

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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*In This Issue:*

## Relationships:

Issues of Friendship and Love for  
Survivors of Abuse



### *Love Poem*

I want to  
know you  
all of  
you  
I want to  
share  
with you  
all of  
you  
I want to  
feel your pain  
your  
sorrow  
your  
smiles  
your  
trust  
I want  
you  
to trust  
me  
enough  
to let me  
help  
wipe away your  
tears  
I want to  
know you  
all of you

*By sjs*

MV

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# Seven Secrets to a Happier Relationship

By Gwen

**T**here are several behaviors that my partner is a natural at that I find really helpful. Perhaps other multiples and their partners will find these helpful, too. Do something special for your sweetie on Valentine's Day— even if it's just to tell him (or her) how much they mean to you! Say those caring and appreciative things that you might not say often enough. A big part of a healthy relationship, I believe, is contribution. Contributing in a positive way to the life of your partner. And remember to do something really special for yourself! And if there is something that he could do for you to help you feel really special, ask. Be assertive. Most men really like directions!

## 1. Accepting of all parts of the self.

My partner has been extremely accepting of all parts. I'm trying to get him to say that this was emotionally difficult, but he swears that "each was so lovable, it was so easy! Each one was more caring about me than themselves, I mean I could understand them being afraid..." My partner answers me about my angry parts, that there are reasons why they are angry, and he understands that. See why I am so blessed? This guy is really loving. Acceptance is something that, as a quality in a partner, really balances out the survivor's self-hatred, at least in my case. I really believe that I chose someone as a partner that I have a lot to learn from spiritually and emotionally. And he has taught me much about acceptance, both of others and of myself. He has also been very accepting, and encouraging, of integration— of my own personal goals. In other words, he loves me. As a whole. This can be an incredibly amazing experience for someone who is multiple. Because, almost by definition, it is difficult for us to accept the parts of ourselves that we have walled off.

## 2. Not Taking The Feelings & Re-Experiencings & Behaviors Personally.

This is a big one. I have often been blown away by my partner's ability to stand at a distance when it comes to my flashbacks, re-experiencings, and transferences. Because, so often they have involved him. The first years of our relationship were really rocky. Many a time I was unable to stop screaming when he walked into a room, because I was unable to recognize him. Sometimes he would coax me out from my fetal position in the corner. I would hit or bite or beat myself if I felt threatened. If he attempted to stop me, I would become even more enraged, screaming, "It's my body!". Often, I had bouts of defensive rage over something I felt he meant by his words or because I thought he was trying to hurt me. I would scream, "Get away from me! Don't touch me!" It is so painful now to remember this, because I love him so much. But my words and actions weren't about him or about what he said. I wasn't even speaking to him in a sense. I was speaking to someone who had hurt me badly in the past. My partner has been able to fully realize this. He often says to me when I get defensive, calmly and clearly, "I know this isn't about me." I remember the first time I faced this. It was difficult, because flashbacks and re-experiencings feel so real in the present. But they are old feelings. And I said to him, "This isn't about you. You haven't done anything wrong. You are allowed your thoughts and feelings, this isn't about you." I was also drawing the line for myself.

In the beginning of that realization, he was relieved. I think it was really difficult at first. But I might have destroyed our relationship if I had not been able to come out of myself to be there for him in that way. And gradually, and with the help of medication and therapy, the flashback experiences almost completely stopped. Because I learned that it was

about the past. Now, I can identify something that is an "echo" of the past, acknowledge that I have some anger about it, and let it go. I don't often feel I have to get so defensive anymore. But my partner's ability to stand strong in the face of those old feelings also helped me tremendously to accept the reality of flashbacks, and that what was happening was that I was feeling old feelings. In a sense, he maintained a strong connection with the present, even though I couldn't at that time. I feel really badly about the times I've screamed at him, and how hostile and defensive I could become. He understands, saying-with honesty, "I didn't feel hurt. I knew it wasn't about me." That's a strong sense of self! And I respect him for it, and strive to be as confident.

## 3. Accepting The Multiple As She Changes.

My partner has been incredibly accepting of my growth and healing, both as a multiple, and as a woman. He has supported my decisions on treatment wholeheartedly, and is fully supportive of my personal goal of integration. I would say, "But...but...will you still love me if I integrate?" And he would say, "Of course! All of you will still be there!" This wasn't so clear to me! This has been great, and has allowed me to focus on healing and not be so scared of losing him if I change, or so scared of losing myself. The changes take work for both of us, but in the long-run, it's well worth all the intense internal and external work.

## 4. Being A Model For Self-Care, Honesty, Assertion, and Sense Of Humor.

A lot of what I have learned from my partner is how to value myself enough to take good care of myself physically and emotionally, enough to stand up for myself, and have faith in my abilities. It's been great to have a partner who lives these things. Home

*Continued on page 3*

has become a sanctuary, and our relationship is about helping each other to become the best people we can be. Laughter is a huge part of our life together. We laugh at everything. We have secret jokes. We make up our own words together. There have been times where I laughed so hard I thought I would wet my pants or fall off of the bed. Once when I was in the hospital healing from major surgery, he walked into the room in the morning, and the nurse said to me later, "You just *lit* up when he walked into the room! I couldn't get a smile out of you like that all night." Then she added, as she crossed the room, something like, "You know true love when you see it."

### 5. Understanding & Honoring Each Other's Decisions.

When I had been given the gift of a trip to the Middle East, I decided that I needed to go. My partner asked thoughtful questions, and supported me in my decision. I was gone for almost a month, I was very sick and war broke out while I was there. He understood the importance for me of going, even though I would see quite a lot of someone who had hurt me badly. It was my decision, and he respected it. When he needed to be away from home for months, I accepted it. I won't say that it was easy. It was one of the most difficult experiences for me in our relationship. But we got through it. He needed to attend to a family member he loved very much. It was what he needed to do. I still have a lot of respect for the decision he made. I think that, in the end, each of us needs to do whatever it is so that we can sit right with our sense of spirituality. And instead of finding fault, or blaming, or making the other person feel guilty — if we can embrace them fully where they are and support them in their life decisions, we are much more likely to have a healthy and happy relationship. We also have shared interests and separate interests. I dream of Japan, whereas he has already been there in the military. He doesn't want to go again. I may go on my own. I love scrapbooking and writing, whereas he is interested in government intelligence and airplanes. We appreciate



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each other's interests, we talk about them together, and we can enjoy them separately as well. We also have interests in common, and travel to a special place all our own that is our "little piece of heaven". As far as survivor families go, this is difficult. My partner has always been polite and kind to my family, though he has his own strong feelings about what happened to me. He doesn't push me one way or the other, and doesn't confuse his own feelings with mine. Whether I have been in contact or separate, this is my choice and my responsibility. I think partners need to support the survivor in making her own decisions, and even encourage her to do so. Again, it helps to be present to whatever the survivor feels she needs to do *for herself*.

### 6. Admiration For Each Other's Different Qualities.

Sometimes I say to my partner, "How can you be so *calm*?!" If he weren't cool like smooth water, I probably wouldn't have chosen him. It is his ability to handle his life and stay positive that I so admire. He admires my sensitivity, my aesthetic appreciation, and the way I can express myself. Those are the very qualities that make me difficult to live with at times! For example, sometimes I want the colors and fabrics just right, and then there are all my chemical sensitivities! Not to mention that I am sometimes overtaken by concerns about world

hunger, poverty, and the children on all sides of the oceans. Appreciating each other for who you are is so important to feeling loved, supported, and accepted. We laugh about it a lot!

### 7. Honesty.

We talk a lot. A lot of talking is listening. Listening is so important.

MV



# Comments on Love

As I grew up, there was little talk of feelings and thoughts. There was virtually no hugging and cuddling, apart from sexual abuse.

It has taken many years of therapy and allowing people to take advantage of me for me to realize I am worth loving.

Thirteen years ago my spouse and I began dating. Then later, we said our vows.

Now we talk a great deal, sharing feelings and thoughts often. We also snuggle and hug many times a day.

Finally I have found what true love really is. But it has been a long road and a rough one.

*By Sally B.*



Too often I have heard the idea that men are "just little boys with big toys" and that men do not have the emotional needs or ties that women have. I not only find this degrading but to be an absolutely false idea. Men are no more "little boys" than women are "little girls." Putting all males into such categories is an heinous crime against men.

If trucks, ballgames, tools and hunting are "toys" for men, then are babies and children "toys" for women, like the dolls they played with as little girls? We both know that children are not dolls or toys to be tinkered with.

I have heard a lot of females in person and on TV say they wish "their" men would be more responsive to them emotionally. (Note that by claiming ownership of "their" men, women refer to men as if they were toys or dolls). Yet in relationships such women do not wish to recognize men's individuality and emotional needs.

Many men (though not all) have the desire to have children and families, to protect them and provide for them. Similarly, not all women nurture their children or men (one does not nurture toys).

Until this vile concept is eradicated from the minds of those who make up our society, things will not change very much. Men need to bond with men the same way that women need to bond with women. Yet our society as a whole frowns on such an idea.

Gender activities are not rigid. Hunting, fishing or ballgames are not just for men. My wife loves to fish. I do not. I like to cook, but my wife does not. Nor is she a stay-at-home woman. She prefers to work and meet the girls afterwards. I prefer to come directly home after work because my desires are for the family.

Men need to feel love and be loved, but women do not know how to do this any better than men do. I find it ironic that I hear the same complaint from both men and women. It seems that neither sex wants to see the other as an individual with their own particular needs.

More talking needs to occur before marriage, and less sex. The males I know understand what "no" means, and will respect it. But they just about always take their cue from the females they are with. Women who do not want sex have the responsibility to not send cues that men will take as sexual. While no female is responsible for rape, she is responsible for the sexual overtones she presents in public, and knowing how they affect males. To totally disregard this is to behave like a "little girl" playing with her "toys."

It is not that I hate women. At least, no more than I hate men. Most human contact I disdain. I suppose that is one of the reasons I have been in therapy for the last 10 years or so.

*By D'lyne for the Wolfpack*



We love him and her, but we also hate him and her. Love and hate. The past is the past, and it can't be changed. "Accept the things you cannot change, and change the things

you can." Love and hate are strong feelings. Sometimes we feel so full of hate and anger that we just lose control. Then we feel full of guilt and sadness. Othertimes, we feel full of love and respect, and guilty and sad that we are hurting and disappointing others with our illness. But we are trying. We're trying to find the balance between Love and Hate and come to Peace Within.

*By Karen G.*



## Wants

I want to find joy in the midst of pain. I want to paint, sculpt, write poetry, letters and stories. I want to make a difference—even if it seems small. I want to like who I am and let myself grow to be vibrant, fresh and truly alive. I want to embrace life and freedom. I want to be loved deeply. I

want to love deeply. I want to explore life—the light and even the darkneses. I want radical acceptance of who I am and who I am becoming. I want to show random acts of kindness—put a smile on someone's face. I want to play with babies—really play. I want to have intimate and outrageous friendships. I want to decorate a corner of my house for my inner children—to play with them—get to know all about them. I want to climb a large hill and lie down with a blanket, a book and the sun. Go barefoot in the sand. I want to feel warm, fresh rain on my face. I want to run—fly a kite. I want to smell the flowers and surprise someone with a bouquet. I want to see the good in people and be an encourager. I want to dance. I want to be free!

*By KC 2000*

MV

# Creative Intimacy

By Diana Barnum

"Since the root of MPD centers around creatively dealing with reality, why not deal with intimacy in the same manner?" I ask myself.

My fantasy mate would treat me like heroes treat their fair maidens in romance novels. He'd be courteous, gentle, soft spoken and of course, extremely complimentary on how beautiful I am! Occasionally, but not more than three times a day naturally, he'd bring me gifts: flowers, candy, perfume, etc. etc...

We'd spend quiet moments together, that is, after a Mary Poppins-type nanny took charge of the children, and the housekeeper took over the cleaning and washing for the day, and our cook started preparing a fabulous dinner. My sweetheart and I would sit on the front porch swing, side by side, of course, not noticing the neighbors outside mowing their lawn, or cars that drive by with music thumping out of their loudspeakers. We'd be oblivious to everything but each others' eyes, tantalizing scent, and erotic touch. He wouldn't notice my faded dress, thick eyeglasses, or lack of manicure. Nor would I notice his receding hairline, wire-rimmed glasses or tired posture.

Of course we'd have our private moments later on for passion, too. There would be soft candle light in our master bedroom, masking the single bare bulb hanging from a central fixture awaiting repair. Cozy pillows would top the warm quilted bedspread, secretly hiding rips from our dog's claws. A scented candle would add that special touch, though it smells like bubble gum. And quiet romantic music would sneak in the door from our son's stereo down the hall. Naturally this child is out playing in the park with his nanny, though.

But how does this creative intimacy become reality? By putting it into the brain first. Read tons of romance novels and watch carefully selected programs on television. Forget the violence and garbage in the media. Since our creativity is influenced by

what we put into our minds, let's try to re-direct our intimate thoughts in a gentler way.

My favorite books are called Inspirational Romances. One line in particular, *HeartSong Presents*, offers only carefully selected materials in their books, so readers won't find violence, rape, etc. Books present well-rounded, gentle, caring people who become intimate throughout the course of the story, and treat each other respectfully throughout.

As with books and television, be choosy in selecting music, even casually on a brief car trip. Do any of us need to hear songs with swearing in them? An offense like this can cause any range of reactions to various parts inside, causing unnecessary harm to them—ultimately to the whole individual.

These outside media influences affect our ideal intimacy internally. By being gentle and loving to ourselves, we'll feel more comfortable. Then we'll be able to share this desire with our mates. Who knows? We may not be able to hire a cook, nanny and maid, but maybe while the next door neighbor watches our kids, we can enjoy a few moments alone with our mates while waiting for the pizza delivery man to arrive.

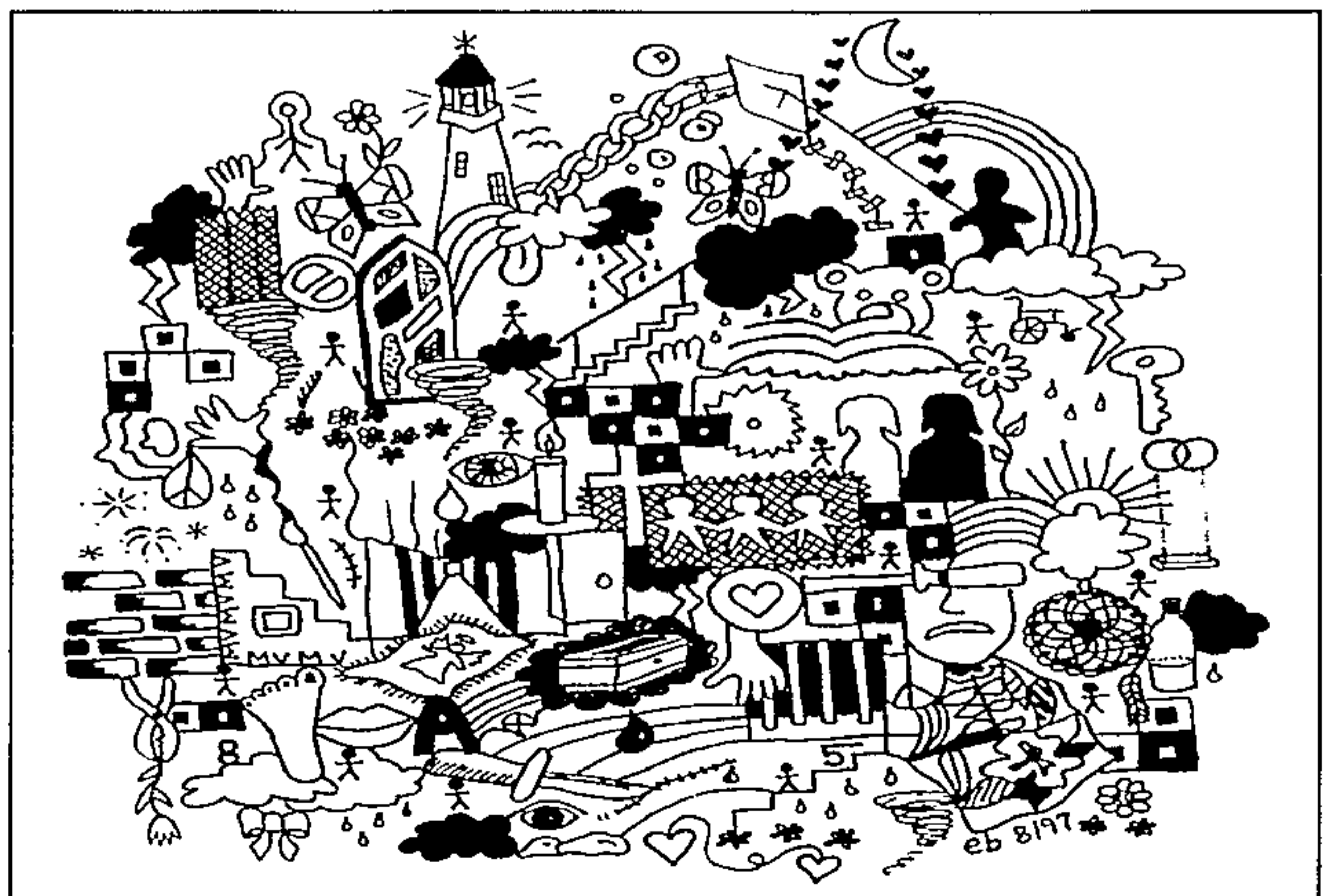
MV

## Poem for the Insiders

Turn and walk away dear children  
Pain is better left behind  
Pull all of us together  
a new love of a special kind  
The road is long—its emptiness  
is causing us such pain  
but promises of blooming trees  
at the end will be our gain  
Don't stop to ask the why or how  
It did and it is over  
Now rest awhile, this journey's long,  
Lie down in this field of clover...  
How hard it is...I can't believe it  
the worst seems now—right now  
But sweet little ones, just think of this  
Now is something we never knew  
how!  
We'll walk through this, we'll stop and  
sleep  
and each new day wake up  
With clearer thoughts become on top  
and the bad thoughts begin to pop...

By MF

MV



# Non-Therapists' Page

By The Shadows

## TELLING A FRIEND

We just took a big risk with the help of our therapist and told our best and only friend about the diagnosis. So far, it seems like it is all going to turn out ok, and the things we were so scared of aren't happening. So we thought we would like to take another risk and write to Many Voices about how we told our "secret."

We read in books about how people lost their friends from telling, how people lost jobs, how telling changed their relationship and not for the good...so we were terrified. We had a hard time understanding the need for friendship in general.

We met our friend in junior high and later became best friends in High School and even better best friends after rooming together in college for 1-1/2 years. It was really only through her persistence that we became the friends that we did. But then she got married, moved out of state, and we felt so left behind. She used to be such a good letter writer, but suddenly the letters became shorter and shorter and fewer and fewer. Finally the pain became too much and one of the Shadows (that's what we call each other) wrote a letter to terminate the friendship. It seemed easier to have no letters than a painful reminder of what used to be.

That opened up some much needed communication, six months later. We had hurt our friend very badly with that letter. She was angry but also worried about us. She always worried about us, it turns out. We found out she knew a lot more than we ever expected or knew ourselves. Part of why she stopped writing and sharing so much was because she was afraid she would write something wrong or would "trigger" us...sometimes we would be ok with talking and other times her conversations would really upset us. She didn't know what was safe to talk to us about, anymore. She also had

some painful issues with infertility, so to be safe and guard both our pains, the letters became very superficial.

After we talked, we knew that a huge thick wall had come between us over the years, but neither of us really wanted the friendship to end. We wanted to have the connection we used to have. (We have a test to see if we care. We ask "if this person were to die tomorrow, would we care?" She was the only person about whom we ever answered "yes".) But so many years had gone by. Our friend knew we were in therapy and that there was a secret. She was worried and even called our therapist once. Our therapist thought our friend really seemed like a true friend. She encouraged us to tell her.

There was so much inner turmoil: to tell, or not to tell. The incident actually helped bring Shadows together for a common cause, because she was a friend to us all, even if she didn't really know it. So we decided to cooperate and made out a list of pros and cons which we will share with you (keeping in mind that often what was a "pro" for one Shadow was a "con" for another.)

### Why YES, Let's Tell

1. She was our one and only true friend

2. Therapist thinks it is a very good idea. She knew the risks involved for us, but also said that is how one grows. Without relationships in one's life, you cannot grow as a person yourself.

3. Therapist said "wouldn't it be nice to have someone to talk to who knows and still accepts..that we wouldn't have to be so careful and on guard around" We thought maybe that would be nice. We weren't sure.

4. Our friend said the reason the friendship fell apart was because a wall got built between us from not sharing and communicating. Without sharing there still could not be more than a

"surface" friendship and we wanted more.

5. It had gone too far. She seemed to know so much already. Either we tell or continue a surface friendship with her, knowing there is a secret but never talking about it, wondering what she does or doesn't know. Major stomach ache! (We often made ourselves physically sick over this whole issue.)

### Why NO: Don't Tell

1. Afraid it will be too much for her to handle, and it will be the end of whatever friendship was left between us. (We knew once she was told there was no turning back.)

2. Afraid it will upset her or worry her more than she already does (and she has so many things to deal with already)

3. Afraid of what she'll think:  
 Afraid she'll look at us differently  
 Afraid she'll treat us differently  
 Afraid she'll hold back sharing her problems in life thinking we can't handle things anymore  
 Afraid she wouldn't understand (our therapist said she would help us)  
 Afraid she won't believe  
 Afraid she will believe...what happens then?

Afraid she'll be afraid of us  
 Afraid she'll be embarrassed to have friends like us  
 Afraid she won't want us around anymore.

4. Afraid how things would change with her knowing  
 Afraid she'll try to find each of us, identify us and that we could no longer hide behind each other.  
 Afraid we'll be invaded by her  
 Afraid of all the questions...and then not knowing how to answer or explain.  
 Afraid she'll tell others, especially her husband and then how will he react, who might he tell.  
 (Our therapist said our fears were valid but her husband has always been nice and supportive of his wife's friendship

with us...besides he lives out of state and contact would be rare.)

Afraid when she knows, she'll want us to "change", to get better, but what if we can't change quick enough, what if we don't want to get "better" the way the books say better is?

Afraid she'll feel the need to fix us, help us

Afraid the friendship will remain one-sided and she won't share her life for fear it will be a burden to us...but don't want more one-sided talk because that's like therapy, not friendship.

Afraid there will be too much attention and concern from her. (Our therapist said she would help us develop and set boundaries.)

Afraid she would end up knowing more than us about all this. (Our therapist said she could never know more than all of us together.)

Afraid I could never relax and be myself again, that I'll always be self-conscious of what she must be thinking.

Afraid she may accept us now, but if her adoption comes through, she wouldn't want us around her child.

#### 5. Other concerns

Will her religion come into play? (We have no religion, but she accepts our non-belief, or at least tries to.)

Feeling not safe: telling takes our safety away.

Afraid we won't be able to pretend it all away.

No turning back once a decision is made to tell. Could lose the friendship. (Our therapist said we must come to terms with that as a possibility, but to also consider how much more fulfilling the friendship has potential of becoming. Sometimes we have to take a risk. Right now our current level of friendship doesn't seem that big to lose, since we already tried to terminate it.)

Initially we believed this would have to be a unanimous decision among everybody, but it became clear that would never happen. Whatever choice got made, somebody was always unhappy or scared.

So that was a big part of our list.

Usually one would see which list was longer and that would be the winning decision. For us the cons list was longer, so that should mean "don't tell" but we had to weigh the importance of having a friend. We discussed everything with the therapist. She didn't make the decision for us, but pointed out things we may not have thought of, to help us make the most informed decision possible. It was finally decided we would "one day" tell, but it would have to be in person, not in a letter or over the phone. Since she lived out of state, we expected it would be awhile. Then suddenly she said, "I'm coming over." (She was coming to town for a different reason. She has other family and friends here, but she was coming.) One of the Shadows went in to see the therapist and said "She's coming to town tomorrow...what do I do?"

The therapist said we didn't have to say anything we didn't feel comfortable with and we could stop at any point. We set an appointment for three days later with our friend and the therapist. Then panic set in. It was three days of chaos: headaches, stomach aches and not one minute of sleep. The poor therapist also had several phone calls, including one canceling the whole thing (and we received a note saying the therapist had to cancel, but that wasn't true.) When we went in finally, none of us knew if the other would be there. The therapist said she expected this to happen though, and she was glad we stuck with it.

All in all, it really went OK. The shadow who went in to do the telling is the responsible one that goes to work. She said she felt really light-headed and spacey through the whole thing. She said she felt us all pushing out to watch and listen. The therapist started it by asking my friend what her concerns were. This was difficult for the Shadow who was out to hear. In general it was strange for any of us to hear such feedback of how people saw us. We never had that before. Then we got to take a turn to say our worries about telling her, how important it was to keep it a secret. When the actual MPD word came out (the therapist asked us right before she said it to make sure we were still ok with it) we

felt we would die, our friend would explode, something—but at worst our friend was a little flustered. She didn't quite know what to say, so we didn't get bombarded by questions like we thought we would. (The questions unfortunately came after we left the therapist's office.) It turned out she already kind of suspected the diagnosis. She had been worrying about us for many years with things we told her and how we acted, so now she had some clearer understanding, and it was out in the open for us to discuss. The therapist tried to explain things to her, but kept it basic too.

After we left the therapist's office, our friend gave us a hug. Some were ok with it, others were too drained to care and others wanted to escape. Then the drive home (we travel far to see this therapist, so it was a long drive home.) Our friend talked first about ordering a pizza and spending the evening together. We were scared she would just leave after the telling because she did have other plans, but she spent time with us, and we needed that to be sure of where things really stood between us. We gave her the one book we have: *MPD From the Inside Out* and let her read the section about friends and family.

The therapist said it will take time for her to really understand how we operate and why. I think it will take time for all of us to settle with things, even just how to talk to her. Is it ok to say "we" now when we want, or will this be too uncomfortable for her? Can we ever feel safe enough to break our habit of covering up, of hiding each other from the world? Our friend says she will still see us as only one, which I think is good, but we hope that's still with understanding we're not. We have a lot to work out now, but at least there is something to work out. It's scary, at least to us, to have a friend, a friend—confused as she is—that knows now and still stuck by us. It's scary to know the sharing and communication isn't over, it's just beginning. It's scary to know there's someone out there in the world that cares about us (and we don't even have to pay her, like the therapist!) It's so scary in countless ways, but I think it's going to be worth it. We hope so.

## Partner's Page:

# The Littlest Healers

By Richard

I've lost track of how many teddy bears we have around our house. If I count just the typical stuffed bears, there are about 25. But if I count all the decorations, figurines, and the ones in storage, there are about 30. And that doesn't include all the dolls, bunnies, and assorted other creatures.

Stuffed toys, especially teddy bears, have played an important role in my wife's healing, and in our relationship.

### Play

"The various stuffed bears and dolls you gave us were the way our child alters learned that you were safe," my wife told me. "You often didn't know you were giving a bear or a doll to a specific child, but that alter would adopt it, then they started talking to you using that particular doll or bear, which led them to actually come out and visit and play with you. I don't think you would've had close relationships with my child alters without the teddy bears and dolls."

"Play is a major way that couples can use stuffed animals," said Karen, my wife's therapist. "Particularly in multiplicity caused by childhood sexual abuse, I find that the person never learned how to play. Or if they did play, it was dissociative play, a re-enactment of the trauma. It wasn't truly joyful, abandoned play."

My wife and I have found it healing and liberating for the child alters to have safe, healthy play like normal children. And the support person has to relax, have fun, and lose some of his or her inhibitions, and that's all to the good as well!

### Communication

As our ability to play with the bears grew and improved, sometimes they served as spokesbears between my wife and me. Sometimes a little bear could tell me that one of my wife's alters was scared of me or angry with me. Sometimes a little bear could

apologize to a child alter and explain my actions easier than I could.

This was also true of adult alters who adopted bears. It sounds silly, but we found that teddy bears can be a very effective way to communicate. Teddy bears are safe and non-threatening, and they allow alters to communicate at one remove ("It's not really me talking, it's the teddy bear.")

And even when my wife and I talk as adults, sometimes holding a teddy bear on our laps makes difficult communication a bit easier. Their presence keeps the emotional tension a comfortable half-hitch short of intense.

My wife and I are just amateurs, though. Even the pros find teddy bears useful.

### Therapy

"Oh, absolutely," said Karen. "It's an easy way for therapists to identify who is out. A lot of child alters don't like to say who they are. But if I know that So-And-So has claimed a particular bear, and my client walks in with it, I have an idea who I'm dealing with that day."

"Because of my clients' dissociated nature, I can get all sorts of information from teddy bears that I might not get otherwise," Karen continued. "When a client is huddled in a corner and can't or won't speak, sometimes they can hold a little bear and it will peek over their shoulder and nod or answer questions."

"Back in early therapy, I learned it was safe to bring stuffed animals to a session," said my wife. "The kids were afraid to speak to an adult, so the stuffed animals would literally talk for them. As far as the children were concerned, the stuffed animals were talking to the adult, not them. And my therapists talked to the animals and held conversations with them, which helped the safety level go 'way up. And that made it safe to communicate a lot

of difficult issues, everything from fear of the dark to things which other adults had done to us."

"That may have saved our lives once," my wife added. "Gandalf Bear rattled on us when we were really suicidal. One of the kids was terrified that the people inside would beat her up if she told, so she used Gandalf to communicate. It meant a stay in the psych ward, but Gandalf may have saved our lives."

In a pinch, teddy bears make pretty good therapists all by themselves. My wife found that if her therapist isn't available, a teddy bear, a warm blanket, soft music, and maybe a cup of hot cocoa make an excellent substitute.

### Confidants

Along the same line, teddy bears also make good listeners, hearing the secrets that frightened children whisper in the dark.

"I know they'll never tell," my wife said. "There's a code of ethics among teddy bears that they can never betray a secret. Just being able to whisper our unspeakable secrets to a favorite teddy bear gave us a little relief, a little sense of power. So we often turn to our bears for emotional support, guidance, love, comfort, and sharing."

"And often our bears were a conscience for children who never learned the difference between right and wrong," my wife added. "Even an alter with a damaged sense of ethics can understand that a teddy bear always knows the difference between right and wrong. If he knows that his teddy bear would disapprove of an action, it's a step away from the evil the child was taught, and a step toward the light."

### Guardians

My wife and her therapist also say that stuffed animals can function as guardians. Our best example is Gruff, a fierce-looking little stuffed gargoyle I

gave a child alter one Christmas.

In a practical sense, my wife and I both realize that the only protection Gruff can really provide might be a second or two to take a defensive stance if she threw him in an attacker's face. But Gruff has a much deeper meaning for the children.

"What do we have in life that really protects us," Karen asked. "We don't have much, when push comes to shove. The major thing that protects us is our belief system. While growing up, survivors of childhood sexual abuse didn't have any belief in protection. Mommy and Daddy didn't protect them. They weren't safe in their own bed under the covers. The police or angels didn't rescue them. So anything that child alters can believe in helps give them a measure of security and inner strength, even if it's a teddy bear or a stuffed gargoyle."

My wife's experience confirms that.

"The primary thing is the power that someone places in the animal," my wife said. "Gruff is a perfect example. Along with Gruff came a note from Santa Claus explaining how gargoyles traditionally protect cathedrals. So power was put into Gruff and, because he was from Santa Claus, Gruff became the ultimate protector because we knew Santa would never hurt us.

"And children, even child alters, have a way of thinking that's very different," my wife added. "They don't have the limitations the adult mind has. The kids really believe that Gruff can come to life and protect them. I can't begin to explain that, but they don't have doubts like I do."

### Choosing a bear

Obviously, selecting a stuffed animal or doll for your partner is serious. It's not just a matter of going to the toy store and snatching the first bear you see off the shelf.

I've learned a few guidelines for buying stuffed animals that might help. My wife is a teddy bear fanatic, so most of my experience is with bears. But these guidelines seem to also hold true for the dolls and other stuffed animals I've bought for her.

**Listen to your partner.** "Listen closely to what they want," my wife said. Sometimes your partner will mention it in conversation and you'll have to make a mental note; sometimes you'll have to ask. "Is comfort being asked for? Is strength or protection? Do they want something they can cuddle, or something with joints that can pose? Do they want a doll or a teddy bear or a dragon?"

**Choose soft and cuddly.** The most effective teddy bears and dolls that I've given my wife are the soft rag-doll-like ones. Bears with a poseable armature, or built to sit up perky, look great on the store shelf, but if you want a bear that will be held and cherished, go for huggable. And if soft bears and dolls have to be thrown or pounded in anger therapy, they won't hurt someone or break.

The only way to judge cuddliness is to give a doll or teddy bear a test-hug in the store. You might feel silly working your way through a toy store hugging dolls and bears, but when you find the perfect one, the one your partner can cling to bed or in therapy, you'll know it.

**The right size.** My wife and I find that "standard" (about 18 inches long) is the best size for a teddy bear or doll. They are "holdable" without being overwhelming or feeling lost in your arms. (If your partner asks for a hand-sized teddy bear or doll, or one big enough to double as a sibling, by all means get it. They also make good decorations.)

**Expressiveness.** "This is probably the most important, and the hardest to find," my wife said. "Some bears have it, most don't. About the only way to find that quality is to come across it. You literally have to walk into the store, looking for a doll or a bear that would be just right for your partner based on what you know about her, and just look until you find one that leaps out and says, 'I'm the one!'"

**Don't name the bear.** "This is very important," my wife said. "You never named the bear for me. You always said, 'This is for So-And-So,' or 'I knew you wanted one of these.' The name needs to come for whoever adopts the

bear or doll. That's real important for its acceptance and symbolism."

### Importance

All this may seem like much ado about nothing, but never underestimate the power and utility of teddy bears, dolls, and other stuffed animals.

"I can't say how precious and priceless the gifts of teddy bears have been, how much they have helped me heal, grow, learn, and change," my wife said. "Without teddy bears, I honestly don't think I'd have progressed nearly as far as I have."

MV



I don't know what integration is like, but Emma and Kitten have learned how to be out at the same time. It's not scary at all. They kind of join together so it's kind of like making a heart with people. They like it and we like to watch them. It makes all of us feel good. It makes them so happy to be together—I didn't think any of us could ever be happy...ever. Nobody is sure how it happens or even why—maybe it's just the right time. The older ones say it must be "copresence." I don't know what it is for sure...I just know it's a good thing, at least for them. I just thought I would like to tell somebody about it.

*From Hope (15 years old)  
I live with Ellen and Candy and Jack and Hannah and Shiloh and Emma and Kitten in a house with shadows that Ellie built. We are her friends.*

MV

# Is What I Missed, Called Love?

By Irving

(Irving, a non-multiple professional who is engaged in DID research, suggested this imaginary dialogue)

The Little One whispered: Because all those terrible things happened to me, why do I feel I have lost so much?

1. The Big Voice answered: Little One, you lost the sense of personal security—feeling safe and protected.

The Little One said, I wanted to feel Secure, but I didn't.

2. The Big Voice replied: You missed the trusting relationship; it was violated.

Again Little One questioned: But why do I feel so Sad?

3. You missed the Pleasure that comes with Security, Trust, and being cared for.

And the Little One asked: Are these all the things I was supposed to receive?

4. You needed a relationship with Honesty and Sincerity so you would not fear being rejected.

The Little One thought about all what the Big Voice had told her and said, I don't know who I am; where is my self?

5. Then Big Voice advises: You will eventually know your self and have confidence in your self when you have found the right therapist, who has:

A: The courage and willingness to assume responsibility to help you and me grow.

B: She will respect our needs and our desire to know our selves.

C. She will have humor and spontaneity; and will take good care of herself, so she can help us to grow.

The Little One asked: Is there such a person-therapist out there?

The Big Voice responded: We certainly hope so.

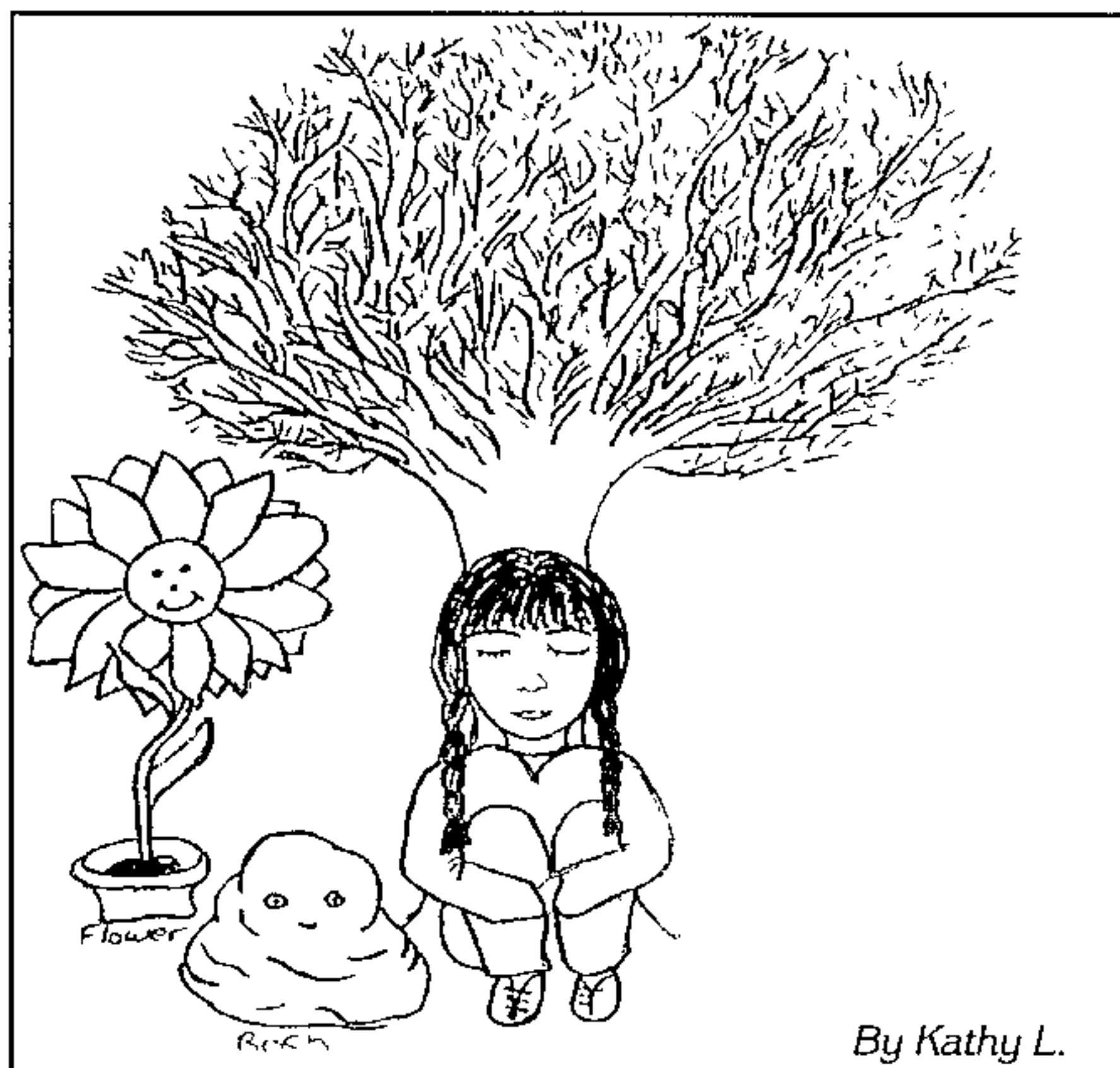
Then they both thought and thought, and wondered if the feelings of security, trust, pleasure, feeling cared for, with honesty and sincerity, and without fear of rejection, so that we can know who we are, are all what make up the components of the Feeling of Love.

\*\*\*

It appears that in order to provide the various components necessary to create the Feeling of Being Loved (1 to 5) and restructure the personality, there must be someone with the dedication and qualities enumerated in A, B & C to express Love by giving energy for physical and mental growth.

Quite a challenge this presents, for the Therapist in Dissociative Disorders.

MV



## My Life

Here I sit in a park.

This park is like my life,  
The playground equipment and  
immediate trees are like my family,  
Drs. and Therapists,  
Close at hand able to be touched,  
Able to be felt.

The trees near me are like my  
Australian net friends,  
Can't quite reach them but know they  
are close at hand,

Only a phone call away,  
And if needed, a short trip away.

The outer perimeter trees are like  
my international net friends,  
Out of reach, a long way away,  
A lot of effort and resources to get to,  
I think I can see them,

I am not sure  
Are they just a figment of my  
imagination?

A world I have developed for me?

But deep down inside I know they  
are all here like the trees  
To shield and protect me from the  
elements.

I hear peaceful sounds that envelop  
me

Strange yet familiar,  
Foreign but reassuring,  
Stark but peaceful.

As I sit here I realize I am not alone,

I have my totem,  
My special dragon,  
Some think I am crazy  
I can see her but others can't.  
Maybe she is part of my imaginary  
world,

But I don't care; she is here holding  
me close,

Comforting me in my time of need,  
Being my power of reason, being my  
rock,

Always there no matter what  
Always around, only a call away.

As I sit here knowing my friends are  
near in my heart,

The cold, the rain, the wet disappears

A ray of light opens up,  
I know with this new realization  
I have the power to go on,

To survive,  
To live and love.

By Kathy Q.

MV

## Speaking My Truth

By CE

There have been many seemingly insurmountable hurdles to overcome during my decade of therapy for trauma and DID. I had to learn to recognize and to voice my emotions that had been carefully squelched for forty years. I had to accept that my personality was fragmented into 45 distinct parts and then to get to know and appreciate these parts for what they had done for me. I had to become comfortable telling horrific secrets within the safe confines of therapy. I had to deal with my depression and, perhaps most importantly, to quit being self-destructive. I had to face my definition of integration head on, until only I am in the driver's seat of my life. This is merely a partial list of achievements made possible by my hard work in therapy and by the dedication of some wonderful mental health professionals who held my hand during the process.

Now, thankfully, only a couple of major issues from my past need to be put to bed and I think I will be ready to set a target date for the end of therapy and for the reclaiming of my life. At age 50, I am anxious to experience what my calendar, my checkbook and my self-esteem will be like without the constant support of a psychologist!

However, right now I am working on something vital to my healing. My therapist recently pointed out to me that I seldom "speak my truth." This failure can take all kinds of forms—saying yes to requests for my time and energy when I really would prefer to say no, failing to give myself credit for my accomplishments, keeping my opinion to myself when asked because I define myself as mentally ill, not asking to have my needs met when they are reasonable and deserved, being acutely afraid of criticizing for fear of hurting someone's feelings, accepting that my recurring depression is not my fault and that I have a right to back out of a commitment when I need to.

There are other "truths," but perhaps an example might clarify my gradually maturing practice of saying what I

mean. I have a friend whom I have known for years who is teetering on the edge of life and death due to anorexia. She is a lovely lady and I dearly wish I could make a positive impact on her mental and physical health. However, it seems that all I am able to do is listen time after time while she almost seems to take pleasure in telling me her latest weight (now under 70 pounds) and describing her scanty food intake. I have told her repeatedly that I do not want to attend her funeral, but it seems my words do no good at all. Usually, I cry after our conversations.

My therapist asked me to imagine myself telling this friend "my truth." That truth is that I fail to fully comprehend her illness in light of the fact she says she wants to live and that I feel speaking with her is not in my best interest at this time!

Summoning up all my courage and harboring grave doubts that I was doing the right thing, this morning I told my friend just that, in as diplomatic a way as I could muster. I said that she should call me as soon as she could report that she has gained five pounds or more and plans on following her dietician's food plan as prescribed.

Now as I write this, I feel great sorrow that I obviously hurt her feelings. However, I am trying to do as my doctor suggested and for once, put myself first. Slowly, I am coming to the realization that I did what was best for me, and maybe for her, in the long run.

What I said today was just one step toward learning to "speak my truth." To me, that means that for the first time in my life, I am learning not to say and do things just to please others and to avoid some sort of perceived punishment. I am learning to be me—not to be the person I think others expect me to be. I am learning to speak from my heart—not from guilt and fear.

I think it's a lesson long overdue, and it feels very good.

## Flowers Today

(Submitted by Nancy F., a survivor of domestic violence)

I got flowers today.  
It wasn't my birthday or any other special day.  
We had our first argument last night.  
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt me  
I know he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said  
Because he sent me flowers today.

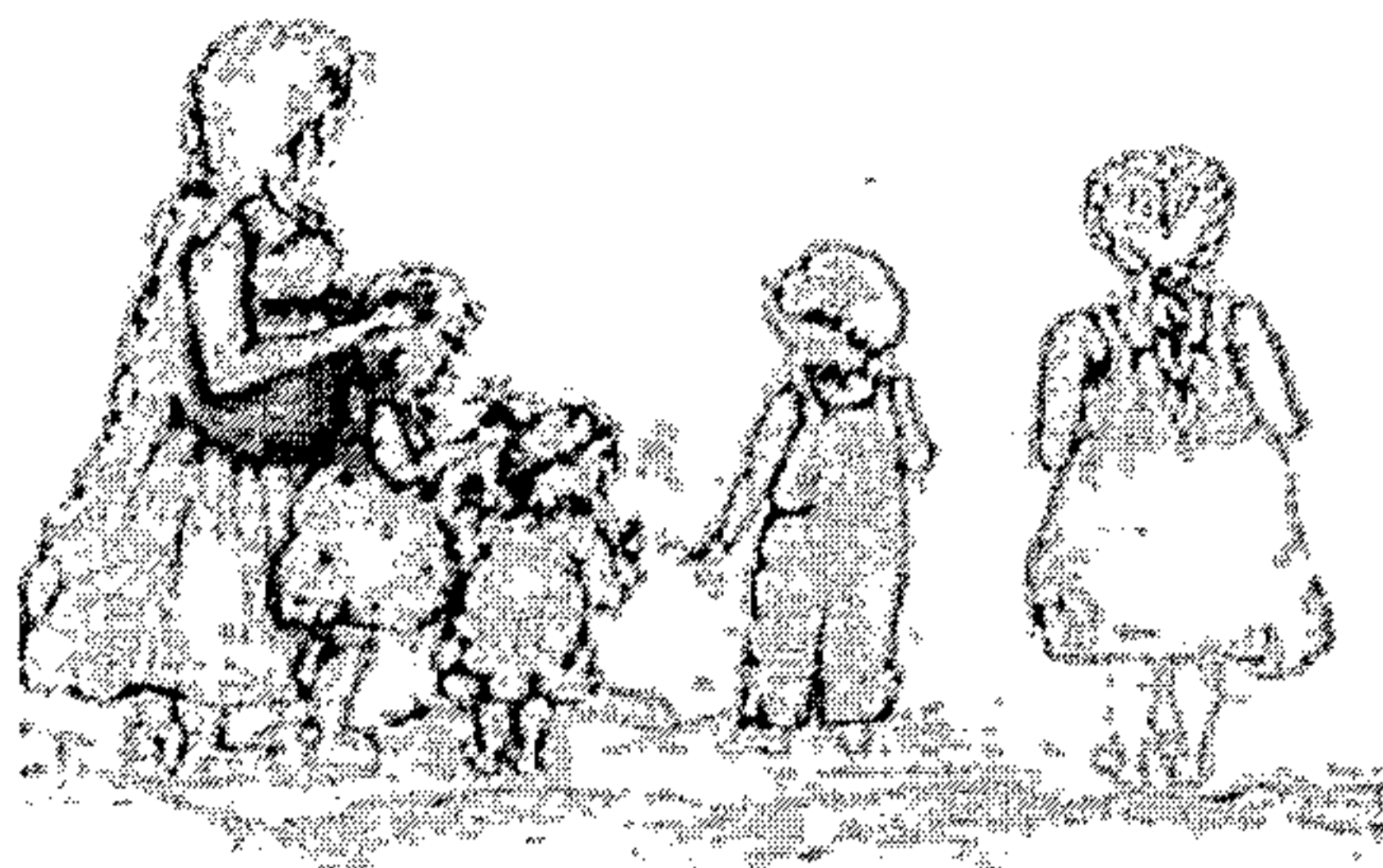
I got flowers today.  
It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day.  
Last night, he threw me into a wall and started to choke me.  
It seemed like a nightmare.  
I couldn't believe it was real.  
I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over.  
I know he must be sorry  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
And it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day.  
Last night, he beat me up again.  
And it was much worse than all the other times.  
If I leave him, what will I do?  
How will I take care of my kids?  
What about money?  
I'm afraid of him and scared to leave.  
But I know he must be sorry  
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.  
Today was a very special day.  
It was the day of my funeral.  
Last night, he finally killed me.  
He beat me to death.  
If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him,  
I would not have gotten flowers today.

MV

MV



### *If I Only Could*

So hard to tell, so difficult to explain, so difficult to know  
 It is dreadful to realize you are alone, yet your heart wants to love another  
 You know you feel it, you imagine it, yet cannot do it  
 No, it is impossible, why?  
 To try means much worse, to try means it will only end up with a human in your home  
 And, you know you cannot stand to think of that  
 No, it is best to be alone, alone is safe, you never feel safe with a human in your home  
 You love the aloneness, you hate the loneliness, you hate not having a human to talk to, a human to touch  
 You want to touch another, you know you can give them what they need, what they look for, what they desire, and what they yearn for  
 You know you are affectionate by nature, it has just been locked away by fear of receiving the same  
 You know you can know what another human desires, that tenderness, that gentleness, that compassion, that considerateness, those kind words they long to hear  
 You know you can make them feel free, no worry, no care, free and explode, releasing all those feelings which begin to weigh you down, yes, the release in safety, and comfort of our arms, arms that long to give another human love  
 You know you can tell what they need or want even when they don't know themselves  
 Yet, you are incapable of doing it, you cannot try  
 We can be trusted with their secrets, their fears, their wants, their needs, their feelings  
 We can give them safety to be, security to live well, we can give them a feeling that they are cared for and needed and loved  
 We can make them feel so important, so respected, make them feel smart, and witty, and fun to be with  
 All those things, and yet we choose to be alone.  
 We feel selfish and self-centered for it, yet honest  
 We would not be honest if we tried, we would fail  
 We wish to be alone, in peace and quiet, we accept the loneliness that comes with it now  
 Before we didn't feel lonely, we hope to not feel it again  
 Because we know we need to be alone, it is best for us, and we ask to be accepted for not doing what we were supposed to do, what every human should do—love—it is the rhythm of life.

*By Rain*

MV

### **We Always Must Hope for the Best**

We must never let go of hope. Hope gives us the strength to keep going when we feel like giving up.

We must never stop believing in ourselves. As long as we believe we can, we will have a reason for trying.

We can never let anyone hold our happiness in their hands; we must hold it ourselves so it will always be within our reach.

We must never measure our success or failures by material wealth, but by how we feel. Our feelings will determine all the riches of our lives.

We must never let the bad moments overcome any of us. Being patient with ourselves eases the moments till they pass. We must not hesitate to reach out for help. We all need it from time to time.

We must never run from love, but towards love, the love we have for each other; it will be the source of our deepest joy.

We must never wait for what we want to come to us. Go after it with all that we have, always knowing life will meet us half way.

We must never think that we've lost when our plans and dreams fall short of our hopes. When we all learn something new about ourselves and about life, we have progressed.

We must never do anything that takes away our self-respect. Feeling good about ourselves is essential to feeling good about life.

We must never forget how to laugh or be either too proud or fearful to cry. It is by doing both that we will be able to live life to its fullest.

*By N.K.*



## If I Loved Myself

By Gwen

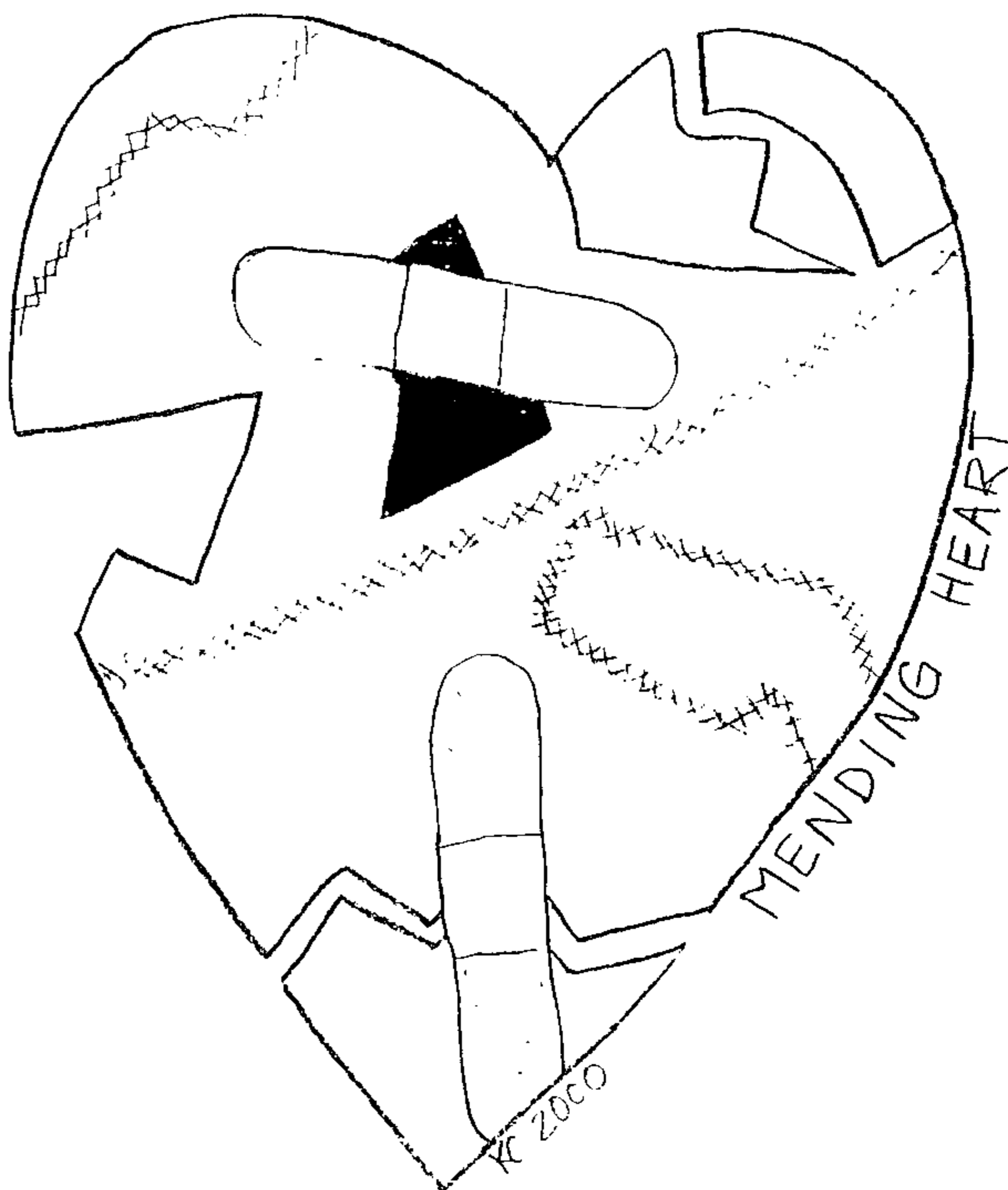
I wrote this poem, wondering how I would view myself if I loved myself. What would I appreciate about myself? In reality, I struggle with despising my body and voice, and with saying no. I realized that if I loved myself, saw myself as someone dear to me might see me, that I would love my body and voice, and would think I had a right to say "no". I wrote this poem, imagining that I was looking at me as "someone dear to me"—how would I view this person (me)?

The curl of pink lip  
half moon of buff nail.  
A resilient spirit  
the way I can hold my own.  
Warm laughter  
a radiance of compassion.  
The way humor dances, a sharp wit  
and the glint of brown eyes.  
Feminine roundness  
long, soft as silk hair.  
an easy holding,  
sleek feet with pink shimmer.  
A full and loving self,  
the way I listen.  
The space in my heart for the songs  
of cicadas,  
and delicate, faraway chimes.  
My love for the moon and sky,  
the soft delicateness of forest trees.  
My love for the ocean  
sand.  
My soft and strong voice,  
the sound of my words.  
Drawing,  
the feel of my hands on paper.  
The way I hold a baby in my arms,  
a star cradled cozy.  
The way nurturance is natural,  
and my ability to soothe.  
The way I think in patterns,  
and remember the beauty of tiny things.  
My joy for the tender earth,  
and my appreciation of light.

## I Needed to be Covered

Then, I needed to be covered  
No way out!  
Confused, Embarrassed  
Enmeshed in shame  
The touch left me tarnished with  
endless, empty pain.  
I needed to be covered  
to hide my name!  
Now I want to be covered  
But see a way out!  
Less confused, less embarrassed  
Not as much shame  
The touch left me tarnished but  
there is much gain  
I still like to be covered  
But now share my name.

*By Hester, who used to be Lolita  
Whore in the family of Susan et al*



## Letters

I am hurting very badly right now, and wish the man I kicked out would come back into my life, and just move back in with me. I miss him and I made a mistake. I am not thinking clearly at all.

(a few days later)

Have calmed down somewhat from chaos and drama and trauma. I wish they had given me instructions when I was born to tell me what I as a multiple would be able to follow regarding men and relationships. I really do want a companion, a mate. A lot of people I know are at a point of breaking up or finding others. However, I am just now stepping into the arena. (Some of us are late bloomers, I guess.)

I think the connection with the alcoholic guy I was/am involved with is over, and what's left is the crying, and putting my life back together again.

It does feel good currently (and I mean very currently) to be by myself. He took up so much of my attention and time—like taking care of a child, sometimes. Plus, his own issues were just too much for me to deal with, since I have had a lot of recovery on my part. I just want it over with, and to move on. But there are still many tears from the young adolescent in me, and the woman I have become. What do MV Readers think about having relationships with other people who have abuse histories?

*By Sabrina*

*Readers, what do you think? My (limited) personal opinion is that one person with an abuse problem in a relationship is plenty...and that it's healthier to look for recovering & sober people, perhaps from organizations like AA or Al-Anon, who might be compassionate and sensitive regarding therapy and abusive backgrounds. It seems to me that involvement with another abused person might trigger off unsavory responses for both parties. Alcohol and drugs are two big no-nos in my life. I've dated alcoholics in the past, but now I run the other way. For me, it's not worth the pain. Some of us with trauma histories tend to ignore trauma. We're so used to nutsy*

*people that we put up with enormous amounts of nonsense without realizing it's nuts. Despite my "good advice" I still violate this rule on a regular basis. It's an ongoing struggle to learn to create and maintain healthy relationships. I hope several of you will write in with suggestions on this subject. I'll forward replies direct to Sabrina, and maybe print some replies in a future issue. We all want good relationships and need constructive advice. Your sharing will be very helpful to many. Thanks! - Lynn W.*

**I would really like to know if there are others out there who have been able to go through thought recovery without the use of medications, and if so, was there something special that they did use instead of medication?**

*By Darlene and the inside kids*

### **A former partner writes:**

I started to be interested in DID after a relationship I'd been in finally ended, and I sensed that aside from the usual sides of people one sees I had seen a couple of sides that seemed not to be connected, very distinct and separate sides. It was just a hunch based on a few things that were said and one email in particular which seemed to be from somebody so scared and frightened by the previous week's events she was trying to pretend the events did not happen, as if she somehow believed enough, everything would be back to normal. It was like it was from a little girl, stuck in her disbelief at what was happening to her.

A day before, she said I was like all the rest who left her. I tried to explain that I was leaving her life as she was with someone else, and that she had decided she did not want to be with me—but this did not seem to register.

I started searching the web for info about DID as I wanted to know more about serious trauma after-effects, and how that impacted relationships, primarily because I still hoped we may have a future together. I also bought a book by Steven Farmer called the Adult Children of Abusive Parents, which seems a very gentle and not condescending book. It seemed to corroborate the three distinct sides I had seen of my ex. He calls them the hurt child, the controlling child (which protects the hurt child from further hurt, and triggers defense mechanisms when people get too

close), and the natural child, which seems to be the warm, playful, and "dancing" side of the three.

Basically when I was with her I only saw the very sweet, smiley and warm side...the natural child...aside from once when she flipped and threw a knife she was using into the floor when she disagreed with something I said.

The explosion of anger did not scare me (I see that anger and rage in myself) and I said if she wanted to get that mad again, perhaps she could chuck a few plates, as there was less chance of anyone getting hurt. The poor love—she was so mortified with guilt at getting mad and throwing the knife.

Anyway, we finally split and I came back to Europe. A few months later after a phone call I got a letter from her saying how much she still loved and missed me. Then I found out that about two weeks after she wrote the letter she started dating someone. She told me this some six weeks later, on the phone, and tells me she also loves the man. But she also loves me and misses me, etc. I then said, if this is the case, then I shall come back and we shall make a go of this, if that is how she really feels (I certainly do.) Then she says no, I should not come back, as she is dating someone. So then I said if that is how she feels it is time for me to leave her life. She doesn't like this scenario at all, and tries for a few hours via phone to keep me in her life.

Deluding myself, I got in contact with her, thinking I could be her friend. But for the past five weeks, I have set myself up for very mixed messages indeed. One day she says one thing, the next day it's the opposite. I also sent her mixed messages, imagining I could be her friend and nothing more. She seems to be too scared to trust, to frightened to let someone close to her. Her father was abusive: mostly to her mother and brother, but some to her. She seems to confide in nobody.

Have any of you people out there wanted to be with someone, yet were going in the other direction because of the controlling aspect of yourself? Have you sent one message to a person only to contradict it the next day?

And if you are a partner to someone with DID, please tell me whether you would do it again, if you had the choice, and what suggestions you might make to handle it well.

Any feedback would be deeply appreciated. I am in mourning for this relationship and want to understand. -

*Stanley M.*

## Books

### The Trauma Model: A Solution to the Problem of Comorbidity

By Colin A. Ross, M.D. © 2000 by Manitou Communications Inc., 1701 Gateway, Suite 349, Richardson, TX 75080. (800) 572-9588. www.rossinst.com \$27.95 404 pages. Paperback.

Colin Ross M.D. is a man with a mission. He's a past president of the ISSD who has worked with trauma survivors for over twenty years. He currently directs trauma programs at three US hospitals (in Dallas, Grand Rapids, MI, and Torrance, CA), and maintains ongoing public and professional educational efforts through products and services of The Ross Institute. *The Trauma Model* is one of two books recently published through Manitou, which is located at the same address as The Ross Institute. (We'll review the second book next issue.)

There are advantages and disadvantages to self-publishing books...but by far the biggest advantage is that the author can say anything he pleases, as forcefully as he wants. No editor or chicken-hearted publisher will interfere. In this book, Ross takes on the establishment of psychiatry, its teaching methods and principles, and he is refreshingly blunt about it. He's taken a hard look at his experiences with psychiatric inpatients over the years and developed a very interesting theory that deserves a serious look by professionals. He believes that the number of single diagnosis patients on psychiatric units is relatively small, even though general psychiatry and insurance coverage tends to focus on biochemical treatments for conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar depression. Ross notes that the dominant inpatient population is composed of "comorbid" patients, or those whose symptoms range widely. These complicated patients are labeled with several diagnoses, in a futile effort to account for their florid symptom patterns.

He proposes the Trauma Model as a scientifically testable solution to the problem of comorbidity, theorizing that chronic childhood trauma is an underlying factor in the lives of the

majority of seriously-ill psychiatric patients. "I propose that chronic childhood trauma is to psychiatry what germs are to general medicine," he writes.

Interestingly, Ross believes that "bad events" are less damaging to complex patients than the "errors of omission" by their caretakers: the absence of normal love, affection, attention, care and protection. He says that so-called treatment "failures" tend to be Trauma Model cases. He also includes an intriguing discussion of the complex relationship between schizophrenics and dissociative disordered patients, and the possibility of a continuum that specifies a dissociative form of schizophrenia.

Some figures astonished me: in a reported study of 103 patients with DID, 74.1% met criteria for a psychotic disorder. He also says dissociation and attention deficit disorder symptoms overlap, suggesting a need for better ways to differentiate.

Ross has put together a comprehensive book that does more than state his theory. After a thorough discussion of his model and its testability, he discusses trauma treatment methods: ("You are not responsible for being a victim, but you are responsible for remaining one.") The problem of "rescuer" therapists is another well-detailed chapter, as is "How not to be sued."

In the appendix, he describes errors of logic made by those who disapprove of the concepts of dissociation...but stresses that dissociation is only a very small part of psychiatry encompassed by the Trauma Model.

In short, this is a valuable book for professionals who are willing to consider new approaches to old problems, and possibly reevaluate traditional practices. It's a gutsy move on Dr. Ross's part to publish this idea in such an outspoken way.

The lack of an editor's pencil shows in the repetitions and structural problems in this book, but Dr. Ross's information is definitely worth the price.

(And if you like gutsiness, just wait until you read about his second new

book, *Bluebird*, in our April issue. In this he takes on the issue of mind control via the psychiatric establishment and the government, simultaneously—with proof.)

### Life After MPD

By Debra Lighthart, PhD © 2000 by Debra Lighthart. Order from Lamp Counseling & Healing Center, HC32, Box 6505, Wasila, AK 99654-9718. \$24.95 includes shipping/handling. 144 pages. Paperback.

This is a Christian-centered book of recovery from dissociation, by a therapist who also healed from DID. It follows the author step by step through therapy and recovery, into her new life. The spiritual side of her experience is provided in great detail. She provides considerable discussion about the ISH or Internal Self Helper aspect of the self (Dr. Lighthart believes everyone has this capacity within, not only persons who dissociate). Learning to value and trust that inner voice was a major part of her recovery. She engaged in both traditional family therapy (with her husband and children) and inner family therapy, with her alters. While they required individual therapy as well, the family therapy techniques helped inside parts accept and work well with each other. Eventually, Dr. Lighthart went through a ritual of integration, which is carefully described. Christian survivors will find this a very encouraging and helpful book that addresses the development of spirit within, and access to spiritual strength for healing.

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