

numa

caring for the spirit in island health

Public Servants

It is not overly popular to consider oneself a "servant". Being a servant has connotations of being beneath or subservient to another. In the following excerpt from Kitchen Table Wisdom [Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen](#) provides a way of understanding service that can be both inspirational for health care professionals and beneficial for the people for whom they care.

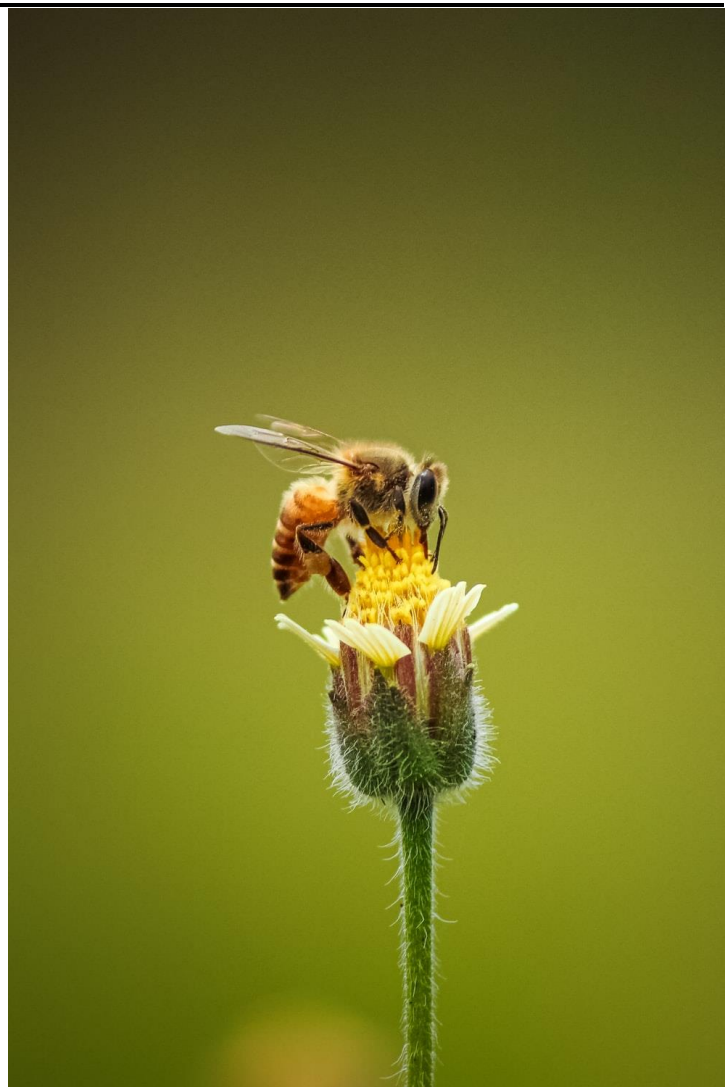
In recent years the question "How can I help?" has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not "How can I help?" but "How can I serve?"

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am.

When we help we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity and wholeness.

**Everyone can be great,
because everyone can serve.**

Martin Luther King Jr.



When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is the same as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am as served as the person I am serving. When I help I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix I do not see the wholeness in the other person or trust the integrity of the life in them. When I serve I see and trust that wholeness. It is what I am responding to and collaborating with.

There is distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, an experience of difference. In fixing there is an inequality of expertise that can easily become a moral distance. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. This is Mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

NEW INTRANET SITE!

The Spiritual Health program has a new intranet site which staff can access for information on education, resources and how to contact Spiritual Health. Check it out!

[Spiritual Health Intranet](#)



NUMA (Greek for “spirit/breath”) is produced by Island Health’s Spiritual Health team to draw awareness to issues of spirituality in health care. The editor of numa is Darren Colyn, Spiritual Health Leader. To learn more visit the Spiritual Health Intranet page.

New Spiritual Health Practitioner

North Island Hospitals – CRH/CVH



Sandy Reynolds, SHP

Island Health’s Spiritual Health Program is excited to welcome Sandy Reynolds as the new Spiritual Health Practitioner who will serve both the Comox Valley and Campbell River Hospitals. Sandy begins Monday, August 15.

“My journey in Spiritual Care has been full of turns and adventures and not a straight path, like some colleagues! A mixture of experiences in hospice/palliative, rural hospital, geriatrics and some forensics with lots of acute care mixed in! Originally I moved to B.C. 6 years ago to work with Fraser Health in Langley with a pilot project on a specialized geriatric interdisciplinary team to provide care for seniors in their homes and part-time in the hospital. I moved back to Calgary end of last year to work in a hospital for a year but missed B.C. too much, although it was great to catch up with old friends. I just missed the ocean and mountains to the west too much! I will still visit Vancouver area as I have 2 grown children and a grandson there. My other adult child will remain in Calgary. Coming back this time I bypassed the Vancouver area and have moved to Vancouver Island where I look forward to working with the patients, families and staff in Comox and Campbell River.”