

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

Vol XVIII, No 5

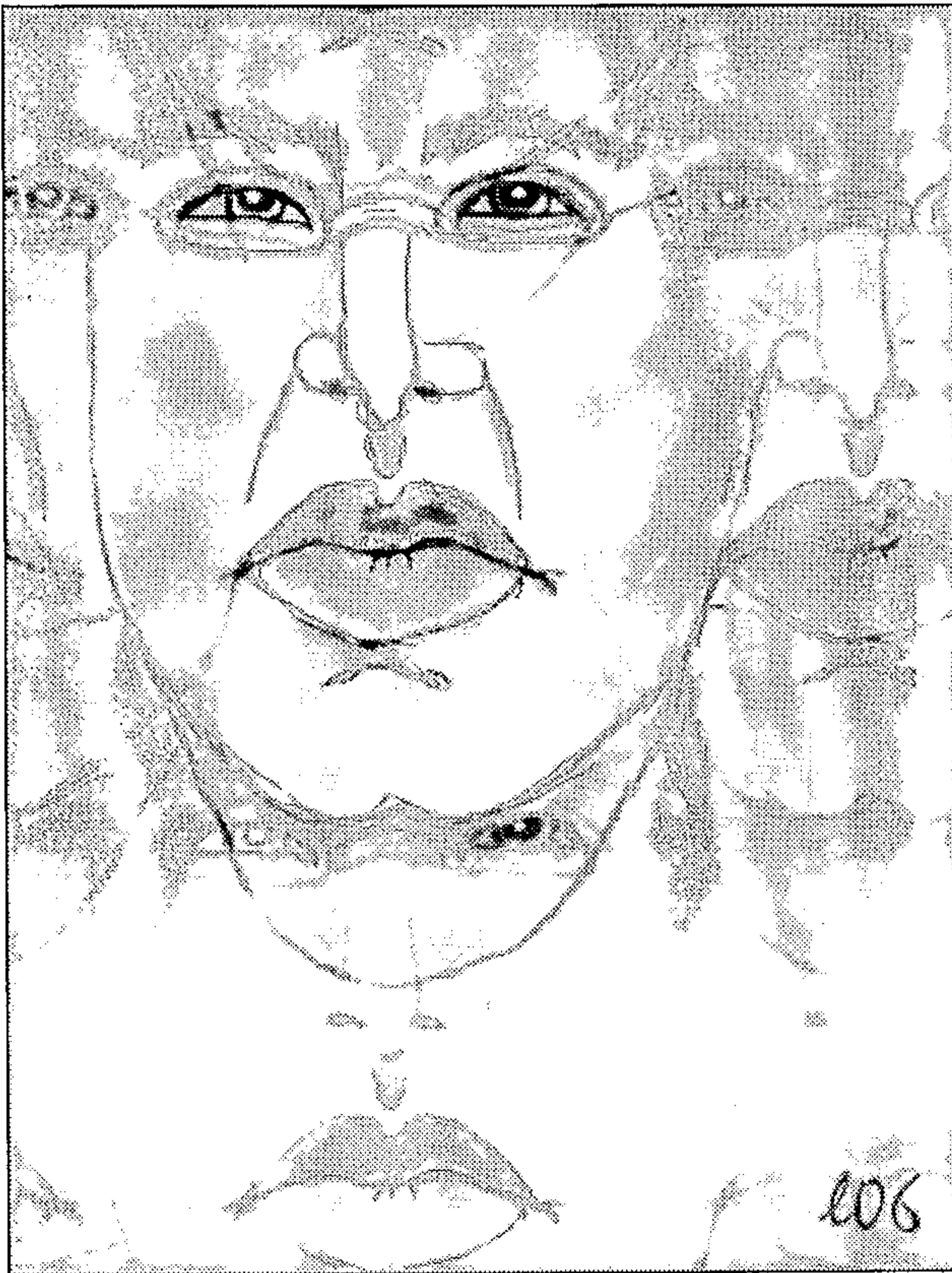
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meditate on the balance between
thoughts, urges and feelings
transform by awareness of the always-
present world
and above all, trust in your own very
heart, power and wisdom

By Carol L

MV

Doing What Works

By Four Dragons

My daughter is getting married next year. Already we've spent countless hours touring various potential locations, interviewing caterers, considering types of wedding invitations and more. But today we were out looking for a gown. We've scoured all kinds of shops and she must have tried on a dozen or two dresses though it seems like she's been corseted into more like a hundred of these lovelies. All these gorgeous gowns that looked so stupendous on the models in the magazines ended up not flattering her figure at all. What worked for other girls wasn't working for her. Following a string of particularly hideous gowns featuring ruching in all the wrong places, my daughter lapsed into a brief state of dejected resignation before digging in the spiked heels that were now killing her feet and getting determined not to stop looking until she found one that looked absolutely fabulous on her. Nothing less will do. Maybe she will have to give up some of her pet ideas that she thought would look good on her but didn't. The bottom line is whatever gown design that works for her figure is the one she'll choose.

The saleswoman bustled back with a new armload of dubious selections. As I waited for her to try on yet another spangled mountain of chiffon and satin, it occurred to me that finding the right therapy is a lot like this search for the perfect wedding gown. The wedding day is a very important day to the bride and groom. It deserves the utmost attention to every detail. Therapy is about healthy living and that's even more of a top priority deal. It has to be. Like the wedding dress, second best is unequivocally second rate. We send ourselves the message that we're not good enough to deserve the best when we settle for anything less than excellence. Sadly, I have accepted tons of garbage from substandard therapy because I didn't feel I had the right to ask for more or because it

was all I had at the time, or because I had already committed so much time and energy to the relationship that I just didn't want to change.

Sometimes I heard other clients resorting to remaining in unhelpful damaging 'therapy' because they couldn't afford anything else. Cheap therapy that doesn't work isn't cheap. It's expensive to the pocketbook and saps limited emotional resources. Like my daughter, I had to find the guidance that worked for me. Even though I still believe that standard talk therapy with a competent and trusted professional is a surefire way to heal from trauma and its sequelae, somehow, it didn't work for me. It's not that I didn't give it a shot. I tried on endless gowns of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and licensed marriage and family counselors. None of them fit. I stayed depressed and miserable.

However, it was my desperation to get out of the relentless, oppressive depression that led me to some less conventional sources of healing. One of the earlier methods I tried was EMDR or rapid eye movement desensitization. It seemed like a good idea at the time but it turned out to be more like the lovely skimpy topped gown that left my well-endowed daughter with way too much unconfined cleavage. In a word, EMDR exacerbated my already overflowing, unruly, barely manageable inside horde. I am very easily hypnotizable (as I suspect many multiples are) and I didn't need any help "opening" into my system. Instead, I needed help getting control of all the chaos inside, which had churned to the surface when I got divorced. I needed clear structure and EMDR sent me into terrible tailspins that interrupted my life with weeks of internal conflict. Obviously, the EMDR tool is only as good as the practitioner who uses it. Just like the annoyingly unhelpful saleswoman at the dress shop, who couldn't figure out what size to have my daughter try

on, my EMDR therapist was not too useful either because she did not guide me in the direction I needed to go. We spent way too much time fishing for whatever might pop up rather than concentrating our efforts on identifying the specific areas of damage and working towards defined positive outcomes. Luckily for my daughter, the manager stepped in and soon had her trying on gowns that fit her well enough for her to home in on one that she liked.

Unfortunately for me, I was not as lucky at finding a good therapist. But I did find a way to express myself without the crazy, chaotic, out of control effects of EMDR. I found it in art. Specifically, I found that drawing allowed me to show my deepest feelings and conflicts because I could draw the part who wanted to be seen or heard. It took several years of working on my drawing skills to be able to do this, but once I did, I had freedom. I didn't have to keep things bottled up inside me anymore. I could put them on paper and let my feelings exit out of me instead of getting blocked or stuck inside to eat me away like some fulminating infected abscess.

As useful as it was, drawing still didn't lead me to the ultimate winning gown. Amazingly, it was my spiritual journey that finally pointed the way. I believe that everyone has a spiritual place inside that connects us to universal truth. This kind of truth is always the same. It doesn't change. And I have become a seeker of this truth. For instance, I discovered that I didn't need to concentrate on all the details of what happened to me in my childhood because, the truth is, I will never know all the particulars. It's simply not possible. What I do need to know is how I think and what I believe. Most of these processes were formed from my early life experiences. They are the results of my small child interpretation of the events that took place in my life. The specific details of the events are not

nearly as important as what meaning I attributed to them. On closer inspection, I discovered that some of my ways of thinking were completely erroneous. Other times I found that I just utilized pessimistic methods of thinking that were not helpful.

Knowing this information gave me the power to choose how I think. I can continue the same way as I did before, or I can choose to do it differently. When I can choose, I'm no longer trapped in dreadful depression.

But there is a price for this freedom. It takes constant vigilance and attention to myself to develop new habits. Like today, for instance, I got a chance to practice improving my thinking skills while waiting in the dress shop with my daughter. The groom's decided preferences regarding the nature of how he wants his bride to look, along with my daughter's ideas and my desires, was a recipe for a major storm between us.

I realized that I could try to force my wishes into the picture or I could choose to see this as their day and not get too attached to using this as an occasion to get my own way. I've learned that making peace is more important than being right or getting everything I want.

It isn't really all that different from the battles I used to struggle with inside where older kids tried to mow littler ones into something and the adults divided up and argued on one side or the other

It is to everyone's benefit inside when we do what we know is right, when we treat other people right, and when we refuse to give away our joy just because things aren't going our way. We don't necessarily FEEL like doing these things but we have learned that a life of peace and joy does not come any other way. We do it because it works.

MV

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Timberlawn Mental Health System - Dallas, TX

Call Peyton Orr: (214) 381-7181 or (800) 426-4944

Two Rivers Psychiatric Hospital - Kansas City, MO

Call David Tate: (816) 356-5688 or (800) 225-8577

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We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor



Music and Healing

By Michael Skinner

Music has been one of the most important pieces in my healing and recovery from a lifetime of trauma and abuse. I have come to believe that it helped save my life - and I don't say that lightly. For if I didn't have music in my life, I know that life would have been a whole lot different for me.

I was born in Boston, MA and lived there and in Cambridge, MA till the age of 6. My parents then purchased a home in the small town of Billerica about 20 miles outside of Boston. Though owning a home is the dream of many Americans, I believe this purchase out in a small suburban town by my parents gave them the means to do what they wished to do with children and not get caught. I was the oldest of 5 children and I experienced severe emotional, physical, and sexual abuse perpetrated by both of my parents and some of their friends. Only 3 of us are surviving today - two of my brothers committed suicide.

As young child I can remember either listening to the radio or to records when one of my parents would put them on. I found this to be simply amazing and full of wonder. Though I didn't know it at the time, it was a great escape for me in helping me to forget [for a while] the sheer horrors I was experiencing at the cruel and sadistic hands of my parents. Sadly, I had made the mistake of trying to sing along some times and their verbal tirades of how horrible I sounded quickly put an end to any thoughts I had of singing along anymore to this wonderful music that was playing. No, I would sing along in my head and still found the greatest pleasure in hearing this wonderful music - I liked it all, but the rock and roll was my favorite.

Despite my early love and fascination with music, I had other plans for my life. I can still remember quite clearly how I had it all mapped out in my head of what I would do

when I became an adult. I had my mind made up to join the military. I would become one of the best soldiers the Army ever had and then transfer over to the Rangers and eventually become a Green Beret soldier who would be highly skilled and proficient in all forms of covert warfare. I wanted to possess the skills of a sniper and then I would come back and use those skills to protect children. My first order of business would be to eliminate my parents and their perverted friends.

Fortunately, I had one of those magical moments come into my life that transformed how my life was to be. I was able to see and hear "The Beatles" perform on the Ed Sullivan Show and I was hooked. I too wanted to play the guitar and sing just like John, Paul, & George. Unfortunately, I made the mistake of saying this in front of my parents. The condemnation and verbal garbage thrown at me by both of them as to how stupid and lazy I was, worthless no good, how I would amount to nothing, and this list went on and on, did indeed cause me to believe that what they said was true. So I did not set about to play the guitar and sing like so many others did after having seen "The Beatles".

But there was to come another magical moment in my life when one day while tapping along to the radio I realized I was keeping perfect time with the song and could anticipate what would happen next in the song and tap my hands accordingly. This was huge for me, for I now realized that I still could find a way to be in music. I could be a drummer - and so I set about to learn to play the drums. I was forever tapping along to any and all songs that were on the radio or on a record. This time I did not share this new idea and joy with my parents.

I was able to borrow a friend's set of drums to join the neighborhood rock band till I was able to get my own. This opened up a whole new

world for me. Practicing with the band gave me not only the greatest joy in playing music, but I was forging some good friendships. Practicing at my friend's different homes gave me the opportunity to see and experience the interaction between loving and caring parents with their children. I was amazed and transfixed in observing the simplest of gestures of kindness, caring, and love between my friends and their parents.

The band did indeed become my surrogate family. It also helped boost my confidence and self-esteem, for the more we practiced, the better we became. Soon that neighborhood band was performing at parties, teen centers, junior high and high school dances, and many outdoor events. Our first Battle Of The Bands Contest saw us taking 5th place from out of 20 bands. Soon we moved up to 3rd place and getting that trophy was one of the greatest times in my life. From here on in we were winning those contests and what that did for me in helping to keep me focused and alive was huge. I had value as a person, as a human being and to receive the most welcome praise coming from so many, did indeed help me to think for some short brief moments that I was someone with value and worth and who could follow his dreams.

The nucleus to that band eventually was performing full time and I was a professional musician. It was my greatest title and I felt so proud of what we were doing as a band. Eventually I ended up touring overseas in Great Britain for two years with the very successful hard rock band "American Train". This too became a major turning point in my life for the healing process was about to make a huge shift. I lived in Liverpool, England, which in of itself was so cool, for this is where my idols ["The Beatles"] came from.

But the most profound part of this was when I realized it was the first time in my life that I had felt truly safe

from my parents. I was 21 years old and living in another country with this large ocean keeping them away from me. This also set about the un-locking of more of my creative pursuits in the areas of songwriting and now I was putting to paper and to music some of what I felt inside of me from the horrors of my youth. I also found that some songs were shelved because I didn't want to deal with what it was bringing up. But to feel safe and alive was so important and to be living my dreams of being a professional, touring musician, despite what my parents told me, was a godsend.

To try to encapsulate a lifetime of music and how it helped transform my life into a short article is a bit difficult - for there is so much to share and how it affected me. I continued to perform till the ripe old age of 29 at which point I started my own business of managing and booking other musical acts. I would still perform as a weekend warrior, but now my focus was on building my business and providing for my wife and 5 children. The business grew quite successful and I was having the time of my life and what it was able to provide my family and me.

Sadly, the past was still knocking at my door and in January of 1993 at the age of 39, I had a complete nervous breakdown from the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder [ptsd], non-stop flashbacks, and a major depression. I was unable to work and lost my business. But it was the loss of my ability to play the drums that caused an even deeper depression. I could not understand how I could lose something I had been doing for most of my life.

During this extremely difficult period my wife also left me and kept me from our children. The light at the end of the tunnel had burnt out for me. I had lost too much and the fact that it was related to my childhood abuse issues only caused more frustration and anger.

Thankfully with time, my ability to play the drums came back and now I thought about the long held dream of mine since I was a child to learn to play the guitar and sing. It took a lot of effort, hard work, and lots of

practice but it was so huge in helping to rebuild my shattered self-esteem and confidence.

I learned some "Beatles" songs, some oldies, and other classic rock songs and would go into 'drop-in centers' for those dealing with severe mental health and trauma issues. The loving support they gave to me when I would perform for them and that exchange of a healing energy did wonders to aid in my own healing. This soon gave me the confidence to try this out in performing at pubs, coffeehouses, and schools. Soon I was writing songs that had long been buried inside of me relative to the abuse and all of its effects upon me.

This too proved quite pivotal in my healing for I was able to express my sadness, my anger, my rage, and my frustration at what I and so many others have experienced. These songs were also resonating with other survivors so I set about to make a recording and I released my first album "TRAIN OF TEARS". It was successful beyond my wildest expectations and soon I recorded and released a second album, "PIRATES".

Soon this led to setting up a website - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse, and Mental Health through music, resources, and advocacy. Hundreds of thousands of people from around the world have visited my website and the fact that it was done mostly through word of mouth has been important for me in realizing and understanding that in my own small way I am helping other survivors, their family members, and their friends.

To feel good about the things we do in helping ourselves and others is indeed a huge factor in surviving and thriving after abuse. I am half way through the recording of my third album release "WAITIN' FOR A TRAIN".

My healing through music has brought me to a place where I can now write songs about love, life, loss, and hope. There are still many days and many times that it is a struggle to carry on and move forward, but I try my level best to see where I have come from and what I have achieved and I can see the good things that

have been accomplished, even the little things are huge for me and I am forever grateful for that.

Michael Skinner
141 English Village Rd. # 11
Manchester, NH 03102

NOTE from editor: you can contact Michael on the web at www.mkskinnermusic.com at www.myspace.com/michaelskinnermusic or email him at mikeskinner@comcast.net

MV

I Am Not a Horrible Child

I am not a horrible child
I hear myself cry and no one answers
I am a horrible child
I reach out into the darkness but know
no one is there
I am a horrible child
I ache for someone to hold me and
wonder
Am I such a horrible child
Still no one answers
I think I must be a horrible child
I hear my mother scream
I want to die
Am I that horrible child
Why does she always leave
Because I am that horrible child
I awake years later from a deep
slumber sleep and ask
Am I still that same horrible child
The answer is yet to come
I don't know if I am that horrible child
So I pray that someone will answer
And I wait And I wait And I wait
Am I still that horrible child
I try to dig my way out from what
seems a lifetime ago
Yet I still ask
Am I still that horrible child
I await for the answer
Someone must answer
Am I still that horrible child?
The answer I think is near
No you are not nor were you ever
That horrible child

By Jill M. D'Angelo

MV

Therapist's Page

By Denise Fletcher

Denise Fletcher holds a degree in recreational therapy from Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN and a massage practitioner certificate from the Minneapolis School of Massage. She has worked as a recreation assistant with children, young adults and elderly of varying abilities.

Exploring the World of Art

In a world gone awry, art can become a welcome release from your troubles and is a very important part of healing from trauma. Art is both fun and relaxing and a great stress reliever. Art can be utilized as a method to not only express your deepest thoughts and feelings, but as a tool to get to know yourself better and to discover your hidden talents. Create art for art's sake. Art does not always have to be for public consumption, competition or for material gain. Art should definitely not be used as a way for others to analyze your psyche. If your art is very personal, it may be best to use discretion and share it only with trusted friends or family. Ask others you know for their personal perspectives on art, but do not let them discourage you from exploring new modes of personal expression. Make it your goal to try your hand at something new and different that you've never done before.

When determining what types of art that you would like to pursue, you may consider exploring the world of art by visiting your local community center or art gallery. Take a good look around your community to get a sense of where your interests may lie. Art takes many forms, such as sculptures in the park, flower gardens, rock formations, and paintings, drawings or photos hanging on the walls of Churches, libraries or local restaurants. Other valuable resources for various ideas are craft and fabric stores, bookstores, or art supply stores. Taking a walk in the woods or walking along the beach will stir your imagination and may bring out the collector in you. Shells, rocks, petrified wood and other assorted natural products are great resources

for craft projects like mobiles or collages. The more you observe your environment, the more you will become attuned to the many art forms available to you. Even baking cakes or cookies can become an art form!

It is always helpful to take a class to learn a new skill and art is no exception. There are many opportunities for classes through art centers, community colleges, or even at craft stores, depending on the level of your interest and skill. If finances are a problem, then consider checking out art books or video tapes at the nearest library. There are innumerable experts who have written how-to books on many different art forms, such as jewelry, woodworking, quilting, computer graphics, etc. You can learn almost anything you want to know in self-help books. If you live in a large city, there are large Institutes of Art which are open to the public where you can tour exhibits by world-renowned artists. These displays change with the seasons and are full of amazing works of art that bring fresh ideas no matter how many times you visit.

Find a relaxed atmosphere such as a coffee shop or reading room and bring a spiral notebook or journal with you to jot down notes. Challenge yourself to write a short poem or song on something that is of value to you. Give yourself some personal time to reflect on your creative goals. Contemplate such questions as:

What types of art do I like most? Least?

What methods of art would I like to learn?

What is my primary interest? Secondary?

What subjects would I like to concentrate on most? Least?

What points do I want to convey?

What is the best way to express a

particular point?

What motivates me to create art the most? Least?

What are my future goals?

Write your own questions related to art and write down your answers in your notebook. Your questions and answers will change over time. Keeping an art journal is a good way to measure your progress. If you are proficient in a particular skill which you would like to share, you may consider teaching a class or volunteering with a non-profit agency which specializes in the healing arts. My challenge to you is to embrace your inner child by doing any creative activity which brings you joy and which helps you to focus on the present moment.

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Articles/Resources:

Recommended Books:

Making the Moments Count: Leisure Activities for Caregiving Relationships by Dr. Joanne Decker

Touched with Fire by Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison

Suggested Websites:

American Art Therapy Assoc - www.arttherapy.org

Free Arts for Abused Children - www.freearts.org

Narsad Artworks - <https://narsadartworks.org>

Pain Exhibit - www.painexhibit.com

Survivors Art Foundation - www.survivorsartfoundation.org

The Awakenings Project - www.theawakeningsproject.org

The Icarus Project - <http://theicarusproject.net>

VSA Arts - www.vsarts.org

Quote of the Day:

"He who works with his hands is a laborer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist." - St. Francis of Assisi

Fleas and Lice

By Carol L.

"Just cuz ya got lice don't mean ya ain't got fleas too!"

Now when my internist told me this Louisiana colloquialism, I laughed with relief. At the age of 51, I find myself battling a bad case of mononucleosis. It seems that if you've had mono earlier, you can develop a subsequent case in the same manner as developing shingles after a childhood case of chickenpox.

All I knew was that I had fatigue like I had single-handedly built the Egyptian pyramids. I wasn't sad or blue...in fact: this was totally unlike anything I had ever faced in my many years of dealing with mental illness. All I wanted to do was sleep but I do try so hard to maintain good sleep habits and knew that sleeping 18 hours a day would normally not be good for me at all.

HOWEVER, I knew from bitter experience that because I am "a mental patient" those avenues are ALWAYS explored first. And, yes, perhaps, they SHOULD be considered first but far too many doctors see on my drug list several psychiatric drugs and they just shut off the possibility that I might actually have something physically wrong with me.

I have lain in agony in an ER in acute pain and vomiting almost continuously while listening to doctors discussing if this was attention-seeking behavior. Of course, when the gastroenterologist got there and palpated my abdomen, he had me in surgery in ten minutes to repair an incarcerated hernia that had several loops of intestine being strangled. Nope, not a psychiatric problem but I could have died while they discussed the issue.

And somehow, more infuriatingly, even when I go in for a sprained ankle, for example, a lot of nurses and doctors will look at my drug list and then just ignore me and talk over my head to my husband. I seem to become invisible to them. Fortunately

for me, my husband just re-directs any questions back to me. He has had his own experiences of being ignored when he had an operation on a foot and was in a wheelchair for 8 weeks. I once took him to the cafeteria and the serving people down the line consistently asked me what HE wanted to eat.

And so, I have searched for doctors who do recognize that I want to and can give input into my medical care. My internist is one of those delightful people. When she told me the lice and fleas expression, I knew she would look beyond my "mental patient" status and look for something else that might be there. So she ran blood work including the Epstein Barr panel. My antibody levels were through the roof. I felt a lot of relief at the fact that my self-knowledge was right on the money. Also I was so glad that going home and crawling into bed was what my body needed. I don't mind being told that I have mental health issues to work on, but there are times, when, dammit, the body just has a bug!

Yes, I am very aware that there is a strong mind-body connection. When I am very depressed my immune system does seem to go on the fritz and I nearly always get a cold. I do recognize that there is such a thing as psychosomatic health problems. But even "mental patients" have a real physical body and it can get injured or sick.

And the reverse problem does also occur. When I was admitted for that emergency abdominal surgery, I was in the hospital for several days afterwards. Now, I was officially a "real" patient. I never once saw ANY of my psychiatric medications...even though they had a list of my medications and a list of all my doctor's names, addresses and phone numbers. So, in essence, I went through withdrawal symptoms because I had been stabilized on that level of psychiatric medications for a number of years. I asked at least

once or twice a day when they would come and I was repeatedly told they were checking into it. I know you are never supposed to bring your own medications to the hospital but it was very, very tempting. I was getting all sorts of medications through my IV and I did not know the interactions with my psychiatric medications or I probably would have done so. So in other words, if and when your doctor finds fleas...don't let them forget to keep treating the lice too!"

MV

Healing

Healing the spirit in my life has been ongoing. It began as an adult when memories of abuse started coming to me.

I think I began to honor life and love myself then, too.

Treating my inner children gently and happily, and their response being so joyful and such a blessing to me, is probably the most wonderful part.

All the love and encouragement I wanted as a child, we shower on the little ones, and on our selves too.

One way we help us adults is to accept ourselves as we are.

I we don't seem to get older in spirit. The adults came as adults, and still are adults. The children never get older.

Why is this? Do any of you feel older than when you first knew yourself—I mean, inside?

By Sally B

MV

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

By L.B.

I was diagnosed with DID in the early 90's. I did not understand the diagnosis, and continued in talk therapy for 8 more years without learning much about it, or that the prognosis for recovery was very good. After I moved away from that state and my therapist, I continued to experience flashbacks and was having nightmares and panic attacks without understanding any of the reasons these distressing symptoms were happening. It caused several health problems, and wreaked havoc with my nervous system.

It's been a year and a half since I started therapy with a psychotherapist who specializes in EFT. My therapist, Laurel, confirmed the previous diagnosis. I had no idea how shattered I really was inside and it became overwhelming at times when I began to learn how little I knew about or was able to care for myself. I was aware, however, that this was the last time I was going to anyone for help. If this didn't work I had already planned how to end the torment, once and for all.

I have learned from reading *Many Voices* that many of us with DID have a great fear of medical procedures. I was relieved to learn that, because I thought I was the only one and that I was very, very strange. In 2006 I was diagnosed with cancer. One of the

procedures I had to have was painful and I would not be allowed any anaesthetic because it would interfere with the test results. This was a major drawback in my treatment, because I was so terrified by how painful I thought it was going to be, that I was refusing to go through with the procedure. I went to my therapist for a special visit before I saw the doctor, and we discovered a 2 year old alter named Lucy who came out and told us her story for the first time. She was filled with terror and didn't want to live anymore.

We did EFT specifically for Lucy and her fear of pain, tests, surgery, anaesthetic and her feeling of being unmothered. After a one hour session, I left that office with little Lucy completely calmed, and went to my doctor's appointment. I had the procedure the next day, found it was not nearly as painful as I had thought it would be, and also had the surgery that same morning. I was astounded by the shift in such a short time, from terror-stricken child, to a healthy adult making good decisions in taking care of herself in a life-threatening situation.

I thank God daily for Laurel. She has taught me about identifying and caring for the little ones inside. When we discovered a little one she taught me that they all had a story and we

had to listen to their stories and then they could heal. After we listened she would begin to use EFT, "acupuncture without needles". Laurel would set up the situation using the words and feeling that the child had expressed - and we would do specific EFT for that situation. Always finding how intense the pain was "on a scale of 1 to 10" she would begin the EFT and after one or two rounds of my tapping on my acupuncture points I would tell her where the pain was on the scale. It has always dropped so quickly that I feel impelled to let other people with dissociation know how effective EFT is in treating DID.

I never leave her office in the agony I read about in so many articles about DID. The child might be sad, tired, grieving, but not in agony. Laurel wouldn't let us leave that way - we did the EFT until it was OK and the child was resting and peaceful, which doesn't take very long. The thing I love about EFT especially, is the brief time it takes to bring healing and relief to little ones in distress. It has happened for me countless times in the last year and a half and everyone who knows me has commented repeatedly on how much stronger and healthier I am emotionally.

I highly recommend exploring this treatment to persons with DID and their therapists.



MV

What is EFT?

By Laurel Deborah Sweet, MA, LMFT

Laurel Deborah Sweet, M.A., LMFT, is a psychotherapist in private practice. She has over 30 years experience working with clients and has been utilizing EFT for about 5 years. She has served as "Emotional Assistant" at several of Gary Craig's workshops on "EFT and Serious Illness". She can be reached at (417) 257-3383 or by e-mail at fcircle@townsq.com.

"Some day the medical profession will wake up and realize that unresolved emotional issues are the main cause of 85% of all illnesses. When they do, EFT will be one of their primary healing tools as it is for me."

- Eric Robins, MD - from www.emofree.com

EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) is a new discovery that has provided thousands of people with relief from the distressing effects of emotional issues and physical pain. Simply stated, it is a unique application of acupuncture where you don't need to use needles. Instead, you stimulate well established energy meridian points on your body by tapping on them with your fingertips. Developed by Gary Craig, the process is portable and easy to learn.

EFT is one of the new "energy psychology" techniques which is revolutionizing how we think about and work with psychological and emotional issues. Still considered experimental, therapists who use EFT are achieving and reporting rapid success and resolution with a huge variety of conditions. As a therapist who has often been frustrated by the limitations of other therapeutic

modalities to fully eliminate the emotional residue of trauma in client's lives, I have personally found EFT to be the most effective technique I have used in working with many who are dealing with anxiety disorders and the traumatic memory issues associated with a diagnosis of PTSD.

The premise of EFT is expressed in the Discovery Statement:

"The cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system."

When experiencing a physically painful or emotionally distressing event, it seems that the body's energy system (understood as the meridians in Oriental Medicine) is disrupted and disturbed. (Think of how your body's energy feels when someone unexpectedly yells at you, or you fall suddenly.) The EFT technique, which uses tapping on certain meridian points while focusing on the disturbing emotion or pain, allows the body's energy system to rebalance. As this happens, the disturbing emotion or pain typically decreases in intensity until balance returns and the intensity is gone.

I have found that the use of EFT often substantially shortens the therapeutic process. I have seen clients who have suffered for years

from panic attacks or painful memories resolve these issues and become free of the disabling effects after only a few sessions. Other, more complex problems would certainly take longer, but my experience with EFT is that the therapeutic process is still substantially shorter than with "talk therapy" alone. I would caution that although EFT can be learned fairly quickly, when one is dealing with a serious disorder (such as DID) or such issues as a complex history of childhood abuse, it is essential to work in conjunction with a trained and qualified health care practitioner. As with any other professional with whom you might choose to work, it is essential that you determine their qualifications and background beforehand.

If you would like to learn more about EFT, an excellent resource is Gary Craig's website, www.emofree.com. You can read and download an introductory manual, as well as read a variety of articles posted by practitioners and others using the technique. You can locate practitioners there as well as on another site operated by Patricia Carrington, PhD, www.EFTupdate.com

MV

D.I.D. Humor

Something that has gotten me through the difficult process of learning more about each part of myself has been:

I Multiply Like Rabbits!

Saying it in a joking manner has made learning the pain that each newly surfacing alter has endured a much easier process.

By Nicole

MV



I Walk

By Dorothy Williams

I walk. Every day: rain, sun, sleet and hail, just like the proverbial postman. I put on my walking shoes, do a few warm-ups, and out the door I go. First I take a deep breath of fresh air, then I have a look around me and put one foot in front of the other, then the other foot in front of the other, repeat, repeat, repeat.

I try to make it part of my daily meditation. Clear my head of intrusive thoughts; feel the ground beneath my feet, listen to the sounds of nature around me, feel the rhythm of my body, focus on the here and now.

I walk about 3 miles each day. 365 days a year for the last 4 1/2 years. Haven't, as yet, missed a day. It's a vital, healing, therapeutic part of my life. It helps to keep me feeling grounded and sane and I love it.

Sometimes I walk with my family or friends. We giggle and chat and the time goes very quickly and my meditations get forgotten, but it's lots of fun. I always feel happy and safe when I'm with them.

Sometimes I walk with my "family and friends." We find ourselves walking in doubles or singly down the road – a long, long line of us with our protectors, Andrew the dark Scot and Valdemar the white Dane on each side of us, keeping us safe from traffic and making sure we don't fall into the ditch. On the days that we're all together we usually don't walk as fast as usual; many of the children have trouble keeping up the pace and besides, some of them just like to dawdle and maybe pick a wildflower or two. Because some of the younger ones get very tired after walking awhile, some of the adults will lift them up and carry them for the rest of the journey. Then they feel very safe and protected while still being able to enjoy the time in the fresh air.

Sometimes I walk alone.

The seasons pass beneath my feet. In the heat of summer I can smell the precious sap of evergreen trees mixed

with the dank odor of the earth and the sweet smells of summer flowers. I feel the heat of the sun on my bare arms and neck and feel the soft brush of dandelions and daisies on my bare legs as I walk by them. I celebrate these sensations that are still so new to me but sometimes I just let my tears come, realizing that so very much was stolen and kept from me for over 40 years. The Ocean in the Summer is all blue glass and satin ribbons and the mountains in the background are lush and verdant.

Autumn comes. I once more don my ancient red raincoat and feel the wind and rain and the dread within me. Still I keep on walking. I fear the Fall. I fear the continuous cold and damp. I try to see the beauty in the falling leaves and the colors of the rusty drying grasses, but I still feel invaded by memories of cold and "picked up after school" and being trapped in a locked dark room and feeling cold, alone and afraid. I want to rush home and feel the heat of my woodstove and the warmth of a hot cup of tea. I want to be in the here and now and forget about the past, but Autumn still knows how to play her insidious mind games with me. At least now she doesn't always win. My Ocean fades to dull gray topped with white in the Autumn and the mountains pale with new snow. And the rains come.

Winter poses new challenges. We don't get endless days of snow in my home in the North by the Ocean, but when it does come, it's wet and heavy and thick and makes walking difficult and treacherous. I trudge through knee deep; same old red coat but with gumboots instead of walking shoes, looking like a defeated woodpecker who forgot to fly south for the winter. Winter is also the season for the majestic bald eagles. I've had the exquisite privilege of seeing over 15 of them at one time in the huge evergreens that frame my walking route, silently watching me or swooping down to get a better look at the lone human walker who dares to

enter their domain. Winter is the time that my Ocean sometimes vents her wrath at the world and holds the ferry hostage in its dock as her revenge. Often the mountains disappear.

Everyone needs a time of rejuvenation and rebirth. Mine slips in slowly through the winds and torrential rains. After months of dreariness, my feet finally pass a snowdrop peeking out from the soaked ground and soon we pass the odd daffodil and crocus, declaring that the long anticipated return to life is at hand. Time to rejoice! And each year, in the fourth week of March a miracle happens. My hummingbirds return! Tiny and cold from their precarious flight up the coast from Mexico they fly right up to my window, asking me to please fill their feeder so they can prepare the nests for the females, who follows along soon. Then I know that my journey, also filled with many hardships, is bearable and things will be O.K. And the Ocean calms down and the mountains come back.

I know that in the large scheme of things my daily walk is of no great importance; that perhaps what I see and feel is somewhat trivial and ordinary. But for me, it's my special tonic – a form of therapy that is simple, uncomplicated and natural. Of course, I engage in other forms of therapy as well; I see my therapist on a regular basis and understand her importance to me. Not only is she kind and understanding, she's expertly skilled in working with people with DID and I feel privileged to have her on my side. I practice meditation and grounding exercises on a daily basis. I read about and am aware of many other forms of adjunctive therapies available for survivors and I applaud the therapists and their clients who benefit from them. Life finally seems to be so full of healing opportunities for people, like me, who suffer from trauma and dissociation.

And also, I walk.

My Best Friends (s)

By J.H.

Fourteen years ago if you had asked me any questions about someone with mental "problems" I couldn't have really told you a thing. "Depression" was something the doctor gave you a pill for. "Bi-polar" was probably an alternate life style choice. "Multiple personalities" was something I thought I went through once a month. I, like the majority of the population, was ignorant of the true meanings behind these terms.

Then I was fortunate enough, through a needlework stitching group, to meet someone who was going to have a wonderful impact on my life. At first, I was a little taken aback that she was so upfront and honest and willing to answer questions about her "problem". I knew there were times when she didn't show up for stitching group because she wasn't feeling well. But I grew up in a home where you didn't ask questions about someone's illness and didn't want to pry.

Gradually, our time together was more than just stitching evenings and we began to go shopping together or other outings. I slowly began to feel comfortable enough to ask questions when she made certain remarks during the course of conversation. I have learned to judge the state of her health by her level of conversation and hundreds of other little clues. I now know she is great when I or others are in a crisis, but tends to fall apart afterwards, so then it's my turn to "nurse" her along.

There have also been some scares along the way. One night she was staying with me while her husband was out of town and she wasn't doing well. I got up the next morning—no friend. Seems she left during the night and I didn't hear her. All she can remember is waking up in her bed and knowing she shouldn't be there. What I remember thinking is that this is not a good indication of my sleeping habits with 1 teenage daughter and 1 pre-teen daughter. They could sneak out of the house

and I would never know it. Here are some other things I have learned over the years.....

1. There are as many levels of depression as there is a cold. I might have a cold and just have the sniffles. She could have pneumonia. They're both still colds, but with one I can go to work and run errands, with the other, she is in bed or one foot in the hospital.

2. Saying "Are you nuts!" during a discussion is not a comment on her mental health status and she is not offended by the phrase. She does however take offense that I think her idea is less than great.

3. When I say I need to "center" myself I am talking about calming down and distressing, doing a little yoga. She is talking about getting all her "buddies" back under control.

4. When I call her on the phone and ask, "Whom am I speaking to?" it could be a legitimate question depending on how her day has been going.

5. I am not afraid to leave my children with her. However, I am reluctant to let her and my oldest daughter go off together. Neither one of them has any sense of direction and have been known to frequently phone home for directions.

6. Unfortunately, I can't get one personality to loan me money, clothes, CD's and the rest of them to forget it. Nor will each personality give me a separate birthday or Christmas present. Which actually is good thing, because then I don't have to get each of them a separate present!

7. Mental illnesses are not contagious. But I can still TRY to blame any of my mental lapses on her. But she is too savvy to fall for that.

8. I can discuss my depression or state of mind with her and she understands and offers helpful suggestions. However, she is prone to try and slip a little "Freud" in there and find phallic symbolism. There is

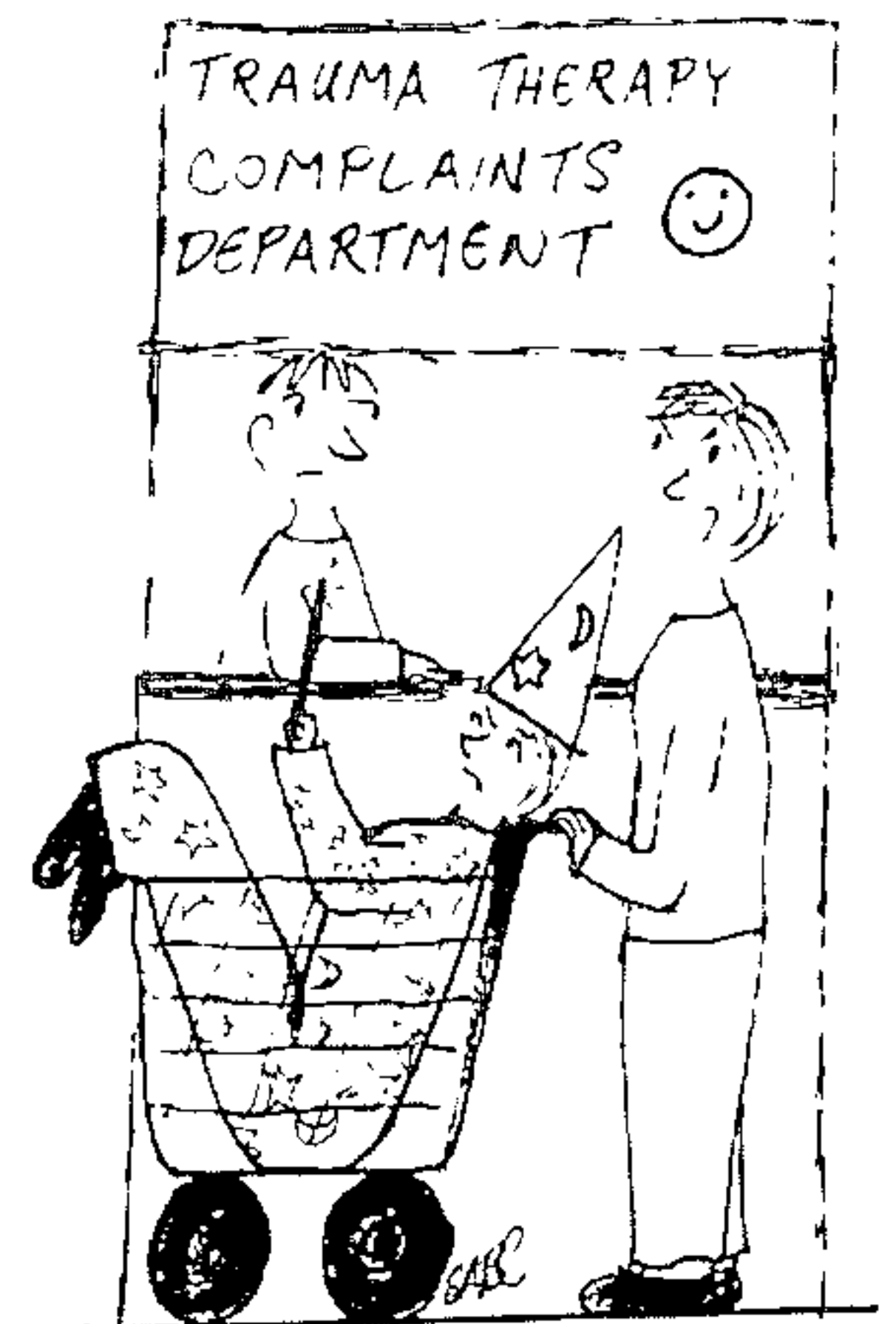
nothing like a dirty joke to make you feel better.

9. Her husband does not find anything we do too strange. He has become accustomed to 10 changes in plans within a 24-hour period to a project or trip. He's seen it all and just goes with the flow. He understands it's hard to get all those "personalities" to cooperate.

10. I wouldn't trade her and all of her alters for the same amount of "normal" people. After all, we couldn't get them all in the same car and decide on one place to eat lunch.

11. When we say, "I would kill for a cup of coffee", I'm the one you would have to watch out for, not her. I'm still learning about all the little ends and outs of her illness and alters and all the other things that accompany them. I figure I will never have it totally understood since I am only a bystander and not actually experiencing it myself. But darn it, WE ALL can have fun trying!

MV



"This therapist won't wave her magic wand."

EMDR to the Rescue

By Connie and Her Little Ones

I love EMDR work. It is intense but we also reach a comforting and soothing stage. Our therapist introduced us to EMDR work in our therapy. We are finding this to be extremely helpful to us all. Talk therapy also continues to be so very important as we feel our thoughts and feelings are given the care and concern we have always needed. Growing up, this was not the case. The environment was negative, we never knew what to expect. Communication and listening skills were not there. But, healing is a process and we had to understand that mom is who she is. We are still working on this.

We feel our therapist is very skillful with EMDR. We have had some exciting results. The hard work this takes is worth it. As we find the thoughts, memories and feelings that were once hidden in fear and sadness, we come closer to each other. We gain knowledge about One Another.

In EMDR work, we can express the negative thoughts and feelings we heard growing up and still keep hearing in our mind over and over again. These statements are like an emotional hit to us. They are draining on our self-confidence and strength, and inhibit our growth. During an EMDR session when a negative statement came, we also told our therapist the positive statement we needed to hear. Later that week, I was so surprised at how we could hear a negative statement and a positive one would pop up right beside it! First time that ever happened!

Now we are finding the negative thoughts just go away and are replaced with positive ones. We continue to work with the positive statements to bring them to a conscious level of awareness. As we do, feelings of confidence, strength and comfort come to be ours. Once we hear the positive statements, deep within, we can begin to weave our own. And as stated before, talk therapy is also vital to our healing. It is

how we began. We are grateful to have a therapist who can go there and give us the comfort we need. We also comfort Our Selves as we are very able to share with each other. We have learned some very good exercises in breathing from our therapist. These are very helpful in grounding Our Selves during flashbacks or stressful moments.

I am Little Connie and I need to share my sad feelings. This is not easy for me because I might make everyone sad but I have learned sharing helps me. There are Big Connie and Protective One giving me their comfort. My therapist is comforting too; also my family at home. Sharing my sad feelings helps me to understand myself and to find some happy ones when we all share.

Connie again (Big Connie): Sometimes we need to go back and work through it again until it gets better. It is a wonderful moment when you feel this. It is an uplifting moment where we pause, smile and linger. Our positive feelings and thoughts stay with us; we have that kind of care. In our therapy and in our family, we are blessed.

I am Protective One and I need to talk. I have many scary thoughts and feelings. In talk therapy I can let them out in a safe place. My therapist understands and helps me through an OCD thought or an anxious moment, with a more logical way of thinking. Now, when I am anxious, I try to think more logically. When I am thinking in the old way, a logical thought comes up right beside it. This is comforting as I feel less anxious and I am able to cope with the moment.

Me again, Connie – I would like to share how we cope with a session in EMDR or any difficult time. One important message we learned is that the feeling itself is not good or bad—it just is. Our therapist asked each of us to think of a safe place. This is included at the end of a session. We can go there and feel better. We also do this at home during our inside time. These moments keep us close, give us a learning experience about Our Selves and bright us closer TOGETHER.

With warm thoughts – Connie, Little Connie and Protective One.

MV



Don't Know What It's Called But It Really Works

By Cha Cha Cha

When my second therapist suggested I learn self-hypnosis, I was not pleased with this at all. I had an instinct hypnosis misused can be dangerous. Then he explained that dissociation and creation of my others was in fact a form of self-hypnosis. Now that made good sense to all of us.

He taught us how to relax and allow the co-conscious to go into a self-hypnotic state. We created this awesome place for all of us to go. No way in for anyone not in our system. It became a refuge.

Later when I began a seriously-bad series of nightmares, one after the other, we gathered into a trance state to find and fight them.

It has worked pretty good. I have been studying different meditation styles and adjust them for our needs. About five months ago I was fed up—we could never go to bed until after 3:00 AM – from cult issues.

My first therapist was into teaching us all to think positive and understand we were not bad or did anything to deserve the abuses.

As a Christian I also pray. One in us (who refuses to say name) got into bed before the 3:00 AM, and began to use a combo of prayers, positive affirming statements, self-hypnosis and use of a mantra... to address the nightmares.

Now – I will sleep in peace
 In peace I will sleep
 Nightmares will not bother me
 Nightmares must stop for our Lord does not desire us to have nightmares
 I will sleep peacefully with normal fun dreams
 My dreams will not become nightmares
 They will simply be a normal dream.

I have no idea why it's worked so well except, I believe, by changing our

focus from fear of sleep etc., and trying to see the positive: *"I will sleep and wake up well-rested."*

It's like trying to stop all the rotten things adults said I was. NO! I am a good person and I know I can do most things we put our minds to.

Whatever it is, we have been doing it. It works very, very well. Even my psychiatrist is interested in it. We call it the chat, for lack of any idea how to define it. It's got parts of a lot of different healthy things people use to help recover. I have not had any nightmares since and get good sleep well before the 3:00 AM.

My first therapist would say, "Hey, if you keep saying and thinking I can't, you won't be able to. But to say "I can learn"—this is a positive statement that if you repeat enough, you will begin to believe it."

I am at this time trying to use this to relieve migraines and other old-lady aches and pains of arthritis.

And each time I begin to use it, the pain slowly goes away a little faster.

I don't lie to ourselves. I say, "We have a migraine...very soon this migraine will begin to ease up and go away. Our Lord does not desire us to be in pain."

After 10 or 15 times..."The migraine will leave now. We do not enjoy the pain."

I say that and, it's usually worked.

The really important aspect in this chit chat is the need to really give it a chance and believe it will work. If I take aspirin thinking it's not going to help at all—it doesn't. This may be some slight placebo effect, but for 47 years I was in a terror most every night, plagued by horrible nightmares.

Now that is no longer a problem.

MV

Homecoming

How did they arrive here
 Who brought them home to me
 Were they conceived in love or lust or rape
 My private history
 My unconventional family tree.

Some came with the sweetness of a little child
 Bringing beautiful bouquets of taste and touch to me
 Some came like a phantom in the night
 Sliding through the backdoor of my memory
 Ripping up the flowers of my history
 Shouting out their secrets in their misery
 Clawing at the fabric of my sanity.

So many different names and different faces
 Yet they learned to hide their fury, all the same
 Through the fog their thoughts and feelings keep emerging
 Still encumbered by the terror and the shame
 That rumbles through the bowels of my history
 Colliding with my concept of reality
 Acknowledging a time of inhumanity.

Still, they need to stay and slowly sip the validation
 That lets us know we're not alone upon the earth
 Then with love and care we'll find the strength and courage
 To help me gently claim my Spiritual rebirth
 Accepting Nature as my Deity
 Nourishing the wholeness of my family
 Granting my soul the blessing of serenity.

By Dorothy Williams

MV



Meditation for Multiples

By Carol L.

I never thought I'd consider meditation (and yoga, especially) but when I saw an ad for the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at Duke University Center for Integrative Medicine, I was intrigued. MBSR is considered "a psycho-educational program." More and more medical studies show clear links between the mind and body. MBSR is an 8-week course that teaches several techniques to help deal with stress from many sources. I checked it out on the Internet (see URL below) and it sounded like something that might benefit me.

I was glad to find that "skeptical curiosity" is encouraged in the course. The book we used as our over-all text is the very readable *Full Catastrophe Living. Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* by Jon Kabat-Zinn. The Duke MBSR teachers have also written a workbook and recorded several CD's which are provided to help guide the meditation practices and yoga. Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, is perhaps the best-known proponent of using meditation to work with patients in a clinical setting. This MBSR program Dr. Kabat-Zinn developed has now been used by thousands of people across the nation in numerous programs.

Although the course itself taught techniques of several kinds of meditation and some yoga, I will be writing primarily about my experiences with the simplest (or hardest!) meditation practice: Awareness of Breathing. One of the first hurdles to overcome about meditation was carving out the time to do the 45 minutes a day practice session that we all committed to when we signed up. And after finding the time, the next main hurdle was how judgmental I was about my meditation. My self-talk (and with multiples, this takes on a much higher, um, dimension) ran a

constant stream of criticism of HOW I was (or often was NOT) meditating. *Breathe in, breathe out...hmmm... hmmm..Oh, oh..I am NOT concentrating on my breath...I'm a TERRIBLE meditator...I'll NEVER be able to control my mind...I can't BELIEVE I'm just sitting here doing NOTHING...I have things to do...Oh, wow, now I am REALLY not meditating...breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out...*

We were told many times to gently and compassionately keep bringing our attention back to our meditation, no matter how often it strayed. And the gentleness and compassion part was (and still can be) very difficult. But I have started to learn to "sit" with myself in silence and to be an observer of my mind. Every time I think I've really got the hang of it, I realize how much further I have to go.

So, what did I get out of my 8-weeks of training and subsequent practice? Well, for one, when I carve out some time of silence with no noise, telephone turned off and my "Do Not Disturb" sign on my door, my first order of business is communication amongst the alters. My private therapist worked hard with all of the alters to establish channels of communication. But there is a problem that some of these channels do get shut down sometimes to make life a little less complicated so we can get through some life events. Well, if I am in a quiet place and have an open and receptive mind, communication certainly does flow. There are far fewer times when we are hijacked by one of the alters and "lose time" because everyone is "heard" regularly. Only after we all touch base with each other can everyone calm down, slow down and let go so we can meditate.

Now meditation is not a state of being blissed-out, although peacefulness very often does occur. But there were many sessions that ended in tears. Certainly everyone MUST have a safety framework in

place before starting this type of therapy. A reputable university-based program taught my course, my psychiatrist kept up with my progress and was available for some extra sessions and a close friend took the class with me so I was not driving myself home just in case something disturbing got triggered. To do this type of therapy work is to trust that you can survive the experience of being in touch with your own self...or selves.

Meditation is actually more like a form of heightened awareness. And as Dr. Brantley once observed, this is awareness in a calm and detached way like observing a football game from high in the bleachers as opposed to in the middle of the fray. Patterns of thought, recurrent stress reactions and repeated body tensions become much clearer at a distance. And with this clarity come options. Options to act in a way we choose as opposed to simply reacting as usual. I have found my over-all anxiety level has decreased although, of course, there are still bad days.

Another benefit I have seen from the movement-type meditations (such as walking meditation or yoga) has been the concept of nibbling at my limitations. Being very overweight and suffering from arthritis, my ability to get around was such when I took the class that I was very worried about the active parts of the training. I was reassured that I would only be asked to do what I could do without injury but was encouraged to go just a little bit further each time if I could. So a year or so later, between being more active a little more each day and learning to eat more mindfully, I have lost 56 pounds and even reduced my diabetic medications. I have started to do things that physically I would have thought impossible not that long ago. I am also much less likely to go through my day on autopilot and to notice beauty and friendliness around me.

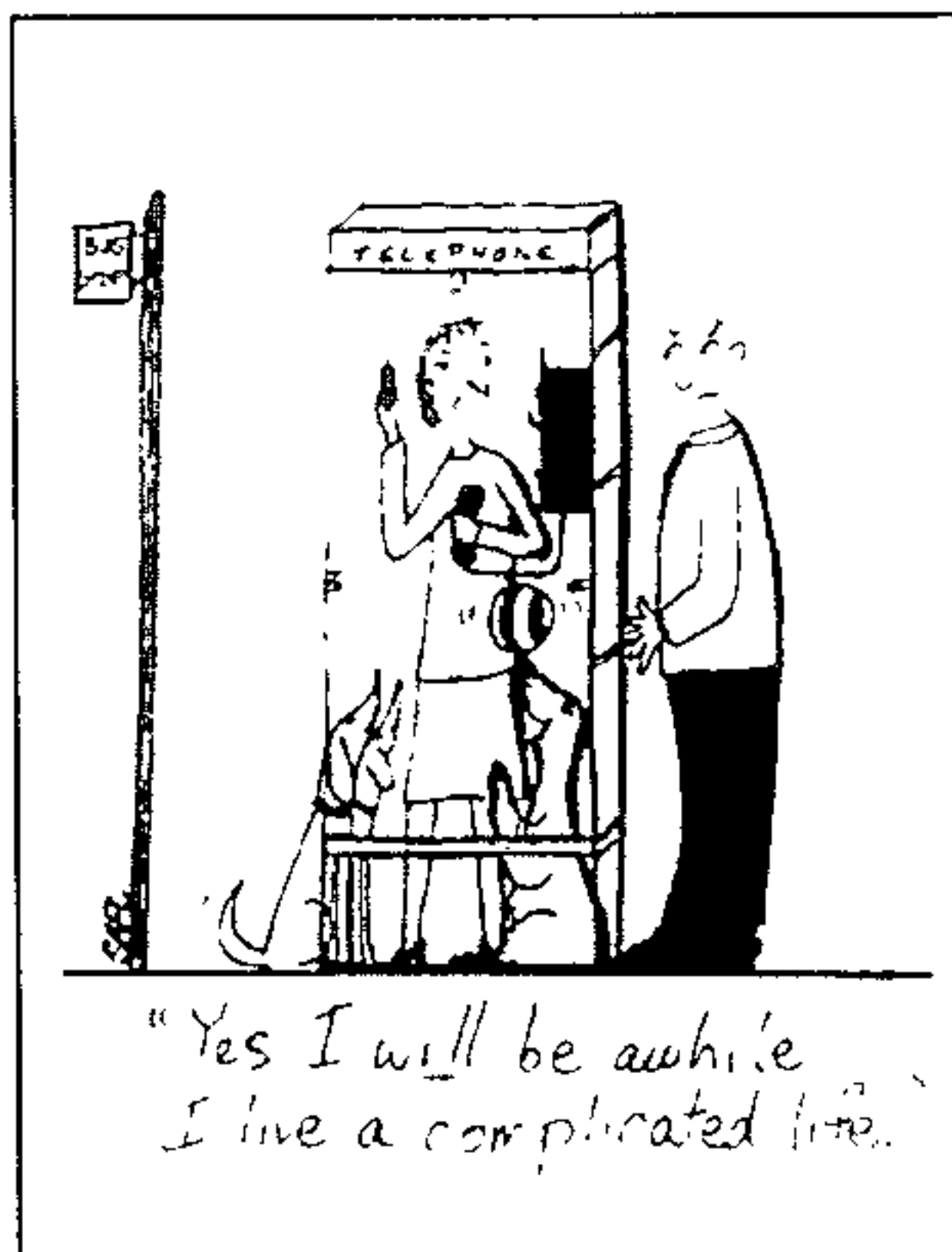
The focus of mindfulness meditation is on the present moment, which gives anyone, but especially a multiple, so much freedom. Of course, some of the alters are, by definition, stuck in past events. But the grip those past events have on our life today can be loosened. And we can then all move forward.

In writing this article I feel like I am trying to get into jeans 4 sizes to small, because I could write so much about not only mindfulness and meditation but also how these are different for a multiple. I hope that I, a novice writing only of my own personal experiences, have given a glimpse of how these techniques can be useful. I owe a great deal to my teacher, Dr. Jeffrey Brantley (author of *Calming Your Anxious Mind: How Mindfulness and Compassion Can Free You From Anxiety and Fear*; and co-author of *Five Good Minutes: 100 Morning Practices to Help You Stay Calm & Focused All Day Long*) This will be a lifelong journey and I know I have just started. But I do face the future with greater equanimity, less fear and a determination to continue with my practice.

Meditation is opening ourselves to the vast space of kindness and stillness inside each of us. This is our home. Meditation is a way to find our way home." Dr Jeffrey Brantley

For more information, see: www.dukehealth.org/Services/IntegrativeMedicine/Specialties/StressReduction/Index

MV



This Broken Life With All Its Pain and Terror is the Promised Land

And I have found tears
To be the nectar of the soul
When the lamp of life burns low

Nestling by blue islands
Listening to the cry of bitterns

Or the song of seals
In silky dappling waters

What starts bitter
Becomes the soul's
homecoming
Carried on ocean waves
To simple breath
As we reach out for relationship

By Kate Evans

MV

BOOKS

Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma

By Michelle D. Sherman, Ph.D and DeAnne M. Sherman © 2005 Published by Seeds of Hope Books, Woodbury MN. www.seedsofhopebooks.com (800) 901-3480 \$20. 142 pgs. Paperback

Finding My Way is truly a find for young people trying to understand and relate to their traumatized parent who is, one hopes, recovering from that trauma. This slender but information-packed volume is designed in a workbook format that encourages teens to express their feelings and describe their situation to share with a counselor or teacher. Beginning with the basics (Why is my parent so tense and sad?... Why does my parent turn to alcohol or drugs?... What can help my parent?) the authors offer clear explanations of common reactions to trauma, including a very readable description of PTSD, its causes and effects. The book discusses the addictions, social anxieties, suicidal thoughts and other dysfunctions that frequently result from severe trauma. Then the book rightly moves to care of the teen who is forced to live with this trauma-disabled parent. It assists the young person to examine mixed feelings and find constructive coping mechanisms. And in the end, the mother-daughter duo of authors summarize their findings and provide helpful resources. This is a great addition to recovery literature for teens.

What Ever It Takes, God: The Most Difficult Things For Men To Survive

By John Oarc. © 2006. Published by Authorhouse, Bloomington, IN www.authorhouse.com (800) 839-8640 \$15 128 pgs. Paperback

John Oarc was a victim of molestation; this book is his testimony to the serious aftermath of that trauma. Using a style reminiscent of a psych patient's journaling, it traces his path through self-destructive behaviors, problematic relationships, and finally, professional counseling. Along the way he examines his 'issues', including drinking, porn, his struggles with his wife's affair, a near-divorce, and other problems. He prints numerous letters, mailed and unmailed, that were written to help vent overwhelming feelings. In the end he comes to terms with his dysfunction and is better able to see how his experience shaped his life. His letters and descriptions are intense, so be forewarned.

In the end, John explores new attitudes, responsibilities, and moves on with hope for the future.

MV

THANKS, FRIENDS!
Write & Draw More To Share!
Your work helps us all!

December 2006

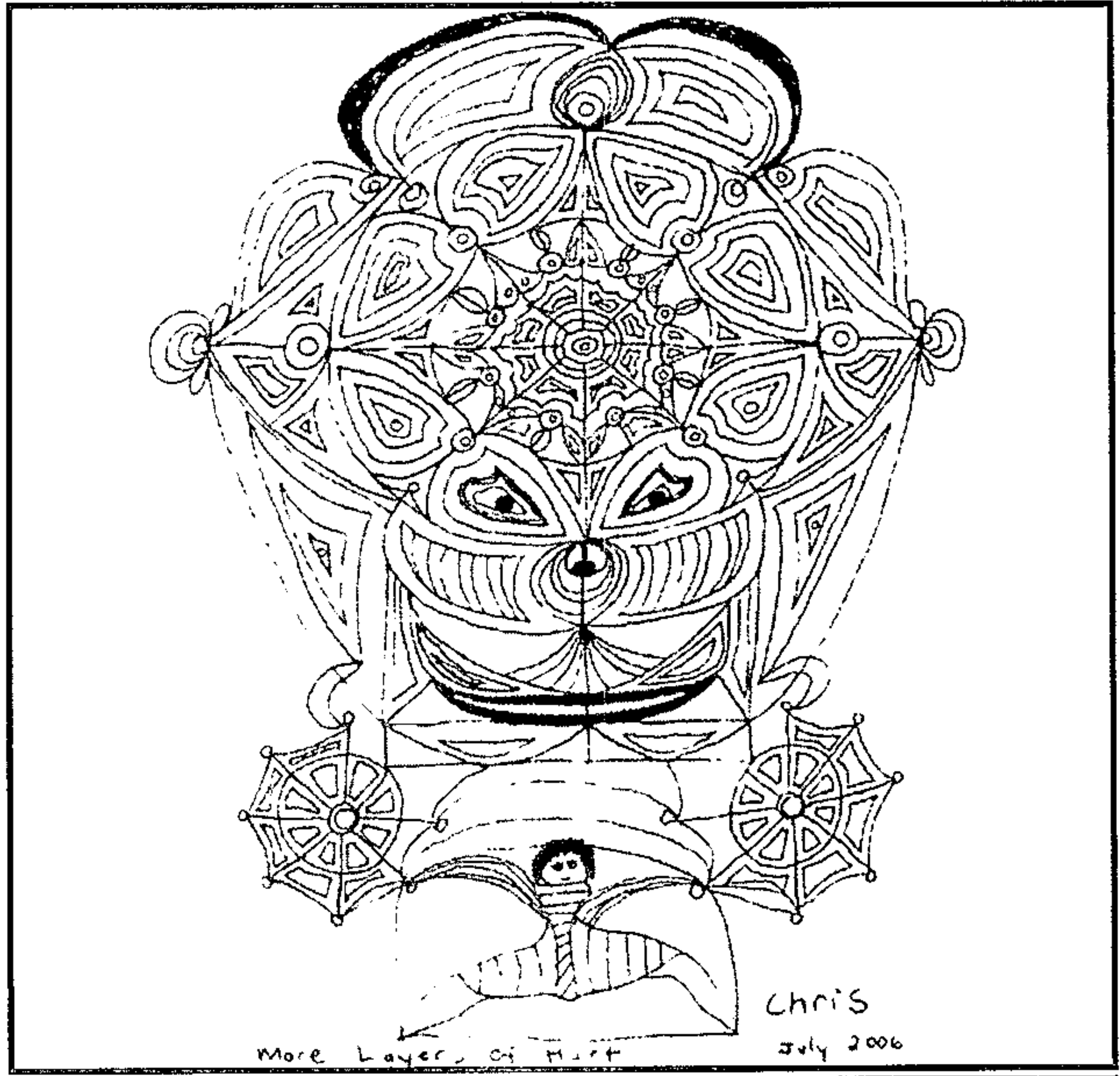
Mix d Feelings Please share how you handle the "gray" areas of life.
ALSO: Learning to Ask for Help—and Accept It! ART: Helpers in your life.
DEADLINE October 1, 2006

February 2007

Sexual Problems and Solutions.
Healthy Relationships.
Artwork: Images of Intimacy and Trust
DEADLINE. Dec 1, 2006

April 2007

What you like don't like about dissociating.
Grounding techniques.
Understanding your system. Artwork:
Meeting Yourself(ves)
DEADLINE Feb. 1, 2007



Share with us!

Prose, poetry and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

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