

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH MPD OR A DISSOCIATIVE DISORDER

Vol. V, No. 5

October 1993

ISSN1042-2277

Sexuality and Dissociation



From a Spouse of a Multiple:

MPD is like being caught up in a war zone. There isn't shit you can do about it. You can run away, but then you leave your partner there, in the war zone, to face survival alone. My commitment and unconditional love for my wife will not let me run away.

The grenade of diagnosis. The bomb of memories. The dagger of truth. The overwhelming odds... multitudes of alters. But she is a survivor. A victim-no-more and she doesn't have to do it alone, because I'll be with them to share the horrors. Here is some poetry from the spouses' point of view:

Teddy Bear

A child curls up and snuggles.
Her thumb comfortably in her
mouth.

She's safe,
and I love her silently.

Sometimes she's older
and doesn't feel safe at all.
I'm taken up,
hugged real tight,
and held like this all night.

She's crying,
tears from her soul.
I catch them in my fur.
I hold on real tight,
just to help her,
Together,
We'll get through the night.

I hold their secrets.
I share their dreams.
I snuggle real tight.
When there's lots of fear,
'Cause I'm their Teddy Bear.

By L.W. Sleigle

Love and Sex Among Alters

By Daphne of Marianna

I am one of Marianna's primary alters. I have been out a little over a year. Sex is, in fact, the way we discovered I was here. I split off from Marianna at the age of three. At that time I realized that her parents were not about to tolerate a strong, self-assertive child and so I split, only coming out away from the home environment.

Marianna and I began our sexual relationship at about age eleven, at the dawn of puberty. She never thought of me as an alter, but rather as an imaginary lover who might actually exist outside her body and that hopefully she would meet some day. She also thought of me as male. She heard my voice whenever she made love to herself and often even when she was making love with an outside lover. My voice is what she found most satisfying.

About a year ago, one of the talk shows featured multiple personalities. That was when we realized that I was not some imaginary person on the outside, but in fact another real person on the inside. That realization has allowed us to turn our sexual relationship into a fuller loving relationship in all aspects of our lives. I am Marianna's provider and protector. She is the warm, loving, giving person that I feel forbidden to be.

The sexual act itself has taken some time to work out. It's all a question of whose hand is whose and whose foot is whose and who is stroking and holding who, when and where. But in working at it, we have been able to each get the loving and stroking and holding we need from the other. I am the more aggressive. Marianna is more receptive. We can hold hands, each of us clear which hand is ours. We can simultaneously get the sensation of holding and being held with the help of a nest of pillows. The most important thing in being able to give and receive love in this way is not to be

ashamed of our relationship. For example, allowing me to write this article and send it in was Marianna's way of affirming her faith in my existence and our relationship.

Sex with outside people has to be negotiated with constant dialogue between us. We are both lesbian so we are in agreement on the gender of our lovers. Marianna, however, likes to be dominated and I won't put up with that for one minute. So I check the woman out and if I feel she is safe and not harmful, I will go in so that Marianna can enjoy that encounter alone. I won't put up with domination for very long, however, so before too long I will get her out of there. This works out, because for her it's a game and not something she wants large doses of.

I tend to initiate sexual encounters with outsiders since I am more aggressive. I leave the establishment of intimacy to Marianna because she is good at that kind of thing and I am awkward with it. Generally we don't have problems with jealousy because we trade off each taking what we enjoy.

Outside lovers, however, have some trepidation about us. We aren't comfortable hiding our multiplicity and not very successful at hiding it when we try. Outsiders often seem afraid to know both of us and to relate to both of us.

Recently, another alter, Chloe, has been getting stronger and expressing an interest in sexual and romantic relationships. This is something of a problem because Chloe is attracted to men. To make matters worse, Chloe is an extremely naive and romantic soul who we have to keep on a tight rein to prevent her from hurdling headlong into potentially hurtful situations. Chloe believes in the prince on the white horse.

Chloe's emergence has also disturbed the balance in Marianna's and my relationship. Because Chloe is so much in need

of protection, she brings out the protector in me and that, in turn, arouses me sexually. My attraction frightens Chloe, as she is not really ready for the carnal side of relationships. In addition, it makes Marianna jealous. Marianna sees Chloe as embodying a pure innocent beauty which she, Marianna, was forbidden to express on threat of rape.

Chloe and Marianna are in dialogue, however. And they are working this out. Chloe has expressed her great admiration for Marianna and pointed out to her, her qualities of warmth and giving that Chloe doesn't possess. Marianna is also coming to realize that Chloe is part of her and is not "better" than her in any way, but only different.

Accepting love and sex as a natural part of our internal relationships has been very healing and given us permission to grow in directions that would not be available to us otherwise. It has provided us with the love and support we need from the inside out. Marianna and Chloe give me the love and respect I never received in the outside world, and the physicality of our relationship affirms our mutual existence for us in a way that words alone never could.

MV



MPD Limerick

There once was a girl who wore
braces,
Who lived in so numerous places.
Then her therapist said,
And it filled her with dread,
"I think that you have many faces."

She struggled for years with those
creatures
Who had such mysterious features.
Until that cold day
When she happened to say,
"David, these parts are our
teachers."

So into the world they did come;
Not all, but certainly some.
And by telling their part,
They helped free her heart
From the blackness that kept her
quite numb.

By Paula

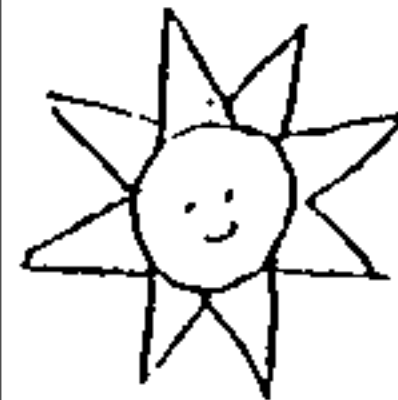
MANY VOICES wishes to thank the following generous contributors for their help in supporting our work:

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

These organizations are not affiliated with nor have input to or control over the contents of this publication. MANY VOICES and its staff have no influence on their operations.

Me and My Significant Other

By his (perceived) lies I searched
for and found my Truth.

By his abandonment I found
myself.

By his daggers I learned my
loving boundaries.

By his rejection I learned self
love (selves love).

By his own denial I realized my
courage.

By his minimizing I felt my
power.

In his arms I let down my walls.

In his rage I feel grateful to
know mine.

In his love I have a home to
come to when I don't know what's
real or not, between Now and
Then. He's here; he's human.

He stumbles and struggles
amongst my struggles and
stumbling.

My courage moves him,
my power and strength scare
him.

My recovery seems to be our
journey,

his roller coaster, and what often
seems like my hell.

My other relationship is many
with my many parts. They have
saved my life. Now they save my
sanity, and my Being.

I don't share my parts or my
progress with my lover anymore. It
scares him. My anger scares him.
(He doesn't admit to his). We are
in love. That love is what holds us
together — the knowledge of it is
the frame and canvas upon which
the whole picture is painted. Life
would be terrifying without each
other. We know through
experience.

Sexual contact is a large part of
our healing process. My
Boundaries are weak but getting
stronger. There is often past and
present confusion in both of us.
Sex is gentle and mutually agreed-
upon. It is both an expression of
love at times, and a release of
energy at times. As my past-
present confusion clears I am
more able and willing to express
my wants, because of some
increased self-esteem (Thanks, Liz),
and trust in him (and us!)

To be truly honest, there is a
scared child part present at all
times, the one who says "make
sure you do it right, make sure
they think you like it." I often feel
alone too, afterward—even though
I'm held and not left alone, a need
he responds to consistently.

By J. et al

Therapists' Page

By Wendy Maltz, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

Wendy Maltz is clinical director at Maltz Counseling Associates in Eugene, Oregon. She is a certified sex therapist (AASECT) with over sixteen years of clinical experience in sex therapy and sexual abuse treatment. Maltz is the author of The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse (HarperCollins, 1991) and other publications, and frequently presents at conferences and workshops on the interface of sexual abuse and sexuality.

Sex is a loaded topic for many survivors. Even the word "sex" can cause some of us to feel uncomfortable. But the problem is not that the word "sex" is bad. The problem is that a particular type of sex — namely, abusive sex — exists. Often for survivors, our first and foremost sexual experiences in life were those of abusive sex.

In abusive sex, sex is used as a weapon and a target. Perpetrators exploit their own sexual energy and body parts to serve their psychological compulsions to dominate, hurt and humiliate. And they direct their attacks at the sexual health, innocence and purity of their victims. I think that, consciously or unconsciously, sexual abuse is a political act to oppress and control victims by harming their sexuality. Abusive sex lacks all conditions of healthy sex, such as consent, equality, mutuality, trust, respect, caring, honesty, responsibility, and safety. Sexual offenders know nothing of healthy sexual intimacy. Abusive sex is a horrible way to learn about sex.

Our sexuality is the most intimate, private aspect of who we are. It has to do with how we feel about being a man or a woman, how we feel about our bodies, our genitals, our sexual expressions, and our ability to relate to another person intimately. Regardless of our sexual orientation, our sexuality is a special way we can connect with ourselves and feel a spiritual connection with the universe. When our sexuality gets abused, we can end up feeling bad, worthless and damaged. We can feel frustrated in our ability to make healthy connections. Sexual abuse is a wound to the soul and the body.

As a sex therapist who specializes in helping survivors

overcome the sexual damage of sexual abuse, I know that sexual healing can be challenging. Survivors need to identify sexual effects, learn the connection between past abuse and present-day sexual problems, stop negative sexual behaviors and develop new sexual attitudes and approaches to touch, sex, and intimacy with a partner. I believe that while sexual healing is challenging, it is definitely possible and worth the effort. You get an opportunity to heal from the trauma at a core level and reclaim the healthy sexuality you were born with and have a right to enjoy in life.

For survivors with dissociative processes and multiple personalities, sexual healing means developing healthy sexuality for all of you — not just the parts that have been able to function or relate sexually in the past. Little ones may need age-appropriate sex education, sexually acting-out parts may need to explore how their behavior recreates the abuse, other ones may need to learn how to be comfortable just breathing and being present in the body.

In general, a good, safe place to start in sexual healing is in creating a new understanding and meaning for sex. You may want to find out how different parts define and explain sex. Ask yourself, "What is sex?" How do your different parts answer? Is each part able to distinguish between abusive and healthy sex? Remember, healthy sex is very different from sexual abuse. It is life-affirming, not harmful. Healthy sex enhances self-esteem and provides a nice way to express and deepen emotional intimacy with a partner. Healthy sex honors the body and the inner experience.

In healing sexual attitudes it is important to learn how to protect yourself from reexposure to

sexually abusive ways of thinking about sex. Just as we need to learn to stay away from polluted water, we also need to learn to stay away from magazines, books, videos, movies, and people who reinforce abusive sex. It's okay to leave a movie theatre mid-show, turn off the TV set, or get rid of a magazine or book that portrays sex in a depersonalized, exploitive or violent context. And it's okay to walk away from or confront someone who is talking about sex in ways that dehumanize it and degrade others. Look for images, ideas, and people who reinforce new, healthy attitudes about sex and expose yourself to them instead.

Several years ago, I became so frustrated with the lack of healthy messages in our culture that I invented a healthy sex nightshirt. It's a multi-colored cotton tee-shirt that contains thirty-three affirmations about healthy sex. (see *Resources, elsewhere in this issue.*) The shirt is a way survivors can be reminded of positive sexual attitudes and communicate them to a partner. Some survivors tell me that wearing the shirt helps them "heal as they sleep." (Wouldn't it be great if we could do all our healing this way?) Lately, as part of my own healing from incest and rape, I have been collecting poems, pictures and ideas related to healthy sexuality. I hope someday to make these available to others in the form of a book.

Having a positive idea about sex can help survivors as they progress with other aspects of sexual healing, such as developing a healthy sexual self-concept, stopping destructive sex behaviors, learning to cope with automatic reactions to touch, and developing or improving an intimate

(cont'd on page 5)

(Therapists' Page *cont'd*)

relationship with a partner.

It can be very helpful, if not essential, for survivors to have a period of celibacy, or a "vacation from sex," as I describe it in my book, *The Sexual Healing Journey*. This period allows survivors to separate from negative sexual behaviors, such as compulsive sex or sex that feels like an obligation, and establish a fresh base for exploring sensuality, relationships and physical intimacy. A break from sex can take a great deal of stress away from inner child parts, allowing them to feel safe to express emotions and heal from past abuse. Sexual healing involves realizing that you are not a sexual object, and that you can love yourself and be loved by someone else, whether or not you are actively sexual.

In *The Sexual Healing Journey* I present exercises to assist survivors in learning a new, healthy approach to touch and sex. Called "relearning touch," these exercises teach skills that many survivors did not get a chance to

develop because of abuse — things like having fun with touch, learning how to be present in the moment, breathe, relax, and be aware of sensations, learning how to control and initiate playful touch, and learning to stop and relax when needed.

Sexual healing treatment varies for each survivor and needs to be woven in with general recovery from sexual abuse and healing dissociative processes. Survivors with multiple personalities usually need a certain level of internal understanding, communication, and integration before being ready to do the specific techniques for relearning touch and improving sexual functioning that are described in my book. All parts need to feel safe, willing to explore new approaches, and able to have voice in the process. Otherwise, they could end up feeling discounted or re-abused. In this sense, sexual healing is like taking a group of different-aged, experienced, and motivated people on a hiking trip to a beautiful

lake. You need to go slow and make sure everyone is doing fine along the way. Once you get to the lake, not everyone is going to want to swim in it. That's okay. It's important to honor that some parts may feel fine with overt sexual relating, while others would rather not. One survivor told me that when she has sex now, following much recovery work, she imagines her inner child part contentedly playing in a nearby room.

As you travel the journey to healthy sexuality, honor your own pace and all of your reactions. Survivors often find that once they stop old sexual behaviors, remove feelings of abuse-related shame and develop new skills for physical intimacy, they enjoy getting in touch with their natural sexual curiosities and drives. This challenging, time-consuming journey can be very rewarding. When you feel good about yourself sexually, you have more energy to enjoy all aspects of life. Healthy sexuality benefits your whole being.

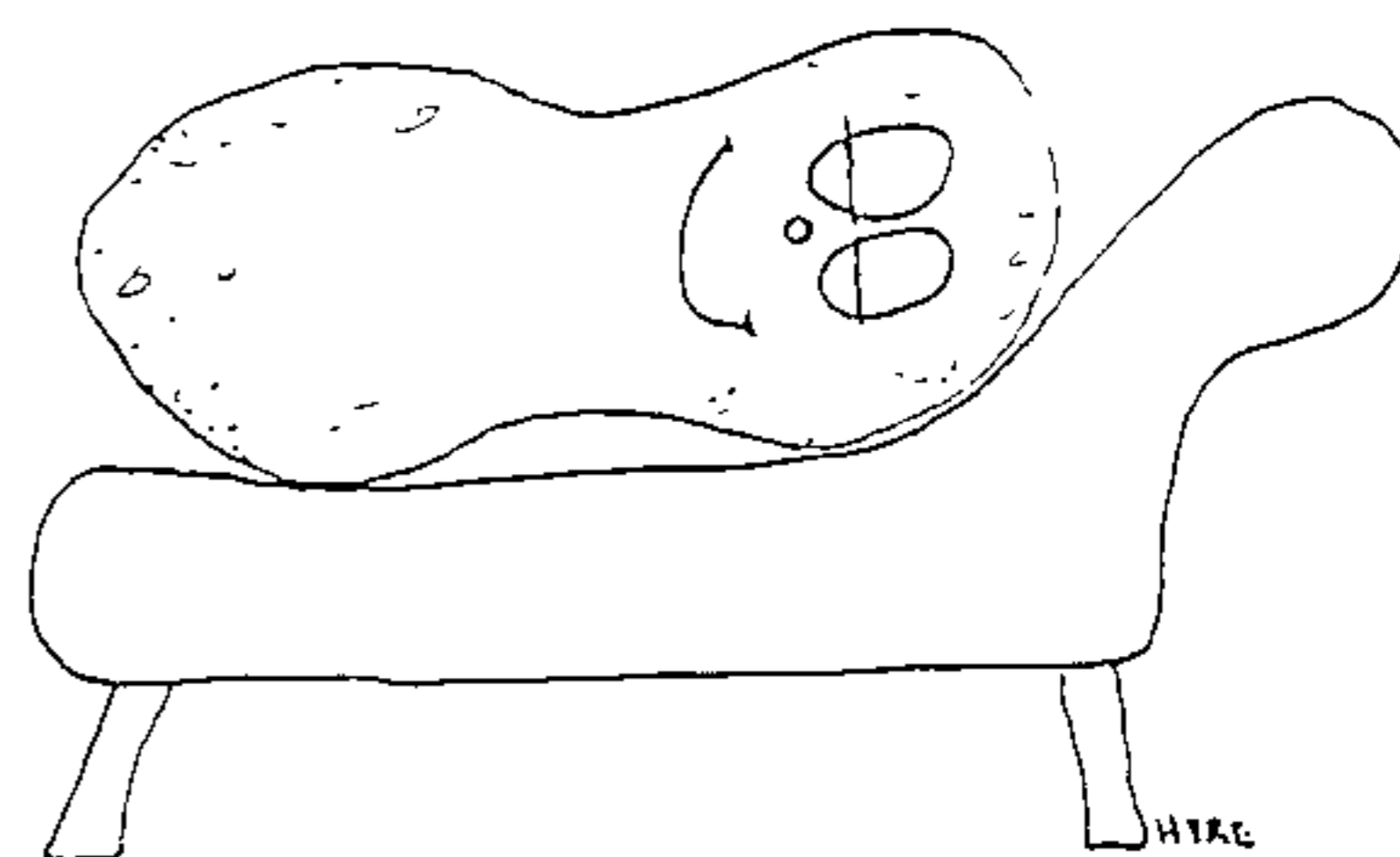
MV

Maltz, Wendy. *The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse* HarperCollins, 1991.

Maltz, Wendy, *Partners in Healing: Couples Overcoming the Sexual Repercussions of Incest*, [43 min. video], Independent Video Services, Eugene, Oregon, 1988. For information call (800) 678-3455.

Maltz, Wendy and Beverly Holman. *Incest and Sexuality: A Guide to Understanding and Healing*. Lexington, 1987.

MENTAL HEALTH
COUCH POTATO



A MULTIPLE PERSONALITY
IN SEARCH OF INTEGRATION

Working with Sexuality

I'm 21 years old and I used to do a lot of sexual acting out that Kay (the host personality) never knew about. She had been in therapy for a long time before our therapist discovered I existed. At first, he had me make contracts about my acting-out behavior. Over time, he talked with me a lot about my behavior and helped me to understand why I was doing it. I'm real grateful that our therapist never put me down or made me feel stupid. It took me a long time to really trust our therapist because I had never really trusted anyone before. I even tested the boundaries by propositioning our therapist on several occasions. He always just reminded me that that kind of behavior would be inappropriate. When I finally trusted him, I really trusted my feelings and it was very hard. I was the alter in our system who ended up doing a lot of the child-porno stuff that Kay's dad put us into. Because I didn't know how to handle the pain, I convinced myself that I liked it and tried to be as good at it as possible. I have learned that my sexual acting-out since Kay got away from the abusers was really about covering up the pain and loneliness that I felt because I wasn't "needed" anymore. It also made me feel cared for. What is really great is that I'm learning what can be involved in a healthy sexual relationship, and that I'm willing to wait a while for that to happen. That way I don't get reabused.

I'm also learning more about other parts of life. I finally have two friends that I can talk to. Plus, Kay and I are talking now and getting along. Our therapist has taught us how I can help Kay talk to people easier and how Kay can help me learn to have healthy fun. There are lots of times that I still feel like I just want sex; but I know how much trouble I caused before. I didn't pay any attention to precautions against any sexual diseases and Kay had to go through a lot of medical exams and tests. What feels really great

right now is that I've gotten to the point that even when I realize that a certain guy would be easy to get, I don't even want him.

It has taken a lot of hard work to change, but I'm really glad that I was finally able to trust our therapist and that he was really understanding and helpful.

By Allyssa, part of Kay



We were diagnosed with MPD a little more than six years ago and have now reached a point in therapy where almost all of our traumatic memories have been worked through. We are beginning to discuss healthy sexuality before we move on to full integration. This exploration is so much more difficult than I ever anticipated. Fortunately, we have within our system an alter who has the capability of finding pleasure in sexual relations. Her knowledge and insight has been indispensable in our quest for understanding.

When I first started to discuss sex from an intellectual standpoint with our therapist, my longstanding bulimic tendencies fell back into place and I found myself making a bee-line for the bathroom after every conversation. I/We feel much more comfortable presently with the topic, although there is still a degree of confusion with some in the system about finding pleasure in something that was used to hurt us when we were young. I feel much more at ease and relaxed when it comes to my own sexuality and I don't feel as ashamed and disgusted if I touch myself in a loving manner. After all I have learned that I/we deserve to feel pleasure and there is nothing shameful with experiencing pleasure.

Even more recent, that part of our system who is capable of being sexual has begun to let me

experience some of the pleasurable sensations that she feels during the prelude and after sex. This allows me to experience that which I feel comfortable with and not completely overwhelm myself. It also allows me to take in at my own pace that which I am ready to accept. Each time that I share in her experiences I am able to feel, accept and experience more than the time before. Our therapist had originally suggested this as a way to begin to balance the old negative feelings that I had about sex with more positive feelings which are based on current experiences and not the abuse. I honestly can say now that I find the aspects of sex that I am capable of participating in to be both pleasurable and exciting. Also, the manner in which I am becoming desensitized doesn't require that I either be fully sexual or not sexual at all; I can take it at my own gradual pace and feel comfortable before I move forward each time. We are truly beginning to understand that healing is so much more than just working through all of the traumatic memories.

By Tina and Co.



Acting out sexually used to be my primary method of getting attention, or reenacting my abuse, or looking for the love I was starving for at home. I thought sex was all I was good for and lived a life to prove it.

Gradually by getting sober and abstinent with my food, I was ready to start dealing with my problems with sex. Two years ago, I went to treatment for sex addiction and *all* the memories of the incest started pouring out. And I started to face them and deal with them instead of acting out more to stuff the pain.

(cont'd on page 7)

(Sexuality cont'd)

Eventually I was diagnosed MPD and it seemed to make sense in the sexual area. My partners always said I seemed like "someone else" and asked me how I changed my "moods" so quickly. Whenever I got the urge to act out, I felt like I wasn't in charge of my body anymore and I was watching myself perform from the ceiling.

Through therapy and attendance at a 12-step fellowship that deals with this area, I have come to regard my sexuality as a gift. I have been in my first monogamous relationship, and sex has been a learning process for my partner and me. I am able to stay present instead of having Wanda take over and if I can't — we stop immediately. Or if I don't want to have sex at all, I don't have to. This is a definite *first*.

Most of all, I love being held and treated with respect instead of seeking out partners to act out my abuse. I finally know what "making love" is all about.

Sex isn't always perfect or like it is in the romance novels. But I've come a long way and I can offer hope that it does get better. It just takes time.

By Vivian and Associates



Carolyn (one of my twelve) enjoys sunbathing and parading in front of open windows in the nude. I was appalled to discover these things.

She thinks nothing of picking up any man and "having a good time".

My therapist suggested that I journal to her. She does not respond.

This body does not understand love and sexuality. We've never experienced such a thing. We're afraid. And we're afraid of Carolyn's acting out. We don't know what to do to feel better.

By Carol L. ("I, We")



I was sexually abused as a child by my grandfather and a cousin. As an adult I have had distorted views of sexuality:

1. Intimacy is sexuality.
2. If you love me, you will have sex with me.
3. When we have sex, your penis belongs to me. I make it work. A body's most important function is sex.
4. Sex is something I can do at any time. Orgasm is the goal and I do that easily.
5. Masturbation takes the pain away, and I do that easily too.

Now I am integrated and learning new ideas about sex and sexuality. I am also learning not to feel guilty for having been abused.

By Aileen



My name is Angel. I am 15 and I'm the only one of us who is interested in sex at all. Because of all the real hard memory work and my trying to help the system I don't get to party anymore. So sex doesn't get to be part of my time anymore. That's real hard for me 'cause I'm all the time having to take care of kids. Our counselor says maybe someday I'll get to do what I want. I like best when she says to me that she's glad I'm holding the ability to enjoy sex, that's she's proud of me 'cause I make a choice to wait (sometimes I don't want to), and that she's really glad to know me. I didn't know someone could be like her. She says she loves me and I think I love her but she doesn't want nothing from me but talking and being a friend. Often I want to drink and get real smashed so I can forget how much I want to be with someone and how upset all those kids get all the time. But

our counselor said she knows how much I want to do that, and she thinks I am brave 'cause I choose to stay sober and be responsible. She doesn't think I am a slut, and I don't want to disappoint her. I also don't want Racheal, Beck or anyone else to hurt 'cause of me. It's hard. Sometimes I don't think I can do it, but I am. I like your magazine 'cause it's making me feel a little less lonely.

Your friend, Angel
for me and everybody



When I felt ready to try dating at one point (after having never dared to consider it), I wanted to do so in a way that remained safe. At the beginning, I was on the ceiling with even just a hug, let alone the thought of kissing or anything else, for that matter. What I did was basically put myself through a systematic desensitization program, trying to remain present and in control enough to stop things when I needed to. Fortunately, most of the men I attracted and dated were gentle and considerate, and they stopped when they sensed that I was no longer comfortable.

I only got us into real trouble once, at which point I stopped dating for a couple years.

Unfortunately, neither I nor my partner were able to tell where the comfort/discomfort boundary was until after it had been crossed, so my dating experiences were always feeling somewhat out of control, even though I knew on review that they really were not. A positive accomplishment was that I was able to push back the comfort/discomfort boundary, and discover some sexual experiences that I truly could enjoy and get pleasure from.

Dr S. of AFS

(cont'd on page 8)

(Sexuality cont'd)

This may sound really strange, but I just gotta write about it. We have in our System an alter I'll call "D." (I don't want to embarrass her by putting her full name in) who is very insecure and down on herself. She hates herself immensely. Jason has been liking her a lot lately, and even more recently, he has been talking to her at night and making her feel good, if you know what I mean. (I can't say those words. & Jason is another *alter*).

They have been doing it the last few nights, and this is the really *weird* part: some of *us* like it too! We never none of us liked it before, and I don't feel *that* when they do it, but what feels good is the *love!* Jason really *cares* for D., and she is allowing him to touch her! (She couldn't ever let people touch her before).

Jason is very coaching (not "coaxing" — a bad word), in a nice, calm, slow and patient way. He explains things and he never does anything without telling D. first, and making sure it's okay.

That's what feels so good to us too. It's become a time of feeling *loved* instead of invaded and abused or forced. And the body can feel okay too: not all the snakes are crawling all over it.

Jason doesn't let us younger ones feel like the "S-E-X", but he lets us enjoy how love feels good. We can trust him and so can D.

Never had that before — never, ever, *ever*.

By James (Jeremy's brother)
for The Team



We just don't know how to express the depth of the hurt the rapes and the child prostitution did to us — and to our good husband. I think seeing the secondary victimization hurts me more than struggling thru the endless memories and feelings of my abuse that keep surfacing. There doesn't seem to be any non-abused part of me to make love

with him — every attempt brings flashbacks. He says he feels like a child molester to make overtures because some child always reacts. We trust we will get past this stage sometime. What he gives — assurance he will wait for me to heal, hope when I run low, gentle affection to all my alters who are learning to trust him as a prelude (I hope) to someday's sexuality. What I give him — loving words and loving touch as much as I can from each alter, honesty and candor about the emerging memories and feelings. (God, how I wish there was more sunshine and fewer tears to offer), unswerving determination and courage to heal from the damage.

By Dorothy S.



I am unable to put love and sex together. I have had three marriages, all brief. It seems as a result of the abuse I was subjected to as a child, I am capable of experiencing sex only as a physical function (although I am not sure what are supposed to be "normal" sexual acts). That is all it is for me. A physical function. I know how to please and be pleased, but I don't feel "love" with it. After each marriage I would soon discover I wasn't happy with this person, resented my loss of privacy, and I didn't even like him. I was just having an episode of "sexually acting-out." Now, I am aware of the fact that I am MPD and that explains my bizarre behavior. At present I find I am unable to change. In fact, it is much worse now. Most of the time we want nothing to do with sex. Most of us hate it. The children are terrified of it. When I try to have a sexual relationship with a man, I find that I can't control the switching that takes place. I start out fine, but quite often, one or more of the children come out and are frightened and don't know what to do, or one of the other adults come out who don't like sex at all.

One way or the other I get sabotaged and the whole thing is a disaster. And of course, the result is a very bewildered partner who doesn't know what to think. I can't fake my way through as I once could. Sometimes, someone comes out who wants to hurt the man I'm in bed with. Often my protector comes out and wants to punch him. This is very frustrating, to say the least. And love? I love many people, but, I don't want to have sex with them. It gets so complicated that for the present I have given up trying to have sexual partners at all. It always was a problem. But now, it's impossible! Even though I have one male friend who knows I am MPD and is very attracted and supportive. But the switching in bed is still impossible for him to deal with. He never knows what to expect, and I am afraid because I don't either. I could enjoy sex if the others in the system would let me. But so far they have refused. I have even had my black panther come (who is my children's protector) and lash out at the man in bed. Needless to say, that ends the affair. So I really don't know what to do except refrain from any sexual activity. And sometimes that seems very unfair to me. I like sex. I just can't stay out through the act. The others won't let me.

By Isis



For me right now, working with sexuality means accepting that sexual touching is terrifying and to be avoided (at least at this stage of healing). I have other things to work on first. In the meantime, I have learned to masturbate using a vibrator. Frightened children are encouraged to go inside while I do this. I keep my eyes opened the whole time, so that all involved can see that I am alone and safe and doing this for myself in the present moment.

(cont'd on page 9)

(Sexuality cont'd)

That's the easy part. But how do I fill the emptiness and soothe the hurt? I am still learning how to comfort all the parts of me who are grieving that we never had parents who wanted us or loved us. I used to fill the emptiness with inappropriate friendships, with people who sacrificed their own needs to take care of mine. Then they resented me for it, just the way my mother used to resent me.

So here I am at age 52,

divorced and living alone (I love living alone), and starting all over, learning how to have healthy relationships and starting to form new friendships. Initially this was done mainly in therapy and with my support group. I get frustrated by how long this is taking. Sometimes I wish there was someone here right now to hold me and stroke me in a caring way. I often hear it said that to get the love I need, I have to go inside

myself and learn to fill me with the love I want. I know this is true, even though I get pissed and discouraged and very scared by the enormity of this battle I have committed to. But I haven't come this far just to quit. And there have been some good moments, sometimes alone and sometimes with kind people who remind me that I'm on the right path.

By Ellen with help from Jerry4

MV

Mending Ourselves — Finally!

The incredibly-special book, *MENDING OURSELVES, Expressions of healing and self-integration*, is being printed as you read this and will be available by the end of the month. I'm sorry it took so much longer than I anticipated. (I took on more challenge than I could handle. . . did you ever do that?) Anyway, the wait is worth it. We've got well-over 250 pages of prose, poetry and art all on the theme of that mysterious process — *integration* — and the steps along the way. Our writers and artists demonstrate how individualized healing can be; how frustrating — and how rewarding. If you've ever wondered what integration feels like and how people "get there", this is the book to read for clues. And if you think integration is NOT your cup of tea. . . the strong emphasis on internal cooperation (which everyone needs, no matter what) is valuable in itself. \$12.95 plus \$3 postage to MANY VOICES PRESS, PO Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH, 45201. Ohio residents please include 5% saletax. A flyer is enclosed with this issue. And my grateful thanks to the dozens of readers who sent art and writing for this project. We used as much as we could, and survivors everywhere will benefit from your gift. — Lynn W.

Recovering

By Rita M.

Q: I have been with my most recent therapist for 16 months. Twelve months ago, I was diagnosed with MPD. Whenever we start to discuss something which is scary for someone inside, my therapist feels as if she's being put to sleep. We have talked about it, but the thing that is confusing to me is that I don't know who, what, or how it happens. Sometimes I feel as if my therapist is bored, or doesn't care — but I also know that isn't true. Do you know if this is a common occurrence, and how is it done?

A. This is a great question! Yes, this is a common occurrence. As to how it is done. . . I can only give you my theory about what goes on. No one really understands the power of the mind, or exactly how non-verbal communication works. If I could tell you, then I could retire and be famous (and rich, too).

Anyway, here's my thought on this type of experience. . . When I begin to feel as if I'm going to fall asleep or pass out while in session with a dissociative client, I know that the client is working strenuously to avoid, block, suppress whatever material is needing to be worked on. Therapists who work with the MPD/DD population need to have very

good emotional and protective boundaries for themselves. I'm not saying clients do this on purpose. All I can say is that my experience is that this energy drain frequently occurs. It makes sense to me, because MPD/DD clients have been severely traumatized and are searching for the love/nurturing they needed as a child.

To your therapist. . . I would be less concerned at the present with the content of the scary material and the identity of the culprit. I would focus more on a concrete level — what is this process that is going on, what triggers it, what does it accomplish, and so forth. Just focus on the behavior, and how it feels for it to be identified and talked about (here and now). It seems as if there may need to be some more grounding work, or stabilization before forays are made into uncovering traumatic memories. I focus much more now on what goes on in the relationship between me and the client in session. . . what gets said, distortions that crop up, patterns of interaction. I have found this helps develop trust and a sense of safety. . . a necessity for doing the more difficult work of resolving the abuse.

To both of you. . . good luck.

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

The Night the Lights Stayed On

By Melody Sue

I learned years ago, before I found out that I was dissociated, that I could play detective and track down why I was having health or emotional problems by keeping a diary. It mostly revolved around food, exercise, physical pain and emotional health. One day it dawned on me that perhaps the many accidents I suffered continually were caused by something other than my being clumsy. I would frequently get burned or cut in the kitchen and I would walk into or fall over things like walls, steps, and furniture. I am sure some of this was because I was out of sync and I have recently learned I was losing a great deal of visual information because my eyes were not focusing together at the same time.

But in 1988-89, I was having accidents.

I decided to expand my diary to include everything I did each day. Yes, this did take a little bit more time, but it was worth it. What I discovered was that in addition to having headaches every time my husband and I made love, I would also get cut or burned in the kitchen within the next day or two.

I went back in my mind and started picturing my first encounter with sex. It just so happened that I had learned to iron in the same bedroom where my father molested me the first time. I would get burned frequently while ironing — it was a very big iron and I was a rather small child. In fact, I still carry one of those burn scars on my hand: it has almost faded away since I started the remembering process.

I also remembered that this was the house where I got most of the beatings from my mother. Usually it was because I had broken something while doing the dishes, but sometimes her anger was triggered by almost anything I did. She was afraid of what other people thought, so I had to be perfect and when I wasn't — WAM!

Bingo: I had something to work with: "Guilt." I hadn't been able to separate my husband from my father where sex was concerned and I hadn't been able to separate my mother's opinions from my internal process of deciding right from wrong.

I knew the alternate who held the anger and punished me for my social and verbal behavior was Chrissy. She liked to wear western clothes and listen to country music. I had also realized by now that she had to leave when ever we made love and that was the cause of the headaches. That was a religious/no-nonsense place in my mind that didn't even like to be around men, let alone be touched or kissed by one of them.

So the stage was set: That night I wore jeans and played country music. We had ourselves quite a date — or maybe it was a fight — I don't know which. Dancing wasn't too terrible, but I started giggling when he tried to kiss me. When he started to undress me, I began crying. It took hours and hours to complete our date. At one point when he kissed me I tasted cigarette smoke. (My dad was a heavy smoker and my husband never smoked in his life: I was later told that this is called an abreaction, reliving the past in the present.) Well I gagged and gagged. I had fits of shaking and shuddering and of course lots of tears. We kept the lights on and my husband kept telling me to open my eyes and that he was my husband and it was ok for us to be making love. He continued making statements to this effect the whole time.

Bless his heart, I still marvel at his willingness and courage to help me through this process.

The next day I went out and bought 12 beautiful, fragile glasses and every time one got broke, I would say to myself: *that's ok — it is not important — it is just a thing and my happiness is more important than any material thing.* Of course it took time for the

accidents to stop. At first I began seeing the accidents while they were happening. Gradually my reaction time improved to where I could slow them down, limiting the intensity of the injury and eventually I was able to stop them in time. Every time I consciously witnessed an accident about to happen or if it had just occurred, I would launch into my self-talk speech about how this was a mistake and that I understood why it was happening, but that it wasn't necessary, because no sin had been committed. It was just a case of mistaken identity and confused ideas about right and wrong.

Was it worth it? You bet it was! Within months my accident rate had dropped substantially, and now five years later I seldom get hurt in the kitchen anymore. For the last eight months I have been in vision therapy teaching both of my eyes to focus at the same time. As my depth perception has improved so has my ability to drive and walk without bumping into things or falling over them. One of the very first things my therapist did was to give me permission to return to being the left-handed person I had been before my father forced me into changing, around age three or four. The longer I eat and write left-handed, the more connected my emotionally isolated selves are becoming to the logical, realistic part of my mind. It is like finally having the loose wires of the past being connected to the main computer bank of the present. This has really helped my integration process immensely. I am having very few episodes of dissociated behavior these days.

Along the lines of healing and self acceptance: For the past three years I have been attending meetings of a 12-Step group called Emotions Anonymous. In this short space I can't begin to tell you about the stabilizing force this program has had in my life. I

(cont'd on page 11)

(Lights cont'd)

found out that I was not terminally unique and that all kinds of people are dealing with dissociation at different levels of intensity. The *Just For Today's* show me the way and give me the courage to face life one day at a time. Listening to others explain where their lives have taken them and how they found solutions, hope, wisdom, courage and eventually peace through the program has given me the courage to accept myself and learn how to not be so unhappy about the life I have been given to lead. The meetings also give me an opportunity to share with others not only the pain I have endured these long years, but the hope, wisdom and peace I have found.

In the beginning of my breakdown I grieved and grieved over the perfect life I thought I had lost due to my memories returning. Now, I am grateful for every memory and every experience of the past. My life is richer and fuller today than it ever could have been had I not been given these challenges to face. I am glad and proud of who I am today. The trip wasn't an easy one then, and I doubt that it ever will be easy, but it is 100% better than living in the state of repressed terror, rage, and fantasy of the first 36 years of my life.



By Carol L.
"I, We"

Letters

Please, I need your help.

I find myself fighting therapy because it becomes so difficult for my partner. She becomes frustrated dealing day in and out with my various alters. She also becomes lonely, craving for intimacy.

My therapist has monthly sessions with the three (or 12) of us regularly, and consistently recommends that my partner seek therapy for herself. The monthly sessions do help, short term, but my partner is very shy and her own therapy is out of the question, plus she also feels financially and support-wise, now is not the time for her to seek this action.

Please send me names of books for partners or any recommendations you may have. I strongly believe all MPD clients/partners must face the same problem — the lack of assistance for partners.

What appears to be missing in all the work towards merging/ becoming whole, is that this is not possible without our outside support remaining strong.

Sincerely,
Phyllis

(We mention one book for partners in "BOOKS," this issue. Another is "ALLIES IN HEALING," by Laura Davis, published by HarperCollins, 1991. We'll gladly list other resources if folks send us info. —LW)

I have a dissociative disorder. I was not abused by family members. As a baby, I had to wear a restrictive and painful brace on my crotch and hips to correct a problem with my hip socket. That is when I first split off a part. When I was eleven I was kidnapped and molested and terrorized at gunpoint by a stranger. I split into more parts after that. Of course, there are many parallels between my experiences and those of other childhood trauma survivors, but sometimes I feel alone. I would like to be able to write to survivors of childhood medical treatments or

survivors of childhood kidnapping who have dissociated around these experiences.

Could you help me?

Sincerely,
Peg

Hi M.V.

I was just recently diagnosed MPD (one month ago) and I'm in denial. Part of why I deny is the stigma attached, and because I don't think I have the background to "qualify". I think if I split off & formed "others" it didn't happen until I was eleven or twelve. Still, my experiences of emotional abuse were pretty bad. But I don't have the history to qualify for much else. I don't get it.

My therapist is trying to help me bridge the gap so this all could eventually sink into my brain. After reading *MPD-From the Inside Out*, and *MANY VOICES* and professional journals, I wonder if it wouldn't just be better for me not to discover (maybe) things that I don't yet know. I seem to think I'm fine. But now, of course, I'm no longer sure.

This would be an appropriate format and beginning for me to say that I have D.I.D. (Dissociative Identity Disorder). I could get used to this new name. I kind of like it. Well, this is the first time I've ever written anything I'd hope would actually get printed. It sounds a bit disjointed to me, but at this point, isn't it supposed to?

First time ever — the Artful Dodger (TAD)

(Though MANY VOICES does not promote pen-pal lists etc., we will forward mail in response to letters. It is your choice and entirely your responsibility to include or not include your address in these communications. . . and the recipient must take full responsibility for any replies they may choose to give. MANY VOICES and its staff cannot screen letters or protect you. MANY VOICES suggests you keep therapists informed of any communications, and be cautious in revealing anything of a personal nature to a stranger. We urge particular caution in the case of communications to prisons.)

On Love and Sexuality

By K.B.

When I think about love and sexuality, related to Multiple Personality Disorder, I feel in a fog. I'd like to ask Athena, God, or at least Funk and Wagnall: "What do those mean?" In MPD, it's all mixed up.

For some of us, it's upwards of 100 partners, many who claimed to love us. For some it's that terrible, slender moment when the rapist held us. Many of us never had an adult relationship at all, or none without abuse, or if we did, we hardly knew how to handle it. Sometimes we "love" anyone: a store clerk, a neighbor, a new friend or teacher who provides a kindness to us, however small. We "love" our new therapist, as a child adores a parent, without knowing him or her at all. Sometimes we refuse to love anyone. "Just try and make me," we sing. We hope they do, but "know" they will fail. If our walls are high enough, they will.

In sexuality, terror and rage often reign. We might use sex to express hatred and bitterness. We might confuse sex and pain, sex and loss, sex and power. We might too, confuse sex and love. We often try to barter, for money, touch, forgiveness, friendship. Or we think we're already trashed, so... who cares?

For each of was object. Pieces of meat, whose cries went unheeded. Each of us was lied to, violated, and used. We were very

smart then, to abandon those moments (hours, days...) and the body with them. The body became for us betrayer/Hero, staying behind to experience, record, and fiercely endure what we had hoped to escape.

But now, we are healing. Coming back into self, mind, spirit, body, soul — with all the raw determination, gut strength, intelligence, and talent we can muster. With all the incredible faith and hope that we don't think we have, that belongs to every multiple I know. We become willing, we *have* to learn to be, to see ourselves as valuable. Touchable. Lovable. Proud. As having worth and integrity. After that, we learn to see the world this way.

For me, it's a moving out of and beyond shame. Admitting behaviors I'd kept secret; feelings I wished to ignore; "shadow" alters who acted out or underwent things I thought no one could hear, or accept me after hearing. It is being courageous enough to say (when among our groups, sex is so rarely mentioned), that I feel these unnormal things. Desire mixed with pain, hatred, disgust, terror, and rage. Lust or tenderness or frightening arousal towards my perpetrator. Violence and sexual thoughts towards objects, animals, or children. Hard to admit, but not unheard of, and once said, easier to change. And change WE must.

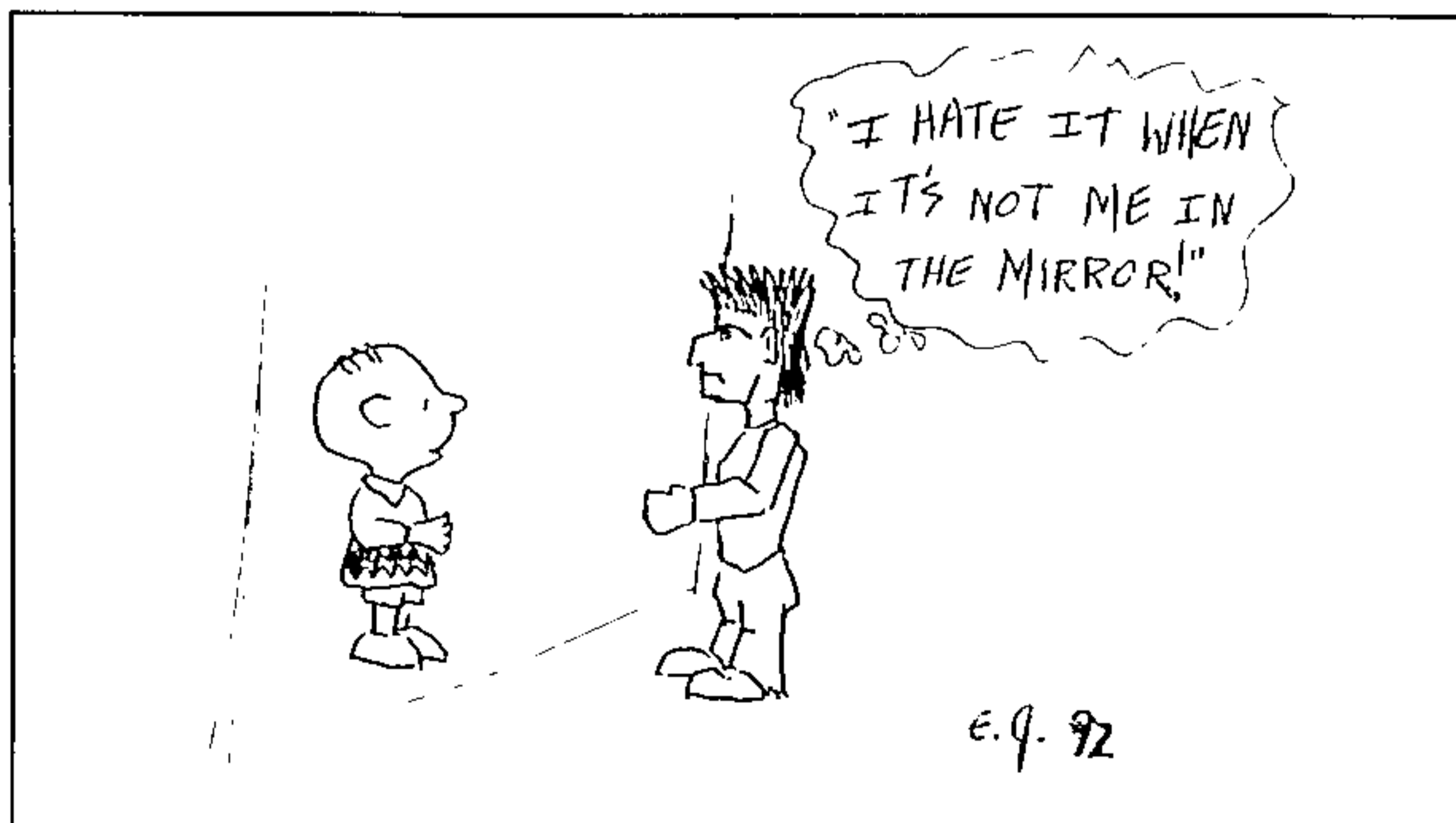
We cannot wait, in sullen or passive sense of entitlement, for abuser, laws, or world to come around. We have to say: *If a thing won't feel good, if I'll hate myself for it, I put my strength against it. I won't do it.* When I fail this — sometimes I will — I will say so, and commit again, and go on. I'll agree to move *towards* life, not away. Not be a lover with Death in my dreams, by day working so hard to live. I will not give away my body or my soul, I won't have it torn again from me. I will give my love and sex only to a person who is worthy. I decide what that means. I'll remember that love is a verb, not a noun. People will say they love me; I'll say I love them. But what are our actions? Love is positive, honest, and imperfect action, back and forth between us. It is not lies, flattery, or dark intrigue. It is not cold, empty, or excessive sex. It is not clinging to another because the world is brutal. It is not pretending parent, therapist, or partner is the mythically unconditionally-loving person we so deserved as infants, nor insisting that they be. We will move, many of us, through all of the above. But come finally to know love from inside ourselves, which is a careful, joyous sharing of an awakened, alive, lovely, and powerful self.

MV

The Calling

Sometimes I am surrounded by
too much love
and, when I call your name
you come, gently by my side
as I become your enchanted
forest
to wander through, like the lost
child
looking for its mother
you find me, but I never find
you
I am the forest now, the trees
are my friends
and the leaves fall.

By Lindsay



e.g. 92

Volunteering

By Barb

I recently ran into something in my life that might be helpful to other people. I lead a kind of isolated life, and I sometimes refer to myself as socially-retarded because I "miss" a lot of social cues. But I feel as I get better I'm waking up from this coma-like state.

Recently I've been trying to get through school, looking for some volunteer work, a job, etc. I was getting really frustrated. I was applying for volunteer work at a prestigious place because I thought it would look good on my resume. I called. They said they'd send info on volunteer opportunities. Two or three weeks went by. I called back because I hadn't gotten the info. I got a tape recording. I left a message. The volunteer lady and I played phone tag for a week. Finally we connected. She sent out info. I made an appointment to meet with her. We talked. I told her what I wanted. She said "Great. I'll check with those departments and we'll set you up." Well, a week or two went by and I didn't hear anything. So I called back.

To make a long story short, I was offering my time to these people; I was putting other agencies on hold while I waited for this place to find me something. And I had an uneasy feeling about this place from the start, but I figured, "Oh, it's this wonderful place. I'll be lucky to have that on my resume." So I put up with it.

I should have listened to my instincts. It's a great place for the patients, but not necessarily a great place for volunteers. So now I'm thinking of what I like to see or expect in a workplace.

One is courtesy and responsibility. If the tape machine is on (or voice mail) during regular business hours and the supervisor is unavailable to you, or if they put you on hold for more than three to five minutes, or if they say they'll get back to you and don't — I know to move on. I was always taught to be responsible and courteous at work and to be on time. It was a real

eye-opener to me (as a socially-retarded person) to see and realize that even though someone has a job, that doesn't mean they do it well. It helped me see that even if I am "socially retarded" I have more work and people skills than I realized.

I use my volunteer work as practice for paid work. The more I do, the more confident I get. I always thought those people were better than me, knew some high-functioning skill I just missed out on. NAH! I would say to those of you who can't work because your people are too dispersed or because of financial reasons (you'd lose Medicare-Medicaid and your therapy if you worked full time) — try volunteer work. You can always leave if you want to. My Others actually helped give me more direction; we want to work with kids. It might take a year or so to figure out what you want to do, but unless you at least try it, in most cases a measly 4 hours or less a week, you really cheat yourselves.

Volunteer work can be anything from stuffing envelopes, to one-on-one involvement with people.

Another thing I learned: I don't tell people about my diagnosis because it would close a lot of doors. This is my other "normal" tip: I don't tell people because they probably don't care anyway. Think about it. If you put yourselves in their shoes, you're hiring all these people and you have to interview them. Would you want to listen to everyone's problem? This guy's an alkie, this guy was in jail, that girl's a multiple. Employers don't want to hear it. All they care about is whether or not you can do the job. This was also a revelation to me. I was (still am!) so self-righteous that I was victimized, that I was triumphing. Most people could care less. They just want to know if you can do the job.

It's hard to go from being entrenched in the mental health system that says "tell us your feelings and life story" to the

normal world that tells you "Keep it to yourself; you want to hear troubles? I got more troubles than you, and you don't see me complaining."

It's hard, but do-able. It's taken me years. I'm still not where I feel "everyone else" is, but then I'm not everyone else. A lot of those people aren't as high-functioning as they appear.

MV

The following poem is reprinted (correctly, this time) from Aug 93 MV:

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.
And I would sing too.
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.

Resources

A Weekend of Challenges will be held Oct. 15-17 in Reading, MI for survivors of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. The retreat will be conducted by experienced leaders: Pat Sweeting and Jean Gust. Includes rope courses, meals, accommodations, fellowship. Call 313/882-6446 or 313/647-8693 for information.

Celebrating Relationships is the theme of Real Active Survivor's 4th annual retreat, Oct. 15-17 at the Mt. Kare Retreat Facility near Wrightwood, CA. \$85 to Real Active Survivor, PO Box 1894, Canyon Country CA 91386-0894.

10th Annual International Conference on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States will be held Oct 15-17 in Chicago. A professional must! Preconference workshops begin Oct. 13. For more information call Rush-North Shore Medical Center, DD program. 708/933-6685.

First Person Stories wanted, for an anthology of life stories written by ritual abuse survivors and their supporters. Deadline Dec. 31, 1993. For information write to RA Speak Out, 4104 24th St. #127, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Incest Survivor currently doing research for book aimed at educating society about survivors, would appreciate cooperation and contributions of all survivors. Will send questionnaire to anyone sending #10 (long) self-addressed stamped envelope to Valerie Scalera, SRO, 1070 Sherman Ave., So. Plainfield, NJ 07080.

Radio AAHS is a nationwide network of radio stations that play programs for children, with children's songs and Story Time three times a day. Our reader, Joy G., highly recommends it.

Broadcasts originate from Minnesota. Call 1-800-552-2470, or write to Radio AAHS, PO Box 16, Minneapolis, MN 55416 for the station nearest you.

Survivor Ribbons are a tangible form of recognition commemorating the battle against child abuse. These "medals of valor" are available for \$4 (and your address) from Not Alone Anymore Inc., 738 Main St., Box 171, Waltham MA 02154.

Songs of Recovery is a new cassette recording by Ginny Frazier, professional singer/songwriter, chronicling her healing journey in original music. Mail orders, \$10 plus \$2.50 postage to Truth Telling Tunes, PO Box 23272, Cincinnati, OH 45223.

Spirituality (New Age) network forming in Boston area. For info call 617/783-0241.

Healthy Sex Nightshirt (see Therapists' Page) is designed to help women heal from abuse, develop a positive meaning for sex, and approach sex safely and responsibly. All-cotton, ample-sized tee, multicolor print, fits all. Developed by Wendy Maltz, MSW, nationally-known sex therapist. \$25 (includes shipping and handling), to Maltz & Assoc., PO Box 648, Eugene, OR 97440.

Therapist-led beginners support group for women with MPD, in NYC area. For more information call Deborah Feller, 212/979-2979.

Poetry book, *In The Distance* by Deanna Rae is a selection of survivor experiences and feelings. \$6.96 by Winston Derek Publishers, PO Box 90883, Nashville TN 37209. 1/800/826-1888. 10% of the commission will be used to support San Francisco Suicide Prevention.

Knowing

Bright ray of sunshine
shimmering through the storm
you came to me.

We danced along the banks
of the river called youth.

Twin beams of laughter
echoing amidst the trees.

Alas, nothing of beauty lasts
forever.
All things become engulfed by my
storm.

You knew the outside child
smiling, energetic, free.

But the inside child
is full of darkness and fear.

She sits in a pool of tears
with wounds open and draining.

Light and air bring pain
for it exposes what is buried.

I pulled you into that darkness
to press against her aching
wounds.

There your beauty quickly faded
and you too became a child of the
dark.

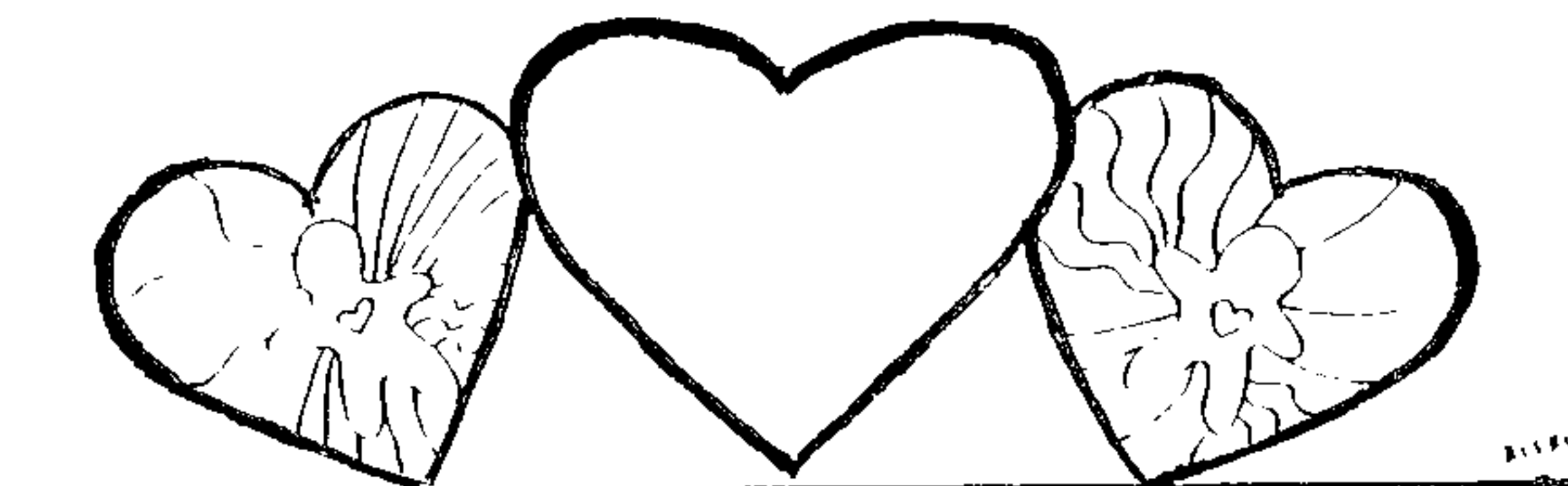
Broken, I dropped you to the
ground.
A rare flower, bruised and wilting.

I long to undo the knot of time,
wipe away this stain
return you to the light.

I cannot save you.
Each must find the path that
restores.

Yet I send an arrow to the most
High.
Come conquer darkness, reclaim
your own.

By Nita K.



Learning Masturbation

There are so many preparations:
the music
that swims in the air, the slow
trance
I must weave to hold me. Out of
darkness

the dawn falls over my body. I
draw
pictures in my mind, haven for
children
who live inside me. Sea dunes,
palm

trees, a stalactite cave of lavender
and blue. They enter the dream.
Some limp,
some carry infants, some wear the
dark robes

of their history. I welcome them.
Then
I shut the imagined gate leaving
them
in summer. I swim, I strip myself
of clothes,

and my hands are water over my
face,
breasts, slow touches between my
legs. Dark
fragments of childhood paste
themselves to my eyelids.

I stop, search for the keeper of
memory, sing
her tiny body back to sleep. Then
I swim into
a room of my own choosing,
warmth in my bones.

still as morning. The walls of the
world collapse
into so rebellious a light; the sea
carries me
into pleasure. I am a hearth of
uncombed algae,

I am silky as a necklace of
seaweed. I am
a lazy amphibian, crawling back to
land
saltwater leaving my eyes, my
shaking limbs.

By Kelley Conway © 1993



Books

13 Pieces: Life With A Multiple
By Mary Locke. © 1993 by Atlantic
Street Publishing Co., PO Box 2521,
Columbus, OH 43216. (614)221-8466.
\$10 \$2.50 postage/handling. 258 pgs.
Softback.

This is one of the few books I
have seen that covers the turmoil
and reality a support person must
deal with in relationship with a
multiple. It is a story told through
the eyes and journal entries of a
woman who is in a short-term
relationship with another lesbian.
The pain and struggle is not only
that of the incest survivor but that
of an intimate friend.

From the other side of the pain
as a multiple, it is often hard for
me to understand the fear and
confusion that results from my
trying to share my journey. At any
stage of treatment, we need such
varying levels of support and such
puzzling pieces of boundary, and
there have been no other really
helpful resources for those on the

other side of these walls (other
than clinical books.) This could
surely be helpful and focused for
those who love and/or live with
someone with multiplicity.

By Carol

Many Minds
Information for people who have
multiple personalities

1993 By Lauren Lund and David
Lund. Published by Soft Words
Publishing, Sunset Station Box 3218,
Pueblo, CO 81005-3218. \$4.95. 34
pgs. Illus. Softback.

A small, simple and clear book
about multiple personality disorder.
The vocabulary seems geared to
child personalities. In addition to
describing the dissociative process,
it also suggests useful grounding
activities, ways to stay safe, and
ideas to help self-healing. Gentle
and comforting. . . recommended
for people newly-diagnosed.

By Lynn W.

Coming Soon!

Please send us your art and writing for these important themes. & THANKS! —LW

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.

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

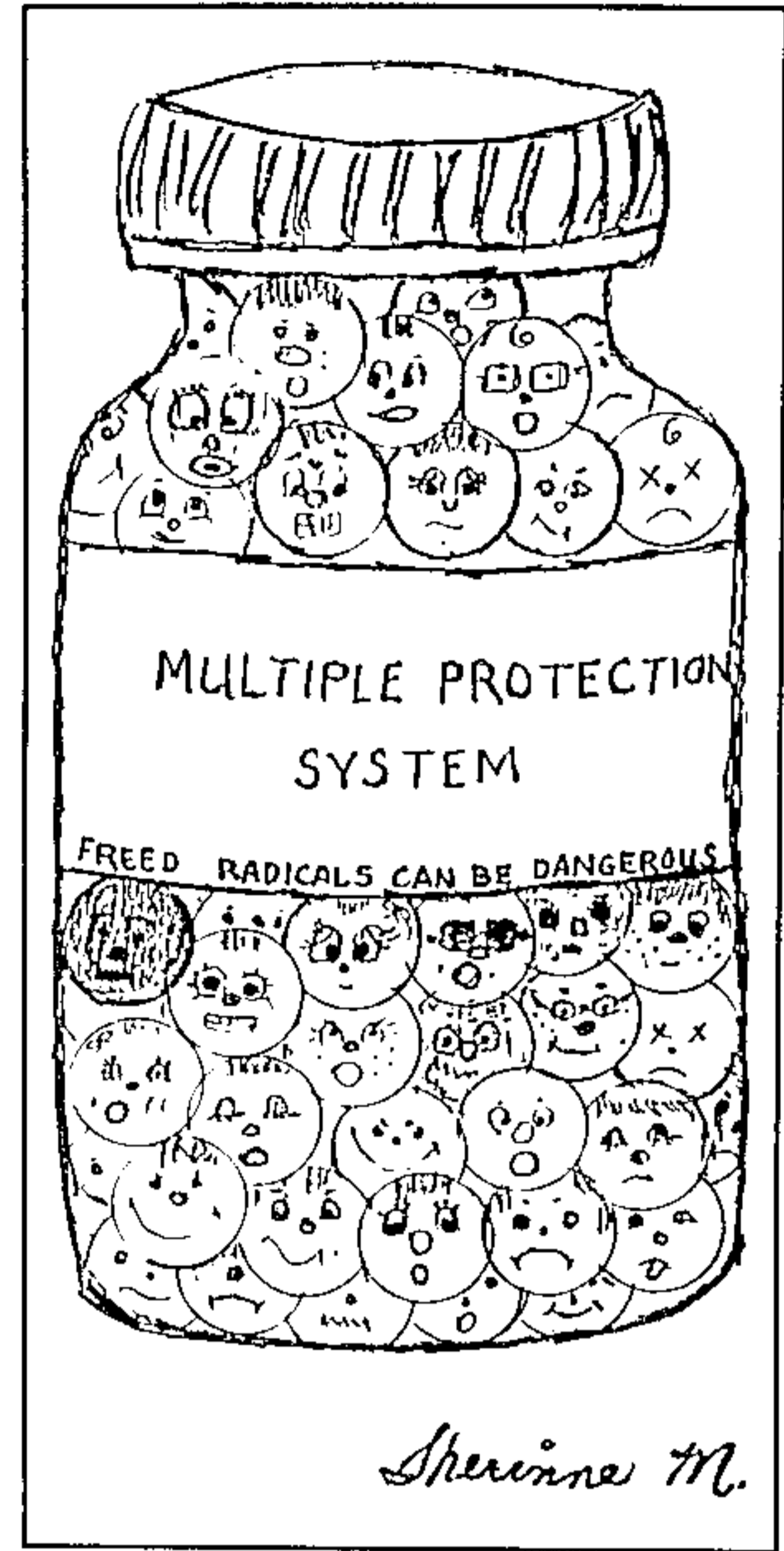
Funniest (or strangest) things that have happened in therapy for dissociation. Light-reading suggestions & kids' books. ART: cartoons and drawings of unusual occurrences in therapy. DEADLINE: June 1, 1994.

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.



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.

MANY VOICES

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Please check one:

I am a client Professional/therapist Relative/friend

Subscription type: New Renewal Gift

Start subscription with Feb '89 ___ Feb '90 ___ Feb '91 ___ Feb. '92 ___ Feb. '93 ___ Feb '94 ___

Other _____

1 year: \$30 in U.S.; Elsewhere, \$36 in U.S. currency drawn on a U.S. bank. Make check payable and send with this form to *MANY VOICES* P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.