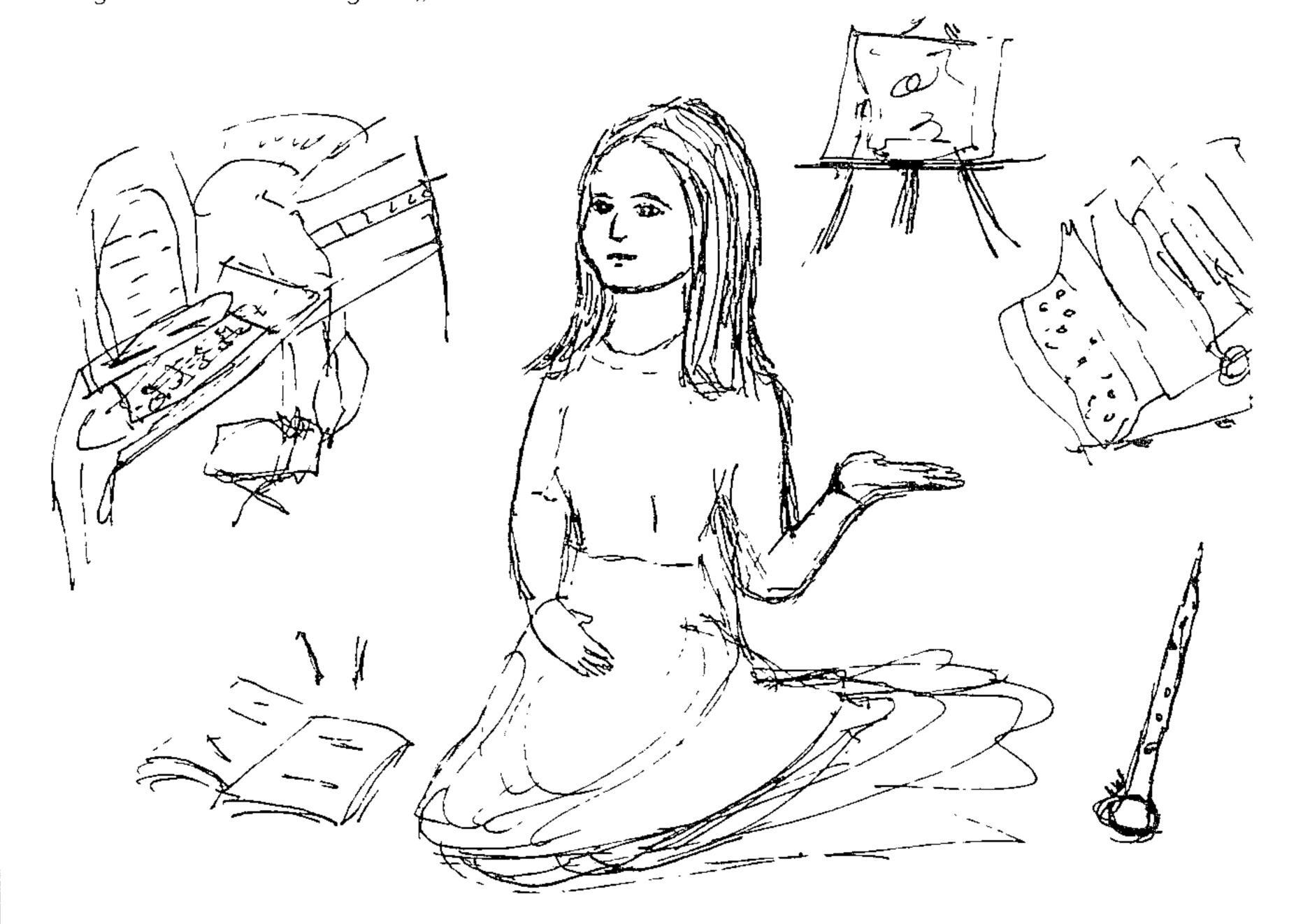
MANY VOICES

Words Of Hope For Clients With MPD and Dissociative Disorders

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The Self I Am Becoming

I wrote/drew this in 1985, before entering MPD-type therapy. I'm still working on it. This "becoming" stuff takes time...LW



This is my world and I have earned my place in it. I am strong enough to do whatever needs to be done. I am clearheaded, and carry out the day's work without internal conflict. I am calm and centered. I have a sense of direction and trust my place in the Universe. I choose to work for my own gain, at my own pace. In the course of my work, I also benefit others. I love and am loved. I am courageous and speak up for my beliefs. I am creative and support others in their creative efforts. I have direct access to whatever is useful within my personality, to perform the task at hand. I give to each project the time it deserves. I know what I want to do and direct my full attention to it. I am rarely fatigued, but know when it is time to rest. I am not afraid of pain or death. I have learned to use those fears constructively. There is a constant, unblocked flow between surface reality and my deepest resources. I am comfortable with ambiguity. I live a comfortable, simple life. My bills are paid on time. I travel at will. I am pleased with myself and my work.

Preventing Child Abuse...

your lungs that child abuse is a crime! Let every child know from early on that their bodies are sacred and no one is to touch them in private place or violate their bodies. Then explain about their bodies and that not even a family member is to touch them inappropriately. Explain what 'inappropriateness' is.

For example, not too long ago my eleven-year-old niece called me late at night crying and said that the fifteen year-old male baby-sitter had been "touching" her in her private parts and she didn't like it. Why did she call me? Because she knows I'm a multiple personality and that I am this way because of vicious childhood abuse. Most importantly, she trusts me. I asked a few questions and then I told her that it wasn't her fault and that her mother was a responsible person and she should tell her what she just told me. The next day I informed my sister on how to handle the authorities — to call the child protective services and the police. She was met with strength through both of these departments.

I decided to get some children's books on abuse from the library and photocopy the chapter "It Wasn't My Fault" from *The Courage to Heal* and send them to my niece.

My goal is to become a lawyer dealing with rape and child abuse issues.

By Gayle R.



The feeling I have is that personal, individual attempts to stop the abuse — as I have, refusing to pass it on to my children — while important, cannot win the battle alone.

I believe that it has to be a lot easier to prosecute abusers, easier for adult children to press charges against those who abused them as children, and safer for children to testify against their abusers.

I started by thinking that I would really like to see sex offenders allowed to prosecute those who

abused them, because I think the main reason we get nowhere with them is that the courts give them a message that what was done to them was fine, but what they did was evil. This probably makes them feel as if they don't matter at all, so of course they can't hear it. Making sex offenders see that what they did was wrong and what was done to them was wrong would probably do a whole lot more good.

Then I realized that other abused men might commit a sexual offense just to be able to bring their abusers to trial. So for my idea to work safely, it should be just as easy for anyone to bring offenders/abusers to trial.

What would this do? I think it would force a recognition that abusing a child is wrong.

First for the victim: I know how much it has hindered me in my therapy, that my parents are allowed to go free, that no one has ever stood up and told them they were wrong, and that no one ever will (other than myself—but they totally ignore me).

I have been involved in passing legislation aimed at extending the statute of limitations against abusive parents, but even if it were to pass, my parents would be safe. I was too old before I even remembered that anything had happened.

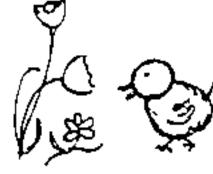
But it would still be of enormous help to me if other parents were prosecuted and punished. Then at least I would have a better sense that the law sees abusing children as wrong. Not just when the child dies and it's a public scandal, but wrong.

Second, I think that the public view of abuse needs to change. Abuse — especially by parents — needs to be seen as wrong, and that it continues to be wrong after the child turns 18. (I assume that you have heard 'Let bygones be bygones,' or I'm sure your parents did their best,' or 'Isn't it time you got on with your life?') I can think of no better way to accomplish this than to make it a crime which is punished. Perhaps then we will be seen as injured parties with the right to claim damages, rather than

disgruntled children out to make life difficult for parents who 'did their best'.

And I think this will help us whether or not we as individuals choose to press charges. The fact that we could press charges will make us feel less helpless. If enough adult children do succeed, then I'll bet more adults will choose to get help and/or prosecute those who abused them, rather than take the suddenly risky course of abusing their or others' children.

By Jessica T.



In struggling to keep myself alive and well on the planet, I've developed strong feelings and ideas about how to prevent child abuse. I believe the only way to keep from passing child abuse down through the generations is to work on what was done to me and how I feel about it.

Love and good intentions alone have never amounted to anything in my life. The bottom line is actions. Does what that person says to me match how they treat me?

In deciding to work on my history of abuse, I erred just a touch by waiting until my lover was pregnant before beginning. I started working on "my stuff" just in time to help my relationship with my daughter, but too late to pick out a coparent that shared my same desire to face innermost fears to keep from passing abuse along.

Now I have pride in my relationship with my daughter. But I also have a lot of pain watching my daughter's relationship with her other mother.

These are the tenets I live by with my daughter:

- 1. Always treat my daughter as if I were being watched. Never do anything that I would feel ashamed of having someone see.
- 2. Tell my counselor/safe friends when I have thoughts of being childabusive. This way, I'm not alone with the feelings and can get ideas for keeping safe. It is clear with my counselor/safe friends that

...Our Life's Work

"thoughts" are not reportable violations, only actions are. Thoughts are important to talk about.

3. To not pass abuse on, I have to do my work and face up to what happened to me and how it has affected me. Cold turkey doesn't work. Simply not wanting to do the same thing is not enough. Working on what was done to me and how I feel about it diminishes my preoccupation with what I could do to my daughter. It also clears my mind for thinking about ways of acting that are in agreement with my intention not to harm her.

It's never too late to start. It's also never early enough, but that's a grief we all have to live with and cry about.

I hate that I have to work so hard on my injuries. But I hate so much more the idea of passing those injuries on.

By Joceile



There is much to be learned through the observation of children. I do not wish to reflect the idea that all children who manifest "suspicious" behaviors in my eyes, are being abused. I emphatically believe that some of these behaviors are in fact signs of child abuse.

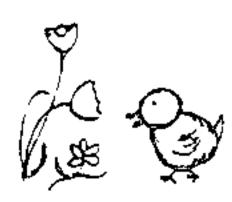
I know that I have met these little troubled persons. I have met children who just don't seem right; whose eyes are sad and whose affect seems off or inappropriate. When I see a child with spontaneous tearfulness and whose response is not related to any environmental or obviously precipitating factors. I question that. I may see a child who is having a good time playing: then suddenly he or she is troubled with some thought. If the child's mood seems to have done a ninety-degree angle. I question that.

The prevention of child abuse starts with education and observation...knowing the right resources and alternatives to take when suspicious...reaching out to the child and learning a little bit

each day of their inner feelings. I do not make my inquiries known prematurely to potentially guilty parents or significant others.

This is my point: only through learning and observing can I hope to impact a small piece of the world's troubles.

By Mark Buckner

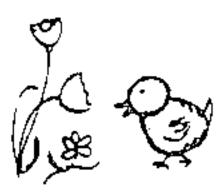


My abuse by my father started when I came home from the hospital after birth. It continued (I believe) for 39 years. My father is now dead and this fact I am sure let the memories begin to come. I have memories of four generations being part of a satanic cult.

It is difficult to watch my own adult children struggle with their ritual memories, knowing that the truth must be known for healing to be real. I can't change the past. I can be honest in the truth today. I work on being nurturing to my inter-people and strengthening the positive interactions...learning what and how this works.

Knowing that I have passed this evil on is one of the hardest things to acknowledge and accept. My therapist says that the person who committed the act must take responsibility for her or his actions.

Leaving an abusive marriage of 27 years has greatly helped me learn about being good to myself alone. I am working on my own healing before beginning a new relationship.



By D.

I believe there are several parts to prevention:

• Break the Silence and Never Stop! Every time you take a chance you may open someone's eyes...and mind. Some people will hear what you say. Somewhere down the line, someone will benefit, someone will hurt less, someone may live who might not have

- lived. Things have a way of snowballing.
- Stop Talking and Listen. There are times when letting someone talk, or asking the right questions in the right way, can be supportive and healing. As survivors progress in their healing, they can help others to heal. The further along a person gets in this process (which never does end), the further away they move from any possible need to have abusive power over others.
- Intervene or Blow the Whistle if you see abuse happening. If you suspect that something abusive is occuring, check it out, or get someone else to check it out. Do Not look the other way. If abuse is a snowball, stop it before it turns into an avalanche.
- Never Stop Educating Yourself. The more you know the more you can help yourself; the more you help yourself, the more you can help others. This is the positivesnowball effect!

What have I done? Not as much as I d like, but I keep working on it! Among my efforts: I am in individual and group therapy. I read constantly and write often (for my therapist if not for others) about abuse and healing. I exchange support in peer relationships with other multiples. (For example, I recently joined a Voices in Action Special Interest Group for survivors with MPD.) As an adjunct to my work on a rape-crisis hotline. I developed and continually update a booklist of over 40 pages which is useful for professional helpers as well as survivors and their friends/ families. I am pretty open about what I am and why, which allows others in my life to also open up to help.

realize that my primary responsibility is to myself. I need to stay as healthy as possible so that I can participate in efforts to prevent child abuse from happening.

In my view, prevention of abuse is a group effort. It may seem overwhelming, but as our hotline's motto says, "Together, we can make a difference."

By Lynn D.

Therapists' Page

By Timothy A. Smith, M.Ed.

Mr. Smith has specialized in the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders since 1977 and served as codirector of Northwest Treatment Associates in Seattle, Washington since 1980. The following material is excerpted with permission from his booklet, *You Don't Have to Molest That Child*, published by the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60604.

hat constitutes sexual activity with a child? It might be looking at or fondling, grabbing, or touching a child's private areas or having the child look at or touch yours. It's really all the same — someone older and more powerful doing something sexually with someone under age.

It is known that many people who as children were sexually abused by adults do the same thing when they grow up If you are touching a child in a sexual way, your feelings are probably confusing to you — sexual excitement, nervousness, and guilt all at the same time Maybe you are just thinking about a child in a sexual way Maybe you are starting to tell yourself that the child wants to be touched by you or that it won't hurt the child. If this sounds like you, stop! Don't start touching or continue touching that child!

People can learn how to control themselves so they don't have sexual contact with children. If you are having problems in this area — even if you think it's only a small problem — start making plans now to get some help

First, make a list of people whom you might talk to...as many names as possible, even if you don't know exactly what you might say to them Many persons in your situation have said that they really wanted to tell someone but they were afraid. Start working on those fears.

If sexual touching of a child has already started, it most often occurs in patterns or cycles. People feel that the urge to touch is under control—but then the urge comes back and they touch again

If you think that this sounds like you, it is important to realize that you make the decision to touch a child sexually. There is no other cause but you. You don't have to touch a child the first time, and you don't ever have to do it again.

Most people who have gotten help for this problem sooner or later admitted that they made a number of thinking errors to help them live with their guilt. These errors are

simply excuses. Some of the most common ones include: 'What I'm doing isn't child molesting, it's really sex education', or 'Other people won't understand our special relationship; or 'He wants me to touch him. He hasn't said no.'

Many, many other excuses have been recorded. 'I'll only do it one more time. 'She won't realize what I'm doing, she's too young.' 'What I' do in my own house (or car) is my business.' I'm just going to look, I won't touch [Many more are listed in the booklet. lw]

People develop these excuses to explain away something that deep down they know is wrong, that they want to stop. If this sounds like you, start writing down as many excuses as you can think of. Put it next to the list of people you might be able to talk to.

Many persons who have touched children say that they go through a type of emotional cycle where they feel bad about themselves...they do something to a child and the guilt gets extreme. Often at this point the person promises that he won't do this ever again. But without breaking out of the cycle and improving on the feelings of depression and low self worth, it usually is just an empty promise

If you feel that this cycle sounds like you, start talking to another person, now. You have to break the secrecy and denial that helps keep this emotional roller coaster going and tell someone how bad you are feeling, how much the guilt hurts, and why it's there.

Sexual urges and fantasies towards children can get stronger if you dwell on these ideas or if you engage in any sexual behavior (intercourse or masturbation) while thinking about children.

If you've found yourself using fantasies of children, don't think you can use other sexual behavior — such as intercourse with an adult — to try to control the urges that you are feeling towards children. It really makes the urges stronger. When you notice these thoughts, try to switch

your sexual thinking to an adult. Or, some experts suggest immediately focusing on an unpleasant idea or scene when you begin thinking sexually about a child. This is called punishing the thought". This method by itself won't reverse the changes that have taken place in your system, but it can help keep them from getting stronger, provided that you are following other suggestions as well

You know whether or not you've done something sexually with a child. You can also sense if you are close to doing it again. If so, first tell someone you need help. Second, change your habits:

 Don't put yourself alone with a child for long periods of time.

• Avoid situations where you might have touched a child before (baths, tucking in at night.)

Avoid alcohol and drugs.

• Work on keeping your sexual thoughts very appropriate. Don't think sexually about children. Don't flood your system with pornography, x-rated movies, etc

• Take care of your own health, reduce stress, improve diet and sleep habits.

• When you tell someone, be very specific. Don't say "I'm having trouble with a child." Instead say, "I have sexually touched a child." That gives the counselor an idea of what you really need to talk about. Tell someone who you know will insist that you tollow through and get help.

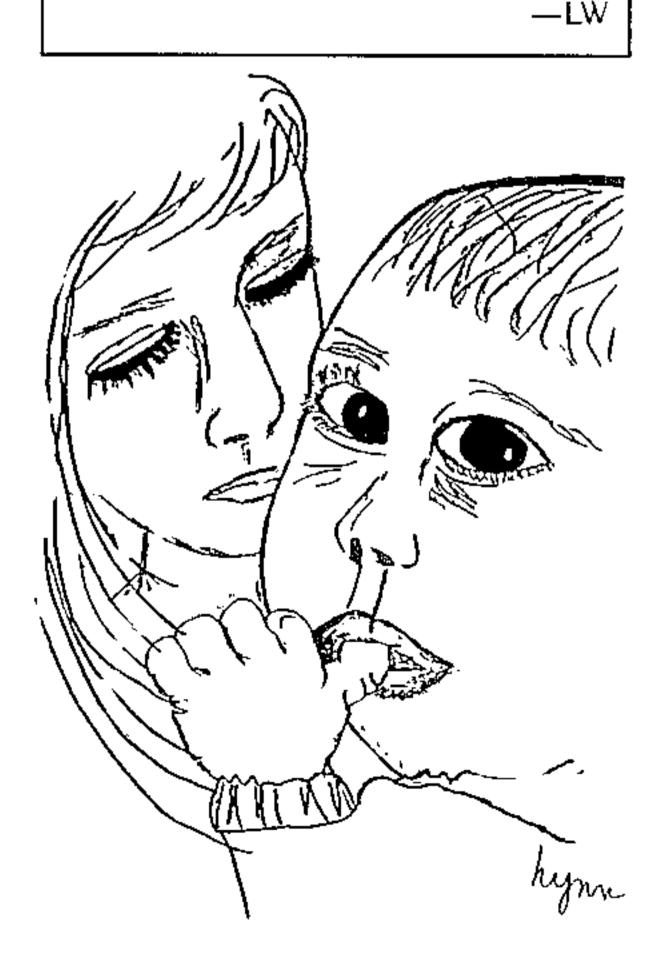
When you decide to seek help, ask your local children's service center or sexual assault center for the people in your area who provide most of the counseling for persons with sexual problems with children. Be specific. You want to go to a clinic that is used to helping people with these problems. Most states have mandatory reporting laws, designed to protect children. The law should be explained to you before you start telling a professional any of the specifics about your problem since it could lead to an arrest. Ask about your state's law if it is not explained.

(Therapists' Page, cont'd)

Remember, thousands of people across the country are receiving help—so can you! Don't give up. You always have a choice. You don't have to touch a child.

We thank the NCPCA staff and its director, Anne H. Cohn, D.P.M., for their gracious help in preparing this article. NCPCA is a valuable resource for education and research on child abuse prevention. For a free catalog call Publishing Dept., (312) 663-3520, and tell them you saw this in MV! —LW

Special Note: The book we've ALL been waiting for will be published soon. "Multiple Personality" Disorder, From the Inside Out includes written contributions by over 150 persons who either have or live with the MPD experience. A number of the writers are subscribers to MANY VOICES, and I want personally to thank everyone who submitted material for your time and effort. Published as a joint. venture of the Eastern Regional Conference on Abuse and Multiple Personality. MANY VOICES, and The Sidran Foundation (which provided the funding and handled the mega-details of the publication process) it is (I believe) the first book of its type compiled and edited by a therapist, a client, and a family member. To receive publication information and an order form, when available, write to The Sidran Foundation, 211 Southway. Baltimore, MD 21218.



Stopping Family Abuse

By Joie Jones, and Them

Hi. My name is "Joie," and I am eleven years old, I would like to tell you how I helped in stopping the abuse with Joie Jones (adult alter's) children Britanie and Bethanie. I hope this will help those of you who abuse others to find the strength and courage to get the help you need. To those who have reached out to heal. I want you to know you are not alone, and we congratulate you on your courage.

y story begins before I can remember, but the effects have followed me through my life. I had tried to keep things going with the husband, and Joie Jones' two children. Little did I know that "I" was a "We."

As with most multiples, we have a history of severe child abuse. Sometimes we ask ourselves why we had to endure so much pain and hurt to get loved, only to be left with the feelings of guilt and shame. There is no easy answer to this question, but there is healing from it.

To stop the abuse, we called the Child Abuse Registry...yet at that time we did not know we were multiple. We called because we wanted to stop hurting the little girl Britanie (the oldest). Also, we did not want to start hurting the infant. We had abused the oldest child Britanie sexually and physically from the day she was born. At the time of our call, Britanie was two months away from being three, and the baby Bethanie was six months old. From this you can see that Britanie had been abused almost three years. Somewhere deep inside we knew we had to quit, but we were frightened to get help. What would people think? What would happen to us? What would we have to face about ourselves?

Even though we were scared, we knew we had to call to protect the infant from being abused, and Britanie from being scarred anymore than she is. Our deepest fear was that if we did not get help, the children would end up like us.

Before we could make the call, we had to come to the realization that we were becoming like our abusers, which meant we had to give up the image of being a "Good Mother". Calling also meant

we had to face the fact that what we were doing to the children had been done to us.

Facing the truth is sometimes very painful, but it does have its rewards. For the time, we have lost custody of the children. They have been away for a year, but during that year we have been in recovery. The process is slow, yet there are signs of progress. In the beginning, we were only allowed two hours a week to visit, but now we get five hours a week. The time will increase as the healing continues. Soon the children will be home to a Mommy who is healthy, and able to give them love the right way.

What was most healing about calling is that we had the courage to do something our abuser never did. We chose to protect the children no matter the cost to us. We also showed the children what true love really is. Now they will have a chance for a happy and healthy life — something we never had. We also feel powerful being able to stop the abuse from continuing to another generation.

Yes, it has been hard, and sometimes we wished we would have never done it, but deep inside we know it was the right thing to do. I can truly say this because of the relationship that is developing between the children and us. Before we called, Britanie would tell us she did not want to come home with us, because we hurt her. Everytime we told her we loved her, she would say "I hate you. Mommy! I want Daddy." Now she says she wants to come home. and she is always telling us how much she loves us. Just last week. she told us "You're a good Mommy." These are only some of the rewards of getting help.

We can say it is worth it.

Accounting for Love

By Barbara Nemetz

I use strict guidelines to account for love,

Stringent parameters to measure who should give what and when and how much,

A running balance sheet that I keep in my busy brain of who's done what for whom and who is owed and what is due and who is overdrawn. As I debit and credit all my human transactions. (And God help those

whose t-accounts I total in red ink.)

A family trait, perhaps: my brother's advice when I lost my longtime lover was to write the investment off to bad debts.

I have these careful guidelines to account for love.

But suddenly I'm learning in the hardest way that there are no generally accepted principles for caring.

No policies, no procedures, no trial balances of giving and getting in this best of all possible worlds.

That the family who's supposed to give me life is not compelled to wish me well.

That they can even try to trade my soul like some perishable commodity to keep me from speaking the truth.

Can even wish me dead.

And I'm watching in horror as my meticulously constructed system turns to chaos in my mind.

I used to have many guidelines to account for love,

But now I'm feeling wonder at the miracles of kindness that issue from a family of total strangers.

And I'm thriving, unlike poor Blanche Dubois, on the compassion of these new-found cousins:

The saintly psychic who offers me hope and doesn't charge me. The lady cop who saves my life and sends me a Christmas card. The feisty nurse who risks her job getting my story to the TV actress. The self-proclaimed gigolo who somehow reads my heart, holds me tightly while I sob and whispers in my ear that I'm good, that it wasn't my fault, that he'll keep me safe.

I once had silly guidelines to account for love,

But now I've ripped up my mental ledgers,

Wiped my t-accounts clean.

And come to accept that there are no rules.

It doesn't matter where you get love or where it goes or what the outstanding balance is.

What matters is the giving and the getting,

And that one way or another, if you give love out, it finds its way back. With one extraordinary member or another

Of our universal family.

Some kind of cosmic balance sheet for which I'm truly grateful.



I Won't Tell If You Don't Tell

What do you want for Mothers Day, Mom?

Nothing, Sweetheart, Nothing.

But that's not true.

She wants what she's always got —

A pact. A pact of silence.

A pact that keeps truths buried deep within.

So deep, that we cannot even know for sure that they exist.

A pact that lets the facade continue

And the diseases deep within fester slowly.

By Sharon K.W.



Hope

I look out at a raging sea. Such turbulence to the naked eye. So beautiful to the thousands crying out for swift peacefulness.

I see the gulls searching for their life's bread beneath the depths of the churning waves. Their life is preordained till completion.

I see the whales spewing their raw spray. With their simple lives I envy them. Nature has detailed events for them to live.

Only man can alter nature, alter this magnificent scheme of things. Look at what man, this upredictable savage, has done.

We will always continue to search for hope. Hope is for those unfulfilled souls.

We will no longer need hope when we quit pillaging our neighbors, when we quit raping our children, and when we can share to have our most basic needs met.

By Beth H.

Recovering

By Rita

Q. If I stay in therapy, will I really be healed, or is there always the chance that I can regress? How does one protect against that?

A. This is, perhaps, the toughest question to answer. It would be wonderful to hear that once you achieve a "cure", you live happily ever after. I can say this...if you stay in therapy, work hard, stay committed to taking responsibility for getting well, face the pain, and learn (or relearn) how to live in a healthy way, you will be healed. There is no magic in recovery, only dedicated, hard work.

I don't think there is a day when you are "cured". I think a day comes when you suddenly realize that what happened to you no longer defines who you are or dominates what happens in your life now...you feel a peace inside. That may not signal the end of your therapy, though.

This reminds me of some of my chemically dependent clients who have gone through treatment. They would think. "Gee. if I get sober, then my life will straighten out, bad things won't happen to me, my troubles will be over!" Those clients have had a rude awakening in sobriety. To some extent, they carried into sobriety the same baggage (financial problems, legal problems, lack of job skills, poor work history, problems with

handling feelings, etc.) that they had while they were using. In addition to this, everyone experiences stress in life. It's unavoidable. The car breaks down, the toilet is leaking, and you just got laid off...you name it. Under stress, people can regress. When they regress, they tend to fall back on old defenses more than new coping skills.

Hopefully, if you've done good work in therapy and really cleaned up the trauma from the past, you will weather stress much better than those who have unresolved issues. You may get irritable or depressed for awhile. You might fall back on dissociative defenses to some extent, but you're not going to go back to where you were before therapy.

This has happened to me several times post-integration. I felt depressed, overwhelmed, trapped. my "insides" felt shattered, but I didn't "split". I did. however, find myself dissociating from the situation...going through with what I had to do to get through and not feeling too much about it. (I must note. I was not being abused, just dealing with real-life situations that happen to people in general.) I utilized my support system of friends as much as I could, and went to therapy. When I was ready to deal with my feelings, I faced them . . . cried. got

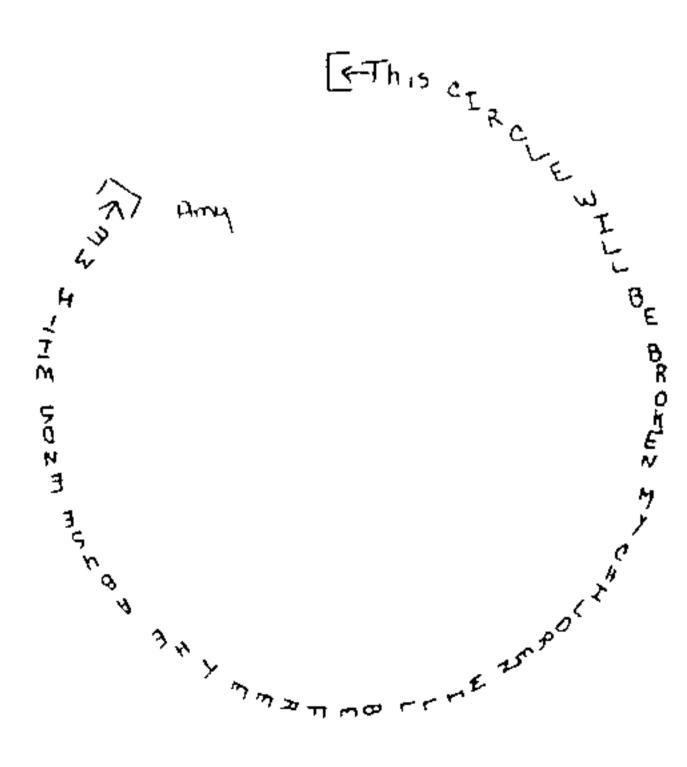
angry, or whatever, and took care of it.

The reality of life is that defenses (dissociative or otherwise) serve an important purpose. If we collapsed into a hysterical lump every time we hit a rough spot. we'd never make it through. Defenses help us function when we have to function, and then later on, if we're healthy, we process what we couldn't attend to during the heat of the moment. This is real normal. (I love that word!) So. numbing out, then falling apart later doesn't mean you're 'regressing", so much as it means you're learning to cope with life as it comes. (Note: "later" to me means within hours or days of an event, not months or years.)

The best way to protect against falling apart (regressing in a true sense) is to keep working in therapy and face everything you need to face. You might con a therapist into believing you've resolved everything, (that's often referred to as a "flight into health.) but you won't do yourself any favors in the long run. It takes a long time, perhaps five to seven years of therapy, but it pays off.

One more comment: I think there are some personality traits or idiosyncracies that stay with us... and what those are depend on each individual. We don't enter recovery being perfect.





(While acknowledging that some people don't consider masturbation as sinful at any age or stage of development, I consider this a most-worthy approach that might help those who struggle with the conflict between body and beliefs — LW)

Masturbation

By Abigail Collins

ne of the most pressing and guilt-ridden of issues during my recovery from ritual abuse was the subject of masturbation. I was in constant torment with sexual stimulation resulting from the aftermath of the abuse and from therapy. The harder my system worked and the more memories I received the more difficult it became to cope with the building tension and stress in my body. Keeping a stiff upper lip of silence. I would brave the rigors of therapy only to return home in severe mental and physical anguish. My underpants and clothing were always soaked with unwanted discharge and I viewed my body as a dirty. stinking piece of garbage which was, once again, out of control 1 felt as though I was going to explode, while my religious background crucified me with guilt for even THINKING of touching myself, since masturbation was viewed as sinful. I felt cheap and sinful and too humiliated and embarrassed to trust my therapist with my misery. Even long after my therapist addressed this touchy subject, giving me permission to relieve myself, I still continued to condemn myself to a prison of guilt and damnation. I felt truly damned if I did and damned if I didn't, in more ways than one. throughout the healing process of MPD.

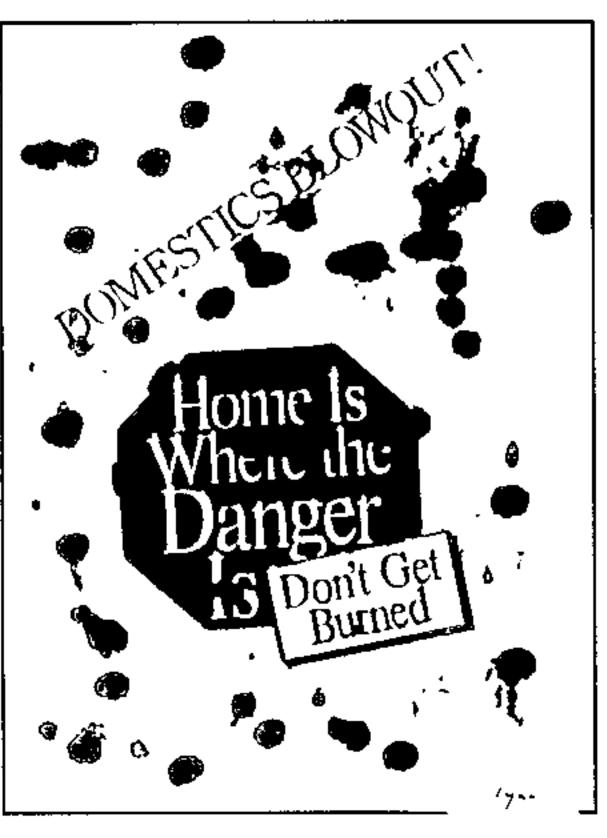
What I couldn't understand and grasp, at that stage of my journey. was the unrealistic expectation I had placed upon myself and my alters, and eventually, this too would pass. I had expected my body to not react after my therapist had so skillfully uprooted those troubled areas. This was as unreasonable as expecting no bleeding after a surgeon had cut away an infection from my arm or leg, and just as a surgeon will place a protective pad over an incision so it can heal so, too, can masturbation be used as a healing.

bandaid. After the healing has occurred, the bandaid will no longer be part of the process or needed. My children alters especially needed the guilt-free freedom of normal self-touching exploration for their growth and development.

To have continued the deprivation would have perpetuated the abuse cycle. Self-touch brought a redefining of emotional language and boundaries whereby all of ourselves could begin to perceive our body as normal, healthy and clean despite the ugly violence forced upon us.

Masturbation became a useful device and drug alternative for relieving emotional and physical tension, as well as calming frayed, raw nerves within my nervous system. As a fully integrated individual in my fourth year of therapy. I no longer need to engage in self-stimulation or feel guilty and dirty, because other interests and new activities have replaced old patterns.

Only after much, much emotional, physical and spiritual healing did I experience the allloving, tender mercy of the Light. Then I could understand that to condemn self-stimulation under these particular circumstances would be spiritual abuse, but after there was a thorough healing into healthy maturity, it would be wrong and unhealthy for me as a restored adult to hang on to "childish things" and create a new life of habitual self-indulgence. I came to understand that letting go of the childish things of masturbation was no different from the normal process of outgrowing baby bottles and thumb sucking. As an adult. I was ready to embrace the numerous gifts of a life the Light held for me. Masturbation, for me, was only a tool and stepping stone to the positive health I enjoy today.



Girlie Stew

My mother keeps a dragon; Deception is his name. He's mean and green and slimy and pricklies down his mane.

Yes mother keeps a dragon: she keeps him in her cave. Funny though — she doesn't know it's she who is his slave.

Feed me. Feed me now! he cries, Feed me. Don't be late! Deception snorts. His nostrils flare. His mouth glows red with hate.

My mother hangs her head in shame; she knows what she must do.

To protect herself from any blame, she prepares a girlie stew.

Mix and mash, manipulate equal parts of fear and pain. Add a ton of pretending and top with guilt and shame.

Deception's droot drips from his lip as she prepares his meal. She gives a shot of Novocain in hopes that I can't feel.

She serves me to Deception, my bones crunch in his jaw. My mother looks the other way and pretends she never saw.

My mother knows her duty.

She must feed him or he'll die, and then she'd have to face the truth.

Im the fuel to feed her lie.

By Connie B.

Lost Child

By Two-Feathers

he streets were crowded with people rushing one way and then another and I fought hard to hold back my feelings, trying to resemble the other blank, empty faces around me. As I passed a vacant building, I happened to see a small child sitting on the porch-step, holding her head in her small hands with her elbows propped on her knees. Something about the child invaded my thoughts and I stopped to study her awhile.

She appeared to be very lonely even though there were several other children playing around her. Their giggles and laughter filled the air as they sang and danced about, but she didn't seem to notice them, nor they her. I was puzzled by the emptiness of her stare.

Feeling somewhat uncomfortable with my emotions. I went to get a closer look at the child. Her physical self appeared to be about three years old. but there seemed to be years of sadness in her eyes. Her clothes, which were much too big for her, hung on her tiny body which was badly beaten and bruised. My heart cried in the unspoken secrets of her pain and I wondered how anyone could abandon such a small and frightened child and not care for her.

Not totally understanding the link forming between us, or my feelings toward this small child, I carefully reached down to hold her. She too held out her arms as if she wanted to be held, given support and protected from the horrors she kept locked deep within her.

My whole body wrenched in pain as I picked her up and saw face to face that the child was me. Not an image of me. but the child in me who had been rejected and abandoned so many years ago. I held her close and she clung to me. becoming one with me. and her pain was my pain. As I held that lost child I found myself again asking, "How could anyone abandon me, this small and frightened child?"

The following poem was written when I was profoundly moved by a picture in my psychology book of a baby monkey clinging to a wash cloth covered piece of wood with an artificial face. It symbolizes part of my struggle, having MPD and being a mother.—CB

The Empty Shell

The children look at her and think she is their mother Like the baby monkey thinks the washcloth covered piece of wood with the funny face is its mother.

The children think she is their mother because she has always been there.

She is a female of the species. She feeds, cleans and clothes them.

Somehow the children sense something is not quite right, but they don't understand.

That's because the mother is an empty shell.

The mother does not know where her living contents went

One day they were gone and she was an empty shell with no one at home inside.

The children keep waiting for her to be home.

The mother knows she should be home...but she can't find herself.

The mother is sad because she knows she's not really a mother.

She does not know how to explain to them that her living contents left and she doesn't know where to find them.

She fears if the children find out they will be afraid.

She wishes that she could find her living contents but it might mean leaving her children to do it.

Then the children would have nothing.

The mother thinks an empty shell is better than a nothing where the mommy is supposed to be.

By CB

The Sunrise of My Soul

My soul, in its deepest mourning, awaits the coming of the dawn, when the bright, warming rays of the sun reach towards infinity.

Ah. yes.

So must my spirit rise from deep within, climbing the stairsteps of my sould, seeking the warm light of Love.

My spirit finds Faith.

A tiny seed of Faith, sown when there was warmth and light within my heart, struggling to touch the wholeness of the universe, just as the morning sun.

Hope touches my spirit.

as it yearns for a divine sunrise within my being. which will bring Harmony and Healing to my grieving heart.

For where there is Faith and Hope

there is also a light of Love.

And Love, greatest of all, is the essence of unity.

So as my spirit climbs, searching within for the fullness of Love, it finds the lightness of unity.

which lifts the heaviness of my grief.

Alas, the beautiful sunrise of my soul brings peace. And it is morning.

Answers to "Fear of Finishing" (Feb. '91)

My background is MPD, family ritualistic abuse, and CIA mind control experimentation (1967-1973). I "integrated" (I prefer the term "reassociated") approximately one year ago, with only a baby left to reassociate. I am nowhere near the end of my therapy. However, I can address KC's concerns about feeling she will have nothing in reserve and no protected parts in case she should need them.

Her fear is legitimate, very real, and in my experience, very common among those of us who have reached this point in therapy. We all have worked hard and fast to put ourselves together, and then it doesn't seem as inviting as it did at the beginning of therapy.

My experience was that although I had reassociated with 99% of my alters, I still had/have the option of splitting if I wanted to. Splitting is a legitimate tool that we have at our disposal if necessary. We don't just lose that ability as we integrate. Personally, I have not found the need to split off again, but it gave me great comfort to know that I could.

In the beginning of my days reassociated. I was overwhelmed at times by having mixed feelings. I did feel vulnerable. I had no idea who I was: it scared me to not be able to pull out any part of myself, immediately, to deal with things. I really wondered if I'd done the right thing.

Somehow, I did stick it out. I want very much to share that it was the right thing for me. It has taken a year for me to get used to it, but the reasons for reassociating are now, nearly daily, manifesting. Just living and experiencing is getting fun.

Instead of reacting to things, sometimes I have to take a day or two to sort out how I feel, then decide what to do. I woke up one morning without all that generalized fear; Now sometimes I am not only assertive, but shockingly opinionated. I am discovering how much I don't know, but I don't have to secretly figure things out on my own — I

can ask. (The things I don't know get downright silly sometimes because I missed so much developmentally. Sometimes I laugh for a whole day at the silly things I was never taught.)

Best of all, I am discovering what I do have: talents and abilities that can really bloom with the maturity that comes with integrating; discovery of how much more mellow life is with the blending of my parts. I love not feeling isolated from myself. I finally feel like a part of the human race. It is like everything they were teaching me throughout therapy is coming out in my life now. For me, it is better; but it took time, grief, and guts.

Good luck, KC, whatever happens. For me, this integration business took more courage than anything prior in therapy. It was absolutely the most difficult thing that I have ever done. But it has also brought me to the life for which I dreamed. — Atu M.

As my final integration approached I found myself in a crisis of isolation. I was shutting down on all levels. This "stalling out" response was a coping mechanism to deal with the intense fear of growth and health. The normal reaction for anyone making major life-style changes is "cold feet", and in my case, a good crisis was the translation of normal, pre-integration jitters. What helped me the most was forging ahead, taking that final plunge and trusting God, my higher power, to bring me through my fears. Procrastination only intensified the anxiety and fear. My final integration didn't bring a termination to therapy with instantaneous health, but was the beginning of a different kind of work and relationship with my therapist.

My final integration was May 9, 1990, ending a system of 21 alters, and 12 fragments originating from ritual abuse.

—Abigail Collins

MΥ

Announcements

Ritual abuse is the topic of interest to researchers at U. of Colorado/Boulder. They seek 50 anonymous ritual abuse survivors in treatment — to respond to a six-page questionnaire which covers abuse history, process of memories, validating experiences. issues pertaining to telling about the abuse, and the effect of society's denial on the survivor. If interested, first discuss it with your therapist and obtain therapists' approval to use his/her address for mailing. Please do this before sending your name and the name/ address of your therapist to: Ritual Abuse Project, Women Studies Program, Cottage #1, Campus Box 246, Boulder, CO 80309-0246.

Incest Resources Inc., 46
Pleasant St. Cambridge, MA
02139 provides educational and
resource materials for survivors
and the professionals who work
with them. Fees are nominal. For
a list of available materials, send
your request to the above address.
Please include a self-addressed
envelope with 52 cents in stamps.

"Short documentary in photo and essay form" describes the work-in-progress by Atu Maret, who is documenting the lives of persons with MPD. If you might like to participate in this project, write to Atu P. Maret, 5505 Valmont Rd. #97, Boulder, CO 80301.

Researcher needs participants: U.of Mich. Doctoral Candidate therapist/researcher investigating effect sexual abuse has on women's beliefs about the world. Need women over 18 who were sexually abused as children (under 18) either by family or non-family person. Study involves completing 6 questionnaires, expected to take a total of 30-60 minutes. The first 60 participants receive \$10 each. Contact Donna Silbert, M.A., 40 River Rd., #12-G, NYC, NY 10044. 212/888-1594

Elizabeth Lewis is collecting writings/drawings on the spiritual aftereffects of abuse. Please send work or questions to P.O. Box 2196, Boston, MA 02106.

The Trees

The trees know
They cover and protect
They will do it again and again
For the sake of eternity.

The trees oversee Sorrow Without betraying its secrets To those who might harm

They spread soft leaves at their feet

For the little ones to rest on.

And cover them with their Strength and their silence.

Alone, alone, finally alone. The little ones rest and wait For dawn and sanity

By Natalie H.



Books

United We Stand: A Book for People with Multiple Personalities 1990 by Eliana Gil, PhD, 43 pgs Published by Launch Press, Walnut Creek CA \$5.95 paperback

This is a book I wish I'd had five years ago! It is a simple, matter-of-fact, unhysterical description of the experience of having multiple personalities: causes, advantages, disadvantages, etc.

Written by Dr. Eliana Gil (author of *Treatment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse* and other works) this book is useful for multiples (especially those who have been recently diagnosed), spouses/partners of multiples, parents of multiples, children of multiples, as well as the children *inside* multiples.

Pretty versatile little book! You might think that this book sounds a bit thin, but it is BIG on impact. When I ordered mine, I ordered 10, and they have been well received coast-to-coast.

I personally like the lack of 'shoulds" and "musts" — no mind games.

From the preface: Multiples
"...have been smart, resourceful,
and more than anything else, true
survivors...my greatest concerns
are that many multiples feel badly
about their inside people, think
that they are crazy or strange..."

Topics covered: what is multiple personality: dissociation: alters —

friendly, helpful, scarey; do alters have to go away; why it helps to be a multiple; when it can be a problem; aspects of communication, etc. — Dyan

Unspeakable Acts: The True Story of the Frank Fuster Child Abuse Court Case.

1986 by Jan Hollingsworth 592 pgs Published by Congdon & Weed Inc., New York \$11.95 paperback.

As its title suggests, the story in this book is not a pretty one. The writing is beautiful: the reader is grateful for the length and detail found here.

This book is about child abuse at a babysitting service in an upscale neighborhood in Dade County, Florida, run by a previously convicted, but paroled, child molester (and murderer). Frank Fuster, and his young wife Iliana, Iliana is described as 'a chameleon', but I think she may be dissociative.

There is great sadness in the story; many children were harmed, families went through hell. There is also hope in knowing that some people care. And, that sometimes, with much effort, things can work out in the end.

There are many heros to be found in this story: the district attorney, who was determined to find out what really happened: a group of parents and others who worked ceaselessly to get

legislation favorable to child witnesses passed (even though it was not in place for this trial): the judge, Joe and Laurie Braga, who are not only altruistic, but also confident and capable experts on child behavior. Most of all, the heros are the children who were able to tell their stories, even in the face of adults whose primary goal was to trip them up, to destroy them, in order to 'win'.

What this book says to all of us is that we all can be part of the solution. We can all make some difference. The beginning is in our healing from the past, because then our energies can be directed outward. The Bragas quietly serve as role models, not to be role models, but just because their chosen life is one worthy of emulation.

The following quote is one found on the wall at the Braga home:

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. The purpose of life is to matter, to be productive, to have it make some difference that you lived at all. Happiness, in the ancient, noble sense means self-fulfillment and is given to those who use to the fullest whatever talents God or luck or fate bestowed upon them. Happiness, to me, lies in stretching to the farthest boundaries of which we are capable, the resources of the mind and heart" (Rosten)

A book well worth reading.

—Annie

Get Creative for MV!

We especially need art and humor, but all submissions welcome. Theme-focus optional. THANKS!

Coming Up! 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 protectoris) DEADLINE for submissions. April 1–1991

August 1991

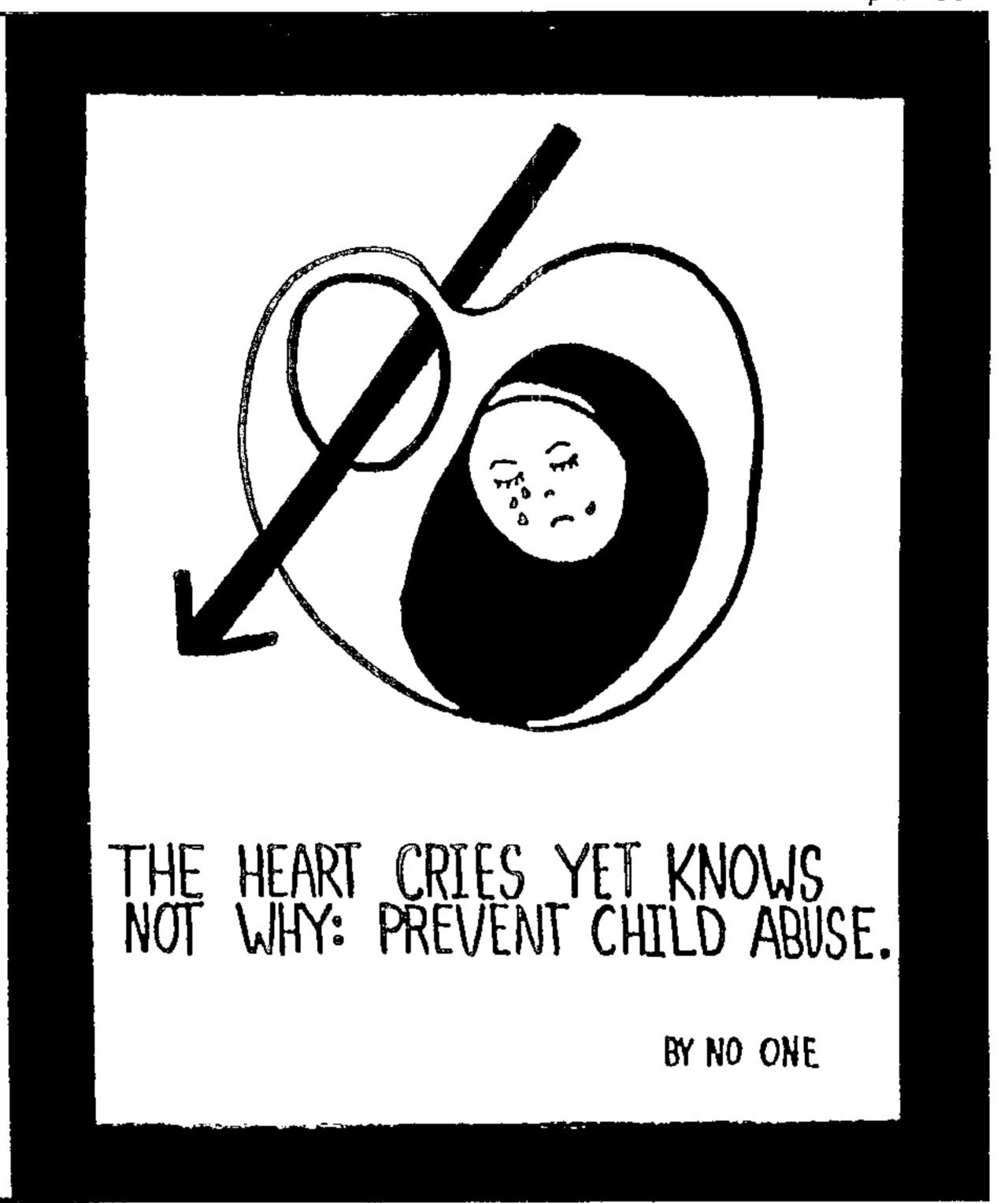
It's easy to talk about the little kids inside but what about the feeris and adults? How do you balance their needs? What are their skills and responsibilities? Their problems? ART Draw an inner adult helping an inner child DEADLINE for submissions. June 1, 1991.

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 for 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.



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 well 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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