

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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*In This Issue:*

## Managing Your Money: Financial Tips

## Therapist's Page: Relaxation & Anxiety

*...and MORE*

## *Silent Moments*

In the silent moments before  
the sunrise

I can sometimes forget

I am more than one.

I can feel whole,

I can just be me.

In the silent moments  
before sleep

As I slide into slumber,  
multiplicity leaves me.

For moments only,

I am just one.

In the busy-ness of the day  
living my life

I live by a majority rules system

I feel fractured,

living life by committee.

I long for those moments  
before sleep and sunrise.

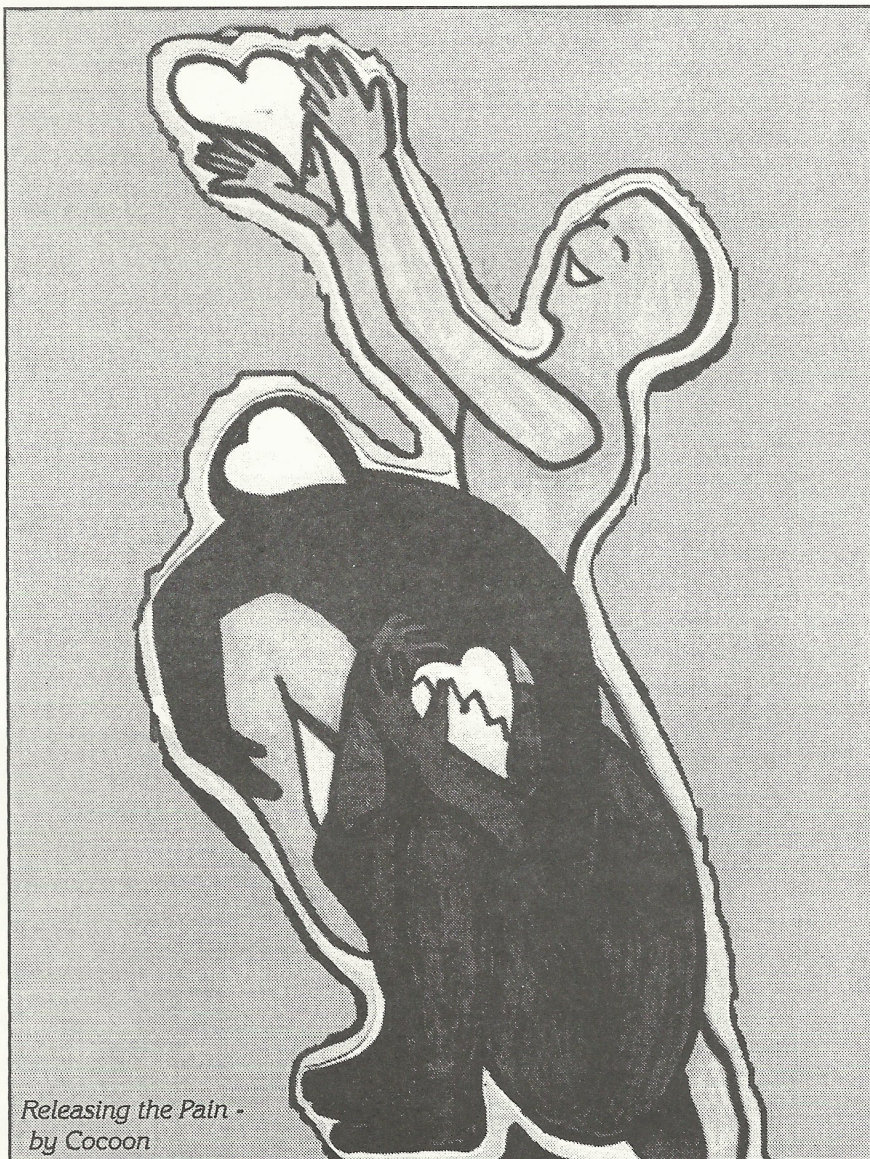
For the time I forget,  
the time I am whole.

I wait for the day

I will be just one.

*By Karen K.*

**MV**



*Releasing the Pain -  
by Cocoon*

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## Don't Be a Day Late or a Dollar Short

By Deb C.

**I**t has been said of me that I can make a dollar holler! And it's true. I am very thrifty and I want to share some of the ways I handle the financial side of life.

One rule of thumb I follow very closely is: never pay full price for anything. I use coupons, sales ads, the internet. My favorite stores are Goodwill and Thrift Smart. That is where I go on a shopping spree. I bought most of my winter clothes at these stores. The sweaters that I bought were just like new. I will pay full price only if I just have to have it and that is five or six dollars. I go a lot on half-price day, then I pay two-fifty or three dollars.

At Thrift Smart I am a frequent shopper and I get ten percent off every time I purchase something. I buy purses, linens and books also. I am an avid reader. I make good use of the library, but sometimes there is a book I want to keep. I love to own books. Thrift Smart has their books color-coded, so each one is on sale on different days. I have bought some real treasures. My inner kids love for me to read to them, so they always get to pick out a book, usually costing twenty five or fifty cents.

I love Precious Moments, but have not the money or room to collect them. One day I was just drawn to Goodwill. It was the middle of the day, so I figured the good stuff would all be gone. I couldn't believe it when I found a Precious Moments snow globe. It had a little girl and puppy (I love dogs) in it and was in perfect shape. I turned it over and to my surprise it was a musical globe and it worked. I was elated, especially so when I saw the price—one dollar and ninety nine cents. Then to make this a great find, I found the kids a Precious Moments story book, just like new for seventy five cents. What a treat!

I am thrifty at the grocery store too. I shop only at Publix. Some people say they are higher on their

prices than other stores. Here is how I make it work for me. Every week they have loads of "BOGO", buy one, get one free. So what do I do? I plan my meals around the sales items. And if you only need one item, it is half price. I get some incredible deals.

I have recently discovered Kohl's store and I stopped there for some last minute items for Christmas. If you had a Kohl's charge card, you could save an extra thirty percent and every item I bought was half price. I don't have a card, but the cashier had me fill out a short application for one and she gave me the discount on the spot. Then I got ten dollars of Kohl's cash to spend the week after Christmas! I spent eighty nine dollars total and my savings were one hundred and six dollars—more than I spent.

The internet is a great way to find coupons that you use. Most stores will accept them. Also on the net are freebies, which I take advantage of every day. AllYou.com has a free sample every day and WalMart.com always has free samples.

Some people rely on the big box stores, like Costco and Sam's Club. My inner family does not do well in stores this big, so we don't go there except for medication. They are so much cheaper on prescriptions and the good news is that you do not have to be a member to get medications. Many people do not realize this.

Always get your Sunday paper. It is loaded with coupons and sales ads. A lot of the time the coupons are for the sales items and you can really rack up the savings.

We eat out some and nine times out of ten, I have a coupon. Ruby Tuesdays, Steak and Shake, CiCi's Pizza and Captain D's always have really good coupons. Go to their websites and you can get coupons emailed to you and a lot of time you get a deal on your birthday. I go to Sonic Drive-In sometimes when I need a drink and I have gotten a ton

of receipts with a number to call and get a free 40 ounce drink on your next visit. You just have to answer a few questions and it takes hardly any time. For a while, every time I got a drink, I got a coupon. I also go during "happy hour" when drinks are half price.

A simple way to save is collecting your change. Every night I put any change I have in a special jar. You wouldn't believe how it adds up. Save it for a treat.

One final thought—if you are making a purchase and you think "Well maybe I don't need this," put it in your cart and finish shopping. When you get through, evaluate the item and most of the time you will decide you don't need it.

And the last and really important thing—don't let your inner guys run the show. If you are like me, you would soon go bankrupt getting them things.

PS The one thing I have to have—a really awesome pen for my writing. A friend of mine makes pens and he made me an awesome pen in purple swirls, my favorite color. It is a splurge, but no matter how thrifty you are, every now and then, just not to often, indulge yourself. Happy and Thrifty Shopping!!! **MV**



By Charles Mitchell



## Better Living

By Red G.

### Anger and Rage

I am a 54 year old male with Bipolar disorder, DID, PTSD and some panic and phobia issues. And alcoholism. I have been sober now for 28 years. After I got sober I actually had more rage than before. I hit people who touched me from behind and raged at everyone and anything that set me off. Also, I wasn't able to sleep for days on end. About 10 years into sobriety I got some meds to help me sleep. That started me on the road to mental health. Several years later I got a miracle drug (for me) that calmed me way down. Geodon allowed me to calm myself down. I never was able to do that before. Now I see if I am getting loud and scaring people, and can calm down enough to finish my business or just leave the situation. Also I was able to look back on my behavior and see where I had accidentally set myself up to be triggered into a rage. I am no longer full of rage. Now I get annoyed or a little angry. I don't do road rage anymore. People like to be around me now. I have friends who used to be scared of me. I take my meds now because it's the pills or prison.

### Poverty

My disability check keeps a roof over my head and pays my bills but no extras, so I started a little hauling business. That was great until the financial meltdown. Now I am helping a friend every couple weeks at the swap meet. I am barely making it through the month. If I can get my hair cut (a Mohawk) every month and buy sodas and Monsters I feel OK. When I have to go without those things it reminds me of growing up poor in the projects and that feels very bad. This week a friend took me to the Los Angeles Car Show. I got a Hot Wheels Camaro for the kids. So life can be hard, but with the help of my friends I don't feel hopeless. I encourage everyone to try to make friends and not isolate. Caring for others gets me out of my problems and I can do what it takes to survive, and sometimes to thrive.

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!

### Bridges to Recovery - Pacific Palisades, CA

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### The Center at Psychiatric Institute of Washington DC

Call Admissions: (800) 369-2273 or (202) 885-5610

### Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA

Call Francis Galura: (310) 784-2289 or (800) 533-5266

### River Oaks Hospital - New Orleans, LA

Call Martha Bujanda: (504) 734-1740 or (800) 366-1740

### Sheppard Pratt Health System - Baltimore, MD

Call James A. Pitt: (410) 938-3584 or (800) 627-0330 x3584

### Timberlawn Mental Health System - Dallas, TX

Call Kristi Lewis: (214) 381-7181 or (800) 426-4944

### Two Rivers Psychiatric Hospital - Kansas City, MO

Call Nancy Harrel: (816) 356-5688 or (800) 225-8577

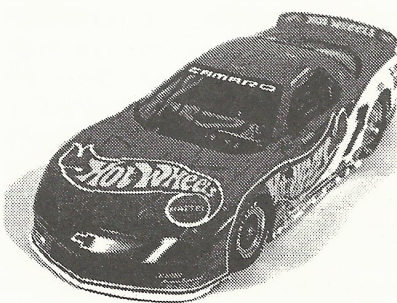
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Does your clinic or conference need flyers? If so, please call 513-751-8020. We also would like to help publicize your events. Tell us what's happening!

**MANY VOICES** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving victims of trauma everywhere. Our EIN is 20-8945881.

Tax-deductible donations, estate bequests, volunteer help, and good ideas are always welcome. Let us know what we can do better, too. We appreciate your generous support!

—Lynn W., Executive Director/Editor



### Taking Care of Business

Taking care of business means just that. I pay the bills first, then fix the car if necessary, then meds, then food, after that we go hog wild and get a haircut. I just had to buy a used pair of jeans at the thrift store. Then I actually cleaned my room and found that same pair under a pile of clothing. Of course the clothing was all different sizes and styles! So I'm

donating the really fat clothes, and giving the really small ones to a homeless friend. I never know what size I am because I don't remember getting so big. Dissociating sucks...It's very expensive and inefficient. Yet I manage to survive on practically nothing. I was hoarding the clothing just in case I gained or lost 50-100 pounds. I feel I will never be able to replace them. That's ridiculous. Yard sales are wonderful solutions. Also I do odd jobs to supplement my income. My priority is simple. Keep the house going at all costs because it is our sanctuary, and after that the car, because I cannot isolate. The rest doesn't matter as much. Also – my Many Voices subscription is very important. And the Dr. visit 120 miles away every month or two. *Never give up.*



# Avoiding Financial Trauma

By Lynda Wisdo

**A**s a former accountant, I thought I should try to offer some worthwhile financial advice to those of us who are recovering from trauma (funny how our financial situations often seem to heap even more trauma on us). Not only haven't I worked as an accountant since the 1990's however, I have to admit that since my menopausal meltdown in 2005, I haven't been anywhere near as conscientious about my finances as I had been in the years prior, years when I was actually obsessive about pretty much everything...finances, food, fun.

I think the word that better describes my attitude toward these things prior to my breakdown is "miserly" as I would often deny myself in all three of these areas. Had I not been able to relax my financial belt a bit five years ago, I never would have been able to pay for the therapy that has returned to me my sanity and neither would I have considered pursuing the MA degree I am now halfway through. Before my meltdown, I didn't consider myself worthy of such financial luxuries, luxuries which today I consider to have been necessary to my healing.

So, while I would like to offer all of you some sound financial advice, keep in mind that in many ways, I'm not following much of this advice myself right now. That said, on to the world of "traumatized finances"...

In theory, budgeting should be simple:  $\text{Monthly Take Home Pay} - \text{Monthly Expenses} = \text{Monthly Net Income}$  or "Money Available for Savings or Fun." Unfortunately, for many of us, the right side of that equation is far too often a negative number leaving us not only with no money for savings or fun but also running up our credit card balances. When this is the case, we need to sit down and ask ourselves some serious questions, questions like whether we are being frivolous with our spending or if our monthly expenses are actual necessities, things we need in order to

survive. We also need to be very honest with ourselves in answering these questions.

When considering our list of actual necessities, for those of us who are recovering from trauma, expenses related to therapy often need to be placed pretty high on our lists, usually right up there with rent or mortgage payments. Without therapy, many of us simply may not feel grounded enough to manage all the other details of our lives, making our therapy expense vital to our existence.

Still, there are ways to try to make even this expense more affordable. Don't be afraid to ask your therapist about sliding scale fees. If he/she is not able to offer this benefit, can he/she recommend someone just as experienced who can? Are there any local clinics with counselors who have a background with trauma survivors? While it is important for most of us to not skimp in this area it is equally important that we be able to afford our therapy on an ongoing basis so do try to be your own best advocate; the sense of empowerment you'll receive in asking for what you need is often enormously therapeutic itself!

At the same time that we're trying to make sure our therapy is paid for, we also need to think about our rent or our mortgage payments, the money it will take for us to stay in our homes. While I'd like to be able to offer you an exact formula for calculating how much you can afford for housing, we all have unique situations so it is best that each of you consider your individual needs with someone who is knowledgeable in this area. If you have car payments and/or other loans such as student loans or high credit card payments, do keep in mind that you'll need to consider these payments when deciding how much you can afford for your dwelling. For many of us who were abused within our families, living with a parent is out of the question making housing during a financial and/or healing crisis a critical issue.

One of the best agencies to

contact when in such a crisis is your local United Way agency. Here you'll find people who can direct you to the appropriate local organizations that can assist you with your needs. Look for them in your local telephone book or online at <http://liveunited.org/>

Once we know we are able to pay for therapy and housing, we also need to consider our utility bills, things such as heat and electricity; those expenses that help to keep us healthy and comfortable in our homes. For this, it helps to remember to turn off all lights and appliances you are not using and make sure windows and doors are tightly shut to keep the heat in and the cold out. Many communities have organizations that can help with both heating and electricity bills so if you have need in this area, do be sure to ask your local United Way agency where you might turn for help. Also considered part of our utilities is our telephone bill, something that today can be quite costly if you're paying for both a land-line and a cell phone. If you're having trouble making ends meet, you might want to consider a less costly cell phone plan, something for emergencies only, or a less costly land-line. Don't be afraid to shop around to get the best deal you can. (Remember that feeling of empowerment that comes from asking for what you need.) In some instances, you might want to opt out of either the land-line or the cell phone until your financial situation improves.

Next there's the monthly expense for television, cable or satellite. I can remember a time when, with only seven or so channels, television programs came free of charge. Today, monthly bills can be as high as \$50 a month. And then there's internet service, another \$25-\$50 a month. Here's where those hard questions come in, where you have to ask yourself if you really need these services and if you really do need both. I have a friend who no longer pays for cable or internet and instead,



relies on a local library for both internet service and TV movie rentals. My sons tell me we can watch our favorite shows online and really could do quite nicely without the cable bill (I'm keeping this in mind for when I no longer have my spousal support.) For those of you with municipal water and/or sewer, this is also a necessary utility expense that you must consider as part of your budget and which you can work to control somewhat. Always check to make sure there are no leaks in your plumbing and that your toilet isn't running as even these small issues can add up over a month's time and increase your bill substantially.

Other expenses you may need to consider are car payments and car insurance. Can you get by with just one car? Perhaps a less expensive and yet still safe and reliable car? Is public transportation an option? Keep in mind that there are organizations that may be able to donate a car to someone in extreme need so again, don't be afraid to make some phone calls to see what's available in your area. Car insurance is definitely something you can shop around for in order to find the best deal. It is important however to make sure you maintain adequate coverage just in case something does happen so be sure to discuss your needs with a reputable insurance agent.

Today's gas prices are something we all struggle with so is there any way you can car pool and share the expense of driving with a friend? When the weather is nice, can you safely walk to work? Walking can be a great way to elevate your mood and stay in shape but it is vital for those of us recovering from trauma to first feel SAFE and to never take any unnecessary chances with that safety. Even when finances are an issue, our safety should always come first.

As gas prices go up, food prices go up as well. With two college-age sons, I try to shop as much as possible at a discount store and am an avid coupon clipper; even a savings of \$4 a week adds up to \$208 in a year! While I feel fortunate not to have had to utilize their services, I'm grateful to also have a food pantry in my small town, one that several of my friends have turned to in a pinch more than once and for which I have held several food drives over the years. Most often, local food pantries have a "no questions asked" policy and will simply take you at your word that you are in need, so do consider this option if things get tight.

As far as clothing goes, with the exception of shoes which I can't seem to find no matter where I shop (painful feet), most of my outfits come from thrift stores and consignment shops. While the savings I get from shopping in these second-hand stores is tremendous, I also find that I prefer these shops to malls or large stores. For me, I find that I simply get too confused in a large store and feel much more able to concentrate in a small thrift shop where I can also find reasonable prices—a bonus no matter how you look at it.

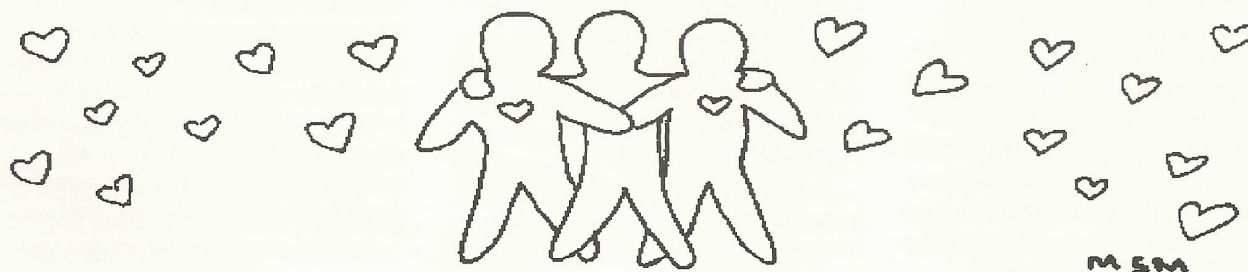
For many trauma survivors, medication, like therapy, may also be an expense that is necessary for optimal functioning. An excellent resource for information regarding assistance in paying for medications is the National Alliance on Mental Illness or NAMI. Although I strongly disagree with any label of "mental illness," this organization can offer not only information regarding how to pay for medications but also many other resources such as consumer, veteran and legal support. They can be reached by phone at 1-800-950-6264 or online at <http://www.nami.org>.

When tax time rolls around, be sure to take advantage of any tax credits you may be entitled to such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or EITC. This is a refundable credit, one you can receive payment for even if you have no tax liability and which is available for individuals who meet certain criteria such as having income that was earned through some type of employment and which is below a certain limit. If you do qualify for this tax credit, keep in mind that you don't have to wait until tax season to receive your money: you can elect to have this credit added to your paycheck throughout the year. Also remember that there are free tax preparation services available for those who qualify, so again, check with your local United Way agency to see what you may be entitled to.

Disability payments, social security, medical insurance...there are many areas of finance that we as trauma survivors need to consider in order to keep ourselves from feeling even more traumatized. I know that the readers of Many Voices come from a wide variety of financial circumstances; some are working and in a safe place financially while others are unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. As all of our financial situations are as unique as our trauma histories, if you are struggling it is important that you sit down and look at your personal financial situation with someone who is knowledgeable in this area, someone who can help you make decisions that will not only ensure your current financial security but which will help you to feel confident in your future security as well.

I wish all of us much hope and wholeness on our journeys,

**MV**





# Therapist's Page

By Gil Shepard, MFT

Gil Shepard MFT is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in California who works with a lot of people with Dissociative Identity Disorder. A strong background in different forms of bodywork, homeopathy and both Western and Eastern Spirituality inform his understanding of healing from trauma. He can be reached at P.O. Box 2462, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

## Why Does Relaxation Sometimes Yield Anxiety or Flashbacks and How to Calm Without That Risk

It is counter-intuitive for relaxation exercises to cause anxiety or flashbacks. After all to relax means to be calm. How can relaxation exercises ever make anyone anxious, or even worse re-experience a past trauma?

In this article I will explain how relaxation might possibly result in anxiety, and may even possibly result in remembering traumas you may have forgotten from the distant past. And I don't mean just mentally remembered. These reactions may include physical and emotional feelings that make you literally feel you are in that past trauma.

Abreactions or flashbacks of past traumas are usually cued, or triggered by the senses. Some sense "remembers" or brings you back to the past trauma. This could be a sound, a smell, a touch, even a way your body moves in space. For example, if a perpetrator used a certain deodorant, then smelling that deodorant many years later may bring back the whole original experience of being molested. Or hearing a piece of music that was played in the background when you were abused may bring you back (an abreaction) to the full original experience. The flashback may be triggered by something that someone says, the timbre of someone's voice, the way someone touches you or a physical location. This is a PTSD reaction.

During a trauma the body is in survival mode. That means fight or flight hormones including adrenaline and norepinephrine are released so the body is ready to fight or run. The body then instantly increases heart rate, narrows arteries so blood can get to muscles faster, increases blood flow to parts of the brain designed to

handle emergencies, and stops non-essential body functions, like digestion, among other things.

What happens if you cannot fight or flee? An infant cannot fight or run away. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse usually cannot fight or flee. If you cannot fight or flee then the energy released by hormones into your body is not released. This energy is stored in the body.

Peter Levine, in "Waking the Tiger," describes how he was deeply relaxing a very anxious woman in a hospital setting when she suddenly began screaming wildly. He had recently been reading about tigers so as a last resort he told her to climb the wall that was in front of her to get away from the tiger chasing her. She began to make motions as if climbing the wall. This was ultimately curative for her.

From this experience Levine developed ways to release traumatic memories through body movements, a form of therapy called Somatic Experiencing. He discovered he could release traumatic memories that were stored in the body so that they no longer affected people through methods he developed. And he thought out ways to gradually release such memories so as not to retraumatize people as he had unintentionally done with this woman.

Survivors of sexual or physical abuse or torture may store this unreleased visceral or body memory deep in their bodies. These memories may even be locked in another part of the mind-body and stored in an alter's body memory. This happens in Dissociative Identity Disorder. It is one way that survivors of severe abuse or trauma survived impossibly overwhelming situations.

Eventually something may happen to cause these formerly blocked memories to "leak." That is unlikely to

happen if you are not safe. The "doors" of dissociation behind which these memories are locked will probably continue to hold unwanted memories behind them. They were created to help you survive in a time of life threatening danger, so if you feel unsafe they will usually maintain that function.

There are exceptions. Sometimes a new danger, or a situation which is perceived by the senses to be similar to an old danger, will stimulate your body to release hormones that stimulate a fight or flight reaction. Such a flashback to a bodily remembered traumatic memory may make you anxious or even give you a panic attack for no obvious reason. Or it may come with the complete experience of a past trauma including physical sensations, emotions and mental memories.

This is an abreaction of a traumatic memory; something that happened in the distant past, but feels like it is happening right now. An abreaction is a present feeling of a past trauma. It is a reawakening of a past traumatic memory and is a way a person can instantly respond to something that it feels is a threat.

This is very useful to a chicken that spots the shadow of a chicken hawk. Without thinking the chicken immediately runs for cover. It would not be smart of the chicken to psychoanalyze the hawk! It just has to get to a safe place fast!

Humans have similar built in reflexes to respond to danger – to fight, flee or freeze – before thinking. So you may be cued, (triggered) by something that unconsciously reminds you of the clothing or smell of a perpetrator, or of some location where you were abused. Your body will respond immediately to the perceived danger. We are "hardwired" that way.

In the past someone abused you



who was much stronger than you and may have threatened to hurt you or your family if you didn't submit. Fighting or fleeing was not possible. All you could do was freeze and submit. All the energy mobilized to protect you instead was locked in your body. When an emotion is not released through the body it stays in the body until the body finds a way to release it.

National Geographic has some videotapes of how animals naturally release this energy in the wild. When a hare escaped from a harrowing chase by a coyote it leaped in long graceful leaps in apparent exultant freedom. The hare thus got rid of its excess energy. "Civilized" people are often trained to not express their feelings. This is especially true if your abuse or beating increased when you showed any feelings. Then you were forced to hold those feelings in. They stayed locked within.

You may do relaxation exercises by meditating, listening to calming or "New Age" music, or using guided imagery. Usually these simply calm. However, an abreaction may happen as Peter Levine was very surprised to discover. How? You may automatically relax the "doors," or guards that protected you from traumatic memories because you feel safe when relaxed. You can't be on guard and relaxed at the same time. So when relaxed the traumatic memories may have nothing to hold them back. Then they may flood you with suddenly released memories of a past traumatic experience.

You may continue to hold those memories in but experience a lot of vague anxiety or a panic attack instead. Or you might get so "antsy" that you stop the relaxation exercise and do something else. You may automatically find yourself doing something that moves your body. Of course you might just simply relax.

Can you get centered without risking an abreaction? Yes. Remember that dissociation means you are dissociated from your body and from the experiences held in your body. Floating above yourself on the ceiling or watching yourself from across the

room means you are not in your body. The self, is separated or split. This is a trance state of being, the same state you had when you dissociated to avoid the overwhelming pain of abuse.

Since pain is held in the body, people with trauma usually do not like to be in their bodies. Who wants to feel that pain? Instead, some people, especially people with DID, usually live in a partial trance state where these memories are cut off (dissociated.) If you have spent a lifetime of being out of your body you are used to that. You may not even be aware of how that interferes with your functioning.

Paradoxically, when you are fully in your body you are one with yourself at a deep level and you won't experience those painful feelings. That is why, in a previous *Many Voices* article (February, 2010) most of the ways I described ways to center and calm work in very different ways. Each of the movements I outlined is designed to help you get into your body more fully. They are designed to focus your mind on your physical body by doing something with your body that demands your full attention. When you do that you unite your body, mind and emotions in harmony without risk of anxiety.

For example, when you rub your feet on a carpet the friction helps you focus on your feet. Doing this takes your attention to your feet (your body), your emotions are ignored and you balance mind, body and emotions. You get INTO your body. When you are in your body you are not spacey or dissociated.

In another exercise described in that article you squeeze and hold yourself tight in such a way that you must focus all of your energy to do it. Again, that balances mind, body and emotions and results in being IN your body.

The Epsom salts bath creates a deep relaxation which could possibly be a cue to past trauma, especially if prior abuse occurred in a bath tub. If that happened you may simply not like to take baths. An Epsom Salts bath does supply Magnesium in a way the body can easily absorb. Magnesium is drained by stress and is a calming

mineral. This bath also drains toxins out of you and helps you calm. If you find taking a bath triggers you and you are extremely dissociative you may like to have a safe person around when you do this or simply skip it.

Aromatherapy is a physical way to center that many dissociative people find very helpful. Once again these aromas help you focus on a sense, the sense of smell. I often use aromas if someone dissociates in my office and find it helps people calm very quickly. This is very helpful after doing hypnotic work or EMDR when you may be too spacey to drive home safely.

I have heard that ritual abusers will sometimes use aromas along with their abuse and if that was done then the smell of incense that is used in some religious ceremonies may have been deliberately used by abusers to confuse your senses. What in a healthy religious ceremony helps you feel closer to God may have been used to confuse you to associate that smell of incense with pain and evil.

However, I find that aromatherapy dramatically helps even with those who have been ritually abused when someone is fearful, stuck on some thought or memory, panicked, distraught or very angry. A person becomes calmer in two or three minutes. If you feel unsure about this have a friend with you when you try out various aromas until you know from your own experience what aromas help you.

Simply paying attention to your breath as you inhale and exhale is a meditative practice that can be very calming. However, because it does not demand a lot of attention you might become anxious. The following ways to focus on your breath help you focus your attention and therefore can take you out of an abreaction.

Focus on counting aloud inhaling 5 puffs of air as you breathe in deeply, then hold your breath for a count of 5, then exhale all the way with 5 puffs of air and hold your breath out for a count of 5. Repeat this until you are calm. When you are highly anxious or abreacting this can transform your



## Therapist's Page, Cont'd.

anxiety. The energy and concentration it takes to do this strange and energetic way of breathing makes it a safe way to become centered and calm.

Here is another breathing exercise that works when you are so upset you may be gasping for air from crying (hyperventilating) or totally beside yourself. Breathe in quickly and sharply, hold your breath in to a count of 5, then exhale all the way out quickly and sharply and hold your breath out to a count of 5. Continue until you feel calmer, usually 5 to 8 breath cycles. Because this exercise is so active it goes with the way you may feel at such a time. It demands even more attention than the previous exercise, stops hyperventilation because of holding your breath intentionally and will bring you back to your body even when you have felt totally out of control.

These simple breathing exercises illustrate how you can take a simple mild relaxation exercise that might not help and change it to get back in your body to be grounded. You do this when you use your body with more vigor and/or more complexity.

Another example is to throw a pillow back and forth with someone. I often do this with clients if they get anxious to help them ground. The physical exertion of throwing the pillow and the focus on catching it works the same way to get you into your body. It is safe with a soft pillow and you can't very well throw or catch a pillow if you are very spacey.

These examples demonstrate the principle of how to use the body with more vigor to calm yourself when you have strong feelings or increased dissociation.

MV

## Chopping Block Rant

By Kate Edwin

Puppies? Check. Sappy music? Check. Plea for money? Check. Guilt trip? Check. There goes another commercial for the prevention of abuse to animals. What is wrong with us? They run them multiple times a day, during prime time when ad space is at its highest cost. They run over and over and over again. And sure, there are also commercials with horrid stories of small children in Third World countries and innocent, cute animals whose causes are valid and just.

But, HEY, HELLO!, OVER HERE! One in three, innocent, bright, kind, helpless, defenseless little girls are being sexually abused, right here in this country, no matter how much money is around, where or who you live with, what class you're in or any other set of circumstances you could possibly come up with. Our needs as a community heavily outweigh awareness and donations alone, though a prime time or celebrity spot wouldn't hurt.

We need funding for research and above all else, treatment. There are a

handful of treatment programs across the US. A small portion of those take insurance, and that doesn't include Medicaid for people who are out of state. "We" as a community are responsible for the creation and very existence of trauma disorders. We cannot leave successful treatment to the "lucky few" who just happen to have money or connections. The whole world did this and only a scant couple of people are truly taking charge. There should be no need for insurance or money in the treatment of these conditions. The human race caused the loss of life and living of countless children, now adults trying to \*just\* make it in the world. They need help, they need our help and your help and every other bit of help there is to spare. Trauma treatment should be free and readily available to those who need it. PLEASE speak out and support trauma care initiatives.

We screwed up and we need to fix it. Right now. People have already waited lifetimes; it's got to be right now.

MV



# My Journey With Art

By MySong

I started painting when I was about twenty-five, but finally stopped because I found it so frustrating trying to paint something and making it look perfect. Then a sculptor told me, "You know, no matter how perfect you paint that boat it will never float, as it is not a real boat, just a painting of one." But I was still frustrated so I stopped painting for about twenty years.

When I started to remember my abuse, I starting painting again, partially abstract and partially realistic, always painting pictures of what had happened to me. Being a writer, I also wrote poetry and put it on the back of every painting. I can't tell you how horrible my art was, but I kept painting and writing for several years.

Many years later I looked at these paintings and decided they belonged in the pit of hell from which they came. I took all my writing off of them, as I wanted to keep it, and let God rain on my art for two weeks. I had a huge wheelbarrow full of paintings, probably over sixty of them. Then I let God dry them out with the sun. One day I lit a huge fire in my fireplace and burned all of them but one. It was a painting of a three-year old with her face in her hands hanging on to her panda bear. She was wearing a pink dress and had scratches all over her legs. She was surrounded in black, but had a yellow glow around her and SILENCE was written across the top. I suffered from abuse while wearing a pink dress at the age of three and my only friend throughout my childhood was my panda bear. It was the only painting I really wanted to keep.

I didn't paint for a very long time after that, but eventually I started having absolutely horrific memories of my abuse, even worse than before. I started to paint again, but they were so bad that after I painted two of them I had to take them to my psychologist to keep, because when I saw them I felt traumatized. He told me he wanted me to paint nothing but

abstract from now on, as abstract art comes directly from your emotions and realism comes from your thinking mind. I went to the art store and bought some books on abstract painting, as I had never done it before and didn't have a clue what I was doing. I had always painted in acrylics, but didn't want to do that anymore. I wanted to try a new medium. I found a book on pastels and in one area it told me how to use sand in my work. I always liked dimension in my art, so that appealed to me. I decided to try it.

One day I laid my water color paper outside and put gesso down with a cheap brush, making a design, then dumped sand on the gesso, then put more gesso on top of the sand. I then dumped the excess sand off and let it dry for 24 hours on my easel. I used nothing but my hands and sponges and worked with the pastels. All the colors that had once been dark and terrible changed. I painted in beautiful colors. I felt absolutely free to express myself with art for the first time in my life. I had no idea what I was doing or why, but it was wonderful.

I was working totally with my emotions now and the paintings were beautiful, at least to me. It wasn't the horror of my abuse I was painting any longer, it was the beauty I had experienced in my life.

I always use pastels just with my hands and sponges and many times without sand, but it is beautiful now and not black and red anymore. I do occasionally do dark ones, but they don't traumatize me like the more realistic ones did. I had finally found freedom with art and it takes no talent at all, it is just simply a feeling of letting go and allowing yourself to have fun.

I have taught several abuse survivors to work with art like this and they all felt the same thing—freedom. All of them could do it and none of them had ever had any art training or painting experience. It doesn't take

talent, just the desire to have fun.

Anyone can do this; just get some water color paper in case you want to use sand or water with your pastels. Then buy some pastels and sponges. It's not very expensive to purchase the supplies. Then it's just a process of letting yourself go and just having fun. You will be surprised what you can create and how free you will feel. Every single person I taught had a great time and felt total freedom as they let themselves go. You might be surprised how beautiful the art is you create. Some of mine are framed and hanging in my home, and one person offered me \$400 for one of my paintings. Creativity comes from the heart and soul of a person and can offer you something that can bring real joy in your life. Try it, you might surprise yourself.

**MV**

## *I Drum and Dance*

I drum for the little ones who have no words for their pain  
I dance to help release their pain.

I drum for all the painful words and teasing the little ones have endured.  
I dance to release those painful words to the Four Winds forever.

I drum for all the tears that we were not allowed to shed.  
I dance to make river beds to hold all those tears.

I drum for all the horrors that the cult did to us and forced us to do.  
I dance for all the times we were paralyzed with fear and terror.

I drum to give voice to our deepest painful memories.  
I dance because we are now on a Healing Path.

I drum and dance because *we can!*  
I drum and dance because we are Free at Last to Express Ourselves!

*By Mourning Dove of MC's Flock*

**MV**



## Therapist's Page

By Diane Spindler LMHC, LMFT

*Diane Spindler maintains a private practice in Central Massachusetts. She enjoys creating new and innovative ways to work with her clients, which led her to developing Gentle Reprocessing™. Diane has been teaching Gentle Reprocessing in workshops throughout New England, including Boston University, since 2001. In 2009 she taught two workshops in New Mexico. She spoke at the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association Conference in Houston July 2008. She presented Gentle Reprocessing at the European EMDR Conference in Paris in June 2007. She co-presented at the 2003 EMDRIA Conference in Denver and at the 2004 EMDRIA Conference in Montreal. She was published in the Special Children's Edition of the EMDRIA Newsletter in 1999.*

### A Gentle Approach to Psychotherapy With DID Clients

Many present psychotherapy techniques ask clients to look at the complete traumatic event which includes the event itself, the emotions this event brings out, where these emotions are stored in the body and the negative cognitions that were instilled when the event happened. This is a lot to face all at once and can lead to retraumatization in some cases.

DID clients have the option to switch to another part, if the therapy becomes overwhelming and they very often do switch.

Let's look at an example of what a traumatic event might look like from this perspective. Say you did not get any brownies when you were a child. Everyone else at the table was given brownies, but you were told "no brownies for you." So this is the traumatic event. Now you might be angry about this and feel the anger in your fists. In addition, you may feel hurt and sad, sensing these feelings in your stomach and heart respectively. And the most damaging element of trauma is you start to have negative beliefs about yourself - "I am too fat. I am worthless. I am unlovable. There is something wrong with me." Then you start to collect incidents that support these beliefs and feel worse and worse about yourself.

Gentle Reprocessing™ was developed to break these four elements of trauma down into manageable bites. It further uses metaphors in the form of guided imagery, drawing and/or storytelling to help a client release the negative thoughts, emotions, and body

sensations. Once this is done, the trauma becomes neutral and feels more like an old movie, it happened a long time ago or it happened to someone else.

There are two different approaches to Gentle Reprocessing - Internal and External. With Internal Gentle Reprocessing™ a client uses guided imagery and bilateral stimulation to release the negative emotions and body sensations attached to the trauma. Once this is done, positive cognitions replace the negative ones. With External Gentle Reprocessing™, the client uses drawing, bilateral stimulation, storytelling and positive cognitions to neutralize the negative parts of the trauma. This article is going to discuss External in more detail.

External Gentle Reprocessing or EGR was created after it was discovered that Internal Gentle Reprocessing (IGR) did not work well for very young children or fragile clients. Any clients who could not tolerate touching their trauma even for a short time would be considered a fragile client. Fragile clients would include war veterans, energetically sensitive people and DID clients, among others.

With DID clients, as was already mentioned, when a part gets too close to a trauma, they switch to another part where it is safer. This makes it very difficult to do any 'therapy' with the most troubled parts. It has been found that EGR is gentle enough to keep a part engaged long enough to release some of the trauma for these damaged parts. Once these parts start to heal, the whole system benefits. It must be emphasized, that EGR should not be used until the basic work, such as establishing trust with the therapist and mapping the system has taken

place. But once this is done, EGR has proven to be an excellent tool to help clients really start to heal on a deep and meaningful level.

So how does External Gentle Reprocessing work? Clients are asked to draw a line down the center of a blank piece of paper. On one side they draw a picture of how they see themselves when they think of the traumatic event and on the other side they draw the emotions and/or thoughts they have when they recall the event. Once this is done, the paper is cut in half on the line. The self portrait is put aside and the negative thoughts and feelings are 'erased' with a black crayon or marker while positive cognitions are repeated. When the paper is totally blacked in, the clients tear or cut the paper into little pieces and throw it away. At this point the clients are asked to tell an empowering story about how they defeated the negative 'monster' feelings using bilateral stimulation. When the story has been repeated several times, the first step of drawing is done again. This may seem to be a bit far fetched. But the truth is it works. It seems to keep the clients occupied enough to allow the trauma to melt away when they are not looking. Usually the second set of pictures are much more positive and the clients report feeling much less triggered by the event.

The following set of pictures is an example of the before and after self portrait drawings of a DID client. In the first picture, there is a little girl in bed with her teddy bear. It says "No eyes open." She is very withdrawn. The second picture, in contrast, shows the same little girl, but she sees herself out in the world feeling literally heart centered. The tree was her place of power in the work she did. This



## Homelessness

By The Isadorables

We were homeless in the winter of 1985-86, and we stayed in a halfway house for the mentally ill in the overflow room.

Sometimes in St. Paul, Minnesota there was no place to go. I had so many labels about what was "wrong" with me and I discovered if we said we were suicidal (afterall it was sleeping in the snow) we could have warm meals and a roof overhead. Now this was survival and we made it out of homelessness and into college. When looking back it is a miracle to be alive.

We divorced my abusive husband and found our way into Social Security Disability. I worked for a short time and failed miserably because alters would come out.

I just want every body to know that it is a lot better today with help for the homeless and help getting into permanent housing. We all have to survive and some things we had to do that make us ashamed.

My faith is what helped. I found homeless people that took care of us; teaching us how to beg and where to go for food at Dorothy Day's Soup Kitchen. We begged in front of the Greyhound bus station for a donut and coffee every morning. When my coat was ripped off, the other homeless people showed me where to go for a warm winter coat and they gave me gloves, hat, and scarf.

If you'll find yourselves close to homelessness there are programs in many cities to help the near-homeless to stay in their housing. Take care and Happy New Year!

MV

## What Does Depression Look Like?

### My Eyes

Are vacant when I look in the mirror  
Lost in memories of pain  
Some from long ago, Some are more recent  
Want to cry but can't  
Want to see the future, but it's empty  
Search for compassion  
Seek acceptance, Beg for understanding

### My Ears

Listen for empathy, Hear apathy  
Listen for comforting words  
Hear "what's your problem, pull yourself together, get a life, stop wallowing"  
Listen for someone "to listen"  
Hear "I know exactly how you feel," blah,blah...goes "their story"  
Listen for "It's okay, I care...talk to me"  
Hear, "Well, you'll be alright. I've got to go!"

### My Mouth

Opens and I don't know the right words to say...so I'm silent  
(Others fill it with their version of what they think is wrong)  
Opens and tries some words (Others misinterpret them)  
Chokes on an emotion (Others panic at the outcry)  
Opens and the wrong words come out (Others don't understand)  
Falls silent (Others say "Here we go again!")

### My Heart

Bleeds with inward pain  
(Others say it's been long enough, you need to move on)  
Pumps life, but I feel dead  
Is bruised from life's trauma, is misunderstood by most  
Hurts for others who suffer  
Is full of compassion I can't always share  
Overflows with grief that has nowhere to run  
Tries daily to recover but usually feels overcome

### My Hands

Are sometimes in knots  
Fingers entwined until they turn blue, trying to control the inward pain  
Shake when anxiety is intense  
Cut when the pain can no longer be contained  
Reach out for help but at times no one is there  
Some understand and try to reach out  
But they're too far away and really they doubt  
That they could hang on, when I am so far out.

By Ann N.

MV





# Dissociation and Credit Cards—A Dangerous Mix

By Sweet Sue

Several years ago it finally dawned on me that I was over \$100,000 in debt on my credit cards. I went to an attorney to ask what I should do. He said "Stop using the cards immediately, and go bankrupt." So I did.

I'm still digging myself out of that financial disaster years later. How did I let myself get into this mess? I always thought I was smarter than average. I always imagined I knew how to manage money. I even thought I knew how to manage money well. I'd had a top-level credit rating my whole life, up until the time I followed my attorney's advice and stopped paying on the cards. I had decent, though not super-paying, work.

Today, with my credit rating in the sub-basement, I realize that for years I didn't have a solid sense of reality. I let my chronic optimistic attitude (also known as "wishful thinking") lead me down the garden path into horrendous debt that I could never have paid off unless I won the lottery. (I did buy tickets now and then but—surprise!—I never won.)

In truth, I had managed my money moderately well when I had a staff job. But after two decades of doing the same thing for someone else, I decided to break away and start my own business. And it did very well at the outset. I made much more money as a business owner than I did working for someone else. In fact, since the company I'd left abruptly folded, I thought I'd made a super-smart decision by getting out in the nick of time.

Back in the early days I loved working for myself. I am good at what I do and, as a single mother of adult children, I felt I was building a little empire to pass along to the kids. For the first few years I put in long hours and the money rolled in. Then, without warning signs that I could see, the money began rolling in slower and slower.

Looking at the situation in retrospect, I understand I've always

been more of an applications person. I'm not a management expert and I didn't have a solid background in running a business. I was teaching myself how to run it mostly by the seat of my pants, figuring out what to do as I went along. I wasn't brought up in an entrepreneurial environment, so I didn't get the early childhood training about how business is done. Many successful business people have role models in their families, or built-in experts among their acquaintances to turn to with questions. When I launched my business, I had none.

Eventually I developed a few business advisors—primarily an accountant and a vendor who became a "friend." But I was not especially good at networking and never established a chummy relationship with bankers or others who had strong financial instincts and knowledge. So I was basically flying blind.

Although I was vaguely aware of my limitations, I had complete faith in myself and my ability to turn things around. Therefore, to me in that optimistic (unrealistic) state, it made perfect sense to borrow \$5,000 at a time from a credit card to cover the bills. I was sure I'd make it up and more, within a month or so! After all, I'd brought in that kind of money when the business began. Of course, by the time I engaged in this regular borrowing, I had not only normal bills like vendors and utilities, food, and rent—I also had credit card bills to pay. So I borrowed from one card to pay off another. Or I got a new card and transferred balances to a lower rate—but then went back and used the previous card as well.

I was playing with financial explosives and thought I knew what I was doing. I always paid more than the minimum payments. I always paid early—never at the last minute. So my credit rating stayed high. I left a few cards untouched, on purpose. I felt proud of myself for using "other people's money" to get ahead. Isn't that what the big boys do? I was

teaching myself how to play that game.

I had a fool for a teacher, but at the time I didn't know it. I bought only necessary equipment, and only when I really needed it. I didn't splurge on vacations or new cars or decorating the house, or anything that could be called "frills." I did nothing but work, or rarely, entertained a client or vendor—but never lavishly. Usually we had a light lunch or supper at a modest restaurant. No drinks. No drugs. No major vices—except spending money I didn't have.

I did pay for what I considered important: medical insurance and dentist bills, Christmas and birthday presents for the kids from my long-gone marriage. But nothing over-the-top. Almost all of my spending was directly business-related. Yet I didn't pay attention to the fact that I kept pouring money into a leaking boat, especially once the credit debt escalated and interest piled on top of interest.

I kept my nose to the grindstone but no matter how much time I put into my venture, it still wasn't making enough money. I couldn't believe it! What happened to those glory days when my business was new? What was I doing wrong now? For the life of me, I could not figure out what was different or where I was failing. And I didn't know who to ask for help or advice. At that point, I could not pay big bucks for an advisor. I was sinking in quicksand, and I knew it, but I didn't know what to do.

So when my bank balance would diminish, and I knew I'd have to borrow more to keep afloat, I'd go through a terrible period—a week or more—of panic and fear. Then, one morning, I would conquer that fear (i.e., I would switch into a different dissociated state) and I'd borrow the money, so the bank balance would look OK for awhile. (There was always some money coming in from my business—just not enough.)

The minute that money was in the



bank account I'd first feel euphoric—and then numb. I blanked out (dissociated) the steadily increasing debt load, refusing to see it for what it was—a mountain of chaos I was building beneath me that gave me a false sense of stability, while in reality, it completely destroyed my financial security.

So I went bankrupt, and I am paying the price. I live, literally, month to month. There is no cushion yet, though I hope to build one. I'm still working, of course, but I'm trying to work smarter, and be more aware of my financial state. I do not hide from my bank or credit card statements anymore. In fact, I usually check my balances every day and write them down in a notebook, including any expenditures, so I can know—not guess—where I am. I try valiantly to not kid myself, and if I realize I've screwed up, I pay attention and try extra hard to not repeat the error.

Other things I do better now: I cut costs to the bone. I have an ancient car and drive it only when I must. I use my bank cards, not "credit cards" for nearly all purchases, so I'm using my own money most of the time—not "other people's money."

I did not have trouble getting a couple credit cards after my bankruptcy went through. My interest rates are not in the insane category (20% - 30%) of some "rehab" cards, though they are not the low single-digit interest rates I'd qualified for in the past. And I will admit there were a few absolutely terrible months during the recent economic downturn when I

simply had no choice but to use that credit to pay some essential bills. But I have limited myself to two cards and pay them down as fast as possible, with double and triple the minimum payments each month. My goal is to have zero balances and keep it that way. I toss all additional card offerings directly into the shredder or delete them from my email, without reading. I now know to turn away from temptation.

Since my basic business still doesn't bring in enough money, I am developing new income streams. I'm trying new things...but nothing that takes a substantial upfront investment. I am running my business on the cheap. Some of this is working. My lunches with clients are greatly reduced in quality and quantity. I still feel it's important for me to practice networking, so at a regular networking lunch I limit myself to a \$4.75 burger and water. Even with the tip, it's about \$6 total...an amount that seems like a worthwhile investment to stay connected with others who might need my services. I'm also keeping track of what I spend—even the cash that I use for occasional groceries or office supplies. This helps keep me in the real world, not my fantasy world.

Each year I put between me and my bankruptcy, I feel a little stronger and more sure of myself. But it was a terrible way to learn a lesson. Please be smarter than I was, and learn from my mistakes. Try not to mix dissociation and credit card use. It's the road to financial hell.

**MV**

## There, But Not Seen

Floating, wandering and swirling around.

I see my reflection in the dew of the leaves, but just as quick they whoosh away. The disappearing act I know so well. There but not there.

Seen but not seen.

All there are is a flash, a whisper of me and then I disappear.

Disappear into the endless world of leaves and illusion. There but not there, seen but not seen.

Where am I?

Who am I?

When and where to I find out?

A voice says *not yet*, but I ask, *when?*

Alas there remains no answer back.

Alone and in the dark, dank reality that is mine.

Seen but not seen... In my own paradox for all eternity. There but not there.

By Priscilla Turvey

**MV**

**www.Kidworth.com**

A new site to teach children about money management.

Help your outside (or inside?) kids prepare for the future by setting savings goals and monitoring progress. The Parent is in complete control of who sees the account, so this is not an open invitation to dangerous third parties. Might help parents think about how to teach responsible money management. With some experimenting, you may be able to set up goals for different aspects of your self.





## Struggles in Therapy

By Tony Giordano

In my two bouts of depression, I had a lot of difficulty finding a knowledgeable therapist who I was comfortable with; and, of course someone my insurance would cover, and who was taking new patients, all potential limitations.

As I began trying therapists, I realized that for some reason I wasn't entirely comfortable with a male. It may have been because there seemed to be little empathy. Or maybe it was just harder for me to confess my weaknesses to a male, an ingrained, macho sort of hang-up. So I switched to a woman and immediately felt more comfortable. And by the way, I think people shouldn't hesitate to switch if they're not completely happy. I did whatever research I could on the internet on therapists' specialties, styles, etc.

The next thing I found was that many therapists out there practicing aren't at all up to date on the latest developments in diagnosis and treatment techniques. A couple times I asked my therapist questions about things I had read and got a disappointing reply of, "I'm not familiar with that." I'm sorry but I feel strongly that someone who's suffering the painful symptoms of something like depression is entitled to get the benefit of the latest treatment that research has shown to be effective.

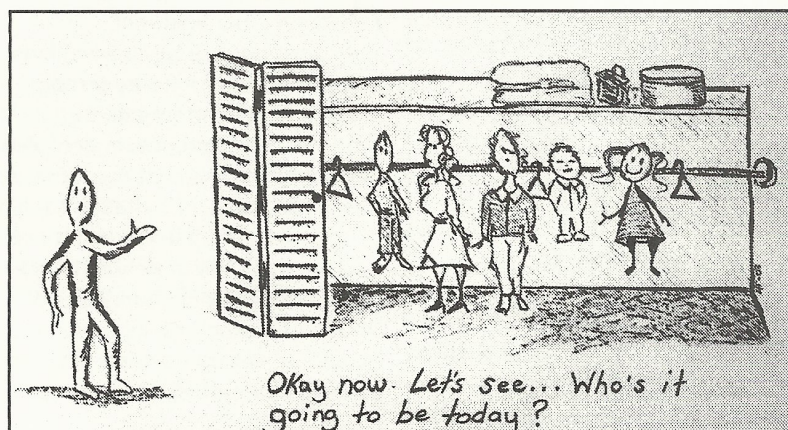
Proper diagnosis is obviously just as crucial, but doesn't always happen. I apparently suffered with symptoms of dissociation for years before

anyone formally diagnosed me with that. I also learned years after starting therapy that my condition was probably trauma-based, critical information that affects the type of potential treatments. I then tried someone specializing in EMDR—'eye movement desensitization and eprocessing.' This worked fairly well in surfacing old traumas and helping me deal better with them. I had found that simple 'talk therapy' was no longer doing me much good, and sometimes actually made me feel worse.

The downside to switching therapists is that you have to tell your whole story over again, which can take quite a few sessions to be thorough. I had similar challenges with finding a good psychiatrist for medication management, and again I had to switch several times before finding someone acceptable. I'm at the point now that I'd like to get off antidepressants entirely after some five years on them. But I'm uncertain as to what to do because this is another area where there are wide disagreements on what's best. You wonder who really knows and who should you believe.

*Ed.Note: Tony Giordano is author of "It's Not All in Your Head: Unearthing the Deep Roots of Depression,.." published in 2010 by O-Books. We plan to review his book in an upcoming issue.*

**MV**



## Healing

By Margaret N.

After many long years with others in total control (the others meaning "the many parts of me") it was time to get help!

Time, therapy, tears, pain, and horrible memories, slowly changed the past lies to truth. One by one the children "I was" I found and loved, urged, talked to, telling them they were safe now, no more hiding, or anger. Those people who hurt them were gone forever.

Some came easily, some, not so easy. But all came eventually. I am now complete with all parts accounted for, even the boys, with God's strength and being with me every step of the way—and Margaret (therapist).

This Life! lasted 50+ years. The last three years, aware I was a multiple & had PTSD, even now old friends come up and talk to me. Are they familiar? Yes, but often I don't know their names or where-when they were part of my life. Most of my life is patchwork memories. I will always carry emotional scars, but the wounds are healed.

The thing I had to learn was that I will never react like the "normal" woman my age. But that does not make me wrong, broken, or bad. It makes me "normal"

I thank God every day for my long history. it has made me who I am today: strong, compassionate, loving.

So to all who are struggling through your own black times: don't give up. There is Light at the end. Keep the faith, get help, and be strong.

**MV**

## Years of Silence

Years of silence  
Cries that were silenced  
now come alive  
Silence to awareness  
awareness to fear  
fear to terror  
terror to anger  
anger to acceptance  
acceptance to strength  
strength to self awareness  
cries alive with righteous anger  
silent no more

By J.L.

**MV**



If you thrive  
on stress,  
work with  
multiples.

I'm a  
community.  
Who are  
you?

Multi-faceted



personality

By Jessica T

## BOOKS

### **Work Makes Me Nervous: Overcome Anxiety and Build the Confidence to Succeed**

By Jonathan Berent, LCSW and Amy Lemley. © 2010. Published by John Wiley & Sons Inc., Hoboken NJ.  
www.wiley.com ISBN 978-0-470-58805-5  
249 pgs incl. bibliography & index. \$24.95  
Hardback. Also available as E-Book.

This book has the potential to change lives, in the workplace and beyond. Whether we tremble at the prospect of public speaking, or can't bear to interact with executives, Berent offers an insightful view from the outside of what's going on with us inside. Readers learn to identify their specific problem areas, and follow step by step guidelines to resolve them.

Berent, who studied social anxiety for years, says workplace anxiety plays a role in literally millions of unemployed or underemployed individuals. Their ability to support themselves is hampered by embarrassment, panic or fear, severe sweating, paralysis, blushing and other uncomfortable or disabling symptoms. The symptoms occur when a surge of adrenalin is misinterpreted as a life-threatening danger.

Berent recommends working through the book, start to finish, in 21 days. Dozens of lists, charts, exercises keep the reader personally engaged. The book also instructs in relaxation, visual imagery, and more. Berent dissects workplace anxiety triggers

then explains how four different mind states must work together in balance to keep anxiety within bounds. Many people will want to go back and read or work through the book repeatedly. Changing old habits is a tough, tough job.

He employs biofeedback (specifically, skin temperature) to teach people how to monitor their emotional states. Berent's website offers a simple skin-temperature gauge for just \$1 plus shipping, to help you learn to notice when adrenalin is flooding your system. By improving the mind/body connection, individuals can eventually control some of the stress responses. One fact becomes clear: stress is inevitable. There's no escape, so we have to learn to live with it. Simply buying this book won't change anything. But actively working through the exercises can improve your stress tolerance and help you get more out of life.

### **Spent: Break the Buying Obsession and Discover Your True Worth**

By Sally Palaiian, PhD. ©2009. Published by Hazelden, Center City MN.  
www.hazelden.org  
ISBN 978-1-59285-699-2 220 pgs  
includes appendixes and notes. \$14.95.  
Paperback.

Do you spend more than you can afford? Do you hoard money, avoid thinking about finances, hide from your bank statements? Do you deprive yourself or your family of necessities

to avoid "overspending"? Is it possible to straighten out your money mess, and rebuild a stable financial life? Sure, it's possible—but it all starts with straightening out your thinking.

Everyone uses money, and most everyone uses credit cards and other financial instruments. Many of us are deeper in debt than we'd like to be. Dr. Palaiian shows us how we got there and what ingrained beliefs about money, image, status, morality are brewed together to create our problems. In *Spent*, she invites readers to go back to their personal financial history to see what forces created their current "money personality." Dr Palaiian provides a free 68-page workbook/journal to help you define and organize your financial life. It's downloadable in PDF form from the web at [www.hazelden.org/bookstore](http://www.hazelden.org/bookstore) (search for *Spent* entry).

Then using the tools, charts and lists she suggests, you can slowly untangle yourself from the money issues that complicate your life on a daily basis. Early on, she says "Childhood trauma predisposes a person to addictive behavior." Since some money problems escalate to the category of addictions, it makes sense to regain control of your financial realities before they grow into a problem that requires professional help to solve. If you read and apply the suggestions in *Spent*, you'll make a good start.

**MV**



**Thank YOU, One and All,**  
for helping to bring **MANY VOICES** to the world. This issue starts our 23rd year of service to survivors. **YOU** are the reason **MV** keeps going. Sharing your recovery process with others is a wonderful way to help heal yourself. Thanks for 22 wonderful years. Keep sending your inspiring work!

#### FEBRUARY 2011

Taking care of business. Financial trauma. Budgeting.  
Learning to save. Affordable treats.  
ARTWORK: Comforting yourself  
DEADLINE: December 15, 2010

#### APRIL 2011

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Humor. Building on your strengths.  
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### 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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