

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

Vol XX, No.5

October 2008

ISSN1042-2277

*In This Issue:*

## **Spirituality in Your Life: Yes or No? Opening the Door to Change** *...and much more!*



*Firemaiden by MScott*

## *Out from Amnesia*

How beautiful it is  
to let long buried grief flow.  
This healing pain—  
I would call it sweet.

I would call it  
the sweetest sorrow,  
this gentle loosening  
of the tight bonds of loss.

Hidden in the brain's darkness,  
in the dumb acres of the body  
was my heart's loss  
—sweet children torn from me.

Now I am in my body,  
every inch, every cell  
No longer does the mind blank out  
the horrors of my youth.

Not to know your pain  
—this is hell.  
Not to know your life  
—this is robbery.

To have no memory  
is the hardest life of all.  
How sweet is this pain  
that restores me to myself.

How sweet is this river of tears,  
welling up from the heart's core,  
watering the desert  
of this new land called memory  
to join the river of sorrow  
that flows through our world.

*By Kate Evans*

MV

# Grief Explained

By Jane

*In tribute to the memory of my 'lost' baby son Jack (1982)*

Recently I came across this wonderful Jewish midrash: a story told long ago, by peoples who were searching out ways to explain and share meanings and interpretations of the words of their holy book the Torah. It has spoken to me, and it is my wish that its message will resonate with other readers too.

**"When God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden, he saw that they had repented of their sins and he felt pity for them. He spoke to them gently and he said:**

*'You poor children, I have punished you for your sins and I have driven you out of the Garden of Eden, where you were able to live in peace and love and joy, without grief or worry! Now you will have to live in a world which is full of unhappiness and you will have to learn to manage and cope with whatever life throws at you. But remember this; you will always know that I am there for you, and that my love for you will last forever. I will be generous and bestow upon you my most precious gift and treasure, this costly pearl – a tear. Whenever you feel overwhelmed by grief, when your hearts are about to break and great pain is tearing your soul apart, then this tear, my precious gift to you, will fall from your eyes, and the burden will at once begin to lift, and slowly the pain will get easier and easier to bear.'*

**When Adam and Eve heard this they both became numb with grief at their loss. Their eyes welled up with tears which streamed down their cheeks and fell upon the ground. These were the tears, their tears of pain which first**

**moistened the earth. And they in turn left this precious gift and inheritance to their children. Ever since then, whenever someone is suffering great grief and pain, his heart is heavy and his mind in turmoil, tears flow from his eyes, and behold the grief eases!**

How I wish I had read this story many years ago. It might have helped me back then to identify one of the basic, core issues regarding my own illness – my inability to cry.

It seems that so many of us who have been abused and traumatised, lack the 'psychological framework' necessary for the grief process to occur and be acknowledged. This is a landscape which we seem to have great difficulty manoeuvring our way through. Amnesia for the past, and dissociation in the present, don't allow for remembrance and reflection on the painful aspects of our life experiences.

Grief is a natural response to loss, and therefore as a result must necessarily be the other side of the experience of attachment. In simple terms, how can it be possible to 'lose' something that was never 'found' in the first place? How can a person 'let go' when they are preoccupied with 'holding on'? If there has never been a good enough experience of loving and being loved, then the opportunity for the growth of love to occur has been thwarted, making it

difficult for the experience of grief to be felt and expressed.

The road to healing is long and often difficult, for it requires the individual to take up these two opposing forces at the same time; which causes great psychological conflict, and hinders recovery. This is a mammoth task which those who have not been abused do not have to struggle with. Usually, when the natural order has not been disrupted, attachment occurs long before any major loss is visited on the individual. So the capacity to deal with loss is intact and functioning. Hence '... the tears flow and behold the grief eases', and the letting go occurs, painfully but naturally.

For victims of abuse, entering into a psychotherapeutic relationship can provide us with an opportunity to repair this initial damage, to kick-start and relearn this whole process; and in doing so, to claim God's inheritance to us, which this story serves to illustrate so beautifully.

MV



*She loves me not....*



**Elusive Peace**

Elusive Peace  
 Chasing the Unseen  
 Longing for Solace  
 Locating None

Encountering an Abyss  
 Experiencing Fear  
 Looking for Other  
 Needing Much More

Noise Inside  
 Unceasing Discontent  
 Being Apart  
 All Out of Sync

Untouchable Scenes  
 Just Out of Reach  
 Surreal Objects  
 The Fog Rolling In

Unwanted Memories  
 Unacceptable Truths  
 Innumerable Wrongs  
 Such Senselessness

Asking for Quiet  
 Wanting Some Rest  
 Hunting for Oneself  
 Wishing for Death

Searching for Clues  
 Some Understanding  
 A Gentle Touch  
 Infinite Pursuits

Discovering a Voice  
 One to Be Heard  
 Truth Proclaimed  
 Listening to Follow

Faith Required  
 Hope Unleashed  
 Love Desired  
 Belief in Another

Life Affirmed  
 Created Purpose  
 Finally Delivered  
 Elusive Peace

By Virginia

MV

**MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!**

**Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA**

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

**Bridges to Recovery - Pacific Palisades, CA**

Call Tonda Williams: (877)-7BRIDGE

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

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

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

Call Kimberly Colbert: (410) 938-5078 or (800) 627-0330 x5078

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

Call Peyton Orr: (214) 381-7181 or (800) 426-4944

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

Call David Tate: (816) 356-5688 or (800) 225-8577

**Women's Institute for Incorporation Therapy - Hollywood, FL**

Call Larry Spinosa: (800) 437-5478

These organizations are not affiliated with this publication and have no control over its contents. Many Voices and its staff have no influence on their operations.

Does your clinic or conference need flyers? If so, please call 513-751-8020.

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

Tax-deductible donations, volunteer help, and good ideas are always welcome! We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor

LIFE OUTSIDE THE BOX BY SHEREE BRADFORD-LEA



# Therapist's Page

By Alexa Altman PhD

Dr. Alexa Altman is a clinical psychologist who specializes in somatic experiencing and EMDR. She is a staff member at Bridges to Recovery, in Los Angeles, California: [www.bridgestorecovery.com](http://www.bridgestorecovery.com)

## Somatic Experiencing

**T**rauma. We use the word "loosely" in every day conversation, but in this sense its definition is diluted. We feel "trauma" when there is a delay on the freeway and we will surely be late to a lunch us OR we experience "trauma" when a loved one dies or is diagnosed with a dreaded disease. So, what does "trauma" in our every day world really mean?

Dr. Peter Levine defines a traumatic experience as, "Any experience that overwhelms a person's capacity to cope." Dr Levine developed, Somatic Experiencing, a common sense approach to the treatment of trauma that utilizes each person's innate resiliency and health to resolve symptoms related to traumatic stress.

Dr. Levine studied animals in the wild to learn how they resolve traumatic experiences and function without the developing debilitating symptoms that we, as humans, sometimes experience. He observed something truly remarkable. We have known for a long time that our bodies are equipped with an automatic "on" button called the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system. This "on" button elevates heart rate, respiration, muscle tone, and sends blood to vital organs to react. This capacity serves a vital function for our survival providing access to the energy required to defend ourselves from potential threat in the form of fighting/attacking or fleeing/avoiding behaviors. If these aggressive or defensive behaviors fail, the nervous system has another option which is to temporarily "freeze" the system. In Somatic Experiencing this is called the immobility/ freeze response. Many

people who have experienced traumatic events may not know why they did not "do something," "fight back," or "run away". It is so important to understand that there is an innate wisdom in the body when it comes to survival. Animals and humans use immobility/freeze as a survival mechanism when it senses that fighting or running will be more dangerous than temporarily becoming very still.

Our body instinctually responds with the best defensive strategy that will support continued survival. Why would immobility be useful? First, the body secretes an enormous amount of endorphins, the body's natural pain killers, to protect the organism from further suffering. If death or further physical pain is imminent the body responds with compassion by releasing these chemicals. Second, fighting or fleeing may result in further threat or harm, whereas submitting or immobility may reduce further attack. Immobility suggests that the person is "still" or "frozen" and on the outside it appears that way. However, internally the nervous system is charged to its maximum with all that survival energy ready to be used for action. The analogy of revving a car with one foot on the gas and the other foot on the break at the same time is often used to denote the internal state of a system in immobility. What Dr. Levine observed is that animals in the wild are able to discharge this survival energy after the threat is gone and their nervous system moves back into a balanced state. This state of balance or internal regulation communicates to the organism that the event is over and safety is reestablished. The organism feels a sense of triumph when the system discharges this survival energy and balance is restored.

We as humans are equipped with the same capacity to renegotiate and integrate traumatic experiences. So the question is, "what goes awry in our nervous system that creates the debilitating symptoms related to traumatic stress?" The key here is in the immobility response. When a person fails to fight or flee to protect themselves the body moves into the immobility/freeze response, as a result the survival energy becomes frozen in the body. Somatic Experiencing attends to the frozen defensive (fight and flight) responses in such a way that a person is supported toward healing in several key ways: 1) discharging the survival energy, 2) re-establishing appropriate boundaries to protect oneself, 3) the ability to orient to one's surroundings and be aware if danger is nearby and 4) able to have access to needed survival energy if protective actions become necessary. This process helps a person feel safe once again and empowered to engage in enlivening experiences, to explore the world, and to make contact socially with renewed confidence.

How does Somatic Experiencing help a person move from fear and immobility to empowerment and movement? As humans we have a well developed rational part of our brain called the neocortex. This part of our brain allows us to plan, organize, rationalize and make meaning of our experience. We would perish if we relied on the rational, slower moving neocortex when faced with a life threatening event. The part of the brain responsible for the survival defensive actions of flight/fight/freeze is the reptilian brain. The reptilian brain is not rational, does not organize information verbally, but operates purely based on sensation and action. In Somatic Experiencing we help people gently and slowly discover how



to tap into this part of the brain by learning to speak the language of the reptilian brain, sensation and movement. This model restores empowerment by supporting the body moving out of immobility/fear into an experience of triumph associated with purposeful, protective and successful action. The events that lead to the debilitating symptoms of trauma are over, so we need to intervene where the symptoms reside, in the body. This approach to the treatment of trauma allows a client to slowly, at the clients own pace, re-establish healthy protective behaviors and restores balance/regulation in the mind and body.

Trauma is a severing or a rupture in a connection to oneself and humanity.

Health is restored to the mind and body when a person can live fully in the present, engage in life and experience a deep re-connection to themselves, family, friends and community.

MV

---

## Out of the Blue

A song on the radio  
Speaks to my blood  
But my mind holds so few memories  
Of who I am.

I fly over a landscape,  
Skimming the patchwork below  
Of soft velvet and jagged peaks.  
Watery blue...brilliant  
green...screaming red

Flow through my eyes  
And out of my hands...  
Too many empty squares—  
Cold, black and empty.

I want my life back  
Memories, feelings...all of it  
I want to hold  
All of me again.

By HR

MV

## The Panic Button

By Michele J. Bornert

It happened one day a long time ago. I just told myself I wouldn't cut anymore. So I stopped. For a while. Then the stresses of life came falling back upon me and I couldn't take the pressure, so I went out and bought a box of double-edged razor blades.

As I sat in my car, I began crying because I knew that all of my hard work was about to be flushed out like the blood inside my arm, yet knowing that I couldn't tolerate the internal pressure that was so prominently screaming my name. The bigger the cut, the better I would feel, I thought, as I drove home contemplating where I would do this "impulsive" action.

I've been cutting since the ripe old age of four. It was just a way I learned to cope with internal pain. Whether I started it in order to show people my pain or not, the reason I do it now is because there's pressure that builds up inside me and I feel like I might explode if I don't "let the air out."

I work on dealing with cutting and other self-harmful practices with my therapist. He's very patient, but also very blunt. I'm not quite sure how I can deal with that, but I want to get better. I have to get better. If my children see me cutting or notice the vast amounts of cuts and scars on my body, they might emulate my dysfunctional coping skills or lack thereof. I don't wish this on anyone, least of all my children.

And still there I was sitting at the computer with a razor blade. I held it and I traced a line I wanted to slit, but then I decided to try something my

psychiatrist suggested the other day. I pushed the "panic" button — my internal panic button. And it summoned all the parts inside and they all came running.

"Don't cut," "We're here for you," "You're going to be OK," "Don't cut," "Give me the razor blade," the Protector tells me.

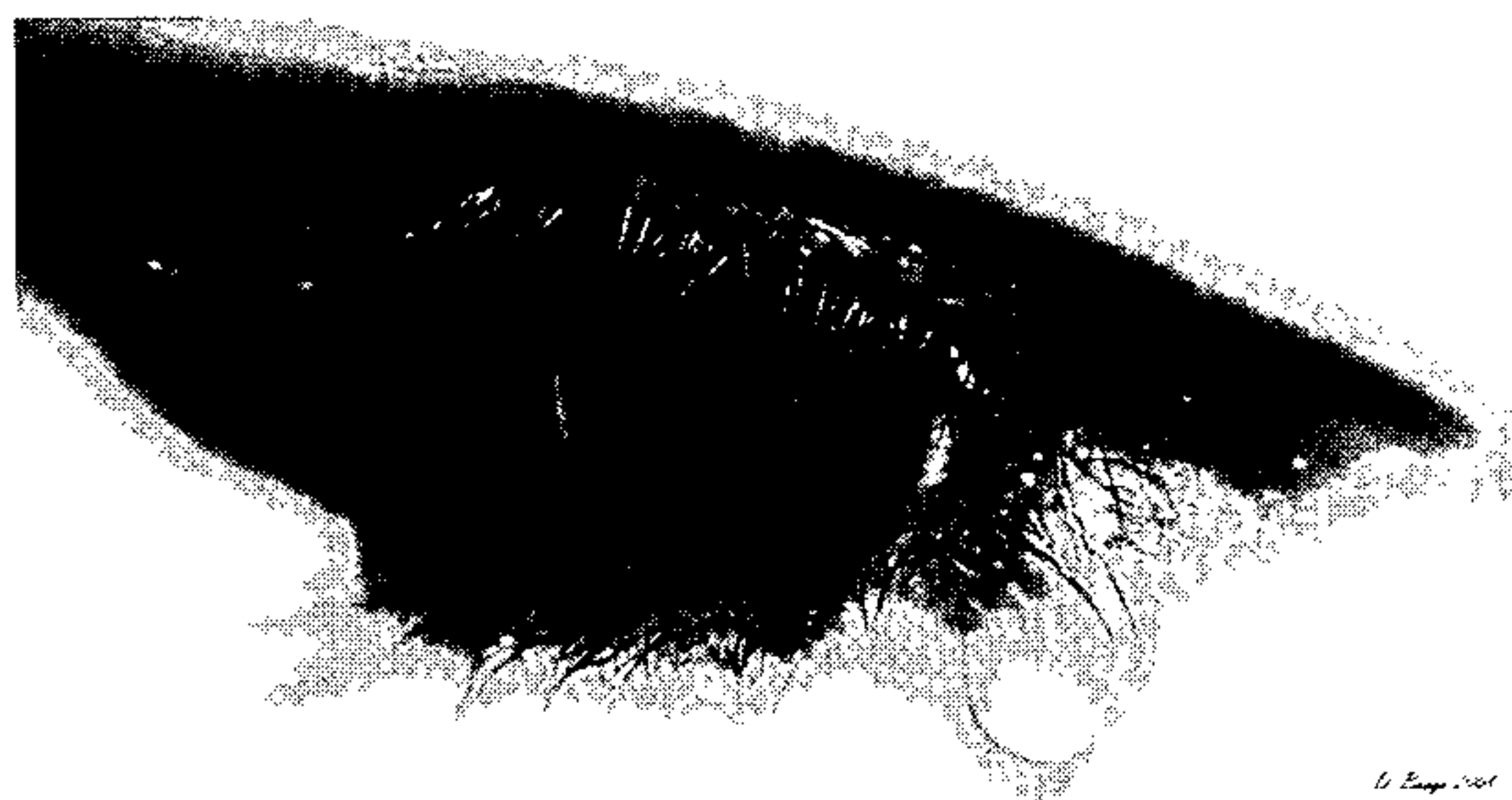
I do and he takes it and disposes of it. All around me inside my head are people ready and willing to help me. "You don't need to cut anymore. We'll help you through any pressures you're feeling."

This panic button imagery is definitely something new in my life. Yet it's like an old friend. A time when I would cry out and someone would be there to help me. I can still do that. I can still cry out, push the button, and have a multitude of helpers scramble to my side, overlapping me... Getting me through the hell I'm experiencing at that moment.

Maybe your life is a mess. Maybe you feel like there's no hope. But where's your panic button? Everyone should have one. A button you push when you want all of your inside helpers to race to your side and get you through whatever it is you're needing to get through.

Give yourself a panic button. You may never need to use it, but I suspect you will. At least once. And that's all it takes...all it took for me.

MV



Through the eyes, by D Boggs

# Spirituality In Your Life

By Lynda Wisdo

Spirituality...I truly don't think I'd be here today without mine, without my unwavering belief that there is something larger than all of this, something beyond me and my trauma that gives my life meaning, that gives all of our lives meaning.

I can trace this belief all the way back to my childhood when I first began to believe that the rays pouring out from behind the clouds were God. Must have been an idea I got from a painting or photograph.

Still, it stuck in my mind and remains with me even now as I watch the sunset outside my window and am, as always, filled with awe.

I can remember one day in particular, a day when I was about five years old, when my spirituality really began to take hold. After escaping from some routine episode of trauma that was going on inside my house, I ran outside into the front yard, looked up at the sky and saw a jet, way up at the top of all that blue. Instantly I felt that if there could be something so incredible, something so very far away from me and all my family hell, that I could survive, that I could hold on to that far away place and keep a part of my soul safe there (early threads of dissociation I suppose).

Ever since that day, I've felt if I could just see a piece of the sky or the summit of some mountain off in the distance or even a turkey vulture in flight that I could make it...that I could somehow be okay.

Just three years ago, however, right smack in the middle of my "psycho-spiritual crisis", I was about as far from okay as I could possibly be.

It was during the summer of 2005, at the beginning of my menopause, that all of my coping mechanisms began to collapse, both around me and within me. As my mind and my body began rapidly releasing much of my long held terror, grief and shame, I found myself plummeting into the most terrifying and yet liberating experience of my life, an experience I

never could have survived without my spirituality.

All day and all night my hands and my body shook, my pulse, usually around 65 or so, raced somewhere around 100, my blood pressure, normally 110/65, climbed to 178/100. I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep. It took all the concentration I could muster to perform the simplest of tasks like making my sons' lunch or doing the laundry. I was afraid to take a shower, afraid to be alone and terrified that I would take my own life.

Still, I held fast to my spirituality and continued to pray, to God, yes, but also to my inner and outer healing guides, adding a special prayer for the life I so feared I was losing.

It wasn't until I entered a psychiatric hospital that October that I was able to accept the fact that it was not some dreaded physical disease I was suffering from but the aftereffects of my long repressed childhood abuse, abuse that I was just beginning to remember.

And so, with the help of talk and hypno therapy, massage, movement, writing and group therapy, yoga and Chi Kung, I began my long awaited journey toward integration, healing and wholeness.

As all of you know, this journey has not been an easy one. There are many moments when fear and returning memories still threaten to steal away my newly found feelings of safety and sanity. While I have many tools to help me through these moments now, I remain amazed by how many times simply being able to admit to myself, to God and to my inner and outer healing guides that I am afraid, has brought me comfort, reassurance and the blessed ability to move forward with my day.

Growing up in an abusive family, I was not allowed to give voice to feelings of shame, grief or fear and so I internalized these emotions, turning them over the years into episodes of anorexia, bulimia, promiscuity and

self-inflicted violence.

Today I can see that it is only by embracing and ultimately releasing these long repressed emotions that I have been able to heal my mind, body and spirit, one memory at a time, one tear at a time.

I think many of our difficulties with spirituality arise from our belief that it is something that exists outside of ourselves, something unreachable and angry that we need to fear, much like the perpetrators who wounded us as children.

Through my studies of hypnosis, dream work and the subconscious mind however, I have come to believe that our spirituality or "higher power" is something that exists deep within each one of us and that it exists simply as the abundance of memory, wisdom and faith that each of us needs to heal.

It is there whether we are able to believe in it or not, whether we feel we are able to access its power or not.

So, if you're feeling so inclined, why not take a moment or two and close your eyes. Take a deep breath and turn your attention inside. Notice what you're feeling. No need to judge or try to change these feelings, just notice them. Take another deep breath and say these words whether you believe them or not, even if...no, especially if it makes you cry, "I am taking back my power!" Say it again. "I am taking back my power!" and again until you do believe it and until you believe with all your heart that you have both the right and the ability to heal.

Wishing all of us hope and wholeness on our journeys,

*Lynda Wisdo*

**MV**



## An Infinite Mind

By Jaime P.

In my last article for Many Voices, I wrote about the support group I had formed for people living with dissociative identities. The group has grown and it is filled with such wonderful people, all whom have faced similar struggles and challenges with their DID. Listening to their stories week after week frustrated me. Why do we have to continue to suffer with inexperienced therapists, negative stereotypes, and stigmatic fears? DID is an amazing gift our minds gave us to help us survive. This should be celebrated.

The final straw was the season premier of a crime show in which the main suspect claimed to have DID. The police treated her badly and called her crazy and fruit loops. She was accused of killing a baby, and having "an alter" kill her parents, all before it was discovered she faked the whole disorder after studying it in books. I was furious at the misrepresentation of DID. Surely someone was going to say something. Could they really get away with this injustice? I waited and waited and yet no one said anything.

That's when I decided to say something. In December of last year I wrote an anonymous article in a national survivor journal. I spoke of all my frustrations with the way the disorder is viewed and shown in the media. I shared how DID is a sign of resiliency, not craziness. I wanted people to start to see a new side to DID.

The article generated a lot of feedback. People wanted to know who anonymous was so I decided to create a MySpace page. Now the organization could send all the inquiring minds somewhere. Within two weeks, I had made my MySpace page under my new company name, An Infinite Mind. I could still deliver my message of understanding and acceptance while remaining anonymous.

As the site gained more attention, I started receiving emails from people with DID; amazing men and women who were all struggling with the same issues I had struggled with. With every story, I became more motivated for change. I knew the only way the world was going to change their views of DID was if people started speaking out. The media was showing what the DID community was giving them and now we are hiding because of what the media is showing. I knew someone needed to be the first to step up and say it is ok to have DID. You can be successful. You can be happy. You can lead a typical life and still have DID. That someone was going to be me. I decided to make An Infinite Mind a fully functioning organization.

As the official website took shape, I knew I was taking a big risk. I was going to tell the world my secret. My name, picture and story would be on the website. There would be no more hiding or denying. It was time to openly say, "I am Jaime, and I have DID."

On March 24th, An Infinite Mind was launched. While I expected the emotional toll starting my organization would take, I was not expecting the physical toll. I greatly underestimated the amount of work that went into running even a small organization. There was a lot to learn; website design, web hosting, non-profit laws, paper work, paper work, and more paper work. Don't even get me started on finance and fundraising. All this is in addition to answering the large amount of emails that started flowing in. I quickly became overwhelmed and realized that despite my desire to save the world, I couldn't do it all.

I sought out help and advice from other small non-profits, especially ones working with DID. It occurred to me that there was no need for me to re-invent the wheel. I couldn't do it all but I could do some, and they could do some and together we could do a

lot. Every organization no matter how large or small has their own unique skill set as well as their own contacts and resources. By combining our talents, we could all work together to make the change. Coincidentally, it very similar to the whole DID process. You have all the parts, each with their own unique skills, working together to accomplish the group goals.

With some amazing partnerships now secured, we are able to look forward to accomplishing our mission. We have several projects in the works but as of now, we are focused mainly on education and advocacy. For most of my friends and family, seeing my website was the first time they were learning about my DID. I am very happy to report that I have received nothing but tremendous support from my loved ones. None of my fears came true. Recently, my friend was interviewed for an article in which she was asked what she thought when she found out about my DID. She simply said, "I didn't care. She is still Jaime and I love her." What more could I ask for?

MV



## My Unexpected Life

By Pat M

Down the hall from my office is a large tile mural. I have been fascinated with it for the entire time I've worked at my present job. The colors of the tiles are bright and cheerful. I often run my fingers over the bumps and grooves of the individual tiles. In a way, it helps me feel closer to what it represents. The mural has several children holding hands, smiling, with the saying "Grace is for All" above them.

A few years ago, my life changed completely. I don't mean that I moved to a different location, nor do I mean I got a new job. The inside of me is different. I have been diagnosed with having Dissociative Identity Disorder. I dissociated, once again, two years ago during a Christmas party at work. I was talking with a colleague one minute, and the next, I was pacing in my office trying to figure out what happened to me. The life I knew was over, wiped clean from my brain. It took over two years to put all the pieces together so even I could understand this incredible moment in time.

I always enjoy the holidays. This particular year was no different. It was December 17th, 2005. I will always remember this date because it was the day I lost my life. It is the date I celebrate my new birthday, it is the day I felt Jesus' love. At our school we have Christmas parties in the morning, and then we get dismissed before lunch. I usually go from room to room and visit the classes and share the day with each of them. I remember this event clearly. I don't recall much about my life, but this day I won't ever forget. It was the end and beginning of me.

My parents moved far away from me while I was still in high school. I didn't want to move with them because I had already found my future husband at the age of sixteen. Most kids are enjoying their newfound freedom, dances, and football games. I was trying to learn how to support myself and pay for college, buy food,

and survive. My mother decided to move back to our area two years ago due to advancing years. She wanted to share her later years with her "girls". My sister and I are still confused about this decision. I was very stressed about her return and my mind had already started to drift back to childhood. I was anxious as to what she wanted from me after all the years she was absent from my life.

This particular morning, I was enjoying the party atmosphere and eating a chocolate donut while watching the principal of my school work on cards for the staff. He is skilled at calligraphy and was busy finishing the staff gifts. He started talking to me, but it was my father I heard and saw. I packed up my belongings and was about to leave when the principal came into my office. He thought he'd done something to upset me and with heartfelt emotion, apologized to me. My heart began beating faster and faster, until I thought my heart had burst. I looked down and I saw nothing unusual. I knew something big had just happened. I grabbed my things and ran from the building. It would take two and a half years to understand that moment in my office.

Over the next week or so, I was unable to function. I lay on the floor in front of the tree and watched the lights glow in the dark. I couldn't eat and lost ten pounds quickly. I couldn't sleep. I found myself praying in my bedroom for the first time in a very long time. I got down on my knees and asked God for help. He answered me instantly and said, "Go to church!" I ran downstairs and shared this with my husband. He calmly put the newspaper down, smiled, and said, "Then we better go to church!"

In that remarkable moment in my office, God blessed me with my first real friend. Outside of my husband and my children, this is the first person I've ever trusted. I have never been able to trust anyone due to the

abuse from so long ago. I knew he was different. I knew God sent him to help me with all the changes I was about to undergo. The suffering and pain from my childhood had to be remembered, processed, and left in my past. His faith in Jesus was extremely inspiring to me. His example helped me to trust my own faith in God.

During this healing process, I have thought of this man as a real father. After all, I had reverted back to childhood and started over again. It seemed natural for me to see him as a father figure. It wasn't all that great for him. In between helping me and pushing me away, we came to an understanding based on Christ's love. I needed him to support me and be my friend. He needed me to adhere to his boundaries. I always trusted his judgment. I tried to obey his rules.

This past summer I have finished the process of grieving. I have gone from shock and denial from long ago, to bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. I no longer fear my past. I am a completely different person than I was two short years ago. I no longer live in fear. I am happy at work and I go to church as often as I can. I tremble with emotion from God's words. I sit in my pew and learn about love and forgiveness.

My experience is new to everyone around me. I know there are many adults learning of their pasts and dealing with the same anguish and heartache. I no longer carry the burden of what my father did to me. He was just a man, nothing more. This man can no longer hurt me. God has shared this burden with me and now, I share my life and love with him.

Growing up I had a dream of being in a family where love was spoken; a family that supported one another through good times and bad. I still have this dream. I believe in the goodness of God and trust His word. I also believe I was brought to this particular school to share this burden with kind, loving people. I couldn't



have made it without a wonderful support system, not only at home, but at work. In my heart, I know God sent me a brother. My friend and I are getting to know one another without the burden of my illness. I still have hope that he will see me as his family one day. Until then, I thank God for his friendship and for my new life. It is a life without pain and fear. I am joyful and thankful.

I walk by the mural in the hallway and run my fingers over the tiles. It gives me peace. After working in this school for six years, I finally understand the words written for all to see. "Grace is for All" really means God loves each one of us. He died for our sins and gives us forgiveness. My heart is filled with God's love and I am thankful to all the individuals who played a part in my recovery. I begin again, unexpectedly.

MV

### Rage

Better to rage than to die  
Lash of storm waves at the land  
Crash and spume in the air  
Scatter the pebble strand  
Better to rage and roar.

Wild winds batter the hills  
Lash trees to a frenzied host  
Thunder clouds swirl over moors  
Storm winds of justice pound close  
Better to rage and to roar.

Oh for the long life robbed  
For the thefts by night and by day,  
For the children here no more  
The mother's dumb shriek of clay  
Better to rage and to roar.

Crash comes the harrow down  
Smashing evil again and again  
Crushing it into earth's jaw  
To be scoured by the sun and the rain  
Better to rage and roar.

Out they come as before  
The Furies, from days of old  
To grab in a steely claw  
Those who sell humans for gold  
So no woman or child be sold  
Better to rage and to roar.

*By Kate Evans, March 2008*

MV

## It's About Time

By Jack Howley, LPC

*Jack Howley, LPC is a trauma counselor based in Dallas, Texas. The following is a text he uses with his patients. You can learn more about Mr. Howley's practice at [www.dallas-counseling.com](http://www.dallas-counseling.com)*

It's about time...  
It's about how such a brief time...  
    can seem like forever  
It's about how time...  
    can make a life seem to stand still  
It's about...losing time  
It's about the time...  
    that I needed to be an innocent child  
It's about the time...  
    that innocence was lost  
It's about the time...  
    that a childhood was lost  
It's about how I wanted it to be ..  
    "Once upon a time..."  
It's about how I still want it to be..  
    "Once upon a time..."  
It's about the times...  
    the abuse stained time itself  
It's about the times...  
    there needed to be boundaries  
It's about the times...  
    there needed to be limits  
It's about the times...I needed to rescue  
It's about the times...  
    I needed to be rescued  
It's about the times...  
    I don't want to remember  
It's about the times...  
    I can't seem to forget  
It's about the times...  
    I can't get out of my head  
It's about the times...I live over and over  
It's about the times...I wanted it to end  
It's about the times...I wanted time to end  
It's about the times...I didn't want to be  
It's about the times...  
    I wanted anything beyond the moment  
It's about the times...  
    I didn't want to experience  
It's about the times...  
    I didn't want to be in therapy  
It's about the times...  
    I wanted them to be in therapy  
It's about the times...  
    I needed them to be loving  
It's about the times...I wanted to be loved  
It's about the times...  
    I wasn't loved...enough  
It's about the times...I received "un-love"  
It's about the times...  
I needed them to know that I was lovable  
It's about the times...  
    I was abandoned and neglected  
It's about the times...  
    I wanted to be held, not hurt

It's about the times...  
    I needed them to be perfect  
It's about the times...  
    I hated me for what they did  
It's about the times...  
I needed to hate me so I could love them  
It's about time...to accept time  
It's about time...to accept myself  
It's about time...  
    to accept my inner and outer realities  
It's about time...to get it that they didn't  
love me the way I wanted them to  
It's about time...to get it that I can't make  
them love me the way I wanted them to  
It's about time...to get it that I can never  
be perfect enough for them  
It's about time...to get it that it's over  
It's about time...to get it that I can't redo  
things to get it right the next time around  
It's about time...to come to terms with my  
mixed feelings for them  
It's about time...to come to terms with my  
love for them and my anger at them  
It's about time...to grieve the love that  
was supposed to be  
It's about time...  
    to grieve the love that never was  
It's about time...  
    to place the anger where it belongs  
It's about time...to stop living in the past  
It's about time...to accept my fear of  
change and my fear of not changing  
It's about time...  
    to accept that life is about change  
It's about time...  
    to stop being afraid to change  
It's about time...to begin to change  
It's about time...to live in the here-and-  
now, time-and-again  
It's about time...to get on with my life  
It's about time...to not be numb  
It's about time...to begin to heal  
It's about time...to begin to feel  
It's about time...to accept my body  
It's about time...to accept my heart  
It's about time...to love the person they  
were supposed to love  
It's about time...to love myself  
It's about time...to love me  
It's about how time implies a beginning  
and an end  
It's about how time implies boundaries,  
limits, and limitations  
It's about time.....

MV

# Finding Spirituality that Fits

## (The search goes on...)

By Questor

Writing about spirituality is like walking a tight rope without a safety net, for me. As with so many areas that seem like basic no-brainers to others ("family values" and "education", to name two) my spiritual beliefs—or the lack of them—shift with the tick of a clock.

I don't consider myself a survivor of full blown SRA, but as many others who dissociate can understand, my spiritual life became very complex very early.

I was raised in an isolated, rural household, in an atmosphere crammed full of Bible-stories-for-children as well as direct readings from the Christian Bible. But neither parent went to church. Dad was a lapsed Catholic (on his third marriage); my mother was a lapsed Methodist. Both frowned on formal religion and believed we children should make our spiritual choices for ourselves.

Both parents may have been previously abused. My mother would leap back when touched, even by a toddler (the startle response), and seemed to dislike intimacy across the board. My father had a penchant for 'driving out devils' by waving a crucifix over the person he considered possessed. Some of the most terrifying moments of my life took place when he reenacted scenes from the Bible, using me as a prop (think Abraham and Isaac, for example.)

He was an altar boy as a child, and extraordinarily good looking. In retrospect, I've often wondered if he'd been abused by priests. As an active alcoholic and later, a dry drunk, his "mood swings" were instantaneous (switching?) and I would call his anger and outrageous behavior psychotic, though he was never diagnosed.

In addition to reading from the Bible, the parents also surrounded us with the stories of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Gods, history of the

Salem witches (said to be my mother's direct ancestors), and Celtic tales. As an extra special treat, Mother would read "Dante's Inferno" to us at bedtime (the version illustrated by the artist Doré, which graphically depicted the horrors of hell.)

Thanks to my odd upbringing, I was both drawn toward and repelled by organized religion and spirituality. At the same time, growing up in a rural environment, I was exposed to the wonders of nature, which I still consider the innate spirituality of the universe. Beyond the craziness indoors, I found peace and solace outside, alone with plants, trees, living creatures and symbols of past civilizations—the arrow-heads, Indian mounds and trails that wound through the woods nearby.

So my young child's brain had an oversupply of spiritual images to choose from.

I craved then, and still crave, an understanding of the world and universe I'd landed in. (Why was I born, and why born to these people? Was this part of "God's Plan?" or was it just happenstance? Was I supposed to learn some lesson of living from this experience, ala Karma?)

Unlike my siblings, who seemed not to care so much about the opinions of schoolmates, I desperately wanted to be like the "normal kids" who lived in "normal homes" with their "normal parents." (Of course, I took a huge guess in assuming their homes were any more normal than mine.) I wanted to go to church and Sunday school, just like they did.

So beginning in 4th grade, I walked a couple miles to a United Church of Christ congregation near the grade school. Some adults raised their eyebrows to see my small child-self walking into the church without a parent in sight, but the congregation was welcoming, and I felt better about myself for going. This part of me

remains a "true believer" for sure, even today.

But during the same period of time that I became a churchgoer, I also went out alone in the fields and woods, to lie down on the earth where no one could see me, and visualize the earth itself as a God or Goddess, or the sky, or the hills around me. Or I would literally worship the sun. I would sense the god-ness of all the living things that I encountered, believed that the plants communicated with me, that the wind itself had a godlike power and voice. Even certain rocks and logs were metaphysical symbols to me that helped me define my spiritual world.

Those elementary years were filled with a spiritual richness that was mostly experienced in complete rebellion against my parents ambivalent belief. I wasn't uncertain like they were. I believed in *everything*, without exception or discrimination.

Beginning in 6th grade, as puberty took hold, I sought even more ways to oppose my parents, and found it via Catholicism. I became (in my head) a Catholic, though I never entered a Catholic church. I drew pictures of nuns in habits, over and over and over again. At one point, I went so far as to phone a Catholic church—but was discouraged by the Sister who answered the phone. She apparently recognized the sound of a perplexed pre-teen in my voice, and suggested that I should do a lot of soul searching before making a commitment to a faith I knew only from afar.

Still I remained enraptured by what I imagined to be the Catholic ritual, the Latin Mass, and the necessity to eat fish on Friday and give up something for Lent.

But while that part of me felt Catholic, other sides drifted toward different denominations. After the



married pastor and the single choir director of the UCC congregation I attended were caught in flagrant delecto in the choir loft, I went in search of more prudent role models at the local Methodist church. There I took a giant risk and drank the communal grape juice when it was passed around—even though I wasn't a member—because I wanted to do what everyone else did, and also to find out what it felt like to "take communion." Was this a spiritual behavior on my part? Not much. But I was trying to be spiritual, and part of me felt deep reverence.

About this time, I became friends with the girl with the biggest breasts in our class. My parents were not impressed...and were even less so when she invited me to join her at the huge Baptist church to hear the Gospel singers who came through town, to accompany this church's numerous, notorious, revivals.

I was amazed by the Baptists, whose approach to religion seemed opposite that of the mysterious Catholics. The Baptist services were held in an arena-sized hall, with a very plain altar but good acoustics for the touring Gospel quartets, quintets, and sextets who passed through town singing rousing versions of classic hymns. The bass was always singled out for a solo. People thrilled to that bass voice. They whooped and hollered. Maybe it reminded them of the voice of God.

I attended a number of times with my friend, and one memorable evening, during a revival, the preacher invited people who wanted to be "saved" for all eternity to come to the stage. It didn't matter what religion you practiced, he said. It didn't matter what sins you committed. Once you were saved, you were saved.

Well, for my 13 year old self that sounded like a pretty good deal, so with some anticipation I walked up to the altar with about 20 other people. As we stood beneath the klieg lights facing a few thousand worshippers, a prayer was said, and then each of us were greeted by a member of the congregation to sign up. When the fellow asked me if I'd like to join the church I said, "No. I want to be a Catholic."

I still can see the look on his face, but I wasn't being a smart ass. I was innocent. I just figured I'd cover all the bases and get my behavior protected for eternity, and THEN become a Catholic.

My father died when I was 15, and when my Catholic relatives learned I was interested in the faith, they presented me with my first missal and rosary. I also found a religious medal somewhere in a drawer, and took to wearing it on a chain around my neck 24 hours a day. The rosary made a deep impression. It was composed of heavenly-blue faceted transparent beads on a silver chain, and I basically worshipped IT, as much as what it was supposed to represent. When a single bead broke and I had to mend it, I decided that God wanted it to be flawed so I wouldn't worship its beauty so much.

However, despite this focus on Catholicism (which extended to the level that I really didn't want to have friends other than Catholics, so I'd be sure to marry a Catholic someday...) I still pursued my personal "nature religion" simultaneously. I meditated outdoors, doing strange things with my eyes so everything was out of focus and I would be transported to "another place." I also got in the habit of eating flower petals, in some odd homage to the gods of the universe. I ate them one at a time, and felt as if I were praying as I did so. Unfortunately I didn't realize then that some flowers are poisonous. After one particularly ecstatic spiritual episode of flower-eating and meditation, I threw it all up. While this destroyed my pleasure in that particular session, it probably saved me for another day.

At some point in here it dawned on me that though I was saying the rosary multiple times a day, and reading my missal cover to cover, there were certain things in Catholicism that I didn't quite believe. And when I learned that masturbation was a serious sin—well, I couldn't accept that. Why would God create us to have pleasure and then say it was off limits without marriage? Nah. I disagreed and ignored that warning.

Not surprisingly, I married,

pregnant, at age 16. He was a Lutheran, not a Catholic. My in-laws strongly disapproved of Catholicism, and I wanted to please them, so I studied the Lutheran Catechism in formal classes and after a period of time, I joined the church. I participated avidly in services and also consulted with the enlightened young assistant pastor, who was willing to listen to my doubts about religion and the Christian belief in their exclusive conveyor belt to heaven, with access controlled only by Christians (and often, only by Christians of particular denominations.) He even put up with my concerns that Jesus himself was really a man, not God, and that I preferred to worship God directly, face-to-face, not through some hard-to-comprehend Trinity. He said that it was OK to doubt and to question faith. That simply attending services was not the desired outcome of religion, but that it was created to help guide us to a connection with the Universal Truth and give us meaning to our lives.

I really liked this pastor...but he left after a few years, and the replacement pastor was far more ritualistic and traditional. I began to be an around-the-clock DISbeliever. I quit going to church, and put formal Christian religion out of my life.

However, I still pursued my sporadic nature worship, all alone. I especially worshipped the sun and the wind, though rain with thunder were also important to me. Trees and plants too. I still listened to plants. They didn't have words, but I could sense their feelings when I walked past.

Sixteen years after my marriage began, it broke up. I was divorced. I had no use for formal religion, though I was interested in comparative religion, and studied a variety of religions on my own, through books. I especially admired Judaism and Baha'i. Judaism because it seemed to offer one God as a personal contact (no intermediaries). And Baha'i because it acknowledged the worth of all religions, and didn't say that it was the best, or that members of others were doomed to Hell. I didn't like all the Jewish rules and regulations,

though. They seemed arbitrary to me, and sometimes appeared to be marginalizing my female gender...as if women weren't good enough to communicate with God on an equal plane with men.

When I started dating a full-blooded Apache, I came in contact again with a strong spiritual sensibility connected to the natural elements. My friend had many very serious problems, including acute alcoholism, but he had a deep connection to his native faith, and practiced it daily. Though he never gave me details, I absorbed the fervent nature of his belief, and it reminded me, once again, of the exciting spiritual journey I'd taken as a child. I began to try to recapture that sense of wonder and the touch of the Divine. The relationship with this man did not last, but the reconnection with my spiritual seeking self endured.

Today, I still don't practice a formal

religion. I created a personal belief system from bits and pieces of all my exposures to spiritual practices. I don't think God is a person...I think God is a universal, eternal communication system. Like a giant Internet that encompasses everything that lives: every plant, tree, living creature, human being. So it is possible (though not likely) to affect anything in this system from a single position, if one is in tune with or aware of the linkage to what I call God.

And I don't personally believe in a separate Hell (though for some people, Hell is quite literally here on earth.) But out of my own internal longing, I want there to be an afterlife, or a possibility for rebirth. I don't know if this really happens, but thinking about coming back to do a better job here is a source of comfort for me...although I try hard to be as constructive as possible here, this

time around. I'm not sure about Karma. Maybe it's real, maybe it's not.

I am still very concerned about humans destroying the earth, and ourselves in the process. I don't think this is God's idea. I think it is our idea, and it is very wrong.

I still pray to God. But I add in the Universe, and also my personal protectors, who I call the Guardians, invisible beings that I believe have kept me alive and pulled me from certain destruction over and over. So some would say I believe in angels. Well, maybe I do.

In spite of my science-head that says all this spirituality stuff is the bunk, that it's nothing more than self-soothing. I say back, "If I want to soothe myself, I'll soothe myself. With spirituality beliefs that comfort me. And you can't stop me."

MV

## Living with MPD

By Velvetfairy

Eleven years ago, I was at UCLA emergency room for complications with anorexia. I was about 87 pounds and couldn't digest food anymore. I was scared. The only book I brought with me was "Multiple personality disorder from the inside out". I knew I was multiple, but this hospital didn't recognize MPD. During my intake, they asked if I heard voices. I thought they asked if I read "MANY VOICES"!!! So I excitedly said "yes!" But once I realized what the real question was I gave the correct answer.

My "inside family" all tumbled out at the hospital. We were terrified, and the controlled "host" disappeared, and all the "little ones" came out. Even though they refused to acknowledge my disorder, or deal with the flashbacks we were having, it was still a healing experience for some of us. I was diagnosed as having major depressive disorder, and borderline personality disorder, but the social workers recognized us and circled the "D.I.D." on the sheet, with a question mark.

Now it's eleven years later. I'm still multiple! But I'm wiser, prettier, and much more powerful than I was then.

I have been learning patience- I believe that that is one of my greatest challenges on this planet, as I want to heal so badly and move forward in my life...And I will, but in God's time.

So in the meantime, I work a little, sleep a lot, buy and prepare food, exercise in nature, swim, play piano, read, and watch movies....

I am isolated, but am grateful to have one very special best friend/roommate who knows us and who sometimes lets us vent our rage with him, and that is so helpful.

One of the things that has definitely gotten stronger through the years is our anger. There is so much. But it is empowering and useful, because without it, we would probably never get out of bed. And we do...

I am looking forward to being someone who "used to be multiple". I have no idea how that's going to feel, but my strong guess is that it's going to feel a lot more peaceful and

relaxing than how it feels now.

And then I have other dreams to fulfill, artistic, and political. Because when I am a successful, whole person, thriving instead of just surviving, I plan to talk about my former life as a multiple, and to help other multiples who are in need.

There are no crisis lines specifically for MPD and I want to change that. And there should be a place where multiples who do not have money can get therapy for free from qualified therapists who know the disorder.

It is hard to suffer from a disorder that is so stigmatized and misunderstood...That will change one day.

In the meantime, all I have is hope, and my prayers, and I know they will soon be answered.

MV



## Still Stuck in the Past?

By Freda

When I talk to old friends again, they want to know why I am "Still stuck in the past? Get beyond it!" they say. "Grow UP! That happened a million years ago! Don't you think of anything else?"

I don't think of it as Past. Too many of us that live inside this one skin feel it as Ever Present Dangers. They don't realize the danger is not just part of the past, it's gone!

We have tried so hard to get beyond that fear. We lived for years after the abuse, 'way after it. We have done some weird stuff that we had no control over. Things happened, words were said, and I had no idea where they came from. Goals were blown up even as I fought for, struggled for, them. Dreams were knifed even as they drew together the fog/mist from which they would grow. Those things I loved were destroyed by the people I loved. The people I loved, I left...having outgrown them. My life looks ok. It's not anything to write home about because it looks pretty normal. But it doesn't feel normal! It has felt for years as if it were totally out of control.

I planned—and they blew up.

I laid out goals—and the written plans disappeared.

I fought to 'stick with' anything—and would find myself doing something else.

I tried to hold 'this moment now'—only to find ten minutes had just disappeared.

I tried this, that and the other. And Nothing could keep me in one track, nothing could produce like-able results. The results I had were not the ones I chose!

They say "Get beyond the Past!" I feel like I have never gotten Out of the Past.

See, about two years ago someone I had come to trust said flatly, "You are a multiple. There is no other reason for your losing time the way you do; no other reason for losing

your memories almost as fast as things happen. You are a multiple. Doesn't mean I love you any less...just means we need to find these parts and help them out, help them heal." So started the roller coaster ride of my life.

Now I am retired from the work I had been doing, I have time to learn, to talk with, play with, deal with all these thirty-plus folks. A few have 'merged' as they have felt there was no other reason for their existence. They weren't needed. I don't push it. I like their company. I am used to having others around who can help me deal with a day.

These people are part of my everyday living. They are not part of the past. That some of the younger ones are still terrified of a certain sound because, for them, a horrid experience came just after that sound, is not part of the past. It's the Present! For some one to 'set down the law' is enough to have me hit the ceiling. But it's not ME that hits the ceiling. I see the wisdom of that choice. The one who turns into a skyrocket is a hormonally-powered male teen, furious at someone trying to "hem him in!" But all the reactions are coming from inside one skin. Those who are not in my everyday life, in my house, do know know this is thirty people. They are content to see me as 'fun, but weird', or 'nice, likeable, even, but odd', or even 'a bit moodier than most.'

Is there a way to share our story, to tell what is going on Inside, and not set ourselves up as permanent targets of ridicule? I don't see it. At least I haven't found it yet. Only the very wise, the very loving, the very well educated, the very personally secure seem to have the ability to see beyond their own drama into another's story, without having it reflect on them. It's so easy, when we talk with others, to take things personally. It's so different to let others have their dramas, and stories, and tales of woe, and not get involved

as either victim or savior in their story, in one form or another.

Can we share our story?

Can we explain WHY "This is not the Past! This is Every Day!"

I don't see how.

I guess, when it comes right down to it, I am looking for sympathy. I think I am looking for at least understanding and pertinent questions from those who I have been around for years. But their lives are full of their dramas, their stories, their stuff. They don't have time for MY story. Heck, I am struggling to understand My story. How can I tell another?

You've heard the old story? Two old men, sitting in the hardware rocking chairs around the pot belly stove.

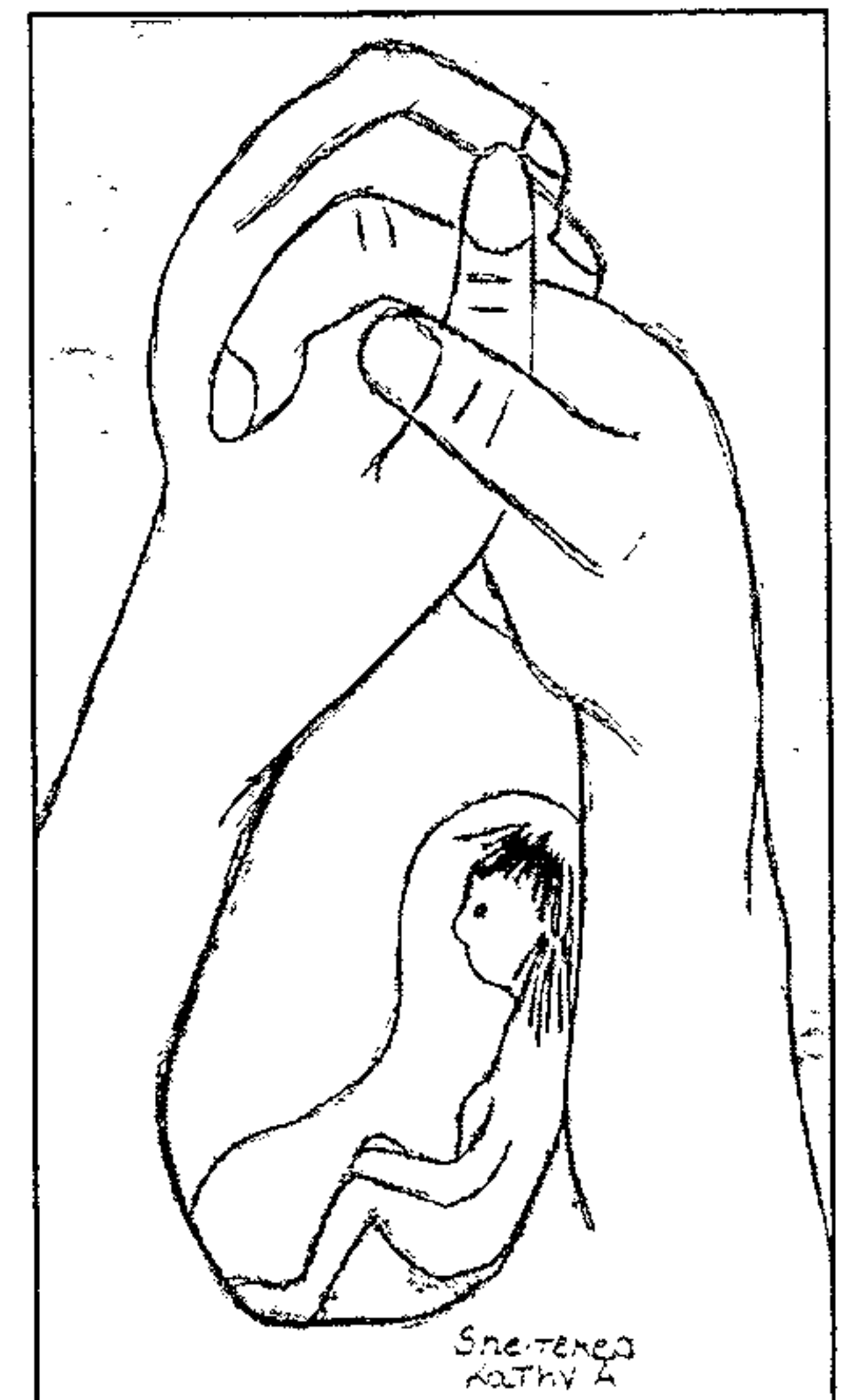
How ya doin' John?

Doin' jus' fine, Paul, doin' jus' fine. ya know the list is too long to explain.

They nod and smile as they rock, and change the subject.

And we leave it like that.

MV



# Spirituality

By Wendy B. Kirk, MDiv

I wrote this piece because I felt that it was time to share some of what continues to happen in our lives, further along the way. I'm an American Sign Language Interpreter, and a Psychotherapist that does work with individuals, couples and families (how well does that work into dissociative work, eh?), 53-year-old mother of two adult daughters (Gillian & Laura), and three dogs (Dusty, Peggy & Pippin) and two rabbits (Max & Benji), and has had her older outside daughter construct a website earlier this year for the counselling side - [www.comingintolife.com](http://www.comingintolife.com). We have dissociation going on, on an ongoing basis, and have chosen to live this way, with co-conscious functioning, as an alternative life choice. We don't see dissociation as a negative thing, but as a richness to life, and part of the deeper magic God laid down before the beginning of time.\*

\*"It means, said Aslan, that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation." C S Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

I guess it depends on when you talk to us what we would say, but for many years, we felt that we had a spiritual connection, and then would feel like it had disappeared. It would then magically reappear again sometime later. It took a while in recovery to realize that we have different abilities, and different strengths, and our awareness of spiritual connectivity tends to depend on who is prominent in the system at that particular time.

We now know that Mary and Rose are those that spend a lot of their day in prayer for us, and *go to ground* when things get bad. (*Going to ground* for us means going deep into the system, disconnected from the outside world, and laying on their faces before the Lord in prayer continuously.)

Although, others have differing relationships with God and Jesus (we are Christian), we do not know how we would function without that influence and place of safety in our lives.

We work as an interpreter, and therapist. As an interpreter, we meet

a lot of other interpreters who have come from other countries, and have other religions, and we have interpreted in a variety of religious venues, and have learned a lot from other people and their beliefs. We are challenged to view things in different ways, and through different lenses by these experiences. We often find more in common than different.

When we first started to remember, we started to understand why "Jesus Loves Me" was such a hard song for us to believe. "Little ones to Him belong"? How could that be, when the adults in our lives didn't value us? And how could we trust Him to take care of us now when He hadn't back then? Bad things still happen at times, and how is that caring?

We have come to terms with the fact that He does love us, and that providing the ability to separate, and hold memories, and share abilities, and safeguard our being is and was protection. When a particular memory was recovered, we railed at Him because He didn't treat His son like that. He had a good family.

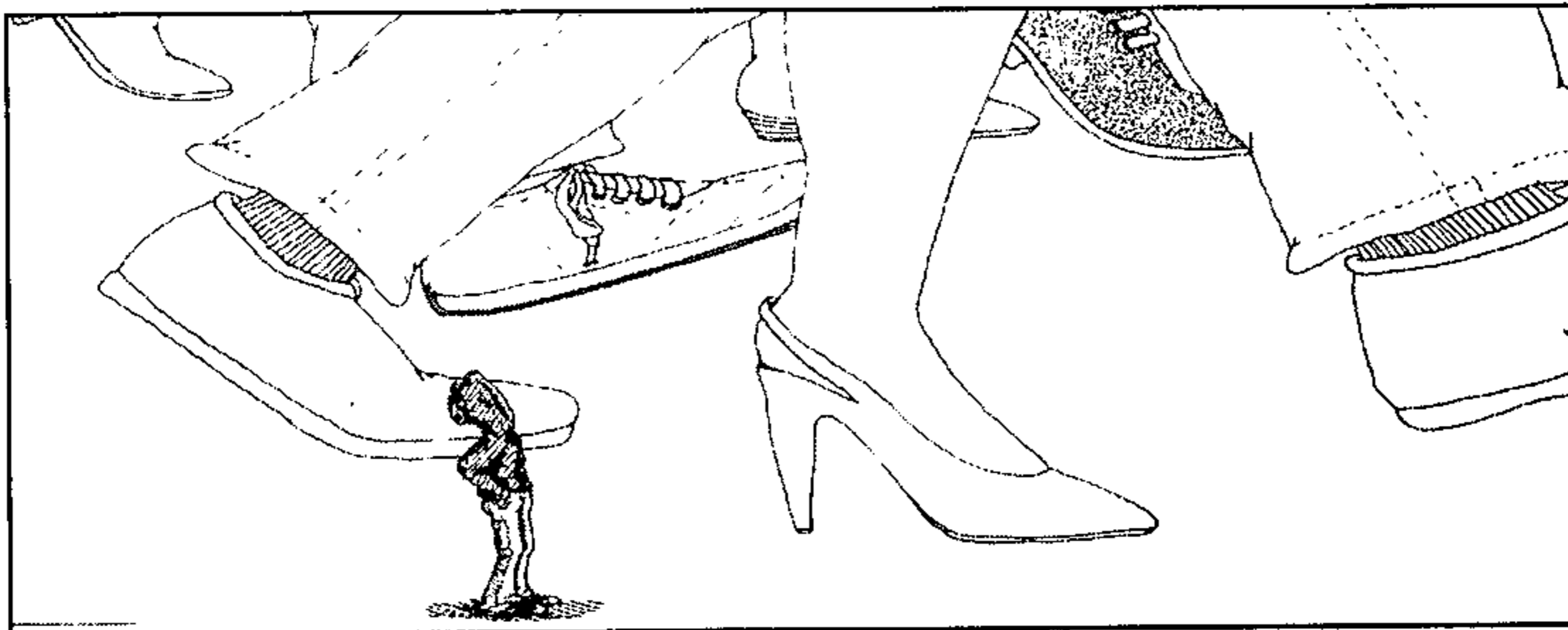
Then we interpreted for a Christmas

play, where they use a real baby, and a 15-year-old girl to play Mary, and we realized the depth of the gift that God had given us, entrusting His only son to a 15-year-old country girl to raise. It's not something I would have done with my children, and I'm not God.

There has been amazing safety in having a God who's not offended by anger, and still loves us, regardless of what else is happening at the time. He keeps us safe and secure, even when we go through difficult times. There seem to be a lot of those. Honestly, it feels like it continues most of the time.

Then I remember, *In this world you will have tribulation, and Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God is like you? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honour and comfort me once again.* (Psalm 71)

MV





## Our Song

When we were girls  
 we steered the ship  
 through the eye of the storm  
 Now that eye  
 stares right through me  
 and the wind haunts me  
 like a spirit  
 and the rain leaks in  
 The night casts shadows  
 and my world caves in  
 Our senses were heightened  
 like a wild animal  
 running til we were  
 out of breath  
 Always prepared for  
 battle  
 Running a race with  
 our shoes untied  
 but there was no time  
 to stop  
 We were being hunted  
 staring down the end  
 of a loaded barrel  
 just waiting  
 for the next shot  
 We were primitive then  
 reduced to the bare  
 instinctual urge  
 to survive  
 We were tough then  
 Strong  
 'cause we had to be  
 and happy  
 that God was allowing us  
 to be alive  
 The war is over  
 nobody won  
 sides can't be taken  
 the truth may be forsaken  
 but they can't stop us  
 from singing our song  
 We cry  
 over spilled milk  
 We panic  
 over twenty-four-hour cycles  
 The sun is shining  
 but not in our  
 neighborhood  
 Other people can feel safe  
 we only wish  
 that we could  
 Maybe we can't tell  
 the closeness we felt  
 to hell  
 but they can't stop us  
 from singing  
 our song

By Kimberly A. Cavanagh



By Thomas Frieda &  
 all who dare come

## Books

### The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques: Understanding How Your Brain Makes You Anxious and What You Can Do To Change It

By Margaret Wehrenberg, PsyD  
 © 2008. Published by WW Norton,  
[www.wwnorton.com](http://www.wwnorton.com). \$17.95 US. 232 pgs  
 include references and index. Softback.

This is one of the most accessible books I've read on anxiety reduction, focusing on both mind and body. Among its many strong points: Dr Wehrenberg describes the structure and functioning of the brain so laypeople can understand what is really going on when anxiety or panic "attacks" them. While she suggests that trauma survivors typically need a trained therapist to guide them through the anxiety minefield, there are many skills in this book that can be learned by a diligent reader, outside the therapy session.

Wehrenberg devotes many pages to detail the way biochemistry affects emotional response, using charts to break down the different physical and emotional changes that accompany anxiety. She explains what happens when a particular chemical in the brain is too active, is lacking, or is "just right." Once the foundation of anxiety is conveyed, she then addresses a number of different behaviors or skills that modify anxious

behavior. Her solutions include diet (protein is important—and a small late night high-carb snack helps build brain cells) and sleep (aim for 8 hours); controlled breathing from the diaphragm to calm the body; full-body relaxation methods; thought-stopping techniques; worry containment, and much more. This book offers practical advice to people debilitated by anxiety, with a clear roadmap showing even distressed readers how to reach a calm, centered place within.

### From Within the Looking Glass

By Gustave Geyer  
 © 2007. Published by PublishAmerica  
 Available on its website at  
[www.PublishAmerica.com](http://www.PublishAmerica.com) \$19.95, 233  
 pgs. Softback.

Gustave Geyer is one of our many male MV readers. His fascinating artwork appears on our art gallery website—mostly sculpted heads, decorated with glass or feathers. But his art is wideranging, and some other styles appear in this book. Primarily, though, this is a poetry book, employing both rhyme and non-rhyme as its means of expression. Geyer explains in detail his loves, fears, and the struggle for recovery, as he looks for answers to the questions that preoccupy most survivors of trauma: why me? what can I do about this? what next?

# PLEASE! Write and Draw for MV!

*Please share your wonderful creative expressions with other MV Readers. Your sharing helps all of us recover!*

**December 2008**

Healthy celebrations. Creative expressions.

ART: A Creative Moment

**February 2009**

Addiction Recovery: drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, spending etc.

12-step or ??? What works for you.

ART: Healing Friendships

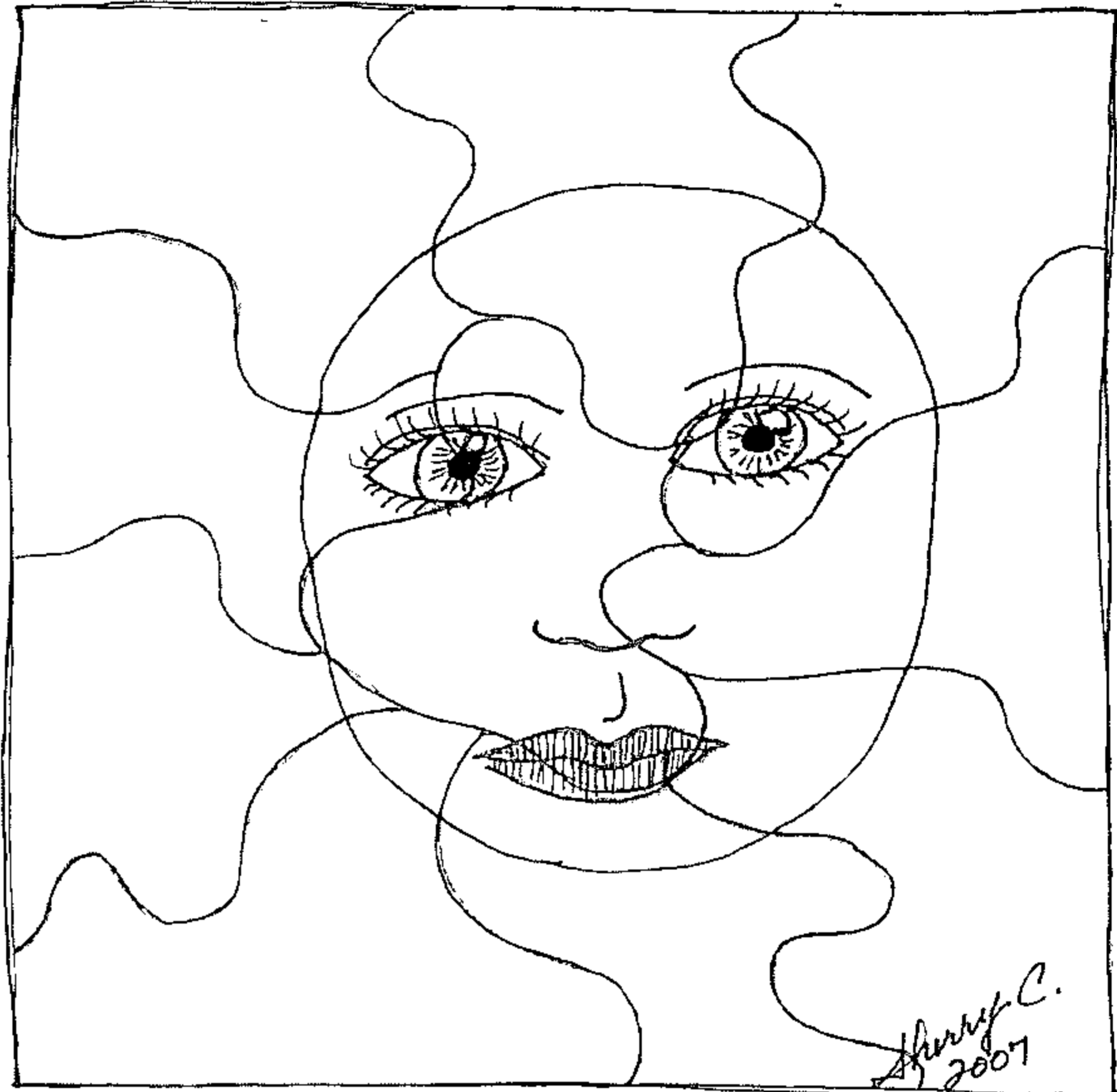
DEADLINE: December 1, 2008

**April 2009**

Safety First! Leaving abusers. Creating safety inside & out.

ART: Your Safe Place

DEADLINE: February 1, 2009



## 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. Phone (513) 751-8020. Web: [www.manyvoicespress.com](http://www.manyvoicespress.com)

# MANY VOICES

*We now accept American Express Visa, Mastercard & Discover!*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

I have a Dissociative Disorder  Professional/therapist  Relative/Friend

Subscription type:  New  Renewal  Gift Send full list of past themes \_\_\_\_\_

Full yr(6 iss)'89 \_\_\_ '90 \_\_\_ '91 \_\_\_ '92 \_\_\_ '93 \_\_\_ '94 \_\_\_ '95 \_\_\_ '96 \_\_\_ '97 \_\_\_ '98 \_\_\_ '99 \_\_\_ '00 \_\_\_  
'01 \_\_\_ '02 \_\_\_ '03 \_\_\_ '04 \_\_\_ '05 \_\_\_ '06 \_\_\_ '07 \_\_\_ '08 \_\_\_ '09 \_\_\_ '10 \_\_\_ '11 \_\_\_ '12 \_\_\_

Specific issues or preferred start date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 year:\$36 in U.S.: \$42US in Canada; Elsewhere, \$48 in U.S. Currency drawn on a U.S. Bank  
Make check payable to *MANY VOICES* & send with this form to

*MANY VOICES, PO Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639*

**CHARGE IT!** (Please print clearly) (circle one) VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Acct.# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.Date \_\_\_\_\_ Total:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_