

CCPJ MOVIE NIGHT!

War and the Soul

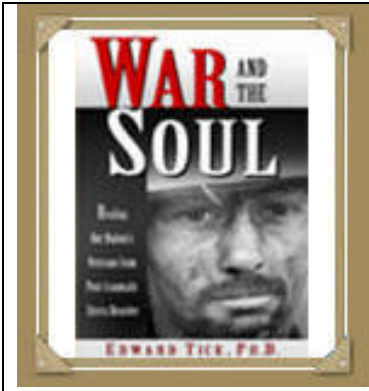
Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Come Help CCPJ Develop a Forum on Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD)

Monday, January 22 at 7:30

Friends Meeting House, 144 South Quaker Lane, West Hartford

We will show Dr. Ed Tick's 90 minute DVD (a brief synopsis of his book "War and the Soul") and discuss efforts to hold a larger Central Connecticut and/or state-wide forum on PTSD focused on helping returning Iraq War (and previous war) veterans "come home." This DVD captures a presentation of the issues raised in the book at a small forum. It includes a question and answer session with that audience which included veterans, veteran's advocates and others.



War and the Soul

Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder by Edward Tick, Ph.D.

War and the Soul will change the way we think about war, for veterans and for all those who love and want to help them. It shows how to make the wounded soul whole again. When this work is achieved, PTSD vanishes and the veteran can truly return home.

For more information: www.hopeoutloud.org
wayne@hopeoutloud.org

[Excerpt] The mortars have stopped falling. The tracers have stopped screaming. The mountains, jungles, and villages have stopped smoldering. But years later, veterans still have nightmares and flashbacks in which the old battles still rage. They still watch for threats and stand poised for danger. Their hearts respond to everyday situations as though they were vicious attacks and to ordinary relationships as though they were with long-gone comrades and enemies.

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Though hostilities cease and life moves on, and though loved ones yearn for their healing, veterans often remain drenched in the imagery and emotion of war for decades, and sometimes for their entire lives. For these survivors, every vital human characteristic that we attribute to the soul may be fundamentally reshaped. These traits include how we perceive; how our minds are organized and function; how we love and relate; what we believe, expect, and value; what we feel and refuse to feel; and what we judge as good or evil, right or wrong. Though the affliction that today we call post-traumatic stress disorder has had many names over the centuries, it is always the result of the way war invades, wounds, and transforms our spirit.

I have been working as a psychotherapist with war veterans and survivors for over a quarter of a century. I began in 1979, just a few years after the end of the Vietnam War. PTSD was not yet a recognized diagnostic category. Veterans my own age--some had survived combat, others had avoided it--were asking for help.

I sat with men whose souls seemed damaged and whose young lives seemed ruined. Scott, a helicopter door gunner, abandoned at night in the jungle, had killed in hand-to-hand combat. I had not seen him since we had played softball together in high school. Two hundred miles from our teenage neighborhood, he stumbled into my office stunned and wired, his life in shambles. I could not tolerate the idea that my old playmate and others like him would remain lost and without health, hope, or purpose.

According to the Veterans Administration almost 20% of Iraq returnees have Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Such vets typically can't hold jobs. They are incapable of intimacy, creative work, and self-realization. Some can't leave the house because they are afraid they will kill or be killed.

The key to healing, says psychotherapist Ed Tick, is in how we understand PTSD. In war's overwhelming violence the true self flees and can become lost for life. He redefines PTSD as an identity disorder with radical implications for therapy. First, Tick establishes the traditional context of war in mythology and religion. Then he describes PTSD as an identity issue and a soul wound. Finally, he presents ways to nurture a positive identity based in compassion and forgiveness.