

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

Vol XIII, No.2

April 2001

ISSN1042-2277

*In This Issue:*

## Denial and Disbelief Memories and More



## *Moving On*

This appears to be the end  
but it's really a beginning.  
From this relationship I have  
grown.

It has changed me gently  
It has given me hope to go  
on.

Pain will arrive again  
Fear will join with worry again  
But as the seasons change  
so will Courage go ahead in  
the journey

This is the song that Hope  
sings

It seems I stand looking back  
today

The splatters of light in the  
darkness

Show me that walking  
quickly through darkness  
will lead me to the light

I fear the journey stepping  
forward alone

There is no quick stepping  
away from this moment

Forgive me if I pause longer  
in looking back this time  
for I must leave fear here to  
survive, and I want to  
remember

where I've been before  
moving on.

*By Becky C.*

MV

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# Internal Fears and Inner Work

By Eileen S.

Very soon after my memories of childhood abuse began to return I realized that I was going to have to do some serious work on myself in healing old mental and emotional injuries. That was when I was introduced to what the word "fear" can mean. Fear is a survival mechanism, but I've found that unchecked it can be a major stumbling block on the path towards healing myself. It seems like there are a thousand ways fear can be defined, and each one of them can be a struggle for me to let go of.

Something I have learned is that I cannot just erase a fear through logic. First, I need to honor the fear and understand it. It exists for a reason and if it's still hanging on it means it's deeply rooted. My saying "Thank You" can be a first step. I honor it as it has kept some part of me safe. Then I really look at it. What caused that fear? What is its root? This can be scary in itself, as sometimes I've needed to go poking into the dark corners of myself to discover the origin of the fear. So many times I've touched that root, done a mental "yeek!" and gone scampering back to the present, unwilling to face it or just totally terrified of it.

First contact is good though! Once touched, I can think about it, then go back when I am ready, and touch it a little longer. Eventually I get to the point where I can sit with the fear and understand it. It's then that I can ask if the fear is still valid. To do this I have to look at the fear in a detached way, without getting sucked into it. Is the fear based in a childhood incident? Well, I'm an adult now and I can take care of myself, so therefore the fear is obsolete and I can let it go.

That decision made, what do I do next? That is something that will be unique to each individual. For me, once I understand the fear, I can sometimes marry logic and emotion and gently let the fear go. Other times I use what I call my "bull in a china

shop" technique that is basically where I put my head down and just go DO whatever is scaring me. This is useful when I have some fear that I know is illogical and obsolete and which I know will lessen or disappear if I can just do the thing I'm scared of. For example, for years when I was among people, I always sat or stood with my back to something, preferably a wall, so that I could feel safe. This is rooted in a severe lack of safety in my childhood, but this extreme vigilance is not needed now. So at a workshop I put my chair way up in the front of the class on purpose. This made me extremely nervous and I was highly aware of everyone moving behind me, but by the end of the week the fear of a lack of safety in such a situation had lessened considerably.

One thing I have to keep in mind is that there is no timetable for dealing with a particular fear. Some, like the above example, I have to work on many times. It helps me immensely to have a goal in mind. In my case, one of the things I want is to heal enough to have a fairly normal life. A teacher's question in a philosophy class of "How bad do you want it?" has many times given me that little bit of extra courage I needed to make the first step towards facing a fear.

Dealing with my fears also leads to other things. Every single fear I face and heal opens me up more to deeper

levels of faith and spirituality. There have been many times when I was so scared that I couldn't do anything but turn it over to the Creator, let go of my usual "I can do this myself," attitude. I had to ask (or scream) for help. I have learned that the Creator will not ask me to face anything that I cannot handle, regardless of my own severe doubts about the matter. Also, if it's a really difficult fear, some kind of support will appear, though I always have to do the work myself. Very slowly, faith in what I am asked to deal with continues to build.

As I face and heal my own fears and issues I become more whole, more capable, with new skills and confidence, and therefore can handle the next step in my own healing. It is an ever-growing and changing process, and one I'm very grateful for regardless of the pain and tears involved.

I've found that fear can seem to have a life of its own and many times it can blow things way out of proportion. Not once, with all the internal fears I've faced, have I ever found the situation as bad as the fear made it out to be. Over time I've developed more confidence and skills and now I can look at the latest fear that has popped up and know that I am strong. I'm not alone and I can deal with this.

Eventually.

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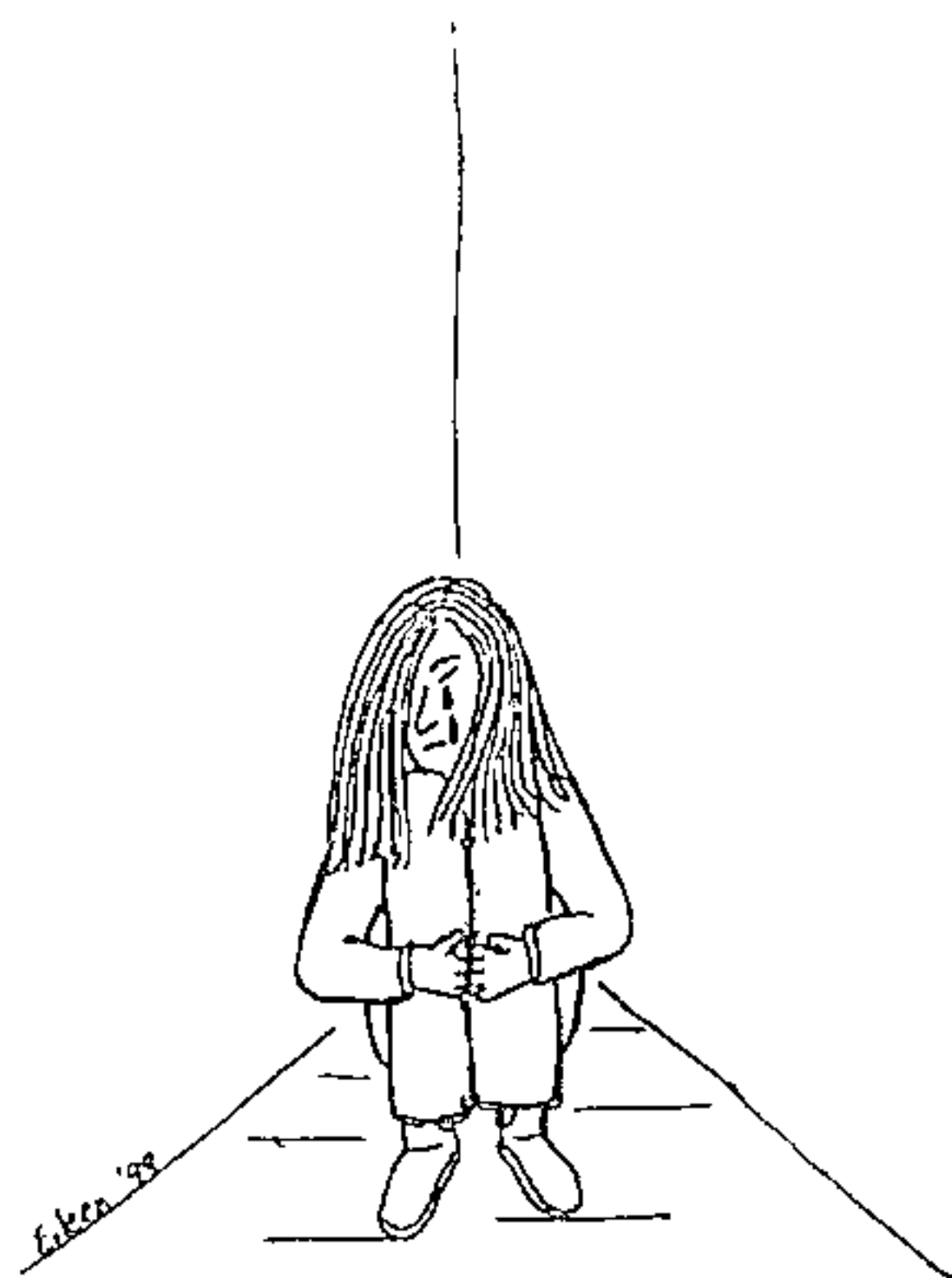


## Past

From the past there are incidents.  
 You wish you never did it.  
 You wish you were more mature.  
 You wish you could see into the future.  
 You wish you were redirected.  
 You wish you weren't encouraged by your peers.  
 You wish your life situations would have been different.  
 I must learn to let go of the past.  
 I must recognize who I am now,  
 And not my past failures.  
 I have learned a lot from my past.  
 But now I must acknowledge my accomplishments and not dwell on my failures.  
 I am not the same person I was then.  
 I have matured.  
 I have more knowledge of life.  
 I am redirected.  
 I have pride and dignity of myself.  
 I have a much better life now,  
 A life that should destroy my past.

By Mary J. S.

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 We appreciate your support! — Lynn W., Editor

## Not So Sick

By Erin D.

"You are not as sick as the others." I have heard this said to me so many times.

But just how sick do I have to be in order to be sick enough? And exactly how sick am I? Do they even know or do they just think they know? Do they know the thoughts that race through my head? How every wall calls out to me and taunts me to hit it or kick it...anything. Feel the pain in a way that you can really feel it. Feel it in a way that others can actually see. Let people see the pain. Tell. Tell people what they did to you. You are not small and weak like they thought you were. You are strong and powerful. No one can hurt me anymore. No one can hurt me but me. No one can make that hurt go away but me.

But what about that man? That man that follows me around. That man that I can sense no matter where I am.

"There is no one there, Erin. There is no man, Erin. You are paranoid." That's what everyone says. But he is so real. Real to me. And he is waiting and watching. Watching for me to make one mistake. No matter how big or small he is waiting and watching. Almost wishing and hoping for me to make that little mistake.

But I thought I was safe here? No, I am not safe anywhere. Where is he? He is everywhere. And what will he do?

There is no way to know. But I am paranoid, that is all. I just have to keep telling myself that.

I lost track...what was I talking about? I hate when this happens but it seems to be happening more and more. Where was I? Sick enough. Am I sick enough? If I am not sick, then why do people scare me? I should be able to walk around outside or in a store. I should be able to take a bus or train to get to the places I need to go without becoming frozen with fear. Shouldn't I? It's all in my head, and I just need to snap out of it.

I am not as sick as the others and I need to remember that. Why do simple, harmless, everyday things take on new and dangerous personalities? Why does a mirror or window dare me to break it. Why do I shake every time I walk by the medicine cabinet?

Sick. Sick. "You are not as sick as the others." No, I do not hear voices and no, I do not see things. Therefore, I am not sick enough. I could be sicker, but I hope that never happens. That would be heartbreaking. Until then, I long for a day when I am safe to be alone in my own head. A day when walls do not talk to me and curtains are curtains. A day when I can take my meds and go to a pharmacy safely and alone. A day when I am even less sick than the others.

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# Denial and Disbelief

By The Sunflower House

**I**t's bad enough when you are wondering about the things alters are remembering, but it was infinitely worse when "false memory" information hit the media. It was hard to be certain of anything as it was!

When I began remembering, I couldn't believe what I was visualizing, hearing and feeling. There were very foreign ideas, interests and thoughts suddenly in my brain. It was impossible for any of it to be real. But it explained perfectly the confusions of my life. I had answers to why I did things and why I felt things. My phobias, my obsessions and compulsions became clear as to why I had them. Whenever I recognized and accepted the memory, I felt immediate relief, and sometimes, the obsessions, compulsions and phobias disappeared.

In spite of the positive results, I still needed to make a commitment to believing in my judgment and conclusions, and those of my alters, practically twice a day. Most of the information I have on DID fits me, but there is only one alter who doesn't doubt. When we were children, we were brainwashed into believing abusers' attitudes about us. Most of that was about how stupid, ignorant and ugly we are... "Who would want to listen to you?"... "You'll never have friends."... "Do you really think anyone would...love you; like you; choose you for their team; hire you; think you're pretty; would think you are competent in any way?" etc.

In addition, there are the crazy lies you are told about what is happening to you... "I love you" when you are being hurt. "Mom/Dad/Caretaker will tell you what's good for you," when you are being shamed and betrayed. You are blamed for everything that goes wrong when it was clearly an accident, or a life choice your mom or caretaker decided on, or a mistake happened that had nothing to do with you. This last item on my list totally destroyed whatever faith I had in my own senses and opinions. When I was told, for instance, that my mom lost

her job because I was hungry, I believed her.

I am coming apart at the seams, yet resolving old mysteries in my life. On a deep level, such a wonderful cool, understanding of old emotionally-charged thoughts I had never understood. There is an unknotting of tensions I didn't even realize I had, until they stopped. I felt better as my alters have been feeling better and safer. My alters are becoming curious and astonished as they look around and see where we are, forty years from their last memory. I have a great therapist, who gave me a diagnosis that finally seemed to be correct, and I'm following her suggestions that seem to help and relieve problems, and my alters are growing with their new understandings of the past.

Then I turned on the news and discovered several hospitals and therapists were in trouble for "planting false memories." I got angry, scared and upset. Then I felt depressed and defensive. I didn't mention it to anyone because I was ashamed and embarrassed. Had I made a stupid mistake? Was everything I thought I was doing yet another trick of yet another abuser? Had I been abused? Then came the phone calls from my family, crowing about how wrong and stupid I was again, my neighbors now doubting the explanations I had been giving them for my erratic behaviors... ("Are you sure your therapist is honest and not just taking your money?") my in-laws saying that maybe I don't have MPD, that I simply need to toughen up and take responsibility for my life, and stop with this waste of my time and money.

I cried. My entire life had become MPD therapy. I was taking meds that I would need help in stopping. I had left my job to go on disability. Were all of my senses and feelings wrong?

Finally, I pulled up my socks and started rereading my journals of the past few years. I started researching what "false memories" were about. I

cautiously began to have a conversation with my therapist about false memories. Almost immediately, I knew false memory wasn't, couldn't be about me. But I wanted to be certain. It really helped that my core person never doubted what was wrong with us.

We were never hypnotized or took drugs which made us overly suggestible. My therapist never bullied or pushed me into a direction that mirrored her opinions. She either gently led or guided me to asking myself more questions. She had suggested I might be hearing and feeling other selves in my head only after a few sessions. We explored first my journals, where she saw the different handwritings I also saw, but I had no clue what they were about, or why I was writing them.

I began therapy because I could not explain why I watched myself say things and get emotional, or did things that were not my ideas. I had conversations with people where I hadn't a clue why I said what I had said, I would cry helplessly, scream, and generally pull a Joan Crawford scene, while at the same time I had no idea where this drama came from or why I was upset. Most of all, I could not explain to myself at all why I felt I was placed somewhere behind twenty layers of plastic, muffled and far away from all of this. I felt I was performing for the crowds in some scene somebody had neglected to explain to me.

My therapist did not tell me this was happening; I told *her* in our first session. Later, after it became impossible for me to work because I felt so bad, so reckless and hopeless, so depressed...most of which I did not feel, but someone else did, which was immobilizing me and affecting my social life and job anyway...I quit. My therapist asked me what I planned to do, and I said "look for another job with less stress." But I couldn't. My emotions were swamping me with a despair that I couldn't control. I didn't know what to do.

Then my therapist said, "What about Disability?" I knew nothing about it. She suggested calling my old employer and finding out what was possible. To my utter relief and dismay, there were things they could do. They had known something was going real wrong with me. One even mentioned, "You're MPD, aren't you?" to my utter shock. She had known, and I hadn't, for many months.

Well, papers got signed, statements were made. I am now on Disability. At no time was I bullied or cajoled or threatened in any way. I was never isolated by my therapy. I did not talk to only one group of people, vested in my being MPD. I had a life with a variety of friends and social interactions. Many of these people were disinterested parties, uninvolved with the decisions I made. Nobody had set an agenda or forced an agenda on me.

My therapist validated me, but didn't manage me. She reassured me, she was there for me, she restated my confused sentences about emotions and feelings. She never created thoughts for me. She never

condemned or demeaned me. Several times, when I didn't understand what she had said, and one of us thought it was a threat, I could ask her about it because she allowed us to "misbehave" in her office, to make fear-based scenes (never violent, of course.)

After this soul-searching and research, I knew for sure that false memories were not my problem, just as my previous diagnoses of Borderline Personality Disorder and Manic Depressive Disorder had not been. I saw progress, in spite of losing abilities to have a social life or go to work. MPD is a type of mental disturbance which is not a "mental illness." It requires insight, research and acceptance. It means not caving in to other people for no reason other than I'm not sure of my own senses. I use the fact that we need to trust our senses and use our senses to solve problems, not depend on someone else's judgment rather than our own. I use the fact that almost all of my symptoms are explained by DID. I use

the fact that discovering in therapy who I am, is creating change in my beliefs, opening up to relief of pain, and happiness in unexpected moments of clarity.

Thinking is becoming less hurtful, and more about seeing my strengths. It's learning to recognize that the punishments I suffered when I was a child were never based on who I was or what I did. It was instead about the very people who were judging me, people who were very unhappy with themselves, and who had morally corrupted and debased themselves long before I ever was there.

With my therapist holding up a mirror to my face, and I holding a picture of myself as a child, it's seeing that I was, like all children, an unformed, clay-like object of helplessness and wide-eyed unthinking innocence, who could not in anyone's wildest fantasies have an intelligence, force of personality or physical strength to damage the abusive adults who accused me of damaging them. My therapy is teaching me how to help myself. I use that fact most of all.

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## Treasure

*To find the sacred mother in your self  
to feel her touch at last,  
as seasons pass  
to let her blessings flow from inner  
wealth  
To love, to give, create nor  
fear your last  
These are the treasures held within our  
pain  
When searching for ourselves yet once  
again.*

*By Irene F.*



# Therapists' Page

By Lisa Peabody, LISW,CCDC-III-E

Lisa Peabody, LISW, CCDC-III-E is a therapist in private practice in Middleburg Heights, Ohio. She has been treating traumatized clients for almost twenty years. She is a member of ISSD and is a frequent presenter at International and Regional conferences.

## Relationships and Dissociation

Relationships are inevitable.

DID patients who are already in a relationship need to really evaluate that relationship before deciding to make any changes. A DID patient who gets well, and already has a spouse, probably has a spouse with significant issues! If a DID patient is relatively stable and in the later phases of treatment, relationships should be approached slowly and carefully. No plunges. The chances of traumatic reenactment are virtually certain to occur.

Is it good for two DID people to enter into a relationship? My first response is, "Hell, no!" But it depends on the two people. I've seen "sicker" relationships with non-DID married couples whose marriage is in serious trouble.

A relationship with two survivors can work, if both are relatively stable, and are committed to therapy and to working out/processing their traumatic reenactment dances.

I have a couple in treatment now who met outside of the therapeutic setting. One is DID in the later stages,

very grounded, and has done amazing work. The other is not DID, but is PTSD and ADHD. Both are very committed to therapy, and both have a very strong spiritual base. They were friends for a long time before anything romantic came into the relationship.

A "relationship" is not sex. If that's all there is, then it is a form of traumatic reenactment the patient(s) are not seeing, and it will be a train wreck.

The good news about relationships is that nothing is ever a mistake. It's an experiment. People try things. Scientists have always had a theory or hypothesis they want to test. And sometimes the results are not what they expected. But they always learn something from what they observe. You can do the same thing with your experiments in relating to others, whether in friendship or more intimate contexts.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- A. Go slow.
- B. Do daily reality checks.
- C. Talk to each other and check things out before assuming anything.
- D. Love is the key.

E. Always remember the "I" part of the "We". One must always maintain one's own identity as a separate entity, even when being bonded with the mate. There are three units in a relationship. There is (a). There is (b). and there is (a—b).

Notice I didn't say AB or BA or something melded. There is still space with intimacy.

A very good book to read on this subject is called *The Dance of Intimacy*, by Harriet Lerner, Ph.D. She also wrote the *Dance of Anger*, and the *Dance of Deception*, all of which I believe DID patients should read. They are not about DID. They are about being a "real person" which is the ultimate goal of all patients, especially if they are struggling to find out what the hell "normal" is, anyway.

My approach now is not focusing so much on the traumas themselves, but on the developmental issues that got interrupted. Relationships are an excellent place to examine distortions of reality, and for teaching skills and what is normal between people.

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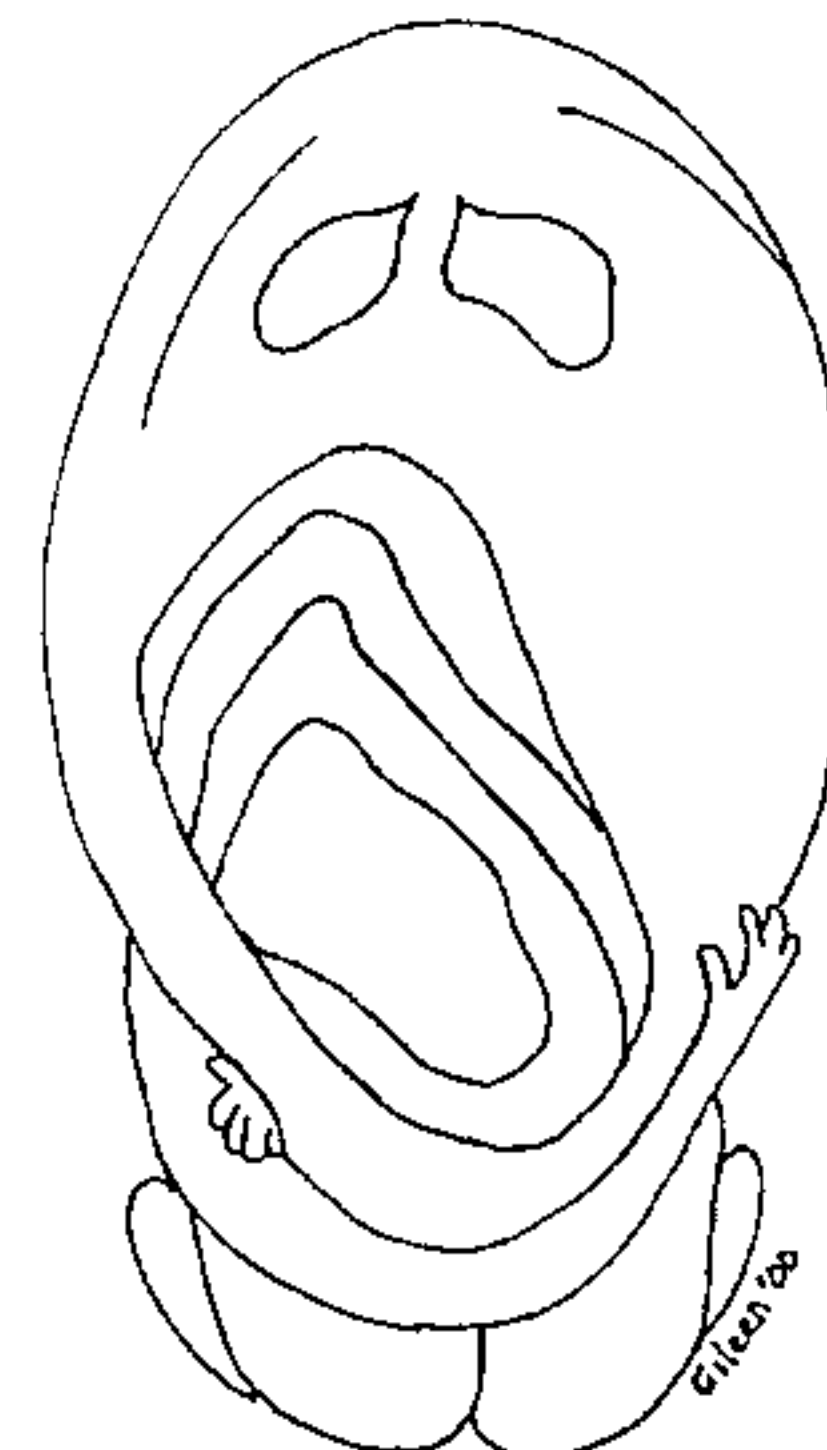
## A Quandary

Little child in me—who are you? Do you have a name? What is it you want from me?

I don't want you in my life, my child! I don't understand your needs. How can I fulfill what I don't know? No one ever fulfilled *my* needs. Why should you be given *your* needs? Are you so special that you deserve to be nurtured and loved? Ha ha! No one is lucky enough to be loved in this world. If you are lucky you are able to survive long enough until you can die.

Oh, the pain you have caused me, little one. By showing up and demanding what you feel is rightly yours, that you be loved and nurtured as if by a gentle parent. Well, my friend, no such parent exists for us. We are alone in this world. I do not know if I want you to come into my life. I could try to give you the things you lost and in so doing, give something to myself. But how can I give you something I never had? I do not know how to love and nurture a child. I don't even know how to love myself!

By Lisa S.



A child can scream at many levels.  
No one heard me.

Friends, if you've ever sent something to *Many Voices* and wondered if you'd ever see it published, take heart. The following piece was in our files for an embarrassingly long time (well, OK, I'll admit it...it's been here since 1996!) But I found the perfect place for it today, and I hope you'll enjoy it. To my great delight, I was able to locate "Denise," who told me that even though the letter hadn't been published earlier, she got a lot of good out of writing it. So please...if you feel like writing something for us—do it! It may help MV's readers, and it *will* help you!

—Lynn W., Editor

Dear MV Readers,

I have written this letter three times, always hoping to do it better. I guess with so many of us inside, it's hard to put it into the right words and get our feelings out.

Someone wrote about "the fear of integrating." Also, about the strange living dreams. We, everyone in "Denise," have talked, fought, and prayed over it all. The result is they go together—the dreams and integrating fears.

We have had nightmares, terrors, waking dreams of such horror and killing, that the Lord's Prayer is said out loud, even in some of our sleep. My ex-husband always got so afraid of this. These dreams are so real that we can taste, smell, feel the texture of, actually re-experience events. We've learned many are stories our people need to share. Others are fears of the unknown. The what-ifs.

With many meetings we came up with rules about dreams. If it hurts some of us, like the little kids, then someone protects them. But if it's a story that is hurtful to all, we must wait until we're ready for it. Also, most important, is that we are afraid of the unknown more than the actual events. You know, "there had to be some really bad things to have happened, or we would not have so many people." It's nice to learn that we don't have to know it all, to heal and survive.

The dream I think so many others with MPD have is that of being hunted down, and of the self-killing. We have finally learned that we are afraid of integrating—becoming one. This helps the dream, and all of us inside, rest easier.

We don't want to be just one person. We love all of us. Shortly after learning of our others, we were told that to heal, we must remember everything. Not true! Also, we must try to be without the others—just one. After

living a whole 38 years with these friends, lovers, haters, children, selves...we couldn't imagine it.

After a therapy session, some of the braver and maybe smarter persons decided to give the "Denise" a black-out. Now, we've all been through a lot. Hell, maybe. This was even worse, because of the total internal emptiness. No sharing of anything, just a black nothing; no pain, no happiness, a desperate hunger for my others so strong that this was our first death wish. If we were going to "have to" live like that, then there's no living.

We have learned now, that the dreams are our fear of killing off the people that make "Denise" ...self-murder, not suicide. We have come to understand that we don't have to integrate. We hold meetings, have rules, have arguments, but there is so much shared joy, that it's all worth it. We are happy for the first time in forever, and more stable, too.

My children have grown up with these people and care for them; they don't always like them, but that's life. My ex-husband was too selfish to learn, and too afraid of his own inner self to cope with us. We wish him luck and happiness; funny—he's a hermit-type person.

My present counselor is special. She encourages us and lets us work through things while she points a few things out for help. She never lets us forget that we are fighters and survivors, not victims. We won't let the bad people ruin us.

I hope this helps others realize that our dreams often are just each other talking, and working through matters.

By Denise

## Emotion Thought Connected

It was never your fault.

It is time to give up  
your weapons against yourself.

Frozen in time,  
a vague, fragmented soul.

You lie deep within,  
in pain, abandoned.

Little one, do not be shamed.

Although she went away.

Mommy has always loved you.

Now you curl, fetal position,  
Protecting you from daddy's rage.

Still the hurt, in your heart.

Fear not. You will soon stand tall.

The earth shakes, now you topple.

But with courage, self-nurturing,

You can grow stable.

And in loving yourself.

And parenting yourself...

May you find your:

Swayed back straightened.

Foggy mind cleared.

Slumped head raised.

Scarred skin smoothed.

Vague feet grounded.

Divided soul whole'd

Emotion thought connected.

By Caroline A. Martin © 2000

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## Partners Page:

# The Therapist Who Wags

By Richard

One of my wife's therapists is lying over there at her feet while I clatter away on the keyboard — our mixed-breed dog, Sherlock. He has been more important to my wife's healing than I ever imagined.

"Initially, Sherlock was a source of comfort, a way of getting out of myself," my wife said. "Sherlock was totally dependent on my care. I had to let him out; I had to feed him; I had to walk him; I had to train him regularly to be well behaved. All these things started pulling me out of myself."

My wife's experience is not unusual, according to her therapist.

"Several of my clients acquired pets during their therapy, and the pets mattered a lot," said Helen, one of my wife's therapists. "Some of them identified their pets as the reason they kept living. For others, pets were safe, when no other relationship was. And there's the unconditional love angle. The dog would always greet them with a wag and a lick; the cat would always purr when petted. So somebody greeted them with pleasure, even when they were very isolated, or their other relationships were strained due to what they were going through in therapy."

## Lifesaver

My wife agrees that Sherlock saved her life.

"The bond he and I forged helped me remember there was a reason to live when I felt suicidal," my wife said. "If I killed myself, who would find me? Sherlock. Who would cry over me while I lay there dead? Sherlock. And that helped me realize, 'Oh, Richard would find me, too.' And so I'd slowly build up reasons to live, and that would pull me out of that incredibly self-centered place which being suicidal is all about."

Sherlock's companionship has also been very important, since my wife cannot work and spends much of her time with the dog.

"He offered companionship during the day when I was really lonely or sad," my wife said. "He was always by my side. Sherlock gave me someone to talk to when I was so deranged in my head. I know Sherlock doesn't really have a clue what I'm saying, but talking out loud helped me order my thoughts. And dogs don't respond to words; they respond to the emotion in your voice. People react the same way, so it's taught me a lot about human interaction."

And having Sherlock has even improved our marriage. We don't have children, partly because I have no interest in parenthood, and partly because my wife wants to be sure the cycle of abuse stops.

"With Sherlock I feel like I have a family," my wife said. "I just don't feel like it's a family with just two people. To me a family is two people with children. I know Sherlock isn't a child, and I don't treat him like one. But by making our family complete in my eyes, I'm better able to love you."

## Readiness

All that is amazing, considering that my wife used to be terrified of dogs.

"I'm not sure what happened," she said. "I went from hating animals, especially dogs, almost overnight to desperately needing a dog. I think it was partly because we bought a house with a fenced backyard, and I know it had something to do with spending time with the dogs next door. I think I just reached a point in my recovery where I was ready to devote myself to another being on that level."

## Big decision

We didn't run right out and buy a dog, mainly because I was dead-set against it. Given her abuse history, I didn't believe my wife could be trusted to care for a dog and not abuse it.

"People should treat getting a pet as seriously as they treat having a child," advised Sharon, one of my wife's friends who had pets throughout her

recovery from Dissociative Identity Disorder.

My wife and I took that advice to heart, and talked over the decision for weeks. We visited animal shelters, and read several books about dog breeds, dog care and training, and how to select a dog.

Finally, I set my objections aside, with the understanding that at the first sign of abuse or neglect, the dog would go back. We found Sherlock one Saturday at a local pet supply store where the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was showing dogs available for adoption. (The SPCA named him; we didn't.)

My misgivings proved wrong, my wife and Sherlock bonded almost instantly, and the rest has been a lovely miracle. It has worked so well that we recently got a second dog, Watson, a puppy from the litter of a friend's purebred.

So, if you and your partner feel he or she is ready for a pet, it's not a decision to make lightly.

"They need to do their homework, work up a budget, and talk with their therapist to make sure they're making the right decision for themselves, and their pet," said Sharon. "Can they afford it? Pets are expensive, and most people in recovery are already hurting financially. Getting a pet is a commitment for 10-plus years, and people need to be sure they're ready and willing to make that commitment. It's not something to help you through a rough time; it's something to do when you want to share your home with another family member, and when you're sure you can do it well."

## Safety and care

The most important factor is the pet's safety.

"That's critical," said Sharon. "Make sure all your parts will be safe with an animal. I can't think of anything more devastating to alters than if they hurt a pet."



"A person should have an animal only when they're ready to crawl out of themselves a bit," said my wife. "If I hadn't been in the right emotional state at the right time to have Sherlock, I would have abused him. I would have treated him like garbage because that was what I was still receiving from inside my head."

Your partner's therapist can help determine if he or she is ready for a pet.

"My therapist would have never approved it until I started exhibiting reaching-out behaviors, where I wanted compassion and love," said my wife. "And if I were being deliberately abusive or cruel to her or to you, she wouldn't have recommended it."

Along the same line, you must be sure your partner is capable of taking care of a pet. Since I work all day, and sometimes work overtime and irregular hours, Sherlock's care and training is my wife's responsibility.

"Animals require a lot of attention," said Sharon. "People in recovery have enough trouble taking care of themselves, so they need to be sure they're ready for this responsibility. It would be devastating to the alters if their pet had to be given away."

We also don't recommend getting a puppy, not the first time out. Get a grown dog who has had some basic training. Puppies require constant care, almost as much as a baby, and if a person isn't ready for that level of care, it will just add stress to an already stressful situation.

As a corollary to that, the support person must be sure he or she is ready for a pet. My wife has gone through long stretches when she could barely drag herself around the house. At other times, she was sick in bed, or hospitalized in a psych ward. At those times, all or most of Sherlock's care became my responsibility. I had to walk him, be home to let him out, feed him. In short, I had to rearrange my entire life to accommodate Sherlock. Fortunately, I like dogs and understand their needs and, although Sherlock is clearly bonded to my wife, he and I have a good relationship.

### Choosing a pet

Once you are both sure you're ready for a pet, then comes the fun part – choosing one.

"I'd opt for a social, interactive pet," said Helen. "Cats and dogs are the most common, but I wouldn't rule out other animals. I know someone who has a rabbit. The rabbit is a much-loved pet, and very good for the person. I don't see any reason why a social, interactive bird wouldn't be a good choice for some people. But I wouldn't recommend a short-lived animal like a gerbil, because its death would cause grief issues for the child alters."

In the great eternal cat versus dog controversy, we're neutral. It depends on the person and their needs.

"I've had cats, as well as two dogs now," my wife said. "A cat is much better if you don't want a lot of responsibility for training. You have to train a cat, too, but it doesn't take as much time and effort. With my cats, I could be out all day, or take off for a weekend. If you want freedom, yet you still want a pet, I think a cat is the way to go.

"But if you want responsibility, get a dog," my wife continued. "You'll have to learn how to be an 'animal parent,' and spend time training and taking care of someone who's going to be dependent on you for life."

### Magic

Whatever you choose, if you and your partner are ready for a pet, and prepare wisely, the results can be magic.

"Having an animal can bring joy back into your life, even in the midst of walking through hell," my wife said. "An animal will do something that will bring a laugh, even if it's only a mild laugh. And your animal will always be beautiful to you. That laughter and beauty can bring sunlight and joy into a very dark place. That's important. A pet brings a little joy, a little happiness, and opens the door to feeling more. Sherlock brought me joy when I was convinced I would never feel joy again."

**MV**

## Depression

### Won't this ever come to an end?

This pernicious disease kept coming back to me from time to time. It didn't always last a long time, but when it was present, it seemed like it was coming from the gloomiest part of hell.

Each time it was back, it would manifest in a more acute way: stronger, and deeper. We were against the use of medication—we believed that it would "mask" the situation and wouldn't bring real healing. So we kept on looking for its cause. The only permanent solution is to uproot it completely.

We compare the use of medications, in some cases, to the following example: a person was driving his car when the alert light on the panel turned red, warning that the car's engine was out of oil. The person took his car to a mechanic who disconnected the electric sensors from the control panels. The light isn't on anymore, even if the car has a problem. The driver keeps on driving...then suddenly the engine stops.

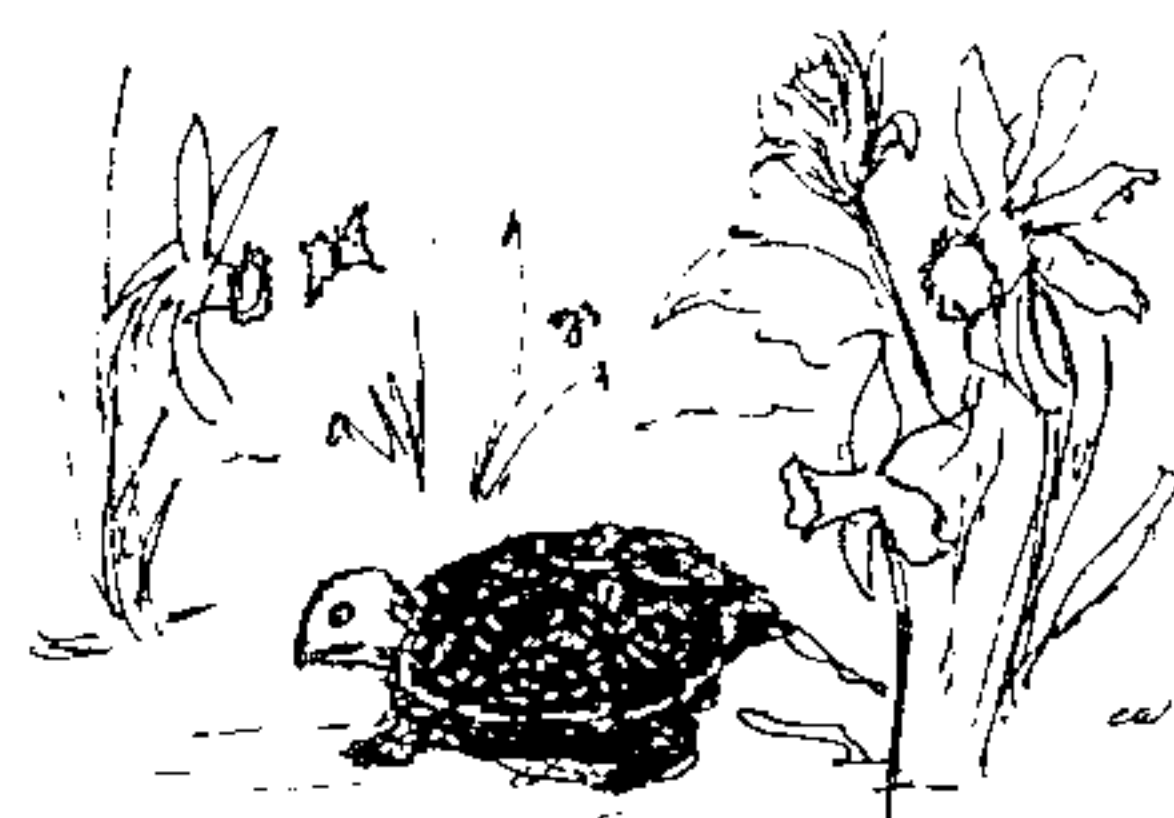
Where was the problem that should be fixed? What went wrong and made the situation worse? What can a person do to be aware?

We decided to fight depression by searching for information and understanding. We wanted to end this suffering for good. So we would find out the causes. It's obvious that we don't recommend this method for those who don't have the temperament for doing a strict, hard research concerning this matter. One must be involved, making a strong effort to search for self-knowledge in a serious, ethical and disciplined way. No matter what the decision is, the individual must consciously determine what he/she is doing!

The matter involves "how" you take something, whether it's a medical substance, a concept, a habit, a dogma, or a knowledge. The "evil" isn't in the object itself, but in the way it's used, even if the intention is the best. Some people use politics, religion and love to get power, material advantages, prestige and other self-indulgent benefits.

*By Ligia*

**MV**



## Memories and More

**My family denies that I was abused** and does not believe I have any memories of abuse.

They believe I am crazy and that I have "false memories" from seeing movies and reading about abuse. That in my imagination I've conjured up things that never happened.

Some of my relatives believe that there is no such disorder as multiple personality disorder. Others believe I am schizophrenic.

I/we just go on healing and trying to help others. We largely ignore people who don't believe us.

Our therapist has helped us become stronger and stronger.

*By Sally B.*

**What is necessary to heal** are the effects of abuse. I don't recall all that happened when I was a child. Perhaps this is some sort of blessing. But I have spent years holding it together through night terrors, re-experiences, hypervigilance. I have reached the conclusion that, although I honestly don't remember in the sense that one usually talks about the word, I have some sort of kinesthetic and emotional memory of what happened in early childhood. I have often thought that if I remembered, I would absolutely lose it. I would go into a dark abyss of

madness and never return. I live with being unsure about what happened. In some cases, my siblings remember events that I do not. Although they are disturbing to hear about, I cannot honestly say that I remember them. However, they have a resonant quality to them in the sense that they feel very "familiar" and fit with the context that I grew up in. I remember trauma from when I was an older child, but remember only some of my early childhood. My early childhood feelings, body sensations, nightmares, recollections, have all been very liquid, in a sense. I am left to mend the effects of trauma, some of which I remember, and some of which I do not. I think, when it comes down to the wire, I believe that something very traumatic happened to me very early in childhood. Its presence and being is kinesthetically remembered in my body, in my illnesses, in my nightmares, in my sadnesses, in my poetry. But I am not sure that I will ever be able to swear to what it is. I have moved, to a large degree, beyond the questions. There is certainly a massive amount that I *do* remember, quite clearly. I don't want to underestimate the effects of what I do so clearly remember. No matter what happens to a survivor, whether it is

emotional, physical, or sexual abuse—pain is valid and meaningful and deserves to be mended. I think it is vitally important not to underestimate the effects that emotional abuse or emotional trauma can have on a developing child. And it is the pain and difficult experiences that I embrace and hold into the night and work to transform into something meaningful. For me it has been important to determine what it is I remember clearly, and have never forgotten, and what it is that haunts me. I supposed we could fill a book on this topic, but suffice it to say: Be true to yourself, to what you know to be true to you.

*By Gwen*

**Rae Ann is a very angry woman** shrouded in secrecy and isolation. An old black album of her childhood pictures are locked for all eternity inside a white van. This van is surrounded by hills of putrid garbage.

Rae Ann only emerges from her dark sanctuary when provoked beyond human reason, and then displays the meteoric temper of a pit bull on amphetamines.

*By B.D.S.*

MV

## To Those I Deceive

I hide from myself, or is it the self you tell me I am? I feel so deceptive! You think you know who I am by what you see or hear in first impressions or single episodes. It happens with everyone, even when you know about DID, or even if you know me as well as my therapist

You see me and hear what you wish. You are excited when you see a sparkle in my eyes. You hope it's there to stay. Anything is a relief from the pain that you usually read in my eyes. I agree! It hurts me because I don't want to disappoint you again. I desperately want your love. Tell me I'm okay. Just okay. That's enough.

I feel so guilty! I have become a liar, or have I? Voices harshly judge me from inside, condemning me, tearing me up shred by shred. I know the way you see me is not for "real". It's as if I stand before a mirror. The reflections are obscure

because of the antique style of the old mirror and the light it has provided. It is what you see, the reflection of my past, present and questionable future.

I want to be true to God, myself, and in all of my relationships. I don't believe I am fully capable of it at this point. I am progressively learning what truth is through therapy. I pray to become more and more open to change that is necessary for an honest life.

Forgive me. I don't mean to be deceptive. It is not planned. I probably hurt no one but myself. "Myself" has been hurt so many times by others and my own self-destructiveness. She is too fragile to absorb any more pain, especially when it comes from me.

*By Angel Hope*

MV





## *A Butterfly At Last?*

I have been co-conscious since March, 2000. Kind of.

In June, 2000, I felt like it was time to tell my parents I remember the abuse, "I" was there. For those of you who dissociate, you know just how important and life-changing that statement is.

I invited my parents to attend a session with my therapist. In the safety of my therapist's office, I read my letter of confrontation, confession and forgiveness. All of my parts were together, were remembering the abuse, were admitting its truth and were speaking that memory to my abusers.

There was an almost immediate freedom. The unspeakable had been spoken and heard. And denied. There was also a gradually growing despair. The key role for many of my parts was linked to guarding the secret. There was no more secret to guard. We weren't ready for that.

In July, 2000, I tasted life with all of me. Peace, joy, romance, cloud nine... I felt like I'd finally "made it". I also began to feel disappointment and loneliness with all of me. Loneliness and pain didn't fit into my picture of an "integrated" life. I did what a lot of us do and will do, I went back to a very familiar friend called "dissociation." I knew I was ignoring some of my parts; I told myself it wasn't my fault - my circumstances (travelling Australia) simply demanded it. I heard myself think, "You should be taking the time to listen to your self; it's your choice." I also wanted to hold onto those special feelings of peace, joy and romance. Keeping the happy feelings seemed to require snuffing out the painful truths.

Dissociation. Dissociation got me through life - a sometimes very difficult life - for 27 years. In fact, when I was the very sickest, I received the most help and professional concern. I crashed. I was off work for a month. During that time, I read an author write that as she integrated, she learned that she was "addicted" to dissociation. "That's me," I thought. And if I'm honest, I'm also addicted to mental illness and the attention it gives

me. I'm learning to let go. It's the only way in which I can be my self.

I spent a lot of time mapping out my "cycle" - my emotional cycle, not my menstrual cycle! I know which thoughts and/or actions signal the different points in my emotional clock.

While I was in Australia, I found a wooden puzzle that reminds me so much of my self. It's got two layers. Both layers are in the shape of the country Australia. The top layer hides the bottom layer. Both layers - when they're assembled correctly - create the same size and shape of Australia. The bottom layer is lots of tiny pieces shaped like Australian animals - kind of like my young ones. The top layer is more socially expected - the provinces and territories of Australia... Australia wouldn't be Australia without each of its animals, provinces and territories and I wouldn't be Wendy without each of my parts.

Each of us needs to find our own way and our own path. I have found harmony and peace in allowing all of my parts to make one complete Wendy. And then... I am free to let my heart be gentle and loving; Free to admit the specific pain of my abuses; Free to let my self flutter like a butterfly in spring; Free to admit that I have a mental illness; Free to admit that I'm learning; Free to admit that I am me.

All the best as you walk your path.

—Wendy

MV

## *Love and Hate*

*We love him and her but  
We also hate him and her.*

*Love and hate.*

*The past is the past and it  
Can't be changed.*

*"Accept the things you  
cannot change,  
and change the things you  
can..."*

*Love and hate are strong  
feelings.*

*Sometimes we feel so full of  
hate*

*and anger that we just lose  
control.*

*Then we feel full of guilt and  
sadness.*

*Other times we feel full of  
love and respect and guilty  
and sad  
that we are hurting and  
disappointing others with  
our illness.*

*But we are trying. We're  
trying to find the balance  
between  
Love and Hate and come to  
Peace Within.*

By Karen G.

MV



By nona



## A Word About Co-Consciousness and D.I.D.

By CE

Co-consciousness, or being present and remembering what an alternate personality says or does, seems to be vastly different for every person with Dissociative Identity Disorder. Even within one person, the ability to be present may vary from one alter to another and also may change status without warning during periods of stress. I think I could make several generalizations about my own experience that might ring true with your own:

1. I became progressively more present over time and with very concentrated effort exerted in therapy.

2. I was always less present with those alters who were bent upon self-harm behaviors. This caused many problems until it was corrected via loophole-free contracts and constant vigilance.

3. I was present more often with children than with adult alters.

4. I found it easier to be co-conscious if I was with my therapist and under low stress than when I was with other people.

5. Aside from an initial introduction, I was never present with my "Internal Self-Helper" or my "Emotionless" part. Nor was I present when two of my alters acted out sexually or when one personality in particular was contacted by cult members. I have to trust that my System was acting in my own best interest to screen out those incidents according to my capacity to tolerate them.

6. Even when I had not been co-conscious, I often could "feel the footprints" of whoever had just been out and could identify them by name. Similarly, I sometimes could sense who was on his or her way out a few moments before they presented.

7. I believe increasing co-consciousness is a vital part of the work of therapy for D.I.D. I think that it is imperative that one stops or considerably decreases losing time so they may be consistently present for the therapy hour and for life in general, if healing is to progress. (Nothing was

more frustrating to me than paying \$90 for an hour of treatment I didn't even remember.)

Some suggestions:

1. Allow your therapist to be a mediator between you and your other personalities. Having everyone inside perceive he/she as an ally is probably the most effective tool you could have in your arsenal.

2. Use dialoguing in your journal liberally! If you can have a conversation with a part on paper, that is an excellent precursor to being able to "sit beside them" on your therapist's couch. Start by asking easy questions that require one-word answers. Then move on to asking questions that show genuine interest in how they feel about their role in your life. Almost everyone appreciates the chance to talk about himself or herself! Encourage them to do just that.

3. Single out a personality you have never been co-conscious with and spend some time doing an activity you have a feeling they might enjoy. Whether or not you get an audible response, tell them you are dedicating this time and effort to them because you care about them. From personal experience, I almost can guarantee that this idea will open up communication/co-consciousness as you take on the role of a "partner" with your alter.

4. Take the time to write a heartfelt letter of thanks to your parts as a group. Tell them how very much you appreciate what they did for you in the past by taking on your pain. Think of personal compliments for each one—even the "troublemakers."

All of these suggestions don't add up to a magical fix for lack of co-consciousness. Nothing does. After all, you dissociate now for some of the same reasons you did when you were being hurt—you just may not be ready to know everything yet. However, if you are ready, and if you are serious about healing, I would encourage you to try some or all of the above!

MV

## The Porcelain Castle

Things are not always what they appear to be. A family can seem normal (or one's definition of) to the outside world, yet be so painful, tortured and silenced inside. This is where denial exists—in the inside. This is how kids can become so locked up in their own little worlds, by not being able to share their pain with someone, for fear of further abuse. Their place, that was thought of as "secure," becomes a place of fear where they exist to the people who are controlling them, which sometimes means their own parents, siblings and themselves.

It hurts to be in a family such as this, a house where denial of feelings is the only way to get by. If you attempted to show your feelings, you get scarred for life. The people that you relied on, to protect you, don't know what protection is. You look to the outside world for help, and they don't want to be involved, for fear it would disrupt their family. I don't blame the outside people, but I do blame the abusers and the people who witnessed and didn't say anything. They will never know the difference they can make in a child's life by stopping the cycle. I think they are just as bad as the people who are abusing. It hurts to know that part of my childhood could have been saved if someone (including family) would have said something. But I cannot dwell on the could-haves, would-haves, and should-haves, because it is not reality. I can only deal with the left over baggage that has altered my life.

A porcelain castle is only formed when people aren't willing to see the truth about what is really happening. A porcelain castle stays alive when people continue to deny the deep hurts and impacts that keep them in bondage. It is not right to deny people their feelings, power, control, emotions, childhood, etc. It angers me when people know what's going on and still deny. In order to live a healthy life, a person needs love, nurturing, support—things that are not found in a porcelain castle although people try to have it exist that way, but it is not reality. As soon as people start seeing the reality of things going on, that is when porcelain castles will start to break down and we will see changes for the positive.

My existence in a porcelain castle from childhood to adult years has taught me that it is wrong to keep things inside. That the real truth is found in how a person feels and how that has affected them. The porcelain castle that I once lived in still exists, but I no longer have my name on the door. I go back once in awhile to visit because it is hard for me to sever ties with family, but at least I know what I feel in my heart, and what I stand for...

By The Beach Bums & DJP

MV

# What a Blessing!

By clinton

I learned about *Many Voices* at a therapy center in Maryland. What a blessing to read and feel what "normal" is, being a multiple. Since last November, the Lord totally integrated me. I gave it "all" to Him and simply told him after nearly ten years of what seemed to be getting worse and worse through therapy, I could no longer take "it" anymore...God just simply put all the confusion together and now I am one.

To those struggling to be one, it is so much harder than being many and being able to hide and shove your problems and life's struggles on others within. Now it is me and the Lord, and it is a daily, sometimes minute-by-minute struggle. I would not change a thing, for what I have learned not only about myself, but seeing that there are so many others who are suffering and struggling so hard, yet so embarrassed to let anyone know they are not like others, and God forbid, they are seeing a psychologist or therapist.

Anyone feeling embarrassed or ashamed to seek help should be holding their head high in pride that they are at least doing something about their problems. And always hold on to the hope that there is a purpose and an end to all this. Although I am not at the end, I have come a long way, and could never have done it without the help of my Lord and my psychologist and therapist.

Also, my husband has been a support who stuck with me through thick and thin...and then more.

Here are a few things that helped me over some of the difficult spots: My therapist helped me develop a way to communicate to my husband when things were just too hard. We called it a Block System. We were raising our grandson at the time, and he had those 1-1/2 square Duplo Blocks and loved them. My therapist suggested I make a Traffic Sign communication for my husband Jim when so many just could not speak. One of the spare

bedrooms on the main floor was my "safe place" and my husband knew this. So many times he would come home and I would be hiding in there, and he would try to speak to us. No, no, no...too many people fighting and hiding. Well, Liz suggested that the Red Block meant "Stop. Just oh Please leave us alone. Don't open that door!" Yellow meant "Caution. Use your own judgment. Open if you Dare." And then of course, Green meant "Come on in." Later I added Blue, which meant "I need help," as to which block it was sitting on, red yellow or green. This method not only stopped the fights but established a great trust within my alters and my husband. She thought that we could both have our own spot for our light, to help stop the confusion and open the door of communication to each other.

Also, on days when I had to run errands alone, I would take a pencil and paper, write down the time I left the driveway, and then the time I arrived at my first spot...which was always the farthest way so I could back-track myself. As I ran my errands, I would save the sales receipts that indicated the time I checked-out of that particular store. Then, after the last stop, I would note the time I got into the car and then the time I arrived home. This helped not only my therapist and psychologist, but my self and my "entire system" when I was losing time for such long periods.

My alters took their control of this body and I was not conscious of what they had or were doing. This method helped tremendously and I myself was shocked as to the vast amount of time "they" (the alters I was not conscious of) stole from me, and thus caused harm and/or damage to myself or others and their property.

## The Marys

Age 5: Pretty dresses, dolls, hopscotch and friends to giggle with. That's how it's supposed to be, but not for me. It was just darkness. That's when some of us were born. That's when the sexual abuse started, along with physical and mental abuse.

My mother and brother, aged 10, were the abusers. Eventually my Mom stopped the sexual abuse, but my brother became worse. As the sexual abuse became worse, more of us were born to help cope. The last to be born, "working Mary," popped out at age 16 when I got my first job as a diet-aide at the local hospital.

There was no one to help me, just the different "Marys". I eventually ended up in therapy, put on many different drugs, in a mental hospital...and of course there were the numerous suicide attempts. And all through it there was always a "Mary" to get me by.

It was a rough ride. All the information on incest dealt with father/daughter incest and I had a hard time relating to that. The therapists I saw didn't help me. That is, until I met my current therapist, Michele T. She helped me get through it all and put us together.

I had first tried to tell about the sexual abuse when I was 7 years old. Being a good Italian Catholic, I went to confession and told a priest. He just confirmed my thoughts that it was all my fault.

It wasn't until 30 years later that I again tried to tell about the sexual abuse. I told my parents. Again, I was was told it was all my fault.

Growing up in an Italian family, I was a second-class citizen. I had to cook, clean and to add insult to injury, I had to wait on my abuser's every need—he was the Golden Child.

Since I couldn't leave on the outside, I left on the inside. The abuse did stop physically, but not mentally. It was always there, but I could always count on a "Mary" to get me through anything.

Now we are all one Mary. It took almost half-a-century, but with the help of a great therapist, Michele, we're one.

Oh, there are times when a "Mary" would like to come out, but now I can deal with just the one Mary—me.

MV

By Mary

MV





## Letters

I am writing to thank you so much for forwarding the three letters from people who responded to my letter published in *"Many Voices"* October 1999. I was hoping for a bigger response, but I'm so happy with my three new friends. Two letters were received by me in November 1999, and surprisingly, one this November!

I am still hoping to find more penfriends so I wonder if you could once again publish my details. Writing is my love and the only way I can really share myself. As I have written, I have three wonderful friends in the USA and one here in Australia. I have realized just how much I have missed in my life. For the first time I have friends whom I can relate to.

Over here (Australia) the general lack of support for those with D.I.D. is obscene. Our support group "Merging All Parts" is folding as an incorporation in March 2001. Only two groups are meeting, neither of which I can attend. We have no magazine either, which does sadden me.

It angers me that D.I.D. remains such an invisible, hidden disorder. I believe it is so in the USA also, but over here—the disbelief, the lack of knowledge, the witch hunts. In four years I have had five opinions about my diagnosis. Three counsellors and two psychiatrists have agreed, and though I am often in denial, deep inside I know "we" are real.

At present I am seeing a counsellor and a psychiatrist for my therapy. I also suffer with depression which is treated effectively with Zoloft. And this year I've been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, and have commenced Ritalin for that. My level of concentration has been a major problem for so long, and lately my head has felt clear for the first time in years.

I am 47 years old, but I rarely feel that old. It feels as though most of my life has been a blur. I read through my journal and cannot believe what I read! "Who wrote that?" "Did we really feel that way?"

Finding penpals with D.I.D. has opened a door for me. I feel it's good to find people who can understand what I go through, and I like to think I am a good "listener" too. If we are sad, we write that way, and we refuse to change. My view is that if you cannot write because you are sad, only when you are happy, then you aren't sharing how you really are. I like people to be real with me.

D.I.D. is often a disorder of loneliness, isolation, and frustration. We have all come a long way since we started our journey of healing. It is a long journey and it's turbulent, but I've been told it does get better. Really, we know it's true.

We are learning who we are, trying to accept the feelings inside. It's an adventure. That's the only way we can work through it.

We enjoy writing letters, journaling, petite point tapestry, reading, films or video, learning more about our world. I am married, and have two adult daughters, one 18, the other 20 years old. We work as a registered nurse in a nursing home. We love animals (own two dogs and three cats.)

We will write to males as well as females, for a real but platonic friendship. Any age within reason. I prefer over age 25, married, single or whatever.

Thank you, *Many Voices*, for your help so very much. I hope you can help me some more.

Rosemary

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** MV does not "match people up" as pen friends. It's too risky to take on that responsibility. However, if you choose to write to Rosemary, I'll forward your letter, and if you want to enclose your address, let me know and I'll include it. That's ok as long as you understand you are taking full responsibility for whatever happens once addresses are exchanged, with Rosemary or anyone else. MV's forwarding offer is limited. We can't be intermediaries for long-term correspondence. You can add an extra layer of protection when writing to strangers by using a business or PO Box address or writing in care of your therapists' office, IF your therapist agrees. [Be especially cautious with prison correspondence! Always talk it over with a therapist or good friend if you think about writing to people in prison.] — Lynn W., Editor

MV

## How Do You Love a Chameleon?

How do you love a chameleon?  
Constantly changing  
Forever drifting in and out  
A child frozen with fear trembling in a dark closet  
A woman's desperate hunger for acceptance  
The young boy's struggle with his own private shame  
A mother slowly dying  
Her children ripped from her breast  
Who committed such atrocities?  
Such reckless carelessness of human life?

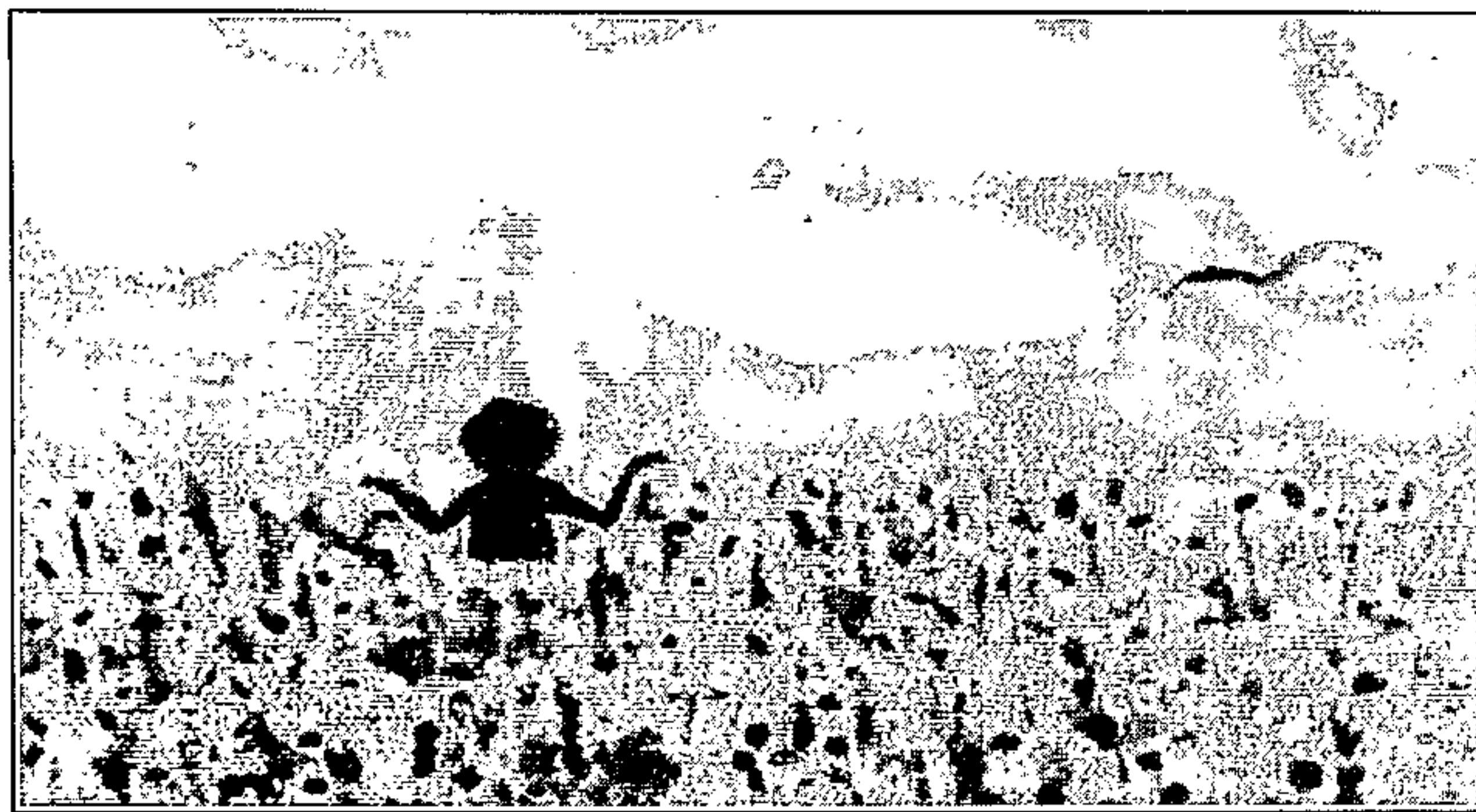
The young virgin, so pure, full of trust,  
wonders at life  
Where does the will to cause such pain,  
intense and endless, come from?  
Who put this black splinter here?  
A fascination of death—of ecstasy in the forbidden  
And in the center of it all—  
A child—  
A perfect, beautiful bud of life poised at the edge of her splendor,  
Trembling; yet refuses to open her face to the heavens

For fear her life-giving source will not shine.  
How do you love a chameleon?  
Self-loathing, hate  
A young woman's frantic search for the answers to put in order the chaos within  
Where is the line?  
Please show us—  
for we fear  
falling  
over the edge,  
beyond reach of sanity.

By Stacey

MV





## Lonesome

Wake up and look around  
not to understand what you  
see.

Breathe the air & smell the  
flowers,  
with a longing that is painful  
& pure  
ONE DAY, ONE DAY, all will  
be well.

By Pat C.

## Books

### Bluebird: Deliberate Creation of Multiple Personality by Psychiatrists

By Colin A. Ross, M.D. © 2000. Published by Manitou Communications, 1701 Gateway, Suite 349, Richardson, TX 75080. (800) 572-9588. \$27.95 406 pgs. Paperback.

Dr. Colin Ross, former president of ISSD and head of the Ross Institute Dissociative Disorders programs at hospitals in Texas, Michigan and California, has produced a potential bombshell with this, his seventh book. Dr. Ross based this book on over 15,000 pages of documents obtained from the CIA, via the Freedom of Information Act...documents that are damning to some of the leading psychiatrists of the 1950s through more recent times. Dr. Ross maintains and (for me at least) convincingly proves the involvement of notable psychiatrists and well known medical centers in numerous CIA tests of brainwashing techniques, "mind-control" drugs, and potentially-harmful practices. These tests were performed on mental patients, prisoners and other unknowing participants. He believes that so-called "Manchurian Candidates" are likely to have been created during some of these processes...ie, CIA projects may have "created" persons who are deliberately programmed to spy or kill, yet who have no awareness of their own behavior. This would be, of course, an example of iatrogenic (physician-created) dissociative identity disorder.

Beginning in his introduction, Dr. Ross stresses that he is not dismayed by the government or CIA agencies' interest in such projects. Defense and espionage are, he believes, legitimate government concerns. Instead, his criticism centers on the roles played by psychiatrists who performed such experiments on clients, almost invariably without their knowledge or consent. Dr. Ross points out that this violation of ethics and responsibility is

reprehensible, and the perpetrators should be called to account for their behavior.

Dr. Ross's book is laden-to-overflowing with details: names, dates, who-knew-who, and what they did (or may have done) together. It is well-salted with mysterious government acronyms: MKULTRA, MKSEARCH, Project ARTICHOKE, etc. No one would call it an "easy read." But compared to wading through 15,000 pages of government documents, reading *Bluebird* is surely a piece of cake.

Dr. Ross raises several interesting ideas here, including the possibility that Sirhan Sirhan (who killed Robert Kennedy) and Mark David Chapman (who killed John Lennon) were both self-created dissociatives. But perhaps his most intriguing speculation is that the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, which enjoys a heavy concentration of board members with documented CIA connections, could be viewed as a CIA "disinformation" campaign established to deliberately confuse the public about the origins and reality of D.I.D. Hmmmm. Now that is an interesting thought.

I do hope lots of people will buy this book, and pass it around to others. I would love to hear what you (clients or professionals) think about it. - Lynn W.

### Hidden Selves

By Moira Walker and Jennifer Antony-Black (Editors) © 1999. Published by Open University Press. \$31.95 paperback, \$90+ hardback. Available at Amazon.com or major booksellers. 160 pgs.

*Hidden Selves* tells the story of Liza, an abuse survivor with multiple personalities. The book begins with a chapter entitled *A Century of Controversy: multiplicity or madness; memory or make-believe?* In this chapter, Moira Walker summarizes the controversies that surround recovered memory and MPD. She makes it clear that

she believes in MPD, as well as having extensive experience with abuse survivors

The second chapter introduces Liza, a 29-year-old woman with three children, who survived physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as a child. I think she has between ten and twenty alters. She describes each alter by function, though some of the alters don't have names

The next six chapters are written by six therapists. Each therapist is asked how he or she would respond to Liza's story and how he/she would treat Liza. Their views on MPD range from totally skeptical to totally believing. One of the therapists, Jenifer Antony-Black, who is also a co-editor, has multiple personalities herself, and it is fascinating to get her viewpoint on conducting therapy with multiples. For example, Ms Antony-Black says that "counselors with multiple personality need to have worked through their own issues sufficiently so that their different selves are working in harmony." She also says that "I come from a different starting point because of my experience, and although this has to be monitored to ensure that negative effects do not result, it can positively assist the process."

The last chapter summarizes the material in the book. Moira Walker ends by saying "It is Jenifer Antony-Black's hope and mine, as editors, that this book has played a part in the ongoing process of discovery, challenge and knowledge." As a reader, I would say they certainly achieved this goal. The idea of portraying a real woman's struggles with MPD is a good one. I also like the diversity of views expressed. Some people might question why skeptics are included: I think it is important to include their views because, like it or not, the skeptics are out there and forewarned is forearmed. —Mary P.

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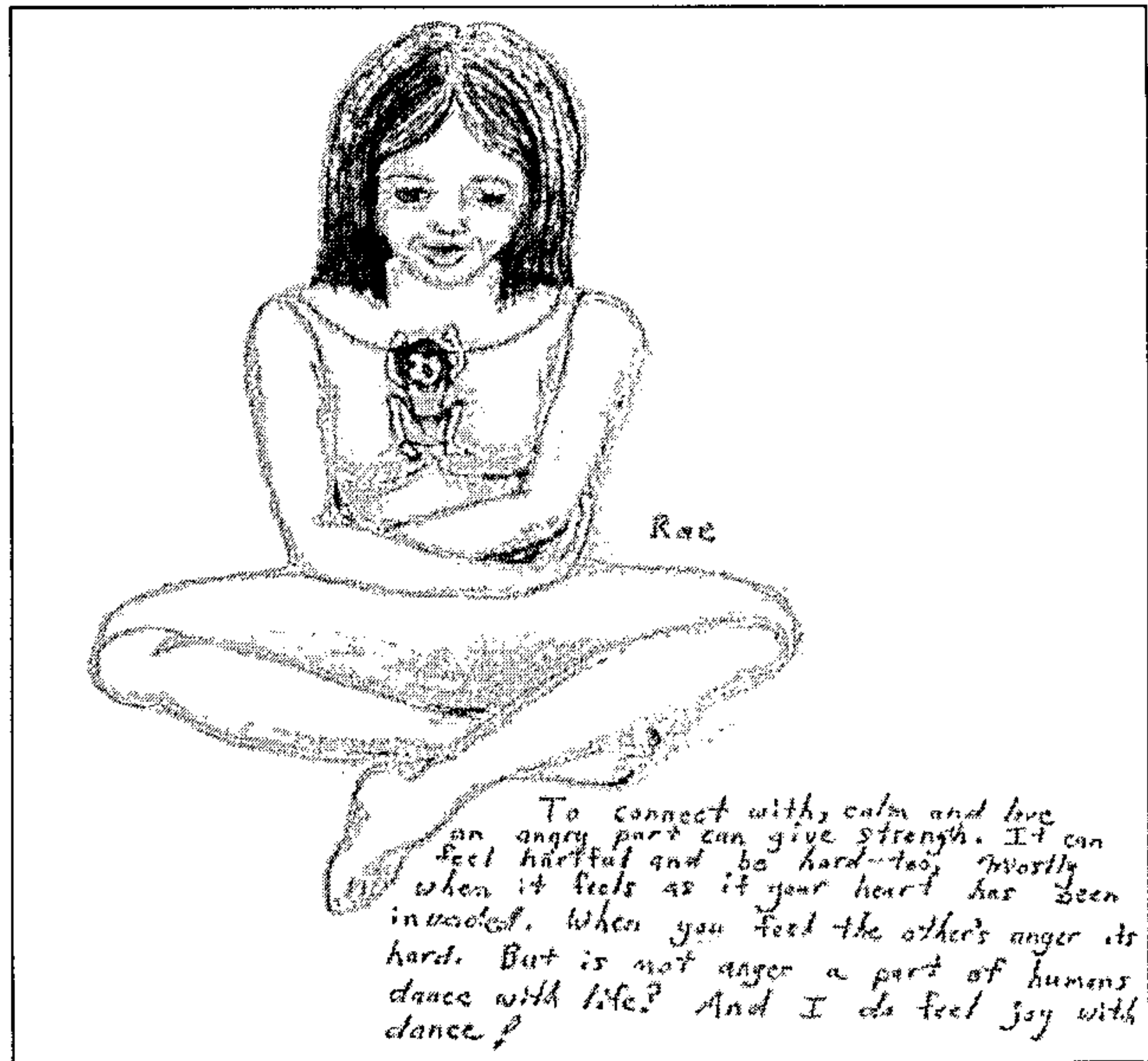
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