

# The Face You Wear

## BECOMING HEALERS

**W**hat if you were born to live in this time, in these times? Choosing to incarnate, burdened by terrible conditions, strengthened by an indigenous strength, native to any human who can tap into it. Strength training is built on resistance.

I've been thinking about this these past months: Faced with facts, realities and alternative facts, alternative realities far more dangerous than accepting the fact of neuro-diversity. You may perceive differently, but are your perceptions matching a consensus community of suffering? Does that community agree on the best way to strengthen itself against outrageous suffering?

How did Native people deal with people who practiced addiction-driven domestic violence and child abuse; deal with those who believed Natives should be wiped off the face of the Earth, so that America could eventually build condos and oil pipelines, sacrificing people and drinking water? How do you come back from genocide and still *rise*?

How did Black people deal with a scientific declaration that they were inferior, that they were insane for attempting to escape slavery? Then move to a state where their very presence was illegal and whose founding fathers felt slavery was the best "natural" condition for them?

How do women, longing for a life beyond bearing children for oppressive men, work for the vote, equal pay for equal work, freedom from domestic violence and sexual assault, but be declared "hysterical" by the "scientific" community — which still doesn't officially recognize any emotional and psychological wounding from sexism and racism?

While I'm an American who used to sing the national anthem as a child and salute the flag, I love my country, but my country doesn't always love me back. For most of my life, the Russians were the enemy of my country, the Germans before them. And people wearing my face were plagued by the Ku Klux Klan.

Now we have a Klan-friendly White House again, which elevates a white supremacist to a national security post. A president of German descent (Wonder what Ben Franklin would think of that?) who is palsy-walsy with the Russians, whose covert ops may have pulled off a real life Manchurian candidate, without firing a nuke, but dropping a cybernetic Trojan Horse.

How does one practice surfing in such a perfect storm? You are born ready. I'm suggesting we are all born ready. You face fear, with skills of deep connection, truth telling, and skillful healing action towards hurt people. Hurt people hurt people. Healing skill must be applied to all who need it, beyond the will and skill of corporations and governments to supply it. When I hear that opiate overdoses have overtaken gun deaths, that's indicating there is a lot of pain.

Pills are not skills.

When pills are more available than skills, for dealing with chronic pain of all kinds, someone profits: Corporations are enriched, governments have controlled populations, unable to agitate for greater freedom. It becomes clear to me that if addiction is slavery, then incarceration leads to the New Jim Crow, except that it's expanded beyond its original targets.

The skills leading to liberation and freedom are skills that are tested and refined in resistance. They must be practiced like a musical instrument. The choir must not sing hymns, but learn to improvise like jazz. My kung-fu teachers once told me, "We practice so we don't have to fight, but we are ready if the fight comes. But creating

peace is the superior path to creating war. That's why it's called a martial art. The art is making yourself beautiful and stronger than even death, by resolving conflict, and making peace beyond your personal family, and your personal lifetime."

Martin Luther King Jr. did not emulate Gandhi by wearing a *dhoti*, to practice *satyagraha*. *Satyagraha*, literally "holding on to truth," is one term for actively practicing non-violence. White women or other people wearing blackface are not effectively teaching about racism and other forms of systemic discrimination.

Clearly, these actions cause pain in others because of their connection to the past, which is still present. *Satyagraha* requires discerning, healing, and strengthening internalized oppression, not inflicting oppression on others. If any pain is to be inflicted, you take it upon yourself not to inflict pain upon your oppressor, but to teach your oppressor to stop causing pain.

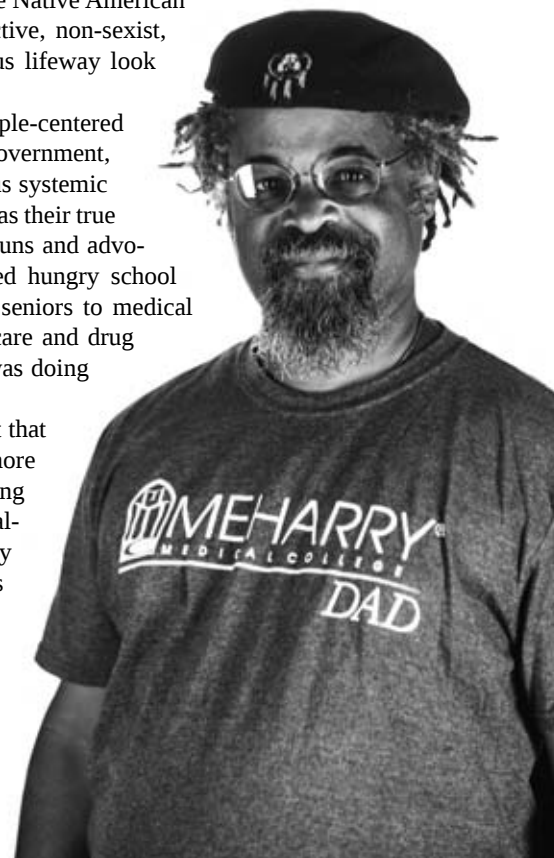
I liken it to developing guitar calluses on your fingers and thumb. At first it hurts, but with continued work, the pain disappears and you can make music. Then the difficulty is making increasingly difficult and harmonious music in the face of discord. Teaching such skill, one must endure students' *satyagrahic* mistakes in harmony, so to speak. It is the more difficult path than simply wearing blackface, but it works. I studied Martin's teachers, Bayard Rustin, Howard Thurman and Mahatma Gandhi, after I had studied and emulated the U.S. organization Black Panthers and the Wellbriety movement in Indian Country.

The connection is the Wellbriety movement seeks relief from addiction by abstinence from addictive chemicals introduced by Europeans and re-creating a non-addictive Native American lifeway. What would a non-addictive, non-sexist, non-racist, non-classist, indigenous lifeway look like for Europeans?

The Panthers generated people-centered social programs independent of government, addressing patterned and conscious systemic neglect by the government. This was their true threat: Not that they brandished guns and advocated revolution, but that they fed hungry school children of all races, transported seniors to medical care, and provided free medical care and drug treatment when the government was doing nothing.

When faced with a government that not only actively lies, spends more money on weapons and promoting addictive products more than healing addictive disease, and actively does nothing to alleviate people's suffering, it's up to us to become active, truth telling healers. I was born to do this, and so were you.

*Mark Harris is an instructor and substance abuse prevention coordinator at LCC.*



**Envision Eugene**  
**Community Information Sessions**  
 Urban Growth Boundary Adoption

Come learn about the proposed urban growth boundary, expansion areas, comprehensive plan, multi-family housing strategies and more! Find out how to provide feedback and participate in the March public hearing.

<b>February 2</b> 6-7:30 pm Churchill High School Library 1850 Bailey Hill Rd., Eugene	<b>February 7*</b> 6-7:30 pm Eugene Downtown Library Bascom-Tykeson Room	<b>February 9</b> 6-7:30 pm Willamette High School Library 1801 Echo Hollow Rd., Eugene	Brief Presentations at 6:30 pm
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\*Interpretación al Español y actividades para niños ofrecidas por el personal del departamento de recreación de la ciudad estarán disponibles en el evento del 7 de Febrero.  
 \*Spanish translation and activities for kids with city recreation staff will be available at the February 7th event.

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SWEET DIPS house party 1/11/17  
 local djs, champagne, and chocolate dipped sweets  
 8pm-1am \$15=entry+drink 21 and over  
 pink attire requested [facebook/MAVEN](https://www.facebook.com/MAVEN)