

THE POWER WITHIN US

**Closing remarks to the 2009 Carolinas Conference on Addiction & Recovery
October 30, 2009
by Jim Van Hecke**

We have more important work to complete here today, but while we are all together I want to make a few comments that I hope will summarize what we have been about this week. Before I do that I would like to thank some very important people:

- **Our wonderful staff: Kirkland, Michael, Skip and Wendy who “made it happen”;**
- **The extraordinary faculty who taught us and inspired us;**
- **Fulton Crews and Bob Gwyther of the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, our co-host for this event, Sara MeEwen of the Governors Institute and the Medical University of South Carolina for their support;**
- **YOU—who knew you needed continued clinical training but who also knew that you needed to be inspired again.....to have your inner fire tended to....you who are so vital to so many people who depend on you to help them find their paths to wellness and wholeness.**

One of our goals this week was to present the best of science and spirit—to recognize what Rumi calls the “Two Kinds of Intelligence” that reside within each of us—and to seek ways to bringing both of those forces together into a power that will improve our personal and professional lives.

The gift that each of us have been given—to be in the recovery business--that’s right, the recovery business—not the treatment business—is a real blessing that carries with it, enormous responsibility. We are each entrusted with our unique roles to assist individuals and families find their way out of the darkness of addiction and into the light of recovery.

To do it well we have to (1) keep learning—about the newest advances in research and treatment modalities; and (2) keep growing—nourishing our spirits and taking care of ourselves so that we can care for others.

Science and art (or spirit) are like two logs that you add to a fire—carefully and strategically placed, they produce a greater flame and more heat than only one. I shared a poem with some friends last night about fire that I would like to share with you: “What I Have Learned So Far” by Mary Oliver:

Meditation is old and honorable, so why should I
not sit, every morning of my life, on the hillside,
looking into the shining world? Because, properly
attended to, delight, as well as havoc, is suggestion.
Can one be passionate about the just, the
ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit
to no labor in its cause? I don't think so.

All summations have a beginning, all effect has a
story, all kindness begins with the sown seed.
Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of
light is the crossroads of -- indolence, or action.

Be ignited, or be gone.

Many of us have been inspired by a wonderful little book entitled A General Theory of Love by Thomas Lewis, a psychiatrist from San Francisco who spoke to this conference back in 2003. Listen to what he says about this blending of science and spirit:

“While science can afford us a closer glimpse
of *this* tower or *that* soaring wall,
the heart's castle still hangs high in the heavens,
shrouded in scudding clouds and obscured by mist.
Will science ever announce the complete revelation
of all of love's secrets?
Will empiricism ever trace an unbroken path from the
highest stones of the heart's castle down to the bedrock of certitude?

Of course not. We demand too much if we expect
single-handed empiricism to define and lay bare the human soul.
Only in concert with art does science become so precise.
Both are metaphors through which we strive to know the world
and ourselves; both can illuminate inner and outer landscapes
with a flash that inspires but whose impermanence
necessitates unending rediscovery.”

May you leave here today, ignited with new commitment and passion, to use what you learned and experienced here this week to enrich the lives of those you serve and yourselves.

Thank you.