

Hello,

My name is Judith Barr. I am a psychotherapist and LPC in private practice in Brookfield, CT, and I have been working for years to help heal the abuse of power and violence in our world.

Like so many in our state, nationally and globally, I was heartbroken to hear about the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary. My heart and prayers go out to the families of those we have lost, and to the Newtown community as it heals.

In the wake of the shooting, I have had much reason to be concerned, not only about the violence that happened and continues to occur. I am concerned about the cycle that ends up feeding and creating abuse and violence in its many forms. For example . . . I have heard how some therapists, healers, and spiritual leaders right in our geographical area – professionals who are supposed to help us with our grief – have been interfering with people's grief after this tragedy. If people are interfering, then how will we grieve? And how will we have the chance to grieve at our own pace? If we can't grieve, we will not be able to truly work through this and truly move on. If we can't truly work through our grief and all that goes with it, what will be the consequences for us -- individually and communally? Believe me from my decades of experience . . . the consequences will be grave.

As we -- and you -- make public decisions about how to help ourselves, each other, our communities . . . this example of the interference between us and our grief is just one of many crucial examples for us. This blocking of grief is an example of how it's not just "the mentally ill" who are in the spotlight. It's all of us. And it's not just our "mental health" that's in the spotlight. It's our emotional health. Our individual and our societal emotional health. Our society – perhaps even our world – has tried to avoid and defend against feelings. All sorts of defenses: those we developed during pain and trauma as children -- defenses which thickened, strengthened, froze in place as we grew; then new defenses we took on as we got older -- including drugs, violence, sex, money, and more. It is this defense against our own feelings that festers within us and helps to feed abuse and violence of all kinds in our world . . . including school shootings and other violent tragedies. And our use of bandaids and quick fixes -- in misguided efforts to help us get over our feelings instead of working through them -- feeds the problem more by trying to hide it from view.

I am not solely a psychotherapist. I have also been working for many years to help heal abuse of power and violence to its root. . .through my book, *Power Abused, Power Healed*, my blogs, including PoliPsych and my HuffingtonPost blog, through hundreds of articles and media interviews, as well as workshops and individual sessions. As a result of the length and depth of my experience with these issues . . . I am concerned that we are only looking at them at or near the surface and not at the depths that are

needed. Not at the depths that are needed to truly resolve violence in our community, our state, our country, and our world. And not at the depths that are needed to truly help us be healthy people and citizens of our communities.

Although I am unable to attend the hearing, I am offering to find a way to talk with you and to help not only for the immediate future but for the long term future of resolving these issues and helping to regain the health and well being of our society. I would be open to speaking with you via phone or in person to see how, together, we may help our communities, our nation, and our world.

May we take real and deep steps to help us heal to the root.

Thank you,

Judith Barr

"Power is like fire, lightning, wind, ocean – like life itself – a raw, vibrant force of nature.

It has the potential for great harm and the possibility for magnificent good.

Each of us chooses, whether consciously or unconsciously,
how we will use the power of our own life energy."

Power Abused, Power Healed

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