

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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In this issue:

Good Parenting--Inside and Out Healing with Spirituality

...and more

Night Magic

A wisp of breeze across your face
That's all it takes
You know they are there
Tiny winged creatures
You slowly open your eyes
You glimpse slivers of light in the
darkness
They have come again
They come every night
The fairies of your dreams
but this is no dream
You feel yourself being lifted
Like magic you fly out the window
You are soaring in the moonlight
Where are you going
You know the place
The enchanted forest
There you can have tea parties
Dance with the creatures who live
there
Play all night
You are safe and loved
No one will harm you there
You are happy for a while
Then the time comes to fly home
You don't want to go
But go you must
Your other life is waiting
A life that is not happy
A life that has danger in it
But you know there is something
better for you
You know the fairies will return
And for a while you can be the child
you were meant to be
Happy
Free
Safe

By Deb

MV



Fear of Going Crazy Part II

By Jenn

In my previous article on this subject, in MV's August 2007 issue, I talked about all the unexpected things that had happened in life that were beyond my control and beyond any expectations I had for my self. Like the princess in the fairytale, I was waiting for that happily-ever-after that those fairytales promised my impressionable young mind. I hate fairy tales.

There was no young handsome prince on his white steed coming to rescue me. I was beginning to wonder what was wrong with me. Why didn't that handsome prince come running to rescue me? What was wrong?

Nothing was wrong with me as chance would have it. It just happened, through no fault of my own, that I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It seems simple enough, but no one mentioned that to me. No one said that it wasn't my fault.

In order to make sense of my surroundings I developed certain irrational beliefs to explain my life situations. One of those beliefs was "Fear of going Crazy." This fear, this false belief, was learned from our childhood. This fear can often be tied to something an abuser said, "Everyone will think you are crazy. No one will believe you." It was demanded that I respect authority growing up, so this fear of going crazy is easily instilled in a child by an adult. It kept me quiet.

Somehow, this fear of going crazy found permanent residence in my brain. It was reinforced by my sister going to the "crazy" hospital and later my very own psychiatrist told me if I didn't shape up he would move me from the adolescent unit to the adult ward "where the real crazies are." When you hear this from a psychiatrist, it's hard not to believe it.

I believe that initially before we are aware of the ramifications or even our own history of abuse, we feel "crazy".

Society tells us that if we hear voices, have flashbacks, "shell - shock", or remember past child abuse, we are mentally ill or "crazy."

For me, what comes to mind is that we reacted normally to an abnormal situation. Dissociation and repression protected us until we had the capacity to deal with and process the events that happened as a child. I had to hear this many, many times before it sunk in, but finally understanding it was proof that I am not crazy. My abuser lied to me. I am a good, kind, and sane person.

Sometimes with all the emotions going on and the sense of time being off kilter and sudden reactions happening for no apparent reason, we feel crazy. This is common especially when starting therapy. It seems to get worse before it gets better. It does get better. It is just hard to believe that, when you are frightened. I always say I walk right up to the cliff, look for any way to avoid the chasm and then finally have the faith to deal with the issue and come out on the other side. I picture Indiana Jones in the 3rd movie where he has to take the "leap of faith." He throws the pebbles on

the bridge to reveal the passage. Then he carefully walks across. This is a good analogy for me when processing difficult stuff in therapy. There is indeed another side to get to safety.

Sometimes, people have doubts about their sanity just because they are seeing a therapist. My dad once said that walking through that door was an admission that you aren't perfect. Something is wrong with you. People who do not have the understanding of the therapeutic process tend to label you as "crazy" since you are seeing a psychiatrist or psychotherapist. This is a public stigma regarding mental health problems, but it is slowly changing.

My therapist told me that it is the brave ones who walk through her door. Therapy is not for cowards.

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Inside

Take a deep look
 Take an even deeper look
 What can you see?
 What do you see?
 Do you see what I see?
 Can you feel what I feel?
 Can you just for a moment
 Put yourself here in this moment.
 If you could, for just a blink of an eye
 Be inside this shell of a body,
 This shell that exists much different.
 Sees things in a way different light.
 Feels things in a way most couldn't
 dream of.
 Has fears and anger embedded so
 deep.
 Has pain and sadness embedded
 deeper.
 Afraid to show enormous amounts of
 feelings.
 You may understand better if
 You could just step *INSIDE*.

By Patricia R.

MV

This issue of MV features a Therapists' Page by a priest, Patrick J. McAteer SJ, of Chicago. We welcome his thoughts about healing and prayer, and believe they'll be helpful to many readers.

At the same time, I want to clarify MV's position regarding the use of spirituality and religion in recovery. We support and encourage any point of view that helps a recovering person gain stability and functionality—whatever that particular individual finds useful. These beliefs may range from atheist, humanist, agnostic, and all flavors of Christianity, to Judaism in its many forms, Islam, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Native American, Pagan, you-name-it. Constructive and helpful expressions of any and all religious/spiritual belief systems are welcome here.

We tend to publish more material with a Christian orientation simply because we receive more material with that orientation. But I urge those of you who have different opinions to please share your thoughts with us.

MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!

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

Spiritual Topics & MV

And if 'no religion' is your choice, please write about that viewpoint too. I want to publish 'whatever is helpful' so those who are in the recovery process have options to consider.

A few guidelines will suffice: I will not print anything that claims "XYZ is the one true faith & anyone who disagrees is going to blazes," or "ZZQ is a bogus religion & no one should follow it," or anything that promotes cruelty or brainwashing tactics (ie cultic methods). Because I believe inner parts are not demonic, I personally believe exorcisms are likely to cause more harm than good and won't publish 'positive testimony' about exorcisms. In general, I prefer material that doesn't cite numerous Biblical passages by name (or similar multiple references to other holy books). I prefer the focus to be on the helpful message, rather than the religious text that bears that message. And always, the thrust of preferred articles includes something constructive...what you learned from your spiritual (or non-spiritual)

experience, and how it helped strengthen your ability to become stable or whole.

MV is about HOPE and moving forward despite hard times. At MV we know life isn't easy. But our core belief is – you can do it. You can 'feel better'. I'm asking you to share how you do it, how you manage to find strength, peace, and joy despite past and present problems. In sharing your stories and ways of healing, you help us all.

Lynn W., Editor

MV



Support at MeetUp.Com

By Jaime P.

It was almost three years ago I got the diagnosis I feared. Even though I always suspected I was DID, I held on to the hope that maybe I was wrong. Since my diagnosis, I have been on quite an emotional roller coaster. I struggled with sadness, anger, grief, and eventually acceptance.

However, for me, the one thing still missing from my therapy was someone to talk to about these struggles. I so desperately wanted someone that could understand me and say, "Hey, I've been there before and it will be okay." I wanted someone who would laugh with me when I shared a story about one of my part's zany antics. I really needed an outlet but I had none.

I had some friends who were sympathetic and though they tried, they couldn't understand. I had found some great online support groups with message boards but I found it challenging to post a question and then hope and wait for someone to respond. Then if you had another question, you had to do the process all over again.

I wanted just one real, live person who would be able to know all of me. I was longing for the comfort of one person who I could just be me around without having to explain away an out of the norm comment or try to hide a quick switch.

Similar to what so many others have experienced, I searched and there was not one single support group anywhere in the area. I felt so alone and really thought I must be the only person here with DID.

Then I had a thought. With the field of dreams motto in my head, "If you make it, they will come," I decided to stop waiting and start my own support group. I went to the Meet Up site and created the only DID support group on the site. I had no idea who would join, if anyone. Much to my surprise, within the first week, 2 people joined, then another and another. By the 6th week, we were up

to 12 members. I was overwhelmed but a very good way.

We get together twice a month now to laugh, cry, support each other, and most of all, love each other for who we are. Finally, we are able to be our true selves without fear of rejection. There is no anxiety worrying how to explain away a switch or have to come up with an excuse for a certain behavior. We all know, we all understand.

When I started this, I was selfishly looking to help myself. I had no idea how much it would impact and change the lives of so many others. Below are just a few of their comments from emails to me, printed with their permission. "I don't feel so alone anymore. This disorder is very isolating but now that I know other who deal with the same things I do, I don't feel so different than anyone else. At times, I actually feel special. None of which I ever felt before the group."

"The group has given me a place where I can be with other people just like me and not have to explain myself or feel like I'm different or hiding something. I feel like I belong."

I would encourage anyone reading to consider starting their own Meet Up group. At the time I am writing this, we are the only active Meet Up group in the country. How many more of us are hiding ourselves away, wishing and hoping for one person to understand and accept us? Instead of being the person waiting, be the person creating.

MV

Holistic

Holistic: Of or relating to holism. Relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts. Holistic medicine attempts to treat both mind and the body.

Healing is a song so young/
old it is silently full of words
and raw sounds rising from
the deep Healing is dream
visits when yesterday your legs
are blue from too much walking
Healing is remembering what
the mind boxes in and the soul
needs to grow so dark is melted
down in heat and light Healing
is using hands filled with shame
to form containers of earth
parts of trees things discarded
Healing is waking to see day
through
tears reflecting sun, moon,
breath,
heartbeat Healing is tasting
bread, sand, water between toes
air on the tongue while speaking
silence, sensation and howling
dogs
remembering wolf saying no for
the first time and meaning it
saying anything in any way with
gesture, touch, paint, music,
earth
drum, absence, presence
Healing
is salt in water that purifies to
amplify
soul doing it your way your way
your way

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Therapists' Page

By Nancy Leeming PhD

Nancy Leeming, PhD, is a psychotherapist in North White Plains, New York. (914) 682-7600.

Good Parenting, Inside and Outside

Picture a young family group clustered together. The children hold large drinking straws inserted into their parents through which they draw nurture and sustenance. This is a good way to picture a healthy family.

In an unhealthy family, the adults hold the straws inserted into the children. They assume it is their offspring's duty to take care of them. These parents are, in fact, disturbed children in grown-up bodies. They will neglect, abandon, or abuse their sons and daughters.

Adult survivors of inadequate or abusive parenting often discover sad, fearful and angry young presences within the mysterious entity they call "self". Troubled inner children can take control of the adult host and cause big time trouble.

You will experience these inner children at times when you find yourself behaving or feeling in ways that make no sense to you as an adult. Such behaviors and feelings seem to have a life of their own. At first, you may be quick to blame or criticize yourself. Anxiety from mood swings, drastic shifts in perspective and inability to trust yourself one moment to the next will, hopefully, get you into therapy.

A therapist, wise in the ways of human multiplicity, is an invaluable aid. You'll be encouraged to look for the positive intention underlying your "symptoms". Hard to believe at first, young, acting-out parts of the self are most often trying to help and protect you.

Sandy, a 45-year-old woman, was feeling weak and vulnerable after surgery. She wanted to rebuild muscle strength by returning to the gym, but was enraged at a "f—ed up" part of

her self who kept her hiding at home.

I asked her to follow the need to hide back through time and she remembered being 5 years old, hiding from a psychotic father. No more curses, her anger dissolved, Sandy named her inner 5-year-old Little Tuffy. Clearly, Little Tuffy was responding to vulnerability in the only way she knew.

Sandy was encouraged to appreciate Little Tuffy's loyalty, while asking her help in building strong muscles. The next week she reported hearing in "her mind's ear" a little voice saying "I will help you get strong; let's go to the gym; let's do sit-ups."

Children cannot be allowed to take charge of an adult's life. It's hard to believe, while facing down a tantrum, that your child wants you to set limits. You must stand on two grown-up feet, solidly grounded in the knowledge that saying no, setting limits and enforcing consequences are necessary. Children feel safe with an adult who loves, protects, and teaches them. Security comes with predictable and fair rules.

It's a good idea to enroll in a parenting class, even if you do not have a child of your own here, in the outside world. You cannot know how to do something you've never experienced or been taught. The principles of good child care are the same for inner, as well as outer, children.

Here are some of my favorite guidelines for inner children:

- * Teach them they are loved through generous encouragement and praise.
- * Let them know you are there for them when they feel afraid.
- * Practice taking a few deep breaths before reacting to stress. Within

those moments your adult wisdom has a chance to guide you.

* Apologize if you've been unfair. It's such a relief to children who always believe they are at fault.

* Never reject, condemn, abandon, or brutally criticize. Remember, sticks and stones may break your bones, but bones will mend. Names may curse or bless you for a lifetime.

* When correction is needed, seek to discover the positive intention behind the problem behavior and appreciate it.

* Mentally communicating with inner children may not be enough. It's easy to be pulled off track by their clamoring. Talk out loud. The sound of your adult voice reassures inner little ones and holds their attention.

When you recall the most difficult emotions you experienced as a child, be sure that your inner little ones are still living with those feelings.

Welcome them into the adult community of your self. Your message to them, over and over, must be, "It's different now, I'm here. You're not alone. I'm here."



Therapist's Page

By Patrick J. McAteer, S.J

Patrick J. McAteer emigrated from Ireland in 1957 and joined the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus in 1964. He earned a Masters Degree in Spiritual Theology. For the past thirty-five years he has directed priests, religious and lay men and women through the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola in the traditional and adapted forms. He first encountered abuse and trauma early in retreat work and for the past ten years has counseled abortion, abuse and trauma survivors. He is a resident priest at St. Ignatius parish in Chicago. Email contact: mcaateer@stignatiuschurch.org.

Spiritual Healing of Sexual Abuse Through Prayer

When I received the call from God to become a Catholic priest, I had a choice to make. I could say, "yes" or "no" and the decision was mine to make. Since I wanted to contribute to doing good in the world, I said, "yes." My next decision was to decide whether to join a religious order or join a diocese. I was familiar with the spirituality of the Jesuits and their works and decided to join their order. I would still have to be accepted by them and their formation program was quite rigorous. However, I had to respond personally to God's call. The response is still in the person and the freedom to respond or not is his. I became a Jesuit priest because I wanted the best spiritual background and complimentary academic program that would make me "the best I can be." Being a Catholic Christian I wanted my spirituality to be a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Why? Well, simply because he creates and recreates; that means he can heal and develop. I talk with Jesus and his Holy Spirit; that's my prayer. God is spirit which makes him seem far away and impersonal, but, really, he is present and cares for each of us personally.

I began to see the effects of personal prayer when I started to give individually directed retreats in the mid-seventies. These retreats usually lasted six to eight days and the retreatants, those doing the prayer exercises, were usually women from religious orders of sisters. They would have been formed in ways of praying, and many would have followed a form of Jesuit spirituality. These women

would meditate on suggested Biblical texts four or five times daily for periods of about an hour, and be prepared to give a verbal account of their day. They would observe a quiet reflection throughout the day, and meals were usually taken in silence. It was on one such retreat that I met my first retreatant who had been sexually abused — you'll meet her below. Her story, and subsequent stories of others, introduced me to spiritual healing in prayer. Abuse of any kind becomes part of the person and part of her/his spirituality. She is wounded and if wounded, she can be healed. If an injury was done to her it can be undone. God heals, and as deeply as one is injured, that's how deeply she can be healed. She can learn to love as deeply as she has been wounded. Jesus says so in the Gospels (Luke 7:36-48). Prayer, then, fully entered into with faith in Jesus can be healing. Some of the writing below confirms this, but you can see for yourself and decide.

Feelings in Prayer

Ann Belford Ulanov believes that two things happen when we pray: "We are being touched by our own selves, and we are being touched by God."[] If God touches us in any way He heals and frees us from what is not of him in us. We may or may not be aware of this healing or what is being healed, but God does not act without purpose. If we pray with confidence and hope for healing it is because we trust God, and we trust ourselves to God. This trust is deeper than ordinary trust —it is faith. We believe that God exists in us and is actively engaged in his creatures. It is this faith and trust in ourselves as believers through which He acts and heals. Our faith facilitates his grace to take us

into the areas of ourselves not familiar to us. We may have inklings or intuitions that these spaces within us exist, but we cannot of ourselves get there. God takes us to them because we seek him in prayer. In psychological terms we might say that in recollection the unconscious speaks to the conscious. In religious terms we are surprised by the Spirit.

In the midst of the conscious act of recollection of ourselves the unconscious usually surprises us. Unexpected images, affects, wishes, complex patterns of reactions break into our meditations and carry us off somewhere we had not planned on going. We discover, either painfully or pleasantly, that something in us touches us that we had not even acknowledged as part of our selves. Unconscious parts of our inner selves effectively dispossess our conscious self-image, our "own" sense of our identity. Yet the unconscious also acquaints us with new parts of our identity that need to be rescued into daily living. In opening ourselves to God in prayer, the deepest reaches of our selves are opened to us (Ulanov, 1978, p.388).

This rescuing a sense of ourselves, the sorting out which gives us a glimpse of our essential self and takes us beyond our "own" sense of identity is God's grace helping our self develop spiritually. He can take us to new places which lead us to the sort of consolation or desolation described by Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises.**[] The abused and traumatized person needs to allow God lead her/him into these new places within herself; it is there the healing and growth take place. She cannot go there by herself, and she need not fear her old feelings, for God may turn her pain to consolation. We

work as if everything depended upon us and pray as if everything depended upon God. Then we allow God to do whatever he wills. When we receive movements touching the affections and emotions as gifts, we should not think that we ourselves have brought them about. The surprises are real images and feelings which reveal us to ourselves. At that time they may call for calm and courage not to run away from these sensual unprayerful and apparently unspiritual movements. Those are the places God's Holy Spirit takes us, and where, really, we need to go if we desire to know God and want to heal. Allow God to be God and to show one to oneself as Ulanov suggests; don't be afraid of the new interior experience! We invite God to be present in prayer, and when He shows up in some way, we immediately conclude it was from the evil spirit. What sort of trust is that? The Holy Spirit probes the depths of ourselves. Mary and Peter were afraid before the Spirit of God; Mary stood her ground and asked questions; Peter ran away but returned.

Healing in a Directed Retreat

My first involvement with someone going through spiritual healing occurred in the mid-seventies when I started giving directed retreats to religious women. The sister was an incest survivor. We'll call her "Maryann" and she was among my second group of retreatants. She was courageous to come to a retreat house to be directed by someone she had never met. People were not as revealing of their personal lives in the seventies as they can be today. TV celebrities and others had not revealed their childhood sexual abuse, it was still part of the family's and society's secret. The first meeting in retreat is meant to be routine, and this one was. I asked her if she had made a directed retreat before. She had. That was good. She had just completed the year teaching high school and was exhausted. I told her to rest and take it easy; one can hear God's Holy Spirit more clearly if one is relaxed and rested. I gave her some Biblical texts to read over if she felt like it. If she did that would be fine, and if she didn't, that too would be

fine. She left with an appointment for the following day.

Courageous Woman

When she returned the next day I was struck by how confident and relaxed she looked. She sat down and spontaneously began to tell her story. She had talked with God the Father, and He had approved her decision to share her past with me. She had consulted the Holy Spirit and Mary and both approved her decision. In my beginner's innocence I asked myself, "What is going on here?" What a novice director did not want was a retreatant with a psychiatric problem. She didn't have one, but as a child she had been sexually abused by her uncle. The abuse lasted several years and ended when she was in her early teens. She had liked her uncle when she was younger. He was fun and they would play games. The touching began in play, and then they had secrets. She began to be uncomfortable when he was around. Then she realized that this touching was wrong, but it was already too late. She wanted to tell her dad but knew that her dad would "kill" his brother if he knew what he had done. The abuse ended when her uncle left for military service

Good Retreat Meant Healing Support

As it turned out she did make a very good retreat. I listened mostly, but I was not completely passive. I asked some questions which I thought pertinent to her prayer as she recounted it to me. It was mostly a consoling week for her, and God felt very present and attentive. During this time she experienced him as close and intimate. Her prayer was such that she distinguished between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. She talked with the person she felt most comfortable with depending upon her need. She had difficulty with Jesus sometimes as he was a man. On occasion she spoke with Mary who understood her womanly nature. There were no images here, but she did have feelings and they were good. She was coming to know Jesus and trust him. He was a man and she had

experienced bad things with a man. The Holy Spirit was with her in a "spiritual" way. He moved her to trust, to risk, to respond to the graces she was being given. He consoled her and encouraged her when she was depressed. The Father was present to her as a strong supporter but in the background. His plan was to help her and she should allow this to happen through the comfort she received.

How is this healing? Her sense of consolation and support from God the Father was reflective of the love and constancy of her earthly father. The trust and courage she received from the Holy Spirit to approach Jesus gave her new confidence in herself and her relationship to men. She was being healed from feelings she was afraid to experience as she allowed Jesus to hold her hand. She was freed to learn that her bad experience with one man need not be true of all men. She is loved unconditionally by God through the Holy Spirit. The Three Persons are letting her know their ways of working. With Jesus she is beginning to feel loved, supported, and affirmed as a woman without being made to feel ashamed. As another woman, also a victim of sex abuse by a man, described her intimate encounter with Jesus: "It was clean." It was not dirtied by sex and she did not feel used. The experience is one of intimacy with God and with oneself. The woman had never allowed herself to be in this deep interior space. These women were at prayer alone in their room, and they felt loved, good, whole, clean. They were not embarrassed or ashamed of their sexuality or their feelings. The "dirtiness" of their abuse experience which caused their shame is being healed. They are able to feel the intimacy of the moment and it's okay!

MV



Real Talk About...Real

By Beth S.

When a child begins to have fears about a "boogie man," ghosts in the closet, monsters under the bed or the dark, where do those fears originate? Maybe they heard about scary things from other children. Perhaps they have seen a movie that scared them, read or heard a story that got their imagination working overtime. Or, maybe it comes from a sibling who is trying to torture their younger siblings with mind games as older ones can do. However the information was installed, the child may be convinced that they are in harm's way.

In the case of a child raised in a healthy functioning loving environment, these type of monsters are of course, not real. The darkness holds nothing harmful or menacing. None the less, some children are still terrified of the possibilities. In a nurturing, stable home, most childhood fears can be diminished by parents who take the time to lovingly calm the child and patiently prove to them that there are no monsters in the closet.

There is another type of scenario however...in which a parent or trusted adult may use fear or threats to keep the child from getting out of bed, or calling out for something they need by repeatedly telling the child that something harmful will happen to them if they don't do as they are told. Perhaps then the monsters become the child's adaptations of what is going on around them in an unhappy home. When adults in charge are not receptive to the needs of a child, or dismiss their fears, ignore them or worse, use them as ammunition to taunt and provoke the child, those fears may begin to extend out to other aspects in the child's life where eventually they might not feel safe anywhere or with anyone.

As those children become adults, some of the seemingly irrational fears can remain and can sometimes accelerate into something bigger and more vivid. Perhaps the fear adjusts

and grows with the adult, reshaping itself into something an adult imagination could maintain.

How many of us as adults still need to sleep with a light on somewhere or hear white noise to ease the tension? Some leave the TV or radio on until they fall asleep. How many of us have a soft pillow or blanket to hug onto when we sleep? Many adults are still terrified of thunder storms. Are these behaviors or needs leftovers from our childhood nightmares and anxieties?

Surely we as educated, mature thinking adults should no longer harbor the fears of our childhood. Shouldn't we have the understanding, knowledge and sense that these things are not real and be able to rationalize them away?

But what if we cannot always obtain a rational explanation? What if we cannot find the reasoning or defining of a time or incident that might have caused our fears, only the behaviors and angst that remain? Or, what if images, memories, flashbacks take our mind under siege, but cannot be verified or substantiated by anything that we believe happened in our life? Does the fear become any less real by not having a why or wherefor? Does the anxiety diminish as we try and tell ourselves "*this can't be real, why am I thinking and behaving this way?*" Is it possible to undo what is happening to us by just dismissing what it is we are experiencing? How do we attempt to justify the behaviors that just won't seem to stop?

For some of us who have grown and survived victimization of childhood ritualistic, sexual, mental, emotional abuse and trauma, fear becomes the dominant emotion that has presided over most of our lives. This fear seemed to be the bricks, mortar and foundation of learned behaviors that followed us into our adult lives. For us, the darkness seems to beckon and conspire with terror, the monsters under the bed, or in some cases, on it, were quite real

and the ghosts have taken up residence within us.

When my decision to journey into healing from a life bound by chains of the past began, my only chance as I saw it, was to find a qualified, knowledgeable compassionate therapist. For me, there were years I tested the trust, compassion, patience and ability of my therapist. After much work, she and I have grown into a very strong therapeutic alliance. Not to say that the trust has always remained solid, or that patience on either side has always stayed intact, or at times her methods have not been challenged. However, throughout it all, her compassion, honesty and consistency have stood vigilant and unwavering on her part.

At some point after trust was established, the sometimes torturous, most times gut wrenching process of revealing memories became paramount and unavoidable in the process of therapy. As I had been told by my therapist from the beginning of my healing, it became the "*hardest work I have ever done.*" She did not exaggerate or lie to me.

There were years of virtually turning my body inside out, placing all fragments of who I was onto an imagined table in front of me. I felt as if a tornado had pulled them in and scattered the pieces to the four winds. As years of therapy went by I slowly began to reclaim bits and pieces and tried to restructure them into a functioning being. After having gone through a total of three therapists, tens of thousands of dollars and a staggering sixteen years in therapy, I began to see the proverbial glimmer of light at the end of a very dark, dank seemingly endless tunnel.

However, what I did not anticipate was a sharp turn in the tunnel that I myself constructed. This new path was dug with tools of self doubt, self loathing, more fear and confusion.

My journey now took me down paths of disbelief in myself, my past

and my motives. I would lie awake at night having one anxiety attack after another believing that God and my parents were sitting in judgment of me. I felt that I had gone way beyond what the truths were about my past, concocting stories and images for the benefit of the attention it brought me. I was convincing myself that I had become addicted to therapy, getting accolades from my therapist, receiving a sense of comfort, calm and relief after having exhausted myself from the process. Out of this line of thinking came my decision to stop therapy. (This by the way was not the first time I had decided to stop therapy.) I was convinced it was the right thing to do. My therapist, spouse and those closest to me however, questioned the appropriateness of my decision. It didn't matter. I had made up my mind.

In the days after I had stopped going to therapy, feelings of self hate and shame grew tremendously. I was convinced I had created and conjured up false memories. To back up my theory, I began to go to false memory sites on the web. Things that I read only served to fuel an already burning out of control fire. I was sure that I had fallen into all of the pits and traps that these people were expressing. I began to comfort myself by trying to find out whose fault it was that all this had happened. After all, someone had to be the enemy. In my world of people either being perps or victims, someone had to be to blame for all the hell I was experiencing! Was I the enemy or was it my therapist? Never at any given time throughout those days did I ever consider the possibility that I was looking for answers to that question in all the wrong places.

As the weeks passed being outside the safe walls of my therapist's office, I tired to understand what was happening to me, and why. Why had things so suddenly become distorted and urgent and why was I beginning to contemplate putting an end to my life?

Perhaps my therapist was right. When I first explained to her these feelings of betrayal of self, she had mentioned the possibility that there was something within me that I had

buried very deep. Fear of revealing whatever it might be and having to face it could be causing me to bring back extreme measures of security, which could cloak itself as denial. There might also be another part of myself that stood vigilant in the guise of a protector in order that information that might be seen as harmful, not get exposed. Certainly quitting therapy would provide the ultimate way of not having to reveal the pain. Albeit the pain could very possibly find a way to reveal itself in other ways that would not be nearly as controlled as in a therapeutic environment.

All of this being mulled over, I still felt the gnawing sense that the things that are coming into my mind as actual events in my life, were not real. That being said, I started playing "devils' advocate" with myself. So what if I could not always obtain a rational explanation or find reasoning or a defining time or incident that might have caused my fears? What if my memories could not be verified or substantiated? Does that make my fear any less real? I would have to answer by saying...No. The fear was no less real.

After years of working with a woman I had finally put my trust in, would I allow an unsubstantiated series of thoughts and conjectures put an abrupt end to the work that might very well save my life? Should the energy I used toward my healing now be exhausted on trying to tell whether or not my fear was justified? Even if some of the details of my memories were not crystal clear, something, somewhere must have happened to me as a child to create the broken adult I had become. To quote the well known news anchor man, Dan Rather . . . *"if it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck . . . you can be reasonably sure you've got a duck."*

Now the burning question I had been using all my energy to ignore was, who then was responsible? The answer to that would be the map to finding my way out of the tunnel.

Perhaps I had been too busy trying to weed out what was real and what wasn't, when the reality was, what I needed to be doing was keep my eyes

fixed on what was in front of me and go out and claim it as mine.

The other question that remained for me now was, did I believe I was ready to leave therapy and find my own way out of the tunnel? Or, could it be that by going back to therapy, asking and accepting help from my therapist, would prove to be the healthier, more courageous choice and an indicator that I was truly getting stronger than my fears.

As I write this, therapy continues to be the hardest work I've ever done, but with the greatest rewards.

MV

Whose Map Do You Follow?

Has someone written your life's script? Did they give you, long ago, a paper? With your life's directions scrawled across the lines with their roads and goals for you?

Do you step aside from your own spirit's journey to allow their map to guide you?

Do you pack your carrying case with their words and baggage? Do you point your compass in the direction they pointed you in?

Or should you step off their scripted path, brave the brambles and the thorns and forge your own life's road? And do you add your own possessions to the suitcase you carry inside your being? and walk in the way that you meant for yourself in victory of the here and now.

By Kathy A.

MV

Inside or Outside: It's All the Same

E. Annie G.

I remember while being eight months pregnant, a lady I did not know coming up to me and saying, "Enjoy this time while you can, because when the baby comes things will never be the same." How right she was! Having children changed everything. In my ignorance I thought after my baby was born things would go back to normal; in other words back to the way things were before I was pregnant. There is a kind of normal that follows after the birth of a child; it's just different than before. All of a sudden this new little life is put in your arms and you instinctively know your life really will never be the same.

My husband and I were blessed with five children; the oldest three years and nine months when the youngest was born (there is a set of twins in there). Having children so close in age brought special challenges but also unique opportunities. On the one hand an issue of great concern for us was how to deal with sibling rivalry; while on the other hand we knew our children would learn how to share, how to get along with others, and how to become assertive.

In terms of sibling rivalry we did our best to never compare one of our kids to another. When our oldest was about eight years old it was clear that she had a talent for dancing. When she would say, "Look at me Mommy!" I wouldn't say, "You are a good dancer Eileen," because in doing so it would imply to the others that they were not as good. Instead I would say "You look like you're having a lot of fun Eileen." Then as the others would chime in with their "look at me's" I could remark on how much fun each of them was having because everyone can have fun. Then when tucking Eileen in at night I might tell her what a terrific dancer she was.

As the kids got older we celebrated their differences, for each had their own unique talents. Celebrating these differences greatly enriched our family life.

I was diagnosed with DID two years

ago. To say the last few years have been difficult is an understatement. I'm finally making some progress though, because I've finally accepted that I really have DID.

Over the past few months my therapists and I have been working on my communication with my parts, among other things. It is getting easier. I spend between an hour and an hour and a half each day talking and listening to my parts. I have many child parts that I take care of. As our relationships have deepened I find myself actually parenting them.

What I have learned is that parenting my parts is exactly the same as parenting my outside children. Even though I parent my inside children the same as my outside children, I find it much more difficult to parent my parts because of the fact that each holds the memories of unspeakable traumas. They are so thirsty for love, and affection, and compassion, and safety. They are so broken sometimes I wonder if they will ever be whole again. My heart aches for them. And so I hold them and listen to them, and kiss them, and really just love them. I explain that the bad things that occurred happened a long, long time ago. I remind them that it is 2007 and that they are very safe.

Although I spend a lot of my time nurturing my child parts, there are certainly times when I need to step in and be firm because my kids must learn that there are consequences to their actions. This is not so much of a problem with the little ones as it is with my teenage parts. They push the limits. They get angry. They talk back. They lash out, and at times they are defiant. Dealing with them isn't easy, just as it wasn't easy with my outside children. It's like the "terrible twos" all over again, except this time instead of throwing a temper tantrum on the floor, they use words, and somehow they know exactly the right thing to say to cause the most pain. Sometimes it's very hard to remain both calm and firm. Setting

limits and sticking to them is difficult because of their "teenage logic." They know how to push my buttons. I've learned to not get sucked in to those conversations because they go nowhere. I take solace in knowing these stormy times will eventually pass.

I find spending time with all of my child parts to be just as emotionally draining as the time I spent raising my outside children. It's impossible for me to really be there for my parts in an intimate way without feeling their pain. Sometimes after speaking with them I can't do much of anything because I'm so tired, worn out, and emotionally drained. In the past I knew I needed to take some time for myself but I couldn't seem to do it because I felt so selfish. Now I know that it's crucial that I take care of myself because if I don't how will I be able to be there for my parts when they need me?

All in all, I find parenting to be one of the greatest joys of my life. I learned a long time ago that I could either complain about the difficult aspects of their growing up (like having four in diapers), or I could put those things in perspective and instead focus on the wonder of each and every day. To me everyday is sacred, because once a day is gone, it's gone forever. So instead of complaining and stewing about how messy the house is or how dirty the kids are after playing outside, I choose instead to watch them and delight in their giggles, laughter, and unabashed joy.

How lucky I am. How many people get the opportunity to parent all over again, let alone with the insight and wisdom they gleaned from the first time around? I wouldn't trade this time with my inside children for anything in the world. Eventually we'll integrate, and that will be wonderful, but so is the time right now. I'm the luckiest person in the world with so many children to love, and it makes no difference whether they're inside or out.

Keepers Learn That It Really is OK to Say NO

By Keepers

This afternoon, one of keeper's relatives contacted us with a request that we place a call to our brother (the one with the alcohol addiction and is in a program to help him begin some sort of recovery). Like a dutiful big sister, Ellen (one of our alters) agreed to make the call at the allotted time.

Almost immediately, our system became overwhelmed with feeling of fear and trepidation. And, John Michael's mood was seriously altered when he realized that this call would actually be made. John Michael and keepers waited out the afternoon until 5:30 rolled around. Then, Ellen went to the phone and dialed the number on the post it note where she had jotted it down. On the other end of the line was keeper's little brother—who is now in his fifties. The question he put before us was: *Could he move back in here at KeepersKorner and live for a while because the program he is in does not suit his needs.*

As he put this dreaded request before us, keepers could feel our stomach begin to turn and our knees begin to knock together. We knew that keepers could not say *no* to one of our siblings. For that reason alone, keepers told our brother we would talk it over with our John Michael and let him know our decision later this evening.

After hanging up, the first thing keepers did was make two phone calls to our experts on alcoholism (both of whom know our brother's story well). Each of these two people told keepers that it is best for everyone if we tell our brother *NO* and either allow someone else to rescue him or force him to remain in the program that was chosen for his recovery.

Then, after a long talk with our John Michael, the decision was made to tell our brother he could not move back in here and that JM would be the one to place the call telling him that.

The truth is that there are six different people on this earth that keepers have always had trouble saying *NO* to. Not because we feared these people would not love keepers. We already knew that not one of them felt an ounce of caring for any keeper but we still felt like keepers needed to live up to our responsibility to them in spite of that fact.

These are people that keepers have been taking care of for the whole of our lives. So much so that each one of these people fully expects keepers to twist and turn ourselves to satisfy their every whim. But each one, also, turns right back to treating keepers like garbage once he/she has gotten what is being asked of keepers.

To keepers, being big sister meant that it was up to us to always do the giving and the caring for our siblings. And, being mom meant that it was our responsibility to please and to give without ever asking for anything in return. In fact, it was only to satisfy a demand made by our youngest daughter that the door was ever opened on allowing our siblings back into our lives. Keepers knew it was the wrong thing to do. That is why our siblings had been out of our lives for the last twenty years. But—when our daughter told keepers how much it would mean to her to have her estranged aunt and uncles in attendance at her wedding—keepers opened the door on those relationships and tried our best to give her what she wanted so badly.

Actually, tonight begins a new era for all keepers. It begins the time in our lives when keepers know and understand that it really is ok to say *NO* to those people who only intend to use and drain us of all we have to give.

We have made the decision to say *NO* in this one instance. Still, our John Michael loves us. Our brother still loves us. Pastor loves us. In fact, each one stands beside us in our saying *NO*. For keepers, this means

that we can say *NO* and our world will still go on without missing a beat. The relationships where keepers are loved and valued are just as strong after our saying *NO* as they were before. Keepers only gained strength and self-esteem by saying *NO* in a situation where that word was most appropriate. It has taken keepers almost 60 years to learn that it really is ok to say *NO* when we need to. That is not a lesson keepers will ever forget.

To be honest, keepers are happiest when we are giving to those we love. There have been times when it made us happy to share with our brothers and sisters. There have been many times when it made us happy to be giving as mothers and especially as grandmothers. But even in the roles where keepers have always been caretakers there is a limit on what it is reasonable to ask of us and there is a point where our giving hearts have been completely depleted. Since none of these people have ever bothered to replenish our giving spirits, keepers finally reached the point where we have absolutely nothing more to give.

Somehow, that should make keepers very sad because it means these people put no value at all on who keepers are. But instead of sadness a feeling of freedom followed our saying *NO* this evening. What an amazing thing it is for keepers to finally feel that freedom!

For keepers, Saturday July 21, 2007 is the day that keepers can celebrate as the day we finally knew *that it really is ok to say NO!* This day will always mean so much to our system because we have struggled our whole lives to get here.

peace and blessings.

keepers

Meditations on Medications

By Jennifer J.

I didn't have a problem with taking meds for depression until about 2002. At that time I was taking Tegretol, Effexor, Serzone (Nefazodone), and I think Seroquel.

I understood they were helpful and necessary for me to have any quality in my life. I did not like taking so many pills. At first it was not a big deal, in fact I prided myself on the fact that I could take so many pills at once. I had a history of overdosing, so it seemed almost natural in a weird kind of way.

As time went on, I got more meds on board. I started taking Synthroid as an adjunct for the depression. My doctor informed me that there is a belief that an unknown chemical produced by the thyroid can contribute to depression. If the thyroid is turned off by taking the synthetic type, this chemical cannot be produced. (Note: This is not the same as hypothyroidism where the body doesn't produce enough hormone and you become depressed.)

Sometime after that, I was in a day hospital and was prescribed Lamictal. The doc there said it would make the "lows" not so low. Finally, a couple of years ago, I was prescribed Klonopin for anxiety. I also took blood pressure and cholesterol meds.

After six months of this regimen I got tired of taking my meds. I would carelessly miss doses here and there and wasn't even sure if I had taken them or not. My neighbor pointed out to me that she could always tell when I was missing meds because I would go into crisis. She suggested a weekly med box. So, that's what I did.

Every Sunday, more or less, I would fill up my med box for the week. It was always confusing though because I was never sure if I should take the dose for the day I filled the box from the box or from the bottle. I had this other great plan when I didn't feel like

setting up my med box. I simply turned the bottles upside down when I took them. Unfortunately, if I forgot to turn everything back over I still didn't know if I'd taken it or not. I used those two methods for maybe a year or more.

I had problems remembering to take my meds with me if I went to spend the weekend with my parents. They live about an hour away so it's not easy to run back home and get them. Twice I decided to skip my meds because I forgot them. Once I took everything in the house that had a sleep property to it. I took cough syrup, pain killers, Tylenol PM. I didn't sleep. I had this happen again to me recently, but fortunately I had my Seroquel and Klonopin so I could sleep.

I have begun to understand the cliché that taking medicine for mental health is no different than taking insulin for diabetes. Some time ago I lost my Klonopin during my move and had some withdrawal symptoms – my hands and feet were numb, like they were "falling asleep." My anxiety was palpable. Of course, no one wanted to give me the drug because it is a controlled substance. So I went without. Then one weekend I was at my mom's house and I didn't have my Effexor. I was having major withdrawal symptoms as my son drove me home at the end of the weekend. I was shaking so badly that I could barely hold the glass of water to take my medicine. I found out later that Effexor goes out of your system fairly quickly, about 36 hours at the most. When you have no drug your body goes into withdrawal. Fortunately, this does not happen with all psychiatric medications. You can ask your doctor how long a drug stays in your system.

Back in December last year I became intensely suicidal. I had just lost my insurance and didn't know how I was going to pay for my meds.

I ordered my Seroquel online and it was \$700. My meds were going to cost me over \$3,000 a month. I knew there was not a way for me to pay that and I also knew that if I didn't take my meds I would kill myself. I ended up at the Crisis Center at a hospital here. They gave me meds for the month and set me up at a clinic to get my meds regularly. Each visit cost me \$90, but I did get my meds free.

I had no idea what resources were available to me. Once I entered the system in a crisis I found out there were lots of groups that could help. I have discovered though, that taking my meds is the absolute necessity for me to live. Just like the diabetic.

I am not a doctor so I can't really tell you anything more than how I coped with my own medication issues. I have made the choice for myself to take my meds as prescribed. I am still learning to get the refill requests in on time. I was depressed and suicidal on and off from age 13 to 33. Effexor and Tegretol made me feel better than I had in 20 years.

I know some people are reluctant to take psychiatric medicines. Some of this may be from the stigma associated with mental illnesses or pressure from "friends" or family to "Just pull yourself up by your boot straps." Also some people may be in denial or even may even be unaware that they are depressed and it is treatable.

I just moved to a new apartment and things are still a bit chaotic. With that and my propensity to forget where things have been placed, getting all my meds taken can sometimes be a challenge. I lost a prescription for my Nefazodone and was running out. I began to feel the change right away.

This morning I was feeling suicidal and couldn't stop crying. I had an appointment with my case worker. She got my prescription written for me for my Nefazodone.

So, now I know without a shred of doubt that I must take my medicines as prescribed with no deviation. I think it would be very sad if I had hurt myself, because my mood was not under control. I could have killed myself. I wonder how many others have experienced the same thing and didn't survive it?

Trauma and its effects are treatable with therapy and sometimes meds. Even if we have lost one person to suicide when they could have been treated, this is too many.

It might sound trite and sometimes it's hard for even me to believe, but there is always hope. I have an affirmation I made. There is a picture of hands holding a little plant. Underneath the picture I wrote: I have the courage to hold on to hope. I pray you will too.

jjones © 10.2007

MV

Colouring

when I colour
like a four year old
with bright, sticky
wax crayons
getting lost
as the colours mix
and clash, swimming
in light and dark
planned or random
patterns in the safety
of a colouring book
or courageously
consummating
a lonely white page
it's not just comfort...

it's connecting
with her desire to survive
her willingness to believe
despite everything

being alive can be
wonderful.

By Kirsty Winterbourne

MV



The Legend of the "Fairly-Good Mother"

(This is the introduction to a forthcoming book)

If we are very lucky we will have in our lives women who, though not "angels," are always there for us in our greatest need.

Their wings may be store bought, and their wands may be duct-taped, but their hearts are real and they wear them on the outside of their sometimes very BIG dresses.

Though not necessarily related to us, they love us truly and always want what is best for us.

And they will tell us what that is even when we don't want to hear it!

Because they love us, they refuse to simply say what we want to hear; because they are only human, they may get it wrong or say it too strongly.

But we can be sure that what they say and do is always out of love and concern for us.

They are our "Fairly-Good Mothers."

By Mona V.

MV

Soul Child

You took up residence around my wounded soul
burying your barbed spikes into the recesses of my mind
Just when I thought I was free to move forward,
towards the outstretched hand of love.
You drew off each other and darkness engulfed my sight and hearing
You beat up my mind with cruel intimidation
and violent mockery.
The barricade erect. I became lost again,
within the incessant cruelty of your power.
My heart aches to be free from your prison walls,
that stretch high above me.
a drowning scream reverberates round and round,
yet is never heard.
A cry deep within the chasm of my soul.
Your sentries hold on tighter and tighter until pain
encompasses my physical being.
Frantically, I struggle to be rid of the tormenting words.
Shackles that hold my soul child captive
Words spoken into my hearing, so twisted, that my heart bleeds,
and my mind recoils in agony.
Enmeshed with more that were supposed to bring life,
healing, comfort.
Used to maim, they brought their vile destruction.
Yet I know I've glimpsed a safe place,
so I struggle to stretch, to reach out.
Even with the very sinews of my fingertips, because once contact is made. I can escape this vile place.
The one who awaits, who holds the answer, the key
to my dungeon has made a way.
Oh...how I long to reach the embrace of tender love
and be comforted.
I struggle to speak, getting closer and closer.
but the sentries stand up together issuing confusion out of every thought.

The chains get tighter and tighter,
until all meaningful sound is silenced.
I collapse in futility, whilst my soul child descends into the jaws of the hungry abyss.
She sees you getting further and further away,
She falls, crying "help me, help me, help me," from soundless lips.
She's glimpsed the helper and senses if she could but reach you
Somehow make herself heard, maybe she'd be safe,
and the sentries would leave, taking their cruel spikes out of the trenches.
Instead of the darkness crowding the path, forming the tangled maze,
There may be hope that she could come through into the light
Where you stand, and taking your hand, find courage to speak.
She could speak and sound be heard.
She could run through fields, knowing a friend is there.
But she fears her voice. It brought violent shame,
Humiliation, rejection and pain, so much pain.
She would need to know you're on her side and you would protect
Her wounds from the sentries,
Who, given new food, would once again try to sneak in and rebuild their tortuous walls.
Can you reassure the soul child?
She's so frightened.
Terror wipes out all sound and only nothingness brings relief.
Silence brings its own peace, but it's a lonely place.
Some feelings cannot find words to express them; they are inadequate.
Can you reassure the soul child?
She wants to come home.

By N Evans

MV



You Asked Me

You asked me what I want
And I couldn't say *feel*
You asked me what I wanted to do for fun
and I couldn't say anyways
You asked me
Got an angel in my heart
Traveling to be set free
Cause you could see

That I have a plate full of wishes
A magic 8 ball, a mystery board,
and a light of gold
No instructions for feelings
Loss of time or lost in your senses
Jumping over the painted fences
It's not your fault

You ask me and I will say

From millions to mansions
From minimum wage to the stage
It does not matter
We all climb the ladder

You ask me and I will tell

From what I didn't know then
I do know now
Paper airplanes, paper dolls, and paper cards
Making wishes on a magic star

You ask me what I want
I will say anyways
Cause I have an angel in my pocket
Traveling along with me

From learning to feel my feet
touch the ground
From learning to hear sound
From surrounding to surrendering
My meaning that longs to heal
You ask me I will say anyways

By DS

MV



Oh Happy Day!
a collage by Denise F.

BOOKS

Moon Shadows: Stories of Trauma & Recovery

Edited by Colin A. Ross, MD. © 2007
Published by Manitou Communications, Inc., 1701 Gateway, Suite 349, Richardson, TX 75080 (800) 572-9588. www.rossinst.com \$22.95 375 pgs Paperback.

If you've ever wondered what takes place in mental health hospitalization, or what it takes to "recover" from a serious trauma history, this is a book worth reading. Dr. Ross, whose treatment methods are used at both Timberlawn and Del Amo hospitals, has gathered 18 very different stories from people who have personally experienced trauma therapy or, in one case, sought it unsuccessfully, for a loved one.

Each chapter was prepared by a different recovering person, with only minor edits by Dr. Ross. The reports are quite diverse; they don't always praise the therapy process, therapists or hospitals. Dr. Ross himself gets a few elbow-nudges from former patients, who express mild-to-moderate complaints about different aspects of treatment. (Apparently even a prominent therapist is human... imagine that!)

The writers don't sugar-coat their experience. All were hospitalized at some point, so there are reports of

suicidality, and serious dysfunction. But despite the struggle of recovery, there's a wealth of positive, heartening encouragement here. While some traumas may be described in fairly-graphic detail, the steps to "getting-better" are covered thoroughly, as well. Reports of the integration process, and the post-recovery years, show how healing occurs and can transform a sad, depressed, dysfunctional person into a healthy, functioning person.

Not every story is a total-success-story, though. Some of the writers are still engaged in the recovery process, and some have had multiple setbacks. But the strength and courage of everyone writing in this book shines through the pages. It is a remarkable testament to the resilience of those who are determined to live healthy lives, and the therapists who help them achieve their goals. Survivors who want to recover should read this book.

Helping Abused and Traumatized Children: Integrating Directive and Nondirective Approaches

By Eliana Gil, PhD. © 2006. Published by Guilford Publications, 72 Spring St., New York, NY 10012. 212-431-9800. www.guilford.com 234 pgs plus references. \$30. Hardback.

Dr. Gil has been helping sexually abused children and their families for over 30 years, and has written extensively on this topic. She is presently Director of Clinical Services for Childhelp, Inc. in Fairfax, Virginia, and conducts summer training programs through her Starbright Training Institute.

This particular book is aimed at professionals, but I believe that supportive parents of traumatized children could appreciate much of it as well. Dr. Gil is a clear and cogent writer, as she stresses the importance of employing a variety of approaches when working with abused children.

From initial assessment to cognitive/behavioral work, various art forms, play therapy, sand tray therapy and more, she describes appropriate ways to partner with children who have suffered injury and loss of trust.

The last half of this book is devoted to detailed case studies that show how the different methods are applied, with success. By combining different treatment modalities, Dr. Gil helps children to express painful or difficult feelings in an atmosphere of compassion. This book is a satisfying and hopeful guide for anyone living or working with abused children.

— Lynn W.

Thank You Again!

Once more, YOU, the wonderful readers of MV, have shared your thoughts, drawings, heart-felt poems and more to help each other heal. It is always a joy to prepare each issue.

Please keep sharing!

- Lynn W., Editor

February 2008

Managing symptoms of Dissociation & PTSD. What recovery means to you. ART: Yourself in recovery

April 2008

Finding therapy that Works. Physical healing. ART: Therapy in Action

June 2008

What you do for fun. Expanding life outside therapy. ART: Cartoon Festival



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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