

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR CLIENTS WITH MPD AND DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

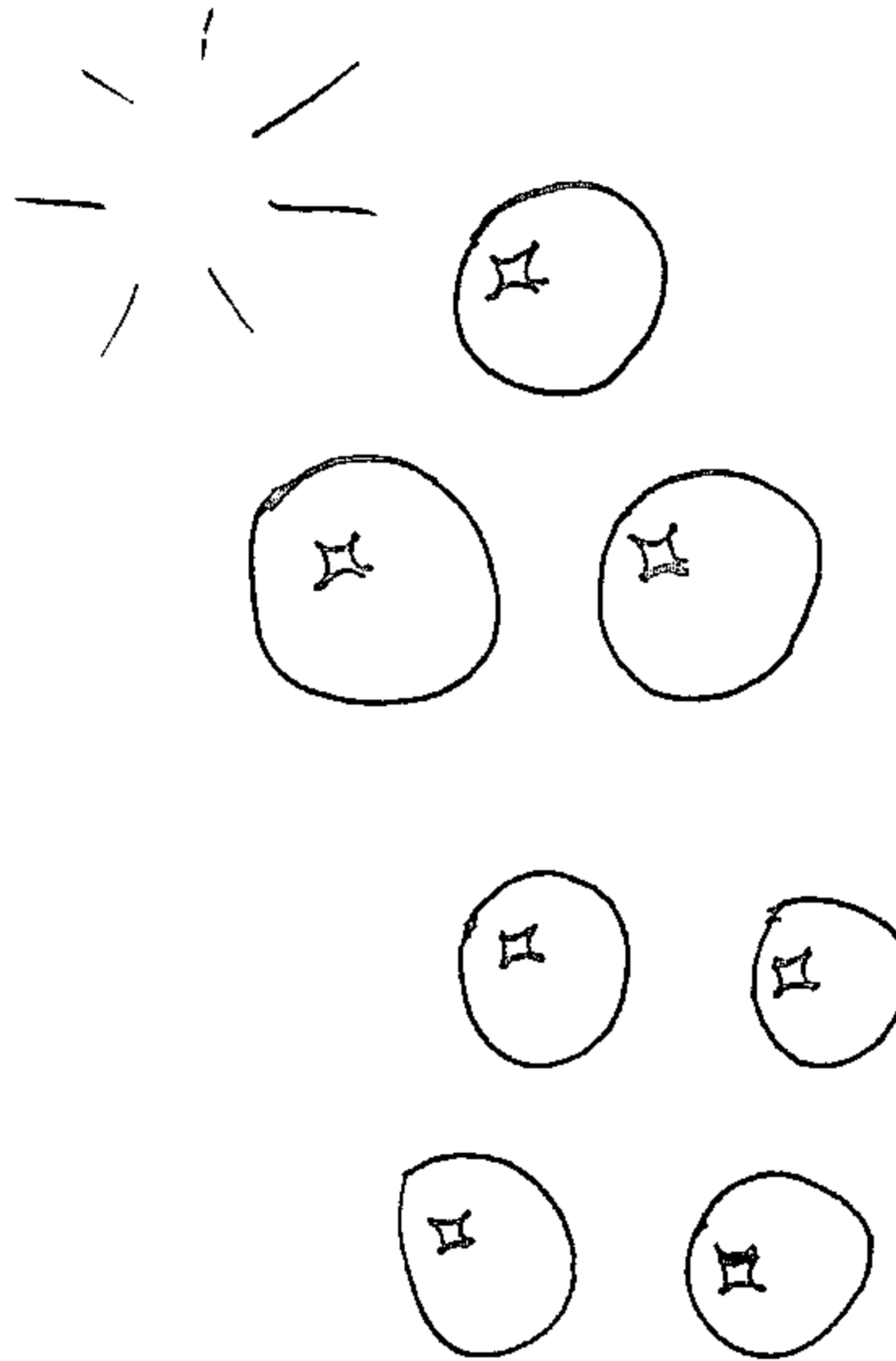
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Dear Friends:

This is our issue on grief, and it was not easy for me to put together. It will probably not be easy for you to read. I tried to present a mix of material to keep from overwhelming you. However, it seemed wrong for me to edit-out the reasons that people give for needing to struggle with grief. Please read this with friends nearby. —LW



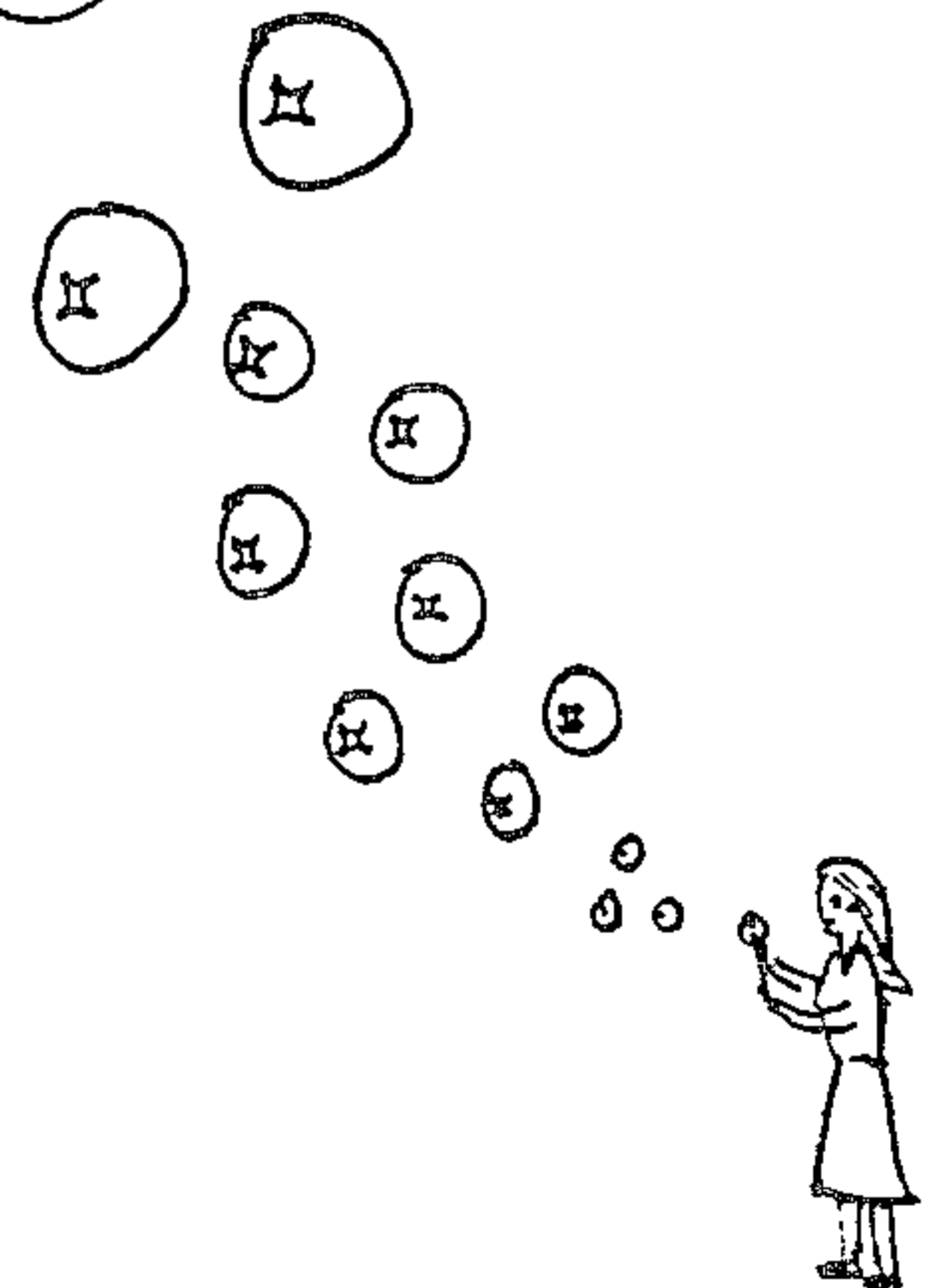
Bubble Therapy

For years, we have held on to the memories of people who were killed by the cult. We tried to save them by internalizing them. As we have uncovered more memories in therapy, we experienced a physical and mental heaviness. We needed to grieve for these people and we needed to let them go.

Lately, our "kids" have wanted to blow soap-bubbles. We did this with a group of multiples and all had a great time. The bubbles were light, and rose up out of the enclosed area we were in. They were free! They escaped! We loved it! We thought that bubbles could represent the letting go of the people.

It worked! As part of a therapy session with our therapist, we ran through his parking lot and released hundreds and hundreds of bubbles — and the people — and they were free! We laughed and cried. We grieved. And, we felt lighter and more at peace.

By Lynn D., Kitten, Lizzie, Marcy and BADCAT



(Cassandra wrote this story for me before I sought therapy and discovered that I had MPD. The quiet wisdom of this parable gives me hope when my world seems so divided and impossible to manage. — Frances T.)

Guilt

By Abigail Collins

The Gentle Laborer — A Parable

By Cassandra

As a now-integrated survivor of ritual abuse, I have learned restorative lessons on guilt. The fact that I *do* feel guilt sets me apart from my perpetrators, and that is good; however, to allow guilt to control or enslave me serves the dark negativity of my abusers.

I have learned that guilt can be my ally, for it flashes a warning signal that something is not quite right. I must examine why I feel guilty, distinguish if the guilt is appropriate, and make necessary corrections.

I used to harbor "false guilt" that was implanted by my perpetrators. Now, guilt has become the disciplining tool of correction and an initial signal for reformation.

God intended guilt to draw us closer to Him so each of us could have a fuller life in His abundant love. Guilt usually gives way to a need for repentance or saying, "I'm sorry" to God and to others. Guilt helps me discard old destructive patterns, while it helps establish new patterns of growth.

I believe that Satan used guilt as a tool for torment, for bondage, while God sets His beloved free. Now I understand that guilt presents a choice to me. I can continue the abuse cycle of my perpetrators or I can use guilt constructively and move out of the circle of bondage. As a child there weren't any choices. But today, as an adult, I have many options and the freedom to choose.

I found myself walking through a green forest. I could see sunlight flashing through the forest's canopy of leaves, giving evidence of a warm summer's day. However, the air was cold and damp because the sun's rays were unable to penetrate the dense foliage of the trees.

I soon came to a shady clearing. In the center of the clearing there stood the remains of an ancient stone foundation which appeared to have once belonged to a small circular building; it stood about four feet high. I walked up to it and touched one of its stones. The stone was partially covered with moss and felt as cold and damp as the air. I saw that there were holes in the foundation where some of the stones had fallen out. Some of these stones were still whole; others were broken into pieces.

As I stood there, a young man came into the clearing pushing a wheelbarrow filled with a mason's tools and materials. I understood that these things were to be used for the making and laying of new stones on the existing foundation. The man was tall and slender. His hands were very large and suggested great strength. However, they were not rough or calloused

as the hands of a laborer might be; they were soft and smooth. He went straight to His work without speaking or looking at me. Nevertheless, I felt that He was very aware of my presence.

He began His work by picking up the broken pieces of stone and masterfully fitting them together into whole pieces. This task was done with great care and love. To my amazement, He was able to mend the broken stones simply by pressing them together in His hands. As He completed the repair of each stone He placed it carefully into a hole in the foundation. Each stone was a perfect fit and I marveled at how the job was done with so little effort or toil.

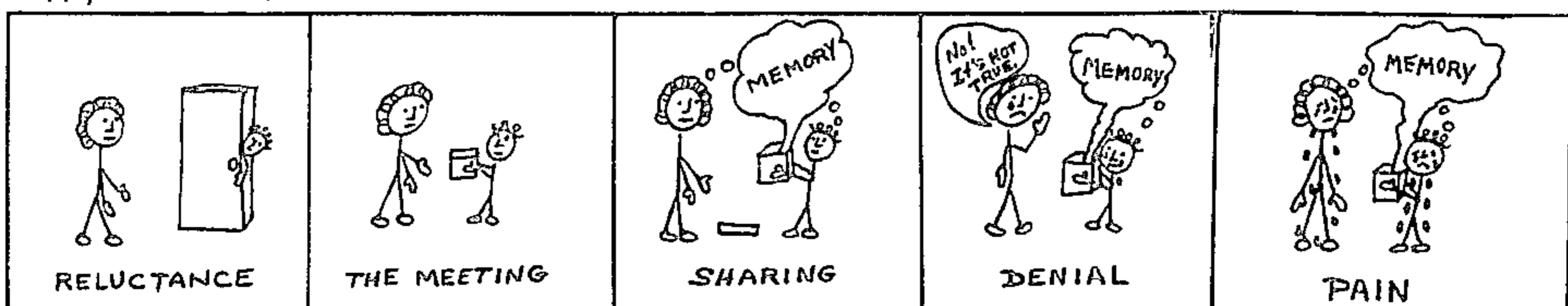
When His work was completed He stepped back and looked at it and seemed very pleased. It occurred to me that now that the foundation was strong again, He would begin to build on top of the already existing foundation. As if reading my thoughts, the laborer went to His wheelbarrow and began to push it closer to the foundation.

Suddenly, the sunlight broke through the trees and brought warmth to the tiny clearing. I felt my heart quicken.

MV

MV

MY/OUR PATH THROUGH GRIEF



Tell Me, Little Girl

By Lydia

This poem was my invitation to one of my little girls, to come to my therapist's office and talk about her sadness. She did.

You look tired of walking
 rest here, little girl
 under your glance
 I see loneliness
 hurting you,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 Tell me, what are you doing here
 far away from home,
 Trust me, little girl,
 Tell me, what makes you run?
 I will understand it,
 little girl,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 Relieve it in my office
 bring to me all your hurting,
 let the sadness that is in you
 come out,
 drink a little of my peaceful wine,
 sit next to the fire
 that I build here for you
 and smile again to life,
 little girl with sad eyes.

On your face
 a smile is having birth
 your eyes are laughing,
 little girl,
 you feel a relief
 in your heart,
 you are not alone,
 little girl,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 Tell me about your past,
 overwhelm me
 with your perfume,
 return to this office.
 I too have walked,
 I too know loneliness,

I too, had been tired,
 little girl.
 Relieve your pain
 in my nest,
 accept the hope offered
 for your broken heart,
 let the sadness out,
 look ahead to the future,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 Let the tears run.
 Denial is not the solution
 as long as it hurts, it's real,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 The agony of your pain
 will be alleviated
 with my ointment,
 escape is no way out,
 little girl,
 little girl with sad eyes.
 Accept all the roses
 beyond the thorn
 they are part of your perfume
 little girl with sad eyes.

On your face
 a smile is having birth,
 your eyes are laughing,
 little girl.
 Drink a bit
 of my peaceful wine,
 sit next to my fire
 that I build here for you
 and smile again to life
 smile again for us,
 little girl.



Alone

A small child, crouched in the
 center of a huge arena,
 Echoing empty,
 Vast space, vacant loneliness.

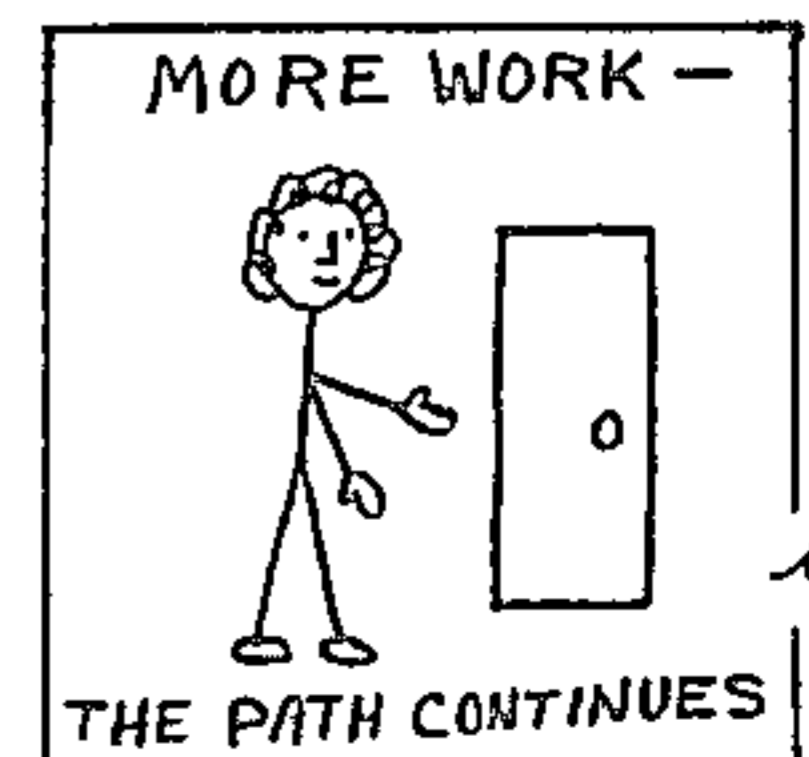
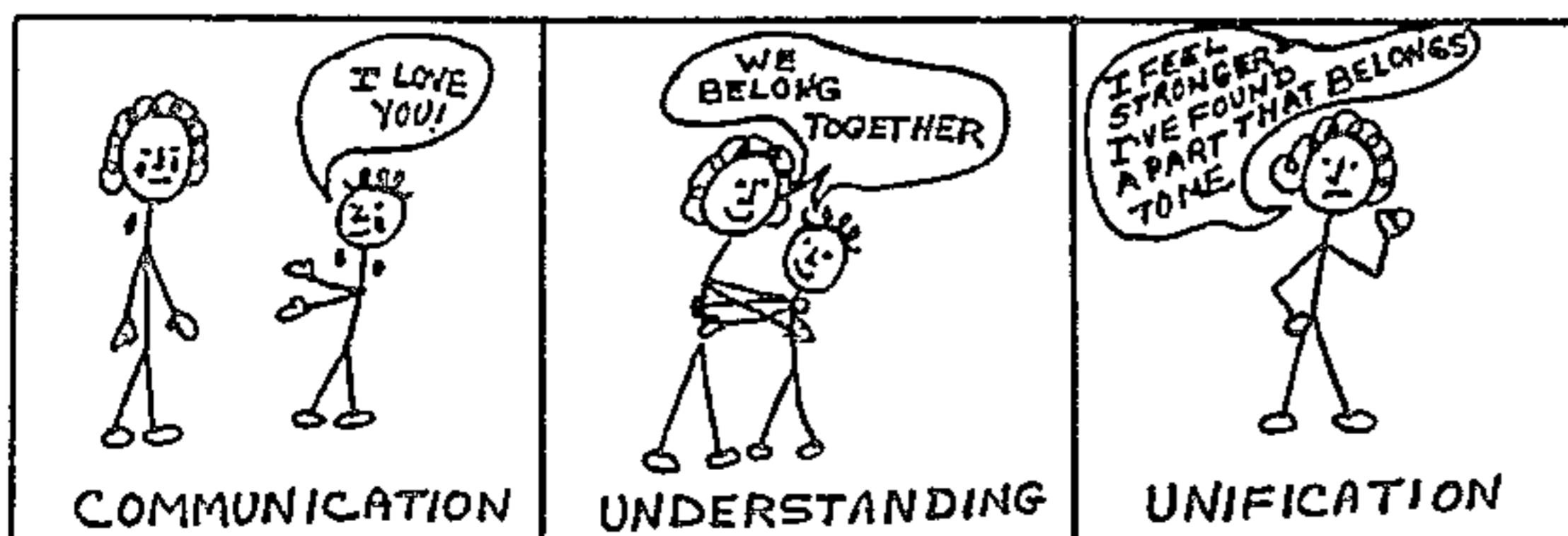
A small voice in pathetic tones,
 Heart-cry of fear
 Reverberating around sorry
 nothingness.
 "Mama . . ."

Silence.

A small pair of panicked eyes,
 gleaming inner pain —
 Tears spilling in hesitant disbelief,
 Cheeks damp with sorrow and
 despair:
 "Mama . . . Mama . . ."

Two small feet running, running,
 searching furiously,
 Following futility in endless circles.
 Screams of agonized desperation
 "MAMA . . ."

She is not here.
 She will never be here.
 Mama is gone. Her name is
 "Abandonment".
 By Julie B.



by —
Dino M.

Grieving our losses . . .

My brother Steve died a month before his 19th birthday. He died in his sleep. From what I have remembered in therapy, he probably committed suicide.

Steve had many questions about things that were happening in his life that I had not yet experienced, such as time loss or flashbacks to earlier events as a young child.

What I have learned is that I can be mad at Steve for not keeping his promise to give me twenty-four hours to find some help for him. I have also been able to cry for the first time, because I hurt and miss my brother very much.

Also, I have to resist feeling guilty for being a survivor. No matter how many times I tried to die, another part or parts in me fought to stay alive.

I am also working hard to accept and grieve the babies that I lost from the time I was twelve until three years ago, when I had a hysterectomy. I realize now that whichever part(s) of me handled things then did the best they could, at specific periods in my life.

By Vickie and the Gang



What is grief? It's not depression. Rather, grief is the pain felt through losses. Psychotherapists look at it as a way of biological healing as well as the healing of the psyche. There are stages of grieving such as (1) shock, (2) acute mourning, and (3) the resolution.

Personally, I have worked through a number of losses, among them the loss of my mother, who abused me severely. The anniversary of her death was in June and I had to mourn the loss of the "ideal" mother plus decide whether there was anything loving about our relationship. I didn't confront my mother before she died, and I wish I had.

My father is also deceased, and the anniversary of his death was in March. Father's Day is in June. I confronted him on his deathbed and he cried and admitted to all the sexual abuse.

The other personalities were temporarily fused, so we have all heard it. The confrontation was difficult because we were left with the dilemma of loving or hating him. I learned through therapy that it's okay to have both emotions.

Now I'm beginning to grieve the future loss of another personality who wants to integrate, because we are both friends and I will feel the loss.

I've learned that grieving resurfaces at any time, but the feelings over old business will be less and less. As we grieve, it seems that more and more issues dealing with grief are brought up. Each time feels awful, but we know intellectually that at some point they will be resolved.
By Protector Gayle, part of Gayle R.



Grief. Accepting loss in order to heal. How to "work through" grief.

Good grief! All joking aside, allowing oneself (or eightyselves?) to grieve our losses can be extremely healing. And for us, *healing is the main point.*

We certainly have an endlessly long—and completely justifiable—set of *grievances* against so many people. And those grievances need to be aired and validated. We need to be able to feel anger.

And, we need to *allow time for grieving*. There are so many losses: years and years of childhood, innocence, trust, children in the cult, our own children not allowed a breath of life, the motherhood we will never experience. As the years went on, there were aftereffects—the relationships in shambles, confusion, pain, lost time, inadequacies. . . That certainly sounds overwhelming.



Well, it was. And it is.

But, you know what? I'm gonna make a huge pitcher of lemonade out of the truckload of lemons dumped on me by life! Gotta take it one lemon at a time, because otherwise I'll be crushed.

What are the ingredients to sweeten that citric acid? I'm learning to like myself and appreciate things I've done. I'm very sensitive to other people's pain and I have touched many other lives in helpful ways. I'm also able to take delight in other people's joys.

I'm getting to know all the aspects (alters) of me, and mostly, I *like* what I see. There's some real strength in there.

OK, second part of the question: how to work through the grief? I really don't know. My guess is that we must not deny the feelings of grief. It is not necessary to wallow in grief, but we need to stay with each memory until the pain lessens to some degree. I think that some memories will be revisited many times.

I don't want to forget the losses. I want to honor the memories of those who lost life. I want to honor what I lost. I want to honor how I survived. And, along the way, I want to bring to others many of the things that I lost, because then they won't really be lost.

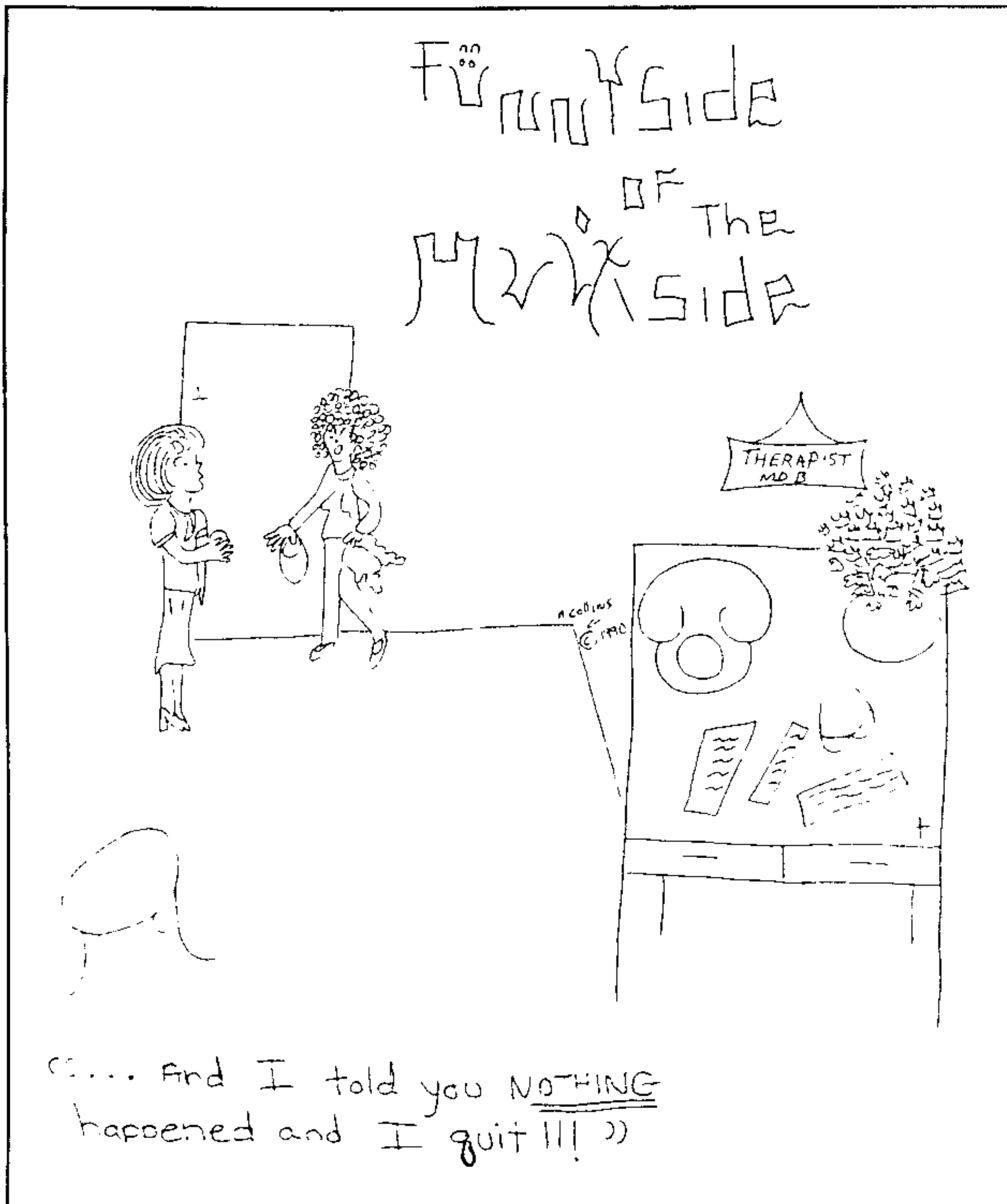
By Lynn D., Dyan and BADCAT

... to help us grow

I don't know how to work thru grief. I even find it very difficult to cry. But as grief is present, i find i need to take especially good care of myself and my littlest girls. These are some ways i care for us when we're hurting badly:

1. Snuggle in bed with favorite blanket.
2. Hug, stroke, and talk to my stuffed bears, stuffed dogs, Raggedy Anns, and other cuddlies.
3. Be hugged and comforted by my therapist.
4. Take a warm bubble bath.
5. Lie on the floor with my dog.
6. Turn on lots of lights.
7. Listen to my favorite music.
8. Change to more comfortable clothing.
9. Take prescribed medicines.
10. Drink from a 'Sub Chaser' which has a plastic straw on which to suck and chew.
11. Talk/pray aloud to God.
12. Go outdoors.
13. Drink some water.
14. Walk.
15. Make lists.
16. Scribble or draw on unlined paper.
17. Fill fun pads using colored pencils.
18. Color with crayons in coloring books.
19. Put lotion on my arms and legs.
20. Go to a library/read.
21. Comb or brush my hair.
22. Use my back brush.
23. Create collages (tear pictures from magazines, cut them as desired, glue to posterboard.)
24. Write on my Word Processor.
25. Sit in my locked car with the heater and/or tape player warming me.
26. "Lock" myself into a stall in a large women's lavatory.
27. Review MANY VOICES.
28. Get a \$4 haircut at the beauty school.
29. Do needlepoint, cross-stitch, or latchhook.
30. String beads.
31. Visit a florist, the floral department of a grocery store, a pet shop, a book store, or a stationery store.
32. Have no contact of any sort with anyone from my family of origin.
33. Draw or write with chalk on our driveway and sidewalks.

By Rose



A Collective Winter Voice

Some people call us snow
As we fall from the sky
In separate pieces
And create a new home
On the cold, hard land.
Our pieces reconnected,
We form a blanket
With our shared traumas
Like a family of wool
Woven tightly.
We find private warmth
On the frozen ground
Until the temperature rises
And we're crucified once more.
Our connection disrupted
Like the broken families
Who welcomed our arrival
But were equally pleased
To see us leave.
Our shattered pieces
Grieve for each other:
Sucked into the air,
The earth, the mud.

By Sandi B.

Therapists' Page

NOTE. The following material may be of special interest to survivors with a Christian background or present-day faith. For others, it may be a useful reminder that 'exorcising or disowning' parts of ourselves just because we don't understand them, or approve of their behavior, can thwart the healing process and deny us the opportunity to be whole. Professionals rarely discuss the concept of 'demons' openly. Approaches may differ. I'm interested in receiving opinions from other therapists on this subject —LW

By Mary Lu Love, RN, MS,
PMHNP

Ms. Love is a mental health professional in Portland, Oregon.

I wish to share some facts and encouragement with you who have MPD. During the past eighteen months that I have been working with MPD clients I have met six people diagnosed with MPD who, in their desperation for help, went to faith healers and clergypersons of various denominations. Each of these clients was "exorcised" and in each case the client felt worse. What I suspect happens is that the "exorcist" mistakenly "discerns" an alter to be an evil spirit. Some spiritual writers are saying that negative emotions such as anger, depression, rage, are demonic. In the case of MPD, these emotions can be the function of alters.

Due to mistaken identity, child alters have been doused with holy water, yelled at, silenced, humiliated, ordered to leave, beaten; traumatically abused further in the name of proffered help. When the expected behavior did not occur, the client was then excluded from the congregation as being evil and dangerous. One was even placed on a bus with a one-way ticket out of town.

It was not the client's fault that the "exorcist" failed to properly discern the problem. Clergypersons have the responsibility to make decisions based on sound knowledge. It can happen that people with MPD who were raised in satanic cults did come under the influence of evil spirits. Dr. James Friesen offers to counselors some suggestions for telling if someone has evil spirits. He says that spirits have no sense of *relationship* and are not experienced as any part of self. They stir up *confusion* rather than making things clearer. They tend to

push into dominance, perform the evil task, then blame the person, rather than quietly trying to *conform* to their surroundings as alters do. A spirit is experienced by others as a *voice* with no corresponding personality. (1)

I have found that clergy who understand demonic influence and who are also willing to learn about MPD can work successfully with me in helping the alters work toward spiritual growth. I am fortunate to be able to work with a Catholic priest who knows that demon spirits are real, independent, evil and angelic persons who can, in fact, possess and/or obsess human beings. Exorcism in Jesus' Name can free the human person from such demonic abuse.

At this time we have discerned that evil spirits are not involved with my six clients, all of whom are struggling toward integration.. You need to know that your alters are not evil and you are not evil. You may inform your clergyperson that 98% of those with MPD do not have demon spirits that require exorcism.

What can you do about your situation? Just as one has the right to depart from a misguided physician or therapist, one also has the right to depart from a harmful and uninformed clergyperson. Any congregation that cannot properly minister to your alters needs instruction and healing.

If you are facing facts, you might be able to contribute to that instruction. Happily, two of my clients have brought their priests here to meet some of the alters and to learn how to address the system. My other clients, on their own, have currently left their churches. You might suggest that your therapist and a clergyperson work together. And encourage them to read the article by Dr. Friesen if they have not done so.

Letters

Dear Many Voices,

I wish to respond to Dorothy P's article, *Cry for a Mother*, which appeared in your August issue. I might title my response, "Will the Children Manage While I'm Away."

This week I just returned from a week-long workshop and I've been very concerned, especially for a client I'd only been working with for two months, recently diagnosed with MPD. We seemed to have formed an immediate bond (*transference* that Dorothy referred to,) and therefore our sessions moved to a very safe place and much began happening, very fast. So fast that, though I believe and trust in each individual's own inner knowing, and own inner pacing, I found myself questioning if I needed to somehow "control" this fast pace. The nightmares, the flashbacks, the painful and frightening memories were increasing, it seemed, at an ever-accelerating speed.

I had to work hard on myself during this, to continue to trust that everyone knew what they needed. Some (alters) would leave for long periods of time, only to return, wanting to catch up with the others, yet afraid to do so as well. Just as my fears would escalate that it was all becoming so dark and heavy and difficult for everyone, someone in white would come, not wanting to know or understand anything that was happening, and provide a breather for the others. I believe this automatic inner balance is inherent in all of us, and when a safe place "happens", this balancing and rebalancing works on its own.

What I am left with is my own *countertransference*: to deal with my *own* inner voices, my *own* inner critics, my *own* protectors, my *own* child. If I can accept these parts of myself, clearly, *then* we move, and dance together, my client and I, through the pain.

We missed one another very much while I was away, and celebrated coming together again. But while I was away, I worked hard to continue to trust her own inner knowing, that inner balancing would continue (whether I was present or not —or perhaps in some way, my love and presence would still be with her.)

A mother always hopes that the children will instinctively know what they need to do, and whether or not that mother is literally present or not, I believe there is a greater Spirit, a greater Knowing that is at work — both for the client and the therapist.

Sincerely,
Mary E.

(Psychotherapist in private practice.)

(1) Friesen, James G. "Treatment of Multiple Personality Disorder: Integrating Alter Personalities and Casting Out Evil Spirits," *The Journal of Christian Healing*, Fall, 1989.

Recovering

By Rita M.

Q: Am I a pretender? I/we were not "diagnosed". I, Michelle, an alter, told my therapist about those known to me at that time. This occurred about 9 years ago. From an original seven, there are now 31. Still, we question...are we faking?

A: If you were really faking this (and some people have been known to do so...why? Attention, mostly), you'd be the last one to ask the question of whether or not your experiences really happened.

It's quite typical for multiples to go through periods of time when they feel "I made it all up." The ability to dissociate (which meant surviving the unsurvivable) means that each trauma was experienced as if it weren't happening, giving it an aura of unreality. If one combines this effect with the complete repression of the trauma, and the seemingly "out-of-the-blue" way that memories are triggered to resurface, there is a natural sense of *unreality* to traumatic memories.

It's also very, very painful and horrifying to realize that people actually do such terrible, violent things to children...to their *own* children. Of course, one would want to believe one made it up.

The sad aspect of MPDs believing that they "made it up" is that they are doubting their own reality. That's the basis of MPD...having to deny your reality in order to survive. However, I also believe that questioning is a normal part of the therapeutic process. A problem arises when the client simply refuses to identify

the questioning as a need to deny the abuse, and therefore does not "work through" the traumatic memories. This causes a massive stalemate in the therapeutic process, and often results in either chaos in the therapeutic relationship (including self-destructive behavior, hostility toward the therapist, etc.) or a flight from treatment altogether. I call this "getting stuck" and this needs to be addressed by the therapist as soon as he or she notices that it is happening. Clients can get stuck at all different stages and places in therapy: ie, in anger, depression, working, denying, crying, drinking, drugging, eating, not eating, "forgiving", etc. I've even seen clients use religion as a way of being stuck. Everybody gets stuck at one time or another, but if you're staying stuck, then you (and/or your therapist) are missing something.

Rokelle Lerner, a therapist in Minnesota who lectures nationwide on co-dependency issues has a pamphlet called "*Boundaries for Co-dependents*" that addresses the issue of being stuck. I recommend it highly. It is available for 95 cents from Hazeldon Educational material, Pleasant Valley Road, P.O. Box 176, Center City, MN 55012-0176. Phone 1-800-328-9000. Another excellent resource is a book called "*Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*" by Clarke and Dawson. It's also published by Hazelden (\$10.95 plus shipping and handling.)

MV

Forgiveness?

By K.C.

Is it up to me to forgive my abusers? Will I never be whole or healthy unless I can forgive them if they should ask? Will I feel better? Is it really "forgive and forget?" Is it one of the steps toward healing?

When I address the issue of forgiveness, I can't help but wonder why it is that everything they want or ask of me is designed to make them feel better.

When my father beat me, the rage slowed and he felt better. When I was young and he made me touch him, he felt good. When he made fun of me he felt big.

When I told my mother something hurt and she wanted me not to cry I stopped. Not because I no longer felt like crying, but so that she would feel better. When I told her a certain thing had happened and she said it had not, I agreed; not because she was right, but so she would feel better.

As I got older and things got worse it seemed as though everyone but me felt something. I felt nothing.

I tried harder to be good. I did more work. If I were better, smarter, cleaner, more fun — would they like me? If she said it was my fault, I believed her. If he said he would kill me, I believed he would.

Now, years later and after much therapy, I've come to terms with what they did. I am no longer helpless. I am no longer driven by anger. I've learned to like myself and to feel loved. I am not stupid, clumsy, or dirty. I was abused.

Forgiveness? Will it make them feel better? Is it for me?

No. I am not in charge of their forgiveness. They need to look elsewhere for it. I am going forward with my life and leaving them in the past where they belong. My goal is not to please them anymore, but to lead a healthy, happy, productive life.

MV

Rita M. is a Licensed Independent Social Worker and Certified Alcoholism Counselor (LISW,CAC), and is also a recovering MPD client. She functions at a very high level (after much therapy) and is "integrated". MANY VOICES is pleased to have her help us provide the special viewpoint of a recovering, knowledgeable, MPD client/therapist. Readers may send questions to Rita, C/O MANY VOICES. We'll use as many as possible. —LW

(CAUTION! The following article is presented without editing, as I received it. MANY VOICES takes no position regarding the validity of its contents. It includes STRONG, GRAPHIC material. If you are feeling vulnerable DO NOT read this without a safe, supportive friend or therapist nearby. And if you choose to ignore this advice, don't write to me and say it upset you. Thanks. —LW)

Grief and Acceptance

By C.

I live with constant, burning grief. I don't know how to pass through it to pure living. I know that total acceptance of the past is the cornerstone; and I am afraid it will rupture me. I desperately want to make some other testament than just to set my face towards living.

I am a ritual torture survivor. I was constantly beaten, raped, whipped, tortured, buried, strangled, hung, burned, mutilated, degraded, threatened with knives, electroshocked, programmed, watched, intentionally confused, taught to murder, psychologically eviscerated and bought off with "love" and attention. Nobody noticed, nobody rescued me. I survived alone.

I could not trust or love or feel or develop my talents or contribute to the world. I had no childhood, no love, no understanding. I knew life had value—the more murders and tortures, the more deeply I knew it—but I never experienced any of its beauty. And then for survival I robbed myself even of the knowledge that all the horrors had happened.

I lost seven children, all taken away or gruesomely murdered by the cult I grew up in. Four of my children were ripped out of my body. Three were born alive. I have three sisters whom I had to dismember or murder in rituals. I was forced to kill, cannibalize or torture more than a hundred other people, many of them children in rituals all over the world.

The faces of all the murdered ones are forever burned into my mind, searing pictures that cannot fade. I especially remember their eyes. We looked at each other in the moments before death, before I murdered them in that hell, where the cult so programmed me that I did not even have the choice to throw down the knife.

My living siblings are still in the cult, murdering by night, working by day. I love them and cannot speak with them if I wish to survive. Both of my parents are dead. They were torturers and mass murderers. They knew no mercy, felt neither compassion nor love for me. They trained me as a high priestess of ritual murder, and would have killed me had I shown any sign of decency or rebellion. So I hid it. All my other family members, and all the people I grew up with, are in the cult. I live far away. I have no family. No children. No sisters.

Now I'm standing in the devastation, living in the remnants of my life. The betrayal was so vast I don't know how to begin mourning. One group of frozen alters lies motionless in deep ice caves. No sun can melt that ice and no axe chip away at it. Another set of alters lie dead, each in her own dim, separate room. Because I cannot mourn much yet, I cannot dissolve the ice, nor bury that in me which died with each murder. I don't know how to mourn and live.

My parents wanted me to see them as omnipotent over life and death, wanted to deprive me of all resources for mourning. For by integrating grief into my life, I could free myself of them. They wanted me to remain a shell surrounding that cold, sickening emptiness that follows death. They wanted me to stumble from murder to murder, drunk on power, drained of reverence and feeling.

But I groped after the right to mourn. From reading books and watching people, I concluded that proper mourning required me to die also. I wanted only to lose my hold on life and follow the murdered ones to the other side. Growing up in a world of terrible sacrifice, I thought I could best

show my love for the dead by joining them.

Now I know this is not so. Mourning is life-affirming. It is also one of my hardest tasks. All my life I fought against the unbearable truth. In grieving I must accept. . . accept the truths as they are. My parents tortured me impersonally. When I accept that they did not love or value me, I am torn from them forever. My most precious and most crippling dream, that they might love me, withers and dies. I am grief-stricken but free—and alone, completely alone.

I don't know how to live without carrying the burning grief. Sometimes I don't want to. The grief feels like my only link to the murdered ones and my own twisted childhood. Often I transform the grief into guilt for what I did not cause and cannot change. Guilt is an easier monster for me to live with than deep, bone-cold grief. I feel too ravaged to mourn and embrace life.

I don't want to celebrate my survival when every day of my childhood was mind-crushing hell. I don't want to turn towards living when all the others are forever dead. I've never honestly felt that love and joy were equal partners with agony. I want to make any testament to survival other than placing trust in life.

But I am beginning to feel that the greatest service I can do myself and the murdered ones is to live. That and only that tells of strength, tells that murder and despair do not rule the world. Day by day I mourn and accept. The ice melts slowly; all at once the pain would rupture me. Now I know that the acid grief, the torn fabric, will always be there. But I will not always be crippled by them.

Living at full sail is the only testament I can make that

(cont'd on page 9)

(Grief . . . cont'd)

A Path Through Grief

By E.R.S.

endures. I can reach to help others who are burning with unshed horror. Each time I do, every day I live, is fulfilling the memory of all the murdered ones. And it fills the promise of value in life that I preserved through every attempt to crush it. I am transforming my survival. I will speak—for myself, and all those who cannot.

Often in the high mountains, the dainty aspen trees are so entombed in wind-scoured snow that only their crowns show through. Their trunks twist in tortured pretzels around the razor-sharp drifts. Come spring they are permanently malformed. But these trees do not die. Arrow-straight above the old snow-line, they grow towards the sun, blooming out in a shivering canopy of new leaves.

MV

It is a lovely day as I look out of the window in my bedroom. The sun is shining brightly and I feel a warmth inside myself. I am glad I am alive. I walk over to the telephone beside my bed and begin to call my closest friend, Pam. Then, in sadness, I remember. Pam is dead. On this beautiful, sunny day I am alive and Pam is dead. A victim of suicide.

Pam and I were very close. We both suffered, and I do mean suffered, with multiple personality disorder (MPD) and an eating disorder. We were so alike and yet so different. We understood each other.

There were problems, though. Whenever we were together our bulimic parts automatically came out. We would find an "all you can eat" buffet and away we went. Having someone to share the nightmarish binge somehow made it easier. Perhaps because we knew we were not alone.

The same is true with MPD. Pam remarked once that she never met anyone with MPD or an eating disorder, and with me she had the best of both worlds. We honestly understood each other.

There were other problems with our relationship. For example, neither her husband nor her therapist approved of our friendship. My therapist never seemed to have an opinion one way or the other, but then I never told him how close Pam and I were. Our friendship was, for the most part, a secret. Since our relationship was a secret it has made grieving for her so much harder. Deep inside I feel as if I was a bad influence on her; after all, it was her therapist who disapproved of our relationship, not mine. The thought haunts me. I feel torn apart and alone in my grief.

I was in the hospital when I found out about her death. My therapist walked into my room and casually asked me what I thought about Pam. I asked him what he meant and he told me: Pam had

killed herself the week before.

At first it did not register. True, it had been several days since I had heard from her, but that wasn't unusual. She and her husband had just moved and I was giving them time to settle in.

Then my therapist said it again: Pam committed suicide. Why was he lying to me? If it was true, why hadn't someone told me before? But no one realized we were so close. I did not know what to do. I was hurting inside. God, it couldn't be true!

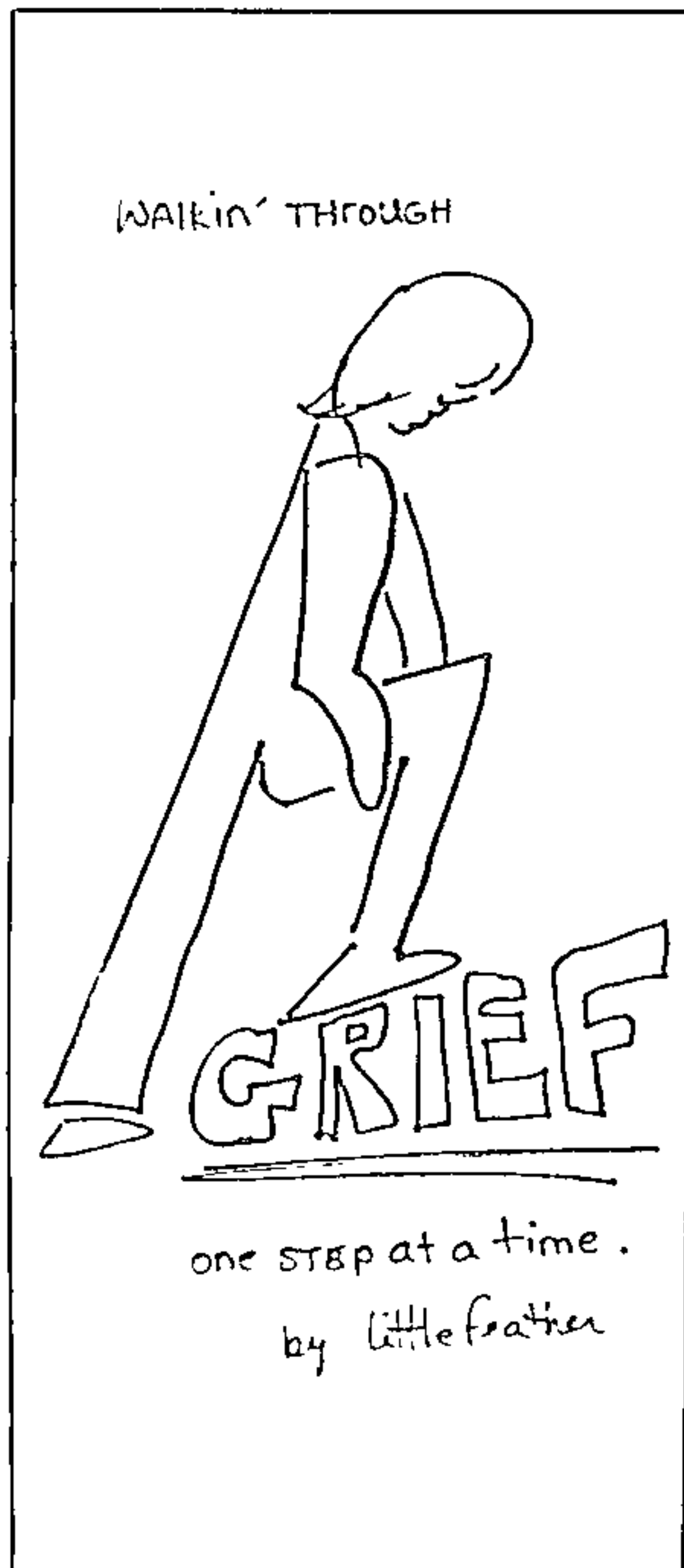
I was suddenly afraid that I was going to end up the same way. A suicide. I was hurting. I still hurt.

I feel very angry with my therapist for telling me about her suicide. I feel angry at Pam for giving up. I am angry at her for leaving me. It is hard to be unable to call her and tell her that this is a beautiful day to get together. It hurts to be unable to share this wonderful day with her. It is very hard to grieve for her. I cared about her and she left me. Why? I am angry. I want to scream! I am so very angry!

Today, tomorrow, and for many tomorrows to come I will grieve for her and hold her memory close to my heart. As I mourn her death I also mourn the tragic events in her life that led to her struggle with MPD. Most people do not realize that a struggle with MPD is also a battle for life. Pam lost the war. Her path through grief was more than she thought she could bear. I wonder if I will be one who manages to win.

I woke up today grateful that I was alive and praying that I will make it through another day. I grieve not only for Pam but also for everyone who labors everyday to win the race. I grieve for the child inside of me that never had the tenderness and love she desperately wanted. My path through grief is more than mourning the tragic suicide of my friend. It is a daily walk, step by painful step, and I can only believe that in the end it is worth it all

MV



The Land of Oz — Inside of Me

By Rita C.

I have always loved the movie "The Wizard of Oz." I know the script, the songs. Yet I just came to the realization that I have my very own OZ with cast and characters living inside me.

Not unlike my perpetrators and even some "well-meaning" folks, the Good Witch says to Dorothy, "I'm afraid you've made rather a bad enemy of the Wicked Witch of the West."

Poor Dorothy did nothing but exist for those moments in total confusion. She didn't ask for the ruby slippers or anything else. She was in the middle of adult conflicts.

Dorothy asks for help to get home. The Good Witch replies, "It's always best to start at the beginning." She says the Munchkins will help, and disappears, leaving Dorothy to observe, "People come and go so quickly here."

How familiar to me! Important people, caregivers coming and going, stating the obvious, not getting close enough to really see.

The middle of the movie is perhaps the most poignant for me now.

Dorothy meets the Scarecrow who laments, "I'm a failure because I haven't got a brain." She meets the Tin Man who is empty, all hollow, no heart. He wants to register emotion, to really *feel* the part. And finally, the Cowardly Lion, who is probably the core of all abuse victims. He knows he is "supposed to be", but *isn't* brave. He feels degraded, ashamed.

Throughout the journey, several interesting factors appear:

1) Each begs to go along, is willing to face dangers in order to be whole.

2) They figure out how to protect each other and how to survive along the way, as when the Scarecrow gets apples from the talking trees.

3) Anger is a useful tool for protection against the wicked witch — "I'll see you reach the wizard whether I get what I need or not!"

4) Fear of the unknown—the dark forest—"I think it'll get

darker before it gets lighter."

5) Doubt — "Suppose the wizard wouldn't give me one, once we got there."

6) Blind faith — We can earn it — "He will! He must! We've come such a long way already."

Believing they had been through so much already, and realizing they are almost to OZ, Dorothy says, "You're the best friends anybody ever had. And it's funny, but I feel as if I've known you all the time. But I couldn't have, could I? Still, I wish I could remember. But I guess it doesn't matter anyway. We know each other now, don't we?"

I realized here that each of these characters are parts of me inside, each in varying degrees and ages.

At the edge of OZ, a chorus breaks out singing the following words:

"You're out of the woods
You're out of the dark
You're out of the night
Step into the sun
Step into the light
Keep straight ahead
For the most glorious place
On the face of the earth or the stars
Hold onto your breath
Hold onto your heart
Hold onto your hope
March up to the gate and it will open."

The next part of the movie is illuminating. Meeting the wizard—grand, untouchable, powerful. He knows why you have come.

The wizard represents, for me, the therapist—powerful, full of answers, solutions.

What a blow to realize that it's not that easy. He's not handing things over. *I have to do the work*, just as Dorothy and her friends had to confront, and ultimately kill, the Wicked Witch. But even in killing the wickedness, Dorothy was only protecting that which she loved.

Upon returning to the wizard, the group finds out that not only can he not deliver, but he is also not a wizard. Dorothy says, "You're a very bad man!" to which the wizard replies, "I'm a very good

man—just a very bad wizard."

Perhaps I have a very good therapist, but a very bad wizard.

At this point in the movie, like so many times in therapy, time is taken to teach, to re-direct, to clarify.

We have brains, but we need a diploma — teaching and training. We have courage, but we confuse that with wisdom — perceptions colored by experiences. We have a heart. We have to allow ourselves to feel all things, most importantly, *love*.

But alas, Dorothy is still in OZ. The wizard leaves without her. She doesn't think she'll ever get home.

The Good Witch returns to tell Dorothy, "You don't need to be helped any longer. You've always had the power to go home."

The Scarecrow asks, "Why didn't you tell her before?"

"She wouldn't have believed me. She had to learn it for herself."

"What *have* you learned, Dorothy?"

"Well, I think it wasn't enough just to want to see Uncle Henry and Auntie Em. And if I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard, because if it isn't there—I never really lost it to begin with."

"She had to find it out for herself."

"I can go home now? That's too wonderful to be true. Oh, it's going to be so hard to say good-by."

Learning and accepting what we need to know to take care of ourselves is scary, difficult, exhilarating!

And it's hard to say good-by, to let go of all those things that shaped us, colored us, because as Dorothy said, "This was a truly live place, but some of it wasn't very nice."

And just as Dorothy kept saying "I want to go home," I began my journey saying "I want to be whole." Like Dorothy, I learned—I'm not looking any farther than my own backyard, because that's where I'm finding what I need to be me—all of me.

Items of Interest

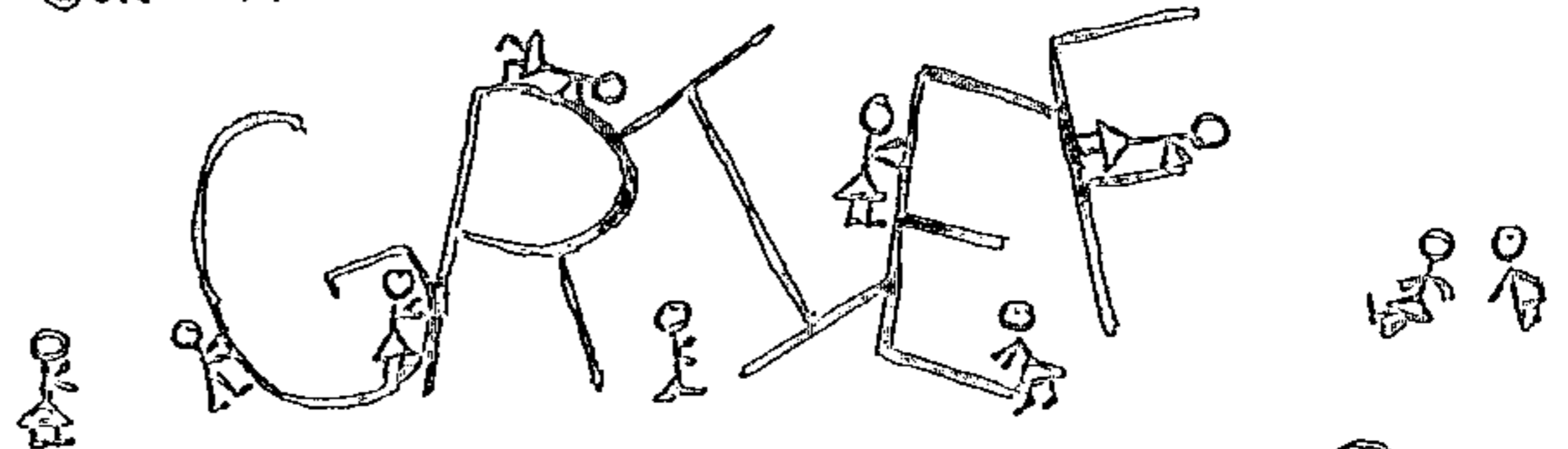
7th International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States, November 9-11, 1990. (Also, workshops for clinicians, November 8.) Keynote Speaker, Frank W. Putnam, M.D. Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, Chicago, IL. For details, call 708/675-6019.

David Calof, well-known clinician, trainer, and presenter will conduct seminars for clinicians this fall. *Adult Children of Incest & Child Abuse* will be held Oct. 10 & 11, 1990, Washington D.C.; November 6 & 7, 1990, Houston, TX; November 15 & 16, 1990, Orlando, FL. ALSO, "An experiential clinic in healing and play" titled *Awakening the*

Childmind, is scheduled for November 12 & 13, Winston-Salem, NC. For further information, call Professional Development Associates Inc. 304/252-8068.

MPD Dignity/Loved Ones Of Multiples (LOOM) offers a structure and guidelines to help establish peer support groups for survivors and their loved ones. For further information, write MPD Dignity/LOOM, P.O. Box 4367, Boulder, CO 80306-4367.

OUR PATH THROUGH GRIEF:



By Kathleen ☺ 7/90

Books

Secret Survivors: Uncovering Incest & Its Aftereffects on Women

© 1990 by E. Sue Blume 326 pgs.
Published by John Wiley & Sons, NY,
\$19.95 hardback.

Ms. Blume has created an extremely complete, well-written book about the aftereffects of incest. It centers on a checklist created by the author based on her clinical experience, which is reinforced by an extensive review of the existing literature.

There are some interesting ideas, including a discussion of a tendency to blame the non-offending mother more than the offending father: "In cases of paternal incest, the system often blames the *mother* and removes the child from her custody. By thus invalidating her, the system tells the mother that her word is never as believable as a man's. . . thus another message about the worth of women is given to the victimized daughter. . . For us to ask *first*, 'What did the mother do?' is to suggest that she is more responsible than the one who committed the abuse. . . when men abuse power and women are powerless, it is the *woman* society criticizes."

Secret Survivors covers the whole range of aftereffects, including MPD and outcomes of ritual abuse.

There is hope, though, such as the quote from a Hungarian proverb which says, "When you share joy, you double it; when you share your pain, you halve it."

I really *like* this book!

— Dyan

Strong at the Broken Places: Overcoming the Trauma of Childhood Abuse

© 1990 by Linda Tschirhart Sanford.
Published by Random House, Inc., NY,
\$18.95 hardback.

I was drawn immediately to this book by its title, because I really feel that survivors can often be stronger than "normal" people, and that these strengths can be used in the most positive ways to help the individual and those with whom they come into contact.

This book was written because the author was "frustrated by the scarcity of hope", the suggestion that "my clients' rough start in life. . . forever doomed them to be 'damaged goods.'"

She also stresses the *salutogenic* approach to disease: "A patho-

logical orientation seeks to explain why people get sick, why they enter a given disease category. A salutogenic orientation focuses on the origins of health, and poses a radically different question: Why are people located toward the positive end of the health ease/disease continuum? Or, why do they move toward the health ease end, whatever their location at a given time."

Interviews and examples from a variety of survivors demonstrate that while the effects of trauma are important, so is support and belief. If the child is believed, the outcome will be less devastating. It helps to have time between traumas. Good experiences in the life of the child build like a bank account, and trauma makes huge withdrawals. So, the higher the "bank balance", the more the child can handle the trauma.

I was quite taken by a saying quoted by the author:

*And then the day came
When the risk to remain tight
In a bud was more painful
Than the risk it took to
blossom.*

A good and different book.

— Annie

December 1990

Relationships with 'outsiders' children friends, spouses significant others Who do you tell about your diagnosis? When and how much do you tell? Dealing with negative response. ART Draw you and your friends/family

February 1991

MPD Conferences How (or if) clients benefit from attending Why some conferences are 'closed' (except to professionals in the field) How to know if you are ready to attend and what to do once you get there Open conference listing. ART Draw your 'student(s)' or the way your system learns. DEADLINE for submissions: December 1 1990

April 1991

Your thoughts about prevention of child abuse How to stop passing it along in families What you've done (or hope to do) to assure an end to the pattern of abuse in your life ART Draw the self you are becoming DEADLINE for submissions February 1, 1991

June 1991

Working with your Dark Side Coping with rage How you keep your angry self from feeling betrayed or forgotten when you modify violent acting-out. ART Draw your inner protector(s) DEADLINE for submissions April 1, 1991

August 1991

It's easy to talk about the little kids inside, but what about the teens and adults? How do you balance their needs? What are their skills and responsibilities? Their problems? ART Draw an inner adult helping an inner child. DEADLINE for submissions June 1, 1991

October 1991

The stages of therapy you have experienced. What you see as progress. What is your most stubborn problem. How you are working on it in therapy ART Draw your special comforts DEADLINE for submissions August 1 1991

December 1991

Transforming holidays into happy (or at least tolerable) days. What you do to protect yourself from memory triggers on 'special days' New "traditions" created for healing ART: Draw a picture of you and your best friend. DEADLINE for submissions: October 1, 1991.

Growing Again

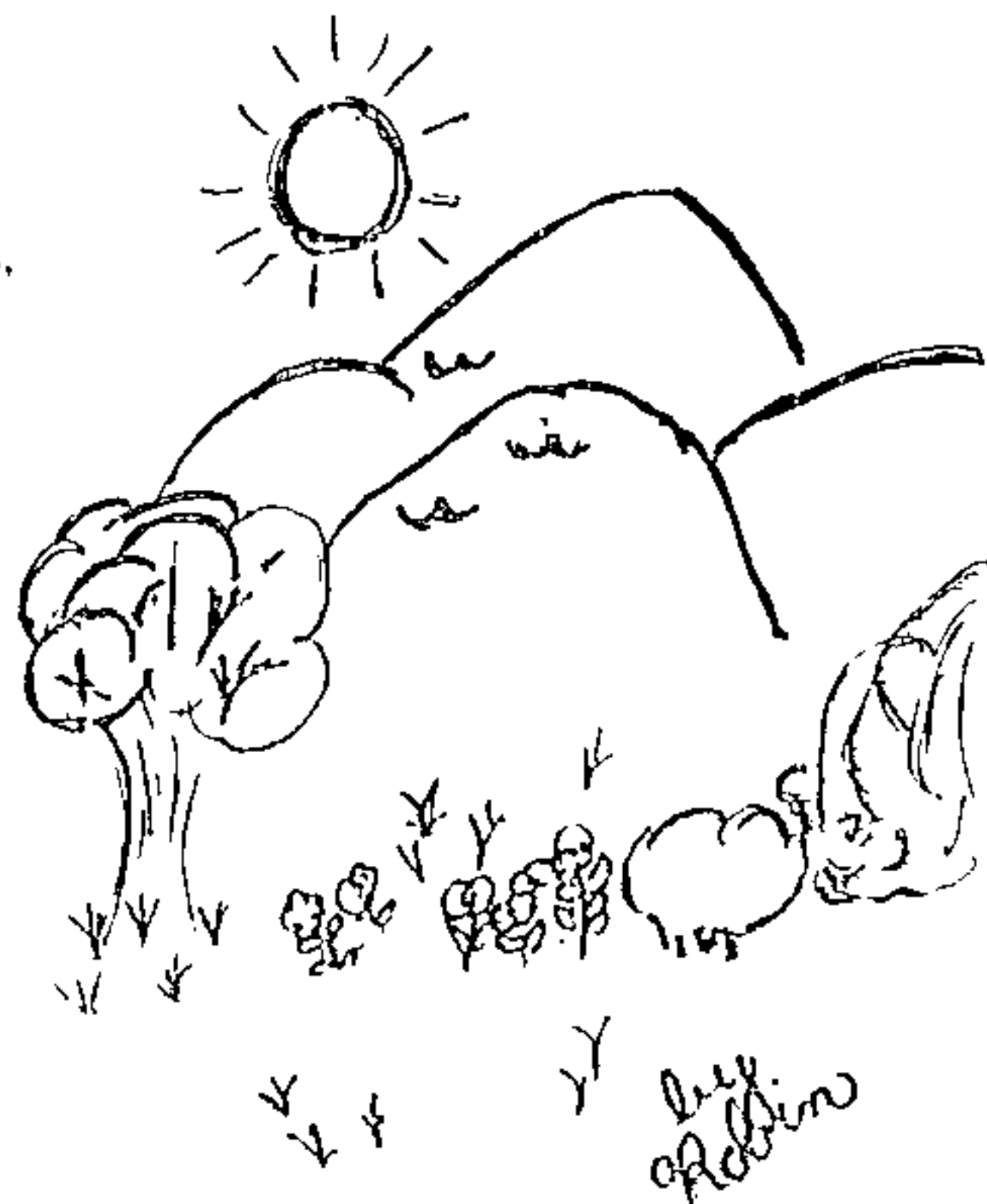
By the Writer for Terry and Friends

Just like flowers need rain to grow sometimes, we need tears to help us grow.

Just like the grass needs sunshine to flourish, we need the Light to help us flourish.

Just like trees need pruning to remove dead branches, we need to feel the pain and sorrow to remove the old hurts.

Just like nature needs God as her gardener, we need Him to begin anew.



Share with us!

Prose, poetry, and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

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