the list of problems they bring to therapy defines them; that this list of problems is all they are. This is understandable for a person who is in the midst of a crisis or who has suffered deeply and for a long time. I make sure that I am not 'seduced' by what I hear, and I keep in mind that my client is larger than his or her present crisis or 'issues'[5]. As a humanistic therapist, I simply refuse to believe that people are just the sum of their problems. The client before me is a whole human being with infinite dimensions and facets, possibilities, potential, dreams, talents, stories, personal and cultural history, dignity and yes, also a lot of trouble, inner conflict, grief, misery and woundedness.

When my clients are in crisis they are temporarily unable to feel hope or see the light at the end of a dark tunnel. Because I maintain a vision of the whole of the person, I am also able to be the 'custodian' of hope and vision for my clients, until such time when they can hold it for themselves. I do so without forgetting their problems, and I hold the hope only as long as is necessary. As soon as my clients are ready, I 'pass' the hope back to them.

Knowing when the right time is to 'pass' back the hope, depends on how well I engage with the client. If I try to pass it back too quickly, it might mean that I either do not appreciate the depth of suffering my client is in, or that I avoid the discomfort of my client's suffering. Either way, clients are likely to feel abandoned by me and think that I don't really get them and they will be right! If I pass the hope back too slowly I could disempower my client and encourage dependency. Interestingly, seeing the client as a whole person also helps me maintain a balanced view of life.

The same principle applies in all contexts where people help others. Even in the midst of despair and devastation, the human spirit is alive somewhere. Those who work with groups of victims must not to forget the dignity of the unique wholeness and humanity of the victims. You must remember their strengths, their full spirit, and their desire for meaning. They are more than just victims, they are human beings who react as humans react when they are subjected to harm and hurt. But there is always dignity and spirit somewhere, and we must be prepared to see it even in the midst of enormous suffering. If we cannot see the full humanity in victims or the dignity in a devastated piece of nature, I do not believe that we can truly make a difference to them. If we see only the problems, we risk objectifying those whom we are trying to help. The world needs us to view it as more than just a collection of problems to be fixed or eliminated.

### **When are you more likely to suffer burnout?**

Our capacity to be tempted by the 'dark side' varies depending on our personal circumstances. Sometimes we can feel so positive and strong, that we simply do not feel threatened. But at other times we might be more vulnerable. I have learnt that I am more vulnerable to being drawn into the 'dark side':

- When I am physically unwell (or as a woman, when my hormones get the better of me)
- When I am grieving or adjusting to a big life change; and
- When I have emotional 'unfinished business' of my own that I have not yet dealt with.

When we are physically unwell and when we are grieving or adjusting to change we need to be taken care of. Our ability to be with people who are in need is naturally diminished. If we try to force ourselves to be with others in need when we ourselves are in need, we are likely to feel impatient, irritable, drained, depressed and resentful. When we are not conscious that we are in need, these feelings are a useful beacon to alert us. Rather than see them as annoying, criticising them or trying to fight them off or dismissing them, it's important to pay attention to what these feelings are telling us.

If I feel impatient with a client or if I am too eager to 'fix', I immediately suspect that something is going on with me. I never dismiss my own feelings. Our feelings are the limbic (mammalian) system's way of giving us valuable information about what's going on around us and within us. To ignore our feelings is to dismiss a huge amount of valuable information about our environment and about us. No one can see reality properly or make good decisions when they ignore valuable information.

When otherwise emotionally healthy adults feel overwhelmed, it is a disproportionate reaction to a situation. In the face of a traumatic story, I might feel angry and sad. These feelings can be deep and they are appropriate. But if my emotional experience feels *overwhelming*, then instead of anger I might feel blind rage, instead of sadness I might collapse in overwhelming pain, despair or depression. These are signs that some of my *own* unfinished business is being triggered by something in my present experience.

There is a useful rule of thumb we use in my profession: if the emotional response to a situation feels overwhelming, then the issue is probably 90% in the past and only 10% in the present. Appropriate emotional responses, no matter how deep or difficult, are not experienced as overwhelming. The 'dark side' can only have a hold on us through our own 'shadow'. As I mentioned earlier, our shadow contains all the things in us that we are not aware of, that we do not acknowledge or that we have denied, or we have not yet been able to face. Since we are all work in progress and we all have wounds, we are all at risk, at some time or another. It all depends on whether a new experience happens to press the right 'buttons' in us.

**Suggestion for reflection:** *When are you more likely to be 'tempted' by the dark side? I encourage you to reflect on your life and try to identify the circumstances when you might be more vulnerable to burnout.*

*Think about situations when you feel irritable, impatient, try too quickly to fix or change circumstances or people, or when you find yourself shutting down emotionally and withdrawing.*

*Try to notice the difference between appropriate feelings and disproportionate, overwhelming ones. Reflect on the last time you experienced an overwhelming response. What do you think was being triggered within you at that time?*

### **Caring for our own well-being when we are vulnerable**

In order to avoid burnout we need to have enough self-awareness to know when we are likely to be vulnerable. The next step is to develop an awareness of our needs when we are vulnerable, and know how to meet them.

### *Physical wellbeing*

When we are ill we need to rest and eat properly so that we can allow our bodies heal. We might also need medical attention and a lot of TLC from someone safe and close<sup>4</sup>. It is obvious that during illness we must not work. It is important to allow as much time as needed so that the body can truly heal and recover. If we do not, the illness might manifest itself in a lingering low-key drain on our energy, which can point to unsustainable living. If the situation goes on for long enough it is possible that we develop something more serious.

### *Grief and adjustment to change*

Grief is a natural process of brain adjustment that follows any significant life change. Even a positive and desirable change will be accompanied by grief / adjustment. It is a process that helps us create a 'bridge' between the world as it was before the change, and the world as it is now. Our brains contain a neural representation of our reality. We need this to survive and to have what we call 'sanity'. When something important changes, the change might happen quickly but our brain will take time to create new neural networks to accommodate a new reality. Neural pathways and networks don't change over night. Everything that we are, and everything we experience is processed inside our brain. When our brain updates its neural circuitry, we experience it as an emotionally, mentally, spiritually, intellectually and physically tiring and demanding process.

Grief can be accompanied by physical symptoms and changes in appetite and sleep patterns. It can also be accompanied by a temporary loss of excitement or interest in things that are otherwise central to us, impairment of our short-term memory and difficulty concentrating. People sometimes report feeling as if they have suddenly become stupid or having a sense that they are going crazy. In times of grief (adjustment to change) most people tend to focus more on the 'negative' side of life.

Grief does not need a resolution or a cure. It is not an illness or pathology but rather a natural process that simply needs to be experienced as much as possible without interruption. Un-grieved grief can make us ill, and in the long run it can develop into depression.

Grief is often misdiagnosed as depression by both professionals and the suffering individual. This is a serious problem because an otherwise natural and healthy process is being inappropriately and unnecessarily pathologised. Although they may look similar from the outside, the difference between grief and depression is that grief is a dynamic process that has energy in it, and depression seems to be stagnant and lacking in energy.

During grief we are likely to feel profoundly exhausted (because our brain is updating and rewiring itself), and therefore a lot of rest and sleep might be needed. We might also need a lot of time and space to be able to reflect and 'lick our wounds'. We might need a shoulder to cry on, or someone we can talk to who does not need anything from us. During grief even strong extraverts become more introverted for a while. Grief is therefore an inappropriate

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<sup>4</sup> Many people do not have someone close who can take care of them, when they are ill. During an illness they might feel disappointed, lonely or sad about this. If your needs cannot be met, at least make sure that you allow yourself to feel your feelings about this fully without judging them, avoiding them, numbing them or trying to fix them. It is not so much our life events that hurt us. It is the lack of both internal and external permission to have and feel *all* of our feelings, that is more likely to wound us

time for activism or for being in a helping position. If grief is grieved properly, it will end and people go back to feeling like themselves again. (You can find out more about this in 4 Many people do not have someone close who can take care of them, when they are ill. During an illness they might feel disappointed, lonely or sad about this. If your needs cannot be met, at least make sure that you allow yourself to feel your feelings about this fully without judging them, avoiding them, numbing them or trying to fix them. It is not so much our life events that hurt us. It is the lack of both internal and external permission to have and feel *all* of our feelings, that is more likely to wound us. (You can read more in my article ‘Grief and How to Deal with it: A no-nonsense approach to grief’ at <http://www.fullyhuman.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Engaging-With-the-dark-side-revised-2014-01-25-.pdf>)

### ***Unfinished business***

When unfinished business is triggered our work can be impaired. Our judgment might be coloured by a past context, and we might not be able to see things for what they are in the here-and-now. When you become aware that something unresolved has been triggered, different tasks may be required. You might need to see a therapist to work through it, or you might engage with the issue in other ways through art, a ceremony, writing letters, writing in a journal or any other strategy that you know works for you. If you are not sure, experimenting with different ways can help you discover what best works for you.

### **Self-care as a way of life**

In the previous section I referred to wellbeing and self-care in times when we are particularly vulnerable. However, it is important not to wait for a crisis. We must cultivate an attitude of self-care as a way of life.

In his book *The Mindful Therapist* (2010), Daniel Siegel argues that it is essential for people who care for others to look after themselves. He says:

Caring for your self, bringing support and healing to your own efforts to help others and the larger worlds in which we live, is an essential daily practice—not a luxury, not some form of self-indulgence. But you may have heard people say that self-reflection is only for the selfish, that we need to ‘get out of our lives’ to really find meaning. ... no matter the challenges we confront, from famine and disease to environmental assaults, from psychological torture and escaping cultural genocide to the familial betrayal of childhood trauma, we come to our efforts to heal as human beings with a subjective inner life. There is no escaping this reality, no matter what others, or we, try to say about it. If we don’t care for ourselves, we’ll become limited in how we can care for others. It is that simple. And it is that important—for you, for others, and for our planet.

A fundamental point about self-care is congruence. If you are a person whose life’s work involves helping others, then it would not be congruent to not do the same for yourself. I sometimes come across therapists whose physical and emotional wellbeing suffers terrible neglect and I wonder how capable they are of really helping their clients. I feel uncomfortable when I meet doctors who are chain-smokers or appear stressed, overworked, irritable and exasperated. What message or example do they give to their patients about self-care and living a healthy life? I believe that if our personal life is incongruent with our work, both pay the price.

**Suggestion for reflection:**

What areas in your life are already informed by an attitude of self-care, and in what areas this is still missing?

What helps you or stops you when you try to care for yourself? Are there times when you are able to do it better than other times? If so, what is the difference between those times when you can exercise good self care and times when you can't?

Are your life and work congruent? Are you practicing your work in a way that is matching the goal you are trying to achieve?

### **Our work environment**

Jeffrey Kottler (2000) surprised and disappointed me when he advised counsellors and others who do good, to just 'get on with it' if they work in organisations that are poisonous and uncaring. He says, 'Mutter to yourself and feel resentful. But if you are truly serious about helping others, you will likely pay a small price in terms of environmental dysfunction. It is not usually that big of a deal... unless you make it so'.

I disagree with Kottler and believe that he is sending a wrong and even dangerous message. Research shows a strong link between dysfunctional work environments and anything from heart disease to depression (e.g., Robert Karasek's High Demand-Low Control Model)

I have worked with many clients who have been seriously harmed by a dysfunctional, poisonous, uncaring or 'macho' work environment. Contrary to what Kottler suggests, the price is often far from small, and it is not always just a matter of perception. There can be serious things that are wrong in the work environment. For example, you might have the misfortune of having a team member or worse, a manager, who has a personality disorder<sup>5</sup>. There can be unfair or unreasonable work conditions, expectations or demands. There are situations where work is poorly organised, where people are expected to do the impossible and where the system sets people up to fail. Such circumstances can cause serious physical and psychological harm to good, hard-working people who are just trying to do their job well.

There is a world of possibilities between embarking on a crusade to change your organisation, and being a martyr or a hero. We are in a *relationship* with the organisations we work for, and they have to care for us as much as we care for them. This means that when we are aware of a need or a problem and express them, the organisation has an obligation to take us seriously. This is called 'duty of care'. No relationship can be healthy if the needs of one side are always sacrificed for the sake of the other. Yet, I repeatedly see this happen in organisations, where organisational needs can take precedence over the needs of individuals. There is no magic in size and big is not more important or worthy than small.

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<sup>5</sup> If you are interested in this topic, I recommend, John Clarke. (2005). *Working With Monsters*. Random House Australia. Clarke is a forensic psychologist with a great deal of expertise in personality disorders and how they affect others.



I believe that all human organisations need to see those who work for them as their greatest asset. Someone once said to me that aid and development organisations are the worst employers. They can be even worse at neglecting their staff than commercial companies. There is a belief that if you do good, then looking after yourself is an indulgence you can't afford. I think some volunteer, aid or charity organisations use this as an excuse to treat their staff poorly. If this is the culture in your organisation, it has to change.

One indication that an organisation does not offer a good environment is when there is a lot of staff turnover or burnout. When good people leave a job where the environment is too taxing, they often blame themselves, and this is not right. You'd think that all human organisations would want to keep their staff, in particular those among their staff who are dedicated and are good at their job. To keep them, they have to look after them. But organisations have to look after people because it is the right thing to do and not only because they want to keep them. Organisations are made of people, and people should look after one another. Don't compromise just because you might be working for an organisation that does good. If you do, you risk your life and work becoming unsustainable, and you risk suffering harm. The world needs those who do good, and we need to be able to do our work over long periods of time without being destroyed by it.

**Suggestion for reflection:** Do you work for an organisation that is likely to understand your needs? Or are you working in a an environment where you are discouraged from having needs; where needing anything is considered a weakness; or where when things do not go so well for you, you risk being persecuted or punished in some way? (I encourage you to ask the same questions about your relationships.)

### **The role of supervision**

Most therapists, whether they work in private practice or in agencies, see a supervisor on a regular basis. A supervisor is usually an older, and more experienced therapist whose role is to be a skilled mentor and advisor. Good supervisors challenge, guide, educate, listen, reassure and validate. They are familiar with the work of the supervisee, but they are not involved in it directly and so they can remain reasonably objective. Part of the role of supervisors is to help therapists deal with what comes up for them in the course of their work, and help identify unfinished business.

Supervision is seen as absolutely essential for the wellbeing of both therapists and their clients, and it is compulsory for accredited therapists. This is so precisely because of the potentially disturbing nature of our work, and the high risk of burnout. Many people use informal sources of support in their work environment. Whilst this can be beneficial, it is also important that organisations provide their employees with formal, consistent, skilled and reliable outside supervision. There needs to be someone available with whom you can debrief, share your experiences in a confidential and safe space. Your line manager or supervisor at work is not the right person, because if you have problems with him or her or someone else in management, you might not be able to speak freely and openly and there will be little point in the exercise.

## **The existential dimension: purpose, meaning and identity**

People who do good can spend a lifetime developing many aspects of themselves to make sure they are suited for their jobs. This is a big investment. Now, imagine that we have succeeded and everything is fixed. Everything you worked for is now fine: no more famine, disease, war or misery, and the environment is all fixed and healthy. What will happen to you and your life? What will happen to your sense of purpose? Your identity?

On my website I say that my job is ‘to make myself redundant’. But I often ask myself what would really happen to me in a perfect world, where everyone is healthy and there are no more clients? Who and what will I be then? What about all the years and effort that I invested in developing and polishing my skills?

My way of addressing this is to make sure, as much as I can, that my identity, wellbeing and sense of worth do not come *only* from my work. Yes, I feel immense satisfaction when I do my job well and I do feel that I am best used in my work as a therapist. But it is not the same as getting my entire sense of worth or identity from it. We must have a sense of purpose that is bigger than our work or at least is spread over a few activities and interests. Because if/when the time comes and we can no longer do the work we love, it’s important that we continue to have a sense of purpose and meaning.

### **In summary**

- Anyone who is an agent of change and who works in a field where there is great need, trauma, suffering, injustice, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse or destruction, is always potentially at risk of being drawn into the ‘dark side’.
- The secret to being well does not lie in not having problems. Everyone has problems and issues. It is in knowing ourselves well enough, being aware of our emotions and our bodies and listening to them. It’s about living our lives with self-care and self-compassion and honesty. We need to know our needs, have appropriate strategies in place to meet them, and the willingness to use these strategies. In particular, we need to know when we are most at risk of burnout and we must be committed to our ongoing personal development.
- Being well at all levels protects us from losing our balance and being drawn into the ‘dark side’. If we are not well, we not only lose our effectiveness but we risk losing our excitement and joy in life, our sense of purpose, our ability to relate to others intimately and meaningfully, our physical health, and maybe even life itself.
- We need to live congruently. The way we live our own lives needs to be congruent with the purpose of our work. If it is not, we risk becoming another casualty of the ‘dark side’. We can also unintentionally become collaborators with the very problem we are trying to solve.

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