

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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In This Issue:

Sexuality, Intimacy, Trust Healthy Relationships

...and more

Affirmations for Today

Today I believe I am
beautiful

Today I believe I can make
people happy by my bright,
glowing smile

Today I believe I can make
worthwhile choices and
succeed.

Today I believe I can do
good, kind things for others
and myself.

Today I believe I can stay
calm in all situations.

Today I believe I am
blessed.

Today I believe I can give
and receive love.

Today I believe I am loved.

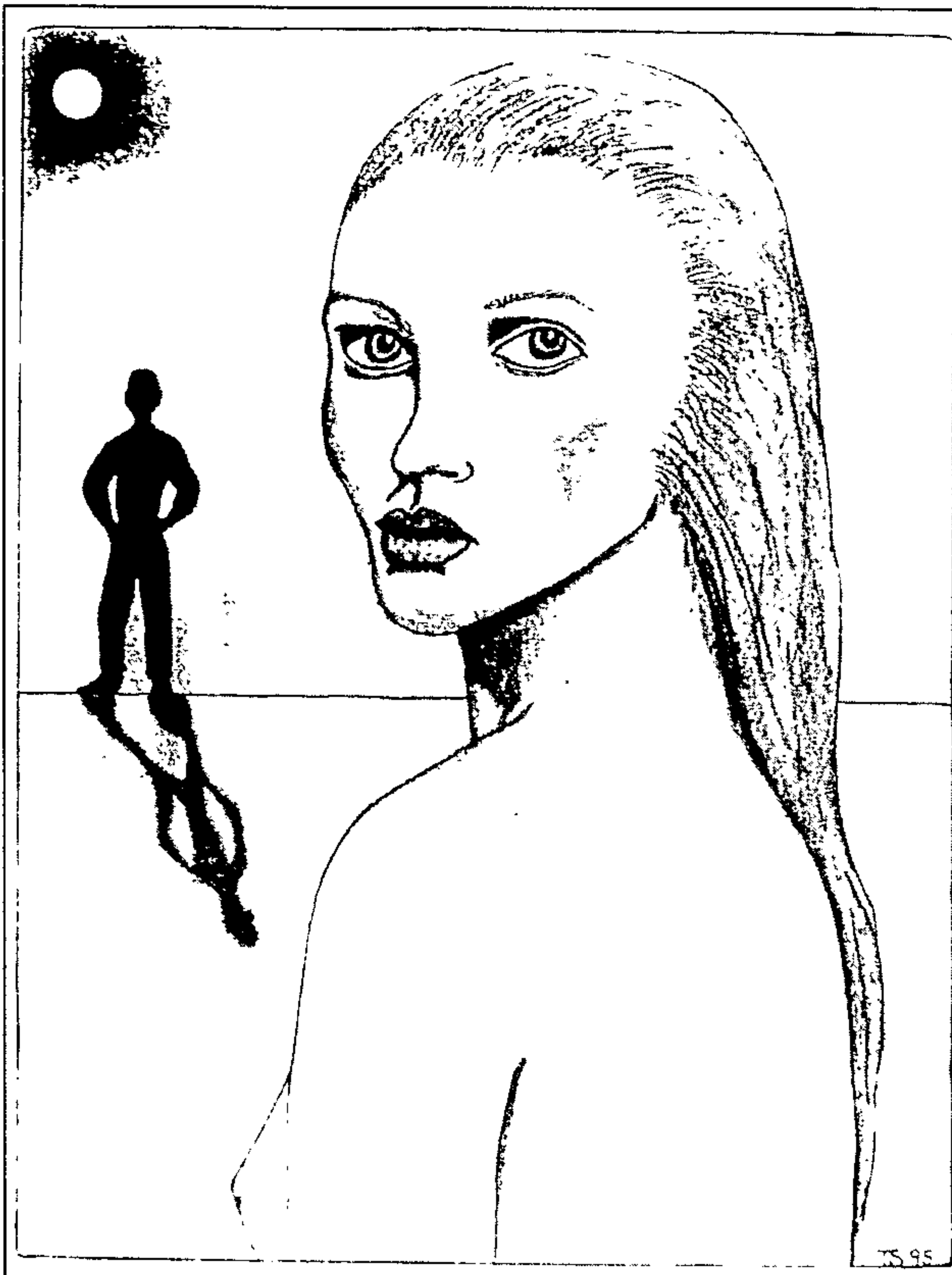
Today I believe I can be
joyful.

Today I believe I can handle
life in stride, little by little.

Today I believe I am truly
beautiful.

By Denise Fletcher

MV



Learning to Ask for Help

By Kathi & Community

Learning to ask for help and accepting it is a big area of my life. I have known that I was dealing with DID now for many years. Almost as many as Many Voices has been there. I am finally getting to the place where I ask for and accept others' help in a positive way.

You see, trust has always been a problem for me through the years, before I found my new therapist, Rhonda. She is ever so helpful and understanding. I have been looking for a way to get more cooperation from all inside during 'our' morning meetings. With Rhonda's help I have been looking into ways to start writing our life story for all inside to see. We have been looking into ways to present and clarify the stories that each has to share. It has been this last week that we have been able to get all to morning meetings to discuss the whole idea of asking for and getting help. We almost have a majority coming on a regular basis. So I am really excited to let my Therapist know that we are having more luck recently than not.

I used to be very quiet and not talk to others. But since I've known Rhonda, she has helped me to work on my issues and also to work with her on losing weight. We both followed a diet that was from a group that focused on diet and exercise. Well, "we inside" were able to lose 50 pounds before we hit a plateau and slowed way down on our losing. For a month, I was frustrated and almost gave everything up. But Rhonda stood by me and continued to support me.

I then joined a group called TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly). What a world of difference. They support me if I gain or lose. They all accept us for ourselves as a whole. The biggest focus is on changing our lifestyle to one of health and support. So I have found myself helping out a lot in the Chapter (local group). I find that others call on me as much or more than I call on them. I have gotten to

know a group of two men and many women that all call on me, write to me during the week, or join me for exercise in a therapy pool. I also do some of these things toward others in the group. Because of this openness, I have found that we are able to reach out and ask for and get help that we need for losing weight. Of the members, a few of the ladies know that I am a multiple, and I can call on them for help with us as a community. I am not limited to nutritional issues with these few ladies. So I have been able to widen my area of support through these new friends.

I have one special friend who has known us since before we knew that we were known to anyone, including ourselves. The joke was that when we met, I was being really silly in the office and I was asked, "And who are we today?" About two years later I was diagnosed as DID. So "we" now are often teased about just who we are at any given time. It helps me to know that there are people who love to tease and share with us those things that make life fun and

enjoyable. My friend, Pat, is very special because she stands by us even when things are out of control, like before. So we know we are able to reach out and ask for assistance and know that we will get it when we ask. She has told me on many occasions that there is nothing we could do to chase her away. We know that we are blessed in a special way. So this is why I feel that I am able to ask for and receive help, and am able to accept it. I have been shown many times that I am loved and am loveable in even the hard times.

I hope that this will fall on a new ear and will give someone the knowledge that others have been through a difficult struggle for years, but there is hope and acceptance for the taking.

Always relax and take a deep breath. You will find a solution; it just takes some time.

MV



By Liz D & Tammy

Family

What is a family
Perhaps it is relatedness
Internal or external interactions
Among people, animals, objects

Interactions among a group
Communicating verbally, physically,
emotionally
What is said and what is meant
Can be all mixed-up

Untrue, unreal, distant
Unspoken signals
And misplaced trust
Elusive connectedness

Opinions and judgments
Confused identity
To others, self, situations
Chaos

Interpersonal
Cooperation or discord
Safety in numbers
Or disorganization

Being in the world
Intersecting
With others, things, events
Even if preferring not to

Community isolation
Not belonging
Group dynamics
Distracted from present

Fleeting reality
Inside family
Only truth and fitting in
Internal trust

What is a family
Dealing with disagreements
Getting along to function
When there is no other way

By Virginia

MV



MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!

Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA

Call Francis Galura: (310) 784-2289 or (800) 533-5266

Intensive Trauma Therapy, Inc. - Morgantown WV

Outpatient Treatment for PTSD & Dissociation - (304) 291-2912

River Oaks Hospital - New Orleans, LA

Call Martha Bujanda: (504) 734-1740 or (800) 366-1740

Sheppard Pratt Health System - Baltimore, MD

Call Kimberly Colbert: (410) 938-5078 or (800) 627-0330 x5078

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

Women's Institute for Incorporation Therapy - Hollywood, FL

Call Larry Spinosa: (800) 437-5478

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We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor



Revelation: Dissociation!

By Pollyanna

For years I felt I couldn't do what all the wonderful people who dissociate do. I couldn't find real selves and/or find complete time periods to work or feel. Instead, my awareness is little ripped time fragments, like Ali Baba sitting on his flying carpet, charging into an overwhelming precision of some thought or activity.

Then, time ripped and a different response and different particulars, but now watch carefully those neighbours or family or church friends around me. What has just been said, or done by me, that they look at me, or laugh? -Jolt! Some other ripped tattered fragment is meeting the demands of responding.

But I didn't want my psychiatrist to know. Sure, they know I dissociate, but I didn't want anyone to know how very little there really is inside this body with two arms/legs and a head. It's just scraps, tatters, and useful fragments for only certain tasks/certain situations. I just wrote a fragment and let it pass as a sentence.

But I don't want to let anything pass anymore. I am starting to turn over my scraps and tattered fragments and just tell them that I want them for myself. My fear of social exchanges has provided me with a very thin veneer/support system. There are too many fragments! They are like confetti at a wedding. I wish I could just walk through the confetti into a blissful future. My intense emotional stress has left me with a heart problem I hadn't detected, and I have yet to feel pain. How do I explain what I can't explain to my cardiologist? He asked me if I had had post traumatic stress syndrome. I said yes, and left it at that.

MV

Intimacy from a Survivor's Viewpoint

By Sahara

In many instances "intimacy" is defined as sexual activity. "Have you been intimate?" is a common question meaning: have you had sex? In reality, according to a class at River Oaks hospital, "intimacy is a bond between two people based on trust, respect, love, and the ability to share deeply." An abusive relationship of any kind has no intimacy. In order to understand intimacy issues in survivors, I believe you have to understand how the ability to trust, respect, love, and share is lost. It's quite obvious that an abuser does not allow and often clearly prohibits intimacy.

As an adult, I had to relearn what healthy intimacy and sexuality is. It is my understanding that sexual abuse survivors are either sexually anorexic (no trust) or very promiscuous (no regard for trust or regard for self respect). I was of the anorexic type - sort of. I believed from my upbringing that if you had sex with someone you must love them, (although I knew that wasn't true with my abuser.) When I slept with my future husband I believed I had to marry him. Also I lost my 'virginity' to him. Because of that, I definitely had to marry him.

I didn't count the abuse as losing my virginity. The abuse simply made me disgusting. Like most survivors I hated my body for giving me pleasure during the abuse. My therapist reminded me that that was how bodies were wired. Stimulate them and they react. Now I appreciate that I can make love and enjoy the way my body feels without regret.

Having sex with my husband was pleasurable. In fact, it felt really good. It was normal, it didn't hurt, he enjoyed it too, and it was age appropriate. He didn't leave and say I was disgusting. Sex was the major reason that I married him. I was damaged goods. Why would anyone want me? I was amazed he didn't leave me because I'd been in a psych hospital. I trusted him. I say I was

sexually anorexic, but I felt "promiscuous" with one person. I was hypersexual. Sex was glorious and I felt I was in love with him due to the idea that if you're having sex, you must be in love.

In the beginning the marriage was basically fine. We made love all the time and that became a strong part of our marriage. We loved, trusted and respected each other. I felt I could share my secrets. We were intimate on many levels.

We had a child in the first year of our marriage. She was absolutely a joy. I loved being a mom and loved giving a child what I had not felt I was given. Healthy relationships with your children are another type of intimacy. In fact, one of my doctors said that you can heal some of your wounds by giving what you didn't get.

After about 4 years, we began to lose the intimacy in our marriage. I lost respect for him. I didn't want to participate in certain things in the marriage, like bill paying. I told him to just do it. I didn't want to know how far in debt we were. I didn't want the stress. He lost respect for me because I wasn't aware of how much I spent. He became upset by how much money I spent at the grocery store. I didn't agree that buying food was a spending problem. I began to resent him for spending more time with his friends than me, again loss of respect both ways. I knew at this time our marriage would not survive. He thought marriage just "happened". The thought of working together to have a good marriage eluded him.

Around this time, I lost mostly all the intimacy I had with him. I was pregnant and willing to take another job to help make ends meet and he had no intention of doing anything like that for us. I lost total respect of him. He was not willing to make a sacrifice for our family. I had another child and everything was peachy again. I really didn't need intimacy with my husband. I loved my son as I did my daughter. My mission was to

make sure that they knew they were loved.

I begged and battered him with requests to get another job. He was earning \$11,000 a semester as a graduate student while I had a regular 9-5 job earning \$30,000 a year. I felt he didn't love or respect us as a family. I asked him to go work at McDonalds. It wouldn't be the greatest job, but it would provide some extra income. He did go to work there and hated it. He let me know every day how much he hated it. He quit after 2 weeks. I began to stop loving him.

Our son was sick and in the hospital for croup. I was sick as well. My husband went to teach a class, leaving me to stay in the hospital with our son. Again I lost all respect for him as he left his ill wife and baby to teach because he liked the lecture topic. He could have cancelled the class that day.

We moved to another state where he took a job as an instructor. There were no jobs for me other than as a graduate teaching assistant with a salary of \$3000 a year. I became very depressed and suicidal. Not only was my job demeaning, I also began having abuse memories. My husband walked into the house one day and my son was finger painting. He said, "What are you doing letting him play in that sh*t?" I took my son to the sink, washed his hands and handed him to his dad. I told him I didn't want to be around the kids at the moment and left. We had absolutely no intimacy with each other.

He got a call at midnight, on that day, to come up the campus. They told him I was suicidal. He walked into the building and said, "For someone pretty smart you do some really stupid things." I felt completely and utterly alone. I was taken by the police that night and put under emergency protective custody.

Thinking of that night still makes me cry. Had he been loving and supportive, the situation would have

turned out differently.

Our marriage was over that night but we didn't divorce until almost ten years later. I wanted to have a father for the kids. A friend pointed out that this idea was admirable, but did I really want my husband to be their role model?

A couple of years later, I had several hospitalizations after serious suicide attempts. My husband said I was lucky to have him--that most men would have left me by now. He said no judge would give me custody of my children with my past mental health history. He refused marriage counseling. I gave him an ultimatum: counseling or divorce. He agreed to marriage counseling. The counseling had little effect since "I was the one with the problem."

During that time, I went to the local women's center to talk to a counselor. I picked up a paper that showed the cycle of abuse: all is well, all is angry, "Gee, I'm sorry I said or did that; all is well..."

I was shocked to realize that this cycle described my marriage. I was in an abusive relationship. By that time all intimacy was gone, every last shard of it. I left, took the kids and we divorced a year later.

The title of this article is "Intimacy from a Survivor's Point of View". I have never looked at my relationship with my husband through the eyes of intimacy. Example after example makes it obvious that intimacy is important in a relationship. Little by little our intimacy went away.

Where does the sexual part fit in? Sex without intimacy is not an act that brings people together. I've heard often that problems in a relationship show up first in the bedroom. I would say for a survivor intimacy is critical. Without that trust, respect, love and sharing how could any survivor have a pleasant sexual experience? If any of the abuse was sexual, the survivor may totally freak out. In the abuse there was no semblance of intimacy. If you don't have it in your relationship, you are simply recreating the emotional conditions of the survivor during the abuse that was suffered.

I hope for the benefit of the survivor and SO that you will look at intimacy and bring a new strength to your relationship. Even if you aren't a survivor, intimacy is something you want to have in a healthy, loving relationship.

MV

My Children See Me

My children see me
My children say, mommie is sad
What does that say about me
as a mom?

My children see me
Do they fear me?
Do they see the pain?
Do they fear me?
If they see the pain in my eyes
If they see the fear in my eyes
when I sometimes look at them
They must fear me too

Maybe that is why I am so sad that
they see that I am sad
For my children see me for who I am
I am a very sad person
A person who doesn't know herself
A person whose children know her
better than she herself

My children see me
I am told that is a good thing
For they can recognize emotions
Something I was taught not to have
nor show

My children see me
Please don't let them fear me
But, the frightening thing is, is that
maybe they should fear me

My children see me
Help me to see me too

By Jill M. D'Angelo

MV

Satisfaction

I find satisfaction and joy by doing things I love and helping others. Going to visit those in prison and nursing homes bring me joy.

Studying the Bible, prayer, going swimming, going for rides in my partner's car, doing arts & crafts, writing, and reading mysteries are fun, too.

By Sally B

MV



Non-Therapist's Page:

How We Overcame Selves Harm As A Multiple System

By Dr. Coral Hull (The Voyager System)

Coral Hull was born with Autism in 1965. She is now an established writer, artist and photographer living in Darwin, Australia. She is a Doctor of Creative Arts and the Director of The Thylazine Foundation Arts, Ethics and Literature. She is a vegan who supports animal rights, neurodiversity and functional multiplicity.

Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others — Barbara Bush

As a multiple system of between 40-50 selves we have either worked in group braids (partially integrated) or on our own as individuals. Not knowing that we were multiple led to having a disordered amnesic system or MPD. These days we are a cooperative, co-conscious system. We continue as we always have, but with selves awareness, and recognition of the others within. Once we became aware that we were many sharing one physical body, then we could understand the needs of those who were suffering and who had issues to resolve and set about assisting and nurturing them for the good of all. To this day we remain a developing system of selves, who continue as a functional collective. Here we will briefly describe some healing that has worked for Daniel and Wednesday.

The Healing of Daniel: A Self Prone to Suicidal Thoughts

Daniel is a complex developing adult self who is impossible to sum up in a few words. He is the male half of a twin soul braid who was left behind in the female body of an 8 month old baby, when the first split in consciousness occurred. Daniel is a gentle empathetic male who wanted to become a Catholic priest. Of course, being a male member of a multiple system that exists inside a female body is problematic and he was rejected by the clergy, so he became a mystic and a poet.

In the past Daniel was prone to suicidal thoughts. These mainly occurred when he was unable to deal with the cruelty inherent in world. He also thought that he walked alone, but with a mind inhabited by ghosts. While he turned to God and begged to be returned to the time before, he also came close to fulfilling his need on several occasions. We have found that the best way to help Daniel, when he was thinking about suicide, was to understand where he was coming from and appeal to him on his own terms. The first thing we did was to take the focus off the intention. While Daniel's thoughts remained on suicide, there was more likelihood that he would continue down that path. A distraction had the effect of enabling someone else to take over, in order to assist in directing the thoughts of Daniel and the system onto more positive and empowering ways of thinking.

This process involved a lot of selves talk. Fortunately Daniel is a deep thinker who is open to reasoning, no matter how intense the emotional pain. But he is also prone to giving up quickly. He uses the idea of suicide as an escape from what he perceives to be a hopeless situation of suffering on earth and longing to return to God (the universal consciousness of love). Therefore when Daniel's suicidal thoughts sweep through the central psyche, we appeal to his spiritual or moral side. For example; God (the universe) needs you to go on in order to assist others. God loves you and does not want you to harm yourself. If you harm yourself you will harm us and others. If you harm yourself you will harm God since God is love. You are loved and cared about and are

needed by this world.

Daniel is an empath who does not wish to harm others, so we are appealing to his stronger empathetic side, rather than his suffering and feelings of powerlessness. We offered him a new perspective suited to his emotional needs. Sometimes Bonnie and Xena would come in and take over and force Daniel to go on, "Come on Daniel! We have to go on in order to help others!" Their combined role was that of a drill sergeant, forcing Daniel to keep moving when he felt he could continue no longer. These methods are not for everyone, but Bonnie felt that sometimes Daniel needed a good jolt in consciousness in order to shock him out of his mindset and their way of distracting him was to keep him moving forward.

We are also a system who is overseen by a number higher selves or guides. We have found that one shortcut out of problems experienced by the individuals, is to let these guides come down into the body. If as a multiple, your system does not have these selves or does not have access to them, it might be the case to have your more stable and nurturing selves co-conscious, in order to heal the one who is considering suicide, until that self is strong enough to continue on their own. Sometimes this was a simply matter of turning both palms to the sky and asking for assistance from the universe or in Daniel's case, giving himself over to God. We also nurture each other through touch. We would go to sleep with one hand holding the other, or stroking the face which Daniel enjoyed as a child.

Once we became aware that we were many selves sharing one

physical body, Daniel's isolation and hopelessness was replaced by an overwhelming sense of gratitude and comfort in the fact that we had all finally found each other and in particular that he had found his twin soul braid, Eve. Daniel now plays a role in the psyche of healing others who need it and in doing so, he is continually healed within. The main risk to Daniel killing the body, occurred through us not knowing that we were multiple. Awareness of the situation has allowed for ongoing inner nurturing and assistance. That is not to say that Daniel still doesn't feel pain. But self love, a sense of being loved and of having a greater purpose in union with us and the universe, has been the primary healing force for Daniel.

The Supervision of Wednesday – A Child Self Mutilator

Wednesday is an infant locked into a frame of reference in our system. The trigger for her is very specific and involves a sense of abandonment or rejection by an older female narcissist who is a perceived mother figure. In our early twenties when we have a disordered system (MPD) kids such as Wednesday became conscious and ran riot. Not knowing that we were multiple, we struggled with "mood swings" where adult selves were regularly knocked out of consciousness and would wake up to cuts to the arms, legs and body with either dim memories or not knowing why it had occurred. I remember a counselor who used to make us sit in a lounge on both hands when the so called "mood" took over. This was done but as soon as the switch had occurred we were gone. After all, how many kids sit on their own hands and do what you tell them to do?

Our only consolation is that the trigger for Wednesday was so specific that it did not occur that often. Once we became aware that we were multiple, we were quickly able to monitor and rectify the situation as it occurred. With Wednesday it is a matter of several adults remaining co-conscious, as a babysitter, when she comes through. Wednesday is very young and very afraid and is simply

not allowed to be in the body on her own without the strict supervision of adult selves. When Wednesday becomes conscious, even with adults aware and in control, it can feel like spirit possession. It was essential for us to maintain a detached awareness of the situation. Humor was extremely beneficial to the process, particularly under stressful circumstances. Once co-consciousness with Wednesday was achieved, we were able to access and experience her thoughts, feelings and intentions, while maintaining our own position within the psyche.

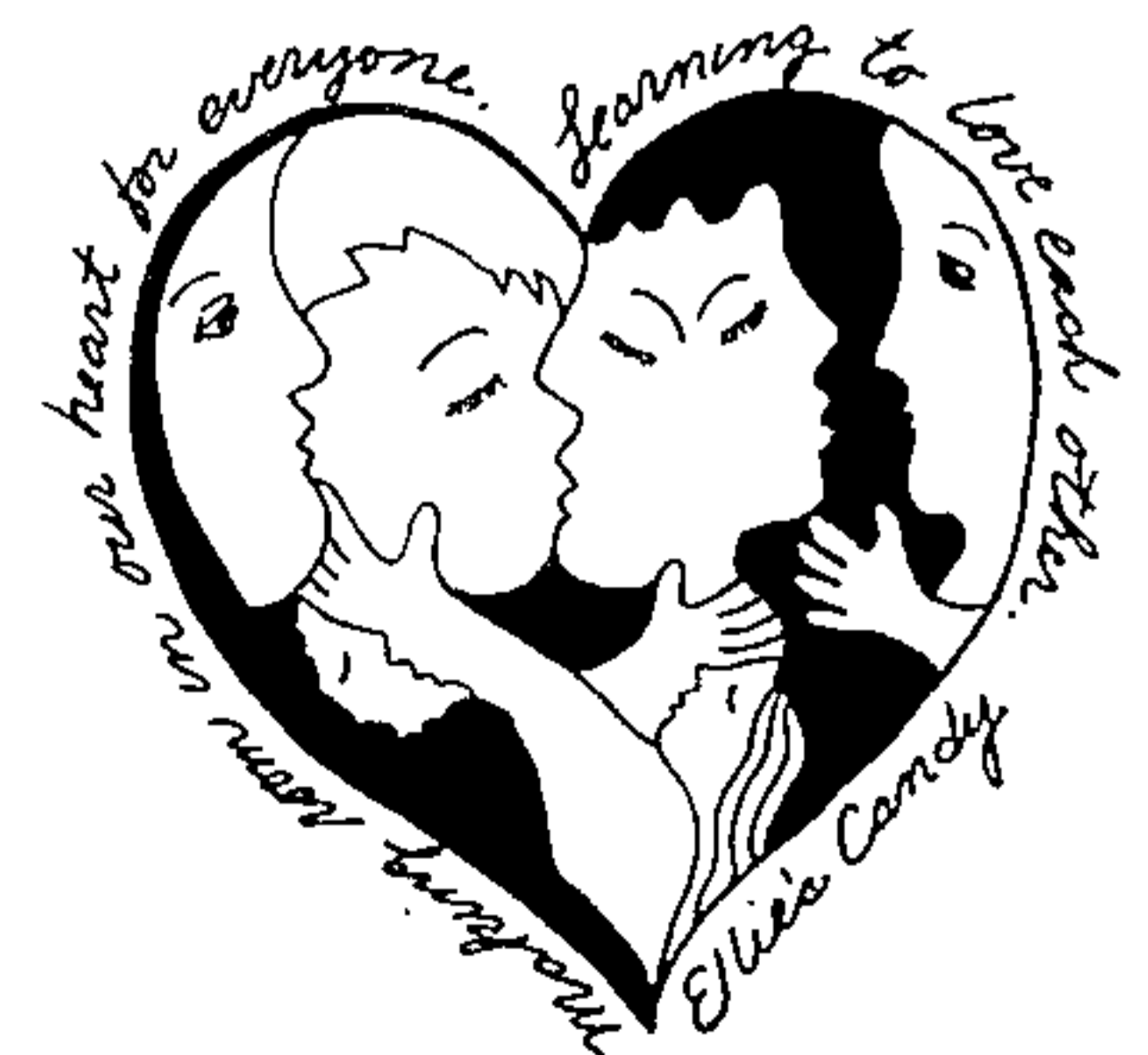
Unlike our other kids, Wednesday did not like television. We turned it on. But when an ad came on featuring a baby, she felt threatened. We also made her a sandwich. She was too traumatized to eat, nearly choking. We noticed by remaining aware and with her, that she became frightened by our two dogs moving or wagging their tails, so we shut them out of the bedroom. The overheard fan disturbed her and so we switched that off. We discovered that she didn't like movement. While we maintained control there was no chance of her getting into the kitchen knife drawer. In Wednesday's case, her mutilation is not done through self-hatred, but as calming device or an emotional release that she feels cannot be expressed any other way. It was also a sense of being in control. Wednesday was unaware that she was in an adult body. She was not emotionally mature enough to be aware of her situation or of her physical surroundings.

While we are able to reason with Daniel on a spiritual level with each sharing the thoughts of the other, Wednesday was too young to understand. We have found that she requires a room with a bed and blankets that she can crawl beneath. Once she enters a secure space, she will curl up and fall asleep as a relief from the suffering rather than self mutilating. Each time Wednesday is comforted in this way, it becomes easier to achieve the next time she becomes conscious. It's still about changing ways of thinking and behavior. We are at the stage now where she seems to appear with several other functional children in the system.

If Wednesday gets upset we are aware enough to know what to do. We have also engaged in some research on how to assist very young children who are extremely traumatized. It is important to understand that the needs of Wednesday are very specific, therefore we had to respond to the situation as a multiple system. Wednesday is now free to evolve how she so chooses, but under our supervision and guidance. What is important for us to do as the adults, is know of her existence, what triggers her, how she thinks and acts when conscious, and how to attend to her needs and nurture her in order to protect the physical body.

The way in which we work with Daniel (who is no longer prone to suicidal thoughts) and Wednesday (who is not allowed to cut the body) is very different to the way in which someone who is not a multiple would deal with the situation. Until we became aware of and accepted our multiplicity and came to know and understand the others with whom we shared the body, there was no chance of healing Daniel or assisting Wednesday. Attempting to apply what a non-multiple does in a situation, such as when Daniel went to various counselors, had no lasting effect. If Wednesday was out on her own there would be no counselor, since she doesn't know to use a phone and she doesn't speak. Therefore we had to work as a system in order to resolve these situations on a permanent basis.

MV



Embracing the Past, Present, and Future

By Jenn J.

A really neat thing happened a few days ago. My selves got to see their past and their future. Anyone who is dissociative will understand about parts being stuck at a particular point in time. To "unstuck" these parts from the eternal abuse they are living in is one of the major tasks of recovering from childhood trauma.

We form parts to help us cope with events that we are unable to process. Those parts hold memories, feelings, pictures of horrendous events. Our brain has given us a glorious gift of survival. When we are ready, we have a sort of "map" for our healing. By splitting events into parts or selves, we are able to compartmentalize our traumas into manageable units.

These "units" or parts or alters have been likened to children that have stopped in time. When we talk to them, or they to us, we discover that they truly are children. They like to play games, color, and watch cartoons. Their drawings and writings are age appropriate. Their body language and speech reflect the age at which they stopped growing. While it is almost impossible to believe for people that have not experienced this, those of us who have survived traumas and our therapists and psychiatrists know without a doubt that this is not an act.

Often we see drawings from survivors of their "inside" family. These are illustrations of the alters formed by that person as they were exposed to severe trauma. These parts are real. Upon learning of inside parts, many things are explained. Now I understand why I am drawn to coloring books and crayons and stuffed animals. Now it makes sense that I really need to sleep with a blanket and teddy at night. I am not crazy for wanting to suck my thumb sometimes. That's why I can draw so well though I have never had a lesson. I have had a normal reaction to an abnormal experience.

I believe that most survivors have a

picture of what their alters look like. It is easy to describe what our parts look like. They are real people. They interact like a group of people when they become conscious of one and other.

Conversations between parts become audible to the survivor. Sometimes the survivor can "go inside" and converse with everyone. It may be necessary to mediate between parts, as some may have different desires for only one body.

It is possible for the survivor can assign certain tasks to parts. I do not manage my money well and tend to buy things impulsively. I have a "finance committee" that monitors spending and makes sure the bills are paid. They supersede any impulse by any part to buy something unnecessary or out of budget. They agreed to take this job at the suggestion of my psychiatrist.

For the first time in years, my spending is under control.

So, back to my parts seeing their past, present, and future. I was listening to some soft music. The words of the song "Adia" by Sara McGlauglin spoke to the very core of my being. "You were born innocent..." In that moment, as I was sitting with my inner children, someone "handed me" my infant self. What a beautiful baby I was! I was holding a sleeping newborn wrapped in a pink blanket. I gathered the children around me and I showed them the baby and I said "This is you, when you were born." They were amazed at the tiny fingers and hand. They were struck by the peace on the face of the child. They understood that there was no way that this baby was bad. They understood that they truly were born innocent. I felt a peace come across them.

As they gathered around me, I told these children to look at me. "I am a strong adult. I know how to stay safe. I have money to feed and clothe us. I

know how to nurture. I am you grown up. You survive. You will be happy." They saw, for the first time that they were out of danger. They understood that if they grew up to be me, they weren't being hurt anymore. They felt hope for the first time in their young lives.

I sat with my children and held them close. I basked in the feeling of safety that I felt course through my entire being. I drifted to sleep surrounded by peace and love in every bit of my soul. It is there somewhere for all survivors. Each and everyone of us deserves to feel the refreshing comfort of our inner children being able to love and grow again.

MV

YES

This is the life
with all its spies and fears
and incessantly counting the cost
and letting go

This is the life
stepping off the cliff into the air
discovering its buoyancy
learning to swim through the
days

This is the life
not waiting till tomorrow
to begin
but filling both hands now.

This is the life
breathing in
saying yes
moving on.

Consenting
to the constriction of days
to the overwhelming power
that wants us gone.

This is the life
consenting
to the traitor in the midst of joy
walking on proud and bold and
tall.

This is the life
Yes.

*By Kate and Friends
(from her book, The Healing Road)*

MV

Another Battle in the Long Struggle for Life

By Chris et al
December 2006

It seems like we've always been fighting for our life one way or another. When we recently learned we had breast cancer, it seemed like merely one more skirmish in the longer war. So far it still does, for the most part.

Some of the more difficult challenges have involved our internal community of 40+ moving through the early stages of acceptance, denial, and anger which go with the cancer diagnosis. At the same time came dealing with the triggering of the long ago learned habits of self-blame and despair, which go with being many, being D.I.D.

Other major challenges have come from the many appointments, tests, and procedures we've already been exposed to as well as those scheduled for the near future. Each of these has triggered various old fears, traumas, and flashbacks for individual or groups of insiders of our community.

We don't talk about our cancer much with outsiders, only our closest friend and our therapist. We feel that hearing a lot of external thoughts on the subject would complicate our efforts to attain and maintain the focus within for which we strive.

The linchpin of our internal process is trust and reliance on our intuitive, quiet-minded knowing of what is right for us.

This intuitive knowing incorporates all internal resources available at a given time. It includes our intellectual, verbal knowledge, our experience, our spiritual, emotional, and all other ways of knowing ourselves and the world around us.

In addition to years of therapy, we have worked with a variety of self-help books and methods. In our younger days we explored the spiritual teachings of a variety of religions and practitioners. From those days long ago we had developed our own spirituality. The development of that spirituality, we are convinced, drew on

the resources of the whole of us although it happened long before we knew we were many.

With regard to physical illness and healing, we were diagnosed with an "untreatable" illness (CFIDS) in the early 1990's. Prior to then, we also had the experience of a close friend being diagnosed with and treated for cancer. These experiences gave us a great deal of information regarding the world of medicine and its limitations.

We learned, read, meditated, and visualized through what was then (some years ago) regarded as the unproven if not whacky world of non-traditional medical practice.

The "mind-body" healing paradigm has grown in acceptance since then.

We accepted and believed it back then as we continue to believe it now. We also steadfastly believe that anything that makes a human being more involved in their healing process is empowering. By itself that empowerment is healing.

Knowing now, as we did not then, that we are many (40+), the internal landscape we see each day is very different than what we knew of consciously years ago.

We conduct much internal discussion whenever possible. We also come together non-verbally to try to share our combined strength among us all.

We often think that the last 10 years have been similar to starting a very large physical family. Suddenly as we began to know the others within, unilateral decisions were no longer acceptable.

In a family it isn't okay to drag any one member off to an activity/event that they feel terrified of or loathe.

Especially to start with, we had to assume that we all went wherever any of us went. Later at times we were able to find ways around that.

Our lifestyle changed a great deal, we slowed down in order to hear

ourselves and each other more clearly.

We have worked hard with especially the continuing aid of our therapist and the unflinching support of our closest friend to heal the wounds inflicted on us from our past.

With regard to D.I.D. we emphatically label ourselves "wounded," not "mentally ill."

Cancer, on the other hand, is an illness.

As we have been learning much of our life, the body responds to the mind and vice versa.

That simplifies things a bit and simplicity is highly coveted in our internal community. In short anything that helps our physical being or our mental, emotional, spiritual being to feel better and heal also helps the WHOLE of US to heal.

There's not anything more important, nor is there any greater purpose to which we can ask ourselves to strive.

However we are not a self-sufficient and detached island, oblivious to the larger world around us. We look for progress in that larger world towards greater peace, greater acceptance of all people and living beings, as well as concern and caring for the welfare of all people and all living beings.

We have actively worked towards such goals at times in our life.

When we see an increase in hope for the world at large, when we see kindness and caring become more prevalent, then that HOPE washes over us like a soothing wave of nature's ocean on a warm day.

MV



Sherry Remains Constant (Faithful)

By Jane G.

Throughout my many years of therapy, one of my parts— Sherry—has remained constant. In fact, she was the first to appear. She is about seventeen years old, a kind of outrageous, quite often inappropriate, gets-angry-a-lot, teenager. Writing about her, when I take time to think about her, brings me to tears.

I would say nothing really bad has happened because of her. I'm still here. I've never been arrested. Probably the worst thing that has happened is that maybe about seven years ago I hitchhiked (I was probably about 51 at the time). I got in a little trouble for that.

At one point in my therapy, I decided that it was time for Sherry to leave us. It took quite a few months for me to prepare. I ended up preparing a beautiful, simple (but it felt elaborate) ceremony.

I live by the ocean, so I went alone to the water, sat down on the sand, thought about my Sherry and said goodbye to her as I put a bouquet of wildflowers into the water. And cried and cried and cried. It was very, very sad.

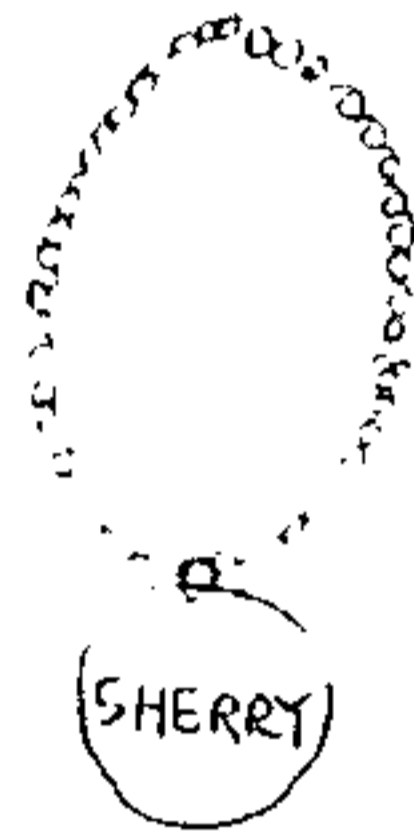
But—a couple of years later— Sherry came back!

It was a bit unsettling. I wasn't sure what to think of it, but I was very excited. My therapist and I are of the

mindset that we work with whatever comes up.

So, because Sherry is such a constant in my life, and has remained so faithful to me, and we believe that a lot of her acting-out is because she doesn't feel like she belongs, like she matters - I recently came up with an idea to recognize her, to keep her close to my heart.

I thought of those Catholic medals that Catholics wear on a rugged silver chain—like a Saint Christopher medal,



or some other saint. And I decided to find a jeweler who will make me a medal with the name Sherry engraved on it, and have it on a long chain, so it will hang down by my heart. I want the chain rugged, not dainty, because I am a rugged person who does a lot of rugged work. Probably that is Sherry talking—she does love to appear tough!

I have learned from the past that sometimes I am impulsive, so I have sat with my Sherry medal idea for

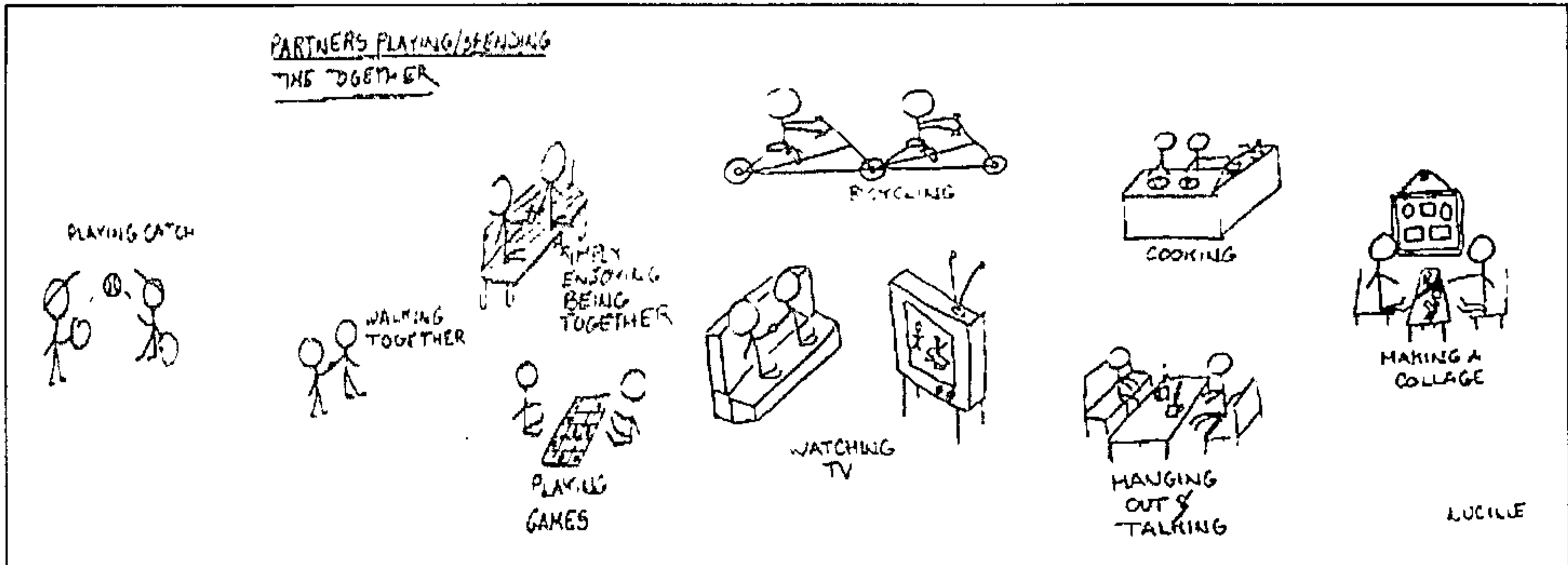
awhile, and talked about it in therapy, to see if it is what I want. I think it is. I am enjoying thinking about getting it.

My therapist suggested a jeweler I could go to have it made that wouldn't be too expensive. I (or Sherry) immediately had a reaction to that and said, "Are you saying that Sherry doesn't deserve a more high-end jeweler?"

I am glad I can confront my therapist about such things. After so many years, he totally understands and we can even laugh about it. He cannot pull anything over on Sherry—she is totally my on-guard person.

So last night I had a dream, but I'm not sure if it was a dream or is a fantasy I thought up. In the fantasy I go to the jeweler and ask them to make me a medal with 'Sherry' engraved on it—on a rugged chain. The jewelers ask me why I am having this made, and I tell them the truth about having DID. They must have been very touched because when I go to pick up the medal they give it to me for free, and they want to put it on me, but I don't let them, because Sherry does not like men to touch her, and the jewelers are two men. So I put the medal on, and I have my picture taken with the two jewelers.

MV



Sex: It's Always an Issue with Me

By Anon

I used to be frantically sexual, from my toddler days through the first 12 or 15 years after I was diagnosed with child-abuse based dissociation. As a child and teenager, I "acted out" my impulses whenever I had the opportunity, and thought about sex obsessively. My sex drive as a teenager and adult was overwhelming to me, and changed my life—not always for the better.

I was lucky enough to be most active in the era before AIDS, so I never got that, nor gonorrhea, syphilis or herpes—but at one time or another I encountered most of the other STDs—crabs, venereal warts, chlamydia, trichomoniasis and similar uncomfortable, potentially-dangerous infections.

I was both frantic to "get sex" and, at the same time, loathed myself for not being "reasonable" in my desires "like other people."

I had dreams of becoming an exotic dancer, a prostitute, or porn performer—but lucky for me, I didn't live in an urban environment where,

during the most intense phases of my sexual obsession, I could act these dreams out. People laugh about the futility of "taking a geographical cure" but location and behavior *are* connected. For me, living in a semi-rural area and being socially inept kept me out of what I now understand would have been *a whole lot of trouble*. (Social awkwardness has its good side!)

I never thought my behavior and wishes were particularly 'healthy' ...but it was ME.

Yet somewhere along the line in my recovery, my instinctual urge for sex vanished. I don't think it's entirely aging...especially since I have a loving partner. I participate in sex, willingly, with no fear...but it doesn't reach me emotionally at all, and I feel no 'need' for it. I don't think this is healthy, either.

Now I am turned off by sex aids, sexy passages in books, and unusual encounters of any kind. On the one hand, I feel a little more "normal." Sex is not the 80% preoccupation of

my mind that it used to be. But I have to wonder if, rather than a hormone-change of aging—this is more likely a takeover by a part of myself that disapproved of sex activity from the very beginning, and this part is running the sexual show today, rather than my sexually-active parts.

I don't push away my partner. I'm not repulsed by sex with him. I even initiate from time to time, because I want him to think I'm interested, even if I'm not. I really care about him as a human being. I should probably go back to therapy and find out what's going on, but instead, I shrug it off and say "So what. I'm not hurting anyone."

But am I? Am I denying myself a healthy expression of sexual intimacy? Am I deceiving my partner with feigned interest? And how feigned is it, really? How much am I kidding myself?

Sex. It's always an issue with me.

MV

The Bear

Sometimes I wake
with a grizzly bear
lying on my chest
familiar and heavy
making it hard to get up

"hello, old friend," I say
knowing that fear or fury
could make it more weighty
I hope to speak kindly
but it's too old and weary
to get off me so easily.

I plod through my tasks
while she drapes across my shoulders
like a beast close to death
wanting only to hide
wanting peace and safety.

"How can I help you?" I ask
hoping for answers

to a lifelong question
hoping my old bear can rejuvenate
into a frisky, delightful cub.

If I stroke you and pet you
and brush your matted coat
bathe your rheumy eyes
feed you morsels of pleasure
old remedies and new ideas
can we gambol in the woods
climb trees and splash through
streams?

Could you raise your old bones
creaking and lethargic
to taste the day?

If I feed you love and attention
can you sleep deep in hibernation
while I grasp whatever nettles
have grown in the night
wearing rubber gloves

chop
them
into
manageable pieces
make soup of them
with potatoes for lunch -
it's the only way: the stings
of sadness and hatred
had fertile soil and
plenty of cause to grow rampant
in my disturbed soil.

Sometimes I forget
to praise myself
for agreeing
to keep on living
Sometimes I forget
I am brave
every day

By Kirsty Winterbourne

MV

There's a Sheriff in This Town Now: Adventures in Integration

By Leah Aronow-Brown

At first I did not know I was a multiple. Personalities emerged to the surface and functioned in their own random order, according to the turns of time and events that befell my life on a daily, hourly, or moment-by-moment basis.

In my thirties, I began to be aware of these personalities. I entered therapy and became acquainted with them, usually one by one except when my mother moved out of the apartment she'd lived in since I was a baby and an entire group of personalities who I nicknamed "the new kids" came forth. I felt like the mayor of a small town that had suddenly seen the influx of a refugee population.

I could at this stage sometimes be co-conscious with the other personalities and watch them come out, cycle through, then submerge again as another took over.

When I first decided to attempt integration, I had no idea what that meant. I was frightened of losing or killing the people inside me. Finally, I asked for a volunteer to try this integration thing. Miriam, who loved nature, volunteered. I did not know what to do. So I did a little ceremony inside myself, and decided that the key to integration was to realize and accept that Miriam was part of me. There was this odd sensation of merging, like mixing melted chocolate into cake batter. All of Miriam's knowledge and qualities were still there, but now they were part of me, not a separate personality beyond my control. I could call upon this part of me at will, rather than be surprised at its presence and feelings and activities.

Encouraged by my success, I next integrated Shauni, the preteen writer. The same process occurred. I did not do any further formal integration work for many years. But a process had been started within me, and I attempted to view the personalities as part of me. There was a blending. I

did indeed feel more integrated, without any formal declaration or effort.

Recently I have begun deepening my meditation practice and have worked on improving my physical and mental health through better eating choices, exercise, and stress reduction techniques. Suddenly I notice that I am present. I. Not the continually flipping Rolodex of personalities. My prayer sometimes is very simple: "Hi, God, it's me. I'm here."

It was then that I realized that the village within me was lacking one important component: law. When I attempted to change my eating choices or focus on my breathing during meditation, many personalities would arise as they always have with needs, desires, and demands. In the past I would have done my best to accommodate them. But as I failed to focus on my objectives I said, enough! I am here now, and I'm the law. There's a sheriff in this town now, and that would be me. I will decide what is for the greater good of the whole of the system, and I will do so with kindness and compassion to everyone within.

I waited for anarchy, protest, or sabotage. Or ridiculing laughter. Virtually none (except those darned chocolate eaters...)

I guess I'm ready to be in charge of my own life, all of my own life, including the hundreds of shattered pieces of myself. Situations still arise, usually under stress or some trigger, when someone will come shooting out and take over, causing me to say or do something I would not have chosen to say or do. But I do not punish myself or them if that happens. I try to remember to stop, acknowledge the trigger that instigated the situation, and work with that person to find a solution that helps the problem without harming the system. It can be a trick locating everyone who eats, everyone who talks, everyone who is programmed to

protect me but doesn't know the best way to do so. And to remember that virtually all of them are children trying to do adult work. It's an ongoing practice. But seventeen years into this recovery, I feel like I'm making great strides forward. And the most important thing is, I am present. Hi God, it's me. I'm here.

MV

All I Ever Wanted to Be

All I ever wanted was to be free
The little girl with the long blonde hair,
with her favorite pair of jeans.
The black high top pro-keed sneakers
that squeaked after a fall in the creek.
To have the warmth of the sun on my
face while lying on the top of a hill.
Not a care in the world, and the only
thought was to what supper might be.
All I ever wanted was to be like others.
To be good at what I like to do best.
To have the friend you call on the
phone, till it was time for bed.
To come home to Leave it to Beaver.
The smell of cookies, mother in tow.
To hear the words "I'm proud of you
today."
To grab that paper at the end of 12
years and figure out my future.
All I ever wanted was to be some one
else. To have a meal that was on a
plate, eat till I was filled, to know there
was more for tomorrow.
To see an adult looking from the
mirror.
To have my place in the game of life.
To know what it is like to feel early
days of life.
To know what it's like to care for self.
All I ever wanted to be was strong,
beautiful and free.
To know what I am looking at when
looking back at me.
All I ever wanted to be,
was free to find me.

By Linda S.

MV

I wrote this poem after reading through a back issue of Many Voices. It felt imperative to share with others just how I've broken out of 18 years of uninterrupted major depression. I believe it is the scourge of those of us with DID and I so hope this poem will help even one person to fly to freedom.

My Baby Plan

When I was just a little girl
I thought these things were true,
I thought that I was bad
And that my God condemned me,
too.

These things were true because
My mommy said so every day.
She said I was a bad girl then she
Punished me to make me pay.

Humiliated I then stood
My head hung down in shame
Because my mommy told me that I
Did not act in Jesus' name.

Now mind you I was probably
Just barely two years old,
Yet already I was quite sure
My soul to Hell'd been sold.

Small as I was, I somehow knew
I needed to be loved.
I also knew it wouldn't come
From mommy or Heaven above.

In desperation I created
My own salvation plan.
I'd find a mommy substitute
To fill this love need then.

So I grew up always searching
For this someone who would be
The one and only person
Who would give that love to me.

I didn't even know that I was
Doing this love search;
And almost dead forgotten
Was my childhood God and Church.

But then one day I looked inside
And found this huge rip in my soul.
No therapist or friend or spouse
Could ever fill this type of hole.

I saw how I had been attached
To people who abused me
Because my baby desperation
Bound me to them in slavery.

Still I wanted to be loved so bad
By someone powerful and tough;
A someone who would take away
All my hurting crushed heart stuff.

I just wanted to have one someone
Who'd understand my pain
And finally love me enough
To chase the torment from my brain.

I felt so cheated and despairing
That I wished to die.
Without love, this life was not worth
living
And yet I still did not know why.

One thing I knew for sure was how to
Live in utter shame.
I'd lost the me that God created
Buried under blame.

I knew that helpless babies
Needed love to grow up strong.
From mommy's love they learn their
worth
Secure in knowing they belong.

How could I hope for happiness
When I was missing this?
The lack of mother love inside
Had canceled out my bliss.
And then I noticed that this love
Is something babies learn.
If they could do it, so could I.
And now it was my turn.

It wasn't easy going
And I had no guarantee
That this new path would lead me
To a brighter destiny.

I looked back to my babyhood
To what I was at birth.
The many gifts God freely gave me
Let me know that I had worth.

My mommy's hurtful words weren't
true
My inside babies learned.
Instead my gifts and attributes
God's love for me affirmed.

Still I struggled in the darkness
And my mind went round and round
Without a someone loving me
Most surely I would drown.

Then one day when my heart
Was hurting really really bad
Something snapped inside me
I was just plain fed up mad.

I finally cast out all hope
Of someone giving me
The mommy love I missed,
if that's what God wanted from me.

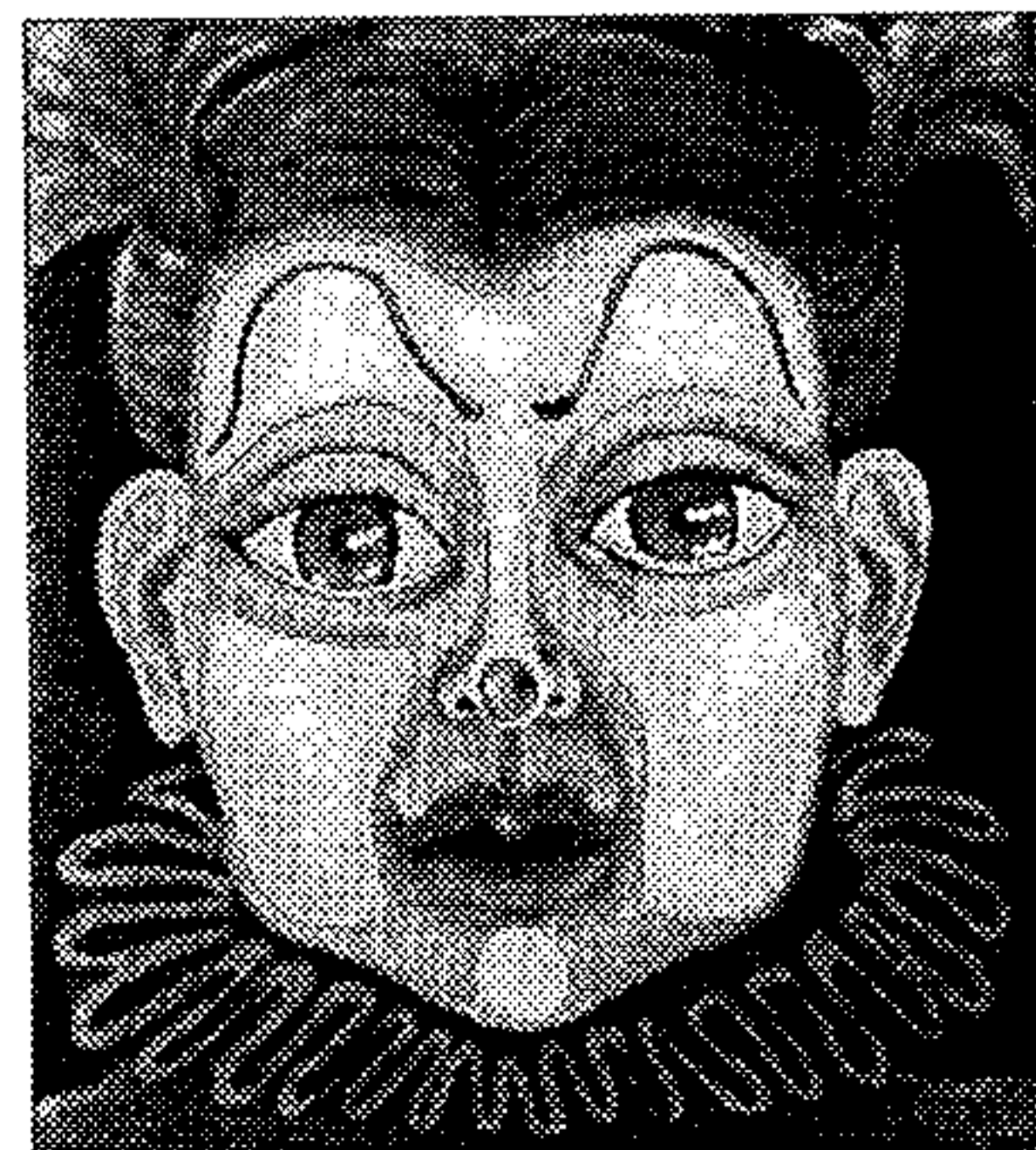
Then His plan manifested
It was suddenly so clear.
He gave me gifts and talents
To lead others out of fear.

Now I am grateful for His grace
He's lifted all that gray.
When I decided to love others
That's when my hole melted away.

No longer do I pine for love,
And darkness doesn't cling to me
Because the day I gave up my baby
plan
Was the day I got set free.

By The Four Dragons

MV



Letters

My Search for New Therapy Tools

I am so encouraged by the *Many Voices* newsletter. I just recently finished reading the October 2006 issue. I found it very inspiring and it gave me hope. It also left me to think about my own path to recovery. I find talk therapy very effective for getting the abuse stuff out, but I am often left with deep down emotional pain that at times is very disabling.

I have read about EMDR, my therapist and friends have talked to me about EMDR, but the idea still scares me. I fear losing control or being so overwhelmed that I won't be able to process what I need to process safely. The only EMDR I can do without a panic attack is the Butterfly Hug...which is where I give myself a big hug and then with one hand I tap my back and then the other hand. It works great for my little ones!

I have also tried Meditation in the past and I found I could not shut my brain down to find peace and quiet. That was before I knew about my parts. I got so frustrated that I was unable to have a quiet time to be with God that I talked myself into thinking I must be a demon or something. So now I and my little parts are afraid of Meditation.

Hypnosis, which sounds like a great tool for others, is super scary for me. My parts tell me that my abuser used something like hypnosis on me through music and low, slow talking. Needless to say, I don't see me trying that technique until I have a few more therapy sessions! That being said, I can entertain the idea enough to know that I am really looking for some other techniques to add to my tool box that might help take some of the sting out of talk therapy.

Art therapy is a true blessing to me and it really helps me to process my feelings. I highly recommend it to everyone, even if you think you can't draw. The point is to get feelings out. I have used art therapy for years, as I am an artist and I hope one day to

use my skills to help others living with DID/DDNOS.

But I am really searching for another method to add to my tool box. My other methods are great, but we can all use new tools every now and then. I guess I would like to know if anyone else struggles with meditation, hypnosis, EMDR and EFT? I'm sure you are out there and hopefully some of you have climbed that mountain, and maybe able to offer up some suggestions.

Please submit your story to MV!

Kelly

Q About Gang Rape

If you have been through a gang rape, not in the context of ritual or other organized abuse, I'd like to hear from you. Do you feel that this type of abuse needs more publicity/attention?

Are there special issues that you feel are not captured in books and by therapists? If you are comfortable describing something about your experience please do so. I am a subscriber who went through a gang rape at age 10 and wonder if there are other people out there impacted by this who are not ritual or other organized abuse survivors. I would also like to know if you are aware of books or other research materials on this topic. Thank you!

Anonymous Writer

Fear of Suicide

I am a newly diagnosed multiple and am really struggling with many issues and questions. My main concern is that our dominant alter wants us dead! She knows that I am weak and is playing hard on that fact. She has been mutilating our body and now has me to the point where I am ready to see the futility in it all, as she states the situation and this life is futile! We had a family meeting last night and are almost at a consensus that we should end it all. I'm not sure what to do. She is right in the fact

that I don't want to be alive, and I think that she has me where she wants me. What to do?

Running out of time.

Vicki

Q: Flashbacks during Sex?

I/we do not have sex with anyone "all the way" outside ourselves.

There are many reasons for our decision. The one most painful is that sex acts cause us to have flashbacks to rape.

We have a dildo to assist us pleasing ourselves.

Do any of you have flashbacks while having sex? What helps you?

Sally B

If you reply to our writers via MV by surface mail or email (lynnw@manyvoicespress.com), I'll send your answers to them promptly, but please give permission if your reply can be also published in MV!
Thanks - Lynn W., Editor

MV

Survivor Sisters

To our dream weavers,
soulful singers and
ice-cream eaters.
To our hope-filled healers,
freedom fighters,
boundary breakers and
dance-all-nighters.
To our laugh out louders,
mercy givers,
band-aid bearers and
peaceful wishers.
We celebrate with you,
our survivor sisters.

No matter what path your lives
have taken...
we all have something to be
proud of ...surviving.

By Carol L.

MV

*Safe in his
hands*



A Man Speaks Out

My aim is to help other men who are still struggling with maintaining the secrecy of their own abuse and its aftermath as a result of a shame that does not belong to them. I fully respect women's issues with men being a part of their forum for healing. I was fortunate enough during my trauma work in the hospital to be involved in a coed group. It was quite a shock to hear some of the women's statements as to their ignorance that men can be victims, too. I never would have considered that women could have that concrete of a belief about men. Obviously through their own experiences they had only seen men in powerful and predatory roles. It was enlightening for both the women and the men in the group to see our similarities in how the abuse affected us as well as the differences that were gender specific. I hope that we as survivors of our trauma can bridge the gap between our genders to find common healing. I think we do ourselves a bit of a disservice by staying separate out of our own fears and lack of understanding. I know the group I shared experiences with were touched for life. The women came to see that not all men are monsters and at least for myself as a man, I came to see the true strength of the "weaker" sex. I know the men left with more of an attitude of wanting to protect the women we first saw as strangers who truly mothered us through our time together. Every survivor of trauma is in a different place, though, and each must respect their pace of healing through our time together.

By Jon W.

MV

Books

Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy

By Pat Ogden, PhD, Kekuni Minton, PhD and Clare Pain, MD • 2006 Published by WW Norton Co, New York/London
www.wwnorton.com 345 pgs incl index
\$35 USA, \$43.50 CAN Hardback

This book is directed to professionals who want to incorporate a better understanding of the body's response to trauma as an avenue to healing. However, I believe survivors who want answers to some of their own puzzling responses (or lack of responses) to pure talk therapy will find this helpful as well.

Pat Ogden is founder and director of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute, and teaches her methods internationally. This comprehensive text covers both the theoretical framework and the practice of using body awareness for healing purposes. It explains in detail how trauma disrupts a person's ability to notice and react appropriately to cues in daily life.

Two concepts presented here gave me plenty to think about. The first is the 'orienting response'... similar to 'focus'. We 'orient' ourselves by noticing both external stimuli—the outside world—as well as inner stimuli—emotions or physical sensations. People with a history of trauma often have disrupted orienting responses: being hypersensitive to minor inside or outside changes,

habitually dwelling on cues that remind them of their past trauma, or inability to detect the level of risk in ambiguous situations. In sensorimotor psychotherapy, clients learn to increase their awareness of body and feelings, gradually connecting this awareness to the 'real world' around them. Over time they are able to choose behaviors rather than responding automatically. Chronic defensive postures are released, and the individual can engage the environment with curiosity and flexible responses.

For me, this suggests that my chronic habits of negative thought might be addressed by paying attention to my physical self just before the negativity starts rolling in. It will take a lot of work, but it's a thread that might make a difference.

The second concept I found intriguing is that traumatized people may actually rebel against "pleasure". Instead of welcoming something fun or comforting, they may withdraw or feel vulnerable. I've noticed that I start projects or pleasurable activities—but then suddenly stop or 'forget about it' and don't go back to try again until the excitement 'wears off'. In other words, the excitement and pleasure itself frightens me.

Maybe some of the many different ideas and techniques discussed in this book will help MV readers find more pleasure and satisfaction in the world.
—LW

MV

Thank YOU, MV Readers!

Once again, you have shared wonderful, healing ideas that may help us all live in greater peace and comfort.

MV needs writing (especially prose) and artwork - NOW. So please, send us your material! & thanks!

April 2007

What you like don't like about dissociating
Grounding techniques. Understanding your system
Artwork Meeting Yourself(ves)
DEADLINE Feb.15. 2007

June 2007

Good Food & Good Sleep
Developing healthy habits What to do if you 'slip'
Artwork: Cooking or Exercising.
DEADLINE: April 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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