

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

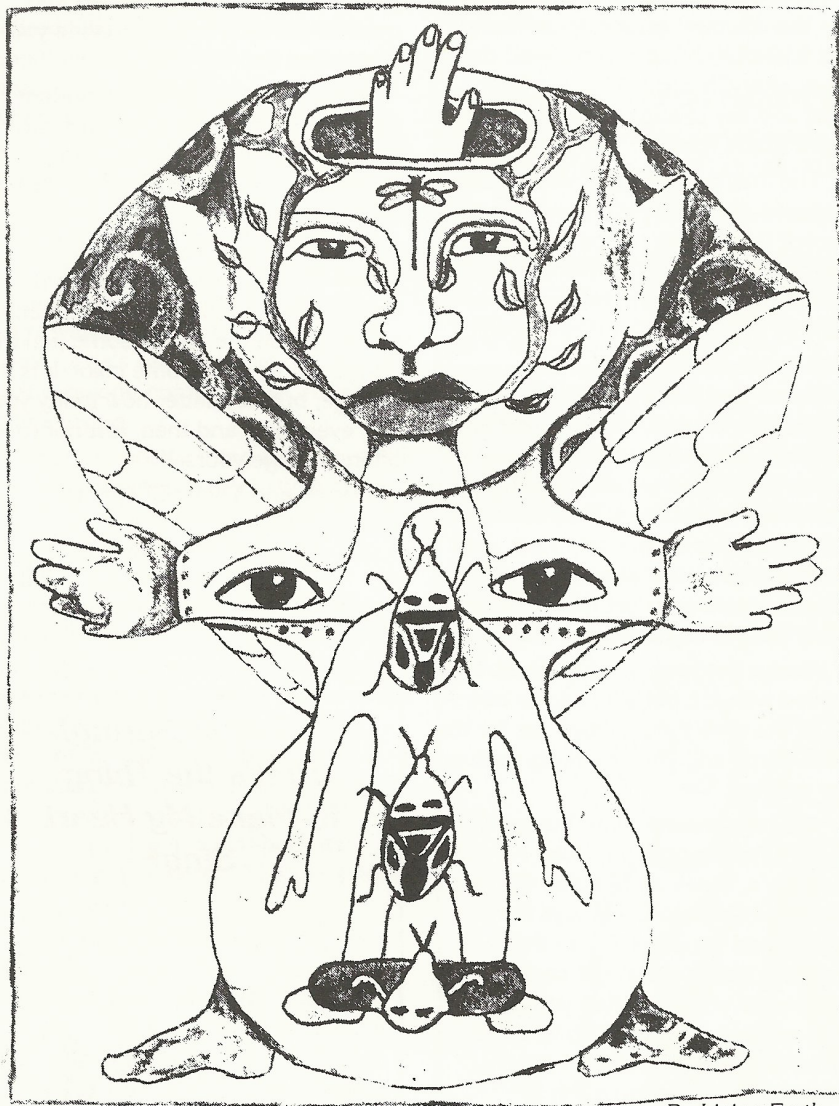
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*In This Issue:*

## Work and Healing Volunteering Structure in Your Life...and *MORE!*



*By Living Earth*

### *Song of Hope*

The wind, it supports and carries our  
breaths  
Silent voices, unheard stories, unseen  
visions  
Yet I know it only takes one person  
For the truth, our knowing, to be heard

Courage is our honor and our strength  
Let's put shame back in its rightful place  
Fear, pain, and anger all need release  
Time can change: we can belong and still  
be free

Bravely trusting and sharing with another  
Stepping gently into the past  
Trust is growing, a believing, it's a knowing  
Beneath one's self new roots replace old  
shafts

Courage is our honor and our strength  
Let's put shame back in its rightful place  
Fear, pain, and anger all need release  
Time can change: we can belong and still  
be free

Deep changes, more vision, a safer place  
Through the darkness we've gained new  
strength  
Stories told, feelings shed, and boundaries  
mended  
We'll dance and paint with a freedom that  
won't end

Courage is our honor and our strength  
No more shame, it's in its rightful place  
Fear, pain, and anger have been released  
Time has changed: we belong and we are  
free

*By Debra Faes-Dudden © 2011*

MV

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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 this.

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 \$5 or \$6. I go a lot of half-price day; then I pay \$2.50 or \$3.

At Thrift Smart I am a frequent shopper and I get 10% 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 25¢ or 50¢.

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 be all 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 when I saw the price—\$1.99. Then to make this a great find, I found the kids a Precious Moments story book, just like new, for 75¢. 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 lots of "BOGO," buy one, get one

free. So what do I do? I plan my meals around sale 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 30% 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 \$10 of Kohl's cash to spend the week after Christmas! I spent \$89 total and my savings were \$106—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 9 times out of 10, I have a coupon. Ruby Tuesday's, 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 often you get a deal on your birthday. I go to Sonic Drive-in sometimes when I need a drink and 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 hardly takes 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 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.

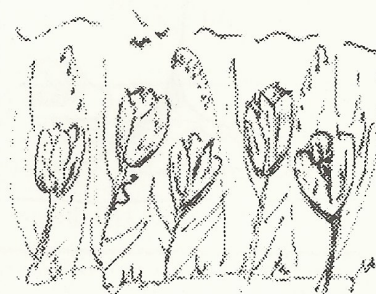
And the last and really important thing—don't let your inner guys run the show. If you are like me, you would soon go bankrupt getting them things.

There is 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 too often, indulge yourself

Happy and Thrifty Shopping!

**MV**

***Tulips in Spring!  
That's the Thing  
To Make My Heart  
Sing!***



**MV**



## Bice and Julia

By Jigsaw

At every opportunity, I tell what little Bice said. I even stopped my dentist while he was drilling, long enough to say "I have a granddaughter story. My daughter and her two-year-old were visiting a friend with her brand new baby Max. My daughter was holding the baby, and my granddaughter Bice came over to little Max and said directly to him in a soft, slow voice, 'Please. I want my mommy back now.'"

Ever since my fifth therapist Julia retired, I think cold, hard thoughts about Julia. I feel strangely removed. I resent the empty space in my garden where one of my favorite perennials was growing well in the dappled shade along the stone wall. I miss the delicate fronds of the maidenhair fern I gave Julia during our last session.

Yet before she retired, those times when I was sure I'd not break into tears with her were the times I wept most. Julia's office manager remarked that everyone comes out of Julia's office crying.

At some point during this process I heard an interview with Steven Hayes on the radio. As he discussed Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, he stressed that, if one avoids legitimate pain and emotion, one decides on the worst possible strategy for managing life. His words fit my approach to Julia's retirement. I struggled to picture myself walking straight into the cold atmosphere I manufactured over and around her. I struggled to look steadily into my loss and feel its dimensions--both its breadth and its depth. The tears finally began afresh.

Certainly I understood that Julia decided to retire because her only daughter who lives some distance away was giving birth to her first baby, and Julia wanted and needed much time with them. Small wonder, then, that I was so taken with Bice's words to little Max, for they had the shape of what I was feeling, several fathoms down. I'm longing to say to Julia's tiny grandson, "Please, may I have Julia back now?"

**MV**

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!

**Bridges to Recovery-Pacific Palisades, Bel Air, Santa Monica CA** [www.bridgestorecovery.com](http://www.bridgestorecovery.com) Call Intake Department: (877) 602-0257

**Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA**

[www.delamotreatment.com/TraumaRecovery.html](http://www.delamotreatment.com/TraumaRecovery.html)

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

**Mountain Youth Academy - Mountain City, TN**

[www.mountainyouthacademy.net](http://www.mountainyouthacademy.net)

Call Betty Villarreal: (423) 727-9898

**River Oaks Hospital - New Orleans, LA**

[www.riveroakshospital.com/specialty\\_no\\_trauma.html](http://www.riveroakshospital.com/specialty_no_trauma.html)

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

**Sheppard Pratt Health System - Baltimore, MD**

[www.traumaatp.org](http://www.traumaatp.org)

Call Admissions Coordinator: (410) 938-5078 or (410) 938-3584

**Timberlawn Mental Health System - Dallas, TX**

[www.timberlawn.com/trauma.htm](http://www.timberlawn.com/trauma.htm)

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

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

[www.tworivershospital.com/tprograms.html](http://www.tworivershospital.com/tprograms.html)

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

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*Heesh & Sheesh*  
*"500 Milligrams of Cat"*



## Becoming a Light Bearer

By Jenn J.

I am a 45 year old mother of two, lover of horses, friend to many, a volunteer and a person who is proof that indeed there is a place of peace beyond the hurt and pain. It is real, and honest and so much better than where I've been before. I am a "Light Bearer." I hold the light of hope and truth for those traveling the healing path with me.

Some people may consider my life a failure when they look at it "on paper" in therapist notes, hospital records, job loss, being on disability and being an adult woman who lives with her parents. But I am so much more than my "paper" can say.

I was abused in many ways growing up from verbal abuse all the way to sadistic abuse. This affected all of the choices I made in my life from where I went to college, to the person I married, to the parent I was, the employee I was, the medical student I was....There was a period of about 6 or 7 years where I was in the hospital at least once a year. I was suicidal for almost 20 years. I figured when my kids were grown that it wouldn't hurt them if I was gone. I never expected to be alive at 45. Nice ring to that, isn't it? So let me tell you a little about "Then" and all about Now.

Like many of us who have been abused, I split into parts. I am pretty fortunate that I was dissociative enough to survive but not dissociative to the point of being non functional for a good part of my life. If you notice in the first paragraph, I don't really call myself a survivor too much these days. I am so busy with a life that I never thought I'd have. "Survivor" is more of an, "oh yeah, I'm that too." to me. I used to get really annoyed when people would say you move from "survivor to thriver." I felt that description still pointed out that I was not "normal" and even that label identified me as still damaged. So now, let me share my path with you.

The first time I was in the hospital

was at 18. I couldn't tell my parents about the abuse. I was suicidal and self-harming. Actually, I ran away to the hospital! I had never run away in my life. My parents had no idea why I went in THAT place voluntarily. I had 3 good months of work there. That was way back when insurance companies would pay for more than a week of treatment. All of the other patients on the adolescent psych unit happened to be sexually abused teenagers. That made me angry at the adults messing with kids! It wasn't a specific "Trauma Program" as the other hospitals I would encounter later in my life were. It kept me safe though, and I had some good intensive therapy that couldn't be done on an out-patient basis. It was also a place that was confidential and I didn't have to worry about my friends at my high school finding out what had happened to me.

I married my husband at age 22 because I thought I was so disgusting that 1) nobody would ever love me and 2) sex with him was pleasurable and 3) he didn't hurt me. I also had the strong "no sex before marriage, and the sex with only one person" dogma that I grew up with. I thought he was a good listener. He wasn't, he just didn't talk. We soon had a baby girl and I was really healthy for about 4 years. I had a good job, I loved being a mom, and I didn't need a therapist.

After my second child, a son, was born, I had postpartum depression for a brief time. My husband was a student and didn't work in the summers, so he helped with keeping my daughter occupied and did most of the household chores. About 2 months after I had returned to work, I was at a low level depression when winter came and we started having arguments. As winter continued, I plummeted into depression due to the increased stress and lack of emotional support. I also had Seasonal Affective Disorder, which I was unaware of at that point in time. I had no therapist

at the time.

One of my dreams as a teenager was becoming a doctor. I wanted to go to Medical School so that I could take care of myself financially without ever having to depend on anyone, and so I could afford to have my horses I so dearly loved, and I was fascinated with science and especially medical subjects. My husband gave me no support for any of my dreams. I came home from church one morning saying, "I am supposed to go to Medical School. That is what I am meant to do."

He said, "You'll never see your children." I was floored. I eventually did go to Med School 8 years after that.

I choose to go to a Medical School in Mexico because I could stand on my own achievements there. No one there would know I was an abuse survivor. (I thought people could look at me and know that I was damaged here, but no one knew me there.) I did exceptionally well in school with no support from my husband. He was angry that I decided to go without his consent. I ended up passing my first set of board exams, then had major crash and had to quit. I've come to view that time not as a failure. I was in medical school. I did it! I was smart enough and good enough to be a doctor.

After leaving med school midstream, I was in the hospital once or twice a year for the next 7 years. I went to the trauma program at River Oaks in Louisiana and did about 4 months worth of therapy in three weeks. I made so much progress there in a safe environment where I could let scary things out and still be safe. It was very intense and healing at the same time. I had the support there that I didn't have at home.

I was really afraid of going in the hospital and not sure what to expect, but I talked to people who had been there and my psychiatrist knew it was a good program so I took a "step of



faith" and went in to work.

People who were in the program with me said to expect to be tired and even exhausted when I came home because of the intensity of the program. They were absolutely right. However, the healing benefits continued as I went back to work with my regular therapist. I went to the River Oaks program two other times with the same results.

An interesting thing happened after nearly every hospital visit I had in each hospital. My treatment team asked me what was I going to do about my husband? They saw, in a way that I could not, that he was making me feel worse and essentially sabotaging my progress. He said he would not let my children see me in "that place" when I was in the hospital close to home and I asked him to bring them to see me. He had his own issues that were abusive to me verbally.

As soon as my kids were old enough to take care of their basic needs, we left. There was no way I could cope with a child under 5 years old in the way I wanted as a single parent. Before I knew it, the kids were into their teens and my daughter was off to college.

After my daughter was in college, I had one hospitalization. I had a pretty good support system in place and was able to let my son stay with some kind and compassion friends of ours while I was in the hospital.

From then on, I worked in day hospital programs. They were very helpful and directly addressed my issues. They allowed me to deal with the feelings that were more than I could do in once a week therapy sessions and be at home with my son after he came home from school.

All the hospital programs were what I call "affirmation heavy." Daily affirmations and mood charting were a strong part of the outpatient programs and that became really helpful to managing my illness. I found out I was bipolar along the way and the mood charting became really important.

Let's move closer to current day. I had lost several jobs due to lack of attention to details. Since I didn't have insurance, my last hospitalization was

with the county MHMRA unit. When I got into their system, I got my meds paid for and their consumer benefits office helped me to get on Social Security Disability. SSDI.

I had mixed feelings about this. I was smart, how could I be disabled? It's another stigma, "too lazy to work."

My doctor there said it was the most practical thing to do and that intelligence didn't mean I couldn't receive disability. I found out that I functioned much better without the stress of work. After 2 years I got Medicare benefits. It was a good decision to move to SSDI and I'm thankful the doctor directed me that way. I still had no mental health insurance, but I was able to get my meds and primary health care paid for.

About that time my son graduated from high school and I lost his child support and also social security benefits that he received to take care of him financially since I was unable to work. I could not afford to live on my own, so I moved in with my parents.

About a year before, my psychiatrist had said, "There is no way you should ever live with them. That would be way too triggering!"

The work I had been doing with a new therapist addressed a lot of those parent issues and living with them actually ended up being a blessing. Only occasionally, something comes up that is triggering.

So, these uncanny things started to happen in my life as my stress level dropped. I am able to deal with my parents on an adult level. (They were not my abusers.) I have my own space in the house on the other end from my parents. I have already worked through the issues of them not being there for me as a teenager. Now, I enjoy the time I am having with them as they are getting older. I help them out a lot by shopping, cleaning up and doing other errands. I do my own things and they do theirs. We generally eat together, but otherwise I choose how much time we spend together.

Since I am a disabled adult child, I was able to get on my father's medical insurance. It has mental health and dental coverage. I don't have to pay my therapist \$80 a session anymore.

Having that money allowed me to

start taking riding lessons again for the first time since I was about 15. At the barn where I took lessons, I met someone who was involved with a therapeutic horse riding ranch nearby. It actually turned out she lives down the street from me! So, I have a good friend nearby. I started volunteering at the "Ranch" 4 days a week. Lo and Behold! I had my horses again! I don't have a lot of money, but it is enough for what I need. A bonus is that I have lost 20 lbs since I started volunteering with the horses!

Additionally, I have entered into a world of children with disabilities that I never really knew existed. It is amazing to see their progress with the horses and so wonderful to be involved in the children's growth and healing process that occurs through their work with the horses.

When I think back on the past 25 years, I don't see my hospital stays as failures, but as opportunities. They were periods of time that I could work intensely in a safe place with few responsibilities beyond self care. I am fortunate that I could do this kind of hospital work and that there were appropriate places to do it. I worked hard on hard issues while I was there. Going in with a focus helped the process immensely. Generally, I would set some goals with my outside therapist before I went in. I would bring my records home with me for her to review.

It's been over 3 years since I've been in the hospital. I have moved into a new phase of healing. I count this as a great success from a lot of hard work inside the hospital and outside with a talented therapist who is a great fit for me. I have an excellent psychiatrist that I have been with for 10 years who manages my meds. I haven't had to change any meds in over a year, which is a testament to my health and stability. I follow her directions to the letter.

I rarely feel suicidal anymore. Maybe 4 or 5 days throughout the year I have an acute depression for a day or two where I feel suicide could be a choice. When that happens, I contact my therapist immediately and get into see her. After that session, I am usually safe.

*Cont'd next pg*



*Light Bearer, Cont'd.*

I do contract for safety when I feel I need to, and I have her keep my meds if I am really concerned.

Additionally, I attend a weekly Depression Bipolar Support group (DBSA) which focuses on managing daily stress and meds and works strategies for staying healthy through peer support. I exercise by walking horses outside 4 days a week.

Basically, I'm doing everything I am supposed to do. I meet with my therapist weekly. I take my meds faithfully. I get outside daily and I exercise. I also am building a good support system beyond that includes my DBSA Group and several friends that I have made with my renewed association with horses.

Every now and then, I visit the last hospital I attended as an "alumni." They have a program for previous clients and I can go for groups anytime there. The last time I was there was maybe a year or more ago. I could honestly say to the clients there, that there is an end to the suffering. *It does get better.*

My therapist that I had while I was a patient there says that it is important to carry the light ahead for those who follow. I do that now in so many ways. One day, I believe that if you stick it out and let someone believe in you if you find you can't believe in yourself, you will make it through on this healing pathway and you too can become a "Light Bearer."

**MV****Nothing Thoughts**

Too facile she says  
The edges of all this  
nonsense are clipped with  
pinking shears making crisp  
tight triangles on the  
borders of reason  
Quit asking such stupid questions  
Quit answering such nothing  
thoughts

But I can't help it, the  
Tearful One cries  
Stupid questions and  
nothing thoughts are: all I have!

By Collette

**MV****Touched by Paws of Love**

By MySong

I've always loved animals, but I never really understood why; I just knew I felt good when they were around. I felt loved, accepted and less lonely when my pets were with me, especially my dogs. They made me smile when nothing else could; they made me laugh when I had nothing to laugh about.

When my husband was killed, I curled up with his Dalmatian and grieved. I'm convinced my dogs helped me heal, not only from my abuse, but also from my grief, though I don't believe that feeling will ever totally go away.

So in an effort to understand my own emotions, I decided to research animals and find out why I felt this way. I was amazed with the information I discovered and found myself excited when I learned the ways animals, or any kind of pet for that matter, can help people.

Findings of the most current research being done about people associating with animals show:

- \*Decreases in blood pressure
- \*Decreases in cholesterol levels
- \*Decreases in triglyceride levels
- \*Decreases in feelings of loneliness
- \*Decreases in stress and anxiety
- \*Lowers your heart rate
- \*Increases in psychological wellbeing
- \*Increases opportunity for exercise
- \*Increases survival after a major illness
- \*Increases opportunities for social interaction.

Although this research is still in its infancy, these are some of the many exciting things pets do for us.

The human-animal bond is something I don't think anyone can quite explain. It carries unique benefits not offered by a human companion. Anyone that has ever owned a pet can attest to the fact that a dog will practically wag his whole body when he sees his master come through the door. It's like we are the most important person in the world, and in fact, to him we are. It doesn't matter if your hair is a mess, you're tired and smelly from working hard all day, or you're cranky and have BO. He still is thrilled to see you. It's something only an animal can give us.

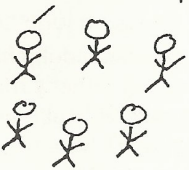
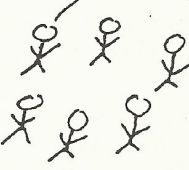
Pets are non-judgmental, whereas humans are not. They communicate through body language, thus their whole body wags. And we, as humans, react to this and feel happier without even realizing it. They evoke a nurturing part of us, so we frequently treat them as a child, giving us more purpose in our lives.

Pets give us many things, but I think the most important is unconditional love. No one else can really give us this. They even love us when we're angry and yell at them.

I cannot say enough about the love of an animal. I have been touched by paws of love.

This article is dedicated to them, Joshua and Sweetpea, my loyal and devoted Labs.

**MV**

Meeting	Meeting
<p>I'm going to be completely healed in 6 months.</p> 	<p>I'm healing one piece at a time.</p> 
I'm a survivor.	15 years later.

VICTORIA LIGHT 2002



## ForGET It!

By Freda T.

People say to me, "Why don't you leave the past behind you? Just forGET it! Get ON with your life!!! It was hell," they agree. Then ask "Why do you keep bring it up? Move ON."

The list of solutions, of sage advice from others, goes on for miles of uncomprehending noise. They have no idea what someone who has survived trauma deals with on an everyday basis. They cannot comprehend what we dealt with before we knew what went on before. Then, once we do know what happened, they ask "Why don't you just throw it all away. Just forget it and LIVE your life?"

We would, every last one of us would, if we could.

Tell me, can a New Hampshire farmer just plow a straight line through his fields in the spring?

Noooooo. Every winter the ground freezes. Every time the ground freezes it pushes some more of the mountain of rock pieces dropped from glaciers eons ago further up through the soft soil. Every time rockss come near the surface, the plow turns them up, bumping the plow this way and that. Can the farmer plow a straight line in the spring? Well, yes, after he's removed all of this winter's crop of rock.

Tell me, can a fat person get skinny?

That fat person surely can, after seeing where his/her diet has put on all kinds of pounds, little by little. It will take a major shift in what we eat, replacing one kind of food with a totally different kind of food. It takes a great deal of conscious effort to change to what was healthier. How many of the people you know who are overweight, who have dieted most of the years you have known them, how many have lost the weight they wanted to lose? How many of these people have lost this weight only to find it again?

How many times have you heard me go through what to you sounds like the same "reliving", the same

feelings, the same memories? Same thing. We are both trying to get from Unhealthy to Healthier.

Where does a person who was treated like shit for the first fifteen years of their live learn how to be a parent? How does someone who was constantly literally slapped around and screamed at, learn to control irritations, let alone anger or fury? How does a child who was ignored, overlooked, belittled, made fun of, ever find their own sense of worth?

Just take your past and throw it away. Come on, you can do it. Just forget about all that's gone on before, Just forget it and get ON with your life!

Uh-huh! You can't do it either.

I am not "digging up" what has been buried for years! I am finally understanding some of what has never gone away. All this stuff has been in my life. I just had no idea where it came from, how it got here, and have been unable to make it go away!

It's taken a long time to understand that what I need to work with are the consequences of experiences I did not choose. Not the abusers. They will take care of themselves. I just need to distance myself from them. But what happened inside ME. That is what I need to take care of. The only thing I can change, the only thing I can fix, the only thing I can heal, is me.

If you've broken your leg, why don't you just get up and walk on it? What? You mean you have to do with healing that broken bone? Then you can walk on it again? You are doing what I am doing; dealing with the consequences of a previous or earlier experience.

That's what we deal with every day: the consequences of experiences we did not choose, that were forced on us. Those consequences are in our face twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year.

Once we have started on the road to healing, it is not something we can turn on or off like a spigot. It's not something we can choose to see, hear, or feel—or not. It's like pulling

your finger out of the little hole in a dam; the whole dam is going to let loose, until the river flows freely again!

And it *will* flow freely one day. There will be the normal tides, the normal ebb and flow to life. Once we have dealt with all the consequences in our life.

So, for all of you who feel it necessary to remind me that "You live in the past!" I say, "We all do!"

And for those who insist there is a lot of my past I should just forget and get on with my life—well, I will, soon as I can.

When you can walk on your broken leg, let me know.

MV

### A Prayer

Holding a clear safe place  
fear rage helplessness  
dad is scary  
hits her older sister  
She hates fears him  
She wants out out out  
She is only 10  
Holding a clear safe place  
fear rage helplessness  
The cancer is back  
she went back  
should have stayed away  
she hits the oldest child  
bore a second child  
she is trapped  
cannot protect her children  
cannot protect herself  
She is only 38  
Holding a clear safe place  
my rage unfurls hot liquid fire  
burning through reason and peace  
lashing out feeling my way  
darkness calls thrumming insistent  
heartbeat  
I know this way I know how  
seeking seeking death not mine  
It is a right and just punishment  
Holding a clear safe place  
Grief sadness  
Mommy please protect me  
Mommy mommy mommy  
pain helplessness pain  
Be still still still  
Accept be silent  
I will never scream  
I am only 59  
And I will hear the cries of this child  
This mother  
And let our cries reach heaven and my  
heart  
Breaks again making still more space  
For peace

By Inara

MV



# Jacob's Daughter

By Jacob & His Daughter

*Many Voices has permission to reprint this article that appeared first on CwDID, where Jacob is a moderator. It may also appear at Infinite Minds. Congratulations to Jacob's Daughter for her project and success in raising awareness of Dissociation!*

I disclosed my diagnosis to my "real" (3-dimensional) daughter last September when she was 13.

In response, she decided to research DID. It turned into a science project. She is in middle school. She won 4th place out of over 600 projects, got written up in the local paper and was able to attend the Infinite Minds conference with me in January.

She is going to the Regional science fair. Her results and the write ups in the local paper have been amazingly positive. This project has opened dialogue and awareness about PTSD and DID in our local community that was simply not there before.

If you are thinking of disclosing to your children, friends or significant others, you may share this information with them. I'm posting this to help raise awareness on DID.

— Jacob

## Her paper follows:

### What is Dissociative Identity Disorder?

For my science fair project this year, I am testing the prevalence of dissociation in the general population. I will conduct my experiment by handing out a DID screening test to a sample of roughly 100 people. The scores will be recorded in groups according to age and gender.

Later I will find how many scores are over 30 (has the power to dissociate) and determine whether the age and/or gender has any effect on the average scores. My hypothesis is that more than 3 percent of the population has the ability to dissociate (scores at or over 30) and that higher scores will result in older people. The independent variable is the ages of the

people who took the quiz. That would make the percentage of people who are able to dissociate the dependent variable. The quiz, though, will ultimately stay the same.

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is a mental condition in which a person has multiple personalities. If a person has this disorder, they could split between two completely different personalities and not even be aware of it. How, you ask, can a person actually do that? Split between personalities? It sounds bizarre and strange and most definitely out there. But, to people diagnosed with this disorder, it is most certainly real. To have it, you must have had childhood trauma before the age of eight. A child is more vulnerable to dissociation, since their personal identity is still forming. If they learn to do this, they could use it as a coping mechanism in stressful situations for the rest of their life.

Multiple personalities are like totally different people all rolled up into one body. For example, let's say a person with this disorder has six different personalities. Steven goes to work, Jackson does all the sports, you see April at all the parties, Hannah cooks, Lisa cleans, and Jeremy only comes out when extremely angry. It's like a six-sided dice. The same person, with six different faces. Jackson might have an extensive knowledge of football, but Steven might not even like football. April might be the center of the party, while Lisa could be quite shy. Hannah might love math and hate science, while Jeremy might love science and hate math. Now imagine them all as one person.

For a child trying to escape ongoing abuse or trauma, these alter egos may appear to them as imaginary friends. People actually diagnosed with this disorder find that giving names to their multiple

personalities helps to increase communication and functioning. Splitting personalities is a magnificent way to handle stress, but, while it can help a person function during childhood, it can become quite bothersome in later adulthood, when the need for splitting personalities is not required anymore. People who have this disorder may suffer amnesia while switching between different personalities. Let's say Jackson goes to work one day, but can't figure out what to do, because Steven always does it for him. And Steven and Jackson couldn't possibly share notes! Or, Jackson could be watching a soccer game, but Jeremy might take over when he sees just how unfair the match is and totally cuss out the coach. Jackson doesn't remember a bit of this, however, and nor do the other personalities.

Though DID is uncommon, many people have the ability to dissociate. It could be going to your "happy place" or trying to convince yourself that you don't have a headache. Have you ever found that you are able to ignore pain? Do you find that once you get to work/ school you can't remember the uneventful drive there? How about totally blanking out in the middle of a long, boring lecture? These are all forms of dissociation. Most people experience these mild forms of dissociation.

So relax. Breathe. More likely than not, you don't have this disorder. Even if you did, it wouldn't be too much of a horrible thing. Like that old saying goes...two heads—or more accurately three or four or five—is better than one!

### Can You Dissociate?

#### Purpose:

I am testing the prevalence of



dissociation in the general population. (i.e. Finding the percentage of people in the general population that have the ability to dissociate)

#### **Hypothesis:**

That more people in the general population will have this ability than what the APA says (1-3 percent of the population) and higher scores will be found in older people.

#### **Procedure:**

I got roughly one hundred (exactly 116) people to take a DID screening test, splitting them into groups according to age and gender. From the scores, I was able to draw conclusions. To find the percentage of people who had the ability to dissociate, I found the percentage of the scores at or over 30. I calculated the average scores and ranges from each age group.

#### **Materials:**

DID screening test, printed as well as online, pencil/ pens, online scoring, excel spreadsheet to store data

#### **Results:**

49 out of 116 people tested scored at or over 30. This means that 42% of the population has the ability to dissociate. The highest scores were

found in the 10-18 age group. The average score for both the male and female 10-18 age groups was 38. The lowest scores by far were found in the 19-30 age group with the average as 19.5. Slightly more females have the power to dissociate in comparison to males (a difference of just 2). The females tended to have slightly higher averages than the males. The female 10-18 age group had the highest percentage of scores over 30 with the percentage being 67 (8/12). Only one person out of 11 in the Female 19-30 had the power to dissociate, making it the lowest percentage (19%). The highest range of scores was also found in the 10-18 age group with the range being 62. The lowest range scores were found in the 19-30 age group with the range at just 27.

#### **Conclusions:**

My hypothesis was halfway correct. Though 42% is most definitely higher than 3%, I also hypothesized that the older people would score higher. This was incorrect. The highest-scoring age group was actually the 10-18 age group. The 55+ age group's average score was eight points lower than the 10-18 age group.

**MV**

## ***The Tree of Sorrow***

The Tree of Sorrow stands tall, healthy.  
Each leaf depicts a life harmed.  
The leaves turn yellow as the sorrow grows.  
They drop when there is no hope.

## ***The Tree of Life***

The Tree of Life begins as a seed.  
It fights to break through the dirt.  
With each fight it shows its strength.  
With each fight it takes more nutrients.  
Sometimes, the circle becomes complete  
as the Tree of Sorrows provides its remains  
to help the Tree of Life become tall  
and magnificent.

*By Rachel*

**MV**

## **Controlling Clutter**

**By Dorothy**

I have clutter but most of it is what I call "controlled clutter." I know where everything is and can find it in a second. It doesn't show outside in the apartment but is in drawers and closets. Much of it is genealogy stuff and obits, as I do genealogy a lot. That drawer is layered with things but I can put my hand on it anytime to find what I want. Most of my drawers are labeled as to what's inside.

If one does clean out drawers and closets, be sure everyone inside is in agreement before you get rid of stuff. If you don't all hell is to pay later. You will either want it or someone else will and there will be a fight inside. I know, as I have done it. No selling of anything until a few days later when we are all sure of what we want to do. Do we need or want the money worse than to keep the stuff? If we keep the

stuff, where do we put it? I've found the big plastic tubs or containers like plastic trunks with lids are great. You can sorta see through them and tell what is inside, and you can always label. I do that with dolls and Christmas items. Helps a lot.

I do have one basket that I reserve for things I don't know what to do with at the time, or medical stuff. It's a pretty basket with red, golden and blue bands around its width, and it sits under my stereo. When it gets too full or it bugs me, then I look at it and decide what goes where and what to keep or shred or throw. A lot of my writing goes in it too. Right now it is too full.

Magazines and such have a special basket, almost like a little cradle with spindles on top, woven a deep brown. That's under my TV area.

Another basket for books I have not read yet or want to keep longer, and don't know where to put yet. It's under a chair.

I have not found a solution yet for commercial magazines yet, with things for me to buy, so they take up a considerable space on my big foot stool or hassock in the living room—center stage, of course.

Newspapers come in, get read, cut out when need be for genealogy or interesting ideas, and then go to the hall in a big paper bag for recycling.

Mail I am not interested in, and medical papers with security info on it, go to the bedroom where the dest and shredder are. They get shredded when there is a big pile.

Makes my life a lot simpler for sure. And it's fun, as there are cute things to put my stuff into.

**MV**



# Dissociative Identity Disorder, Obesity and Me

By Jennifer D. Scott

Ms Scott has a blog where this first appeared. It features her artwork & writing. See it at <http://id-scott.blogspot.com>

I am a survivor of severe childhood and adult abuse. My primary diagnosis is Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). One of the abuse signs is suffering from some kind of eating disorder. Mine was over-eating. I was morbidly obese. I was a very big woman, just beginning the journey of recovery.

One year I was able to attend a conference for survivors in my home state. I attended several lectures. One was by a woman, another survivor, who also was dissociative. She spoke about multiplicity and being overweight. It was her experience the, before she became healthier and more co-conscious with other fractured parts of her, she lost control and gained much weight. After beginning her survivor work she said she just began losing weight. That at some point her body just said "Now I lose weight. Here I am. This is what I do next."

In her mind she felt she didn't work at losing weight, she just started losing. She is convinced that she lost weight because all her "parts" agreed it was time for her to lose weight. She told us that without even trying, she reached her ideal weight. She went on to say that, since then, she hasn't had any worries about weight. She said that it happened automatically, which gave me a wonderful, hopeful, relieving "off the hook" kind of feeling. I thought the same would happen to me, without my even trying. The

weight would come off by itself, when it was ready. At the time I was well over 250 pounds.

I went to the rest of the conference and even purchased the tape of the lecture I attended. Her lecture made me so happy. I bought the tape so I could listen to it over and over again. I thought losing weight would be easy and automatic.

At the next meeting with my therapist I told him what I thought; that I thought this would be the way losing weight would work for me. I just had to be patient and the weight would come off by itself. Here was the quick fix I had been hoping for!

It turned out for me losing weight would not be that easy. Maybe that's the way it worked for the woman who gave the lecture. Or maybe she was not able to explain what happened to her in a way that I could grasp. Either way, I was happy for her, but that's not what happened to me.

Here's what happened to me. I had an "aha" moment. I attended my 30th college reunion when I was at my heaviest (303 pounds). My lifelong friend lived near the college and I stayed at her house that weekend. On the night of the reunion, we took our time getting ready. When we left her house I thought I looked beautiful. Beautiful dress, decked out in my favorite rainbow moonstone jewelry, good hairdo—I felt confident. Even though I knew I was heavy, I felt good.

As we walked in, there were many familiar faces. I had been a radio disc jockey at college and some of the people from the station were there. I was especially happy to see them. I couldn't wait to say hello to them. As I said hello to one old friend I could see a look of shock and horror on his face as he realized who I was. To this day my dear friend still insists the look of shock was not directed at me. She's being her sweet self, but I know that truth. In that moment, I realized how heavy I really was. I also realized that this weight was not just going to go away by itself. I had to do something about it. I could not keep kidding myself.

I went back to therapy after the weekend with my friend. I told my therapist I was finding my weight would not fall off automatically. I had come to the realization that I had to work at getting healthy. I started by changing how I felt about my body. Instead of thinking it an instrument of torture, I started to think of it as an engine, a car engine. I have to maintain the engine, put the right things into it so that everything works properly. This was a good analogy for me. It was very logical and I was able to take it in and incorporate it into my whole self, my System. It was a great thing. By controlling the amount of food I ate and eating healthier, I started losing weight slowly and steadily.

**MV**





## Amy's Story

By Amy K.

There once was a bulb planted in rich soil, laying dormant for a long time. It had a life deep inside waiting for the right time to emerge. Eventually this bulb began to shift and to wiggle and to feel the stirrings of life. It began to grow roots. This wasn't always easy because sometimes the roots would hit rocks and clay.

After what seemed like a very long time, the bulb began to grow. It pushed through its hard outer crust until a spot of green could be seen. It was very unsure of itself. It needed much nurturing to continue to grow.

There had been considerable pain in the past. It had been hurt in ways that few other bulbs had been. But with a lot of caring, some sunshine, and water, it continued to grow upwards, while the roots grew stronger.

This bulb was still scared of what could happen. It could wither and die. It could become weak and be unhappy.

But after a time a flower began to bloom. It was a delicate flower, fragile by nature, yet it was a flower none the less.

Bit by bit it began to get the hurt out. Things that had never been out before.

There were difficult times ahead, times

when the flower started to get weak, and not be able to stand up.

It had lost its trust, it thought, forever. It thought it was going to die. It felt like the nurturing had stopped, the caring had gone.

This flower was sad, it was hurting—a kind that few could understand. It cried, it argued, it gave up at times, but mostly just hung on, and waited.

Before too long, feelings changed again. As the feelings changed, the roots grew strong again. The stem straightened, and the bright, beautiful colors returned.

This was something new for this flower. In the past, there was no fixing, or regaining. It was hard to believe it to be true, yet each time the flower weakened, and truly believed that it was all over, it once again found safety in caring and nurturing.

Then there came a point when it was time for the flower to leave the caretaker. It wasn't an easy time. The flower bent and swayed a lot. The flower cried and argued that it was wrong. The caretaker stood strong.

Said "NO! There is someone out there who can take better care of you than I!"

The flower only understood a little bit.

But after awhile it didn't matter anymore. It only mattered that it hurt and was sad and scared. The flower almost died. But then remembered that there were other people who thought Iris was important also.

So the roots are a little weak, and the colors not so bright. Yet, this Iris knows that she will probably be OK again. That the caretaker still cares, and will still be there, remembering when the Iris was still just a bulb, and how she grew into a flower.

Note: This story was written many years ago, and combined with illustrations into a book. It was a good-bye present for a therapist I was very attached to. But she had the strength and foresight to know that I needed someone at that time with much more experience than she had. At the time I was totally blown away when she told me we had to terminate, but after awhile, after trying many therapists, I ended up with a psychiatrist who has stayed with me for many years now. We have gone through as they say "the best of times and the worst of times. Yet we always find our way back to each other. It is a kind of connectedness that is no longer a caretaker and patient most of the time, but a true relationship, that is very much valued and appreciated, and will last a lifetime.

**MV**

## The Yoke

By Jeanette R.

My parents yoked me to the cult. I crumbled into separate little parts. I lost my mind to DID. It's probably like being a robot who lives. My parts protected me from living out my life. That way I had no feelings and no memory. I was just there. I was assured that when I died I would go to hell. I couldn't imagine hell being worse than my life, but I wasn't willing to take the chance, so I moved into a survival mode at all costs.

The yoke directed me farther and farther away from my heart, where love is. And that's how I existed. My parents died and the yoke remained around my neck. It continued to lead me beyond myself into addiction and self-hurtful behavior. I was aware of the self-hurtful behavior and addiction. I experienced a lot of pain, sorrow, depression, shame, doubt etc. I didn't trust anyone—especially God. I didn't know a way out.

At age 50 my twin sister died. As I look back, I see that her death was the beginning of my new life. I became quite depressed and was hospitalized for major depression. Hospitalizations, psychotropic drugs and unemployment were my companions for about 9 years.

In 2001 I was diagnosed with DID and began to see a DID-trained therapist. I worked very hard allowing my parts to surface and integrating them when they were ready. This was a long, slow process. It had its own timetable. I surrendered to the process and discovered 86 parts along the way—some stronger than others. My therapist was the 'flimsy reed' that my parts grabbed on to. She slowly and consistently led me to my parts, to myself, to my center, to the God within.

As each part integrated I felt more whole. I felt like I was a frame that was being filled in with each integration. I was

able to stay present more and more of the time. I was able to remain sober and became abstinent, and participate more fully in life. My goal was total integration and I believed that it would happen probably in the next life.

Well, it kept happening, and on February 2, 2010, I became a single. I knew this is how I was meant to be. It was wonderful and awful at the same time. I was accustomed to using my parts to step in when I wasn't able to face things. Now I had no parts. I searched and searched and there were none.

So now I need to learn how to live as a single. I am aware of my many feelings, and my connection with the Great Reality grows daily. I am able to live more and more in the present moment—in reality. This journey is now a journey within. The yoke has been smashed and I have been set free to live life one day at a time. **MV**



# Why Didn't She...?

## How the Media Reinforces Self-Blame Among Survivors

By Kate Edwin

All of us survivors know all too well that initially we blame ourselves for the trauma. It's one of the ways trauma works on the brain, one of the ways our bodies broke things up to save us. We make it our fault in order to have a sense of control.

That's a defense mechanism, but why does it seem so easy to keep up? It can't be 'just' in our heads. We were all children, we had no power, no way of fighting back. We did all we could. Still it comes up in our thoughts and the thoughts of others: "Well, why didn't she say 'no'? Why didn't she make them stop?" Why didn't I do anything?

Society and specifically the media plays a pretty big role in what people expect children to be able to do. "Home Alone," "Matilda," "Peter Pan," "Harry Potter," "Alice in Wonderland," "The Wizard of Oz," "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs," "The Chronicles of Narnia," "Free Willy," and "Spy Kids" is just a short list of books, stories, and movies that feature children as the heroes who save the day, (if not the whole world). Most of these are stories we've all heard or come across, none of them went straight to DVD, no one tried to shoot them down. They didn't do anything wrong, but I don't think they helped, either.

Take Harry Potter. Even though there was magic involved, this elementary school aged boy was the one to save the whole world from evil

magical doom. Sure, he had some help from his school-aged friends, and maybe a kind adult here and there, but he did all the work. He was the one who had to save everyone. Potter and his friends are put up against great big powerful awful creatures and bad magical people and they win! Could that happen?

There are a lot of stories with magic added on the list, but I've never thought of it that way. I've grown up completely surrounded by media that shows kids saving the day, kids raised thousands of dollars for charity, kids call 911 when no one else can, kids are called heroes for simply getting through a disease. Yes, by all means, kids who do things deserve credit. But in my opinion, we have set the bar far too high. Sure, there are kids who do accomplish things, and it's great, but it seems 'we' as a society give children powers they simply do not have.

Then when a child goes through something awful, life threatening, there are people who ask "Well, why didn't she? Why didn't she say 'no'? Why didn't she do something? Because, well, of course we they can."

Somehow we have all gotten confused into thinking that kids can be on their own and handle everything that comes their way.

Not every time though. If a child has cancer, or loses an arm or a leg, of course they can't recover on their own. But it's wrong when children are seemingly expected to be able to fight off, persuade, or talk their way out of a

grown adult trying to do grown-up things to a child who is, in fact, utterly defenseless and powerless.

What can we do to encourage creativity and imagination, but also to get people to realize that children are vulnerable, they cannot save the day, save the world, or even save themselves. It's not the child's fault. 101% of the time, it is not their fault.

It would indeed be nice if we had magic. If we could have somehow injured the adult, or confused them into letting us go. The real world doesn't work that way. So, on go the efforts to spread the awareness of child abuse.

We have to do something about it. After all, this is the real world, not a fairy tale where every child is loved by an extended family. This is not a movie with a happy ending. This is real, and trauma is real. We cannot begin to stop it until we see it is there.

MV

### *A Healing Road*

When I am in despair at the pain  
and meaninglessness of my life

I try to remember that everything  
becomes what we make it

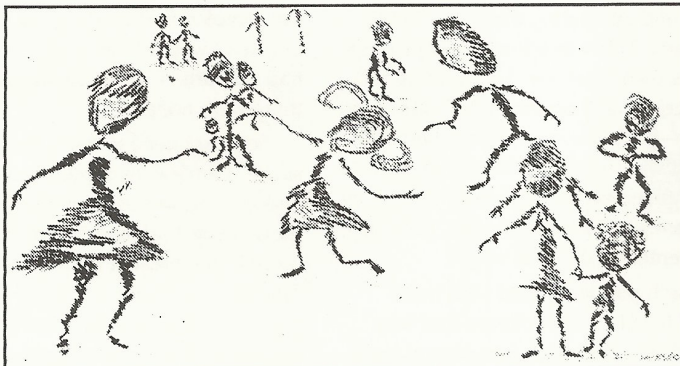
That deep wells of peace lie  
beneath ordinary existence

That if we embrace each problem  
fully and breathe deeply

This hard survivors' life can  
become the glorious healing road.

By Phoenix

MV





# What a Healing Day For Me

By Maggie S.

Not long ago I achieved a goal, a very big one, and feel really good about it. We went and smashed some very strong powerful things that were meant to stop us from talking and telling my story. Mother has been gone a bit over 10 years but I still had her voice telling me to fail.

I was interviewed for 2 hours by the clinic PR man. It went into the newsletter they do. We didn't pull any punches. Didn't avoid the DID and at one point mentioned MV as for people with trauma and dissociation. I simply told the truth of my life and really didn't assign any blame except that mother was clinically insane and back then there was no help. The programs really didn't exist.

I made a stand that many people are mentally ill because of abuse at all ages. For anyone there is a high price for abuse. I told him most of the clinics I had been in had either abuses going on or were not interested in client recovery because of insurance payments.

I was so scared—beyond scared. But I knew we had to do this and say what we said. No coping out or rescheduling it was a very big step in my recovery. I hurt a bit knowing that my mother wouldn't want me to do it and would try her hardest to stop it. She spent most of my life saying "Failure is very good, Success is very bad." Then tried to sabotage any kind of success I might have. It was a war.

We all know that she is gone forever, but her influences remain as a lingering discourager for choices I make in my life now, that tried to stop this interview.

But happily, I did it anyway. Now there is some anger that life in my past was controlled by her. I told him even as an adult that it was like being her pet or toy...to take out and play with, then lock away again. Yet she was clinically insane...not knowing how much she was accountable for.

He asked what I see as the biggest

part of my recovery. I said "My faith and value system, and my art." For some reason Mother didn't rant or do other negative things if I was sitting very quietly with my crayons, so art became my first real coping skill.

When I grabbed a stack of art to show him, I found it interesting that the three in series work in black, white, and grays were the ones he used. I had just told him that any in black and white were for that newsletter, *MANY VOICES*.

I told him about losing my husband David to cancer, and how we had a very special love. Yet he was suffering too much and it was his time to go. Lots of other things, like being homeless even in Boston, then purely by chance I landed here. "What are you doing so differently here? Why is this or that different?" I asked.

"We don't understand why you keep asking us that," he answered.

"Because things are really a lot different here," I said. "You actually encourage recovery. You actively get involved in helping us clients to recover. Most places just maintain the client at a certain level...and there was mention of advocacy."

He asked, "Was your breakdown when you were told others existed inside?"

My answer was no, not really. Growing up we simply thought everyone had others and it was too rude to discuss, like going to the bathroom.

When I was a junior in high school I never skipped school, but wasn't often in class. I'd go to the library and read or study things outside of school lessons, and by chance picked up the book "Sybil" and read it, recognizing I had a kinda mirror image of her. Then I started to actively hide the others.

So at last we did it! We actively smashed all the crap Mother had done to teach all four of us kids, "Failure is very good, Success is very bad," as she taught us to sabotage any and all successes.

We simply told our story in a calm and peaceful state, as if I had found real peace...and we have. It's not always there, but yeah, peace is nice.

**MV**

## Eidetic Memory

By Kate T.

In talking with a friend about this subject, I decided to do a little research. It seems that eidetic ("photographic") memory is quite common to abuse/trauma survivors. A hallmark of Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder in its many forms (including DID) is hypervigilance and highly exaggerated startle response. For example, my DH, the One True Paul of the Universe, actually wore an elastic band, to which I'd sown on Christmas bells, around his ankle for a year or two so that he couldn't sneak up on me and make me leap a foot into the air – not my fault the man walks like a cat!

I believe eidetic memory is a learned trait, not inborn. It seems to be a survival mechanism in survivors (notice I do NOT say victims). I've read that many have it in youth and then it mysteriously goes away; that part I do not get; perhaps they just don't need it anymore. My Paul loves it when I simply shut my eyes for a second and visualize where he left the Allen wrenches (whatever they are) or the garden twine!

According to the many articles and blogs on the subject which I've read, it can be taught; there are about a zillion websites offering that, which I won't list here, having no knowledge of their repute. That's also why I'm not citing the many "scientific" publications I read on the subject. If you are interested, you can research it on your own.

That's all I have to say about that. It's my story and I'm sticking to it.

**MV**



## The Three Faces of Steve

By Barbara S.

Steve was a very unique robot. He had multiple personality disorder and had 3 very different personalities. There was Confoosius, a brilliant Chinese philosopher; there was Eddiepal, who was a sad little boy always looking for a mother, and Scruuge, a rich miser always dreaming up ways to make many fast bucks.

He was also unique because he was in the rowboat 24/7. He even slept in the rowboat after dragging it to shore, hiding it under the long ground-sweeping branches of a willow tree. So all day Steve would row his rowboat up and down the stream singing, "Robot, row row row your boat, gently down the stream. Merrily merrily merrily merrily, life is but a

dream."

And Confoosius might come out and say something brilliant like "Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without."

Or little Eddiepal might come out always hoping to find a mother to love and nurture him. He had lots of new roses to present her with, as old roses just wouldn't do.

Or Scruuge might come out and dream of being a ghostwriter for a famous author such as Carol Chryst-Maas. So on and on Steve rowed (or whoever happened to come out) and he was a very industrious robot indeed.

MV

## Insomnia & PTSD

By Judy H.

Well I have had a very hard time with this as I am an insomniac—and don't sleep well and wake up in the middle of the night to pee, and can't go back to sleep a couple times. So I don't wake up feeling calm or hopeful or like I've rested and can think straight. I wake up exhausted.

I found a drug to treat PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) online and went to my doctor about it.

She knows I have DID and PTSD real bad. I never mentioned it but she put me on the exact drug I believe God showed me. "Prazonsin" which is used for combat vets who suffer from severe trauma. A low dose helps all the symptoms of trauma like numbing out etc. I have now got two of the best night's sleep in a row. it also stops anxiety and nightmares.

I believe I was having nightmares and not remembering them because I knew I dreamed and felt bad but couldn't remember the dream. It's actually a high blood pressure med and I have a low blood pressure as a rule but it doesn't seem to be harming me.

So I have been waking up like I can face the day and I'm rested and

sleeping longer and deeper and not waking up groggy...

I feel so hopeful now that I'm on this med and as all people with DID have PTSD from so much trauma I have great hope again.

I wanted to share this discovery and hope with others as I feel I should have been on this med years ago. It also helps urinating problems and now I don't have to wake up and pee and when I wake in the morning.

Having to pee isn't so painful now and I am urinating from a full bladder instead of urges with little urination like a real sensitive bladder. My molestation caused me bladder problems all my life with infections and all.

I hope this will offer hope to offer who are suffering a lot from their PTSD. You may look it up online.

*(Ed. Note:*

*Do NOT buy any drugs, of any kind, online without Informing your doctor and discussing it thoroughly.)*

MV

## The Dove Beyond the Horizon

As we see the bars around us  
the dreams once held dear fall to the  
wayside

though their memories remain fresh  
and it is known they someday will fly.  
My mind, my spirit, my heart, my all  
play tricks on me—a cruel joke life  
plays

upon my very soul.

But my soul has been strengthened  
by many

years of challenges and trials  
and I know someday  
the dove within me  
will see the horizon beyond the bars,  
which will set my spirit free,  
and my strengthened soul will fly  
away

to peace, to safety, to life  
beyond  
the pain.

By Angela (part of Anita, Inc.)

MV





## BOOKS

### Getting Past Your Past Take Control of Your Life with Self-Help Techniques from EMDR Therapy

By Francine Shapiro, PhD. © 2012 by Francine Shapiro, PhD. Published by Rodale Books, www.rodaleinc.com ISBN 978-1-59486-425-4 \$26.99 US. Hardcover. E-book Available. 344 pgs includes appendixes & index.

**This is an absolutely wonderful book** written by Dr. Shapiro, the therapist/researcher, who discovered, improved on, and formally-introduced Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) to the therapeutic community, where it has enjoyed great success as a treatment for traumatized and PTSD-affected individuals.

But unlike so many of the texts we receive, this book is clearly written primarily for consumers—i.e., laypeople can understand it, including those who may NOT be dissociative to the level of complete disruption of their lives. Your family, friends, relatives may see themselves and the common problems that plague all of us, among its pages. You, and they, will learn how EMDR works for those who can “do it on their own” safely.

It also identifies the types of people who could truly benefit from professional treatment by a properly EMDR-Trained therapist.

It can help anyone understand themselves better, understand how their personalities developed, and how we become trapped in self-sabotaging behaviors that can last a lifetime and interfere with work, love, parenting, and just plain having fun. And while it doesn't minimize the effort it takes to create change within ourselves, especially among those of us with a trauma history, it also shows that

sometimes the changes EMDR brings occur faster, more deeply, and endure longer than one might expect.

Counselors who have not been trained in EMDR should read it, too. Because it explains how EMDR is not “magic” or some unproven method. —there is a scientific basis for the way EMDR creates change.

I think this is an absolutely terrific book that everyone who reads MV should take a look at. If you can't afford to buy it, ask your library to order a copy.

### The Couple Who Became Each Other: Stories of Healing and Transformation from a Leading Hypnotherapist

By David L. Calof with Robin Simons, originally published by Bantam/DoubledayDell in 1996 was reprinted ©2010 by David L. Calof. ISBN 978-1453774212. Paperback. Available in earlier (identical) editions at various pricing (often \$7 and lower!) from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com, and numerous outlets. 355 pgs includes bibliography.

**A Fellow and founding member of the ISST-D**, David Calof, D.A.P.A., is perhaps best known in the world of trauma treatment as founder and now Emeritus Editor of the therapy journal, “Treating Abuse Today.” He's been a family therapist in private practice in Seattle for nearly 40 years, with a special interest in hypnotherapy, and is a Certified Diplomate and Fellow in Clinical Hypnotherapy of the National Board for Certified Clinical Hypnotherapists.

In reading this excellent set of case studies, which cover a wide variety of conditions, it's easy to see how Calof has become known as a trainer of hypnotherapists and speaks internationally on the topic. Each case is carefully disguised to avoid breaking

confidentiality, and the discussion about how the process works which follows each description is clear about the way the techniques used worked.

Repeatedly he shows where and how he made ‘mistakes’ and then worked to reduce their impact on his clients. He is a strong believer in the need to ‘fail’ because we grow and learn through failure and then trying something new. Calof operates on the principal of partnership with the client. He does not ‘direct’ them with hypnotic techniques. Rather, he views hypnosis as a special tool that can help people tap into their own inner wisdom.

Much of his clients' progress occurs away from the office, as they practice self-hypnosis, special relaxing or containing techniques, and mull over—in their private unconscious realm—the steps they need to go through to break the sense of being trapped or stuck in treatment or behavior.

While some of the case studies involve severely abused clients, others are more directed toward the so-called ‘ordinary’ dysfunctional family situations that are passed along, generation by generation, causing pain and sadness. It is truly amazing what can be accomplished via hypnosis in teaching people to learn to separate from their ‘inner parents’ and grow up as separate individuals—no longer enmeshed in ages-old family dynamics.

Calof's approach to hypnosis absolutely deserves a wide readership, and gives strong credibility to a field that is too often considered ‘stage magic’ or pushing people into falsifying ‘memories’. I strongly recommend this book. --LW

**MV**

### EXERCISE NOTES

**We are surprised** that no one mentioned the most fun exercise of all—playing! When the weather is good, we like to go to a playground and swing or run around on the slide or play on the teeter-totter. If there is someone to play with, tag is a great game. Also other kid games are fun. In Brooklyn, there were even kickball

leagues for grown-ups, but we didn't join because we are disabled and don't have much stamina.

When we go to a playground with people who aren't multiple, they have just as much fun playing as we do. It is great to remember when playing was fun, not a chore. When the weather is bad, we can use the Wii games like Wii Fit or the dance games.

Playing for exercise gives a chance for the littles to have some fun, and the older parts enjoy it too, once they get past being embarrassed. *By J.A.*

**My daughter and I** have been touring around the perimeter of the US. We have bicycled 6,900 miles and across 10 states so far. It is amazing how good I feel! I love the endorphin high. Check us out: [www.facebook.com/athena3674](http://www.facebook.com/athena3674).

**MV**



**THANKS EVERYONE!**

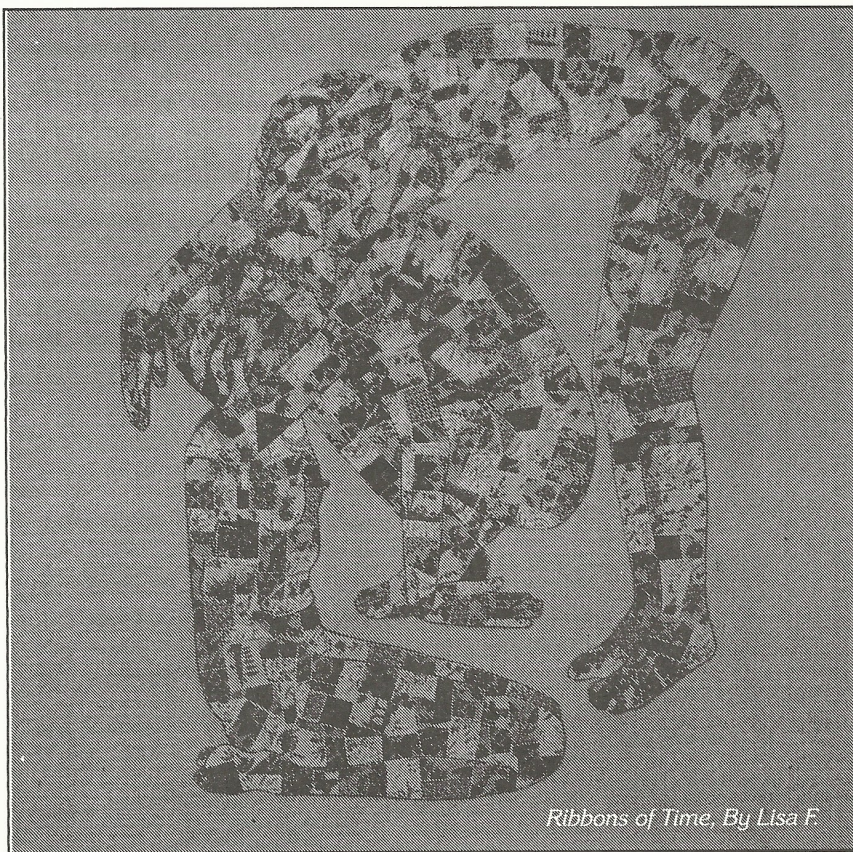
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*Ribbons of Time, By Lisa F.*

**Share with us!**

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