

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

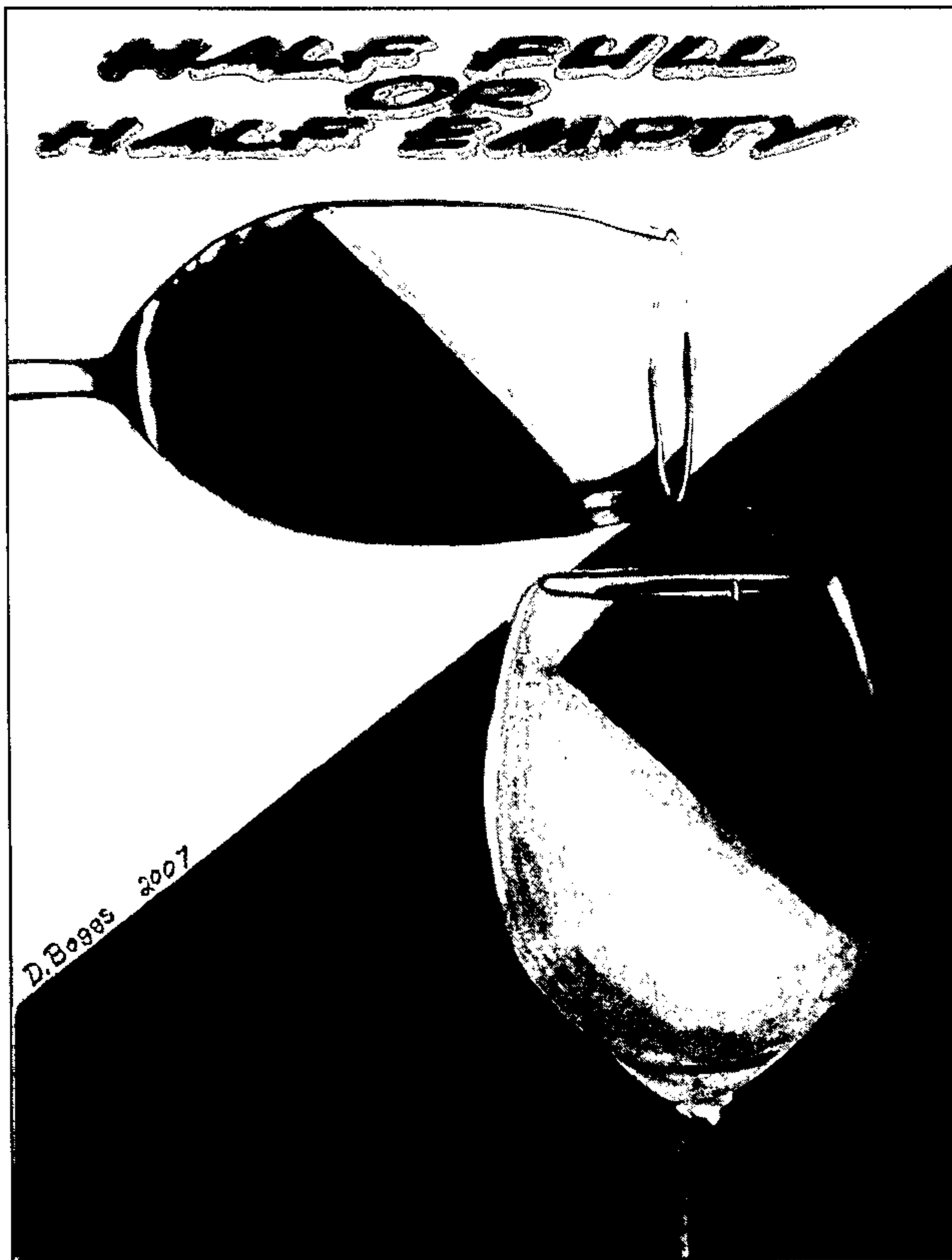
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My Best Friend, Hope

By Pat M.

Every twenty-eight days I watch the sky and anxiously await the arrival of the full moon. I run outside and look to the stars and breathe deeply. The bright, yellow sphere is my refuge and the only time I remember anything good from my childhood. This is my only connection to years past. All my other memories are gone, vanished, and I am safe because of this. I can't be hurt by remembering nothing.

I was very small when I realized that the planet was a rather large, lonely place. In fourth grade we studied the solar system. It was difficult for me to imagine the enormity of it all, so I chose to only think about Earth, the sun, and the moon. Nature became very important to me as I grew up because I found solace among the trees, and the flowers, and the breeze blowing in my face. I still find peace in all things of nature.

My family seemed like everyone else's but now I know that was a lie that I made up so I could make it from day to day. We were dysfunctional and we are still dysfunctional all these years later. I can count on the fact that as adults, the dynamics of our original family is the same. But as adults we know we were abused. It still doesn't help any of us talk with one another. The silence is still deafening. I have no ideas on how to change this or if I even want to. Maybe some things are best left alone. If we talked about our past, we would have to feel something we would rather not ever feel again.

I remember so clearly lying on the green grass looking skyward and hoping for something different for myself. I would watch the white, puffy clouds drift along without a care in the world. They seemed to be on a course headed for somewhere else, never stopping for very long. I would lay for what seemed like hours trying to find reasons to continue and not give up, continuing to hope for a life after childhood. I never really believed

that childhood would ever end. Every day seemed like the day before. But I found refuge in the blue sky and I had hope, if nothing else.

On our mantel in the family room is the four letter word *hope* carved in a mahogany-colored wood. I look at this everyday for comfort and for strength. Some days I would like to grab that word and take it to work so I know that I still have hope with me. I often wonder if anyone would see it or if anyone would comment about it.

I would love to talk of the hope that has sustained me through the worst of times and now brings me to a new place in my life. Faith, hope, and God are interchangeable. I didn't understand my need for God when I was a little girl, nor did I understand His need to be near me at all times. Now that I am grown and I have worked through a lot of my childhood issues and trauma, I realize how important all of this is to me. I find great comfort in knowing that God was with me all along when I was a child and now, as I try to find my way as a grown-up.

I have been in therapy for a year and a half to help me deal with the emotional abuse along with the sexual abuse that I suffered from during my childhood. It is unbelievable how

much I have had buried inside of me for so long. I am finding a new life with many wonderful things left to discover about myself and about my world. About a month ago, my therapist and I decided to part ways for a bit to see how I would do on my own. After our session, I opened the door to her office and a young woman was waiting to see the doctor for her first visit. We exchanged smiles. She stood and said to me, "Hi. My name is Hope."

I stood there unable to move. My inner voice cried out, "I know you! You have been with me my whole life!" Needless to say, I was very emotional for several days. I told this story over and over to anyone who would listen. Each time I told it, I had tears streaming down my face.

Remembering hope from long ago has given me one good memory to hold onto. I still carry hope with me every day. The idea that there was something better for me kept me going towards my future.

I am happy now, with a family of my own. This family gives me love and respect. They honor me. They are faithful to me. I am grateful for this new beginning.

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**Many Voices' Progress
Toward
Not-for-profit Status**

Just wanted to update everyone on the current status of MV's not-for-profit application.

Many Voices is incorporated now as a not-for-profit in the State of Ohio, & we have had our first board meeting. Current board members include a CPA, an experienced grant writer, and a marketing expert. By the end of the year, I hope to recruit some professional counselors to give healthy advice on content and future direction for MV, to make sure it fulfills its mission to give hope & help to people recovering from trauma, dissociation and PTSD. (If someone out there is interested in participating, drop me a note!)

I also want you to know that preparing this not-for-profit application is a HECKOVA lot of work! I do MV in between earning \$ to live on, so it is going a bit slower than I'd hoped. But there is real progress. I am still expecting to get the application off to the IRS before the end of the month. If so, we may be able to achieve 501(c)(3) status by the end of the year.

I want to share with you some of our objectives:

To be an advocate for trauma recovery and prevention; to encourage research and communication of information about trauma-based mental health issues, including but not limited to dissociative disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder; to promote recovery of traumatized individuals; to foster prevention of trauma in society; to advocate for appropriate trauma treatment locally, nationally, and internationally; to foster publication or display of literary, artistic, and educational expressions of traumatized individuals and their therapists; and to publish newsletters, books, and other publications relating to trauma-based mental health issues.

As we move forward in this transition, I hope you will send me your ideas on how best Many Voices can fulfill these objectives. We are open to every suggestion. And thanks so much for your encouragement and support!

--Lynn W., Editor

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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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If you know of clinics or conferences that need flyers, please call us!
We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor



I Wish I Had Someone To Tell My Stories To

By Greenbranch

I live alone. I have lived alone since I was 20 years old. I am now 53. I've known about my little kids for the past 7 years as of the third week of August this year. I have healed myself by a combination of alternative healthcare measures that I could learn about and do myself without anyone else's help.

This includes anything from reading extensively about human energy fields and philosophy of life to studying and doing, on my own, Bach Flower Essences, Yoga, ballroom dance class, Buddhist meditation at the Buddhist Center, and so on. I would like to tell you more about alternative methods of healing I use in another article.

I have also healed myself by praying my brains out a few years ago for God to send me someone who knew how to help me. And within 3 months, through synchronicity, I found my homeopathic doctor (who happens to be a retired MD-- Internal Medicine, not psychiatry). And I also found a healer who was born with a gift for healing energy fields and seeing energy fields down to intricate detail.

I have been working with these two helpers for over 4 years. I prayed for help because I had gone through a long list of therapists who did not know how to help me, some who were unethical in their practice (for example, incorrectly billing me,) and a few who were very sick themselves though they were allowed to continue patient care because nobody knew what they did in their offices (and of course nobody believed me). The therapists, including the best of them (except for one new graduate social worker) would have accidentally killed me had I continued seeing them (by my own hand, by institutionalization, etc). I did attend therapy groups which were often helpful, but not always. It worked best when I found my own group, rather than going to one referred by a therapist.

Once I decided to no longer speak

to therapists I started to get better and was able to keep a job. Prior to that I had extreme panic attacks and was often unemployed for months at a time. (All this happened since my discovery of my inner kids. I did not panic, etc, prior to discovery of my kids.) It was by no means easy to give up therapists however, because I knew of no other options for help. And I knew I was in desperate need of help. (I could tell about many experiences with therapists that were unsatisfactory, but that's not the purpose of my article.)

I want to tell about how much I love my inner kids. I want to tell about what I've done to heal myself. I want to be able to tell someone about my life being Multiple. Other people can tell their families and friends about the things that happened to them during the day. For example, they are working for a company going through a merger and they have to apply for their own job in order to keep it with the new company, someone in traffic drove really crazy and cut them off and almost caused an accident with them, someone at work really gossips a lot and it's hurtful. All of these things happened to me and I can tell others about them. But I cannot tell other people this story that happened to me today:

I have many inner kids. The oldest one is 8 years old, the rest are under 4 years old. I have taught them many things so we have a life we enjoy and we have a full time professional job. And I have achieved an advanced degree in my field. (I remember going to a local medical university to read about multiples and it said people with many very young kids have poor prognoses. I remember therapists telling me I could never get better and be functional.) I also have 5 infants (we call them the 5 Babies; they haven't told me their names yet) who have just recently started to come into my life. They have healed greatly in the past year. They previously were so terrified they were afraid to go outside

the apartment (except I continued to be able to go to work part time). Sometimes we still have to stay home and not go out and have any fun (walk in the park, go to the zoo, etc). But now we are all starting to be able to go out to have fun more frequently.

Here's my story I wish I had someone I could tell:

I was very stressed this morning because I had important papers to write and people to talk to. After I was finished with work I went home, but then we wanted to go get groceries because the Babies enjoy eating (incidentally, they eat very frequently!)

I left the apartment keys somewhere--I thought in the lobby at the mailboxes. The babies haven't been allowed to carry the apartment keys or the car keys because they drop them. But today they got a hold on the keys until the keys were left behind. When I came out of the grocery store I realized that I didn't have the apartment keys (I have a rule that the keys must be immediately placed in the same pocket of my purse every time they are used. Otherwise I get locked out every week and it's very expensive and upsetting to everyone.)

I looked everywhere for the keys: through my pockets, purse, the car, the grocery bags, the lobby where I live, everywhere that I could think of. And I did not find the keys. I was very anxious and spoke to my building management and after a lot of hassle my apartment has one lock on it and they will put the bolt lock on tomorrow while I'm at work. I called security and I almost called the city police department. (Incidentally, the Babies were hysterical about the lack of safety and potential for break-ins by the people who had stolen the keys.)

When the maintenance man gave me the new keys I put them in my pocket. The maintenance men left and I reached into my pocket and there were 2 sets of apartment keys. The babies forgot to tell me they put the keys in my pocket (in a tiny side

pocket of my jeans). They thought that the keys that open the mailbox are different from the keys that open the apartment.

I laughed so hard...even though I will owe over \$125 for replacement of the bolt lock. I'm sorry to have lost this money, especially because my funds are very tight. But my Babies are just like outside babies. It is not appropriate to ever become angry with tiny children whether they are inside kids or outside kids. Their functioning is age appropriate. Just like my inner 4 year old who insisted that the cat we saw running across the street in the dark was black.

I go to work really early and I was thinking to myself, "I don't know what color that cat really is." I got to thinking about the 4 year old who insisted the cat was black. At what age do children realize that something that is black in the dark may turn out to be another color when the light shines on it!

Love has healed my inside kids. Whenever I ask my kids how to help a newcomer, someone always says, "Love her/him." I love my kids no matter what they do.

Our team has discussed the Babies' needs since I first became aware of them and they were still extremely sick. My other kids wanted to go out and have fun. The Babies were all still terrified. But my kids and I loved them and they are healing.

I loved each of my kids as they appeared over time, though sometimes it wasn't easy. For example, the third one out was catatonic. We loved her and she's one of my best supports now. (I never told anyone. My kids never let anyone else see this happen.)

Another very young child was suicidal and bent on killing herself when she first "popped out," as well as when our beloved cat died at age 17. (We have two new cats since then which everyone loves.) We explained that there was only one body and the rest of us didn't want to die. (I still was very scared for a long time that she might do it and I wouldn't ever even know about it.) We loved her "with all our hearts" and she is no longer suicidal.

She's a shy girl. I have some that are very gregarious. They are delightful. I have one who likes to cook. She's the one who's eight years old. She cooks for the rest of us. We love her cooking. There are many more.

They all have different talents. We love each other. I teach them how to do most things that I do or else to stay inside when we're at work, but they mostly come out anyway. They do, however, keep anyone who is still very sick entertained while deep inside me when I am at work (though when I am very stressed my kids still "pop out" at work and I act very emotionally. But, it's continually getting better). Then, when we get home, we do something together that's fun that they choose themselves (with the Babies that means eating, so I can hardly wait until they feel good enough to have fun doing something else!). (We are not overweight. We eat healthy food.)

We also discuss what happened and agree that the best way to help Mama (that's me) is to stay deep inside and know they are not responsible for dealing with people in the adult world.

I have learned to do all of these "techniques" on my own. I have thought about how I would comfort a child and how I would like to be comforted and have used these ideas to comfort and teach my kids.

And I must tell you this too, and hopefully it will help someone: The energy healer once asked me whether I remembered having an invisible friend when I was a child (because she could see some around me, but had not told me yet).

I'm sure most everyone has heard stories about kids talking to and/or about an invisible friend. I said, "No, I don't remember any invisible friends myself, but my kids still talk to our angel. They refer to her by name. She tells them to always do what I want to do and to always stay with me (I could tell you something here, but you will never believe it). She loves them and me. She has been with us always."

If I am to believe everything that happened to me I have to also believe the good things my kids tell me. (I do

not personally remember any of it. My kids have drawn pictures of what they saw—the pictures are quite graphic. My kids have occasionally told about some bad things that happened and what was described I found absolutely incredible, revolting, beyond anything I have ever heard of. I have no words to describe what they told me.)

(Also, because of what happened and what was said to my kids they are afraid of God and want nothing to do with God).

I had to tell them I believed them when they told me these things because they asked me whether I believed them. If an outside child says something bad happened, should we not believe them? So why would I not believe my kids when they tell me about good things, like what the angel says to them.

They talk to the angels every day. They have spoken to other people's angels (they were fascinated with a pregnant woman and her unborn baby we saw while at the health club). The unborn baby's angel told my kids about how the angel loved the baby and why angels attend to babies.

The bottom line is this: I know that angels exist. I know that everyone has angels. I know that I was never alone. I know that you were never alone. I know that we all have witnesses. Don't ever believe that you were or are alone or that you have no witnesses. (I heard other people in some of my therapy groups say that they didn't have any witnesses.)

I have no idea why bad things happen. But I am absolutely positive that:

You and I were never alone.

Love is always with you. MV



My Lessons from Depression

By Anthony R. Giordano

Anthony R. Giordano holds a masters degree in sociology from Brown University and had a 25 year career in consumer market research until depression necessitated a career change. He now teaches part-time at Rutgers University.

Faced with a chance to relive a portion of your life, very few people would elect to experience depression again. Even if you learn and grow and come to develop a more positive and enjoyable lifestyle, as many survivors do, it rarely makes up for the devastating pain, crippling despair and total loss of vitality. Depression is an all-consuming illness. It's a category-five hurricane against which there's little defense. If you haven't experienced it, you cannot begin to appreciate its awesome power.

But depression can be a rare if not painful opportunity to learn invaluable things about yourself and about human nature that would not have been possible otherwise. You can see deeper inside yourself than you ever thought possible and find an inner core of strength and resilience. Here are some of the noteworthy lessons I learned, which may be of help to other sufferers or their loved ones.

It wasn't until my late forties that depression first struck. My initial thought was that it was solely triggered by problems at work and burnout. But prior to this incident, I suspected quite a few times over the years that I was emotionally wounded and crippled in some mysterious way. Since I had been programmed to ignore any vague suspicion of weakness or vulnerability, I instinctively felt the compulsion to move on, "like a man." So I did, and denied again and again that a problem might exist.

Some things cannot be ignored. Emotional wounds don't just go away—you need to face them in order to resolve the issues and heal. Otherwise, stresses that will invariably occur in any life—stresses that can be handled with little difficulty by those lucky enough to be without serious wounds—will break you down. That's what happened to me. I learned all this only after four years of depression.

As with most sufferers, the importance of overcoming denial was my first lesson from depression. After several months of decline to a state of complete exhaustion and despair, I eventually submitted to therapy and medication. In a year's time I was able to 'recover' from my first depression. I enjoyed four pretty good years, enabled in part by a change in jobs and an improved work environment. However, since I didn't learn the real roots of my depression and deal with the issues, I didn't truly recover. I simply stabilized, for a time, continuing to carry inner wounds that could come back to destroy me. I relapsed four years later following another major life stress. People with serious emotional wounds from childhood don't have the resilience that others have and they react much differently to stress. Major stress can actually cause these people to relive the original trauma, often subconsciously.

I don't know where I got the courage or the energy, but in this second bout with depression I was determined to learn the real cause of my depression and face the pain squarely. In my first bout, the initial therapist I saw used what's called cognitive therapy to focus on dealing with current problems in my workplace. That's fine, but he didn't go any farther than that, despite my uneasiness about events during my childhood. In ignoring my troublesome past, my therapy only served to delay recovery. After my relapse, I was much more aggressive and demanding with my treatment. Patience in this case is not a virtue. I went through a dozen psychiatrists and therapists, a variety of treatment techniques, several support groups, and countless medications before I found relief.

Depression cost me two good jobs, caused serious marital problems, and drained the energy and spirit out of

me. It wasn't so much that I felt hopeless. Rather, for me it was more a feeling of being hollow, totally lacking any inner strength or a sense of purpose in my life. Perhaps I hit the rock bottom of my plunge and could only go up from there. I took it upon myself to learn as much as I could about the causes and nature of depression. With my newfound appetite for knowledge, I read dozens of books on mood disorders, mental and emotional trauma, psychotherapy, treatment techniques, and related subjects. Suddenly inside me was a compelling drive—to solve the puzzle of my illness—and I knew that I couldn't count on therapists alone to do this. This is very troubling, even shameful that professionals will treat people for months or years without helping them substantially, but it's true. Don't let it happen to you or to a loved one.

I eventually learned the roots of my illness and how it produced the many puzzling symptoms I was experiencing. This knowledge came more from my reading than from any therapist. "Talk" therapy failed to surface the wounds deep inside me that were caused decades earlier in childhood. I certainly never thought it possible that a person could be so seriously impacted by events 40 years earlier. And it appears that, quite surprisingly, psychotherapy today has moved away from the earlier model of probing important childhood conditions, preferring to stay in the present and focus on techniques for handling problems. In other words, it addresses symptoms rather than causes. That may enable you to cope, but it doesn't support healing.

My story, in a nutshell, goes like this: My father was an alcoholic and would often come home in a rage and confront my mother. There were hours of raging arguments and threats of violence. This started when I was about age four and lasted more

than a decade. As a young, unknowing, vulnerable child, I was absolutely petrified, probably more for my mother's safety than for myself. This happened again and again and again. Although there was very little actual physical violence, the threat was always there, which is more than enough for a young, defenseless child. The minute I awoke in my bedroom and heard the first sign of another raging incident, fear and dread would seize hold of me. There was no way I could know it until I suffered depression decades later, but I was severely traumatized by these numerous horrific events in childhood.

What I've learned is that people have to develop defense mechanisms in order to cope. This is especially true of children, who cannot understand what's happening. My defense was a common one—my emotional being went into hiding. I became numb, frozen. These repeated incidents over a decade's time, compounded by my father's seeming absence of approval of me, caused me to become crippled emotionally. I carried lasting wounds from the devastating fear and tension and, as a consequence, I was never able to feel a normal range of emotions.

Mental health experts are now realizing the extent of emotional damage produced by traumatic events in childhood that may have occurred decades earlier and may have seemed minor at the time. This damage often results in depression, anxiety or personality disorders in later life when stresses occur. My job burnout was the straw that broke the camel's back, triggering my first depression.

At first I viewed depression as a weakness, a sign of cowardice, which of course only increased my harmful guilt and shame. I now know this is far from the truth, despite these widespread myths about depression. The fact is research is finding that childhood trauma causes serious physiological and neurological injury that can later produce mental illness. This type of injury is commonly known by the dreaded and horrifying term, 'brain damage.'

The term 'brain damage,' or any connection to physical injury, is rarely associated with depression by the general public, which is part of the myth and misinformation surrounding the illness that leads to bias and discrimination. I met this discrimination head-on, in my workplace, when I was twice forced to leave a job due to depression, which had forced me to take temporary disability leaves. Depression profoundly affects your ability to think, reason, concentrate or remember. It can ravage the brain, something I absolutely needed in order to effectively do my work as a market researcher. And sometimes the side effects of antidepressant medication produce symptoms as bad as the original depression.

I'm now learning how to fight back against the discrimination, having hired a lawyer to challenge the recent termination. This action appears to be putting a scare into my former employer insofar as they have now tripled their severance offer, and the negotiations continue. I'm not letting them off easy. In both of the companies that terminated me, I had been a highly regarded, management-level employee, until depression struck. Then it was like I had the plague. You'll never see an employer admit wrong-doing, but my latest employer's willingness to significantly increase my severance demonstrates that they now realize they had discriminated unlawfully based on disability.

Unfortunately, discrimination at the workplace due to mental disorder actually happens a lot. People suffering a mental disorder, even a relatively minor or temporary condition, are hardly in the condition to fight back. Often they won't even acknowledge their illness. It's not at all easy, but I'd suggest that anyone who suspects they may be victims not hesitate to consult a lawyer. I did a web search for lawyers specializing in unfair termination and solicited more than a dozen lawyers to assess my case—for free, since I no longer had a job. I did have to pay a retainer once I found a lawyer who said I had a strong case, but by then I was fairly confident I'd get the money back, and

more.

As bad as the news is that depression reflects a type of brain damage, the upside is that it's compelling evidence that mental illness is not the fault of the sufferer. That's a common view in our society, and victims themselves are often led to hold that erroneous and harmful view. The fact is, depression is as "physical" as any illness. It's inside the body and really cannot be prevented when it stems from childhood events, which is extremely common. But it can be stopped, if the victim understands the causes and faces them openly. Only then can healing occur.

For me personally, this is the stage where I currently find myself. While I've healed a great deal and no longer feel the full, terrible burden of depression, I still suffer crippled emotions. I can still feel anger and sadness much more than I feel peace or joy. So I'll continue to seek out what's best for me. My problems were actually compounded by my extreme response to the childhood trauma, which for me generated a particular complex of emotional numbing, shame, disconnection, and subsequent guilt that a "man" would have such weaknesses. As a result, I wouldn't talk about the horrific incidents or about my feelings, with anyone, ever. The wounds were therefore left to fester. This is a major obstacle to healing. Exemplifying the benefits of discussing the harmful events with someone and receiving support, my two older sisters did not suffer such serious injury because they had each other for vital support. I was alone.

With talk therapy no longer yielding benefits, I decided to switch therapists again and this time try a fairly new technique, known by the cryptic name, 'eye movement desensitization and reprocessing' (EMDR). This treatment induces the brain to reprocess memories and perceptions in a more positive light. The technique, which is reportedly quite successful in most cases, can undo much of the harm of earlier trauma.

Continued on Page 8

Depression, Cont'd

It wasn't apparent at the outset, but my illness is as much post traumatic stress disorder as it is depression. The symptoms can be very similar. This was yet another thing I learned not from one of the many caregivers I saw, but from reading. I came across recent evidence indicating that depression is often the result of serious emotional trauma in childhood, trauma which may have been essentially invisible to parents. Like depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an illness that's still undergoing definition. The causes are not well understood, and it's not even clear who has it and who doesn't. It's not a reassuring situation.

Just knowing what happened to me, finally, is very therapeutic in itself. Writing about my ordeals is also very therapeutic. What's unfortunate is that it took so long to discover the truth. Since my mental capabilities were severely compromised by my depression, I wasn't in the best state to discover the true nature and cause of my illness. Like most, I counted on the professionals to do this. That didn't work out very well, and my painful illness was prolonged.

You'd think that in a place like New Jersey there would be a multitude of mental health professionals with up-to-date knowledge and training. I can say from personal experience that there are some, but you have to search far and wide to find them, and endure a lot of trial and error while checking out a new caregiver. And I can only assume the situation is much worse in many places where education and income levels are lower.

People suffering from depression and anxiety disorders need professional help, the right kind of help. I'd encourage anyone who suspects they may have a problem to seek out help aggressively and not be easily pacified. Ask questions, demand results, learn as much as you can about your illness and how to help yourself. Resolve to recover, and you will. Until our society's tools and resources for restoring mental health are better, you cannot count on someone doing it for you.

MV

Pacing in Therapy

By Brenda

What pacing means to me is the rate of movement, progress, and/or development.

Within therapy, the rate of movement is better set by the client. Moving too rapidly could leave convoluted thoughts or ideas for the client. On the other side of the coin, moving too slow feels stalled. I, as a client with DID, have at times discussed with my therapist how difficult it is for me to digest too many topics at one time. Knowing I have regular scheduled visits, I am more comfortable knowing I will have many opportunities to speak about subjects which enter my mind.

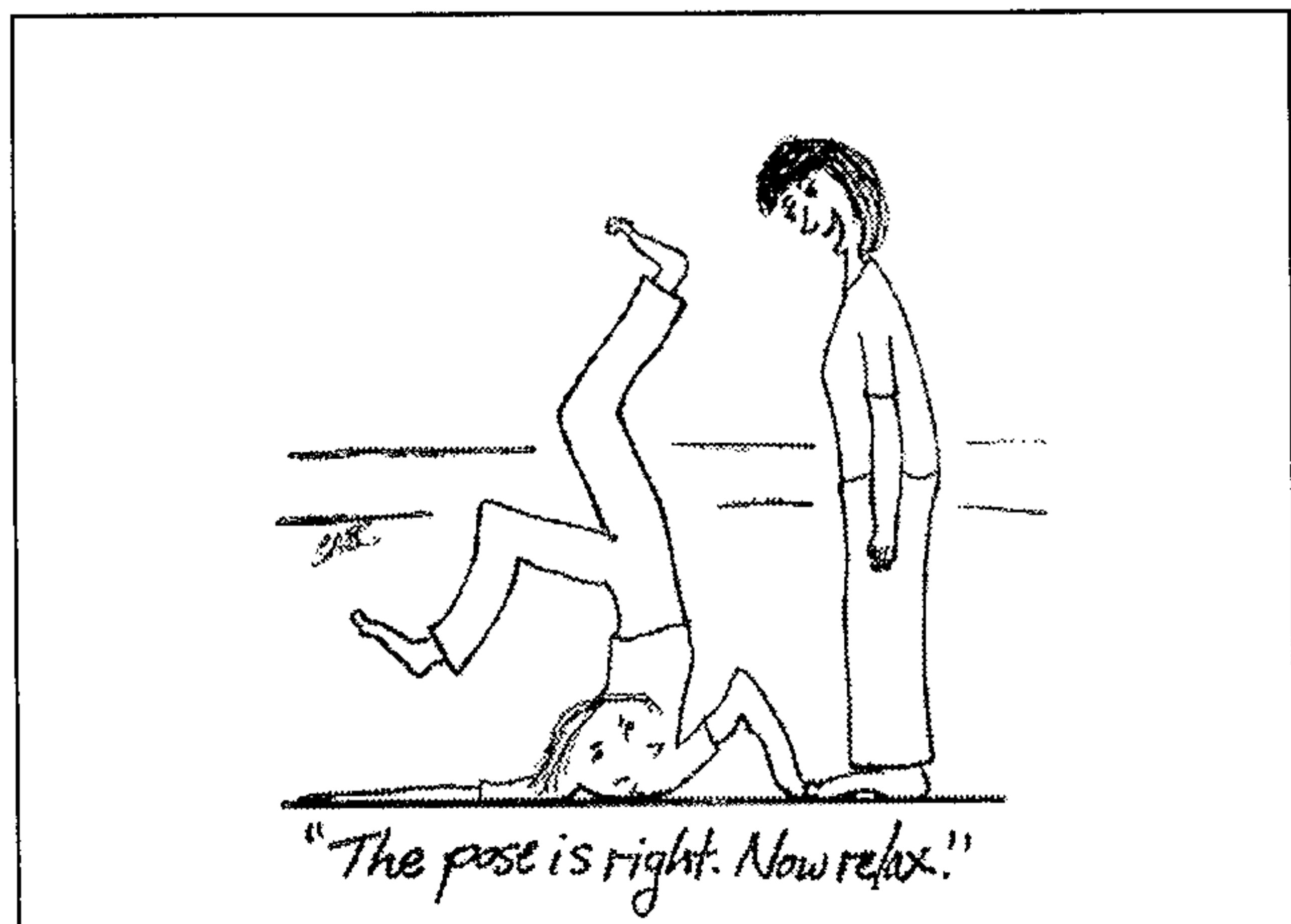
In therapy, the rate of progress will have many factors. It could depend on how much the client can absorb, how hard the client works on themselves, or possibly how severe their DID is. Again, on the other hand is the therapist. Is the therapist well trained in treating DID? How useful is the method they use for treatment? Is a therapist readily available in an emergency crisis? Do the client and therapist feel there is progress?

The development part in therapy, in my opinion, is first and foremost the development of trust between

client and therapist. It can also mean the physical and emotional development for the client. Certainly, a client sees a therapist to make happier and healthier life choices for themselves. This in turn makes a DID person develop into who they want to be as a person. There are many other developments such as learning boundaries, to stand up for oneself, to calm yourself, eating habits, no more self harm, to have reciprocity in my relationship with my husband, to deal with life situations, etc. My mind at this time is just spilling with many developmental parts in therapy.

Why it matters? The movement, progress, and development in therapy all matters to me. This is how I am growing as a person. This is who I want to be. Yes, I stumble and fall at times. Yes, I may have a crisis now and then. But I try to pick up the pieces and continue on at a pace I feel comfortable with. A pace I set for myself. A pace that is important to me within therapy and in my life. This is what pacing in therapy means to me, what it is, and why it matters.

MV



Emotions in Motion

They were thrown onto a path together, strangers, one and all.

Some were set down gently while others took the fall.

Some walked with long strides and much stronger gaits

While others lagged behind and made the front ones wait,

None spoke at first nor looked up from the ground.

the rhythm of their breathing, was the only sound.

Finally the lead one looked behind,

Curious as to what she would find.

These intruders were not wanted,

those that kept her dreams haunted.

She turned to face them, putting on her disguise,

Making sure she never looked into their eyes.

"Who are all of you and why have you come?"

Don't you know who I am? My name is Numb.

Disappear all of you, none can stay

This is my path and I walk it my own way."

Terror was right behind Numb in the line

She could not speak, but held up a sign.

It read, "I've seen you before, I know who you are,

We've always been close, you've never been far"

Next on the path marched Guilt and Shame

Inseparably joined to carry the blame.

Loathing and Hate pushed their way through the crowd

Revenge their destination to all there they vowed.

Reeling throughout, Hopelessness staggered and strayed

The clothes that she wore so tattered and frayed.

Agony tried to keep up with the rest

but crawl in the dirt is how she knew best.

Humiliation covered in her long dark cloak

looked at no one and to no one she spoke.

Last in the line never leaving her space,

afraid to move away from this place

stood the one known as Dread

already knowing she soon would be dead.

All went this path endless nights endless days

like predestined rats locked up in a maze.

Below the surface dark and deep

walls are cracking, starting to seep.

Acceptance attempts to crown her head

knowing there are others that will need to be lead.

Courage knows to stay close by her side

having learned she too can no longer hide.

The small one Hope needs to watch and wait

not really knowing what will be her fate.

There may be others that will later awaken

given the chance that must be taken.

By -JB

Sally takes a different view of pacing in this piece. But her ideas may be valuable to MV's readers, just the same!

Pacing in a Wheelchair

I don't know much about pacing, as I'm in a wheelchair.

Probably pacing helps people to feel powerful, be less confused, and be assured they can leave if and when they need or want to.

Though I cannot walk I feel like I do a lot of inward pacing.

It's a kind of guided imagery forme. I "see" myself handing my burdens over to God.

By Sally B.

MV

Our World

Come into our world

It's a noisy place

Full of chatter

Full of laughter and sarcasm

Full of cheering and jeering

Full of anger and jealousy

Full of fear and terror

Oh yes

It's a noisy place

Why would you want to come into my world

Sometimes I'm not even sure I want to be there

But I have no choice

Did I choose them

Or

Did they choose me

However it happened we're in it together

A mansion with many rooms

A door opens

A door closes

So much noise

I need quiet time

A time just for me

But I have to share

It's our world

By Deb

MV

MV

Life Begins Again

By Pat M.

I come from a dysfunctional family. My father was in charge and the rest of us lived our lives as quietly as possible. Most days were safe days, but once in awhile the verbal abuse was very pronounced. Along with the verbal abuse came the emotional and physical abuses that are still at the center of my being. Even now, when I hear a voice raised in anger, it takes me back to a time that I would rather forget.

We were a family of five with me being the youngest of the three children. I knew at a young age that my siblings hated me for my very existence. I got used to the solitude, but what I could never get used to was the constant fear of the unknown. Each day was filled with an emptiness and sadness that came from the shouting, and at the same time, from the quiet of a family that didn't interact with each other. I carried this fear forward and it is still with me.

My sister has given me the gift of knowing that I was the *perfect child* or the *chosen one*. I never saw any of this favoritism, but she insists that it existed. I look back and remember an entirely different type of meaning to the term *chosen one*. I was sexually abused by my father starting at approximately age seven.

I say approximately because I suffer from amnesia. The amnesia can be attributed to trauma from the actual abuse or because of my dissociation.

When the pain was too great, I would change into a different version of myself and begin again. I did this over and over throughout my childhood. None of these new versions remembered the previous girl so there wasn't any continuation of memories during that period even to today.

It's amazing what the mind will do to protect you and even now I don't want to believe that the abuse could happen to a child, let alone to me. But it did. I can't recall how long the abuse lasted nor does it really matter to me at this point in my life. It is

irrelevant. What is important is that the abuse became ingrained in me, and I became invisible.

The world sees me as a fifty-year-old woman, but on the inside my mind thinks it's twenty-nine. It has taken fifteen months to progress emotionally and mentally from childhood to this age. The journey has been one of despair, hope, forgiveness, and love.

I have Dissociative Identity Disorder. I have worked very hard to become integrated, and now I have but one voice inside of me. I am very thankful for this. My last fifteen months have been the most painful I could have imagined. However, as I continue to heal, my life is full of such hope for my future and pride in my accomplishments, that I want to share this with you in case you are in need of encouragement to continue on your journey to find your own way. It is worth the pain, struggle, and torment because on the other side of this agony is self-love, joy, and peace.

This has been my journey into and out of darkness. I have been married for thirty years to a wonderful, supportive man. We share in everything, or so I thought. I had a secret that neither he nor I knew was buried within me. This unknown information exploded before me in the fall of 2005, and my life changed forever. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, it was almost like the hurricane came down on top of my own head.

My mother lived in that area and relocated to my neighborhood after being away from me for my entire married life. With the return of my mother, my mind was flooded with childhood nightmares and childhood reality. I became depressed, and before I knew what had happened to me, I reverted back to childhood in my mind. I was seven years old again. I could hardly function, and my pain and grief turned into seizures and convulsions. These seizures would last from four to six hours a day in the

beginning. As time went on, they were reduced to less time, but they increased in intensity. After each seizure, I curled up into the fetal position and moaned in pain. I cried from the inside out.

This particular part of my illness lasted for six months. I visited many doctors and emergency rooms, but no one could help me. My emotional being was torn apart, and I had thoughts of suicide, the same thoughts I had when I was a child. I could not leave the house for many months.

Although I was overcome with pain, I never quit looking for a reason or a solution. I began with the internet and continued with self-help books. Then while I was being tested at a local hospital for a seizure disorder, I was given a huge piece to the puzzle. A neurologist decided to sit with me during the testing because of my history, and after two hours of tests, he asked the technician to leave the room. In a quiet voice, he reassured me that he was a safe person to talk with. I was numb, speechless. In my head, I could hear a voice saying, "Someone is going to say this out loud!" This day was the beginning of my healing process. Yes, I had been abused. Yes, it was my father. Now what do I do with this new information?

I have always believed that I didn't have any faith, that I wasn't born with any. I never believed I deserved God's love. I was unworthy, disgusting, a sinner. Child abuse takes so much away from the spirit of a person. Self-hatred lasts a long time. It's difficult to share misery with anyone and that includes God. But, during my seizures and my depression, I found a need to turn to God for help and for His love and forgiveness. I knew that this burden was too much for me alone and I got down on my knees and asked God for help.

Many people don't believe that God speaks to them, but for me, I know God talked with me and encouraged

me to go to church. I immediately trusted His word and I got great comfort from attending church and reading the Bible.

There are so many lessons to be learned when you are overwhelmed with life, but I think the most important one is that God wants you to open up and share your pain with Him. He will walk with you and you will never be alone. I have found peace and love through God. This has been the most rewarding part of this journey. I never, ever thought I would belong anywhere, and now I belong in Christ's family with other people who have the same Christian faith.

After the initial diagnosis, I was very proactive in finding the right therapist for the job ahead. At the time, I thought I was dealing with the abuse only, and that was scary enough. But as time went on, my doctor realized I was emotionally a child again and she needed to take great caution with me.

Our goal was to age-progress me back to an adult if possible. Each session brought so much pain out into the open. Every month or so I would age a few years. I started at age seven, then ten, then fifteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty-two. I was so proud of myself for each milestone.

My behavior during that time mirrored that of myself at that age, long ago. My husband and I went out for ice cream when I was in my ten-year-old phase. There were chess boards on the table, and while we ate our cones, he tried to teach me how to play. It was way over my head so I began knocking the pieces off the board and onto the ground. I thought this was so funny, but he'd had enough, and off to the car we went.

Many voices were living inside of my head during this healing process. Sometimes I would be mature and an adult on the outside while on the inside I felt totally lost. I have always been very good at covering up everything from pain and grief to the truth. I always waited for someone to just ask me if I needed help. No one did.

I had been covering up my emotions all my life by this point so I was an expert at it. I needed someone to reach out to me and give me

comfort, hope, and help. That person ended up being my doctor. I had to learn to trust her. This was a huge step in my life. I had never trusted anyone other than my husband and my children.

It would be easy to say I am fully integrated and that it only took a year or so. But that would be a lie. I have been many separate "girls" since I was seven years old when my life stopped and my mind took over. I know I will continue therapy for quite a while to ensure that I don't dissociate again and to become a stronger version of the woman I am now.

My advice for those still struggling to come to terms with the abuse or the many different voices inside is never give up hope. Never let your abuser win. People who dissociate are strong individuals. It will take great strength to navigate through the past, through the abuse, and to learn to stand on your own two feet.

I truly believe that there is hope for all of us even when the pain is overwhelming. Find a good therapist who understands this disorder and supports the idea that healing is for everyone. Learn to believe in yourself. It is a slow process but one that is worth every single step along the way.

I am very blessed to honestly say that I am not traveling this journey alone. I have a supportive family, wonderful co-workers, and a God that I trust and love completely. I also realize that my journey is not complete. It will take more time to understand everything that I've experienced and the reason for it.

Why did this happen to me? I may never know this answer. I am grateful for all the loving, caring people who held my hand each day because I couldn't face it alone. They continue to support me. To these friends, I thank you.

MV

If Only

If only:

I were different...my need would melt into ashes.

If only:

I was invisible...the tears inside wouldn't block the gate to my heart.

If only:

The clothes that I wear would keep me warm...I wouldn't keep looking for another layer.

If only:

The smile on my face was mine and not the one I painted for others...then I could see what mine looks like.

If only:

I believed and not doubted so much in people, maybe someone could touch me...but because I am so busy watching for the lies, closeness comes with a price too high to pay for most people.

If only:

I stayed in myself and didn't have any expectations in anyone else...it's in us. We set up failures and hurts; if you expect nothing you can't get hurt.

If only:

I could stop hurting.

By Cara...Guarding Angels

MV

ABANDONMENT

FEAR



Professional Brain Reprogramming

By Jesse

I learned how to use affirmations at WIIT, an inpatient program in Florida.

There, I learned that the negative thoughts that run through your head are your abuser's values. They are not your thoughts, but the thoughts of your abusers. It is possible to change these inner beliefs if you work at it hard enough. You don't have to believe an affirmation is true in order to say it. Eventually you will believe it.

The following examples of affirmations were created specifically to counteract my personal abuser's values. I also put some Scripture into affirmation form. People have to identify their own abuser's values. I would recommend that people wanting to try this reprogramming have a trained therapist check your list over before doing them in the mirror. You wouldn't want to be feeding your brain wrong information.

According to the method I learned, to reprogram over the abuser's values, read the affirmations at least 5X a day with nose to mirror (if necessary to eliminate distractions) for 6 consecutive months without missing one single day. If you miss a day, start over at Day 1 again. I use a hand held mirror. Reprogram both the left and right sides of your brain by reading the affirmations with first one eye open, and then the other.

Inpatient recommended doing 50 affirmations a day. I do 75, some people do 30. It's your personal preference. 75 take me about 10 minutes to do in both eyes (L & R) each time.

- 1 I am already successful exactly as I am now for me
2. I have a sound and peaceful mind for me.
3. I have the power to protect myself for me
4. I have the power to stand up for myself for me
- 5 My true name is _____ for me.

6. I am who God tells me I am for me.
7. My sexuality is wholesome and pure for me
- 8 I am in control of my mind for me.
- 9 I am carefully and wonderfully created by God for me
- 10 .I am creative and have a wholesome imagination for me.
11. I believe my memories are true for me
- 12 I remember enough to heal for me
- 13 I am righteous and justified by God for me.
14. I am sound in body, soul and spirit for me.
15. I am sound in my mind, will and emotions for me.
- 16 I believe God's truths for me
- 17 I accept and embrace all parts of me for me
18. I live my life for me.
19. I lie down and sleep in peace through the night for me.
20. I validate myself for me.
- 21 I see myself through God's eyes for me
22. I feel my feelings for me
- 23 I am loyal to all parts of me for me.
- 24 I am the right body size and shape for me
25. I am recovering for me
26. I allow my inner child to experience innocence for me.
- 27 I live in a healthy, safe environment for me.
28. I am extremely intelligent for me.
29. I am aware of my body, soul and spirit/ mind, will and emotions for me.
30. I internally communicate with all my alters for me
- 31 I am in touch with myself for me.
32. I am responsible for my own safety on walks for me.
33. I am a very valuable person for me.
- 34 I do healthy exercise for me.
35. I have clarity of mind for me.
36. I forgive all parts of myself for me.
37. I am at peace living in a calm home for me.

38. I stay calm for me.
39. I speak truthful, loving and encouraging words to myself and others for me.
40. I love only safe people unconditionally for me.
41. I am a peacemaker for me.
42. I am joyful for me.
43. I show kindness to myself and others for me.
44. I am faithful to myself and those I love for me.
45. I am gentle with myself and others for me.
46. I have self control for me.
47. I eat healthy food for me.
48. I embrace the truth for me.
- 49 I engage in healthy recreational activities for all for me.
50. I organize and clean my house for me.
51. I have very strong boundaries for me.
52. I pray and meditate everyday to God.
53. God keeps me safe for me.
54. I am extremely significant to God.
55. I hold my head up high for me.
56. I am a child of the King.
57. I am a Princess.
58. I am made in the image of the Living God.
59. I live a balanced life for me.
60. I believe the truth, these affirmations set me free for me.
61. I was chosen by God before the foundation of the world.
62. I invite only safe people into my home and life for me.
63. I am true to myself for me.
64. I allow God to complete my healing and freedom for me.
65. **I share my healing with only appropriate people at appropriate times for me.
66. I say "thank you very much, I appreciate it" to others when they compliment me.
67. I remain by people who are still

waters to my soul.

68. I am satisfied as a wife and mother in real recovery.

69. I will have a career and ministry in God's time.

70. I have a voice for me.

71. I have the power to protect my children for me.

72. God is healing my marriage for me.

73. God is healing my relationship with my children for me.

74. God calms and quiets my soul for me.

75. God quiets me in His love for me.

76. I have eyes only for my husband _____ for me.

77. I am a miracle.

78. All food is a blessing from God.

79. I stay focused for me.

80. I stay free, safe and protected by God.

81. God's fun is real fun.

82. Bedtime is a time for rest and rejuvenation.

83. I have therapy in a healthy, safe environment for me.

84. I am dignified by God for me.

85. I drive to and from therapy and see all the exits on time for me.

86. I recognize when I'm switching for me.

87. I identify my alters for me.

88. I meet all my alters for me.

89. I am diligent about healing me.

90. I am beautiful in every way for me.

91. I complete my affirmations everyday for me.

92. God created me very strong for

me.

93. I am free to be the real me.

It takes 21 days to form a habit and 3 days to break it.

I promise you will feel great resistance to the ones you need to hear the most and also on day 21! Believe me! Ask inside and listen inside. Find your abuser's values. Create your own antidotes to them (positive and true affirmations) and reprogram your brain. Affirmations relieve anxiety and help me fall asleep. Affirmations lead to breakthroughs at home and in therapy. They work! They are powerful! Write your own personal ones that directly counteract your personal abuser's values. It's a very effective way to erase the negative thoughts in your brain. Try it! Give it the 6 month test.

MV

Fear of Going "Crazy"

By Jennifer

I am 41 years old and a survivor of most kinds of abuse you can picture. I have been working with a great therapist who is helping me get through the irrational fears left over from my childhood. It has been agonizing, but we are moving forward.

Recently, I have been having symptoms that are frightening to me. I generally don't lose time, or find things I don't remember buying. Now I seem to be trying to muddle through. It is affecting my life and I am terrified.

My moods are all over the place from one minute to the next. I am suicidal on and off during any given day. I had to give my therapist all my medicine to ensure my safety. I see a movie and get lost in it and I'm fine. I was fine until I left my keys in the car door. I started crying. I was lucky the car wasn't stolen.

In the past few months I have lost two jobs. It looks like I am going to have to go on disability. That alone scares me. I know that disability is there for people like me, but watching the crash has nearly destroyed me. My therapist tells me that disability has nothing to do with intelligence. I understand that intellectually but

emotionally I am screwed up on the issue.

Those things I heard growing up are so sharply ingrained in my personality are making this whole situation devastating. I was expected to have good grades as a kid. If not, I interpreted it as being a bad girl. If I can't support myself, I feel like that bad girl again. I am terrified at being around the expectations of my father and mother.

My mom has offered to build a new wing on her house for me and my son. It is a loving gesture, but my son is a sophomore in high school and has good friends. I don't want to take that away from him. I have friends and a church here that I don't want to leave. I just feel crazy with my emotions all over the place.

Crazy is a term that I hate and do not use generally speaking. With losing things, not keeping track of things, not being able to keep my house picked up, or enough dishes clean to eat on, I feel crazy and out of control.

I did manage to find out one thing though. I have been misusing one of my meds to help me sleep during the day. It has symptoms of forgetting

things and losing things and disorientation in higher doses. So at least I can get back on the correct dose and see if that helps a bit. Sometimes we all have difficulty accepting our diagnosis. "Crazy" is certainly not a diagnosis. I believe that accepting the symptoms of a diagnosis can be just as difficult. I was in medical school for god sakes! Now I can barely take care of myself and my son.

MV



My World

By Barb S.

You could say I live in my own little world. I have "around 100" alters, nearly all of them children and young teens. I have very few outside people I socialize with and prefer it that way.

"We" love to shop and so have a huge variety of clothes and accessories as well as many stuffed toys and books and knickknacks and wall art. "We" also write a LOT-zany poetry, fantasy filled short stories, amazing dreams, and daily journaling.

"We" use the dictionary and thesaurus and computer frequently to attain information of all kinds. "We" enjoy watching animated and fantasy type movies.

"We" love to read a good book, drink McDonald's iced coffee, and experiment with different cosmetics. I have always wanted a chicken, a cat, and a goat as a pet if I lived elsewhere to better accomodate them. (I live in a one bedroom apt.) Then just tonight I thought, wouldn't that be something if a chicken, cat, and goat could be created to be one animal? It could have a chicken head, cat body and tail, and goat legs. And I have the perfect name for it too—a chicago. chi (chicken) ca (cat) and go (goat). I have the feeling a chicago would like to eat graham crackers and drink rootbeer. That's just my guess. It could just as well like powdered donuts and strawberry shakes. But at any rate, we'd all live happily together Under

The Tungsten Sun (Is that a movie?)

This short story I call "Snore No More:"

In the exotic land of India there lived a very tired man named Amaris. Amaris means child of the moon. That's where he wished he lived.

Amaris took a two hour nap every day at exactly 2:00 p.m. He snored so loud neighbors from miles around could hear it. This went on for about a year until finally the neighbors got together in a very agitated and rebellious mood and decided to report Amaris' loud snoring to the police.

The police took their complaint very seriously and even created a special task force of 500 to deal with Amaris.

One fine summer day when the peace and quiet was again shattered by Amaris' very loud snoring, the special task force of 500 broke down Amaris' door and slapped him awake with flyswatters each of them yielded.

Stunned but woozy, Amaris sat up, rubbed his eyes, and demanded, "What goes on here? Who are you?"

The biggest and burliest policeman stepped forward and waved his arm before the huge group of policemen. "Until your noisy naps cease we will be here each day with flyswatters drawn. We are the Indian Nap Police 500."

MV

Shell

Life washed me up upon this shore
and I have gathered shells,
holding them up to my ears
to hear the deeps of the ocean,
the sweet music issuing forth
from their spun and whorled interior.

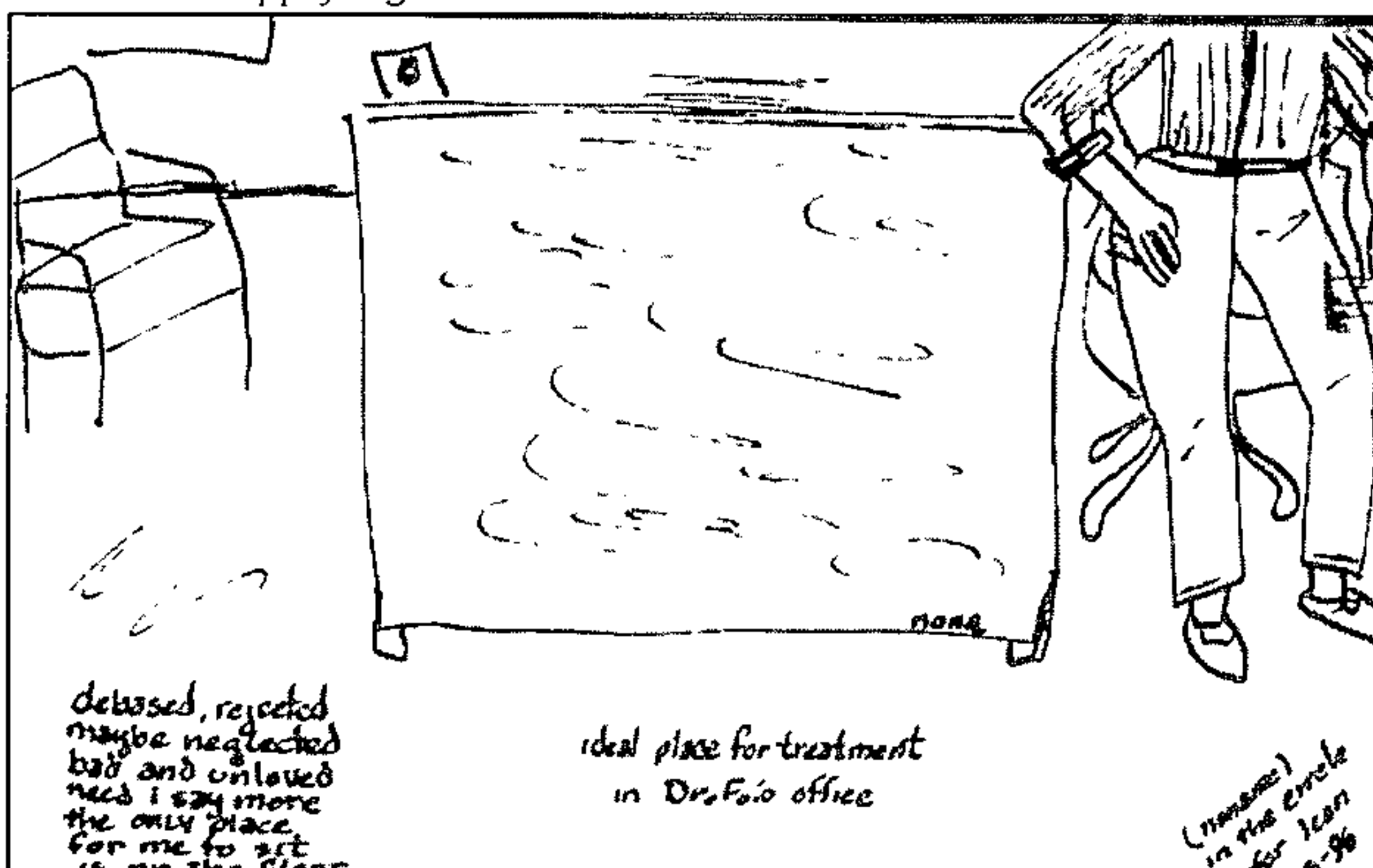
Since, without ad within,
I have been ceaselessly defiled,
I look for innocence and purity
in these strange creatures of the deep
sea.
Remembering I forget, and forgetting I
remember
the horror of childhood, of early life.

Ceaselessly the waves break on the
shore
into a million droplets, forming and re-
forming,
mountains of spume become a
translucent veil
spread on the sand, reflecting the
infinite sky
and there—see—the waters have
flung up a shell.
One only, unique even in its
uniqueness.

Curved, convoluted, barnacle
encrusted,
rainbow-shimmering, salt-water-
dripping,
how it sings of the home it has left
behind,
every experience etched upon its body,
and yet it has reached out, detached,
committed itself to the ocean swell
and somehow reached its destination
on this far shore,
singing of blue-green depths.

By Kate Evans

MV



BOOKS

Set This House in Order: A Romance of Souls(Fiction)

By Matt Ruff © 2004, ISBN 9780060954857 Published by Harper Perennial, \$14.95 Paperback.

When I read the synopsis of Matt Ruff's novel, *Set This House in Order: A Romance of Souls*, I was deeply skeptical. A multiple personality named Andy is gently nudged into supporting another multiple, Penny, by his friend and supervisor at work. Andy reluctantly agrees, and the whole thing becomes something of a murder mystery, partially taking place inside the "house" of Andy's mind, partially between the disorganized alters in Penny's mind, and partially in the "real" world. Oh, and most of the book takes place in the Seattle area. To be honest, I was more than skeptical. I was annoyed.

I know a thing or two about multiplicity; my mother is a successfully integrated multiple. My ex-husband is a multiple. I have lived now, with no fewer than four dissociative people, and loved them all dearly. I am fiercely protective of multiples and of the seriousness of multiplicity. (For that matter, I'm also rather protective of the Seattle area, where I lived for four years.) I am constantly annoyed by "creative" portrayals of multiplicity that serve to perpetuate generally unkind myths about multiples, and throw all of the scientific and therapeutic understandings of DID back into the dark ages. It is largely because of Hollywood-style misinterpretations that multiples are so often thought to be killers, idiots, or deranged, selfish attention-seekers. I was not at all confident that Matt Ruff would be up to the task of correcting any of these perceptions. Or, even if he were, I wasn't sure he'd bother.

Still, Mr. Ruff had done a marvelous job of respectfully portraying the fanciful mindset of Ithaca, New York, in his earlier novel, *Fool on the Hill*. Ithaca is also near and dear to my heart, although therapists are less likely to scornfully dismiss an Ithacan from their offices than a person with signs of dissociation. I decided, with great apprehension, to give *Set This House in Order* a chance. And yes, I was greatly apprehensive. Fictitious multiples

solving a murder? In Seattle? Yeah, right. As I opened it, I was still grumbling, "it's stuff like this that had my mom in and out of hospitals for seven years, and never got my ex-husband the right diagnosis..."

But by page 34, which I reached within a half hour, I set the book aside and wrote Mr. Ruff the only fan letter I have ever written in my life.

The characters in the book are all explored with depth and compassion, and even humorously. The alters are presented as meaningful characters, each with a specific protective duty and distinctive personality features. Most remarkably to me was the way Mr. Ruff portrayed the rapid switching in Penny's system. He depicted Penny's confused blackouts beautifully, all while maintaining a certain subtlety to it. Mr. Ruff avoided the common mistake of over-dramatizing Penny's character(s) to the point of making her seem like a lunatic or a possessed person. I felt that, to the outside world, she came off as being a little peculiar, a little quirky, but not overtly out-of-control. (This, honestly, has been very close to my own experience with multiples.) Internally, she came off as frightened, troubled, and wildly confused. The quality and depth of her character(s), and Andy's, are astonishingly realistic.

The novel is based solidly on psychological theories of DID, but does not read like a textbook. It touches on the atrocities of child abuse that Andy and Penny suffered, but does not dwell on them long enough, or in horrific-enough detail, to cause great distress to the reader, as opposed to, for example, *Sybil*, *The Flock*, or *When Rabbit Howls*. It raises fascinating questions about the relationships between a body and a soul (or souls), and the issue of gender identity. In one notable passage, a male character with a female body attempts to seduce another female character, only to be told, "I'm not a lesbian." "Neither am I," insists the male alter. The humor and deep sense of empathy, especially in that scene, touched me as no other book on multiplicity has managed to do. It is an honest portrayal of an honest dilemma. Furthermore, Mr. Ruff also persists in coloring each alter as extraordinarily "real," even while questioning, within the

minds of the multiple characters, whether the alters are symptoms of insanity or delusions. In this, he does what few other books have managed to do: lend respect to the sense of individuality and selfhood that alters have, although refusing to take a concrete standpoint on whether or not the alters are "imaginary."

Mr. Ruff's book is involved and beautifully complex. Clearly, writing a book — a fictitious one, no less! — about a multiple is an enormous task, particularly if one intends to maintain any semblance of accuracy with regard to DID, and even more so if one intends to market the book to a lay audience, with or without DID. I read his biography several times, he insists that he himself is not a multiple, and I find myself even more amazed at his ability to conceive of multiplicity with such care and dignity, from both a first and a third-person viewpoint. Having read it to its conclusion (within two days; I couldn't put it down), I am mildly ashamed of my initial reluctance to read it. *Set This House in Order* is an excellent book, nothing short of brilliant in its plot, pacing, thematic depth, and, of course, its character portrayals. I have moved it over, with no qualms, onto my shelf of favorites.

Oh, and it doesn't do a bad job of describing Seattle, either.

By Carolyn

MV



THANKS FOR YOUR WRITING & ARTWORK! KEEP IT COMING!

Also- If you know any partners/friends/supportive family of people recovering from trauma, please fill out the survey posted at <http://tinyurl.com/398a6o> The information I'm gathering will be used in a presentation to the ISST-D in November, and as background info for a forthcoming book

Lynn W., Editor

October 2007

Hospital issue:
Crisis recovery and continued healing.
Managing addictions.
Artwork: Safe places for comfort
DEADLINE: August 1, 2007

December 2007

Parenting (inside and outside) children. Breaking the cycle of abuse.
Artwork: What children really need
DEADLINE: October 1, 2007



By Kern V

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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