

*Soul Repair: After Moral Injury* is hosted by Dr. Susan Diamond and Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock. And is produced by [Studio D Podcast Production](#).

## **Episode 6: Soul Repair: Finding Goodness in Each Other**

This final episode in our series provides a call to action for all of us to do soul repair work. Rita and Susan are joined by their friend Kyle Fauntleroy, a former Navy chaplain who retired after a distinguished thirty-year career. In a wide-ranging conversation, they discuss how understanding moral injury is a call to spiritual and religious leaders, their communities, and to all who seek to alleviate suffering and repair souls.

### **Hosts:**

Rev. Rita Nakashima Brock, Ph.D., is Senior Vice President for Moral Injury Programs at Volunteers of America (VOA) and a Commissioned Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Capital Region. She is a former professor and academic administrator and co-author of *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury After War*. An online, one-hour moral distress-relief program at VOA is open to the public at [www.voa.org/rest](http://www.voa.org/rest).

Rev. Susan Ward Diamond, D.Min., is Lead Pastor of Florence Christian Church, Florence, KY, and was ordained as a pastor in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1990. She has served on a number of boards and leadership roles in the denomination, including moderator of the church. She is author of *The Daily Grind: GOD with Your Coffee*. Her daily blog, “Thoughts for the Day,” can be found at [pastorsusantftd.wordpress.com](http://pastorsusantftd.wordpress.com).

### **Guest:**

Captain W. Kyle Fauntleroy, M.Div., M.A., is Director of Development at Brite Divinity School at TCU, and a retired Chaplain of the U.S. Navy, where, among his many assignments, he directed the Navy Chaplaincy School and Center and served as Command Chaplain of the Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

### **Resources:**

The Soul Repair Center Webinars: [https://brite.edu/programs/soul-repair/SRC\\_Webinars/](https://brite.edu/programs/soul-repair/SRC_Webinars/)  
For online Moral Distress Relief: [www.voa.org/rest](http://www.voa.org/rest).

## **SOUL REPAIR\_E6\_Transcript**

**Susan Diamond** [00:00:02] This is Soul Repair: After Moral injury where we bring to light a misunderstood trauma.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:00:09] In each episode, we will walk together through the labyrinth that is moral injury, which is our human reaction to harm.

**Susan Diamond** [00:00:18] This wound to the soul is often experienced through feelings of grief, remorse, shame, outrage and despair.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:00:29] Whether you've experienced moral injury, hope to help someone who has it, or want to learn more and advocate for others, this is the place for all of us.

**Susan Diamond** [00:00:40] Join us as we seek pathways to bring light, healing and peace into the labyrinth journey of Soul Repair after moral injury. Well, it's great to be with our listeners again as we are on our last episode, episode six of Soul Repair: After Moral Injury.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:01:02] Hi Susan. Feeling a little sad that this is the last episode, but it's great to be back and to have another amazing conversation about moral injury.

**Susan Diamond** [00:01:13] The topic for this one is Why Does It Matter?

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:01:17] And we learned something about that last week too with our first responders, the two chaplains: a fire department police chaplain (also the police chaplain had been a police officer) and the founder of a foundation that works on helping make life easier and avoid moral injury for E.R. doctors. And so, what an amazing conversation that was.

**Susan Diamond** [00:01:40] It was amazing. That's all I'm going to say. It's just amazing to hear the stories and to know that out of incredible crisis and the most awful of circumstances, how people's lives are being changed as they're coming to terms with moral injury.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:01:59] So tell us about our guest. You've known him the longest.

**Susan Diamond** [00:02:05] Let me just back up and say as we were thinking about all of these episodes and we were moving toward why it matters, Rita and I were talking about who do we need to invite? And I thought for just a minute and said, "I know who we need to invite. We need to invite Kyle." Kyle is somebody that both of us have known for quite some time. I've known him a little bit longer. Actually, I met Kyle almost 40 years ago. We were both at Brite Divinity School, and so that's where I met him. Kyle started seminary at Brite Divinity School in 1984, and that was the year that I went to Brite to begin a job as a Senior Secretary to the Dean of Brite Divinity School. And I was 23 years old and Kyle was just beginning seminary. It was four years before I began my seminary education, but I was immersed in a wonderful community called Brite Divinity School. Rita, you want to say how you know Kyle?

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:04:13] I know Kyle because when I came to Brite to start the Soul Repair Center, he was one of the main persons people told me I should get in touch with. And I don't even know exactly when the first contact between us was made. I just know that Kyle was a major supporter of the Soul Repair Center and helped me meet a bunch of great chaplains, including Rear-Admiral Margaret Kibben, who spoke at one of our events on moral injury and is now the chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives, the first woman to do that. So, Kyle is incredibly well connected into the military. And he helped us a number of times. We had a major conference in Midland, Texas, and Kyle was there to give coins to the veterans and to be there to

speak. And so, Kyle has just been in this moral injury space for a very long time in really powerful ways.

**Susan Diamond** [00:05:14] And Kyle was also there when you and I did the workshop in Montgomery, Alabama.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:05:20] That's right.

**Susan Diamond** [00:05:22] Kyle came and spoke, was one of our speakers at that one.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:05:25] He's spoken at quite a few of our events. I lost track of them all. I just think of Kyle as a major presence in those five years I was at Brite Divinity School.

**Susan Diamond** [00:05:34] So there's a long connection for all three of us with each other, with the work that we are doing. Last year when I was on sabbatical and was at Brite for a very short period of time, Kyle and I spent time together. We talked about this work, and so as Rita and I began to think about this podcast and where the direction was going to go, the last episode we knew would be, Why Does This Matter? Why does this work that we are doing matter for the church, for religious communities of all ilks, for chaplains? Why does it matter that we are involved in this work? And so, as Rita and I were talking about who we needed to have this conversation with, it was Kyle. So, thank you so, so very much for being here and spending this time with us.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:06:31] It's my honor. When Rita and I met first to talk about moral injury in the Soul Repair Center, it was something I didn't have language for. Certainly, when I was in seminary in the early eighties, there was an accident on the USS Nimitz. An airplane missed its landing spot in layman's terms. Over a dozen sailors were killed in the accident on the aircraft carrier. And they attributed part of some of the causes to that were improper use of prescribed medications, marijuana, and other illicit drugs. Aircraft carrier landings have to be specifically choreographed with all the people that are on deck during traps and you have to have your wits about you. But it's hard work and it's monotonous work, especially when you've been at sea for months on end. And that drew me to ministry in the military. I've always been called to it, I think, but that particular event certainly brought it home. And how do we deal with the stress of the monotony and the periods of sheer terror? The military, they said, of combat brings long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror. How do we handle that and what do we do with the experiences we have? Immediately after Desert Storm, I was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro. I met a young Marine who was married with a couple of kids who hadn't been sleeping for a long, long time. I mean, a period of years he had suffered sleep disruptions. Well, it turned out that he was on a gun truck in Iraq during Desert Storm and was responsible for the .50 cal on top of the truck. They took out the source of enemy fire. They had gone over there to where the enemy had been-- now these dead human beings-- and did intelligence, went through his pockets, found his wallet, and found a photograph of the Iraqi soldier's family. And he said, "Chaplain, it looked like the same picture of my family in our church directory." You know, a typical little Olin Mills pocket, and the reality of human conflict came home to roost with him. Over a period of time, he became better, but it was not because of the chaplain's intervention alone. It was a team approach. It involved medical and social work,

both psychiatry, medicine, talk therapy, family therapy and pastoral care. So, I didn't know how to categorize it, but when I met the Soul Repair Center and was able to bring a vernacular to my pastoral community, that is Navy chaplain serving with Marines and Navy and Coast Guard, it gave me a place to study. Even though I was on the advisory board, we built this great repository of bibliographies, experiences, interviews, webinars, and we continue to do that. So, this is what's important about it. We are bringing a different level of spiritual care to folks and giving them the language to speak their truth, to speak their pain, to speak their fear, to speak their shame, guilt, remorse, whatever, and to teach the church, which doesn't know what to do with returning veterans. So, I'm excited about this conversation especially.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:10:39] Yeah, and I think people really aren't aware of how many veterans, when they leave the military, wind up working in service work because they still want a life purpose and mission in their world. Many of us are encountering veterans in ways that we wouldn't even know they were military veterans. They're in the police department or the fire department, or they're in corrections or EMT work and doing rescues and all kinds of things like that. It's often they're good at hiding what they're carrying. They've learned to do that. I think it's an honor to be able to give them language that might help them come to terms with things they've been carrying and they don't need to carry. If you're not bothered by some of the things that you experience in the military, you probably don't have much of a conscience. And then, of course, we've been looking at how moral injury impacts lots of people, and you don't have to be a veteran to have it.

**Susan Diamond** [00:11:37] That's right. And that, again, Kyle is, I think, interesting how your journey-- you've retired as a military chaplain and now you are where? What are you doing now?

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:11:54] I'm back at Brite Divinity School, where it all began. I can't talk about the impact this place has on me, even though it's changed radically, Susan, since we were here 40 years ago. It's getting better, but I can't talk about the experience of being back here and searching for resources to keep this place going without getting emotional because it changed my life. It helped me discern my vocation more specifically. Meeting the woman who had become my wife here wasn't a bad thing.

**Susan Diamond** [00:12:33] That's a good thing to say.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:12:35] As friends of mine tell me, I outkicked my coverage when Laura and I got married-- to use a football analogy. But this place is very important, and we're keeping the work going. Rita knows this because she supports what Soul Repair does still. But we did nine or 10 webinars this calendar year, and had 581 registrations. And Rita has equipped us to do that. And those are clinicians. Those are congregational pastors. They're VA chaplains. They're military chaplains. Our latest one was talking about moral injury in the training of the Air Force chaplains when they address diversity, equity, and inclusion. So, I think from where we started and now to have the military chaplain core using the language that the Soul Repair Center has been trying to promote for so long, Rita, I think Herm would be proud.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:13:41] I think so too. Kyle's referring to this amazing military chaplain named Herman Keizer Jr. He was a colonel when he retired. He served 30 years in the U.S. military and then was called back for five year stints at the Department of Defense and then the Department of State to help NATO countries establish military chaplaincy. And he said the army flunked geography because they sent him to South Africa as part of the European Theater Command to help the post-apartheid government form military chaplaincy in South Africa. And his whole life's mission for 40 years as a chaplain was to protect the moral consciences of people who serve. And it was because he had been a grunt for six years during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He had been a chaplain's assistant when he was a grunt. And so, all of his chaplaincy workforce said you should be a military chaplain. So, he went back to seminary with that in mind, but that was as the Vietnam War was beginning to escalate. And he told his seminary professor that he couldn't be a military chaplain because he objected to the war and thought it was illegal and immoral. And his seminary professor said to him, "You know, Herm, they're going to be a lot of guys that think like you do, and they're really going to need a chaplain." And that's what persuaded him to enlist as a military chaplain. And when I met him in 2010 at the Truth Commission on Conscience and War, he said, "If you violate your conscience, it's a kind of moral suicide. It's a really awful thing to have to do." And when we got the grant to start the Soul Repair Center, I just thought, really, he needed to be part of it because I'm a military brat, but I've not served in the military. And he had a kind of distinguished career that would really open doors for us. And he did. The two years he was co-founder and co-director, he opened so many doors to the military and to the V.A. He had worked with Shinseki, and General Shinseki was head of the V.A. And so, when we applied for the Lilly Grant, General Shinseki wrote a letter of support for this program. And Herm was able to do those kinds of things for us. So, I feel like he put us on warp speed that would take me five or 10 years to get that kind of social capital that he spent for us to create the Soul Repair Center. And I'll always be grateful to him.

**Susan Diamond** [00:16:12] I got to meet him at that Montgomery conference. And he's one of the kindest souls I think I have ever met. Just a great, great person.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:16:24] Then when I met him, I had been told he was a very, very distinguished retired chaplain and an endorser for the Reformed Church. And so, I had to take a document to him that he wanted printed. I said I'll take it. I want to meet him. And this was the Truth Commission at Riverside Church in New York. And so, I knocked on his guest room door and somehow I had this in mind, this very maybe even Abraham Lincoln looking kind of tall, distinguished senior person as the chaplain. And he opened the door and I was about to say, "Colonel Keizer." He said, "Hi, I'm Herm." And he looked like a little Santa Claus. And it was so against type. I was just sort of stunned. And it turned out, number one, he was whip smart and politically really savvy, but just came across as hail-fellow- well-met, nice guy, kind, caring and extremely funny.

**Susan Diamond** [00:17:27] And I wanted to say we'll be sure to link in the show notes those webinars, because I think that they would be a great resource to our listeners as they're continuing to-- we're going to be talking about kind of next steps of things that people can connect with regard to VOA and the Soul Repair Center and some work that we're doing here, pilot projects we're doing here at Florence Christian Church.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:17:54] I don't know Kyle if you have had time to look at or see that article that The Washington Post published really recently on Moral Injury and Chaplains. I was so moved by the kind of faith struggles that-- you sort of think of chaplains as they're the ones who have the faith that are going to go around and comfort others and take care of souls. And I have to say, once I read it I thought, of course, it made some sense, but I hadn't really thought about the moral injury of chaplains themselves and the crisis of faith that they might have, doing the kind of work they're asked to do. And I know Kyle you commanded a lot of chaplains, and I wondered what your experience with that had been.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:18:35] Yes, I did read the article. I have it in front of me right now, as a matter of fact. And I think it highlights a couple of different things. The steady strain of ministry is always challenging. Time is always an enemy in ministry, it seems to me, because you've got administrative work to do. You've got classes to prepare for, sermons to prepare for, pastoral care events that you can't plan for that pop up and interrupt anything you have planned. And then a chaplain does all of that within the context of lethality. Because our constituents, our congregants, our people, God's people for whom we are responsible, live, move and have their being in a lethal environment. Even training has lethal potential. And that's always before you. And then if there's any downtime within the given, I'll say, unit of whether it's soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, coasties--when everybody gets a chance to take a deep breath, that's when the chaplain really gets put to work because everyone else has the free time to go find the chaplain in someplace out of sight from everybody else because there's still a stigma that kind of remains. I think it's gotten better, but you don't want to be seen to be going to the chaplain because you want to get out of something. Because there's always this stigma attached to it. Well, the chaplain can't show vulnerability anyway, because that means the chaplain really isn't faithful as the chaplain ought to be. If there's some weakness of a chaplain, I think the article brings that out quite well. And just like a congregational minister, when I was a ship chaplain, I could never get more than two or 300 feet away from my constituents. I could never, ever be alone. There was more room on an aircraft carrier, but there's also 5000 people confined in something that's 1100 yards long. We all live in a condensed four and a half acres of different levels. So, I think the article was good about that. And so, when there's something heinous that happens, whether it's a flight deck accident, whether it's combat incidents, whether it's an automobile wreck on base, for Pete's sake, you know these people, you know their families, you're embedded with them. You see every one of them every day of your career when you're attached to that unit. I mean, we know one another and it can provoke a crisis of faith because from the midway point of the deployment on, you're getting tired. You're not sleeping 8 hours consistently. You're the only one there. You're the only person of faith there. Chaplains are the only officers within the Department of Defense that enjoy privileged communication with those they speak with. That means we have absolute confidentiality. We cannot tell a soul. We are the only ones on the ship, in the unit, in the battalion that have that privilege, and that gets woefully heavy.

**Susan Diamond** [00:22:27] And that is a burden.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:22:30] Well, yeah.

**Susan Diamond** [00:22:32] So, chaplains, it isn't any surprise that our dealing with the stuff that we read in this article and one of the things that I was particularly impacted by was one of the

chaplains who had this horrible experience and got PTSD. And he said in some ways he lost his faith, but then he realized that he was becoming a more compassionate person. And he said, "It opened doors to me for me to tell people who've been through trauma difficulties that God doesn't waste anything." And I really think that that's a powerful statement. It reminded me of a sermon I did recently where I was talking about Romans 8 in the way of not that God causes anything that all these horrible, traumatic things happen, but somehow God is able to bend it to good. And sometimes that compassion that comes out of it is one of those ways in which that is not wasted.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:23:49] If you're bending a piece of steel, you've got to super heat it in order to make it pliable. That's a painful process, and it's a lonely process. The chaplain doesn't have a chaplain. When we're deployed, we don't have someone-- in the early days of my career, we didn't. Well before we had email, there wasn't a way to stay in contact with your spiritual partner, with your guide or director, whoever you use to keep you afloat in Navy terms. It's just chaplains journal, chaplains work out, things to get some kind of other parts of the body moving other than a concerned look on our face and worry on our heart. Am I saying the right thing to those shipmen? I'm I keeping my mouth shut when I should keep it shut? And am I speaking when I should speak? And try not to lose your cool when you have a really grievous problem that you're helping somebody through. The article talks about when they did a death notification earlier in the day and then had to come back and do marital counseling or something else. It reminds me of times in my own life when I had really struggled personally and dealing with a younger service member who had some kind of really immature reaction to what they thought was an unfairness or some kind of unjust behavior. And it was just a chain of command being the chain of command. And I wanted to go off on this young person and say "Grow up, would you please?" But that was not appropriate for me. That was about me, not about the service member. So, it does get incredibly lonesome.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:25:50] When I read that article, it made me flash back to a thing I had done for the Presbyterian chaplains once at a retreat center. It was when I was still at the Soul Repair Center and they had invited me to come and talk about moral injury at their annual gathering of their chaplains. And it was all military chaplains. So, I did my little talk on moral injury. And I think back then I probably knew a thimble full of information because there wasn't much out there. But I gave them what I had. And then I had published the book Soul Repair, so I took a box of copies and I just gave them to the chaplains and they all disappeared. After I'd done my talk and the books disappeared, this man came up to me. He was in his fifties probably, and his spouse had been a master sergeant and so she was with him. And he had three copies of my book in his hands. And he came up to me and he said, "Do you think if I gave a copy of this book to my three daughters, they'd speak to me again?" And it just broke my heart. I had the same problem with my own father when he came back from Vietnam. And I just said to him it could help a lot. I didn't know what else to tell him. I just said it could help a lot.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:27:23] I think we've seen over the years since 2012, the language become more accessible, more available, and more user friendly about moral injury. And I think folks are saying, "Well, wait a minute, my moral code is upright and just and it's rock solid." Well, right on. Good for you. But maybe we're talking about more than that. I have some Marines friends that still take umbrage at the term. And I said, "Look, even when we are conducting a fight

within the rules of engagement, things happen that just breach everything we hold to be valuable in the universe. And we don't know what to do with that because the world should not work this way. This kind of evil cannot persist." And the church has a certain language for it, but I think we're educating the church now too.

**Susan Diamond** [00:28:22] And that's what I'd like for you to talk a little bit about, Kyle, because I think you coming from the background you have and being back at Brite and being with seminarians and also in your work with churches all over the country, you're having these conversations. I'm sure in the midst of COVID and all of the things that have been happening over the last few years, it has shaken all of us.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:28:51] It certainly has. I'm a born and bred Disciples of Christ. And I think as a progressive mainline denomination, we don't like to talk about war because we're against war. And that's where we want the conversation to end, but it doesn't end there. We're still letting folks come out of our high school youth groups and enlisting in the service so they can get access to the G.I. Bill for their education.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:29:26] Right.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:29:27] Or to get some job training, or maybe to work in a positive way. A military service organization that does good in the world, whether it's National Guard, the Coast Guard, the Marine Corps, whatever. But we're not going to send world class pastoral care to them. The mainline denominations, in my humble opinion, and I don't mean to offend anybody, but we have ceded our responsibility to provide mainline pastoral care to those in the military. We are granting that responsibility to folks who do not share our theology.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:30:07] Yeah, they have a much more black and white view of the world and an understanding of salvation that's highly exclusive and narrow, when a chaplain should be able to give spiritual care to anyone and not coerce them into their position. I mean, that is not the job of a chaplain- to change somebody. It's to support who they are in their best self. I agree with you. And one of the things I became more and more aware of when I was at Brite was how mainline churches, because they opposed war, stopped sending people into the chaplaincy and actively discouraged people who wanted to go into the chaplaincy because you're wasting your life or it's not a good career, blah, blah, blah. What I think is interesting now is that the majority of people entering seminary are interested in chaplaincy-- even in mainline seminaries. And that may not all be military chaplaincy because there's health \care and other things. But at least now mainline seminaries are reconsidering the way they do education to at least add some stuff on chaplaincy, because the construction of theological education isn't really good preparation for chaplains most of the time because you don't really need to read Greek and Hebrew to be a chaplain. You need to understand something about a lot of faiths and also how to how to minister to people when you don't know what their faith is. That's not something seminaries spend a lot of time. They just want you to be able to represent the faith that they belong to well to your congregation, be very sophisticated with that. And that's a worthy thing to do, but it's not the only way you can be a minister. And so, I too think that the mainline theological schools need to step up.



**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:32:02] Obviously, I agree with you. The disciples only have 30 active duty chaplains in all three services. That's all we have.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:32:12] Wow!

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:32:13] Yeah, that's all we have. That's radically different than when I went on active duty in 1987. Radically different. I had mentors that I could look up to that were Disciple, senior chaplains that could coach me up and prepare me for what was happening. Well, there's the whole civil religion part of this conversation that the Constitution addresses that some of-- I will say this specifically, my brothers in military chaplaincy don't want to attend to. Some of us want to be missionaries. That's not our job. This is not a mission field. This is a service field. We are there to care for souls. And that's the constitutional mandate for the Chaplain Corp. If we cease to do that, if we cease to care for everybody, we will lose the Chaplain Corps altogether.

**Susan Diamond** [00:33:19] I just wrote down the job of the chaplain is to care for souls. This was what in my sabbatical work that I did, I entitled the project Moral Injury Catalyst for Reform, because I think that the church faith communities are being called back to caring for the souls.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:33:44] And that is our lane.

**Susan Diamond** [00:33:48] Well, and that's the Jesus lane.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:33:51] Or Buddha lane or whatever, but it's our lane. Yeah, right.

**Susan Diamond** [00:33:55] What if these mainline ministries were about healing and being about coming to terms with oneself and their relationship with God?

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:34:05] Yeah. No, I talked to a retired army officer who said he had a company and he had said, "I had a chaplain who was really good with the Christians. He did a really great job, but he wouldn't take care of anybody else. So, I fired him."

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:34:18] When I joined the Chaplain Corps, the Navy Chaplain Corps had a motto called Cooperation Without Compromise, that we could operate within the integrity of our own tradition of faith as long as we had respected and collaborated with others.

**Susan Diamond** [00:34:33] Yeah, that's right.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:34:34] That's not hard.

**Susan Diamond** [00:34:35] It is not.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:34:36] No, it's not.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:34:36] There are some great people out there that are fun to work with.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:34:39] Right. And I've talked to female military chaplains that were in units where the male military chaplains wouldn't do a service with them. They didn't believe in women's ordination or they didn't believe in gay ordination. They just wouldn't serve alongside somebody that they thought just shouldn't be ordained. That's not your choice as a chaplain, I don't think.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:35:06] No, it's not. But it does happen.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:35:09] It does.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:35:10] I have colleagues, women colleagues, a couple of whom are on the Board of the Soul Repair Center who have that very same experience. Getting back to the church, I've had colleagues, seminary classmates, say, "Kyle, I'm glad you're having a good time being a Navy chaplain, but couldn't you get a church?" Well, that's not my lane. My lane is this. My calling is this. And it's just as valid as any other and we've got to promote that. It's a valid ministry.

**Susan Diamond** [00:35:44] It is a valid ministry. And when veterans come back from service, they need to have a place where they can continue their spiritual journey. And that is one of the things, I think, why it matters that we understand moral injury from the standpoint of veterans first, because that's what has informed us as we've looked at all of the other ways in which moral injury is taking place in the larger community. But we have a lot to learn and we have a lot to share with each other.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:36:22] When I wrote the grant to the Lilly Endowment for the Soul Repair Center, one of the things I said in it was that I thought if the church really took moral injury seriously as part of its responsibility in ministry, that it might help the church actually rediscover some of the ancient wisdom around this ...like penance. There are all of these pre-modern pre-Protestant reformation, pre-enlightenment-logic kind of rituals that people sometimes think of as superstition because it's anti-Catholic, but what I've learned in working this all through is ritual is crucial for healing people. And if you can take them through a ritual that is a process of both expressing their moral pain, but also giving them comfort from it, that it's an amazing gift to them. It frees their soul up to grapple and struggle with their moral injury rather than just be in intense pain about it. And nothing does that as good as ritual, because when you're in a ritual, you're with a group of people and you know it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. And it's going to finish and it's going to take you somewhere, but you don't have to go there by yourself. It's not all on you to change yourself. It's like the whole community and everybody else is struggling, participates in a process of mutual change and benefit, and it's for a limited period of time. You're not going to be in misery or do all these awful things all the time, but you have to go through it. And to know you have a container and a spiritual guide that will get you through, it is such a gift.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:38:07] Chances are the injury didn't happen in solitude; chances are the injury happened in company with other combatants. Healing will not happen in solitude. It has to be in community and it has to be a ritual.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:38:28] Yeah, I agree.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:38:29] Because the ritual provides support.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:38:34] It's the architecture underneath it all.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:38:36] Yes. Great word.

**Susan Diamond** [00:38:39] Let's talk about some of those resources, Rita. I know that we're going to spend a little bit of time toward the end of our podcast talking about what you're doing at Soul Repair Center.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:38:52] Well, I'll just start with one that Herm's Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, did for veterans who when they first came out of the military that they would invite the person to come in to the service in their uniform and they would read their military record and thank them for the service they gave to their country and their willingness to do that. And then the person would leave and change into civilian clothes and come back into the service and they would come up and lay hands on the person and bless them, returning to their community. And he said people cried going through that, that it was such a feeling of welcome. It's different from having them stand up and everybody say welcome and applauding. There's more depth to it when it's ritualized like that. It goes deep in a person when it's not just them, it's the whole community participating in the process. And I talked to a veteran who read an article he read as well about how he was in Iraq and he got good treatment for his PTSD from the VA. He said, "I learned how to handle my symptoms." He said, "But I still felt miserable inside. I just didn't feel right." And he heard about a program that took veterans through a sweat lodge ceremony, non-native one, that they welcome non-natives to participate. And he said the leader of the ritual said, "We're going to take you through a journey so you can stop fighting people." And he said they went through a series of these sweats where they prayed, and it's a very physical process. And he said that's finally what helped him come back. You go in, you pour your heart out in prayer and sweat and you hear other people and you sing and you chant. And he said it's finally what brought him back so that he was willing to live with what happened. He said you don't ever forget it. So, you figure out how it's a story in your life that you can live with. That's what brought him out of the state of misery he was in so he could function. The medicine man or the singer-- they have different titles-- would carry them through it. He knew what to do. He told them what he was going to do for them, and then they gave themselves to the process. And that's the process that did it. They didn't have to do it themselves. That's what makes a ritual, a ritual. And I think churches need to rediscover the power of that, especially for the hard stuff. We have Sunday morning ritual, but then there's the really hard stuff. And that does not show up on Sunday morning.

**Susan Diamond** [00:41:30] I was going to say we've been doing a pilot project at Florence Christian Church where I serve that's called Healing Circles of Trust. That's a term that has been used at an organization called Warrior's Journey Home up in northern Ohio for veterans. But this was started just for anyone who may have been struggling with some sense of moral injury over the last two, three years with all of the things...the pandemic, the racial reckoning, the divide, the

political division we've been experiencing, climate change, whatever it is that people were going through, and all of us have had that. But we started having small groups that came together, and I was amazed, if not shocked, by how quickly people were willing to share the depths of their pain in a ritualized setting. So, the room was prayed over before people came in, smudged. We had an Indian talking stick. We had lots of Christian symbolism as well. But when people came into the room, there was a way of walking into the room and being seated, and we were all ready to experience that time together. And one gentleman recently-- I shared this with Rita a few weeks ago-- shared with me that he said he's been through major trauma all of his life from the time he was a child and abused all the way through lots of trauma, traumatic brain injuries. And he has been under psychiatric care for decades. And he said this is the first time that he felt like he was really able to state his truth, his story, and to be completely accepted because nobody was trying to fix him. Everybody had to listen. And Rita, you taught me how to use non-verbal ways of putting your hand over your heart so that you empathize with the other person. They were able to speak and it was completely in a confidential and loving and trusting environment. I've never seen anything like that happen on Sunday mornings.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:44:04] Right.

**Susan Diamond** [00:44:09] How you doing? We're doing great.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:44:10] Oh, I'm fine.

**Susan Diamond** [00:44:10] And so, these small groups they're forming relationships with each other, deeper relationships than they ever probably would be able to develop in any other way. It is amazing to me how hungry people are for this. And in this time when churches have actually-- the numbers have gone down in in-person attendance and that kind of thing, this is just one of those ways I believe that we can rebuild something different in the church.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:44:46] And we use that process of taking turns to share in our programs with that, too. We use mindful breathing, which also helps people stay calm as they're sharing difficult emotional things, lowers the cortisol in your body. So, we start with that, but then we make sure that people understand that when a person is sharing, they share as long as they need to share. And then there's just a time of silence...of just breathing so that people can take in what they heard in a deep way and affirm the person for sharing. And the person sometimes is telling something for their first time and they can actually hear themselves say it by taking it in that time of silence. And there's something magical about the empathetic silence. Nobody's judging you, having an opinion, asking a question or trying to fix you. They're just validating the truth of what you just said. And until someone can do that, they can't process what they're carrying. And so, it's a magical thing. And, Susan, I have to say, we did this for the Regional Assembly in Kentucky. We showed ministers how to do this process. And the person in Susan's church that makes the talking sticks gave the most interesting and respectful description of the Native American use of them and how he had used bamboo and that people had said that wasn't the right thing. He said but here we're near Cane Ridge. The reason it was called Cane Ridge, it was because there was cane here and the Native Americans did use that cane for objects like this. And then he explained what the leather straps and the feathers on it meant. And it was a very respectful sense of trying to honor that tradition by making these talking sticks as authentic

as possible, not just anything. They gave me one. I was really honored to have one because I have one that's made with such love and care and respect for the tradition it came from.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:46:52] I love the idea of ritual and reclaiming. Many of our military people are used to ritual. Every rite of passage is a ritualized. Experience crossing the equator on a ship is ritualized. Every promotion is ritualized.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:47:11] Every encounter, greeting somebody on the sidewalk is ritualized.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:47:16] And which is why my wife and I were insistent that I ritualized the retirement because I was not looking forward to taking that uniform off. I had no clue how much of my identity was wrapped up in the uniform.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:47:34] Yeah.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:47:35] And that was very important. That was the last time I was going to wear that uniform. I still hold on to my ordination, but my commission is over. And I had to really intellectualize that because I wasn't accepting it here at all. And some people will say, well, you still haven't. You tried to call the choir to attention when you came in church last week, so you haven't let it go all together. But the ritual is very important and the church needs to reclaim some of that with a change of command. When you have one pastor replace another pastor at the pulpit, how do we ritualize that? Well, we don't because we want to get rid of the old person and put a new one in.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:48:29] Yeah.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:48:30] But maybe there's a peaceful transition. Something that we haven't experienced in a while, maybe.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:48:35] No, I think that's right. It's like you have a search, and then you have a new person. They have a party for the old person who leaves. And then there's just this blank time, and then the new person comes, but they don't ever connect. It's really interesting. I hadn't even thought about that. And even if the old person is somebody that needed to go, they're going to be people in the church that love that person.

**Kyle Fautleroy** [00:48:59] And we need to respect and honor that. There was goodness there or they wouldn't have lasted as long as they did.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:49:05] No, I think you're right. In western society, we've just let a lot of ritual go. And the problem with that-- I mean, some of it maybe wasn't needed, but the problem with letting too much ritual go is then it's on everybody individually to figure out what to do. And that is such a strain. Like, well, how do I greet this person? Do I shake their hand? Do I bow? When you have rituals, then you don't even have to think about it and things go smoothly. You don't even have to mean it. You know, you shake somebody's hand and not even mean it, but you just do it because you're a polite person and it's the right thing to do. And that's how

ritual can shape life in a way that smooths a lot of stuff. And I think we're seeing now where we don't have that kind of community or civic ritual and people are just acting out all kinds of weird and nasty ways, and people are just putting up with it.

**Susan Diamond** [00:49:59] I'm hearing that reclaiming ritual is one of the things that is mandatory for us to be placed in a posture where people can sacredly share their story because part of healing from moral injury or moving through moral injury into a better place is being able to name the brokenness or the injury however it happened. What other things are we wanting to lift up?

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:50:30] Well, I do think the recovery or the invention-- it isn't necessary to be recovery. In our veterans' groups, we have them construct their own ritual processes that work for everybody in the group because we don't select our small groups to be homogeneous in any way. And we've had incredibly diverse groups, actually, including even an officer or two amongst all the NCOs, which the NCOs were surprised the officers are there. We give them a table; we give them a circle to sit around and talk. And we put like a coffee table in the middle, and we let them build that altar in the middle of the space with things that they do during their time together, including making a mask of their military face, which is a kind of ritual use of this mask that we have where they talk about their military experience using the mask. And sometimes things go on the mask they'd forgotten that come out in the visual, which is really an interesting process. So, there are lots of creative ways you can use nontraditional rituals. You can have a group make its own rituals up, and then those become a kind of code or memory for that group's identity and including the group giving itself a name. But I think that there are many, many ways that people can be assisted without a lot of effort on any individual's part to be able to be present emotionally in ways that really are healing for them. And I think that's different from a one on one conversation with a friend, which can be quite valuable. But there's something about the group in the holding quality of a ritual itself that is a kind of gift to people.

**Susan Diamond** [00:52:23] So, Rita, tell us about Volunteers of America and some of the resources that people, our listeners might want to take advantage of.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:52:33] There are a number of programs at Volunteers of America that we built from our veterans' program. This is another way we're grateful for veterans, is that we did this evidence-based program for veterans and it actually research-wise worked. And I was surprised at how well it worked, not only from the data, but from the stories of the veterans themselves. And so, when the COVID started to break out, I thought, "Oh, no, we're going to have moral injury everywhere, especially in health care." And so, people at VOA made a policy nobody would lose their job. So, they kept reassigning people who had in-person type work to help people with online stuff. And we thought, you know, maybe we could take some of the things from our veterans' program that worked and create something knowing that people might have an hour and no more to go online and it'll all be online. And so, we pulled all our facilitators from the veterans' program together that had done a lot of groups and said, "If you only had an hour with people, what would you do?" And so, we put this program together called Resilience Strength Time. It's ReST for short. And we tried it with some of our staff and they found it helpful. Then we slowly opened it out with the public. It's really hard to get people to

use these kinds of programs. But we kept pushing and pushing and we opened to the public. The groups are up to 10 people and they're peer facilitated, which means the person that's facilitating the group is a member of the group and also shares some of their stuff and isn't there to fix anybody. They're not in a professional capacity. They're there as a peer support person. And people can just go to VOA/rest and sign up for an account because we use a platform you have to get into. It's a simple process of just registering. You can see the schedule of days that are in times where these one hour sessions are going to happen, and you can go to as many as you need. And we have people that show up pretty regularly and people who've tried it once and never come back. And people who do it every now and then because they need to tune up sometimes. And 82% of people who filled our survey say they feel much calmer and better at the end of the hour, which is basically all we thought we could do for them.

[00:55:12] And now we've got a couple of meetings a week that are for veterans only so veterans can use them. At the same address. VOA ReST. And then we have a special one that we got a grant to do for first responders. And that started last July-- I think was the first groups. And so that's Rest4responders.com. That's the URL for that one. And that one, the facilitators have all been first responders. So, we have people like a former EMT, paramedic, a person who's actively right now a police chaplain, people like that who are co-facilitating those groups. And all of them are free and open to the various populations, the general public, the vets and the first responders. But we've also helped the AARP create a similar program that is for people who've been victims of fraud. Their fraud hotline gets three or 400 calls a day and people are often in moral distress from that. And then we helped a health care company set up a program for their graduate nurses because they were losing half the class every time. And it's gone up. And so many nurses and doctors are leaving health care. So, there's an acute need in terms of moral distress there as well. So, we're working on it. We're running a workshop in April the 12th in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for medical doctors, and we're going to give them time to process some of their moral injury, and we're going to teach them about moral injury in themselves and in their patients. We're starting a certificate program in mid-February for caregivers of any kind, including medical doctors, psychiatrists, clinicians, social workers and chaplains and clergy. That's a 50 hour program, lasts 10 weeks. We've been running a one hour, one day, eight hour program for chaplains, especially, and clergy. We're going to put that on suspension because the certificate program is a huge amount of work, but we'll probably restart those that's called Moral Injury in the Aftermath of COVID (or MIRAC). We'll probably start those MIRAC courses in the fall again.

**Susan Diamond** [00:57:34] I'll be there.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:57:35] Yeah. Well, the certificate program is pretty intense. By the time you get done with it, you're going to know a lot about moral injury and you're going to be able to work in your own professional specialization because we're paying people to do some lectures for us in various areas that are taped and people can hear about moral injury in child protective services and in social workers and in nurses and all of these different populations, and you get 20 of those 50 hours to do a personal project.

**Susan Diamond** [00:58:08] For those who are listening that might be interested in wanting to know more about the pilot project that we're doing at Florence Christian Church, we'll put in the

show notes how you can get in touch with me. I'll be glad to share what we're learning. Kyle, do you have anything that you'd like to add as far as resources? Of course, the Soul Repair Center. I'm sure.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [00:58:29] The resources are on our web website. Brite.edu/soulrepair. I also would commend the many VA programs that are available. Just go to Va.gov and look for resources. And that's the short answer to that.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:58:48] There are lots of resources out there. And our Shay center, which is VOA.org/moralinjury, has a whole resources section that includes an extensive scholarly bibliography, even of clinical essays and things like that, but also videos and recommended books and a whole bunch of other resources that we update weekly. There's so much coming out.

**Susan Diamond** [00:59:14] There is so much coming out. Rita and I, when we first started this, just wanted to say moral injury is here and this is the reality that we are going to be dealing with for-- I don't know how long. A long time. And so, faith communities are positioned in a very special way to be able to address and to walk alongside and to become wounded healers ourselves, as Henri Nouwen used that term. But to know that there is a place and there is a calling, I think, for faith communities, especially right now in this area. So, thank you all.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [00:59:54] We've had a major series of crises to go through, but I would say that moral injury is an ancient affliction. It didn't just come up because of modern life or war or something. If you start to think about things in terms of moral injury, you see it in the biblical texts and in other religious texts and stories that people who violated their moral conscience and have an identity crisis need a way back and they need a community to help them come back.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [01:00:25] Right.

**Susan Diamond** [01:00:26] Well, thanks be to God for our time together. We are so thankful for all of our listeners. Please, again-- we'll say this in a minute. But please, again, if you feel like you've received something from this, share this with others so that they can learn more and begin to get the resources they need from moving from soul repair after moral injury.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:00:49] And thanks, Kyle. It's been great.

**Kyle Fauntleroy** [01:00:53] It's so good to be with you too. Thank you.

**Susan Diamond** [01:01:01] Wow. Rita, that was amazing.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:01:04] Again, we just had so many wonderful people in this podcast series that I am speechless.

**Susan Diamond** [01:01:12] And I hope everybody understands now why we chose Kyle to be that last voice to hear. Because when we were talking about it matters, it really does matter. And



Kyle's experience as a Navy chaplain, as well as now his experience in the seminary environment, is important for everyone to be a part of.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:01:35] I know that Kyle in his career has been in some pretty important spaces for moral injury, so I'm so grateful that someone of his caliber and his influence-- because he was Pacific Command Chaplain for the fleet. And so, he's influenced a lot of other chaplains that his long standing interest in moral injury has been really powerful and important. And this is something I know he didn't say explicitly, but I want to say it for him. When he was in seminary in that time period where everybody had learned lessons from the Vietnam War and lots of people were antiwar, he was discouraged by his professors from going into the military as a chaplain. He was told he would be throwing his education away, and they were completely puzzled why an ethical person would want to serve in the military. I think that was the implication of their discouragement of him. I think that has been a kind of dereliction of duty by progressive and liberal seminaries, is that after the Vietnam War they started encouraging people not to go into military chaplaincy, which left a huge vacuum in chaplaincy in general, not just the military chaplaincy. But in ignoring the needs of chaplain education and focusing on church and congregational life, even with a good theological education, there was a whole lot of other training chaplains needed to serve as chaplains-- not just in the military, but in healthcare where 68% of chaplains serve. And so, I'm making a plea to my colleagues in theological education to attend much more closely to the specifics of the needs of chaplaincy education, because moral injury is our lane. I mean, we said this before in other episodes. Chaplains need to be skilled and sophisticated in their understanding of moral injury because they serve where people's souls are in crisis. That's why chaplains are needed. People are sick or they're dying or they're in the military or they're doing things that really bother their conscience and they have to do them. We need better chaplaincy education because chaplains aren't in the work to create congregations or to save souls or to count numbers and grow their communities. Chaplains take care of people where they are based on what they need, not what we need. And that is a particular vocation and calling that I think is powerful and important.

**Susan Diamond** [01:04:09] I think you and I have had this conversation over the last year or so, that as we're thinking about the future of ministry, that seminaries are going to have to do this work. I want to affirm that. I also want to say, as a pastor that has spent my life in the church, that I think this is important as well. I remember when I first graduated from seminary and I moved from Fort Worth, Texas, down to Naples, Florida, kind of the Mecca of rich white folk who have retired or whatever. And I did not realize how much I had needed to pay more attention to pastoral care. I think in the world in which we are living today, where we have all-- not just the veterans' community, but the whole world has experienced moral distress, moral injury, conflict, all of that, that this may be a catalyst for us all to refocus perhaps the way we think about ministry as we are going forward.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:05:20] I agree. And I also have to say I have deeply appreciated the ministers who've been trained by theological education who have been my ministers. So, I don't want to say that theological education isn't doing a good job in training ministers because, of course, I've had some wonderful ministers who went through these schools. But it's true that we're not encouraged to be at church in ways that are profoundly authentic in terms of how we're suffering. We're there to serve the world. We're there to bless the world. We're there to care for

each other in an hour. But you really can't process moral injury in a worship service. It doesn't work that way, although sometimes you can have rituals that help. But I don't want to be disparaging of congregational life in general. And that's not what my comment about chaplaincy education was. But because there isn't an institution in our society that commits to someone from birth to death except a spiritual or religious community that's disparaged as organized religion, but actually it's that community. And as someone who's moved a lot to follow jobs and had to find a church home every time I moved, I knew-- especially if it was my denomination-- when I walked in the door, they had to take me in. They couldn't say, "Well, we don't want you as a member." But it didn't work that way. It's a community that says if you come to us and want to be part of us, we will embrace you for as long as you're here. And that matters. And I love going to General Assembly when we gather as a denomination, because I get to see some of the pastors that I was in their church and we catch up with each other. So, they remain in that sense friends as well. But it is important right now-- as you say, because of all that we've been through, it's been a difficult especially difficult time historically for the whole world, really-- to have ministers who have the capability of addressing the pain that people are in is really, really important. And that pain, I suspect, is almost entirely moral injury pain.

**Susan Diamond** [01:07:37] I agree. And I also want to lift up lay people in the church and in other religious communities, people who deeply care. The peer support that is required from healing a moral injury is profound. And in our healing circles that we have had, the relationships that have been built by people having a safe space to share what's going on with them in a confidential environment, has made such a difference. So, that in addition to the worshipful work we do on Sunday mornings and then we live that out in mission in our communities and those kinds of things, we also as I think you said last time, to get the courage to move forward by facing our own moral injury and distress. Not trying to push it aside, but really confronting it gives us the ability to be that community of at least in the Christian tradition out of which I come, be that community of healing in the kingdom, or in the kingdom, of Jesus.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:08:51] Yes. And I have to say that because of the work I've been doing the last over a decade now in moral injury, I have met some of the finest human beings I could have imagined meeting. That's, I think, what is important to keep in mind about moral injury. It is an intense kind of suffering because the person has a conscience and they're struggling with it and it's painful. Moral feelings like shame and guilt and remorse and humiliation and outrage, these are painful and difficult feelings. But underneath them is this amazing person. And when you begin to help people process moral injury, that good soul, that beautiful soul actually shows up and wow!

**Susan Diamond** [01:09:42] It matters, folks. And we are so privileged to have had you on this journey. If you want more information, we're going to put that in the show notes and keep tuned. We don't know what's ahead, but we'll be sure to share it with you when it happens.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:09:59] Thanks, everyone, for joining us and we hope it was helpful to you.

**Susan Diamond** [01:10:10] Soul Repair: After Moral Injury is hosted by me, Dr. Susan Diamond.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:10:17] And me, Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock.

**Susan Diamond** [01:10:19] And is produced by Studio D Podcast Production.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:10:23] You can listen to Soul Repair anywhere you get your podcasts. And if you'd like to support the show, please subscribe, leave a review and tell everyone you know about Soul Repair.

**Susan Diamond** [01:10:34] All you have to do is open up the podcast app on your phone, look for Soul Repair and click the plus button in the top right, then scroll down until you see ratings and reviews and tell us your thoughts.

**Rita Nakashima Brock** [01:10:47] Thanks for listening.

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