CONCEPT PAPER: SUFFERING AND HEALING IN THE CONCEPT OF NEIGHBORHOOD

AUTHOR: FAITH WAMBUGU

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BEULAH MISSION CENTER OF OKLAHOMA
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Table of Contents

1.0 Background

Suffering in the concept of neighborhood is a theorization that contextualizes the genesis and metamorphosis of suffering in light of the far-reaching social engagement that, expectedly so, affects our economic, mental, interpersonal, and psychological welfare. It departs from a preliminary understanding that whereas suffering can be partially characterized as an introspective experience that can be handled stoically, humans are, inevitably, social beings who can hardly live in a solitary setting with neither the urge nor the need to interact with others. Incorporating the concept of neighborhood when trying to understand suffering and healing, therefore, projects an important, but at the same time paradoxical idea that a neighborhood is an ailment that presents its own antidote. In other words, while neighborhoods unapologetically precipitate human crises that engender disparities, precipitate pitiful inequities, and cause significant deprivation of essential resources that primarily diminish people's welfare, the solution to those problems are ironically entrenched within the systems and structures of those settlements.
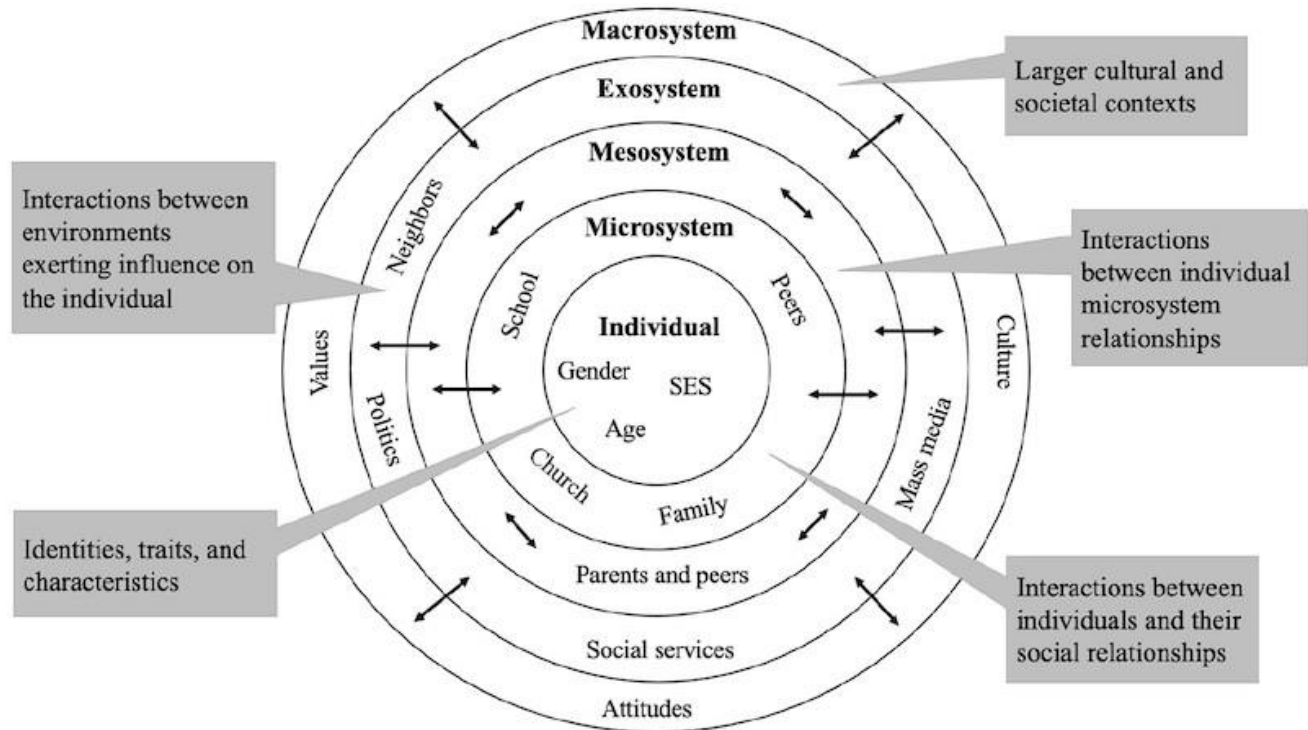
In full appreciation of the fact that a neighborhood is widely defined - at least geographically - as a localized area that forms part of a larger settlement such as a town or a city, a more functionalist definition is preferred for the purpose of this paper since it projects neighborhoods as units of social cohesion that grants people with a sense of belonging, identity, and mechanisms of primary social interactions. It is with this orientation in mind that this paper proposes a four-stage mechanism of healing in the

concept of neighborhood. It, principally, argues that the process of healing undergoes a four-staged evolution spanning from suffering as the first stage, healing, becoming a healer, and developing a healed neighborhood characterized by emotionally and spiritually stable individuals to prevent suffering that would be caused by an, otherwise, ailing society. To effectively elucidate the aforementioned process, this paper draws from a multifaceted array of sources including academic literature, the scripture, and my personal experiences with the view of developing a well-thought framework for social healing within neighborhoods and creating more sustainable societies. Ultimately, the discussion herein presents a template through which people can turn neighborhoods into iconic sources of joy and healing rather than the dreaded causative agents of suffering and deprivation. It provides hope to advance the pastoral work of Jesus and the promise of salvation from suffering to plant the seeds of love, compassion, and empathy.

2.0 Phase One: Suffering

The whole cycle through which people incur pain and later heal to acquire experience to become healer's starts with suffering. As indicated in the previous section, suffering precedes healing and without suffering humans lack the opportunity to brave through critical challenges that transform them spiritually, physically, and psychologically. To understand suffering in the concept of neighborhood, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides an unrivaled template for understanding the inner workings as well as interactions between the individuals and their surroundings. The theory undoubtedly provides one of the most comprehensive

frameworks through which neighborhoods can be characterized on the basis of social functionalism.

Macrosystem

Exosystem

Mesosystem

Microsystem

Larger cultural and societal contexts

Interactions between environments exerting influence on the individual

Interactions between individual microsystem relationships

Neighbors

School

Peers

Culture

Values

Individual

Mass media

Politics

Gender

SES

Age

Church

Family

Identities, traits, and characteristics

Parents and peers

Interactions between individuals and their social relationships

Social services

Attitudes

According to Bronfenbrenner, suffering in the context of neighborhood takes place in a systematically designed manner where different multi-level environments affect how people feel, act, and respond to events that take place in their lives. According to this theory, the ecological system contains five distinct levels that include the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, as well as the chronosystem (Crawford, 2020; El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). However, before interacting with these systems, the theorist emphasizes the need to appreciate that the individual's personal demographics and characteristics have a partial impact on the experiences that one encounters at least in a

socialized environment laden with cultural undertones such as gender roles and privileges.

Some of these personal attributes that shape human experiences, for instance among vulnerable women, include gender, age, and health conditions among others. BMCOK, in the entirety of its historical engagement with vulnerable women back in Kenya and the United States, bears witness of the inequities meted out on women based on the retrogressive cultural orientations that prioritized the boy child over the girl. In a traditional Kenyan family setting, for example, the society largely considered and labeled girls and women as the bearers of children and the caretaker of the family with little emphasis being placed on the need to develop their career and interests above this realm. I have always told of my experiences as a first born girl child from such a society where close family members scolded my father for taking me to school not only because, in their opinion, that was a waste of resources that would otherwise be used to educate my brothers - who were otherwise seen as the inheritors of the family property and the custodians of the bloodline from a cultural perspective.

The interactions between the individual and other systems are, therefore, affected preliminarily by the cultural expectations of the society thus partially and, more so, significantly determining the destiny of the individual. Developing nations such as Kenya and those in East Africa have struggled with pitiful societal and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and early child marriages among others. Not only are these girls married off to older men who are the same age as their fathers or grandfathers, but they

are also denied their childhood, the choice to make decisions based on free will, and the opportunity to choose the love of their life. Based on the Bronfenbrenner's hierarchy of systems within neighborhoods, therefore, women in such cultures tend to carry with them a fateful handicap that affects their performance and opportunities just based on who they are.

In fact, the access to financial resources is even more disgusting whereby, for a significant period, women were not allowed to have identity cards for example, in Kenya. This would mean that the woman was not allowed to own land and other properties. In one of the most illustrative example, when Kenya got independence a group of women known as Nyakinyua, which essentially represented an age group of women who have children that have attained the rightful age of circumcision, formed a cooperative group near the Kenyan capital city to buy land and invest for their children shortly after independence. However, they ironically had to register such property as being in the ownership of their husbands just because they lacked the legal identity cards. This structural discrimination sets a stage for a long continuum of suffering especially in the family setting because women had to specifically rely on their husbands to get shelter, have a sense of identity, and that of belonging in the community.

Here in the United States and other developed nations with an understandable exception of the Scandinavian countries that have significantly achieved a near-egalitarian system of governance, women continue to face issues such as gender pay gap whereby they tend to receive less salaries working on the same jobs groups. The handicap

that comes with the cultural discrimination of women and individuals based on the demographic characteristics set such people on the path of suffering just because of being who they are. This is a perfect manifestation of Tamar - the daughter-in-law of Judah as narrated in Genesis 38:6-30

> *6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death.*
>
> *8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the child would not be his; so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother…*

Tamar had always had the urge to bear a child and when she got married to Er - the son of Judah - his wickedness led to eventual death as per the will of God. This would lead to a series of challenges and untold suffering on the part of Tamar living her life waiting to get a child without fruition. The cultural practices of the time were counterproductive to the women for she was required to sleep with Er's brother to Onan thus depriving her off the opportunity to make a decision freely on who to get married to.

> *11 Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's household.*

After Onan's actions that would further lead to his demise, Judah promised to marry her off to the youngest son's Shelah - a promise that he never kept.

> *13 When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep," 14 she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife.*

While Tamar had spent a significant period of her life as a window, Judah failed to assign Shelah as her husband. This is a clear representation of the patriarchal oppression directed towards a woman despite remaining faithful to the course.

> *15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. 16 Not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he went over to her by the roadside and said, "Come now, let me sleep with you.""And what will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked. 17 "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said. "Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?" she asked.*

In response, Tamar would stand by the roadside acting as a prostitute so as to deceptively sleep with Judah himself and bear a child. In this scenario, Tamar crushes her dignity to act as a prostitute in the glare of the public in search of a child. Whereas Tamar embarks on a path of utter dedication to fulfill God's will and ensure that Er's bloodline would be kept, she falls into the trap of an insensitive patriarchal society that is neither willing to respect her interest as a woman, nor intentional about her welfare.

Now, suffering in the microsystems are the actual manifestations of the face-to-face and immediate interactions between the individuals and the people surrounding them (Eriksson et al., 2018; Tong & An, 2024). The interactions are partially informed by the roles, cultural orientations, and economic classes that have been imposed on the individuals based on their personalities, characteristics and the status of the person in question. Poverty-related suffering occurs at the microsystems level due to the insufficiency of resources required to provide standard housing and healthy feeding. Mothers taking care of their children, in the family setting for instance, incur critical challenges due to low income limited to the extent of sacrificing essential needs that, in turn, affect the development trajectory of their children and the general welfare of the entire family.

Growing up as a child, I lived in a poverty-stricken family of seven children without proper housing and beddings. In addition to this, my mother adopted three other children whose mother had tried to poison before attempting suicide. This made a total of ten children living in the same room fitted with two beds. The beds were painstakingly made of four main pieces of wood planted on the ground and choice sticks firmly closely tied with sisal made rope. My mother's decision to invite the three additional children was a perfect case of a suffering microsystem - at the family level - and one of peers and neighbors suffering together to make ends meet. Nonetheless, the cycle of poverty leads to a situation in which women and girls coming from such social classes further become oppressed by their privileged neighbors, relatives, and employers.

I experienced one of my hardest times in life while working for a Pastor couple - a family that had dedicated their life to ministry. As they would inform my parents, my primary role was to help them with housekeeping as a way of supporting their mission. As I left the village, my hopes were high. I had big plans to make the family supported, understood about their needs, heard, and validated to continue serving the Lord. However, what had been presented as a God-fearing family full of the fruits of the Holy Spirit turned out to be the most degrading and dream-shuttering couple I have ever experienced. Living with them, I encountered unthoughtful humiliation, food rationing, and demeaning behavior that significantly affected my sense of self-worth and esteem. According to my mistress, for instance, I was never allowed to be in the presence of her husband under any circumstance. I remember one rainy evening when I had come from collecting clothes from the hanging line. Unfortunately, the husband had already arrived and sat in the lounge. I sat on a stool with the clothes placed on my laps waiting for the husband to finish taking her dinner before I could get back into the house. This affected me psychologically because I had been brought up in a Christian family where discipline and family values were evidently inculcated in me. As such, there is no single time it crossed my mind to get involved with a family man whose ministry and mission I had come to support. During this tough episode of my life I was reminded of Hagar - the maidservant of the Abrahams - in Genesis 16: 1-16. When Hagar conceived, Sarah

mistreated her so that she may flee into the wilderness. However, the angel of the Lord met Hagar near a spring in the desert where she said the following words to her.

> *10 "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."*
>
> *11 You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael,[a] for the Lord has heard of your misery.*

Despite the suffering in the hands of the mistress, I prayed to God for revelation so I may get to understand why he had let me pass through this. Every time when I planned on leaving, I thought about the attachment I had developed with Ellen - my mistress's daughter. I thought about the days I had been called to school just to clean after her toiletry mess considering that she lived with a special need. I was convinced that maybe God had called me to ease the pain that Ellen would have otherwise lived with had she been taken care of by an uncompassionate house maid or the absent mother so to speak.

Besides the individual and the microsystems, Bronfenbrenner's theory argues that the ecological environment encompasses the mesosystems. These are the connections that link up the microsystems and Ecosystems (Sadownik, 2023). In principle, the ecosystems include such things as the neighbors, media, and politics among others. Most of the components of the exosystems cannot be controlled by the actions of the individual and/or the microsystems. In any case, the individual and microsystems are directly controlled by the actions and decisions taken at the exosystem level. People living in the neighborhood will undoubtedly suffer in case the microsystems are not well linked to the components of the exosystems. This is based on the fact that the communication between

the microsystem and the exosystem promotes policy formulation which improves how individuals live within the microsystem. For instance, when there is proper linkage, the political class will develop legislation that promotes equal treatment between men and women, hence, improving the experience of women at workplace, at family level, and in business among other settings. Lastly, the outermost realm of the Bronfenbrenner's system is the macrosystems which incorporates the values and larger cultural contexts that affect the individual (Navarro & Tudge, 2022). As discussed earlier, human suffering and more so the painful experiences of women are deeply rooted in how cultural stipulations affect individual freedoms and the availability of opportunities. In essence, therefore, suffering in a neighborhood takes place when the different systems are not developed to promote human growth based on an egalitarian approach.

3.0 Phase Two: Healing

3.1 Healing in the Context of Neighborhood

The forerunning discussion appreciates the fact that neighborhoods are double-edged swords that present individuals with challenges, but also encompass the solutions to the inherent problems. In other words, suffering precedes healing which originates from within the same systems that have been discussed above. I have always believed that whereas some people might cause us pain within our neighborhood, God sends others to help us out of that pain. In Galatians 5, God acknowledges that man, with the freedom to make choices, will result in making diverse decisions that might go by or against his will. The scripture, therefore, makes a clear distinction between the works of

the flesh and those of the Holy Spirit. Suffering in neighborhoods happens when the constitutive members of the respective community go by the works of the fresh. Galatians 5: 13-18 indicates;

> *13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."[b] 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*
>
> *16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[c] you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

The scripture acknowledges and emphasizes the need for human freedom to make a choice as to whether they would indulge in the flesh or answer the call of freedom by finding homage in the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment of the greatest commandment directing us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves is described as the singular act in which we fulfill the entire law. Further, the scripture acknowledges that, without love, people within the neighborhood would bite and devour each other hence causing suffering and destruction. In that light, the scripture provides a comprehensive list of the acts of flesh where it indicates;

> *19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition,*

dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did

before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Looking at the acts of the flesh, it is evident that jealousy, self-ambition, hatred such as the one my mistress directed towards me, and rage are key contributing factors to people imposing pain on their colleagues and peers in their neighborhood. On the other hand, however, neighborhoods can provide solutions to suffering by adopting the fruits of the Holy Spirit. In this case, the scripture says;

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Neighborhoods and individuals that embrace love, peace, kindness, and self-control among other fruits of the Holy Spirit do not only have the capacity to reduce suffering in the society, but also improve their own experiences and personal healing. In effect, the transition from suffering into healing calls upon individuals to adopt the fruits of the Holy Spirit in order to enhance optimism and cut on rivalry within their respective circles. I am always moved by the reality that the same river that Peter spent the whole night without catching any fish was the same one from which they caught thousands of them when Jesus came in the morning and asked them to cast their nets deeper. When a neighborhood is filled with the Holy Spirit, it has the capacity to transform from a fierce

tormentor into a compassion and empathetic environment through which dreams thrive and families grow.

3.2 Process of Healing

Effective healing is primarily ingrained in proper understanding of how healing should take place across different faces right from the suffering stage to full recovery. The healing process starts with the awareness phase where the affected person admits that the issue they are facing is an actual problem that needs to be dealt with. In this regard, the adage that a problem identified is a problem half way solved rationalizes the idea of self-acceptance. For instance, when I was being abused and mistreated by the mistress, I had to identify the problem in order to come up with plausible ways of solving it. I first admitted that the couple was unnecessarily abusive, I had lived in denial, and that Ellen needed some help. I admitted that the mean behavior directed towards me affected my self-esteem and it was time to move into a new environment. In effect, I talked to my pastor friend about Ellen's challenge and proceeded to let him know about my dream to join bible school. Had I not admitted my situation, I would remain stuck within the home without finding a proper solution to Ellen's problems and the challenges I was facing personally. However, this admission arises from the suffering stage when the pain becomes so much that one has to find a way out. With this in mind, it becomes clear that suffering is an essential part of healing because it puts pressure on the barrier of denial.

Having admitted and acknowledged the existence of pain and suffering, the next stage of healing is acceptance. Living in denial and self-blame does not help the

individual to start the journey towards full recovery. Before the acceptance stage, the victim is always in continuous bitterness blaming him/herself and God for what happened. In some circumstances, the victim feels shame because they do not believe that it can or should happen to them. With such bitterness in mind, healing becomes a critical problem because the individual has not fully owned the problem and accepted their part of the responsibility. In a neighborhood situation, women meeting and sharing about their experiences plays a vital role in enhancing acceptance, more so, because the victims are freed from their suffering bubble in which they think the problem is specific to them. With social discussions among women, for instance, BMCOK manages to provide insight to women confirming that others have passed through the same challenges.

In the third phase of healing, the victims have to undergo grieving in which they try to cope with the pain of the suffering and loss. This is especially important because some people take time to get over their pain and hence enough time should be provided to get through the negative emotions. In the context of neighborhood, it is important for colleagues, friends, and peers to provide a shoulder to lean on. In this regard, the victim must be allowed to shed tears and be in sorrow without having to resolve the issues at hand. When this happens, healing moves to the next phase which encompasses forgiveness and moving forward. It is important to note that healing cannot fully take place in case the victim has not forgiven those who caused him or her suffering. In my case, I had to face my mistress and let her know about the suffering she took me through. I did this to clear my mind and forgive her for what she had done to me. However, I

could only forgive if both of us had a common understanding that she had done something wrong to me. This way, I was able to move on and open a new chapter of my life in the bible school.

4.0 Phase Four: Become the Healer and Provider

Having come from suffering and encountered painful experiences, healed people in a neighborhood setting are better placed to help others through the process of healing and dealing with their own set of issues. Through the process of healing, the healed one develops a high sense of awareness about suffering in both the general and particulate perspectives. Based on the foundation of their own experiences, a healed person is aware of how pain subtly influences an individual's reactions as well as decision-making. In addition to this, such a person in society is aware of the different coping mechanisms that a person undergoing pain employs in order to survive. They are well aware about the ineffectiveness of such survival tactics and clear avoidance of the problem in the hope that it will vanish.

For instance, a woman that has gone through divorce or separation from an abusive partner will fully understand why another woman is reluctant to give up on her family despite the humiliation they undergo. In this regard, a divorcee tends to understand the complexity of the matter from a multidimensional perspective including the difficulty to get the children through a hurtful procedure and traumatic encounters. A woman undergoing divorce will, therefore, feel more understood while in company of a fellow woman who has experienced it. In effect, the healed one is more empathetic when

dealing with a suffering person within the community providing enough time for grief, acceptance, and forgiveness among other steps discussed earlier.

The component of empathy is perhaps the most critical enabler in the healing process. When trying to assist someone to cope with their suffering, the interpersonal dynamics between the involved people have to fully consider the perspectives of the suffering one. These perspectives are primary because they project the fears, emotions, strengths, and weaknesses of the person undergoing the pain. This way, it becomes a balanced and authentic representation of their pain which forms a solid ground upon which the healing process could be founded. In principle, the general rule of the thumb is that the healing procedure has to be as authentic and self-immersed as possible for acceptance, forgiveness, and moving on to be realized. Any mistake to rush a given phase of healing is counterproductive to the effectiveness of the overall procedure. Expectedly, therefore, a person who has undergone the same pain is more likely to ensure that the suffering one deals with his or her fear and emotions patiently for full healing to be realized.

Besides, the healed one becomes a better provider and healer because they have a high moral authority as the living testimony that one can heal from great pain and continue with their normal and productive lives. They act as mirrors through which those in pain can see themselves and predict the brightness of their future despite the difficult circumstances in which they find themselves. In other words, they are living proof that recovery is possible. Undoubtedly, they project lasting hope through the tough healing

process which is partly characterized by episodes of backtracking and withdrawal. It is only through continuous rejuvenation of hope that the suffering one can keep the motivation and the required level of consistency.

Nonetheless, the concept of becoming a healer also comes with the aspect of being a provider. The healed one provides a number of essential components in the recipe of healing by offering advice and insights on what should be done at different stages of the process. Kolb's Cycle of Experiential learning indicates that observing and experiencing are fundamental epistemic components through which people create and/or advance their level of knowledge. Kolb's theoretical framework is as shown in the figure below.
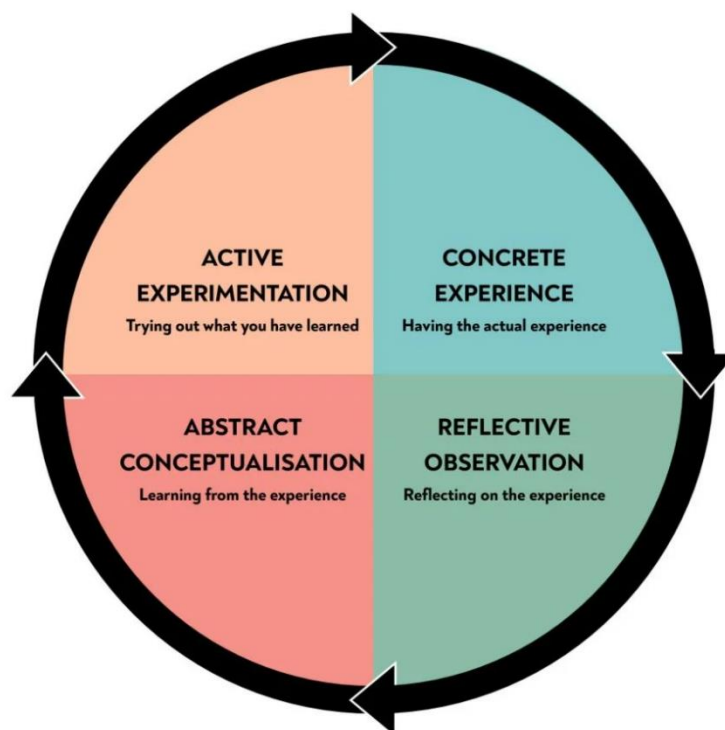
According to Kolb, when an individual goes through an actual experience personally, there is always an epistemological opportunity for them to advance their understanding of the core issues at hand (Chiu, 2019). At the experience stage, the events that take place push the person in question into a situation where they appreciate the need for action. Otherwise, before the experience and undergoing the pain at a personal level, it is less likely that a person would appreciate the issues that affect others. With this experience, the individual enters into a state of reflection where they seek to understand how and why each of the events took place (Vince, 1998). In this case, they seek to understand what is useful in that experience and what they should discard going forward. Once the reflection is over, Kolb proposes that the person in question tries to develop a conceptually appropriate model to map out their lessons in order to come up with a generalized way of dealing with the pertinent issues manifesting in the event (Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022). Lastly, the theorist argues that such individuals will attempt experimenting with their lessons by applying their newly adopted knowledge to similar situations. Based on this theory, it is evident that a healed person undergoes an epistemic transformation in the process of dealing with their own pain. To serve their community, the healed ones would serve their neighborhood in a more effective manner if they helped their peers to deal with similar situations.

The story of Saul's transformation to Paul and, thereafter, becoming the most passionate proponent of the Lord's message is a perfect representation of the healed one becoming a healer and a provider. When Saul the bright light shone on Paul and made

him blind, he proceeded to Damascus where he fasted for three days in prayer. When

Ananias healed Saul and baptized him to Paul, he proclaimed the word of Jesus wherever

he went, becoming the most effective and celebrated disciple for the man who everybody

knew as a persecutor had turned into a preacher. Paul became such a faithful and ardent

disciple because he had experienced the transformative power of Christ, the suffering,

and the mercy of the Lord. He became the best person to preach the good news to those

who were still in darkness for them to proclaim the word of God and accept Jesus as their

personal savior.

5.0 Phase Four: Instituting Healing and Strengthening Neighborhood Values

For us to have a sustainable neighborhood that reduces the level of suffering at

personal and communal level, it is necessary to institute the concept of healing within the

systems, ranks, and structures of a neighborhood. Instituting healing as a principality of

social engagement with the aim of ensuring that people cut down on unhealthy

interactions that otherwise lead to suffering, the healed ones have to take deliberate

efforts to transform the value systems of the neighborhoods. BMCOK engages in a

myriad of activities that provide an opportunity for the healed to tell their stories for all to

learn from and improve their own understanding about the cost of pain. When the healed

ones become the primary frontiers of such initiatives, the neighborhoods develop a cyclic

system in which healing projects a ripple effect that creates a more sustainable self-

correcting society which focuses not on healing the suffering ones but preventing the pain

itself.

The fundamental question, therefore, is as to how we can institute the culture of sustainable interactions that prevent suffering and also generate structures that engender healing in the context of our neighborhoods. The key idea that comes to mind is the word "awareness". It is surprising that, whereas a significant number of people impose suffering on others deliberately, there is a significant number of others who are unaware of their actions based on their personalities and past experiences. Importantly, the most critical segment is one that comprises individuals who are completely unaware of the impact of their actions on the welfare of others. When individuals successfully undergo healing, it is necessary for them to engage in awareness creation campaigns in which they narrate their experiences in different areas of socialization such as schools and churches. The overall impact of this approach is that it ingrains the key values of intentional empathy at different levels of the ecological systems through the individual.

Based on the Bronfenbrenner's theory we used earlier, when the individual is more aware of the impact their actions can have on others, they become more deliberate about how they treat their peers, colleagues, and family members in the microsystem. The transformation of the individual starts off a wave that reverberates across the different levels of the ecological system considering that individuals are the primary players in each of these systems. For instance, a school is made up of individuals holding different positions to make it a fully functional institution. As a result, a school principal who is aware of the challenges that parents with disabled children undergo will tend to be more empathetic about them. When engaging them, the teacher will always make consideration

of the fact that the developmental needs of the child are well-above the ordinary and hence require proper follow-up and frequent communication to achieve the desired academic results. In the same light a family woman who is aware of the cost of separation and divorce will behave and operate in a manner that strengthens the bond between her and her partner for the welfare of the children and the larger family in general. In that light, therefore, the healed ones have a key and primary role in ensuring they engage in creating community-wide awareness in order to make neighborhoods sustainable.

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