

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

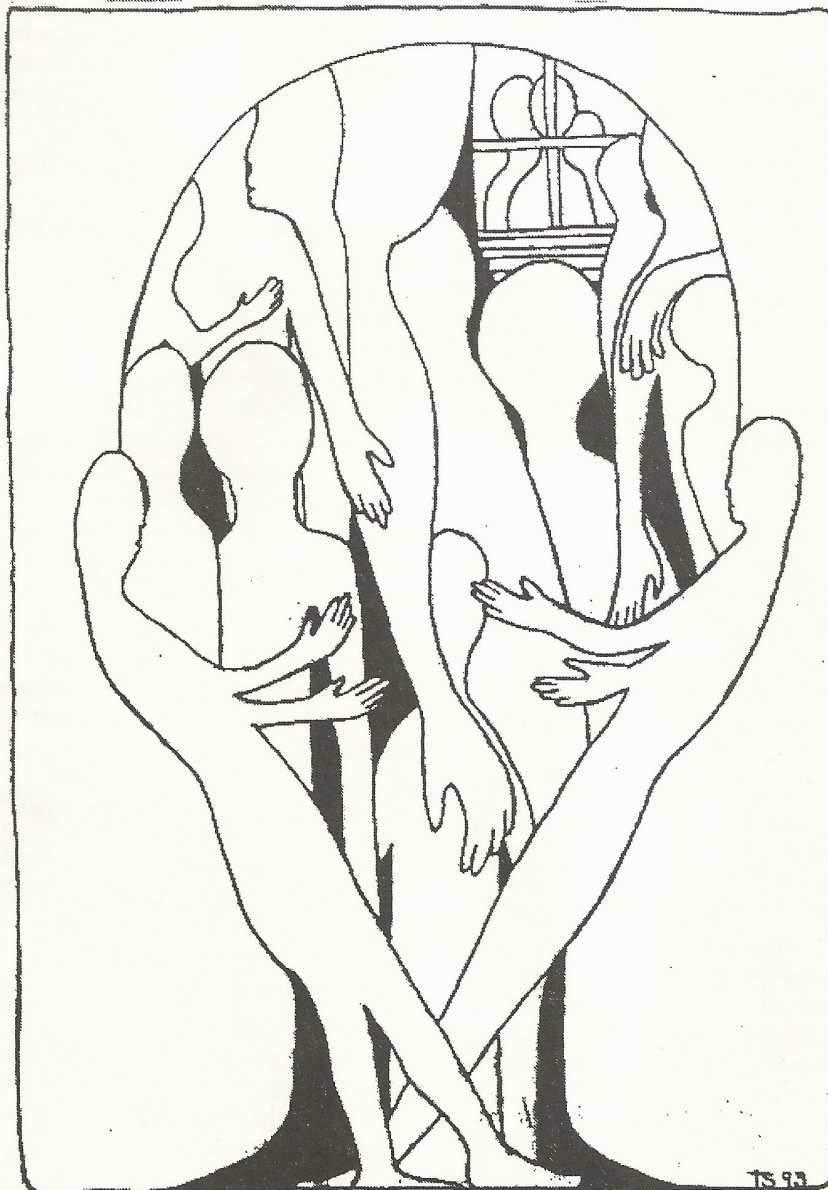
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MV

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Intimacy with a DID Partner—and Therapy, Too.

By Jasmine Kent

Jasmine and her husband Greg are both recovering from a dissociative disorder. They have been together for 30 years.

***D**on't touch me! But you just told me you wanted it! How could you do this? You're scaring me.*

Intimacy with a DID partner can be very tricky, especially if one of you has sexual issues. Sexual abuse in childhood can create alters that are terrified of sex or desperate for it. It can create alters with a different orientation than the host. Even when there has been no sexual abuse, just having a child alter out during a bed scene can create problems.

When I first got into therapy and was diagnosed with DID, my child alters were all over the place. When my husband and I tried to play around, the children were horrified. To solve the problem we identified one young lady part that Greg could call out and enjoy our activities. We also told all the children to go to a safe place in my mind and asked them not to stay out. I do not believe in manipulating your partner by calling out alters or sending them away under normal circumstances but with permission this is a rare exception. (Another exception is when you need your partner to get out an alter who can drive.) It is important never to traumatize child alters with sex.

It is even more important not to re-traumatize alters who were sexually abused. If they can't go to a safe place, you both may have to refrain until further healing is attained. This may require an extreme amount of understanding. Always ask what you may and may not do, beginning with the very first touch or flirtation. Slow down and make asking a regular part of your lovemaking. Suggesting what you would like your partner to do is also very helpful. Sometimes just a back rub or a foot massage can bring about the closeness you both need.

This brings up a very delicate topic. There are many ways to make love and all can be employed as long as they are pleasant, painless and

sanitary. If one partner cannot tolerate traditional sex and the other needs it, the use of a toy such as a vibrator may be very helpful as long as it involves both partners and is pleasing to both. Getting off on a tangent of your own will only lead you away from each other.

It is most important to create the right atmosphere ahead of time. The best lovemaking starts in the kitchen with a special dessert, flowers, or a few generous compliments. Set a time and use cues such as a negligee, dim lighting, candles or certain scents, that your alters can learn are hints for them to either get ready for lovemaking or disappear.

Finally, be tolerant of each other's scars from the battle. These can be emotional but they can also be physical. Weight gained from taking medication may present a challenge for a partner, as may scars from cutting.

Hollywood and pornography teach us to seek the perfect body and the perfect sexual experience, but in the long run, consistent love is what a couple really needs, not a fantasy.

When DID is a factor in your relationship, therapy for both partners is strongly recommended.

When couples are both DID, I recommend finding three therapists if at all possible. You need one for yourself and one for your partner. Plus you need a totally separate couple's counselor who also understands DID.

Greg and I used the same counselor for years. He did not progress very fast at all. He saw the situation as "my thing" and hid everything. His alters only came out after therapy when they would take him away for hours at a time. Not only did he need a different therapist from mine, he needed a different kind of therapist. He finally found a therapist who would really dig for stuff and he grew in leaps and bounds. Greg had about 21 alters and in one

year he integrated those to five. Then he quit therapy and has been doing fine with those five ever since. He has very severe back pain and needs those alters to help him function around it.

I, on the other hand, needed many years of gentle therapy. I strive to get well and am open and honest but easily triggered. My system involved over a hundred alters and is very complicated.

We tried couple's therapy with a non-DID therapist for a while and were hopelessly misunderstood. With a good DID therapist we made tremendous progress, enough to put our marriage on solid ground. Then we made another mistake. Greg started seeing her at the same time as we both did. Very soon it seemed like she was on his side of our issues. We had to stop that quickly.

Sure, it is expensive to have three therapists between you, but you and your relationship are worth it. The therapists don't have to be the most expensive ones out there. Aim for a very good fit for each situation.

One other thing—don't try to be each other's therapists. It doesn't work for a lot of complicated reasons. You need to be each other's equal partners. Don't unbalance your relationship by letting one of you relate in a superior way to the other. My husband says I have PhD in communication and he has a Kindergarten Certificate. Because he doesn't talk much it seems like he doesn't know much but he does. I have to learn to step back and be an encourager, not a fixer.

Each of you is responsible for your own therapy, but you as a couple are both responsible for the therapy you go to together

Introducing Adrian

By Vivian M. (representing the
Valefactors)

Although genetically I am female, I have a human male self as well. This is Adrian, who is the second most major "me", and he is actually male even though he's not particularly "manly" in the stereotypical sense. He has been a key player over the past few years and it feels is continually emerging. Who knows...he may some day take over as the dominant one in control. Perhaps due to his slight feminine looks and his caring, sensitive ways, it would be a good fit.



To us, he's the one who can take control in times and places where one of me might otherwise panic, feel troubled, get agitated, or generally not handle the situation well. In moments of trouble, he can be called upon as long as the one present / in control at the time is aware of this option. Some of my me's don't think to call on him. Other times he just seems to slide into place and any outside observer would have no clue a change from Vivian to Adrian happened. Although often changes are seamless with him, I am not sure about "integration." He's untainted by the trauma the rest of us dealt with because he came much later in life. It's odd, but especially as Vivian, I feel

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lots and lots of love for him. (My 8 year old within loves him like a close uncle. It's weird.) I can't predict what our collective future will be, but I hope it's good. Even if he or any of us never integrate, as long as we have one who is strong in spirit and able to save us from needless over-reactions like panic or flashbacks, then it's cool.

Of all the faces I know of within, his is one of only two that I want to look at. I think loving who he is and what he means to the rest of me / us is what makes me able to put pen to paper and draw him. My goal is to draw him with my 8 year old and possibly even me (Vivian). I don't look like him, but by enjoying what he looks like within, I know he reflects an unharmed outlook and life. He's left-handed and for some reason is just shy of legally blind in his left eye. He typically dresses in dark colors with a little contrasting white. I hope you enjoy my art work. I draw in ink, scan, then color in Photoshop. I'd like to submit more stuff in the future.

MV

A New Perspective

Wanted...Highly skilled people in possession of the following attributes:

Spontaneous
Able to travel at a moment's notice
Experts in division
Creative thinkers
Knowledge of unraveling complicated and outdated data
Ability to hold and be trusted with confidential information
Flexible and able to work with diverse personalities, ages, and genders
Must be strong with the ability to persevere

Educational experience:
Majored in survival
Holds a Masters in Life
D.I.D. required

By Laura et al

MV

Therapists are Human

By LisaBri

Having been in therapy for the better part of twenty years I've seen many different approaches from therapists, doctors and mental health workers.

This is the story of how my memories of ritual assault and childhood sexual assault have been processed by different therapies along the healing spectrum. Its sister article, "*A Survivor In Therapy*," is on my website, The DS at www.dissociatedsurvivor.com.

I grew up with Dissociative Identity Disorder, which is the creation of inner parts (alters), split from the original child to deal with overwhelming emotional, physical and sexual assault. (For a more in-depth definition of Dissociative Identity Disorder or DID please refer to my article, "*Dissociative Identity Disorder*" on my website, The DS.)

At the age of twenty five, I ran away from my family in the East to the West coast of the country, hoping to leave my trauma and my unhappiness behind me. I quickly learned that the geographical cure did not work. I was just as suicidal, just as addicted to drugs and alcohol, still suffering from severe chronic anxiety and almost completely dysfunctional. I couldn't sleep at night due to nightmares and night terrors. I tried to hold a business together during the day, but spent more time in the hospital than I did working.

In the early 90s, I was diagnosed with everything from Schizophrenia to Pre Menstrual Syndrome. I was told to get a hobby, to not drink in the evenings, and one psychiatrist continually pulled a white packet full of white pills from his desk drawer every time I showed any kind of emotion.

This seemed to be the key that ten years later I learned was the root of my healing... emotion. Every therapist, doctor or psychiatrist I had ever seen wanted me to stuff the feelings away. But where could they go? The more I 'stuffed,' the worse I became until I landed in a locked ward of a psychiatric hospital. I sobered up, threw away the drugs and alcohol and finally found a therapist to work with, KJ (not her real name).

I thought KJ was my savior. I arrived at her home battered and worse for wear, ready to do anything to curb the intense feelings I was experiencing. During the five years of therapy with her, I was out of hospital more often than in, and quickly diagnosed with DID.

Early in my work with KJ, we discovered a division between my inside parts. A line divided my brain into left side parts (alters), and right side parts. It took a year to find the purpose of this division. I learned my left side parts were ritually abused and my right side parts had been subjected to emotional, physical and sexual assault by my mother, father, two older brothers, and other members of the community. I was too far into my relationship with KJ to see that her therapeutic approach was detrimental.

KJ exchanged the process of stuffing feelings away to stuffing away what came to be termed 'bad' inside parts. The 'bad' parts were the left side and were labeled evil and needed to be dealt with harshly. We discovered they were 'sabotaging' therapy sessions by creating chaos in the system, preventing any healing. These were the inner parts whose job it was to ensure we didn't participate in therapy, and hence, talk about the assaults the system had been subjected to. If a part did manage to break through and talk, they would later be punished by the hierarchy of the left side parts by burning or cutting into the skin of our body. Today, we bear the scars caused by these early misinterpreted inner parts. They were just doing the jobs assigned to them by our abusers. If they didn't, they knew they would be punished. At this time, no one understood that we were safe by then, as the core of the cult was dead.

These parts were accused of 'poisoning' KJ, and to this day, we still have a police report stating the possibility of guilt for this 'crime' somewhere deep within the bowels of a police records building. When KJ found her born-again faith, we were sent to her church for Christian counseling and sat through endless Sunday services. She had the congregation pray for us, and KJ burned sage and other herbs prior to our arrival at

her office and after leaving a session. We allowed these practices to continue for a year because we felt we had no choice. KJ had been there for us at the beginning, and we had been, for the most part, out of hospital since seeing her.

Other things began to arise during our therapy together:

KJ became inconsistent with her support. One week she was buying presents for our inside kid parts, and the next week, we appeared for our session and waited an hour for her to show up. She never did. She had forgotten our regular standing appointment and had gone boating with friends. Later that night when we finally did reach her, she told us she could not accommodate us for the next two weeks, as she was going out of town.

In order to make our right side more strongly defended against the left side, KJ attempted a forced integration between the host, Lisa, and the strongest defender of our system, Brian (Bri). It was a hypnotic marriage ceremony which took place in an imaginary forest, and as KJ lowered her voice, in a sing-song fashion, we began to relax. We were sitting on the couch with KJ talking to our right side. All was quiet inside. There were no voices, no crying out, and no laughter. It was as if every inside part knew something was about to happen to change their world.

The sunlight filtered through the window onto our faces and the sound of birds and dogs could be heard. At that moment, we felt if we opened our eyes we would see the trees and birds and squirrels scampering around. KJ droned on about how we were a couple about to become one; that it was a very important piece of therapy and we needed to let the wall crumble down to the forest bed, long enough to let Bri cross the line and meet me in the middle.

"Stand as close as possible to the each other in your inner world. Hold hands and think that you want this joining to take place," she repeated over and over. "It is very important for Lisa and Bri to join together."

We continued this procedure a number of times, until in fear I opened my eyes.

There had been a shift.

"Lisa? Bri?" KJ asked.

"It's me, Lisa, Bri," we said at the same time. KJ was ecstatic at the effectiveness of this hypnotic fusion.

It had worked, perhaps, on the outside, but it was too confusing inside. I tried to talk, but I couldn't find the proper words. I tried to convey to KJ there was a complication which she hushed away. Julie, our five year old part, appeared just as we joined. At that moment, we were a threefold alter who had no idea on how to live in this singleton world. We finally made it out to the car and stalled it all the way home as we couldn't operate the stick shift. After three days of not being able to function and carry out simple tasks such as unlocking a door or preparing a meal, we broke apart, but not before deciding never to integrate again.

It felt as if our core strength, (Bri), who had been the basis of our survival for so long almost crumbled because of a botched attempt by an outsider to gain control of our personality system. KJ was wrong. An outsider can't revamp a system that has been in place for forty years and make it work, no matter how logical it seems or how right the therapist believes herself to be.

When we discovered an inside part whose main function was to hold pain both from the present day and from traumatic memories, KJ felt it only right to have her banished and isolated from the rest of the system. Miss Pain was sent away to an internal imaginary beach, alone with all her pain. She had no one to talk to, cry with or hold. Years after we stopped seeing KJ we attempted to find her, to tell her the world had changed, we had changed, and we wanted her back. I am happy to say that we found her and to our pleasant surprise she was in better shape than we could have hoped. She was smart. Those years at the beach were spent ridding herself of the pain that so often led to self-harm. She revealed to us that when the tide came in at her beach, she took a little piece of pain and put it in the tide. When the tide went out, the pain went with it, therefore, making her isolated life just a little more tolerable.

KJ was not the only therapist to suggest the destruction of inner parts. After the fall of KJ, we were rerouted to a psychiatrist who practiced hypnosis. Due to our ability to dissociate at any given

moment, we were highly susceptible to this type of therapy. This doctor had the strongest right side parts gather all the left side parts, many times forcibly, put them into a rocket and send them over the highest imaginary mountain into space. We did this routine with him once a week for over three years.

Until I met my current psychologist, MA (not her real name), I thought ritually abused clients processed memories which had been triggered by present life, using the same approach as KJ. When I was triggered into a memory, KJ would plunge in looking for the content of the memory prior to finding out which parts of me were involved and gaining their trust. We found out, too late, that an inner part is not going to tell a stranger secrets and stories that, through coercion, they were told never to reveal. The teaching of silence and secrecy was not only for their own protection, but for the protection of a friend, therapist or brother who had been threatened by pain and death, as well.

Julie, our five year old who had suffered assault at home, was the first inner kid brave enough to talk to KJ. The threat that her daddy would go to prison made Julie even more reluctant to take this risk of exposure. She and KJ developed a rapport early on but it still took months for Julie to tell KJ one piece of one memory. KJ's reaction to that partial memory was to praise Julie and buy her a present. To a five year old, this adult connection made her feel loved, a feeling she had never had. The feelings she had experienced while being raped by her daddy were never discussed. When KJ found her born-again Christian faith and rejected us when we refused to continue going to her church and Christian counseling, Julie was hurt the most, and in some ways, will always be scarred.

After a year of searching for a new therapist, I found MA. I will never forget our first session—it scared the hell out of me. We sat in an office so unlike KJ's, who operated out of her basement with washing machines sometimes on a constant go, distracting us from our work. MA's office contained a play area for kids or inner kids. The walls were adorned with pictures that did not trigger any of us, but most importantly, the air was fresh without the odor of burnt incense that we were beginning to detest at KJ's.

After, introducing our system to MA,

the different layers and sides, she said to me: "I will work with your right side; however, we need to do a lot of healing with the left side parts. This is going to be my starting focus."

I was flabbergasted. She wanted to work with the left side, the inner cult parts. Was she crazy or what? After spending almost a decade with doctors and therapists doing all they could possibly do to get rid of those inner parts, this took me by complete surprise.

The first action, MA said, was to gain trust with the higher ups of the left side hierarchy, namely, the High Priestess and the Satan parts. Fear rang through the system—they knew the power these groups had and punishment was only a request away. MA explained that there were no 'bad' or 'good' parts, the so called 'bad' parts were just scared little kids. They were programmed ritually abused parts who were doing their 'jobs.' The pain and suffering they were subjected to during rituals forced them to hurt the body, become homicidal, threaten other parts, and cause fear and terror to the inside world.

We would discover one of the benefits of gaining the trust of the higher ups first was their ability to teach their subordinates on the lower levels. We have nine levels so the movement of information down the steps has been a benefit to our system. As well, the higher ups, usually at level 9, have the most programmed rules regarding administering pain and can now stop the hurting of the system a great deal of the time.

It seemed as if we had only begun that first year, when we entered our next phase of healing—memory processing. One of the first things our inner parts needed was to be updated to the year and place we were living in. Various ones had stopped growing at a range of different ages, and each of them felt the body was that same size and age as at the time of the abuse. Often, when asked what year it was, they replied '1975,' and they thought the last time they had been at a ritual was 'yesterday' or 'last week.'

MA came prepared with newspapers, calendars, and diaries showing the current date. Many alters were astonished so much time had passed as they sat in their pain. MA was relentless—she never seemed tired of telling the same information over and over as new alters—

Therapists are Human , Cont.

trust built—began to emerge.

The memory resolution process was divided into two sections. The first, and most important, was for each part in a particular memory, to come forward to state his or her part in the memory. If an inner part wished not to participate he or she was not forced; it was their choice. This was something that we had never experienced before. As they all grouped together, MA continued to tell us we were safe, they couldn't get us anymore, and (my favorite) "Your mother is old and has blue hair."

She explained that the memory retrieval process was like watching a video. The first time through the memory, there were just sights or sounds, but no feelings of any kind. The feelings were put into an imaginary garbage can, with a tight lid, and we had a strong inner part watch over it to ensure nothing leaked out. We were left with the story line and pictures of the memory. We held the remote and could fast forward or replay or stop if we felt it necessary. While watching the movie, it was up to the memory participants if they wanted to say out loud what they saw to MA or just keep it internal. We needed to say it, to rid it from our mouth and body.

MA was close by and was consistently re-orienting us to the year, her office, and the fact that what we were seeing wasn't happening at that moment. We were living through a memory that had happened a long time ago. In order to recover a memory, to reclaim a life, we needed to go through this stage.

Next came putting the feelings and body sensations into the pictures and storyline. We put the whole video together and at a rate only we could control, we felt the pain, then let it go, from those long years ago.

Going through the feelings of having been raped, having unnecessary 'surgeries', or watching another child performing what we knew we would have to do cannot be expressed in words. The pain, shame, and guilt are things no therapist can totally prepare you for. Having gone through the experience hundreds of times, I can say that experiencing sexual feelings in the presence of another, while going through feelings associated with sexual assault, is the most humiliating and degrading aspect of the criminal act. But in order to be free, totally, one hundred percent free

of crimes committed against us, we found the strength we gained in childhood and built upon it.

Often when the memory was completed, there was a warm waterfall image from MA that left us clean and warm and allowed us to go to sleep on the inside knowing we had just accomplished what no other therapist had ever given us—freedom from our pain.

Sometimes the inner parts would change their names. The High Priestess parts are now called High Protectors and they look out for the system. The Satan parts are now called Simons and their jobs of inflicting pain are turned into helping the others.

Sometimes we need to do the memory two or three times, although the inner parts who have shared their part need not go through it again. An inner part, from fear or from not being close enough to the surface when gathering the participants together, may require repetition. We have had the experience of having completed a memory and finding an inner part 6 months or a year later, that held a part of the memory and did not put it in at the time.

A last word on the dreaded "I" word. Integration is a natural conclusion to memory processing when all inner parts of me have completed their respected pieces of memories, and it happens quickly, quietly and without force. But most importantly it has no outside interference. Though we stand stoically against integration, we have two integrated parts in the inner world. It was a process we could not prevent and has had no long term hurtful effect to our healing.

The purpose of this article was not to 'therapist bash.' With the passage of time, we hope there will be more therapists like MA, who are fearless advocates for processing memories, complete with their feelings, as well as their content. It is not acceptable to hide or banish inner parts for whatever reason a therapist may feel. Labeling alters 'good' and 'bad' has to be eliminated. Something happened to the body that an inner part was created for. All parts are equal and all deserve the respect of the mental health community.

All survivors need to know that healing is possible, and as painful as reliving a memory is, the benefit on the other side is peace and freedom.

For all therapists, learn all you can about Dissociative Identity Disorder and ritual assault. The chances that you will have a client with either one of these is great, so you need to be ready to help them to the other side in a safe and healthy way. Most importantly, if you are attempting something new with your client, and she says it doesn't feel right—listen to her. She knows her system in a way no one else could ever imagine. Good Luck!

MV*Butterfly*

A delicate little butterfly
With wings of colors so vibrant
Only muted by pain held tight
Waiting to fly away...

To get out of this game.
She stretches her wings
So stiff from being held captive
Just waiting for that moment
To soar above the stars.

Slow to start, aching with
anticipation...

To finally be what she wants to be.
Gently floating up into the air
Stretching her wings she has hid for so
long.

Colors unleashing to beauty most
rare...

Talents unfolding like a little child.
Becoming aware of new places and
things,
Acknowledging the past but beginning
to soar...

Into the future, with curiosity and
learning
Among the stars.

A better life awaits. Unafraid...
Beginning again.

*By Julies*MV

Giving Up Suicide As a Defense

By Jan T.

I'm sure "being suicidal" is a topic well known to trauma survivors. And I believe my recent therapy sessions about this topic might truly be of interest and of help to some MV readers.

I have been in therapy for quite some time—and have made great strides. I have achieved integrations, I am no longer on disability and am working successfully as a nurse, I have raised a wonderful son, I have implemented skills in making true friends, etc. *and*, I have given up *many* old defenses and old coping mechanisms, such as self-harm. I used to be an avid "cutter." I no longer cut.

However, one thing I have admitted to my therapist is that I still, always, keep the idea of "suicide" in the back of my mind, as my "ace in the hole." Now, I am *not* actively suicidal. My life is really quite good right now. But, this is one defense that I just have never let go of.

My therapist, Dr. Jim, asked me: "What does the thought of suicide do for you?" I replied: "It's my way out!" We then had several sessions about this topic. And, the bottom line was, it's not even the thought of "death" so much that I'm seeking. I'm holding on to achieving a state of mind that I developed as a defense when I was only 4 yrs. old.

To explain: Although I was the victim of many types of abuse for over 17 years of my childhood, the earliest was being beaten daily by my mother with a leather strap. If I cried, I got beat worse. So, the only solution was to achieve a state of mind where you tell yourself: "It doesn't matter....I don't care....Nothing matters..." After all, if nothing matters, you can survive anything! Well, I kept that survival skill through all the abuse and it served me well! But, it grew and blossomed, and at the age of 17, it culminated in a suicide attempt. And, only by the grace of God, did I come out of the coma to be here writing to you today.

At any rate, I made an early connection in my mind between several things: 1. "I don't care and Nothing matters" means you can withstand *anything* and *nothing can hurt you*. 2. If nothing matters, you can kill yourself because you have no connection to anything in this world!

So, as Dr. Jim and I continued our discussions, and I realized that it's more this "state of mind" that I used as the defense rather than actual "death" per se, I admitted that, yes, I still want that "way out....just in case." Maybe there is no trauma in my life right now, but being a trauma survivor, there is always a fear of "what if."

Anyway, as I was thinking more about this, I realized: How can I use this old defense, anyway? How could I get myself into that state of mind where I say: "Nothing matters" and I'm "NOT connected" to anything...when I am SO connected now to life, to my family, to my friends, in my life today?

I freaked out! I got so very scared that so much has changed; that this old defense might not work anymore. So, I tried to experiment. I tried to get myself back into the "I don't care" state of mind. I couldn't do it. Life is just too important to me.

At my next session, I yelled at Dr. Jim: "This is what therapy has done for me!?! Don't tell me I can't NOT CARE! Don't tell me I can't kill myself if I want to!"

But, I think I was yelling more at myself than at him. I was having a 2 yr. old temper tantrum. I was "kicking and screaming" at change, at giving up an old defense which had served me well throughout the years.

Yes, I had my temper tantrum for a while. But, then, my psychiatrist came up with an excellent analogy. He compared suicide to "pulling the cord on your parachute."

And he said: "Of course you can't pull the cord right now...because no one has pushed you out of a plane and you're not falling to earth right now. You don't NEED the parachute

now." He continued: "I'm sure that if someone pushes you out of a plane, you'll do what it takes. For example — if there's a nuclear bomb, and you're the last survivor on earth and you're dying of radiation poisoning, you'll probably kill yourself."

In other words, he was telling me that suicide, and "Disconnecting" are extreme measures used for extreme circumstances. My childhood was filled with extreme abuse. And, I'm not in an extreme situation now.

I don't need suicide now.

I don't need the "I don't care, Nothing Matters" mindset now. So, I don't need to keep suicide in my back pocket anymore. It certainly takes a lot of getting used to, this new concept. I have cosidered suicide as an "old friend" for many years. But, I once considered cutting an "old friend" as well.

There comes a time for giving up the old and embracing the new.

I wish all MV readers the strength to "move on" when needed.

MV



Calling Out

By The Kidsteam and Anonymous Partner

The following is an explanation of their partnership and lifestyle by a dissociative partner and one who is not. "Calling Out" refers to the request by name for a certain part of the personality to come forward. It is often appropriate in therapy, but is not always essential or desirable elsewhere.

We need to be the *me* (aka "calling out") to be successful at whatever we are doing at the time. Whether it is cooking a meal or paying the bills or driving a semi truck to planting a garden or holding your hand... it's a flow of many that work as a team.

We are "One Team," the kids' team... otherwise known as The Kidsteam. And with a few rules and the earned respect of each other inside there is no need for individual recognition in this physical world.

Now that doesn't mean if you looked closely you wouldn't see the different team members. But then again most people don't know what to look for or even know to look, and then we are pretty good at hiding it.

We are such a "We" that the automatic process of using/building on individual (insider's) strengths not only helped us survive back then (during the abuse) but it's our foundation for surviving a world that doesn't welcome us. For those (including Mental Health Professionals) that even dare to accept the DSM IV dx of DID have the need to frame us as a disorder or frame us as they picture us within their own belief box. This physical world struggles so in finding the language for God's intervention for so many of His children in surviving the darkness of others.

In working with our therapist we have learned that it's possible to reach outside of that survival mode and truly live... to shine!

Ok, imagine having a handful of "Pick-up sticks" (the game) and you drop the colorful sticks on the ground. Now look at the sticks (pick out one) and ask another person to pick up that stick but without telling which color. How is that person ever going to know which stick you are talking about without a "Name?"

How is there going to be communication, cooperation, comfort, and coordination inside without being able to identify each other?

But for us (at this time) this power of a name is for our inside communication—it's our key! Not one that we are willing to hand over. We need the power of many (broad shoulders) to carry the responsibility of sorting out our truth as we learn and grow together. We parent each other, for the good of all as the goal.

The work that we do with our therapist supports our team work, our respect of each other, our belief that there is a place in this world for each of us to shine. Our therapist doesn't "call us out" per se, by a individual name, but nevertheless she does "call out" because of our hunger to learn. So many questions inside which lead to even more questions. There is a line (inside) with their questions in hand. When the first Q is answered they turn around and get back in line.

And then there are the days when someone has a bigger need and the line has to be put on hold. Those days lay heavy on the body for not only "the issue" at hand but for the loss of individual time of many with our therapist.

By the way did I tell you that we have the world's best therapist? She's so so smart, and you know what? She sees us! And she doesn't demand names. All are welcomed!

So for now we need to be the "me" in that moment, when functioning in this world. We have learned to build on our strengths and successes. And in doing so we have learned that we need each other. That the shame is not ours even with this world's need to frame us as a disorder. Our shine is growing!

Clue: Shopping for flowers at the green house. Lil ones only pick flowers that are in bloom because to lil ones, flowers are blooms. So we make that second shopping trip. No big deal!

Clue: Wal-Mart shopping, a one stop store. As far as we are concerned Wal-Mart only has one door. Facing the store, the door is on the right and you will find our car/truck parked in the lane straight out from that door no matter how far we have to walk.

Why? "Calling Out." There is one team member that holds the food list, another that needs to buy that can of paint to finish a painting project, maybe another that holds the fact that we need dog food, the one that tracks our budget, then to run into a old friend. All of us depend on finding that our car/truck is parked as planned.

By The Kidsteam

Just for the record—I'm the lucky one. The perspective that my partner and all inside carry has changed my life forever in the most amazing ways.

I had a childhood that was pretty good. I was molested once at the tender age of 8 by a friend of my dad's who was staying with us. One molestation...one time...is all it takes to change a life forever as you know, and it did mine and my sister's. She was also molested and affected more ways than I ever knew till we got older and talked about it.

I still feel my childhood was wonderful, and I am so thankful for that. My parents were so good to us, and gave me love and guidance to be the adult I am today. Knowing what so many survivors endured growing up makes me even more grateful to my parents.

Today, I am a 45 year old mom to three amazing, beautiful women who bring light into my life every day. I have two (almost three!) grandchildren who bring me even more light and love than I ever believed possible.

I was divorced over 12 years ago from a very abusive man. He is the father of my two youngest daughters and stepdad (awful stepdad) to my oldest.

I am bipolar but have therapy every week with a wonder therapist whom I've been seeing for 10 years now. Medications also help me cope with this difficult issue.

I met my partner online about 20 years ago, in a support group for child abuse survivors. We were friends for years and chatted occasionally online.

We shared a lot as friends for several years, and eventually, we both knew there was more to the relationship. The rest is history. We have grown so much together, and I love them all so very much. It's a total blessing for me.

I don't know everyone's name inside, and that's OK for me. "Calling

out" ones inside my partner isn't something I have ever done. To me it's like acknowledging those who don't wish to be acknowledged. It could even feel like a disrespect to them.

I want to respect their space and maintain the trust established between us. So I always want them to come forward when they want or need to because of a role they have in the system, in my partner's life.

As each one comes to speak with me, to receive hugs, love, soothing words, it's not as much about who I am talking to as it is about what the needs/wants/or how important it is to simply just be heard,

How do I know what is needed or wanted? Through time I have learned this by listening. I can feel the needs by hearing the words, or seeing actions of whomever is present. Even sometimes noticing those who are just there listening, which many times are little ones.

To me it is like a flow. My partner and I share such a deep relationship that I am very intuitive when it comes

to who is there.

It has taken time for me to be at this place with them and I am so happy about that.

As I listen to them speak, I might know "who" by the words that are used. Perhaps words a little one might say.

Again, it is a flow between all parties involved. Whomever is there, I just listen and what comes next from me is what I instinctually feel I should do. I respond from that deep place within myself.

The conversation comes so easy between us, and I have respected them by not saying, "OK, who am I talking to right now?" That's something I don't and won't ever do.

I love each of them so very much. What I do/say/how I react, is very important. Calling ones' out is not something I feel is needed or necessary.

By The Anonymous Partner

MV

How to be Supportive of People Who Have MPD/DID

By Aaron G.

We were support friends and advocates for more than 18 years, long before we knew we were survivors. We know what it is like to love someone who is suffering and feeling helpless when they are in pain. While trauma-based multiplicity is a complex subject, here are a few simple lessons we've learned along the way:

1) Consistency - The most important thing is to show consistency when forming connections with a survivor. This means keeping your promises, admitting your mistakes and doing what you say you're going to do.

2) Learning- There are many books on multiplicity or dissociative disorder readily available on Amazon in addition to hundreds of survivors' sites and advocacy resources available via the internet. While each survivor is different, the more you read the better

understanding you'll develop.

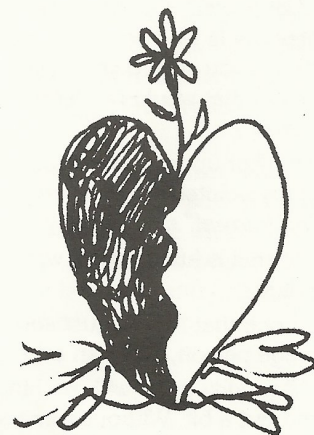
3) Open Mindedness - We survivors are as unique as non-survivors. Reading Sybil, Rabbit, or other popular books on multiplicity may be helpful but many multiples are nothing like them. It's unfortunate that the most successful multiple is often unknown. For just one example, see Herschel Walker's book *Breaking Free: My Life with Dissociative Identity Disorder*, on Amazon.com

4) Compassion - We will never fully know what our survivor friend experienced but expressing a genuine love and concern will go a long way. We also need to develop compassion for ourselves when hearing of very disturbing aspects of the abuse they endured.

5) Having a sense of humor/fun - This is a big part of my healing and

an important aspect of how I run my group. We all need to laugh more, experience more joy and happiness. It's actually healing on a spiritual/psychological level to experience genuine happiness and joy as a part of our recovery.

MV



What's In a Word?

By Nobody in Particular

Words are how we communicate and think. Some words are more powerful than others. And some can cause a problem to develop into a crisis. For example: "Panic Attack." It's like 'Bam!' something is attacking you and adds fear and terror to the panic ATTACK. But why do we have to call it a panic 'attack'? Why not a panic *event*? Or simply—*fear*. It's about how it is perceived. If I think "Oh no! I'm being attacked by panic!" it sets me up to experience it worse than it could be.

Or think about the phrase "mentally ill." That's a negative. Why not say "I have some problems with my mental health." That's a positive that implies...no, states...that I have 'mental health.' I simply have some problem-areas within it. Not all of me is mentally ill – just some areas of my life have problems.

Then again – why should I allow people who know I have DID put me outside of the "normal"? What is "normal"? A word that considers the majority of people who have certain traits as "normal" and if you are different, it's a bad thing.

At one point in the last couple of years I had some jerk putting me down when he learned I had DID. I got so mad. I said, "Well, I'm normal, too. Just that my normal is different from yours. And to be honest, I like my normal. And I don't want your kind of normal if it means hurting other people who are different. What is it? Are you scared you have a problem that would not let you be "normal"?"

He shut up fast, and I could see that my pointed spear thrust "*you not being normal*" scared him.

Normal is just another way to say Average.

I hope that I'm not just some average person, living an average life.

All muddy grays with nothing to stand out a bit. Without some skill or talent that makes me different and

interesting to a friend or family member.

D.I.D. Dissociative Identity Disorder. Gee, *did*. Having done something. I think the big DID—once people got past the fear of our being different—it's really unique. It's all in how we see it. I laugh and tease my singleton friends. "Hey what if DID/MPD was the "normal" and the majority of people had others inside, and the people without "others" were the mentally ill people. What if I was in that big "normal" and you as a singleton were the weirdo?"

For 'way too many years I tried to hide it, and boy to be honest, it made me appear even stranger. When I started to let people see I was still me, but had different parts or ways to act and express myself, my life got a bit easier. People could accept me as being different, yet still like them in many ways. I found it easier to find where I fit in life, dealing with other people.

So, *disabled* – sounds pretty bad. Unable to do things most people can. Broken, somehow. When does disability become ability? As a person with DID with complex polyfragmentation for the frosting on the cake, integration has not been possible. Once I could accept this, and say "Ok, how can we work together to improve the quality of life?" we began trying different things to help us all be more "functional." We also found very successful ways, too.

The first and most important is acceptance. Accept the DID, but not the problems it brings. Accepting each other, but not acting-out behaviors.

Learning how to reward and discipline—never punishment. But as we accept DID and being different, we also need to know change is also as important.

Change is hard. It's got this big unknown—"Oh, what will life be like? What's going to happen if I change

this or that?" Change—mmm—scares me too much and those inside fight it.

What people don't quite understand...everyone changes a bit with different new life events. And change can be good or bad. It depends on how we act. Some change is pretty much by choice. Some isn't. But the part of change that seems hard to deal with, for both singletons and DIDs, is that it takes effort, work, and willingness to allow parts of life to become different.

What we change and how we change it is our own choice. When I get frustrated and talk to one of my ACT Team members, they laugh. "But it's your normal...and you do a great job with it too," they say. It's not going to just —whoosh—happen fast. I'm 49 now, and have been in the mental health system for 20+ years. I'm doing great, but healing will be a part of my daily life until I'm sent to whatever the after life holds.

Willingness!

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Or as we all say it, "the willingness to see the difference."

And for my last what's-in-a-word...*time*! It takes time to change. It's not going to be a consistent, always successful process. Some days I'm great at my changes. Other days I'm "Oh grrrr. Here I am and I'm messing up again!" Or simply put—being human. We all have our good days, our bad days, and when we're willing, we can try to change parts of our lives. Some things may be a bit too hard. That's why we have been given a future. Change what we can today, and try again in the future when we have changed small stuff. The bigger, more scary changes will be smaller and easier to deal with then. Feeling the experiences to change the small stuff helps us grow stronger to face the harder stuff.

Once I was told by a shrink I'd be useless—a parasite on society. But I now have made a lot of changes. I have a place of acceptance, respect, and what I hear about a lot, now—abilities. It wasn't an easy path to journey on, but it was and is worth it.

As for what I'm working on this time to change? I have a terror to let anyone see anything I write. So most of what I've shared in *Many Voices* is art and cartoons. Writing was not accepted in my home. My mom was paranoid about it, even to the extent that she would not make us do our homework.

So we have decided it's time to face this fear and actually stick this piece in the snail mail, hidden between some art stuff, and then hand it to an ACT Team member with a forced smile: "Ya mind mailing this for me?"

Change is good. I prefer mine in \$10s and \$20s, not nickels and dimes.

MV



The Challenges of Dual Disorders

By Karen

Many of the people I know who have substance abuse problems also have accompanying mental illness of some sort, making it a double challenge to work toward recovery. When that mental illness diagnosis includes dissociation the challenge becomes almost impossible at times.

The first time I entered a room of AA and said in front of about 50 people "my name is Karen and I am an alcoholic," I felt an enormous sense of relief that it was out in the open and no longer just my secret. Then along came new alters, new memories, and losing time again through dissociation. And these alters want to drink. Not to get drunk kind of drink, but a glass of wine with pizza or pasta. One even asked for a beer, which I dislike immensely!

Through what I can only attribute to divine intervention, I asked a woman to be my sponsor who turned out to be a former psychiatric, public health, and administrative nurse from New York City, who had some understanding of DID, but who was also willing to read and to learn more about it in order to help me better. But she is stymied. My psychiatrist, who also does my therapy, has read the 12-Step book in order to try to help support me through this as well. She, too, is stymied. So the question is how to stay sober when new parts emerge and do not know or understand the difficulty we face in staying sober or the importance of not taking that first drink.

While I take my sobriety very seriously, and work the steps and attend meetings, and speak with my sponsor, talk of my DID or any part of my mental illness is not welcome at AA. Yet for me, the two are very intertwined. Had it not been for the DID, I probably would have continued as a social drinker, with an occasional glass of wine.

We do not have any groups around where I live that deal with dual disorders. I use an online alcoholism

support group that has a sub group for dual disorders as a means of support. While I am the only member who is dissociative, others face similar problems and can be empathetic. It helps, but it isn't enough.

Inside parts who have been out for a long time try to keep the newer parts in check, but aren't always able to maintain control. So far, I have been lucky, I have not had a drink, although there have been parts that have bought wine and have gone so far as to actually pour a glass. We switched at the last moment and I called my sponsor in a panic. The glass was full and I did not taste any wine in my mouth and so believe that I did not drink. But it was a wake up call that was too close for comfort.

So every night now, when we gather for what we call our town meeting, we say the Serenity Prayer. We ask for help to stay sober one more day and thank our Higher Power for allowing us to stay sober that day. This way, all the parts know what we are doing and why. Sobriety is a topic of conversation at each meeting. Some feel that we are being punitive to them, not yet understanding the mind/body connection. Some have done some reading and tell us that there are cases of people with DID who have physiological changes when parts come out, so maybe that would be the case for us as well. They could drink, but I as the host, can not. Still, everyone has honored our desire to live sober. We feel better physically and emotionally, our depression is lessened most of the time, and we have the strength and strategies to cope with what life throws our way without drinking.

Still, I live with the fear that I will lose my sobriety to a part who just wants a glass of wine with dinner. And that I don't know what to do with. My name is Karen (and company), and I am an alcoholic.

MV

Dissociation, Sexuality, and Relationships

By Charlotte Y.

In my life, and maybe in yours, dissociation, sexuality, and relationships are interdependent and intertwined. I became dissociative at a very early age due to sexual assaults and other abuses within my family relationships (primarily from both parents.)

This unhappy situation led to a whole list of damaging consequences. Thanks to the dissociation, some results directly conflict with others. These include massive distrust of authority and serious lack of trust across the board; fear of intimacy; physical numbing especially during sexual activity—while simultaneously engaging in compulsive sexual behaviors; excruciating guilt; broad swaths of ignorance and denial, and much more.

However, while the abuse made adult relationships a real challenge for me, at the same time my ability to dissociate preserved my capacity to feel desire for healthy love and affection. In addition it allowed me the willingness—to some extent—to give back to a partner what that person needs and wants, as well. Because I had to constantly gauge my parents' needs and use that information to either soothe them or avoid them, I am exquisitely sensitive to the needs of others. This is both a help and a curse in developing solid relationships.

I'm fortunate in being able to function well, outwardly, in most parts of my life (education, work, surface-friendships, etc.) so I have muddled through "normal" society by keeping my own "weirdness" under wraps. Only a handful of my friends and acquaintances, lovers and former lovers, know about my abuse and dissociative "issues."

In the past, as a teen and young adult, I was sure I was crazy. Since my diagnosis and therapy began, I've learned a lot more about my situation, and the roots of my problems in establishing a healthy relationship with

someone I love who loves me in return. My deepest, most heartfelt goal is to have that "healthy relationship" with a member of the opposite sex. But my abuse history makes sexual relationships of any kind so complicated—it's difficult for me to put the problems into words. I both want sex and fear sex. I am compelled to try to connect beyond a surface level, and then to "run away" or find – or manufacture – reasons why a relationship "won't work." Other times, I gravitate unerringly to abusive or very sick partners...we're talking severe alcoholics, drug addicts, people with violent tendencies, etc. (I don't personally drink or take drugs, and I'm not especially violent except inside my own skull...but somehow I find these people and accept them into my life.)

When past relationships went sour, I always looked to see what I'd done "wrong." It has literally taken years of therapy for me to begin to realize that my goal of having a "healthy relationship" largely depends on me becoming healthier myself. I need to make better choices and teach myself to change old habits developed during my early years. The old habits are the hardest to change. Even when I "know better" it is so easy to flip back into familiar patterns.

I now know, intellectually, that it doesn't make sense to accept someone's words that they will do X, if they don't subsequently deliver. But emotionally – if someone promises me something – I believe them (or part of me believes them) while simultaneously, I don't believe them at all. (Only people who know dissociation will understand that dichotomy.) My lovers—even the few relatively healthy ones—are often damned if they do, and damned if they don't. If they treat me right, on the surface I'm very appreciative, but underneath I'm suspicious as hell. If they treat me wrong, sometimes I show hurt—but more often, I just can't possibly believe that they meant

to do THAT to me, and surely they will change! (While, underneath, I know darn well that their mistreatment is likely to continue for as long as I put up with it. Which is, generally, "forever.")

Because my relationships frequently disappear, I need to keep finding new potential friends and partners.

But despite years of trying, I still don't feel socially adept. Meeting new people face to face is daunting. Sometimes I can pull it off...other times I can't. My "shyness" gets in the way. (Still, sometimes, I'm in-your-face assertively social, bouncing around like the Energizer Bunny. It all depends...) Naturally, the people I meet when I'm in Mode A expect me to be a Mode A person, while those who meet me in Mode B, expect that personality type. Imagine their confusion when the Mode A person they were expecting for a quiet dinner is disconcertingly Mode B, chatting up all the people at neighboring tables. Or...the reverse. Now I understand why so many past relationships bombed out quickly.

Today I work harder at being consistent. I blend my social and less-social modes more smoothly than before.

I am choosier in my selection of potential partners, too. For example, I recently discovered the whereabouts of an old boyfriend on the Internet. Initially, I was going to contact him, say Hi, and "see what happens." But thankfully, my common sense prevailed, and I recalled that this person—tho he had many charms—had such severe alcoholism that he would drink until he became totally mute and I had to guide him around by steering his shoulders, to get him out to the car. It is possible that he's overcome his addiction. But it's also possible he hasn't. In the past, I felt deeply connected to him, trying to help with his problems. Today I know it isn't in my best interest to reopen

that old can of worms. I think that's progress.

I've also slowed down the compulsive sexual behavior. Maybe that's due to therapy, or age, or wisdom, or perhaps all three. But I'm glad about it. Reducing that simultaneously reduced the accompanying guilt.

Despite many improvements, it seems clear to me that I'm not "all better" yet. And so I may not be ready for the healthy relationship of my dreams. But on the other hand, I've also come to terms with the fact that this is an imperfect world, with many imperfect people—myself included—residing here. Most of us are doing the very best we can, with the information and skills we currently have available to us. We try—and we screw up. And then, we try again. I've decided that, for me, that's what life and relationships (sexual and otherwise) are all about. Onward and upward!

MV

Freedom

Soaring like an eagle
upon the crisp, harsh currents of air
She gulps large breaths of freedom
as she remains high above the
turbulent course of life.

Don't clip her wings
causing her to remain in bondage

She wants to fly away to
another place, another time,
another universe.

By The Writer for Janice & Co.

MV

Lifespan Integration Therapy

By Dauna Cole

In my book *A Shattered Mind, One Women's Story of Survival and Healing*, reviewed in this issue, I describe how Lifespan Integration (LI) therapy helped me. I'm a survivor of incest that started when I was six months old and continued until I was 16 and gave birth to my father's son. I have been diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression. All told, I have spent about 25 years in and out of therapy, talking about the abuse, but never feeling any better. The memories were still as painful as when they happened to me many years ago. When I finally decided to try LI therapy, I started feeling better from the very beginning.

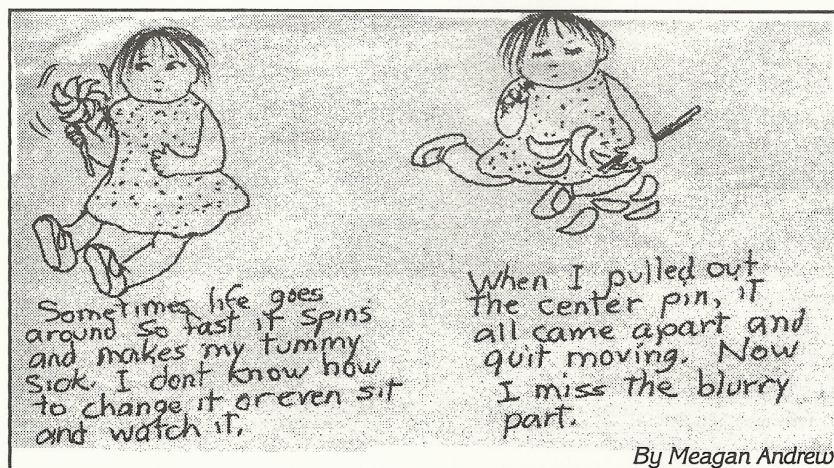
At the start of the LI process, my therapist and I made a list including one positive memory from each year or two of my life. During LI therapy sessions, when I had a new alter emerge with a new memory of abuse, my therapist would take the alter from the age he/she was, ahead in time one or two years at a time. She would use the list and remind me and my alter of the positive memory for each time period in my life. When she reached my present age, she would ask the alter if he/she wanted to go inside of me and be with the other children. If the alter agreed, she would ask them to merge with my body and move inside. When this took place, I always felt a warm sensation in my chest as the alter entered into my heart. I also felt a profound sense of relaxation and

happiness. My therapist did this process over and over, dealing with all of my upsetting memories of abuse.

In LI therapy, we also did a process called rebirthing. In this process, my therapist would ask me to close my eyes and visualize myself back inside my mother's womb. She would talk me through the birthing process. During the labor phase, I felt a tight pressure sensation around my body and head. When I was born, I felt a sharp pain in my lungs as I took my first breath. Next, I was given a doll to hold, as if I were holding myself as a newborn infant. My therapist would then bring me forward a few months at a time, and then forward by years, as she had done with the other therapy process. The first time I experienced rebirthing, it had an enormous impact on my progress. When I reached six months old, I felt a stinging pain in my vagina and started to cry uncontrollably. We realized that this was most likely the first time I was abused. My therapist moved me forward in time and quickly integrated the infant alter. On many more occasions, my therapist returned to rebirthing in my sessions. They never quite had the same impact as before.

For me, LI therapy took the sadness and pain away from the upsetting memories of abuse I have carried my entire life. With the help of the LI process, I have learned to integrate my own alters when they emerge.

MV



Moving in With My Parents

By Sahara

I struggled with living with my parents and how to set healthy boundaries with them. I know this is an issue many people encounter, especially those of us with "toxic" parents. People often move in with parents out of feeling obligated to care for them or guilty feelings or for economic reasons.

My finances changed as my son left for college, and his child support ended. I considered many options such as getting a roommate and renting a one bedroom apartment. But my parents were aging, I could help them, and also help with my teenage nephew that lives with them.

At first I changed my mind almost every day about whether or not to live with them. If I did, I wouldn't have all my friends nearby and I wouldn't have my church. But I could probably get a horse and that would be a safe place for me to go and help me cope with living there.

My father and I have had issues for years. He can be critical, verbally abusive, and devaluating. At one point he said if I moved in that he didn't want his house destroyed or looking like mine. I felt so rejected!

After discussing it with my psychiatrist, I decided that absolutely under no circumstances would I move into their house. I realized I am responsible for my own well being and mental health and that comes before anything else. We all deserve to be loved and loving oneself is truly the greatest love of all.

But despite all this internal debate, at last reality hit, and I actually ended up moving in with my parents!

There was just no way I could afford to live without my child support and my son's social security payment. What happened, to my surprise, was that all the other stresses in my life were relieved so there wasn't as much conflict as I expected. Not having to pay rent, utilities, phone, etc was a true blessing and helped me manage

any other stresses. They also have a housekeeper that comes three times a week. I don't have to worry about doing my laundry or other cleaning.

I was surprised to find my father to be very kind and patient. My dad really seems to have mellowed. I actually spontaneously told him he was a good dad last week. I now realize he is not the same person as he was when I was growing up. Since my kids are "grown" I don't get lectures on parenting. I help my mom out by picking up around the house and cleaning the kitchen. I also do computer things and set up her bills to be paid online. I generally go to her doctor's appointments with her and give her a lot of support.

Moving in with them has been a blessing. I understand them and have grown closer to them. I don't blame them so much any more. I don't expect them to die anytime soon, but when they are gone I think I'll do ok since I have accepted them for who they are and have very little resentment toward them. Out of all my sisters, I am the only one who has this kind of relationship with them.

There are still some minor conflicts that happen when they are stressed out, but I know it's about them and not me. I take care of myself by going to therapy once or twice a week and attending a DBSA support group once a week. I just recently started horseback riding and it is wonderful to be on a horse again. The other way I take care of myself is that I don't spend time with them 24/7. I let them have their time together and I have the privacy of my bedroom on the other end of the house.

So, I guess what I'm saying is that all my fears did not come to pass. I haven't self-harmed or had any suicide attempts. I think in all facets of our lives, especially relationships, we have so many fears. It's hard to know what will truly happen looking through that lens of fear and worry. I am not

saying that all relationships will turn out the way mine has with my parents. Sometimes we need to get out of hurtful, abusive relationships. It is good however, to check in with yourselves and your therapist to be sure you are seeing the whole picture.

MV

Edward

though cold and divided
it may be
my heart is yours

holding life in your hands
tenderly breathing
warm prayer

your love embraces
the deepest
and darkest reaches

where trust was lost
and broken dreams
are torn and bleeding

you lift my heart
into the sky
where birds and breezes

begin to touch
and love begins to heal
my heart in your hands

By Rhonda H.

MV

Koans

*If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear,
does it make a sound? (Buddhist Koan)*

Her image of the house where she was born
shows phantoms of a father and a mother
a saintly sister and two nightly brothers.
If none would answer when she spoke, was she alone?

Has she forgotten waiting silent and inert
for visitors who in the dark invaded
her privacy and bed? Has all that faded?
If she does not recall the pain, did nothing hurt?

And now, like an obedient child, when good souls strive
to overwrite the slate where all her life is etched
she limply tries to live the lifeless life they've sketched.
If no one stirs her passion is her soul alive?

And still each night she cries herself to sleep;
If no one hears her sobbing, does she weep?

By Oliver French

MV



Books

Shock Waves: A Practical Guide to Living with a Loved One's PTSD.

By Cynthia Orange. ©2010. ISBN 978-1-59285-856-9. Published by Hazelden, www.hazelden.org \$14.95 US, \$19.95 CDN. 240 pgs. Includes resource section. Paperback.

This much-needed book for partners and friends of trauma victims is well structured by Cynthia Orange, an experienced Hazelden author on addiction and inspiration. Her husband Michael developed PTSD as a veteran of the Vietnam War. Orange writes here with a backup of solid research as well as her first-hand knowledge of the pain and suffering of trauma survivors. Partners who need to recalibrate their lives may choose to turn first to the three-chapter section on Self-Care. It features detailed observations about setting boundaries, learning to take time for oneself, setting priorities, listening to the other but also speaking up for one's own needs...vital lessons that are more than worth the price of the whole book.

Orange covers the gamut of feelings and consequences produced in and around PTSD—loss, grief,

rage, addictions, recovery, relapses and so much more. She writes with a clear, no frills style and uses numerous quotes from partners throughout the text. If you are a partner or friend of someone with PTSD, you owe it to yourself to read *Shock Waves*.

A Shattered Mind: One Woman's Story of Survival and Healing

By Dauna Cole. ©2009. ISBN 978-1-61566-121-3. Published by Tate Publishing, LLC. Mustang, OK. www.tatepublishing.com \$12.99 150 pgs. Illustrated. Paperback.

This simple memoir describes Dauna's story of abuse by her pedophile father and his friends in considerable detail. However, she does a good job of proving that having a difficult childhood doesn't have to ruin your adult life. Despite giving birth to her father's baby and having it adopted, she managed to complete her education, have a responsible career as a nurse, be married, stay married, and raise children to adulthood (children who still like her!) She dealt successfully with numerous medical complications, along with her

memories and emotional pain. Her strong faith in God and her considerate husband certainly helped in this journey, but Dauna deserves credit too, for not crumbling during the difficult times. She's had lots of therapy (one approach, called "Lifespan Integration" is described in an article elsewhere in this issue.) And she also includes some helpful, straightforward tips to manage DID in her final chapters. If you enjoy reading how other people "made it," MV this is a good choice.

As mentioned in our free E-Newsletter (sign up on our website if you're not receiving it) many of our review copies, past and present, are available for purchase at a discount to raise funds for MV. Usually only one copy of each book is available. First come, first served. When they're gone, they're gone. Contact Lynn for availability and pricing. LynnW@manyvoicespress.org or



THANKS, FRIENDS!

We really, really, REALLY need lots more articles (prose) & art! Please look at our themes (or in your hearts) and write about what matters to you! Share with others to Help Healing!

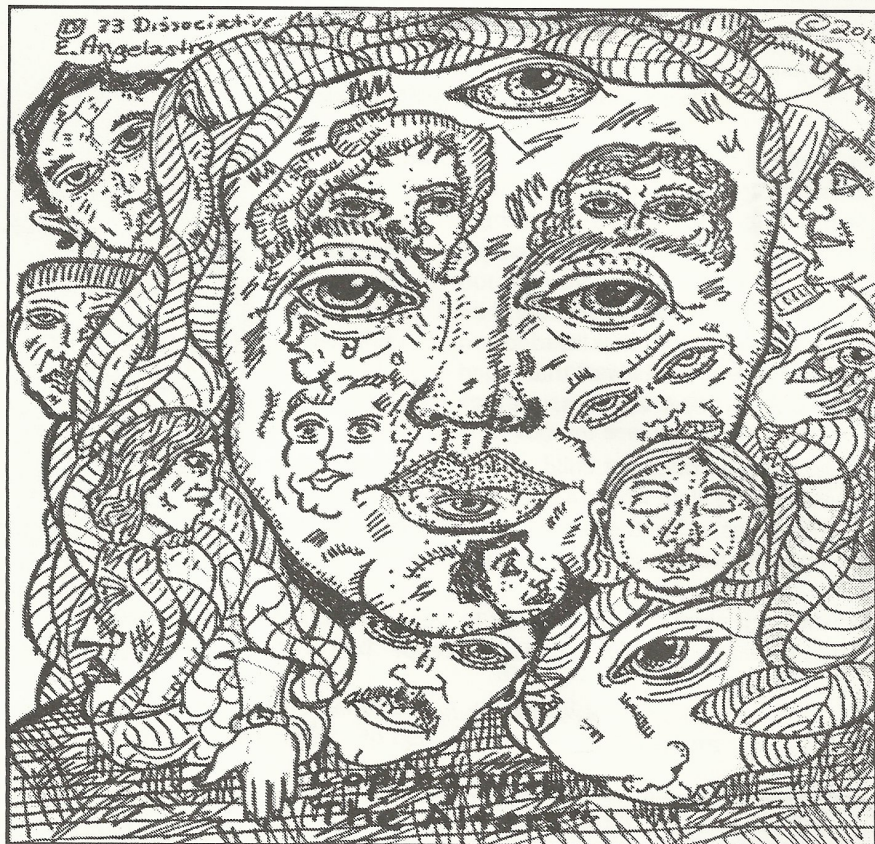
See what's coming up...

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Dealing with Authority.
Communicating with Medical Doctors, Lawyers, Police and more. Share Problems or Successes. Physical Conditions vs Body Memories.
ARTWORK: Images of Dissociation.
DEADLINE: August 20, 2010.

DECEMBER 2010

Processing Anger and Rage. Soothing Yourself. Managing Triggers.
Affirmations that Help You Heal.
ARTWORK: The Peaceful Place Within You.
DEADLINE: October 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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