

Maria Campbell, *Eagle Feather News*, November 2017

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It's time to share our experiences with violence

Violence has become our greatest inheritance, brought to us from a violent place across the water a long time ago and given to us to carry, to nurture, and to take to new levels.

One needs only to read their history to see the horrific ways people were treated and treated each other in Europe prior to contact with Indigenous people in North America.

This inherited violence has manifested itself among us into every form of soul wounding one can imagine or cannot imagine, especially to the soul wounding of babies and children who grow up to be men and women who carry this and often, if help is not sought, pass it on to another generation.

I have worked as a volunteer, as a grandmother and an elder with those same women, men and children for over 50 years. I can't even begin to describe the shame, hopelessness, and fear that each one of them carries, be it the abused, or the abuser.

Some carry it in the semblance of a "normal" life. Others carry it into prisons, safe houses, crisis centers, into academia, sweat-lodges, and fasts. I have never met anyone who didn't want help.

My late husband and I loved each other, we wanted a good life, we wanted help, but there was so much shame and fear. I was lucky, I went to a sweat lodge, and I found an elder. He self-medicated and died. What a waste of a good man, because he was a good man.

Some of us can successfully hide our stuff away for a long time but eventually, if not dealt with, it comes roaring out and we can't stuff it away anymore. No one wants this, we didn't ask for it but it has become an epidemic and we have to find a way to stop it.

Beginning today, I am going to share this column and space on page five with as many people as I can find to write about all forms of violence. What are /were your experiences with it, how are you living or not living with it. Where and how did you get help?

You don't have to use your name if you don't want to. Just know that your story will perhaps open a door and show a brother or a sister a better way, or even just to start a conversation.

Our old nokom's always say, ' Achimo, wuskahwe, kakisimo ki maskihky aniki ' (Story, movement and prayer are your medicines)

You can contact me at gabriels.crossing@gmail.com or I will be in touch with you.

We begin today with friend, writer, mother, grandmother and community elder Louise Halfe. Thank you, Louise, for your words.

Louise's wise words are below