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Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World

By Richard F. Mollica



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In these personal reflections on his thirty years of clinical work with victims of genocide, torture, and abuse in the United States, Cambodia, Bosnia, and other parts of the world, Richard Mollica describes the surprising capacity of traumatized people to heal themselves.

Healing Invisible Wounds reveals how trauma survivors, through the telling of their stories, teach all of us how to deal with the tragic events of everyday life. Mollica's important discovery that humiliation—an instrument of violence that also leads to anger and despair—can be transformed through his therapeutic project into solace and redemption is a remarkable new contribution to survivors and clinicians.

This book reveals how in every society we have to move away from viewing trauma survivors as "broken people" and "outcasts" to seeing them as courageous people actively contributing to larger social goals. When violence occurs, there is damage not only to individuals but to entire societies, and to the world. Through the journey of self-healing that survivors make, they enable the rest of us not only as individuals but as entire communities to recover from injury in a violent world.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Mollica breaks with what he says is the conventional wisdom that torture victims are untreatable. In limpid prose, Mollica, director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, celebrates instead "the capacity of persons to recover from violent events and to engage in self-healing." He explains how his clinic offers traumatized refugees to America housing, emotional support, counseling in their own language and participation in therapeutic self-healing programs. Demonstrating the importance of cultural sensitivity, especially to language, and the significant healing power of attuned listening to the "trauma story," Mollica writes: "Survivors must be allowed to tell their stories their own way. We must not burden them with theories, interpretations, or opinions, especially if we have little knowledge of their cultural and political background." Relating harrowing survivor stories from Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and the World Trade Center, among others, Mollica describes the psychological effects of humiliation, cultural annihilation and sexual violence, showing how victims "suffer a divide in their conscious minds" between hope and despair. Mollica advocates moral and emotional discipline in both healer and patient. Passionately endorsing a humanitarian, holistic and culturally sensitive approach to healing, Mollica persuades with pertinent reference to contemporary neuroscience and to ancient and non-Western healing practices. (*Dec.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

As director and cofounder of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, Mollica has born witness to the devastating consequences of the most unspeakable acts of violence humans have conceived. Furthermore, he has seen firsthand how victims of inhumanity have found the inner strength to overcome life-altering trauma with renewed faith and have even regained humor and optimism. After a slow start, Mollica's book reaches a passionate peak as he relates his clients' experiences in the prison camps of the Khmer Rouge, as Bosnian genocide survivors, and as victims of domestic violence. When he describes self-healing techniques, including verbalizing one's own story and the importance of faith, he speaks from the wisdom of his practice not as a healer as much as a guide for those on the road to wellness. His empowering message is that the invisible wounds left by violence are not intractable, that people can and will persevere, and he offers a handful of the necessary skills. *Donna Chavez*
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Review

"Mollica provides a wealth of ethnographic and clinical evidence that suggests the human capacity to heal is innate—that the 'survival instinct' extends beyond the physical to include the psychological as well. He enables us to see how recovery from 'traumatic life events' needs to be viewed primarily as a 'mystery' to be listened to and explored, rather than solely as a 'problem' to be identified and solved. Healing involves a quest for meaning—with all of its emotional, cultural, religious, spiritual and existential attendants—even when bio-chemical reactions are also operative."

—**Neil Boothby**, Director of the Program on Forced Migration and Health at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

"The reader closes this book with a renewed appreciation of the power of individuals to heal themselves."
—*The Lancet*

"The stories recounted here bear eloquent and often moving testimony to the resilience of human beings."

—**The Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu**

"This book miraculously extracts a message not of despair but of hope."

—**Anne Fadiman**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Melendez:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have some other opinion?

Pete Plaisance:

The reason why? Because this Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of gains than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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