

Ancient Strategies to Heal Warriors' Hurt Minds and Spirits

Long ago, several ancient cultures knew that fighting and killing in battle could deeply hurt a soldier's mind, and heart...including their own ability to connect to God. A study through history reveals that this kind of personal combat-damage actually goes back to time immemorial. It's not at all a new phenomenon for soldiers to come back from combat situations feeling broken inside, sad, angry, or even wanting to die. These ancient cultures even realized that this also



dangerously disrupted their relationships with family and friends. Thus, to help soldiers, these different ancient cultures, intuitively utilized special rituals to aid in healing the hurt...to help the warrior feel whole again, to reconcile them back to God, and to restore healthy community between them and their family and friends. Reflecting on these old ways can help today's veterans with PTSD heal by shifting the foundations of how they see the world—starting most especially with the foundation of transcendent-beauty & love, not just truth or observance of religious laws.

Explained simply, here's how some ancient groups helped their warriors heal:

Native American Tribes

Warriors felt “*darkened*” inside from enemies’ spirits haunting them, causing bad dreams or feeling out of balance. They realized that this could also actually impair relationships with everyone around them.

- **Navajo People:** Did an “*Enemy Way*” gathering with songs, dances, prayers, and meaningful rituals to “*chase away*” bad spirits. Family and friends joined to share the load and celebrate the warrior.
- **Plains Tribes (like Lakota or Cheyenne):** Sat in a hot sweat lodge where they would recount stories of both heroic acts and trauma and sweat out the war's bad stuff. It gave time to reflect, to grieve, and to feel like part of the group again.

African Tribes

Believed that killing brought curses or bad luck, making the warrior's soul feel sick, which could spread to the whole tribe.

- **Meru People:** Paid a special tribal medicine man to do spiritual cleansings to remove the spiritual and emotional curse, thus protecting the safety of the whole tribe.
- **Maasai People:** Had cleansing rituals for returning warriors to wash away war's emotional dirt, so that they wouldn't bring distorted and dark feelings into the home.

Ancient Israelites (from the Bible Times)

God gave the ancient Jews an interesting vocabulary to describe what happens to a soldier in war. He said that coming into contact with violence & death in combat made warriors “*unclean*.” Even if the fight was justified by God, it still did emotional damage to those soldiers...a kind of damage that put themselves and everyone else at great risk. They were very concerned about this damage, because it could have lasting negative consequences upon the whole Israelite camp, disrupting their oneness, both with each other, and with God.

- Thus, they stayed outside the camp for a while to reflect and to grieve. Then, they repeatedly took special ritual baths (called Mikvahs), mixed with prayers for a while, to purify themselves, both inside and out.

Ancient Romans

They believed that war's blood and death polluted soldiers' virtue, which could harm society.

- After battles, the army did group cleansings with offerings of animals sacrificed to gods in a shared meal, along with parades. Roman soldiers also took ritual baths to wash away the bad effects of war.

Ancient Greeks

Believed that violence caused mind-pain, causing combat veterans to hide away, damaging community bonds.

- So, they watched tragic plays about war to mourn and reflect upon the ways combat had damaged them. They joined spiritual groups who sought out internal harmony, and offered gifts to gods. This continued these healing rituals long after they returned home from war.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity (An Ancient Kind of Christianity from the East)

"Beauty will save the world." ~ Fyodor Dostoevsky

Eastern Orthodox Christians believe that psychological and spiritual trauma is caused by an overexposure to ugliness, which tricks you into thinking everything in the world is cruel & careless. This fosters feelings of detachment, dejection, and sometimes the desire to die.

But God is a community of love, Father, Son, & Holy Spirit...and humans are created in that image...to become self-offerors like God—full of God's harmony and selfless love. Thus, after encounters with the trauma of violent-ugliness, healing starts not just with truth or moral correctness, but most especially with

Transcendent Beauty (a supernatural kind of beauty that points to God's love). On the contrary, Western-

Christian ideas (like those from the famous Western-Christian theologian named Augustine) tend to focus too much on moral-correctness for healing, which can actually make hurt people spin further out into a kind of self-destruction.



1. **An Excessive Encounter with Ugliness Creates Psychological/Spiritual Damage:** War trauma is ultimately a manifestation of Antichrist, in other words, it plants seeds of the lie that convinces victims that the whole world is malicious or indifferent, which lodges deeply in the heart and grows into a sense of despair. This is ultimately a distortion of reality, which leads to feelings of isolation and hopelessness.
2. **Beauty Heals First:** Look to Jesus Christ as the ultimate example of loving and giving Himself for others. This kind of beauty fixes your soul before facts do. It brings hope and stops suicidal thoughts.
3. **How to Do It:**

- **Feel Wonder Again:** Look at transcendently-beautiful art, listen to transcendently-beautiful music, take walks in transcendently-beautiful nature, and engage in intimate, authentic, faithful, self-offering friendships (not selfish ones). This fights sadness and connects you to meaning.
 - **Pure Love and Humble Respect:** Fall in love with the transcendently-beautiful Jesus Christ. Feel a good kind of shame—like realizing, in humble amazement, how much more Christ-like beauty there is for us to grow into. This gives purpose and repairs self-hate.
 - **Participate In Sacred Rituals:** Go to transcendently-beautiful church services to experience the other-worldly, cosmic family of God, even joining with angel's worship. It ends destructive-isolation.
4. **Why Not Just Facts?:** Mere therapeutic dialogue, or even pills alone, can help you break down your problems to some degree, but it doesn't do anything to help rebuild you back into that for which you were created...your purpose in life.

Therefore you need humanity's holy trinity of:

- 1.) transcendent-beauty;
 - 2.) goodness; and
 - 3.) truth,
- all three working together in wholeness to give you abundant life.

In summary: Rebuild bonds with loved ones through transcendently-beautiful shared moments. Fall in love with Jesus Christ, because as the Author & Perfector of transcendent-beauty *comes to life in you*—that manifestation defeats the dark pit of self-absorption and self-destructive behaviors. This old Eastern-Christian way is a far-more effective way to heal your whole being, restoring you to the kind of humanity you were created to be...a humanity that is intimately united to God...very much like the God/man, Jesus Christ.

You're not alone—transcendent beauty is waiting to help!

