



September 2012

RAINBOW'S

END

Volume 13 Issue 2

Support & Information Newsletter of First Person Plural
the national survivor-led association for dissociative identity disorder
and similar complex dissociative conditions

Registered Charity No: 1109464



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The next Open Meeting will
be held on

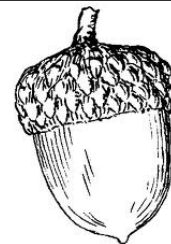
**SATURDAY 17TH
NOVEMBER**

**AT THE COMMUNITY BASE
IN BRIGHTON**

12.30PM-4.30PM

See enclosed information for
details of the day,
directions and venue

We hope as many of you as
possible will be able to join
us for a relaxed and social
afternoon!



Editorial Statement:-

Thank you so much for all the contributions we have received! It is great to hear from so many people, and we have tried to include as many as possible

While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are made by the editors and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the executive committee or the editors. 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** stories; resources; book reviews; tips;

Personal experiences; articles and poems; brief snippets and black & white artwork are desperately needed It would really help if you can send your contribution as an email attachment. This saves times and resources. Please send to our editorial email address **newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk**. If you can't send by email, handwritten and typed material sent by post will continue to be accepted.

The next issue of the newsletter is due in **December 2012**; any contributions for consideration for inclusion in that issue must be with us by **24th November 2012**

Originals returned only 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

MAKING CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER? - - - REMEMBER SAFETY FIRST

One reason people join First Person Plural is in the hope of connecting with other members. The newsletter and occasional members open meetings provide opportunities to do so but we suggest you use caution. Do not lose sight of the fact that, initially at least; other members of FPP may be strangers to you, as you are to them. FPP does not check applicants for membership. Anyone can become a member by completing a form and making payment. We have no reason to believe that any of our members are unsafe persons but conversely we can offer no assurances that someone is trustworthy just because they are an FPP member. Also non-members may have access to the newsletter. Clearly we are not saying never make contact but we do advise that you use common sense precautions as you would when meeting or contacting any stranger. Develop your friendship slowly before exchanging personal details such as telephone, mobile or postal address. Set clear boundaries for yourself about what kind and how much contact you wish to have with each other. Listen to & respect each other's need to set and change boundaries. Do not let desperation for understanding, support and friendship cloud your judgement or lead you to try to get more from each other than each wish to give

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Dear All

I have just re read the last newsletter and the two articles about using the internet for support and sharing really made me think about how so much has changed for those of us who live with a dissociative disorder. Fifteen years ago the internet was still a total mystery to most people and then as support sites gradually started up many people were very anxious about risking using them. I appreciate that this fear is still very real for many of us but for those who do 'risk' it they can be a lifeline when used with caution.

I understand how empowering it is for those people who have a blog and share so much about their lives of living with DID. This is a support and sharing as well as an invaluable source of learning for those who work with dissociative clients. This easily available resource allows for many people to do what has been such an important part of my own journey but done in other ways through FPP. To have this shared insight from different people who manage their lives in so many different ways and yet the feel of a common thread still being there offers a rich source of information that was not available before the internet. It allows for many to be part of this world at any time of day and night.

When I first knew that I was DID I was desperate to connect with others. There were very few books about the reality of living with it and I knew no one who had even heard of it. The isolation was total and to discover there was a newsletter called 'Collective Consciousness' for people like me probably saved my life at that time. Then to be told it was discontinuing, I was desperate, likewise Kathryn hence the beginning of FPP. How different it is now a days if you are comfortable with computers. You can quietly observe, contribute and interact. You can do your own research and hopefully be wise in how you use this wealth of information.

I was always too anxious to use the support sites as I knew the sense of anonymity would allow us to write and share too much, a sort of online journaling and as I couldn't see the audience it would be like they didn't exist. Probably a rejection of something that could have helped, for me I am not sure. I also think I appreciate a lot of things are subjective but in my initial isolation I tended to believe everything I could lay my hands on and spent many hours worrying because it just wasn't relating exactly to my experience so I must be wrong, lying and a fraud. So information could become the enemy.

I can still so easily overwhelm, retraumatise and trigger myself but I have learnt to be much more selective and I don't have to read everything. I have choices. I think for people who are desperate it is so hard to regulate your search for information. You find something that does resonate and go for it only to find you spend the next few days switching with a feeling of terror felt throughout.

So things move on at a very fast pace, so much of it positive but I do think we I need to view it as another tool not the answer. An invaluable resource that allows us to connect, share and interact with other people, I think for most of us we can't imagine life without all that modern technology brings. I include mobiles and the facility to text. I find the chance to instantly connect with someone I trust if I am having a difficult time is amazing. Even if that person is unable to respond for a while the feeling of having taken an active step to ground myself and the tangible feel of the message going from me to the other person has revolutionised my days. How I managed before this I don't know.

I personally feel that over all a very positive development when used wisely and cautiously also recognising that there will be others who for whatever reason are not necessarily good news.

Warm wishes Melanie

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Twitter, Blogging and Forums- By All of US

We have been reading about Twitter, Blogging and Online Forums in the latest Newsletter and, although they seem to be places where people can share their experiences and make new friends, I wonder how many others who receive the newsletter are afraid and uncertain about using the internet as a means of feeling less isolated and alone.

A lot of people ask "Are you on the internet?" or "Have you got an email address?" (not necessarily to do with DID but life in general) and we say "No".

As more and more is talked about using the internet, the more we feel afraid of it and less able to want to use it but, at the same time, we are feeling that we are getting left behind and missing an opportunity of being in touch with other people struggling with DID.

Please, does anybody else feel like this?

'Understanding Misunderstandings' – Attachment Issues by Melanie

In continuing the series of 'Understanding Misunderstandings' that are based on FPP's Crisis training day I am going to talk about the areas of attachment that are so often contaminated for dissociative people. This has the potential to be the biggest and most well established factor that causes confusion and has the possibility to distress the person offering crisis support. As we acknowledge this is the tip of the iceberg but working with a friend who is DID and a Rape Crisis volunteer we identified what we felt we would want the volunteer to have a basic understanding of. (volunteer could read support person)

Very often the person who has sought help then presents with impenetrable barriers. I think it is important to stay with what is happening, it is hard but we have reached out for a reason and by doing nothing more than accepting us can help to ground and stabilise us. Wait for the caller to begin to feel more connected and don't over emphasise your relief at this happening. Nothing works more quickly than to reverse this first move than sensing the other person's relief.

From what we personally experience and have learnt from talking to others who are dissociative the lack or contamination of the childhood attachment has the most profound and enduring effect on us. It is a slow, painful task to look at it and slowly feel safe enough to bring about change. As we now understand so much more about the development of the brain this is not surprising. The brain has to re develop allowing these changes to happen and become an organic part of our being not yet another learnt behaviour.

When we are training volunteers who work in crisis settings one of the most important things for them to grasp is the reactions they activate could usually not possibly have been predicted and we want them to be able to stay firmly grounded during these times. If they don't we certainly will find it harder to reach terra firma. Having a very basic understanding on how our attachment issues are so damaged by severe and prolonged abuse helps the volunteer to remain connected when the caller is doing everything to break it having asked for it in the first place.

We also talk about boundaries, usually the lack of with adults who are dissociative. Of course it will often be because of switching between parts that have no idea of what has gone before. I know for a lot of my healing journey I am either someone's best buddy very quickly or keep everyone at arms-length. I never knew about slowly building up and developing my relationship with my main care givers. It was either fine or not fine and either way was absolute and I was powerless. This was so much a part of my pattern of connecting and attempts at attaching and has had to be unlearned over many years. We stress the importance of the volunteer to remain clear, firm and consistent with what they offer. Our lives are confusing enough without getting mixed messages when in crisis. This is done from a place of caring, for me that was often the secret ingredient that meant I could risk another day.

It is also important that the volunteer is able to stay very grounded when little ones come out. Their attachment needs are usually demonstrated very emphatically but it is not the volunteers' job to try and fill these needs. It is as important that the volunteer remains as clear and bounded with small ones as with older parts. This may mean adjusting their approach so it is age appropriate.

Dissociative callers may want to know more about the volunteer than other people in crisis. I think this has many layers including checking out they are safe but also so often we have little to no sense of identity that by knowing more about the volunteer can give us a pseudo sense of who we are. Again it is important that the volunteer does not offer information about themselves. It would not be appropriate to deny you have got a cold but answering other questions is not helpful apart from possibly being appeasing in the moment.

Often in a telephone conversation or a longer relationship of offering support, building a relationship with people who are dissociative can be extremely frustrating. The sense you are getting somewhere, trust is beginning to happen and then it can disappear in an instant. For many of us getting what feels close to someone can be good and healthy but also dangerous and in some cases life threatening. So a tentative start of forming a relationship can cause the brain to go into panic mode, for me it feels like two, strong positive ends of magnets trying to be forced together. We suggest that if the volunteer is upset or concerned about this behaviour that could feel like us rejecting them they take it to supervision. It is so important that when we seek help at times of crisis we do not end up caring for the volunteer. This might work in the immediacy of the communication but will most likely lead to a major fallout later for the dissociative person.

And finally of course different parts will have totally different patterns of attachment. We give brief examples like one part might have been praised or rewarded after being abused which would cause so many conflicting emotions and attachment issues while another part may have felt nothing more than a machine, possibly a cold and detached view of life for that part.

We do not want the volunteers to be experts on any aspect of why and how the extreme abuse affected us. We try to, through simple examples to give them a foundation of understanding that then underpins, mainly at a subconscious level the way they have been

trained. We do this to try and help them gain an insight into the long term consequences of extreme abuse that they will be dealing with that enables them to fully utilise their training and remain solid and grounded. It is very important that they are able to take good care of themselves. We hope to de-mystify and remove some of the fear that DID and DDNOS still seems to generate.

Interview with a Support Worker:

Gill Tamplin is a support worker who works a few hours a week with a client with DID alongside her psychotherapy.

How did you start working with DID?

I saw an advert in the therapy centre where I was working as a receptionist. It was strange as part of my job was to put the notices on the board and put adverts up, but I ended up applying myself.

Had you heard of DID?

No, never

So what made you apply?

I had never specifically worked with mental health conditions but the advert was worded in a friendly way, in language I could understand. I did google DID but didn't find anything constructive. But nothing that put me off either.

What was the initial meeting like?

I don't know what I was expecting as it was not like anything I had done before. I met the client with her therapist in a public place. A young child alter came with a cuddly toy and some little plastic toys and seemed to be studying me intently.

Was that weird for you?

It was strange. What came over at that moment was how protective the therapist was. It felt normal but also felt strange as well. I've met so many different sorts of people though life so I try not to be judgemental. A friend of mine said

"Didn't you go to a library and get out all the books you could find?" but I felt like what's the point because I was not writing a thesis. So I decided not to do research. I still struggle a bit with am I really making a difference? Am I making anything worse?

What was the next step?

I met the client in her home.

How did that go?

It went well but felt a bit strange as the therapist was there observing, so it felt a bit unnatural but seemed to go well, and I was asked to come back!

What were your biggest worries?

That I would trigger the client without meaning to, especially as I had no experience. I didn't think it helped to ask too much about triggers. The way I saw my role, I didn't need all the background information as I was not a therapist but then I worried I'd unknowingly trigger them.

Has that ever happened?

Not that I was aware of. But sometimes a young teenage alter tried to run things by me and I felt she was too young to be taking that much responsibility for big questions. I wanted the 'main personality' to take more responsibility and not leave such a young part to do it all. I ended up worried about her sometimes. She wanted to tell me things sometimes but I had to say "you don't need to tell me that"- I tried to tell her to talk to her therapist.

Do you have supervision or support?

The therapist said I could call her if I was worried about anything, and every now and then she called me. It was nice to know there was someone there if I needed but I didn't need to call her often- in fact I don't think I ever did.

What kinds of things does your job entail?

A lot of it is generally being there. It was hard at first to believe that 2 hours a week could make any difference, but just being there seemed to help. The client has had a lot of changes in her life and I liked to think I was consistency as well.

What are the best bits?

There's quite a long list. Seeing how amazing they all are. The little one is so funny sometimes. The young teenager is so amazing and wise.

Do you feel you do make a difference?

I think so. I feel I have been there through the ups and downs and been consistent.

What are the hardest bits?

Sometimes I feel I am not aware enough of the switching. And sometimes I forget how young the young teen really is.

What is your relationship with the 'main personality'?

Good I hope. I don't see much of her sometimes. I used to call her at the end of the time and fill her in but I haven't done that so much recently.

Have there been any crises?

There have been a few times I have been asked for extra, at weekends sometimes. But it's been

ok. Sometimes I have had to say I couldn't, or I couldn't straightaway. I have never felt too pulled on. I am quite flexible and I think that has worked out well. I haven't been asked for any extra recently.

How has the relationship developed?

It feels more natural now and that it flows more. When I first started it was always in the client's home, now we do a lot more things out of the home. It feels more sort of family like now. But being adaptable has been vital.

Have you ever been scared?

No, never. People sometimes say to be 'aren't you scared of going into someone's home', but I never have at all. I had a job before which involved going to families' homes, so that helped.

Have you ever been scared for them?

Not really because I know that they have access to other help. I have never been pulled on to be a therapist instead.

How do you feel if there are incidents of self-harm etc?

Well, it's not something I am going to be able to stop. I am not a therapist and don't have the counselling skills. But it doesn't upset me too much as I know they have a good therapy team and other people to call.

Any final words of wisdom to anyone who might be thinking of doing something similar?

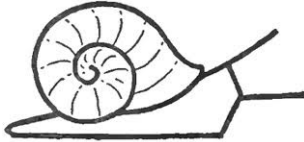
Just go for it!

PLAY

Some Ideas for Things to Do Outside

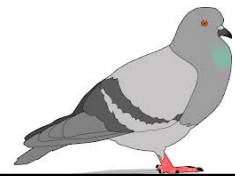
Before the weather gets worse again, these are some ideas of things to do outside- make sure your big ones say it is ok for you to be out

Can you spot all of these creatures and fill in their names?









Also Try...collecting some Autumn leaves and placing them on a sheet and kitchen roll with another sheet on top of the leaf and then put them inside the heaviest book you own. After a month, take them out and you will have lovely dried leaves. You could use them to make cards. You could even paint them gold or silver and use them to make Christmas cards



CENTRE

Spot the Difference



Shape Suduko

□		○	
○			
	□	△	
			▬

Can you fill in the boxes so that there is one circle, one square, one triangle and one rectangle in each box, without there being more than one of each shape in each row and column.

A Presentation at the TAG Conference 2012
Trauma and Relationship
The Voice of Someone with Dissociative
Disorders Not Otherwise Specified
By Sandra Sunfire

Dissociative Disorders Not Otherwise Specified brings us into an arena of lived experience of profound dissociation that affects our lives in the world, our relationships, our inner world and our very experience of our self or selves. And yet, in the true experience of dissociation it apparently does not fit in with definitions of other dissociative disorders. And so we are left in a landscape “not otherwise specified”. It is as if we find ourselves alone in a house at an unknown location, the house is in darkness and new to you and do you think you can find where any of the light switches are?



Each person's inner world is undoubtedly unique. It was not until I had left my parents home and lived with others at University that I discovered that my inner world seemed to be different to that of those other young, growing adults that were around me.

My experience of trauma from when I was born until when I was 9, left me in severe dissociative states that meant I was not able to be fully in relationship with myself or others. Reflecting on this title of our workshop “Trauma and Relationship” over many months, has helped me realise that for myself, and I suspect others who

have survived trauma through dissociation, trauma has meant not being in relationship and it is through learning to come into relationship that healing the wounds of trauma has been able to happen.

To return to my time at University, it was through forming relationships with others (as best as I could) that I saw reflected back to me how different I was from them in my inner and outer world and I began to realise my alienation from my whole self and other people. Whilst living at my parents house until 19, either I did not feel safe enough to realise this or maybe I just had not encountered others people's outer lives and inner worlds and so was unaware of any differences. As a family, apart from my father, we were alienated, in fact dissociated from others. And so I, so to speak, entered the darkened house in my 20s and started to explore. Actually that sounds more gentle than it was. I felt forced to explore what was going on, as states of rage causing me to kick walls when I was training as a nurse also caused me to leave my training, (this all came to a head when I was on placement on a ward where it seemed to me that the doctors were unable to let people die in dignity and with grace), ~ also as my body became increasingly allergic to various things and I had more and more difficulty breathing due to asthma, that threatened to escalate to needing hospitalisation myself which I was determined to avoid ~ I felt unable to function in the world, my body and other parts of me were reacting, over reacting and forcefully demanding attention.

A couple of years after I left University ~ any reference to timescales is always a bit vague for me as I can't seem to be able to measure time accurately to this day ~ I experienced a breakdown, a breakthrough in many ways. This took me to a level of consciousness of

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myself/myselfes that I had never experienced before. It was as though just some of the walls of the house became broken so that fragments of memories, body sensations, emotions, leaked out of sealed rooms that previously secured their isolation, their quarantine. A friend said that it was like I had walked into a mirror and I would say that the resulting fragmented image was a more accurate one. How I was became less hidden to myself and those around me. These fragments are not a whole self with personalities of their own, defence mechanisms, body armouring and body patterns of their own but they are like shards of the mirror, holding say the body memory of the pain inflicted on the body when swung at a door frame ~ another shard might hold the intermingling smells of cigarette smoke and lipstick ~ another intense, destructive rage.....

In your minds eye put one tiny fragment into one of the darkened rooms, sealed off, enclosed and then deconstruct the house so that each room is blasted far away from each other, in fact scattered all over the Earth. If you can imagine this then maybe your mind can touch on this human experience, one not unknown to those who lived thousands of years ago in Egypt where the ancient story of Isis and Osiris, Ast and Usari Neptra arose ~ the latter being the names by which they were known in their own tongue rather than that of the Greeks but many of us don't know this, these names, this story and so we have to discover and rediscover ourselves and our connection to each other and the stories we weave. We have to search the "ends of the Earth" as Isis/Ast searched for the body parts of her dismembered lover ~ we have to search in this hearts desire for healing, wholeness where no-one and nothing is excluded. The fragments are painstakingly gathered and woven together like many threads, placed in positions like little squares of a mosaic that when you step back and

look at it you can say, "yes, this is Sandra Sunfire".

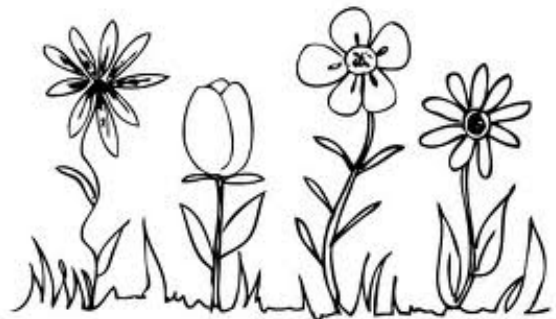


I have spent a lot of time and energy on wondering what I want to say to you today and how can I communicate this. If how I am speaking is confusing, jumping about from this to that, you may be feeling some of the gaps in between thoughts, emotions, sensations, in between woven threads in this gathered "self", as I try and weave some of my wordless experience into something I can communicate in words. As I was preparing myself to talk with you, I heard on Woman's Hour about a report on autism in the UK. They naturally focused on women and autism and it was fascinating that women are often not diagnosed until late in life and often after misdiagnosis because as women we "present" differently to men. It was commented on about how good women are at mimicking and I wondered if those of us who are dissociative (men and women) use these same skills to learn to "pass as normal", or near enough anyhow! We may appear as a "singleton", a single self, at least some of the time if nothing untoward happens that triggers a different response. This ability that a woman with Asperger's described as being able to learn social skills from watching Coronation Street, is one many people with dissociative disorders may be able to identify with. The ability to mimic, taking you to edges in friendship, in intimacy, in real meeting, where the script runs out and leaves you in one of those gaps, really not knowing what to do, how to respond, how to reach out, how to reach in, when everyone has

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hidden within those darkened walls again, or maybe all that remains in the no-man's land between us, is the wordless urge to run, to hide. As I prepared to come here today it was these gaps I had to leap, to risk, to find the solid ground of words to build a bridge, the reality of body sensations in this present moment, to find a way to reach you, to come into relationship now, with you. I am motivated to do this as I carry on taking each step in my own healing journey, one with dissociation (I did write "from" dissociation and realised that all though I dissociate far less than I used to it certainly still has a major effect on me, my life, my body and relationships) ~ so as I move more from isolation into relationship which has brought me to a place of my own acceptance of being part of humankind ~ interesting to use that word particularly because it has been the accumulative effect of gradually being able to let in human kindness that enabled the acceptance of being human to happen. With this realisation, with this real experience I have come to know that so many people on this Earth have suffered atrocities inflicted on them by other people ~ in states of war, in Bosnia, Serbia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel ~ in so called states of peace, in families, in paedophile rings, in human trafficking And so we perpetuate these cycles of abuse, of human cruelty that is hard to believe or imagine, that can not always be survived. And so at 49 I realise that I am not alone, people especially when young are surviving atrocities using our natural mechanism to do so, severe dissociation. We have been surviving such atrocities, such calamities for millennia as the mythological stories of Isis and Osiris testify. It seems to me that this human experience really is not all that uncommon and as such it needs to be recognised, ideally at that first point of contact, when someone asks for help. We may need to do more research to fully identify the prevalence of severe dissociative

survival mechanisms but if we are unaware of their existence now, when we meet someone daring to ask for help now, then we are unable to help them as fully as we can. We are increasing our understanding of DID, which is wonderful and we need to realise that severe dissociation also exists in "unspecified" ways that we know less about collectively. I have been a Trustee of FPP for a number of years and ironically one of my purposes is to hold "continuity" as our board of Trustees changes over the years. Continuity has become something that I treasure as such a precious jewel in my own experience after having experienced it in these later parts of my life, as parts of myself, shards of my experience, find how we can fit together and the gaps lessen, they can be bridged ~ or at least some of them. Another purpose I hold as a Trustee of FPP, is to remember and try to find a voice for those of us who don't fit in with the DID experience of being. I have tried to share some of my personal experience of severe dissociation with you today, to hopefully give voice to what it can be like to perhaps have DDNOS. I'm sure others may experience DDNOS in different ways but in ways that don't fit in easily with either being multiple or singleton. In recent years I seem to have used the phrase that I am "multipley inclined".



**FIRST PERSON PLURAL OPEN
MEETINGS.....WE'D WELCOME
YOUR VIEWS.**

First Person Plural holds two open meetings a year for its members; these are held in different locations across the UK in order to allow as many members as possible to benefit from attending.

The next two meetings are scheduled to be held in Brighton in November this year and then York in May 2013. The First Person Plural committees aim is to ensure that these meetings are openly accessible to and serve the needs of as many members as possible.

However the committee knows we need to ensure we meet the membership's needs, so this is your opportunity to tell us how we can improve the meetings and encourage members to attend these valuable events. The committee would welcome your feedback, you contact me Carol, either via the First Person Plural address or by email at cbroad123@gmail.com; your views will help shape the future and I look forward to hearing from you and sharing your views and ideas with the committee.

THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE OPEN MEETINGS

Let us explain our own journey into First Person Plural's meetings, In March 2009 approx 4 months after our diagnosis we attended an open meeting/AGM in Birmingham, our daughter came along as moral support and also to learn more herself. Everyone was welcoming, the AGM business part of the meeting did not take very long and soon it was time to share conversation over lunch and then have the opportunity to participate in creative activities and/or just sit and chat. There were safe spaces to go to if we felt we needed them, and we did make plenty of contacts and gain much needed insight into

our world of D.I.D. To be honest it was scary to venture to our first meeting, we had never met anyone else with a dissociative disorder before, though we soon realised just how much strength we gained from realising we were not the only person living a life of multiplicity

Since then we have attended a number of the meetings, one in Swindon was an open meeting, were we basically all took along things to do, and had an afternoon of creativity and laughter, we know certain parts of us felt so excited to be amongst others who liked doing activities such as bead making and other creative crafts. My supporter that day, said she was so glad to have the honour of being there amongst such an amazing group of individuals. She also felt it was good to talk to other supporters that day as they all gained from each other's experiences. At all First Person Plural meetings you can take along a friend, whether that is a supporter or someone you know who may find the meeting useful for themselves.

The last AGM/Open meeting held earlier this year gave us the opportunity to catch up with friends, the day began with a drink and a chat, it was good to make friends with first time attendees, we were inspired to find people had travelled from as far away as Guildford in Surrey. The business side of the day again did not take very long; while lunch gave us another opportunity to socialise and to learn from one another. In the afternoon there was a short film, though some people chose to sit and chat, it is very flexible. As usual there was a safe space this time at the back of the hall and in a side room creative activities. Prior to leaving for home, we had chance for a final refreshing cup of tea and the most delicious cupcakes, which someone had kindly brought along to share.

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So why bother attending, especially if it involves travelling some distance? I hear you ask. Well

quite simply it is an opportunity not to be missed, the chance to meet others with dissociative disorders, to socialise, and to find support from those who understand the most.....people like you and me or should I say we.

We will be in Brighton on November 17th despite the lengthy journey from Cheshire, because we know it will be full of friendly like-minded people, chatting, being creative and generally enjoying themselves. We truly look forward to seeing more new faces in Brighton; will yours be one of them? We hope so.

Carol Broad

A Response to "Feeling Isolated"

By All of Us

In response to this article appearing in the March 2012 newsletter we want to say that we do understand the very strong feelings of anger attached to "normal" seemingly unimportant everyday things.

We have at least one "very helpful" personality who suffers from road-rage. We don't drive but, as a passenger, get very upset and angry with motorists who don't indicate where they are going, or get too close, or even sometimes, dare to be using the same stretch of road as we are.

In fact, our grown-up recently told her husband that if he is suddenly pulled up and confronted by an angry motorist it will be because 'we' gave him/her the finger and they, unfortunately, noticed!

The World

By Amy G

*I am starting to see that the world is
not all bad,*

*Just because some wicked people,
did bad things...*

*Doesn't mean that everyone in this
crazy mixed up world will.*

*There is good, there is bad and there
are grey in-betweens.*

*I have met some great people along
the way.*

*Just because some people have hurt
us,*

Just because some do not care,

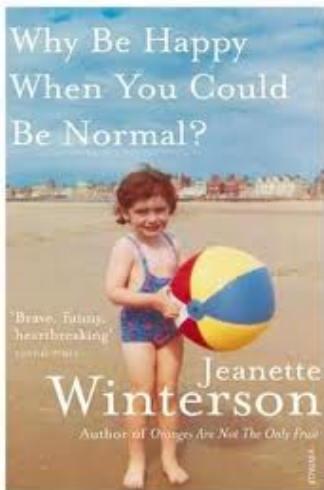
*We don't need to tar all and sundry,
With the very same brush.*

We do not need to fear all people,

For some are exceedingly kind.

*As for the ones who have done us
wrong,*

*We need to learn to leave them
behind!*



Why Be Happy
When you Could be
Normal?

By Jeanette Winterson

Book Review by Oriel

Jeanette Winterson has long been one of my favourite writers. There is something about her prose which has had the ability to express things and hold things for me. I think my two favourite passages (below) explain why more clearly than I ever could. The first is from *The Passion*, the second from *The World and Other Places*:

'How is it that one day life is ordinary and you are content, a little cynical perhaps, but on the whole just so, and then without warning you find the solid floor is a trapdoor and you are now in another place whose geography is uncertain and whose customs are strange. Travellers at least have a choice. Those who sat sail know that things will not be the same as at home. Explorers are prepared. But for us, who travel along the blood vessels, who come to cities of the interior by chance, for us there is no preparation. We who were fluent find life is a foreign language'

'When Artemis had lost her quarry she lit a fire where she was and tried to rest, but the night was shadowy and fully of games. She saw herself by the fire; as a child, a woman, a hunter, a Queen. Grabbing the child she lost sight of the woman and when she drew her bow, the Queen fled. What would it matter if she crossed the world and hunted down every living creature, as long as her separate selves eluded her? When no one was left she would have to confront herself. Leaving home left nothing behind, it came too, all of it, and waited in the dark. She realised that the only war worth fighting was the one that raged within; all the rest were diversions. In this small space, her hunting miles, she was going to bring herself home. Home was not place for the faint hearted; only the very brave could live with themselves. In the morning she set out and every morning day after day. In her restlessness she found peace.'

I was therefore excited about reading her new book, *Why Be Happy When You Could be Normal?* (apparently a quote from her adoptive mother). In this book she addresses her childhood more directly than in any of her previous books. She was adopted into a religious cult, and although it does not appear to have any Ritual Abuse overtones, it was a twisted and deprived childhood which has left her with a great difficulty in forming healthy attachments. This book chronicles her journey of coming to terms with this and learning to live again after a suicide attempt. It is not always an easy read, and because of the content may be triggering for some, but it is a beautifully written and moving book, and seems much more grounded than her latest novels. I was also struck by the similarity in some places to DID- although she does not directly suggest that she experiences alternative self-states, she does write about different parts of herself which I think many members may resonate with.

I also found it very important, as, knowing a little about her childhood, I have wondered for years how you had come out of that to be apparently normal and successful. Apparently you don't. Although I would not wish that pain on anyone, it has been moving for me to realise that it is not just me, or those of us in the psychiatric system who struggle with scars from childhood. Many others do in secret. And the book also chronicles that they do not have to mar life forever- great creativity and love can come out of such childhoods too.

And finally it underlined for me, once again, the healing effect that literature and stories can have.

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Pat's Petition

URGENT CALL FOR ACTION

SIGN THE PETITION AND PASS IT ON

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/20968>

Stop and review the cuts to benefits and services, which are falling disproportionately on disabled people, their carers and families

The petition is just one of many actions being taken by disabled people and their supporters. The idea is to get a debate in parliament. To force those dismantling our public services, rights and entitlements, to account for themselves. There is no illusion that the petition will stop anything by itself. But every small action joins with other actions, so that together they can make a difference.

A small group of volunteers has got this to over 44,000 signatures. Now we need to get it to 100,000 by November 1st.

Together WE can do this.

So please sign, and as important, send on to friends and colleagues. Add to e-newsletters, blogs, and social media platforms - spread the word.

Further information here - [Pat's Petition](#)

Contact Pat – patspetition@gmail.com

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