10 Quotes from *The Wounded Healer*, by Henri Nouwen that Will Shift Your Perspective on Service and Suffering

1. “No minister can save anyone. He can only offer himself as a guide to fearful people. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely in this guidance that the first signs of hope become visible. This is so because a shared pain is no longer paralyzing but mobilizing, when understood as a way to liberation.”

2. “When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope.”

3. “Through this common search, hospitality becomes community. Hospitality becomes community as it creates a unity based on the shared confession of our basic brokenness and on a shared hope.”

4. “Jesus is God’s wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed.”

5. “The main question is not ‘How can we hide our wounds?’ so we don’t have to be embarrassed, but ‘How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?’”

6. “When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.”

7. “Nothing can be written about ministry without a deeper understanding of the ways in which ministers can make their own wounds available as a source of healing.”

8. “Our service will not be perceived as authentic unless it comes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which we speak.”

9. “Perhaps the main task of the minister is to prevent people from suffering for the wrong reasons. Many people suffer because of the false supposition on which they have based their lives. That supposition is that there should be no fear or loneliness, no confusion or doubt. But these sufferings can only be dealt with creatively when they are understood as wounds integral to our human condition. Therefore, ministry is a very confronting service. It does not allow people to live with illusions of immortality and wholeness. It keeps reminding others that they are mortal and broken, but also that with the recognition of this condition, liberation starts.”

10. “Thus, ministry can indeed be a witness to the living truth that the wound, which causes us to suffer now, will be revealed to us later as the place where God intimated his new creation.”