

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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In This Issue:

**What "Home" Means to You
Eating Wisely & Well
...and much more!**



Colored Dreams

Started the morning with
screams in my head
that said
"I'm being hurt in my own
home"
"I'm being hurt in my own
home"
God, write me a poem, color it
black,
paint it blue, wrap it in red...
There's no going back,
nowhere else to roam
except into the dark places in
my head
where children scream black
and blue and red.

Was it just a dream?
Or a half-remembered memory
oozing out of the fog of the
past
not lasting long enough to see
clearly
before settling back into the
safety zone.
Left only with shattered colors;
A kaleidoscope of black nights,
blue horizons,
and blood red sunsets....
Plus words I'll never forget
"I'm being hurt in my own
home."

By Carol Muir

MV

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MY SPILLING INK

By MySong

I was taking a short break from writing, but when I saw the article Lynn wrote on journaling, I knew I had to write something.

My journaling is a bit different than most, since I am a poet at heart. I started writing at the age of nine. I wrote a small book of poetry for my father. I made a cover and bound it as best as a nine-year-old could. I think he liked it, but who really knows about those things. Then I stopped writing for quite some time.

At the age of sixteen I wrote a poem in my English class. My teacher told me I had talent and that I should pursue writing. It made me feel good about myself, which was a miracle at that time, but again I stopped writing. I always loved doing term papers in school and writing book reports. I just loved to write, even then.

At the age of twenty-one I left my abusive husband and took my two and one-half year old son with me. My husband stalked me for two months, so I hid from him. Finally he left me alone. It was a very difficult time in my life and I started writing a great deal of poetry. I was very confused and scared and my poetry reflected that. I wrote about the way I was feeling, so it was very much like journal writing, only it was in poetic form. I shared it with only one woman at that time. I also wrote about my young son and how much I loved him. He was the only bright thing in my life.

I then had many years where I did not write. When I was forty-five years old I finally remembered my abuse. It was a horrible time for me, but I started writing again, and that did help. My poetry was dark and tragic and you could tell I was terrified. I also painted and my art work was much like my poetry. I painted about sixty pictures and many years later I burned all of them but one. I decided to send them to the pit of hell, from which they came. But I saved my poetry. I had written poems about each painting and they were taped to the back of

each painting. Some were written in pencil and some in ink. The handwriting was different on some of them too. I put the poems in the box where I keep the poetry I'd written in my early twenties.

A few years ago I started writing poetry again. Sometimes I'd write paragraphs about my feelings, but they still had a poetry flare to them. That is when I started writing prolifically. But it was still always about my feelings. I became active on two poetry sites and am still very active on one of them. I post poetry there all the time and enter poetry contests, which I occasionally win, but usually lose. My poetry has become much better and more concise throughout the years.

I finally took my forty-five years of poetry and typed it all on my computer and put it in a four-inch notebook. The notebook is so packed I need to buy another one. I have hundreds of writings, mostly poetry, but a few badly written short stories and also some miscellaneous writings. It took me a couple of weeks of constant typing to do this, but I'm very glad I did. I can look at my writing and see the changes that have occurred in my life as I healed. Slow changes, but ones that have impacted me greatly.

I think change is slow and difficult and everyone thought I would take my poetry to my psychologist to read. I wanted to do more with it.

So I got another four-inch notebook and put copies of all my work in it. I have dividers for short stories, poetry, articles I've published and miscellaneous writings. I gave it to him as a gift one day. I put a note on the front of it telling him that he had given me life back and I had nothing to give to him. So I was giving him my life in written form. He was very touched.

As I write, he adds to this notebook, which is bulging at the seams by now. I know he treasures this gift.

During this time of writing I started

publishing articles here and there. I started sending them in about twelve years ago. I found joy in doing this, but not the same joy I found in writing poetry.

I have found more joy in writing articles for MV than other magazines, because I want to give my hope away to others who may not have found theirs yet. I have my life back and am happy and content and in writing for MV I try to show others how I found it and what worked for me.

But writing poetry is different. I have a kind of gross way of describing how it feels for me when others ask me about it. So here goes: *Writing poetry is like throwing up on paper. You throw your feelings out, spilling ink of different colors that reflect your mood, and hopefully you leave your pain there on paper.*

Sometimes I am able to do that and sometimes I pick it up and take it back. But writing has been a gift from God for me. It has helped me throughout my life and reading through it always gives me a lift as I see the changes I have gone through as I sought to re-claim my life and find my way to happiness, joy and contentment.

As a conclusion to this short article, I wanted to give you a sample of a poem I wrote about one year ago. I did win a poetry contest with this one. Oh, sorry Lynn, this one rhymes! lol

MY SPILLING INK

I pick up my pen and it is me
As my insides flow so free

Inside my heart blood is spilled
Onto a paper where my pain is filled
Swirling and spinning as I lay it down
Watching my ink spill onto the ground

Ripping my heart to free my soul
Reaching at straws to just feel whole
The color of ink changes in my eyes
As my insides begin to cry

Spilling Ink, Cont'd.

But as I scratch on paper so thin
It helps me heal deep within
And as I look back at the pain I've felt
God takes my soul and I start to melt

For even though tragedy I have had
I've turned and looked back even
though I'm sad.
I can see blessings that have
come to me
Even when I didn't feel free

I can see the gifts I've been
given from pain
But it's not been easy drowning
in the rain.
But God has made me the
woman I am
In spite of my life that was so damned

He gave me some people to
walk with me
And in the end it set me free.

To a journey I never thought I'd find
He healed my broken, fractured mind

He blessed me with wisdom and
taught me grace
And wrapped my soul in silky lace

He formed me and molded me
using my pain
To make me into the woman he made

He showed me a journey,
a brand new road
A wonderful healing place
I could hold

He blessed me in ways
I can't describe
But the color of ink has
changed my insides

I cannot grasp these
words in my hand
That healed my heart and
taught me to stand

MV**MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!****Bridges to Recovery-Pacific Palisades, Bel Air, Santa Monica CA**

www.bridgestorecovery.com Call Intake Dept.: (877) 602-0257

Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA

www.delamotreatment.com/TraumaRecovery.html

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

Mountain Youth Academy - Mountain City, TN

www.mountainyouthacademy.net

Call Betty Villarreal: (423) 727-9898

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www.riveroakshospital.com/specialty_no_trauma.html

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"Heesh and Sheesh,
Ever faithful, Ever Vigilant—
They are!"

What We Think of "Home"

When I was a little kid, my idea of home was a place where the furniture looked familiar. Guess that is not asking for much!

Later on I learned that other people feel that home is a place where they belong and feel comfortable. I have never, ever felt that, not in over seventy years of living in different places. Twice I have lived in one place for over twenty years and I still did not feel that way. Every single place I have lived has always felt temporary.

When I figured out how I had been abused and what its effects were, I came to a whole new idea of home. It's being at home with myself, being reconnected to parts of myself that had previously been cut off. I belong together and I finally feel comfortable.

By Jeannie

Home to me means I don't have to share space with anybody else unless I want to.

I live on five acres in the desert. I was looking for a house with enough space around it to buffer me from humanity and I got it. I needed enough space where nobody crossed my path without my permission.

It took months to find it and I moved 123 miles. I came here to get well or hide away. I *did* get well here but it took several years.

I'm forever grateful for my living situation. I have three vehicles now and sometimes more so I really appreciate all the space here. Now sometimes I wish someone was with me to help out with upkeep as I am not that good a housekeeper.

This is sacred space for me/us. I am only 30 minutes from Palm Springs Calif. so I get to see my friends nearly every day. I could easily be isolated and drink myself to death here also, so I am glad my friends are near. Thanks for the topic.

By Red G.

My mom had grown up in a nice normal home. My sperm donor was the evil one who got cult and physical problems that drove mom over the

edge. My grandparents understood this and did their level best to repair the damage done to all 4 of us kids. We were so fortunate they got to us when we were young enough.

The damage-control worked, but my D.I.D was already set into motion. My grandparents did the best with what there was, 44 years ago. Their nurturing was the foundation we built our recovery on.

My grandmother had a "magic closet" at her cottage. It was pure fun. Grandpa's binoculars were the special treat.

"Yes," she'd say, "put the small lenses up to your eyes...look out to see the bay."

The boats grew bigger. Then she put them to our eyes to look through the big lenses, and the boats shrank so small! She also had an antique kaleidoscope..."See how the colors and shapes change? Things look different. It's all really how you see it."

She never talked down to us or treated us like we were stupid. In fact, if we did something wrong, she's say

"You are too smart for that. Now let me show you again the best way...not the right ways but the best ways." She would even say "Oh no, no. It's not a disaster. We can fix this!" She was always encouraging and patient.

Somehow we learned at the grandparents' home it was always safe and developed inside "others" who lived in that world.

But at mom's house it was never, never safe. It was never OK, and the ones who spent more time there are a bit more broken, a bit more dysfunctional.

We try now to sort out things. Keep what is good, of value, and get rid of the bad stuff. The experiences will not change. Instead we need to change how we see them, think about them, and feel ourselves growing healthier, too—with time and hard work.

By Maggie S.

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Help for Eating Disorders

By Gwen

One concept I found helpful to keep in mind about eating disorders is that the unconscious and conscious mind work together to meet our needs.

When the unconscious mind needs us to keep eating to comfort ourselves, it's very difficult to convince our conscious minds to stop, because the two parts of our mind are in disagreement about how to best meet our needs. This concept is well-addressed on Tom Condon's Weight Loss CDs (*contact info below). If you decide to use these, be sure to consult your therapist/psychiatrist first. Difficult feelings and memories may be triggered.

In my case, when I am my appropriate weight, I feel like I'm twelve again because my bones are small. So I always need to be a certain amount overweight to feel safe. I also eat to comfort myself. I'm working on these difficult issues.

If you share these problems, be gentle with yourself. I'm finding that keeping a food diary helps me become more conscious of what I am eating, and when. You might try getting a little notebook and just writing down everything you eat for two weeks, then taking it into therapy and talking about what you become aware of.

Eating disorders are really difficult to manage. There are so many complex issues of re-enacting old trauma, meeting emotional needs, avoiding and hiding from things that feel threatening. Layers of meaning.

You might also try artwork. Draw your body, draw your eating disorder, uncover the language of your eating disorder. What is it telling you? If your eating disorder had a voice, what would it say?

You are not alone. Just do the best you can and work through your issues a little at a time.

*Locate Tom Condon's Weight Loss CDs at www.thechangeworks.com. The CDs are under the Hypnosis tab-in a set of two. Download to your computer for \$15.95 or order the CD set for \$24.95.

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Therapist's Page

By Rebecca Cooper, MA, MFT, CCH, CEDS

Rebecca Cooper is a California licensed therapist, Certified Eating Disorder Specialist and the *Founder of Rebecca's House Eating Disorder Treatment Programs*. She created the first "transitional living residence" for clients recovering from eating disorders. If you or anyone you know has an eating disorder, please call Rebecca's House at 1(800) 711-2062 for a free phone assessment.

Sororities and Eating Disorders (Cause and Effect)

A binge-purge party is a harmless way to enjoy some fattening foods without getting fat, my patient told me.

"At my sorority a few of us girls would buy all of the forbidden and fattening foods we have been denying ourselves. Then we would have a binge-purge party. It's a way to have your cake and not get fat! Three of us meet in my room. It was like a secret society. We ate donuts, chips, pizza, ice cream, fast foods and fried foods then we purged the food."

My patient did not know that even occasional episodes of bingeing and purging could lead to an eating disorder. Once in the cycle of bulimia nervosa it is hard to get out. She had come to see me because she was bingeing and purging between the

parties. She could not get food out of her mind. She had recently she been hospitalized for dehydration.

There are few studies about the prevalence of eating disorders among females living in a sorority. Before we look at the results of these studies I would like to describe the factors of sorority life that would increase the likelihood of developing an eating disorder.

Most first-year university students are typically away from their families and home for the first time. They have left their friends and primary support systems and are in search of finding a place to belong. One such place is to be part of a sorority. The pressure to fit in is extraordinary.

It is estimated that at least 20% of college age women may engage in bulimic behavior, but these numbers do not even begin to cover the multitude of individuals who do not meet diagnostic criteria, but are obsessed with poor body image, unhealthy and disordered eating

habits.

The research of the prevalence of eating disorders suggests an increased risk of developing an eating disorder in a sorority setting. However there are many uncertain factors.

First, what are the criteria for finding a control sample? Second, eating disordered behavior is hard to evaluate because testing is based on self-reporting; and third, the diagnostic criteria of the current DSM does not include the factors of disordered eating, yo-yo dieting, food addictions or other disordered relationships with food.

This group far out-weighs the diagnosed group but causes as much internal conflict, unhappiness and unfulfilled lives as the diagnosable disorders. For this group their relationship with food, weight, diet and body image has become an obsession and is controlling their lives.

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To Lynn W. from all of us.
Thank you for Many Voices. It helps us not
feel so alone.



Healing

By Margaret

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

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

Some came easily, some not so easy, but all came eventually. I am now complete. All parts accounted for, even the boys. With God's strength and being with me, Margaret, every step of the way...& my therapist.

This life lasted 50+ years. The last

3 years I was aware I was a multiple with PTSD. Even now, old friends come up and talk to me. Familiar? Yes, but not their name or where-when I knew them. Most of my life is patchwork memories. I will always carry emotional scars, but the wounds are healed.

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

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

So to all who are struggling through your own black times—don't give up! There is light at the end. Keep the faith.

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My Gastric Bypass: October 20th 2004

By Jennifer D. Scott

At my heaviest I weighed 303 pounds. I had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and was borderline glaucoma. I had tried to lose weight, unsuccessfully, for a long time.

This time was different. I changed the way I thought about my body. I thought of it as an engine – needing the right kinds and amounts of food to keep it running well. I started eating healthier and maintaining portion control; and I began to lose weight, slowly. I was losing about 3 pounds per month.

In one year I lost 50 pounds. It was hard work, but definitely worth it! I worked through my food issues with my Therapist. I sorted out my feelings so I could figure out what the triggers were that sent me to eat. I realized all the while I was being abused I used food as a way to keep both my parents happy. It was a good defense mechanism. Not a healthy one.

Food was very central in our house. My father would wake up in the morning, come down for breakfast and immediately ask what we were having for dinner.

I had a lot of food issues. Food was my comfort, my reward, my escape and the only thing I thought I controlled. While I was being sexually abused, I believed I was protecting myself by eating lots of food and getting heavier. I felt no one would want the body as big as it was.

One day after losing the 50 pounds, I took a road trip with my friend of over 20 years (I call her my sister). We began talking about my weight loss success and I was very happy. My sister asked me, after praising my weight loss, since it took me a year to lose 50 pounds, how long was I willing to wait to lose the rest? I heard what she said and brought it inside my head to wrestle with. Continuing to think about it, I began researching Gastric Bypass surgery.

Using the Internet I found support groups for people considering the

surgery. Those groups provided much needed information including what paperwork needed to be completed before I could have the surgery. At the time I began studying this surgery, it was only being done in a few states, but not in NJ.

Three years later I found that Gastric Bypass surgery was being done in the hospital I was born in. When I was born there the hospital was very small. Now it is the Hackensack University Medical Center, one of the top hospitals in the country.

I contacted the hospital and found there were monthly orientation meetings held at the hospital for perspective patients. The orientation meeting went over all the available gastric procedures. The doctors themselves led the seminar. Because I had been studying the operation for so long, I was able to complete the paperwork required. As I left the orientation meeting, I gave the nurses my paperwork and made my appointment with the doctor I wanted to do my surgery.

I asked my sister to accompany me to my one-on-one appointment. I was happy and excited and I didn't want to take the chance of not hearing everything. An extra pair of ears could only help me. Taking my sister with me was a good decision. When my surgeon entered the room I couldn't stop smiling.

Concerned, my doctor asked my sister if I realized how serious this operation would be. My sister replied that I did understand, that I had studied the procedure for three years and was just so happy to be this close to having the procedure. She was right of course. At the end of that appointment I had my operation date: October 20th 2004. I was on my way.

I remember that day. I don't remember the weather, but I remember the day. I remember I came to the hospital in the early morning with my sister. I remember changing to my hospital gown and

pacing around the operating waiting room.

When it was time for me to go I said goodbye to my friends. I knew they would be in my room when I woke up.

I walked down the hall toward the operating salon. I think there was a nurse on either side of me. It was like I was my own private parade! I don't know if all hospitals let you walk to the OR, but they did at Hackensack. Other nurses and doctors waiting for their patients lined the halls, waving and applauding as I passed by.

I marched myself into the room and got myself positioned and ready for surgery. I was asleep less than 5 minutes after I laid down. When I awoke I was in recovery. I was cold and I thought I had to go to the bathroom. I stayed in recovery until my oxygen level returned to an acceptable level.

As I suspected my friends were waiting for me when I was brought up to my room. People from the online support group also stopped by my room to offer encouragement and congratulations.

At this point I would like to offer you a bit of advice: if you have surgery requiring general anesthesia, do not ingest any food or drink with sugar after surgery! I found out the hard way that having sugar after general anesthesia can make a person instantly nauseous! Unfortunately, it took two surgeries for me to make the connection! Perhaps I'm saving someone out there from the same uncomfortable fate! I hope so.

Thankfully, this past August when I had surgery to correct a broken kneecap, I remembered my own advice! My anesthesiologist helped by giving me four separate anti-nausea medications before I went to Recovery.

I was in the hospital for four days. Hackensack Hospital has dedicated a whole wing to bariatric surgery patients. There were approximately six of us on the wing while I was at the

hospital.

Before we went home, we were required to attend a meeting with the hospital's nutritionist. The hospital nutritionist, or dietitian, was perhaps the thinnest person on the whole wing—and that included the nurses. Here's the picture: six huge people, morbidly obese, all stumbling toward the meeting room on our floor. None of us looked happy and most of us had plastic draining bottles hanging from the outside of our bodies.

By the way, I was not prepared to see a draining bottle on the outside of my body attached to something on the inside of my body! No one had warned me about this or explained it to me. I thought the piece inside my body was about 2 inches long. At times I was worried it was going to fall off.

It wasn't until the day I went home that they took out the drain. Imagine my surprise—no, *shock*—when the doctor straddled my body as I lay in bed, got a good hold on the drain, and pulled it out of my body! Turns out the connection inside my body was approximately 9 inches long and passed clear across my stomach! Anyway, I digress.

The six of us walked into the meeting room looking around and at each other. The room was full of extra wide chairs for us. As I said we were all pretty huge people. We found seats, appreciating the extra large chairs. As we all focused in on the dietitian it seemed we all thought the same thing: here we are and this little skinny dietitian is going to tell us about nutrition. She passed out handouts to all of us, but we were not impressed.

At this point it was obvious that none of us felt good enough to be there, let alone listen to her speak. After a while we realized that everything she was saying was in the handout. Just to be sure I verified it with her. Once we knew everything she was saying was in the handout, one by one we excused ourselves and went back to our rooms.

The first week after I was home from the hospital I lost 13 pounds. I was amazed. I could actually feel it going! Whenever I got up to go to the bathroom or just to try to hobble around a little I could feel the

difference. It was amazing—difficult and amazing. I was on a liquid, no particle diet for the first week and a half after surgery. After being home for seven days I went back to Hackensack for my first post operation follow-up. When I saw my surgeon and we both knew that I had lost 13 pounds, I think he finally understood me. He knew that I was serious and that I would be a great patient. We both knew I would be a success.

Without going into a lot of extra detail, it took about a year for me to lose all the weight. In total I lost 178 pounds! So far I have kept the weight off for seven years. It gets a little easier every year because this was not a quick fix, it was a lifestyle change.

Before my surgery in 2004, I purchased the *Imagine* ring from the John Lennon jewelry collection. That Christmas I had that ring engraved with my name and the date of my surgery. The ring is too big for me now, but I often wear it on a chain around my neck. I did it to celebrate my hard work and success.

I still celebrate it as I continue to maintain this new size. I'm always surprised when I look in a mirror or when I see a reflection of myself in a store window or door. It never gets old!

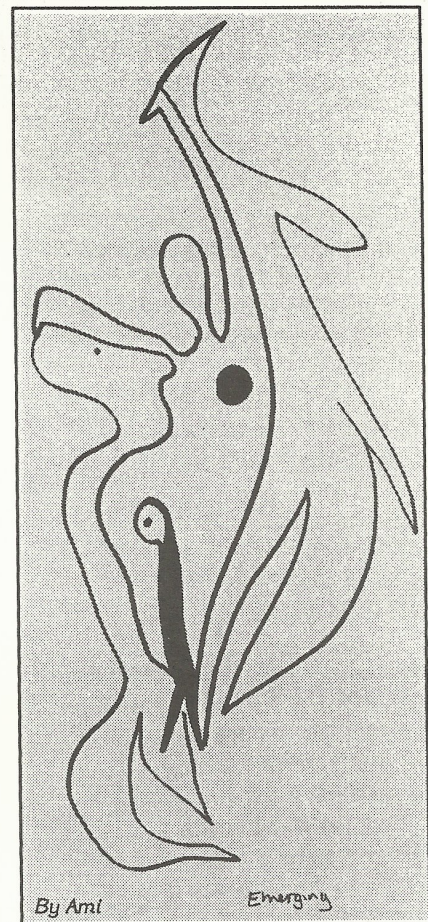
There are still foods that don't agree with my system now. I can't eat broccoli and I stay away from things like rice. Broccoli is gas producing and foods like rice continue to expand in my stomach which can be extremely uncomfortable.

Every few months I reintroduce a food that did not agree with me before. Sometimes my stomach can handle the reintroduced food; sometimes not, but it's good to try again every once in awhile.

One example of this for me is salmon; I'm happy to say that salmon is back in my diet after not agreeing with my system for about four years. That's great because I love salmon! Yea!!!

This article first appeared on Jennifer's blog at <http://jd-scott.blogspot.com>. Used with permission.

MV



Humor

We were lying down while the doctor was examining our abdomen and he noticed our watch hanging from our belt loop. He finished his exam, helped us up, and said "nice watch."

We answer "You like it?"

He says "Yes."

So we tell him we have another one if he'd like one. He asked "How many watches do you have?"

We answered "Four," and he laughed.

I answer, "Well, we *are* a multiple..." and he really began laughing, and said we'd better keep it because he didn't want to make anyone mad.

It is nice to be able to be ourselves with a medical doctor and feel safe enough, and know he is not out to hurt us.

By Valeda and Inside Family

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My Own Best Friend

By Judy H.

I was diagnosed with DID in 1990 and it's been a struggle to accept my diagnosis and get real about it all these years. I have gone in and out of denial. Every time I forget I seem to just get crazy because nothing makes sense.

I accept ourselves better now since our Protector came out late to straighten out situations with abusive doctors and a new Psychiatrist. I have found my selves to be my best friends and feel a love and acceptance for my selves I haven't really had before until late. I believe this is a sign of healing.

I'm not ashamed anymore about having DID but honored with a fresh feeling of respect and appreciation for my many parts. I've started talking to my selves lately telling others how much I love them and am so thankful for all they have helped me to survive. I owe my parts my life along with thanks to the God who made this complex way of coping, out of their love for me.

We who have DID are all miracles—the miracle of the mind and body to have such a survival mechanism. I feel my Higher Power has opened my eyes to the meds I need. It's odd as I re-read my MV flyers I found this one drug mentioned therein—Geodon.

Both my ex husband and son have been put on Geodon and have wanted to live again and feel more in control and it has changed their lives for the better.

I am praying it will also be a miracle drug for me whenever I can get my new doctor to give it to me. I patiently wait for the phone to ring so she can do her professional BS and make a face to face appointment when I have no car. It's given me hope. I am also waiting for her to prescribe an anti-depressant too.

My last doctor would order over the phone, but not this one. One of my inexperienced alters showed up for our first appointment with the psychiatrist last month and we had on a paper exactly what I am waiting for now. However my alter Darla didn't know

how to get her point across and doesn't work well with doctors. So our protector Stephen came out to handle all these things and I am so grateful to him. He is not real personable but direct and gets right to the point. Rather blunt. But a great guy. Very wise.

We highly dislike doctors that play God and act as if you don't know the first thing about meds and your needs. I believe my God does direct me in these matters; however I am never sure who is going to answer the phone when the doctor does call.

Often we cringe when the phone rings anyway. The children in me hate the telephone as it scares them and often they have trouble dealing with the seriousness of the call and how to respond. We are all working on working together better; the adults should be answering the phone. But we don't want to miss the doctor calling.

Stephen wrote a complaint out twice concerning an abusive doctor we got in January. Teresa, our 5 year old came out during our first appointment with him. He was so intimidating and hostile. It's hard to explain your needs to a doctor when you are five years old. He put us on meds that really affected our asthma in a bad way and we felt endangered our life.

That's when Stephen said enough is enough. I go by Judy and I'm not sure if there are more or fewer alters since our first diagnoses of DID.

Of course our psych doctor started out treating us for bi-polar disorder as we with DID are often misdiagnosed. I swear my new doctor, who is young, threw her arms up in the air when I explained I am not bi-polar but a multiple personality with possibly some BP parts.

The BP drugs do me little good but I have been helped greatly by anti-depressants.

I feel these doctors have no compassion nor can they relate to the desperation of a depressed person who has no interest really in living.

Days are like years to me while they hassle with seeing you face to face and fitting you in. This is how it is in the Veterans Administration around here.

So right now I feel like a multiple who is coming out of the closet, tired of hiding what I am not ashamed of anymore. I am a brilliant survivor with a disorder, but not mentally ill. I see the world differently maybe but I am valuable and special, I believe, to my God. I am one of His masterpieces of life and the world He created as with every multiple. We are miracles, each one of us.

Being in the throes of depression for 2 years now, and worse lately, my God reminded me of a bottle of Elavil I had which can bring me out of depression in 3 or 4 days. This is my 3rd day on it. I don't have time nor patience to wait on doctors who seem to be more dysfunctional than I who can't order a bottle of meds over the phone.

All my doctors who won't make med phone calls have been useless to me and only serve to remind me of the frustration of having a doctor who is unhelpful and rigid, can't keep things simple and feels no compassion for the suffering. Too many doctors play God and Stephen included that fact in his final complaint on the other doctor.

It would be so nice to want to live and have an interest in life again, so I continually wait for my Psych to order Geodon. As an author and an artist I really want to work again.

It seems all I can do is cast my cares on my God and believe He will intervene soon and keep myself in peace by doing so.

I am excited about how far we have come in the acceptance of having DID and really working together to get well. I am talking out loud to my selves and telling them how proud I am of them and my co-consciousness has improved even more.

I think they know when we are for or against them as I have had times in the past when I really wanted to get rid

of some of my alters. It's like we were at odds then and I just felt out of control. It's taken me time to accept them and myself as I am. I'm determined to be my own best friend.

We make majority rules up for a long time and we all finally agreed to let our hair grow out, which has been fun. All through high school my perpetrator mother would chop our hair real short and ugly. We hated each time we got a short hair cut every 3 months.

We have thick natural curly hair and growing my hair out has meant a lot to our overall identity. I think the bible says our hair is our glory. We all are beginning to believe we are beautiful. and it has given us a sense of taking our life back.

I bought some new used jeans last week and I'm very happy with that, because jeans are Stephen's favorite, being male, and we are all tired of not paying close attention to how we dress. Mostly we've been comfortable wearing stretched out cheap sweat pants.

Stephen also insists that we wear a

bra daily, as many like to go braless. They can't stand the hemmed in feeling. Found a comfortable one now and am happily wearing it.

So I feel we are working hard to help each other in our situation and all our DID material has been such a comfort.

I was put on Prazosin for PTSD my first visit and I feel it has made me feel less vulnerable in dealing with the stress of life. They treat combat Vets with it for PTSD. So that's good news as was finding the Elavil until my doctor can get her crap together. Elavil has worked great as an anti-depressant for me but caused weight gain and dry mouth so I don't want to stay on it. Of course I can't tell her this about the Elavil but at least I have the hope of light now in all the darkness, until she gives me the Geodon I requested.

As I look out the window and see the new budded leaves of Spring I think, *that's me inside*. I am determined to get well and getting into DID therapy as soon as my Veteran's settlement comes in. I want

to come out of the darkness I've been in so long.

So on a happy note, never give up as winters pass and Spring time comes, if we don't quit. I have been doing whatever it takes to comfort myself including watching the same happy comedy daily and horse movie daily for over a month. I don't know what it is about "Junior" and "Secretariat" but they have been like a bottle to a baby for me making me feel safe, not alone and brought comfort. Also, I have been listening to a lot of worship music as I feel it to be very healing.

Since being put on the Prazosin I have dyed my hair, cleaned my room and played with my grand daughter 4 hours straight for the first time in my life.

Stephen does not feel comfortable with children but somebody does, so I have seen some positive changes and energy for things that were overwhelming for me. I hope this encourages someone else.

MV



Changing Your Fate

You're here so long

I always want it a little longer

Do you feel better?

I come to "better feel?"

What have you gained?

Much and I've lost much.

Can you tell me?

Better functioning and new abilities. My body is tuned up and I write poetry.

Does everyone?

No, we all express in our own way.

What has been the best so far?

Losing the fear, the horrible fear. Being non-phobic and able to tear.

What an unbelievable trait, changing your fate.

By Sandra C.

MV

My Talents, Pets & Pleasures

By Valeda Middleton

One of our biggest pleasures is being able to be ourselves. When we are home we can have the little ones out safely, we can talk to one another, play with our toys, teddy bears, dolls. Sometimes we even get to do art work. Our favorite is finger painting, but we don't get to do this very much because it is a mess, but oh boy—fun!

We own a dog or he owns us—we aren't sure sometimes. When Valeda was growing up her outside family always had big dogs and she moved away and had big dogs again.

One day Valeda wasn't out and we went into a pet store close to our home. We saw puppies. There was a very cute one and the lady said, "Do you want to see him?"

Oh, we were excited...and then we got into a 'playpen' where the pup could move around instead of being in this small cage. Oh my, the energy he had! We sat down and said "Hey, fella, if you want to get to know us, you better come here."

He was on me before I knew it, licking our face so much. The lady was so excited she started yelling to another lady, "He went to her! He went to her!" So of course we had to have him.

Valeda doesn't know what is going on, so we have to be careful. But it was the people we lived near that kept saying "Oh, what a cute puppy!" so often that it wasn't long before Valeda found out she had a "miniature Italian greyhound."

What kind of dog was this? First, he was small...but we knew we could only have a small dog in our little home. We knew nothing about small dogs, how to take care of one or anything. We soon learned he was a lot of work. At the time, we were highly medicated and still in so much pain that we did very little during the day or night, and I do mean very little.

OK, first we had to train him—you know, potty train—what an adventure! At night or anytime we were lying down we kept a leash on him so when

he'd get up we'd know. Then we'd take him to a cat litter box and soon he figured out to pee in there and soon after, to poop on the papers beside the litter box. Now for a male dog to pee in a litter box—Wow! We now had no need to go outside at all. So all winter I don't have to take him outside. Besides, he doesn't have much hair anyways, to stay warm.

But we accomplished this, and we accomplished helping to make him the most skittish dog around. I heard one lady say she'd put him to sleep. Well I won't, because I am to blame for his timidness and being afraid. The first two years I had him I was so out of "my mind" —so medicated—so much switching going on. No wonder he didn't know what to do.

By the way, one of his names is Jo-Joe. Since there are many inside who like him, he is called by several different names. Perhaps he is a multiple. We could tell he had been abused before we brought him home, so we try not to feel totally at fault.

Jo-Joe is now our "Savior Dog." He has given us a reason to live; he licks my wounds; he keeps me a low gear—otherwise he becomes this frightened little one, running to hide. And we don't like that! No little one should have to hide anymore or not feel safe!

Granted, this is very difficult for us to stay on an even keel—not show anger, to not raise our voice, not move quickly. To be 'relaxed' was never part of our lives, and now it has become necessary to help Jo-Joe not be afraid. He smells my breath to see if I am feeling well or if I am sick. He tends to have a need to do this with anyone he allows to get close to him.

No, he's not mean—he's very untrusting of people. Anything—loud noises, smoke alarms, people talking in the hall—oh he hears everything.

Now that I'm not so medicated, I've learned to enjoy and watch him grow into a little bit more of a trusting dog. He has kept me from getting up, when had I gotten up I probably would have fallen. I was falling one day—both legs

had given out, and he jumped at both legs and kept us from hitting the floor. He can smell a drop of blood through layers of clothes. If I've had blood work, he knows it. If I've cut, he knows this and wants to tend to the wound. (I've actually let him and I do heal quicker though I don't recommend this type of care for anyone else.)

Jo-Joe has struggled as I have in having a small dog. Living with us has not been easy for either of us. But you know what? My dog Jo-Joe still loves me, no matter who I am, whoever is out, he will come and lie on my chest and just relax, telling me "It's OK."

MV

Little Boy Lost

Such a good little boy
Takes himself to bed
Wakes up in the morning
Doesn't need to be fed

No motherly bonding
Not even her voice
There was no one to help him
He had no other choice

His brothers were sickly
Took all of mom's care
He was so self sufficient
Like he wasn't even there

He was scared and alone
Yet nobody came
So scared that he left himself
To escape the pain

Five decades have passed
And nothing has changed
What became of that boy
What was his name

By Georgie

MV

How I Screen Potential Therapists

By Anonymous

When I decided to go back to therapy I was really nervous and apprehensive. I think secretly part of me wanted to be rejected so that I could not go, then blame the doctors for justification. But instead I sat down and listed everything that is an issue for me, and all the things that previous therapists did wrong or right. Then I wrote out a questionnaire, and if I found a therapist I was interested in, I emailed them the questionnaire. I figured if they did not respond, or refused then they were not for me.

Your own guide should be personalized, because it's not so much about finding the therapist with all the right answers, but that you find someone whose answers feel "right" to you. Here is the email I composed:

"Hello, (name of therapist)

I would like to begin by saying congratulations! I'm sending this email to you because you have passed my first impression/webpage test. I have decided that in a final effort to become "normal" I need to give therapy the best chance for success. Saying that, I want to explain that I have a difficult time trusting anyone.

I have always believed that people will eventually hurt, abuse, or use another person for their own benefits. Many people have argued this point with me, but no one has presented proof of the opposite. I would like to feel out your beliefs and practices to see if we can meet and potentially work together to help change some things in my life.

Before I describe my presenting problems, I want to clarify some of my needs in a therapist:

Please understand that I cannot reject you or your ideas to your face; I need you to be able to pick up on body language cues.

I will unconsciously test you and will not be able to recognize this until it is too late.

I need you to be very clear in your thoughts, and make any

direction to be precise, clear, and point blank.

I assume from the start that you will eventually hurt or betray me. It would be helpful to know upfront what to expect from you. Please do not try to hide anything from me.

I will need you to lead conversations, at least at the beginnings of sessions. Sometimes I "clam up" and it helps if you can ask questions I can easily answer to reduce my overwhelming stress to perform.

You should have a high tolerance for frustration. Also, please be comfortable with sarcasm, as it is my preferred method of communication.

If you have read this far and still think you can work with me, I'd like you to answer a few questions to help break the ice:

1. Most important: what is your viewpoint of Dissociative Identity Disorder? Do you talk to, listen, and spend time with inside alters/parts?

2. Do you have any experience with this list of additional suspected disorders or presenting problems:

Social Anxiety Disorder
Complex PTSD
Satanic Ritual Abuse
Repressed Memories
Intense feelings of anger, shame, guilt and humiliation
Self-mutilation and/or Suicidal ideation
Social rejection both in a peer and family setting
Intense discomfort and fear of touching or being touched

3. Do you do any standardized testing and if so, do you share and interpret the results with the patient?

4. Are you open to a patient's self-diagnosis and willing to explain why it is or isn't accurate?

5. Are you able to identify and point out defense mechanisms and inconsistent behaviors?

6. Do you feel that a person who cannot remember a suspected traumatic experience should just accept that it happened and let it go, or explore in depth their suspicions or fears?

7. If I give you written pages, would you want to read and discuss them, or read them at a later time?

8. Do you primarily focus on daily happenings, the past experiences and presenting problems?

9. What is your opinion on phobias? Are they a priority in your treatment or less significant in the big picture?

10. Do you have a strong religious background, and if so do you incorporate that into your treatment?

11. Are you able to "read between the lines" or do you rely on the patient to be clear about their true thoughts and feelings?

12. Can you work with a Black and White mentality?

13. What is your policy on disclosing a person's past crimes?

14. What is your idea of "safe" touch in a therapeutic setting?

I apologize for taking up your time, but I am not a typical patient, and need to know that I am going to be safe or comfortable on our first meeting, or I may not come back.

Thank you for your time.
(My name/contact info)

The Lion Who Learned to Care, and the Antelope Who Learned to Survive

By Kate E.

He was the biggest, baddest lion on the plains between the mountains and the river. He fought every mail away and he gathered the most females around him. His favourite female, later than the other lionesses, had a roly-poly lion cut who Lion delighted in.

When the rain failed and the group had to move, Lion found good hunting ground on the other side of the big river. "That river is too deep for the cubs," the older lionesses said "Nonsense," Lion replied, leading the way into it. The water was deep and wild. It seized the two smallest cubs and raced away with them, and when the mothers tried to save them, it swept them away too.

Grief swept over Lion for his lost ones. He turned savage and roamed alone. His only pleasure was hunting and killing. One day when he was about to eat a small antelope, he heard a voice behind him. "Sir Lion," it cried out, "kill and eat me, not my child. He is young. Let him go free and enjoy some life."

These words made Lion furious. He killed her with one blow, her child with another, and ate the best parts of them at once. But the mother antelope's words stayed with him. He felt her saying them repeatedly in his stomach, and soon wished he hadn't eaten either of them. He was sick until there was nothing left in his belly, but he still heard her saying, "Please, Sir Lion, kill and eat me, not my child."

Next time he hunted antelope, he was ashamed of his womanish behaviour. Purposefully he separated a small child from the herd, and killed the mother. But as he turned to kill the small, petrified young creature, the words of that first antelope mother came into his mind again. He glared at the antelope child. Why didn't it run away? Didn't it realise that he was a lion and about to eat it? He roared at it, to teach it some sense.

The terrified antelope heard this huge sound and thought it came from

the sky. He was so scared he pissed on the ground and froze.

Lion was fed up with this dumb baby antelope. Before his appetite could get the better of him, he turned and began to lope off. As he did so, he heard something behind him—little clippety-clop, clippety-clop. He speeded up. It grew a bit fainter, but it was still there.

How fast Little Antelope was going—faster than ever before. First his mother disappeared, then there was the roar from the sky, and then the only other creature left in the world ran away. He knew he had to keep up. It was in his blood, his genes. From just after his birth, when his dear mother licked him all over, he knew he had to follow on his little legs. Suddenly the creature stopped.

Lion turned to face Little Antelope angrily. Anyone as stupid as you doesn't deserve to live, he thought. He glared at Little Antelope and held up a huge front clawed paw. Little Antelope, thinking this strange new animal wanted to play, held out a front hoof. He tried to squat back as the other creature was doing, but fell down. He looked so ridiculous that Lion laughed. He thought: that tiny antelope thinks he's a lion cub.

Little Antelope kept trying to hold out a front hoof. His mother had always told him to be polite and somehow he felt it was really important now. But he kept falling over, and then he missed his mother so much. She would have smiled at him and licked him to show it was OK and she still loved him. He burst into tears.

Lion was bemused. It was the first time he'd been distracted since his cub hood was over. Since then he'd constantly had to fight other lions to keep respected, or hunt for food. But then...

Little Antelope now had tears running down his muzzle, just like Lion's cub had had. When that happened its mother would lick its

face. Lion would feel embarrassed and walk off in a lionly way. Suddenly, through his memories, Lion heard an elephant trumpeting in the distance. He stiffened. Instinct ran through him, and he loped off on a long curve to his nearest resting place. He totally forgot about the sobbing little antelope.

Little Antelope didn't know how he followed that scent through the night. Everything was so big and he was so small. Far above him, the eyes of countless tiny creatures flickered in the sky. Around were all sorts of rustles and squeaks and smells. But always there was the faint rank tangy scent of the yellow creature he had to catch up with. And then they would go on together, as he and his mother had done. Just as daylight came, the scent was massive—and he collapsed close to Lion, in a hungry, thirsty and exhausted sleep.

When Lion woke and looked around he was filled with horror at the little heap of skin and bones. Why hadn't the wretched mother antelope thought things through? Spare her child! How could a tiny, ignorant creature like this survive even 24 hours without being looked after. Left on its own, all it did was follow a lion. He didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Emotion overwhelmed him. In total disorientation and confusion he began to lick the tears off Little Antelope's face.

Little Antelope relaxed his tense huddle and fell into a deep sleep. He dreamed his mother was licking first the tears from his face, and then all his tired, stiff and sweaty body. Every cell inside him now knew that everything would be OK.

And it was. Although it was difficult, in the days ahead he kept up with Lion. And although Lion didn't understand it, Little Antelope reminded him so much of his lost cub, he began to enjoy having him around. They grew used to each other. Lion eventually realised Little Antelope wouldn't eat raw meat, and Little Antelope learned that Lion didn't like

grass. At night Lion would curl around Little Antelope and dream his lost cub had come back from the dead. And Little Antelope would dream his mother had come back to look after him.

Life was sweet for Lion. He had learned to care. And Little Antelope had survived.

After many months, when Little Antelope was grown, he began to look with curiosity at the footprints and far off bounding herds of his own kind. Lion began to think of lionesses again. Slowly they drifted apart, each pulled to their own kind, and each had a good life ahead.

MV

Find Us

What happened in the wind?
What happened in the rain?

What happened when the door
was closed
to not be found again?
Come calling—ere you slide away
Come calling—ere you fall

The twisted message of their
dreams
to not be heard at all.

The doorways now are bolted shut
The darkened hallways bare

They hide away the entrance ways
and secret make their
stairs

A million circles in the dark are
drawn
within their minds

The Keepers of Eternity
place locks
no man
can find

By Sandy H.

MV

My Heroes: Survivors of Abuse

By Fred

In my lifetime I have fallen victim to abuse and known survivors of abuse. Many have died never to be free from the bondage that is the result of abuse.

The abuser walks free and blames the victim that he has abused, always making the victim feel the abuser was good to them and the abuser will throw out what they did for their family and her.

Bound by guilt and shame, attempted suicide, lost, lifeless, she thinks of herself as worthless.

If only I could speak to her, make her believe it is not her fault. I have told her for years.

She feels comfort in my arms. You see I am her husband and I love her more than she will ever know.

When she is with me I love to hold her and to see her laugh and smile.

She was okay until I witnessed the abuser abuse (her) like no abuse I have ever witnessed in my life.

The onslaught and expression on

his angry face made me want to hit him, but she would not want it that way. If it happens again I can not and will not permit it because I love my wife more than life.

I now know multiple personalities and why they occur. How do the victims survive through such torture and pain? Years of therapy can not repair the lost years of a victim's life.

The people who say "Just forgive, and move on," know nothing about abuse from a parent or any other type of abuse.

My word to counselors and people in general is to walk in the victim's shoes; walk in their shoes and you will, as I do now, know what multiple personalities are all about.

I love my wife—the most forgiving, loving person ever—and I am fortunate and blessed to have her.

I love you babe, always and always.
By your side forever.

Your husband,

Fred

MV



Hold Them Accountable

By sueetal

I am Sick! I am Livid! I am Screaming Inside! These are the first words I wrote after reading the article in *Rolling Stone* (Sept-2011) on the Catholic church's secret sex crime files.

Then I wanted to engage in some old, self-abusive behaviors. I started one and then had the presence of mind to call my therapist. She listened through my tears and anger and then suggested I write this article.

I am a survivor of clergy abuse. I am told my dissociative abilities probably saved me. Still, it took a long time to consider myself a survivor rather than a victim.

For so long my anger was masked by serious depression. I was raised a Catholic and knew these "God-men", our priests. To lose my faith as a child was abhorrent; to realize these men of god were telling me the abuse was my fault splintered my mind and heart, and left me never to trust myself again.

Today, five co-defendants identified in the *Rolling Stone* article await trial in Philadelphia. These heinous men not only "allegedly" molested many children, but the "scandals" were covered up by bishops and cardinals, all the way to the Vatican.

There has been NO remorse, only desperate measures to prevent church scandal. These measures have included moving these perpetrators from parish to parish under the regimes of three different cardinals; intimidating victims; telling one victim that "the priest slept with women as well as children...so you can see he's not a pure pedophile." *Never* were the police called!

I am still so angry. This anger has never left, but I have handled it differently at different times.

Sometimes I was so depressed I took it out on myself, by abusive cuttings, or purging, or starvation, or drinking.

My core was almost destroyed by these men and this church. It resulted in my dissociative abilities, and a shame so deep I am only now finding my way out of it at age 61.

I went voluntarily into a psychiatric hospital when I was 42 and so depressed I could not function in my job. This was after I had sent my only child off to college, and could finally stop being the perfect person I should be.

Now, almost 20 years later, I am still in therapy and have thrown out a lot of those shoulds. I meditate and try to live mindfully, but it is so hard. When I return to my hometown for a visit I often get triggered. There, a monsignor who has been a perpetrator, is still able to walk around in his robes even though he can no longer perform the sacraments; it triggers me and his victims.

When I read articles like the one in *Rolling Stone* magazine, mindfulness initially goes out the window. Why read this stuff? Why stir my feelings up? I don't make it a daily practice, but would I rather make it any easier for the church to continue its deceit? What if no one spoke up or wrote about it? That is what this church wants. Victims? Who cares?

Scandal? Oh yeah, this church cares!

I know good priests, and why they continue in this church, I don't understand.

So, for the ones who are doing their job for the people who need them, maybe you need to protest to your superiors in a more active way.

America is protesting Wall Street right now, and rightly so. What if in every diocese people took to the streets to protest this church's leadership?

Some organizations do so, but the church has so much money, so many high powered attorneys, and an image problem. Their image is all they care about.

Where do the teachings of Jesus fit in? The answer is, they don't. Jesus was not a hypocrite; he was a good man and a teacher.

Don't let yourselves be manipulated by this current church. **Hold it accountable.**

MV

The Turtle Story

By Pegge S.

This turtle story was told to me by a Hopi Indian in Arizona. It has become important to my recovery process.

I met a Hopi artisan who had a display of Hopi animal fetishes carved from stone. I was very attracted to them because I knew something about their use for honoring and learning from the spirit of the animal each portrayed.

Seeing my interest in them, the artisan felt compelled to direct me to the animal he thought my spirit would benefit from the most.

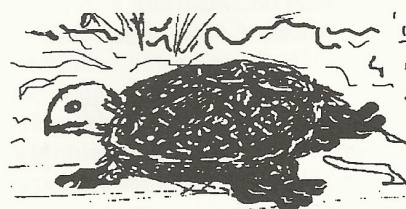
Although I wouldn't have chosen the sea turtle from all the animals, I listened to the sea turtle's symbolic story with an open mind. The sea turtle is said to be unique for its ability to take a single breath of air (symbolic of Life), diving deep into the ocean (symbolic of the Spiritual Realm Inside), reaching all the way to the bottom of the ocean (symbolic of reaching the Deepest Issues of the Soul), and then swimming back to the surface of the ocean (symbolic of Bringing Inner Learnings to the Outside), and experiencing a renewal and healing through taking of another breath (symbolic of Rebirth).

The sea turtle's life is about making these courageous journeys, that it is uniquely designed to do, and to continue this process of spiritual growth all of the days of its life.

As it progresses in this process, the journey goes from a frightening and perilous experience to an experience of joy and fulfillment.

Do you see why this story stayed with me? It is beautiful and encouraging, as well as comforting and understanding of the healing process that lies so deeply inside.

MV



BOOKS

To The Moon and Back: A Daughter/Mother Journey Toward Eating Disorder Recovery

By Meghan Feran with Contributions by Karen D. Feran ©2012 by Meghan Feran. ISBN 9781468137767. 188 Pages. Paperback. Buy at <https://www.createspace.com/3757607>. Cost varies elsewhere. \$8.99 as Amazon Kindle edition.

As a college student in 2005, Meghan started behaving in an eating-disordered way that lasted six years before recovery. It all began with a sociable pint of ice cream...but she felt too full after eating it, and decided, just once, to stick her finger down her throat and throw it up. She was already deeply involved in track and cross-country athletics, and wanted to improve her performance. She'd noticed that the girls who went to Nationals were all extremely thin. They could run faster, carrying less weight. She decided to weigh less too.

Repeatedly in her pre-treatment food/running diary, she'd write "Must run more! Must eat less!" She also refused to tell anyone about her private plans to dedicate herself to thinness. Now she sees this as a big mistake. She says the earlier an eating-disordered pattern is discovered, the easier it is to treat, and women or girls should talk openly with a knowledgeable coach, parent, even a schoolmate who might know what to do to stop this focus on food before it becomes a real, physical problem. Unfortunately, Meghan kept her "secrets" and developed a full-fledged eating disorder before the end of her senior year in college...getting worse and worse as months and years rolled by.

In November 2009, she started dating John—who later became an important person in her recovery. But that didn't happen right away.

She felt she didn't deserve to eat. When she went back to school for an advanced degree, she moved home, so was no longer surrounded by the thin athletes...but that didn't stop her eating disorder. She started taking laxatives to reduce the tiny amount of

food she'd let herself eat. When her size zero pants didn't fit anymore, she felt liberated—in control! Starving was self-satisfying. Later, she added self-mutilation to her repertoire—trying to cut off fat so she could be just bone.

In June 2009, her car was totaled by a woman who was texting while driving at 55mph—right into the side of Meghan's car. It was a miracle that she got out alive, with minimal injuries...but she realized how fragile life was, and that she wanted to stop Eating Disordered Behavior. In October 2009, she entered Inpatient Treatment at Remuda Ranch in Wickenburg AZ.

The book itself details her experiences at Remuda Ranch for its 45-day treatment (funded by a generous grant.) It's interspersed with her mother's journal comments during that time. I won't go into this process...but it was "interesting" (and successful) to say the least. I truly recommend this book to those with eating disorders or who know someone who needs it. —Lynn W.

8 Keys to Recovery from an Eating Disorder: Effective Strategies from Therapeutic Practice and Personal Experience.

By Carolyn Costin and Gwen Schubert Grabb. ©2012 by Costin and Grabb. Published by W.W.Norton & Co., New York & London. www.norton.com ISBN-978-0-393-70695-6 278 pgs includes appendix & index. \$19.95US, \$23 Canada. Paperback.

Carolyn Costin, MFT, is the founder of Monte Nido Treatment Center in California and a renowned eating disorder expert. Gwen Schubert Grabb, MFT, is a psychotherapist in private practice, specializing in all facets of eating disorder treatment and recovery. So you are hearing from experts here, and the message overall is "You CAN overcome Eating Disorders." But the second message is—it is not an easy road to take. There is no quick fix. You have to truly want to get better, and you have to retrain yourself to treat your body in a loving way. When one has spent years

in a battle over "control of your body" by restricting nourishment, overeating, bingeing and purging, or whatever route you have taken, it is no simple matter. No one can help you "wave a magic wand" to transform into a person who eats "normally" and enjoys life as it comes. It is your job to do. The experts can guide you, but the work of changing your self is your own.

The writers caution that even when you conquer the eating disorder, you may still retain an inner critic who says negative things about you to yourself. Especially for people with a trauma history, there are many steps to full healthy living. But correcting an eating disorder can literally save your life for the next steps.

Some of the many benefits of 8 Keys to Recovery are its lists, worksheets, and written exercises designed for clients to use to help unravel the background of the self-punishment that occurs with eating disorder. These include writing about how to let go of your focus on losing weight, exploring feelings before a binge, food rituals, reaching out for support, why you may feel worse when you are actually improving behavior, etc.

This is a systematic book, loaded with personal examples from clients who are working hard to change their lives for the better. It is optimistic and helpful. It lists lots of reference works, resources, and a well-organized index. Again, I recommend this book for clients and professionals both, who need the guidance it provides for healing. —Lynn W. **MV**



Thank you all for your generous and insightful prose, artwork, and poetry. Please send us whatever you think others would learn from or find intriguing. Just remember: we don't print graphic descriptions of abuse. Details belong in therapy. We provide hope & progress for MV readers.

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