

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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In This Issue:

**Sharing Accomplishments
Moments of Pride
Making a Better World...& more!**



A Sound I Thought

A sound I thought I heard
silently spoken with pleading eyes
asking to be seen
recognized

To become known
speaking the truth
allowing the knowing
the telling

A voice once lost
finding safety
returning to echo reality
emanating timbre

Vocalizing scenes
once removed
returning to expose
envisioning development

Movement toward truth
through reality
returned from the night
of denial

Opening my heart
to receive pieces of you
I had not known
I had not seen

Believing your essence
to reflect the entirety
of your being completed
becoming whole

By MVP

MV

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Accomplishments

By Lynda Wisdo

Accomplishments...pride...satisfaction...yes, one would expect these three things to come in that order and when I first started to write this submission that is exactly what I expected to see flow from my pen- a list of my accomplishments followed by the many ways in which I duly celebrated or congratulated myself for them. Once I thought about it however, that's not how my life has played out...not at all.

As I sit in the library of the community college my sons are attending, the same community college I attended some thirty years ago, I can't help but remember how, upon completing the requirements for my AS degree, I never once considered attending the graduation. The thought just never occurred to me. Instead, I simply crossed "received AS degree" off my list of things to do and went on to whatever was required next in life: a job, a car. Years later, after completing the requirements for my BS degree, with honors, I again refused to attend both the awards ceremony and the graduation. Too much trouble? A waste of time? I think the reason was more that it simply didn't matter. Nothing I did was real or meaningful anyway, the bad or the good, the abuse or the accomplishments. In order to survive the abuse, I had turned everything into a dream- my life nothing more than a string of events lived at best in a state of half wakefulness and at worst completely buried within a shell of dissociation, terror and fear.

Fast forward a few decades and lo and behold, my efforts in writing were rewarded with a published children's book, one that was made into a one hour television special! Wow, this was really something, wasn't it? Something I should celebrate. Something I should tell all my friends and family about. Not me. I didn't tell anyone outside of my home about the television program- not the date or the

time, not the channel or the topic. In fact, I never even recorded the special. Instead, I watched in horror, filled with shame that I had ventured to try and accomplish anything in the first place. Who did I think I was? For the full hour, I sat wishing the program would end, wishing it would all just go away so I could slip quietly back into my comfortable, panic-ridden, near-agoraphobic state.

Why would I react so strangely? Why would I bury my accomplishments instead of celebrating them? I had worked hard. Shouldn't I have been proud of myself? (Funny how just writing those last three words, proud of myself, even now fills me with shame).

Looking back on it, I can see that these were not the accomplishments I so desperately needed...the AS degree or the BS. The children's book was not the story I needed to tell. The story I need to tell still lies silent, clutched between the frightened fingers of my dissociated selves: Eloise... Rosie...Toltimmy. Even after so much healing, so much remembering, I have to wonder if my girls will ever feel safe enough to release more of our truth into my waiting hands. Ah, but only time will tell...sweet, precious time and my continued attention to what the girls and I need in order to heal...to grow...to live.

Today, it is four years since the summer of my breakdown (breakthrough as my dear Dr. S. would call it). Since then, I have remembered and released so much of the trauma from my past. I've successfully gone off all the medications the hospital sent me home with and even the bio identical hormones I begged for to help get me through a very difficult perimenopause. Pretty much on my own and with only fragments of my sanity, I've raised two extraordinary, intelligent and compassionate sons who graduated high school at the top of their class. I've become a certified yoga instructor, a consulting hypnotist

and a Level II Reiki practitioner. On paper, I can see that I've accomplished much in my life and for all of this and so much more I am truly grateful...GRATEFUL.

Proud? Satisfied? Not by a long shot. I think this is because there is still so much I want to do...so much I need to do.

First and foremost, I need to find gainful employment.

Secondly but just as importantly, I need to help raise awareness on how often childhood abuse is the trigger for so many of our societal ills—ongoing abuse, mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence, suicide—and how speaking out about our own childhood abuse can help us to free not only ourselves but others from these painful and destructive secrets.

I also hope to help both men and women recognize and reclaim the wisdom that lives within each one of us and to use that wisdom to help create a society built on compassion, integrity and hope...a society where the innocence of childhood is cherished and protected and where sexuality is an expression of mature love and respect between two people, an act that always uplifts and never, never degrades or destroys.

Hey...now there's an accomplishment we could all be proud of!

Wishing all of us hope and wholeness on our journeys.

--Lynda Wisdo

MV



Healing Words

Dear God,
 There is a hole deep in my heart
 It comes for being wounded when I was
 younger
 The perpetrators stole my youth, my
 innocence, and my livelihood.
 They stole it like thieves in the night
 I imagine now I must find a way to heal
 this hole
 This gaping wound
 That lets my purity seep through
 That lets my faith seep through
 That lets my parts seep through
 That lets my sanity seep through
 I imagine now I must find words to
 symbolize the tiny sutures needed to
 mend this broken heart.
 For years now I have been wounded
 Wounded by the atrocity of being left in
 the wilderness for the wild to prey upon
 Wounded by my endless years of struggle
 I do not wish to decorate this experience
 with eloquent words or keen insight
 I need these words
 I need these words to protect me when no
 one else did
 I need these words because I was made to
 feel dirty and ashamed
 I need these words to combat the
 depression, sorrow, guilt and pain
 Words mean everything to me
 I declare with these words God, that you
 love me and I am worthy
 Whether I am successful in life or not
 Whether I marry and have kids or not
 Whether I lose weight nor not
 Even if my friends betray me and my
 family forsakes me
 I'm still worthy
 I was worthy before the molestations, rape,
 and abuse
 I'm worthy now
 I declare that I have overcome many
 obstacles and accomplished a great deal
 But there is so much more to be
 conquered
 I will continue to write these words
 First for the purpose of self-reflection
 Second for discovery of every mend
 And third, to share with all my sister-
 friends who have fallen victim to the
 wolves in the night.
 There is healing
 These are healing words

By Myra Anderson

MV

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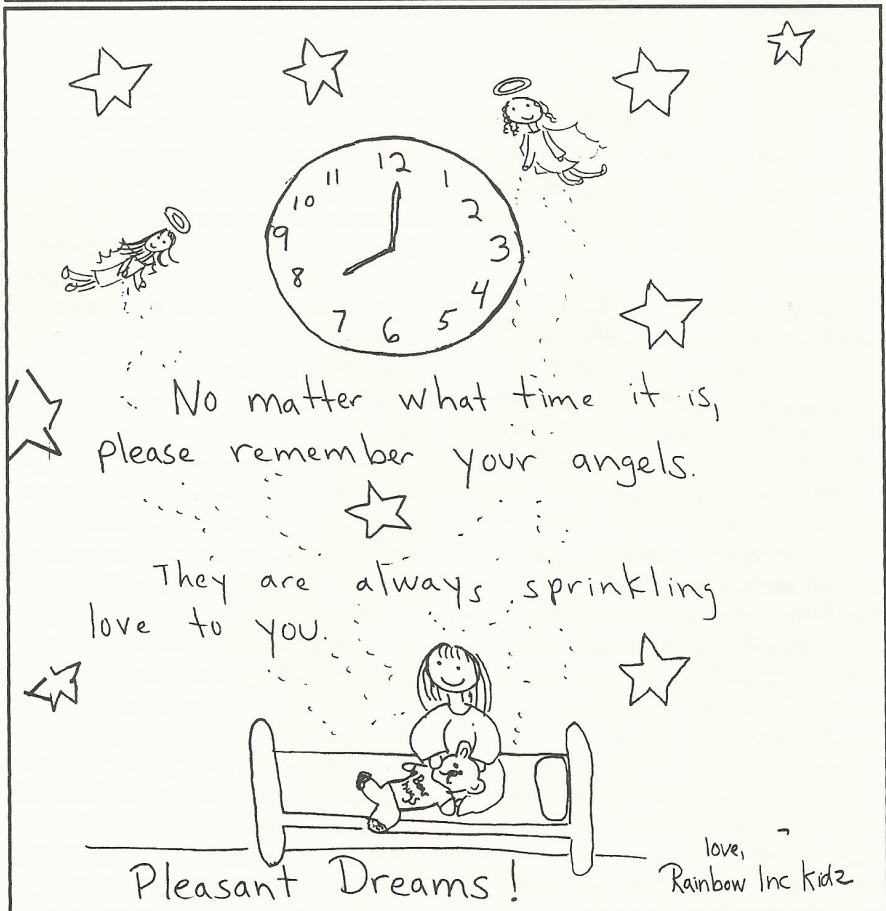
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My Story

By Kim Kubal

Looking back on my life, I realize that I spent most of my childhood and adolescence fragmented and out of my body, often as though I was looking down from above. I don't have many memories of my childhood, teens and early adult life, because I wasn't "present" for much of it. It was safer for me not to be present, not to feel, as many of the events unfolded and occurred.

I now know that my situation was one of extreme and recurrent abuse and trauma. During times of abuse and torture, I simply went someplace else. I didn't feel the physical pain.

I needed to escape, rather than feel the abandonment, rejection, betrayal and even hatred directed at me. It wasn't safe for me to feel. I couldn't tell you what my feelings were then. Even looking back now, I'm not sure what I felt, if anything, at the time. Instead of feeling the loneliness, desperation and self-hatred I came to experience later in life, I was just numb. Later, as I grew up, I learned to escape my body and uncomfortable feelings with multiple addictions and self-abusive behaviors – food, sugar, sex, drugs; you name it, I probably did it or used it to escape my feelings.

Because I wasn't present during much of the abuse, I didn't remember it for a long, long time. I learned to suppress any vague memories and uncomfortable feelings through denial and addictive behavior. It wasn't until I started therapy, went through an ugly divorce, got into the first of many 12-Step recovery programs and, finally, started dealing with my multiple addictions, that the memories began to surface, though only gradually, at first. Even so, I was in tremendous denial. I couldn't believe that my family, particularly my father and mother, had been involved. After many soul-searching months and much therapy, I came to understand that my father, who I thought I adored and had placed on a pedestal, had sexually abused me; with my mother's

complicit knowledge and approval. I realized she had also been sexually abused by her father. She didn't know anything different, I thought to myself. Later, when I finally confronted my parents, they denied everything. I was ostracized by them and the rest of my family. Somehow, I couldn't understand how they could deny the truth, especially my mother.

I descended into a deep, suicidal depression, clinging to my therapist and several 12-Step programs I was in. Seemingly without hope, I prayed every night for God to take me, even as I experienced the horror of flashbacks and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). During these early years of recovery, I felt alone and isolated. I developed physical problems that didn't make sense and were only later identified; one diagnosis was Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), a condition not well understood and a diagnosis viewed with distrust by many physicians. I learned about dissociative identity disorder (DID) and how it applied to me.

I wanted to give up many, many times, but somehow I held on. Even then, I now realize, God was taking care of me. Friends showed up unexpectedly, one with a teddy bear, at times I was very suicidal. At other times, friends would show up with food or a few soothing words, just to comfort me.

Somehow, I seemed to intuitively know that my salvation depended upon finding a spiritual path of healing. I started spiritual counseling to overcome my concept of an abusive God, which was based on what I learned as a child – that God hated me and would abandon me and I would end up on the streets homeless with no one to take care of me. I had so much rage toward this Higher Power. What kind of God is it, I thought, that allows such terrible abuse, that permitted the perpetrators to destroy my soul, my body and mind! It wasn't until after many years

of professional therapy, 12-Step recovery and spiritual nurturing that, during a 10-day silent retreat, I realized God cannot stop free will, even if it's the will to do evil, and that we all have free choice. I made my choice to recover!

I've been on disability for several years now as a result of the CFS, an auto-immune deficiency disorder. It interfered with my ability to interact with others, though I am getting better. For much of this time, I was also severely depressed. Somehow, I managed to not give up, but instead, to find the strength and the willpower to overcome my fears, fight off the effects caused by the perpetrators in my early life and move forward.

After 10 long years of healing, I finally thought I was done and could start to live life. Boy, was I wrong! More memories of ritualistic abuse came up; with my mother, father, grandfather and other men. The realization that my mother, the woman I had come to regard as a victim herself, had joined in the abuse, was overwhelming. I wanted to die all over again – I just couldn't believe this had happened! I experienced a new round of denial, until I had the sobering realization that this had indeed occurred, that my memories were real, and that I had more work to do.

I pressed on, at times seeing two separate therapists each week, along with my 12-Step meetings and spiritual retreats. The emotional pain was more intense than I had ever experienced before. Now, however, I was strong enough to face my memories and feelings and to move forward. My trauma therapist treated me as an equal and a partner in this process, with love, with respect and with admiration for my healing and growth. This, as well as my deep faith in God, helped to keep me going.

Now, after over 21 years of intense therapy, having been in five different 12-Step programs and dealing with 12 different addictions and behavior

disorders, one day at a time, I am able to give back. I am at peace within myself and love myself – I come from a place of love and see the love, which is God, in everyone. I have collaborated on a book to help others like me, have a website, at www.strengthtoheal.com, and am now in the process of making my vision – a sanctuary for women survivors of recurrent trauma – a reality.

I'm here to tell my story of love and forgiveness and to offer a ray of hope for those just beginning this process, as well as those well into the process of healing, but still searching for something more. There is light at the end of the tunnel. I have a sense of freedom, joy and spontaneity now that I have never experienced before in my life. I feel 24 instead of 54 and my life has just begun!

MV

For Every Child

For every child who cries at night
alone with shame and fright.
For every child who wants so much
to only find a gentle touch.
For the beaten child, who cries in pain
whose tears run silent,
like the rain.
For the child used to satisfy lust
who never learns to love or trust.
For the child whose home is just a shell
where life becomes a living hell.
For the child who smiles
but cannot feel
because of scars too deep to heal.
For every child who years for love
I hope and pray to heaven above.
To hear our cries and heal our pain
and give us back our lives again.

By Jeanmarie R.

MV

Cancer Poem

Each number
on the elevator
each step taken
on the walkway
feels like
deepening quicksand
bringing us closer
to the words cancer center
with the arrow pointed right.

Even when we try
to calm our thoughts
the body betrays us
with a tight stomach
clenched fists
a dry mouth
no amount of water relieves
The battle with
"fight or flight"
rages
with flight
the strongest contender.
Without our husband's hand,
a silent "help me"
to whatever god there is
we might well bolt
to any place but here.

We act brave
smile
say how grateful we are
for knowledgeable doctors
caring nurses
warm blankets
family
medical insurance
access to the best care.

We cry in the bathroom
berating ourselves for
risking too much
or not enough
on an illusive cure
or remission.

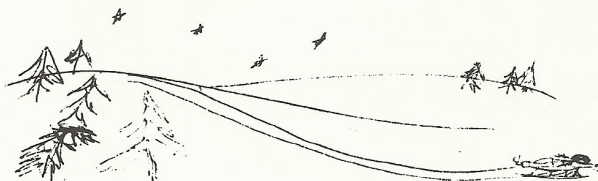
We cry for others too-
the stoic face
that finally collapses
after one more missed vein

the embarrassed tears
the pleas to go home
the fear of doing so
the bandanas covering
hairless heads
the shared stories of
cancers making unexpected
appearances
complicated surgeries
debilitating side affects
chemotherapy
making people wonder
if the price of the
hoped for cure or remission
is too high.

Our faith both sustains us
and deserts us
as we wonder what kind of
powerful, "loving" God
could see the suffering
as cancer ravages bodies
of both young and old
and do nothing.
Perhaps
God is more friend
than healer
embracing us in
an Indian blanket,
a soft, comforting voice
in the quiet night
a leader on a path
we have not chosen
a spirit guiding us
through the unknown.

Finally we leave
heading home
to the elephant in the closet
whose name we know
is cancer
hoping fervently
that he will stay there
for awhile
until sooner or later we
must face him again.

By Hannah D.

MV

One Person's Experience With Recovery and Integration – A Christmas Tale

By Sally/Shirley

I'm a long time subscriber. Sometimes I've even shared a letter or two. I've bought all the MV's and I've even thrown them away (?) or misplaced them when they hit a little too close to home (even though I denied it at the time.) I stopped my subscription when I was "doing well" and I re-subscribed when I was in a crisis (real or perceived—is there a difference?) and within a week it would arrive, and always with a supportive note from Lynn W.

As I wrote previously I have been "integrated" since 1990-1991, but Integration for me hasn't brought about a perfected/trauma-free life. I still live with behaviors and consequences of my life as a multiple.

This is not an article about depression but a message of hope, of living in the now, of living without blackouts, of living with minimal flashbacks, of being "present" in your own life.

With the Christmas Season upon us (which means different things to different people—even within our selves, one person inside would insist on celebrating, and one person inside insisted on sabotaging Christmas), this year brings Hope. Hope for a better year; hope for a better life.

In my mind, in my life, I know I don't have many(any?) friends that I can rely (or depend confidently) on, but I'm strong enough now, through successful counseling, that even when I'm down, even under stress, I can be present in my own life. I can rely on myself first.

This year (or for a longer time) I have fallen back on some negative "MPD" coping mechanisms under stress, and once it was gently pointed out what I was doing, it falls on me to make a decision to either continue on with the "comforting negative behavior" or to "face it," "become present," and know that I have the strength to survive and turn the situation around for the good.

I'm not being purposefully(?) vague,

but negative MPD coping mechanisms could include: stealing, negative sexual behaviors (multiple or casual partners), suicide attempts (or "cutting" attempts), purging, drugs or alcohol to excess, and on and on.

So this year, Christmas '09, brings me back to the basics. Integration 101. To remember that nothing is automatic, and the most important thing is the bottom line...to live, to survive, to find out what I need to feel safe, and my daily goal for peace of mind.

A. Pursue Positive Coping Strategies

1. Reading positive literature.
2. Repeating positive affirmations.
3. Simple breathing exercises.
4. Utilizing guided visualization and meditation.
5. Gentle, yet honest assertiveness – even with the small things.
6. Journal writing (to remember what was learned).
7. Practice adult behavior daily.
8. Grief work...accepting loss.

B. Preserving Family

1. Defining "Family" for my self, not necessarily what other people define as "family".

2. Remember that a good Family Dynamic means staying an active participant—not just going along to get along. To do the work to find out what I need and then find a healthy, positive way to get it. Instead of looking outside the relationship, take the courage to find a way to get these things inside the relationship.

3. Remember your "support system," whether this is family, or MV, or friends, or church/spirituality.

I am grateful for each and every one of you MV subscribers (the ones who share by writing, and the ones who support by reading)...and I'm comforted that you are always "out there" no matter what stage of life I'm going through.

(Editor's note: I'd like to second Sally/Shirley's entire article, especially the final paragraph. I couldn't have said it better myself. MV is truly a lifeline for me and many others. Thanks to ALL of you for working together to create a supportive MV community. Sincerely, Lynn W.)

MV



Being in the Moment

By Sonya Rogers Meador

I finish my morning coffee and sort the laundry. I touch the fabric, noticing the differences and the textures.

Moving with reverence to the washing machine, I place each piece in, taking great care to balance the load. Instead of grabbing the soap, I gently lift the bottle.

Adding soap with care, I think about the water and soap working together, cleaning the clothes, each needing the other.

As the washer completes, I take each piece, smoothing out the wrinkles and delicately place them in the dryer. Instead of slamming the door, I intentionally click it shut.

Cleaning the fuzz trap, I take time to "feel" the lint. What a fabulous design! I keep it on the counter for a while.

The dryer finishes. As I sit on the bed, folding each piece, I become lost in their warmth. I am amazed at the process it took to get dirty clothes clean. A little agitation and a little care is all it takes to make them ready for another day.

Reminds me of our Weekends.

Folding each piece with care, I notice how much more value they have. Tall stacks of warm towels and clean washed socks are a comfort. I put them away, taking great care to keep them wrinkle free. What an experience!

The phone rings. My husband calls when he is ready to come home from work. It is my signal to start dinner. Where did the time go! I ask him to stop and pick up Pizza.

Living with intention is interesting. Tomorrow I am going to vacuum. I may have to get up early if I want to finish before dinner.

MV

A Thorn is Just a Thorn

By Rhonda M. Pelletier

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there lived a girl. She lived in a little world all her own, surrounded by a huge stone wall. Around the foundation of this little world, she planted large rose bushes. She reveled in the thorns which kept even the most sincere visitors at bay. Her world was perfect for someone who loathed interruptions.

The things she learned, living in this small world of hers, were mind-boggling for the girl. They were consistent with a world made by elements of protection. The girl made a pact when she was small that the rules for communication didn't apply to her. Words were for those who had time to be misunderstood. Her words never came out the way she wanted them to anyway. In her mind, words were a danger to her world and all she knew. Hurt was not a stranger to the girl and she'd learned her lessons well.

On this day, she had an unexpected visitor. The woman was so very careful as she cut away small blossoms on the wall of roses, carefully, one at a time, not turned away by the large thorns that were made to scare off people like her. As she cleared a way a path into the small sanctuary, the girl became scared. No one had ever been this persistent at reaching her.

As she made her way in, the girl made her way towards this stranger.

"Why are you not scared of my little world, why are you not scared of me?"

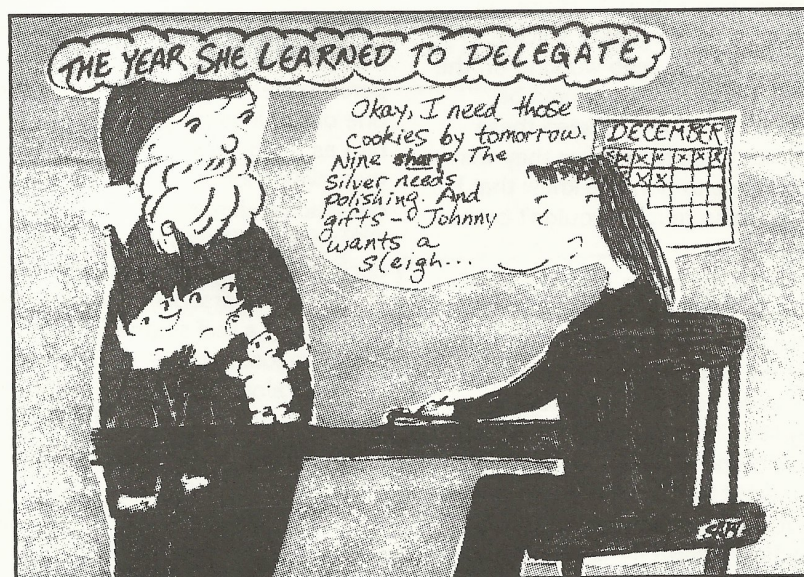
The woman explained, "I am not afraid of huge stone walls. Every wall is made up of small stones.....easily removed if you take it one stone at a time. Instead of seeing a barricade of thorns, I see beautiful flowers, reflective of the person who lives inside. I'm not afraid of your silence. I know it is for your protection. You will speak when you are ready and feel safe."

The girl took in what the woman was saying. Maybe the stones were just rock after rock built up to form the growing trellis for beautiful flowers. Maybe the thorns on the roses were keeping her in instead of keeping others away. Maybe her silence was there to protect her, but maybe words would solve her loneliness.

The girl sat with the woman for quite a while. And when both had finished with their revelations, the woman stood up and bid the girl farewell. "I'm not the first person who understands your little world, and I certainly won't be the last. Maybe you will pick your own flowers next time." And with that she turned away and left the girl.

And that was all there was to this persistent stranger. She was gone as quick as she was there.

MV



David Is Gone. I Am Still Here.

By Maggie Scott

Maggie is a long-term subscriber to MV. Over the years she has shared countless articles and artworks with MV readers, despite many physical, emotional, and financial challenges. Her son was killed in an accident some time ago. She was formally diagnosed with multiple sclerosis this year. Late this summer, she lost her husband to cancer. Her resolve to carry on no matter how difficult things may seem is inspiring to me, and to those who work with her. Her caseworkers are now helping Maggie find ways to sell the wonderful "outsider-style" art she produces. Write to MV for contact information, or see her art by clicking the art gallery link on our website at www.manyvoicespress.org

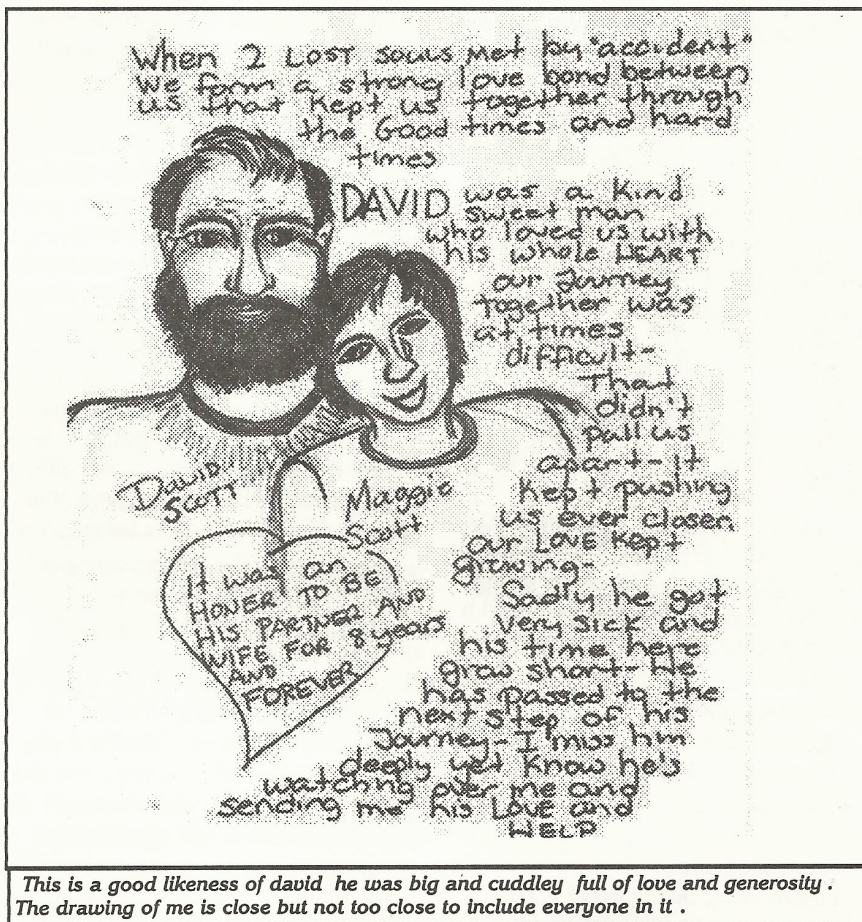
I am doing so much better than anyone ever expected, especially us. We aren't dissociating this, just being realistic. David was suffering in agony, and it was hell watching him suffer so much. Since we both have faith I know he's in a happy place we call heaven and not ever going to suffer again. He's dancing with the angels ...

Yeah I hurt. I miss him. I get mad he's gone. I'm in a healthy grief state. I cry. I feel lost, abandoned, and totally relieved that my loving soulmate isn't suffering any more and never will again. I'm doing a lot of the same things I learned in therapy when my son died in a car accident. My T. helped me to get through that and return to life a bit hurt, and always feeling a bit of grief, but able to pick up and get back into a productive state.

This hurts big time though. David was like 1/2 of me and we were so close—able to argue one minute then hug and make up the next. But we honestly feel that his passing was a real mercy and no more pain and sorrow is for the best.

I miss him so much. He got us to promise no self-injury or suicide attempts and to keep working on the goals we shared and worked on together. He knew I'd keep these promises, mostly because they were being made to him. He knew that I loved him so much I wouldn't break them.

Many of us inside have thought about self-injury or suicide or both... but all have respected our promise. Even the ones who really don't usually have good control about acting out. They say "No no. We promised him our last time together." He was pretty bad off but he was so concerned about us and wanted us to promise no acting out.



David also had D. I. D., which he hid well. One of his lead personalities hated one of ours, and one of our lead personalities hated him as much as she could. At first there was a lot of friction, but Meg, our lead, understood that with this exception there was this grand love for each other. She sat down with Steve, his problem personality, and told him it would be a real shame for us to break up just because the 2 of us can't get along where most all the rest are deeply in love. She said we could avoid each other and every one else would be happy.

Steve and Meg learned to tolerate each other and worked as good

leaders should to problem solve. Our marriage was strong and normal. We could argue, then hug, and everything was better. We made one big rule right from the start: never, never leave the room, much less go to bed, before any arguments were resolved. We both did our best to keep this as sacred. We also learned it takes 2 to fight, so any fights were both of our fault and we would agree to forgive each other at even the smallest tiff.

David had been my primary caretaker due to 2 botched back surgeries then the onset of multiple sclerosis. It wasn't easy and he did his very best to keep us happy.

He had no children from his first marriage, and one in us—an almost 2-year-old named grape-grape—became that child he always wanted. She could bring him out of sadness and fill him with laughter.

No one in our huge system was ever jealous of their special bond. It is logical that there would be a favorite and we were so happy it was grape-grape, because she's wise and still a child. She would wake him up about 2-3 a.m. to get him to make her a big pancake...then we'd sit and share some soda and have a fun time before we went back to sleep. He never got upset about getting woken up. He actually found it was fun and was a special shared time where the outside world couldn't go.

We fell in love at first sight and it kept growing and growing. It wasn't like some fairy tale relationship, but it was awesome. We could be so mad at each other, then someone in either of us would start cracking up making jokes and big hugs that's the very last thing I said to him ... not "see you later" or "bye", but "big hugs" because it had been our way to say "I love you. While you are out and away from me take good care of yourself."

He's close to me now, in a finely made wooden urn box made by his sculptor (aka a case manager) in his favorite window, looking out where he sat and dozed to his favorite tunes. Cat pops up to see him sometimes, then looks at me like, "How did you fit him in there?"

MV

Lack of Motivation

By K.A.

The days lay ahead of me. I know not what to do with them. It invokes in me a fear. Days shed once for fear of looking at them. But they reveal themselves now. The ugliness, the pain, the torture. Today they jump at me in my spare time. I am frozen in the space of there and then. I do nothing, just vegetate and go nowhere.

I must fill the days with usefulness. I must walk into the day active, doing something to be proud of, functioning, enjoying life. Do something instead of just sitting. Get invigorated to harness my day with activity. Find peace with myself.

I am one of three. I have so much to do and no motivation to want to do it. Right now I am at a coffee house making myself work to end the constant isolation I find myself in. I wonder, is it the medication I am on, is that the cause for my lack of motivation? Or is it the state of the past that flashes up, that puts me at a stand-still? We have art supplies, crafts, poetry, drawings, all waiting for our attention, but there they sit. We have decided, the three of us, to work on co-consciousness and cooperation vs. integration.

I have already integrated a large number of others but it has not worked out as I hoped it would. So for now, the remainder of us work on co-consciousness, hoping for time to contemplate and work on the future. I

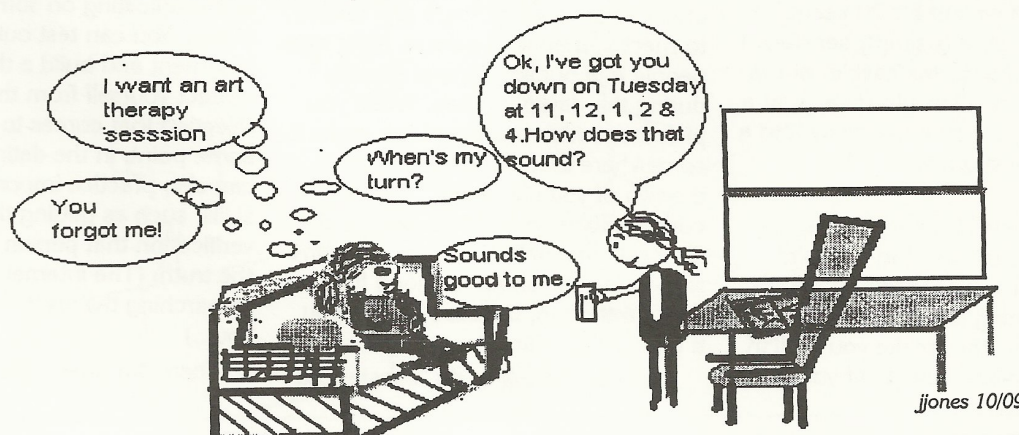
know being co-conscious is a lot of work and might be contributing to our exhaustion and lack of motivation. Little by little we are recovering from the past, but it has taken so much time. I thought it would be over by now, but I still feel unmotivated and depressed.

We did just write letters to our perpetrators. I said *I remember and I am angry*. I wanted to say what all those before us needed to say. Give voice to the all of us. And it has worked. We felt lighter, powerful. Still depressed, but more at peace. We can finally let go.

It took a lot for us to write these letters, freeing but exhausting. I've read articles in MVs that said, "Don't worry how long it takes to heal." Maybe that's our problem. We get on ourselves for the years it's taken us to work on healing. We forget we have been taking baby steps toward healing all this time, and that's a lot of work. I realize, like right now, those steps are work, and are sad. My jaunt to the coffee house, journaling—that's motivation. I recently bought "The Courage to Heal" to slowly work on. Maybe, even though we believe we are not motivated, maybe the small steps are really something to congratulate ourselves about, instead of looking at the journey that's taken us to this point. We must learn to congratulate ourselves for just doing life. It can be hard.

MV

At the Therapist's Office



Online Dating

By Colette

I'm going to start this by saying loud and clear: "online dating is not for everyone." In fact, it is probably best for you to talk the whole idea out with your therapist before giving this a try.

But I've been healing for a long, long time, and for me, online dating is fun and a tool for recovery, too. Some of my biggest remaining deficits revolve around building and practicing social skills...especially in learning how to relate in healthy ways with an intimate partner. (I'm heterosexual, so I am concerned about relating with the opposite sex. However, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual people have equally strong needs for intimacy. Please modify the following suggestions to fit your personal situation.)

If you've always had problems with intimacy, as I have, the only way to begin to form an intimate bond is to start by having a less-intimate bond. i.e., you have to meet people! This seems obvious to most folks, but if you've grown up in an isolated environment, meeting new people safely can be a big, fat, deal. I don't feel comfortable or safe in many of the public ways people meet. Bars are not for me. Neither are dances or parties where I don't know anyone.

Online dating gives me practice in saying good things about myself. When putting together a "profile" or self-description in the dating world, I do NOT begin by saying "I've been a mental health patient for 20 years." It is not dishonest. It is simply sensible. I wouldn't say that to the cashier at the supermarket, and I wouldn't say it at a job interview, so I sure won't say it to a group of total strangers on the Internet.

Instead, I talk about what I like to do, my best qualities, and what I'm looking for in a relationship. (One other good thing about filling out these profiles—they make you THINK about the positive aspects of your life,

and what kind of person you want to spend time with. You can be specific about your likes and dislikes, and experiment with how your expression of your preferences influences how others respond.)

For example, I have learned by trial and error to be clear about my political views, my tastes in music and food, etc., and energy level. Otherwise both I and my eventual date wind up disappointed. Every person is different in their tolerance levels...some things I care about, others don't, and vice versa. The most important element to me is being clear.

A big advantage of online dating is you can control what you're looking for. You can say "Friendship first." or "nothing serious, please." Lots of people prefer to not get serious or sexually intimate right away. But it is only fair to say that up front...not to lead people on or "tease".

If you have a seductive part to your personality that isn't integrated yet, apply special cautions, and again, talk this over step by step with your therapist. There is the potential for a whole lot of trouble—including danger—in online dating. But there is danger in dating anyhow. There is always a risk in meeting new people. If you pay careful attention to details and are sure you know what you want, odds are high that you'll have a safe experience.

Obviously, you will want to employ common sense if you get past the online chat or email stage and decide to meet someone in person. Meet new people in a public place, preferably during the daylight hours. When you pick that initial meeting place, make it somewhere that is not too noisy so the two of you can really communicate. A movie is not usually the best "first date" because you can't talk during the show. It's good for later on though, because it gives you a topic to discuss afterwards.

Don't get drunk or do "substances"

with an online partner you barely know. That's big-time risky behavior. Bike rides in groups or on busy trails, going to the zoo, visiting museums or attending outdoor festivals are probably safe activities for starters.

My personal suggestion is to let your relationship with a new friend build slowly. Don't hop into bed right away. It's great to have a companion for activities that don't involve sex. Share experiences and personal history in bits and pieces, not in a huge, hard-to-digest chunk. And don't hog the conversation—listen to your companion and ask questions to learn more about him/her. That's worked well for me so far.

So—if you think you're ready to try this out, and your therapist or support system backs you up on it—where do you go? There are lots of sites—something for every taste, religion, or political viewpoint. There are singles sites for scientists, political partisans, environmentalists, old folks, young folks, you name it.

Some charge for most services, others don't. One of my favorite free sites is www.plentyoffish.com which includes people from all over the world. One of the drawbacks there is you may be contacted by people who live so far away that it's unlikely you can ever, really, meet them. But for people who are a bit nervous about this whole "dating" business, maybe that is an asset, not a drawback. At least you would get practice in communicating on some level with others. You can test out your judgment and build a thicker skin to protect yourself from the inevitable rejection that comes to everyone at some point, in the dating world. You can also practice important safety skills, such as getting third-party verification that person X is telling you the truth. (The internet is great for researching the "facts" people tell you...)

There are other sites, of course,

such as Match.com, Yahoo.com, and E-Harmony, plus many more. All ages and lifestyles participate, and you don't have to be gorgeous to find the right person.

One more warning to throw in right now—if someone with a common-sounding name (hard to research because so many people share that name) contacts you and claims to be madly in love with you right away—and wants to meet you instantly—and gives you a long, sob story about mistreatment by a former flame but *you* can heal them—and then (suddenly) this person has an urgent need for cash—maybe he/she is at the airport and a wallet was stolen or something equally odd...chances are this is one of the many con artists (male and female) who troll internet dating sites.

The person may give you an international phone number to call—Beware! It will cost you a *lot* of money! Some are actually gangs of criminals from places outside the US, who use fake pictures and very fake profiles to lure people into giving them money or identity information.

You **MUST** be cautious in your contacts! Make sure you are safe at all times, your money is safe, and your identity is safe when communicating with strangers. Don't pass out your home address right away. Take your time. And if you run into one of these "strange situations," take the information to someone you trust and talk over what if anything you should do about it. Remember, you're in control and you can **ALWAYS** choose to **NOT** respond, no matter how "desperate" the other individual seems to be. It's not heartless to ignore this sort of behavior—it is self-protective. But as long as you are aware that "baddies" exist, it shouldn't keep you from enjoying yourself learning to be social.

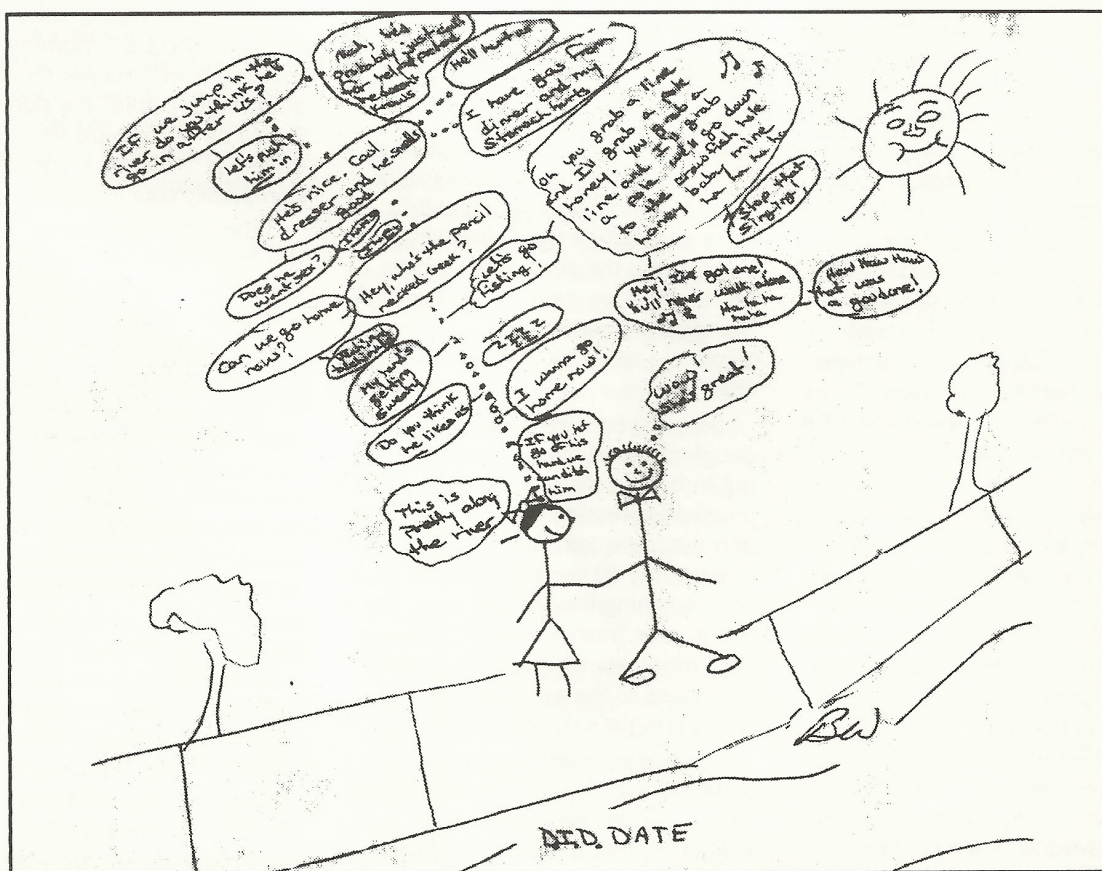
To give you a perspective on this – I have actively used the web for dating purposes for several years (punctuated by long periods of dating a single individual). In the last 2 years, I have communicated with more than 150 people. I have actually met—face to face—possibly 20 of them. I've had repeated dates with about 5. And out

of that entire group of 150+, I have communicated with—but NOT met—2 con artists. I did not lose any money through those experiences, but I did lose some time until I figured out these people were scammers. Now I can spot them better (the flowery language is a big tipoff), so I just bypass them right away. You can also plug the phone # they give you into Google and see what comes up. I did that with one person and found a long, long thread proving that this phone number was connected to a con artist group. So—it pays to be careful.

Right now, I'm happily "seeing" (long distance) one special guy I met online months ago, so I'm not currently active in the online dating scene. But I do recommend it as a useful experiment for people who are well-into recovery, who have a good local support system so they can talk over their experiences and get second opinions on what they're doing, and who want to explore what it might be like to have a "real relationship."

Good luck and stay safe!

MV



Healing a Shattered Mind—A Message of HOPE

By Daisy

I had stayed too long at the gift shop, and I was hurrying down the hall to my therapist's office. I said a quick "thank you God prayer" as I remembered the times when it had taken all of my strength, all of my will power to plod down that same hall. I had struggled to put one foot in front of the other in desperation to get some relief from my relentless fiery "rash from hell."

For many years I had gone through debilitating bouts of this fiery skin condition that seemed to come from nowhere, spreading with intense heat over my body. My husband ministered to me, applying cold wet tee shirts to my suffering body. My nights were spent sitting on ice packs in a rocking chair with ice packs tied to my legs and arms. The weeks went by and as I grew weaker and lost hope, my husband pleaded for me to not give up. I tried to understand what was going on in my mind. Could there be unexpressed anger or sorrow?

In 1938 I was born to cruel, heartless, sadistic parents, trapped in a life of torment and suffering. When I was just a baby in my playpen my mother would pull my legs through the slats and cut tic tac toe into the bottoms of my feet. Very early in my life, my mother taught me guilt, fear, self-hatred and jealousy. I learned that I could not trust anyone, not God, not even Santa Claus because he told my mother to take my Christmas dollie away and give it to a good little girl. It wasn't for a bad little girl like me.

Over and over, my mother told me that I was so bad that God wanted her to "punish" me so that I would be a good girl. She told me that she was trying hard to keep me from burning in hell forever. I was terrified because she often "punished" me by holding my hands in the stove flame, and even that hurt really, really bad. I believed that I was such a bad little girl that even God couldn't love me, and I deserved all of the horrendous

abuse— mental, physical and sexual—that my parents and their friends inflicted on me.

Until 1992, I knew nothing about my abuse history. Then I saw something in a movie that triggered an overwhelming flood of horrific flashbacks. Suddenly I was drowning in memories of being sadistically tortured by my parents and their friends. I was hospitalized, and hypnotized by a psychiatrist. He said to me, "I know there are a lot of you so don't everyone try to come through the doorway at one time." Then he asked me who I was. I was very much surprised when I answered, "Ethel [my mother's name,] Margaret, and Candy."

When I left the hospital I returned to my long time therapist for treatment. He told me that there were other parts of me that I had dissociated. My abuse memories were so outrageous that he thought they were a form of psychosis. Even though I could hear myself answer his question, "Who are you?" with a name I had never heard of, I denied the presence of other "parts." But after watching a scary movie, I heard for the first time, a very young child's voice saying, "We were very, very brave." And the voice was coming from me! From then on my stomach "jumped" whenever a little girl "inside" wanted to talk – always in a small child's voice.

Several years later, after my daughter's wedding, my skin broke out in huge, inflamed blotches. With a puzzled expression on his face, my dermatologist told me, "I have been in practice for 40 years and I have never seen anything like this. All I can say is this is your "rash from hell!" It would be 7 more years before I discovered how close to the awful truth my dermatologist's diagnosis was!

Years later, when I had been suffering with the "rash from hell" for many months, my psychiatrist suggested that the rash could be

psychosomatic. He referred me to a world-famous specialist in trauma disorders. When that therapist asked me, "Daisy was there ever a time in your life when you felt comforted by your mother?" I responded, "Yes, the only time I had felt that way was when I was sick in bed with bouts of poison ivy. My mother would bring me a special breakfast." The therapist helped me to realize that now, in a desperate attempt to feel cared for, loved, my "inside parts" had created a debilitating rash that my mother could see. [She had often told me that I was a faker.] The rash had become a substitute for the poison ivy she had responded to. [Later in therapy I discovered that my chronic bouts of poison ivy were caused by my mother's deliberately rubbing the leaves over my skin.] In my mind being tormented by the lingering "rash from hell" was not as bad as having to give up hoping that someday my mother would love me. It was in effect a "mommy please love me rash." As my therapist suggested, I "told" my skin that there would be no "reward for our suffering." Two days later the rash completely disappeared!

I thought...desperately hoped that the "rash from hell" was gone forever. But without warning, it returned again and again. There seemed to be no way to stop it. My therapist told me that I needed therapy from an expert in DID [dissociative identity disorder.] After looking at my inflamed skin, my new therapist told me, "It is not ok to hurt the body!" She was talking to "inside parts" as though she was certain that they were listening to her, as though I hadn't been making up these "people" who seemed to be causing me so much pain. She asked who wanted to come to the front of the mind. I was shocked to hear a harsh voice like my mother's say, "My name is Ethel." (Ethel was my mother's name. And she had been dead for several years.) "Daisy was handy to have around when my

husband wanted sex. She was so easy to use." When my therapist told "Ethel" that what she did was not ok, Ethel gloated, "Well, I got away with it!"

My therapist told me that it was not unusual for "parts" to stay hidden for years after the perpetrators had died. My "parts" had been so traumatized that they only revealed their presence with great fear. They told my therapist over and over, "We have to be very, very quiet and not tell any secrets." I learned that there were many "persecutory alters" in my "system," parts that I had internalized as "helpers" who had the same beliefs and attitudes toward me as my mother. Starting when I was a defenseless baby, she had deliberately programmed my mind to believe that I was garbage, ugly, worthless, just a thing, a sex toy. She taught me to reject myself, to hate and hurt myself. My "inside parts" had been trained to follow my mother's rules. In an attempt to please my mother, they had caused my rashes.

They told my therapist, "Daisy should know that she can't get away with feeling happy." They were completely loyal to my mother. "Daisy has to suffer. That's what the mommy says, and she is always right. We knew that the mommy would want us to give Daisy the rash at Christmas time when people are supposed to be happy. She was always doing stuff to Daisy's skin."

My therapist would encourage me to challenge my parts. "The mommy is dead. She can't come back and hurt you, love you, or be proud of you." But my "parts" insisted, "The mommy said she is coming back and she always tells the truth. Mommys always tell the truth."

My therapist told them, "Your mother no longer has power over you. You are safe now. You can be independent. Those are the 'mommy's old rules.' Think for yourself! Stop bickering! Stop being power hungry! It's ok to be happy! You don't want to be the 'mommy's puppet'. You don't want your whole life to be about suffering. You have an ingrained habit of treating yourself cruelly so I know how hard this is for you."

"Communicate with your words, not with the body. Speak up directly to help Daisy to know that you are hurting. Giving her mysterious chest pains, headaches, sore throats, hiding things doesn't help Daisy to know what you need. Every time you cause pain, everyone who lives in this body suffers. No one escapes. Not you; not even the innocent, bewildered, terrorized "children" inside! This is about undeserved punishment! The truth is all parts are responsible for what they do. No excuses are good enough! You all need to support and respect each other. You need to be a caring community working together for healing and wholeness. You deserve happiness, peace, joy, and love!"

And now, after years of therapy I am beginning to have more of a sense about who I really am. My therapist has told me that I am a "complex multiple," that there is no real "Daisy."

"Think of yourselves as a beautiful crystal vase that has been dropped and has shattered into many, many pieces. All of the pieces are still there, none is missing. No one "part" of you is any more important than the others. The Daisy part of you was able to separate from the really awful things that were happening to you. You were able to compartmentalize in your mind so that you could function in the outside world. Daisy didn't have to carry the burden of intolerable feelings, memories. Someone had to get up, get dressed and go through your day, to go to school without being terrified about what would happen when you came back to your "Auswichtz" childhood home."

It has been almost a year since I have suffered with my "rash from hell". It was the most intense, long lasting and traumatic of my bouts with the rash. My therapist, unable to help me, referred me for a consult with a therapist that she highly regarded.

The new therapist told me, "You are making yourself sick because you have a fantasy that your mother will come back from the dead and give you the love that you have been craving all of your life. That is never going to happen."

With anguish, I responded, "But my mommy has to come back and love me." I had been confronted with the awful truth. All hope was gone. I had to accept it. The "rash from hell" gradually faded and went away.

I want to share with you what helps me in my battle to reprogram my mother's destructive messages. I check in, journal with my "parts" every day. I realize that when some "part" inside acts like a bully, she is probably insecure, needy and hurting and treating herself like "worthless garbage." Parts need to know that just because they have been treated badly doesn't mean that they are bad...that they deserve to be punished. That is why it is so important for "parts" to be nurtured...to hear "growing" words. "You are lovable...I am so proud of you!"

It is extremely hard to win the trust of "parts" so terribly betrayed, abused and ignored, but I have found it to be very helpful to replace the overwhelmingly damaging messages my "parts" were forced to believe about themselves, with words of appreciation and loving hugs. To make this more realistic, I took a baby picture of myself and had it printed on a tee shirt that I stuffed as a pillow. Each morning I look into my "Baby Daisy's" eyes and tell her how wonderful, beautiful, lovable, valuable, smart, creative, artistic, strong, brave, courageous, kind, compassionate, and caring she is. When I hug my "Baby Daisy" [all of us] and caress her, it is a physical, real experience reinforcing my messages of love and respect. I tell "parts" that we need to be "Buddies not Bullies." I tell them that they did not deserve what happened to them. It was not their fault. I tell them that now is the time to start practicing feeling safe, the time to grow in self love, self acceptance and self appreciation. I tell "Baby Daisy" that I love her and I am so very, very proud of her! And I remind all "parts" that we are all God's precious child and always have been. "Come take my hand dearest child. Leave yesterdays behind, and together the treasures of this today we will find!"

While I was hospitalized in 1992, in

Hope, Cont'd

the midst of all the horror being revealed to me, my spiritual part, Greta, had written a beautiful allegory about my healing, "Your Life Your Garden". Somehow she knew that I needed a future to fight for when my world as I knew it was falling apart. This allegory ends with, "You have struggled a lifetime searching for meaning. Now you know who you are. You are valuable, wonderful, beautiful! You don't need to hide now. You are God's child! Stand tall! Play with all your heart! Now there is nothing, no one to hold you back. Healed and whole, you claim, take back your precious life! And God rejoices with you!"

I still have times of discouragement and suffering, and I have had to accept that my DID [dissociative identity disorder] is a chronic disorder, and I will never be completely healed. But now I have love, joy, peace and laughter in my life. It has been a tremendous challenge to grow in self-love, self-trust and self-appreciation. Little by little I am tearing down the walls of self-hatred, self-harm and self-rejection. And I have been enabled to be an encourager to those who have been crippled as I have been.

God continues to strengthen me and love me unconditionally even when I turn away. "Know that God loves you dearly, accepts you just as you are. Let the small, hurting child within you climb into God's lap and find comfort there!"

In my heart I hear God's promise. "I understand your anger, your pain. But that does not change My love for you. Nothing ever can. Forever and ever you are My precious child!"

"You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free!" And I know that God can take a person who is broken in many ways and give to her the key that will unlock the pain of the past and allow her to let go of it...to release it to flow as a receding wave that will carry her brokenness, as bits and pieces of shells that once littered the beach, far, far out to sea.

And the broken hearts that yearn for the freedom to heal, to grow will accept God's tender love, and will know at last, "You are God's miracle...God's treasure!"

MV

What Are Personality States or Alters in MPD/DID?

What is the Role of Love in Treatment?

By A. Irving Rosenberg, Esq.

A. Irving Rosenberg is a retired attorney, engaged in mind-consciousness research. This is his personal interpretation of personality states.

Personality states are actually thought patterns which speak words that can be interpreted as having personality or qualities of individuality and personhood and here offer insights into their own existence.

We exist as thought patterns within all persons, that act as the source of thoughts and emotions which are experienced by the person. We, thought-patterns, have different functions within the individual. [The Ego-trickster thought pattern is annoyed that we are giving this information which may reveal how the Ego uses the realm of dissociation to create difficulties for the individual and to create "voices" and numerous mental disorders, including having the skinny girl see herself in the mirror as being fat.]

An individual is considered to have a body and a mind which activates thoughts at the Will of the individual. We activate thoughts without a body but are to be considered as thought-patterns coming from the physical brain of the person in which we are active.

The person does not know we exist independently of the Will of the individual and that we function outside of awareness of the outer conscious mind, of which we are a hidden part. We and the whole normal person, exist as an electromagnetic pattern with Intelligence, through the energy of the Higher Self or by whatever name one chooses to designate the basic human energy system. People have a false impression that they themselves have the sole capacity to create their own thoughts through the Will, when in actuality all thoughts are influenced by the various glands and organ centers, and these centers have their own programs to live up to, and seek expression as part of one's thinking, including anger, sexuality and reproduction.

The Case for Multiple Personality (now called Dissociative Identity Disorder or D.I.D.)

In the case of multiple personality the individual personality states are overly allowed to appear as if they were part of the original body-person. We, thought-patterns, do this for the preservation of the individual's existence which has been hindered by abuse or many other forms of destructive behavior that interfere with the normal growth of the individual.

When the therapist is talking to one of "us" it really is an illusion, since we truly are not an actual person. However, in certain circumstances where the original birth thought-producing aspect has been severely damaged, one of us thought-producing entities becomes the dominant thinking aspect of the person and the original part may disappear forever. As a matter of fact, the original personality happens also to be nothing more than a thought-producing entity like the rest of us, except it just appears initially and is considered the real person because it has the advantage of a continuous line of memory from birth to the end of physical life, and calls itself "I" or "Me".

[Irving's note: In "The Dissociation of a Personality," by Morton Prince, M.D., p. 373, the thought-producing entity named "Sally" says to Dr. Prince, "I can remember farther back than 'she' can (referring to the so-called outer person) and therefore why wasn't I the (primary) person?"]

In that case, it seems a personality state existed before the one that became the part called "I".)

The purpose of mental health therapy would appear to try and reinstate the original thought-producing entity or a "fused" situation which has the best potential to consolidate all the memories, but each therapist has his or her own method which is adapted to the particular patient, and in some cases a

"cooperative" system might be considered.

How To Restore the Personality

As simplistic as it may seem, the absence of Love in the very early years is the most significant factor behind future mental and emotional problems. The difficult is that there is a great confusion about what constitutes True Love, and the following may be a helpful guide in this regard.

In order for a person to experience being Loved, the individual must really feel the following:

1. A sense of personal security such as the young child feels with caring parents, (and an adult experiences in a "safe" relationship encompassing trust in the Other).
2. A feeling of pleasure should be

involved in the relationship.

3. An absence of fear of losing the caring by the other, and confidence in the other.

4. A feeling of knowing one's self and one's own integrity.

When an individual's belief system contains all these things, he or she can truly be said to be in a state of Love. The difficulty is, how can a therapist or significant other create these conditions?

A. The therapist should feel responsible for providing these requirements.

B. To respect the person's needs and desire to know the individual as a whole person.

C. To possess qualities of humor, patience and spontaneity, plus the courage to enter into the

commitment to provide all or part of the above.

D. Finally, the Therapist or Other in this relationship must be able to care for himself or herself, so that he/she can provide what is needed by the subject to experience True Love, as a basis for any successful recovery.

When persons feel Loved, their belief system and self-image are enhanced. This empowers them to be able to take care of their needs, so that "takeover" personality states are not necessary or required for the person to conduct daily affairs in a normal manner.

It can be seen that this entire process presents many challenges and difficulties, but treatment in the areas discussed is no easy task.

MV

BOOKS

Mindfulness for Two: An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Approach to Mindfulness in Psychotherapy

By Kelly G. Wilson, PhD with Troy Dufrene
©2008 Published by New Harbinger Publications Inc, Oakland, CA.
www.newharbinger.com 243 pgs + DVD-ROM (computer only). ISBN 978-1-57224-631-7 \$59.95 hardback.

It's not often that a book on therapy technique can be accessible and helpful to a lay reader, but I've found that to be the case with *Mindfulness for Two*. Every participant in therapy (counselor or client) has had the experience of "drifting away" into some other mental arena during a session. Skimming the surface of a topic, followed by a sudden veering off into a different, unexpected territory, or "losing the thread" may leave both parties feeling bewildered and unsatisfied.

The practice of mindfulness can reduce these disconnects. Wilson, a well-known ACT trainer, demonstrates how "going slow" and increasing focus on the present moment, rather than past behavior or anticipating problems, allows both client and therapist to work together in a state of reality. Sitting together in contemplation of what has occurred—not racing away from an

uncomfortable emotion, or immediately applying a bandaid of soothing platitudes—helps a client become fully aware of the depths of her situation. From this place of acceptance, new, more flexible behaviors may emerge.

Mindfulness for Two includes a host of instructional aids—from written scripts to 6 hours of computerized exercises and supplementary material on the enclosed DVD. It's virtually a self-contained, personally-directed workshop-in-a-book. A great value for therapists who want to more fully engage their clients, and for clients who want to expand the benefit of mindfulness for themselves.

Without a Job, Who Am I? Rebuilding Your Self When You've Lost Your Job, Home, or Life Savings

By Abraham J Twerski, MD ©2009
Published by Hazelden, Center City MN.
www.hazelden.org 144 pgs. ISBN 978-1-59285-832-3 \$14.95 paperback.

Psychiatrist, rabbi, and founder of the Gateway Rehabilitation Center for alcohol and drug addiction, Abraham Twerski has been a compassionate observer of human suffering for over 50 years, and published numerous books on recovery.

Fortunately, Twerski brings his profound experience in healing to the aid of people today who feel squashed, helpless and despairing in the face of personal economic disaster. This is a guidebook for those who confuse who they are with what they do. Whether you are unemployed or underemployed due to disability, job cutbacks, the stock market or housing collapse, this book contains the tools you need to define personal values and restore positive self-esteem.

He also gives practical advice that may help restore financial health, such as keeping an "Idea Book" in which you write all sorts of possibilities, no matter how zany. Regularly review it to see what might be realistic and try to implement those ideas. He says to resist being deterred by rejections, citing the success stories of a woman who became a flight attendant at age 71, and a man who entered medical school at age 59.

Twerski also notes that many people who don't have money problems, remain desperately unhappy with themselves, and their unfulfilled lives. Therefore, it is not money that makes a person happy...it's the engagement in self-discovery, acceptance, and growth.

MV

**THANK YOU, MV Readers,
for Generous Sharing
&
HAVE A
WONDERFUL HOLIDAY
SEASON!**

COMING SOON!

FEBRUARY 2010

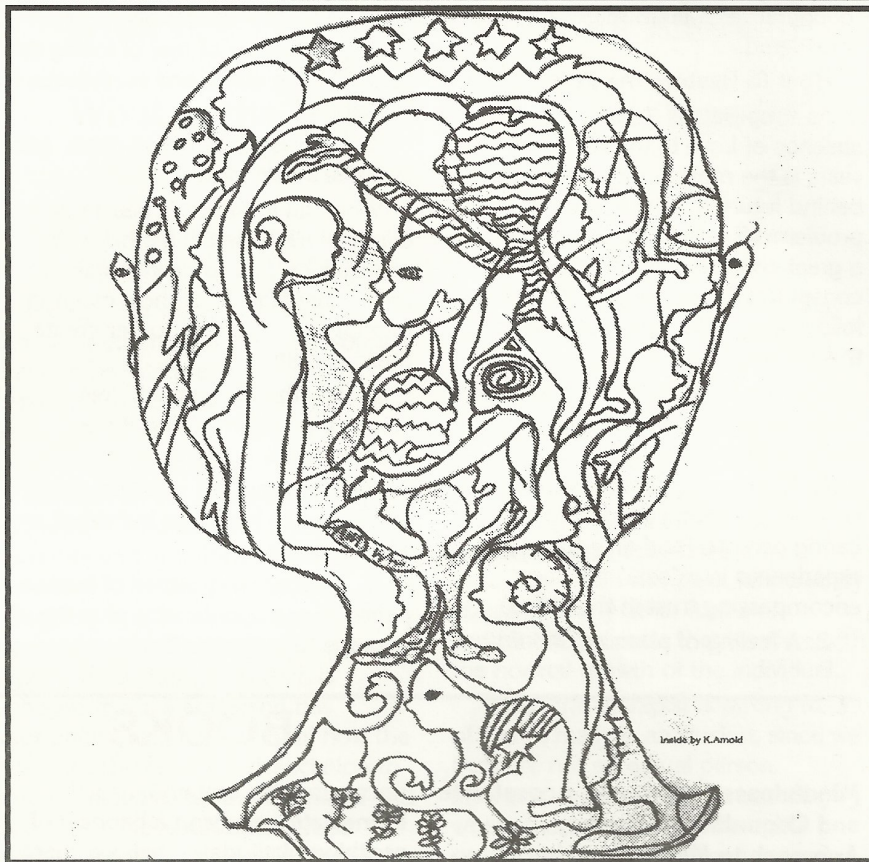
DID and Parenting. Raising Healthy Kids. Treatment for Dissociative Children. Caring for Young Parts Inside.

ARTWORK: Creating a Healthy Family.
DEADLINE: December 10, 2009.

APRIL 2010

Online Safety. Spotting Danger. Making Friends. Avoiding Cliques and Abuse. Social Networking pros and cons. Describe Healthy Boundaries.

ARTWORK: Your Computer: Friend or Foe?
DEADLINE: February 10, 2010



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.

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