

***“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.” – Kahlil Gibran***

**The Silent Scream** - This is how articles on the internet explained self harming when I googled the term...Yes! When my daughter first told me of my granddaughter's 'cutting herself' my scream emerged with both of theirs into the ether. Silence. No sound emerged from myself or them. We didn't discuss her actions for fear.... Now, 3 years down the line, she is 16, we talk, we are not fearful anymore. Yet after 3 attempts at suicide, numerous talking therapists, problems with school, bullying from friends... she is still a hyper-sensitive child. And my daughter and I have developed a greater understanding of youth's considerable pressures at this time. A need for spiritual nurturing of our children is a must to help them understand themselves and us. They are more spiritually aware and advanced, far quicker than we have been, no longer waiting to ask the questions about evolution till their 40's. Much change is required in the teaching of all of us about the spiritual purpose of these souls who are coming in, to herald advances in understanding our world at this time. Loraine Doherty

### **Do they know why they are doing this?**

From the website <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/#.VsDPVhHPUZM>

*“I used to cut myself just so I could feel pain. [It] let me know I was real and I wasn't in a dream.”*

*“I ‘needed’ to harm to punish myself for being what I believed then to be a terrible person and to clear the fog in my head. As soon as I did, I'd feel in control, calm and as though a reset button had been pressed in my head.”*

There are no fixed rules about why people self-harm. For some people, it can be linked to specific experiences, and be a way of dealing with something that is happening now, or that happened in the past. For others, it is less clear. If you don't understand the reasons for your self-harm, it's important to remind yourself that this is OK, and you don't need to know this in order to ask for help.

Any difficult experience can cause someone to self-harm. Common causes include: pressures at school or work: bullying; money worries: sexual, physical or emotional abuse; bereavement; confusion about your sexuality; breakdown of relationships; an illness or health problem; difficult feelings, such as depression, anxiety, anger or numbness, experienced as part of a mental health problem.

Some people have also described self-harm as a way to: express something that is hard to put into words; make experiences, thoughts or feelings that feel invisible into something visible; change emotional pain into physical pain; reduce overwhelming emotional feelings or thoughts; have a sense of being in control; escape traumatic memories; stop feeling numb, disconnected or dissociated (see dissociative disorders); create a reason to physically care for yourself; express suicidal feelings and thoughts without taking your own life; communicate to other people that you are experiencing severe distress.

- The Spiritual Child Lisa Miller <http://us.macmillan.com/thespiritualchild/drlisamiller>

She explains the clear, scientific link between spirituality and health and shows that children who have a positive, active relationship to spirituality:

- \* are 40% less likely to use and abuse substances
- \* are 60% less likely to be depressed as teenagers
- \* are 80% less likely to have dangerous or unprotected sex
- \* have significantly more positive markers for thriving including an increased sense of meaning and purpose, and high levels of academic success.

- Alan Sweeney Reiki Master <http://www.allansweeney.com/helping-indigo-and-crystal-children.html>

' .... learning about spirituality and love outside is useful to children who don't have love inside because they need a framework to understand love. Conversely, if the child does have a deep inner awareness of spirituality and love, they do not need to learn about love from outside them, because they already know love. Yes, they need to be loved. They need to feel love from others connect to their inner love. But much more than that, they need to understand how lucky they are to have such beautiful inner feelings; to know that not everyone feels the same; to accept the horrors of our world before the conflict between their soul and humanity sets in during their teens or 20s; and to realise that one day, if it was right, maybe many years in the future, their job might help many in need.'

### Where is the support?

- Ray Savage Band of Brothers Rites of Passage, mainly for men, but also boys.  
<http://abandofbrothers.org.uk>

The organisation was born out of concern at the continuing escalation of self-destructive and anti-social behaviour among young men from every section of society, together with the realisation that any meaningful and sustainable solution entails the reclamation of shared local responsibility.

Central to all of our programmes are experiences that have come to be termed "rites of passage."

- Andrew Lines The Rite Journey  
<http://theritejourney.com>

The Rite Journey provides unique educational programmes designed to support the development of self-aware, vital, responsible, respectful & resilient adults. By raising young people's consciousness about transitioning from child to adult & having conversations with them about what really matters we can assist in guiding their journey into adulthood.

- Rock and Water  
<http://www.rockandwaterprogram.com>

The Rock and Water Programme is an educational programme that aims to enhance the social, emotional and spiritual development of boys and girls all over the world. In the past 5 years, in Australia alone, more than 4,000 teachers, youth workers etc. have been trained to work with the programme. In The Netherlands Rock and Water is the most well known programme targeting education for boys. ... The programme originates from The Netherlands where people started to express their concern about the decrease in academic performance of boys at school and the increase of alcohol abuse, drug abuse and violence. Although originally designed for boys only, the trainers of the programme have found that girls also respond very well.

Does bad parenting play a role? Abusive parental relationship and experiencing violence between parents at an early age have their effect. What is required is love and empathy, mindfulness and compassion.

### **Graduation from adolescence**

Young people speak of hearing voices, low self-esteem, bullying, fear, insecurity in self, vulnerability. This needs to be transformed to self-love.

Finding their way - they don't want to end up like us, the older generation, in a world of our creation. This is their way in life, not ours.

Self Harming occurs mainly between 13 and 16 years. Most children stop, a small percentage continue into adulthood.

We can support them till they come out of it with rites of passage, talking therapies and love. What brings them out? They say the love of friends and family.

Can we trust children to find their way? Are they creating their own rite of passage? Set adrift in life, they look for their own paddle.

### **Search for identity**

Many girls become pregnant at 13, 14, 15. Is it a way of finding their identity? The age of motherhood has been increasing, leaving it till it's almost too late.

Young people try many ways to find themselves, no holds barred.

Children need freedom at an early age. In Katmandu, children walked alone through dangerous mountains for hours to get to school, then back again. Children used to play outside, through the streets or the woods, alone for hours. There is a lack of freedom, going out in nature allows younger children to test themselves, get cuts and bruises, feel the pain and know their limits. Later in life, without that opportunity it becomes more extreme. Left to find their way, they grow in their own presence and with each other.

Experiencing pain brings experience of self. Tattooing and piercing are also ancient traditions. It brings the focus on the now. Mindfulness is important, holding the consciousness of the present and not the pain of the past or the fear of the future. Where is their Now?

### **Conclusion**

Young people need the love and support of adults, especially between the ages of 13 to 16. They are looking for ways to find their new identity as adults in society. There are ways to support them through this. Self-harming can be a sign that they do not feel met or recognised for who they are or might become. They need to test themselves and create their own ways to come through this stage which have echoes of methods used in the past or which are continued to be used by indigenous peoples. What they express as the reason for coming out of self-harming is this love and support of their family or peers. They do not want to let them down.