

The Wholeness Institute

The place for fresh starts and powerful change.

St. Patrick's Day is coming, but do you really know how it came to be?

There is a lot of lore around this beloved holiday, celebrated by millions around the world, but do you know the true stories behind March 17th? I've been reading up and what I learned may surprise you!

St. Patrick was Irish but actually born in what is now England, Scotland or Wales to a Christian deacon and his wife circa 385. When he was 16 years old, St. Patrick was captured by Irish pirates, brought to Ireland and sold into slavery. During that time, he came to view his enslavement as God's test of his faith and through prayer, found Jesus Christ. Six years later, he escaped his captors and began his studies into priesthood. He was eventually consecrated St. Patrick Bishop of the Irish and began his organization of missions to evangelize Europe.

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See Rabbi Wolpe's blog post in its entirety here:

[http://
www.huffingtonpost.com/
rabbi-david-wolpe/passover-
holiday-of-
love_b_1403844.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-david-wolpe/passover-holiday-of-love_b_1403844.html)

And Pope Francis' post here:

[http://
www.carmelitesistersocd.com/
2015/lent-pope-francis/](http://www.carmelitesistersocd.com/2015/lent-pope-francis/)



A Celtic Gift: Love, Understanding, Freedom

The period of time from today through 4/15 is a time of powerful potential. For many who follow the Christian faith, as I do, it is a time of looking to the celebration of Easter. And for some of us, doing so through the period we call Lent. For those who are Jewish, the days of Passover are coming. During this period we also have the Spring that arrives on 3/20. The period ends with Easter on 4/5 and Passover from 4/3-15. And so as I look at all of this I wonder about what this means in relationship to the work I do as a therapist and the impact it can have on my life with the community of clients whom I serve, and within myself.

Rabbi Wolpe wrote in a blog last year that "Passover celebrates love" and called for it to "reawaken the human heart", saying that "deep love comes only from the heart set free". Pope Francis wrote this year that "Each one of us has a place in God's heart". He also called for a

reawakening of our hearts through the love of God, much as Rabbi Wolpe wrote. And as I read and write this I am so startlingly aware of how much those who often come to me feel the complete opposite: unloved, alone, unlovable. And so I wonder, how do I, in just a few words, attempt to bridge this chasm to share an idea or two about how to take the step to begin loving self?

How I wish that the way to begin loving self was as easy as a recipe for a dish. It's not, but I am going to give you 3 steps to begin a process, or continue it. Let's start with step 1, what you believe about yourself. Try writing a list of what you believe about yourself.

Actually make 3 lists:

a. What others told me about me - good and bad.

b. What I think about each of the items in the first list - do I believe them or not? Why not? Why do I?

c. What I want to believe about each of the above.



When I first did a similar set of lists I found that much of what was in my a and b lists was negative. All of the old scripts from my past came up - and I believed it. To rewrite them as what I wanted to believe was really challenging. And frankly, in some cases it meant I would have to change in order to be the opposite, or to be a different level of the trait. For instance, I can be impatient in situations, so I had and have to continue to work at changing my responses.

I love what poet & writer John O'Donohue writes about Nietzsche when he "rebaptized all his negative qualities as his best qualities" and found it to be a "wonderful day". When we do this, O'Donohue says, we "exercise kindness toward them [our negative qualities]". In a sense, you are called to be a loving parent to your delinquent qualities". I firmly believe that the night I made those 3 lists I began being that loving parent to myself. And I encourage you to do the same by rebaptizing the negative qualities into new strengths. Continue this by daily speaking kindly of yourself to yourself and others.

We all have various traits we might want to change, but also often time's have feelings we are harboring about things from the past. Step 2 is to begin to identify these experiences and feelings. Maybe my sense of abandonment by a parent, friend, business partner, boss, or child still brings up anger and pain. If I let it stay in the dark, it remains there and grows like a mold in the dark. Yet, if I bring that out, if I say, "I'm still so angry and hurt and just plain mad that my husband treated me in this way", then I'm putting light on it. And much as mold cannot live well in the sunlight, there is a potential for change now.

A large part of steps 1 & 2, I believe, is to begin to open one's inner world and thoughts and feelings to another person. We tend to live in isolation even in the midst of friends, family, loved ones. As O'Donohue said in "Anam Cara", "No one else has access to the world you carry around within yourself; you are its custodian and entrance." And yet, healing so often requires we share, as O'Donohue knew so well. It requires we reach out at the times and in ways that feel most vulnerable and share what is within us, even when sometimes we are not even able to find any words. So the feelings may be all we can share through a look, a shadow that crosses our face, an emotion that wells up in tears. We do not open to all or even at all moments. Goodness, if we stayed open all of the time we truly would be both boundary-less and constantly hurt. We need the boundaries; we need to be the kind custodian to our heart and self.

So this 3rd step is to share what is within you with some safe other. I've shared my beliefs, experiences, and feelings at various times with a friend, a therapist, a spiritual director, or a priest. Often I share with my "anam cara", my soul friend as the Celtic would call her, a friend with whom I feel a sense of love and full acceptance. So begin to share regularly with another. "Love allows understanding to dawn, and understanding is precious. Where you are understood, you are at home. Understanding nourishes belonging - when you really feel understood, you feel free to release yourself into the trust and shelter of the other person's love" according to O'Donohue. And truly, that also brings freedom and the beginning of knowing we are loveable despite what has happened, what we feel, what we have believed. As we begin to transform these experiences, then the freedom grows.

And isn't that the true spirit of what we are to learn during this 6 week journey? Lent is about renewal of the spirit, Easter is about rebirth and freedom through Christ's love, Passover is a celebration of the freedom of a people from slavery by Yahweh. As Rabbi Wolpe and Pope Francis call us, challenge us, to greater self-love through this time of rebirth and freedom, won't you also take the challenge and take a step toward freeing your own sense of self? Take that step toward self-compassion and self-kindness. Find and be your own Anam Cara.

St. Patrick's Day cont.

St. Patrick has also been credited with banishing the snakes from the Emerald Isle. However, snakes never likely lived there to begin with. "Legend has it that Patrick stood on an Irish hillside and delivered a sermon that drove the island's serpents into the sea. While it's true that the Emerald Isle is mercifully snake-free, chances are that's been the case throughout human history. Water has surrounded Ireland since the end of the last glacial period, preventing snakes from slithering over; before that, it was blanketed in ice and too chilly for the cold-blooded creatures. Scholars believe the snake story is an allegory for St. Patrick's eradication of pagan ideology." excerpt taken from

<http://www.history.com/news/st-patricks-day-myths-debunked>

We all think of green for St. Patrick's Day, but did you know that initially St. Patrick was linked with blue? The knights in the Order of St. Patrick wore a color called St. Patrick's blue! According to time.com, "the use of green on St. Patrick's Day began during the 1798 Irish Rebellion, when the clover became a symbol of nationalism and the "wearing of the green" on lapels became regular practice. The green soon spread to uniforms as well. That evolution, combined with the idea of Ireland's lush green fields, eventually made blue a thing of the past."

Finally, I have long mistakenly believed that St. Patrick's day festivities began

in Ireland. I was surprised to learn that initially, St. Patrick's Day was a Roman Catholic feast only observed in Ireland, without all of the revelry we know it to be today. It was the immigrants living in the United States who began the St. Patrick's Day we have come to know filled with parades, parties, and festivals.

I'll leave you with an Irish blessing:

A Roof for the Rain

May you always have walls
for the winds,
a roof for the rain,
tea beside the fire,
laughter to cheer you,
those you love near you,
and all your heart might desire.

Recipes

Recipes this month taken from [Irish Cooking](#):

http://www.amazon.com/Irish-Cooking/dp/145085852X/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1425337142&sr=8-4&keywords=irish+cooking

Irish Soda Bread Rounds

4 c all purpose flour
1/4 c sugar
1 T baking powder
1 t baking soda
1 t salt
1/3 c shortening
1 c currants or raisins
1 3/4 c buttermilk
1 egg

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 2 baking sheets and set aside.
2. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt into large bowl. Cut in shortening with pastry blender or two knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in currants, beat buttermilk and egg into medium bowl until well blended. Add buttermilk mixture to flour mixture, stir until mixture forms soft dough.
3. Turn out dough onto floured surface. Knead 10-12 times. Shape into 8 rounds. Place on prepared baking sheets, score top of each round with tip of sharp knife making an "x" about 1 inch long and 1/4 inch deep.
4. Bake 25-28 minutes or until toothpick inserted into centers comes out clean. Immediately remove from baking sheets, cool on wire racks.

*For a sweet crust, combine 1 T sugar and 1 T water in small bowl, brush over hot bread.
Makes 8 rounds.

Irish Lamb Stew

1/2 c all purpose flour
2 t salt, divided
1/2 t pepper, divided
3 lb boneless lamb stew meat, cut into 1 1/2" cubes
3 T vegetable oil
1 c chopped onion
1 can (15 oz) Irish stout
1 t sugar
1 t dried thyme
1 lb small new potatoes, quartered
1 lb carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
1/2 c water
1 c frozen peas
1/2 c chopped fresh parsley

Mix flour with 1 t salt and 1/4 t pepper in large bowl. Toss lamb in flour mixture and toss off excess. Discard leftover flour. Heat oil in dutch oven over med heat. Brown lamb on all sides in batches, about 7 minutes per batch. Transfer to bowl.

Add onion and 1/4 c stout to dutch oven. Cook over med heat, 10 min, scraping up any brown bits. Return lamb to dutch oven and stir in remaining stout, sugar, thyme, remaining 1 t salt and remaining 1/4 t pepper. Add water so the liquid just covers lamb if needed. Cover, simmer 1 1/2 hours or until lamb is tender.

Add potatoes, carrots, and 1/2 c water. Cook, covered, 30 min or until vegetables are tender. Stir in peas and parsley, simmer 5-10 min or until heated through.

Makes 8 servings.



Books TO CONSIDER:

Anam Cara
by John O'Donohue

http://www.amazon.com/Anam-Cara-Book-Celtic-Wisdom/dp/006092943X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1425405386&sr=8-1&keywords=anam+cara

The Gift of Imperfection
by Brene Brown

http://www.amazon.com/Gifts-Imperfection-Think-Supposed-Embrace/dp/159285849X/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1425405444&sr=8-2&keywords=self+esteem

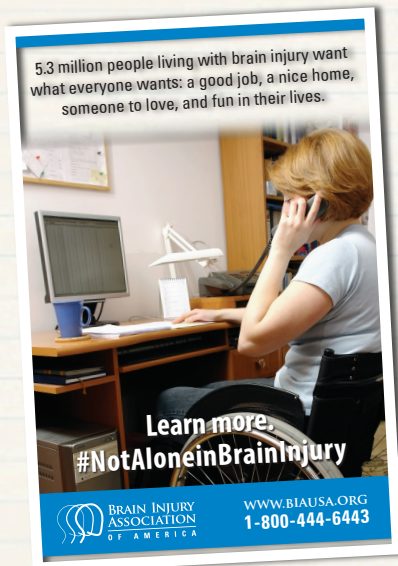
Succulent Wild Woman
by Sark

http://www.amazon.com/Succulent-Wild-Woman-Sark/dp/068483376X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1425405640&sr=8-1&keywords=sark

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Did you know?

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According to the [Brain Injury Association of America](http://www.biausa.org), each year an estimated 2.4 million children and adults in the United States sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI), and another 795,000 individuals sustain an acquired brain injury (ABI) from nontraumatic causes. TBIs can affect the functionality of the brain— affecting thinking, reasoning, and memory. Whether the victim is an adult, a child, or an infant, TBIs can have a major impact on individuals and their families.

To raise awareness of traumatic brain injury, the Brain Injury Association of America recognizes National Brain Injury Awareness Month every March. The NCTSN offers the following resources on traumatic brain injury for families, medical professionals, and military families.

There is help for those with brain injury, and the following are resources I would recommend for more information.

For national information, I recommend:

Brain Injury Association of America

<http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm>

In the Valley, I am a provider through:

<http://intakeconsole.biaaz.org/providerpopup.aspx?from=local&Providerid=762>

THE WHOLENESS INSTITUTE

6501 E. Greenway Parkway #103-529
Scottsdale, AZ 85254

For information on the Phoenix St. Patrick's Day parade and other Irish resources in the Valley, take a look at the following links:

<http://stpatricksdaysphoenix.org/>

<http://www.azirish.org/>