

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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Inside This Issue:

Your Talents, Pets & Pleasures Building on Your Strengths ...and More!

Smaller

When I get scared
my therapist tells me
to try and look at
memories
from a safe distance,
like they are on a
little TV screen
in black and white
and I can just barely see
them.

If I can do that
the emotions
will dim a bit.

It seems that if
I write the
memories
in small lettering
that maybe,
just maybe
they won't
hurt
quite
so
much.

By Rachel

MV



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Shelties, a Healing Balm for a D.I.D. Marriage

By Jasmine Kent

When I found the two shelties, their owner came out in a drunken stupor, half undressed and raved about their feeding schedule and how healthy they were. She pointed out a load of dog food stored in her abandoned car. The dogs were starving. I went home in shock without the sickly dogs, but I couldn't get them out of my mind. I even dreamed about them. Finally I went back, money in hand, and paid the full price demanded by the deranged woman.

When I picked up Charlie and Chelsea I could feel every bone. Their fur fell out in clumps. Chelsea had possibly stayed alive by catching squirrels or rats, as she could still run around, but Charlie, who was smaller, could no longer stand up. The veterinarian couldn't find a vein that hadn't collapsed and sent him home to die.

Little did I know that I had just begun a hobby that would eventually become a third of my husband, Greg's, and my life together.

The two shelties survived and so did their inevitable puppies. They became gorgeous and healthy with lush fox-like reddish coats and wide white collars. Shelties are smart, trainable, and beautiful. Best of all they want to please you more than

anything in the world. They look like small collies. I made money on the pups and bought two more small sized sheltie puppies that were unrelated.

Greg fell in love with shelties when our six month old "Princess" stayed on his bed day and night after a major back operation.

Just walking our little pack helped Greg and I stay together through some rough times. We're both D.I.D. and some of our alters were destroying our marriage and each other. Tragically, we lost our kids in the process, but the dogs were left with us. Soon they moved into bed with us. I found a friend who taught me how to be professional about healthy ethical breeding.

We did separate for a while and friends kept the dogs until we got back together. We found that our love for the dogs had grown tremendously and was one major thing we had in common. The dogs were fascinating in their behavior and soothing to the nerves.

Eventually we increased our pack to seven as the older dogs got fixed and we raised new ones to breed. This may sound irresponsible to some, but Greg and I hold and play with the dogs about two hours each day. They have a large fenced yard and are

allowed to sleep and play indoors.

Staying married is almost impossible when you are both D.I.D. but the dogs bring us together. Even during fights (which, thank God, after 31 years are finally rare,) interacting or even just mentioning something about the dogs and their escapades is safe neutral territory that leads to peace.

We never seem to disagree about who takes care of the dogs each day. Those duties are completely shared. When accidents happen we have an unspoken rule; You find it- You clean it, though it's okay to ask for help.

Charlie and Chelsea went to heaven many years ago after long happy lives. At the moment we have six dogs. Greg has his favorite dogs; 10 year old still loyal Princess, dark Lady who keeps his back warm at night, and playful pup Chrissy. I have mine; Cody the male of the pack, Rabbit the silly slightly retarded one that covers her eyes with her paws when she is shy, and Candace the gorgeous one with the proper tipped ears.

Our shelties entertain us, comfort us, cuddle with us, and keep us warm. They accept and adore us unconditionally, even when no one else does. They are one thing all of our alters have in common to love and focus on together.

MV



Words From an Old Hand at DID

By Audrey

I was forty when I started therapy for DID. I told my therapist that my parents had the first forty years of my life and that I was going to have the next forty. Little did I know that fifteen years later I would still be in great pain. I felt like my therapist had pushed me to the edge of a cliff, and I was about to go over. That was my last appointment with him. I moved on, determined to prepare for the rest of my life. Many of my alters were quiet by then, and I grew stronger with each new therapist that I saw. I firmly believe that everyone has something to teach if we are willing to listen. I have learned to stand up for myself. I learned to appreciate the beauty of nature. I now have regained my sense of humor. I can soothe my parts when we go to the grocery store, something we couldn't do at all a couple of years ago. I am able to trust people more, and to listen to my instincts when I should not trust.

I now have contact with my elderly parents five or six times a year after over a decade of avoiding them. I had good reason to pull away. They were two of my abusers. I'm learning to see my parents as they are today, old and weak. I am proud to say that I am not pulled in by their manipulations and denial. I know what happened in the past and choose not to live there anymore. Perhaps that is the best advice I can give. As much as possible, live in the present. Of course there are problems. There will always be problems. My husband and I now see a couple's therapist working on our relationship so that our retirement years are the best they can be. We are choosing not to be held back by our pasts, but the journey is not easy. Old habits die hard. New habits are built with love, care, patience and much effort.

As Robert Frost wrote in his poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening",

"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

I wish you blessings on your journey.
And try to take the miles one at a time.

MV

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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



"I keep telling you - it's a chronic illness."

DOG-BONE BRAINS

The Greatest Joy in My Life-My Dogs

By MySong

I have to say that my crazy dogs bring more joy and happiness into my life than anything else.

You see, I have two insane yellow labs. If you take the Many Voices E-Newsletter, you have seen pictures of them. They are my best friends and if you've never had or been around a Labrador Retriever, you have no idea what nuts they can be. One is named Joshua, and he lives up to his name, but the other is named Sweetpea and she is totally nuts. I should have named her rowdy, but I thought she looked so sweet at the age of 6 weeks, who would have known that the female of this type of dog is more assertive than the male. That's pretty rare in a dog breed. Joshua is six years old and Sweetpea is three. He weighs 80 lbs. and she is only 50 lbs., but she runs like a dog on speed and leaps on Joshua's back and plays so rough that I thought she was going to kill him at first. She pulls his lips and bits his tail and legs. I finally told my vet, "Sweetpea is beating up Joshua." He said, "Mysong, Joshua weighs 30 lbs. more than Sweetpea, when he's sick of it, he'll let her know," and he does. I felt like a fool, but he is a wonderful vet and loves my two crazy dogs.

I've spent long hours training them, as I feel dogs need to be obedient. Well, they know how to walk on a leash properly, lie down, sit and stay, "on leash." They also have a decent vocabulary and definitely know what the word "NO" is. I would like to say I'm the master of my dogs, and they do know I'm the alpha, but I wonder if they really are the master of me, as off leash is really another story. I hate to admit it, but these are the most undisciplined dogs I've ever had, and I've had several.

When you come to my house for a visit, I have to put Joshua on a leash, as he gets so excited and wild he jumps up insanely and if you don't know him, it is terrifying, and if you

do know him, it's overwhelming. Sweetpea just runs around like she belongs in a loony bin. I sometimes think it's the doorbell. When they hear it, off they go. I practically have to wrestle Joshua down to get the leash on him, but even then, holding on to him and telling him to sit is ridiculous. I don't weigh a whole lot more than he does, so when I know someone is coming, I put them out first, before the doorbell goes off and they go off.

Of course, then you sit down to visit. I finally let them in if you are a dog person, as a non-dog person just couldn't deal with these crazy mutts. Joshua thinks he's a lap dog and tries to put the front half of his body into your lap to welcome you. Well, they both know that they aren't supposed to be petted until they sit, so I tell the person that is being mauled by Joshua to push him away until he sits. If you know my dogs, you will do that. Eventually Joshua sits. But then of course there is Sweetpea. She has more energy than any dog I've ever had. She runs back and forth with a toy in her mouth like she has gone mad. She also knows she isn't supposed to be petted until she sits, but she has to run some energy off before she'll listen. So visiting me is an experience. I've tried everything in my power to make these two dogs behave like good dogs, but labs, what can I say, they are pups forever. Once I asked my vet to give me tranquilizers for Sweetpea, but he told me, "You've got labs Mysong; I'm not giving you tranquilizers for your dog." I asked him when he thought she would grow up. He laughed and said, "About 10 or 12 years." I groaned but accepted the truth. I already knew the temperament of Labs, but they have some really good traits too, it's just that the bad ones can be overwhelming and they are really big, strong dogs. They are lovable, very bright, very protective and can be territorial. If you broke into my house

at night and tried to hurt me, Joshua would rip your throat out and Sweetpea would show you where my money and jewelry were, if I had any. So there is good and bad with this active breed.

Labs are truly pigs when it comes to food. They will eat until they get sick, so I was told when Joshua was a baby to measure his food or he'd blow up like a blimp. And I have to say that almost every Lab I've seen is overweight except mine. I always measure their food. But because they are such pigs, I have learned to use that to my advantage. When I train them, which is what I do every time I walk them, I use tiny bits of dog treats to reinforce good behavior. When they see that pouch on me that I wear when I walk them, they know there are treats in it, so they mind me and "usually" do what they're told. They will do anything for food.

One thing I really like is they sleep at the foot of my bed every night. Well, actually Joshua's bed is there, which Sweetpea always takes, and Sweetpea's bed is by my dresser. Joshua starts out in his bed and Sweetpea then crowds in by his side, as there are very bonded, and Joshua finally gets sick of it and moves over to her bed, so it all works out in the end. So I have two big dogs by me in case someone breaks into my house at night. In fact, if they hear a sound, even across the street, they bark and let them know they live there. I like that. But sometimes they think that play time is at 4AM. I tell them to go to bed, but eventually give up and let them out. I'm not interested in getting up that early.

Something I forgot to tell you about Labs, they are frequently kleptomaniacs when they are young. They will steal anything and everything on your counter or anyplace else they can reach running like crazy with it. The only way to get it back is to give them a treat, as food

always works, unless that's what they have. Chasing them is a game and doesn't work at all. Joshua outgrew this rotten trait when he was about two, but Sweetpea is three and still does it. She is better, but still I have to keep most things far back on the counters, as she is quite tall and can reach things you wouldn't expect. She is what I call "a counter surfer." At least she has given up on my couch pillows. I can't tell you how many feathers I've had all over my living room.

They also love water. Of course, these are hunting dogs who would swim in freezing water for 20 minutes each way to bring you back the bird you shot, but of course I don't hunt, so they just enjoy their tiny child's swimming pool. The only problem is that I only have one pool and dogs don't share well. So this spring I'm finally buying two new ones.

I do have very odd dogs as they love their red blanket. Now I know that dogs are colorblind, but they will

only play with and carry their "red" blanket. I bought them a tan one once and neither of them would touch it, they only wanted the red one. They not only carry it and steal it from each other, they also play tug-of-war with it so it doesn't last very long time. But they love their red blanket, so I just buy them a new one frequently. I guess I'll never really understand these strange dogs.

Well, you might say, "Who would want these two dogs?" But I can tell you, I would. What can I say about these two wonderful dogs? They are very big and all muscle, have beautiful brown eyes and great big feet. They are also truly beautiful animals. I know they constantly bug me to pet them, kiss them (yes I kiss them), throw them a ball or give them a treat or chew bone, but it's all worth it in the end. These dogs give my life more meaning and fill those empty nights when I'm afraid or just want company. I feel safe with them by my side. They keep me laughing and give

me exercise I wouldn't get without them. They are my babies, as my only child is grown and I am a widow, so I live alone. They are truly my best friends. They love me no matter what. It doesn't matter if I'm depressed, crabby, or my hair's a mess, their love is unconditional. Who can ever give you that kind of love on this earth, but a dog? I don't think anyone can really describe the bonding between a dog and a human. It's a connection beyond words. Can anyone explain love, really explain it? I think not. I hope I never have to live without a dog, because I really need one. They have given my life more meaning than I would ever have without them. One thing I do try to always remember though is they are really just dogs and it's important to let them be just that, and not try and make them into a human. They sniff, eat gross stuff and get into mischief. But my dogs have given me so much joy in my life this article doesn't even do them justice.

MV

I Am A Survivor

By Willow

I am a survivor of multiple things: trauma, prison, marriage, motherhood, sisterhood, the work force, social security bureaucracy, and lastly a muscle disorder that has left me pretty much wheelchair dependent. Each of these milestones I achieved before the age of 50. I'd say that is quite an accomplishment. Before dying I imagine there will be numerous other notches to place in my proverbial belt. Most importantly I can say that I have survived pretty much everything life has tossed my way.

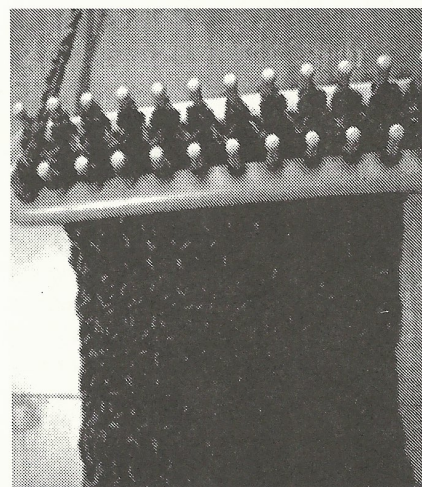
As a survivor I have found it necessary to find ways to soothe, or comfort myself. When I was a child there was a satin border on the blanket that engulfed my bed. In my teen years I found comfort in music, Janis Ian, Joan Jett, just to name a few. Prison, well I'll have to think about that one, but now as I find myself physically challenged I try to find healthful ways to bring myself comfort. For years yoga and deep breathing have aided me, but now I am finding that some days even that

is too daunting.

I recently read about a rebounder, or mini trampoline that allows you to experience the healthful benefits of exercise by bouncing. Gold's Gym is a brand that sells for around \$30.00. I place it next to my kitchen counter so I can hold on to it as I bounce. I started out bouncing for one minute and have now worked up to ten minutes. I am not jumping, just gently bouncing. If you haven't tried it I must say that I find it quite exhilarating. This particular rebounder gives me a feeling of weightlessness, I am not experiencing any stress or discomfort in my joints and though I am on oxygen I am not bouncing so hard that I get winded. I would encourage anyone who is considering this to first check with their physician, just to make sure this activity is right for you.

My latest endeavor which I find very comforting is knitting. I found this really cool loom called the Knifty Knitter. You can view it at provocraft.com. I purchased it for around \$15 and it comes with several

different sized looms. It knits by weaving the yarn around back and forth in a figure eight pattern and then



pulling the bottom thread over the top with a crochet hook. I am presently making my husband a scarf with yarn he picked out. It will be too late for him to use this season but I can look forward to seeing him wear it next winter.

MV

Therapist's Page

By Anne Mills, MA, ATR-BC, LPC

In private practice from 1989 to the present, Anne Mills, MA, ATR-BC, LPC, specializes in the treatment of survivors of early severe trauma, particularly those who are diagnosed with dissociative disorders. She provides resiliency-focused treatment for people who have experienced difficult transitions such as illness, bereavement, and loss of job, status, or culture. Supervision, anxiety disorders, and working with expatriates, refugees, and international students are also clinical interests. Much of Anne's recent focus has been on creating a beautiful new studio for Art Therapy Services near Washington Cathedral in the District of Columbia, where she is licensed. Using art therapy, hypnosis, trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy, Intensive Trauma Therapy, sandplay, and EMDR, Anne helps adults, as well as adolescents and children. Anne warmly invites you to send your questions and concerns about the topic covered by this article to annemills@cox.net

The Outside Team

Just as people with dissociative disorders may have inside teams to deal with life situations, they can also set up outside teams to help them in their psychotherapy. The term 'inside team' means that one part takes the role of leader in the system, deploying other parts to take on certain tasks. When I talk about an outside team, I mean the treatment team, which is made up of the patient, the primary therapist and adjunctive therapists, and other helping professionals. In this Therapist's Page, I'm going to focus on the psychotherapy treatment team. Primary therapy is the term used to refer to the main form of treatment. The primary therapist is the person who sees the client most often and is the one who (with the patient, ideally) sets the treatment plan. The primary therapist aims to be aware of all aspects of care that the client is receiving.

The other members of the team provide adjunctive therapy. Adjunctive therapy is defined as any treatment that is used together, or in conjunction with, another therapy to increase the treatment's overall efficacy. Adjunctive therapy usually refers to a form of psychotherapy that aids the primary psychotherapy, yet is a different modality. 'Modality' refers to which sensation or form of expression the focus of a particular form of psychotherapy; each 'avenue' has unique healing properties. For instance, the sense of vision is most central to visual art and art therapy. Other examples of different modalities include hearing (verbal psychotherapy, music therapy) and kinesthesia (dance/movement therapy). Verbal psychotherapy relies on talking to bring change; arts-based

psychotherapies use talking as well as activities that incorporate self-expression through drawing, painting, vocalizing, listening to music, and moving one's body. You do not have to be talented in these areas to benefit from these forms of psychotherapy. In fact, proficiency can get in the way, as it might for an attorney or professor in verbal psychotherapy.

Let's consider a fairly typical situation. A person with DID has established a good working relationship with a verbal psychotherapist. It becomes clear that there are parts of the system that are ready to tell what happened to them but are afraid to tell in words. However, they can tell through drawings, and it is essential that they do so safely, without being overwhelmed. This would be an appropriate situation for a referral to adjunctive art therapy, since it would not be appropriate for a verbal psychotherapist to begin to incorporate art in treatment (like discussing art brought in spontaneously by the client, or giving art assignments) to try to meet the client's need. There is risk in using techniques and approaches if one has not been adequately trained in them, and it is unethical for a mental health professional to work beyond his or her area of competence.

In the example above, an art therapist would become the adjunctive therapist. But this does not have to be the case; art-based forms of psychotherapy can be viable primary therapies as well. To presume that verbal psychotherapy is 'better' merely reflects the value our society places on words and its devaluing of the arts and non-verbal communication. In fact, any form of psychotherapy can be primary and

any form of psychotherapy can be adjunctive. So, a primary therapist could be an art therapist, and an adjunctive therapist could be a verbal therapist with a complementary approach.

The patient and the treatment team determine collaboratively who the primary therapist is. It is not determined by which practitioner has the highest level of education or the highest prestige. For instance, it's common to have a verbal psychotherapist as one's primary therapist, and a psychiatrist to provide medical judgment regarding medications and related issues. Even though the psychiatrist may have more years of education than the verbal psychotherapist, the psychiatrist is not necessarily the head of the treatment team.

An outside team is often the best way to serve the needs of a patient who is dealing with especially difficult issues, is distressed, or where the use of medication or hospitalization may be required. The psychotherapists share, and thereby ease, the challenges of treatment. People in treatment and professionals often say that having adjunctive therapy tends to move the patient's progress faster in the primary therapy. Another reason to consider working with an outside team is because sometimes psychotherapy gets stalled and progress ceases. In such a situation, even a few sessions working with a experienced psychotherapist who uses a different modality can be very helpful.

The elements of success

What makes an inside team successful is the same as what makes an outside team successful! In good teamwork, there is effective leadership. In the outside team, that

is the primary therapist. The primary therapist has a high degree of commitment and special responsibilities toward the client, such as planning for how to deal with patient crises, therapist vacations, etc. It is clear who the primary therapist is, and he or she makes sure that other members of the team share his or her focus.

The primary therapist helps the adjunctive therapist develop clearly defined responsibilities as everyone works toward a shared goal. It is appropriate to ask for help; one does not have to do it all oneself. It is responsible to delegate, when the psychotherapist and the patient have realized that something is needed that the primary therapist does not offer. And sometimes, the patient has to ask for this himself or herself.

In successful teamwork, inside or outside, there is effective communication. Remember that adjunctive therapy is used together or in conjunction with the primary therapy. This is of crucial importance. How chaotic and destructive it can get when internal parts don't communicate well! The same is true for the outside team.

To make a team effective, the primary therapist and adjunctive therapist need the patient's specific written permission, and trust, to communicate. Without these, they can't talk to each other about how therapy is going. They need the right to communicate what they need to, when they need to, without discussing the content with the patient. Then, they can provide the best possible help.

It is understandable that it is not easy for people to trust, when they have been abused. A patient might be tempted to try to control the communications, such as asking, "Have you spoken with So-and-so recently, what did you tell him, what did he say?" Perhaps one's real concern is, "Can I trust all of you to work effectively, and to respect my dignity and privacy?" When a treatment team is in place, it is healthy for the patient to ask for help to manage anxiety, so that he or she can let the team do its best work.

In my experience, the adjunctive therapy quickly and naturally focuses, in its own way, on the same issues the client is working on in the primary therapy. I've found that by the third session, the efforts of the two therapists and modalities are working smoothly together. That's a sign of good psychotherapy and an effective team. If it is not an effective team, having two different kinds of psychotherapists might be confusing.

In successful teamwork, every person and every relationship is respected. On the outside team, all must respect the relationship between the primary therapist and the patient. That means that these clearly defined roles do not change, or not without painstakingly thorough and honest discussion between all parties. To assume that the adjunctive therapist can suddenly become the primary therapist is disrespectful of the original explicit arrangement, which is binding on the patient and all members of the treatment team.

You have the right to change and grow. A skilled outside team that has good leadership, clarity, communication, and shared goals can help you do that.

* * *

Suggested Guidelines for Patients and Primary Therapists for Successfully Adding an Adjunctive Therapy to Ongoing Treatment

Discuss "why" and "why now" thoroughly with your primary therapist. Consider the possibility that the wish to add an adjunctive therapy comes from worry or frustration at how your therapy is going, or because something doesn't feel right between the two of you. Take time to really examine these possibilities. The clearer and more honest you are now, the more you will benefit later.

Do not move forward unless you and your primary therapist agree on doing this, on how you are doing this, and with whom you are doing this.

The primary therapist must be prepared to easily give and receive regular confidential updates.

4. Get several names. It is best if your primary therapist can provide you with therapists' names, because you will only be referred to someone in

whom he or she has confidence.

5. Interview potential adjunctive therapists. In the initial contact, tell them that you are seeing So-and-so (your primary therapist), who referred you, that you are seeking adjunctive therapy, and that your primary therapist is supportive of you seeking adjunctive therapy. Yes, it is anxiety provoking to take the time to interview therapists, but ultimately worthwhile to be sure that you feel you could develop trust with this new person. Bear in mind that some therapists will decline to work adjunctively; don't take this personally.

6. If your primary therapist does not know the skills and qualifications of the adjunctive therapist you hope to work with, discuss how to proceed.

7. When all issues have been dealt with, sign releases to allow the therapists to communicate.

* * *

To find an art therapist near you, go to the website of the American Art Therapy Association and click on "Art Therapy Locator" (NOT "Find an art therapist"). If you fail to find an art therapist through this means, you can also contact the writer at annemills@cox.net

To find psychotherapists from other modalities, such as music and dance/movement, search the websites of their national and state associations.

If you are highly dissociative, you may benefit from as many sources of support as possible. The ideal form of treatment for you may be a team approach. That said, the ideal form of treatment might not be financially or geographically viable. If you would like to incorporate art in your healing, but cannot afford an art therapist, you might consider a workbook that thousands have found helpful. It's called *Managing Traumatic Stress Through Art* and it's available through the website bookstore of the Sidran Foundation. The co-authors are art therapists Barry M. Cohen, Mary Barnes, and Anita Rankin.

About Us

By Marguerite and Wee Ones

Because I was severely emotionally, physically and sexually abused by my sadistic parents starting when I was just a baby, I have been diagnosed as a "complex multiple." There are hundreds and hundreds of me trying to get their needs met.

My goal for this year is better communication, more cooperation and for all of us to be more caring and kind to ourselves and each other. When I was a young child, my mother programmed me to hurt and hate myself. She taught me jealousy and guilt, and I learned that I could not trust anyone, not even Santa Claus (He told my mother that she had to take my new Christmas dolly away from me because it was for a good little girl.)

I wasn't allowed to have feelings. I was warned that I had to be very very quiet and not to tell the "lollipop secret." I knew that if I did, I would be killed. Often during my growing up years, people would say to me, "My, you are so quiet." My response would be, "I'm just listening."

I was very blessed to have as my therapist the Director of Post Doctoral training in the Trauma Disorders Program at Sheppard Pratt Hospital. My therapist told me that it was not unusual for "parts" to stay hidden until their perpetrators had been dead for three or four years. My therapist would say to me, "Have you asked inside?" And she would tell the Wee Ones over and over, "Use your words. Marguerite is not a mind reader. If you use your words, you are more likely to have your needs met. When you are angry, sad, hurting, feeling distressed tell Marguerite."

Unfortunately, the Wee Ones are still very reluctant to "use your words." They still "hide" things. They also do things "outside of my awareness." They lie about what they have done or not done. They are used to being very quiet and not telling the truth. At one time their survival depended on secrecy. They

were told that Marguerite must suffer, must not be allowed to feel happy. Some of them are still "mean," and are following the "mommy's old rules." Is this a problem for other "MV" readers? I tell the Wee Ones that we did not deserve to be treated so badly. What happened to us was never our fault. I tell them that we can choose a more healthy lifestyle, and that we really need to grow in self trust. We deserve to enjoy all of God's blessings and awesome love!

I try to give the Wee Ones some of the nurturing that they were cheated out of when they were children. I hold my "baby Marguerite" pillow (I had my baby picture printed on it at a t-shirt place.) I sing to them silly loving words from a child's musical book. As I rock back and forth, I imagine that I am a young child again cuddled in my mother's arms; and dancing around the room as I did with my grandchildren when they were toddlers, feeling the same loving tenderness now toward the Wee Ones. Sometimes I challenge the Wee Ones to look at my baby picture and ask themselves, "What did this innocent, helpless baby do to deserve being tortured by her own parents?"

God has given to me the gift of inspirational writing. One of the books that I have written, *"More Than A Band-Aid for the Small Child Within"* is a collection of my favorite Joy Signs (short encouraging verses). Over the years I have given away hundreds of copies of this book to people "who need a hang-in-there hug."

I love to create meaningful bookmarks with encouraging messages to focus on for the day. One of my favorite bookmarks is a picture of me as a toddler standing in the grass with a smile on my face as if I am enjoying watching a butterfly. The message under the picture is, "Forever and ever you are My precious child." The message on the back of this bookmark was inspired by God. It ends with, "I understand your anger, your pain. But that does not change

My love for you. Nothing ever can. Forever and ever you are My precious child." I send my bookmarks to shelters for the homeless and the hungry and to people whose lives have been torn apart by this economy, unemployed losing their homes to foreclosure.

The joy in my life comes from being MUZZY to my three precious grandchildren. We play "hide and seek" and "tickle me Muzzy." I dance around the room with them singing silly songs and making silly faces. I really enjoy the fun and laughter we share. When we take our discovery walks together my granddaughter and I hold hands, searching for tiny flowers in the grass and "God's little white butterflies." We love to look at the sidewalks' magical sparkles that surround us on a sunny day.

As for hobbies, I have lots of fun decorating bracelets, pendants, shoes, eye glasses, earrings and picture frames with sparkling "self stick gems." JoAnn Fabrics sells packages of approximately forty to fifty colorful gems in many shapes and sizes for two dollars. I also enjoy line dancing and "car dancing" (dancing with my feet in the passenger seat to the music in the car.) It gives me a little bit of exercise as we travel. I design bead necklace and earring sets. I enjoy collecting antiques, dolls, crystal vases and figurines. I create displays of my "treasures" on tables, windowsills and chairs. I have magnetic boards for photos, cards, reassuring reminders of God's love for me and words that encourage good self esteem. I tell the Wee Ones that the beauty we see in our grandchildren is part of us. We too are beautiful, lovable, precious and worthy. I tell them that they are doing a wonderful job of helping our grandchildren to grow in self-love and self-appreciation. There are many things that I display that have special meaning. My husband tells me that we live in a messy house. I say, "We live in a "message" house.

I love to see the sparkles of

sunlight dancing across the many beautiful crystal vases that fill my greenhouse window. Dangling in my bathroom window, I have a crystal prism. I am so often thrilled to see "patches" of its beautiful rainbow colors scattered across the ceiling and down the steps! When God's rainbow light touches my hand, I am reminded of the words in a favorite hymn, "Do not be afraid. I am with you. I have called you each by name. I love you and you are Mine."

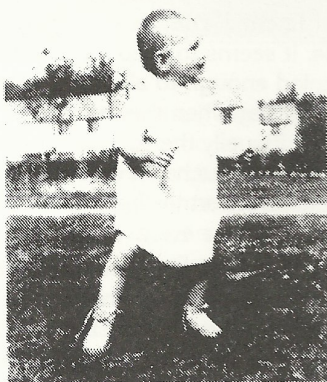
*To order send SASE with 25 cents to Marguerite, 819 Tred Avon Road Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Bookmark verse side

Look

If you don't look up...
you will never see the bird's nest high...
in a tree...
or bright blue skies with kaleidoscope clouds.
I have given to you a beautiful day...
don't let it be hidden in mists of gray...
you will never see crystal raindrops...
on lacey branches
or boughs of evergreen dancing gently.
In response to the wind...
or leaf buds that look now like tiny bandaged
thumbs before they unfurl their beauty.
Look up not just with your eyes but with your heart
I beckon to you with orange sherbet sunsets & am
full of scars twinkling with beauty...
In the darkest of nights.
My laws guide all of creation...but you are free
because I want you to freely come to me.
I understand your anger...your pain, but it does
not change my LOVE for you...nothing ever can
Forever & ever...you are my precious child.

"Be still and know that I am God"
Psalm 46:1



*For ever and ever
you are my precious child*

Picture side. Marguerite suggests
you substitute your own baby
picture for hers if you order.

Laughing: An Introduction

By Rosanne D.

You want me to "laugh"...are you nuts? Do you know how depressed I am? My meds aren't working, therapy just makes me more depressed, my house is a mess, the bills just keep coming, nothing in my refrigerator is decent to eat, the car starts on the 4th or 5th try, my sister insists I just need to have someone read my tarot cards, and...wait...yep, that was the cat hacking up a hairball under my bed upstairs. Tell me, how does a tarot card wash the dishes and vacuum the floor?

And you want me to have fun and laugh...yeah, right.

Why bother, it won't make any difference with my kind of problems.

What did you ask? Would I like to laugh?

Well, hell yes! But things don't look very cheery from where I sit right now.

Do I have a TV—yes. Access to a library—yes. Did I just hear you say this would be "free"?

Well, I could give it a try, as long as I don't have to do much since my energy level equals the temperature at the North Pole.

So, you want me to turn on the television and watch and tape reruns of comedies that I've liked in the past. That would be *Seinfeld*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Gilligan's Island*, *All in the Family*, *M*A*S*H** (selected ones) and I guess I could think of some

others.

So, you say that sometimes they are broadcast in the middle of the night—I guess I could try taping them, or get DVD's of old episodes from the library, or ask for a DVD for my birthday.

I do have an old video of *Men in Black* that I think I laughed at when I first watched it...I guess I could pop that into the old VCR. I think I also have *Caddyshack* and *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Robin Williams does crack me up). I've also got a DVD of *I Love Lucy* episodes...I could watch that, or my Johnny Carson DVD...and pop some popcorn too. That might actually be fun.

Oops, did I say fun?

A good mental health first aid kit must have some laughter sources included! Funny sitcoms, movies, reruns can be found on the television, at the library or even on the internet.

Send your suggestions for funny movies, books, and even music to MVP to include in the e-newsletter. And, yes, we all know that what one person sees as funny might not be to another person, but hey, let's have fun with this! Personally, I need more ideas, although I'm not beyond watching multiple reruns of *Seinfeld* even though I've seen them many times before!

Where is my babka?

MV

Shame Can be Dealt With--and Conquered

By Jan T.

I just had to write and tell you how good I'm doing now. Who would have thought?

Working on shame is indeed opening a Pandora's Box. But with a lot of support I persevered, I stuck with it, and I got to a point of starting to "Re-claim" my body. Used my artistic skills for that one. Started first by doing drawings of my feet (can you imagine that?) I've now got an entire sketchbook full of body drawings. And then I drew pictures of how it is normal for the body to respond to sensory stimuli—I drew an ear listening to music, a mouth eating chocolate, a nose smelling a rose, etc. From there it was not hard to understand that it was not my fault that my body responded in certain ways during the sexual abuse as a child. I have nothing to be ashamed of!

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

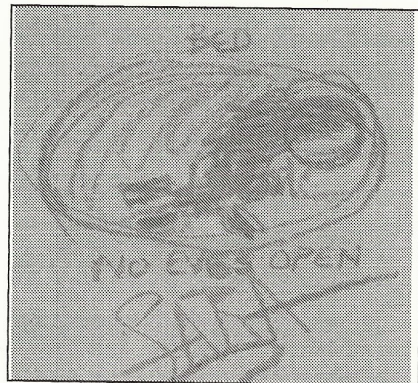
place. But once this is done, EGR has proven to be an excellent tool to help clients really start to heal on a deep and meaningful level.

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

client also reported she felt much better and the whole system seemed to benefit from this part starting to heal.

The difference you see in the two pictures is not an isolated incident.



With many parts, it does take awhile to do this process with all of them. This is not a complete DID therapy, but is designed for the clinician to use it as needed as she/he works with a DID client.

More information about this technique can be found at www.GentleReprocessing.com

I would like to thank Sara for her wonderful drawings and giving permission to use them and her stories in this article.

MV

Alvin and Misty Blue

By Deb C.

I am a dachshund lover. This is the story of my two babies—Alvin and Misty Blue. Alvin is a black and tan, shorthaired and full-sized dachshund. When I say full-sized, I mean full-sized!! He was at the vet last week and had gained 7 pounds. Misty Blue is a long-haired, black and tan, miniature dachshund. She is quite the girly-girl. They get along great with each other. They are both spoiled rotten and I do mean rotten.

My inner family loves the dogs, especially the kids. One of my alters, Micah, is a thirteen year old, especially sensitive child. How he loves the babies. We play with them each and every day. We wrestle, rub bellies, scratch ears, grab noses. Misty hates to have her nose grabbed and she will give this little growl.

I had a red miniature dachshund named Snoopy for several years. I loved him dearly, as did my husband. One day he ran in the road and a truck hit him. My husband and I cried all day. We missed him terribly. We had Misty Blue already, because a woman who managed a restaurant where I sometimes ate knew of my love for dachshunds. She said that Misty required more attention than she could give her with the long hours she worked. She was going to charge me \$100, but then told me that if I would give her a good home, she would give her to me. Of course I took her and have never regretted it. She does require a lot of attention, but she gets it at our house.

My husband, son and I all work at a bowling alley. My husband is the assistant manager and everyone there is our friend. They are all very kind and loving employees. When they heard about Snoopy, they made up the money and bought us Alvin. Alvin has definitely lived up to his name; he is just like Alvin the Chipmunk, always into something. He is also a clown. One day, he got his nose stuck in a chili can and I laughed until I nearly cried. Another time, my husband was looking outside and just laughing.

Alvin was playing "fetch" by himself!! He took the stick in his mouth, threw it into the air and ran after it.

When they go outside, we put them on leads, giving them plenty of room to play. They love to go outside. Snoopy had been taught not to go in the road and was really good about it until that one day. I won't let these two off of their leads. When it is time to go outside, I sing this little song I made up, "Who wants to go outside?" and Alvin turns round and round in circles as I sing. He is so funny, but also so sensitive. He is very in tune with my moods. When I am down, he comes and puts his head on my chest and looks at me with those beautiful brown eyes, as if to say "What's wrong, Mama?"

When I read to my inner kids, which is everyday, Alvin curls up and listens to every word of the story or poems. Misty is a little more on the independent side, but she is loving too. She is cold natured and finds her a cover to get under and she looks like a ghost with the cover moving. When she is in the mood, she will jump up and give us a little kiss. Very discreetly.

Alvin kisses all the time—my husband says that Alvin can't hold his likker!! I ordered me a tee-shirt this morning that says it all: It has an outline of the dog and says dachshund in the shape. Underneath that it says: German for—little pain in the ass!! That about sums it up. They sure can be, but I wouldn't take anything for them. I am a "doxie mama" for life and I wouldn't change a thing about them. They are truly a blessing for me and all my parts, especially Micah.

MV

From Isolation Into the Arms of Love

By Mysong

As I decided to write an article on isolation, I started researching it and found it frustrating and overwhelming. I usually do a lot of research when I write, but this time it wasn't working for me. My psychologist said to me, "Mysong, just tell your story. Your life has more impact than any research you can do." So that is what I have decided to do. I hope it helps those of you who are living in isolation and know that I really understand that kind of life and how lonely and empty it is.

I grew up in isolation. I call my childhood, "the empty house." No one ever came to visit us, my parents had no friends and I was an isolated child. It was what I knew. I did have two girlfriends, but my parents didn't approve of them, so they were not very welcome in our house either.

At the age of 16 1/2 I ran away from home right into the arms of domestic abuse, so again I lived in isolation. I had no friends and lived in constant fear for my life. At the age of 21 I left that man and stopped the cycle of abuse, but remained an isolator. I again married, but it was to a man who was basically a hermit. I had acquaintances, but never friends. I lived in both emotional and social isolation. I still lived an empty, lonely life.

I eventually left that man too and finally married a really wonderful man. We had a good marriage and every Sunday I went to church with him. But still I remained emotionally isolated, except for the connection I had with my husband. I have attachment issues, because my abuse started when I was 10 days old, so bonding is not an easy thing for me. Even though I had a wonderful life with this man, we basically lived a rather isolated one, just spending most of our time together.

On April 22, 1999, my precious husband was killed in a plane crash. That is when the tremendous reality of isolation crashed down on me. I

still went to church, but was a fringe person there. I lived by myself and spent all my time alone. Although I understood isolation, I couldn't break out of it. I knew I stayed that way because it was much safer. I was afraid of rejection and of being hurt, as I had been so terribly abused as a child, but it was more comfortable for me as it was familiar. In reality it was a terrible trap that was very hard to escape from. Even though I was invited to attend Bible studies I would not go. I had acquaintances, but I remained in both emotional and social isolation, not letting anyone really know me. All I had in my life were my two dogs. That was safe and I felt love and comfort from them, but it was not enough. Even though animals can really help you heal, it just isn't enough in our life.

I tried to fill my life with material things, but in the end that was empty too. I didn't use food, as I struggle with anorexia on and off, so food is not my friend, but I did spend many hours watching DVD's, reading, quilting and writing, but always doing things alone. I was in therapy and knew my life was empty, but didn't know how to change it. Actually I wasn't willing to take a chance and do the footwork to make it change. Sometimes it's really difficult to find our way when we feel afraid and have always lived like this.

Finally I met a woman in church who was divorced and we connected. She had been in therapy for many years like I had and was an emotionally available person. She was my only friend for many years. She knew I was an isolator, but just loved me for who I was and never pushed me to change. I let her into my life, really in. I told her about my life, my abuse and my grief, and she still loved me. She was there for me when I needed help, she stayed with my two dogs when I had back surgery and she loved me unconditionally. I thank God for bringing her into my life, but just one friend is not enough.

I still lived an isolated, empty life and I had no idea how to get out of it and be free.

One day my psychologist told me I had DID. Probably the worst diagnosis I could have heard and I was very depressed for about a week. Then I looked into the mirror and said,

"Mysong, this is your life, deal with it," so I did. I got up out of bed and made a decision that I was going to integrate no matter how long it took me. Somehow there is power in a word, as it did help me understand my life. I had held it together for so many years that no one knew I had DID, but finally one day I fell apart in therapy. Thus the name I write under, Mysong, as I see my life in words, but they had fallen everywhere and I felt I had to find them all and put them back into their proper place. But in all honesty, I didn't know where they were, only that they had fallen all over that room. It takes a lot of energy to hold all those alters at bay and not let them show and I think I finally just got too tired.

It is a strange thing, but that was the beginning of walking out of isolation. I left my church because of some things that happened I was not comfortable with and started looking for another. Leaving this church was traumatic for me, as my only friend went there and we always sat together. It was painful and I felt really lost. I found a program called "Celebrate Recovery" so I went, as I became willing to try anything. It is a twelve-step program that uses God as their higher power and is for hurts, hang-ups and addictions. I went because I knew I needed women in my life and I wanted to break free from isolation. It was the first door I entered that started my journey, the journey to freedom. I was terrified that first night and I sat in the very back. After the first part they break into separate groups of women and men. When sharing you say what you

are struggling with. I said I had DID and was a ritual abuse survivor and the woman who sat next to me said exactly the same thing. I couldn't believe it. Inside I said, "Thank you God, I'm no longer alone." I went back to that meeting every week, as I continued to look for the right church for myself, and I connected with this woman who was dealing with the same thing I was. I do not attach easily to anyone and neither did she, but we felt good together and the connection was there. I invited her to come with me and we started to look for a church. Finally, after calling many churches, I stepped foot into the right one and she was with me. This pastor understood pain, maybe not the same kind as me, but he had suffered from migraine headaches since he was five years old and they had gotten much worse over the years. He had been to many doctors and they could never find anything wrong with him, so he just constantly suffered. He told me one day that he felt he was being robbed of his life and I understood that. In the end I have found that pain is pain and it all hurts. We emailed back and forth and I shared with him what my life had been like, especially my childhood. He was writing a book on pain, and being a writer, we connected in that area too. We began to really know each other and both my friend and I felt good in this church. He was real and honest and I knew we were in the right place. It was another step out of isolation, as

in this church I was no longer a fringe person; I became social which really amazed me. I went to the homeless outreaches and sat listening to the people's stories as they ate breakfast and got food boxes. I went to the women's tea and the Bible studies and so did my friend. I was no longer a fringe person and my isolation was lifting. I now had two women in my life and two places to really be with people, a huge step for me.

Finally I told my pastor that I didn't know how to use the things God had given me in the church and he said, "I do." Three weeks later I emailed him and told him I wanted to know what his idea was. He told me he would like me to facilitate a support group for women dealing with emotional pain. I was stunned. I told my psychologist and he was delighted. He said he had known I was going in this direction for a very long time, but was waiting for the door to open for me. Everything just came together; it was amazing. I actually got up in front of 60 women at a tea, talked about all the pain I had dealt with in therapy, and told them about this new group.

I now lead a support group for women walking through emotional pain. I've spent many hours training to lead a lay-led group. It is a learning experience for me and I am still new at it, but it is helping me heal too. I have found that as I reach out to women in pain I get out of the pain of my own life and invest myself in others. It's like climbing out of

darkness into the light. It is truly healing.

This has been a process for me, a journey just like all of life, but until I was willing to open the door and put one foot out and take a chance, my life did not change. It took my moving and not staying still. It took me investing my life in other people and taking chances, even when I was afraid. No one could do it for me, not my psychologist or even God. I had to do it. I had to move and walk through new doors.

I can tell you that today my life is so much better I can't even describe it. I have a girlfriend that lives 3000 miles away that is also an isolator. She said it in a way I thought really described isolation well. She said, "It's like living in total darkness, a living hell that I created." I thought, how true that is. She is also getting out of her isolation by doing some of the same things I did. She opened the door and put her foot out and took chances because she was so unhappy and lonely. Today, her life like mine is much better. She is also starting to reach out to other people which is also helping her heal.

If you are struggling with isolation, it's OK to move slowly, but do move, as it will give you a much happier, fulfilled life. All it takes is courage, and we all have that or we wouldn't be survivors, taking chances and creating movement. But in the end I think movement is the most important word.

MV



Adventures Abroad

By Kate

Being suddenly uprooted to live in a foreign country is challenging for anyone regardless of their mental health. For people like us, it's just plain difficult.

My husband was faced being laid off when offered an assignment overseas; it was the only game in town. So off we went to Korea! We live in a "serviced apartment" and the staff is outstanding so we have a lot of help overcoming the language barrier, like telling the taxi driver where we want to go. But the supermarket is so frustrating: is that cream? Is that butter? I can't read the labels! And don't even think about buying clothes; everyone here is a Size Zero. It doesn't do much for your self-esteem when you are an XXXL in everything! But I can take the elevator down to a two-block-long underground mall which has everything the (Size Zero) heart could desire, and the grocery delivers straight to my room, which is huge since I'm physically handicapped.

Being recently (mostly) integrated, "I" am experiencing and feeling everything for the first time. I went to the dentist (Katherine used to do that), who speaks only Korean. Now that was fun!

The amazing thing is that I do it. I get through, day by day, and find the adventure instead of the obstacle. I'm really quite proud of myself! I've formed a very active Women's Group of fellow "expats" from all around the world, and host a weekly dinner of home-cooked American food; I've found a hairdresser who speaks English; I've found a doctor who is from Texas!

In all the wonderful things I'm learning: culture, art, history, food (okay not so much the food), I'm learning most that I can actually rely on myself. I continue my therapy sessions by phone. Every day presents new challenges and new gifts.

I'm finally learning to use my gifts to advantage.

All the working women here have "English" names which seem to be randomly assigned. My hubby's secretary is "Iris" – and I bet she's never seen one! The other day, on the recommendation of my expat women friends, I went down to the vaunted "Jenny" to get my hair done. Everyone said she speaks English; I think not. I finally told her just do what you want to – my bangs were so long I was about to apply for a white cane!

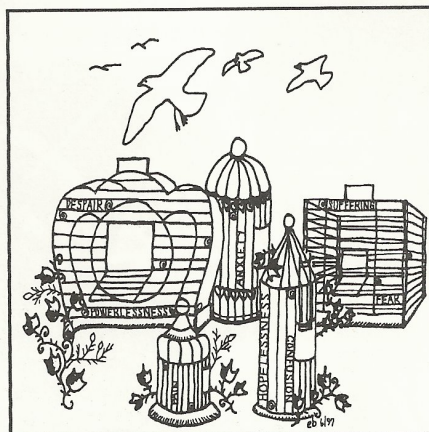
Well, apparently the Good Lord is turning me into a Korean and S/He started at the top! For the first time in my life, I have really dark hair, short (for me) and curly (it always was curly but when it's short it gets nuts). Seriously...my BFF would not recognize me! Paul (my DH) said that if I were not mostly integrated I'd have had a total Nelly Attack, because when I see myself in a mirror I wonder who on earth that is!

Here's a little more...it gets stranger every day. I'm pretty sure Spam is not a food group! They actually sell gift boxes of it. And what's with the seaweed? And what was that slimy thing...ick.

However, I have found a shrink over here, a Korean-American woman who practiced in San Francisco before here, and she is amazing! Does not put up with my crap at all!

All I can say is, what an adventure!

MV



Carrying the Light for Others to Follow

One of my former therapists used the above phrase when I told her I liked to go to the groups at the hospital to be a living example of success for people to see. I was enlightened the first time I went back to a group. I was so far from where the current clients were and I realized how healthy I'd become. I also understood that I could represent hopefulness to them. It felt really good to offer that hope because I remember so well what it was like to not be able to see beyond the moment of pain I was in. I can also report to the group that I haven't been in the hospital for 3 years. I also regularly drop off clothes I don't wear anymore to the hospital and stop over at the dollar store for tooth brushes and reading glasses for people there. I usually spend less than \$15 and it is so appreciated.

I have served on our church's Mental Health Action Committee and created an emergency wallet card for people with hospital information and crisis phone numbers. I am trying to put resources out there that I needed and weren't readily available. I printed out 200 of them and they are used all over the area!

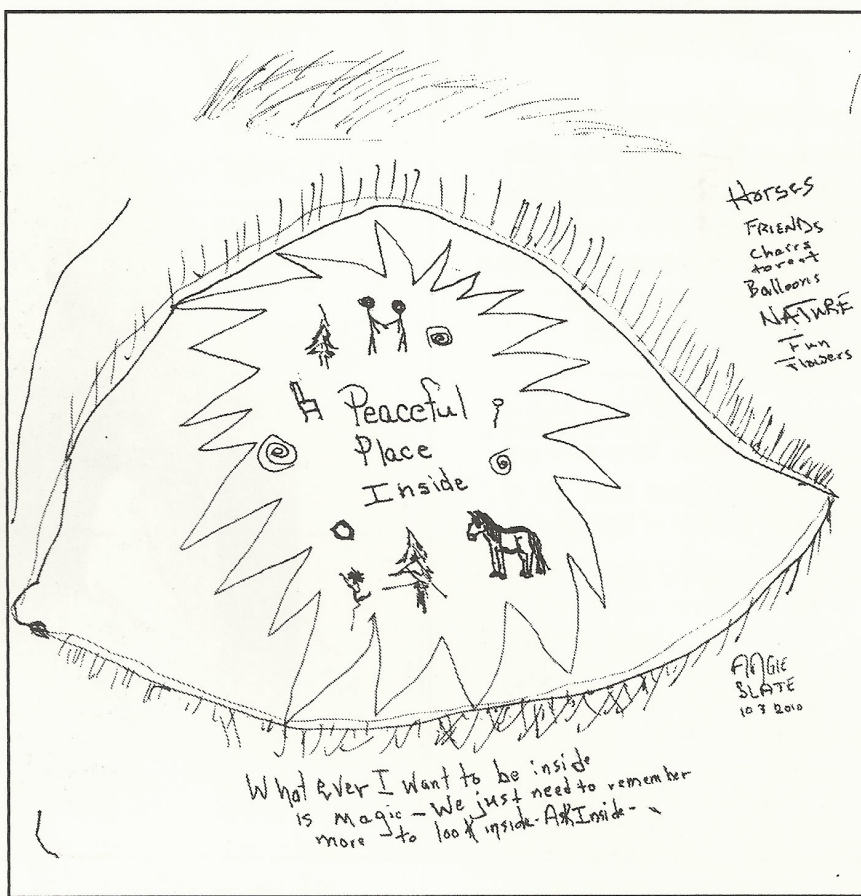
I have also been asked to train as a facilitator for a Depression/Bipolar Support group. I don't know how to put it in words, but I feel really good that I can provide support to others. I think I once heard that we are all on the healing path, just in different spots. I am happy to hold the light for those behind and watch for those ahead. I think we move at different rates on that path and we can follow the lights ahead and hold our own for those behind. Giving back has definitely increased my good feelings about myself and that is always valuable.

By J.Jones **MV**

Grieving the Loss of a Pet but Preserving the Memories

My Main Dawg, Boomie, the Dog of Life, the One True Dog whom all lesser dogs emulated, went to puppy heaven recently, after sharing almost 13 years with me. It just about tore my heart out because I am 8000 miles away. My best friends, who are house-sitting, dog-sitting, car-sitting and basically life-sitting were tasked with taking him to the vet for his last visit - a very hard thing to ask of anyone. They held up a cellphone to his floppy ear so that I could sing his favorite song as he left this world. My Little Man taught me the meaning of unconditional love. I will miss him for a very long time but I will be grateful for his presence in my life forever.

By Kate



Books

It's Not All In Your Head: Unearthing the Deep Roots of Depression

By Tony Giordano © 2009 Published in 2010 by O Books, an imprint of John Hunt Publishing Co, UK. www.o-books.com £14.99 UK, \$24.95 US. ISBN 978-1-84694-393-5 248 pgs. Paperback

Tony Giordano wrote a wonderful article for *Many Voices* on Depression that appeared in our August 2007 edition. Now he has written a whole book on the subject, which may be heartening to those who have spent years struggling with depression and often feel misunderstood.

Tony's first major depression appeared suddenly in midlife. While the roots of Tony's depression stem from an alcoholic, dysfunctional household, he takes the reader step by step through the stages of his discovery and both the frustrations and help he received in treatment. As he writes, "Depression is your mind and body screaming out at you that your life is becoming dangerously

unhealthy, and a radical change is needed."

He discusses various techniques and approaches to the treatment and current understanding of depression. Many readers will find similarities in his experiences with family, friends, employers, and the mental health system itself.

Overcoming Depersonalization Disorder: A Mindfulness & Acceptance Guide to Conquering Feelings of Numbness & Unreality

By Fugen Neziroglu, PhD., and Katharine Donnelly, MA. © 2010 Published by New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA. www.newharbinger.com \$18.95 179 pgs includes references. Paperback.

This is the first book I've seen focusing on the problem of Depersonalization Disorder, and I liked its approach very much. It is written to be useful to both treatment providers and those who experience depersonalization, or a sense of "unreality" in their lives. The Foreword

is written by noted therapist Daphne Simeon, MD, who directs the depersonalization and dissociation program at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York.

The authors explain what depersonalization is, how it develops, and what different treatment methods are recommended to work within its ongoing nature. Substance abuse as well as a trauma history may contribute to this problem. The authors discuss Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and other treatment options. Because of its clear, yet compassionate writing, I highly recommend this book to those who are puzzled by worrisome symptoms that their lives are somehow "not real." It offers explanations you probably have not read elsewhere, that could help you feel a whole lot better.

- Lynn W.

MV

Thank you again, Dear MV Friends!

By sharing your excellent writing, art, and advice with all MV Readers, you offer us the opportunity to make **MANY VOICES** a safe, helpful place for recovery from trauma!

June 2011

What are you working on in recovery, right now?

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