

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH MPD OR A DISSOCIATIVE DISORDER

Vol. V, No. 4

August 1993

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## Something We'd Like To Do: *Swim with sea friends . . .*

Coming in 1994!

### February 1994

Dissociation and the family. Parenting with DD. Do you tell the kids? Sibling issues. Non-abusive parents. Significant others. ART: Draw your inside/outside kids together, or you and close, non-abusive relatives or friends. DEADLINE: Dec. 1, 1993.

### April 1994

Double-topic issue: Experiences of men in therapy for DD. What has been helpful in finding male support. ALSO: Graduating from therapy . . . how do you know when you're ready? Therapist/client discussion. ART: From the male perspective (men or male alters.) DEADLINE: Feb. 1, 1994.

### June 1994

Healing from Multiple Problems: DD and alcohol, eating disorders, other addictions; legal/criminal justice system; What do you do first? How is therapy different? ART: How you picture your healthier future life. DEADLINE: April 1, 1994.

### August 1994

Funniest (or strangest) things that have happened in therapy for dissociation. Light-reading suggestions & kids' books. ART: cartoons and drawings of unusual occurrences in therapy. DEADLINE: June 1, 1994.

### October 1994

Creating your own healthy circle. Developing social skills. Groups for therapy &/or support. Meeting peers (How To, risks, rules for safety etc.) Penpal pros & cons. ART: Socializing with outsiders. DEADLINE: August 1, 1994

### December 1994

Double-topic issue: Dealing with the health-care system (insurance, medical doctors/dentists, social service agencies.) ALSO: Reducing dissociation in stressful situations. ART: A gift you'd like to give yourself, a friend, or the world. DEADLINE: October 1, 1994.



## Special Thanks!

Thanks to ALL of you who came up with editorial ideas for MVs next year! Each suggestion is important and helps to shape our choices, issue by issue. And I urge you, if you have writing or art that does not fit "the themes", but seems valid and helpful...or just plain fun...send it anyway. My goal, as always, is to provide a balance of material.

I'm preparing a new detailed sheet for contributors: write for it! And I hope you like these topics! Please send comments/suggestions anytime! — LW

### ...And More...

We are now accepting free 50-word ads from survivors for our upcoming resource guide, *MANY VOICES/MULTIPLE CHOICES #2*, as well as your suggestions for listing information. *MV/MC#2* will be mailed FREE to all current subscribers in Dec. '93, with the December issue. See information sheet enclosed for details, or call 513/531-5415 and we'll send one to you. Rates and specs for institutional/professional display ads are also available upon request.

—LW

## Wishes

I have an alter named Alice who now says she is 14 years old. There are only two things she wants: to own and ride a bicycle and to play baseball. Owning and riding a bicycle doesn't seem like such a hard thing to do. But I also have three or four younger alters who were told they could never have a bicycle because they would get hurt riding a bicycle, and boy, do they believe that! Every time I attempt to buy Alice a bicycle we have a terrible battle and even though it isn't fair to Alice, she always loses out.

A few weeks ago my therapist brought an exercise bicycle in her office for another client's needs. Alice couldn't resist. She sat on it with her eyes closed and felt the sun and wind on her face as she pedaled away. I hoped it might satisfy her but it only convinced her that she can truly ride like the wind. The littler ones saw her and they said, "Look at that fool. She thinks it's a real bicycle." They know it isn't and their fears weren't dispelled one bit. I guess somehow I still have to buy a bicycle.

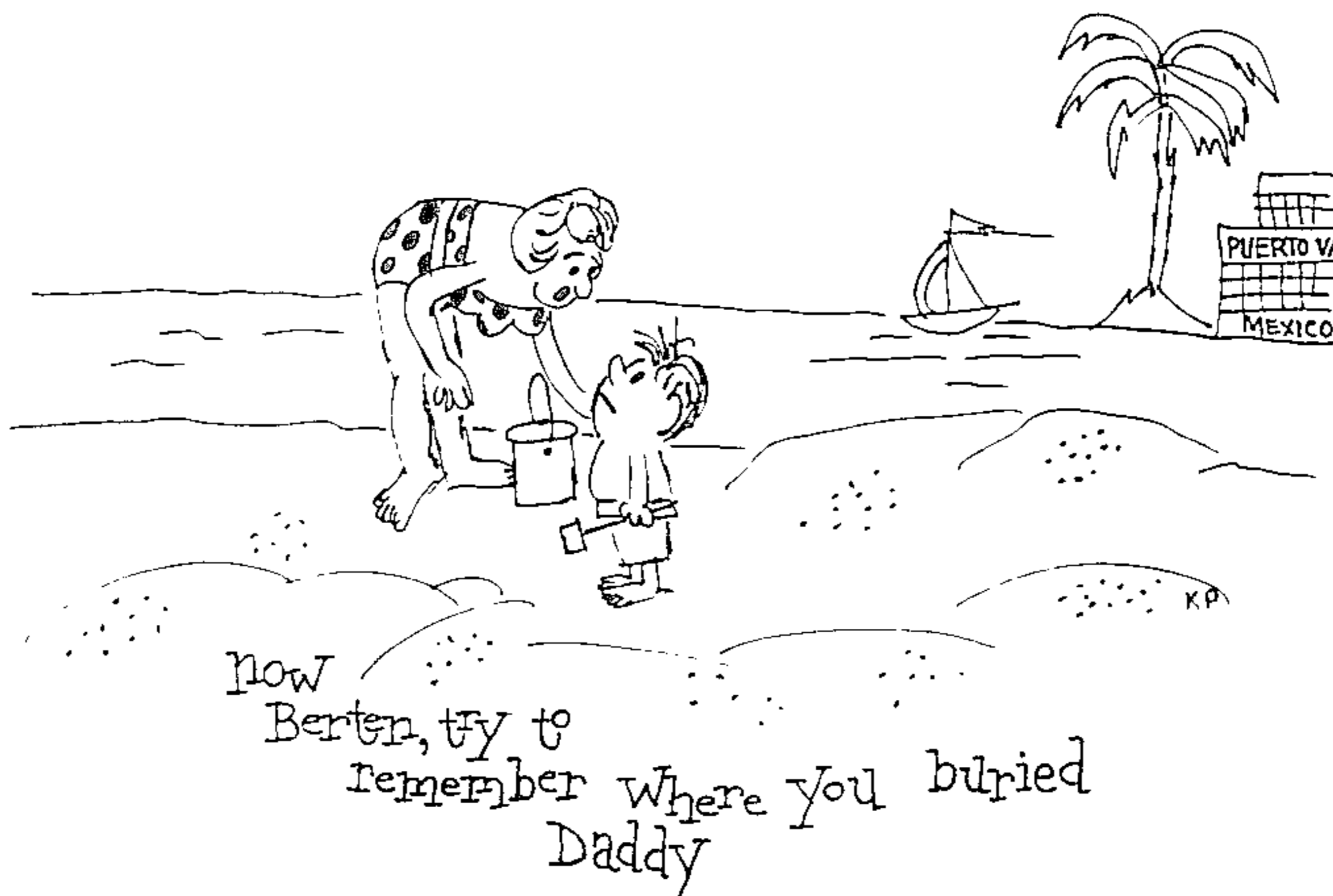
Baseball is a bigger problem. My office has a women's softball team. They are the champs of their league and surely don't need

a 53-year-old woman who never played baseball in her life on their team. I have been going to professional baseball games in the hope that Alice could get what she needs vicariously. She likes that but it really isn't enough for her. The little ones go too. All they see is the big men getting hit with balls and falling down. To them it is far too hard and too dangerous. Alice sees some of that too, but she still thinks she could play better than those men and would never get hurt.

During the last game we went to, my poor husband, who wasn't aware that he was sitting next to Alice, asked what I wanted for my birthday. Alice told him a baseball glove would be wonderful! He was very surprised and said that was easy...but the birthday isn't here yet and I don't know whether that really is going to be his gift.

It is hard to keep all of them happy and getting the experiences they need to grow. The little ones just want to be held and protected until they learn to trust, but Alice needs adventure. Before I was in therapy, the conflict tore me apart. It is a lot easier now that I understand, and sometimes it is downright humorous.

By Dottie





## Chocolate Therapy

R, for staying grounded:  
 1 dose fat free chocolate  
 once/day  
 afternoon or evening

1 dose extra special  
 chocolate treat  
 once/week or  
 twice/week if needed

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY  
 PLAN AHEAD  
 Keep ample supply of  
 chocolate on hand  
 (some of us can't drive to get it)

**WARNING:** DO NOT discontinue  
 Therapy w/out consulting littleones  
 inside. Undesireable behavior may  
 result.

**MANY VOICES** wishes to thank the following generous contributors for their help in supporting our work:

### Angels:



**The Center for Trauma and Dissociation**  
 4400 East Iliff Avenue  
 Denver, Colorado 80222  
 1-800-441-6921  
 Dr. Nancy Cole, Clinical Director

### Benefactors:



**The Menninger Clinic**  
 5800 SW 6th St.  
 Topeka, Kansas, 66601  
 Contact our Women's Program  
 1-800-351-9058 ext. 730

### Friends:

**National Treatment Center for MPD and Dissociation**  
 Del Amo Hospital  
 23700 Camino Del Sol  
 Torrance, CA 90505  
 1-800-533-5266 or 310-530-1151  
 Walter C. Young M.D., Medical Director

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## Resources

**Call for poems** from survivors of incest. Anthology planned for 1994. Permission required. Send photocopies of poems for consideration to Patricia A. Diskin, 13 High St., Erving, MA 01344-9715.

**The Hope Chest Newsletter**, a survivor publication primarily for Connecticut & eastern seaboard states is seeking contributions (manuscripts and financial) to continue its work. Non-profit status is pending. For information and subscriptions, write to Alicia, 70 Dell Avenue #A4, New London, CT 06320-3342.

**Addiction in Society**, a conference sponsored by the USA Transactional Analysis Association, will be held in Minneapolis, at the Sheraton Park Place Hotel, Oct. 12-17. Subjects include shame, addiction, and the child ego state. For information call 612/473-1840.

**Survivors Reaching Out** presents a two-day national conference for clergy, September 17-18, at the Holiday Inn in Sacramento, CA. For information on this and other programs/services of Survivors Reaching Out, call 916/967-0424, or write PO Box 899, Citrus Heights, CA 95611.

**Research project** on the effectiveness of MPD group therapy: Multiples or therapists who are now or have been involved in MPD group therapy may respond to a questionnaire. For info contact Dr. W.D. Gutowski, 101 -9181 Main St., Chilliwack, B.C., V2P 4M9, Canada.

**Australian support group** needs organizing advice. Send your experiences, suggestions to Tracey, 33 Stuart St., Longueville, Sydney, NSW 2066, Australia.

# Things We Do For Fun

We don't have fun like other people. We're too broken and can't have friends: they'd hurt too much. So we do everything by ourselves. We are each other's best friends. Here are some of the things we do.

- Send away for stuff in the back of magazines so we get mail.
  - Make stuff (like crafts), incl. teeny tiny shopping bags (1/2" or so)
  - Order pizzas
  - Go to McDonald's
  - We got to order a magazine subscription about miniatures (*Nutshell News*)
  - Listen to our tape player
  - Work with outside babies at a medical hospital (volunteer)
  - Reading; we read a lot and we're real smart
  - Look at stuff we plan to buy so we get the best deal
  - Take baths
  - We like music a lot
  - Go for walks; we live in the middle of a big city, so there's a lot to see
- By The Others who live with Barb



## HAVING FUN is . . .

Scribbling outside the lines of the coloring book

& NOBODY TELLING YOU NOT TO.

Swinging on the playground  
& NOBODY RUNNING IN FRONT OF YOU TO GET KNOCKED DOWN.

Flying a kite  
& THE STRING DOESN'T BREAK WHEN YOU PULL IT OUT OF THE TREE.

Watching a squirrel steal & then eat a burrito  
& SHARING YOUR LUNCH WITH THE FRIEND WHO GOT "ROBBED".

Playing Candyland with a therapist friend

& TAKING THE GAME HOME FOR THE WEEKEND.

Playing volleyball

& LETTING THE BALL BOUNCE ON THE GROUND & EVERYONE IS ALLOWED TO HIT IT 2-3 TIMES (OR EVEN 4) TO GET IT "OVER" AN IMAGINARY NET. (NO KEEPING SCORE EITHER).

Reading Teen Mysteries at the Children's Library

BECAUSE WE'RE THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN & HAVE TO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT.

Taking turns getting toys at the 99-cent store

BECAUSE THE KIDS WORKED HARD IN THERAPY (OR FOR NO REASON AT ALL)

Listening to *Adventures in Odyssey* on the radio

& RECORDING IT TO LISTEN OVER AGAIN.

Laughing a lot

AT NOTHING IN PARTICULAR = :)

Pasting pictures on a paper.  
THE THERAPIST FRIEND CALLS IT A COLLAGE. IT'S JUST FUN.

By Karleen et al



Having fun and staying grounded are constant struggles for me. In the "outer" world I'm a high-functioning attorney. Very few people are aware of my multiplicity. In my "inner" world, there's almost constant noise, confusion, and conflicting needs, desires and wants.

Sometimes, in what I now know is often an effort to avoid dealing with the pain, terror and other intense feelings and memories

from the past, I can get lost in my head thinking about work or some project I'm working on. After a few years of intensive therapy, I've slowly come to accept that during most of the times I'm off lost in my head thinking about work, some other part of me has taken over and is functioning in my place. I remember being genuinely confused and embarrassed while trying to minimize my college friends' amazement at how quickly I could write an essay or a paper after spending so much time doing anything but homework. To me, all I had been doing was writing that essay or that paper. I just didn't realize I was doing all the work in my head while other parts of me were present and functioning for me.

The idea of having fun is pretty new to me. I'm trying to learn from younger parts about how to relax. When a younger part spends time coloring, or playing with our cat, or going for walks, or whatever, even if I'm not aware of or experience the activity, the "whole" of me does feel a sense of rest. Especially when I give myself a break and not try to work in my head while another part tries to have fun. What's even better is that sometimes I get to have fun, too.

It's beginning to make sense to me that I don't have to be working all the time. After all, non-multiples are always complaining that it's hard to rest when they keep thinking about their work. It would make sense that it would be hard for me and my system to truly rest if only parts rested or did fun things while I was working in my head.

Giving younger parts permission to express their needs and feelings and creative ideas for meeting their (our) needs has helped me feel more grounded. I still dissociate a lot and still rely heavily on notes, lists, and other helpful skills to maintain a high level of functioning. But I think getting to know and accept the younger parts of us will bring

more fun and laughter in my life. I'm grateful for my little girls and the roles they play in our system.

By JO



This is what we do to have fun. It is free, or almost free. We save the lady's shiny change in a jar and she takes us to yard sales and you can get kid toys & books & stuffed bears that need a new good home for a quarter! We like to go camping, we like to go fishing, we like to play with our dog Silver. The lady reads us stories like *Little House in the Big Woods*. You can get those free from the kid library. We can draw & color, and now everybody is learning to use watercolors. We got a great book, *Watercolors for the Artistically Undiscovered* to paint in. It cost a lot, but you can save up or ask for it for a present.

Love, US KIDS  
(in Chris' System)

Having fun includes all of us in our rather large co-conscious. They can come up with great ideas when they try. One of our favorites is simply to take a walk in the warm months. It's fun to take some pocket change along in case you hit a yard sale.

Cooking can be fun too. You can do just about anything with pasta or rice. No two meals are ever the same.

Story time, when we dig out the kids' favorite books and the adults read to them. Some of the adults can really make the stories come alive with a rapt audience of adults and children.

Art time is time for all of us to express both good and bad. Even putting the bad down can be fun, because you can get a little mad and rip it all up.

TV: we have some shows we watch every week. If not that, then tapes of music or radio... that is also grounding for us.

By Stacy Joy

# Staying Grounded

There is a famous saying that I have been aware of since the age of four: "There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a human."

When I'm feeling overwhelmed by wildly fluctuating, erratic emotions, scary monsters, ugly memories and/or suppositions, the best thing for me to do is to take a horse break and temporarily leave my turmoil behind (if at all possible!).

I go to the barn and speak softly with my equine friend, often squeezing her strong, muscular neck with both arms and burying my tears in her soft, warm coat. She seems to understand my pain and my need to escape. We talk, and I brush her and saddle her up, then off we go into the quiet, peaceful countryside. Sometimes we walk slowly for miles and miles, taking in the beauty of nature and feeling thankful for the gifts that God has given us. Other times we gallop, losing ourselves in the rhythmic hoofbeats, the power beneath us, the blur of nature flying by, and the feel of the wind on our faces.

This is good for us! My equine friend never complains — she is willing to let me set the pace and the mood. She never asks for anything in return, either, except food, shelter, attentive care, and love (nature provides her clothes; otherwise I couldn't afford her!) I love Darned Sassy and she loves me. This is all I really know about love, at this point in my life.

By B/S



The first help for staying grounded is my-our faith in God; without Him we would be a basket case. Music tapes — they are wonderful if you can afford it. If not, then a nice radio station. Something that can soothe, not trigger.

Prayer and meditation is great for those who believe in a Higher

Power. When I take my pain to God, He helps us through it to the other side, into the sunlight and peace.

A favorite teddy to hold, a nap to settle everyone down. A treat to look forward to after the rough times are over. A lot can ground you and your individual alters. If you are co-conscious you can talk it over inside and find what will work for you.

Each time you ground yourselves, it makes it easier the next time.

By Stacy Joy



## If I Were Having Fun

If I were having fun  
(for real not pretend)  
It wouldn't matter if I was alone  
or not.  
I would be completely involved  
in it,  
not caring if I looked silly.  
I would be connected to  
insiders' feelings and  
reactions.  
It wouldn't be mental  
It would be gut trusting and  
very physical:  
a loud laugh,  
maybe I'd snort.  
And it would be wonderful to be  
alive and feeling.  
I would be dancing just for me.  
sleep, especially during the  
more stressful times. Thank  
you  
Sarah, for being our love and  
patience.  
It would feel like I was flying,  
and shouting so loud  
that the people who don't  
know how to have fun  
would say 'please lower your  
voice'.  
And I'd say 'NO, I like my voice  
just the way it is.'

By Ellen K.

# Therapists' Page

By Linda Gannon, M.S.S.A., L.I.S.W.

*Linda Gannon is a therapist in private practice in Akron, Ohio who has been working with MPD/DD since 1983. She has presented papers on treatment issues and therapist self-care at local and international conferences.*

**W**hy does one go through the work of recovery? This is a question both patient and therapist need to address. Recovery is difficult. There are trust issues to navigate. It is taxing to be continually on guard evaluating whether you are clear in your perceptions, whether the other person is truly safe or likely to use you or do you harm either accidentally or purposefully. It is difficult to be constantly attending to observing the "other", monitoring their reactions and your own reactions and working to say and do the right thing to address the relevant issues and promote the healing. It is draining to confront the hurt and pain — to let it show and to see it — to observe it and feel it — to accept that people hurt children in horrendous ways. It is painful to acknowledge and sit with the impact of abuse on a life, to grieve lost time, childhoods and opportunities. There are many other difficulties. Why do we do this?

One does this recovery because healing is possible, and like life, is important, amazing, and an incredible experience. We acknowledge how bad it was so we can begin to know how good it can be. Recovery work is entered and begun so one can graduate from it to spend more time in real life — with quality of life. Continuing education in terms of therapeutic check-ups and return to therapy for help in hard times is always an option. Continued stabilization, learning and growth periods are a part of real life.

While going through the time, tension and demands of healing, it is vital to remember that the purpose of this is to get *through* it to better times. We do therapy to get more and more of real life.

What is a real life? M. Scott Peck in *The Road Less Traveled* says "Life is difficult." It is. In real

life you cry and laugh and it feels right — congruent; it fits with the facts of the moment. If it doesn't, you talk with friends or a therapist to figure out what's going on and how you can handle a difficult situation and even grow from it. In real life, you work hard, physically you sweat and know what it's about. When you shower, it feels good to get cleaned up. In real life, there are hurts and struggles, ups and downs, still a need to tell the safe people from the unsafe people... but it all seems more possible. In real life, you know that you are responsible for yourself and you take the responsibility seriously. You take it so seriously that you make sure you have a lot of fun. One does the work of recovery in order to live life as fully as possible.

It is important to practice living fully and being aware from the beginning stages of recovery. Patient and therapist alike need to attend to the following areas of life and daily living for themselves. There must be a basic agreement to stay aware of keeping safe and alive. In addition, here is a checklist we all can use, all the time — whenever we are on the path of living fully. Feel free to add your own ideas to this list.

## **PHYSICAL NEEDS:**

Adequate rest — finding ways to rest one's body, mind and spirit even if sleep is difficult.  
Proper nutrition — never easy, but worth starting over daily (or hourly) if needed.  
Taking medication as prescribed and talking with the doctor if you think changes need to be made.  
Movement — exercise sounds too hard, but we all can move; walk to the corner or around the house, dance, run — a little bit daily.

## **EMOTIONAL NEEDS:**

Safe people to talk with honestly.  
Safe expression of feelings by

talks, writing or drawing.  
Being with your support system.  
Fun and laughter — the comics, funny movies, jokes.

## **SPIRITUAL NEEDS:**

Feeding the soul with art, beauty, nature, music and time spent increasing connection with one's positive spiritual source.

We all need to be claiming these areas every day. Probably the most neglected areas are Fun and Spirituality. I think they go together and are important.

*The following are just a few reasons to recover. What would you add to this list?*

## **Reasons To Recover**

1. To reclaim the past and all parts of oneself — to feel connected inside.
2. To enjoy the moments of the present and know there will be more.
3. To ache with sadness and then recover.
4. To plan for, anticipate the future — including adjusting to the surprises it brings.
5. To enjoy the daily activities and routines of life.
  - a clean room
  - messing up a room
  - cleaning the room again
6. To see nature.
  - a flower at the store, in a field, in your garden
  - feel snow, rain, sun and wind
7. To enjoy the night — even the moon and the stars.
8. To read a book all the way through and remember it.
9. To know if you are injured — cry if it hurts and get medical attention if necessary.

- 10. To find a love.
- 11. To lose a love.
- 12. To learn we can be OK without that love.
- 13. To know we can even do very well without that love.
- 14. To miss having a love and still be OK.
- 15. To be ready for a better relationship.
- 16. To hear music — more and

more — until one day the beauty of the sound brings tears to your eyes.

17. To stay in one place for a time or to move if that's best for you.

18. To enjoy a good belly laugh.

19. To realize your friends really do like you even if you aren't perfect, and let yourself feel their caring.

20. To see the sun rising.

21. To know the pleasure of sleep.

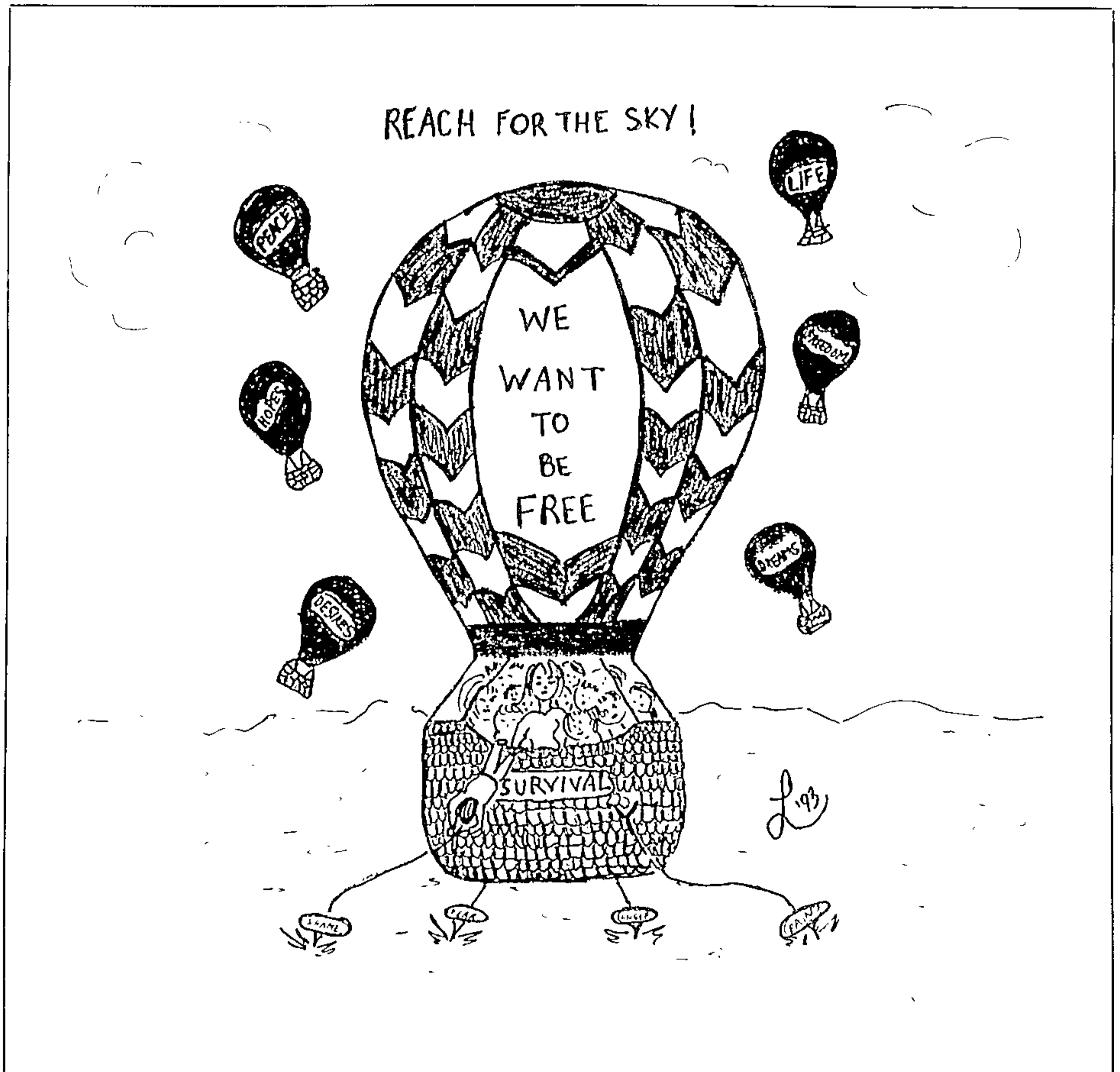
22. To see the color of flowers.

23. To smell a rose.

24. To be able to say No and not feel guilty.

Why go through recovery? To get a *real* life with *quality* of life. Begin practicing today and celebrate every moment you capture.

MV



# Safe Rooms

By Twelve, of DV

**A** year ago all of us in DV's Village were living away from the outside family. When it was decided that we would go back to the outside family's house, lots of us felt scared. We didn't want to be away from our safe place in the apartment. Then the man who is married to one of us said, "Why don't you make a miniature safe place where the scared ones can go?" and Abby (our artist) and I got super-excited and we ended up making bedrooms for each alter that wanted and needed one.

Our infant alter's room is all white and pink and frilly 'cause our birth parents wanted a boy.

Three's room has a blanket with "NO" written all over it to keep bad people away, and a flashlight in case she needs it. She also has tap shoes, skates, and a jump rope because she thinks it's bad when she makes noise and we're teaching her she can make lots of noise.

Five's room has a sliding glass door 'cause she feels lots closer to Veronica, our therapist, when she looks at the sky and remembers that Veronica is under the same sky. She also has chocolate pudding.

My room has a writing desk and posters of people and things I like a lot, and books and records.

We are making one now for Star, our alter that got married. Her bedspread is all lacy and her wallpaper is satiny, and she has carpet. The rest of us have hardwood floors we made out of strips of balsa wood that we glued together and varnished and sanded and varnished over and over and over. We also made wood molding out of balsa wood.

Now, when one of us needs their safe place between sessions, or when it's not OK to be out at home, they can see their safe place and it helps them want to go there and stay there. Every room has lots of stuff in it — all of it there for a special reason that is important to that alter. Making the rooms and making them

super-personalized showed the little ones they count, they are seen and heard, and they are valued and loved.

For Abby and me, it is a great way to do something about all the bad stuff that happened, by making each room feel safe and happy. After Star's room is done, Abby's going to get an art studio room. She wants an octagon window, an easel, lots of paint and pencils and lots of art on the walls — hers and her favorite artists!

We made the rooms out of coreboard because it is light and easy to cut. Each room is 12 inches wide, 8 inches high and just 6 inches deep. They are concept rooms, not whole rooms. We make some of the beds and buy some (on sale usually). We go to a dollhouse store a lot and to a doll house show that comes every three months. When we go and Five or Three want something for their room, we try to buy it. Usually the stuff they want *bad* costs only one or two dollars. We try to make lots of stuff ourselves, like curtains and blankets and posters. I don't know if every alter will want a room. Some of our grown-up alters seem fine without one, but Abby and I have promised to make one for everyone who asks.

The lady at the doll house store is very nice. She seems real interested that we only make bedrooms and they are for different ages. Sometimes we think maybe we will tell her we are multiple someday. We aren't sure yet, but I bet she would think our idea was cool.

Oh! One more thing — my room has a pedestal with nothing and nobody on it — 'cause I used to put people on pedestals and I try not to do that anymore and the pedestal reminds us.

Anyway, the rooms are lots of fun and ground Abby and me while we do them, and ground our Little Ones when they need their safe place.

# Our Word for Grounded is Anchored

It's much easier for us to live in the head instead of the heart. Where the sadness or pain can be too great  
To allow us to function in our world of "have-to's"

Our therapist knew we needed something  
To hang on to when things got too tough  
And we needed to be in the here and now.  
She suggested an anchor — perhaps some gesture or keychain  
We could access to secure us in the present.  
So we ventured out with a friend and found our 'anchor';  
A tiny silver nautical emblem  
Suspended on a delicate chain —  
Fragile and dainty in appearance  
Like the smile we shine to strangers  
So they don't know what we're thinking or feeling  
Never guessing the strength that lies within.

Our word for grounded is anchored. . .  
"Grounded" leaves us with a vision of a boat washed ashore. . . stuck.  
We don't want to live grounded. Rather, we envision ourselves gently rocked by the waves  
Anchored securely from venturing into unknown waters  
When the timing isn't right for exploration.

By BJ, et All of Provo



MV



## Freedom

As I read Psalm 55 with my priests at evening prayer, I realized that what helps me as I hide from being close to others is written in certain verses of that psalm: *And I said, O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*

I recalled one afternoon, after therapy, when I watched a seagull take off from the roof of my bank. I stood in the parking lot watching as it flew past me. It seemed so full of joy. What attracted me most of all was that it is free. I looked up at that seagull and thought about how someday, as a person with MPD, I would also be free. On that someday, I would take on the beauty and carefree flight of the seagull. I would soar and glide and spread my wings and not be afraid of being close to anyone as I am now. When the day has been a particularly hard one for me to get through, when the pain of being grounded and isolated has been hard to bear, what helps is to remember the seagull I watched that afternoon.

And yet, I've learned that the best way for me to find some fun while being grounded is stated in Psalm 55:17: *As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me.* God gives me the ability to look for fun in even the simple things such as the patches of new grass on my front lawn, that I am tending to. When I look at the new grass, I feel happy.

By Susan, Michele, Beth and Carol

## The Club

We have a support group in New Port Richey, FL for MPD. All clients are in therapy. Most of us, at sometime or another, are in what we call functional denial. So we say "We're not multiples. We belong to the brown hair club."

Recently we opened our group to newcomers. One of the women was quite a bit older, with grey hair. This woman said, "I belong to the brown hair club, too. Only my hair is in denial."

— By Mellissa

## Recovering

By Rita M.

*Q: Could you explain to me why I know so much about when an alter is out and what she does if I truly have MPD? Since the diagnosis, I have been very aware of switching, where I wasn't before. Does this indicate to you that I am pretending just to get attention? Sometimes I feel like I am the biggest liar around because I know when the others — if there are any — are out. If I am lying — why am I?*

A: This is a common question. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of misinformation and mythology about what being MPD means/is. There is no One Way that having MPD is manifested, although there are common patterns and experiences.

The most common misconception about MPD is the SALS/SALE. That is, "She Ain't Like Sybil, She Ain't Like Eve" . . . (as the esteemed Dr. Kluft would say.) All multiples do not lose time consistently, or have no awareness of what "others" inside are doing when they are dominating the stage. I like to think of it as the "power behind the throne" concept. This refers to children in history who have become the monarch or leader of their

countries, for whom a guardian must be appointed to serve as Regent. The Regent wields the real power, with the child as a figurehead. I think this makes a lot of sense with dissociative clients. The sensation of watching oneself saying/doing behavior without having much control over what is going on, is common.

Actually, people do notice more when they are in therapy (that's the whole purpose!). . . and it's good that you are able to notice and be aware of what other alter/ego states are up to. It is helpful to the therapy. It does not mean you are lying or acting-out to get attention. However, I have a concern about why three therapists have not been able to reassure you in this regard. It makes me wonder if questioning the validity of your MPD might be an avoidance of dealing with traumatic memories (?) I suggest you let your therapist know you wrote to me and share the response with him/her. This may be a trust issue, and/or an issue of safety, or of reality distortion. An open talk with your therapist about the pattern of your difficulty can resolve it for you. Good luck!

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*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*

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## Creative Outlets!!

The URBAN ART RETREAT in Chicago offers ongoing writing workshops for women survivors of sexual abuse and non-offending supporters of survivors. For information on this and other programs call Ellen K. at 312/784-1962 or write 3712 N. Broadway #199, Chicago, IL 60613.

ART'S YOURS gallery and workshops (4339 Balboa St., San Francisco, 94121) focuses on healing through creativity. Reasonable-cost workshops in a variety of mediums, art for rent/sale, small groups for joint work on theme. Call 415/379-9436 for info.

# Physical Health

By David in Stacy Joy

**S**ome aspects of physical health are within our control: eating, smoking, etc. Other things are not in our control. I know this, because I live with chronic back and knee pain. But I have begun physical therapy to see what can be done about the pain.

Part of staying healthy is food. I know when we go into a junk binge, we feel sick, weak and depressed. So I try to work on one area — cut down on sugar, caffeine, etc., trading fruit for some of the candy we buy. (Mom used to call me The Penny Candy Kid because we ate so much candy as a child.)

I learned a hard lesson. We didn't take care of our teeth. Now we don't have any. They got megacavities and infections. So all those toothpaste commercials are for real. I just used to hate the

taste of toothpaste.

Staying physically clean is important also, but for us is hard. "Mother Person" kept telling us we were going to drown, so water phobia is a problem for us. The aspect of this part of health is two-fold: cleanliness prevents infections and helps build up self-esteem. It's hard to be social when the body isn't clean and has odors.

We treat those of us with the phobia with a reward to think about in the shower. The little guys have something called *neat and presentable*. That's to look into the full-length mirror to make sure we look OK to leave the house. This helps us be sure the clothes are clean, and they aren't the 'jamas or grub pants.

If you feel you look ok it will be easier not to be paranoid at the grocery store: *Oh God...do I look horrible, dirty...is my hair*

*combed?* etc.

We think that taking care of physical health is a part of correcting body image. Weight loss is easier because you cut down on junk food, and skin looks healthier because healthier foods are eaten.

Dress also plays a role in body image. We have about fifty-percent males in our system. This makes dressing hard, but we compromise. We dress for comfort, not style. We feel that if we are comfortable in our clothing we will feel more comfortable in public. You have to decide what is most important for your body image and work for that goal, step by step.

Things take time. I/we tried to change our dress style all at once and went into crisis. Take things slow and easy. Set goals and achieve them, one day at a time.

MV



## Whale Lullaby

*We'd like to go deep sea diving to swim with and learn about whales. We have a humpback whale alter who sings the children to sleep, especially during the more stressful times. Thank you Sarah, for being our love and patience.*

Gentle Giants of the Ocean Deep  
 Alone but free,  
 Living life mysteriously.  
 No lies to tell, & no secrets to  
 keep.  
 Just drifting along, making your  
 music,  
 While babies peacefully sleep.  
 Move along slowly,  
 No hurry, no rush.  
 Just living life is tiring enough.

— By Denise for Sarah  
 & the kids

# The Healing Touch of Art

By Grace

**M**emories are usually hard for me (of course that goes without saying because I live with multiple personality disorder.) But some memories are easier and other memories are life-changing. My memories of learning to use clay and the potter's wheel fall into that last category.

Until I was diagnosed, I was unable to draw. I shied away from anything artistic. In my theatre costuming class, I was called "Three Fingers." "I can't draw a straight line with a ruler," became another of my inner tapes. But art is a gift everyone of us has... and I believe that survivors have a deeper gift than others. Finding that gift is the hard part.

In the first two years of my diagnosis, many personalities, mostly children, drew. They had different subjects, different mediums. Some liked glitter, another painted huge Georgia O'Keefe-like flowers with a tropical bent. One child used oil pastels, another used inks. One child liked lacey romantic things, and another child bought air-dry clay and in the privacy of my room at home self-consciously began to sculpt. Slowly, she began to get better. Her figures lacked faces, but were powerful nonetheless. She loved the feel of the earth in her hands. It is a powerful material.

I don't frequent farms or parks... although I would like to. I live in a third floor apartment. I don't feel the ground in my everyday life. The earth I touch is usually littered with streets and sidewalks. It is hard to feel grounded, but I was always being told that I needed to "ground" myself. Everytime my personality worked with her clay, she would comment on the smoothness in her hands. This was creation! I knew that one day, one kid would have to learn to use the potter's wheel.

During one of my hospitalizations, a child who had

been inactive artistically came to life. During the art workshops held on the unit, this alter, a boy who thought he was born a wolf-boy and who was six years old, would throw everything on a piece of paper. His collages used paint, feathers, sequins, shells, glitter (and he proudly proclaimed, "Even some trash from the garbage!"). These busy collages he called "Super Novas", because they contained so much and there was such an explosion of energy, sending pieces of everything outward.

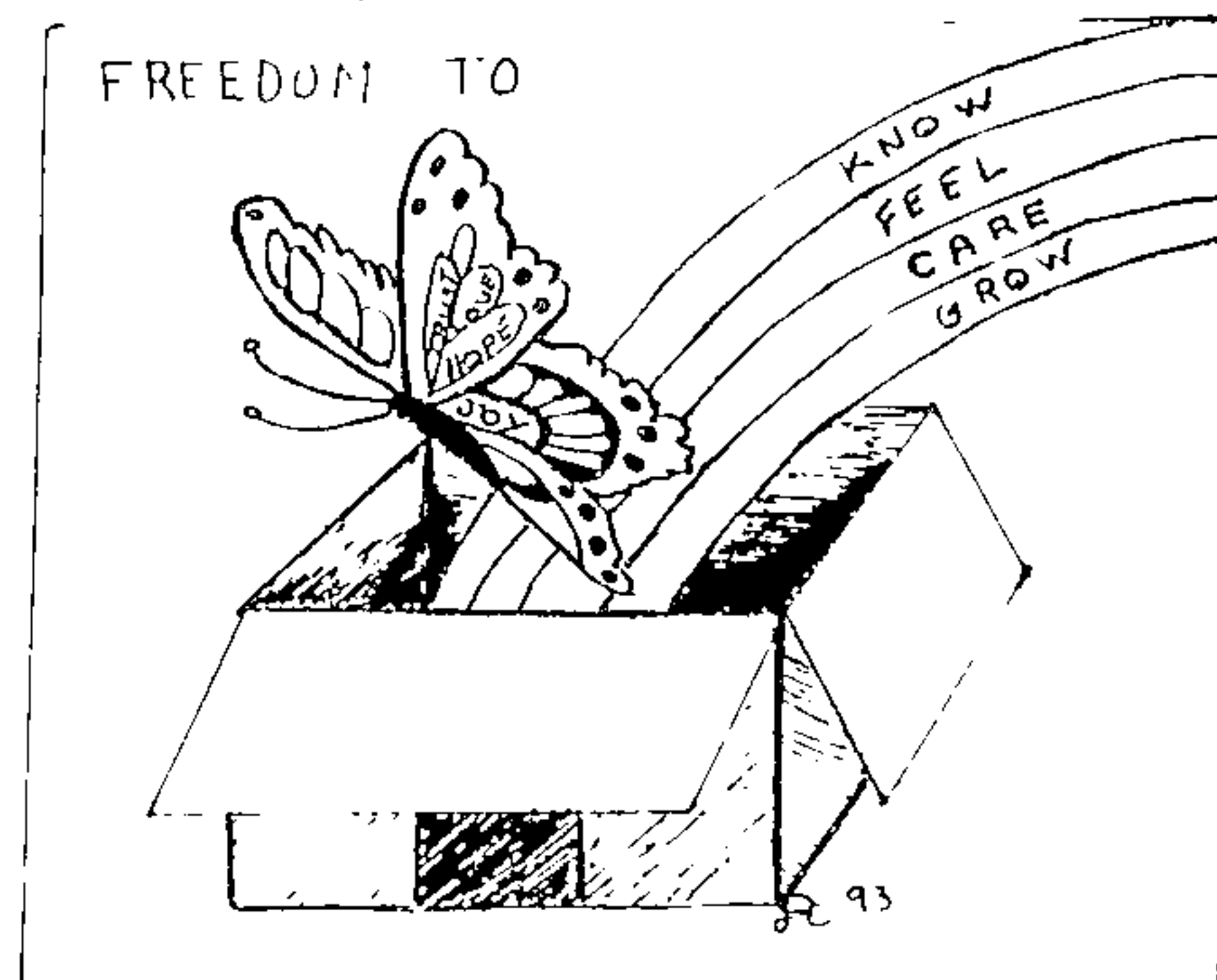
Next he worked on the potter's wheel. He begged for it. When Syma, the artist-in-residence, showed him how to pound and mould the clay, he did it with such a feeling of awe and energy. When the clay was wedged, he moved to the wheel and began to try and center the piece. His pieces of work are good, but that's not the best part. Billy began to rely on some of the adult personalities for strength to hold the clay stably. He had little patience and his first pieces usually fell apart from being overworked. The act of holding yourself steady and grounding yourself in a piece of earth is one of the best feelings in the world.

The potter's wheel goes round and round, a microcosm of the earth I live on. It is a way to

attach oneself to that precious ground... a feeling that I believe multiples usually don't have. Billy talks about the potter's wheel acting like a giant centrifuge, wearing away at the excess in my life until what is left on the wheel is small and precious. In the act of creating on the wheel, I felt centered for the first time. Adults and children are closer than ever in my system. For awhile we even merged. (Of course, we were much too premature... but all my personalities wanted to know that incredible feeling of oneness... so it happened for awhile.)

If you want to get better: draw, paint, collage yourself to health. Encourage your alters to do the same. Provide art supplies as much as possible. If you're embarrassed to buy finger paint, say something at the store about "buying a present for the kids". If you're having trouble with flashbacks and feelings of unreality... try clay! The earth is there for us to use... nothing quite so basic as working with the earth. And when you are ready... run to the potter's wheel. Feel your instructor's hands over yours as you learn to press into the clay as the wheel turns. Stabilize yourself, calm yourself, collect yourselves. Making objects is not the goal; becoming one with yourself is.

MV



# How I See Myself And Am Connected To Others

By C.L.W.

MPR (Multiple Personality Response (not MPD) *Myself* are a response to abuse, not a disorder!

**My Higher Power:** Anchors me, keeps me in balance, nourishes me, empowers me, sustains me, feeds me: My roots

**My daily work:** Devotions, bible study, prayer and meditation, journaling, reading, studying, and working through books which address my issues; art, music, writing etc., help me heal and are at the base of all I do: My grass around my trunk.

**Myself:** Standing tall, learning to support myself, many many parts, take in nourishment from the roots, sun, rain, and things from Mother Earth: My tree trunk and bark

**My professional support:** (Sharon, Toni, Ted, and all the nurses, and Dr. G.): Listen to me, help me to be objective and sort out all kinds of feelings, encourage me, believe in me, help me to heal, are healthily connected to me: One of my main branches off the trunk.

**My (immediate) family (husband, children, grandchildren):** Accept me as I am, share my pain and joy, give me a reason to live when I can't see straight because of the pain and memories, help me to connect with them and others: Other main branch off my trunk. (They love me, too!)

**Survivor Friends:** Know where I'm at and where I've been (*really* know!), accept me, help me realize I'm not alone or crazy, have fun with, listen to me, befriend me: Main branches

**Nonsurvivor friends:** Love me as a friend even though they really don't understand, help me to connect with the real world, have fun with: Smaller branches

**Support Publications:** Give me accurate and current information and positive, helpful support, show me I am one among many!: the twigs

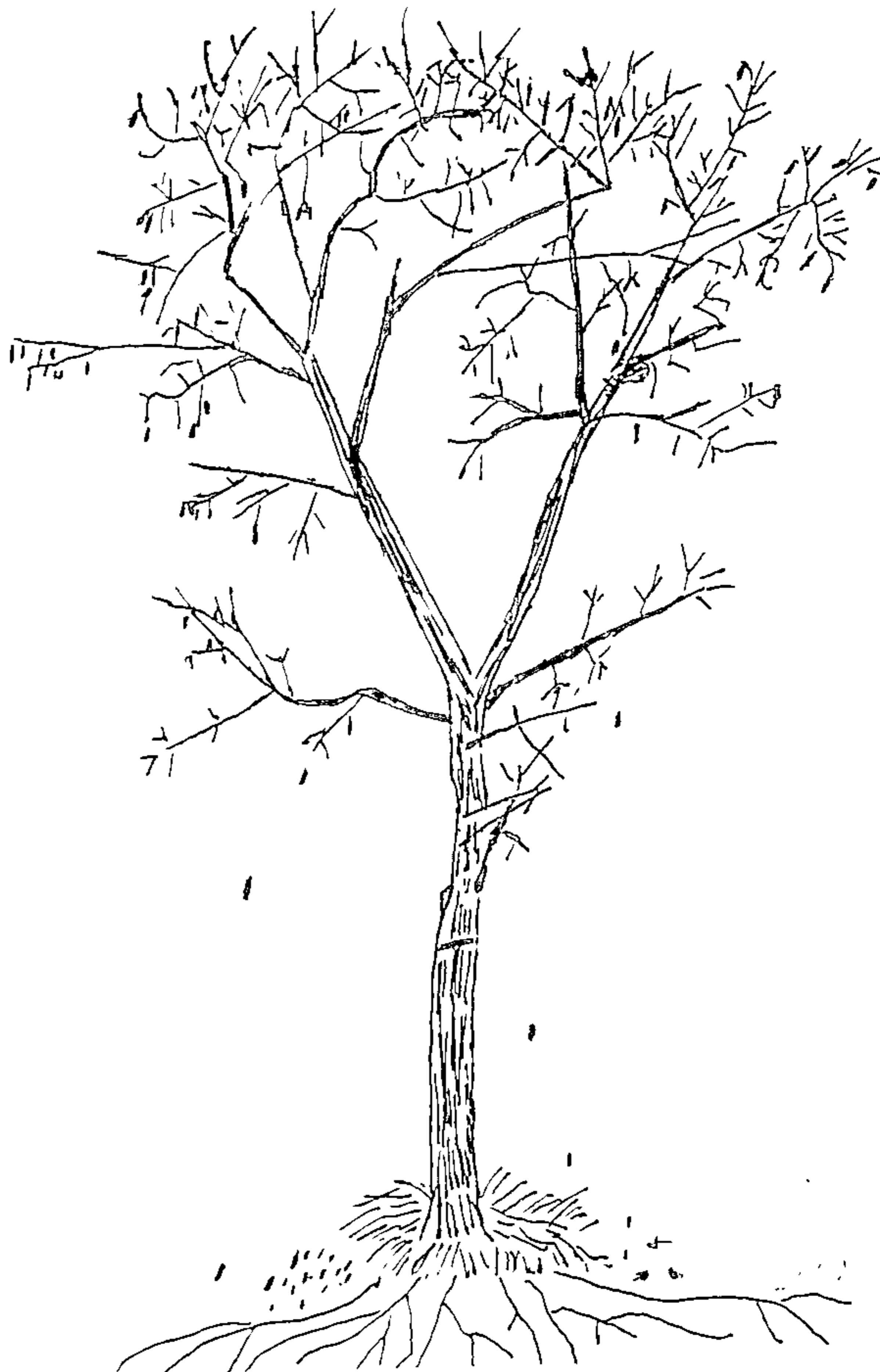
**Memories:** Help me heal by remembering, processing, feeling (OUCH!), and separating from

them; they are my past and are needed but do not control or possess me: The leaves falling off the tree and on the ground

**The New Us:** Speaking and acting with one voice; present, lively,

focused, accepting, loving, healing, kind, releasing the past, living for today (and in today), thankful to be alive! : The whole tree in spring and summer.

MV



## Letters etc.

*Ed. note: MV does not endorse or encourage pen-pals, though we will forward mail received in response to a particular letter or article. Direct communication with strangers can be dangerous. MANY VOICES is not responsible for any contact or other occurrence between readers of this publication. If you choose to make contact, we urge you to use a post office box and to keep your therapist informed about your communications. —LW*

### **RE: Labels, labels. . . (June '93)**

I want to say thank you to Irene and Karen W. because reading their letters was like finally finding someone who might understand me.

I was diagnosed with PTSD and DD a few years ago. MPD was seriously considered, but since my experiences are more like Karen and Irene's, that has never felt quite right. I have had a terrible time accepting the diagnosis. I seem to have parts of me that are able to convince me somehow that a) my therapist is bad for me, b) I am so bad I do not deserve therapy, c) I am making everything up, d) and therapy is very VERY dangerous and I will die if I keep going. It is very hard to get to appointments, and nearly impossible to reschedule if a session gets canceled. I thought that if I could read about other people who have this trouble, I might find a way to make a commitment that everyone inside would be comfortable with. But reading MV has been pretty upsetting. Everyone seemed to be able to map out or describe what goes on inside of them, identifying personalities and stuff. I can't do that. I do not think I am ever not here, but I feel like the lenses of my perception get changed, so that everything looks and feels different, and I get very confused. I can really identify with Karen when she says "I seem instead to turn everything into dissociative soup. . ." And like Irene, all my parts are hidden from only enough that I feel the pain, fear, anger, hate, and suicidal/self-destructive feelings, but I do not understand them.

I also have been very physically ill, and this makes everything seem so bleak. I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome six years ago. It is very difficult to try

to detangle the physical illness from the emotional illness. My physical exhaustion and pain can cause mental foggy and depression. I tried for a few years to blame all my symptoms on the CFS! But CFS could not explain the severe depressions since childhood, lack of memories, rare (but distinct) voices, or horrible feelings of shame and terror. I do not have any memories of any abuse. I do know that I was given a lot of drugs to keep me quiet from infancy through high school, including narcotics and anti-psychotics.

Thank you for letting me tell my story here! I didn't really intend to, but it felt good! I hope to be able to hear from someone who identifies with me like I identified with Karen and Irene.

Sincerely,  
Jean

After fifteen months with the diagnosis of MPD, I also feel as though there is a wall, floor or some other obstruction that I cannot get around. "Most" of the time I am only allowed to see or hear when someone is in control of the body. I never know who. Usually I can look back at a particular event and guess at who it was, but never while it is happening.

I have been asked by two therapists to draw my system, but cannot because I do not know my system.

By Joyce

I've been diagnosed MPD for four years. Prior to that I was diagnosed with major depression, PTSD, borderline personality disorder, bipolar, etc. I had numerous physical ailments (ulcers, pains etc.) but when I was diagnosed MPD & started working on the emotional stress, the physical symptoms went away. I

can relate to Irene's letter that the system is behind a wall, except I use the terminology of glass. I feel in many ways our system is the same. How many others are out there who don't have "direct contact" with their alters? Write in and explain your situations.

By Janette

Irene's letter struck a chord in me: when I read my first issues of MV (as well as other publications for multiples) I felt some similar feelings. . . like I was on the outside within my own club, alone or out of synch with the readership and multiple sub-culture or community, to wondering what they were doing in or out of therapy that I wasn't, to what am I doing wrong, to wondering if my diagnosis was on target. I wondered if I was the only one out there with a mostly inaccessible system, closed or uncontactable. I wondered if I was a "late bloomer", or a "tough nut to crack".

My new lament is "I think I'm untreatable", followed by "What if I run out of money for treatment before my system opens up?"

I've tried journaling to the others in my system, "asking inwardly", hypnosis, doubling my number of therapy sessions, changing my therapist; I've been told "Maybe you're trying too hard". It's been suggested to me that "maybe they're scared to emerge or make contact." "maybe you're scared to give up control." I mean, I have really given this co-consciousness a good try. I have "let go of focusing on it," lowered my frequency of therapy appointments, but myself, I can't see dropping it. I get a "glimmer" of a couple of the others every once in awhile, and I really want to connect with them. I am aware that I miss them, that long ago I knew some

(cont'd on page 14)

**(Letters cont'd)**

of them, and I experience myself as just a "fraction of myself." I feel like I'm trying to find my lost limb. I feel like an outsider to myself. When I read all the articles in MV by all the co-conscious multiples I feel like I'm locked out of their world, and like I'm locked out of my own community-of-self. Gee, I'm lonely.

I'm the only one in my MPD support group who isn't co-conscious, and often my friends can't understand me when I talk. I experience a lot of that "indirect influence" and what therapists call "passive influence experience."

I'm about to embark on some new experiments which I came up with myself, to see if I can make direct contact. (I feel like a weary Captain Kirk!) I'm going to talk into a tape recorder, saying various things to them, and I'm going to put the tape into my walkman and put my headphones on; in a quiet state, I'll push the "play" button and... it's like an internal megaphone idea. I'll listen for them.

I hope you meet yourself with love. Keep listening.

Listening for all of me — Lisa

**Yes, it's hard for me, too,** to read MV and similar publications, because I feel so alone in that I'm not co-conscious, and it seems most of your readership is.

I feel anguished that I can't attain the kind of internal communication so many others have. I can't fathom how they have it. I've tried everything I've heard of — done everything but stand on my head — and I can't make it to co-consciousness.

I'm like the outsider who doesn't know any of the other me's. I've spent a fortune (& years) on therapy. I've switched therapists: and I feel it's all in vain. The other me's don't emerge in my therapist's office, or write to her announcing their existence, though they have emerged at times and sought their own separate outpatient therapy without me knowing, and I don't have any idea who their therapists are.

The other me's have even done inpatient therapy — to my great

astonishment — and I have no idea where they were admitted or why.

I just catch a fleeting glimmer of these things and then it's gone. I can't get anymore. I just lose time when the others are "out", and usually can't maintain the awareness that I've "lost time" for more than a few moments.

I feel therapy is futile. I can't understand why it works for so many people.

How about putting together an issue of MV just on the topic of being a multiple who isn't co-conscious? I'd love to read something I could relate to. And include requests for drawings on *Not Knowing Your System?* It sure would be great if MV would find a way to reach more corners of the multiple community, like us with more hidden, uncontactable systems — the unheard, un-co-conscious.

Bye — The Un-Cola

*(Ed note: Though I didn't make an official "theme" out of this idea, I think it's terrific and welcome contributions on the subject. When I get a cluster of them, I'll try to find a way to squeeze 'em into an issue... preferably BEFORE 1995. —LW)*

**A prisoner writes...**

Dear MV,

We are writing to thank you for publishing the article about our situation, and to thank your readers for writing to offer their support. We were the subjects of *The Madison Edge* article titled "The Crowded Cell". Though eleven doctors have thus far confirmed the diagnosis of Multiple Personality for James, the Wisconsin Dept. of Corrections has refused to allow him to receive treatment. Treating psychiatrists have been ordered to change their diagnosis. Those who refused were transferred to other institutions. Late in 1992 a new doctor came to work at the prison. He too confirmed the diagnosis and wrote in a memo that he would be providing treatment. When his superiors learned of this, he was immediately ordered to change the diagnosis and not provide

treatment. He refused to do so and was fired.

It was for these reasons that we decided to take our case public. The kind words of encouragement from your readers have been very helpful and have given us the strength to continue fighting for treatment.

Your readers may be interested in learning that producers with ABC News "Justice Files, as well as *The Jerry Springer Show*, have planned or are considering interviews with us. It will take support from the public to sway prison officials to change their views and provide treatment.

My name is Ray. If any of your readers would like to contact us, they can do so through James' name. Sincerely, For James Lowery, Waupun Correction Institute. (MV will forward mail.)

**It's Up To You**

Something is wrong. It's your fault

I was told, and I believed.  
It is your job. It's up to you  
I was told, and I believed.

So I shouldered a burden heavy  
with guilt,  
and offered myself in  
recompense.

Dispensing my life, as I tried to  
repair  
broken promises, broken  
relationships,  
broken bodies, broken minds,  
broken hearts, and broken  
spirits.

This is your best? It's not  
enough

I was told, and I believed.  
Giving it credence, I judged it  
true.  
for I didn't believe... in me.

When drained and empty, I  
listened at last  
to an inner voice, that spoke  
and said.

"You are a woman, not God.  
there is but one thing you  
can change."

And so I changed... my MIND,  
about myself. And they are  
angry.

By Dianne Hamilton McGirr

## Resources

For anthology: copies of mailed or unmailed letters (sent or not) to perpetrators and others re: aspects of/feelings about your abuse. Send SASE with submission and permission to publish by Sept. 30: Julie Mines, PO Box 38-2024, Cambridge MA 02238.

**Women Survivors of Pornography:** wanted for anthology, first person stories, essays, interviews, artwork, and poetry by women hurt by pornography (at any age, circumstance). Tapes OK, interviews possible. Anonymity respected. Send by Dec. 93 with permission to Ann Russo, Women Survive, PO Box 771, Kendall Square Branch, Cambridge, MA 02142.

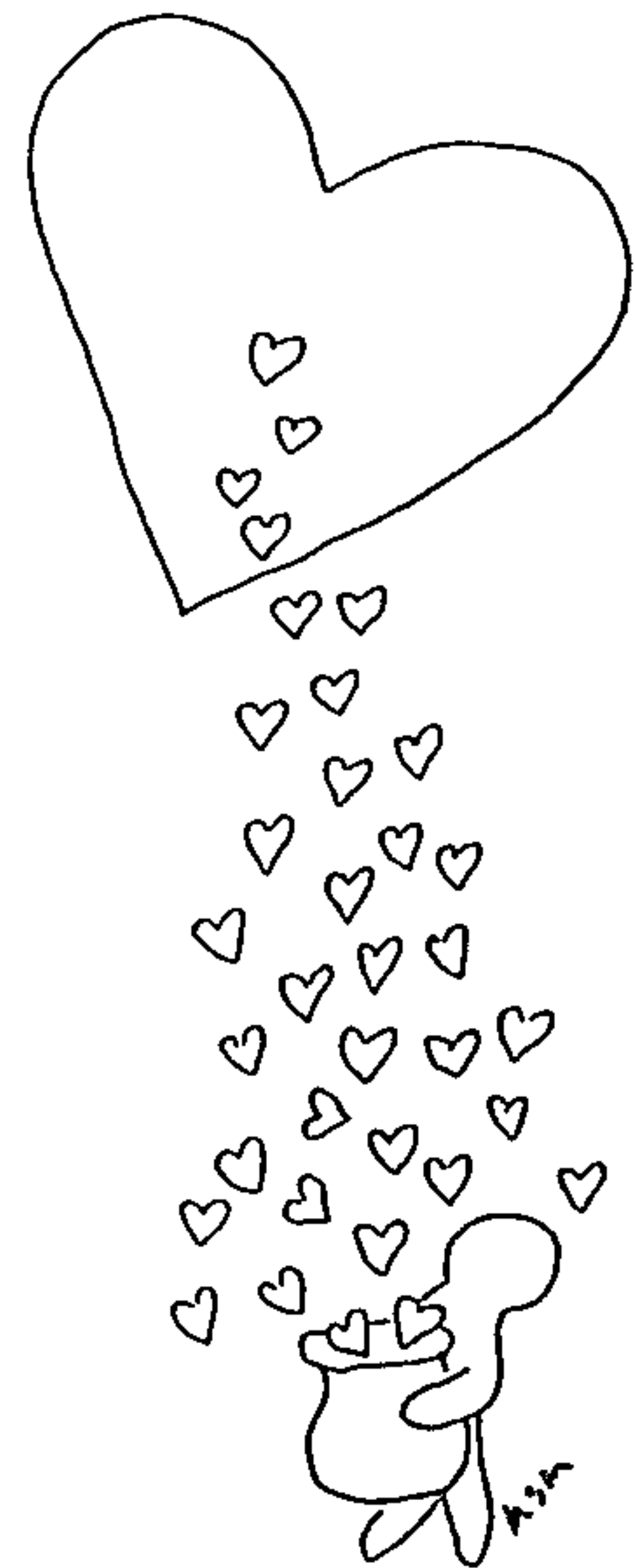
A variety of resource guides and books for recovery are available from R&E Publishers, PO Box 2008, Saratoga, CA 95070, phone 408/866-6303.

**The Dissociation Network:** an

on-line computer service for people with dissociative disorders and mental health professionals. To better facilitate confidentiality, survivors and professionals are given access to different file and messaging areas, use of an alias is encouraged, and no "membership lists" can be accessed. Sponsored by the Capital District Center for Dissociative Disorders, Albany, NY. Run by Maureen O'Brien, CSW, ACSW, psychotherapist. For info call (modem only) 518/462-6134.

**Traveling through Chicago?** A Sister's Place offers low-cost overnight guest rooms for lesbian-positive women and Sunday Potluck Brunches. Call 312/275-1319 for info/address.

**Supportive Alters** is a self-help, consumer-run non-profit group. We would like to communicate with other support groups, with confidentiality of course. C/O J'me Lee Hood, #31, KTP, Bristol, VT 05443.



## Books

### **The Invisible Wound** A New Approach to Healing Childhood Sexual Trauma

By Wayne Kritsberg - 1993.  
Published by Bantam Books, New York. 262 pages. \$22.50 (US) \$27.50 (CAN) Hardback.

Though not specifically oriented to treatment of a dissociative disorder, this is a good basic book about healing from sexual abuse of all types, for both men and women survivors. Kritsberg's professional degrees aren't mentioned, but in my opinion, his experience and compassion are evident. The book is structured in three sections: the nature of child abuse and its effects; the process and stages of healing; and instructions for establishing a "Healing Journal" as a tool for recovery. Among the special benefits of this book are guidelines for survivors who are parents, detailed lists of what really constitutes *abuse*, both men and women included in the examples of healing, parenting the

inner child, directing "healing energy" to fill the gap after exposing a trauma, and other guided imagery exercises. My only quibbles are with his statement that dissociation seems to occur more often when children are older at the time of abuse (I think research contradicts this opinion); and the implied sense that group work (therapy and/or peer-support) is relatively risk-free. (My belief is that there are safe groups and unsafe groups, and the choice needs to be made carefully by each participant.) But these are minor complaints. The book as a whole is reasonable, balanced, readable and the exercises are clear. A worthwhile addition to the recovery bookshelf.

### **Male Survivors**

**12-Step Recovery Program for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**  
By Timothy L. Sanders, MS 1991  
Published by The Crossing Press, Freedom CA 95019. (800)777-1048. 192 pages. \$12.95 Paperback.

Timothy Sanders is a therapist and mental health worker in Scottsdale, Alabama. He is also a survivor of child sexual abuse. This book integrates the personal experience with the counselor's understanding in a way that will be helpful to many men (and women too) dealing with their abuse histories. Exercises patterned on the 12-Steps of AA are interspersed with writing about various aspects of the damage wrought by sexual abuse. The male focus identifies some of the special areas of shame, etc. that abused men feel (and that may block relating to books with a strong female focus.) There's a fine chapter on Spirituality and the distortion of God concepts brought on by abuse (including ways to explore this dilemma.) Lists of affirmations, various meditation techniques and more make this a helpful book for those utilizing the 12-Steps in healing. —LW

# THANK YOU!

Please keep the art & writing coming! Your willingness to share is what makes *Many Voices* a quality publication!

Also - if you sent us a change-of-address last month, & it didn't show up in this mailing... we had a computer-glitch that lost some address changes. (All new/renewal subscriptions are OK.) Please let us know if we have the wrong address on your issue!

—LW

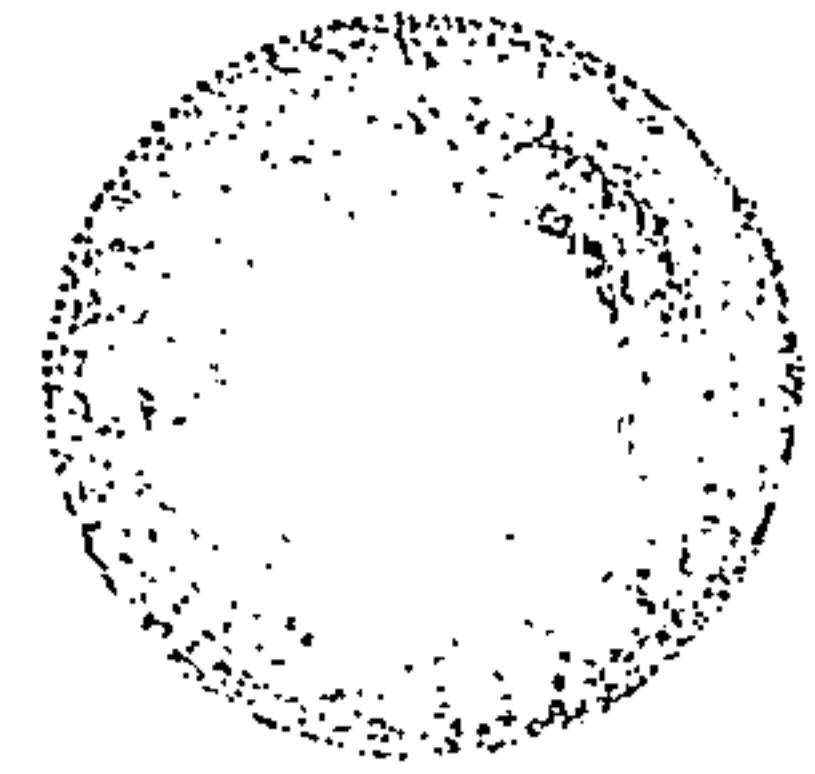
### October 1993

Working with love and sexuality. Limiting sexual acting-out. Enjoying appropriate sex. What you want from your partner and what you can give. ART: Draw a gift for someone you love (inside or out). DEADLINE: August 1, 1993.

### December 1993

Discovering healthy spirituality. How do you express it? ART: Draw your concept of spirit or, (if you have none) what's most meaningful to you. DEADLINE: October 1, 1993.

We would most like to try to feel, to feel what it's like to be touched. Caring, healthy, safe touch. The kind of touch that won't hurt us or make even the most fragile of us disappear.



## 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.

Subscriptions for a year (six issues) of *MANY VOICES* are \$30 in the U.S., \$36 elsewhere. Please enclose the form below (or a copy) with your check, and mail to *MANY VOICES*, P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.

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