Healing the Big Hurts

WHEN TRUST TOOK A WOUND

> *Some wounds don't close with time.*
> *They close with a witness.*

Some injuries are bigger than the daily cycle. The affair. The partner who wasn't there during the miscarriage or the diagnosis. The cruel thing said at the moment of greatest need. The secret that pulled the ground out from under you. These attachment injuries don't fade with time or with good behavior. They stay open and show up in every fight, because the question they raised was never answered: How could you? And can I ever be safe with you again?

Healing has a shape, and shortcuts break it. The hurt partner needs to tell the story whole, not the summary but the moment itself: where they were, what they saw, what broke. The injuring partner's job is the hardest one in love: stay present and let the full impact land. No deflecting, no context, no "but." The wound needs a witness before it needs anything else.

Then, and only then, comes repair. Remorse that is felt rather than performed: "I see now what that did to you, and it breaks my heart." And the slow keeping of promises that proves the story has really changed. Forgiveness, when it comes, is not an obligation and not amnesia. It is what becomes possible, sometimes all at once, when a wound that waited years for a witness finally gets one.

THE WITNESSING

1. Hurt partner: choose the moment. The specific scene where the injury lives.
2. Tell it as a story, not a verdict. Where you were, what happened inside you, what broke.
3. Injuring partner: your only job is to be present. Listen until they finish. No defense.
4. Then reflect the impact: "What I did left you ___. I see it now." Feel it as you say it.
5. Do not rush toward forgiveness. Let the witnessing be complete first. It may take more than one telling.

WHEN IT'S HARD

If you are the injuring partner and shame is screaming at you to defend, explain, or disappear, know this: staying steady in that fire is itself the repair. And if the injury is recent, raw, or tangled with ongoing betrayal, do this work with your therapist in the room. Some surgeries need a surgeon present.

TO SIT WITH

Is there a moment between you that never got fully witnessed, one that still walks into your fights?

What has protecting yourself from that wound cost you? What might witnessing make possible?

OUR INTENTION THIS WEEK

Something small you can both actually do this week.

WITH YOU ON THE JOURNEY,

Dr. Mark Gregory Karris