

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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Relating Tips for Trauma Survivors

By Jasmine Kent

Perpetrator Parents

In most cases separation from such parents is necessary due to massive amounts of triggers and some cases even ongoing perpetration. However, unlike other perpetrators, parents are not easy to escape, nor does everyone want to leave them. Child alters often cling to their parents because children naturally attach to their parents in order to survive. Parents often continue to reach out to their children long into adulthood. And it's natural to want to make peace and be friends with your parents. Here are some tips for creating or maintaining a relationship with perpetrator parents :

- 1) Never allow yourself to be alone with them.
- 2) Try to learn what triggers you about them, and if you see a situation coming that will involve that trigger get away quickly.
- 3) If you have been triggered get help immediately before you have a full meltdown.
- 4) A relationship can best be repaired in casual small group settings with engaging activities. Focusing on the activity lessens the intensity of the relationship. Big events such as Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas are not easy to escape. My mother always hurt me on those days. Afterwards my Dad would say "Why did you bring that up?" to which she would reply, "It's my only chance to get my point across." Her "point" was of course the same garbage she had been hurting me with since childhood.
- 5) Most importantly, keep the relationship you are trying to build or cope with now, separate from the past you remember and are dealing with in therapy. Don't tell your parents anything you have against them. Save memories for your therapist and support people. Your parents are most likely to deny them whether by lying or because of their own denial.

6) Work through the four stages of grief with the events of the past using the help of your therapist and support

people. Denial is where we usually start, depression gets us into treatment, anger causes trouble and acceptance brings peace.

7) Lastly, but very important is forgiveness for the sake of ourselves if not for them. Forgiveness is ultimately the only way to get well. I have never met a bitter person in the process of recovering. However forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. It is simply a choice not to get vengeance. Forgiveness is not forgetting. It is not reconciling. It is not saving them from their consequences. It isn't trusting them; trust is something they must earn. We may still feel angry or betrayed by them for years. If you want to have a relationship with your perpetrator parents, don't share any of these feelings.

Partners

D.I.D.s and their partners must be very patient with each other. They will invariably hurt each other at times and should learn to forgive so they can go on. They need to learn each others triggers and ways of receiving love. They must be very tolerant of all the little things that might irritate them. And they must learn to nurture and comfort each other.

Children

Your children need a lot of nurture and to do that you must nurture yourself. The best way I know to describe nurture is to use the list of good qualities a person should have according to the Bible. I know many of you are not religious or are of other religions, but bear with me, you may like this:

Love – Hugs and kisses but also really respect and appreciate your children.

Joy – Try to do some really fun things like celebrating birthdays and trips to the zoo even though you may feel sad.

Peace – Share peaceful music, crafts, low lights, and other things that you find comforting.

Patience – Life with a D.I.D. parent can be unpredictable. Be patient if they mirror that by acting out.

Kindness – Do good things for the kids as often as possible so they have good memories to balance the bad.

Gentleness – Remember if you are D.I.D. they are probably having a rough childhood. You can't help that, but make it as pleasant as possible for them.

Self-Control – Discipline should be appropriate and consistent. But this also applies to our careful control in what to say and what not to tell them. No one told my daughter hospitals were safe so she thought I was going there to harm myself since that's the way I left home.

D.I.D Friends

D.I.D. friends will understand you and may become especially close but watch out! Even the nicest D.I.D. friends can suddenly switch and become your worst enemy or go back to their old situations.

Non D.I.D. Friends

These can be loyal and supportive though they may never fully understand you. Hide your illness at first, then talk to them gradually as they learn to know you and love you. Someday you may be able to tell all.

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Alone

Are you there? We can't see you
hiding in your darkened room
Alone in nights so frightening
pulling on your chains of fear

We are here thinking of you
your names we do not know
the pain we do connect to
and hope to meet you one day

You may be a son or daughter
You may be a husband or wife
No matter who or where you are
our pains attach us to this life

You may be young or old
no matter in us who care
Our words they do connect us
it's in knowing you are there

As we lay down our head
we pray for all of you
to find a gentle hand
you can hold onto

If you feel as we do
alone in a crowded room
know we are out here
praying you make it through

One more night of horrid flashbacks
One more night of stolen sleep
As we hold onto one more breath of
life
we are holding on to you.

By L. Lee

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In the Many Shapes of Love

We learn to share of ourselves
To conceive our beings
To share our beings
Realizing our differences
and joining our likenesses
I knew you when I was without
We have met and joined
In the many shapes of love.

By Amy K.

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MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!

Bridges to Recovery - Pacific Palisades, CA

Call Intake Department: (877) 602-0257

The Center at Psychiatric Institute of Washington DC

Call Admissions: (800) 369-2273 or (202) 885-5610

Del Amo Hospital - Torrance, CA

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

Mountain Youth Academy - Mountain City, TN

Call Betty Villarreal: (423) 727-9898

River Oaks Hospital - New Orleans, LA

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

Sheppard Pratt Health System - Baltimore, MD

Call Admissions Coordinator: (410) 938-50784

Timberlawn Mental Health System - Dallas, TX

Call Kristi Lewis: (214) 381-7181 or (800) 426-4944

Two Rivers Psychiatric Hospital - Kansas City, MO

Call Nancy Harrel: (816) 356-5688 or (800) 225-8577

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Does your clinic or conference need flyers? If so, please call 513-751-8020. We also would like to help publicize your events. Tell us what's happening!

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Tax-deductible donations, estate bequests, volunteer help, and good ideas are always welcome. Let us know what we can do better, too. We appreciate your generous support!

—Lynn W., Executive Director/Editor



"Don't trust HIM, Alice!
He's a smiling depressive!"

By SB

Evolving Relationships

By Collette

From the outside, people wouldn't think I have trouble with relationships. But I think otherwise.

I was raised with two sisters, and while we had sibling rivalries, we remained friendly. One sister died from illness after a relatively full life, while my remaining sister and I are now confidants instead of rivals and talk several times a week on the phone.

In school I was neither ostracized nor celebrated, but managed to develop a small circle of friends. (I didn't share much personal information though.)

I married early to a relatively stable man. We were not especially "compatible" in a number of ways. Though I was sometimes afraid of him, we managed to raise two children for 16 years before our mutually-agreed-on divorce. I can still be in the same room with him at family events, and we "get along."

I worked in several types of positions over my 30+ year career. Though I was mostly self-employed, I sometimes worked in offices and stores with co-workers, and had no obvious difficulties interacting with them or the public. I kept my feelings to myself.

And of course as I matured and became increasingly concerned about my emotional health (I felt "crazy" due to dissociation and conflicting internal values) I formed relationships with a number of different therapists: some positive, and some not so positive. I've been out of therapy for many years but I still regularly practice what I learned from the good therapists, and keep trying to improve my perspective, and be more in touch with reality.

Now in late middle age, I have a number of friends of both sexes I can talk to and sometimes count on for varying degrees of support. So with all this going for me—why do I consider my relationships "problematic"?

First—for many years—I kept all my inner feelings private. No one knew what I really thought or felt. I behaved chameleon-like, giving each person what I sensed they would receive well...not necessarily my genuine point of view. Often I didn't know what my "point of view" was—it was one thing one day, another the next. (Dissociation, again.)

My goal during this long period was always to "get along" and not make waves. It still frequently tends in that direction though today some people would consider me very "outspoken" as I am emphatic on certain subjects, such as child abuse and social justice issues.

My biggest relationship failure, to me, has been my inability to develop a long-term, mutually-respectful companionship with a man in my life. This hurts. Since my divorce at age 32, I've attempted to create this kind of relationship repeatedly, without success. Though dating regularly, especially when younger, I couldn't "connect" to the men I met. In retrospect, I'm sure a big part of this came from my fear of being close, or revealing my genuine self. In other cases, I "tried too hard" and scared people off. Finally, after a lot of therapy, I eased off a bit and was able to manage relationships that would last a year or more (rather than a week) before disintegrating. But they always eventually fell apart. Sometimes this happened due to philosophical differences. Sometimes I picked men with big problems, such as alcoholism, that made them incapable of being real companions. Other times, they lived too far away. (My choice? Probably. Farther away was 'safer' for me.) And sometimes it may have been my own expectations. I wanted monogamy, intelligence, diverse interests, and kindness. Rarely did I find all ingredients in the same human being.

One time I thought I'd finally found my mate. But after five years, that too fell apart—not by my choosing. I fell into a state of deep despair. This

was the first and only person I'd ever truly trusted in my entire life. I felt betrayed on many levels, and my multi-faceted personality—which had been holding together pretty well for a long time—collapsed inside. I cried every day for two years. Despite all my so-called skill using "therapy tools" I was unable to apply them due to my out-of-control emotions.

Finally I stabilized. But the loss affected my physical as well as my mental health. I developed serious medical problems which have virtually made me "unmarketable" to a potential intimate companion. Only the most unusual type of man would take me on at this point. I am too busy working and staying alive to seek out this rare person, so I have emotionally given up the dream of a true and reciprocal love.

But I still do have many friends who are supportive, with whom I regularly interact, exchange views and sometimes join for outside activities. Some of these friendships have lasted more than 25 years, and I am able to keep bringing new people into my life, as well. My imperfect grasp of relationships doesn't mean I have nothing to offer others. So here, in case you may find them useful, are the tips I use to gather and retain my friends:

1. I only associate with people I like and respect. Those I don't care for, I avoid. This is something I learned the hard way, but it makes a huge difference in my level of comfort. Anyone who treats me badly is history. I go on to the next.

2. I rarely "dump" on my friends in a big, heavy load. I parcel out "bad news" in small doses to different people, and try hard not to overwhelm anyone with my problems. I know I am not the only person dealing with "trouble"...everyone I know has one problem or another. We all deal with difficulty. So Friend A may hear one of my gripes, while Friend B hears another. I vent them all, eventually, but I try not to overdo it. My friends help me cope with a

bite of trouble at a time.

3. I ALWAYS ask my friends how THEY are doing and I always listen and commiserate as best I can. Sometimes I hold back on my "bad news" if a friend is having a particularly rough time of it. I think it's important not to turn our conversation into "me, me, me" all the time.

4. I often initiate contact, if I haven't heard from a friend for awhile. I don't think it's their job to always call me. But I also give them a way out of the contact, if they choose, by asking "Is this a good time?" or something like that.

5. If someone repeatedly does not respond to my outreach, I back off. People change. Sometimes they are simply "not in the mood" to talk, or are overwhelmed by something they really do not want to discuss with me. I don't dislike people automatically for this. If it becomes evident, over time, that a person really does not want to be in touch with me—that's ok. I don't freak out. I only want to be with people who like me as a person, and

want my friendship. There are plenty of people in the world who want to be friends with a friendly and considerate person.

6. If someone comes on too intensely to me, for my comfort—I back off. I set boundaries. I do not want excessively-intense relationships with my friends. I want mutual comfort. Sometimes I explain this openly, but sometimes I don't. I just get off the phone quicker than usual. Or I change the topic. Again, this reverts back to Tip #1: I associate only with people I like and respect, who like and respect me. Sometimes, the names change, but the principle doesn't.

7. I try to give back. I show appreciation to my friends. I say "Thank You" often. I sign my notes to close friends with "Love." For a long time I didn't do this, but then I realized it isn't hard to say, truthfully, that I love someone I care about. And how many people want to hear that word "love" applied to them? Most of us don't hear it enough.

8. With my children—I try to give

them the space they need and don't whine if they don't call me first. I keep them updated on my activities and ask about theirs. And I always close our conversations with "I love you." I want them to know I mean that, forever, no matter what.

9. With clients and employers, I strive for professionalism. I don't discuss my personal life with them, except in appropriate circumstances. And I always say "thank you" and show my appreciation for working with them.

Maybe some of my "tips" are dishonest or circumspect. Maybe I show my "lack of trust" by not disclosing my true self, fully, to everyone I meet. Sometimes, I'm sure, I've made mistakes and not followed my own suggestions. But overall, this method of interacting with people has given me a reasonably good level of support, companionship, and work for many years. I hope it is useful to some of you..

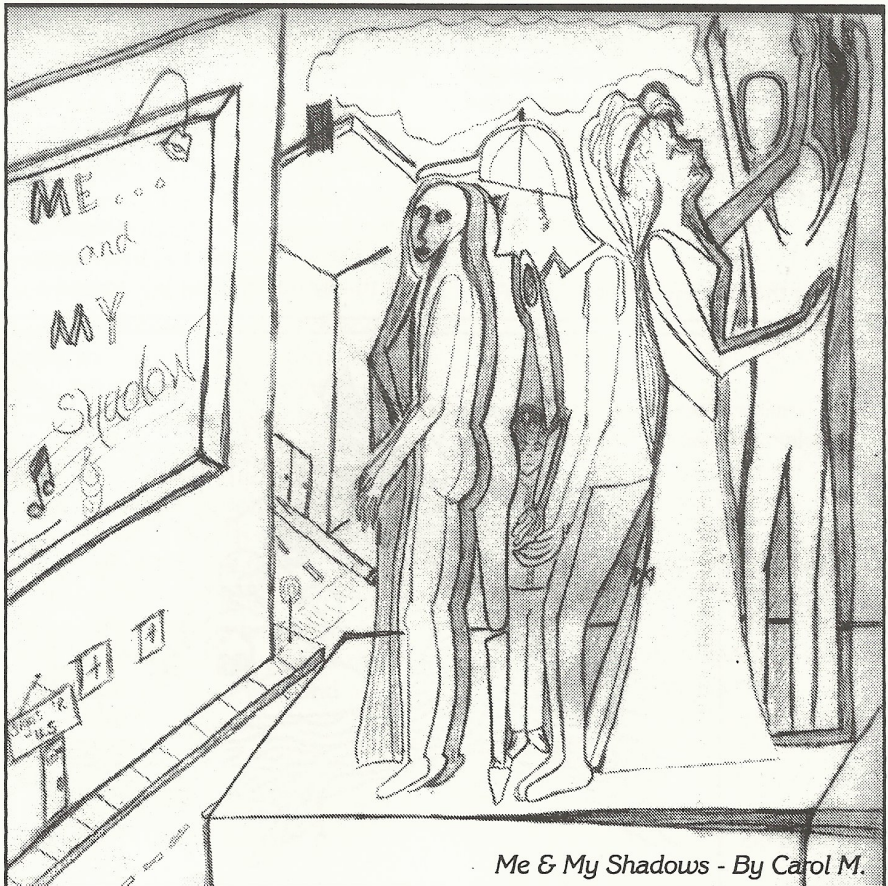
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Aching to Touch

Unable to forget
My weaknesses are your strengths
Skin burning to touch skin
Lips yearning to taste lips
Dying inside with every look
Dying inside without you
My weaknesses become your strengths
We've never set ourselves free
I can feel you inside my soul
Aching, burning, yearning, dying yet
Unable to set me free
Your weaknesses become my strength
My soul aches for you
It is unable to forget
My soul burns to meet yours
As it yearns to be free
My soul dies to feel the strength
of our souls
Tangled together
Aching, burning, yearning and
Dying to set each other free.

By Tricia Wyse

MV



Me & My Shadows - By Carol M.

An Out-of-Line Friendship

By Deb C.

I want to tell you about a relationship I have with a friend I go to church with. I'm going to call him Adam. I am a woman, but most of my friends are men. I have always been more comfortable with men.

Having DID, of course means there are many parts to me. I have to be careful. One of my parts, Betty, is ultra-feminine, a real girlie-girl. Betty does a lot of flirting.

I had taken a class at church that Adam taught. He always made me feel special, wanting me to sit next to him.

Adam had also done some spiritual counseling with me. He was well aware of my bipolar and DID.

Whenever Adam saw me at church or class, he would always give me a hug and a kiss on the lips. My therapist has always been leery of Adam and our relationship.

I didn't really see anything wrong with the kissing. I did notice that if he kissed another woman, it was always on the cheek.

I am a very affectionate person, always hugging my friends. One minister at our church told me that he was going to make me the official church hugger.

Betty thoroughly enjoyed Adam's

attention, flirting shamelessly.

It all came to a head a week ago. I was feeling strange, disoriented. We had a specialguest speaker and served lunch.

I volunteer at our Welcome Desk, greeting everyone and I was lighting the candles in the foyer that morning. I felt a presence behind me. It was Adam. He gave me a big kiss and told me how much he had missed me, as he had been gone for three weeks.

At lunch, I was helping out again. I passed out paper plates, while someone else collected money. Adam came up while I was doing this and planted another kiss on me. The fellowship hall was full of people. I really started to feel weird, then Adam started massaging my shoulders.

By this time, I was really in a mess. Something didn't feel right. We were having a workshop after lunch and I had planned on attending, but now knew I couldn't. I left in a hurry.

I was a total wreck when I got to my therapist's on Tuesday. I had no idea who I was. My whole inner system was in chaos.

My therapist said that the kissing had to stop. He told me that Adam was totally out of line. We agreed a

hug was okay, but nothing else.

I decided an email could say it better than I could in person. I said it with kind, but firm, words.

Adam emailed me back and said that he took it in the spirit that I sent it in.

This Sunday he gave me a friendly hug and I breathed a sigh of relief. I still had my friend.

This is just to say that sometimes DID can make a person very vulnerable and something like this can have a really devastating effect on you. I was a wreck for a week. I no longer take the class at my therapist's recommendation.

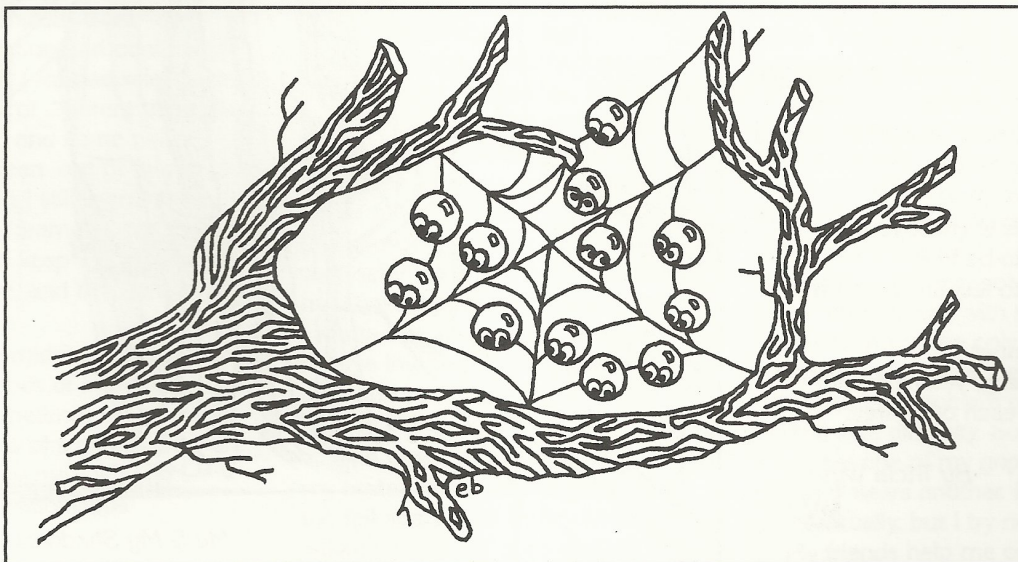
I'm so glad to have him; he takes very good care of me.

As for Betty, she is really mad at me. She enjoyed being singled out with that kind of attention. But she will get over it.

Will it happen again? I honestly don't know. Betty is a part of me and I have many male friends. I can only hope that I can keep her in line.

By the way, Adam and I are both married. I can only thank my therapist for helping me sort this out. For now, everything is cool.

MV



Stalked: A Multiple's Perspective

By Judy H.

I don't know how else to describe my 18-year relationship with a schizophrenic ex-brother-in-law other than it felt like being stalked, although he was just making his daily relative gossip rounds. I didn't like him and over the years changed my phone number 3 times. I tolerated it until 5 months ago. I would cringe when it was him calling.

I felt violated by these calls and finally wrote him a letter telling him I would take legal action if he didn't stop calling completely. The calls stopped. When he called, my children inside hid. Often he would call 3 times a day and for many years, ever day. I am so relieved it's over now.

I also just got rid of my ex-husband's cousin through the same marriage. I also knew him for 18 years and he wouldn't stop calling either. He's an alcoholic. I felt he raped me by pressure and getting me to switch, and abused me emotionally right after I started therapy three years ago. I really didn't want him calling anymore. One night he pressured me until he got the personality that had a thing for him to come out. Everybody else in me said "NO" for 45 minutes. It felt like rape or being molested to me. Who wants a past rapist to keep calling and telling you what good friends you are? I wanted nothing to do with him. My solution for him was to call him back finally, once, and say loudly "In case I forget next time you call—fuck off, asshole!"

Neither have called since I took these actions. I've been divorced three years now.

I have been diagnosed DID since 1989 with 21 personalities, and have really been working hard o recovery the last three years. Actually I've been studying DID for the last 8 years, but it's hard to recover when your living in abuse. I've been journaling for ten years and studying books on trauma recovery and have been reading "The Courage to Heal" all these years. It's been such a comfort and resource to me. I learned you must have and

respect your own boundaries before you can make anyone else do it. We must protect our inner children and keep them safe. A Couple months back, an article in MV on "Lawyers Can Be Friends" so encouraged and validated me, as I had just eliminated these men from my life. I also suffer from PTSD, of course. I have far more peace after eliminating these people, and I've worked hard to get every abuser out of my life for the last three years. Being dissociative and getting into therapy to recover has cost me my family and so-called friends, but I consider my opinion of myself to be the most important and what matters.

My children inside trust me more and recovery has been good though a process over time. It took me these last 3 years to forgive my multiple child abusers and 9 rapists and all the hurtful, destructive relationships I've been in until 56 years old. As a Christian the mental assent "forgiveness" didn't work for me. I had to include dealing with my emotions and anger, forgiving over ad over again, as I have worked through flashbacks and memories and nightmares. The forgiveness I have accomplished through many tears and release of pain and grief has given me so much more hope and peace.

I am really learning to love and enjoy the love of God, and my cat and dog, living alone for three years now. Forgiveness has opened the door for me to experience God's love and forgiveness for me, much greater since the work I've done thus far. But I still can't sit in church after a terrible experience with a pastor.

I hope my experience with creating stronger boundaries helps someone else. We are all grownups and can change things now, I've found with God's help.

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Softly

Starting out a little green
from life's basket tho it seems
Sprouts a little child from heaven
holding up her eyes so bright
Searching, longing for the kiss
for the touch that makes life right

Waiting for the hands to hold her,
waiting for the tender touch
Feeling, longing still believing
life has to offer her so much

Softly in the night with covers
tucked securly in night's bed
Lays the small child soundly sleeping
Dancing dreams within her head

*Tomorrow mother may I wander
over hills of green and gold?
A butterfly may land beside me
and then its beauty I'll behold!*

Be careful child--where go your
dreams
Fate spied a figure lurking near
Pull up your covers round you tight
Prepare to learn what you must fear

Darkened hands within the night
substitute her dreams with fright
Ripped away with burning fingers
happy colored forms that lingered

Bathed in darkness, terror pouring,
Fate hides her playful hopes once
soaring
Now curling up within a ball
The child can scarce be seen at all

but wait-

Later on the child doeth waken
and resumes her dreams forsaken
and she gives the pain so cold
To another soul to hold

She nails (it) up shut firm and tight
The fear encountered in the night

and with a resolute unfailing
Pulling courage on the way
her small child's heart
its hunger trailing
takes hope to start another day

By Sandy H.

MV

Thoughts on Investing

By Anonymous

Editor's Note :

One of MV's long time subscribers has spent time considerable time and effort learning how to manage money and invest, with some success. I asked her to describe her experience, although many who read MV do not currently have extra money to explore this possibility.

Please be aware that what she has done does not apply to anyone but herself, and may not be duplicated by others who try the same methods. Anyone who attempts this must accept their own personal responsibility for the results, good or bad.

I still think money management is a worthwhile topic to bring to our readers, because so often people who have been abused feel that they can't even try to gain financial knowledge or security. We all need to recognize that it is possible to achieve many of the same things so-called "normal" people can achieve...if we start from scratch and spend lots of time safely learning and practicing how it is done. We can each develop our own strategies to become more secure financially, even though it may be difficult and different from what others do.

Fears of change also hold us back—what would it mean if we were able to be "successful" or stable, financially? These are questions to discuss with your therapist, as well as with other stable people you know and trust, before doing anything that involves risk. We welcome broad feedback on this topic, pro or con, but we will NOT engage in any discussion of your personal financial concerns. This article provides limited information only, and neither MV or our writer holds responsibility for your outcomes. —Lynn W.

If there are any words or phrases you don't understand in this article or anywhere else, find out what they mean at a website like <http://www.investorwords.com/>

My #1 goal, which motivates me to work hard at money management and investments, is to have enough money when I leave this situation to not ever have to return or be dependent on anyone again. Saving and investing is the period of delayed gratification with the reward of financial independence as the goal. I will be ready when it is time.

The stock market has worked out for me but I feel uncomfortable recommending it as it is possible to lose so much and I only work in one small area. Public libraries will carry some of the newsletters that require paid subscriptions. My mother uses their valueline which didn't have any of my smaller company stocks that I have. I use all the free information available as I never could find a paid newsletter that would give me everything I needed.

I have made watch lists of my stocks with google.com/finance and money.cnn.com. Google.com/finance also gives real time stock quotes and news at their website. Money.cnn.com will email you very short updates on your watchlist stocks during the day. Their website also has before and after market conditions. It does not take long to go down your lists every morning. It is not that we are going to do anything but it is best to stay updated with your stock and with what is going on in the world (reuters.com) that could affect your stock in case we want to act. While others are waiting for analysts,

interpretations, or news releases, we can possibly see and act on what we are internalizing from our own educational process.

1 - Know we are going to need our own income at some point and it will be much harder the older we get. No matter how old we are when we get started, we could always be older and things could always be worse - so start now.

2 - We must pay ourselves first, like a bill - there will never be enough left over if we pay ourselves from what is left. While we are saving everything from cash back at the grocery to all our birthday and christmas money, we must research, research, research.

3 - Save up a minimum amount to open a money market account at an online brokerage. Different brokerages have different fees and requirements. Some brokerages have a monthly fee and charge for everything, even research. Although I prefer email, it is important to use the phone for this stage to know how customer friendly they are for the times we will need help. It is our money and we do not want to get discouraged and quit from intimidation or inconvenience. It is a lot of trouble to change brokerages. It is so much easier to make money when we don't have to worry about intimidating customer service if we need them and there will be times when we do.

This article gives my experiences with a mutual fund brokerage and Ameritrade. This is not an ad for Ameritrade as I have had my problems with them but they are like my lucky brokerage because we can usually work things out - if I can use the phone. Emails lose a lot in translation. They just show me how to do what I want to do without bothering me about anything. Because they are so helpful and non intrusive, it adds to my emotional well being which helps with the fear factor. I still experience anxiety every time I have to call my mutual fund brokerage. It is our money and we must be comfortable where we invest.

I started out with a mutual fund brokerage when I was new and needed a certain amount of help. They always wanted my social security number. (The phone lines get crossed a lot in my area.) I opened a retirement account for my husband and did all the trades but they continually wanted his permission no matter how many times he gave it, although they told me (repeatedly) he wouldn't have to do it again. I finally became overwhelmed and have not looked at his account in years. This is very bad business as companies can go broke.

Then there was the time I decided to go on margin. I didn't know I needed to have permission from the mutual fund brokerage. The man was so mean accusing me of taking a free ride that I cried. They froze my account for some

months really dampening my experience. I opened an account at a different brokerage but that didn't work out either. A family member told me I had to buy and sell and buy and sell to make money. All this got me was broke and I didn't trade again for many years. I cannot think of one person that ever told me anything helpful.

I started out with Ameritrade this last time and they are like my lucky brokerage because they just show me how to do what I want to do without bothering me about anything - if I can use the phone. When able, I have had much more success on the phone than with their email as there really is some kind of communication gap between what I write and what they answer. They also allow me to give identifying information other than my social security number—like my birthday. However, we still need to know what we are doing. I was getting margin calls (where brokerage takes your stock if you don't have a certain percentage of money or stock) during one period because I didn't know I had to bid on my own options to keep up my account percentage. Someone was bidding .60 on my \$4 options.

Some links to online brokerages comparisons

From Barron's:

<http://www.brokerage-review.com/articles/barrons-2011-broker-survey.aspx>

Getting Started with Brokers

<http://www.fool.com/how-to-invest/broker/fullcompare.aspx>

It is easy to open a new account at another brokerage, but it is a lot of trouble keeping track of your assets all over the place. Transferring stocks and funds is also a lot of trouble and can get expensive.

Funds may be free (no load) to buy and sell if they are the funds put together by your brokerage but if you transfer them, your new brokerage may charge you 39.00 to liquidate. Ameritrade offered to trade me into one of their funds or an ETF (exchange traded fund) without charge but I needed the money to pay on my margin. (I finally got a margin account.) We came to some compromises on all of that. It is also possible to lose your cost basis information in transit as that is a courtesy and not a requirement and they will tell

you how to do it yourself.

You will have to open a money market account from which to work. Everything is bought from your money market account and it is good to set up monthly automatic deductions from your checking account to fund your money market. Some brokerages have a minimum amount to open and if you meet that requirement, I think you can make regular deposits of any amount after that. I don't know about other brokerages, but the transfers from your bank to ameritrade are free through something called ach. Your ameritrade account gets credited the next day but the money comes out of your bank account the second or third day. Disciplined automatic deductions (similar to paying a bill) from your checking account make investing easy.

I started out with mutual funds and found out about 'rate of return.' When I called the mutual fund brokerage to find the funds with the highest rates of return, they advised against that method - past performance is no indication of future performance, etc. I did it anyway and did exceptionally well. That is where I got all the money to buy and sell, buy and sell later on. Mutual fund companies have rate of return printed right at the beginning of the fund information and some even have charts where you can see all of the funds and their information in one place. When they came out with new charts or new prospectus, that is when I checked to make sure I was still in the fund with the highest 'rate of return' in the category of my interest. The higher the rate of return, the more dividends or shares you will get added to your account and it will grow faster. The brokerages won't be selling you those funds that don't make any money because you will know better. The mutual fund brokerage will let you trade funds without a fee a certain amount of times per year.

You can either leave your money for years, just changing funds once or twice a year or so or never for rates of return if it is working well for you. While your money is hopefully growing in a fund, you might start researching stocks. I invested in established energy stocks that paid dividends. I felt the dividend gave them more stability as I was going for safety and people would always need gas, oil and electricity. There are a lot of very cheap stocks but they can always get a lot cheaper if you are bargain hunting instead

of doing your DD (due diligence - research).

I am uncomfortable with financial stocks as they are so dependent on so many things I don't understand - bonds, world banks and interest rates, etc. While my gas stocks have been going up and paying dividends, the one financial REIT I purchased for 4.07 is going down and is now 3.45. My dividends since owning it have been .17, .14 and .13 which makes my base investment 3.63 and this investment could still get cheaper. Although the dividend works out to 15%, I would have made more money in a gas stock that goes up while still paying a dividend.

It is good to research and make sure the company you like is fundamentally and financially in good shape. I think they will hold up better in bad times. I started investing during a bad time just before the stocks I purchased stopped their dividends a few years ago. They got a lot cheaper after that. When a stock announces a cut or an end to their dividends, the stock price can drop dramatically and you have to decide whether to wait out the trouble or sometimes, sell at a big loss.

I just started getting advertising newsletters from Chris Rowe and have been watching his videos but haven't gone any further than information gathering. He tells how brokers will be recommending stocks to individual investors while they themselves are dumping out of (selling) the same stocks. The other thing I learned from him is to decide whether you are an investor or a trader. I am more of an investor and try as much as possible to buy and hold, which is definitely not recommended anymore. I have heard you are not supposed to get attached to a stock but I like the ones I have until I find something better. I am always researching to find a better stock than the one I have in case it becomes time to sell for some reason. Then I already have a place for my money. It seems that the things I like all go up or down together which makes it impossible to sell one high to buy the other cheap. My mother always says to sell when I have a profit - but then what?? Her way it is possible to sell high and wait to buy the stock you want when it is lower. It works well for her but I like to find a good stock and keep adding and holding.

Never trust a compulsion or a thought that just drops in on you. A compulsion is

Investing, cont'd.

usually a trap that I can only see in hindsight. They have never worked for me but are self destructive. Use your own intelligence, thought process and deductive reasoning. You could pay for one wrong decision with more years in the same situation. What we do needs to pay off.

Research, invest and then wait. When you have anxiety, do more research (instead of something compulsive). You can never exercise your mind too much. Someone inside is retaining, remembering, and applying. Keep yourself updated on what is going on with your stock. Sometimes if we are watching all of our resources and noticing the daily buying or selling of our stock, we may be able to 'see' small changes and act before others. All of this information gathering paired with our survival skills can give us an edge - acts like intuition when it is really applied learning.

All of the above has taken me many hard years of focus. I had to make stocks my obsession to make it work for me which is not healthy. My mind has been so damaged that I don't think I could have held a job and done all this thinking and researching at the same time but hopefully

you can. You will never be sorry. I hope you don't lose anything. It is possible but if you do, it is ok. The earlier you start investing the more time you have to recover if you do make a mistake. Hopefully, you will use your mistake to make a profit the next time.

I had a problem knowing when or whether to sell losing stocks or wait for them to come back up. Therefore, instead of taking a small loss I took way bigger ones by waiting too long to sell. Professional investors use some kind of percentage formula. Continual evaluation of our stocks will help us to decide whether to sell or wait. There have been times that stocks I have chosen have come under all kinds of analyst downgrades. Past and current research helps me to know whether to wait for the bad reviews to pass or to sell because the downward trend is so strong. If we have confidence in our research and don't go on margin (take out loans on our stocks to buy more) we can 'choose' to wait for our stocks to come back up to avoid losing money.

Uneducated investing is like jumping off a cliff and hoping someone will catch us. When we research, it keeps us from being

afraid to take the small risks we need to take at times.

I started small with mutual funds, then stocks and now have been trading options for a couple of years which is very dangerous. The odd thing is that for a person that was taught to be afraid of everything all my life, I am not afraid to take financial risks. My research is not built on human lies and deception which makes all the difference in my confidence to trade.

I understand everyone has their own ideas about God but I could never have done anything or made any money at all let alone prosper without a dependence on Christ. He has made me a millionaire but I am not out of the woods yet. Now my struggle is with avoiding self destruction and figuring which stocks will give me the dividend income necessary to support myself for the rest of my life in the midst of persecution, which is quite a financial drain.

I hope you find this helpful, and that you are encouraged to find your own best way to manage money and become financially more secure.

MV

Beliefs and Practices that Sustain Us

Recently we posed a question in our Email newsletter, the MVInsider Edition #37, about dealing with uncertainty and the beliefs and practices that keep us going regardless. (You can see this newsletter by typing in <http://p0.vresp.com/VPdqJ8> into your browser.) Below are a couple of the answers we received. You may find them helpful. - Lynn W.

I am not here living this life by accident or because of a God that would make me a slave to "his" power or choice making. I have been designed with free choice, which is evidence to me that my very life was a choice I had to be involved with. I could choose as part of a loving relationship to "God" which directly defines my concept of "God". I believe that my divine self was endowed with free choice before I ever arrived through birth, and could decide about whether I wanted to live the life I now have or not before I was born to it. I call this a "divine

agreement" between my divine self and that of "God" who demonstrates what love is by having a relationship of love with me based on free choice. No matter how much I meditate on the ramifications of this it always looks like the only possible expression of "Love" that makes any sense to me, and leads to the only kind of "loving God" concept I can accept.

From there everything else starts being understandable to me, and therefore manageable.

By Pegge S.

I began writing with a passion when I was eight years old after a summer playground supervisor praised and praised a little "book" I had fashioned out of construction paper and wrote a story about a bee. I was so proud from her praises as this was rare commendation instead of the much more common condemnation I received daily. So that day I got bit by the writing bug (a bee?) and never stopped! I found

writing did and still does function as an "escape" from terrible realities.

It was also a way of "creating" my own fanciful realities which was a sort of "power" I wielded that was mine and mine alone. I also write very outrageous and humorous "satire stories" about people/situations I am very angry about, then I LOL as I read them aloud later. I feel much better then-the anger disappears just like that!

I also journal in notebooks almost every day about significant things that happen, both good and bad. I also write down many dreams so I keep it on my bedside table most of the time. I also bring my current journal to my weekly sessions with my Therapist to assist in recollections and discuss dreams. I sometimes write with exigency and sometimes with rapture and isn't a new word fun to capture?

By Barbara S.

MV

Healing Through Music

By Alison R.

As a child my parents started me in Piano lessons when I was 7 years old and although I have very few memories up to this point and even during this time due to the abuse I went through and the fact that I split, what I do remember is hearing melodies in my head as young as the age of 5 and always wanting to sing.

My abuse was based around the fact that I was first born and a girl which in my family was not acceptable as the first born has to be a boy in order to carry on the family name. Thus, the idea of me having a voice, period, let alone making it heard, was completely unacceptable to my "family of origin".

So I learned very quickly once I had access to a Piano that this was a way I could tell my story and make my voice heard without speaking a word.

As I got older and started to compete and take music seriously it was another reason in their minds that I was a total waste of time as people in Musical careers, unless they happen to be the best of the best, don't make any money and that was the only thing that mattered to "my family."

But for me it was my only way to have any kind of a voice or emotions for that matter. I think the only reason why my "parents" continued to pay for lessons for me until the age of 15 was because I was the entertainment when they had parties at the house or had their friends and associates over to the house.

It was like I was a showpiece and literally had to perform all the time in every sense of the word. But inside of me I felt something intense in my soul when ever I heard good music, instrumental or vocal, and remember listening to CBC radio and classical music from an early age. The first time I heard Rimsky Korsakovs' Scheherazade, I remember sitting in my room on the floor beside my bed

in my safe place and thinking "this is my story and someday I am going to get through this storm and to the other side."

Now at the age of 36 I am just starting to see the light through the storm. I also dreamed because I started playing the trumpet at age 15 and then went on to get a music degree with a major on Trumpet I actually got to perform the famous trumpet excerpt from Scheherazade within a master class.

in retrospect, I have been given so many opportunities that many others haven't had. But I need to add that I have been on my own supporting myself since I was 15.. I am telling you this because I don't want you to think that it didn't require an extreme amount of hard work, but now the rewards are paying off by the dozen.

I have not only had the opportunity to share my story every time I perform, but as a teacher I have had students who are now young adults come back and thank me for teaching them how to find their own unique voice.

This past Christmas I had the opportunity to form a group of Carolers as well as being the lead Soprano of the group. I was able to take our group into a local mental health support agency. After one of our performances, I was taken aside by one of the workers who said to me "If only we knew all it would take was music!"

To which I said "What do you mean?"

This professional went on to tell me that the staff had been trying to get a particular woman to speak for a number of months and until we came in she hadn't made a noise. Yet when we sang, this woman joined in with one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard. She was singing in perfect harmony with our group, and was smiling and clapping her hands.

Let me tell you that's all I needed at that point. Yes it was important to

be paid but I had just been paid for what I do for a living in a way that is undecipherable. Our group, for the 5 minutes we were in that space, was able to give this woman an opportunity to use her voice for the first time in months.

As someone who was forced to be silent for so long, this literally brought me to tears when I left the building and got back outside and then again at home later that evening.

That's why I do what I do for a living. Yes the money is great, but I am not in this business for the money. I am here to tell a story without speaking a word.

To me, good art-- be it music or visual art-- isn't worth a darn unless it elicits an emotional response. I hope that I never lose that talent or the ability that I currently have to give up and coming musicians the opportunity to make their voices heard.

For that I say "thank you" to everyone who has allowed me and continues to allow me to express myself in this non verbal yet extremely powerful way!

MV



By
Santos

Hostage: The Power of Secrets

By MySong

Here is a piece of poetry (I call a prose) I wrote about secrets:

I have lived inside of secrets and they finally became my prison. Incased inside a lie, entangled in a snare, I became its victim. Alone I lived in a surreptitious closet that no one else could see, not even me. An enigma I could not escape for many years.

They kept me captive and unavailable, as I never let anyone visit my true self. I became a restricted human being and lived alone, trapped within them.

It took me many years, but I finally became free of the secrets that controlled my life. I split open my soul and let them fall into the light, and as they lost their power there, I found freedom.

Secrets, especially those linked to shame, can forever hold us hostage.

Although I am an article writer, I have written poetry most of my life. I wrote this prose not long ago, and of course it is about me, but after thinking about it, I realized most people that read this magazine are burdened by secrets, especially those linked to shame. Thus this article was birthed.

I have been bound by secrets a great deal of my life, but I have let almost all of them go, and have found great freedom from doing this. But I have to admit that it was not an easy thing to do and has taken me many years. Being a survivor, as most of us are, we were forced to keep secrets for many years and this can produce helplessness and eventually hopelessness. When we keep trauma, or anything that is linked to shame, a secret, it does not allow us to heal. It

can control our lives so much we can have a secret life and then we are forced to maintain a façade that revolves around this secret. When we feel we cannot reveal it to anyone, it starts having a negative effect on our behavior and can create a great deal of inner conflict.

Secrets can ultimately destroy relationships with family, friends, spouses, and other people that are important in our lives. They can cause depression, isolation, suicide, anxiety, loneliness, addictions and much more, as we are never able to show anyone the core of who we really are. Some secrets completely stop us from further developing as a person, so we stay rooted in the same psychological spot. They can result in a lifetime of cover-up and secrecy.

I have found that the most difficult secrets to deal with, and the ones that cause the most disaster in our lives, are those bound in shame. We, as survivors, usually have many of those. When there is shame and guilt around a secret, it becomes toxic. Guilt revolves around what you have done; shame is about who you are. Some secrets are too scary to bring out into the light as they are wrapped in layer upon layer of denial and buried very deep within our minds. We are afraid to talk about them or even think about them.

The dictionary defines shame as the painful feeling arising from the consciousness of something dishonorable, improper, and ridiculous, etc. done by oneself or another. It is a common feeling among survivors of abuse. The word shame comes from Old Germanic roots meaning to clothe or cover oneself. Shame motivates the wish for concealment and the desire not to be seen.

Male survivors of sexual assault are faced with even more difficulty than female survivors I think. There is the mistaken belief that men are immune

to victimization and that they should be able to fight off an attacker or they are not a "man". The world believes men should always be able to defend themselves to protect their pride and self-respect. We think they are supposed to fight to the death. These beliefs of masculinity are deeply ingrained in most of us and leave male survivors with intense feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy. People think that men can't be forced into sex, but that is not true. These beliefs leave the male survivor feeling isolated and ashamed and they usually suffer in silence.

Many men question their sexual orientation after an assault and are afraid they might become gay. But male rape has nothing to do with one's sexual orientation. It is a crime motivated by the desire to have power over another, to control, humiliate and harm someone, whatever the gender. Rape is a crime of violence, where sex is the weapon.

Adult men can be assaulted by friends, significant others, strangers and gangs. They are frequently violent and involve weapons. But men can also be raped by women. Males that are victims of sexual assault frequently live inside of secrets linked to shame. Because of how society views men it is very difficult for them to let their secrets out into the light and find the freedom to heal.

No matter what happened to you, it is important to remember it was not your fault. You did not deserve it or cause it. The abuser works very hard to ensure that they have all the power. They use threats and coercion to implant shame in the victim, thus we live inside of this shame and it can control our lives unless we let it out into the light. No matter what was done or how it affected you and others, it was simply the way you survived.

Secrets create a terrible toll on us and it is essential to get it out of our

system and step out of the closet and unwrap the bindings and bare the wound and just let it bleed. What stops most of us from doing this is the overpowering fear of exposure and sometimes its consequences. We have a fear of being judged or being seen as weak. To let out secrets, especially those bound by shame, takes a tremendous amount of courage and determination, but ultimately it sets us free.

Choosing whom to tell is very important. You need to reveal it to a compassionate, trustworthy person. One who will listen and not judge or condemn you. Start by telling a small secret and see how they respond. I chose to tell my secrets to only those that I knew would love me, regardless of what I told them. I was very careful whom I told, and it pays to think a lot about it and know the person extremely well. You, after all, are trusting them with something that may have paralyzed your life. Your secret is not who you are, it is simply something the lives in your soul. Although it takes a great deal of courage to share a secret, letting it out into the light breaks the bondage that it has over you and in the end, you are no longer it's "hostage". It is there you will find freedom.

I wanted to tell you about a book I found as I was researching this article. It is a children's book and I thought it was very well done and read several reviews about it. One person, a survivor, was actually helped by this book too. It is called, "A Very Touching Book ...for little people and for big people..." By Jan Hindman. I did find it available through Amazon.com, and you can read several reviews there. It is about safe touch and about touch that is not safe, touch that is kept a "secret". It is illustrated with cartoons and quite funny. I wanted to refer those of you that have young children to this book, as I felt it could be helpful in keeping your children safe and knowledgeable about when touch is OK and when it is not. It may also be available in your local library. But it may not be on the shelf, so you might want to ask, as it does show the sexuality of both male and female, but in cartoon figures.

MV

A Sad Relationship With Daughter

By MaeveB

I am a 71-year old highly dissociative person with a history of complex trauma, numerous periods during my life with little or no narrative memory, and probable DID. I have one daughter, now 35. Our relationship was always exceptionally close, or so I thought. When she and her family bought their house, they selected a 2-family house in a location where I would be able to get out and about when I finally retired. She had assured me that she didn't want me to have to worry about where I would live in my elder years. In fact, even though I was living in Florida at the time of my anticipated early retirement due to injuries from an accident and severe emotional repercussions, her comment was "Get your butt back up here where you can be close to family." Which I did, and cherished the afternoons sitting with a cup of tea and chatting while she prepared supper. My contentment was complete when I got to be the downstairs Nana when their first child arrived.

But over the next couple years, depression intervened. Whether hers, or mine, or both, I don't know, But the day came in late 2007 when she asked to meet with my therapist, and then with both of us, to let me know I could no longer live with her and her family. The reason she cited was her discovery of her own DID. She insisted at the time that there were no specific reasons that she could give, except that my presence, or even the sound of my voice, triggered intense responses in her System.

Dealing with this newly-imposed, unwanted, need to move exacerbated my life-long hoarding tendencies, and my difficulty with packing and finding other housing increased the strain on both of us, and she gradually came to let me know that she came to believe that I had sexually abused her - something I have, to this day, no inkling of. She refuses to give me any hint of what she believes happened, and insists that the responsibility for remembering is totally mine, and that

even if I do remember, she does not believe that there will be any value - to her - in revisiting her experiences.

Her telling my then-therapist her reasons for asking me to leave created an impasse in my continuing with that therapist, who had extreme difficulty meeting my need to work on the issue without violating my daughter's confidentiality, and I terminated that relationship within a year.

My daughter's anger has grown increasingly obvious in the few written exchanges we have had since then. She has effectively banned me from their neighborhood and their family gatherings, although there are occasional, casual encounters when we attend social gatherings that draw a large number of mutual friends.

Then, I have brief contact with my two grand-daughters, one now 5 years old, and the other, 15 months. While I have tried to be sensitive to her demands, my own anger is growing, since there is no correlation between her perception and my memory.

I would dearly love to know if any other MV readers have had similar experiences, and how they have dealt with them.

Dear MV Readers: if you have comments for Maeve, send them to me either through email, at LynnW@manyvoicespress.org, or through regular mail, to MANY VOICES, PO Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639. I will forward the messages to her, and withhold your address -or give it to her- as you prefer. - Lynn W

MV



Relating to Therapists

By Alone

I'd bet most MV readers have their own personal "Therapist story". I'm no exception. When I started to count them up I realized I've had so-called "therapeutic relationships" with about 13 different people for my emotional problems, beginning in the 1960s and to some extent, continuing today.

Each individual counselor had personal quirks that either matched or were in direct opposition to my own quirks. So I believe the key to finding the "right" therapist is to find one who fits in with your own personality(ies) at least on some basic level.

For simplicity's sake I will identify my history-of-shrinkage with an alphabetical time line, from earliest encounter to most recent. Therapists A, B, C, D, and E were among the first, before I realized I'd been affected by childhood trauma. I met them when I was still married, decades ago. (I'm not counting my uncle who was a full-fledged MD psychoanalytic psychiatrist, medical director of a large mental health facility. It was pretty obvious to me via his own behavior that he was personally a bit "off", so I made it a rule to never confide in him.)

A and B I'd call "neutral". One was a psychiatrist who worked briefly with me alone. He was medication-oriented, my husband called the meds 'placebos', and I, being overly compliant to my husband, backed out of treatment. B was a Christian couples counselor, working with both my husband & myself on our marriage. Neither A or B did much good, but they didn't do any harm. Therapist C was another religious-based counselor. He betrayed a confidence which I'd specifically instructed him to NOT do (it had nothing to do with suicide or homicide) caused all kinds of turmoil, and thus turned me away from religious counseling forever.

Therapists D & E entered the scene when my daughter—who was having a hard time with our marital quarrels—threatened suicide and was hospitalized over a major holiday. This was devastating to me and our whole family—not to mention my stricken child. She was soon evaluated (by Therapist E, a psychologist).

Therapist D embarked on a kind of weird-in-retrospect couples therapy, while my daughter did "play therapy" with his wife in another room. My soon-to-be-ex-husband hated the whole concept of talking about our lives to strangers. He especially disliked this guy, so refused to drive the 50 miles to see him. I decided therapy might be helpful, but I wasn't crazy about this psychiatrist either. So instead I made an appointment with the evaluator, Therapist E. She turned out to be a pivotal "good experience" in my life.

What made Therapist E a winner for me, compared to the rest? First, she explained my daughter's response in words that I understood. She said that my kid desperately wanted to have a close relationship with me, and felt I was distant and uninterested in her. I was floored. I thought, if anything, I was too interested and involved in her life. I actually believed that my daughter hated me, and wanted nothing to do with me. So this information led to changed behavior on my part – and over the years—despite some obvious rough spots—we have grown very close and mutually encouraging. I'd say now that my daughter and I have an excellent relationship and believe she'd say the same.

Second, Therapist E was "Adlerian" in her practice. She believed in building on strengths, not nit-picking all my faults. This was a huge help to me, because I'd been raised in an extremely critical environment, the husband I'd chosen shared that critical nature, and the notion that I actually had strengths that were valuable and should be emphasized was another "new concept" for me. I stayed with this therapist throughout my divorce and for several years after, working from a variety of different angles. As to our "therapeutic relationship" – she had strong boundaries. We were cordial, but as professional colleagues in my recovery. It was not a friendship in the usual sense, and not a "teacher/student" relationship either. We worked together to figure out ways to solve problems, and often I came up with the method myself. She would approve, and I'd start implementing the solution. This was probably the biggest

accomplishment of my life—to learn that I could develop plans and carry them through successfully. I literally owe this woman my life.

In the middle of this experience I also encountered a so-called hypnosis expert, Therapist F. I went to him for a specific purpose—I wanted to regress to a particular dream I'd had, relive it and try to remember it in broad daylight. Though this person was recommended to me by a counselor/friend, when I came out of the trance I not only had no recollection of my dream, he said he wanted me to come back so he could "change some of my memories." In those days I was still compliant on the surface, so I made the appointment just to get out of there. And as soon as I could reach a telephone, I canceled it. Good memories or bad memories, they were MY memories, and I didn't want some strange hypnosis-guy "changing" them for me without my input.

I kept seeing Therapist E, though, until one day I grew so "strong" that I took an out-of-town job opportunity. I was quite pleased with myself for making this move. Anchored in my new city, I had good benefits and thought I'd use them to 'get my act together' even better. That's how I met Therapist G—the G stands for "Gawdawful." I have to take the responsibility for my poor choice—I picked her out of the phone book, based on location. I will never make that mistake again.

Therapist G began by making me write a cut-off letter to my good therapist, E, so we would have a "fresh start." I (stupidly) did so. Then she proceeded to demolish my defense mechanisms, one by one, without replacing them with something more constructive. Within a few months I was grossly suicidal, to a level I had not been near since I was a despairing teenager. I knew this was a harmful "therapy" for me, but I didn't know how to get out of it either, because my former strength was vanquished. The Gods were with me, though, because she got pregnant and had to take a leave of absence. I used this opportunity to tell her I wouldn't be coming back. She proceeded to tell me it was my fault things

weren't going well—and I gladly took all the blame—not because I believed it was my fault, but because I wanted completely out of her life and I didn't want any hassle about it. Thus ended my 18 months of hell.

After a brief respite, I recontacted Therapist E in my old hometown to ask if she knew any Adlerians in my new city. She graciously gave me a referral to Therapist H. H was a nice guy who gave me the MMPI and said I was perfectly normal. All I needed was to add structure to my life. I knew that there were many things out of kilter inside me, but I agreed with him about the structure. So I never saw him again, but I did start to add structure—with definite routines, etc. The structure helped me stabilize. So H was better than neutral—he was a good (but brief) thing.

One of my "structure" efforts involved taking workshops that sounded interesting. I attended a guided imagery workshop, had a wonderful creative experience, and decided I'd like individual therapy with the instructor, Therapist "I". I imagined we'd do a lot of guided imagery on creative topics—but I was wrong.

This therapist was into probing much more than I was geared up for, and the guided imagery kept focusing on my feelings and memories, not abstract creative topics. I kept going back, because I liked her—but all that focus on feelings brought my trauma history to the fore. One session I had a blatantly dissociative episode—and she knew what it was when she saw it. She did not feel comfortable working with a full blown dissociative client, so she recommended me to a local psychiatrist who specialized in this area...Therapist J.

Therapist J was another "good therapist." She taught me virtually everything I know about dissociation, and helped me with medications so I could continue working while going through the worst aspects of uncovering memories. We never did do "all" of the memories, nor did I fully integrate (though I function a lot better after having been with her.) I'll admit I never really trusted her...or any of the other therapists along the way. I found it safer to keep a part of myself in reserve. This may not have been the wisest choice, but it was what I could do, and still stay functional. Because I don't have a spouse or partner to give me ongoing support or financial assistance, I have to work in order to eat every week. That means I

must stay strong, no matter how many blows hit me from whatever direction. In some ways, that's a good thing. At least, that's how I look at it today.

After several years of work with Therapist J., she and her husband built a home outside the local area, and I was (at this point) tired of therapy and especially tired of medications. We'd gone through a bunch of different anti-anxiety and anti-depression meds. The last one was Prozac, and when she upped the dose I decided I felt like a zombie. I was moving to a different job, too, one with more flexibility in my time, and less pressure. So we mutually decided to part company, and I quit the medications altogether, except for a tiny dose of Xanax at night (1/2 a .25 mg pill) to help me sleep through the night. In well-over a decade, I've never gone back to psychotropic drugs.

I found my final counselor, Therapist K, by ordering some tapes on creativity a few years later. I really liked these tapes, and though the counselor lived in a far-distant state, I got in touch with him and asked if we could do some phone therapy to help me with my creative plans and directions. This began probably 15 years ago, and though we terminated the "therapy" portion of this exercise several years ago, Therapist K and I have become "friends" and email each other fairly regularly. He often offers to counsel me, but I don't take him up on it.

I have a built-in ambivalence about therapy despite my good experiences with it in the past...and I really prefer to handle things on my own. Sometimes that has been a mistake, but I've not resorted to substance abuse, eating disorders or any other overtly-destructive behavior. I have been fortunate in avoiding those problems despite my documented history of trauma as a child. Sheer luck, I suppose.

Again, my only "tip" about relationships with therapists is to be willing to change if things are not going well for you. And to listen to the therapists whose ideas make sense.

Keeping a professional relationship worked best for me, during active therapy. I like boundaries and was glad to start developing them in many different ways in my life.

Therapy taught me a lot, both good and bad. I hope it does the same for you.

MV

BOOKS

The Squeaky Wheel: Complaining the Right Way to Get Results, Improve Your Relationships, Enhance Self-Esteem.

By Guy Winch, PhD. © 2011.

Published by Walker & Company, New York, NY. www.walkerbooks.com
291 pgs includes index. \$23.00
Hardback.

Here's a useful guidebook to help you get yourself heard by those who don't seem to listen. Effective complaining can be a great way to empower yourself and possibly solve some problems at the same time.

Dr. Winch covers the whole gamut of complaining. He spends several chapters on defining the Ineffective Speaker, then goes into specific complaints that were generated by people he knows or works with as clients. By enumerating their initial efforts, and then the methods used to gain better results, he teaches the art of complaining wisely.

A frustrating series of complaints can lead to seriously eroded self-esteem, so Dr. Winch devotes an entire section on using what he terms "Complaining Therapy" to regain self-esteem. He also discusses chronic complainers (everyone knows a few of these people) and the emotional and medical risks of not complaining enough.

He also identifies specifics of spouse complaints, teen complaints, and employer or consumer complaints.

Taken all together, this is a useful book that can help many of us gain the courage and skill to stick up for ourselves appropriately when someone else is "sticking it" to us!

--Lynn W.

MV



THANKS EVERYONE!

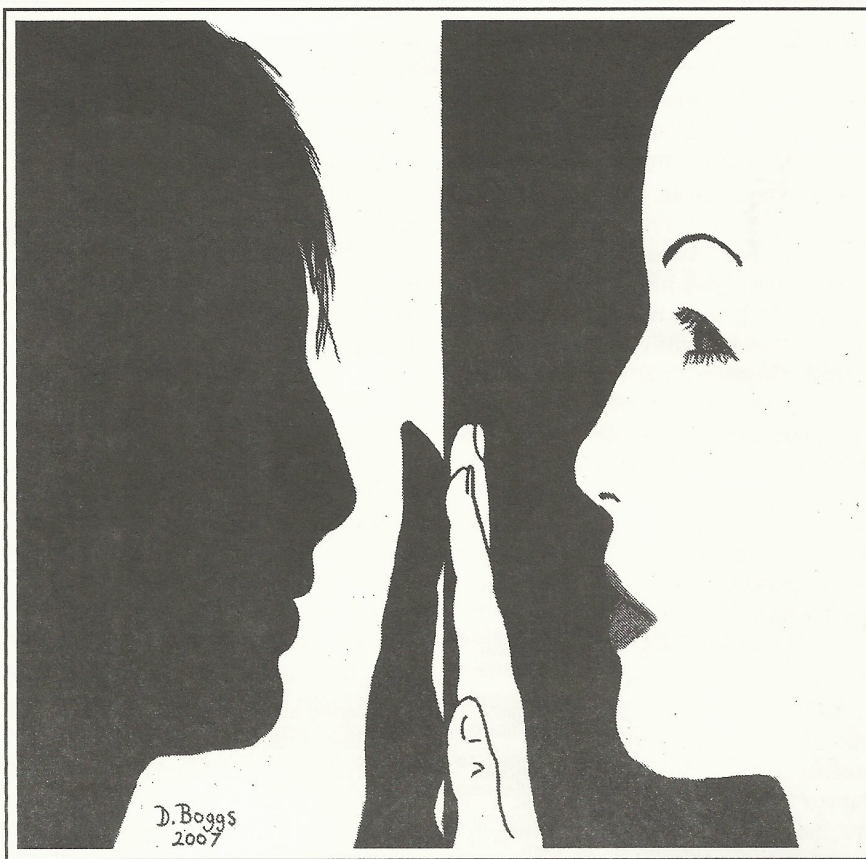
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October 2011

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December 2011

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