

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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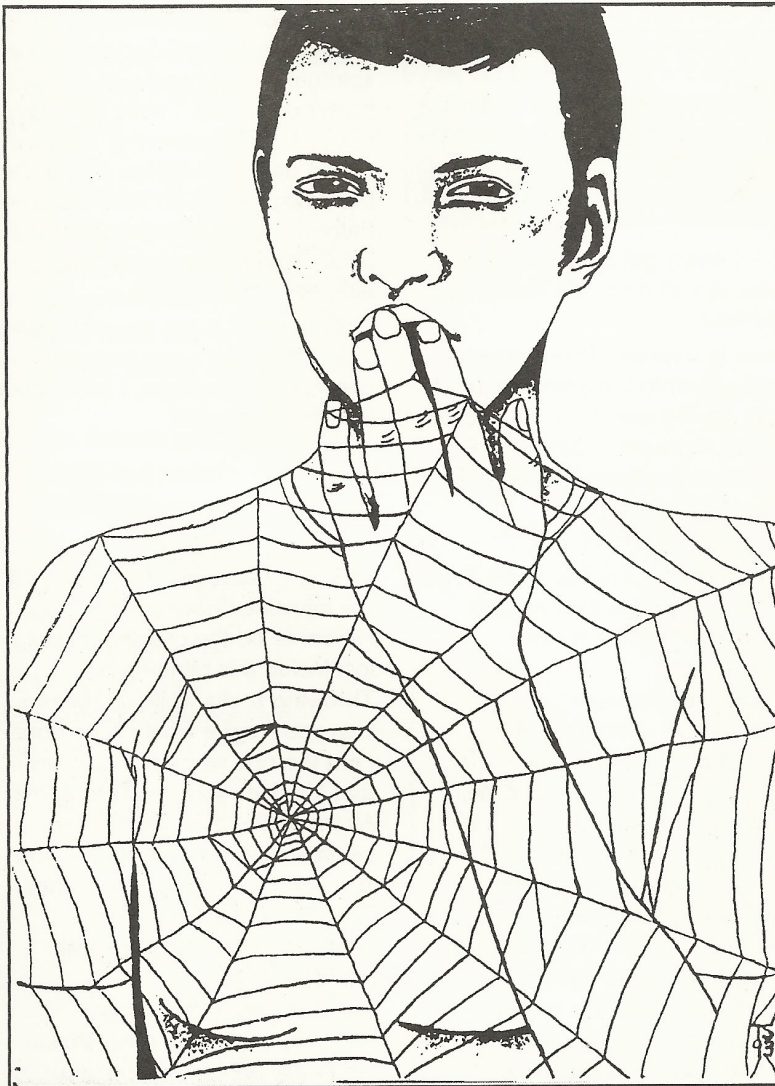
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## *Life*

### *In This Issue:*

#### **Online Safety: Making Friends Avoiding Cliques & Abuse Healthy Boundaries**

*...and more...*



Life is so fragile,  
so fleeting,  
so uncertain.  
We can spend it,  
or gamble it,  
or lose it.  
We can hold on,  
let go,  
share it,  
or give it away.  
But we can never keep it.  
It is not ours to keep,  
it's just to borrow  
or use for awhile.  
It is how we use it that  
counts.  
It's like a parking meter  
We're given so much time,  
and when our time expires  
life as we know it expires.  
Our spirit finds  
a new place  
to park.

*By JLR*

**MV**

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# Facing My Reality

By Ransom

**T**oo many months of trying to survive inside a fireball of chaos and confusion landed me at a major crossroad not long ago. I was becoming preoccupied with finding a loving home for my dog and best friend Harlem. I didn't want to leave her. I didn't really want to die either. I just could not continue on like this anymore.

And then it happened. In a session something was said, and my therapist got real serious. She handed me something to write on: *She wanted names...and...she wanted them Now! Who Was On the Team and Who Was Not!*

Oh my God...I thought I was going to have a heart attack. All I could think is: *Parts don't have names...do they?*

Everything was shifting, hard and fast. All I wanted was to crawl under the chair and disappear. Maybe Kathy wouldn't notice. At some point it got very quiet. I could almost see them; heads were dropping nervously. My sense of various individuals was suddenly acutely clear. It was then, and in the days that followed, I finally began to understand. "They" were

indeed real. These monsters who'd been terrorizing me and running me ragged...well, they were just kids, and some of them were quite intimidated and actually scared of Kathy. Not so big 'n bad after all. Just doing what they were supposed to...and doing it quite well. The discovery that in their own ways many were trying to protect—but had been twisted up, even demonized in my mind—absolutely blindsided me.

Cellblock by cellblock, tier by tier, the doors of this prison were unlocking and the list of names began. The night has been long, cold and dark, but morning has finally broken and the list continues on. At this point there are about 100 names and they are still coming forward. The dungeons below are quite a different story. We will get to them, all in good time.

So—I finally get it, and the funny thing is—it's all right. *It's Really All Right Now!*

There is a sense of community happening within me. My head has quieted down these days, and we are stabilizing more every day. I have never known anything like this before,

## It's Really True

Fractured mirror on the wall  
I watch as pieces of me fall.  
Jagged edges all around  
shatter as they hit the ground.  
Fractured mirror, such a mess  
all I see is brokenness.  
Shredded, scorched and torn apart  
doomed to fail before I start.  
And, when I least expect it  
back at me reflected  
is someone I don't recognize  
staring me...dead in the eyes...  
a past of which I can't break free,  
endlessly tormenting me.  
I simply don't know what to do.  
This constant shifting...out of view.  
Why must you hide yourself from me?  
Are you afraid of what I'll see?  
Or do I have it wrong again,  
backwards as it's always been,  
upside down and inside out,

confusion reigns; I'm filled with doubt.  
Am I the one who turned on you  
rejecting what I know is true?  
The bullet hit...  
and went clear through  
The Judas Kiss is nothing new.  
Mirror, tell me what you see  
I can't believe that They're All Me.  
What does it mean if you are real?  
So haunted by this shame I feel  
It's just too much...I turn away...  
the war goes on another day.  
You push and shove...fight and yell  
I just can't stand this living hell  
I blamed you all for this mess  
such pain and anguish...deep distress  
For insisting on the death of me  
and paralyzed, I could not flee  
Rebellion is one way to pay  
when children have been thrown  
away.

and it is absolutely amazing. To be able to embrace what you fear most is a extraordinary thing.

I knew I was broken, and more than afraid but...I honestly had no idea. And apparently many of them didn't either. I've been doing drawings for quite some time. I knew some of them were parts of me. What a huge relief to finally get it out. Yet somehow, it all remained some kind of very abstract concept in my head. That is, until recently.

The work ahead of us will be very hard, but I know now that I am no longer alone. And even though the last few years have decimated me spiritually, God continues to make His presence known. I have been greatly blessed with trustworthy, qualified, caring help. It is always darkest before the dawn, and in it I have discovered there is indeed a dream in my heart again. And that makes all the difference in the world.

I know MV is not big on rhyming poetry, but that's just how poems come out sometimes. I hope readers like this one below:

The light came on...then I knew  
the injustice I have done to you.  
I seem to be the problem here,  
lost inside this blinding fear,  
Throwing rocks while on the run...  
Can you forgive what I have done?  
I am the one who could not see  
that it's been you...protecting me  
All the while...this drastic show  
because you needed me to know  
You are real...you're here to stay  
Together is the Only Way  
I hear you now...as you speak  
one at a time  
some strong, some meek  
So many parts...it's really true...  
I'm finally understanding you.  
I am a WE...I'm not alone.  
We're on our way..  
We're going home.

By Ransom

**MV**



## *The Revival*

Come all around  
come, dear ones  
dear undead ones  
sterile or sullied  
wretched or wronged.

Gather round, motley maidens  
fallen brothers, plank walkers  
the muted, the martyred  
come closer  
cup your ears  
wipe your eyes  
sing with me.

Come away  
weary warriors  
refugees from dark enchantments  
sweet etherized angels  
awaken, arise.

We'll twist and we'll rattle  
we'll tumble and roar  
so come all you dear ones  
nearly departed ones  
trudge and float, skip and scuttle  
rise and dive, paddle and steam.

Leave the flotsam and jetsam  
the cobbled and paved  
lift the lids off the caskets  
cut the cords and the ropes  
let the blocks tumble down.

Let all your waves crash  
I will wait at the edge  
backing up, stepping forward  
come  
dance with me.

*By Carmen Yana Holliday*

**MV**

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Tax-deductible donations, volunteer help, and good ideas are always welcome! We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor



## **My Computer: Friend or Foe?**



# Staying Safe as Survivors in Our Interactions with Others

By Garden Flower

*Adapted from a more extensive post at <http://asurvivorsthoughtsonlife.wordpress.com>. Check it out!*

Interactions can be an incredibly wonderful tool for healing, and the online environment increases the opportunities for positive experience. Yet...there ARE "horror" stories out there. Abuse can be blatantly obvious or very subtle. Sometimes, in our desire to believe that everything is OK and that the person we are hoping will help us is safe, we can ignore important indicators...or dangerously brush them aside. I am not a professional. In this article I draw from my own personal experiences and those of dear friends and others I have met online. My purpose is to help others practice online safety and experience healing while avoiding the possible negative side of personal interactions.

## To Trust or Not and the Middle Ground

Those who have been abused and made it through trauma seem to fall into two very general categories...the extremely suspicious and the extremely trusting, with some falling in between. Those who are extremely suspicious are less likely to be revictimized; however, they are also more likely to struggle with being able to trust others enough to get help with their healing journey. Those who are extremely trusting seem to have an almost childlike naiveté about them. They just cannot seem to believe anyone would lie to them or present themselves as something they are not. While it is easier for them to trust enough to get help, they are obviously very vulnerable.

The best place to be is in the middle...what I call "cautious trusting." We need to learn to test the waters and slowly build trust. Without some kind of trust, we lose out on the benefits of the support of others. With too much trust, we run the risk of being revictimized. Finding that balance can be a real challenge.

## Who Is Dangerous and Who Is Safe?

I wish there was an easy way to always know who is safe and who is not, but there isn't. That is why we must always be wary and wise. It doesn't matter what role a person is playing, or desires to play, in your life. There are no categories of people who are guaranteed to be safe. However, the more important the role and the closer they are going to get to you and your system, the more important it is to be cautious and watchful.

I have observed two kinds of people who take advantage of multiples, whether through the littles (young parts of oneself) or in some other way. They seem to be either those who are on a power trip, wanting to control and/or abuse the person for their own purposes or they are cult connected and acting according to their programming and the cult's orders. Both are dangerous.

Sadly, some of the worst offenders can be professionals...the very people we should most be able to trust...and who we are, perhaps, most likely to trust. I have had some excellent experiences with therapists/professionals...and I have had some nightmarish ones.

## Messages to Watch Out For

These messages may not be openly spoken, but they underlie the interactions.

### 1. *I have the key/knowledge/expertise, etc. to help anyone/everyone.*

There are many ways to heal in this journey called "life." NO ONE has the only right or best way! There is NO one method for everyone. NO therapist who is a good fit for every survivor. NO forum that is a good fit for every survivor. NO survivor who is a good fit for every method or therapist or forum. We are all different. What works for one may not work for another...or it may work, but not be the best for that system. Someone

who insists they can help everyone is typically unable to accept it when they find someone they cannot help. So, they place blame instead. They might question your commitment to your healing, for example.

### 2. *My way is the only way.*

Be very careful of anyone, especially a professional, who insists that the key to your healing is doing things a certain way...especially if you are not comfortable with it or don't know enough about it. I had an online and over the phone therapist who insisted that he had made breakthrough discoveries upon which his methods were based. He said that to use any other method was to go backwards and "why would anyone want to do that?" The implication was that I was holding back on my healing. He was disrespectful and would not answer my questions, which leads to the next thing to watch out for.

### 3. *I don't need (or have time) to answer your questions. Just trust me. I am the expert.*

This is critically important. I was at an online for-pay forum run by one therapist who did not use those words, but whose actions said the same thing. I was really stuck on something and was not given adequate help to figure it out. When others at her forum labeled me as "uncooperative" and "purposefully tromping on boundaries," she never stepped in and corrected them.

As for the therapist mentioned in #2, when the host struggled to understand some things, he insisted that she just accept it. Her questions were largely ignored. When questions were raised on his private client forum, or in an online group therapy venue, we were accused of trying to undermine him to his other clients. Our questions about his methods or about things he said about our system were never answered. What is really sad, too, is that we found out other clients had similar questions, but were too afraid to ask him.



**4. I know you better than you know yourself. Or...I know what you need better than you do.**

No one knows you better than you. Even though you may not be conscious of it as host, there are those inside who carry knowledge needed for healing. An expert therapist might have some really good insights as to what is most likely going on inside, but they cannot know for sure since they are not inside of you. Pay attention, as best you can, to the trusted insiders. They are important in healing and in staying safe.

When one therapist was challenged by alters regarding his understanding of the system, he refused to listen. He told the host, as well as some alters, that they were wrong. It took months and a lot of help for the system to recover from the damage he caused. So, if someone does not respect that you know yourself better than they do...watch out!

**5. We need to jump right in and work hard on healing. Let's not waste time.**

It takes time to build trust. A good therapist will give you that time. While they might gently prod you at times, they won't accuse you of not being serious about your healing if you need to go slowly.

**6. It should not take very long for you to "heal" with my method of doing things. Or...You will need to work with me a long time.**

The problem with this is that no one knows how long it will take for anything. Be wary of anyone who insists on a specific time frame rather than explaining general possibilities.

**Other Things to Watch Out For**

**1. Online Imposters.**

Pay attention to any difference, however subtle, in someone's IM(Internet Messenger identity) and email ID used, or sudden change in the behavior of a trusted friend.. Imposters employ other identities for destructive purposes online. For an in depth example of how my IM was "copied", how easy it can be, and how we figured it out go to:  
<http://asurvivorsthoughtsonlife.wordpress.com/2010/02/15/staying-safe-as-survivors-part-7/>

The imposter did a lot of damage through the things she said and did. My friends were hurt, some dangerously so. Friendships were lost and others became strained because they didn't know what to make of all that was going on.

Sometimes littles are taken advantage of, both online and in person. So, PLEASE, make it a priority to keep a watchful eye over ALL little interactions, regardless of whether on line or in person and regardless of who the other person is or seems to be.

Many systems have alters with the same, or similar, names. This can also create vulnerability as an imposter can call or write them and legitimately use the same name as a friend of theirs. There are also those who simply outright lie, calling themselves someone they are not.

**4. Alters suddenly becoming afraid of someone you know, regardless of who they are.**

There is a reason for sudden fear. You need to get to the bottom of it.

**5. Listen to your "gut," your insiders and others you trust.**

While you know yourself better than others, it is possible to be blind to something that is going on with you. If one person were to tell me something, I probably would not be very concerned about it. However, if several people were to tell me something, I would really dig hard to see if it might be true.

**6. Secret tellers and confidence breakers.**

Be very wary of anyone who breaks a confidence. You can pretty much bet if they are sharing about others with you, then they are also sharing about you with others. It's bad when "friends" share confidences. It's even worse when a professional does it. There are strict guidelines given to professionals regarding confidentiality. It is NEVER OK for a professional to share details with one client about another client.

It is also not OK to post private communications without permission, even if it was written by the professional. An online therapist who has a for-pay forum openly posted something that she wrote to me in

private. When confronted about it by someone else, she merely changed who it was addressed to and left it up. This was very unethical.

**7. Meeting in unusual places...or uncomfortable places.**

I've heard of clients being asked to meet in a therapist's car or in restaurants, sometimes even with other clients in the same room! This is NOT OK. One therapist had an office with no windows and all the other offices on that floor were unoccupied. The building itself was rather isolated and his office never did feel comfortable...and rightfully so. He accessed my alters there and used them. His office setup also made it easy to not recognize the time loss.

**8. Professionals discussing their problems with you.**

This happened to me. Boundaries became blurred. I found myself feeling like I needed to help him feel better. Therapy isn't "friendship" in the usual sense. Role reversal is not OK in a professional/client interaction.

**9. Wanting to see or touch parts of your body or talk in a sexual way.**

One therapist would intentionally trigger the littles of some friends of mine to come out. Then he touched their bodies inappropriately in the guise of doing healing work. Littles don't know what is legitimate healing work! What he did was sick and caused a lot of damage and hurt.

**To Sum Up**

Your feelings, your thoughts, your ideas, your knowledge, your questions and your hesitations should always be respected. A good therapist will take the time to talk with you and work things through, answer questions and build trust, not force something upon you.

**Enhance Safety By Working With Your System**

**1. Keep your alters informed.**

When I first found out I was multiple, I did something that might help others. I did not "know" my whole system. I had no idea how big or small it was. So, I spoke out loud to my whole system. I shared what I knew about what had happened to us



and how we developed DID. I also explained what I understood healing to be, what I thought our goals should be and how to stay safe. I shared anything and everything that, at the time, I thought might be of importance. I did not concern myself with who heard me or with getting responses. I simply told them that I was going to learn all that I could and work with them as best I could. I also asked them to please pass the information on to whoever could not hear me...to spread it system wide. I needed their help and asked them for it. Then...I trusted that what I was saying was being received. I did this a lot...over and over again.

## **2. Encourage your system to co-operate within itself.**

This is really important...especially if you are a time loser. When a younger, or more vulnerable, alter is out, it is very critical that a more mature, stronger alter always be listening in and ready to take over if there are any signs of danger. It takes everyone working together to stay safe. I have found that the greatest danger seems to come when there is an alter out who is totally alone (or accompanied by unsavvy alters)...when there is time loss. It is in that total switching and losing of time

that reconnecting with the cult, self-injury (and other risky behaviors) and being abused in the present can take place. This is why it is so important to work on developing a co-operation between alters and also on stopping time loss.

It is also important that the host (and the whole system) be made aware if there are people, places or situations that are dangerous. If anyone in the system knows anything that could be important for staying safe, it needs to be shared amongst all. Communication is a huge part of staying safe.

## **3. Make sure everyone knows the warning signs.**

Sometimes, it is not what is happening that is dangerous so much as who is doing it and why...and whether they have your permission. For example, working with littles can be key to healing, but if anyone keeps pushing to talk to littles, especially if you have not known them long...be extra cautious.

This list is not all-inclusive, but I hope that it helps others out there. You are welcome to come by my website and do a search for whatever you are interested in. Who knows? Perhaps, I have written about it.

## **General Online Safety**

### **1. Do NOT share your password with anyone.**

If you must, (like when you need someone to help you with a technical problem), change it as soon as that person is done! A friend of mine needed help with her email. She gave her password to a "trusted friend". That "friend" then started sending emails in my friend's name. It was a nightmare, especially since she was a multiple who lost time. It took awhile to figure out what was going on and who was doing it. But it was even worse than that because my friend also did not follow the next rule.

### **2. Never use the same password twice and always change your passwords periodically.**

My friend was also a forum owner. Since she used the same password for everything, this person had total access to every level of her forum. Not good! Some people even use the same password for banking. You can see how bad it would be if one of your accounts was compromised. If you used the same password for everything else, then ALL of your accounts would also be compromised.

### **3. Don't click on links in emails that contain no other content.**

If the sender is someone you know, write back to that person and make sure they sent the link, first. If you don't know the sender, delete it. Malware is distributed this way.

### **4. Suspicious email messages.**

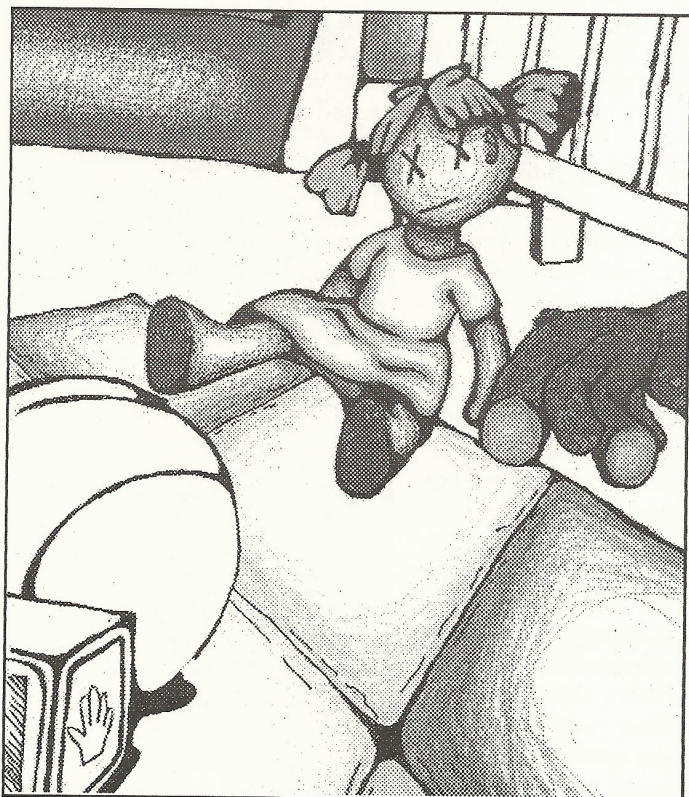
Odds are high that you did not win the lottery or get an inheritance from Romania. If your bank, Paypal, or Ebay has a question for you, don't answer the email by replying. Contact the source directly through a separate email or phone call, and ask. Some "phishing" messages are obviously phony but others sound very legitimate. The goal of these scammers is to rip you off. Don't let them do it.

### **5. Message from a friend in distress?**

Check it out through other channels before wiring cash. Your friend's email address may be stolen.

### **6. Use good virus protection and update it regularly.**

**MV**



Dollhouse,  
By Kate  
Edwin



## An Adult Child's Story: What it was like living with a D.I.D. parent

By Lindsey Smith

**M**y mother was diagnosed with DID when I was 12 years old. When she started undergoing treatment, my life was turned upside down and at twelve years old I had no idea how to handle it. I didn't really understand what was happening to my mother. All I knew was that the mother I had come to depend on was no longer available.

She spent a lot of time sleeping and my father would not allow her to be disturbed. My father became very protective of my mother and I felt that he cared for her more than me. Our lives from her diagnoses on seemed to revolve around my mother and her illness and how my brothers and sister and I needed to be supportive of her recovery. Trouble was, I had no idea what she was really going through at the time. I was just a kid who didn't understand why her mother couldn't take care of her anymore. I remember one specific time where one of her alters told me she didn't know who I was and that I couldn't be her daughter because she was too young to have children. I eventually came to recognize when one of my mother's alters were out and would ask them to get my mother, but they rarely did. Even when my mother was "herself," she still wasn't quite all there.

My mother would often wander off and my father would be sick with worry. I remember my brothers and sister and I all having to help look for her, many times late at night. After her diagnosis our roles reversed. She was no longer the one caring for me. I felt I had to care for her instead. My emotional needs being met were out of the question, though at the time I didn't realize that I was being robbed of so many things I needed.

My father was so preoccupied with taking care of her that I felt neglected not only by my mother but also by him. I learned in time that any problems I had I would have to handle on my own and learned to keep my feelings buried inside. I didn't want to

add to the issues my family was already going through. Little did I know the consequences that burying my emotions deep inside would have on me later.

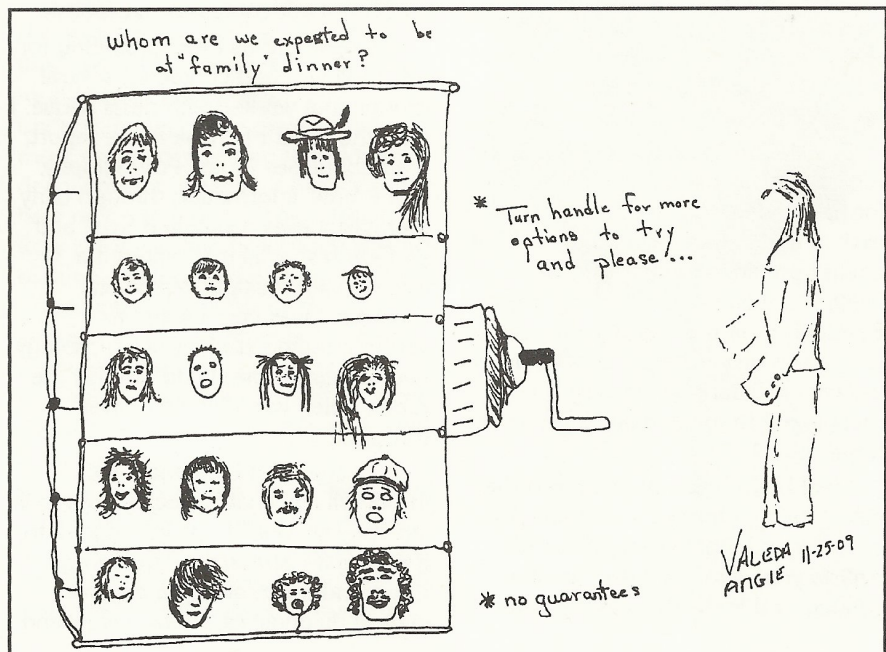
I carried with me into my teen years feelings of bitterness, resentment, and anger towards not only my parents, but towards God. I became severely depressed and experienced crippling panic attacks. I began cutting myself and struggled with anorexia and bulimia. I was in excruciating pain, and I didn't even really know why. I hated myself and most nights the only thought I had to comfort myself was that if it got to be more than I could handle, if the pain was too much, I could just kill myself.

I believe that I would have taken my own life had it not been for the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The one factor that held my family together through the years of my mother's recovery was the fact that both my parents loved the Lord and believed in the power of prayer. I gave my heart to the Lord when I was 15 years old. This was in no way a quick fix to my emotional pain, but it was a source of hope that I desperately needed. Through the years Jesus has shown

light on areas that I had kept in the dark and revealed to me how He was with me even in the times when I felt I had no one.

I have been in counseling for over 7 years and have been able, with the Lord's help, to work through the pain of my childhood. I was fortunate to witness much of the transformation my mother underwent through the healing power of Jesus. I am very close with her now. I have forgiven her for not being there for me, because I understand now why she couldn't be. Not only have I forgiven her, but I am also very proud of her. I feel that she wanted to get better for us, and she has. I still struggle with depression and anxiety, my self esteem could definitely be better, and I tend to keep people at arm's length. Having a mother with DID was incredibly hard and painful, and didn't come without consequences, but I have been able, with God's help, to come out of it a stronger and more compassionate person. There is hope for people affected by DID either directly or indirectly. There is always hope. My mother and I are living proof.

**MV**





# Therapist's Page

By Cynthia A. Henrie, LMFT BCES

Cynthia A. Henrie, LMFT, BCES is a therapist in private practice at LA Trauma Therapy Specialists in Los Angeles, CA. She is a member of ISSTD, and is a board certified expert in traumatic stress, as well as marriage and family therapy. She can be reached via email from her website <http://www.Therapist4me.com>

## The Sacred Gift

A thank you letter to all my clients with DID

Many times throughout the years, I have been asked by several publications to write something about Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) from a therapist's perspective for clients who have DID. I have always said I would be interested but then have gotten stuck because I didn't know what to say.

It's funny because I have been working with people who have dissociative disorders for approximately ten years now. I have been specially trained in the treatment of dissociative disorders through the ISSTD's psychotherapist training program and have been committed to educating other therapists and professionals about working with clients with DID because I know how important it is that therapists know to assess for it and learn to work with clients effectively and, most importantly, to believe their clients. I make sure I mention it and educate every other professionals every opportunity I get. I am able to give presentations on it, trainings, and speak at conferences, yet when asked to write something for people who have it, I freeze. Why?

Lynn W., MV's Editor and Publisher recently asked me to write something for her readers. Again I found myself excited and then dumbfounded. What could I possibly say that may be helpful to the readers of *Many Voices*? Suddenly it hit me. I could just simply give you a view from the other side of the couch! That may be very meaningful to many readers. At least I hope so!

I feel I have been blessed with the gift of being a therapist who has the capacity and inner strength to truly believe you, who can listen to what you say and know deep in my heart

that much. if not all of what you say, is true. I have listened to graphic and horrific accounts of my clients' severe and incredible, unbelievable abuse stories. I feel that is truly a blessing and an honor! I see what much of humanity cannot bear to see. And through this I have been given a great gift. It is that gift I want to share with you. I hope through this something will be helpful and healing for you.

I first heard about multiplicity and found myself interested in learning more about this issue since I was very young in my adult life, maybe 18 or 19 years old. My first speech class in college I did a presentation about Satanic Ritual Abuse and dissociation. I had done some research and reading from psychologists who put out books in the '80's and '90's that I found inspiring, curious and interesting. Speech class was really hard for me. I was terrified of public speaking and found every speech I had to give in front of the class terrifying! So when I was admonished by my professor and told that ritual abuse had been disproven, and he seemed angry with the topic of my speech, I was shocked and hurt by his reaction. I felt confused and foolish.

Interestingly, as I was preparing for this project, I had contacted several groups that worked with ritual abuse. I read the 1992 FBI Task Force report, read about Sex Rings, Pornography, and RA/MC information through early therapists' eyes. I watched Sybil and an Oprah special that featured a woman with Multiple Personality Disorder. I was curious and as a young budding student of psychology, had to learn more. I had no idea the rabbit hole I was about to travel through.

As a therapist I learned a little about DID in what I affectionately call, "therapy school." I was introduced to it during an Abnormal Psychology Class and again during a class on clinical diagnostics. I took a weekend

seminar about DID while in my Master's Degree program and learned enough to prepare me for my first case four years later. I know this isn't a lot of training and preparation. You have no idea! But I am so grateful for these introductory experiences that foreshadowed my future work in this area.

My first introduction to someone with DID was a young teenaged girl in a group home. For the first 20 years of my career, I worked with homeless and high risk youth, foster kids and teens on probation. Now looking back I am sure I have met many other teens who have DID, but this was the first case I ever knew about. She was a youth who acted out a lot and was difficult to supervise by child care staff. I loved working with her and enjoyed spending time with her. She was very special, I felt it, and there was something about her deepest spirit that I was drawn to.

It was soon after my speech class that I discovered she had multiplicity. She allowed me to speak with a few of her alters. This was a great honor for me and now, looking back, I understand just how special and risky this was for her to open up and expose herself this way to me. I didn't know this then. I was more curious and wanting to learn at that time. It wasn't that I was trying to be insensitive. I cared a lot about her. Its just I didn't understand how sacred this first exposure and risk really is for someone with multiplicity!

Later, as a therapist, I got my first case of a teenager with DID. He was someone who had been in the group homes for many years. He never revealed to anyone he had multiple selves. It was an honor when he revealed this to me. By this time I understood how sacred this revelation is. I also got my first taste of the politics surrounding the diagnosis. At this point I knew I needed guidance in helping me work with this boy. Funny



thing was that no one knew what to tell me! We worked with severely emotionally disturbed and delinquent youth and saw every clinical disorder under the sun. Yet no one had any idea where to begin with a teen who had multiplicity.

I sought out a mentor, Dr. Donald Fridley, a clinical psychologist through Del Amo Hospital who served on the board for the International Society for the Study of Dissociation (the title of the organization has since changed to the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation or ISSTD). He mentored me for free and was incredibly inspirational and supportive. Because of him I am able to do what I do now. I credit his dedication to helping survivors with multiplicity to inspiring me to do the work. He offered to help me. He provided clinical supervision as I needed it, answered all of my questions tirelessly and even offered to come train my agency on a complimentary basis. He was so generous and I am so grateful to him. Because of our work he made it possible for me to begin effective treatment for my then teen boy in the residential treatment center.

Unfortunately, the program I worked for was not as enthusiastic as I was! They weren't thrilled to learn that they had a child with Dissociative Identity Disorder and questioned my clinical skills as a result. It was funny because before this revelation I was credited with being the "best therapist we have on staff." I had worked for the agency for over 10 years and was well known by the administration, especially because I had been a Program Director over one of the group homes and one of the key administrators that helped launch their Department of Mental Health Clinical Programs.

When the boy began accepting his multiplicity and being more open with other clinical personnel, in a very healthy, healing way, my sanity and credibility were suddenly challenged. I was actually removed from the case and transferred to a different program because they did not believe him or me and the diagnosis. I was given a new supervisor who I did not get along with, who was demoralizing and

outdated in her clinical skills and who restricted my clinical approaches so much that I felt I wasn't able to be effective as a therapist. They accused me of causing him to become decompensated and fragmented. It was horrible and devastating. The truth is, they pressured me so much that I actually had a break down and had to take a lengthy stress leave to cope with the extreme pressure and demoralization they put me through. It was heartbreaking for me! Even more I was very concerned about the impact it might have had on the boy. I have no idea how it affected him. I only know that it changed something in me.

I am a determined person and stubborn. Thank God for my mentor who helped me through that time. I am glad it happened though because it taught me the pressure that clinicians face and why they are taught so little about dissociation in schools and clinical programs. I have heard many clinicians, social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists say they don't believe in DID or have never met a "true case." They question the authenticity of cases they do encounter or hear about and openly criticize the clinical judgment of those of us who do the work with multiplicity. Imagine what they must think of someone like me who now has been specifically trained in and works with multiple cases of DID on a regular basis!

So today I feel I am blessed. Why? Because when I meet a client and they are able to share that they have multiplicity, I have some understanding of the pressure you must experience having to hold this deeply personal secret. I have a sense how much of a risk this admission truly is for you and how much you are trusting, risking, and hoping when you reveal your experience of multiplicity. I almost lost my career over believing the boy I was treating. I can only imagine the pressure it must be when you are a person whose life experience is beyond speaking about.

I know it is a huge honor bestowed by you when you take that first step of hope, trust and faith when you reveal you have several selves and reveal the extreme and typically bizarre abuse

you may have endured. It is terrifying and you risk a tremendous amount just in speaking the truth. I always keep this in mind now when I work with my clients.

I know it is a tremendous burden to have to carry with you the deep wounds from the past. Most of you have endured more than most people could ever even dream of or imagine. I am always honored when you decide to entrust me with your secrets and share with me your different parts. It is so rewarding for me to watch you struggle and grow!

I just want to say thank you for this deep trust you have given me in allowing me into your world. I know I only see a small part, but often it is more than you have been able to share with anyone else. I want you to know that I am committed to continue to educate my peers and stand up for what I know to be true. I am sorry that so many professionals are uneducated or too afraid to believe you. But it is a gift, a blessing and an honor you have given to me by including me into some of the deepest parts of your soul. I just want you to know that I know how sacred this is and I MV want to thank you for entrusting this to me.





# It's OK To Say No

By Phoenix H.

A good friend of mine has two boys, ages five and three. When I visit them, I am reminded of just how powerless children are. They need total support and protection from their parents and attentive care. Children cannot provide for themselves. They adore their parents and want to please them. At the same time, my friend and her husband teach their boys it's OK to be themselves, to set boundaries, and to say no. Nothing bad will happen to them when they set boundaries and say no. They love them no matter what. They are teaching their boys to protect themselves.

When I was a young child, my parents taught me something quite different. First, they were always right, their way was the only way. Second, I was to always do what they told me, and if I failed, I was bad, wrong and stupid. Third, I existed for their benefit, not my own. Their preferred methods of punishment included a lilac branch switch and sequestering me in my room. So, for much of my childhood, I tried to please them in order to avoid punishment, not because I adored them. What I learned was this: it was important to please others in order to avoid punishment which could take different forms, i.e. rejection, abandonment, betrayal, or physical violence. My parents failed to mirror and teach me my natural worth, that it was OK to set boundaries and it was OK to say no. They had not been taught these things as children themselves. They did not respect my boundaries.

As a result, I have had to learn these things and how to protect myself as an adult. The first time I said no to someone terrified me. I feared punishment. I catch myself wanting to please, wanting to avoid conflict, wanting people to like me and approve of my existence, but the reality is that I can only truly please myself, conflict is a part of living, and I need to like me and approve of my existence. Saying no, when

appropriate, and setting boundaries is about liking, respecting and protecting myself. Because I'm worth it.

It's easy to get caught up in the almost instant intimacy online. The desire for connection drives openness and the sharing of too much information. It feels good to be a part of a group, a community. It's fun to share. Facebook, for example, promotes it. Find friends! Share friends! What's on your mind? And in spite of the privacy protection options Facebook offers, it's still possible to be approached by people that no firewall, spyware or spam filter can protect against. Identity theft is at an all time high. Predators of all kinds use the internet and social networking sites to connect with their victims. How do I keep myself and my identity safe? How do I know when someone is safe? I discovered a new lesson: how to be discriminating in a healthy way to protect myself.

When the complete stranger from Oklahoma, a man, sent me a friend request, I did not confirm it right away. I was curious. Had I known him in the past? I could not access his Facebook page, so I investigated by doing a search on his name. I found his LinkedIn.com page and that's where I learned about him. I'd never been to Oklahoma and it appeared he'd never left that fine state. We shared no friends in common, he hadn't been referred by a trusted friend, and he failed to write me a note with the friend request explaining why he proposed friendship between us. So, I ignored his request and told Facebook I did not know him. And guess what? No punishment. Nothing bad happened to me as a result.

Recently, I received a friend request and note at Facebook from another complete stranger, an older man. The subject line of the note was my father's name. I eyed the sender's thumbnail photo, but didn't recognize the man or his name. The note, however, was specific. He was looking

for my father's daughter (me), named my hometown, and said he wanted to talk to me. I thought maybe he had known my father (who's been dead for 23 years) or had done business with him. My father had been my primary abuser. I'd believed when he died that I was finished with him. This man on Facebook sounded like he only wanted information so I replied, but warily.

His response was respectful and clear. He wanted information regarding my father's medical history because my father was also his father. He was my half-brother. Shocked, I immediately went to his Facebook page where his photo was larger and saw that his resemblance to my father was strong. He'd been born long before my father met my mother, during my father's years of sowing wild oats, and he'd been adopted. He'd found his birth mother and had met her. He was sad that he wouldn't be able to meet his birth father. My first impulse was to reply immediately with the information he'd requested and nothing more. But I decided to give myself some time to think about this man and his request.

Years ago, before therapy and healing from the sexual abuse, I would have wanted to please this man, and would have welcomed him with open arms, blurted out my personal information as well as the information he'd requested, and probably immediately invited him to visit. Now, I understand that I have no duty or obligation toward him, and I am within my rights to ignore him or tell him I want no contact. And if I were to ignore him, absolutely nothing bad would happen to me.

After thinking about it, however, I chose to respond. I believed his story. His resemblance to my father was eerie. Adoptees search for birth parents all the time. He had been fortunate to find both his birth mother and, through Facebook, the daughter of his birth father. I also accepted him as a friend at Facebook. It may be



awhile before I truly accept him as a half-brother and part of the family.

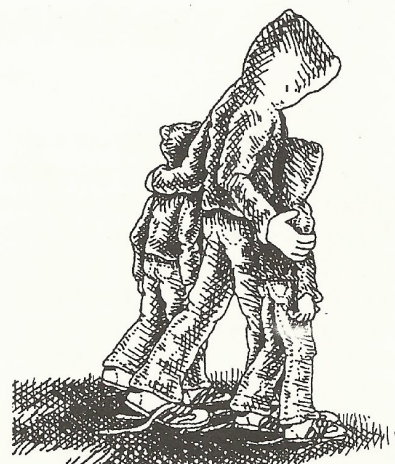
From these experiences, I learned what I needed in order to allow someone to be my friend on Facebook and have access to my profile information. If I don't recognize the name or photo (if there's a photo), then I'll investigate if we have friends in common. The most considerate thing is to write a note with the friend request. Would I befriend a work colleague or employer on Facebook? I would think long and hard about a colleague—what is our relationship?

Do we socialize together outside of work?—but I don't think I'd want a boss or employer to be my friend on Facebook. Nor would I think it appropriate for them to want me as a Facebook friend.

Facebook, and other social networking sites, can be wonderful places to connect with old friends, roommates, family members. It's important to protect personal information, however, and to be discriminating about who has access to it and me.

It's OK to say no.

MV



## Shadow Children

is there a point where there is just too much horror  
for a mind to hold?  
can a mind be too tense and stoic  
to give in and give itself up to a  
forever kind of peace?

there are so many children  
with so many memories that need  
to be told, shared with some one  
who can go into that memory  
and change it,  
vanquish the bad guys  
to a room with picture walls  
that they can never leave...  
their own form of purgatory...  
and because we have a  
compassionate heart  
a plate of fruit, bread, cheese  
and a glass of water  
all of which will self replenish  
and of course  
(here I write with sardonic humor )  
a pot to piss in...  
with a snap of the fingers  
they are vanquished

and we are free to proceed,  
change grey sky to blue  
dark dirty empty carnival grounds  
become green parks where families  
love to linger along shaded walkways  
ponds for children and dogs to frolic in  
sturdy, fat tree trunks for cats to scratch  
and stretch out on.

there are so many children still waiting  
to be rescued from their hell  
sentenced to a purgatory  
they never earned or deserved

within me, this large house in which they  
reside  
with many rooms, places to hide  
the place so vast, my lantern so small  
rooms aren't as empty as they may first  
appear  
shadow children live here  
not fully substantial  
for these children hold only patches of  
time

and the memories within, a single episode

born of necessity the shadow child says  
"here I will hold this one  
so she need not remember  
so her mind won't break,  
so she will survive this as well"  
but can a mind be taught too well  
to hide from itself

and if I die  
do the children remained trapped  
forsaken by God's indifference as I was,  
or will their spirits rise up to the heavens  
like bits of smoke on a summers breeze?

so many shadow children  
how many is unknown  
hundreds? thousands?  
each with a memory of horror to reveal  
and  
which each child is expecting me to heal.  
how many years of nightmares  
occurring most nights  
memories of horror being slowly revealed,  
are still to be endured?

there is simply not enough me the adult  
to go around  
and what of my needs and wants?  
for the time that is left can't I just live in  
the present?  
must all my time be spent remembering  
and  
healing the spirits of shadow children?  
it's not that I wish to forsake them  
but each is really just a memory  
that I care not to know about  
I want to live in the here and now  
yet I feel as though I'm condemned to hell  
the shadow children's memories  
are my nightmares

they are so demanding  
to being heard and healed  
how many memories are there still  
waiting?  
hundreds? thousands?

these are not alters needing to be  
integrated

so why this pushy persistence?  
there's currently no purpose for it  
and it steals daily from my quality of life  
and my ability to live it fully

I despair  
it's as simple as that.  
is death my option for freedom  
my only option?

so hard to find one's passion in life, for life  
itself  
to discover a purpose,  
the point of greeting each day  
with a sense of adventure and delight  
when heavy chains still wrap me up tight  
in unnecessary memories

I feel like a sunken ship that is slowly,  
steadily  
releasing oil that drifts up to the surface  
no way of knowing how much oil remains  
in the ship's tanks  
or how to render the situation obsolete

so  
I despair  
longing to be free  
I'm hoping death is not my only option  
but am completely empty of knowledge  
of other options

research leads only to alters  
but I find nothing about others who are  
living with  
boxed memories which are held by  
shadow children

my lantern is so small  
can you help me by  
holding yours up high,  
shining more light on this subject  
and other options that result in freedom  
other than dying?  
it's a burden I'm placing on you  
but I despair  
so am asking of you to please  
add the light from your lantern to mine

by alexandra

MV



# The SMART Way to Addiction Recovery

By Kate

**M**y name is Kate and I am NOT an alcoholic. I'm a trauma survivor who learned some ineffective coping mechanisms; my favorite (after multiplicity) was alcohol. I'm happy and grateful to have learned that I don't have a disease, I have a choice (I really liked the bad ones). That would not have happened had I not found SMART Recovery.

Before I was diagnosed correctly as a multiple, I spent way too many years drinking way too much (your numb-of-choice here); I went from a splash of brandy in my morning coffee to a splash of coffee in my morning brandy. Then I gave up the pretense of coffee cause it's bad for you. My liver had its own lawyer and my pancreas wanted to make it a class action. But I could quit anytime I wanted, and did—repeatedly: I'd stop for a few days, weeks, a month, even once several years for someone else's sake, but something would happen and I always wound up back at the same dismal place, which I now fondly call Death. And I just did not know why.

As a former victim of traumatic child abuse with a particularly virulent form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder called D.I.D., for me drinking seemed a benign (or at least legal) form of numbing self-medication that worked too well to give it up. I wanted to want to, but I was afraid: reality had not been my friend in the past. But there came a time I really did want to address healing—I wanted to become a survivor, not a victim—and knew I could only really do that sober. As a multiple, I had so many excuses! See, that wasn't me, right? I didn't black out, I "lost time." Like I couldn't tell the difference.

I just couldn't make it stick by myself. I did AA, quite successfully, several times for significant durations but it only replaced one dependency with another. I knew I was committing slow suicide, believed it was more socially acceptable (and kinder to my husband) than a quicker and more

definitive method—which I'd also considered and even attempted. I continued—perhaps from mere curiosity—to seek a solution. For many reasons, 12-step is not for me. I know my behavior was a choice (albeit a bad one), and not a disease, but I was at a loss for the skills to make better choices. Until I heard about SMART Recovery. I found the website. Suddenly I had my own 24/7 non-twelve-step support group. What a totally non-judgmental generosity of spirit I've found there!

There are forums—even one just for women—and online meetings and chatrooms, there are pages and pages of tools. SMART relies on the principles of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (similar to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) which taught me I needed a new way to think, not another excuse—and I'd worn quite enough "disease" labels to last me a lifetime, thank you.

Within a week of serious research, I was happily in SMART's many kind and capable and mostly volunteer hands. Hours of "homework" with SMART tools opened me up to a new way of thinking. They literally taught me the "ABC's" (and "CBA's") that are the building blocks of my new life. SMART Online quickly became my lifeline because there's no face-to-face meeting near me.

To my everlasting disgruntlement, they were right when they warned me that all of life's challenges and obstacles would not just magically disappear once I quit drinking (insert gambling, drugs, sex...trust me they are all alike). (Of course they had no idea about the DID, just that I had "issues.") I expected euphoria and found reality, but guess what? Reality—even a multiple's reality—is kind of cool when not seen through the bottom of a bottle. And when things do get confusing or overwhelming, they are barely a keystroke away. And I always find kind and wise guidance there.

Instead of my usual self-sabotage,

I've continued with my homework, reading, writing, and drawing heavily on my new support network. I'm realizing that this is a continuation of a sidetracked journey, not a shortcut to a destination.

I won't pretend it's all been smooth sailing—oh no! There have been slips and stumbles along the way and I have the scars to prove it. I don't have to drink to get stupid from time to time, but with help I can now learn from my mistakes. And the biggest mistake I can make is not to stay close to this program—at least for now.

See this is not a lifelong "process of recovery"—no dependency, no cult, no relying on a long-bearded benevolent being on the third cloud from the right to fix you if you just believe hard enough. It's a solution based on you.

What a difference! The last line in Dashiell Hammett's classic novel *The Thin Man* reads, "All this excitement is cutting into my drinking time!" Well, all this drinking was cutting into my excitement time! And I am excited now. I've learned for the first time ever to feel content in the moment and comfortable in my own skin. Drinking became the ultimate avoidance. Now I don't have to plan my activities around drinking. I run errands after dinner without risking a DUI or worse. I remember what I said last night (okay, that's not always a Good Thing). I won't burn down the house with a forgotten candle and I never have to pick up poop because I didn't let the dogs out. I probably won't pass out and drown in the bathtub. I can participate fully and voraciously in my life—and in my healing.

I'm not scared anymore.

I expected to feel a void. But I finally feel whole, involved, connected. To say "thanks" would be damning with faint praise. For once, I lack words to express my grateful feelings. Yet: I do give thanks profoundly, as do my husband, my liver and pancreas, my doctor, my lawyer, my family and



friends, and (unknowingly) the community of which I am again a contributing member. I'm again enjoying gardening, cooking, music, exercise, reading (the other day—I swear I'm not making this up—I checked out a copy of *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Dummies!* And drove to the library, stone cold sober and loving it. Hey Liquor Store, this is me not stopping!) Most important, I have tackled the hard work of trauma recovery, a task I could not even contemplate while drinking. And I am Winning!!!!

SMART is totally free. It's a very volunteer-driven organization, a not-for-profit, and no one will ever send you a bill. No one is asking me to write this.

I wrote because so many of us have learned "coping" mechanisms that are not coping at all, and self-medication is one of our favorites, but it totally hinders the process of recovery from trauma. Once begun it's hard to get out of. AA is not for everybody—kudos to them for the work they do and congratulations to those for whom it works. But there must be choices, and after TONS of research this is the best one I have found.

I'm not a professional. I have absolutely no credentials upon which to rely in suggesting this approach. It worked for me. What have you got to lose? [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org) is a place you will be welcomed with open hearts.

All I can say for a fact is that without SMART I could not have begun the serious work I've been doing and the enormous healing I have found. And you know what? Numb really was not numb.

I write this in honor of my brother Tommy, who did not survive our childhood. I have no agenda but to maybe spare one more Tommy.

Last: unless anyone think differently: I honor and revere and cherish my alters. They deserved to have been taken better care of than I have, as they have taken care of me.

**MV**

## Wee Talk with God

By Daisy

**H**ello Father God. It's us. How do Wee know You love us?

*"When you feel my arms wrapped around you, that's one way...if you are open to that. I won't barge in and take control of your life. It's enough that you offer small pieces to Me. I know you...really know you and I love you. I know how hard that is for you to truly accept. The mother really did a number on you. But I am seeing signs that your resistance is not so strong, and that brings joy to My heart. You are precious to me you know. And when you stop clinging to your aloneness and make friends with someone inside, I am thrilled for you. I sense some exuberance about life and trust in Me. I want your life to be filled with beauty, awe and wonder. It touched Me deeply when you drank in some of the world I created for you... not take it for granted ... same old...same old. I can sense less fear about some new challenge in your life. Challenge does not have to be about the bad, but it can be about opportunity...about enjoying. And you very much deserve enjoying all of my gifts!*

*I "leave the past behind." Actually Rachel wrote that while she was sitting on My lap. She was so scared and I just swooped her up and held her in a "hang in there" hug until she stopped crying...such a precious child.*

*I love you all so much, and I am so very proud of all of you. So much pain, way too much for a child of Mine to endure. And at last you are beginning to realize that I AM YOUR FATHER who LOVES YOU tenderly with awe at your beauty...at the treasures you are.*

*"I feel like crying FATHER GOD, at the way Wee have treated You...turned away from You...have been suspicious when You offer good to us. How Wee have denied your LOVE, and let our anger fester: How could You give us to those monsters who crippled us...who stole our happiness, who shamed us, denigrated us, lied to us! What kind of love is that Wee say? Wee don't want anything to do with human or divine love. Wee will stand separate... not feel until Wee can escape finally into death...be an "emotional zombie."*

But You came to me with Your overflowing LOVE and pierced our protective wall of indifference, of *I don't care*. And our world burst with sunshine, with caring, with JOY to be shared, and You gave us the gift of sharing our faith and heart with others. And Wee became JOYFUL GIVERS!

Then the dark days descended on us, and Wee were lost in every way...no way to turn... no one to trust...lost, so very, very LOST. Wee battled the depression that threatened our life day after day after day. But You didn't leave us in that pit of despair. Wee struggled, and You gave us strength. Wee endured. You surrounded us with loving, caring people who wouldn't let us give up...who wouldn't let our life be all about the horrors of our past.

And now Wee are shedding our cloak of fear and anger and unquestioning obedience to the "rules" of the mother and father who sought to destroy us from the time Wee were born. Wee are welcoming good feelings, caring friendships, the incredible JOY of being MUZZY in three precious lives! Our time of growth has come. Wee are growing in self-LOVE, self-appreciation. Wee are saying NO to the destructive messages that Wee were taught to believe!

It is so good to participate fully in life. To be so open to seeing miracles and to know that they come from You Dear God ...the beauty that I see, the birds with their exuberant singing, the touch of a small hand..."Come on MUZZY! Make snowman"...a comforting mug of hot chocolate...the tantalizing scent of a new born rose.

FATHER GOD, with all of our heart Wee thank you and Wee LOVE You. Each day help us to stay near You in heart and mind. Life is good! It's about LOVE, JOY, PEACE, hugs, fun, caring and thanking! Let us live this day with a grateful heart!

**MV**





# Integration and Beyond

By Sonya Rogers Meador

Living after integration can be very confusing. It's supposed to be difficult. It is a difficult disorder to recover from. It's supposed to be hard. But what's even harder is not recovering. It can be extremely difficult to learn how to accomplish every day tasks. The most challenging thing I realized was that I did not know how to live as a grown woman. I knew how to be ill. I knew how to get others to take care of me. I knew how to remain a child/woman. I did not know how to grow up. I now have the chance. As difficult as it may be in the beginning, it is equally rewarding to actually accomplish things and make them an every day part of life. What's even more rewarding is to actually get so used to doing most things, that they become second nature! This makes me laugh, but it is so very real!

I had to literally grow up in public. Even though I had a 30-year old body, I still felt like a younger person. I had spent years owning my child/children and incorporating them into myself. I had to experience and own every single part of me that I had tossed aside in my life. This included every memory, every experience, every age. And now it was time to fit it all into one functioning human being that was not simply alive, walking around, but who actually could have purpose and meaning; someone who could walk in a crowd and not feel apart from the crowd—someone who could feel a part of the human race instead of "apart" from the human race.

When I got serious about being serious, I found myself not even knowing how to make it through a day. I had to literally focus to get through a sink of dishes—get through a paragraph in a book. I had to mentally scream each word of a sentence to myself, in my head, to comprehend the meaning of the sentence. Sometimes I had to go over a sentence two or three times. And it worked! I found that I had made it through a paragraph and I actually remembered what I read and it made

sense! I could consciously wash, rinse and dry each dish and put it away and get through a sink of dishes without throwing one, getting distracted by something else or coming back later. It took time. It took consciously making a decision to stand on both feet in front of the sink, wash one dish at a time, and ignore anything going on around me.

And it worked!

The common factor in both of these is focus. I had a goal in mind and nothing was going to get in my way of achieving that goal. Focus—Focus—Focus. If the task was too complicated, break it down into mini tasks. I still use this one today, after 16 years of being integrated.

Another major change I needed to make was to quit using reasons. I had TONS! "I'm an incest survivor." "I dissociate." "No one ever taught me how." "I have a mental illness." All these were valid reasons in the beginning. I needed to know all of these reasons for who and what I had become. I needed to own them. And then came the time when I did not want them any more. Not because of shame, but because of lack of necessity. They were no longer needed. It was time to retire them.

I had become so very comfortable in my disorder. Finally I had learned why I felt so abnormal, so "different" from everyone else, alone at the center of the universe, with everyone circling around me, going about their own lives, never seeing or paying attention to me, unless I decided it was time for them to pay attention to me. Then I would put on a show that would make them all notice—even all the way to the emergency room, with dripping cut wrists or self-inflicted burns on my arms. All this had to stop.

And it stopped when paying attention to myself became more important than other people paying attention to me did. I'm not talking about the attention I pay to myself in therapy or looking at my issues. I'm

talking about paying attention to where I was as a 30-year old woman in a world of other people who are living productive lives without daily therapy. Other people who are genuinely happy—who actually have purpose and meaning in their lives. I wanted to be able to go to the grocery store and buy groceries without dissociating into a small child when I saw a mother gently holding her newborn. I wanted to go to a movie without abreacting an incest incident when I saw two people making love on the movie screen. I wanted to go to the park and not spiral into a shame-filled fetal position, flashing back to a time when I was so very scared for my life, when I saw a father disciplining his daughter because she almost ran into the street in front of cars. My life had been filled with abnormal reactions and triggers to everyday occurrences.

So, using the reasons I was ill, became the "reasons" I wanted to heal. They became things I want to "recover" from. I no longer wanted to identify myself as a victim of incest, someone with a mental illness. The reason, "No one ever taught me" became "Now it's time for me to learn." And learn I did—and am still learning.

Piecing together the intricate fragments of my whole, I'm reminded of the "glue of faith" securing the essence of my soul. This was my motto. I trusted the Process. I had faith that Whatever kept me alive back then, during my childhood and during my therapy, would get me through learning how to live as an independent woman, in an independent life, self-supporting through my own contributions.

And it worked.

**MV**



## Kaleidoscope Therapy

Tightly, he twisted my fractured world,  
Set me spinning through angular  
realms.

The endless abyss of pressed glass  
patterns

Hid me from my single self.

Melded, welded, sharp shards

Reflected mirror by mirror by mirror

Only multiplied my aloneness.

Now the sun and shadows within  
Twirl and swirl me with your  
illumination;

We dance our dazzling, mysterious  
magic.

Kalos: the beauty encapsulated within.

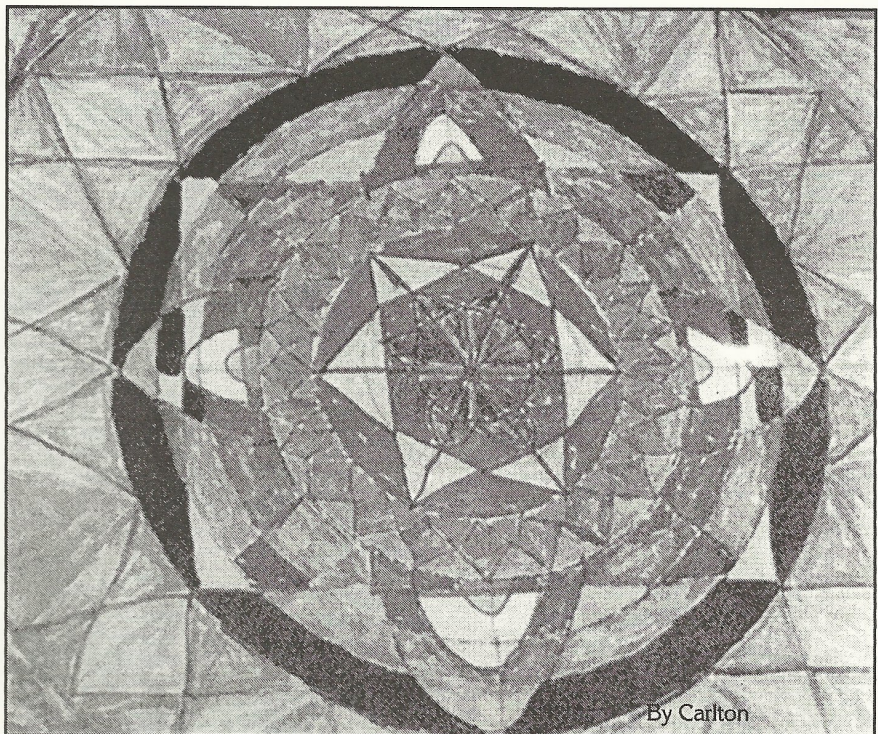
Eidos: mandala of millefiori.

Scopos: your gaze, giving me peace.

Thank you, beautiful form watcher

By Mea-Lee

**MV**



By Carlton

## BOOKS

### 8 Keys To Safe Trauma Recovery: Take-charge Strategies to Empower Your Healing

By Babette Rothschild © 2010 Published  
by WW Norton, NY & London.  
[www.wwnorton.com](http://www.wwnorton.com) \$19.95 US, \$25  
Canada 174 pgs incl index. Paperback

I've been a fan of Babette  
Rothschild's writing since her book  
*The Body Remembers* in 2000. There  
she showed wonderful insight, such as  
pointing out that for some abuse  
survivors (not all), relaxation increases  
anxiety, rather than diminishing it.

With this book, she's really hit a  
home run. A few reasons for my  
unalloyed enthusiasm:

1. Rothschild puts client  
functioning and "having a life" well  
ahead of excavating memories. As she  
puts it: "The first goal of trauma  
recovery should be to improve your  
quality of life on a daily basis." Rather  
than allowing oneself to be immersed  
in the past, "Memory processing  
should be a sideline, like physical  
therapy to heal physical injury."

2. The book is well-structured.  
Short and to the point, each chapter  
presents clear explanations through  
examples and composite case studies.  
Finally, suggestions are made that the

reader can choose to follow...or not!  
(She strongly encourages survivors'  
choice.)

3. Rothschild states from the outset  
that every individual is different, that  
some approaches will work for a  
particular person, while others won't,  
and that it is truly a waste of time to  
beat one's head against the wall—or  
to feel guilty—if a particular treatment  
approach fails to resolve a problem.  
Better to drop it and go on to  
something else.

4. She states categorically:  
"remembering is not required" to  
recover from trauma. True, some  
people benefit from remembering and  
processing their traumas...but for  
others, "memory work" exacerbates  
their symptoms and can lead to  
serious negative consequences.  
Rothschild provides guidance for  
people to help decide which category  
might apply to them. I believe just  
hearing a professional say "It's ok if  
you don't want to dig into this stuff,"  
is hugely helpful.

6. She doesn't claim to have all the  
answers. "You are ultimately the best  
expert about yourself."

If I actually wrote down everything I  
like that Rothschild says, I'd be

copying nine-tenths of her work. So if  
you're stuck in therapy that seems to  
be going nowhere, or if you are  
currently without a therapist, or if  
you're feeling overwhelmed, my  
suggestion is—buy this book, read it,  
and decide what works for you. —LW  
**Transgender Explained: For Those  
Who Are Not.**

By Joanne Herman. © 2009. Published by  
Authorhouse. \$14.95. 148 pgs.  
Paperback.

Joanne Herman is herself a male-  
to-female transgendered person. Her  
columns regularly appear on  
[www.Advocate.com](http://www.Advocate.com) and she also has  
a website of her own at  
[www.joanneherman.com](http://www.joanneherman.com) This book  
explains much about transgender  
issues—from the basics to the stigma  
and most points between. One area I  
hoped would be covered in more  
depth is post-surgical regret, since  
traumatized people may feel different  
genders within themselves which  
may—or may not—be "real"  
transgender concerns. Still, those who  
are confused about this topic or want  
to learn more about it may find this  
book helpful. It is available through  
Amazon and similar outlets, as well as  
Authorhouse.

**MV**



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and Art! Send MORE!  
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### COMING SOON!

#### JUNE 2010

Life Without Therapy. Changing  
Therapists. Coordinating Different  
Therapy Modalities.  
ARTWORK: Caring for Your Self(ves).  
DEADLINE: April 10, 2010.

#### AUGUST 2010

Sexuality: Choices & Dilemmas. Is  
Your Partner Involved in Your  
Therapy? Safely Opening Up  
About Abuse.  
ARTWORK: Loving Yourself  
and Others.  
DEADLINE: June 10, 2010.



### 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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