

A Hole In Your Self: Filling Your SELF With Health

Part III

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There are probably many reasons why we gravitate to glop to fill the empty spaces within us. Glop is easy to do and easy to get. It is also symbolic of early salves for our pain. Most glop comes via our mouth (i.e., food, alcohol, drug, sex, cigarettes), similar to our earliest soothing experiences of drinking milk, sucking our thumb or pacifier or putting our toys in our mouth. Sucking and related behaviors were our first coping mechanisms. They bore no consequences. Glopful behaviors do. Therein lies the problem.

Glop, though filling our hole, distracting us from our pain or numbing us into feeling stronger, at best provides temporary results. In addition, in almost all instances the results of glopful behaviors are glopful thoughts and feelings of shame and blame. The latter only widen our already existing hole. It is the literal equivalent of rubbing salt into our wounds. We glop to stop the pain from the hole in our self, only to increase both the size of the hole and the pain flowing from it in a repetitive vicious cycle. Yet, much as we know all this, we just can't stop.

If we accept the idea that to varying extents all people enter adulthood as wounded warriors, then the answer to this paradox must lie in that complex situation. The warrior, actually our wounded little teen boy/girl parts come with us into adulthood. The adult inherits and takes on the child's hole and strong sense of being lesser than. Even though the adult may now be very adequate and accomplished, these childhood feelings of inferiority and inadequacy irrationally remain. Not only do they persist, but they do so with a vengeance and a force that defies all understanding. It is in the form, "I know I am...smart, attractive, capable, kind, accomplished, but I feel like such a loser all the time." This comes as a result of our mind's architecture. For all its beauty, it has some definite design flaws. Therapy, counseling and coaching processes and many other activities are intended to correct them. This article encourages filling the hole in your self with healthy behaviors, instead of glopful ones.

Step One

The first step is to find sources of healing to make the hole smaller. I have often fantasized about a technique analogous to sutures for holes in our skin. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to sew up the hole in our self to stop the painful oozings and torturous musings? Or to just laser beam it closed. I am still

working on it! Meanwhile there are many healing sources available to you. There are:

Cognitive Healing

Psychoanalysis
Psychotherapy
Counseling
Coaching
Support/Therapy Groups
On Line Chat Rooms
Classes
Videos, Audios, Books, etc.

Experiential Healing

Medication
Relaxation Exercises
Mindfulness Training
EMDR
Massage
Meditation
Warm Baths
Soothing Music
Visual Imaging
Hypnosis, etc.

All of those listed on the left and more offer various ways to work through and resolve historical hurts, gain insight and understanding and strengthen your emotional core that facilitates your healthy adult functioning. It takes some time and patience, but large numbers including myself have reclaimed their selves and their comfortable functioning by participating in one or more of these activities. I may not have realized it at the time, but the psychoanalysis I participated in for my panic disorder in the early 70's, helped me make peace with my hole digging family experiences, while rescuing me from my quivering child/teen parts and returning me to my adult self. The same growth and health can be yours as well.

The list on the right side offers neurological and physiological healing of various imbalances. They also counterbalance glopful feelings of anxiety and depression. Most address the wounded, hole filled child on the basic sensory level where s/he began. Each offers soothing feelings to counterbalance agitation and pain.

That list at best is partial. As I write this sentence I am sitting in the yard on a sunny, not so hot day. The sky is blue with dots of clouds; the green grass is freshly cut. For me this is a powerfully calming sensory experience. The sun gently warms my face. The birds' songful chatter is like a lullaby. My mind is active, but my body is at peace. I encourage you to seek and find your peaceful, glopfree spaces. We will illustrate a few more in step four.

Step Two

Healing our historical wounds is one side of the therapy coin. Understanding the origins of our sensitivities that affect us in the present is another. In a three sided coin sense, you can also come to understand how “old news”, contributes to present day problems. Freud called it repetition compulsion. This is our universal tendency to repeat over and over, the unfinished business and hurt areas of our youth.

Taken together you can use this insight and understanding to build emotional muscle. It will enable you to modify distorted and exaggerated beliefs to become more self-affirming, self-enhancing and supportive. This will facilitate your escape from glopfulnesses into more healthful, hole filling experiences.

Step Three

This step asks that you begin to strengthen your healthy Adult Voice of Choice. That is the voice that inhibits the impulse driven, self-defeating, “want/deserve glop right now,” acting out child/teen. To feel good about your self, glopful behaviors and their shame and blame consequences need to be minimized or eliminated. To feel in control, you need to take charge and manage your life protectively and proactively. A solid sense of competence and confidence can not be fully achieved, while engaging in glopful activities or thoughts. It’s just not possible.

Choice is essential to your healthy adaptation to life. Being or feeling stuck immediately triggers the frustrations of your child parts. People rebel from unreasonable and unfair demands placed on them by others. Yet, those very same people, can impose the most unreasonable, unhealthy and unfair demands on themselves. All compulsive/addictive glopful habits are made of this paradox.

Healthy, adults avoid temptations of all kinds by making healthy choices most of the time. In the bagel vs. banana breakfast bowl, you need the banana to win 80% of the time. In the battle between cigarettes, pain pill abuse or cocaine use, you need the healthy self-protective adult voice of choice to win 100% of the time.

Given the powerful influence of the child/teen based voices, it takes effort to strengthen your adult voice. Here are some tools that help you achieve that:

- Any activities from the lists in step one
- Focusing on realities instead of distortions
- Using affirmations
- Assessing your self today instead from old scenes and feelings
- Speaking to yourself in the same supportive, encouraging, compassionate and unconditional voice with which you speak to others (i.e., objective positivism)

The advantages of your being able to draw upon your healthy adult voice are obvious. You became just like people you admire. You are in charge and able to manage your self and your life well. You enjoy the pride of these results, which changes things from a vicious to a positive cycle. In addition, you are protected and more likely to survive in a “fittest” sense. Most importantly, you are comfortable and fulfilled and for that alone can admire your self for finally feeling whole and adequate. In this position, what others think of you becomes less important and what you think of you dominates. Even more healthy choices occur and you become an important part of all equations. People pleasing, except when appropriate, diminishes as self-pleasing increases. This brings us to the next step.

Step Four

This step involves seeking out everyday activities that bring you pleasure, relaxation and multiple pride bank deposits. We are all different when it comes to this. My writing day in the yard or on the beach may be someone else’s nightmare. Your pleasure of going to a professional sports event would be mine. It is not what we do, but that we do something for ourselves to break up the demands of the stresses and presses of our lives. Here are some examples:

- Arts and crafts classes
- Any form of exercise
- Finishing a degree
- Taking a class for fun
- Watching your favorite TV show
- Going to a movie, show, concert
- Walking or just sitting on the beach or in the park
- Bowling
- Taking a trip for a day, weekend, month
- Reading a frivolous book for no reason
- Lighting a candle or two
- Fishing, knitting, painting, etc.
- Taking a bubble bath/hot tub for one or more
- Taking a steam or sauna
- Watching or playing a game

Step four is important, simple, but not always easy to implement. It takes more time than glop. In most cases it takes planning and time management. It demands a sense of deserving dividends for all the pride bank deposits. Therefore, it requires using a fair accounting system that accurately counts it all in present day emotional currency. This step is a counterbalance to your serious efforts. It is payback for your devotion to your family, your work and all the other tasks you do to take care of yourself and manage your life. It is a reward for being decent, honest, kind and caring. Funny enough, those who don’t behave in these ways can be quite self-indulgent. Those who do can be quite stingy in

giving back to themselves. If they can, why can't you? Step four offers a variety of therapeutic rewards that will contribute to your positive feelings.

Step Five

All diets have a maintenance component which most people struggle to sustain. The yoyo is alive and not so well for us all. Step five asks that you maintain your healthy self assessment, self-management and balance for the duration. It requires a mindset that finally makes peace with your glop(s) of choice.

This step says, "I have one life to live and I want it to go well. I want to avoid problems. I want to live protectively in all respects. I want to avoid:

- Obesity
- Addiction
- Premature death
- Bankruptcy or financial stress
- Divorce
- Sloppy living
- Legal problems
- High medical costs
- Public/family embarrassment
- Losses
- Shame and blame

I want to stay in this comfort zone, for the rest of my life. I want to take care of my very precious SELF."

Can you do it? Absolutely. Is it easy? Absolutely not. Is it worth it? Absolutely. Are you worth it? You decide.

In Sum

As we have learned we all have holes in our self both from the natural developmental process and from the dysfunctional experiences of that process. How we fill those holes are critically important. We seem pre-programmed to fill those holes with glop. That just makes our hole bigger in a never ending vicious cycle.

Clearly, there are healthier ways to fill your holes than with glop. There are also a variety of tools to heal your wounds and ultimately feel whole and adequate. With your healthy adult voice of choice, you can take charge of your self and your life, once and for all and forever! I wish you good luck in this pursuit.

