

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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In this issue:

Finding Therapy That Works Physical Healing ...and more



We Are Your Mind

We're here inside of you
Each of us separate and
individual
Yet, we share a body
We share a past
Locked away for so long
We long to be free
We hold you up
We take care of you when you
disappear
We are your mind
We are your past
Now coming forward to be your
present
We are young and old
Angry and sad
Terrified and fighting
Fighting to keep you afloat
We are darkness and light
Despair and hope
Ignorance and enlightenment
Rebellious if denied access
Weak and strong
Let us help you
Open your mind and recognize
us
We share a body
We are your mind

By JL et al

MV

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Lost in Plain Sight

By Pat M.

It has been over two years since my last dissociative episode. I call it an episode because it reminds me of a movie about someone else's life. But of course it's not. It's *my* life. Today I begin again. It's time to look forward and leave my childhood behind.

After the initial realization that I suffer from a dissociative disorder, the pain and the suffering from long ago had to be felt and processed. This two year period had its ups and downs. I didn't know a person could feel so much pain and live through it. But I have. Some days and nights were unbearable and I had to pray continually to get through to the next day. It's difficult to explain why the thought of killing myself was easier than facing the pain of sexual abuse. I needed God to hold me and make all of it disappear. He has done that through life affirming ways. I made a promise to always choose life, even during the darkest hours. This is a promise that God expects me to keep.

I have been in therapy for twenty five months. I have switched therapists a few times when I thought I needed something different. Talking about abuse, whether it's emotional, physical, or sexual, takes a toll on even the best of counselors. I like feeling safe and protected and cared for by the same person, but when those feelings diminish for me, I choose to talk with another person that may offer new ideas on how to overcome such pain. The therapist I now go to is also a Christian. This is very important to me because my spirituality has become my lifeline. I've heard of people saying they've lived on faith alone, but this concept wasn't believable to me. I now know the depths of darkness where the only thing you trust is God and that trust saved me. He sent wonderful people to help me and continues to believe in me.

I remember quite a lot from my childhood. My original family chooses not to talk with me about anything, good or bad. They expect me to take

care of myself, just like when I was little. In a way, I feel abandoned all over again. But this time through, I have a husband, children, and friends that are willing to share my stories and help me learn to put them away.

I was abused starting at age seven. Each night before bed, I would get a terrible feeling of dread. The light from the hallway streamed into my bedroom and I would stare at it for the longest time, hoping to make it through to the morning with the light still shining on me. Nothing bad could happen if there was light. But, after a while, my eyes would shut and I was plunged into darkness.

It was during this period of my life that I became dissociative. I didn't feel anything when it was dark, and then I didn't feel anything when it was light. I found a place inside where no one could hurt me and where no one could ever find me again. I survived a terrible childhood because I dissociated.

I have learned to be proud of this instead of being ashamed that I might be mentally ill. I am not. I am strong. I made it through. It's time for my original family to share in what happened to me. But, sadly, they will not.

I have changed dramatically in this period of time. I was invisible and silent. I had no friends and trusted no one. I have started to change this. I have joined a few groups at church where the people know of my past. I am working and doing my job. To me, nothing about me is the same. My brain is fractured and nothing goes together quite right. My memories are in there but I can't seem to get at them. I had complete amnesia for the first two years, but now, I am remembering some of my childhood. I have no recollection of the years with my husband and my children. I kept this a secret until I could no longer handle the stress of living with a stranger. I cried as I told each one of them. My husband embraced me and is kind and loving.

He isn't going anywhere and I have vowed to do the same. It is easy for me to run away. That's what I do best. But, I can't do that to myself again. I must stay and work through this and find a way back to my family. Sharing my secret with them has helped tremendously. I shared this information with people I work with, also. The more people that know what I'm going through, the more support I have to get through this last phase of healing.

My therapist and I have decided to concentrate our efforts on the present and my future. Yes, I have a future. I'm learning what to do with feelings. This is very new for me. Life is confusing and it hurts, at times. I am asking those around me to clarify their words and actions so I understand fully what they mean. I get the wrong message often and the I get too upset for any situation. I have much to learn, but the people around me are good, loving souls, that will continue to care for me until I can stand on my own. I do not know when that will be, but I am working towards that goal. One day, I may be independent, but I will never be alone. God is with me. This is the truth of my life. This has always been the truth. This one thing I know for sure.

As I look back, I remember the overwhelming pain of a life lost. When this first came to light, I was unable to handle anything. I had emotional seizures and convulsions for over ten months while I learned to deal with this nightmare. I have been depressed, manic, suicidal, lost, and through it all, I always believed that I am a good, loving person that was in the wrong family. They didn't deserve me and I didn't deserve the abuse. This cannot be changed but I can change my life. I now have an opportunity to speak about child abuse and show others how God works His miracles in everyday people. I am a miracle. I have been blessed with a new chance to be happy. The past is right where it should be. My original family can't

hurt me anymore because I have done the work to become stronger.

The joy of life comes to me in small things such as the way a child laughs or the way the clouds float across a blue sky. It doesn't take much to bring a smile to my face. I am finally free from my past and I am free to be happy. I have lived a lifetime in a very sort amount of time. I have lost and gained pieces of myself. Through it all, I've tried to keep my sense of humor and find positive things at every turn. Life is for the living, and I plan on doing just that. I am finally becoming the person I've always wanted to be.

MV

Spider at the Top

I watch the web woven
woven around others that I cannot
heal
that mind control keeps such as me
from ever gaining the light

web woven around me
of incessant triggering, harassment
destroying every move I make to
freedom
separating me from the therapy
I need to heal

I watch the web woven
subtle disinformation in every media
to flesh out the lie
that such as I are programmed to
eternal self-inflicted hell

web woven around me
infiltrators with two mouths,
four hands
one face for others, one for me.

I watch the web woven
that from a healing multiple I am
becoming a paranoid schizophrenic

web woven around me to alienate me
from every source of support
to cough out my life in stranger
B & Bs

but I will tear the web apart
and write the truth for all the world to
know

By Kate Evans

MV

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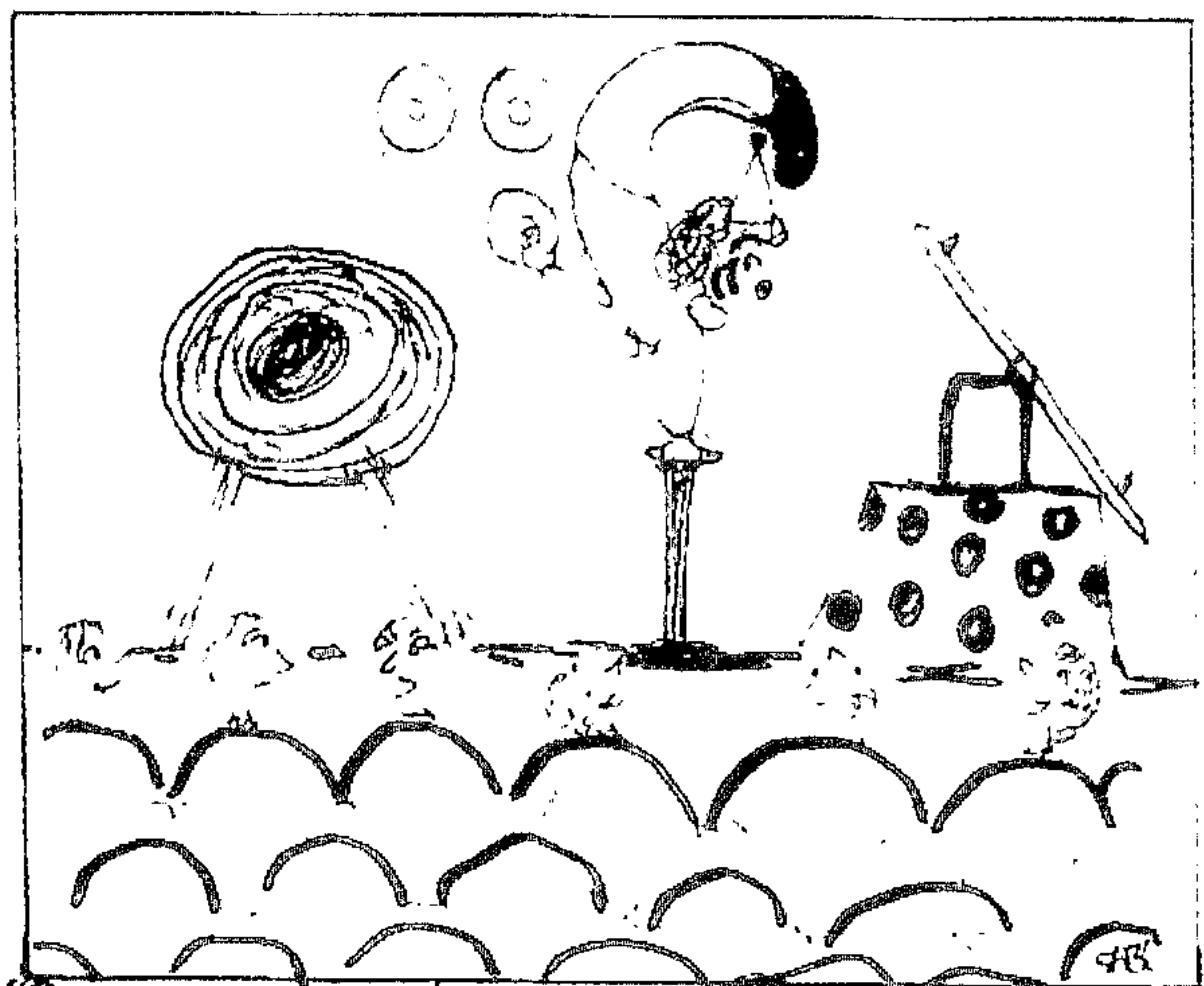
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"Sure the act looks impressive. But she's a multiple. She's just being herself #5."

Finding Therapy that Works!

By Jane

My favourite day of the week is Tuesday! Why? Firstly, because there isn't anyone in it. I don't have to share my living space, so I don't 'lose' myself to anyone else. This is what usually happens as soon as another enters my space. It is an automatic response, a defense mechanism, a learned pattern of behavior. The logic being that if I can't be 'seen' then I can't be damaged in any way. Much less, if I am hurt, I won't respond in a negative way, thereby leaving myself open to further rejection. So, today, I don't have to go anywhere, fulfill any domestic or family duties, or do anything at all, if I so wish. It is 'my' day, to be lived as I so choose. In this empty space I can find 'me'.

The second reason for Tuesday being special is because my therapist's presence is still fresh in my memory from my visit to her the previous day, and that influence calms me enough to see 'reality' for what it is, as opposed to the reality that exists, often, only in my mind. The work we are doing together has the capacity to move me into a different space, one where I can trust, believe in myself, and have faith in a future. It is the place in which I can grow strong. It is the place where I can grow up. It is the place where I can feel, and expel, all the hurt and suffering that has been stored inside me for many years. It is also the place where I learn about life, about people, and how to manage myself in the world. But I did not come by this relationship easily. It was as a result of a hard won experience with a previous, abusive therapist.

For the first time in my life I am beginning to experience feeling real for short periods of time. I am not focused on illness or consumed by symptoms of that illness. Instead I am hurting, really hurting! Some days I hurt so badly that I become overwhelmed. I can't move, much less speak and cooperate in the tasks of

daily living. But I am being and feeling real—the damaged and hurt individual that I am. This is a new and often perplexing experience for me and quite different from the dissociation I use to 'separate' myself from both my painful past and often difficult present.

My disorder initially came into being as a survival mechanism, used readily and rapidly to separate myself from my 'smother' mother. Initially it was my way of gaining some personal, safe space. But it also became my prison. I have lived in it for many years. I have had periods of 'day release' and some 'extended leave' but I have never experienced freedom for any real length of time, not long enough anyway to make it my own. But as a result of the work I am doing with my present therapist, I have at long last gained insight and understanding into my condition and the behavior which stems from it.

Like others who suffer from dissociation, I have spent many years in the mental health system trying desperately to recover from whatever it was, and still is to some extent, that was ailing me at any given time: depression, anxiety, agoraphobia, obsessive/compulsive disorder, atypical grief, self destructive behaviors, and extreme problems with attachment and relationship issues. I expect that by now readers will have identified with some or all of those symptoms?

Their origins stem from the fact that I am terrified of people and what they might do to me. I still 'relate' to myself and others as if I were/am that defenseless, abused child! As a result of my lack of boundaries, others can and sometimes do contribute, perpetuate and accelerate my distress in the present, as a byproduct of my pre-existing condition. That is why I can only really know who I am when I spend time alone.

My treatment in the past has always been based, unknowingly to me at the time, on my offering myself up, like a

lamb to the slaughter. Others would impose their thinking on me and I would assimilate it without regard, and then 'act it out' in order to remain safe. This behavior was a consequence of my still being psychologically, symbiotically enmeshed with my mother, even though she has been dead for many years. I was reexperiencing, still transferring those early unconscious psychological mechanisms onto the 'other', whoever they happened to be.

My Damascus moment came with the conscious realization of what I was doing. But I only learned this as a result of my relationship with my present therapist. Eureka! She had observed the difficulty she found trying to work with me, as she couldn't experience me as having a sense of self at all, and therefore she couldn't experience herself as separate from me. Initially she had to make the commitment to enter into a relationship with me, in order to 'find me'. This 'relationship' has proved to be the basis of all the pursuing work we have done together. It is a truly, shared experience.

Only now do I understand why so many professionals, whom I had called upon in the past, had never been able to help me in my distress. I am inclined to believe that it is as a result of their not understanding the necessity of building a relationship before any work can begin. The dictionary describes a relationship as the dealings and feelings which exist between people, an emotional affair, and/or the connection between two things. I doubt that it is possible to work with dissociative sufferers outside of a relationship, as getting to know the 'other', sometimes of which there are many, must involve doing so in relation to the self.

I am now aware that I was never 'seen' as a person by members of the medical profession, because they had failed to look, listen and learn, and thereby acknowledge me. They were

more focused on themselves, their knowledge, their diagnosis, and their treatment plan. There was never any real connection between us. Medicine is, in and of itself, a hierarchical system, in which the practitioner holds the power, and practices on the patient, a passive recipient. However, at that time I was not aware of my behavior, much less theirs. Smother mother had done an excellent job by rendering me powerless in the hands of authority. Added to that is the fact that I, like many other dissociatives, often function without an emotional register, so assessing people's behavior can be an onerous task indeed. We don't know who we are, much less the 'other'.

I have spent much of my life as an automaton. But I am changing. Slowly I am experiencing the growth of internal strength which is forcing a turnaround. I struggle immeasurably with my symptoms; they have such a grip on me and the 'letting go' is difficult, to say the least. But this relationship with my present therapist and the work we are doing together has begun to change that, although it is a very slow process.

I am beginning to understand that there are many different 'working models' used in therapy. This is usually determined by the school of thought used by the training organization. But I suspect that the therapist's personality will sometimes influence, interpret and define these theories in different ways. Even if I had understood all of this intellectually before entering into any treatment, I still would not have been in a position to make any kind of real professional 'judgment' because I was extremely dissociated. I was only ever able to judge the practice of the 'other' by the recognition that my 'illness' had not abated and there wasn't any improvement in my 'condition'.

Not so now. What I have learned and understood is that my treatment has had to be very exacting and tailored to my individual needs. This has only been possible because my therapist has taken the time and energy to try to get to know me, and the many 'facets' of self which I display. She was not looking for a

quick fix, nor did she need to boost her ego by finding a quick 'cure'. We have worked together tirelessly, to find the original source of my pain. My many symptoms act as 'symbols' which hold meaning for the unacknowledged and repressed pain of my childhood. They are a physical manifestation of my distress, both past and present.

My therapist now works with me on many different levels. She is committed to theories based on early childhood development, and recently I have become aware that she often uses an 'early years' educative approach, in order to reach me. This process is most often based on first hand experience, which in terms of a relationship means me learning about me, through the medium of my relationship with her.

Strangely, I was, by profession, an early years educator, yet not once did I ever think of applying those same 'educational' theories to my own situation. I suppose that is because I didn't see, much less acknowledge, the small disturbed child/children, who were hiding 'inside' of me. Instead I developed amazing empathy and insight into the disturbed children 'outside' of me. In analytical terms this behavior might be identified as a 'projection' on my part, an unconscious struggle to understand and heal myself.

The primary needs of all disturbed children can only be addressed through love, care, patience, positive attention and understanding. Any educative or healing experience will only occur as a result of this. I am reminded of the wonderful work of the late John Bowlby, whose theories I studied as a student. Strangely, but appropriately, I believe that these same virtues are the necessary prerequisites for a successful, working therapeutic relationship. The therapist, like the early years facilitator, provides, observes, interprets, guides, and informs when and where necessary.

Today, as in the past, many professionals, both within the teaching establishment and psychiatric medicine, still tend to scoff at this approach, preferring instead to use an authoritarian dogma. Doctors are not

prone to understanding their patients, let alone encouraging them to relive their past experiences, and to learn from them. This has to be the work of good, sound therapy, and the therapist, like the early years educator, knows this essential truth. We are 'kidults', and damaged ones at that. Many of us who enter therapy are, in some instances, those same disturbed children who did not experience empathy and understanding in the classroom. How many dissociatives can recall the 'misguided management' they received in school, I wonder?

It is the work of the therapist, like that of the early years educator, to make a commitment, to be there, and not falter whilst the patient struggles to get to know something of his/her early life experiences, take on board their effects and the ways in which they have shaped and influenced subsequent thinking and behavior patterns, and then to relearn new ways of experiencing and existing in the present. This knowledge has to be 'processed' and the therapeutic work assimilated, which means to adjust or become adjusted to, in order that the past can become a memory that belongs in the past. Addressing the effects of early childhood trauma and deprivation, as opposed to mental illness, is an essential and necessary part of treatment. It 'normalizes' the abnormal!

Dissociation in and of itself is an adaptive form of psychological behavior in response to traumatic experience. It is a survival mechanism. This necessary, past early adaptation, becomes maladaptive in the present, causing the patient to behave in unnecessary and inappropriate ways. Past and present are enmeshed and can become fused, thus diminishing any possibility for further growth and development to occur. The task of therapist and patient together is to separate out past from present, and hence bring about the capacity for change. This is achieved through the medium of their relationship. Any real change that occurs will do so as a result of the patient having experienced being in a healthy relationship, probably for the first time. We only learn how we behave in

Continued on Page 6

Therapy that Works, Cont'd.

response to the 'other'. There isn't any other way of finding out.

A healthy, intimate relationship with my therapist has given me a new experience of myself. I have gained much from being treated as a 'normal' person, who is suffering from an abnormal life experience. Relating early childhood 'educational' theories to my own situation has helped me to acknowledge and understand the ways in which my cognitive skills have been impaired, and my capacity for language and thought has become disconnected. My ability to play was non-existent, therefore my imagination has never really developed beyond that of fantasy; and there is a huge difference between the two.

I am not cured. I am still a work in progress. Through the slow process of integration, I am becoming joined up. I now know, for the very first time, the path which I need to be traveling. I am not longer lost, but found. I am being given the opportunity to grow up all over again, but this time I have the support of a 'healthy parent', a 'sound early years teacher' and a 'trusted and reliable friend', all encapsulated within this therapeutic relationship. I have found therapy that works, and I am grabbing it with both hands!

MV*Still Here*

parts of me
in pieces;
inside of me
incompleteness.

dark noises,
loud faces;
tenderness in
angry places.

voices screaming,
babies crying
my heavy heart
still denying.

knowing i am
still here somewhere;
living, loving
dancing unaware

By Rhonda H.

MV*Starry Night*

But now, things are happening. Weird, odd, intrusive, scary, unknowable things.

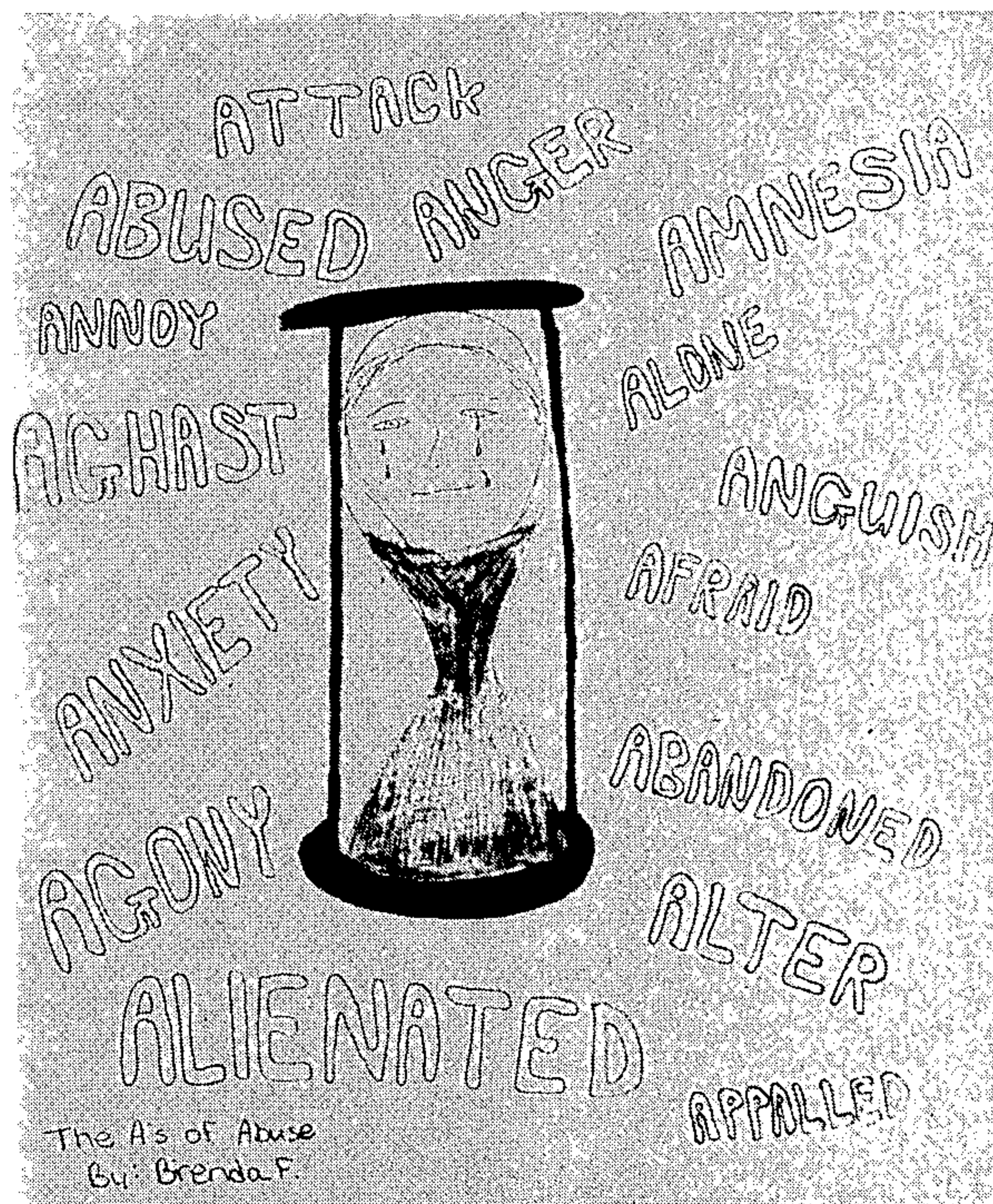
Things I don't have control over. But if I'm not controlling them, who is? You have no idea how it feels. It's different from scared, or scary, or frightened. It's a new, unknown universe all to itself. With walls that won't let you in, but yet whatever's inside comes out into your mind. I'm afraid I've become a part of an unknown percentage of the population that has been, at some point in their lives, thrust into a world they don't know, a world they've become lost in, a world where they are alone and yet filled with lonely people.

Lying on the ground, staring at the stars, wondering what's up there, wondering how far it goes, wondering if there's life out there, life that can

make contact, life that can communicate, new intelligences, new information...that is how my own self has become. That is how it feels to peer into my consciousness...a feeling of unknown, a vast unknown, one that I fear could swallow me whole if I let it, and yet, I have to let it. I have to let it in order to continue to survive.

I have to jump into the unknown, without a net, without a lifeboat, without another...just close your eyes and jump. Be swallowed into the dark, hopefully to come out somewhere, somewhen on the other side, hoping for some point of light to develop in the darkness, hoping for a light to appear, to become a space, a place, a place where I can discover truths not know, a place to see years past lost, a place to know myself.

By Katiekay

MV



An Excerpt...

From Kim Kubal's book

"YOUR STRENGTH TO HEAL: A GUIDE FOR SURVIVORS OF RITUAL ABUSE, CAREGIVERS AND CLINICIANS"

My name is Kim Kubal and this is my story of recovery from satanic ritual abuse.

I am a native Australian who immigrated to the United States in 1984 when I married a U.S. citizen. My marriage lasted 3 1/4 years, during which time my physician husband became more and more emotionally abusive as a result of his increasing alcoholism. After our divorce, I attended Twelve Step programs and entered psychotherapy to recover from my own addictions and self-destructive behaviors.

From years of self-examination, I realized my marriage was an escape from ongoing victimization by my family starting in early childhood. Living in the USA after my divorce, I knew I needed to build a hopeful life for myself, and that meant I had to let go of my family and start over without them. I felt completely alone. I descended into a deep depression with suicidal impulses for five years. I was in total despair.

Cautiously, in Twelve Step programs, I started to address my alcoholism, being raised in an alcoholic family, my compulsive overeating, and my love addiction (giving my power away to men). I needed to look at my behavior in choosing abusive people for friends and choosing abusive employers. I believe these recovery groups saved my life.

Although I was no longer drinking and continued to regularly attend Twelve Step meetings and weekly psychotherapy, I remained deeply depressed and chronically exhausted. I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Additionally, I suffered from migraine headaches, depression, panic attacks and allergies. I applied for and received Social Security Disability, and did not work for three years. I rested most of the day and awakened the next morning exhausted. I dragged myself to recovery meetings and psychotherapy, but did little else. It was too taxing to read or watch TV. Even listening to music was overwhelming. I had to live truly "one day at a time."

My family are addicts and alcoholics. I alone found the courage to begin my own

recovery and healing over nineteen years ago. In psychotherapy, early childhood memories of sexual abuse surfaced into consciousness for the first time. When I confronted my father for sexually abusing me, he denied it and said I needed psychiatric help. When I confronted my mother, she said I was Satan-possessed.

In the course of my psychotherapy, there is one technique which opened up my mind, heart, and body to releasing repressed memories and their accompanying pain: EMDR therapy (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). Through this process, I had memories that as a child and teenager, I suffered physical torture, including satanic ritual abuse (SRA), emotional and spiritual abuse at the hands of my father, mother, grandfather, and three SRA cults.

"Looking good on the outside" and unquestioned obedience were the rules to which my family adhered. I grew up fearfully, alone and withdrawn, and wanting to die. When my anguish became unbearable at times, I would experience leaving my body, escorted by guardian angels to a celestial place. They reassured me that I was protected, deeply loved, and someday would escape from "my hell."

In childhood I began overeating, later as a teenager I started drinking, using drugs—all to numb my feelings. There were alcoholic, blackout episodes in which I awakened in my own vomit, not remembering anything about how I got where I was. I was in such a desperately unhappy state I tried to slash my wrists.

Because of my years' long victimization, I was incapable of saying "No" to any request and blamed others for my actions and behavior. I gave away my power, especially to men, submissive to their control and use of me. To compensate, I deliberately flirted with and manipulated my partners. I dated emotionally withdrawn and abusive men and confused love with sex. I had no self-esteem and hated myself.

My family was devoutly Roman Catholic, with priests visiting us regularly.

Later I learned that some priests were also satanic cultists. As a result, I had distorted and conflicting messages about God, the Catholic Church, and authority figures. During my life before recovery, I hated God for abandoning me to the abuses of others, while having been programmed to hate myself and others in authority.

Once my recovery began and self-esteem increased, I felt the need to have God in my life, yet remained completely confused about His/Her nature and role. With the help of a spiritual counselor, I began to change my concept of a Higher Power.

I had to slowly work through my rage at God and entangled self-loathing. Gradually, I experienced forgiveness from God, my forgiveness for the abusers and myself. I finally understood that God does not interfere with people's free will. After many, many years of personal growth, including prayer and meditation, I now have an unconditionally loving God in my life.

Despite my weekly therapy sessions, for years my struggle to heal from the horrific past seemed endless. I wanted to give up and die many times. Ever so slowly, my healing began to take root. The anguish from remembering lessened each month. My vitality increased. My stamina to be productive increased. I started volunteering. I felt more hopeful than ever. I returned to work, full time, and am now office/HR manager for a busy organization.

My recovery program continues. My weekly psychotherapy continues. I have more loving, nurturing friendships now. I have overcome Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, migraines, panic attacks, and allergies.

I am now at a far healthier, empowered point in my life, emotionally and physically which I never could imagine reaching in the past. I am finally happy within myself. I know I can face any setback or loss. The caring and empathy I received from others in recovery programs and therapy, I practice on myself and give to others.

I continue volunteering as a Twelve Step sponsor and at holiday soup

kitchens. Volunteering fulfills my need to help others and helps keep my problems in perspective. Also, I am an activist and contributing writer against ritual abuse. For years, I have held the vision of founding a healing clinic and trauma center for survivors of abuse. The Center will be a supreme haven of love, compassion and wisdom.

Through many years of therapy and recovery from childhood abuse, hopelessness, bodily pain, I learned that a life of joy and meaning is attainable. Present life challenges decreasingly trigger childhood events and emotions. Now I awaken feeling alive, closely connected to my Higher Power, and at peace with myself. There is a light at the end of the tunnel!

The Road to Healing

With the help of Twelve Step recovery groups, spiritual counseling and therapy, I gradually understood the need to change and develop a concept of a Higher Power who was all loving, compassionate and desired the very best for me. Based on my family of origin and the perpetrators, I had put God on a pedestal who was abusive, non-trustworthy and hated me.

In order for me to have a close relationship with a Higher Power, I needed to address my addictions which I believe blocked my path towards healing. Feelings which had been suppressed by the addictions began to emerge and the fog in my brain lifted. I have let go of eight addictions over nineteen years in recovery and worked through the Twelve Steps many times.

On a daily basis, I pray and meditate. I had a spiritual sponsor who once told me prayer is talking to God and meditation is listening. Over a period of time, I moved from rote prayer to talking to a Higher Power as a best friend. I meditate three times a day. In meditation, I practice letting go of the tension in my body. I relax and then visualize I am resting in a beautiful healing place with a Divine presence who is nurturing me. Then if any thoughts come up, I don't fight them, but let them pass on through and bask in this pool of love.

Through therapy and spiritual counseling, I needed to work through the rage and hatred towards a Higher Power who allowed the abuse to happen. I screamed profanities at God, pounded pillows, cried and felt the deep

abandonment of a Higher Power who had forsaken me. Once I worked through the rage and grief, I very slowly came to the realization that a Higher Power could not stop man's free will, did not abandon me, and that evil is permitted in this world.

With the help of a spiritual counselor and many times during hypnosis, I was taken to a healing place of love, where unblocked feelings were allowed to surface, a Loving Presence replaced the abusers, and I felt protected. In essence, I was facing the fear, taking back my power, and changing and developing my concept of a loving Higher Power. I was gaining a sense of self-worth and a deep void was filled with love.

Loving myself also meant forgiving the abusers and letting go of them emotionally, spiritually and psychically. I also needed to forgive myself for what I was ordered to do by the cults. Forgiveness was a process and took many years of working through the rage, grief and loss until I was finally able to say I abhor the abusers' behavior, and yet see these abusers as very wounded human beings who do not know how to love, but only how to hate others and, in particular, themselves.

Finally, developing trust in the Divine has happened over many, many years to the point where I pray each day to be guided to do His/Her will, not mine. Now, I start from a place of love, see the Divine in everyone, and feel a very deep connection to all including mother earth. In essence, I have walked through the many dark nights of the soul to finally bask in the sunlight of the Spirit.

MV

Roots

Wandering aimlessly in the swirling fog of time—
heavy, constricting; losing our way,
watching our truth fall away
into the depths of past despair.

Until a bright light shines all around;
first, it comes from the outside—the
hand that guides us,
driving back the fog; picking up the
pieces of our knowing:

Then a small point of light we know
and nurture grabs hold—
growing once more; unfolding
like the flower that survives the raging
storm to bloom...

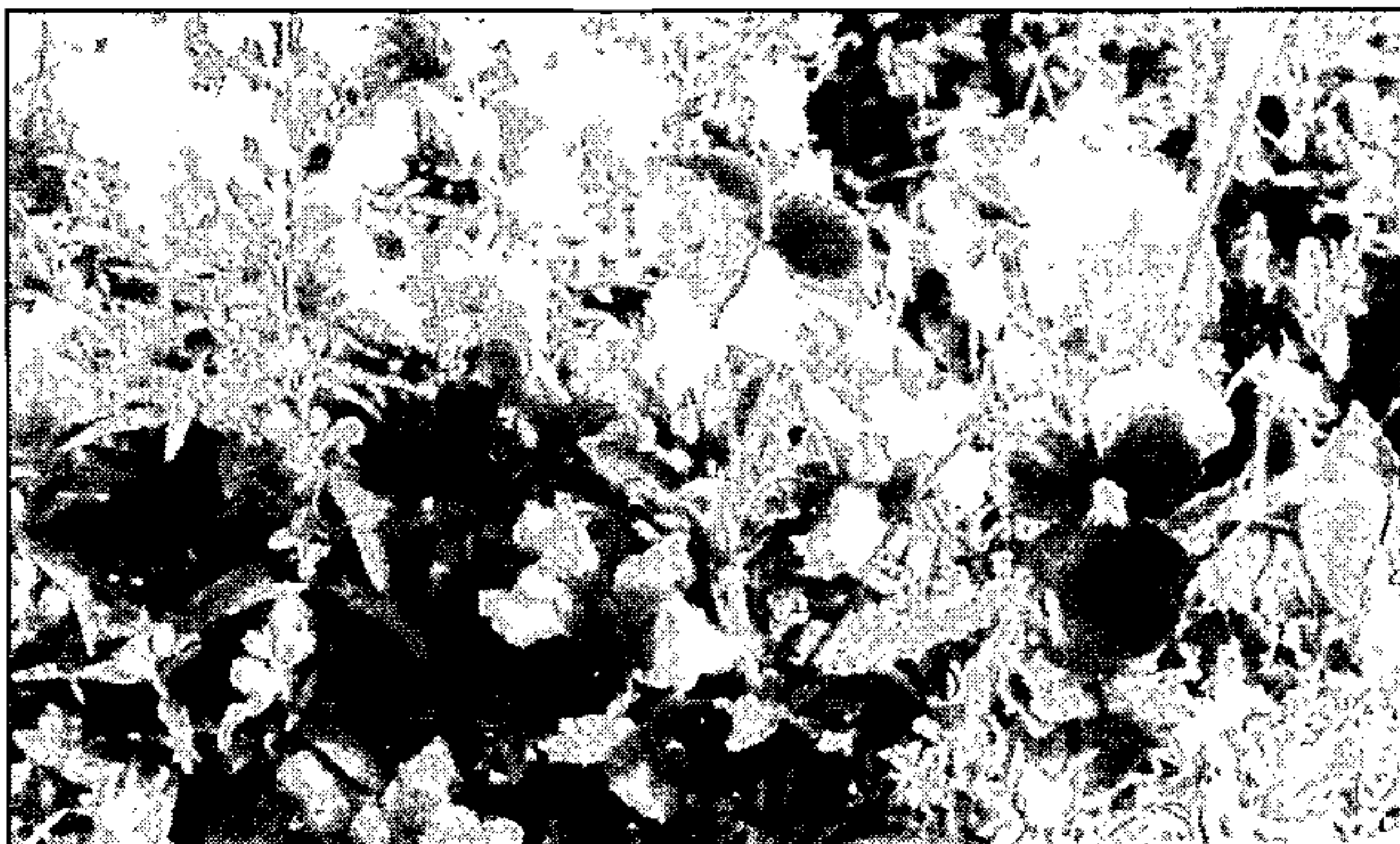
Each time the bud lives longer,
learning to absorb the sun and mist;
destined, evolving to thrive—
filling us with constant hope.

To the hand that prepares the earth
with such care, adding light
and life-giving moisture—
One day the roots will take hold and
the flower blooming there will add
beauty to the light:

Because of your patient care.

For Jan by Sam (DE)

MV



Too Much Repressed Memory Work

By Keepers

Today Keepers received our February, 2008 issue of MANY VOICES in our snail mail. The article by Colin Ross, MD brought up many issues and unpleasant memories for keepers. All we can really say is that Keepers truly wish we had found something many years ago written by an expert who said what Dr. Ross says in this piece. It would have helped Keepers in so many ways to know and understand the new thinking on Repressed Memory Work. Perhaps, if we had read something like this—Keepers would not be where we are today.

For 17 years, Keepers worked with a therapist who claimed to be an expert on MPD/DID. His sole focus in our therapy for those many years was repressed memory work which he did through hypnosis. This therapist was convinced that getting to those buried memories was the only way to help our system. In nearly two decades, every conversation with our therapist focused totally on repressed memories and abreactions. He worked on them in our sessions, which were at least three times per week. He would hypnotize us on the phone and work with our repressed memories that way as well. He used hypnosis on us while sitting in his car on a parking lot so we could work on repressed memories there as well. But, I truly think that the worst thing was that he would call us when we were home alone and tell a Keeper how to trigger an abreaction. Then, he would hang up leaving us with instructions to go through the memory and leave him a voice mail telling him what repressed memories came to the surface. For 17 long years, Keepers' situation was one where we were never free of memories better off left repressed because this therapist was constantly doing only repressed memory work with us.

Another thing this therapist did was bring out the repressed memory but never deal with any feelings about it. He would do the memory work and not once asked how we felt about anything which left Keepers dealing

with horribly strong emotions over the period of many years.

Keepers stayed with this therapist for only one reason—he convinced us (on a daily basis) that he was the only one who could help us. He told us not to read about MPD because what is written in books would never do us any good. He said the ISSMP&D (what it was called when we started with this therapist) did not know what they were doing. He told us we could not trust our own perceptions and that we needed to always trust his perceptions of things. Keepers did not know any better so we believed what this therapist was telling us.

The cost of so much repressed memory work has been very high for Keepers. We have lost our external children and never get to see our grandbabies. Of course, this makes sense because they had a mother (Keepers) who did not have one stable moment when they were growing up. It is so sad that the 17 years we spent with this therapist were our children's formative years when they needed a mother who was more than perpetual abreactions and repressed memories. For Keepers, losing our children was the greatest loss we could have ever experienced.

Keepers did try to go on in therapy with someone else after we left this therapist but just could not do it. We did not understand the new thinking about not working with repressed memories because that was all therapy had been for us. No new therapist sat and explained the new thinking to us. They just ignored our still perpetual abreactive state and criticized us for not working in the ways we should have been working. After a couple of years of Keepers trying in therapy, we gave up and began trying to repair what was left of our lives on our own.

Keepers did report this therapist to our State Licensing Board who investigated and referred our case to our State Attorney General. During the hearing, the state's expert witness testified that so much abreactive work

did nothing but harm to Keepers and that this was intentional on our therapist's part. The therapist was found guilty on four different counts in our case against him. Unfortunately, he received only three years suspension and five years probation for his professional behaviors.

It has taken Keepers about seven years to get past what this therapist did to us with his perpetual repressed memory work. We do not live like other people do but we make it through each day and do good for others as much as we can. For us, the daily practice of yoga has strengthened our system. Meditation has cleared our thinking greatly. Our art work has grown and changed while continuing to be a healing force for our system. And Keepers have established our charitable organization which has helped us a lot. (See <http://keeperscorner.wordpress.com/>)

So, healing is coming step by step. We work diligently at it but we still have very bad days sometimes. Days when all those repressed memories come back to haunt us because they were not left in the deepest depths of our mind where they were much better off.

MV

SOMEDAY

Someday I will be as free as a butterfly, To live life as open and honestly as I can.

You can come too on this road of freedom We can find peace in everything around us and see the beauty that is all around us.

We don't need to live in the past Oh, yes we will think of our past, but it doesn't have to become us, we can put it somewhere and just take it out to dust off, but it does and should not become us.

We can all be one with ourselves never to be split in two.

By Mary Katherine Gillis

MV

Direct Sunlight

Outside circumstance looms
 Change my environment
 Try to control how others relate to me
 Seems to be the only way
 To achieving my inner peace
 but this school of God
 Is trying to teach me
 That this reality
 Is my biggest fallacy
 That true peace starts from within
 And only then can radiate out
 Creating overlapping circles of Love
 Not divisions or heady explanations of
 Others behavior will bring me any closer
 To what is true about myself, about my
 relationships,
 And why we either sink or swim
 My inner self has been in prison for so
 long
 That trusting in it feels dangerous like
 tumultuous
 Waves of the ocean that knock me from
 my feet
 Continuously
 The tides of my emotions don't seem to
 retreat
 I have tried to find sanctuary above and
 beyond
 In other people or in God
 But all roads are leading back to me
 What I first learned was wrong
 So many things I have learned
 have been wrong
 I must face the rising waters
 Or deserts within me
 The abundance or the famines
 The passionate flames of my desires
 And my cold planets
 My dwelling has to begin
 From within
 Otherwise everything I see
 Will only be a life
 Of mirage
 People and places fading
 All around me
 The more I want them to stay
 The balance I am seeking
 Isn't as elusive as it seems
 The impossible now seems
 Probable
 I must trust in the divine
 Order of things
 Every lesson I learn
 Is a new awakening
 Every awakening is
 Full of possibilities .
 This is where the flower
 Blooms and Hope is Born
 Born in direct sunlight

By Kimberly A. Cavanagh

MV

Comments on Therapists' Dialogue

(Feb 08 issue)

By Lady J

Two topics facing each other on the pages that are near and dear to me. The two things that so many have shared this last year that have caused much concern to them. Over the last years I've listened to many Multiples (now called Dissociative Identities) whose therapists believed in and used regressive modalities at regular sessions. Then the consumer (formerly called patient) had to go home with a raw hole brought up through the layers, to deal with all the feelings that can only come out when in their safe place.

It's been hard on them, to say the least. If someone chooses to use these modalities, they would be best served and used in a safe environment over at least a week's stay, in a facility that is aware of the process that multiples go through after bringing memories to the forefront.

I remember the other hypnotic modalities that were used years back to quiet the alters and relax the patient. After a time, what the multiple often found was the surfacing of some angry alters, even those who were normally calm, because they felt as if they were somehow 'bad' and were silenced. What I've seen, read, and heard is not that these techniques are 'wrong' as much as there is rarely any support system in place where patients can work through the issues that arise when memories are brought up, or when the internal system of checks and balances is suppressed.

On the other side are issues of Multiples who have had to go into specialist-facilities (top names who advertise and claim their programs are for us.) These programs protect themselves by not using 'regressive modalities' yet claim that their private sessions are geared to that exploration. Unfortunately, for most, insurance only covers crisis care and stabilizing the consumer. I've heard that even in those few days of crisis patients are told not to talk about the issues that brought up the episode.

Now these are just claims that

come across my desk as emails or posts in groups, so I can't prove any of it. Yet somehow I can't imagine why dozens of people from different groups and parts of the country or countries would all talk about the same problem. Especially since they empowered themselves with information from the facilities who advertised, thinking that they might find some way of getting past certain memories.

I understand the importance of treatment programs making money to keep going, and the Institutes, along with many others, have hung in here all these years, improving programs that educate more therapists and doctors who are still in the dark. I also know that MV has been here twenty years, putting out our stories. Those stories have changed little in the ten years I've been out here with my online groups. The only thing that ever changes are the names, faces, and places. The stories never change, as my story has never changed in the twenty-five years I've told it.

What has changed are the ways we have all learned to live with our many selves, the number of groups online that deal with the issues that are the same for all of us, no matter what 'professional' label has to be put on our diagnosis for insurance purposes. And I honor especially the other people who start and maintain groups, sites, blogs, spaces that help others know they are not alone.

Thanks MV, for presenting the opinions of both views together. Maybe there will be progress.

(Over the last decade, Lady J has led several online groups, including the current Lady Jz Talk Zone at www.ladyjztalkzone.com/)

MV

Why We Have to Survive

By Jenn

"Please God, let me die. I can't stand this pain anymore. I know I promised to survive but I just can't do it. I know my death will hurt others, but I hope they can see that I've finally found peace. I'm already dead inside, just take my body."

I don't know how many times I have said or thought the words above. The pain I felt was unbearable at times. My therapist used to say she knew I could get through the healing because I had survived the abuse. I wasn't quite sure if she was right. It seemed to me that once you hit a certain level of pain there is no measurement for the intensity of it. Pain just reaches a point where it hurts beyond words. At some point all rational thought goes out the window. Thoughts of dying are welcome and even encouraged. Anything to escape or stop the pain is considered.

I have survived every time that I have asked God to let me die. Either there is a God or I am just very lucky. I have survived more suicide attempts than I can count on my fingers. Medically, there were several times that there was no reason I should have survived, but I always did. I even woke up after a massive overdose of ibuprofen, angry to be alive.

I am your average woman. I'm 42 years old and a single mom. I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. You might think that the abuse makes me abnormal, but that is not so. The percentage of persons abused, as an adult or as a child, is continuing to rise. We see the stories of abuse nearly every night on the local news. A dead child, a dead abuser, an abused child, elder abuse—it goes on and on. Even Fox News has a nightly "Predator check" on the program.

I always think of child abuse sarcastically as "the 'gift' that keeps on giving." Once a child has been abused, the life of that child is forever affected. We are losing so many future resources and wonderful minds to child abuse. That child may become a problem at school, a criminal, taking out his pain on others. She may become promiscuous due to sexual abuse and end up in prostitution. The child may simply withdraw, unable to interact or contribute to society. Farther down the line are troubled relationships, more isolation and homelessness. The abused children become a burden to society and draw on monetary resources

as they grow into dysfunctional adults. They may become dependent on alcohol or drugs. Suicide is a common option as it seems there is no way out of the excruciating pain resulting from the abuse. What confusion and horror one feels when someone you trust, maybe your mom or dad, begins abusing you. Children cannot see that they are in no way responsible for the acts perpetrated upon them. "If this is wrong why doesn't another adult help me?" the child might think.

Sadly, the abusive parent is often unable to parent his own child. He may be abusing the child passing it on to another generation. Sometimes, the child has to basically raise herself because the parent is unable to care for them. The system often mistakes bad behavior as being as a simple disruption in the home. In actuality, abuse is occurring but the teachers just concentrated on managing the behavior rather than getting to the root of it. Besides, they don't want to "rock the boat" with an accusation of abuse. Abuse without marks is common whether it be emotional, sexual, or physical. When I was training as a teacher one of my colleagues had a problem with a child in school. The child was constantly disruptive. I was told "that is how Latino families are, they whup their kids. It is part of their culture." Also I was told that CPS couldn't be called because there were no bruises visible on the child. The CPS case load, as we know, is overstressed and it seems only the obvious critical situations are investigated in a timely manner.

One day I decided that if I was going to survive, I need to do something to help other abuse survivors. So, I write. I have bigger plans for helping my fellow survivors and am working towards those. Now, with the resources I have, I simply write with the hope that someone's heart may be touched, that they may understand they are not alone, or maybe they can survive a few more hours or days by reading about my experiences and ideas. Also, maybe, just maybe someone will have the courage to save a child from

abuse.

So, why do we have to survive? The first thing that comes to mind is to let our abusers know that they did not destroy us. We also need to know for ourselves that we were not destroyed. We are watching them and are prepared to come forward to support any law enforcement action against them. This is somewhat opposite of our intuition. They taught us that they would always be watching us. That was a LIE. They could be watching us, but as survivors and adults we are aware and know how to get protection. It's hard to remember sometimes, but we are no longer the children that we were back then. We have personal power and strength and resources to protect ourselves. In reality, the abusers are frightened of us and our telling the truth. Our truth shared with other survivors gives credence and meaning to the things that they feel.

We need to show our abusers and other survivors that we are no longer afraid of the abuses perpetrated upon us in the past. We will not tolerate any abuse of any child in the past, present, or future. Many survivors have successfully made this statement by suing their abusers. I did this and while the process was long and often painful, I stood up to him. I received a small settlement that was nothing compared to what I had been through. Still, the process of the lawsuit made everyone realize that if he tried to harm me in the present, it would be pretty obvious that he was a suspect. I had protection from the threat of harm from him should he try to hurt me: I exposed him. Unfortunately, the statute of limitations had passed so I could only sue him in civil court. He still walks the street free to molest those who can't find their voice. I am keeping an eye on him somewhat to see if some current survivor can put him in jail. Personally, I'd like to repay him, but he is not worth going to jail for.

We must survive because we did not deserve anything that happened to us. In surviving we stand and say, "What was

done to me was wrong. I did not deserve this. I deserve a loving and abuse free life." In the beginning, this is hard to do. As one walks the healing path there are obstacles and opportunities. It gets easier and then harder, and easier and then harder, and so on. I finally accept that I was a precious child and deserved to be loved. I could feel that on and off, but now I have accepted that as my truth. It is part of me and I will never believe otherwise. There will come a point in time where you crossover from being a survivor to a "thrivor". I'm sure you've heard the phrase before, but what it means is that you can have a life that is enjoyable and doesn't center on the fact that you were abused as a child. It celebrates survivorship by letting you feel emotions in the moment and letting you clearly see the rest of the world in the present. Learning that it is OK to feel what you want when you have a feeling is a true freedom.

Stamping out stigma of mental illness is another reason we have to survive. I used to think people could look at me and see I was abused. I felt "marked". I was "damaged goods." I married the first man I dated because sex with him was safe and pleasurable. I thought no man would ever want me if he knew my past. Still in the point of shame, I left the US to study in Mexico where no one knew me. I proved myself there. Opinions could be formed on my accomplishments not on the disfigurement of my soul. Finally, I realized I was not disfigured; abuse happened to me but could not change my core self. Society encourages keeping secrets so as to ignore the ugliness of disturbing human behavior. If you do speak out you are labeled "crazy". One morning I woke up from a dream. There I was in my dream dressed perfectly and looking quite professional. As I walked down the hall people whispered, "She's one of the best in her field, and she survived horrible abuse. What an incredible woman she is!" We survivors are incredible. We made it through hell against incredible odds.

We need to tear down that wall of "crazy" vs. "normal". Who knows what normal is anyhow? Some might say that not having a mental illness means normal. From the statistics about how many people are prescribed certain mental health drugs, mental health problems may actually be the norm! It sickens me to see people pointing fingers at other's behavior

and labeling it "crazy". How cruel to say or even think that about someone who made it through tremendous abuse and is still alive. The thing is that during our abuse we learned how to cope to survive. These coping skills are not necessarily helpful at the present time, so we need to learn better ones. How dare anyone point the finger at me and call me crazy because I had something done to me!

We need to survive so that other survivors know there is something better out there. When you hear a message of survival from another survivor, you see hope for a future. When that person actually sees or feels joy, it means you also can have the capability to see and feel happiness too. This is unfortunate to say, but we must survive for the ones that will be abused in the future. One day I hope that there will be no abuse, but for now we need to be there with our own stories of survival. We need to be available to comfort those who feel so lost. I probably share more than I should, but I have to tell you when I tell someone I am a survivor of child abuse, the other person often replies, "me too" or "my sister was" or "my child was." It makes me cry to hear this. It again validates my experience. I am not the only one.

There are so many people out there needing help. We can at least acknowledge their pain and suffering. No one acknowledged mine, even after I told my family. Eventually, they came to understand how difficult things were for me. That acknowledgment is so important because it validates a survivor's feelings and memories. After more than twenty years, I finally, truly believe that the memories I have are true. Now I don't wrestle with the self doubt that my abuser placed on me. He said, "no one will believe you" or maybe "this never happened. You are imagining this." I can stand tall and truthfully say, "No I am not imagining this!"

Finally, we have to survive because abuse is passed down from generation to generation. We must stop the cycle of abuse from being passed on. Most people hope they will be a better parent than their parents. We take the good things they did and throw away the things we don't like or agree with. I think I was really vulnerable because I did not feel loved. I don't know exactly what made me feel this way, but I needed to know and feel loved as all children do. My abuser played on those

feelings. I had a therapist tell me that an abuser can spot an "emotionally needy" kid in an instant. I decided as a parent that no matter what, I was going to make sure that my kids knew they were loved. I used to tell them things like, "You are a really neat kid. I am so lucky to be your mom." and "I am so happy to have you for my child." They heard this everyday of their lives. As they got older I made my messages more age appropriate and told them, "I am enjoying watching you grow up into such a neat person." or "It's really cool to have a kid like you. I am so lucky." or "I am glad you are part of my life. I love you." Both my children believed they could do anything as they grew up. They had good friends, good grades and shied away from the drug scene. My daughter is 19 and a junior at an Ivy League college. She says, "I love my life now!" I think knowing she was loved let her blossom. My son is the same way, still in high school. I never imagined that stressing I loved my kids was going to have all the positive effects. High self esteem is the key to having choices. It is my job to survive and make their lives complete. Not surviving, would devastate them. I stopped the abuse with me and my children are free of it.

In conclusion, the healing path is a long and often arduous journey, but we are not alone. In the great American migration to Oregon, people set out for a new life. Their lives changed slowly. They encountered problems and found oases along the way. So it is with healing. If we look carefully we can see others have gone before and are still growing. We can reach forward to those ahead for help. We can also look behind and offer a hand to someone who needs some help. There are people ahead to help us as well. I hope for the formation of a foundation to pay for therapy of abuse victims. If we could only do what Komen has done for breast cancer. Little by little, step by step, we can change the world - one survivor at a time.

MV



Diagnosis and Therapy

By Jacki

I was sexually abused by two different step-fathers from the age of eight to eighteen. I was raped when I was 21. I never told anyone about these issues until I had my breakdown at 34. I started having flashbacks, couldn't sleep, couldn't eat, and struggled to get through each day.

My pastor suggested that I see a counselor. My initial reaction was, NO! I thought counselors were for mentally ill patients and I am not mentally ill.

It took my pastor about a month to convince me to go to the counselor. He promised me that it didn't mean I was crazy. The church blessed me by paying for my first year of therapy.

I was diagnosed with DID two years after I started seeing my counselor. She told me that she had been waiting to bring it up until she thought I could handle it. Who in the heck can handle that diagnosis! I thought she was crazy, and there was no way I that I was Sybil.

She gave me some information to read on DID and told me that it was definitely not a bad thing. She assured me that it was a defense mechanism and that without it I probably would be dead. I agreed to read the information and talk to her about it the next week.

Six months later we realized I had six littles. I didn't know it at the time

but she had a lot of experience with DID. God blessed me with the right counselor at the right time. It took about two years, but we all integrated.

My problem with my counselor is that she never wanted to talk to me. It was always one of the others she wanted to talk with and it really hurt me emotionally. I couldn't figure out who I was. I couldn't get her to realize that I hurt, physically, emotionally, and mentally also.

After working with her for about three years I decided to try another counselor—one who would recognize me as part of the hurting pieces. I found another good counselor who understood my concerns and frustrations. She helped me to heal me and accept the others, not be resentful of the others because they had been recognized and I had not.

It has been twelve years since I started the road of healing. I still see a counselor every week because I am still depressed. Some people ask me, aren't you glad that you have walked out the healing process? I have to say, no. I have hated every minute of the past twelve years. That being said, I am in a better place, with a better group of people supporting me. I am holding onto the hope that one day, I will like myself.

MV

Discipline

After a really bad experience, I needed to develop a system to prevent suicide attempts and self injury. I was becoming more and more co-conscious, which was the reason I was able to develop a discipline and reward system. If one personality was bent on destruction, we would gather and decide on a safe and reliable way for the system to put a stop to the problem part.

It took time, and a lot of effort on everyone's part. But we find a way to confine the destructive part while also getting it therapy and help.

I also developed a system where unsafe parts had a companion to act like a safety check. The companion on duty would call for helpers. Usually the cause for the acting out was anger and pain, so we would encourage the problem personality to write and draw the rage, pain, and desire to retaliate. Because no matter how ugly the pictures and words, they could not hurt or kill. In the end, these creative acts relieve the situation.

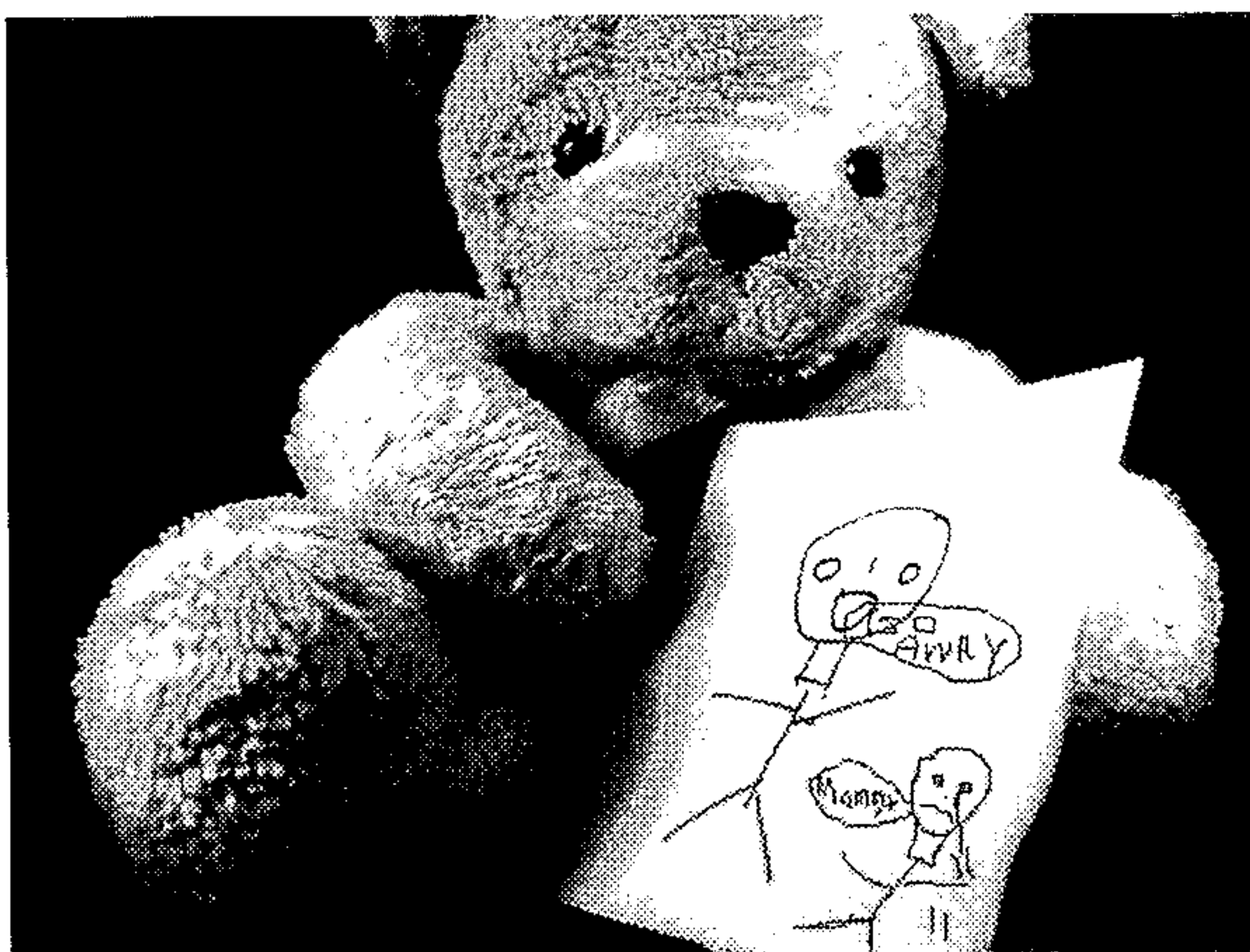
Anger and rage are not bad, they only become bad when violently acted out. I was really full of rage. No therapist would listen I got put on meds to control it, but when we decided to work together and admit that the pain in our life really pissed us off, we found new ways to use the anger in healthy ways.

All emotions have reasons to exist. Even God gets mad, or would he have ever said 'Noah, build me an ark!'

Another thing that really helps is knowing others have been where you are now. You must know that, because you asked for help.

By Anonymously yours

MV



What I want to say...

I want to say that "I'm in pieces" being consumed by darkness and I am lost.

I want to say that "I miss me" and I wonder if I even exist.

I want to say "I'm sorry" to those I love, for being unable to be who I once was, I want to say "if I could rid them of their worries I would"

and in doing so their pain would cease.

I want to say "please just let me go."

But I can't, because the cost of that sadness would be too high.

So what is there that is left for me to say?

"I promise to strive by using more than I truly believe I have,

To fight and in the end endure"

thus by doing so I need say no more.

By Laura et al

MV



Therapy revolves around life; not life around therapy

By S. et al

Sometimes it feels as if living is a prison sentence. I hate being DID. I hate remembering bad things that happened. I hate feeling depressed, desperate, angry, and stuck all at the same time. And sometimes I really hate knowing that I need to keep going to therapy so I can get better one day. When I get this way, it is really hard to have fun. It is during these times that I remind myself that therapy revolves around my life, not my life around therapy.

Fun is something every body needs. Even when things get really, really dark, there are still chances to have fun.

Ever since I can remember, I've been busy. Multi-tasking is constant in my life. There were times when I've had to be at three places at once and somehow pulled it off. I've never excelled at any one thing. I've been pretty good at lots of things, but never could decide which one thing I wanted to focus my energies on. But being busy is really not fun.

Fun is doing something you enjoy, whether or not you are the best at it. Fun is letting go of your

responsibilities, even if it's just for a few minutes. Fun is doing something you would never, ever do if you were in your "right mind." Try to have fun doing something simple.

Ever tried blowing up a balloon, letting it go and watching it flutter about everywhere until there's no more air? That's pretty fun. How about running outside in the rain on a hot day? Or stomping around in the snow? One time, my son made a paper airplane and tried to throw it at someone in church. I was horrified, but then I decided to try it. It was fun. My son laughed. He wants to do that again sometime. A really fun thing to do is to drink a Coke as fast as you can and have a burping contest. Fly a kite on a windy day. Catch a fish. Go for a walk. Blow bubbles and try to pop them before they hit the ground. Play funky music and dance.

Those are some things I do to have fun. Life can really be a drag for those of us living with DID. We've just got to take a break sometimes and have some fun.

MV

BOOKS

Growing Yourself Back Up - Understanding Emotional Regression by John Lee

© 2001 Three Rivers Press, New York.
ISBN: 978-0-609-80641-6 240 pgs.
\$14.00 Paperback

I bought this book about a year ago and read the introduction and parts of Chapter One. I then had to put it aside. I have since picked it back up and FINALLY realized that I could no longer procrastinate about what simply amounted to just "throwing in the towel" calling "UNCLE" and saying OK..."I GIVE!!!!" and accepting my feelings and facing my fears....and believe me, I tried every which way but loose in order to avoid just that!!!!

Now that I have finally made what

is probably the most important decision of my life.....to face my fears - the results have been incredible.

For the first time in my life, I experienced feeling proud of myself for having the courage to go back and integrate just a little bit at a time. I have also noticed that I am no longer in that constant intellectual mode which has kept me stuck, but rather, I am tapping into feelings which has an innate wisdom all its own. This book is helping me to do just that and perhaps others might find it useful as well. I do however, find that I have to be careful to pace myself in reading it.

FYI, you can check out this book on amazon.com as it does provide the

feature of "Search Inside This Book" as to the nature of the material....also, the cover design is quite telling as well.

— By Brenda B.

MV welcomes your reviews of books that have helped you. Send anytime. We'll print whatever we can. & THANK YOU!

MV

THANK YOU

For sharing your hope, fears, recovery plans and dreams with other MV subscribers! We need your artwork, prose & poetry. Please send!—Lynn W., Editor

COMING SOON!**June 2008**

What you do for fun. Expanding life outside therapy.

ART: Cartoon Festival

DEADLINE: April 15, 2008

August 2008

Recovering for Men: what's different? PTSD and sexuality.

ART: Your supportive friends/family

DEADLINE: June 15, 2008

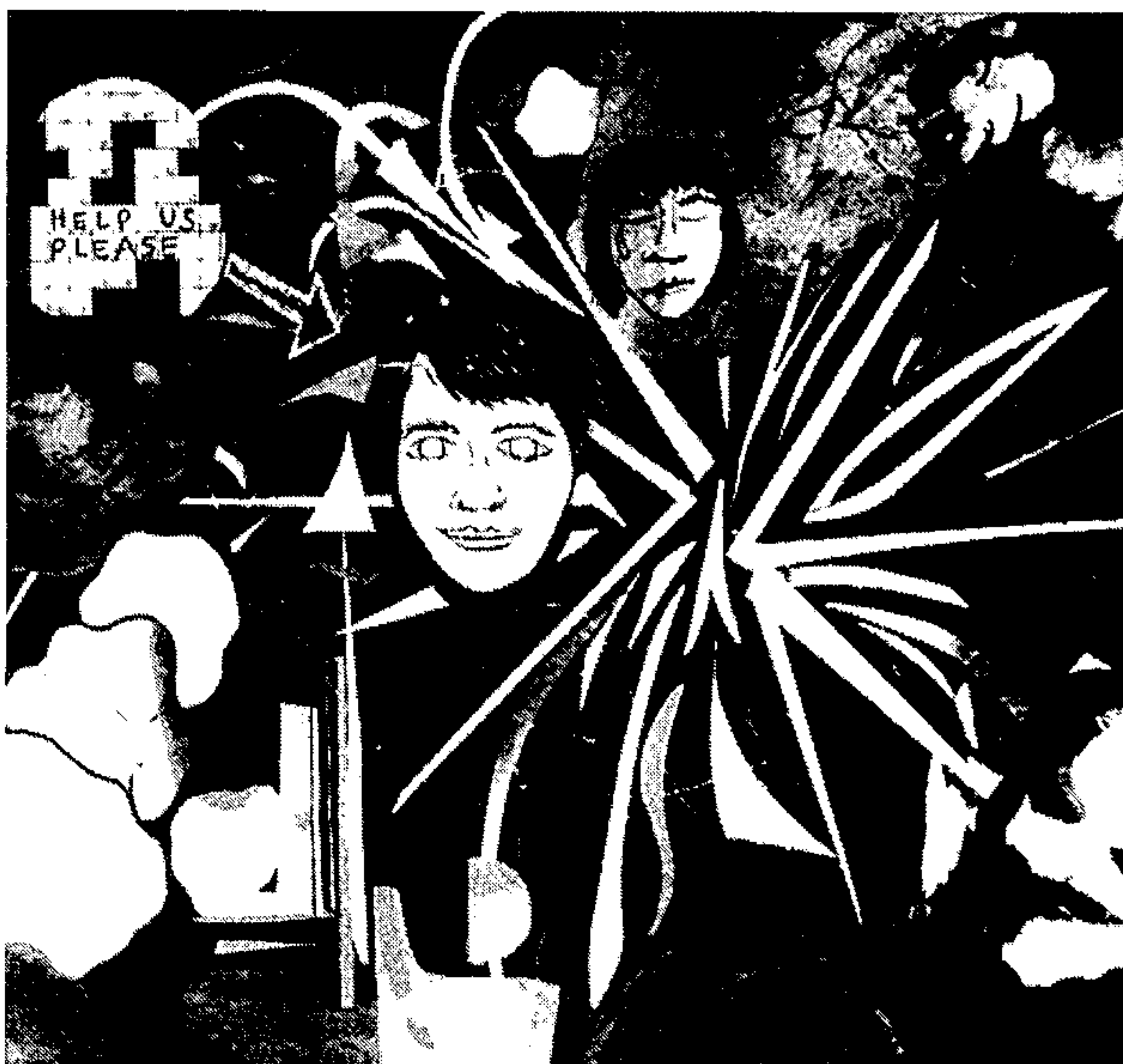
October 2008

Spirituality in your life: yes or no

Opening the door to change

ART: Your inner world

DEADLINE: August 15, 2008

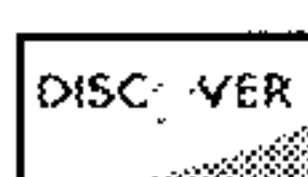
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