



March 2010

# RAINBOW'S END

Volume 10

Issue 3

**Support & Information Newsletter of FIRST PERSON PLURAL**  
the survivor-led association for survivors of trauma and abuse who experience  
dissociative distress, and for their family, friends and professional allies

*Registered Charity No: 1109464*

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## **It's Membership Renewal Time Again**

This is the final issue in the current volume of the newsletter which means membership renewal is now due for ALL members regardless of when you first joined FPP or how long you have been a member. Even members who have only joined recently will now have received all 3 issues of the current volume of the newsletter so need to renew to continue in membership.

A membership renewal form is enclosed. Please complete and return it with payment as soon as possible, and by **30<sup>th</sup> April 2010** at the latest to be sure not to miss future issues of the newsletter or other membership benefits.

Annual Membership fees are being held at £10.00 (£20 international) for the 7<sup>th</sup> successive year.

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While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are made by the editor and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the executive committee or the editor. Inclusion of any reference to an individual or organisational resource is not a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only. The newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision. It is an addition to, not a replacement for, other networks of support.

**Contributions can be sent in at anytime** articles; stories; resources; book reviews; tips; poetry; personal experiences; written articles and poems are good; brief snippets & artwork are desperately needed. It would help if you can send your contribution electronically as an email attachment. This saves times and resources but handwritten and typed material sent by post will continue to be accepted. **Please send to our editorial email address** [newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk)

Originals will only be returned if a suitable stamped addressed envelope is enclosed

**IMPORTANT:-** When sending material for publication please clearly mark "FOR PUBLICATION" and say what name or pseudonym you wish to use.

### **ATTENTION**

Material in this newsletter may trigger painful memories and feelings.  
Read with caution and appropriate support if necessary

### **Editor's Note**

We are already part way through another year, many of us will be striving to continue our healing journey. Perhaps some will be wondering what 2010 will bring. This issue of Rainbow's End brings the reminder of membership renewal, (*see front cover*), and this gave me reason to reflect over the time since I first made the decision to become a member. It felt huge at the time since it was the first public acknowledgement of my own DID. So much has happened since then, all a part of my life journey. Joining FPP has become such an important part of my life and I feel connected to all readers, that unspoken knowledge of dissociative distress that we all share.

We are also reminding you all that the AGM is coming soon and nominations for committee will be needed.

Spring is about to come and we will see new growth as bulbs flower and the earth warms to sun's rays. May we all grow as this year unfolds.



**'I am reclaiming myself from the missing persons list'**

*Maureen Brady*

**2010 AGM, Committee Elections  
and Members Open Meeting  
to be held in NOTTINGHAM on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> April.**

Being on the committee is not the most glamorous, exciting or popular voluntary role within FPP. It gets you little external appreciation because the role is mostly behind-the-scenes and rarely directly about dissociation. It is not usually what people think of when they wonder what FPP does and how they can help.

But, in fact, a full, diverse, versatile and representative committee is the single most important thing needed to secure First Person Plural's long term future.

Volunteers are currently needed to join the committee more than for any other area of the charity's work. So, if you have ever thought about volunteering your time, skills and enthusiasm to be more active in helping FPP to continue its work and develop for the future, the best thing you can do, as a full or associate member, is nominate yourself for election onto the committee at the coming AGM.

*Official notice of the AGM / Spring Open Meeting and information about how to nominate yourself for election onto the committee will shortly be circulated to members. Please **put the AGM date in your diary and watch your email or post for further details***

### Chair's Letter

Dear Members

I hope the 'festive season' was survived without too much pain and distress and that many of you will have enjoyed the snow, maybe frustrated by it as well, but it has hopefully been a good winter for little ones.

Although minor things have been happening it does feel a bit like coming out of hibernation and starting to pick up the pieces again. The ESTD conference in Belfast is a few weeks away and it is Kathryn's and my main focus at this time. Things like International Conferences never use to bother me at all. Now I find I am getting very nervous and trying not to think about it. What a change from not mattering and trying to remember it is happening, progress or what.

I hope many of you are able to travel to the AGM and Open Meeting in Nottingham and look forward to meeting you there.

Best wishes and warm thoughts

Melanie

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Dear Catherine

I am responding to your letter in the last issue. I am truly sorry and sad like you that we are not able to get a programme made about DID. FPP has been trying very hard for years because we feel it is a way of telling the truth and daily reality of our lives, also trying to break the myths and stigma that is attached to being DID. What all the producers want is a fly on the wall documentary that FPP feels it would be unethical for us to support. Nobody knows what may happen from one minute to the next with DID, what may trigger a very distressed child out or a protective part who may appear very aggressive and our fear is this is what they want to capture. FPP feels that the subject is so much bigger than switching into other parts and until we can get the whole story being told and not selected, sensational and possibly voyeuristic situations being filmed it is better for it to be left alone. Francine worked very hard to try and fulfil her producers' remit while not asking anyone to put themselves in vulnerable positions. She decided, very sadly, as by the end she was as passionate to tell the story as we are for it to be told, that she could not go ahead. At this time I am working with someone who is coming from it the other way round. We are putting together what we feel tells the story, is ethical and will hopefully get taken on by someone. We are doing our research within broadcasting so we write a programme that hopefully presses all the buttons.

Did you know Victoria Beckham has terrible bunions!

Melanie

From All of Us

We would like to say, once again, a big "Thank You" to Kathryn, Bunchy and all the members who put together, and contribute to, Rainbow's End. We can honestly say that receiving the newsletter close to Christmas helped us to be able to cope with, as many of us know, a very difficult time.

We found Melanie's article particularly helpful as it reminded us that our newsletter really is written and run by people who really do "know what it is like". Year after year we try and do our best to get through what we describe Christmas as "going into a dark tunnel full of fairy lights". This feeling starts sometime during October when the shops seem to be in full swing of shoving all things Christmassy down our throats. We also get these feelings of doom and gloom at other times of the year but to a lesser degree.

We would just like to say that we treat the newsletter as would a box of chocolates. We begin to watch for the postman more closely as the time approaches for our copy and, when it arrives, we just open the envelope to make sure it holds what we hope it will (one chocolate). A day or so later we might read one or two poems on the back page and then put it away again (another chocolate). Gradually, over the next few days (because we've got the taste for more chocolate now) we begin to read just one article then put it away again for a while, and so on until we have read the whole thing. We like to make it last as long as possible before we eat all the chocolates but, unlike a box of chocolates, we can keep going back and dipping into it whenever we like.

The first thing we read this time, however, was the last sentence of Melanie's article. Just the last sentence that meant, it means, so much to use because

we ARE part of a group of people who really do 'know what it is like' – not just at Christmastime, but through every single day of the year. Eventually, we read the whole article, then the whole newsletter, and found lots of things written in there we could 'hold on to'.

We would also like to say "Thank You" from the younger ones of us especially for the Christmas card to colour. We can honestly say that colouring in the card was the 'safest' part of the whole holiday.

**"Are you an expert by experience who could help inform an innovative experiential arts production?"**

Gail Anderson Sneddon is an interdisciplinary artist specialising in choreography and new media and based in Glasgow lie particularly in human psychology and physiology.

Core to Gail's practise is working with fellow creative artists to achieve excellence and investigate what visually and aurally stimulates an audience.

The theoretical research for this installation began when Gail embarked on a study into the pathology of trauma with the Foundation for Human Enrichment. Working with therapists during her study into trauma, she became particularly interested in Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID).

It is not Gail's intention to make a work that plumbs the emotional depths of the trauma/emotions these states induce- it is more that she is fascinated by this physiological phenomenon, ability and lengths to which the human mind can go to protect itself.

The end product of the project will be a 25 minutes long installation. It will be an innovative and highly original synthesis of sound, image and movement achieved primarily through the manipulation of choreographic techniques, which will be applied not only to the movement but also to the camera work, editing and sound design.

The design of the space represents the "whole" self. The installation will be a 360 degree structure which contains the audience. It will be composed of 2 circular screens, one outer, the other inner. On the outer screen, images will be projected from 4 projectors creating a seamless image. On the inner gauze, images will be projected via 2 rotational projectors.

The subject matter of the projected material is the representation for the physicality of the alters within the "whole" self. This was explored using 2D graphics with the movement signatures of movement artists: capturing their images into a medium that can take it beyond the human body or beyond its capabilities. During this process, Gail was keen to discover the emotive power of the distortion of the images, mirroring (distortion through creating symmetrical body image) and morphing techniques.

If you are interested in supporting this initiative as an expert by experience please contact: email: [gail@gailsneddon.com](mailto:gail@gailsneddon.com) Tel: +44(0)7989557549

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A FEW PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE By Oriel

*Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans John Lennon*

No one can ever 100% guarantee physical or mental health, but the world operates on the assumption that most people can most of the time. Living with DID is not like that. Spending three days at a conference was always going to be a difficult experience. However, I thought I had done all the preparation I have learnt over the years has to be done; I consulted everyone inside who I had communication with, negotiated with those of them that had concerns, I did the therapy to work through any obvious triggers, I put support in place, I rang the conference centre to check about mobile phone reception, planned the journey in advance and I asked each of them what they needed to pack. Such is living with DID, and after all that is what I was going to talk about.

Life is never that simple. The week leading up the conference something surfaced in therapy (totally unconnected to the conference) which sent my whole system into chaos. I was then left not only trying to contain unbearable trauma, but also trying to work out how I honoured my commitment alongside it, or if I could honour my commitment. And what to do if I couldn't. I also had to face the possibility of not being able to go after having done so much work to be able to get there, written a presentation and worked with everyone inside. In addition to all of this, some of the support I had put in place fell through, which was something I could not have foreseen.

In the end, I did go, and I did honour that commitment, but at high personal cost. Not only were we containing things that the conference brought up (everything said there was heard by many people inside at once, all of whom had their own reactions), we were doing it with less support and trying to contain the intense process that had started in therapy.

It is so profoundly unfair that those of us who live with DID not only lose our childhoods, but also live in a present where the ground can fall from beneath our feet at any moment. Even things that we can achieve in the present day are threatened constantly by the fact that an alter may appear, someone may get triggered, someone new might suddenly decide it is time to make contact, or the system may just go into meltdown. There are things that we each learn over time may make this less likely, but it is never guaranteed. For me the curse and blessing of dissociation is that often in this place I am not aware of what might be near the surface or about to kick off. Even if I manage to ask everyone inside, they may not be willing or able to tell me. I often think I am fairly stable, only to discover days (if not hours) later that the world is falling apart, again.

My experience of the conference re-raised the question of what I do about this. Does it mean I never commit to anything, in case I am unable to deliver? It certainly means I have to be careful about what I take on, but I think that to not do anything 'in case' does not in the long run serve anyone. Hopefully each time something doesn't work we learn from it, and change something, but to be too frightened to do anything seems to me to allow the abuser to win. I have DID and the unpredictability of my capabilities is an

aspect of living with that. It is sad and it makes me very angry that that is my legacy, but it is, and to keep trying, and to pick ourselves up, apologise if necessary, and start again seems the only thing to do. If living with DID was neat and predictable we wouldn't need to educate people about it so urgently. It is not. Before the conference I thought that one day I might learn to 'get everything right' and only take on the amount that I can guarantee I can stay present for. I am reassessing that idea. I now think that this is an element of what I live with, and it may always be a part of what I struggle with, but that does not mean that there is not a lot I can achieve and communicate to people.

## HINTS AND TIPS ON WELL-BEING

By Marie-Claire Oliver

1. **BALANCE;** Head stands help balance your thyroid gland.
2. **CALMING;** If you are having a bad hair day to help calm yourself, (*gently*) pull the roots of your hair in clusters for as long as it is comfortable to do so.
3. **HAND MANICURE;** Rub the top of your right hand to the tip of the little finger and continue to rub up and down in a zigzag pattern with the right side of the thumb on the left hand. Repeat this exercise on the palm of the right hand before doing the same to the left hand with the right hand thumb. You will find the exercise tones your hands beautifully.
4. **RELAX AND STIMULATE;** With the tips of you fingers gently tap your head starting at the base of your neck working towards the hair on your head and on to your face. Very gently tap the eye lids and under the eyes as well.
5. **SLEEP;** When going to sleep lie on your front with your head bent in towards your chest so that your spinal cord is curved as your legs are bent beneath. Your arms are also bent with the right elbow pointing towards the pillow and the left elbow pointing down towards your feet.
6. **DIGESTION;** Once you have consumed food only (no liquids eg: juice, water, wine or beer) lie on the left side of your body for fifteen minutes, and drink three quarters of an hour after the end of your fifteen minute break. It helps aid digestion.
7. **WATER;** Always carry a bottle of water with you as a dry mouth means you are dehydrated and chemically unbalanced.



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### **Survivor's Trust AGM**

As the end of 2009 approached I had the opportunity to attend The Survivor's Trust (TST) AGM (Annual General Meeting), something I had never done before. It's good to put names to faces and to know the new home of the TST office in Rugby. FPP is one of the founder members of TST, there now being about 130 organisations who are members of this umbrella organisation that seeks to provide a united and effective voice for us.

I must admit to being a bit disappointed that only 20 or so of us turned up for the day which included 2 presentations. One of these was offered by Clare Fraser who has worked with Faye Maxted (Chief Executive of TST) to produce a report for the TST on "Developing Stability, Sustainability and Capacity for Specialist Third Sector Rape, Sexual Violence and Abuse Services". This project was funded by the Gender Equality Office and a full version of the report is posted on the TST website [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org) This report is part of TST's work in helping to provide a united voice for those of us living with and working with the consequences of sexual violence and abuse. TST is a national organisation that has recently appointed Regional Development Officers. I was very aware that FPP as a national organisation is in a different position to many member organisations which are local organisations. One of the things this means is that our potential funding sources are more limited. TST can play a role in educating potential funders what it is that we all need in order to maintain, sustain and develop our services and support.

The second presentation was given by Richard Curran of Respond "working with people with learning difficulties". He was also the previous Chair of TST. It was so inspiring to hear of such valuable work being achieved with Local Authority and Primary Care Trust funding. As ever though there is the awareness of the ever present need for more needing to be done. This is a shared awareness by us as a network who hope to really have a united and more effective voice together. So little difference between the outer and inner life!

I would like to thank fellow members of the Executive Committee who knew I would enjoy my first experience of a TST meeting. You were right!

Sandra Sunfire



## Our thoughts on Integration by All Of Us.

We have written before in the Newsletter about what integration means to us but we feel we would like to write more.

We said, in that article, that integration was a dirty word to us and that, rightly or wrongly, is still the case. We were asked very early on into our therapy what we expected from the therapy and if we wanted to work towards integration, or not. At that time we had no idea of what we wanted, or expected, as everybody had just begun to “wake up” and none of us knew what was going on inside and so it was just too difficult a question to answer. We said that we could not visualise integration and so our therapy went along the route of learning about ourselves and then learning how to live together as separate identities. Up to this point that decision has not changed.

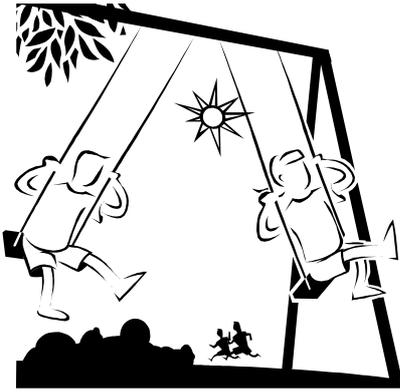
We have discussed this topic amongst ourselves from time to time and we still can't imagine what it must be like to integrate or “join together” with someone else without disappearing or, at the very least, losing that “part's” identity. To us it's like acknowledging that the earth is a planet spinning around in a black void. It's too big a concept, and it's too overwhelming. (Just writing about it here is sending everyone into a panic). We get questions from each other like “But who will be in charge?” “Why can't I (a seven year old) be in charge?” We still can't understand the fact that no one person will “be in charge” , we will all be in the mix, somehow, somewhere.

Also, we have been told by at least one “outside person” that no-one can force us to integrate – if it's not right for us then it's not right and if we are happy to live our life as individual “people” then that is how it has to be. He sees it as a choice we make as one person and obviously doesn't understand the fact that it's not just a matter of choice, it's also a matter of possibility and degree, not just by one person living in the outside world but by many inside people too.

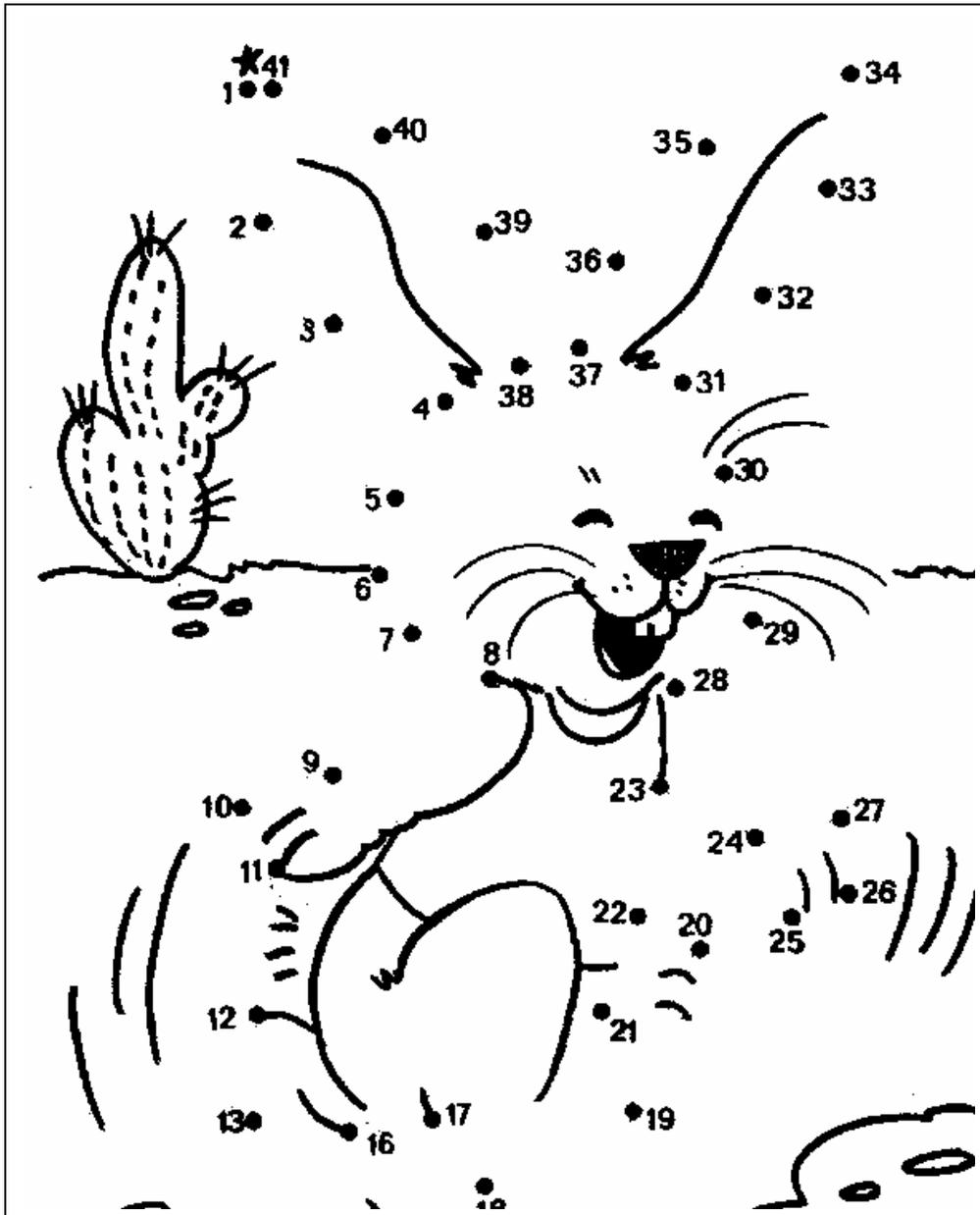
We have a friend who we can all talk to, whoever we are, and she recently said “You have no idea how it feels when “I”, alone, feel everything, do you? My feelings are not broken up into individual people” We said “No, we don't know what it feels like,” and she replied “That's how difficult it is for “single” people to comprehend how your feelings can be split up into different people”. Maybe integration can only be understood by other people who experience “separateness” and maybe integration can never be a conscious discussion by one person split up into various other parts but more, if it happens it happens and if it doesn't.....

We don't know the answer. Who does? But integration, if it happens, will be different for each person living with DID, it happens to. For us, for now, it is not wanted and it is not possible.

# PLAY CENTRE



Join the dots to make a picture you can colour.



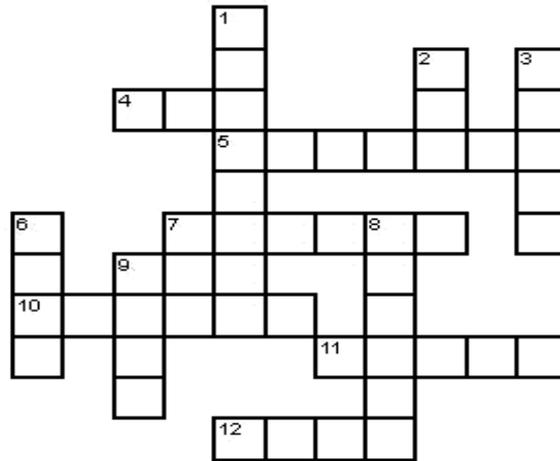
What's white and fluffy and floats?

*A cat-emeringue*

What's got four legs, barks and goes 'tick tock'?

*A watch dog*

Pets



Across

- 4. Pet with a bark?
- 5. Small pet that likes to burrow.
- 7. This pet carries its house.
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_ pig
- 11. A fish lives in this.
- 12. This pet can fly.

Down

- 1. House for a dog.
- 2. Pet with nine lives?
- 3. You can ride this pet.
- 6. Indoor home for a bird?
- 8. This pet lives in a terrarium.
- 9. This pet lives in water.

A picture for you to colour

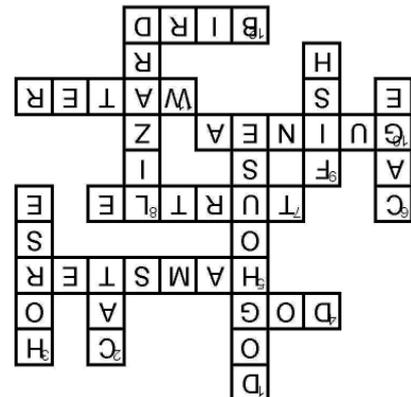


What did the mouse say when his friend broke his front teeth?

*Hard cheese!*



Crossword answer



Pets

## A Life Worth Living

by Carolyn Spring

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A couple of years ago, when I was going through an extremely difficult time, I came across a concept from Marsha Linehan (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy) which she referred to as "A Life Worth Living". Many of my alters at this time were in a constant life-and-death struggle; everything seemed hopeless and pointless; and the grim reality of living everyday with overwhelming flashbacks and pain was getting too much. It was through spending time working out this issue – of what would make life worth living, and how that would actually look in practice – that I began to move through this particularly difficult suicidal phase.

I asked some pretty fundamental questions: what kind of relationships did I want to have? What kind of job or work did I want to do? What kinds of things would I like to do for leisure or as hobbies? What did I want out of life? They are easy questions to ask in your head, but harder questions to actually write the answers down to. I realised through doing this that I wasn't giving myself time or permission to *enjoy* life – I had become so focussed on therapy and abuse and managing DID and dealing with atrocities that I wasn't spending any time actually enjoying myself. In fact, I didn't really even know *how* to enjoy myself!

I knew a lot about pain, but I didn't know very much at all about pleasure.

I asked myself: what do I like doing? For weeks I couldn't answer that question, not with anything tangible or concrete. Then eventually I remembered that when I was younger, I was interested in birds and birdwatching. It had been a bit of an escape at the time, and it had been 'safe'. After all, birds were just birds, and they had never hurt me. So just from that one thing I made a 'plan' as to how I could enjoy myself again. Over time I got a couple of books on birds, and we put some bird feeders up in the garden. Then for Christmas last year I got some binoculars, and I started taking walks in the country park nearby to look for birds. As I learnt more about them I became better able to spot different ones and both I and many of my alters would get very excited when we saw something new – a green woodpecker, a treecreeper, a fieldfare. I learned what foods to put out for them in the garden and gradually I built it up so that we now get up to 20 goldfinches at a time! And lots of other birds too such as greenfinches, blue tits, great tits, dunnocks, blackbirds, jays – a continual stream of them.

This was *new*. This was me realising that I could look out of the window and see the blue tits feeding on the nuts and it made me smile. There was this feeling – I eventually named it as 'pleasure' – and nothing bad happened as a result of it. I had done it; I had made it happen. Because I had decided, and I had got some bird feeders, I could now look out of the window and *enjoy* myself.

So it wasn't something that I 'fixed' overnight, but it was something that I made a plan towards so that I could allow myself to enjoy things. Nowadays I get such pleasure each day just from seeing the birds outside, and it genuinely lifts my spirits. They are so different: so varied in their personalities, so colourful, so fussy or territorial or twitchy or vigilant. The significant thing for me is that firstly I've stopped long enough to notice, and secondly I've allowed myself to enjoy it. And I've got plans for the future too – not necessarily things that I can do *right now*, but things that I'm looking at ways of making possible, like going to some RSPB nature reserves, and one day going to Scotland to see eagles. This has also given me a sense of *future* – previously, I never had a future. Past and present got mixed up on a daily basis, but I had never had a future. I couldn't plan for the future because wasn't I going to be dead by tomorrow? I couldn't delay on anything – it all had to be done *right now* if it needed doing – and I couldn't plan for what I wanted to do in 2 or 3 years' time either.

What I've found is that when I got stuck in a gloomy mindset where everything just continually revolved around abuse, loneliness, pain and sorrow, it was no wonder that alters wanted to take overdoses! So I began to try to show my alters that I understood that they were hurting and upset, traumatised and despairing – but then I asked them what they would really like in life instead. It sounds obvious, but I had forgotten or not realised that life is for *enjoying*. Trauma and DID are very real and a huge part of my life, but they are there because of bad stuff that happened – *bad stuff that shouldn't have happened* – and I have got a life that is meant to be enjoyed too!

As I've got lots of different alters that are all quite different from one another, they want a range of things. For some of my 'boy' parts, they are really into football. So I make sure now that I let them watch it on TV, and we put the matches in the calendar to make sure that we don't double-book anything at the same time – because it's really important to them to have something nice to do. And it also gives them something to look forward to. Over time we've been able to learn that bad feelings, although immensely powerful and overwhelming, do in fact pass and that if we've got something to look forward to, it helps them pass much more easily. There's nothing quite like doing something nice to stop feeling so bad!

None of this was rocket science, but I found that until I actually spent some time thinking about and writing down what I *wanted*, and step-by-step planning for ways to make it happen, I was just caught up in the helplessness of misery. I've got a lot to be miserable and unhappy about – that's true. But there's a lot out there that I can enjoy too.

The key for me was realising that good stuff doesn't just come along. First of all I had to decide what I wanted. I had to decide that I actually wanted good stuff in my life: this felt alien at first. And then I had to plan – actively, thoughtfully and deliberately – to make it happen. It didn't 'just happen'; I had to *make* it happen. And to do that I had to figure out that I *could* make it

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happen, that I had power over my life that included the power to make good things happen.

This whole process – of getting better, and developing a life that really is worth living – is hard work. I don't want to pretend for one moment that it's easy, because it's not. The way really is narrow. But it's not impossible, and we do have the power to choose to enjoy some – if not yet all – aspects of life.

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### **A Big Thank You to all who completed their Membership Survey**

A big thank you to all who sent back completed membership surveys. I am aware of how difficult some of the questions may have been for some, so it was great how many people managed to return them.

The results of the survey revealed several points of interest. Below is a very brief overview. If anyone would like to see the full initial analysis, it is available on request by email.

75 people returned the surveys; 53 full members and 22 associate members.

Approximately 90% of full members had been diagnosed with a Dissociative Disorder, although many had had years of inaccurate diagnoses before this diagnosis was made (the most common being depression). These diagnoses had been made by a number of different professionals. One point of interest was that in the majority of cases diagnostic tests, especially the SCID-D, were only used by trauma and dissociation specialists or where multiple professionals had been involved in diagnosis.

Almost all of the full members were in treatment, the most common of which was psychoanalytic or psychodynamic psychotherapy. One result which was heart-warming to see was that most people had rated their treatment (from whichever field) as a 4 or 5 out of 5. This suggested that Dissociative Disorders can respond well to treatment from many different fields. The length of treatment to date was mostly in the range of 5-10 years.

Most people's treatment was funded privately, and even people who had managed to get treatment on the NHS often have to supplement it privately. This was painful to see in terms of how hard it is to get appropriate help.

The associate members who responded were about two thirds working in a professional capacity with Dissociative Disorders and about one third were informal carers. The length of time in these roles varied from 2 to 15 years. Most rated their knowledge about dissociation at 3 or 4 on a scale of 1 to 5.

The committee will look together at the comments about what has been the most helpful thing about FPP, and what more you would like us to offer. What these comments indicated was a lack of support around therapy (e.g. appropriate help lines) and how isolating living with a Dissociative Disorder can be. It is so sad and unfair that the support is not out there.

Again, many thanks for your time

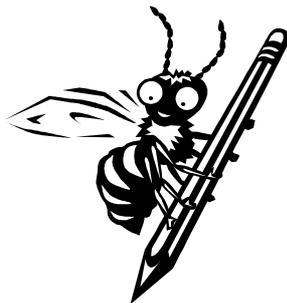
Oriel on behalf of the Executive Committee

# Poetry and Artwork

## Grounding by Anon

Green grass between my toes  
 Gives me a feeling of impose  
 Hoping to root – instead I got the boot.  
 I walk on silently, blindly,  
 No-one sees me,  
 As invisible to the eye  
 Haunting voices  
 It seems I have no choices  
 Drum beating  
 Rhythm seeking  
 Ears frozen to sound that passes  
 At a brazen distance due to blind trances  
 Around the corner  
 I horder  
 As warm cobbled stones lie beneath my  
 feet  
 Giving me a feeling of being more  
 upbeat  
 I try dewdrops upon early morning grass  
 Only to find I'm unable to pass  
 Due to temperature lows  
 When there should be more beaus  
 I continue to seek  
 Yet the result is bleak  
 It all seems nigh  
 When life should be on a high

Sharing your poems, drawings and artwork can help you, and those who see them, feel less 'alone'. Send your contributions to us. See how to send them on page 2.



Why, why does all this hurt us?  
 Too many  
 Too much  
 Crush, crush, crush  
 It just seems the pattern for us

Too many lives  
 Too much stress  
 Causing the problem that kills our heads

Little one scared and ready to run  
 Can't cope with the danger.....

**UP COME THE FIGHTERS  
 DEFENDING OUR LIVES  
 LOOKING, LOOKING  
 JUST WANT TO SURVIVE**

Nobody cares -  
 But that's ok  
 We will live and fight another day  
 Another day will come and go  
 Hang on in there  
 But strength is low  
 It's just the way  
 Nobody listens  
 There are too many foes

Leave us alone and let us be  
 We need to write down the bad stuff.....  
 It's time to let it out and try and stay sane  
 Just hang on in there  
 Waiting for the day.....

Waiting for the day that takes us deeper into  
 the darkness  
 Where others have gone  
 White knuckle riding  
 Just trying to hold on  
 Hold onto the truth  
 That will hopefully set us free

By Mystery Writer

### Golden Light

by Me

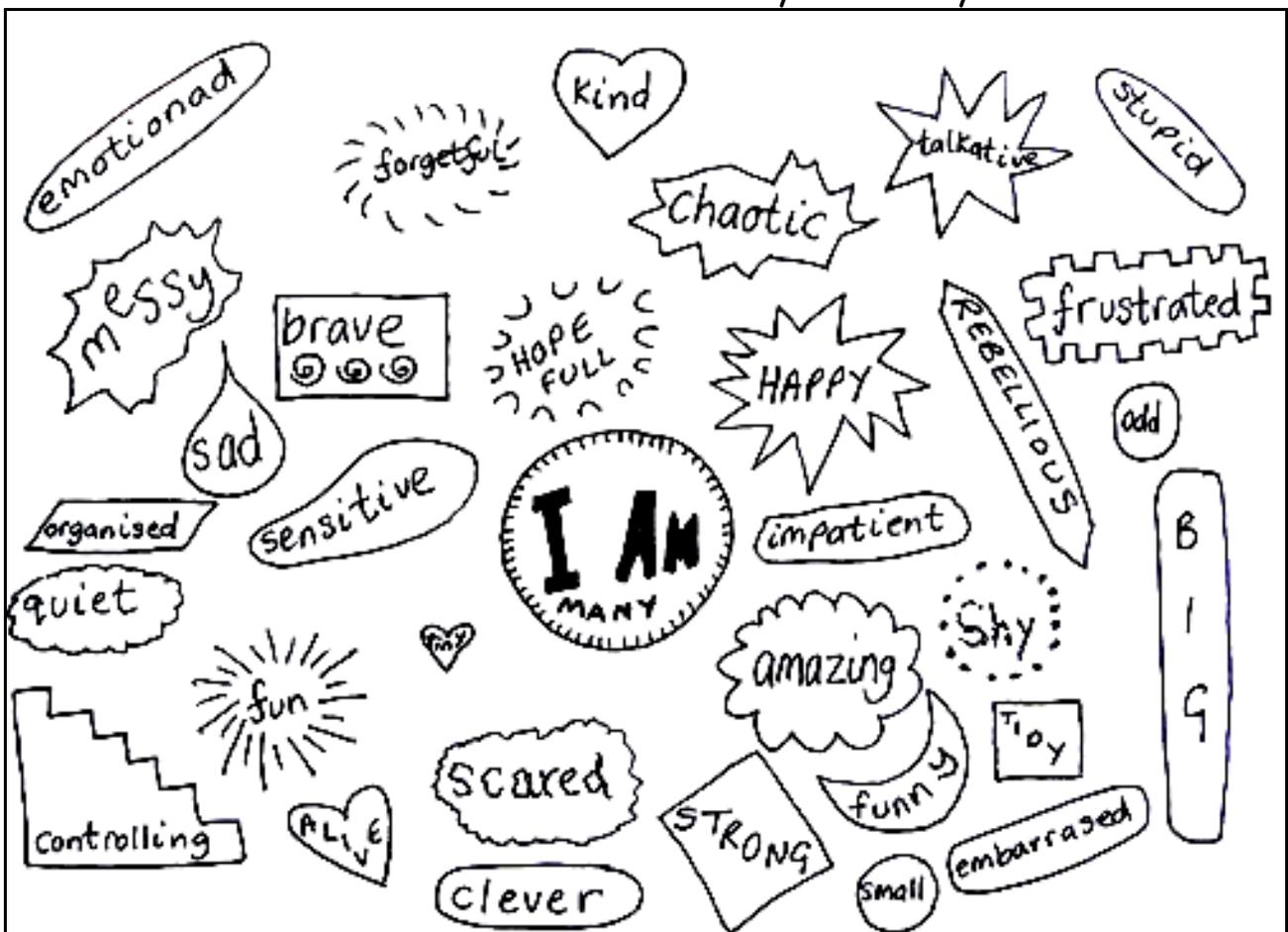
I caught a glimpse, the other day  
of a little part of me.  
A tiny piece of Golden Light  
floating in the Dark  
still laying there behind.

And now I know  
where my journey leads.  
It is to find that Golden Light  
and bring it back to me.  
To light my life and help me see  
All the parts  
who make up  
'ME'

### Oh to be free

Trapped, ringed,  
A head, laced with black fog,  
Sense that dreaded plague,  
Unable to think,  
Unable to process a single  
thought  
– feeling – strangled,  
Neck – waist – death or life.  
Can I choose?  
to sense every moment of life.  
Oh to be free.  
Anon

### I AM MANY by The Many



## "MENTAL HELL SYSTEM"

I wanted to share the following with the readers about my 'journey' in to the mental health system...

After two years now of finding myself on the other side of my own profession and in the mental health system I can only summarise this experience as to 'mental hell'. I have been passed from 'pillar to post' and what I can only describe as frustratingly traumatic. I have undergone intensive assessment/screening processes which all in all took up nearly 12 months of my life before a decision was reached as to "what to do with me" due to the psychotic component aspect of my illness. I was then 'gingerly allowed' to enter a 5 day a week outpatient psychotherapy setting to address my 'issues'. This process not only destabilised me completely but my inner system became so unwell physically due to the demands and structure of this programme that due to my failing physical health coupled with traumatic exposure to not only other people's material which proved very triggering but I became unstable mentally and walked out of groups shouting and distressed which led to my discharge.

I then found myself yet again 'alone' at home with no support and back to square one! I was invited back for an interview to discuss my discharge and was basically told that if I got myself a job and got myself back out into the world again mixing with people I would be 'fine'. My whole experience had been so invalidating up to this point and my voice continued to go unheard. I then found myself back in the NHS system waiting to be offered a referral appointment to see now a psychologist who was going to further assess me. After waiting for a period of nearly 6 months with no support whatsoever I was sent an appointment.

My first sentence out of my mouth upon sitting down in her office was "I am here because I believe I have DID". She stared blankly at me and replied "I am the one who will decide this and I have to see evidence of this first"..a process then began of assessing me, asking me why the outpatient psychotherapy centre did not work and had to go through all that again with her which I found traumatising and exhausting to bring her up to speed. Then I was asked to talk about my life history in a 'time-line' format approach. That I also found difficult and again was based solely on memories I knew only. A lot of my childhood I am unable to remember or recall. After further difficult invalidating sessions and clearly to no therapeutic benefit

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on my part (each week I came home exhausted and took to my bed with headaches and cried) I was eventually told that I was suffering from.....' Borderline personality disorder' due to my early failure of secure attachment s and an insecure base within my dysfunctional family system. I was then asked how I felt about being diagnosed as a 'borderline'? The 'DID' was thrown out the window and dismissed completely. I said that I disagreed and still believed I was DID but was having loads of memory recall difficulties. I was told that I don't present with this diagnosis due to not showing any evidence of having different 'personalities'. I therefore fell within the 'camp' of being Borderline PD. She went on to say that every person she has worked with can remember if they were sexually abused or not in childhood and because I could not? then this invalidated my argument and because she claimed she could not witness any 'alters' then this put a close to it in her view. I saw this person for ONE HOUR a week. Again I experienced invalidation and feelings of being retraumatised by the system I had now found myself in . Feelings of powerlessness surfaced and fear. I honestly came away thinking 'am I going crazy, have I imagined it all, what do I have to do to get heard? despite my education and intelligence and ability to articulate myself with mental health professionals, yet wondered on the other hand how anyone breaks through the maze of ignorance and denial that appears to be still operating or energy? I was left gobsmacked by a system who conveys they do 'care'. It's such a paradox in a long line of them for me.

What I am now realising is that so many mental health professionals are NOT educated or experienced (despite they profess to be) in DID and dissociation associated spectrum disorders and ignorance is rife masked cleverly under the guise of the 'helping profession which is tantamount to 'mental rape'. To me it's like subjecting a patient needing delicate surgery to a surgeon who was blind-folded and hand-cuffed. The present climate still has so far to go in my view and my experience.

No wonder people with DID feel so incredibly alone, lost, isolated, unable to speak to people, unable to trust, feel safe to share with professionals, seek help in the first place, go to their GP, Psychiatrist or Counsellor?, because not only is there still so much stigma 'out there' getting this condition diagnosed without further trauma taking place which I believe is another story altogether , all

too common in my understanding of most people's journey in seeking the correct help and the right therapy for DID survivors and being most of all validated and acknowledged and heard.

I recently watched an old video of mine of the film 'One flew over the cuckoo's nest' ., and I honestly sat there stunned and thought to myself, in 50 years how far has psychiatry really come? Please tell me it has moved on in terms of helping people with mental health problems? Are we still stuck in a 'time capsule' which is what it can feel like for some of us who have ventured into this scary domain under the guise of mental health care.

If people would like to share their experiences with me or ask me any questions or just make a comment please feel free to do so. I would value any feedback.

My email address is [catherine.warburton@ntlworld.com](mailto:catherine.warburton@ntlworld.com) best regards Catherine

## Diane Lili Rebecca

It is with tremendous sadness that I write this to say that Diane Lili Rebecca died, very suddenly while undergoing treatment for cancer. Some of you will have met her at the last Open Meeting and many will have read her articles concerning 'Integration' and 'Personal Experiences with the National Health Service' in the last issue of Rainbow's End. She had been an active member of FPP for ten years, attending early committee meetings, Open Meetings, a training session and contributing to the newsletter. In the early days she had offered Kathryn and myself support and encouragement in the development of FPP.

Diane Lili Rebecca had been a personal friend for many years, engaging with little ones as well as the adults and I know how much we have all lost. She was someone who was fighting the cause and making change happen for others. I attended her funeral and the crematorium was packed with her colleagues all equally sad and shocked as me for having lost such a good person.

True to Diane Lili Rebecca the service was positive and strong, having been prepared by them 'just in case'. The work we achieve over the next year through FPP will, for me be done in their names in the hope I can capture some of their strength.

Melanie

## **PODS Open Meeting**      by Rob

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The first Open Meeting of PODS took place on Saturday 21 November in Huntingdon, Cambridge. 7 partners of dissociative survivors joined me for the afternoon, and for some it was the first time that they had met others in their situation. People came from all over England and some had travelled for many hours. This in itself was telling: that partners can feel so isolated in the situations they are dealing with, and are keen to connect with others.

I delivered three presentations. Firstly I told the story of my wife Carolyn's journey through breakdown and post-traumatic stress to the full onset of DID. I was surprised at how many elements of our story resonated with others' experience. And I hoped that our experience of learning to cope and face the reality of her symptoms would be an encouragement to others. Secondly I talked about the link between trauma and dissociation and about the absolute necessity of a child to dissociate to cope with unbearable and repeated trauma and abuse. And lastly I delivered a presentation entitled "The Road Less Travelled: How to Support Your DID Partner" in which I outlined some of the things that I had done that my wife had found most supportive in helping her live with DID and face the traumatic history that she was becoming aware of. In between presentations people had the chance to discuss issues, and over coffee to connect in a more one-to-one way. I was pleased that people were keen to share their own stories.

There was a wide spectrum of experiences between different PODS and we were aware that our partners were all at varying stages of recovery. But this in itself was encouraging, and I believe there was a sense of hope shared between members. I hope to arrange another meeting at some point in early Spring 2010. For more information or to join our mailing list, please go to [www.tasc-online.org.uk/pods](http://www.tasc-online.org.uk/pods) or email [rob@pods.tasc-online.org.uk](mailto:rob@pods.tasc-online.org.uk).