

MANY VOICES

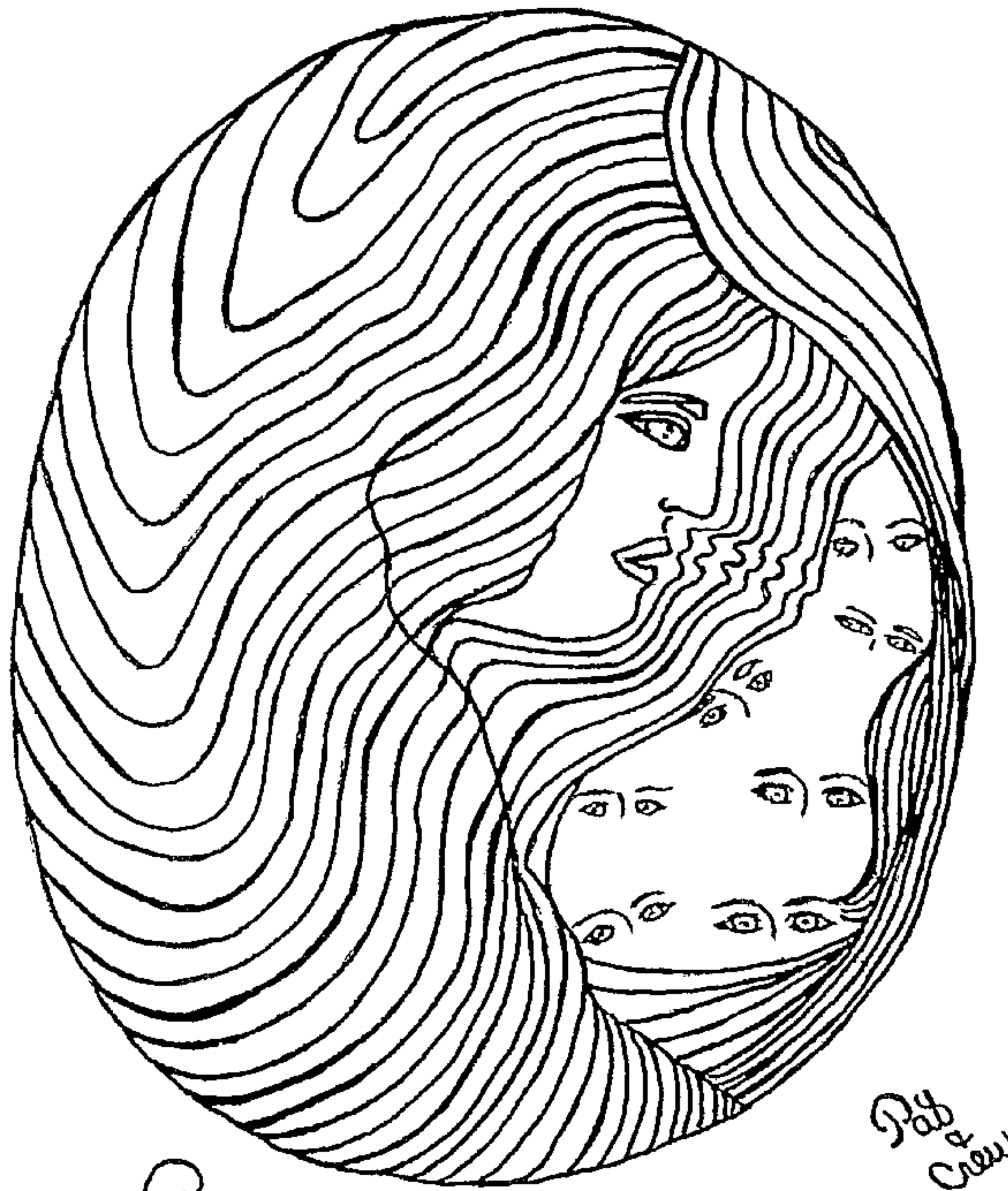
WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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Loss and Change in Therapy



The
Multiple Care

Moving On After Loss

Loss

It's the sense of helplessness
The feeling of being out of control

It's hard

Sadness

When change takes place the
comfort is gone

Then you feel the reality in your life

The fear

Re-evaluating your life and what's
important

The chaos inside

I feel anger about the loss

I feel anger at myself for not
knowing what to do

I'm angry at my religion wondering

"Why does anyone have to go
through this?"

The guilt of the times we didn't
get along

The feeling of, "I should have
done more"

But I did all I could

The loss that we experience also
strengthens us

It takes a long time

But it made me understand more
what others are going through

No matter what you're dealt in life

You don't always have control
over it

You just go on...get through it
...you go on.

*Outpatient Coping Skills Group,
(Linda, Arlene, Michelle, Joann)*

The Search for a New Therapist

By The System Called Lin's

Moving away from our therapist has been one of the most difficult things I have had to do since embarking on this journey called recovery.

If anyone had asked me, even a year ago, whether I could survive moving 2,000 miles away from my therapist, friends, family, the area I lived in all of my life, I would have said no. And yet we, as a system, have not only survived but found strengths that none of us knew we possessed.

Initially I found a new therapist in our new area who helped me get through some of the day-to-day problems of being in a strange place. But even though he helped with the "now" things, my system and memories and the pain remained hidden.

The longing to go back — back home, back to my former therapist, back to my life as I knew it — overwhelmed me. We kept close contact with our former therapist through letters and phone calls. We still do.

Even though I left my therapist, he did not leave me, there have been painful issues of abandonment which we continue to work through. He and I spent time trying to prepare all of me for the move, but nothing could have prepared me for the grief which continues to surround leaving him behind.

It has taken time to understand that he has not abandoned us. He is just there in a different way. He was the only one to ever recognize the "we" inside of me and to reach out to help. He became safety. His office became our refuge and safe place. He alone knows me as no other person ever has. Letting go hurts more than I ever dreamed possible. That's a challenge we still work on.

When my system started to feel desperate because needs were not being met in my new therapy, I cried, worried and panicked, until at last I understood. We could change

therapists. To change did not mean failure. And also the realization came that what we shared with our former therapist, that strong bond and the discoveries he and I made together, could not be duplicated in a new relationship. Each relationship needs to bring something of its own to my journey.

Although the insurance company who helps to pay my therapy bills expressed total shock that I "interviewed" therapists (I was told I could not do it), that is exactly what I did.

With much fear, I set off on this new venture. These are some of the things I found out along the way:

1) It is all right to ask questions. Hard questions such as: *How do you take care of yourself?*

- *Have you or are you currently working through issues of your own?* (Red flags of warning wave when you encounter therapists who say they have no issues, no past pain with which to deal.)

- *What are your feelings around DID and PTSD?*

- *How long have you worked with these disorders? What is your training?* (Be extremely cautious before entering into therapy with someone who has not worked with DID before).

- *What is your general treatment plan?*

- *Are you willing to make a long-term commitment to my recovery?*

2) Different does not mean worse or better than, it simply means different. No two therapists are alike, just as no two survivors are alike.

3) Each therapist brings unique areas of expertise to help me along the way.

4) I can survive even when I do not believe it possible. The strengths and skills which my former therapist helped me to attain have blossomed into vital

parts of my ability to live and function in the here and now.

5) As a system, we have always hated and feared change, and yet it is through change that we have been able to see that internally, we are growing.

6) I am learning that having to leave a close relationship with my therapist does not destroy the closeness he and I shared.

7) And lastly, I am learning to grieve. Change means loss. Loss means pain. Pain is not bad or wrong. It is all right to grieve what we knew with him. It is all right to grieve and to feel the pain for however long it takes.

I have found someone with whom I believe we can build our next therapeutic relationship. She is not like our former therapist in either personality or style of therapy, and yet she shares much in common with him. So, with much fear and very slowly, we are engaging in therapy with her. I really believe we can do some helpful, healing things together.

Even so, I still fight the fear that somehow if I settle in with her, I will never be able to go back home to the place I first knew safety. To be successful with her means that I am growing, needing less intensive therapy, becoming more and more able to care for myself and meet my own needs. A large part of me came into bloom in the nurture and gentle caring I knew with my old therapist, now turned unseen friend, and it is still hard for me to let go of that part of my journey.

Coming to terms with the reality that I am ultimately responsible for choosing to go forward here or not to go forward is difficult. Accepting responsibility is not easy. Living like a survivor instead of a victim is not easy. But it is my choice.

It has been helpful and empowering for me to utilize my new skills in being straight forward in therapy and to not retreat into the silence of

Continued on Page 3

The Search, cont'd.

non-response of the past. I ask questions now. I have a list of what I need and want. And I can now come to my therapy still afraid of rejection, but willing to risk it by speaking when I used to hide behind silence.

I still cannot imagine having the kind of trust which grew with my first therapist. But I am not going to stop trying. If I stop trying or die or just withdraw then my abusers will have won in the end. And I refuse to let them take anymore of my life from me. If trust does not work out with my new therapist, then I choose to keep looking until I find someone to trust again.

MV

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Angels:



THE CENTER FOR TRAUMA AND DISSOCIATION

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In Between Therapists

1. I have lost my drop net: I feel pain in my chest from the risk.

I feel lost inside, something is gone.

I feel that I can't hold my own pain much longer.

I feel emptiness, because I have lost a good friend.

I feel fear, because no one seems to want to help guide me.

I feel sad because I have little money for therapy and need lots of it.

2. How am I coping? Almost non-functional at times.

I stay in bed.

Reading in the Yellow Pages under "Counselors & Therapists"

Reading MV and other related materials.

Sending postcards off to order catalogs out of the MV catalog.

Go to support group 1 time a week.

Listening to Christian music that gives me hope.

Journaling — drawing and praying.

By *trying* to keep everything in perspective.

By continuing to look.

3. I hope when I finally get the chance to look back at this time, I will once again realize I have gained strength — from the *growing pains*.

By A. Hope

MV

Stopping therapy

We stopped because we realized the dollars buying therapy could be used to buy sand dollars on the beach and wind and sun and waves



We stopped because we grew tired of being scared each time the doctor went away

We stopped because we heard the blue bird call and we followed his voice to the sky —

— Abigail for the crew

We stopped because we grew weary of finding one more memory of agony



Challenges in Therapy

It was a horrific experience saying to my then-current therapist that I could no longer work with her, after five years. She did not understand, and I could not communicate what I needed with the new diagnosis of MPD. I just knew that she was not the one. At the time, I was in such a state of upheaval that the only identified need I had was that I needed someone to be comfortable with *anger*. I made phone calls, asked for brief interview time without charge, asked for referrals from everyone I called, asked for reduced rates, asked if the therapist was in a long-standing relationship, asked if they were comfortable with anger. I did not give anyone my diagnosis. I marvel now that I was able to find a woman at that time, given my state of confusion and instability. She was number 28 on my list! She gave me three reduced-rate sessions to "get acquainted." She willingly answered questions about marital status, children, how she deals with angry clients, how she deals with children's pain, had she dealt with children and teens and clients. By the third session, I told her I had an MPD diagnosis and asked if she felt she could take that on. She said she had limited experience but had been interested in this field and had been attending a support group for therapists out of a desire to know more about it. She also said that she would get supervision. I'm not sure which parts made the decision but enough of us did, and that was about three years ago. It was rough and tough those first months, with someone new always showing up for therapy, either *angry* or in *pain* and always in upheaval. But she managed, I kept going, and finally started to stabilize out.

The key is #1, she accepted any and all parts with whatever message was brought to therapy and, #2, I kept on going to therapy. She assured me that if I just kept coming, "we" would be able to handle anything that came up. And she was right! We did have to agree to disagree about the number of sessions per week and about the use of hypnosis. She let it be my call.

It is worth all the effort in the world to find a therapist who can be a stabilizing force. I just had to keep looking until the "system inside" said OK.

By Hanna



It has been two years now since I have been in therapy. Oh, I have tried. When we first met our first therapist, she was a referral from a spouse-abuse shelter I was in. She knew I could not afford her fee so she worked pro-bono for most of our therapy and on a sliding scale when I was back on my feet. She was great. I saw her for three years before telling her I was multiple.

Oh how heavy was this heart when she looked into my eyes and said, "I don't see that," then proceeded to say she wanted to meet each of us before I left the session. I was crushed, and of course our protector wanted to scream out *Who do you think you are, you stupid woman!* But I could not allow that to happen, for Sue our therapist, had been so instrumental in our healing up to that point, without even knowing what wonders were taking place inside this body. I tried to explain that I was the one who had been coming to her all these years, and very rarely did the others show themselves, although they had great respect for her.

Feeling betrayed, I stopped seeing Sue. Then I received a call at work from her stating she had received a letter from me. I knew I had not written the letter, and the others were not talking. But I knew one of them had done it out of concern for me. I felt happy; we set a time to talk. I told her she had made me feel like a bear in the circus demanding me to perform on cue. And how, that was exactly why I had not told her in the beginning. She explained she didn't truly understand and had no experience with MPD, however she would continue to work with me. I knew though that she still didn't believe me.

More confused than ever, I went to an outreach program for mental health. I was with the psychiatrist less

than twenty minutes after explaining that I needed a diagnosis so my counselor would believe me. He could not believe she had doubted me. He gave me what I needed to show her proof and also suggested finding a new counselor.

Shortly after that I moved to a whole new environment, a new state, thinking I could start over. It took so much to make the attempt once again, after two years of seeing no one. And I had to find someone who would not betray us. I found yet another therapist through a referral. I sat anxiously waiting to meet her. Then she appeared, pleasant and soft-spoken. When I began telling her of the physical and ritual abuse I endured as a child she knew almost instantly, which was quite a relief. Then came the blow that did it. She said that Integration would be the long-term goal, and only if I agreed would she take me as a client.

We all feel like that is yet another betrayal. How could anyone want any of us to die? She didn't really know us, but there she was, ready to condemn us to death. We are all survivors within this system...we all have a purpose.

I was in quite a dilemma. I felt isolated yet once again. I began reading anything that would make me understand why people were afraid of us. Then I read a wonderful book, *Multiple Personality from the Inside Out*. In the back was MV's address.

It's been six months now and still I'm scared to try therapy again...I do a lot of journaling and have no other outlet besides MV right now. So I want to thank all of you who share. For you have most definitely saved our survivors' hearts. You have restored faith within this system.

By Paige & Co.

(We're really glad you like MV, Paige. But we also hope you keep trying to find a therapist who can help. Also, while some people think at the beginning that integration means that "parts die," the integrated people I've talked with say that it's not so

much a matter of "losing someone" but it is a deeper, richer feeling of "connection, wholeness, peacefulness, unity" when integration happens at the right time, and in the right way. Of course, this process can't be rushed or forced. And, for people who don't want to integrate, well...that's their choice. And perhaps some of us really can't do it. But I'd have a hard time counting the number of readers who used to write MV saying "I will never integrate! Never never never!" and then, months or years later, they did it. And then they said, "This feels better! Why did I fight it so much?" Just for the record, I'm not integrated, to the degree I would like. But I certainly hope it happens eventually. I'm tired of trying to shout information across walls, and hoping that "everyone" hears.

— Lynn W.)



I'd like to say that we have been in San Diego, California, for 2-1/2 years, and have had *terrible* luck finding a therapist. We have called about fifty different people, and they either don't work with multiples (even when we were told they do) or have "too many multiples already," or do not accept Medicare or this, or that, or that...it got so bad we began to believe all the therapists must have some telepathic device to warn each other: *Don't take that patient; it's bad news!*

We wanted to return to California, but were not eager to return to Los Angeles. Someone told us San Diego was known for lots of therapists and resources...HA! Lots of therapists? Yes. Someone for us? Where? Who? Do we really have poison after all?

We finally went halfway across the country to work with our old therapist (from 1991) last summer. It went so well we have decided to do this every year for awhile. Summers of intensive therapy, then the fall and spring off, as a resting period. It is very hard being here without him. We end up writing lots of letters, and calling too, once in awhile. The summer was very exhausting, with everyone eager to work (we've had no one to talk to since 1992!) and eager to please the doctor

(lots of fear that if we didn't do good enough he wouldn't want us back!) The body got so exhausted because everybody was vying for the body to write their own stuff down, and it got to the point where no one could consider sleeping or eating, and the doctor had to give us thiorazine to make us sleep! But it was a good experience, because it meant that we were working hard!

I think though, this summer we shall go for three months instead of two, and do three weeks of therapy one week off, three weeks on, one off, etc. Then we can rest at least once every three weeks, but work hard too.

Why do we not move there? It's too cold, and the winter months would be too much like "home" — triggersome. Plus, we've got things going on here in California, even if it's not therapy...

By Kevin for the Galaxyites
(Tony's clan)



To you "youngsters" out there, I am now in this world of inner parts. In my sixties, and just coming to the knowledge of a whole clan within, I feel like a 64-year-old newborn! "Except ye become as little children"...is this what is meant? But a newborn with grey hair and more than her share of wrinkles? Come on! However, we've committed ourselves to the long or short haul of healing, whichever it is to be.

My wonderment is how my experiences and concerns relate to you young-uns. Much of my early abuse came from my mother. Then, as the years rolled by, I also became a mother — in the outer sense of the word. And some of my fears unknowingly rolled off me and onto my children.

I have a superb therapist now with whom I've been working for 2-1/2 years. The DD has surfaced since starting therapy with her. I have met my inner family — all thirteen of them — after 60-plus years of hiding them even from myself. Especially from myself. And I revel in my "new family." Yet the more I come to know each member of my inner family, the more I regret the backlash of fear with which I

raised my outer children. Not abuse, but fear.

I want to move geographically closer to my adult children. They have expressed a desire that I do so. Yet this would entail leaving my current therapist. I believe being more present to them geographically could help in the healing of multi-generational wounds — present, past and future. But to leave my current therapist? How the inner ones fear this! I am doing my homework. We dialogue through our journal, in dreams we take turns visiting our therapist. I've written various hospitals and associations to find professionals experienced in DD in the new area. I've even had several exploratory sessions with a therapist there who admits to inexperience in DD.

I wonder if I'm being quixotic in thinking I might be some sort of lynch pin in this malfunctioning family machine. Yet I do believe our healing is interconnected, just as the wounding has been interconnected.

Whoops! Back to the subject of this issue: "finding a new therapist...dealing with loss and change in the therapy session...coping." *I want, I want, I want* — yes Pooh Bear? *I want to go right from this Jan to a new one just like her. I don't want to have to try trusting someone new. Maybe she'll be just like Mummy. I want to stay here!*

Trust the journey, guys. Trust the journey. Look how far we've come. Step by step, day by day, second by second. Homework, here we come.

Jan, please move too!

By Hannah and clan



The Gang started out with a great therapist. He was the first person we ever placed any trust in. We met Dan, for the first time, after an admission to the hospital. I had no idea what was going on, other than someone kept telling people that we wanted to die. The admission was due to not-processing grief. At least, that is what I was told at the time.

Challenges, Cont'd.

Dan became our therapist on the ward. He was supposed to be the best at grief work. He was open and honest from the start. I can't remember much from our first stay, but he consented to see us on an outpatient basis. That didn't last long, and soon I was back on the ward for the same reason, wanting to commit suicide. The hole in that theory was I didn't want to kill myself, and I couldn't understand why I kept getting accused of it.

The first Alter, Angel, talked to Dan on that admission and told him she needed out. The diagnosis proceeded from there. Several months later, Dan told me what he felt we were up against. He proved to be right, but I fought him all the way. He had promised to put us back together, if we allowed him to take us apart. Nine months later that promise had to be voided. Dan was no longer part of the Gang's life. I was suicidal then, we were losing the only person we trusted. The Gang was also losing a very dear friend. What we failed to realize then, was we didn't lose our friend.

Changing therapists was almost impossible. Many don't believe in DID, nor do they want to treat it. We had to settle for someone willing to take us on. That was a rotten time period. He only wanted to work with the Host, and had decided we would be dead long before we could work things out. I am glad to say that was almost five years ago. Guess what — we are still here!

The bad part to our story is that it was over a major suicide attempt that we found Jim. God kept us alive to fight another day. I am very glad that He did. We have been with Jim for almost five years and are very close to integration.

Never give up. Keep looking till you find what you need. Don't let people stop you from seeking help. It may take some time to find just the right person, but it is very important to be able to trust the therapist you choose. If you don't, change again. There are some wonderful people out there, but you have to look for them. We found ours the hard way, but we all feel fortunate. Jim also lead us along another path...that path lead us to

God. Not only did we find a new therapist we found a minister at the same time. Thanks to his belief in us, we have more than just life here on earth to look forward to. Thanks, Jim.

By Beth and the Gang



When you find yourself with a major relationship change, one as important as your therapist, you need to take everyone's feelings into consideration: each child who will cry in the night, to those who will curse you and your therapist for the pain and perceived betrayal. You will need ways to stay safe until you are in a new therapeutic relationship. If you are lucky to find a new one before you stop seeing the "old" one, it will be easier, but don't bust the second for not being the first. Things change. You may need the change and not be aware of it. We weren't, until we began to build a trust with our new one. We were angry. Now we are happy. She's not just a good therapist, she's a neat person.

To make our transition, we pulled our mind out and sorted closets for "lost skills to cope with." We locked the harmful "skills" away and used the good ones we learned in therapy to deal with this. We asked for groups to form to cope. We used food as comfort (a step back in eating disorders, but it helped at a time of need). We had teddy-bear parties...how many bears can you hug until we fall asleep. We listened to Christian tapes, Bible and music all night on our continuous-play recorder. We used a tape our old therapist made for us. (He read us a story about how God healed a child, giving us hope for our own healings.) We needed to pull together to cope and not go back to a hospital or try to die.

Your therapy is so intensely personal that it's hard to keep boundaries. When you change, you will need to keep them. Ask what they will involve ("Can we call once a month? Can we write?") It's best to have a limit or contract so you won't feel pulled by old and new. The limit on old will help you adjust to the new. Don't push the

new so hard that others inside will resent you and rebel against the new relationships.

Be "Kool." It should work out with work and prayer. This is a good time to start a hobby, do something new and different to take your mind off things for awhile. A night class, or reading and writing are all healthy ways to cope. Look for support of your family and friends...or friends and friends, if family isn't an option. Reward yourselves. It's important to say "Yes, we are strong enough. Thank God."

By the Writer's Guild of PL

MV

To My Therapist

Please be patient
and accepting

Give me your guidance
and expertise
as I learn to trust.

Help me to improve
and survive
and last
the strength,
to heal.

By Cheri



Partner's Page

By popular demand, MV will devote a regular page to the issues and concerns of partners of DD-clients...as long as we receive material enough to fill it. So all you spouses and significant others — or DD-couples — here's your chance to be heard! All of us will learn from your experience. Thanks! —LW

When I first heard that Maria and HerFam were DID, I had no idea that life for me would begin to open up a world of terminology that surpasses the confusing, complex terms I'd come to know in my 17 years working with computers.

I would learn to play with her children, as if they were kids on a special block; not like any other household, but very different than most of the world could possibly understand.

As a husband, my view of DID differs from the patients' view.

I know this DID as a place where new rules and boundaries are changed sometimes weekly, or even daily...a world of unique and changing agendas, and late night talks with her kids, teenagers, and sometimes her adult members. Long talks while sitting on our outdoor lounge chairs, while we both view the setting sun. I think we do more talking in one day than most people do in a week!

I have learned more about compassion and what it is in myself...more compassion than I knew could exist.

I have also learned that you must have no expectations of her (and her inside family members), and that she will surprise me with the most simple joys that a day could offer. These are the joys of a child who is longing to find rest, comfort, refuge from an ugly and hurtful world. She hopes to find these qualities in me, her husband of 21 years; and yet I must also be to her only a very close friend, with no sexual agendas to snag the delicate healing process.

I have learned that I cannot over-react to some words and phrases. I must listen only, and just show only my heart of love and understanding to her. Not my logic, not my analysis skills, just...my heart.

Every day I must remember that she and I were joined together by God, not

for my sake or my joy, but for both of our joys and tears.

Much love and understanding to this special club of hearty and tear-filled adventurers.

*By JimmyG and
Maria and HerFam.*

(The following piece was submitted many, many months ago...so I do not have the address. I hope if the writer or his wife reads this, they will contact me so I can forward any responses. —LW)

My thoughts about my wife, who is a multiple, and about multiplicity:

I am married to a person, not a label. Placing a label (or making a diagnosis) of MPD on my wife does not change her; it only makes understanding her uniqueness easier.

My wife has amazing capacities as a result of her multiplicity. She seems at home doing almost anything, from hosting a formal dinner, to using ropes during a technical ascent of a vertical rock wall. I envy her ability to fit so well into any situation. Usually in an unfamiliar situation, I am the "sore thumb" unless I tag along with her.

Occasionally a flashback may be triggered and a different personality may emerge. Most of the time I am not aware that it has happened. If the personality acts in a way that seems fearful, gentleness usually is the best course for me to take.

My wife was sexually abused, so starting sex can be a problem. Again, gentleness is usually the key. However, once a certain point is reached, then someone who loves sex takes over, and WOW!

I have found that if I put love and understanding into the "system" rather than fear or apprehension, then I am able to tap into the amazing powers that my wife has; these powers can be used to make me look like a very perceptive and smart person.

The obvious conclusion gained from the above thoughts is that if I show my

wife love and kindness and compassion, then her multiplicity is a benefit to me and a plus for our relationship, not a liability.

My wife is a multiple — has multiple personalities — but does not have a "disorder." The "disorder" is what caused her multiplicity.

By John P.

MV

There May Have Been A Time

*There may have been a time
When love was ecstasy
A romantic escapade
Together, we held hands
Grasping ahold of each others' heart
We reached that corner that no one
else could touch.*

*There may have been a time
When we were each others' future
We were each others' hope and
dream
When the thought of growing old
together
Was a spoken pleasure.*

*I can't quite forget the times
We walked along a sandy beach
A body of two
A journey of one.*

*There may have been a time
When the thought of our being
separated
had never entered our minds
For you were beautiful,
and plentiful.*

*But now is the time
I can just sit back
And remember...
The past...
Us...*

*Whoever thought a relationship so
special
Would end?*

By Gina Lori

MV

Therapist's Page

By "Sandy and family" and her therapist Sharon A. McGee, M.S.,LPC

Sharon A. McGee, M.S., is a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice in Montgomery, Alabama. She also serves as a therapist and Adjunct Faculty Member in the Dept. of Psychology at Auburn University in Montgomery. She has presented at conferences nationally and is a member of the training team for the National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse. Ms. McGee has over eight years of experience specializing in child sexual abuse, adult survivors of sexual abuse, dissociative identity disorder, adolescent victims, and children's response to disaster and trauma.

HAVING TO CHANGE "BOATS" IN MID-STREAM (Changing therapists mid-way through therapy)

I was diagnosed as having MPD in October of 1992 and was seeing a therapist who knew about and understood the complexity of MPD. It took many months to begin to build trust, and in the early days of therapy, that was the central issue — learning to trust again. Just when I thought I had gotten a handle on my issues of trust and we truly began making progress, my therapist abruptly left her job due to a family emergency that she had no control over. Even though she had no control and no choice, we all know how a multiple would perceive this. It was difficult not to believe she left because of us, especially for the little ones. *Months of hard work down the drain*, I thought. Once again alone with horrible memories surfacing, but no one to talk to about them. This was devastating to my system and I vowed I would never reach out and trust again.

Six months later, after taking a new job and memories coming at me day and night, I knew I needed to find someone to talk to. I believe that there was some divine intervention involved that led me to the right someone. While reading the paper one day I saw the names of two therapists hosting an MPD conference. I picked one name, and we made contact. We were so lucky — our new therapist had a good understanding of MPD and took us on. We are still with this therapist and making progress, albeit slowly. We have come to trust her completely and most of my inside people will work with her. It was a painful transition and has taken months to adjust to. That

time would have been better used dealing with memories that cloud my days and cause so much heartache.

However, along the road that brought us to this therapist and this positive progress, we made some serious mistakes. The main one, becoming friends with my first therapist and subsequently working for her extended family. This caused me and my little ones a lot of inner conflict and messed up the boundaries in a major way. It is not possible to be friends with a therapist and expect to do things friends do. My inner kids did not know how to accept it and I did not want to accept it. This caused a lot of friction, not just in my relationship with the former therapist, but also with my new therapist. I put a lot of pressure on my new therapist, wanting her to make things better while not being willing to trust her, because I did not want to be rejected again. Of all our issues, our fear of abandonment tops them all at the moment, and it's taken a long time to establish the trust I lost.

One word of advice to anyone changing therapists, whether by choice or not: put closure on your relationship with the former therapist. If you do not, you may find your therapy hindered by the shadows of a previous therapist.

I was one of the lucky ones, in as much as my new therapist knew how important this was and she encouraged me to talk about the things that I liked with my previous therapist and the things that worked for us. More importantly, she was very clear on the boundaries of our new-found therapeutic relationship and her role. This was very important to us because of what occurred with our previous therapist. Thinking she was helping us, she had moved from

the role of therapist to the role of friend, and in therapy she befriended one of my little ones beyond the relationship she had with others. This was seemingly good at the time, but in the changeover, this has caused a whole other area of problems.

Because my therapist was sensitive to our needs and allowed us to discuss where we wanted to go in therapy, turning the responsibility over to us, it helped us develop a working relationship that, despite initial problems, has grown to where we are just about ready to look at the darker side of our past. It's not possible to jump right in when you've changed therapists, because if you take down your guard too soon you become vulnerable and can end up getting hurt more. Our therapist respected our need to keep our guard and defenses up initially as we learned to trust her, and to trust that she knew how to work with us. That really helped us. She has also been very patient with us and does not push us too far, which we are all thankful for.

I am on the road to recovery, but I am not on the road alone. I know the days, weeks and months ahead will require dedication and hard work, and I am committed to that journey with the help and support of a caring, informed "new" therapist.



Being the "new" therapist mentioned in this information, I felt the need and desire to contribute to this article. The reality is, being the therapist that takes over a case once held by someone else is difficult and tricky. The shadows of the former therapist lurk within the client and occupy a seat in your therapy sessions, at least initially. That can be good or it can hinder the present work. The key

is to recognize this fact, address it, process and move on. To ignore or avoid it is like voluntarily setting a bomb to go off in your therapy work with your clients.

Ideally there would be a transition time where the person gradually moves from one therapist to another in an organized, intentional way, allowing adjustment time and processing during the transition. Even then it is difficult, but it diffuses many of the problems. Unfortunately, it doesn't always happen this way. So what can you, the "new" therapist, do?

First, accept that you will be tried and tested repeatedly. At times nothing you do or say will be right. Of course this happens with any multiple, but especially during a change. This is when proper, firm boundaries and a good sense of your role really comes into play. I personally have found that clear, stated therapeutic boundaries and the defining and frequent reiteration of my role to be two things that are extremely helpful for productive work and reduced crisis situations in my clients. Sandy knows where she stands and that her therapy is her responsibility. The work is theirs to do with my guidance and assistance. That knowledge, even though she doesn't like it at times, helps her know her place, role, and responsibility as well as mine. Yes, there are times when your boundaries

and role will be challenged, but stand firm. They want and need to know they can trust that.

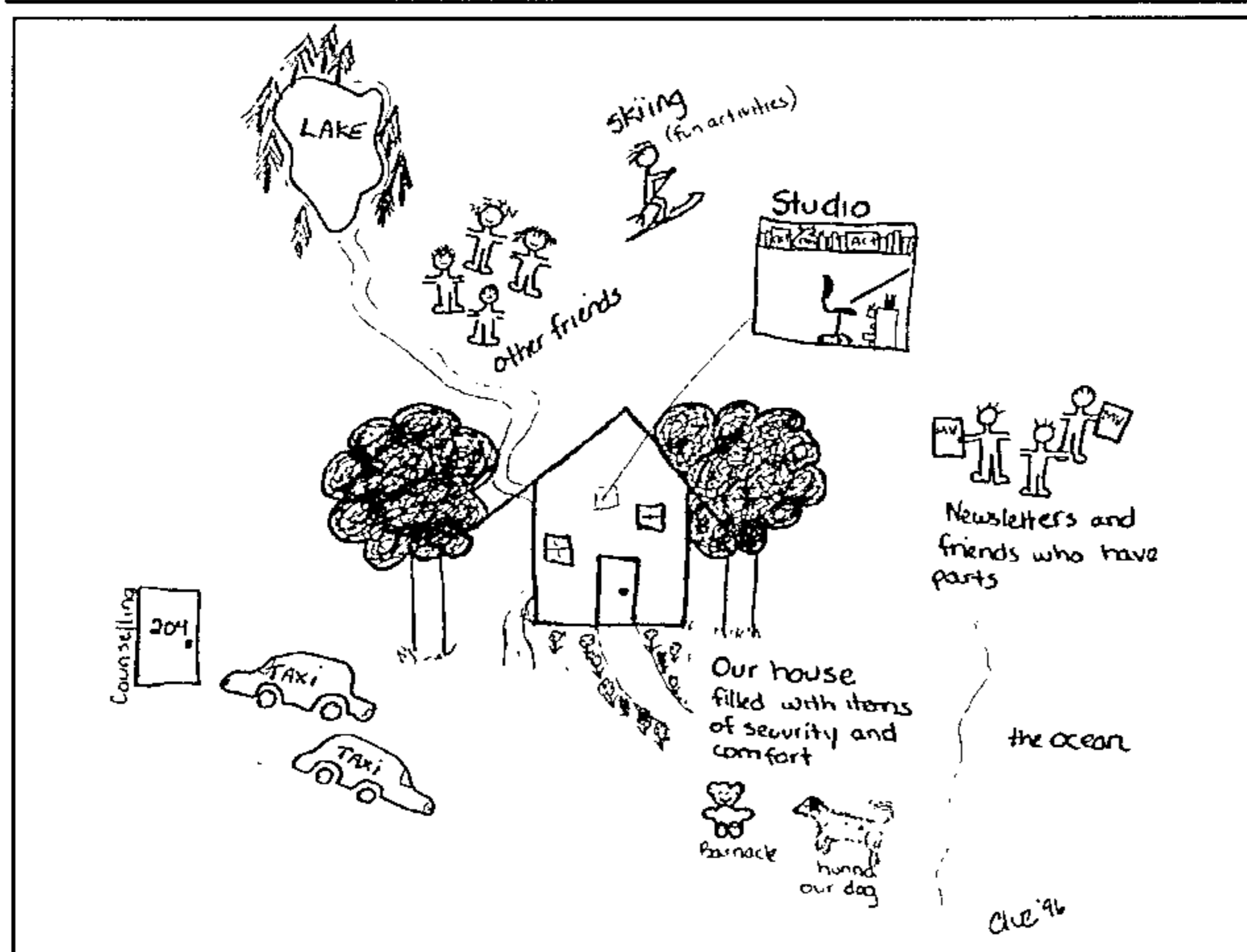
Second, address the other therapeutic relationship directly. Talk it out, see what was positive and negative about the experience for them. Then let them grieve the loss if they need to and process the experience of the change. Do expressive work around this issue. We have to understand that processing and working through having to change therapists needs to be a phase in our treatment plan for multiple and all other clients, especially if the change was not their idea. Then I recommend you be very clear about your style and approach to therapy. It gives them a guide and helps them know better what to expect. I find that I frequently restate that my role is as a therapist, not best friend, Mom, sister, or baby-sitter, among many other roles they may want or expect you to take on. I also consistently reiterate that whether they work and heal is up to them, not me. It has helped diffuse possible problems in that area.

Third, keep in mind that you never want to start doing anything in therapy that you don't want to continue throughout, like frequent phone calls at home during this transition phase. Sometimes there is a tendency to fall into the role of more than a therapist, or to make exceptions, or go

overboard in an effort to help this client through the transition or through their difficult work. I believe that this is a serious mistake that will backfire on you and your client in many ways. Being therapeutic, understanding and patient are keys to transition and good therapy, but be careful. Without a clear understanding of your role, these qualities can be interpreted in many, many ways. Going too far creates dependency and feeds into the notion that they are not strong enough to do this themselves. Crossing those therapeutic boundaries not only can cause great pain, as Sandy pointed out, it is almost always detrimental to the client. Help them tap into their own strength to go forward in healing. Sometimes I think we forget how truly difficult it is for a person to go through the process of therapy. We should be honored to join with them on this road to recovery. We should never lose sight of their strength and courage.

Finally, treat them with respect, recognizing that they are courageous survivors. You will find your life touched by them and you will see that they will teach you more than you ever thought possible. I love working with multiples for many reasons, and I always consider it an honor and a privilege to be a part of the magic of healing.

MV



In our picture of the ideal place for mending ourselves, some of the things are real and some are made up. Most important in this drawing is living alone so that everyone feels safe and secure and there is lots of time to rest and be quiet, or let kids play. Also having fun with friends, sharing love with hunna our dog, and some outside activities such as learning sign language and geography, and going to the library are also very important. The large closet I turned into an art studio is filled with pens, paints, pastels and books for writing in. It is a very special place. Taking taxis both ways to counselling (no buses), being close to the beach, trees, a lake for swimming in and knowing other people with parts are the made-up things that don't exist right now.

By Clue

Boundary Violations

TO: Therapists who are currently sleeping with or have ever slept with their clients or ex-clients

RE: Therapists who believe it is acceptable to sleep with their clients or ex-clients

From: A client

Don't. Don't do it. Do not sleep with your clients under any circumstances. Plain and simple. Even if you believe with your whole heart that you can handle it. Never mind whether or not the client can. Don't. Even if you profess undying love for the rest of your life. Don't do it.

As a therapist you need to know that what you do impacts clients you don't even know in ways you can't imagine. I, and all other clients, carry the burden of your selfish deeds.

Who am I and where do I get off? I am an ex-client, ex-live-in partner of one of you, an acquaintance of another of you, and a potential near-miss of another of you. I am not writing this because I was jilted. I was the one who left, finally, painfully, at the time not knowing why. You, the one I lived with, at least had the wherewithal not to continue therapy after we moved in together. But did it ever occur to you that I started therapy for a reason? Did you ever think of me at all?

After a couple of years with a competent therapist who understands the need for boundaries in the client/therapist relationship and never crosses them, I have a pretty fair understanding of why I was looking for a therapist years ago. Dissociative Identity Disorder. That means that now not only have I had to deal with the original abuse but also the grievous abuse you piled on top of that by becoming romantically involved with me instead of concentrating on the therapeutic process. Because of my keen ability to separate into different parts I did not understand until recent integration that I paid the ultimate price for our relationship — time. I lost years and years of time to my separate parts, when I could have, with a

supportive therapists' help, integrated and lived a life of continuity.

Why didn't I start up with a different therapist after we moved in together? At the time I thought I'd won the ultimate prize. I got the therapist. Presto, I thought I was cured. In truth, I wasn't even diagnosed. After all, or so I reasoned at the time, if my therapist believed I didn't need therapy, who was I to disagree.

Can you understand the terrible injustice of the imbalance of power in this relationship? Right from the beginning of our relationship you were the one in control, the one with the counseling degree, the one who know what was wrong in my life (or so I thought then) and I was the confused client in need. You took advantage of that need, just as the people who instigated the original abuse had done when I was too young to do anything about it. I trusted you as the professional you professed to be. You betrayed that trust in the worst possible way, by putting your needs before those of your client. I hold you personally responsible as the reason I did not get the counseling I needed the first time I sought it, therefore continuing to live a dissociated life for years. At your first awareness of personal involvement with me, the ethical and legally responsible thing for you to do would have been to refer me to a qualified therapist and refuse to see me anymore. I shouldn't have to tell you this. You are the professional. You know this already. So that leads me to believe that you willfully and knowingly violated the law, if not your own good conscience.

I am angry with you. Angry that I lost so many years of my life so unnecessarily. Angry at the loss of untold potential had I been helped to integrate all those years ago. I was ready to do the work required. You had and have no right to take that away from me, or any client, in meager exchange for your own needs. But with a good therapist I am completing the work and now understand the incredible damage an unethical therapist can do, has done. I don't

expect this letter to change a thing you are doing or even get through to any of you, though I am ever-hopeful that it will. I didn't write it for you. I wrote it for me, and other clients and potential clients. For me, writing this letter is empowering. You and your kind have no power over me anymore. And to clients and potential clients everywhere, you were abused once already. Don't let it happen again! If your therapist wants you to sleep with him or her, regardless of the reason given, turn and walk away, even if it is the most difficult thing you have ever had to do. And then get yourself to a good therapist.

By Barbara

MV

I see little, if any, information on the topic of how we feel when we get back from our children when they remember. When the cycle that was started long before us, and continued long after we grew up, reaches its summit. Many, many multiples will have to face what I'm facing how...my daughter is barely talking to me, much like when I stopped talking to my parents.

Let's stop the abuse, cherish the kids, stop hurting them, and above all, take responsibility for the part we played in their pain...

When the Tides Have Turned

I am experiencing a new suffering
That no one prepared me for,
A debit from my past
The opening of a different kind of door.

The cycle of abuse I had continued
On my daughter, by my neglect.
The anger she directs toward me
The pain I deserve, now in effect.

She recollects the abuse done to her,
And hates me for my role,
And she demands immediate justice
But won't even settle for my soul.

Will I be strong enough this time,
Or reject her earnest plea?
This all is so devastating,
Now the tides have turned on me.

By Lisa Cartwright

The Starfish Tree

Dedicated to Elaine

By D.

A grey-haired woman dressed in black picked up a stranded Starfish and tossed it back into the ocean. A little boy watched her do this all day long, six days a week.

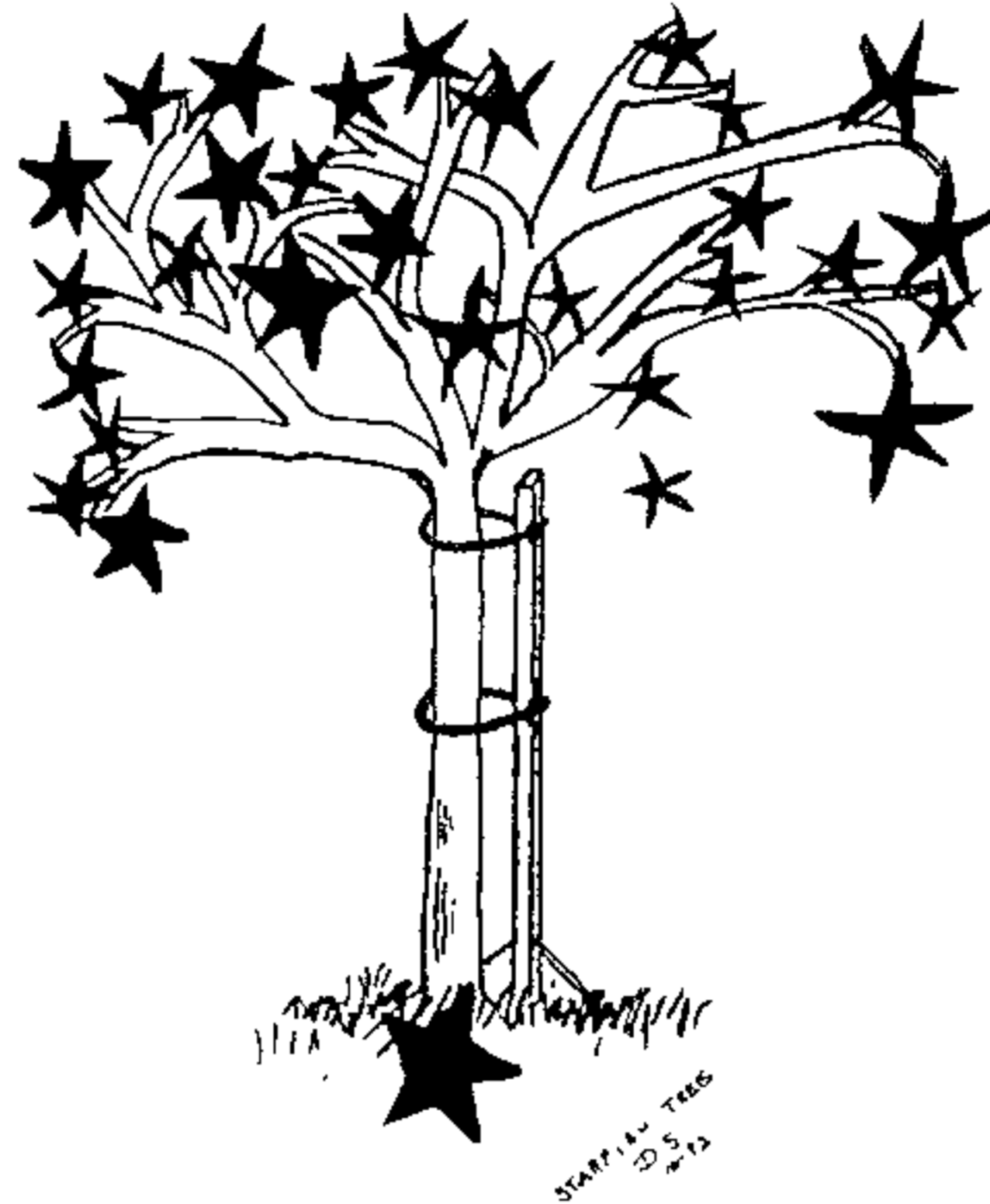
"The beach is miles long," the little boy told her. "The waves toss thousands of Starfish on the sand. You can't save them all; besides, what difference does it make? They're only Starfish," asked the curious child.

The lady held up a Starfish, and as she threw it back into the ocean, she said, "It makes a difference to this one!"

One day the woman picked up a Starfish that looked and felt different. She looked closely at the five pointed tips and saw they were limp. The woman felt sad because she didn't get to this Starfish before it died.

"I will give you a decent burial," she said as she carefully tucked the Starfish in her pocket. Later that night she buried the Starfish in the middle of her sandy backyard, not too far from the ocean. She made a little circle of seashells around the grave and put lots of water in the middle of the circle so it would have familiar things in its final resting place. The woman cried because she loved the Starfish. Each day she brought water from the ocean and poured it on the Starfish grave.

One day she noticed a little tree growing from the middle of the



seashell circle. "A stray seed from a tree must have been buried with the Starfish," she thought. As time went by, the tree grew taller, but the nasty winds and the terrible storms off the ocean, and the fierce hurricanes threatened to bend and break the still-fragile tree. The woman, who loved all life, grew fond of the tiny tree, and became afraid the big winds and heavy rains would kill it. So she carefully and tenderly supported her treasured tree by tying it to a strong stick which she placed deep in the ground. She left the ties loose enough so the tree would be free to grow, but bound it tightly

enough to support it when it was in danger. Because of her, the tiny tree survived and grew.

After two years, the tree was taller than the stick, but it had no leaves. The woman thought it looked funny because it had branches and was shaped like a tree but without leaves. She kept loving and watering it, even though her friends told her to get rid of it. She respected all life. This tree was just a bit different. It deserved to live.

Six months later the woman noticed the ends of each branch starting to swell as if they were getting buds. "Ah-ha," thought the woman, "leaves or flowers or something are coming at last." The little swellings pushed out further each day, like tiny growing bubbles, one at the tip of each branch. The woman watched tiny gold-ish points popping out from the bursting bubbles. She counted five itsy bitsy popping points pushing out of each bubble.

Finally, early in Spring, she saw the tree had burst into beautiful, golden Starfish! A Starfish Tree, the first of its kind! But then, she was the first to plant a Starfish and carefully nourish it. She knew she made a difference. And that's how the Starfish Tree came to be.

MV

Resources

Help resolve depression by freeing your creative spirit! Tapes, individual or group therapy, phone consultation available from Louis Birner, PhD PC, (212) 737-3665, or write to 50 E 72nd St. #11B, NY, NY 10021.

Create a Shattered Dreams pillowcase for public display by Believe The Children, at its national conference and other public events. Decorate any size pillowcase on one or both sides to illustrate the suffering and dreams of a particular child. For durability, sew rather than glue, and avoid use of glitter, gel paints or unset markers. You may create paintings, collages, photographs (photocopy transfer to iron-ons), quilting, appliqué, embroidery and other art forms. Pillowcases become

the property of Believe The Children and cannot be reclaimed by the sender. Believe The Children will retain all copyrights on all materials submitted, and may photograph, print, or display the submissions. Please describe your pillowcase, including age of child, date, and signature of parent or guardian (if child is under 18). Wrap carefully and mail to Believe The Children, PO Box 797, Cary, IL 60013. Call (708) 515-5432 for more information.

Boston Area: Don't miss the on-going events and activities at The Healing & Arts Studio, 731 Harrison Ave., Boston MA 02118. Workshops, crafts, music and more. Call (617) 859-9561 for current information.

Remember the beautiful covers on MV's April and Oct. '95, April '94, and pages 116 & 147 in *Mending Ourselves?* The imaginative artist, Living Earth, now offers *MANY MOONS*, original pencil drawings evolving with a healing journey. Blank note cards with envelopes (6 for \$10), or 8-1/2 x 11" photographic prints on ivory card stock (suitable for framing) @ \$4 each. Informational flyer is available for SASE. Living Earth is dealing with serious physical disability as well as emotional recovery, and will appreciate your orders or inquiries sent to her at 4415 Oak Grove Church Road, Asheboro, NC 27203.

MV

I Lost My Therapist From the Atmosphere, Even Though I Still Had Him in Person

It doesn't matter that in *outside* reality I did not lose him. The devastation that pervades every cell of me is as great as if I had.

I lost him when I realized that he was not a bunch of loose molecules diffused throughout the cosmos, a formless essence surrounding me lovingly and protectively, day and night. I lost him when I realized that he was a person in a container made of skin. He could move from place to place in his container, taking himself with him. If he went from one room to another, he was no longer in the room he had just come from. He was only in the room he just entered. And if I said goodbye to him at the end of a session, he was not with me after I left. I was *alone*.

For a long time, this was a concept that many of us were incapable of fathoming. We were like a baby who has no idea that it exists as a separate person, apart from its mother. Baby and Mommy-Jeffrey were mixed, without form or definition, in one primordial ocean of feeling and being. The magic version of Jeffrey that pervaded this holding Atmosphere always knew what we felt, what we thought, and what we did, every second of every minute of every day, without any words being spoken. He didn't have a particular shape, like a body. He was just *there*. He loved us unconditionally, and understood everything we felt. He knew when our heart ached so much that it would break in another minute. Any pain was bearable, because he was with us when we went through it.

The only thing our baby understood about existence was that the comforting Atmosphere that enveloped her supplied her every need, so she always felt safe, even when bad things happened. This secure feeling permeated from the baby into others of us who are older. We, too, were wrapped in the protective Atmosphere all the time — when we walked in the street, went to work, fell asleep, took a shower. The Atmosphere enabled us to do the ordinary things necessary for

daily life, despite the constant fear we had of being infinitely alone in a place like outer space, where no human beings know you are there, and no one will ever hear you or find you. The magic of the Atmosphere insured that we never were, and never would be, alone. Even when we fell while hiking by ourselves in the forest, and had to walk for 2-1/2 hours on a broken leg to get back, it didn't seem too hard, because the Atmosphere cloaked us the entire way.

For about a year now, the baby has been learning that she and Jeffrey are separate people. It is a devastating awareness that she can digest only in small amounts, in the safety of his office.

The baby attaches Jeffrey with her eyes. He matches her intense gaze. In the silence, her hand slowly rises toward his face, but stops before it touches. It hesitates, deciding, then glides back to briefly brush her own cheek. Back again toward his, a little nearer this time, but still not daring to reach. "It's OK to touch," he says softly. Her hand floats gently back and forth, measuring the space between them, getting a little closer each time. Panic starts to rise within her. She wants to touch, but is afraid of confirming what she is already beginning to know — that he is a person apart, bounded by skin. Her scream shatters the quiet. Her hand drops, and a mini-convulsion wracks her body. Saying nothing, he continues to anchor her with his eyes. The tremors stop and she grows calmer. Her hand floats up again to begin a cycle of silent exploration and terrified screams. After several more attempts, she gets the courage to touch. His skin feels warm beneath her hand, soft, but more solid than the air she had been traversing. A new awareness seeps into her. He remains still. The unbroken connection their eyes make is the only thing that lets her know she is still OK. She manages to hold this for a moment. But she can absorb only a little of the disturbing knowledge before slipping back into something

familiar. She withdraws her hand slowly. His eyes, which still attach her, gradually recede, and become re-absorbed into the Atmosphere that comes back to surround her. The firm substance she had felt beneath her hand is nearly forgotten.

This drama is repeated often over the course of many months. Although she always loses most of the new realization, she is able to retain a little more of it with each session. The effect is slow, but cumulative.

Our growing awareness of Jeffrey as a separate person was troublesome, because we had never developed what he calls, in therapist-speak, "object constancy," and the ability to internalize him. So we created two versions of him: the In-Person Jeffrey, and the Atmosphere Jeffrey. This caused other problems. If the In-Person Jeffrey asked "How was your weekend?", we experienced it as a betrayal, because the Atmosphere Jeffrey was with us all weekend, and would have known without asking. We got angry at him. We felt deserted. We called him a Deceiver.

We made elaborate accommodations to trick ourselves into believing that the In-Person Jeffrey always knew what the Atmosphere Jeffrey knew. We hung photographs of him in our apartment. We played tapes of his voice in the car. We cut a string in two; we kept one piece in our wallet, and he kept the other piece in his brief case. In between sessions, we wrote letters to him, and mailed them *immediately*, sometimes making three or four trips to the mailbox in one day. To our magic way of thinking, as soon as we mailed a letter, it was part of the Atmosphere, and so was part of him. And the ones of us who are more sophisticated and didn't believe that, believed that as soon as he received a letter and read it, he would come back in time to be with us while we were writing it. We calculated how long the Post Office would take to deliver each letter. But we didn't calculate that on some days, he forgot to check his mailbox. We discovered this

inadvertently when we were talking to the In-Person Jeffrey during a session one time, and assumed that he knew something that he did not. Now, in order to avoid upsets, we bring copies of letters we have mailed to the sessions and leave them outside his door so he can read them before we see him.

And we have an elaborate ritual for saying goodbye at the end of every session. *We* always have to open the door. If *he* opens it, he is getting rid of us. If *we* open it, *we* are the one choosing to leave. The journey to the door is like a ceremony, always performed the same way. We stand first; he gets up immediately afterward. We walk slowly backwards towards the door, so we can face him and lock eyes with him as he follows, a few feet away. We carefully feel behind us for the doorknob, and open the door. Still in silence, and still attaching his eyes, we continue to walk backwards through the waiting room to the outer door. He continues to keep pace with us. Again reaching for the doorknob behind us, we open the door and say goodbye three times, waiting for his responsive goodbye after each one. Then he waves, we wave, and we go out into the hall and close the door. In our reality, he remains standing there until we return for the next session, facing the door through which we have just passed, his arm in the air in a frozen wave, his kind eyes looking into ours.

But despite all our desperately inventive devices, the Atmosphere was punctured, and we could not stop the leak that was deflating it. Little by little, the tattered remains of it were draining away.

The full realization of separateness came to me one day when I was sitting at my desk at work in Corporate America. I realized that no one in the world knew that I was sitting there, because *no one could see me*. Did I exist if no one saw me? I didn't. Was I a person if no one else was there to validate it? I wasn't. *There was no Atmosphere*. Although previously I had had all the pieces necessary for this realization, I had never before assembled them. I was devastated by this new state of complete and total aloneness. I was sealed in a room with

thick cement walls, and no door or window. Not a ray of light penetrated. I was terrified. I screamed and screamed. Someone had to *know* I was in there! Someone had to come and get me out! At first, the screams were strident and confident, because I still had hope that someone would hear me. Then the screams became panicky as the realization came that, just as no light could get in, no sound could get out. No one would *ever* hear me. I was stuck in there for infinity, with no hope of any human contact. Ever. I stopped screaming. I couldn't make a sound. I became violently ill. I was nauseous. I could not move. My arms and legs didn't work.

I came to. I was sitting at my desk. The screams I had heard inside had been deafeningly loud. But it seemed that no one at work had heard them, because no one came into the cubicle. I was relieved that I hadn't blown my cover in Corporate America. I managed to move my hand to the telephone. I dialed Jeffrey. His secretary said he was in a seminar. I left a message for him to call me back, and sat there numbly, waiting.

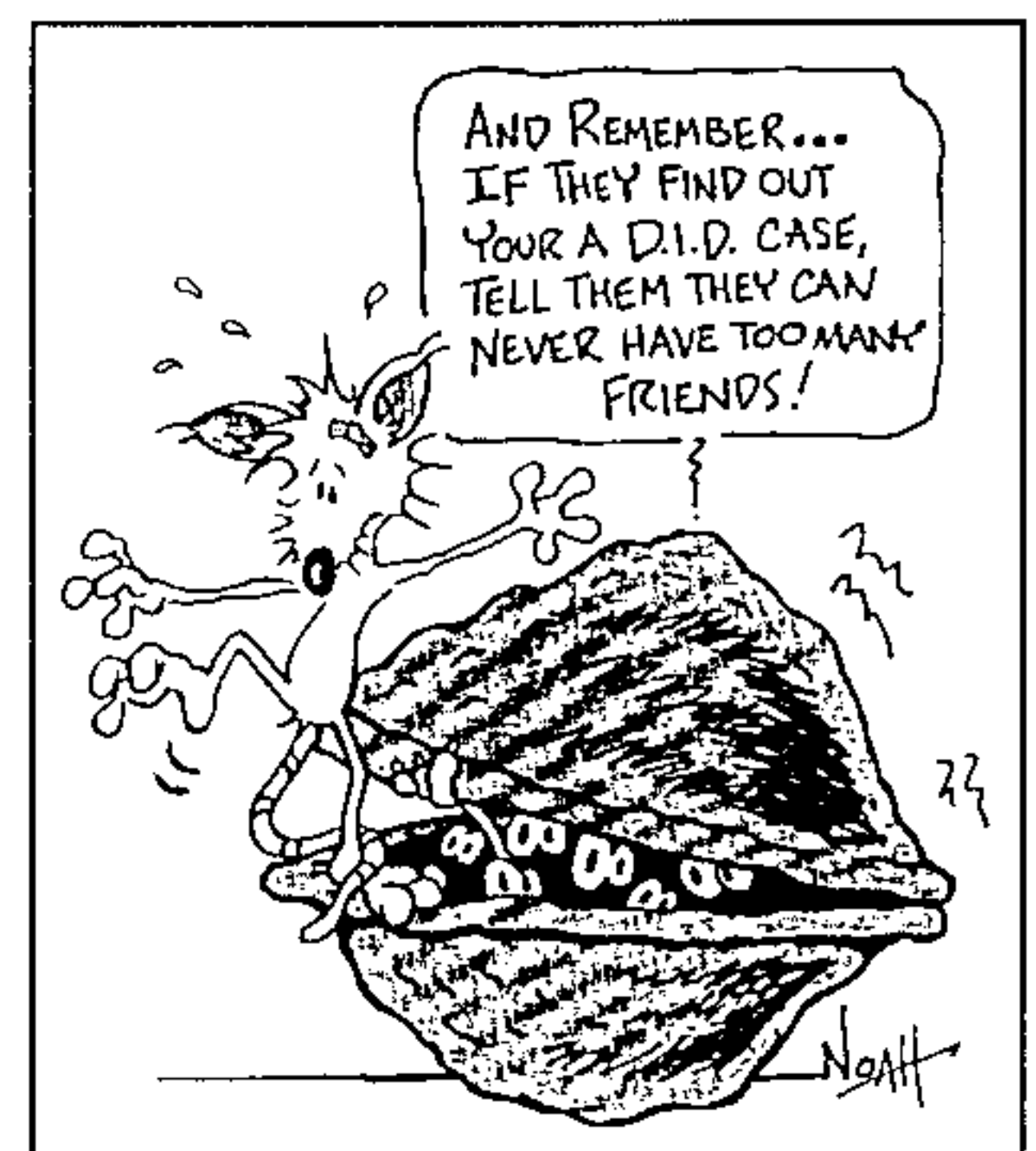
That was a few months ago. I have not felt OK since then. I am a huge, gaping wound held together by a fine strand of hair. If I breathe normally, it will break, and my agony will spill out. I am nauseous all the time, and am so tired that I can barely drag myself around. I have been thrust into new territory. I have no hope of returning to familiar terrain, and no skills to help me get along in this new landscape. I can't leave Jeffrey phone messages any more, because his telephone is empty, and I don't know when he will come back into it. I can't write letters to him, because he cannot come back in time to be with me when I am writing them. I have given back the photos and tapes. They are meaningless to me now. I feel as if I have been through a holocaust. I am a shell that resembles the person I used to be. I make myself numb so I can go on with my pantomime outside life. I still go to work, where I still write reports, chair meetings, and design software. People mistake me for myself, but myself doesn't exist anymore.

For a while, we stopped going to see Jeffrey. We couldn't get into the car to drive there. There was nothing to drive to, and without the Atmosphere, we were afraid to go out in the dark. So we had phone sessions. After a while, we started to see him in person again, but at first we wouldn't go inside, so he came to sit in the car with us.

Now, even though we do go into his office, we do not feel comfortable or safe there. And the familiar way we used to say goodbye doesn't work any more. We still perform the ritual, but we have disturbing pictures of him after we leave. We know he doesn't really stay there, with his arm in the air. He turns around and walks back into his office. He checks his voicemail for messages from *other* people. He takes his keys from the shelf on the bookcase and then goes to the closet in the waiting room to get his tan trench coat. He leaves, locking the door behind him, and goes to his dark blue car with all odd numbers on the license plate. He drives away in his skin container, leaving his office empty. It will be empty over the weekend. We don't know what happens to him. Where he is. Whether he exists.

He says that he didn't change, that we still have him, that he is just the way he always was. He says that he is connected to us by love and feeling, even when he is not with us physically. Parts of us are incapable of understanding that, and will not have anything to do with him. But other parts of us do understand, and that is why we still go to see him.

MV



Letters

We will forward your responses to the letter-writers. They appreciate your advice and support! —LW

Reading MV has been very helpful but I would like to see more on the stage where I am now. After several years of grueling therapy and hard (but rewarding) work, I feel stuck and confused. Many alters have integrated, some are asleep and others have simply gone away. The dilemma I am faced with is, do I continue to full integration or do I stop here now that life is manageable? I find that I want to hold on to the few that are left simply because I can't imagine what life would be like to be completely solo. Would the silence scare me? Would I regret my decision? Am I just holding onto these as one would a favorite security blanket? I have already adjusted to the fact that there are more than four hours in a day, and have handled situations that I previously "handed over." Some of my remaining alters see integration as a kind of "death" and sometimes feel resentment, especially after years of loyalty. I have read that some people stop at the point I am at now, and I wonder if the reasons are similar. I asked my therapist to make the decision for me, but she said it's completely up to me. It would be a great help to hear from others who are at this point or who have gone on to fully integrate. Thank you. — Joann

We have been diagnosed as MPD/DID for about three years and still have a lot of trouble when Easter or Halloween is coming, because of "special" (ugh!) rituals that were done on those days in our childhood. A week or so before, during, and after each holiday, we get more anxious and scared. What things do other MPD'ers do during these higher trigger times to help you cope and stay grounded? Thanks — SL

Have other MV readers experienced the death of their (outside) child? Our child was 12 when she died. She was normal at birth, but at 14 months she became very sick, and went into a coma for three months. When she came out of the coma she was blind, deaf, and could not walk or talk. Most of us wanted and loved our child. We lived as if she could hear and see us. Some of us blame ourselves for her dying, because it's very hard for us to be a parent. In our lives we lost three important people: a boyfriend when I was 18 died in a car accident (one of my alters was driving.) My doctor who was very kind died, and we felt as if it was our fault. And now our child died. One alter still believes our child is alive. She buys her things, and takes the empty stroller for a walk. She went to

support groups but didn't feel anything. She felt sorry for the other people. Everything we have ever loved has died on us. Did we do something to make our child sick? Please help. — Group 3

I am closing up on my third year of therapy. I am progressing well, but I have one huge problem. Since we are all doing well, everyone inside has their own plans for the future. I found myself working in an insurance office for a few months. I went along with this for awhile, but someone quit. Later I found out I had signed up for courses at our Community College. Another time, I found an acceptance letter that I had passed all required tests at our vocational school to be an LPN. Recently I found that I am now president of our County Homemaker's Group. This I don't mind, but it isn't what I want to do. I hope someday to be an advocate to help abuse victims. What I want to know is, how in the world do we decide who does what? How do we keep one another from sabotaging our jobs, and who decides what? This is very confusing for me. I want to do what I want to do without interference from the alters. — Nancy & Co.

MV

Resources

"The House On Survival Avenue" — poetry by Connie Post. Powerful poetry, words and images. Broad spectrum of survivor issues. \$8 includes shipping, handling, tax. Send checks to Connie Post, PO Box 5591, Pleasanton, CA 94566.

Closer To Free, A 12-Step Odyssey for Abuse Survivors, by T. Thomas is a new book by the author of *Surviving with Serenity* and *Men Surviving Incest*. \$16 in US funds includes priority shipping in US. Canadian readers, please add \$3. Arizona orders require 7% sales tax. Send orders to Timothy J. Fleming, D.Min., 5201 E 2nd St. #D-4, Tucson, AZ 85711-1344.

We are sorry to report that Multiple Care Unit, the Canadian Humor newsletter for people who dissociate, has ceased publication. Tracy, the hardworking editor/creator, is OK but she's going on to other challenges. Please remove this listing from MVMC#4.

Australian newsletter, U.S.S. (Uniting Survivors & Supporters) is available c/o MPD Support Group (New Farm), Friendship House, 20 Balfour St., New Farm, Queensland 4005 Australia. Says cost is \$10 but it may cost more for overseas shipping. Please verify!

Seeking support for partners? Write to James Grinstead, 805 Netherlands Dr., Hermitage, TN 37076. Or call (615) 872-9333 evenings

MKs (Missionary Kids) in Recovery Inc. has info to share. Write to PO Box 531, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-0531. (614) 861-8512.

Conferences

June 8. Believe The Children/SAVE holds a one-day symposium on Traumatic Memories at McHenry County College Conference Center, Crystal Lake, IL. (Near O'Hare Airport.) Also annual meeting of Believe the Children. Call (708) 515-5432 for information.

June 5-7. International Psychohistorical Association, 19th Annual Convention. New York City. Call (201) 891-4980 for info.

June 6-8. 1st Nat'l Conf. on Children Exposed to Family Violence. Call for info: (903) 595-6600.

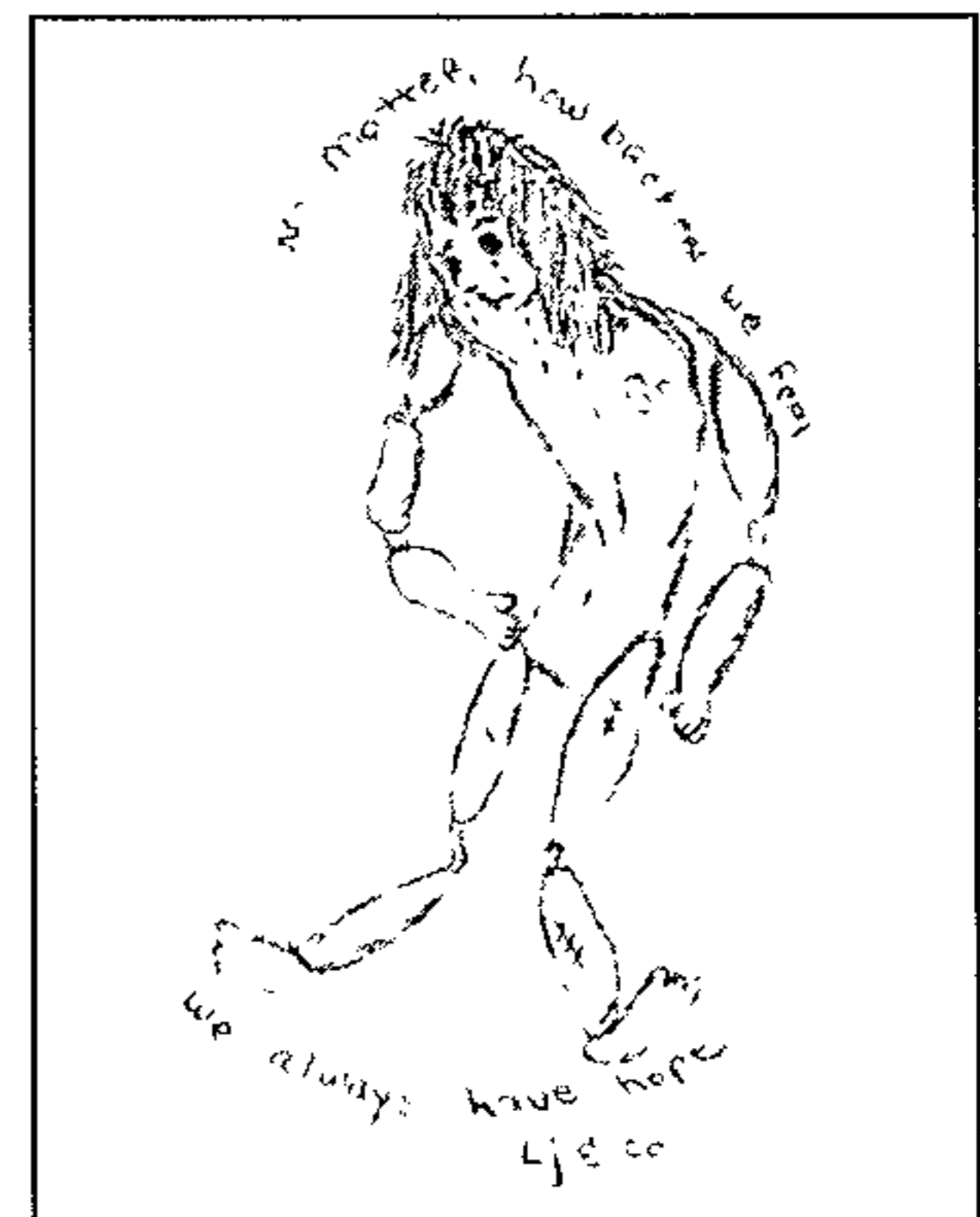
Aug. 2-4. 14th Annual VOICES IN ACTION conference. Cherry Hill NJ. Call (800) 7VOICE8 for info.

November 7-10. ISSD 13th International Fall Conference, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco. Healing the Divided Mind: Advances in the Psychotherapy of Dissociative Disorders. Call (847) 375-4718 for information.

November 9-13. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) will hold its 12th annual meeting at the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San

Francisco. For more information, call ISTSS at (847) 480-9080.

Call for papers, workshops, presentations for the 18th Annual Nat'l Conference of National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (includes Women of Color Institute.) November 19-23 1996, San Francisco, CA. Celebrate 25 years of Rape Crisis Centers and the Anti-Rape Movement. For info call Patti at (213) 462-1281 or Rebecca at (415) 861-2024.



You and I are Sunshine

By C.S.

This is a poem I wrote after the loss of my first therapist. I've had many since then, but the first was the hardest.

Once you've sprung to life under unconditional love
it's hard to let that love leave
It's hard to have the sun go out
and have to shrivel up again.
It's easier to just die than
to shrink under the ground
all your life because that's
all you can do without the sun.

Once you've touched the sun it's
hard to not need sunshine.
Without it you die and there's
no substitute.
Only a moon, if you're lucky
no warmth, no growth, no life left
not enough to flourish.

The sun is leaving
leaving, leaving, lost
on a path to
never-never land
moving to another universe

You are left to rot
in an endless pit
lost and lonely
frightened and forgotten.

This is worse than any death.
This is hell!
I deserve all of this because
I touched the sun and
burned its brilliance
with my darkness and decay.

I flourished once
with the sun and
didn't know it.

As you see, I thought I wouldn't survive that loss, but I did. And I'm still in therapy — still difficult therapy. But don't give up hope after losing a therapist. Pick up the pieces and go on. We're experts at going on. If you want to heal and keep pursuing that goal, God will provide.

MV



Inside the head of us.

By Candy

Books

From Wounded to Embraced A Survivor's Story of Healing Through Sculpture

By Abby Studio/12 Publishing PO Box 68634, Indianapolis, IN 46268
Lovely special-designed art book, 15 pages, \$10 plus \$2 shipping. Or order from The Healing & Arts Studio, in Boston, MA. (617) 869-9561.

From small sculptures of clay, Abby gave words to explain their creations from healing. The book came after Abby had created her clay sculptures. (Offered for sale in MANY VOICES/MULTIPLE CHOICES #4).

This book is a must-read for anyone suffering from mental problems or in the mental health field. It gives uplifting hope and ways to place your feeling within a container (sculpture) and hurt less. Heavy quality paper with unusual binding presents a drawing of the sculpture on one side, and the describing words on the page opposite.

Abby's words and thoughts on *Wounded, Survivor, and Up, Mommie* are words we can all relate to. *Denial* is a very important message to

everyone, and is one of our favorites. *From Wounded To Embraced* is bound to be a success.

Abby's sculptures were given to us over several years by our therapist, and have become our most treasured gifts.

By Claudia and the Chorus

Dissociative Children: Bridging the Inner & Outer Worlds

By Lynda Shirar © 1996. Published by W.W. Norton & Co., NY. \$23 US, \$29.99CAN. 246 pages. Hardback.

Many people will benefit from this book, even if they don't have kids at home. My kids are grown and, so far, doing remarkably well, considering that they grew up with a dissociative mother...but I liked this book for what it taught me about childhood dissociation. Children may become dissociative via biology (inherited capacity), imitation, or the repeated passing-down of abusive behavior through generations. Even without obvious abuse, the chaotic

inconsistency that characterizes behavior of a dissociative parent might lead to dissociation in a child. When dissociation treatment starts early, the outcome is usually favorable.

Shirar writes clearly. From the definition of dissociation at the beginning, through symptoms of dissociation in childhood (which differ some from adult presentations) and treatment techniques, to the capsulized discussion of integration and post-integration at the end, it's a remarkably informative work. (I especially liked the passages describing early dissociation, which reminded me how I used to be, and validated once again that this is *not* a condition I acquired in therapy!) There's a lot of practical advice here for non-abusive caretakers as well as the treatment team. I think *Dissociative Children* should be on the shelf of every household with a dissociative parent, as well as on the shelves of therapists who work with children and families. —LW

MV

THANK YOU for sending your wonderful creative work! DO keep writing and drawing for your friends who read *MANY VOICES*! And don't forget to send us your editorial/art theme ideas for 1997! We need them NOW! Have a great summer! —LW

August 1996

Loving yourself into wholeness. How you learn to transform self-injury or self-defeating behavior into self-nurture and self-respect. Improving co-consciousness. ART: Healing wounds. DEADLINE: June 1, 1996.

October 1996

Choices, choices. Making room for multiple interests, varying skill levels among alters. How to select appropriate work for your stage in therapy. Also, ways to fight the stigma of "chronic mental illness." ART: Draw yourself(ves) and a favorite activity. DEADLINE: Aug. 1, 1996.

December 1996

Dream work. Sleep disturbances. How to get a good night's sleep. ART: The place where you sleep best. DEADLINE: Oct. 1, 1996.



Share with us!

Prose, poetry, and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

Subscriptions for a year (six issues) of *MANY VOICES*: \$36 in the U.S., \$42US in Canada, \$48US elsewhere. Back issues always available, each issue 1/6 yearly price. Enclose the form below (or a copy) with your check, and mail to *MANY VOICES*, P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.

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