



Allender
Center

**Narrative Focused Trauma Care
Training Certificate Level I 2020-21**
Syllabus for Clinical & General Tracks
Session I: September 24-27, 2020

Pre-Reading

REQUIRED: must be completed by start of September session:

- Complete Story Sage Online course
- *The Healing Path* by Dan Allender (ISBN: 978-1578563913)
- *The Body Keeps the Score** by Bessel van der Kolk, MD (ISBN: 978-0670785933)
*Parts I & II only (pages 1-104) required for September; additional parts required later in year
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (ISBN: 978-0345514400)
- *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem (ISBN: 978-1942094470)
*Part I only required for September; additional parts required later in year

RECOMMENDED:

- *Trauma and Grace, Second Addition: Theology in a Ruptured World* by Serene Jones (ISBN: 978-0664264772)
Note: Second addition highly recommended as it applies up to date research about trauma.
- *To Be Told: God Invites You to Co-Author Your Future* by Dan Allender (ISBN: 978-1578569519)
Also available as an online course at www.theallendercenter.org

Writing Assignment: Due Sunday, August 30

1. **Read (or review)** *The Healing Path* before you write your paper
2. **Reflect** on your childhood (age 4-18). Consider specific experiences from that time period that have impacted you and represent central and guiding tragedies of loss, pain, confusion, or harm. Your story selection could be a headline event such as the death of a parent, or perhaps something that seems relatively insignificant like a comment by your uncle about your developing body. Small events, though seemingly minor, can symbolize many other tragedies, and large events are things you know have significantly shaped your sense of being and understanding of who you are.
3. **Write** the following assignment:
 - a. **Section 1: Childhood Narrative (600-1000 words).** Select and describe a specific narrative of an experience from your childhood that represents a central and guiding tragedy in your life. The story you choose is meant to provide an illuminating window into your life. **Note:** *During Session I, you will be invited to read the Narrative to your small group as part of the professional learning and personal development process.*
 - b. **Section 2: Analysis (1-3 pages, double spaced).** Analyze this story by reflecting on how it impacts your current style of relating to yourself and to others. **Note:** *The Analysis portion of your paper will not be read to your small group.*



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4. **Format** your paper to meet the following submission requirements:
 - a. Combine your written sections (both the Childhood Narrative and Analysis) together in a single document
 - b. The Allender Center can only accept documents saved as Word or Google Doc files (PDFs, Mac Pages, etc. cannot be accepted)
 - c. Include your full name as a header within the document; make sure your name is on every page.
 - d. **Double space your text and do not exceed the writing limits per section (600-1000 word Narrative; 1-3 pages double spaced Analysis)**

5. **Review** your assignment to make sure it meets the writing requirements. You will be asked to rewrite/edit the assignment if it does not fulfill the following:
 - My Childhood Narrative is set in my childhood from the age range of 4-18 years old
 - I have focused my writing on one particular story in the Childhood Narrative portion of the paper (vs. sharing snippets of multiple stories or events over a wide range of years)
 - I have stayed within the word count guidelines for my Childhood Narrative and Analysis (see guidelines above in Section 3)
 - I have properly formatted my assignment and have not exceeded the page limit (see guidelines above in Section 4)

6. **Submit** your assignment using these instructions:
 - a. Send your assignment to certificates@theallendercenter.org. **We cannot accept mailed hard copies.**
 - b. In the Subject Line of the email, please write "TCI Session I Assignment" along with your first and last name. For example: TCI Session I Assignment – Elise Chin.

“Land the Plane” and Other Suggestions for Writing Your Story © Lisa Fann, 2009

Too often we write our stories as a newspaper report. We may write the sequence of events, but we avoid details and emotions. When we don't fully engage with our stories, we keep a comfortable distance but rob ourselves of an opportunity for growth. As you write your story, keep the ideas below in mind.

Land the Plane / We often tell our painful stories from a safe distance, say, 30,000 feet. We are in a plane, commenting on the terrain below. “There’s a mountain. There’s a river. It curves and makes a gorge and then tumbles over that cliff.” Will you land the plane and walk around on the ground? Identify the plants, look for animal tracks, smell the wet dirt, listen to the birds.

Mind the Gap / As you look over your story, look for gaps in time and for missing people. What have you skipped over? Did you include details for one part but use broad generalities to describe another part? Are there major characters who are conspicuously absent in your story? Be aware of how you write about the most painful parts of your story. You can also think of this cinematographically. Where do you look at your story through a wide-angle lens? Where do you do a close-up? Why do you zoom in some places and zoom out in others?

Use Your Senses / What do you feel? What do you see? What do you hear? Wise writers keep in mind the saying “Show, don’t tell.” Instead of *telling* the reader it was a beautiful day, *show* the reader by describing the sky, breeze, and scent in the air. Do the same thing as you write about emotions. Avoid words like *angry* or *sad*. Try writing about where you feel it in your body. What does grief feel like? Where in your torso do you feel anger? How does your face register shame?

Follow Strong Emotion / Where do you feel tears coming to your eyes as you write? Where do you feel disdain or disgust for yourself as a child? Where do you think, “I should have known better” or “It was my fault”? Where do you feel the flame of anger? Write more about the emotion then, as you experienced it, and now, as you write. What did you do to survive? What vows did you make to avoid future harm?

Embrace Complexity / Are you the victim of all your stories? Was your mother always wonderful and your father abusive? Are you letting someone off the hook because he/she “did the best he/she could”? What was the impact of those people who seemed to be on the sidelines of the action in your story?