Sept/Oct 2014

RAINBOW'S END

Volume 15 Issue 2

Support & Information Newsletter of

First Person Plural

dissociative identity disorders association

Established 1997 - A Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Registered Charity No: 1156602

CONTENTS

ALL FULL & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS of FPP ARE INVITED

to

The Autumn

Members Open Meeting

on

Saturday, 29th November, 2014

from 11.30am to 4.30pm

at

Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre,

7 Mansfield Road,

Nottingham, NG1 3FB

with a presentation and discussion on Disability Welfare Benefits led by Kathryn Livingston

and time to relax and chat with jigsaws and craft activities

Bring a supporter if your wish

Further details enclosed with newsletter

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Editorial Statement:- 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 help if you can send your contribution electronically as an email attachment. Please send to our editorial email address **newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk** . This saves times and resources but handwritten and typed material sent by post will continue to be accepted. The next issue of the newsletter is due in **December 2014**; any contributions for consideration for inclusion in that issue must be with us by **6th December**

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. We regret we are not able to forward personal replies to contributors. So any responses to articles etc should be marked FOR PUBLICATION if you wish the writer to see it.

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, members open meetings and the mutual support online forums 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.

Chair's letter

Hi, Things have been quiet over the summer but are now gathering speed for next year. We are holding three Open Meetings during 2015, in the Spring in Brighton, in Summer following the AGM in Peterborough and at a venue yet to be decided in the Autumn. We, of course still have the last Open Meeting of 2014 in Nottingham this Autumn, the details of which are in this newsletter. We are running our own two mini training courses in Birmingham and London and have enquiries for commissioned days coming in so next year looks to be another busy time on the training front. The support group in Norwich is up and running and is in fact two groups to cover a daytime and an evening session. There was considerable interest and those who attended the first meeting were very enthusiastic.

Like a lot of people I found myself getting very caught up in the Scottish referendum and notwithstanding any political sway I started thinking about how being DID reflected for me their situation. The UK is a relatively small landmass with incredible differences, cultures, history, likes and needs, so much to celebrate individually and together. This mirrors my internal family, we do share one body though at times even now we forget. We do all have many differences, many guided by age and dare I say gender. Our histories are very different, one of the major factors of being DID and our likes and needs range right across the board. The good times are so often based on listening to what is needed, communication and consultation. Then trying to stay together to see what is possible and how we can achieve it. Unilateral decisions, unless really necessary, never leave us feeling calm, at peace and able to enjoy or even just do what was decided. In the early days this was the process we all went through over every single decision and of course we had so little internal ability to communicate that it was never good enough, leaving the whole depressed, frustrated and often sad without really understanding why.

With therapy helping us all to be stronger in communicating, the unresolved traumas that led to the multiple and confusing mix of emotions downloaded and stored appropriately our lives have become so much more fulfilling because every decision no longer floods us with painful emotions for some parts. We live with a growing peace in the one body and at times feel the possible strength of being united in the moment, very different from integrated but for me equally as wonderful. We retain our differences which lead us to have many more interests, connections to situations, and managing skills at different times but it is done from a place of wholeness that respects our individuality. So thank you Scotland for all the work over the last two years that has allowed me an analogy that is extremely helpful.

FPP is being sought out by a widening range of organisations and agencies that approach us wanting to enhance their learning about vulnerable adults whose complex dissociation is the result of childhood trauma. I ran a day with Invisible Traffick in Belfast. They are an amazing organisation in the embryonic stage of setting up a new, much needed helpline for people who have been trafficked. Twenty six people gave up and are going to give up many more Saturdays until the start of their project to learn how best to help this very vulnerable group of people. I feel very privileged to have delivered their first day's training and thoroughly enjoyed using what I have learnt over the years to put together what felt a good day. I wish them well, with the energy, enthusiasm and integrated support they are offering each other I feel sure it will deliver a very much needed service in Ireland. Warm wishes *Melanie*

Volume 15, Issue 2
Book Release: “Living with the Reality of Dissociative Identity Disorder”

This week saw the release of a book that has been in the making for a couple of years, and it's a delight to finally see Living with the Reality of Dissociative Identity Disorder - Campaigning Voices published. The book edited by Lady Xenia Bowlby and Deborah Briggs is a compilation of individual chapters written by people who are impacted by Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Back in 2010 I saw an article about a campaign day for those survivors and supporters with D.I.D, they were asking if people wanted to speak. I'm not quite sure how it happened but before I realised I had volunteered to get involved. It was a decision that meant in March 2011 I stood alongside many others from organisations including First Person Plural and spoke about my life, I say “I” but in reality it was a part of me who stood there.

I have an alter named Caitlyn who is the part of me that is super confident at public speaking and is a very good trainer. She stood in this room and she presented our story, I think she had decided the best way to explain our story at that time was to use a multi-media presentation. Mainly I think because she wanted it to be her work, to be right and we only a short time slot and well our story is quite complicated.

That day was a success and I can recall traveling back home from London with the two people who had supported me on that day feeling it had gone ok. A few months later I was asked if I'd be willing to write a few thousand words on my presentation for a book, a part of me said yes. That book has been 3 years in the making and thanks to the dedication of lots of people and Karnac books is now complete.

A part of me wrote my chapter over a weekend as I sat in a hotel room a few miles from where I now live. I knew I couldn't write this as the presentation we had given wasn't my work but Caitlyn's' Whilst Caitlyn is a part of me I had at that time very limited awareness of her, we didn't have and still don't internally communicate fully though I try now but it's still very one sided.

Once that weekend was over in 2011 I kind of put it to one side, I couldn't tell you what I'd written or how it flowed as it wasn't me that wrote it. I'd made that very clear in my chapter as it only felt right to give the credit to Caitlyn who I now know slogged away until it felt right. So this week when I received the call to say the book had finally being released I was excited after all it's not everyday something like this happens.

Imagine my surprise when I went online and saw a few pages from the book as part of a preview, as I read I realized Caitlyn knew more about my internal system of parts than I did. She clearly knows more about me and the life I have had than I can recall, and yet I know so little about her. It's clear she is far more confident, professional and organised than the majority of me and she is blunt and honest at the same time.

My children tell me that when I or rather Caitlyn was writing essays for my degree she would complain to anyone who interrupted. Apparently she even hung up the phone on them if they disturbed her mid flow and she's a burner of the midnight oil if she has a task to complete. Be that the chapter for this book, my essays or training presentations.

Of course Caitlyn is a part of me! one of many alters and yet she is a fragmentation of this whole person people know as Carol. I'm quite pleased I have a part of me who is good at public speaking and good at writing in this way, it's a talent and a skill I often lacked as a schoolgirl.

When the book arrived on my doorstep I read the whole of my chapter and yes it was strange to see Caitlyn's words, I recall some of the events she talks of and yet there are things here and there that I read and think and I wonder was she really writing about me. Though I know of course she was and that the chapter is all about me, all about my life and my past. Its hard to read back about my past, especially seeing her call my mom our other biological parent, it kind of hits home I didn't have a mom. I know that deep down but denial likes to rear it's ugly head here and there.

Reading about my time as a child, my time in hospital and the times when my Dad clearly helped me deal with the symptoms of my dissociating from the perspective of another part of me hasn't been easy. Yet I can say that since this chapter was written 3 years ago I have made huge strides towards progress. Progress comes in many guises and for me three things stand out.

1. I now manage and employ with help - my own PA's/ support staff,
2. I've started having internal dialogue and some side by side working with some of my parts and
3. I'm now with a psychologist who is helping me to learn more about me, all of me.

These things are signs of real effective progress, signs that I'm learning to live with D.I.D, most of all I'm learning I am one person with many parts and I can learn to like all of me.

I'm grateful to have been involved in such a great project like this book, it's a brilliant legacy to the campaign and a huge asset for those working in the field of Dissociation. I'm certain it will be an invaluable tool for many professionals, survivors and supporters and I hope it remains such for many years to come.

I'm pleased I know so many of the contributors and that three of those contributors are or have been trustees for First Person Plural. I believe it demonstrates the calibre of our trustees and how highly regarded we are as an organisation.

This book demonstrates that how our society treats those with Dissociative Disorders is changing, by working together we can ensure that everyone including myself has a brighter future and a hope for better things to come despite Living with the Reality of Dissociative Identity Disorder. The book is available in paperback or as an e-book from www.karnacbooks.com/Product.asp?PID=35245

Note from FPP Chairperson Congratulations to Debbie & Xenia for making this book happen, I know it was Debbie's strongly held wish that all the valuable contributions of the first campaign meeting should be made widely available. FPP has whole heartedly endorsed the campaign and the work of the Paracelsus Trust. As Carol mentioned in her article above several FPP members spoke at both of the events and FPP collectively wrote a statement of support which was read by a committee member, Jacqui, at the first campaign event. Kathryn and I were very disappointed that we were unable to attend that first campaign meeting in 2011. We were delivering a long standing training day fully booked, We are sorry FPP's statement was not invited to be included in the book but have included a copy with this newsletter for those who are interested. *Melanie*

Note from Editor : "Living with the Reality of Dissociative Identity Disorder" will be launched at an event organised by the Paracelsus Trust in London on 1st Nov 2014 Contact paracelsustrust@gmail.com for details.

Living on the Fault Line: Cycles of Wellness *by Ruddy*

My life seems to go in cycles. I have a bad phase, and then I have a good phase. I take on too much in the good phase, and then I have another bad phase and I have to give up all the things that I took on. This cyclic path becomes increasingly frustrating and each time I hit a bad phase I feel re-traumatised with the sense of powerlessness and the associations from Before. In the following article I will attempt to unpick this cycle and suggest from my own experience ways to cope better with this cycle – and even to break it.

The cycle

I have heard it said that recovery involves moving towards a state of being where crises become less frequent and each crisis is less devastating and more manageable. What is often not said is that this path of recovery involves moving towards taking on more and become a more fully functioning member of society, and this means that each crisis, however relatively small, still has a big impact because the stakes become higher.

Sometimes it seems to me that I lose more each time I have a crisis, even though the crises themselves are less dramatic, because nowadays there is more to lose.

In stage one of the cycle, I have a crisis. This may be triggered by a wide variety of things, including times of year, therapy work, outside world stressors like work or house moves, and sometimes there just isn't a noticeable trigger. It is as if I only have a short window in between crises. During the crisis itself, the world shrinks and life becomes just about survival. Excusing myself from my usual daily tasks and responsibilities doesn't make me feel too guilty because it is necessary: I am just not capable. I struggle through, with the help of my support network.

In stage two of the cycle, I gradually recover from the crisis. I am not back to normal yet, but I start to remember what it is like to be back to normal. I look around me and notice all the things that I had neglected in the build-up to the crisis: I tidy my house, I start to cook again, I start to engage better with the people around me. I reflect on what may have caused the trigger and I make changes to my life. For me, this often means a job change. My CV is not very attractive with all of this short term work! I consider what may be more manageable and I start to make plans and rebuild my life.

In stage three of the cycle, I forget about the previous crisis and I forget to protect myself from a potential next one. I am absorbed in my current activities. I lose perspective on life and become immersed in my job and whatever else I am doing. I consider myself at this point to be fully functioning and well and I boast about how well I am doing and how happy I am. I become driven and I take on more and more things, delighted with how well I am doing. I am not someone who is able to be very realistic about what I can manage. My life is so hindered by my mind and my past that if I am having a well phase I will do as much as I possibly can to make up for the less well phases. This unfortunately is not very sensible in the long term.

In stage four of the cycle, I start to feel overwhelmed. I feel tired all the time. I am less able to manage the things that come up for me in therapy. I neglect my relationships. I can't be bothered with housework or cooking.

I feel sad but I don't dare admit it because I am still holding onto the thought that I am in a well phase. I keep taking more and more on, thinking that this will distract me and keep me going. My survival is in part due to the fact that whatever happens, I keep going.

Sometimes this is somewhat grandiose, and sometimes it is barely noticeable.

What overwhelms me is often my memories, rather than work or anything else, and this means that it is difficult to recognise or monitor.

And now we are back to stage one. Perhaps this is a physical health crisis, or perhaps it is a mental health crisis. Whatever form it takes, it shows that I have not been coping, and everything crashes down around me.

The effects

Stage one of the cycle traumatises me every time. It takes me back to earlier times in my life when the crises were more devastating and dangerous, and when I wasn't safe. It makes me feel like a failure and the thought of going back to Unwell Me is always very depressing. I am desperate to be well and functioning, and to be less dependent on the people around me. I feel like I have let everyone down and I feel guilty at the thought that I have been found out yet again as struggling more than I made out. It is hard to come to terms with what I knew all along: that I am not Superwoman.

I torment myself with thoughts like: What is wrong with me? Am I damaged goods? Will I be like this forever? Why can't I be normal? These thoughts of course resonate with things that the bad people said to me, and so I am sent into flashbacks and rememberings. At this point I am in an isolated place. On the outside world, people can only see the crisis. They don't understand the deeper impact that this has on me and the traumatising effect that it has.

This is perhaps more devastating than the crisis and subsequent life changes, because it is so reminiscent of the destructive things that I have been told. It is insidious.

These thoughts motivate me in later stages of the cycle to prove myself. I am always driven by the need to prove myself and to make up for what I haven't been able to do in my darker times. This invariably means that I expect much too much of myself and take too much on. This is another isolating factor. Nobody else understands how much I need to be normal in my better phases, and how much I feel that I have to make up for.

I become so frustrated and disappointed with myself. I know that I could be capable of a lot, if only I was capable. I am always drawn to do things which will be triggering and stressful, and then I am surprised when I can't cope with it. But it really doesn't seem fair. I often feel stuck and restricted by myself. It serves to underline my sense of victimisation and it increases my sense of powerlessness, which is triggering in itself.

Continued on page 10 after Play Centre

My very own ninja tortoises part 2

by Anna

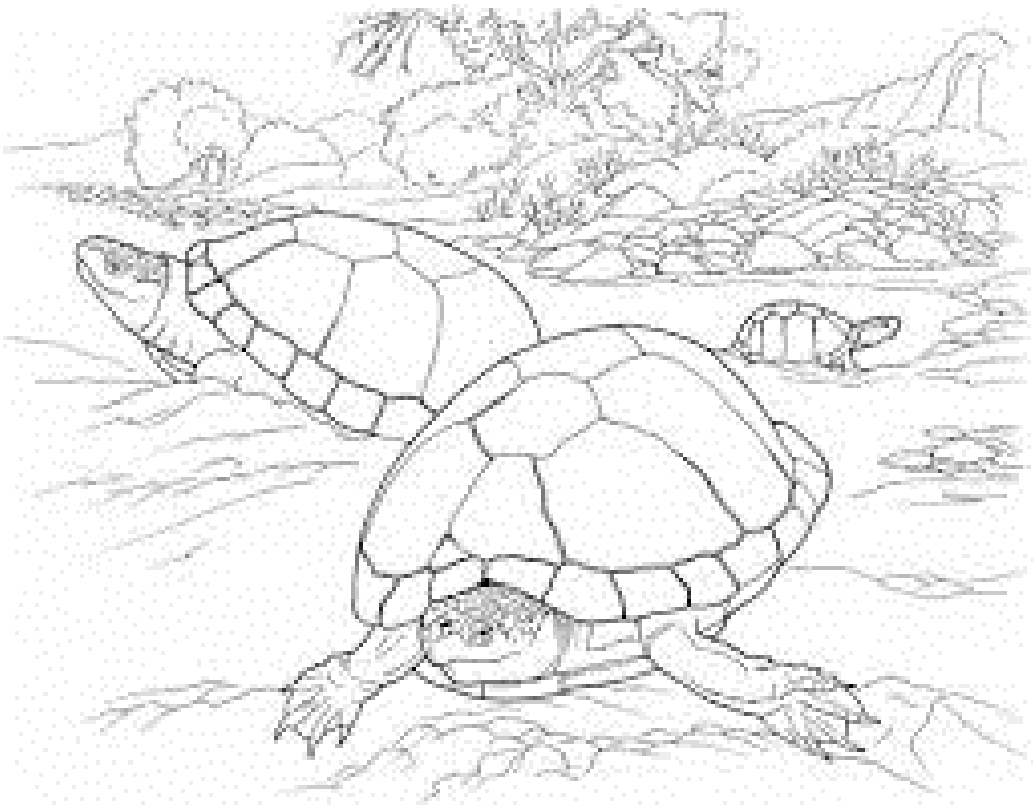
So now there are 4! Michelangelo is getting jealous of his mummy already! In keeping with the ninja turtle theme, my new tortoises are called Leonardo, Donna (for Donatello) and Fae (for Raphael). After trying to put them altogether, i realised this was a big mistake! Michelangelo is so jealous, that he attacked the newcomers. He is truly living up to his ninja name!
Leonardo is otherwise known as mr grumpy, as he does not like people much, and has a very grumpy face. Donna is very greedy, and Fae is a liability! She is always trying to escape into Michelangelo's enclosure, and she climbs on everything! They have loved the warm summer and spent lots of time in their garden, stomping around and munching.

As I now have male and female tortoises, I'm hoping one day there may even be babies! I must admit, one hot day in the summer I came home to find them getting on a little too well!

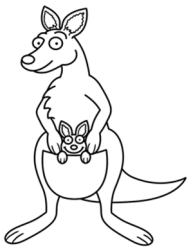
The local tortoise club has helped me socialise more since the last issue of the magazine. I helped this year with the stand at the Norfolk show, where the youngest tortoise we had was 2 days old, and oldest was over 100! I have also been fortunate enough to see a baby tortoise hatch in the last few months. They are so cute and tiny! Next challenge is hibernation. I am a bit scared about them sleeping for months, plus I'm going to miss them!

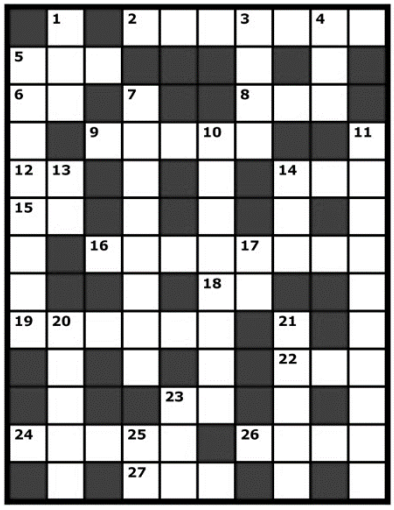
Hibernation instalment to follow...

A PICTURE TO COLOUR



CENTRE





ACROSS

2 A vegetable with large dark green leaves **(7)**

5 This is used for locking things (such as doors) **(3)**

6 As soon _____ possible **(2)**

8 This is found in the middle of a tennis court **(3)**

9 A flat round object used for putting food on **(5)**

12 Does this train _____ to Tokyo ? **(2)**

14 A tool for cutting wood **(3)**

15 _____ apple a day keeps the doctor away **(2)**

16 When there is not enough of something **(8)**

18 Let's go _____ the beach **(2)**

19 A round juicy fruit **(6)**

22 One of the two organs in your face, which you use to see with **(3)**

23 The bus is never _____ time **(2)**

24 A large round sweet fruit **(5)**

26 The number of seasons in Japan **(4)**

27 The colour of a tomato **(3)**

DOWN

1 Do you like ice-cream ? Yes or no ? **(3)**

3 Three times three **(4)**

4 A pet **(3)**

5 An animal from Australia **(8)**

7 A large animal **(8)**

10 The age at which children become teenagers **(8)**

11 A person you love **(10)**

13 Don't be late ! It's important to be _____ time **(2)**

14 Salt water that covers most of the Earth's surface **(3)**

17 Are you going _____ the bank today ? **(2)**

20 A flat, straight stick which is used to measure things **(5)**

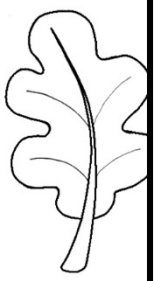
21 A yellow sour fruit **(5)**

23 Thirty minus twenty-nine **(3)**

25 Is it Saturday _____ Sunday today ? **(2)**

Autumn Word Ladder

Make your way from TREE to FALL by changing just one letter on each step to make a new word! There are 6 steps in this word ladder.



T R E E	Forest plant.
	Costs nothing.
	To worry.
	Something to walk on.
	Craft material made of matted fibers.
	Knocked down.
F A L L	Another word for autumn.

Riddles

1. What can you hold without touching it?
2. What do you draw without a pencil or paper?
3. What is bought by the metre and worn by the foot?

Answers

1. A conversation

2. Curtains

3. Carpet

CROSSWORD ANSWERS : ACROSS – 2. Spinach; 5. Key; 6. As; 8. Net; 9. Plate; 12. Go; 14. Saw; 15. An; 16. Shortage; 18. To; 19. Orange; 22. Eye; 23. On; 24. Melon; 26. Four; 27. Red.
DOWN – 1. Yes; 3. Nine; 4. Cat; 5. Kangaroo; 7. Elephant; 10. Thirteen; 11. Sweetheart; 13. On; 14. Sea; 17. To; 20. Ruler; 21. Lemon; 23. One; 25. Or

Continued from page 7

Breaking the cycle: living on the fault line

At this point in time (stage two), I can see clearly that I need to make changes to my attitudes as well as to my lifestyle in order to really avert another crisis. I can see that I have been unrealistic and unrelenting with myself. I know that I should feel grateful that I am here at all and that I should be more forgiving with myself. I also know that it is one thing to know this, but another thing to truly believe it, and to not forget it in stage three. So how can I break this cycle? How can I make stage three last longer, and avoid stage four completely?

In actual fact, I am not convinced that I really can avoid crises. They are repercussions of the abuse, rippling through the years. The abuse was the earthquake – a very long earthquake – and these crises are the aftershocks. As with an earthquake, the aftershocks should gradually get lighter and less destructive over time. I don't need to be afraid of the aftershocks. I know that they are going to happen, and I know that they will get better over time. I have survived many already, so I don't need to fear them.

As with survivors of earthquakes, I should learn from experience and take steps to make sure that I can manage the aftershocks. I am a survivor of abuse and that means that I live on a fault line. I should not expect that there will be no aftershocks, because this denies my experience and denies where I am living. In stage three, I desperately try to deny who I am and what I have been through, because this gets in the way of what I want to do. This unfortunately is one of the key mistakes that leads to stage four. I have to take account of my situation in order to be able to move forward.

People who live on a fault line are ready for earthquakes. They build their houses to resist the power of an earthquake and they store food so that they are able to survive a disaster. They are not surprised by an earthquake, but instead they are prepared and they have plans. As a survivor of extreme abuse, I should do the same: forewarned is forearmed.

Here are some things that I can think about and put in my aftershock survival kit:

- ***How will I recognise when an aftershock is approaching?*** *I could make a checklist of warning signs and check these regularly. I could ask the people around me to regularly let me know how they think I am doing. I could have a check-in with myself in therapy sessions.*
- ***What steps will I take to avert a full crisis?*** *If I have noticed the warning signs, perhaps I could try to stop it getting any worse. I could take some time off work, go on a holiday, sleep more, have a review of my life and think about whether I am taking on too much, pull out of things which are unnecessarily adding to my stress, or arrange extra therapy sessions. I could also talk to my supporters about how I am feeling and ask them to help me.*
- ***How can I make my house stronger to resist the aftershocks?*** *As with building a house, this is a big project. Unfortunately I can't hire builders: I have to do the work myself in therapy. Over time I am becoming stronger and more robust, and this will continue to improve as I work in therapy to come to terms with my past and to learn strategies to cope with life better.*

- ***How can I live in a way that takes account of the aftershocks?*** *I could think about a lifestyle which will be able to withstand the aftershocks. Instead of taking on things which I will have to quit, I could think about activities which will not be too badly disrupted by absences and for which I am not pushed too much. If I find something manageable, I also could to try and stick to that instead of automatically having a job and life change after every crisis.*
- ***What stores should I make to get me through the disaster time?*** *Practically, I could try to save money and think about how I will get through times when I am unable to work. I could think about my career and what jobs would suit me, so that my CV is not too badly affected by my sick leaves. I could make sure that I have plans in place for what I will do when I am at home more: what can I do during the day, and who could I see?*

- ***How can I reduce the grief and traumatisation after an aftershock?*** *I need to move towards accepting that this is a part of my life and one of the many effects of surviving what I have been through. I need to work with myself instead of against myself. Instead of resisting it and expecting myself to be invincible, I should be realistic about what I can and cannot manage, and make life plans accordingly. I could also try to allow some time in stage two for this grief and to talk about it instead of ignoring it. One day maybe I could even consider the idea that living on the fault line isn't my fault - I wasn't the earthquake.*

Seeing myself as someone living on the fault line is helpful, because it helps me not to feel as broken or damaged. It helps me to see myself and my life in context, rather than isolating the experience of having a crisis and feeling that it is just because I am weak and crazy. I am neither of those things. I am a survivor, and I will continue to survive. I am determined to learn how to live in a means that for the time being I also need to learn how to survive aftershocks.

"We don't even know how strong we are until we are forced to bring that hidden strength forward. In times of tragedy, of war, of necessity, people do amazing things. The human capacity for survival and renewal is awesome."

Isabel Allende

easysearch
.org.uk

Raise money for FPP when you search the web

Here's a really easy and free way to raise money – when you search the web, use easysearch and they will donate half a penny to **First Person Plural** for every search you make.

You can raise around **£25 a year** simply by using easysearch instead of Google or any other search engine.

Copy the web address below into your browser to begin raising money for us by searching the web.

http://firstpersonplural.easysearch.org.uk/

Thank you Blu

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More ways to give

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Sponsorship open until 28th February 2015

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Did you know you can make a donation towards our work by clicking the donate button on First Person Plural's microsite at Charity Choice?

http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/firstpersonplural

and/or
you can do as Blu did and use Charity Choice to set up your own fundraising page/events to raise money for us through sponsorship

http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/fundraising

Using the FPP DVDs *by All of Us*

In the last issue was a request for members to say how they have used the Logical Way of Being and No Two Paths the Same DVDs. In response we would like to explain how they have helped (or not) us personally.

We watched most of No Two Paths the Same (the second DVD) and began to feel increasingly more agitated and disappointed because we couldn't relate to it in the same way as we could A Logical Way of Being (the first DVD). By watching the first DVD we felt less isolated and alone, and we felt we had something more concrete to "hold on to" as it confirmed some of our experiences and difficulties, and we could actually see "real" people with the same condition in the forms of Melanie, Kathryn and Oriel. Because of this we were really looking forward to receiving the second one.

But it wasn't the same. Although we recognised the people on the film they were speaking a completely different language! We had 8 years of therapy, which ended 7 years ago, and we realised that, through those years, we had only just scratched the surface – we just couldn't understand and identify with the Second and Third stages of therapy because we never reached those stages. We persevered and continued to watch the DVD but, alongside the disappointment, we began to feel afraid of just how big a deal having DID and DDNOS really is. We have always been afraid of 'making a fuss' or 'making it bigger than it really is" but it is big, and its bigness frightens us.

Because we could 'fit in' with the first DVD, so we began to try and get the same feeling with the second, but it didn't work. The more we tried to connect with the DVD the more we were losing ourselves.

At the moment we feel we have reached a crossroads. We don't know whether to try and get more therapy (assuming there is a trained therapist in our local town as travelling is out of the question), or to acknowledge that we have, at least, learned a lot about DID during our years of therapy and to try to live our life the best we can by concentrating on the things we can do rather than worrying about the things we can't. This reasoning makes good, common sense on a good day, when things are going along reasonably smoothly, but when things go wrong (and small things feel massive when they go wrong) we are back in panic mode or survival mode.

We would be interested to know if other people feel the same way we do.

Kathryn responds:- (http://www.firstpersonplural.org.uk/sales)

I was saddened to hear that All of Us had found watching FPPs second DVD provoked agitation and disappointment. However, it is inevitable that some people watching either DVD won't find a full fit for their own experiences. Indeed this is suggested by the title of the second DVD "No Two Paths The Same". The second DVD's primary audience is professionals and is better suited as a learning tool for them than as a support resource for survivors – though several survivors have found it informative and/or have found it supportive when they have heard something on it that is a fit for their own experience, or even, as All of Us explains, it has encouraged them to consider their own therapeutic journeys and their way forward now.. In this second DVD we wanted to explain the three phased approach to working with DID as this is what is recommended by experienced DID professionals and what all who appeared on the DVD had experienced from either the client, professional, or partner's perspective.. Most especially we wanted to get across the critical importance of doing the stabilisation phase well; realising that the three phases are not a linear progression; but that none-the-less a good enough stabilisation is a pre-requisite for successfully achieving trauma resolution while minimising re-traumatisation. For some people complete trauma resolution is not possible and/or not desirable/advisable (perhaps because it is judged to be in itself too disruptive for the individual), but if the stabilisation has been done well, even these people are likely to have achieved some improvement in their life. It is also true that some people either by choice or necessity have had two or more periods of 'being in therapy' taking a break after achieving good enough stabilisation and then later going back to therapy to do primarily trauma resolution and consolidation/integration work when they feel more ready to do so or their life circumstances have changed to be more enabling of this work. No two paths are the same!

FPP's collaborations could help you find a therapist *by Melanie & Kathryn*

From the start, when in 1997 (yes that is 17 years ago) FPP launched its very first issue of this newsletter at an international conference in Chester run by, what was then, the United Kingdom Society for the Study of Dissociation (UKSSD); First Person Plural has had an ethos of collaboration to achieve our aims and objectives. Our first major information resource – the booklet "Understanding Dissociative Disorders" was a collaboration with Mind. It was not a time to be precious about ownership and branding when we knew that a negotiated collaboration with Mind would ensure that accurate information about dissociation and the dissociative disorders (provided by us) could be disseminated much more widely and effectively through Minds reputation and established networks than if we relied solely on our own efforts. Our memorable and highly successful 2004 conference was a collaboration with the (sadly now defunct) Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum, and also involved the Pottergate Centre for Trauma and Dissociation, the local and regional NHS mental health organisations of the time and several notable individual professional experts and survivor experts-by-experience.

Collaboration has always been as important to FPP as it is to achieving effective functioning for an individual with DID. We believe it is the key to achieving the best possible services and outcomes for dissociative survivors. It is, though, something that needs willingness from both parties for a mutual give and take relationship, with neither party thinking themselves superior; both parties respecting, (even, when appropriate, promoting) the others knowledge, experience and skills; neither party taking on roles that would be more appropriately taken by another; both parties being willing to curb competitiveness when it risks detrimentally affecting the other and neither party taking on a dominance that negates the effectiveness of negotiation.

Collaborations are complex relationships that need maintenance and nurturing.

Over the years FPP have continued and developed close collaborative relationships with the UK network of the European Society for Trauma & Dissociation (ESTD-UK, which is what the aforementioned UKSSD evolved into); with the Trauma and Abuse Group (TAG); with the Ritual Abuse Information Network and Support; with The Survivors Trust (TST) and with the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC). We regularly work in partnership to deliver training with most of the above, and with The Pottergate Centre for Dissociation and Trauma, Renee Mark's Integrate Training and with a wide range of local, regional and national organisations for whom we have provided bespoke (i.e. collaborative) trainings. These latter have included Rape & Sexual Abuse Services, Mind Groups, the Samaritans, Housing Associations, NHS Trusts, Psychotherapists and Counsellors organisations and networks and Churches to name a few. Our work, particularly our DVDs, has been recognised by financial or in-kind support (an often unrecognised form of collaboration) from the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation (ESTD), the Paracelsus Trust, Truemark Trust, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; again The Pottergate Centre for Dissociation & Trauma, and of course from Serious Media, who produced the DVDs for us – not to mention the many other financial donations from individuals that we received towards the costs of producing the DVDs.

We further extend our collaborations through having representatives as individual members of both the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation and the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation; and having a key TAG member on the FPP board of directors.

An example of one of our most developed collaborative relationships is with the ESTD-UK.

For instance, "Understanding and Working with Dissociation – a Foundation Course" is an established ESTD-UK course on which FPP had input at the planning stages and delivers the first day of the 4 day course. FPP also supports it through helping with course administration. Conversely, a series of FPP seminars on the three phases of therapy which are running this autumn and early in 2015 will be supported by ESTD-UK. They will provide partner professionals to deliver the seminars as equals alongside our experts-by-experience and help us to promote the events through their network.

Also our collaboration with ESTD-UK works through Melanie and Kathryn's individual membership of the ESTD. Melanie (alongside Mike Lloyd) is a designated UK representative for first contact and enquiries from those considering membership, joining or being welcomed into ESTD membership. This role is likely to develop further over the next few years as there is a growing drive to develop each country's individual and collective contributions to the parent ESTD's identity and work. Kathryn has recently been appointed to maintain and develop the UK pages of the ESTD website. She is also a long standing member of the ESTD-UK training group which develops ESTD-UK trainings, makes decisions about who receives ESTD-UK bursaries, and decides whether trainings run by individual ESTD members or other organisations can be endorsed by ESTD-UK, among other things. Melanie has also recently joined this group.

FPP's full members and anyone else **looking for a therapist** in their locality who is interested, knowledgeable and/or committed to learning more about complex dissociation can take advantage of one specific area of our collaboration with ESTD-UK. This is our access as ESTD members to the ESTD-UK listserv, one long standing function of which has been to help find therapists. You or anyone on your behalf can e-mail FPP: fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk
Ruth at TAG: membershipsec@tag-uk.net; or the Pottergate Centre: remyaquarone@btconnect.com
giving your geographical area and maybe a little bit about your situation. The latter is optional but, as an example, it might help us offer the most appropriate suggestions if we know you have a RA background and want to work on this. We can then access information that will enable us to signpost you to members of ESTD who are working in your area.

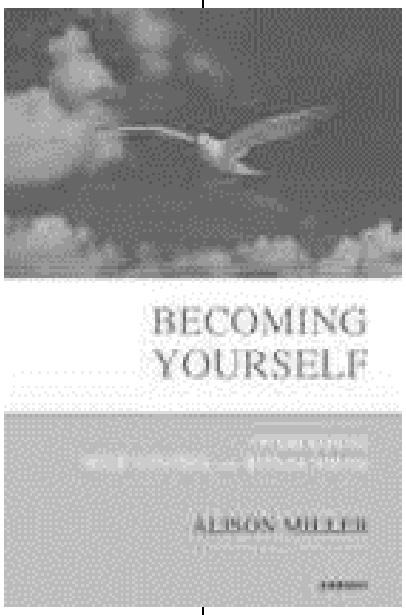
All those with access to the ESTD-UK listserv are members of ESTD and the criteria for membership of ESTD is to be "professionally occupied with diagnosis, treatment, research or teaching in the field of (chronic) trauma, dissociation and disorders related to chronic traumatization or officially represent an organization in the above mentioned field." With no official regulating body in the UK which specifically sets standards for working with complexly dissociated clients, **no-one, including FPP, is in a position to recommend any therapist we do not have personal experience of**, simply because they are ESTD members (or indeed members or registered with any other organisation). **Our responses to enquirers can only be suggestions for you to follow up**.

However, any therapist who is an ESTD member has demonstrated a willingness and commitment to continued learning and networking by becoming a part of the only UK professional body working specifically in this field. And through the ESTD-UK listserv and Members Area of the ESTD website they have the opportunity to share and find support when needed, This helps to address the isolation that is so much a part of their work, which ultimately can only benefit their clients. Discussions on the listserv are both helpful and thought provoking and the more experienced members, some with over 30 years' experience, are very supportive through their informed responses.

First Person Plural recommends this as one of the safest routes to beginning your search for an individual therapist to work with you on your complex dissociation.

"Becoming Yourself – Overcoming Mind Control & Ritual Abuse" 20% discount available for survivors buying this book by Alison Miller

In her introduction to this book Alison Miller, who is a clinical psychologist from Canada, describes her book as "tough" while "hoping it is a compassionate one". She also writes "…, if you read this book, you are going to be triggered. There is no way around that" These are statements that First Person Plural endorse. "Becoming Yourself – Overcoming Mind Control & Ritual Abuse" is written compassionately, and it takes a heads on, no holds barred approach to the subject, which makes it a very tough and, at times, highly triggering read.



If you know you are a survivor of Mind Control and Ritual Abuse, and you are already in good enough therapy which recognises this and has already equipped you with stabilisation skills and/or you have a lot of other knowledgeable support, this book might provide some ideas for overcoming some of the specific problems you face.

But First Person Plural suggests you speak with your therapist / support people about reading it first, and then read with caution and in the knowledge you can choose to stop reading at any time. It is First Person Plural's view that reading this book solely as a self-help guide could be overwhelming and possibly severely destabilising to some survivors at the point they are currently at in their journey of recovery, particularly those who are not yet able to stabilise themselves quite quickly when triggered. Only you can decide, if this book is right for you at this time. If you decide not, that doesn't necessarily mean it will never be the right time for you to read it.

Within our caveats above First Person Plural welcomes this new book and would not be publicising it if we didn't believe that it may prove helpful for some MC/RA survivors and those who work with and support them.

At around £39.00 the book is not cheap but Alison has arranged for Karnac (the publisher) to offer a 20% discount on this price for survivors only. To purchase with this discount go to http://www.karnacbooks.com/Product.asp?PID=34803 and enter the following discount code in the appropriate box : **BYDISC2014**
The discount code expires on 31st December 2014.