

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

Vol XV, No.4

August 2003

ISSN1042-2277

In this issue:

Calming Strategies  
A Safe Place To Heal  
Good Parenting Inside & Out



February 2004

Balanced Relationships for All Genders. Art: Friends and Friendship.  
Deadline: December 1, 2003.

April 2004

What Recovery Means to You. Art: Healing Pleasures.  
Deadline: February 1, 2004.

June 2004

Choosing a Therapist. Thriving Outside Therapy. Art: How people see you vs How you see yourself.  
Deadline: April 1, 2004.

August 2004

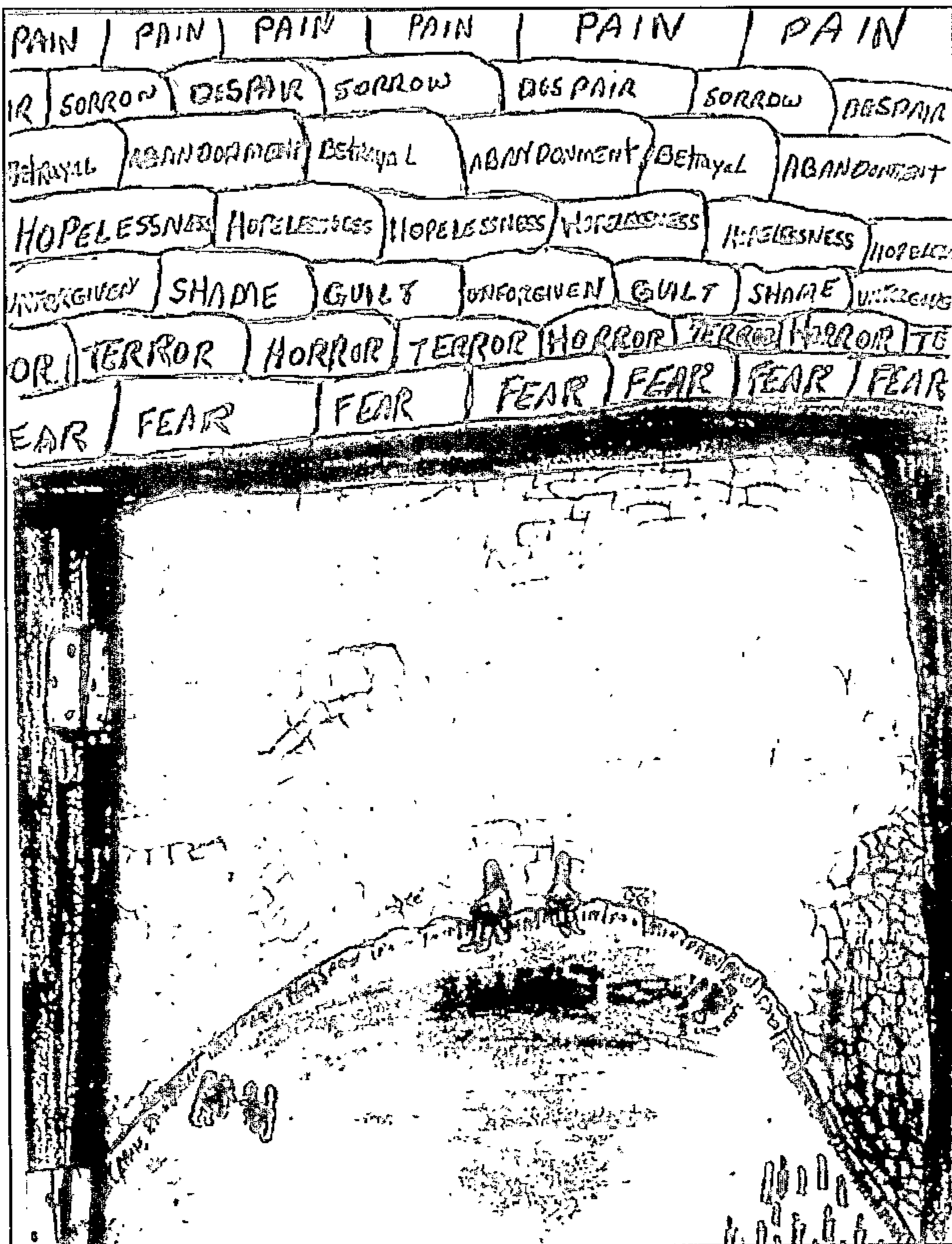
Managing PTSD Symptoms & Depression. Art: Your Memory Storage System.  
Deadline: June 1, 2004.

October 2004

How to Build a Strong Support Team. Art: Your Partners in Healing.  
Deadline: August 1, 2004.

December 2004

Peace Strategies for the Holiday Season. Art: Meaningful Treasures to Give or Receive.  
Deadline: October 1, 2004.



Drawing by Bartleby & Dagger

Many Voices (ISSN1042-2277) is published bi-monthly at Cincinnati, Ohio. Copyright 2003 by MV Co. All rights reserved. Editor/Publisher: Lynn W. Send subscriptions to: Lynn W. Send, 39 Cincinnati OH 45201-2639 Phone (513)751-8020 Email: LynnW@manyvoicespress.com US subscriptions \$36/year Canada \$42US Elsewhere \$48US. This publication is designed as an information exchange for treatment providers and survivors of trauma and dissociative disorders. Neither its editor nor its layperson contributors are engaged in the practice of medicine. This publication should not be construed as medical advice concerning any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are for general information purposes only. Please consult with competent professionals concerning your specific questions.

MV

# Aunting

By

diane (with katy) of Ravensong

I don't remember a lot about when I was little, but I do remember I didn't like kids very much. I'm pretty sure I decided that when my little sister came along; there already was a little brother in the house, and I think I kind of liked him, even though by two, he was already learning to be mean, like boys are. But having another girl in the house was a whole 'nother story. A girl would be prettier than me and smarter than me and she would take up all the room. That was no good. No.

Growing up I babysat my brother and sister (and tormented the sister every chance I got) and lots of the neighborhood kids. I was a good babysitter, trained in first aid and CPR, and mature for my age, so I never got too upset about things and I always stayed awake until the parents came home. My mom says that I treated all the kids like little adults, speaking to them as if they knew exactly what I was saying, even though she wasn't even sure sometimes. Our neighbors next door, professors at the university, had me sit frequently for that very reason; they used to say that I was "16 going on 40." If they only knew.

But I never really knew how to talk to kids. I never felt any sort of kinship with them, and never could get down to their level. I didn't know what it meant to draw from that child-soul; I had lived with an adult one as long as I could remember, and had no access to any other.

A few years back, when I was diagnosed with DID in my late thirties, I slowly began to discover many things that I never had experienced but had simply been hidden for so many years. The very first one inside to communicate directly with me was Lizzie, a 5-year-old and the carrier of most of our hurt. As I got to know her, and later Katy, an almost 4-year-old and very outspoken protector, I learned that nurturing them required that I allow myself the opportunity to

explore my child-soul a little, to come to understand what children need and offer that to them, and to simply be with them and see our world and all its complexities through their eyes.

Lizzie and Katy have taught me more about living, fully "soulful" in the outside world than anybody ever could. They taught me that I have to listen to and honor both the child and adult parts of me and that, even though children are little, they are very smart and have lots of important things to say. Although I don't have any outside kids, I feel like I am blessed that this part of my healing occurred when it did, because it coincided with the birth of a very special person in my life—my nephew.

M was the most beautiful child I'd ever seen when he was born. I know everyone thinks that's true when they get a new baby in the family, but I'm sure it's the case here. Even Katy, who thinks boys are the dreck of the universe, spent the first few weeks after his birth sighing heavily and saying in her distressed, this-goes-against-everything-I-know way, "well, he is a little bit beautiful, and I don't even think he's very stupid."

She quickly went from calling him the "stupid boy baby" who she was expecting to ruin her life to the "smiling baby boy" who she couldn't wait to see. The fact is, his entry into this world changed the outlook many of us had on life; his presence complicated an already confusing place we had made for ourselves here, and made us reevaluate some decisions we thought were solidly in place. But maybe most of all, the arrival of this little boy put me in a position I'd never been before—that of "aunt". And even though I sometimes am not sure how much my role in the family is appreciated I am very certain, maybe for the first time in my life, of my feelings toward and responsibilities for children and, in particular, this child.

Almost every other multiple that I've talked with has had that unsure and secret worry that society and the mental health community has dumped on us and anyone who's been abused. Somewhere in the back of our minds is that nagging concern that maybe we're not "safe" around kids, and that we'll turn out to be just like the ones who hurt us. Although I never had bad feelings toward children, I/we always just knew we were bad—that general sort of bad that you learn when you grow up like so many of us did—and so kept our distance from people and little ones on general principles. It's a certainty that so many of us—those who are abused—carry, and it's a belief that leaves us isolated and alone.

When M. arrived, he brought with him a different sort of certainty, a different kind of knowing—it was almost like a gift that he was meant to pass along to me. In return, I have the privilege of knowing and giving unconditional love and of sharing what I know with the gentleness and patience that I discovered inherent in me. And we are challenged, for the first time, to work together to protect another and to explore the world with our nephew from a variety of perspectives appropriate to him, thus communicating and cooperating more fully, together.

In many ways, time with M. moves us out of ourselves. His safety, well-being, and happiness become more important than ours; we would, without hesitation, put his life before ours. Maybe the most important thing that being an aunt has done for us (and for M., we hope) is to teach us what it means to love and to be fully present. No past to drown in, no future to worry about...just the here and now to experience and move through, with the love and gentleness we were never afforded.



**Because She Says So**

my therapist is not my friend  
because she says so  
though I can easily see us  
suddenly taking a walk in the rain  
without shoes or umbrellas  
trying to catch the rain on our tongues  
& laughing from the pure pleasure of  
trying

my therapist is not my friend  
because she says so  
though I can easily envision us in a  
bookstore  
poring over the latest mysteries  
reciting a poem or two from Whitman  
or Emerson  
or sharing the most current writing on  
D.I.D.  
perhaps revisiting the Velveteen Rabbit

my therapist is not my friend  
because she says so  
though I can easily view us at an  
outside cafe  
drinking coffee & eating fresh  
croissants  
as we excitedly share our families'  
newest adventures  
or the books on writing that I've been  
engrossed in lately  
perhaps remember our mothers on  
Mother's Day

my therapist is not my friend  
because she says so  
but then why do I miss her when she's  
gone  
& anticipate the ease & comfort of our  
relationship  
upon her return to the city  
why is it that I long for our time  
together  
so that I can see if there's a new  
picture  
in her office since I was last there

my therapist is not my friend  
because she says so.

*By Win*

MV

**MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!**

**Forest View Hospital - Grand Rapids, MI**

Call Bill van Harken: (616) 942-9610 or (800) 949-8439

**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 Christie Clark: (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.

If you know of clinics or conferences that need flyers, please call us!  
We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor

**Tape Recording Idea**

**By Lynne**

My therapist, my Jill, has been using a strange tool to help me in my struggle with the "multiples" concept: a tape recorder.

She told me to simply ask for guidance, whatever was on my mind, and leave a blank tape in the recorder by my bedside.

This is the answer that came the second time I tried it. I don't pretend to understand. I've heard of people who walked in their sleep or talked in their sleep but...a tape recorder? I don't pretend to comprehend. I'd say "It can't happen," but it did. Twice!

The therapist plays the tapes back to me in our sessions when we're together, but I have to admit that it definitely is my voice on the recording. Here is a sample:

**To Our Host**

Oh, Lynne, inalienable proof you want? Proof you're Multiple? Proof you need help? Proof you're less than 100% perfect? All right. Stop this tape and look up 1 Cor. 14:33 in your Bible. "God is not the author of confusion." Then who is?

Hold up your right hand...now your left hand. Which of them is "Lynne's" hand? Are you the sum of your

memories...or your love of beauty...or your anger at injustice...or your love of children...or...see what I'm getting at? All these attributes are part of you. Even so am I and Marlena and Little Mickey and Heidi and so many others. Call us alters, call us what you will. Simply parts of the whole you.

Know that not all of us strive to make you a good and trustworthy woman. We can be allowed to lend you our strengths or we can be shoved into that dark closet you've labeled "MPD" and ignored; your choice.

Thank you for not giving in to those dark forces (and, yes, you have them; your therapist knows them by name). All they want is a moment of defeat, a helplessness feeling on your part. It's their Open Sesame.

But if you stick with your therapy, if you feed on good thoughts, right and clean to the best of your ability, those dark forces shall be overcome.

All of you, the eyes and the ears and the hands and the feet and the Alpha and the Marlena and the Ilsa and the Heidi...We shall be One!  
So Be It.

*By Ilsa of Lynne*

MV

# Music for Calming

By Carol Willson and Rhonda Ringering

*(Carol is a music student; Rhonda is her teacher. They hope their combined views on the healing power of music will be helpful to MV readers.)*

*'After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music...' Aldous Huxley*

We were officially diagnosed with DID two years ago. We consider ourselves lucky because we found a therapist/client bond with our first and only therapist. Although our first priority was to learn to be safe inside and out, we also needed ways to be united and get our thoughts collected enough to stay focused and relieve internal and external stress enough to work and to co-raise four children. We found our way through music, with piano lessons.

Our therapist referred us to a teacher that she knew and we gave permission for the teacher to communicate with the therapist if she had questions. This was important to the teacher because she had never taught a "group" of one before.

The day of our first lesson was scary, not only for us but for Rhonda as well. We were afraid of rejection; she was afraid of doing something that might "scare" us. She was gentle

and kind and is always gracious. Currently six to nine of us take lessons once a week.

We use several different books. The three year old has her own (she insisted on it), most of the rest of us share according to age. Rhonda respects each of our differences and helps us know it's O.K. to make mistakes, we won't be punished; it's even O.K. to "choose not to" and she still loves us. Several of "us" have even recently told her "no". That is a big change for us, to have a voice.

One of our most tortured parts found her gift and has become the internal teacher. This has helped her remain part of the whole and not isolate herself. Her stress and fear just seems to melt away when she sits at the piano to play. The three year old that is tormented with night terrors can get up at night and practice to calm herself. The eight year old that self-harms can go to the piano and pound away instead.

Collectively, we have found healing through music, and the friendship of our teacher. Piano is something we can suggest when any of "us" is having trouble with anger, sadness, rejection, or just feeling overwhelmed. We can sit down at the piano and play and the music soothes and calms us.

The biggest thing for us is that our teacher is consistent. She is there week after week, willing and wanting to teach us. This structure is extremely helpful since our life growing up was always chaotic. The consistency itself helps us feel accepted, not just the "core" but "allofus".

Unlike the relationship with our therapist, the professional boundaries don't have to be as rigid. Our teacher can also be our friend. This is an extra bonus, especially for those (like me) who choose not to take lessons.

Our teacher is co-writing this to offer her insight.

– Carol

Musicians routinely talk about the healing power of music, but unless they work as music therapists they rarely get to see music's immense power work in a concrete way. I am a pianist and piano teacher with no training in music therapy or psychology. I have been working with my first multiple client(s) for nearly a year. This has been one of the most rewarding and powerful experiences I've ever had as an instructor.

When "the troops" were first referred to me for lessons I was nervous about two things: 1) that I would not be able to easily distinguish each of the individuals I was teaching and 2) that I might do or say something that would scare them away from my studio and from piano lessons. I soon learned that I was

working with several brilliant piano students of differing ages who just happened to live in the same body and use the same hands.

The first time I met them I invited them to my studio to meet me and see if everyone felt safe with me and with the environment. Once it was decided that they wanted to study with me, I had them make a list of everyone who wanted lessons and I asked them for their approximate ages. The age issue was important because the troops who are studying with me range in age from three to nearly forty. As an instructor I knew I needed different lesson materials for each age group and I needed to present lessons in age-appropriate concepts and language. When lessons first started I found it fascinating that each one uses the hands in a different

way and each comprehends the music slightly differently than the others. They each have their own musical tastes and interests.

From their first lesson it has been extremely important that everyone feel safe and comfortable. Students are invited, not compelled, to come up for lessons. This is important on those days when one or another is having a rough time and needs to stay in his or her room.

There is also a gender issue to remember; on days when someone dresses the body (female) in a skirt, I feel I owe it to my boy student to let him know about the skirt before he comes up at the piano. Most of the time he refrains from lessons until he can wear pants for his piano lesson. Lessons are weekly events and are



taught at the same time every week. The routine is comforting, leading to a "If it's Wednesday, it must be piano" certainty for the little ones.

Making lessons emotionally safe for my students is my most important task. From week to week they must be reminded that their worth as individuals and as students does not depend on them playing flawlessly. Some days I think they begin to understand that I will never "fire" them from my studio, and that they will always be welcome and loved; other days I hold faith that my repeated presence and reassurances will be believed over the next few years.

Over this year music has helped to bond my students to me—an outside person many of the little ones feel they can learn to trust—and to each other. One of the more advanced among them has taken the role of teaching the others in between lessons with me. On dark days she plays for the others to soothe them or to draw them out of isolation. When the system is in complete turmoil, music goes where words cannot. I have played some of my best concerts over the phone to their answering machine, the multi-voice works of J.S. Bach reaching them in ways I cannot. Their delight at the sheer beauty of music reawakens my own love of it.

At one point in this last year it had been a very rough time for all of them and many had been "down" for months. One of them, the internal piano teacher, came up for the first time in nearly a month while the troops and I sat side by side at a concert. I held her hand, tears in both our eyes, as the notes washed over us. There was no need to speak; the music said it all.

—Rhonda

MV

## The Impact Of Integration Thirteen Years Later

By Rachel Downing

Tonight I feel happy at at peace. I feel more whole and complete than ever. It seems the integrated aspects of myself continue to grow and become stronger over the years.

Before integration key aspects of myself (personalities) operated within narrow boundaries. This article will focus on only three parts of myself for the sake of clarity. One part of myself loved dogs, another part was a writer and wrote poetry, plays and professional articles and another part was focused on work and achievement. These internal divisions between parts/-personalities were reflected in my use of physical space in my residence.

Before integration my office only had work and task focused stuff in it. My dog stuff was either in my bedroom or hidden away because it was seen as frivolous by my work self. My writing was separate and kept in spiral notebooks. This physical separation mirrored the internal separation in my mind.

Now my office is integrated just as I am integrated. My computer and work materials are surrounded by pictures of dogs on the walls and favorite quotes are taped on the wall above my computer. My writing is everywhere - on shelves, in files and in piles on the floor. The papers from the book I am writing about my dog Samantha lay beside the papers from the book I am writing about my recovery from DID. My integrated, overlapping office reflects my integrated and overlapping mind. It feels good.

I no longer have separate friends for the different aspects of myself and my life. When I was dissociative I had "dog friends" for discussing dog stuff. I had "work friends" to discuss work issues and I only discussed my writing with a few select "writing friends." Now the whole ME has whole relationships. My life-long professional mentor knows as much about my love of dogs as anyone else.

It is fun to see how I have changed over the years since my integration.

The colors that are "me" are more alive, vibrant and intense than ever. I feel loved by my office — everything about me exists in the same space — my writing, my dog stuff, professional papers, personal photos and favorite quotes. I continue to enjoy the benefits and joy of integration.

*P.S. I have written a 19 page article about about my experience of integration and how I have maintained it over the years. It is available on the Sidran Institute website. ([www.sidran.org](http://www.sidran.org)) under articles on trauma. It includes an annotated bibliography on books, articles and websites on integration.*

MV

### Dark Circles

dark circles surround me  
padded  
like insulation

they somehow  
protect me  
from the cuts & bruises  
of reality

but also  
these dark circles  
keep out  
any light

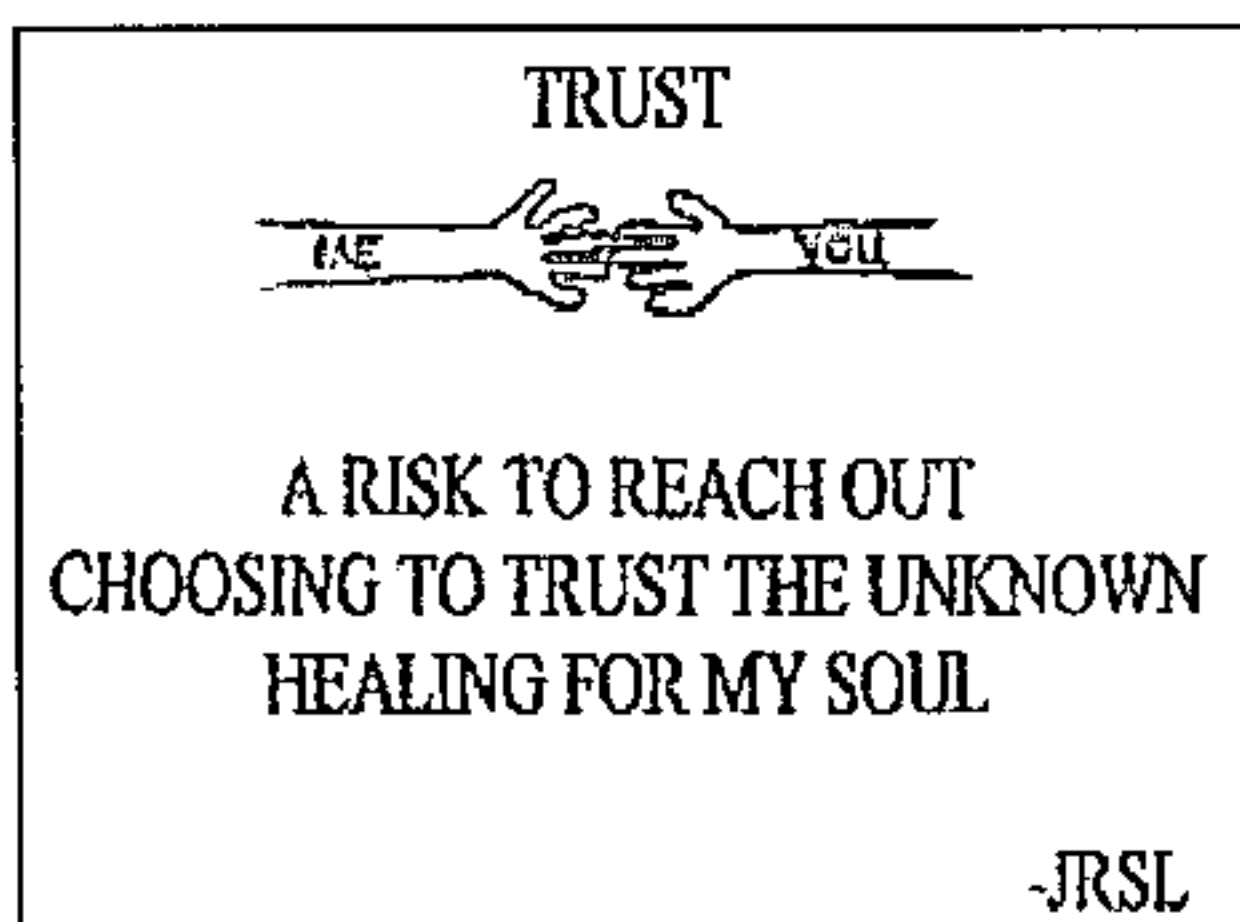
and though i'm not  
in danger  
i am in darkness

darkness  
blackness  
frightens me  
it can be a very

cold and lonely  
space

By SJS

MV



# Therapist's Page

By Nancy Leeming, Ph.D.

Nancy Leeming, Ph.D. is a psychotherapist in private practice in White Plains, NY (914) 682-7600 (E-mail: nanwaves@aol.com)

## Self-Calming Strategies

Competent, well-functioning adults must know how to calm and reassure themselves in times of stress. Effective self-calming requires connection, starting with the body. We need "the brain in the belly", that center of awareness deeper than thought, which is there to guide us. Intuition arises out of it and inspires the most productive flow of thought. How do we get to the body's wisdom when scared or anxious?

Clear thinking rarely occurs when you are emotionally upset or physically tense. Close your eyes and begin to track your breath with your mind. Think, "I am breathing in, I am breathing out." Focusing on slowing the breath immediately sends the message, "relax, let go."

This momentary shift of attention from specific stress is a relief. You may now move to more in-depth self-calming.

It is said we are healed by what we turn toward, not by what we avoid. Be willing to sense where and how specifically you feel the presence of anxiety or stress in your body. Maybe there are butterflies in your stomach or a hard, painful knot in your chest.

Close your eyes and place both hands, one on top of the other, over that painful spot. Start consciously breathing, in through your nose, out through your mouth. Direct the breath to that place so your hands rise and fall with it. Imagine your breath is a

wave coming into the shore of your hands with each inhalation and receding from the shore when you exhale.

Once the wave breathing is established in your imagination, begin to address that anxious part of you in your thoughts. You may say to yourself something like, "I'm sorry I haven't been in touch with you before, but I'm here now. what do you need from me? I may not have answers, but you're not alone; I'm here."

An awareness of a specific need may come to mind. You may simply feel a blessed sigh of relief, a settling down; "somebody cares." Like a scared child who needs to be held and reassured, that fearful part of you feels your compassionate presence.

Intense anxiety often signals that a younger aspect of consciousness is threatening to overpower you. In those times there is a temporary loss of connection with the resources you have developed as an adult.

It is very calming to talk out loud, just as you would to a confused child. If overwhelming or complex tasks seem scary, say something like, "Let's take it one step at a time; we can do this."

If there are several younger ones inside, your grown-up voice brings order, just as a teacher does entering a chaotic classroom. The scared ones are comforted by a competent adult's presence.

For me, speaking aloud works better than merely thinking reassuring words. Thoughts are easily waylaid and diverted. By actually speaking, I finish sentences! If you haven't talked out loud to yourself before, I suggest you begin now.

There is a vast realm of spiritual support available if you are willing to open yourself to it. Here is one thing you can do to call on spirit for help.

In one sentence, describe your current dilemma.

Turn that description into a question which begins, "How can I...?" or "What can I do to..."

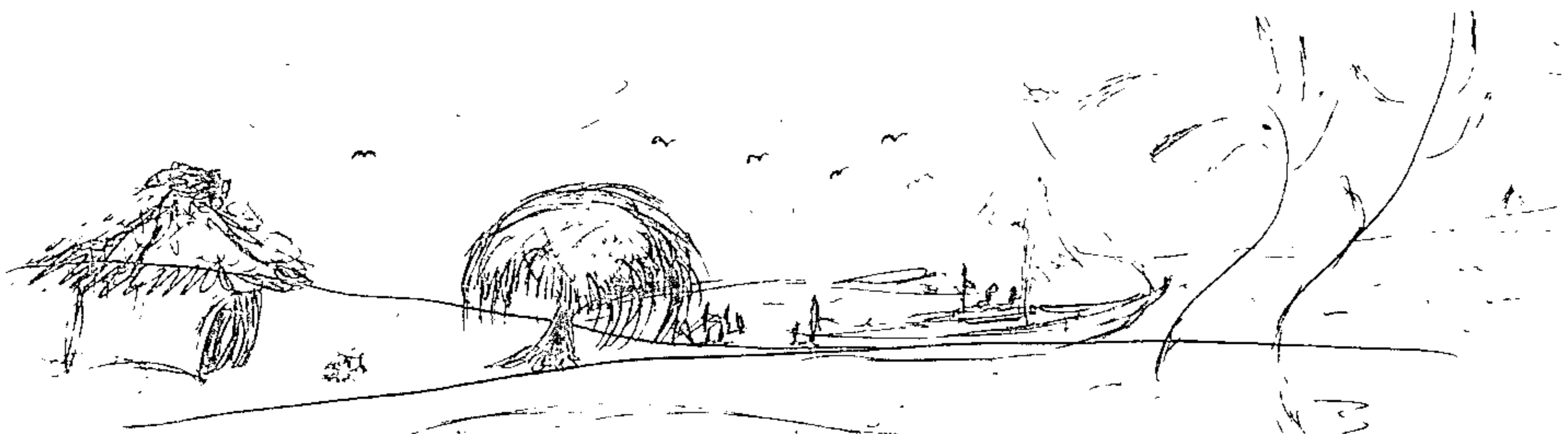
Sit quietly, take a few slow, deep breaths with the intention of inviting a reflective, meditative state. See yourself surrounded by a field of pure, white, radiant light. It is the light of spirit; its nature is perfect love.

Be held in this light. Feel its radiance permeate your body and mind.

Now hold your question in this light without trying to solve or answer it. Simply hold the question. Be open to images, intuitions, thought fragments, insights. Refrain from editing. Jot down whatever comes to you, even if it seems to make no sense. Trust there is value and you will find it.

Breath has the capacity to calm and your body has wisdom to share. The spirit, within and without, is the light and power to help your mind make connections. Connections hold the key to powerful self-calming.

MV





# The Celebration of Healing

By Kathy Pierce

My thoughts were running wild. My fingers white-knuckled on the steering wheel. I couldn't help but wonder who I would see, who would see me, what would I say—if anything. Would my Irritable Bowel Syndrome kick in and leave me in the bathroom all day? What would I do if I just flat-out freaked out in a workshop? What if I started crying and couldn't stop? My mind was a whirlwind. I was a nervous wreck and on my way to my first Celebration of Healing. I had no clue what there was to "celebrate" about sexual child abuse, but I was about to find out.

My therapist suggested I might benefit from this conference which is held in South Bend, Indiana every year. Since I trusted her judgment and knew she would not send me into anything I could not handle, although my bowels were telling me otherwise, I sent in my check and registration.

Sitting in that auditorium with so many other women and men who have suffered from sexual child abuse just blew my mind. How could there be so many? And this group was just the tip of the ugly iceberg. At first, I felt like I had a sign on my shirt with flashing neon lights that screamed "Abuse Victim!" You know, like the lepers had to do in the Old Testament when they walked into public, "Unclean, Unclean!" I was definitely feeling some pressure.

Including that Celebration, I have now attended ten straight years. I still have the Irritable Bowel Syndrome. I still worry about what I will say or do; I still wonder who I will see or who will see me, but that's all right. I have yet to find a place, except for my therapist's office, where I have felt so accepted for who and what I am. It is a safe place to share your struggles, anger, fears and tears. No one judges you. If you want to cry all day, that's cool. There's plenty of Kleenex and shoulders.

I think one of the things I appreciate most is the sense of

belonging and acceptance. You don't have to explain your worries, pains or fears. Other survivors just know. There's a silent bond among survivors. I don't know how it happens, but it's there. The presenters and support staff are some of the most compassionate and just plain cool people I've ever met. They are committed to helping survivors in their journeys and struggles. The Celebration has been an excellent way for me to mark my progress because I can look at where I have been, where I've come from, and catch a glimpse of where I am heading.

The Celebration offers a great variety of workshops, keynote speakers, a creative expression room, massage therapy, safe rooms, a yummy lunch, poetry booklet, and a speak-out at the end of the day. The encouragement and affirmations I have received from other survivors and staff have been of tremendous value to me in my healing journey.

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that there is hope. There is healing. Broken hearts can be mended. Crushed spirits can be lifted. The wounds from the abuse can be touched in a special way with the support of other survivors and the awesome staff. There's no reason to be alone. The Celebration is an excellent opportunity to take a life-changing step toward fresh and much-needed healing that we all deserve. It has been worth the effort, the nervousness, the fear, and yes, the trips to the bathroom. I encourage you to grab a friend or step out by yourself and enter a new dimension of your healing. You won't be disappointed.

If you have any questions or want more information about The Celebration of Healing, please call 574-283-1308, or visit the website: [www.celebrationofhealing.org](http://www.celebrationofhealing.org). God bless you on your journey.

MV

## Dull Gray Book

when anyone looks, all they see is this dull gray book. some pages are worn and tattered, some barely read, but all hidden by this dull gray cover.

If they were to open the book, they would hear children laughing, children crying, they would feel the rush of new ideas and old memories, yes the words may seem to make no sense, the pictures may be blurry, but from this side of the book, they all make sense. The stories that are within are shared among many, but there are many even i do not know.

The worn pages are tattered from rereading and reliving the story it tells, the barely-read pages are hard to read for they tell too much, so they are kept new, and hidden behind happier rhymes, there are pages that are worn from within. They have been read over and over by many, but if someone from the outside were to try to see, the book slams shut, the laughter turns to fear, and the crying silences, so that no one can hear, no one will know that many hide within, having not seen the world for years.

Yes, many from the outside just see a dull gray book, but this book is the dictionary of my life, the legacy of my survival, and it is written in tears.

By poet. for mark

MV



## Risks and Rewards of Speaking Out About Mental Illness

By Mike Skinner

*Mike Skinner is a professional musician and a survivor of childhood abuse. He has been quite active and "out there" in the survivor community. I asked him to tell me how he was able to be public about his mental health history, something many of us find extremely difficult (including me). He agreed to share his thoughts with MV readers. For more information about Mike's songs and music career, or to buy his tapes, check his website at [www.mskinnermusic.com](http://www.mskinnermusic.com). Email [mikeskinner@attbi.com](mailto:mikeskinner@attbi.com). Or write to him at Michael Skinner, 141 English Village Rd. #11, Manchester NH 03102.*

Deciding whether or not to "speak out" is still a demon I wrestle with on a daily basis. If you are afraid to be out in the open on this subject, you are not alone. I struggle with it all the time. I second guess everything I do relative to speaking out and up, not to mention resuming my musical career. The tapes are so embedded from a childhood of being told I was "no f\*\*\*ing good, lazy, worthless," etc. etc. So all those happy messages, coupled with their damn cruelty and perverted abuse, yeah...I have never felt good about myself inside. Despite any good deed I have done, or the simple fact I am a good person with a good heart.

How do I do it? Anger comes to mind, so much anger at what they did to me and the apathy of society in ignoring it. Then years later, in 1993, I had what they call a "nervous breakdown" and then I learned about stigma and discrimination. Here I was in deep pain, finally talking and sharing about the things of my childhood and teen years, and I had so many treat me like a leper, an outcast, damaged, insane, childlike etc. The list goes on and on.

Then in 1995 you take a 21 year marriage with five great kids and a spouse who forgot about "through sickness and in health" vows, etc. Decides an affair is better and to divorce me and dredge up anything I had ever shared with her in private about my abuse in a divorce court, call me "mentally ill, dangerous, erratic, out of control, flashbacks all the time" and our children should be kept from him," for these reasons, etc. I went from being father of the year and husband of the year to a freaking monster in a divorce court, yes the triggers were flying off the wall.

My mentally ill, dangerous, erratic state? Hiding under my bed, curled up in a ball in the corner, hiding in the closet, crying, or in the hospital voluntarily. Those voluntary hospitalizations now became "institutionalized over 20 times" Funny thing, though. Only four hospitalizations. Many awards and recognition for all the work I did for abused and neglected kids, and adults dealing with mental illness. Not to mention countless school field trips, countless volunteer activities at my kid's schools, and yes, all while "mentally ill." It all changed when a divorce was sought and obtained.

So I learned to say "F\*\*\* it and F\*\*\* them!!!" They want to demonize me for my childhood abuse and being "mentally ill". So be it...I had nothing to else to lose. Everything I held near and dear to me was taken away, and so damn viciously and cruelly. I met so many other survivors who experienced the same things in a divorce court or in other experiences.

So I take my anger, which I am well aware of, but I pray everyday to help me harness and focus that anger to help others, to help myself, to continue to be a good man, to be a good example to my children.

It is so hard for me, today is a hard day. It is a constant struggle and I do seek guidance everyday, for I must be honest, most times I just want to run away and hide in the woods (like I did as a kid.) I try to think of the greater good, and work so hard to overcome the shame attached to our histories of abuse, but also the internal shame.

I am urged on, strengthened, and guided by the countless emails, letters, cards, conversations etc. of how I am helping others that somehow lights a little spark in my head. Sometimes I say, "yeah, I'm

doing the right thing." But it's hard, so damn hard.

By being out there and being honest about what goes on with me and to me, I have garnered respect from those who matter most. Those who think of me as weak, crazy, no good—to hell with them. They are part of the problem. Yet sometimes their words do cut me to the bone and tear another piece out of me.

I learned as much as I could about being "mentally ill" and found guidance and comfort in knowing that so many well-known great people have suffered with severe depression, etc. Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill are but two of so many and they led their respective countries through two of the worst periods of history for them, The Civil War and WWII. There are so many things that caused me to be fully out there and open, but the anger and sadness caused me to say to hell with (hiding) it. What else can they take from me? My childhood was stolen and the horror of those years came back to haunt me in what it did to my marriage and to take my kids from me. I hope and pray to have the strength to carry on a little bit of this war every day until my dying days. It is not a war I chose, nor wanted, but I have always been a fighter; even as a child and as a teen I fought back as best I could.

We are fighters and we are all surviving soldiers of a war done to us that we did not ask for. I look at it in those terms, and hope and pray that my efforts help in saving one child from that horror. So that another adult survivor does not have to suffer as so many of us have. I have dreams and visions. I hope that my musical career makes me well known. It will give me a larger platform and clout to help in



the fight against child abuse. I study lots of civil rights movements, women's rights, child labor laws, union organizing in the old days, the plight of immigrants, etc. People have suffered untold horrors, we can't change that which was done to us.

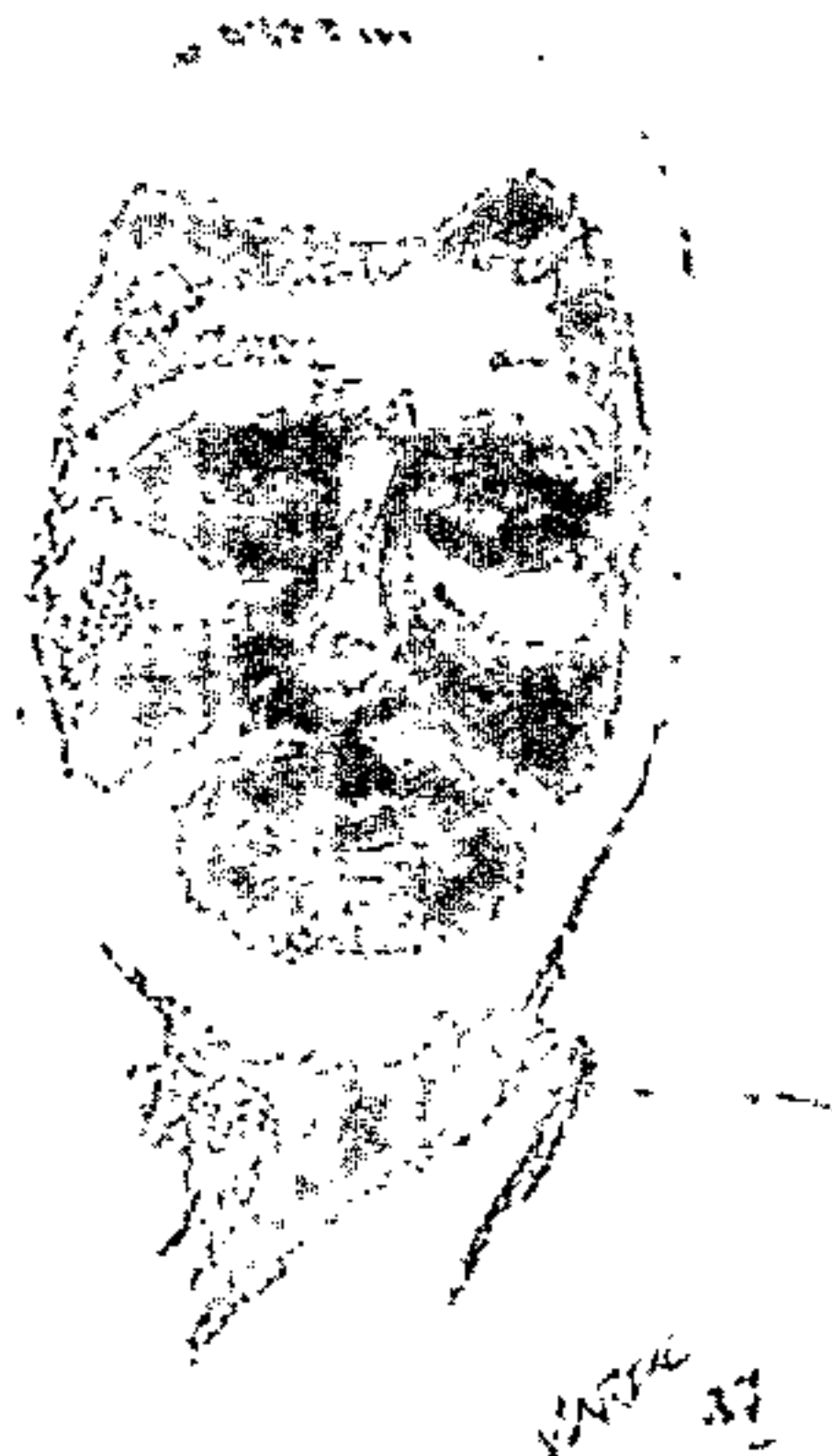
I try to be part of the change to help others.

One can learn most things about me and my beliefs through my music, the lyrics, and by what I write. I have the same struggles: I do give thanks to the God of my understanding in doing the best that I can. I gain strength from meeting others. It has always been a two-way street for me.

It is a balance though. I have lost work in the "normal world" when a prospective gig checks out my website. I can't tell you how many dates (with women) get undone when someone who thinks I'm a nice guy—funny, intelligent—then visits my website or gets a copy of my "Train of Tears" CD. She suddenly becomes busy and doesn't give me the time of day. So there is a price that one pays, also. I must admit that hurts. It hurts like hell because something that happened to you as a child affects how someone is going to perceive you. Their own prejudice and fears surrounding childhood abuse and mental illness come right to the heart of the matter. How sad for them. How sad for us.

I kept secrets until 1993. No more.

MV



## For Those Searching

By Marlene

I am writing this for people who are still searching for who they are, and why. Also, for those who already know, so that they may not feel alone.

I am a multiple. This is the main theme: how the personalities began and where they came from, all of them—those who seem ugly and evil, saintly and good ones too.

The different personalities helped me to survive hell to the nth degree, including the hellish loneliness. My alters were adopted over time, ever since I can remember. I watched and listened to everybody I saw, just like a detective. I chose my alters. Even the evil ones who hurt me, physically. They seemed to say: you think YOU can hurt me! Well, look at what I can do! Those times were very difficult and included a near-death experience.

For you people who aren't sure where your different ones came from: why don't you reflect deeply and wonder if you hadn't watched and listened to a person or a group of people where you decided you were going to be just like them?

In my case, I recall three black men doing road work. They bantered back and forth. These men worked diligently. They could not understand why a little white girl would want to watch them as I adopted all their personalities. They helped me through abuse and loneliness many times.

There are 27 personalities that I'm aware of. That is not to say there aren't more. I found a writer, a poet, a musician, an artist, a gardener, a carpenter, a machinist, a handyman. I helped my son with tracking and hauling his first deer out of the woods, and we skinned it. We used every bit of the deer for food. We didn't have much food. That was the only reason for the killing. He used a bow and arrow.

For some reason, unknown to me, I cannot go to college to get a degree. A part of me is terrified of school.

I am not sure if any of this can help any of you, but this is from my heart—to all of you who may be seeking and need a shoulder to lean on. You are not alone.

MV

---

### SILENT NO MORE

We were trained to be silent,  
no crying or screaming,  
If we did, it got worse.  
besides there was  
no one  
to help us.

Instead of crying or screaming,  
I was born.  
I was born out of a need,  
a need to be filled with pain,  
so Joanie would not  
get hurt worse.

We had to remain silent,  
and suffer only on the inside,  
no one must know because no one  
would believe us.  
At times we even doubted  
that it was real,

So much evil and pain,  
well, we will be silent no more.  
we will be cautious who we tell,  
because people find it  
hard to believe in  
so much evil,

Silent no more,  
our new slogan,  
even with the pain that will come  
from telling,  
we will be silent no more..

By Theresa  
July 03 2003

MV

# Thoughts on Integration

By Thea

Everything I read of integration in the early days of my decade of living with the diagnosis of DID scared me and my system so that we didn't want to integrate. It sounded like lots of hard work in therapy to accept the diagnosis of DID only to work hard to integrate so everyone becomes one person. It sounded lonely and scary. Yes, we have also read that everyone who has written about their experience of integration says that they don't feel it's lonely or sad. But it never was our goal and our therapist has never pushed integration, letting us take charge of our therapy, trusting our wise helpers to guide us in this healing journey. We have to choose the goal that works for us. However, what we've noticed is that integration is a spontaneous process that has evolved as our healing progressed, without any deliberate structure being imposed on us to integrate. In the last six months, I have begun to see how this process is evolving. These are some of the steps towards integration I have been observed from the inside.

## Mapping the System

A very important part of our healing journey to acceptance of the MPD/DID diagnosis was to get to know everyone in our system. A helpful way to do that is to map the system, including names, ages, jobs and skills of each person and relationships of each alter to the others in the system. As healing has continued, the map has been redone several times, to reflect the changes of the group, mergers of some alters into others, or groupings of alters usually by age.

Most of the time these days, we don't think about being dissociative. We get up, go to work and come home feeling unified, feeling as though we are one. Everything runs pretty smoothly. In the past, that sort of functioning required everyone in the system to make an effort to

coordinate and communicate about who is responsible for what and following through on it.

Though work life allows us to function more in a unified and integrated way, there are times when it's clear we are still multiple and not completely integrated. One example is weekends and evenings at home, when kids come out, usually feeling tired and needy. It isn't safe for kids to be at work or drive and they know better than to take the body then, but without specific invitation, the kids are out soon after arriving home.

Another example is when there is a crisis. Though unified adults may be functioning fine in the day-to-day work life, all that is needed to split us apart dissociatively is to have a crisis. Perhaps a car rear-ends ours while sitting at a traffic light. Or perhaps the doctor has run a test and found something suspicious and frightening. At those times we clearly split and resume old roles to manage the crisis. Once the crisis is past, we seem to reunify easily and not be aware of any splits or any dissociation. Frankly, I expect that splitting will happen any time in the future that there is a major crisis. It is the effective way this soul learned to cope, and all human beings regress in times of crisis. I fully expect we will also.

## Integration into Groups

With the exception of one alter spontaneously integrating with another alter seven years ago, then, there have been no other such mergers of the 30 some alters that are comprise our system. Instead, over time, we have noticed that various alters tend to group together, blending with each other so the individuals are no longer easily and quickly distinguishable. Where once there were a dozen or so little children, each clearly different and identifiable from the others, now there is a group we call "the kids." We know when "the kids" are around, but there is no clear sense of which kid it is, only of a mass

of them all together. In fact, these groupings have aligned along ages: the kids, the teens and the adults, and the helpers. The adults and several wise helper/protector alters seem to remain more identifiable and separate. Only in the last month did we stumble across the original personality, a baby, and come to learn when and how the splits of alters began in this system.

## Lineage Lines

As we heal, we have noticed that babies and children grow up, but to date, they have only grown up a few years. Then we noticed that there are "lineage lines" throughout the system. One little toddler who is very afraid and constantly twists her feet together all the time is the beginning of one lineage including a teenage girl who feels like she'll die if she is still, so she continues being in motion. Another line is of a 9 year old girl who identifies with St. Francis in caring for animals and birds and nature, is also continued in a young teen who was the first to accept the Christian faith and make that a central part of her life. That line continues with an adult who has been active in the church and finds faith a central feature of her life.

These lineage lines give us some understanding of another level of grouping in the system that is not by age or by emotion (fear, anger etc). This is a sort of a "tree" of the system, which shows the progress and development of the original splits from the original baby that is called the host. We continually learn more of these lineage lines and how to understand who is connected to whom and who is related to whom and how are they related. These lineages are helpful in finding more ways to cooperate and work together. So we find that groupings occur according to similar ages, horizontally, as well as vertically, across ages, following a lineage line of development.



## Transparency

We just found the words to explain another aspect of integration that has been going on with the groupings. In the integration process, the dissociative walls begin to dissolve. With healing, co-consciousness grows, so each alter knows what is going on in the body, regardless who has the body, and everyone shares memories, feelings and opinions. Then, the groupings and merging of alters begins. More often, two or three alters may group together, and the group functions with the attitudes, memories and experiences of all three combined, but not be distinctly one or the other. There is a transparency that occurs in the group. It is as though the two or three comprising the group are all functioning as individuals who are interconnected enough that each can see and feel the others' presence, feelings, attitudes and opinions, and each can talk through the other. It is a comfortable combination. It is confusing when our therapist asks who we are, because we usually don't know. It's hard to know when you are really three people all at once.

Another example of transparency is when a helper or wise alter speaks through a child group that is out. If a child is out and handling the situation fine, there is no need to switch and have the helper take the body to say something, but instead, the child is able to speak of things the child wouldn't know in and of herself. It feels natural to the child, not frightening or threatening. But, it is clear to the child and to the therapist that those words came from a wise helper. In other situations, words from a jokester who is telling a joke may speak through the child who is out, even though the child may not completely understand the layers of meaning that make the joke funny.

It has always been a surprise if one alter spontaneously decides to integrate with another, and that has only consciously happened once. The groupings and the experience of transparency have happened unconsciously and spontaneously while we were working on other issues. We just began noticing that we didn't know who we was out when

switching clearly occurred. The delineations among us are no longer sharp.

It has been fascinating to see who is in what lineage line and how those memories and experiences are linked, as well as seeing which ones in which age groups have clumped together. Consequently, those who felt isolated and alone earlier in our treatment are not as alone as they used to be. Those who were so well defended and scared that they could not sense the rest of us are now aware of feeling our presence and hearing our conversations. Now they sense our presence much like the way the bubbles of a carbonated drink tickle your tongue—a pleasant, mild sensation that is not intrusive.

## Integration Images

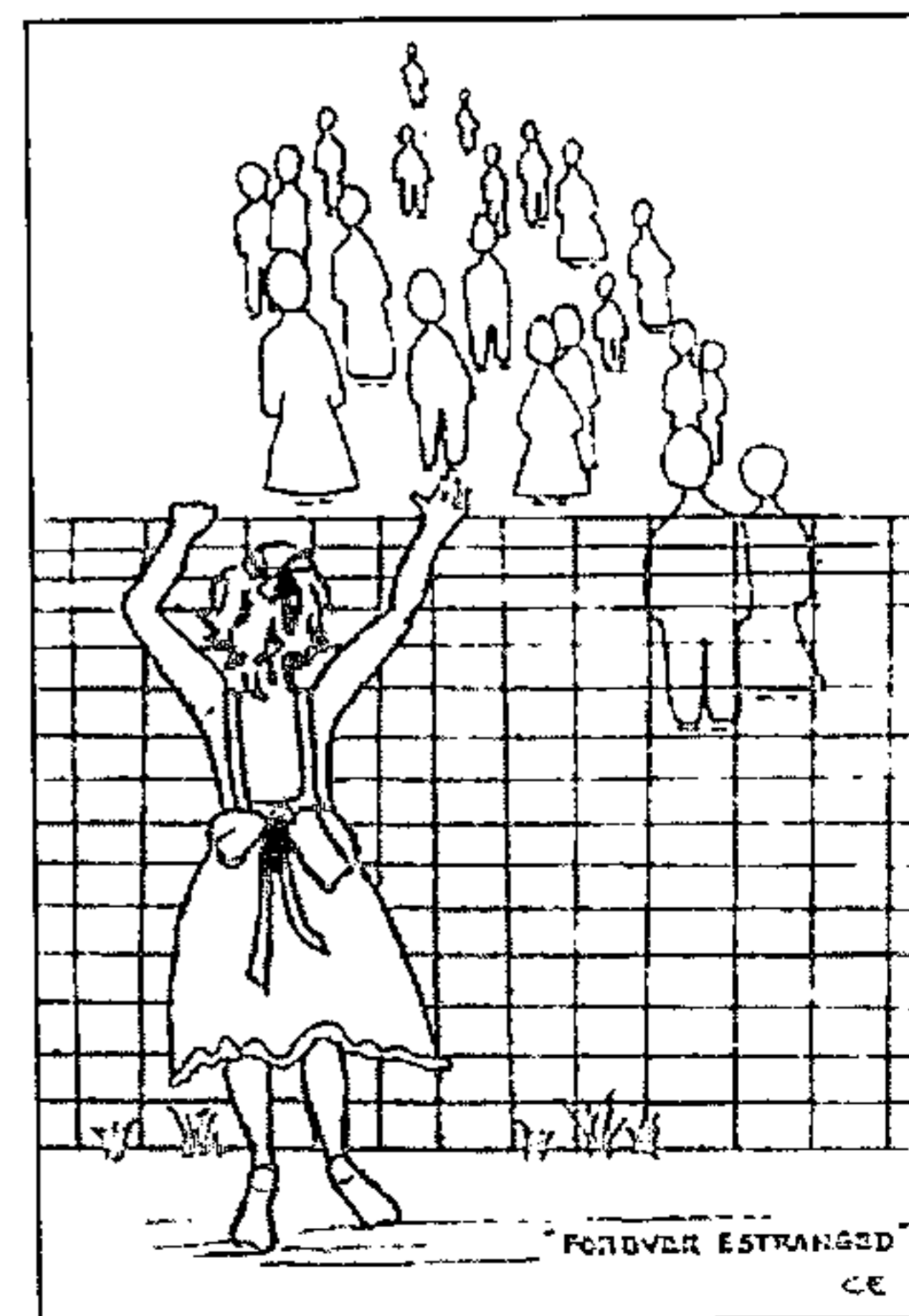
Visual images of what integration is for me and how it occurs appeared to me this past winter during a therapy session, in which I could "see" how each of us in the clan are as separate and as interconnected as any neuron is connected to another neuron in the brain. Integration increases the connections between each one of us, so that we are in constant, immediate contact like one neuron passing on a signal to the next, or to 100 others interconnected to it. The contact and exchange of information and energy between us is at lighting speed, unifying us.

At that time, another image of integration came to mind in a flash. A book we read a couple of years ago, *Power vs. Force*, proposed that emotions have different frequencies, with fear, sadness and bitterness at the low end of the scale and joy, love and hope at the high end. It also proposed that we can raise our frequencies with healing and focusing on the higher vibrating frequencies. We had noticed early on in therapy that each alter seemed to have one main emotion. Suddenly, while doing a process in therapy to create safety and balance in our system, we suddenly saw how each of us in our system vibrates at a different frequency that corresponds with each one's different main emotion, and the book suddenly made sense. Our

little children inside often vibrate at the lower end of the scale, filled with dread or fear or rage and our helper alters and wise protectors vibrate at the highest frequencies. Doing the process to create balance also allows us to connect with each other, helping each of us to vibrate at the highest frequency that we are able to, for the greatest good for all. We saw clearly how all are interconnected by the dominant emotions we each carry and the frequencies of those emotions. Generally, in the lineage lines, the younger the alter, the lower the frequency and corresponding negative emotion. As the lineage line ages, the emotions lighten and the frequencies rise.

Though these images do not correspond with the idea of integration I had read about in books, it was clear to me that we are continuously becoming more interconnected with each other and less separate and compartmentalized. We each have an effect on all the others in the system, even as we retain some differences of experience, memory, attitude and emotion. The interconnectivity that is growing among us allows us to function more efficiently and with less energy drain that occurs with switching personalities and lack of co-consciousness.

MV



## *I Love Myself*

I love myself  
 More than my parents  
 Were able to love me.  
 I love myself  
 For surviving  
 When it was  
 Hard to survive,  
 For laughing  
 When I wanted  
 To cry,  
 For helping others  
 And in that  
 Helping myself.  
 I love myself  
 For being able  
 To keep  
 A good heart  
 When anger  
 Overwhelmed me,  
 For being able  
 To trust others  
 When I  
 Feared them  
 The most.  
 I love myself  
 Whether or not  
 Other people  
 Love me,  
 I love myself  
 Because I'm  
 Tired of hating myself  
 Without the reason!

*By Ann*

MV

## Computer Steppingstone

By Diane L.

Boy, oh boy do I love my new computer! It's not that I haven't had to learn on many of them over the years, mind you (what...twenty-five, thirty jobs later?) And then learn, and unlearn, and learn, and unlearn, as different parts had their way. This D.I.D. stuff is not necessarily conducive to becoming One with those models and limitations they throw at us in the work place. You know what I mean...trying to look up Many Voices or other D.I.D. information with the screen slightly askew, the door "presumably" shut, and this ever-present fear in your heart that someone is going to catch you! Kind of kills the fervor!

So I took matters into my own hands. It set me back a pretty penny, financially—but we know this was one heck of a good move. And just remember, you wanna-be computer junkies...be sure you get unlimited access on that highway of growth!

It may be past my bedtime, but this message had to come out. I had to share this with Lynn W. and with you. My therapist said something to me a little more than a week ago, and it got me thinking. At 49 years old, the biggest struggle is still trying not to isolate! I am sure you know the frustration—that endless thing the parts do to confuse, sabotage, divert, project, stall, rationalize, etc. Oh...we try to get it all together, and we are making good gains in that area. But the torture! Courage gained, courage toyed with, courage ultimately disintegrating as we "garble" ourselves out of opportunity. Oy! I have never once experienced a social activity or interlude without anguishing over it first. At any rate, this computer can provide a Stepping Stone to help ease us one step closer to life as we want to know it! I'd say it was worth big bucks, wouldn't you?

(My fear says, "No Way!")

And all this is done in my pajamas, with bags hanging under my eyes, and bangs pulled back in a gaudy little barrette (Ok, so some parts think it's cute!) Why...why do we endlessly

feel unworthy of other people? For most of my life I've gone by the assumption that no one wants me around; they merely tolerate me.

Well...all I've got to say to that is Horse Pucky! Yes, even without resounding unanimity, we know now that we have value and worth, and the right to a happy life. Isolation is hard to break. the ever-burning question is, "How do you allow open, honest relationships and communication, when your very life has had to remain hidden in lieu of ignorance and survival?" It demands endless effort to deal consistently with the world and its ever-changing landscape, not to mention our own changing landscapes.

Is it really so much easier to maintain that facade of control, and hunger down at home? To be honest—that path of thinking has come close on many occasions to destroying the lot of us. No heroics here. Characteristically, my resolve wants to weaken with an "Oh my God I can't do it" thing.

But you know what? You all give US all the courage to trip-trap over that bridge with the troll under it. Yup! I'm gonna get me a belly full of cabbage!

MV

---

## *Brief Calming Strategy*

I have this experience to share. Recently, while experiencing some stage fright before a presentation at a university, I calmed myself down by repeating, "Just be yourselves!" Not only did I crack myself up and went out on stage with a big smile, the presentation went very well.

*By Bonnie*

MV



# Re-Collecting the Self: A Journey Into the Past and Back

By Gwen

I have been really angry about the effects of trauma on my life. It often seems that the abuse was senseless. Moments of rage that left a lifetime imprint on a child's psyche. It is difficult for me to remember my childhood, and I have learned to work with the evidence of trauma that exists: overwhelming transference, severe post-traumatic and dissociative symptoms. I remember some trauma clearly (trauma that was also substantiated by my mother.)

Other events are fluid puzzles to my mind, a kaleidoscope of body memory, night terrors and fragmentary memory that is difficult to hold still or make sense of. What I do remember is enough. The effects in my life of childhood trauma are severe and myriad. It took me a long time (years) to get to the point of saying *What I remember is enough*. For years, I wanted to know, *What the hell did you do to me?*

Especially I wanted to know all the details about what happened in my early childhood, my early memories. I wanted to remember everything. Still, a part of me wants to remember everything.

I think that, for me, is part of wanting pieces of myself back. I can get those pieces of myself back by trusting my body, myself. Still, a part of me wants to know: *what is it that my sister remembers that is so horrible she won't tell me?* I know enough when I trust myself. I have the keys, my body remembers. I know the remembered body pain, I know the waking in the morning nauseated and suicidal. I know the night terrors unfolding like fluid reels of filmy memory. It is difficult to trust myself.

But I now believe it is vital to trust the little girl part of myself that remembers, that way down deep part of myself. The voice of my body that says, *I hurt*. The core of my being. As for forgiveness? That is difficult. Forgiveness in my family has been demanded as a *right* of the abuser. Not as a choice for the person

forgiving. As though I should forgive because that is what is expected. (I grew up in a strict, Children-should-be-seen-and-not-heard environment.) Because that is the 'religious' way, and because 'forgiveness' keeps the family neat and tidy in appearance.

But forgiveness can be my choice. I am still not comfortable with the whole concept of forgiveness because of the way it was distorted as I was growing up. In my family, forgiveness meant anyone could do anything to me and they had to be forgiven! Behaviors were repeated, not changed. Somehow the focus shifted from the abusive behavior to the child who would not forgive! I don't want to forgive to simply excuse behavior so that the family dynamics are smoothed over and once again appear crystalline and perfect to outsiders. Forgiveness doesn't mean denial. I want forgiveness to acknowledge the hurt, acknowledge the devastation, and make sure that it stops. I don't want to say *That was okay*. It is *not* okay.

I might be able to forgive if there were all three of these things: proper treatment sought so that no one else is hurt and so that the abuser's heart can also mend; a freely given and specific apology, *I am truly sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for... and That should never have happened to you*; and restitution.

In many ways I have not forgiven what has happened to me. I think I can forgive and understand the abuse more than I can forgive the effects on my life (night terrors; eating disorders; anxiety and panic; severe depression; initially well over a hundred personalities; the list goes on and on...) I am still deeply angry. The denial makes me angry. Three generations' sense of entitlement to forgiveness for on-going and severe emotional/verbal abuse makes me angry.

## ***I am still angry!***

Though my treatment has been paid for by my abuser (my treatment began when I was young, and when

my diagnosis was known outside the family. There were years before that when my family made sure that I was kept away from mental health professionals.) There hasn't been acknowledgment of the abuse as the cause of my dissociative disorder. There hasn't been acknowledgment by my abuser that he needs treatment or of how badly I was hurt. There has been a solid and angry Wall of Denial and a complex web of secrecy.

I am not sure what to do with *help* like that, though I consider myself fortunate to receive some financial restitution (though not without its ties). And sometimes I feel deeply saddened to realize that it is not enough to make the horrendous pain go away, to take away the hollow and burning years of trauma, to mend broken relationships. The financial restitution has become a thread, without which, I might simply let go of my family of origin the way you let go of a net on the glassy ocean surface. It has become, while keeping me afloat with valuable treatment that gives me a chance at life, a symbol *illuminated by silence* of what wasn't ever given: validation for the pain and reality of abuse. There are moments when I am ready to let go. For myself. Those moments are more often as I mend.

MV

---

## *Lonesome*

Wake up and look around,

not to understand what you see.

Breathe the air & smell the flowers,

with a longing that is painful & pure

ONE DAY, ONE DAY, all will be well

By Pat C

MV

## You Stole a Little Boy's Life— You Stole my Brother!

### To the Grade School Janitor in Kansas—

Do you know that in those few minutes in the Boy's Bathroom in the basement of that Grade School you took my brother's life as surely as if you had bludgeoned him to death? I don't know how many times you caught him, alone, scared, and touched him, how many times you took him across the hall to the furnace room and assaulted his sweet little boy's body. I do know all those times when he came home from first and second grade crying, wet and soiled, because he would not go to the bathroom at school anymore. I know how he was shamed by teacher and peers, how many nights I whispered reassurances to him after we were kissed and left to sleep. He didn't, ever, for most of his life, sleep deeply and safely as I did. He was always scared, vulnerable and often sick.

Do you know how you destroyed his health? Fifty, that's 50, years with kidney infections, stomach aches, and finally kidney failure, predictions of an early death, fatigue, one illness after another, dialysis, then a transplant,

failure there also, exhaustion, dialysis heart failure, diabetes, and then one terrible day, release into death from a lifetime of suffering.

You didn't kill all of him, though. Because of his wonderful spirit, kindness, humor, love for and from family, friends, wife and children, he exceeded any expectation of a Human Soul and gave more to all around him than he ever received. Children and adults sought his company, his lovingness, his intelligence, his humility and marvelous wit. Of course, his illnesses distorted family life and his dreams for himself—but not his Spirit. That grew and grew and grew and probably healed more sad young lives than you could ever imagine.

Do you even remember that little boy? Do you ever dream of his tears and terror? And what about the others, and I am sure there were many. Do you ever wonder about any of them and what your evil cost them, about their lost lives?

I hope you dream Dark and Deadly Dreams tonight!

A Sister

MV

### Helping the Little Kids

Helping my scared little kids and babies takes a lot of my time. They have flashbacks often.

I use dolls (each child has a "doll body") to enable me to cuddle and kiss them. Singing to them, telling them stories and distracting them by playing with toys with them helps quite a bit.

Listening to lullaby cassettes helps too.

They always love stories, so I tell them a story about a kid who is scared, but finds out everything is okay. Then we tickle them and make lists of who loves them.

Calming us adults and teens when we're under stress involves, for us, using "self-hypnosis" tapes, reading,

sometimes listening to music. Also, being busy and helping others helps too.

By Sally B.

MV

### Lost

Lost – One long chain of precious days—

Each one linked together with golden memories

And inlaid with twenty four crystal hours.

Every hour has been illuminated with 60 shining minutes.

Lost somewhere between then and now.

Not suitable for any other.

They were crafted just for me.

Some are touched by sunshine and rainbows.

Others are clouded with storms that came my way.

Each one contains a truth I have yet to know.

Some may be stained with tears, While others have been tarnished by sorrow

And, a few may have been destroyed by fiery rage.

One side glistens with undying hope; The other has been dulled by the despair of endless pain.

If you find my golden chain of lost time, please return to me.

Condition matters not.

What you may see as broken beyond repair

Can be pieced back together with enough tender loving care.

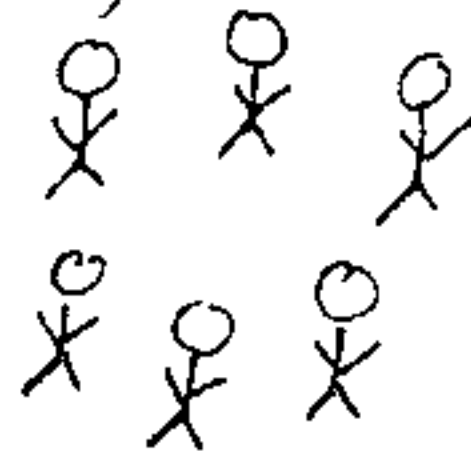
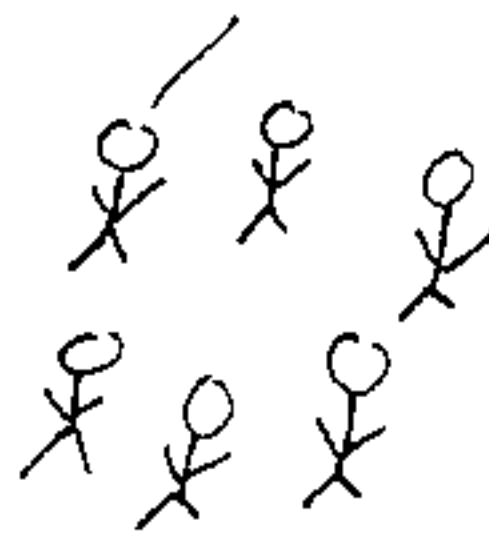
No reward can be offered for this chain of unaccounted days

For it holds no value to you

Yet is priceless in my world of me.

By Polly for the Keepers.

MV

Meeting	Meeting
I'm going to be completely healed in 6 months.	I'm healing one piece at a time.
	
I'm a survivor.	15 years later.
	VICTORIA LIGHT 2002



## Mothering

As a mother of 5 3-D kids aged from 5-14, it became impossible to hide my multiplicity from the kids. We've explained it to each of the children at different times when we felt they were able to understand the basic concepts. My 5 year old has always known and as a result has an interesting view of Mom's others. Especially since we have several real-life friends who are also multiple.

If he hears a change in voice he'll ask, "Which one of you is your name now?" We went through a brief stage of dealing with his hope that "asking" to speak to our 6-year-old alter would get him what he wanted.

John: "Can I have a cookie?"

Mom: "Not right now."

John: "Can I talk to Amelia?"

Needless to say, for the sake of consistency in parenting, this was never allowed. His determination to try shows the intelligence and adaptability

of young kids and has provided comic relief in what can be such a confusing and painful struggle.

My personal favorite story happened when John was in a store with a family friend who dissociates. John commented on not having many friends his age. Our friend mentioned some of his littles and mine and asked "What about them?"

My son looked him in the eye and in the loud voice typical of small children announced, "All the people in your head and all the people in Mommy's head don't count." We've since stepped up our search for opportunities for him to spend time with other kids his age. I can only imagine the things he'll tell his teacher when he enters kindergarten this fall. LOL.

By Marisa & Crew

MV

*This poem was written over a year ago, at a time when I wanted to end my pain. My therapist wanted me to work through it. How she got me through it I really don't know. But I think this poem speaks volumes for the power that someone who knows and understands and cares can do for someone who doesn't...By Denford O.*

### To My Therapist Who Wouldn't Quit When I Wouldn't Start

Well, Doc, it is one of those times. The blackness of this page tells the story of my life, my soul. The red is the color of life's blood. I'm tired Doc. Tired of waking up to more medication; To having to fix my meds for three and four weeks at a time Just because I don't want to take them each morning I waken. I'm tired of living like an invalid (Unable to do, to want to do. I'm tired of the expectations of others who hold expectations that I should want to live, to participate in life. I'm tired of the hold that family has on me, that they need me to be, if not to live life. I'm so very, very tired. I'm tired of the fear I face each time I take a breath. Can't it be my last? Won't you let me go? I want to go home and I cry because I can't... I can't go and I can't do... I just am. A pitiful existence I can't change. Won't you let me go home Doc? Won't you?

MV

\$18.95 paperback, \$3.95 electronic [www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com) Finally, Graycie DiFalco Tripodi published her book, *Windows of Fear*, with Dorrance Publishers © 2002 Its 180 pages are mostly poetry, with some letters about her recovery \$16 00 paperback. [www.dorrancepublishing.com](http://www.dorrancepublishing.com)

MV

## Books

### Shine the Light: Sexual Abuse and Healing in the Jewish Community

By Rachel Lev

© 2003 Published by Northeastern University Press. (617) 373-5480 [www.nupress.neu.edu](http://www.nupress.neu.edu) 26.95 hardback 266 pgs includes index

*Shine the Light* is an informative, comprehensive book about the complexities of abuse in Jewish homes and religious situations. Rachel Lev, a therapist and incest survivor, combines her personal experiences with those of many other survivors in a well-organized and thoughtful book. There's a common assumption that Jews do not have violent or abusive relationships—which Lev clearly debunks. As many of us know, human failings permeate all religions and interactions. Here, the unfortunate secrets borne by abuse victims are spelled out in detail by the talented writers and artists who add their experience to Lev's book. But this book compellingly illuminates the healing possibilities of Judaism as well. Along with wonderful, clear thought and writing, this book includes numerous illustrations by survivors who are

recovering from their pain. This is an excellent contribution to abuse recovery literature, for all—regardless of their religious heritage—who are concerned about patterns of denial, and creative ways to heal the broken spirit.

### Self-published Books by Survivors

*Many Voices* frequently hears from readers who want to see their own writing and art published. We've recently received three books of this type. You may want to check them out to see what other people are doing with their work. These books include: *Before I Could Walk*, © 2002 by Abigail Collins (who wrote and drew a lot for *Many Voices* in our early years). This book focuses on recovery from Satanic ritual abuse using principles of Christian faith. 148 pgs. Illustrated. Published by 1<sup>st</sup> Books, \$9.50 paperback, \$3.95 electronic edition. Another 1<sup>st</sup> Books publication is *An Autobiographical Horror Story, Parts I and II*, by James Daniel © 2002. This is in 8 x 10 format, primarily poetry and striking pen drawings with a strong, direct style. It is described as "Forty-eight Torturous Musings from A Maverick Mystic on the Terrorizing Effects of Child Abuse"

**MANY THANKS TO OUR WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTORS!**

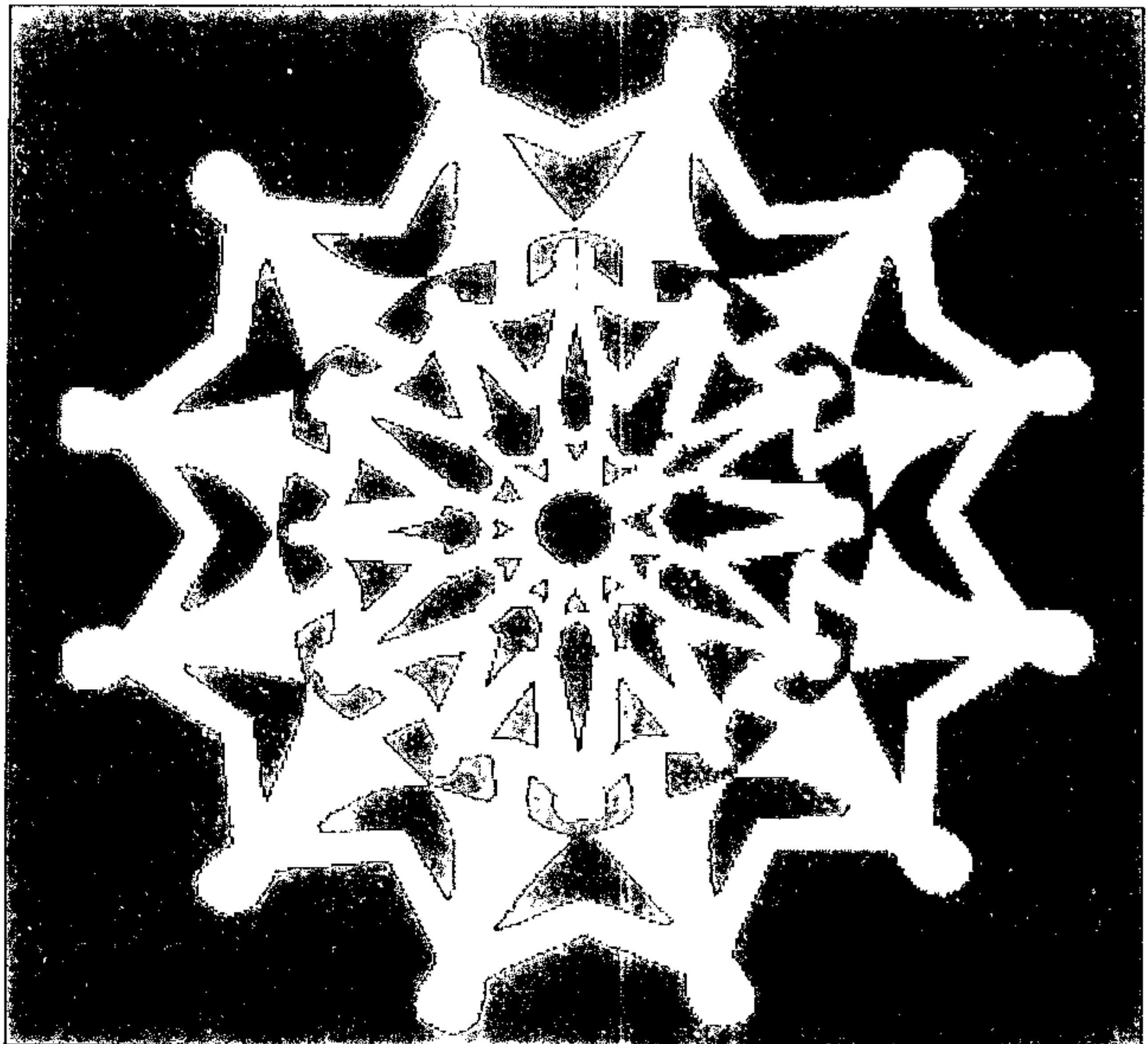
Please send us Writing and Artwork for our upcoming issues, and start working on 2004! Your ideas help hundreds of others! -Lynn W.

**October 2003**

Medical/Psychological issues. Do doctor visits scare you? Body memories and trigger prevention. Art: Your Body Image(s)  
Deadline: August 1, 2003.

**December 2003**

New to therapy? How to build trust. Stuck in therapy? Working it through. Changing therapists. Moving on. Art: You and your therapist in session.  
Deadline: October 1, 2003.



By Marisa & Crew

**Share with us!**

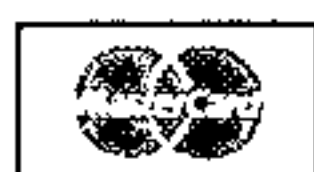
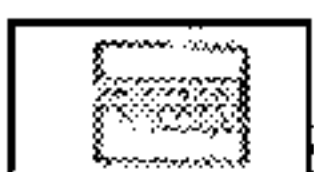
Prose, poetry and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. 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**

**NEW!**

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



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 \_\_\_

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*, P.O. 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 \_\_\_\_\_