

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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## Healing Through Play



### A Playful Poem

One of our favorite activities is writing poetry, then redoing it in calligraphy. A year ago our poems were mostly on the past pain and current anguish due to the past. Today, I find some whimsy and humor tip-toeing in. The little ones seem to be beginning to feel hope and find joy now that I'm slowly daring to open myself up to their experiences. In sharing their pain (I know, *our* pain) we are all learning to find glimpses of joy and hope.

By the way, in this poem, "meese" means mice. Poetic justice, you know? In poetry, justice can really prevail, protecting the underdog, the poor, and the vulnerable children, and seemingly, struggling thespians!

### *Hannah's Ark*

A flock of pigeons  
A gaggle of geese  
A bunch of bears  
A mob of "meese"  
An exhaltation of larks  
A murder of crows  
All living together  
Nose to nose.

A pod of parts  
Like that of whales  
We heal so slow  
We feel like snails  
All sizes and shapes  
In raggedy rows  
All living within me  
Nose to nose.

*By Hannah and clan*

# 79 Ways to Nurture Yourself

By Ellen B.

**T**he word "nurture" means to take good care of yourself, to treat yourself well. To nurture yourself adequately, it is absolutely necessary that you allow yourself to take time for yourself. When it comes to nurturing yourself, you are the expert. You know best what you like, what feels good, what is a special treat. Nurturing yourself means thinking about what you *can* do for yourself, not what you cannot do. Think about possibilities, not problems. Finally, remember that a nurturing experience is not necessarily a "big thing." There are many relatively effortless, inexpensive ways to feel good.

The following is a list of nurturers for the body, mind and spirit. Feel free to treat yourself to many of these suggestions often.

- \*Go to a museum.
- \*Have your nails done or give yourself a manicure.
- \*Visit a place that is beautiful to you—a park, church, lakeside spot, etc.
- \*Give yourself more time than usual to do something you have to do.
- \*Expose yourself to a sound you like: classical music, "white" sounds, quiet (no sound) etc.
- \*Give yourself a flower.
- \*Send yourself a greeting card.
- \*Put written affirmations about yourself in a special place where you will see them often—the refrigerator, or bathroom mirror, etc.
- \*Take a nap in a tanning bed.
- \*Take a leisurely bath and stay in the tub until all the water runs out.
- \*Enjoy something by candlelight.
- \*Burn your favorite fragrance of potpourri or incense.
- \*Take your dog for a walk.
- \*Rub lotion all over your body.
- \*Go to a department store and try on clothes or shoes.
- \*Browse in a bookstore or a card counter.
- \*Go to the airport and watch the planes and/or people.

- \*Rent a video of your favorite movie.
- \*Have a "white elephant" party where everyone brings something they no longer use and everyone exchanges gifts.
- \*Have a candlelight dinner for yourself.
- \*Ask for a hug from three people.
- \*Create a fantasy about how you would spend an ideal day and/or night.
- \*Go to the zoo or to a pet shop.
- \*Read your favorite poems.
- \*Eat junk food for lunch.
- \*Recall pleasant memories.
- \*Lie in the sun.
- \*Go dancing.
- \*Get involved in your favorite hobby.
- \*Give yourself an extra therapy session.
- \*Exchange houses with someone else for a weekend.
- \*Free associate.
- \*Bake your favorite bread, cookies, pie, or cake.
- \*Go to the flea market.
- \*Wash your car.
- \*Have your hair done.
- \*Go for a drive on a fall or spring day and observe the signs of the season.
- \*Go to a quiet place.
- \*Look at your favorite pictures, slides, photographs, cookbook pictures etc.
- \*Read greeting cards to yourself.
- \*Write yourself a love letter.
- \*Read your favorite book aloud.
- \*Sleep late on purpose.
- \*Get a massage partner and exchange massages.
- \*Pet your pet.
- \*Rock a teddy bear in a rocking chair.
- \*Cover yourself with a satin quilt, flannel sheets, or a woolly blanket.
- \*Get a make-over.
- \*Take a 10-minute brisk walk.
- \*Exercise.

- \*Buy a tape of background noise—birds singing, wind blowing in the trees, etc. and listen to it.
- \*Call a friend you haven't talked with in awhile.
- \*Fix yourself your favorite thing to eat or drink.
- \*Take a "mental health day" off from work.
- \*Fantasize about what you would do if you won a lottery.
- \*Take a nap.
- \*Take a different route home.
- \*Go to the dollar movie.
- \*Ride a bike.
- \*Put on your favorite music and dance, alone or with someone else.
- \*Get something fixed that you've put off getting fixed.
- \*Barter babysitting with someone.
- \*Pay to have your house cleaned.
- \*Go to the library and read a joke book.
- \*Dig in the dirt.
- \*Take care of a growing plant.
- \*Swing on a swing.
- \*Color in a coloring book.
- \*Paint a picture or a house.
- \*Squish, squeeze, and mold playdough, clay, or yeast dough.
- \*Finger paint.
- \*Bounce a ball or jump rope.
- \*Go fishing.
- \*Build or refinish something.
- \*Do needlework (knit, crochet, cross stitch, etc.)
- \*Look at a flower or leaf—*really* look at it.
- \*Watch an ant colony.
- \*See how many formations you can identify while looking at clouds.
- \*Shampoo your hair in the rain...especially in a really good cloudburst.
- \*
- \*
- \* (add your own)

— Happy Nurturing!

## Helping Friends

My therapist has done the following with me when I've been suicidal, and I found him very helpful:

1. He tells me that he's felt this way before too, and knows that it is very painful.
2. He suggests positive actions that could help me out of despair temporarily:
  - A. Watch a comedy on TV
  - B. Go out for a walk, bike ride, or roller skate
  - C. Journal and/or use any kind of art to express myself, without worrying about using correct grammar or anything.
  - D. Cool off with ice cream! (Go out and try a new flavor!)
  - E. Make some hot chocolate, cuddle up in a warm blanket, and read a good book.

(How about a classic like *Moby Dick*?)

When he hears my tone of voice lighten up and improve, he then lets me go to care for myself. Many times we make verbal deals that I won't try anything dangerous/suicidal until I absolutely see him in person first, and specifically talk about it with him. Then I know he's given me things to do to try and feel better, but if nothing works (which hasn't happened yet) he'll still be there with more help!

*By Diana Barnum*



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## My Thoughts on MPD

By Cindy, et al

The following is what I have begun to believe about MPD (DID). In my head, I know it's real, but I've always had a problem with some basic phenomena of the disorder. They don't speak to me in a way that I find feasible, so I will redefine this problem in my own way.

As babies and very young children, we still have one foot in the supernatural (where we just came from) and one foot on earth. "Life" as we are soon discovering, is a strange and confusing place. When terrible, overwhelming things happen to us, we retreat back, way back, to the familiar — that spiritual place. There we find a peace and solace not offered here on earth.

When that "swoosh," that sudden removal of self happens, we go back to our previous reality. When we return, we may bring with us another spirit or soul — therefore, multiplicity of the self.

In other words, we go back, get help and bring reinforcements!

When one observes "normal" (those without DD) adult patterns of behavior, one can see that they almost always regress back to old, learned behaviors when confronted with a difficult situation they feel unable to handle. They may cry, pout, stop talking, or worse. If a "normal adult" is mugged (for example), they will behave like a

child and say things such as, "Please don't hurt me; I won't say anything, I won't be any trouble," etc. They regress back to childlike behavior because of their overwhelming fear.

Now, when a child is victimized, human nature again will prove that they will also regress. But, back to what or where? It seems obvious to me that they would go back to pre-existence as we know it. Maybe back to the womb, to God, their spiritual self, but somewhere where safety and security is assured. So far, earth (to us) is not a safe and friendly place. "Normal adults" will regress to a safe spot in their childhood where there was safety, protection and love during a crisis. Someone was there!

We, who were emotionally abandoned, terrified, and scarred, could "split" way back because earth was not yet our "total reality". Not until a child is older does this "earth" become reality. The likelihood of developing MPD becomes less and less as we age.

This "theory" rings true to me. It makes sense this way, for once. I've always been disturbed that God provides no protection for innocent, abused children. (Even animal babies are born with teeth, fangs, claws, etc.) But maybe He provides the highest form of complete love and safety by making this access available to those of us who have sustained the worst!

# Playtime

My 13 year old daughter, (who's known about my diagnosis since 1989, when I discovered it) was cleaning her closet out of all the unwanted toys she felt she's outgrown.

She found one particularly shabby old toy and said... "I can't believe I still have this old *baby* thing!" Then she turned to me and said, "Mom, you want it?"

Children have such a way of helping you to see the truth in things. I'm grateful for this in my daughter, and for her love and support. I'm also grateful to the inner young parts of myself, for helping to raise her, and guiding the adult selves to play and humor.

I had also seen a sign the other day that said... "Mothers of Multiples Annual Clothing and Toy Sale!" It figures my mother would try to make a profit off of this!

*By Noah (Still drumming my way to wholeness...and it's working!)*



I am a multiple as a result of many years of ritual abuse. I am working hard to reclaim my life. I've learned that what I've lost is gone. I cannot replace the bad memories with good ones. But there are some ways I've found to treat my Inner Selves to what I never had. Some of those things were bedtime stories. So what I've done is start a collection of children's books. I read them to my Inner Children.

One of my favorites is so close to many victims' lives that I want to share my personal interpretation of the story. It's called "*The Little Engine that Could.*"

The story begins just like most of us did as babies, innocent and happy. There was a happy little train filled of good things for the little girls and boys who lived on the other side of the mountain. It was full of toys of all kinds, anything any little girl or boy could want. There were apples and all sorts of good things to eat. The train

went along happily—then all of a sudden—she stopped. Just like us, our innocent lives came to a horrible halt.

The toys didn't know what to do. Then, in the distance along came a shiny new engine. Just like us, they finally decided to ask it for help. But when asked the new engine looked at them and said, "I pull the likes of you? Indeed not!" It pulled off into the distance. All of the toys felt so rejected, they thought that there was something bad about them. How sad they all felt.

Then once again another bigger engine came puffing along. The toys pulled themselves together to ask this other engine to help them. But once again they were rejected. Soon an old and tired looking engine came along. The toys begged the engine to help them, but the old engine sighed and said, "I must rest my weary wheels. I cannot help you."

By this point all the toys were so sad and hopeless that they just sat and cried. But then suddenly a little blue engine came chugging merrily along. He saw all of the toys and stopped. "What is the matter, my friends?" he asked. They told him the story of their engine breaking down, and how all of the other engines had refused to help them, or were too tired to be bothered. They told him of their train full of toys that they had to get to the good little girls and boys on the other side of the mountain.

The little blue engine looked up and saw the tears and hopelessness in the toy's eyes. Much to their surprise, the little blue engine said, "Well, I'm not very big, but I can try to help you."

So all of the toys jumped back on their train and started to smile. The little engine went on its way up the mountain. They all cheered. The little engine kept saying "I think I can...I think I can." Bit by bit they slowly made it to the top of the mountain. The toys shouted Hurray! All the way down the mountain the little blue engine could be heard saying, "I thought I could, I thought I could."

I use this story as an analogy for any victim of child abuse. We all start our lives innocent, until circumstances beyond our control start a negative way of thinking and behaving. Most of us have asked for help, time and time again, but have been repeatedly rejected, abandoned, not believed, or hurt even more. I'm sure all of us have been pushed to the point of hopelessness. But we don't stay there. We work to find the right therapist and supports. Soon the feelings of being a victim dissipate. And soon we start to believe...*we are survivors!* We knew we could!

*By Christine G. et al*



**This is a cheap, fun activity, especially good for kids.**

Get a map of the United States or the world, or anywhere else you wanted to go but don't have the money to get there. Then, plot a trip!

I got a world map, a US map and a road atlas of the United States for under \$20 at my local Rand McNally map store.

I wondered what it would be like to live or travel somewhere else, so I'm planning my trip.

I'm going to get the addresses of the Chambers of Commerce at the places that look interesting to live and visit. Then they'll send me information about that place.

Sure, it may seem a little strange, but what the heck! I can learn about other places, and get some cool mail.

Maybe your other readers have fun travel tips for those of us who are too poor or scared to leave home.

PS: Has anyone ever thought of moving to another state or locality? If so why, and did they find it helpful/healthful?

*By Barb et al*

# Many Ways to Heal

By Tracy

I am multiple and I am accepting it and all that it means—to me. That's the only person it truly matters to, anyway. I've learned lately that the only one who will ever take care of you is yourself/selves. So here are some things I've learned through my process of MPD and multiplicity:

\*Be good to yourself, take care of yourself. Like listening to your body, listening to what it feels like daily and in the moment. Do what is healthy. For example, if you're scared and want to hide, go do it for that child or part of yourself within. It's ok. If you feel like crying, cry. It's a good way to cleanse and heal yourself. If you want to have anger, have it in a safe way.

\*Allow yourselves to have their feelings without the other selves invading. Respect each others' feelings and space.

\*Allow yourself to sit through all the different feelings you have. That will help move you through the next phase or stage. It may be uncomfortable at first, but you will make it. This step helped a lot of us.

\*Set your people inside free, to let them go where they need for safety, understanding, and a place to go to process information. Have older ones "be there" for the children and all the others. Be there for each other.

\*When you have a hard time accepting yourselves or each other, remember those other parts of you gave of themselves so you could function and be OK. Don't forget them. Honor them and deal with their pain, to reclaim all of yourselves that you were meant to be.

\*Find others inside who can help deal with the ones who are in current pain. Don't be scared or selfish. Ask others inside to make it safe for all, and tell the others their pain will be relieved as soon as you can deal with them. Acknowledge the helpful parts, with paper notes or small gifts. They are your soul parts.

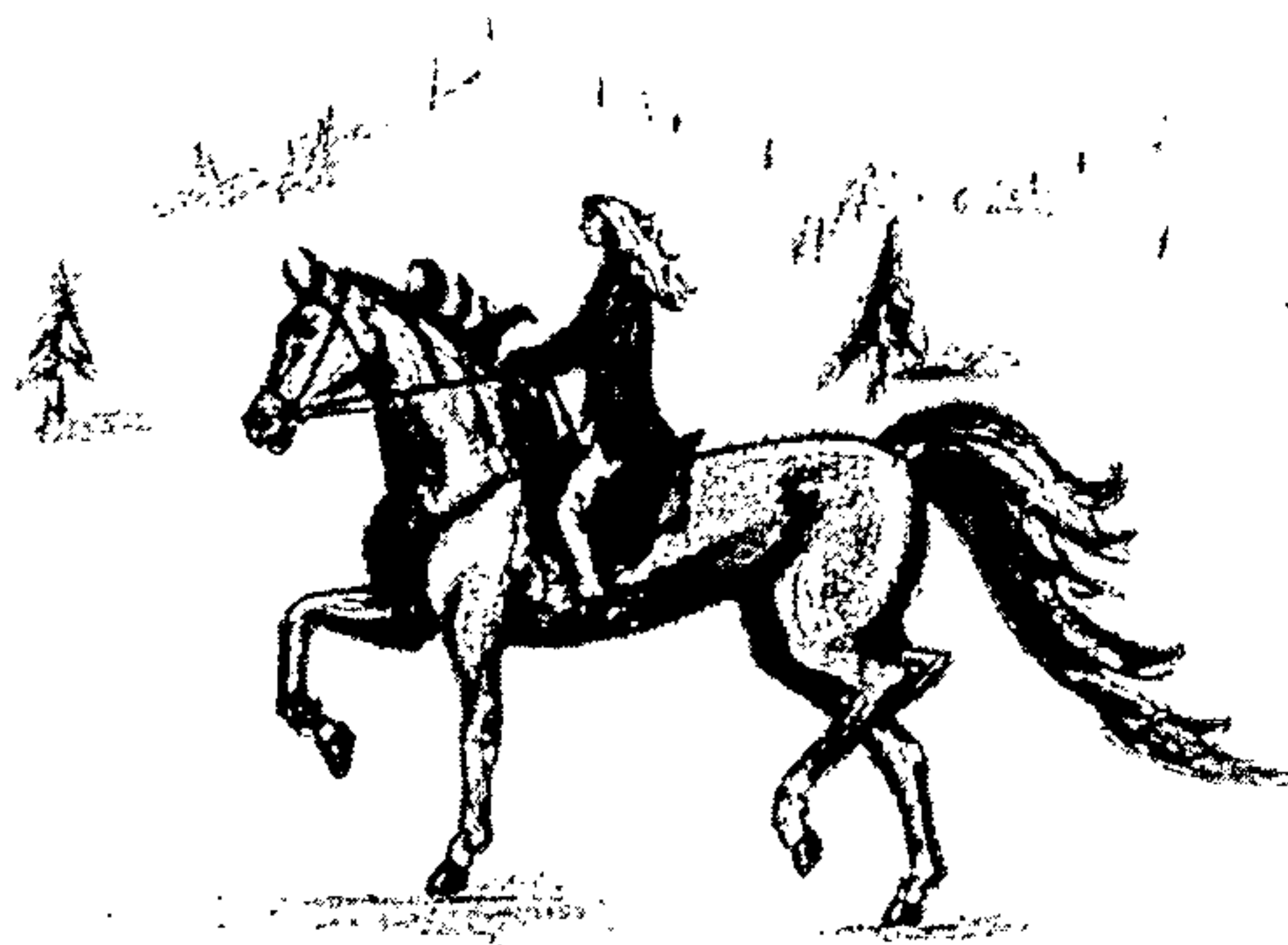
\*One thing we found helpful is to buy the doll house miniatures of items that hurt us during our abuse. It makes things more manageable for us to deal with. At the same time it acknowledges that others went through pain, while it puts the items outside us, to stop hurting on the inside. It's a beginning for us, especially those who have a hard time accepting the horrendous abuse that was done to us. We bring the items to therapy sessions sometimes. Our therapist takes care of them for awhile so we can have a break for those who have to accept the reality of abuse. It also gives our therapist a chance to accept what was

done to us, helping her to understand our reality. Sometimes when we're being flooded with so much we can't handle, we will give her things that represent certain abuse events, so we can handle things a little better.

\*We found a large stuffed TAZ character for our anger. (From the Looney Tunes cartoon Tasmanian Devil.)

\*We even have parts of us inside that have abused us. We accept them because we know they were only trying to survive and deal with the abuse done to us. So now, it's accepting what we all did to survive to get to where we are today. The healthy ones and some of the others are trying to raise the ones who abused us and to help them heal. One of the first steps is sitting in a spot inside, a step out of the abuse, and feeling how that feels, then staying with the feeling till they overcome that stage. Then we go to the next step out of abuse, moving through the steps up and back to being healed. Step by step, anything is possible.

\*Instead of hurting each other inside, help one another. It all comes back around, no matter what you do. It comes full circle. So it's best you help one another. What you put out will come back to you. MV



By Mardic

# Therapist's Page

By Colin A. Ross, M.D.

Colin A. Ross, M.D. is a Fellow and past president of the International Society for the Study of Dissociation. Dr. Ross is the author of over 100 professional papers and books, and is the founder and president of The Ross Institute for Psychological Trauma at Charter Behavioral Health System of Dallas, where he has been director of the Dissociative Disorders Program since 1991. For more information, call (972) 918-9588, or e-mail [rossinst@rossinst.com](mailto:rossinst@rossinst.com).

## The Problem of Attachment to the Perpetrator

Over the last few years I have come to believe that a core problem in the psychotherapy of dissociative identity disorder (D.I.D. or multiple personality disorder) is the problem of attachment to the perpetrator. This is also true for survivors of severe chronic childhood trauma who do not have D.I.D. The treatment that follows from this new model is different from the treatment of the '90s, which focused more on memory recovery and abreaction. My sense of things is that the dissociative disorders field as a whole is shifting in this direction, away from "memory work" as such.

Memories are still a major element of therapy, and the trauma of the past is still talked about a lot. It's a matter of a shift in emphasis rather than a change to a whole new way of providing therapy.

In the old model, which goes back to Pierre Janet in the nineteenth century, the idea was that the blocked memories were driving the symptoms—uncover the memory, process it, and the symptoms go away. The key thing was to recover the information about what happened, and all the feelings that go along with it. The old model was not wrong, it just wasn't complete. For one thing, recovery involves learning a lot of new skills, not just abreacting trauma.

In the new model, the core problem is attachment, not dealing with memories and feelings as such. All baby birds and mammals must attach to a caregiver in order to survive. The attachment systems that control the behavior of mother and child (also father and child) are built-in genetically. The baby bird does not decide to chirp for food, and the mother bird does not decide to go out

collecting food. All this just happens. The same is true for human children. A baby does not conduct a rational adult analysis of human interaction patterns and then decide that crying has positive survival advantage. The baby just cries.

Similarly, the nursing mother who has a letdown reflex when her baby cries does not consciously decide to release more oxytocin from her brain in order to make her milk flow. Her body just does that for her. There are countless attachment behaviors that are built-in biologically. The parents also make conscious decisions about how to take care of the child for which they are responsible as adults. But the little child just attaches naturally in order to survive.

The basic goal is survival. Attachment serves that goal. This is true biologically, emotionally, humanly, spiritually, however one wants to look at it. To thrive and grow the child must attach to its caretakers. Separation and individuation from these caretakers is a task that is down the road developmentally, from the perspective of the newborn baby.

In a reasonable, healthy family this works out reasonably OK. The parents are imperfect and everybody has the usual neurotic conflicts about not having gotten all the love and nurturance that would have been ideal and perfect. We all have ambivalent attachment to our parents to some degree; we all are faced with the task of separation and individuation, and none of us are complete successes.

In a family with active physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, however, things are different. The young child in this family — say it is a girl — must attach to her father for her survival. She cannot run away from home, get

married, or go away to college because she hasn't even gone to kindergarten yet. She depends on her parents for food, clothes, a roof, and her basic survival needs. She also needs her parents for her emotional and spiritual development. The problem is that the father she must attach to, in order to survive, is also the perpetrator who is abusing her.

Just as love, approach, and attachment to parents are built-in biologically, so is the recoil reflex. If you touch a hot stove by mistake, your brain pulls your hand away even before you consciously experience the pain. Your biology does this for you, without any conscious analysis or decision-making. Similarly, your body goes into recoil mode from child abuse automatically. You just automatically withdraw, pull back, and shut down.

One way to cope with the abuse would be to go catatonic. This would be developmental suicide. Except possibly in rare cases (which therapists never see in their offices) the body will not allow permanent catatonia—the attachment systems must be kept up and running for the organism to survive, whether it is a child, a kitten, a bird, or a rabbit. There must be an override of the withdrawal reflex.

How can this be accomplished? By dissociation. The fundamental driver of the dissociation, in this way of looking at things, is the problem of attachment to the perpetrator. In order to survive, the child must attach to the person who is hurting her. There is no escape and no other option. In order to maintain the attachment systems up and running, they cannot be contaminated by the traumatic information coming in through the senses: that reality must be dissociated.

What difference does this model make in therapy? First, the focus of therapy is not on the content of the memories—the target is the ambivalent attachment. This ambivalent attachment is visible in current relationships, and in the structure of the internal world.

This is true whether the diagnosis is DID, PTSD, DDNOS or borderline personality disorder. Borderline personality is an inevitable consequence of the problem of attachment to the perpetrator, and is a biologically normal human response to severe, chronic childhood trauma.

A focus on the problem of attachment to the perpetrator sidesteps most of the controversy about false memories, since the content of the memories is not the main concern. If the memories are accurate, they explain how the problem of attachment to the perpetrator arose; if they are inaccurate, they symbolize that problem. Either way, the ambivalent attachment is the focus, not the content of the memories.

In the new model, there is much, much less abreaction in therapy, if any. By this I mean, the kind of full-tilt abreaction where the person is back in

the past, reliving the trauma as if it is happening all over again. Within the new model, abreaction is unnecessary and retraumatizing. What does occur is what I call intense recollection. The description of the trauma is still intense, vivid, and difficult, but it is grounded. Even in relatively pure cognitive therapy, as I do it, there is lots of intense feeling.

The first goal of therapy is to hold both sides of the ambivalent attachment in consciousness at the same time—to feel both the love and the hate. The love is always there, somewhere. I believe it is biologically impossible to extinguish your love for your parents, no matter how abusive they were.

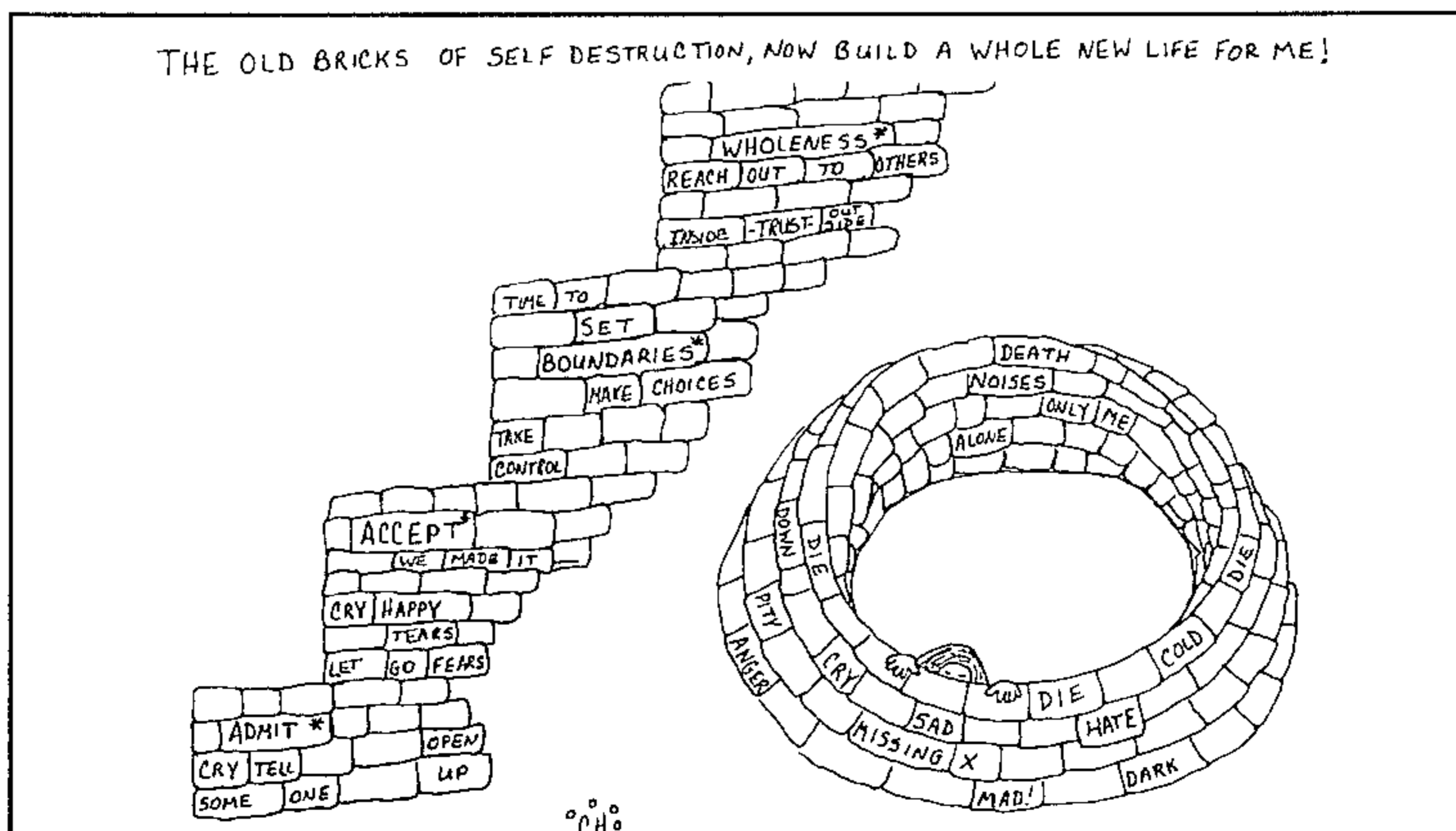
Therapists can make a mistake by identifying with and supporting one side of the ambivalent attachment only. A not uncommon error is to validate and identify with only the anger, and push the love, attachment and approach underground. A pseudo-resolution of ambivalent attachment can occur when there is an artificial complete separation from the parents—this can be just a cover for unresolved ambivalence. This error by therapists is a fertile ground for false memories.

In some situations, the parents are in fact so manipulative and abusive in the present day that complete separation is the only healthy option. That's not what I'm talking about. I am thinking of people whose parents are semi-OK in the present, and who are missing out on a limited positive relationship in the present because they have shut down the positive side of their attachment.

Once both sides of the ambivalent attachment are held in conscious awareness at the same time, and processed a bit, the next step is grief work. One must mourn the loss of the parent one never had. The task is to dissolve the unrealistically all-good or all-bad parent, deal with the actual disappointment and loss, and complete the task of separation and individuation. This is a job we are all working on. Those who were not severely physically, sexually, or emotionally abused as children have a much easier time, because they did not have to dissociate in an extreme way to survive extreme conditions.

One reason I like this model is because it makes the extreme nature of the trauma clear, but emphasizes the fact that the core of therapy is a common human problem. MV

Dr. Ross has produced a 30-minute video that explains the problem of attachment to the perpetrator in more detail. The title is *Treating Trauma Disorders Effectively, Series One, Volume One: Attachment to the Perpetrator*. The video contains dramatic reenactments, scenes of therapy, and narrator discussion. It follows two cases of women with DID who are having trouble with attachment to the perpetrator. The video costs \$85, and can be ordered by calling 1-800-572-9588. It is produced to be helpful and instructive for both survivors and therapists.



# Partner's Page

## Multiplicity

For my friend with DID, by Michelle Becker

Something happened long ago  
something so awful

Like a hammer striking a piece of glass  
you were shattered and left in pieces

Some pieces were so broken and  
damaged  
so beyond your ability to repair you  
lost them

Like dangerous pieces of sharp glass  
they had the power to cut you deeply

You protected yourself and cared  
for yourself  
by avoiding those pieces

You had to...  
...it meant your survival

But now...

Older and wiser  
with more power and more resources

You've begun the sometimes painful  
task

of searching for those missing pieces

Left without their knowledge  
life is sometimes confusing, chaotic

And there are nights  
filled with anxiety

And days in the closet  
filled with despair

But you do not labor in vain  
collecting the pieces has been  
worthwhile

As I watch you collect those pieces  
I've come to know you as a beautiful  
kaleidoscope

Where each turn brings a beautiful  
pattern  
made out of pieces of colored glass

And as these pieces come to know  
each other

I see a beautiful stained glass

What you have become is much more  
beautiful  
than the original unshattered piece of  
glass

In working with these pieces  
you are the artist

and what you have become  
is a beautiful masterpiece

Meant to be placed over the altar  
with light shining through

MV

This is to and for my wife who I love so  
very much. She has suffered thru so  
much. She was diagnosed with MPD  
and she tries so very hard...

## Sometimes I Forget

Sometimes I forget how fragile  
you are.

Sometimes I forget how strong  
you are.

Sometimes I forget how scared  
you are.

Sometimes I forget how brave  
you are.

Sometimes I forget there's more than  
one.

Sometimes I forget there are some  
that don't care for me.

Sometimes I forget there are children  
present.

Sometimes I forget there are many  
to answer to.

Sometimes I forget to be patient.

Sometimes I forget to be  
understanding.

Sometimes I forget to be a listener.

Sometimes I forget to be a helper.

Sometimes I forget to be strong  
and lead.

Sometimes I forget to be a friend to  
those who need it.

Sometimes I forget to be a learner.

Sometimes I forget you get confused.

Sometimes I forget to notice your  
changes.

Sometimes I forget to be a good  
companion.

Sometimes I forget it isn't easy being  
you...

The one thing I have never  
forgotten is how much I love you  
and how much you mean to me. I  
am so very fortunate to have found  
you and to have you love me. Please  
forgive me my shortcomings.  
Sometimes I forget.

— Tom

*Dear Friends and Families,*

*We really want to continue a partners' page in MV, but we must receive more input (questions, comments, descriptions of life-with-dissociation) to make this page be useful to all of you, and to make it interesting to others. Please send us your ideas on what we can include here, your artwork, and your points of view as family members and supporters of people who struggle with chronic dissociation. —Thanks. Lynn W.*







## Mask of Pain

Admittedly, this picture is not related to our scheduled art theme for this issue ("Having Fun"). But I thought many of you would relate to the feelings involved in this piece.

It was drawn by a prisoner in Colorado, Christopher Rodriguez. Here is his explanation of its meaning:

This drawing is My Mask of Pain, attached with barbed wire tie strings.

I wear the mask, because I have to hide behind the mask. The barbed wire tie strings are to remind and cause me pain I'm used to.

The brick wall is the wall to keep others away, and to protect myself from being hurt.

The man in the keyhole is me, looking out from behind my prison bars, with the wall peeled back. The '95-'96 calendar is when I started my healing.

The cob web is what I'm stuck in, fighting away the horrors of my childhood that I will never escape from.

### Face of Stone

I want to reach out to you,  
 But will I find you there...  
 I need someone to comfort me,  
 and let me know they care.  
 So many times I've looked around,  
 to find myself alone,  
 So I've learned to keep it all inside  
 And wear my face of stone.  
 But if you will look behind my walls  
 I'm sure that you will find  
 A man with a heart of gold,  
 that's loving, sweet and kind.  
 I'm still afraid to reach out  
 For fear I'll find myself still alone,  
 So for now I'll keep it all inside  
 And wear my face of stone.

By Christopher R.

## Creative Expressions

We have a format for expressing our feelings, thoughts and creativity that was inspired by this newsletter three years ago.

We have created our own newsletter, called "The Mutual Admiration Society Newsletter." It's personal, just for us, and is a fabulous vehicle for communication. It has headline stories, opinion columns, letters to the editors, a kids' page and the "safety corner." In the "safety corner," anything can be expressed without fear of repercussion. (We draw elaborate and complete borders around this column—symbolic boundaries.)

There are also art, games and horoscopes. Many in our system participate and most have a great time. It tends to get "published" around those times of year when we were abused, and it relieves a lot of pressure. I, personally, am frequently surprised at who contributes, and what is conveyed. I met four new alters this way. Our therapist finds the idea impressive, and some of our outside multiple friends have done it and been excited by their finished newsletters. It's really fun, and has helped us a lot.

By Beverly & Me (Heidi)

MV

MV

# More Playful (and not so Playful) Poems

## *There's Someone Who's Me*

There's someone who's me, that  
someone is I  
There's someone who always wants  
to know "why?"  
Some like to write, some love to draw  
Others sit back and wonder in awe.  
Some want to fly, some want  
to sleep,  
Some think my thoughts are running  
too deep.  
Someone likes to smoke and drink.  
There's one who loves to yell, I think.  
All of us love our parents dear,  
Some are quiet and hide in fear.  
Some are loud, and some are timid.  
Don't know when to say when, but I  
know my limit.  
Some can't stop. They keep going  
and going.  
Some think that my mind is blowing.  
Some still can't see that they're here.  
Some cannot fathom the time or  
the year.  
Some inside won't see the truth,  
Some old and wise, others in youth.  
Ones with great sorrow like to cry  
replaying the past.  
These someones are I.  
Some enjoy playing, others to learn,  
Some are content,  
while other ones yearn,  
Someone is scared of growing old.  
Some are shy, while others are bold.  
Some like to lend a helping hand.  
Others hate that they don't  
understand.  
Some love to cuddle;  
some are mean.  
Together we grasp all we have seen.  
Some think in parts, but all make  
a whole.  
One just thinks of smoking a bowl.  
Some high on life, some wish they  
were high.  
And through it all, there's the one  
who asks "Why?"

*By Guenevere B.*

## *Help*

Help little hands  
Come to the water  
Drink from the fountain  
Love overflows.  
Children stand silent  
Where laughter should be  
Come hold the little ones  
Set captive souls free.  
Give to the hungry hearts  
Love, power, life, song  
Wrap them in trusted arms  
Healing, strong.  
Lead tender feet  
Show a new way  
Joy out of sorrow  
Dance, play.

*By A.G.*



## *Soul's Rhapsody*

I am the dancer  
the midnight prancer  
in the glow of the spirit  
on my toes...  
whirling round and round  
as the spiral grows.  
I dance in the night  
underneath the moon...  
to a song  
without any rhyme or tune...  
just the soul's breath  
making melody  
in a heart alive  
in a rhapsody.

*By Cathy and Echo  
for the Coalition for Joy*

## *The Shadows*

The Shadows are like flowers to me  
Each one different  
Each one beautiful  
Each one growing strong with us  
(within me)  
The Shadows are like stars to me  
Each one sparkles.  
Each one moves through  
the universe  
Each one closer to the heart inside  
of me  
The Shadows are like life to me.  
Each one precious  
Each one unpredictable  
Each one having to let go of me,  
or is it me of them?

*By Aria from within the Shadows*

## *Sally in the Sunshine*

*(To my Healing Dog, Sally)*

Sally in the sunshine  
is all honey, caramel, and  
melted butter  
stirred into thick, rich cream  
with sorghum molasses eyes  
sweet with love and trust.  
As I lie on the floor  
to stretch my sick, sore, tired,  
tight muscles,  
Sally nuzzles my neck,  
shovels her snout in my armpit,  
snuggles against my tender ribs,  
rests her delicate head on my  
aching shoulder  
then slowly, thoroughly, deliberately  
licks my entire face.  
Warmed by the wash of  
winter sunlight  
and Sally's small, sturdy body  
I feel  
whole and healed  
happy and healthy  
in harmony with winter  
for I am  
well loved

*By Laurie C. Pech-Daley*

## Our Own Angels

Angels are warm  
when the room is cold.  
They are right by our side  
someone to hold.  
Angels will sing  
So that all we will hear,  
is beauty and love,  
gone is the fear.  
Angels won't laugh  
at our pain, they know  
just when to slip in  
and tell us to go.  
Angels keep watch  
of all from above.  
So just what are Angels?  
Angels are LOVE!

*For Emily, with love, from Jane*

## Evie

Evie arrived in my head one night,  
Eyes on fire, chin upright.  
She shook my psyche  
She poked my soul  
And then announced, "I'm here  
to fight!"  
Evie makes rough what was serene.  
She throttles nice.  
She champions mean.  
She'll not forget her prison's code:  
"You mustn't ever make a scene."  
Evie may seem just an angry child;  
The product of a life defiled.  
But she holds my truths in her  
open palm,  
Death is tame. Life is wild!

*By N & M*

## After The Storm

I lost my soul for a spell  
In the acres of prairie swirling:  
when the house landed  
the witch was still kicking  
and the munchkins  
were me myself and us —  
not necessarily in that order.  
Not knowing if I needed  
a brain, heart, or courage  
I counted the bricks and lay  
myself down  
in the cracks to absorb the sun.  
When the great and mighty  
curtain master  
gave up the ghost  
I knew I would have to create home  
and we don't leave without it.

*By Deborah P.*

**MV**

## Notes and Resources

The Mental Health Professionals and Consumers Advocacy Project has launched a special fund to help defray the incredible expenses incurred by David Calof, publisher of *Treating Abuse Today*, as he combats personal and professional harassment by individual members of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. (These are *third-party* complaints, not *client* complaints.) It is ironic, but perhaps not surprising, that Mr. Calof has been targeted: his publication is known for presenting both sides of the issue, and his own counseling and training work has emphasized bringing families together, via mediation techniques, rather than forcing them apart. (See page 1, MV April 1995, for a description of his efforts.) If you have a little money to spare, or a word of encouragement, please send it to the David Calof Legal Defense Fund, at MHPCAP, PO Box 46242, Seattle, WA 98146.

If you have symptoms of fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome, there is a pamphlet available through the Fibromyalgia Network in Tucson, AZ. Call (800)853-2929 for a starter packet. They can also give listings of regional

support groups and health care providers.

A Brief Guide to Dissociative Identity Disorder in Your Medical Practice is offered free of charge by Jill Root, 35 Circle Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87122. Helpful information for clients to give their medical doctors, or for physicians and nurses to better understand and treat their traumatized clients.

### UPDATES ON MV/MC #5

Please change the address for beaded necklaces by Arlita (page 28) to PO Box 1543, Nevada City, CA 95959.

Books by Sanda Davis have not been shipped. We have no current address.

The order number for *Healing the Whole: The Diary of an Incest Survivor* is now (718) 776-0203. Or write to PO Box 640206, Oakland Gardens, NY 11364-0206.

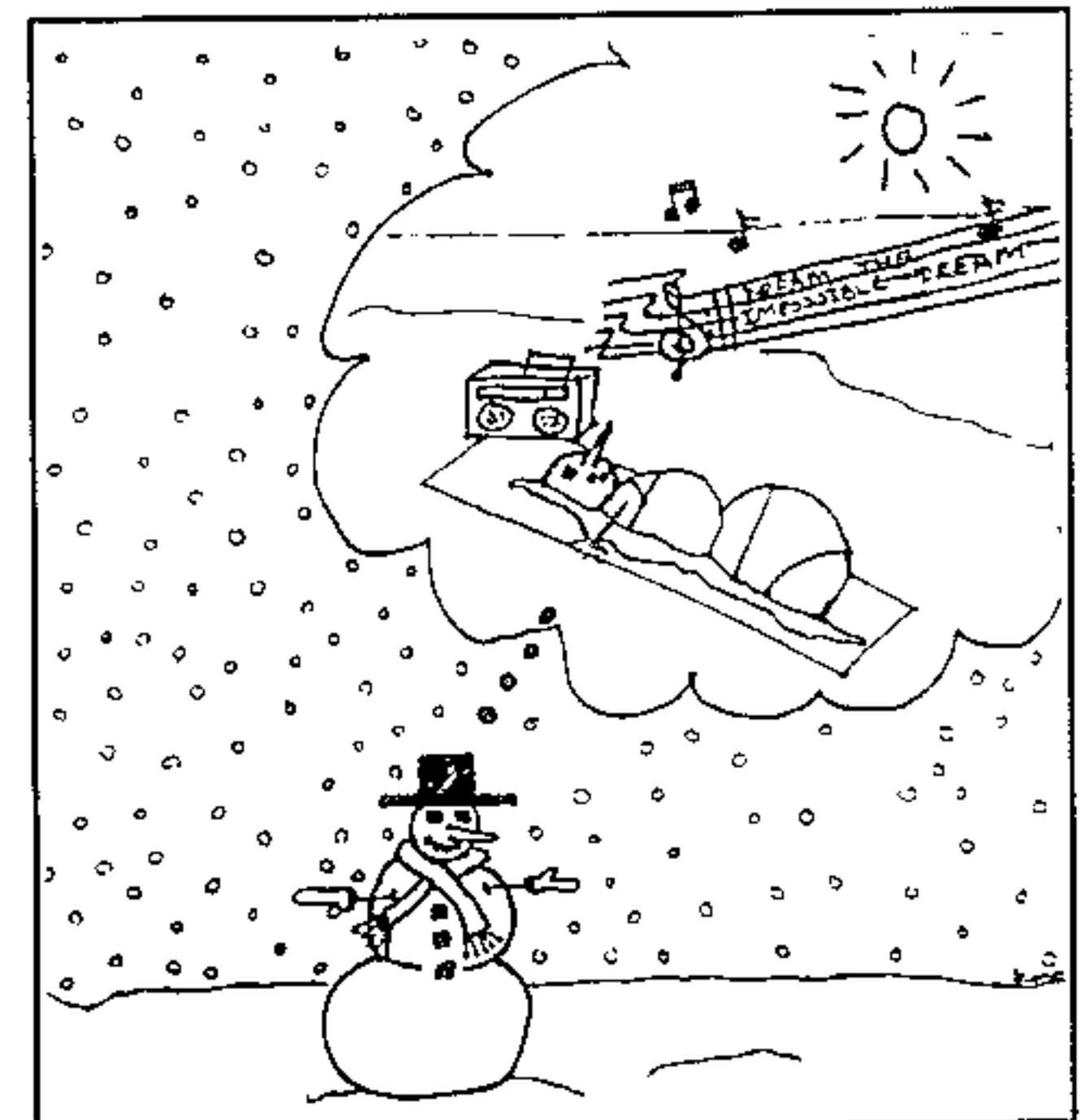
A Canadian resource directory and survivor's guide, *Hope In Healing*, is available for \$12 from Source RE Source, 998 Bloor Street West, Box 10546, Toronto, ONT M6H 4H9 Canada.

Art Therapy combined with Tai Chi Chuan: a new innovative group for women who survived childhood

trauma. Call Vicki Polin, ATR, LCPC at The Awakening Center, 3166 N Lincoln Ave., Suite 224, Chicago IL 60657. (773) 929-6262.

*When We Means Me, Multiple Personality - A View from the Inside.* This non-technical booklet offers clear descriptions of symptoms of severe dissociation. It is written by resident of Australia, and also offers resources for that region. Cost is \$7 plus \$2 postage (American.) Send payment and address to: Queensland Association of Mental Health, Friendship House, 20 Balfour St., New Farm, QLD 4005, Australia.

**MV**



## Letters

If you wish to reply to letter-writers, we will forward the mail. Let us know if you want the recipient to receive your name and address. MV and its staff are not responsible nor liable for any future contact or experiences that may occur. – LW

**Recently our abusive biological father died.** We hadn't seen him since he disowned us 21 years ago. We knew he was dying, and some of us hoped he'd suffer, but the day he died we just felt numb and the next day we started crying. We have had grief symptoms, plus flashbacks and panic attacks. Our doctor tells us we won't be over this for months! Books on grieving go on and on about "your loved one you miss so dearly." I don't miss him! My doctor told me that I'm also grieving for what I didn't have. Even though we knew we'd never see or talk to him again, apparently our heart feels different. It has actually physically hurt. (Our doctor says this is from having a broken heart and is normal.) The PTSD and MPD have been very active. It's as if all the girls are reacting in their own way, so there are a lot of different emotions bouncing around inside. Has anyone else shared a similar experience? We feel so isolated, like wandering around the Sahara Desert all alone.

*By Beverly and the Girls*

**One of my favorite parts in MV** is the letters section...real people asking questions just like I have. This time I am asking a question. I have a tremendously severe startle reflex, as with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I get startled even when the air conditioning compressor come on, or if a spoon is dropped behind me. My children sometimes come into my room to tell me they love me and give me a kiss on the cheek. I "reward" them by sitting straight up in my sleep and screaming so loud that they lunge for the door backwards, or fall on their back. My husband really tries to be careful, but forgets. He will sometimes come up behind me and give me a hug while I am washing dishes. A lot of the time I come out with a scream of terror. Please help! Anyone who has had any experience with PTSD to this degree, offer suggestions. I need all the ideas I can get. My family and

especially my children are being hurt by this. They are showing signs of PTSD from my terror. I don't want to leave them this legacy. Thanks

*By Angel Hope*

**I'm having trouble** 'cause I wonder if I got my own soul. Or do I have to share with the others? I need to know before we get fused, or whatever, that my spirit search will still go on and that they can't undo things I decide about HOME (that's the name I gave God because of the way I see it.) I don't like it if God is a man or woman or an it. God's got to be so big that it can hold all the sadness and hurt and have a special place for all of us...even me. Reverend Vicki said I could think of God and then call that spirit by any name I felt was right. "HOME" it is! I need to know that I will always matter, and that there is a place — a Home for me where I'll always be and be loved. I don't want to just die or get soaked into the others. I don't want to share a soul unless I get to be in charge of spirit stuff. My name is Echo Dyer, by the way. It ain't Echo like a sound bouncing back. It is like Echo who was a forest nymph and was the Goddess Diana's favorite friend. I don't believe in these mythologies, but I want you to know that I'm not a silly empty sound, but a person with a spirit name.

Sometimes I wonder if HOME sees all parts of people and thinks of us as individuals or as one person all together. I really need a HOME. I keep trying hard to get it. You know...peace and assurance. But my spirit friend, Reverend Vicki, has been gone for almost three months. No one to talk to about spirit stuff lately. I write lots in journals, but it isn't the same as real talking and hearing back, like real life talk or letters. Does HOME have a place for people like us, like people broken in parts? Some days I'm almost sure of it. Other days I'm scared.

*By Echo Dyer  
of the Coalition for Joy*

**I have a question for your readers.** My present psychiatrist is chief of staff at the hospital I use. Over the past three years both the doctor and the hospital have written off costs not covered by BCBS and Medicare. My question is: If I decide to change to a psychiatrist who practices at another hospital, can I expect the current doctor and hospital to bill me for any charges incurred that were not covered by the two insurance policies over the past three years? They have both accepted Medicare assignment. Thanks for your replies.

*SHS*

**About three years ago I was** diagnosed, by a top-gun, as MPD, scoring 30-31 on the SCID-D. "Layering" I've been told, is my style (How fashionable! Style is not a choice.) I have been, still am, "I" not "we", and "Me" not "Us". I have no alters. No company. No voices. No intrusive thoughts. NADA. I've wanted to experience the phenomena already, so that I can acknowledge, suffer, then live a better, more satisfying life. How can I integrate and fuse if I'm not divided? Hypnosis is out because of how it was misused with me by previous therapists. No one else in my life has any concept that I have "problems." I need to understand this layering, and how it works. Could somebody out there in MV Land help me understand this? Also, I wonder if an amyntal interview will help me see and confirm for me that I'm MPD as the tests point out. Thanks for responding to my dilemma.

*The Artful Dodger*

**This is a desperate letter** because we feel very angry, hurt and betrayed by our therapist. We want to quit therapy but know this is a self-destructive course to take. "Me" the adult, wants to know if anyone has had similar problems in therapy: what happened, what to do, any advice.

We've been in therapy for ten years with different therapists and had lots of

therapy failures. We also had psychiatric hospitalizations, suicide attempts, and numerous psychiatrists, and shock treatment over the years. We're working very hard to find a doctor and therapist we can trust, and have not had a hospitalization or suicide attempt in almost four years. After two years with our present therapist, we finally trusted her enough to bring the children out. She has talked with, listened to, loved and encouraged the children for the past six months. All of a sudden, now the children aren't allowed to come out to talk to her. She says ME can take care of them and give them what they need. ME is overwhelmed, afraid another part will come out and abuse them, afraid she's a bad mother. The therapist says ME has to do it. Today ME did a visualization and took one of the young children into her. The therapist thought this was good work, but ME is afraid to parent the child and the child is afraid of ME. We tried to do what the therapist said, but we don't understand why we have to do this. The therapist insists on it, so we do it so she won't leave us. The children are all crying and wailing and spitting fire inside. ME can't handle it. None of us can handle another rejection or failure in therapy. The therapist is trashing and ignoring the kids just like so many people did in the past. ME doesn't even know who all the kids are and she wants ME to parent them. How can this work? Is this an attempt at integration? It doesn't feel like integration. It feels like shutting the kids down like we have so many times before. We feel like we've going to explode. We feel like we're going to kill ourselves if therapy fails again. What to do?

By CS

Though most multiples are dealing with severe sexual, physical, and mental abuse, I fall into the "other" category. After much research, I have determined that during intrauterine growth I experienced my first split. I was born a preemie and a drug addict. Despite the medications being prescribed by my mother's physician, neither of us received aid through our withdrawal experiences. My mother (and I) also suffered many severe

emotional traumas while she was pregnant with me. The pattern of emotional abuse and neglect, as well as other notable traumas, continued up through the age of eight. Beyond that time a new set of dynamics and abuse started. Anyway, I was wondering if anyone else developed DID due to intrauterine drug addiction and/or severe intrauterine trauma and/or other forms of emotional neglect and abuse after birth?

Thank you for your input.  
Amass

A few years ago, my therapist called my dreams and poetry "incestuous offerings" that I bring to him. Although I'm not now seeing that therapist, I am still trying to make sense of that comment. I'd be grateful for any response. If I let it, his comment turns what I think of as helpful expressions (my dreams and poems) into vile things that take me back to the guilt and shame of incest.

By C.B.

I'd like to get information on two subjects. The first is how to work on the struggle of individual alters wanting to have their own lives at the expense of others in the system. I am a functioning adult alter and am scared to death of the inside alters who experienced the abuse. I am fearful that they will ruin my life, or take it back to the chaos it once was five years ago. Also, I would like to know how to meet other multiples through the world wide web. I have professional and 12-step friends, but no one who understands very much about multiplicity. Thank you.

Sharon T.

I am a recently graduated professional counselor (master's degree) who has dissociative characteristics. Are there any support groups for professionals? I am afraid of too much disclosure in the wrong places. Also, there is a concern about recovery I would like to share. Spirituality feels like a void to me, and I've been searching for some sense of connection. So I sometimes attend workshops. A few weeks ago, I attended a conference on holistic

healing that featured Caroline Myss and Ron Roth, called "Anatomy of Spirit" for her new book. Ms Myss stressed that pain is an illusion and that we all need to put aside our history. She said investing our energy into our past wounds will block healing, insinuating that if we don't succeed in healing "in three seconds" we are doing it wrong. I wanted to ask her how she would tell these things to a three year old who was being raped. I began hearing the voices of my family saying I don't really hurt, and childhood doesn't affect us later, and if I can't just get over it, it's my own fault. Mr. Roth spoke about compassion, but I heard no compassion from Ms Myss toward those who asked her questions. It seems to me that one must be willing to recognize another's pain in order to feel compassion. Perpetrators notoriously lack this recognition. I've finally learned enough to get up and leave, but this conference was a costly mistake for me. I would like to warn others that not all "healers" are helpful. Look into their work carefully before attending their presentations, and then trust your gut reactions while you're there.

The Company of C

I would really like to hear from others we were abused by their Dads who were ministers. Many times victims go to church to find peace. That was where all my confusion was. It didn't feel like a safe place for me. I hope someone will share with me, through MV. I have been in hiding for so long.

Want To Heal.

MV



Teamwork!

## Letting Go

I sit with my arms wrapped around myself tightly, to cocoon myself and make the truth go away. My head hangs in great sadness, my brown hair covering my eyes, shielding the pain from my therapist, Kate. I want to run. There is no place to go except to deal with these very painful, deep feelings left over from my abusive childhood.

Right now, I hate Kate so much for making me look at this stuff. I do not want to accept that I was sexually abused and unprotected as a child in my house. There is a big difference for me between belief of and acceptance of the truth. As part of accepting the truth, I also accept what cannot happen now.

Sitting in the room with Kate, I am that forlorn child, the one no one wanted, the unseen and overlooked one, the lost child without an anchor. I almost can't see, it hurts so bad. I have wanted a mom desperately my whole life. A long time ago, the idea that my good mom was coming was imprinted deeply in my psyche as something to hold onto. It was the way I hung on through years and years of abuse. It has been heartbreaking to release that old belief. And letting go of the idea that Kate now could be my mom has been very difficult. It feels like this internal structure of thought, something that has been very real to me since childhood, has been taken away from me. This idea has been as big and real to me as the abuse. The strength of my conviction and hope of a childhood, with a good mother, free of torment and agonizing fear, has kept me alive.

For the past year, after five years in therapy with Kate, each time I go to session, it has been a battle between the truth and denial. The truth of my past and what can't be now feels like it will break me. The denial of what was and holding onto false hopes forces me to live outside of myself. I am not connected. For a long time, I have thought the expectation of and waiting for a good mom now was a small distortion. Upon examination, it is much deeper. It is the tip of the iceberg. Underneath is a thickness, a rock-solid barrier to reality.

Kate looks at me with compassion in her blue eyes and says, "It must be so hard to have grown up and missed the growing-up years, for inside kids, to be in an adult body now. It must be hard to find joy in responsibility when no one was responsible for you."

From a young place inside, I don't want to hear her say things about being grown up. I just want her to be my mom and give me all the things I didn't have then. My eyes harden, my heart turns to steel. "Fuck you," I reply. Hiding behind my tough veneer, I don't care how she responds. After five years of mostly compassionate

objectivity, she flies out of her seat, stands up and stares at me with a mad look in her eyes.

"It is not my fault and I don't like being blamed. I didn't cause this. Your parents did. And I don't like being sworn at."

Katlin, the twelve year old, tough part of me, said "Sorry," with a glum expression on her face. "I know it is not your fault."

Inside I am thinking, *but you still could be my mom if you wanted. You just don't want to. Just like my mother didn't.* At the end of the session, I leave, feeling completely rejected and not wanted.

In a rage, I drive home and park in my driveway. I am afraid of hurting myself. After a while, I am able to go inside. Sitting on my bed, the tears pour from my eyes. I want to clutch at the illusion that my psyche is letting fade. I can envision an image of the good mom I've always wanted talking to me.

*"Oh dear one, I know you've wanted a mother to come so bad. But I am in your mind. I am perfection in your child mind, the mother who bakes cookies and tucks you in for naps. I protect you and keep you safe from harm. I am your friend. But I am not real. I am only real to you and now there are real people wanting to help you, to love you and available for you to love them. There is a good life waiting for you, the one that I so badly wanted you to have."*

I am sobbing, clutching my pink baby blanket. "No," I plead. "I need you to stay and help me. I need you to rescue me from the abuse. I need you to make it not true."

She replies with gentleness, *"But I can't do that. You created the idea of me to save yourself."* She starts to pull away.

"But this can't be it. I need to do this letting go slowly, it is going to take me time, I need more time."

Her kind voice replies, *"It does take time, and you know what? I will always live in your heart, always."*

Looking back, I know I spent a lot of time in that place between worlds, where fantasy is reality and imagination creates some inner peace. What existed then was anticipation of future abuse and my "good" mom coming to rescue and take care of me.

I have been holding onto the hope to the point that it has become an addiction. Maintaining this denial of reality is something I have needed to do to get through a day. In therapy, this past year, I have cycled through the stages of denial, grief and rage to a beginning acceptance and then would begin to try again to get my relationship with Kate to be the one I have waited for my whole life.

After another subsequent cycle of rage with Kate, I decide to let go. I realize that I

am not getting anywhere, continuing to hope for something that can not be, with Kate or anyone else. After much therapy, I am aware that when I hold on to this idea, in the moment, the hope/fantasy does offer comfort. However, this comfort is based on fantasy. My goal is to live my life with a base of deep inner integrity to draw upon. That includes acceptance of hard truths. I now begin the adjustment to life without this belief that was formed to maintain hope in the midst of dismal and unbearable childhood circumstances.

I grieve and let go of false hopes. I have experienced many huge craving and wanting feelings, similar to what an addict goes through when she lets go of her "drug of choice" to numb inner and outer reality. I feel the abject loneliness and rejection I lived through then, when coldness filled my soul. It is a brutal knowing. When I was a child, the isolation was palpable as I lay in my room. Then, the idea meant the captivity would eventually end and my real family would be there. Now, it means the captivity ends as I let go.

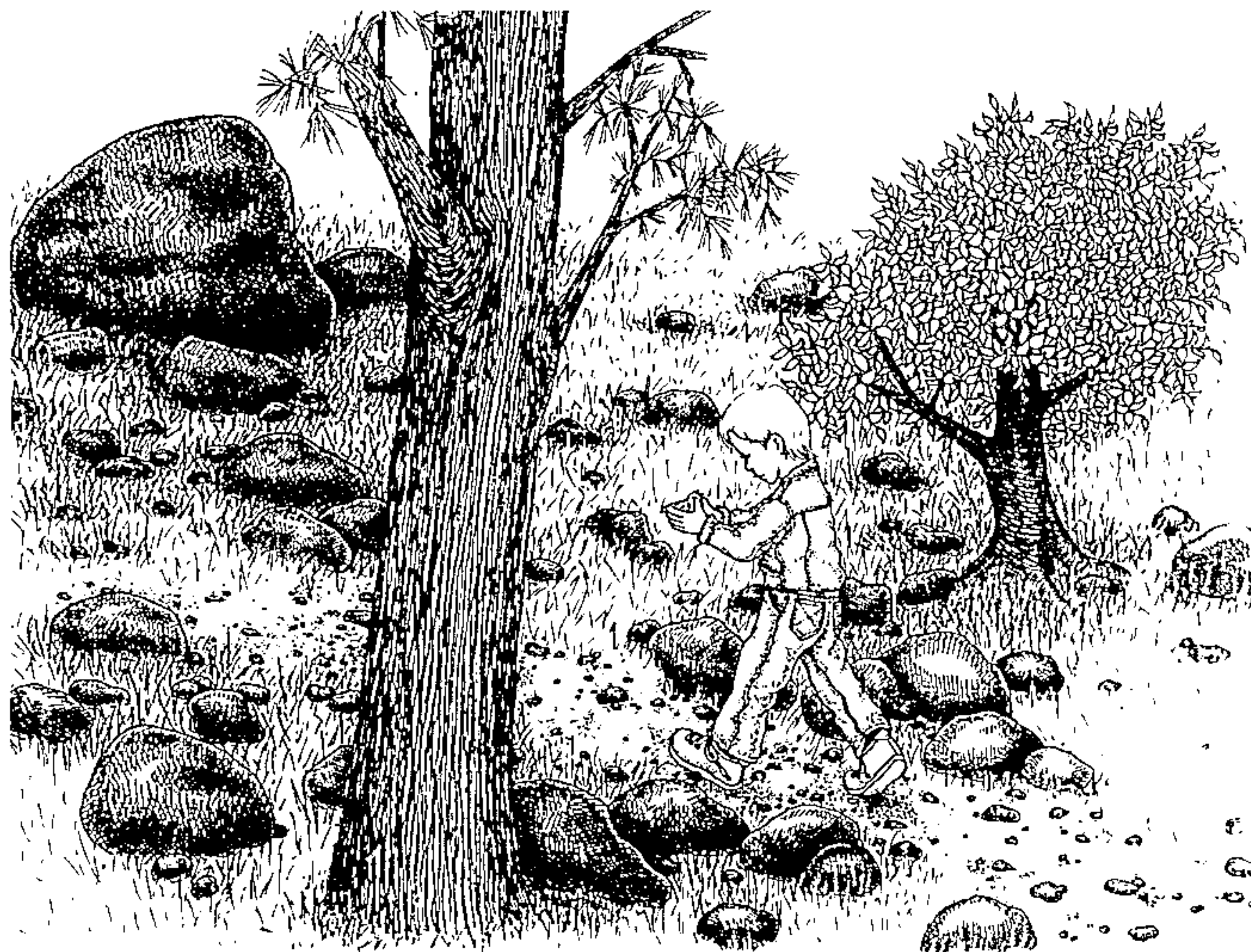
I say this because the false hopes have kept me from having what is in the here and now. To the degree that I cling to the false hope is the same degree I am not present with loved ones in my life now. I can be with someone but still feel like I wait and want something else.

I am more present now. I am not completely free of it, but the hope is no longer my main sedative. Slowly, I learn to find new comforts, internally and externally, to help me feel secure that there is enough goodness and there are real people to count on now. I am no longer that emotionally-starved child.

To come out of my fantasy world, I have made four goals for myself: to make one meaningful connection a day, be gentle with myself, to commit to learn how to be alive, and to not give up. It means coming out into the real world instead of hiding inside with my strong, familiar idea. At first, I thought I would die. And maybe I am, dying to an old way of coping that helped keep me alive through my childhood.

It has not been easy to be in a therapy relationship this past year. My therapist and I both made a commitment to stick with this healing process. I try to remember that together it can be worked through. I have wanted to quit more times than I care to count. To do this healing work at a core level involves much tenacity and courage on both the part of the client and the therapist. It is a very big challenge to release the idea of being rescued, when my good mother comes. I feel and know the stark truth of my inner and past reality without the blinders on.

By K. Riley



## Books

Before I get into the main book reviews, I want to let readers know about a really exciting new publication called *Cuckoo*, published by Green Door Studios. *Cuckoo* is a well-drawn, well-thought-out adult-style quarterly 'comic' book created by Madison Clell, an MV subscriber, and the subject is...you guessed it...dissociation. The quality is high. The price is quite reasonable: \$12 per year, \$3 per issue. I read the first issue (published last August) and was very impressed. Do check it out...and send your checks and letters to Green Door Studios, PO Box 12150, Eugene, OR 97440. Or E-mail them at [door@cruzio.com](mailto:door@cruzio.com). Intelligent, artistic work like this about dissociation should be encouraged! — Lynn W.

### Healing Tasks: Psychotherapy with Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse

By James I. Kepner, PhD. Published by Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco. (415) 433-1767. © 1995. 312 pages. Hardback. \$34.95.

The Healing Tasks Model explored in this book by a Gestalt-trained therapist is another alternative to the abreactive techniques which marked trauma treatment in the past decade.

As in the Attachment Model, referred to elsewhere, this method also recognizes the developmental problems faced by children who grow up in abusive conditions. Kepner believes that compromises in normal growth are creative adjustments made by the child. Healing leads to a "growth process," not a "cure" (as in a disease

model of treatment.) Among the tasks he cites as essential are developing support, the ability to self-manage feelings and interactions, mourning losses, and reconsolidating the self. There are also chapters on traumatic memories, changing one's internal perspective of experience, and healing the gap between body and self which frequently occurs in abuse survivors.

The writing style is accessible to laypersons, and ideas flow nicely, but the content is directed primarily to treatment providers. It includes a multi-page assessment instrument to determine where clients fall on the continuum of completing "healing tasks." This may be of interest to adult survivors, though it may also be difficult to determine precisely "where you are" by yourself. Other benefits may come from some of the Gestalt-therapy techniques described, including emphasis on breathing and posture.

### Coping with Trauma: A Guide to Self-Understanding.

By Jon G. Allen, PhD. Published by American Psychiatric Press, Washington D.C., (800)368-5777. © 1995. 385 pages. Hardback. \$23.95.

Dr. Allen is the senior staff psychologist for the Trauma Recovery Program at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, KS. One can't quarrel with the copious material presented here, which attempts to be relevant to the broad spectrum of traumatic experience: from weather catastrophes to wars to violent crime, sexual abuse and incest. In common with Dr. Ross writing in our

Therapist's Page this month, Allen highlights problems of childhood attachment as a predominant factor of an individual's response to trauma. Trauma treatment is broadly discussed, using examples. For instance, rather than being "filled with anger" (and thus about to explode) he thinks it more helpful to picture yourself with a short fuse, not as a huge container. A phrase such as "You are easily angered by current provocations that are reminiscent of past trauma," brings the problem into today where something can be done about it, rather than believing explosive anger is a permanent part of your character. But despite the author's intention to write a book for the layperson, I didn't find the book's structure or explanation particularly accessible. The frequent footnotes refer to sources only, with no followup. For example, page 74 refers to *dissociation* with a phrase: "The concept is mired in professional controversy." This bald statement is footnoted...but the note, when sought out, reads only "Lynn & Rhue, 1994." Seek "Lynn" in the Sources (which follow Notes) and you find that there is a book by this team. So apparently layreaders will learn about the controversy surrounding dissociation only by requesting this book from their library. Not a particularly helpful approach, but one that is repeated throughout this volume. Physiological responses and research studies are cited frequently, with much technical detail. There's a lot of useful information here, but it's heavy going, so be prepared.—LW

THANKS for your writing, art and ideas! We need your sharing!

February 1997

Healing through Play. What to do outside therapy hours. Getting (and keeping) a Life! ART: Something Fun. DEADLINE: Dec. 1, 1996.

April 1997

Healing through Work. Personal growth and responsibilities. Managing fluctuations and different abilities within. ART: Yourself(ves) at work. DEADLINE: Feb. 1, 1997.

June 1997

You and Your Family of Origin. Connecting, disconnecting, reconnecting, negotiating with parents, siblings and other relatives. ART: The family you treasure. DEADLINE: April 1, 1997.

August 1997

Hope and Healing for All who Dissociate. Special concerns of Men, Children, Elders and People of Color. Community & Medical Education Efforts. ART: Faces and facets of dissociation. DEADLINE: June 1, 1997.



~ Reflections of Progress ~

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