

***We Need A
New Logo***

See page 5 for
details of design
competition

Volume 3 : Issue 1

*FIRST
PERSON
PLURAL*

December, 2000

Newsletter for Dissociators and their Allies

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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 when necessary. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are the burden of the editor and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the steering group or the editor. Inclusion of any reference to an individual or organisational resource should not be taken as a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only. The newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision. It is intended that the newsletter will complement, not replace, other networks of support

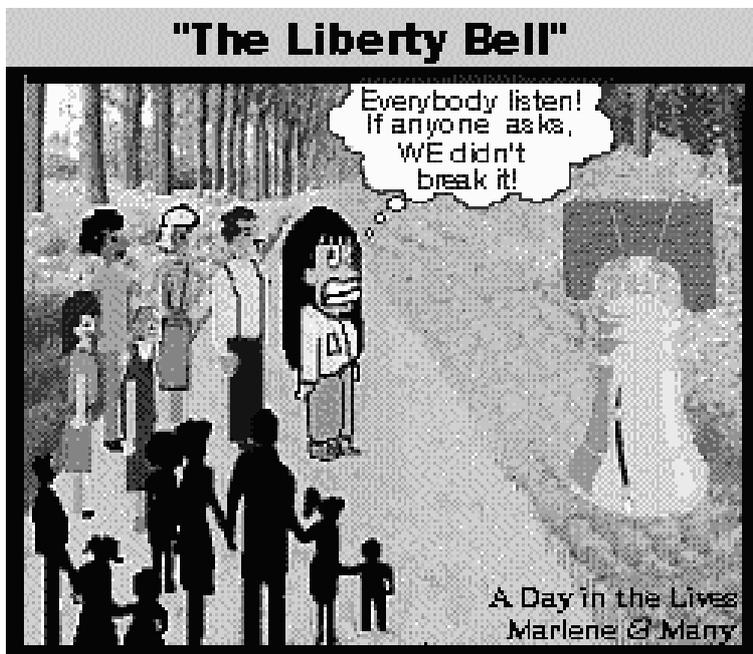
Contributions to next issue to be received by 17th March, 2001

articles; stories; resources; book reviews; tips; poetry; artwork; personal experiences

IMPORTANT : - When writing to First Person Plural please make it clear if your letter, article or other contribution is for publication and say which, if any, of your personal details can be printed. **The editor will assume permission to publish if you do not make your wishes clear.**

ATTENTION

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



See more MPD Toons on the internet at
<http://www.mirrorlady.net>
or in future issues of FPP

Writing to

Dear Kathryn.....

- Keep your letters brief
- State clearly that your letter is for publication.
- If you wish to receive direct responses give permission for your contact details to be printed.
- If you wish responses to be forwarded from the FPP address **it is essential you send a large 33p s.a.e.** Your letter will be printed with a number.
- Replies will **not** be forwarded if you have not sent an s.a.e.

Dear Kathryn....



First Person Plural encourages respectful open comment and debate about the issues, ideas and experiences of people who are dissociative, their supporters and allies. We welcome letters inspired by any article or other material published in the newsletter and other topics of interest to readers.

To reply to a numbered letter place your response in a sealed envelope with the number of the letter you are replying to marked on the outside and place inside a second stamped envelope addressed for posting to:-

Kathryn Livingston, First Person Plural, PO Box 1309, Wolverhampton, WV6 9XY
Email: fpp@collective1.fsnet.co.uk

Meeting my inside children changed my life

Although, like every dissociator I suffer every day - intense isolation, emotional agony, eating problems, self-harm and complete shutdown at times - I have found life a new experience since I began to meet and experience my children.

I don't consider myself a tragic case or in any way pitiful - others (especially my friends) experience me as a strong, feisty woman. They know I have real pain but I make sure they understand that my multiplicity is not at fault. It was a defence. It is my abusers who are to blame for my pain. I believe it is high time we saw the strength in our multiplicity.

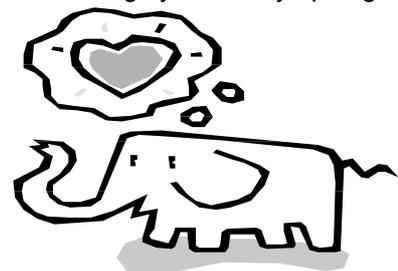
Sometimes I can see only the pain in my multiplicity, but, at other times I wonder at how AMAZING we are - our creativity; our intuition; our incredible capacities for knowledge - these are attributes which I have experienced in virtually all dissociators. Multiplicity is not only destructive - it's a new way of living. I am so proud of myself now. I love to educate people. Our therapists are learning from us too! We are not damaged. We see life from a more creative angle, that's all.

Since I've discovered my children - and embraced them - I've discovered my life! I even look different - prettier! The younger children's innocence has returned to my face - so I don't scowl and I look years younger. There are so many things that can happen to us as a result of our multiplicity - that we have yet to discover. We are WONDERFUL and one day society will know this. We get so SICK and TIRED of being patronised by (I believe) less able "normals" (as my children refer to them)

Thank you for First Person Plural - the newsletter, the contact list, the members meeting, everything! I always kind of knew I had MPD and I REALLY had to fight to get a proper diagnosis so it amazes me that people finally talk about it openly in FPP. I feel validated. FPP is teaching me so much about myself and it is lovely to know that I really am "NORMAL!!!" It's a real lifeline.

Rachael

Ed's note: I received this letter in time for publication in the last issue but it went astray in my less than perfect filing system. My apologies to Rachael.



FIRST PERSON PLURAL

Counsellor finds FPP helpful

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody involved in FPP for their hard work. I find the magazine very helpful and have recommended it to my clients. I particularly find the articles written on various aspects of D.I.D. symptoms helpful for educating clients and others who want to learn more about D.I.D. The article on headaches in the last issue was very timely as the magazine came the week after discussing the subject with a sufferer.

Rita Herbert

Just what I've been searching for

Thanks so much for being brave enough to found the FPP newsletter. What a daunting task encompassing so much work..... it is appreciated and of enormous benefit to me and many others.

For me FPP fits. It is just what I have been searching for; a place to learn from, share and enjoy. I am sending some things for publication. I get a great sense of achievement if I see my work 'in print'. It seems to become more real to me that way. At present I am semi-reclusive but far from idle. I do a lot of writing and art and have recently taken up growing herbs and flowers.

I love getting post in the morning as it gives me something to focus on and gets me out of the morning dreads when I wake in terror with thoughts and memories. I am investigating ways in which I can make money at home to fund my self-journey. (i.e. money for art materials etc)

I used to run a travelling photography business and dealt with hundreds of people at shows and festivals. I took Victorian style portraits of people dressed in costumes I had made.

I find many of the articles in FPP reassuring - "From Isolation to Acceptance" by Melanie; "Staying Safe between Therapy Sessions"; "What is Dissociation" in particular.

Once again WELL DONE on presenting a well got together, informative, entertaining, reassuring and interesting newsletter. Long may it continue and grow.

Sheelah

A Big **THANK YOU** from Kathryn

I have received several personal letters of understanding support and encouragement in response to the flyer I sent explaining the delay in getting this issue out. It has been a tough time for me these past months and it was certainly strengthening and motivating to receive your letters and emails. Many, many thanks. Reading your letters - both those for publication and the more personal - makes me even more determined to ensure FPP continues. I am sorry I can't always individually respond to personal letters but I hope you all now know how much I appreciate your support.

"Me, Myself & Irene"

This film re-inforces society's confusion between D.I.D and schizophrenia. It also gives credence to the stereotypical link between mental illness and violence. Mind, the mental health charity, campaign against such erroneous media portrayals through it's Media Guardians Campaign to Complain. If you were offended by this film or any other media coverage of mental health issues or would like to become a Media Guardian ring the Campaign to Complain Hotline - 0208 215 2499

LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION

Some readers have indicated that they find the First Person Plural logo evokes difficult or uncomfortable feelings for them. At the first ever FPP members' meeting in September it was decided that even though only a few people have expressed their dislike of the logo it was worrying. With this first issue in a new volume of the newsletter it is timely to think about a change. So, here's your chance to design a new FPP logo.

Designs must be simple black & white images and include the initials FPP. Remember that the logo must photo-copy clearly. Line drawings are better for photocopying unless you can ensure density and consistency of shading. The logo should fit into a square or circle, (i.e. be as tall as it is wide). The maximum size for entries is 18 x 18 centimetres or 7 x 7 inches (i.e. fit on an A4 sheet of paper leaving a small margin either side and at the top).

You may submit your entry either on paper or as a computer image file (TIF or JPG format) on disk or as an email attachment. If you submit a disk please also send a print out of your design.

You may enter as many designs as you wish.. **Closing date for entries is 28th February, 2001.** FPP members who attend the next members meeting in March (see below) will judge the competition. Any member who has entered a design will not participate in the judging. **The designer of the winning logo will receive a cash prize of £20.00. Three runners up will receive prizes of £5.00.** The judges decision is final.

Entries to Logo Competition, FPP, P.O. Box 1309, Wolverhampton, WV4 4AQ or email:- fpp@collective1.fsnet.co.uk Please ensure you enclose your name and address with each entry.

We regret the competition is not open to overseas subscribers.

Notice for Members Only

Date for your diary : Saturday, 4th March, 2001

This is the provisional date for the next FPP Members-Only Meeting. Again, it is planned to hold the meeting in Birmingham and members may be accompanied by a supporter. Consideration will be given to claims for a refund of full or partial travel expenses for any member on benefits who would not otherwise be able to attend.

Individual invites and booking forms will be sent to members in January.

These meetings are open to FPP members only - i.e. you must have personal experience of a dissociative disorder, be a newsletter subscriber AND pay an additional annual membership fee of £1.50. For further details about membership write to the FPP address.

Notes from the first FPP Members' Meeting by Lili & Kathryn

The first ever FPP members meeting finally took place in Birmingham on Saturday, 30th September, 2000. It had originally been planned to hold this meeting in July but organisation proved difficult. Then we managed to finalise a date earlier in September but had to postpone this at very short notice because of the fuel crisis. Re-arranging the date with so little notice meant that fewer members attended than had booked for the original September date but we had a small, active group of members and a few accompanying supporters who between them made the first FPP members meeting a safe, enjoyable, productive and informative success. The focus for the meeting was a discussion about the future for First Person Plural, both the organisation and the newsletter.

Those present decided that within the next 12 months (in no particular order of importance) we wanted FPP to:-

- ❑ Continue with the children's pages in the newsletter
- ❑ Continue its educational aims; planned information booklets to be available
- ❑ Improve liaison and explore possible joint working with the International Society for the Study of Dissociation (UK)
- ❑ Explore the possibility, the pros and cons of registering as a charity
- ❑ Broaden our base of subscribers/members/newsletter contributors; to include a wider range of sympathies and interests, particularly across the range of dissociative disorders, e.g. not only D.I.D.
- ❑ Continue to have a balance in the newsletter of the serious and lighthearted; a mix of therapeutic/academic and personal experiences of everyday life.
- ❑ Provide further opportunities for members to meet
- ❑ Continue to enable mutual support
- ❑ Have a competition to design a new log
- ❑ Develop an active web site
- ❑ Compile a resource list to help people find therapists and self help support
- ❑ Send complimentary copies of the newsletter to and invite subscriptions from relevant groups and organisations

Further thoughts about the content of the newsletter led to the following views from the meeting to all potential contributors -

The most important criteria for inclusion in the newsletter is that a contribution is a sharing of relevant lived experience and/or supportive information. Your views, your experiences, your way of expressing yourself, your style of presentation IS good enough even when you fear or think it isn't. Contributions do not have to be perfect or demonstrate literary or artistic expertise. Academic-style articles are appreciated but more important than the style of presentation is the sharing. When we receive the newsletter we want to see :-

- ***your art work;***
- ***your stories of how the mental health system has helped or harmed you;***
- ***your stories of everyday life as a person who dissociates or someone caring for a person who dissociates;***
- ***your views about what does or does not help in therapy;***
- ***your ways of coping and self-help;***
- ***your views on a book you have read etc. etc. So send them in....PLEASE!***

Thinking beyond the next 12 months the group defined the following longer term aims : -

- ❑ Introduce a supporters/friends/relatives page for the newsletter
- ❑ Become actively involved in strategic lobbying and campaigning
- ❑ Explore how a "problem page" could be developed for the newsletter
- ❑ Introduce multi-copy organisational subscriptions
- ❑ Produce a Training Pack to enable more widespread presentations to and training of mental health/other relevant professionals and groups - initially a cheap draft of training notes and text for overhead slides could be produced to be followed at a later date by a more comprehensive and properly published training resource
- ❑ Secure funding to ensure that anyone who wishes can get involved in FPP meetings
- ❑ Explore the feasibility of running a telephone support line

We recognise that the active membership of FPP (i.e. those attending meetings) will change and grow. First Person Plural will be and do what its membership can make it be and do.

Pharmacological Treatment of Dissociative Identity Disorder

by Dr William Hughes

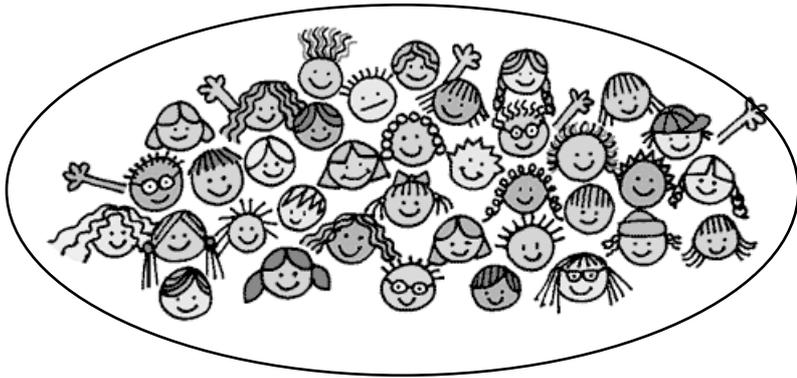
Ed's Note : This brief report and request for further help is subsequent to a letter asking for feedback on the effectiveness of medication which was enclosed with Vol 1 : Issue 3. Readers may also recall "Medication Responses" in Vol 2 : Issue 1.

With the help of one of my patients, I was able to obtain a broad "focus group" response to what effect different medications had with regard to helping or not helping people who experience severe dissociation. The first thing to say is that multiple medications had almost always produced bad effects in people. The main difficulty is that although one part of the person may respond to say, a tranquilliser, another part may, at the same time, be experiencing severe side effects and intolerable worsening of how that part is feeling. I would say that no more than two different sorts of medication or, at most, three is helpful.

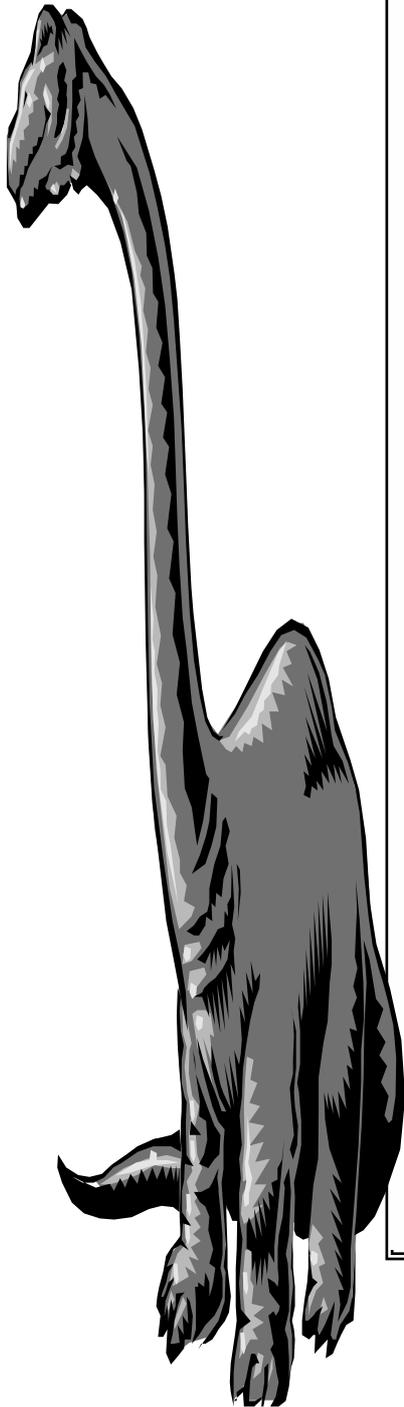
Because of the beneficial effect with regard to post-traumatic stress syndrome type of symptoms, the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) are the most helpful medications. In the short term, up to maybe two or three weeks, benzodiazepines are useful in that they relieve anxiety and usually have much fewer side effects than anti-psychotic medication, which generally does not seem to help people very much at all, apart from increasing a "zombie" like state.

This is the first attempt I have made to try to correlate people's experiences of medication with regard to dissociative disorders. I am hoping that by sharing this very preliminary piece of work in progress, it will be possible to receive more firsthand descriptions so that further work and guidance can be produced.

If you feel you are able to help please write to me at - **Dr William Hughes, Consultant Psychotherapist, Hellesdon Hospital, Kingfisher House, Wensum Meadows, Norwich, NR6 5NB.**



PLAY



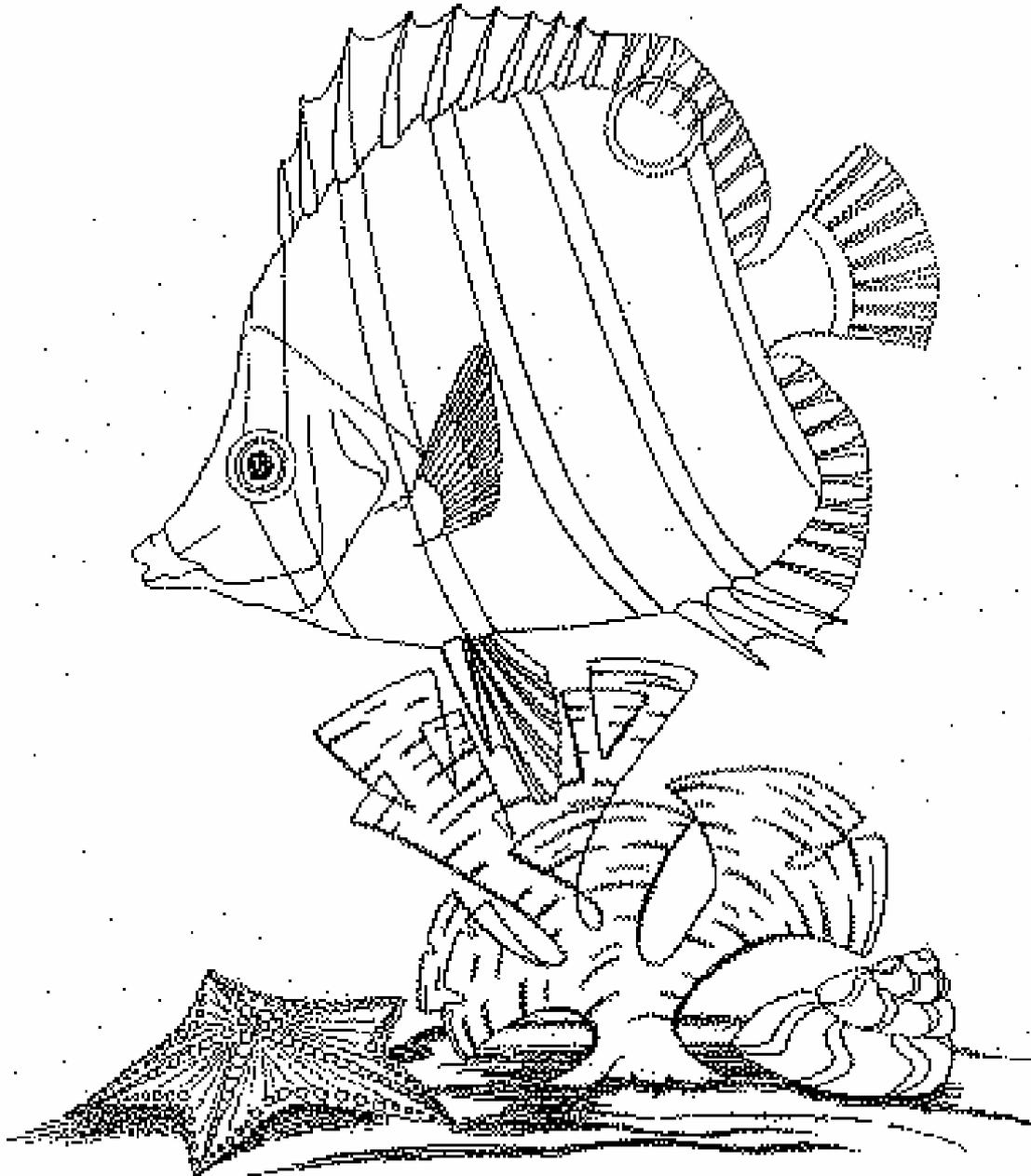
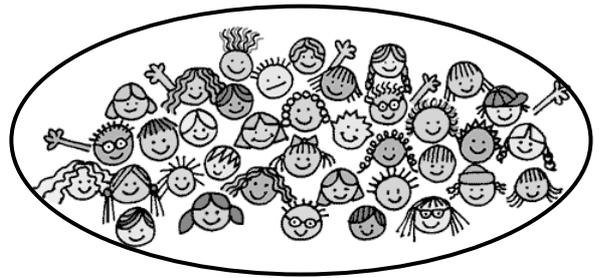
Spot the word

Write the first letter of each picture and rearrange them to spell a new word.



The new word is _____

CENTRE



Answer to Spot the Word = laugh

Jokes

*Did you hear about the dog who was too lazy to dig up his bone?
He was bone idle! 😊*

*Who always gets the sack on his first day at work?
Father Christmas! 😊😊😊😊😊*

Some of us met in Sept, 2000

After the meeting, safely sat on the homeward train, there's time to write, to reflect on all that's been experienced.

We made it! We met, some of us, with date alterations, petrol crisis 'n' all. We met many parts, many people, working together, to achieve mutual support, to achieve access to information and resources, to educate ourselves and others - individuals, groups, institutions, - about the reality and effects of dissociation, to maintain the newsletter, our network, to grow individually and collectively. We set our groundrules and brought such energy, creativity together to achieve our aims, to manifest the dream of one woman, to find it shared by many. We shared laughter, anxiety, excitement and lunch!

The sun sets, painting the sky, reaching through the train window and its reflections of an inner world hurtling through the world outside. It seems its like me, the meeting reaching through, bridging the inner and outer worlds, like the window of the train. I see a slither of new moon, and I wonder about the newness I feel within, sensing new possibilities opening up before me. The power of our meeting is strong inside me. I will harness that strength for me, for us. There's a probability that we'll meet again and go further. I am encouraged to write, to share and even to go further, with you.

Kali

As you touch me

Travelling home
I am overcome
pushed beyond my physical limits
I succumb
to illness, dis-ease
the throat which has spoken
now sore
I know there is more
that comes as I grasp
to each breath I take
rage reaches
the sexual exploitation
the use of a child's body
your body
my body
I can't breathe
In this hatred
I can't cry
these tears of anguish
the scars on your hand
in my heart
I can't breathe
between these contractions
of realisations
of truth
mine and yours
yours mirroring mine
how to calm
this raging torrent
infused with hope
touched by the potential
of what we can create
together
for all of us
excitement at the stirring
that touches deep
as we meet
daring to risk
prepared to face the cost
of it filling my chest
sobbing it out
to make room
to breathe
with ease
to realise
as you touch me

Kali

Working with the Protectors by Sara Lambert

You do not have to be multiple to have protector parts of your self. I hope singleton dissociators also find value in this article.

Your protector selves are very dedicated to their jobs, which they have been doing for most, if not all, of their lives. Indeed, they may fear that, if they do not keep doing these jobs, you and/or your inner system will be in danger. For this reason it can be difficult to disarm the protectors and convince them to either give up their jobs or adapt them to better suit the new, peaceful times. Their reluctance will not be simply a matter of stubborn pride. They will be genuinely frightened of the consequences of stopping work.

I do not advocate anyone giving up his or her job or being made redundant. People/parts are too valuable and essential a part of the self as a whole to just be set aside like that. Rather, I have personally experienced huge improvements for everyone - the individual self and the system as a whole - if selves are willing to be flexible, adaptive and find new and nurturing ways to use their skills. After all, these skills are much too valuable to allow to be wasted. Even the meanest monsters inside possess characteristics which can go towards making a more complete and richly endowed self or self-system. (Not everything about us has to be positive, after all! The purpose of this work is not to end up like PollyAnna!)

It's all about respecting each other. The protectors need to learn to respect that the others inside don't deserve to be manipulated or terrorised. They also need to respect the others' strengths and abilities, and not see them as wimps who could not survive without their protection. At the same time, the rest of the system needs to respect that the protectors have good motives for the things they do.

So, how do you respectfully and successfully convince your protectors that they need to exchange their weapons for blankets?

You could try to outwit them with clever tricks and devices. Unfortunately, this is almost guaranteed to fail. Protectors are very intellectually sharp and have kept you alive for so long thanks to their ability to think fast and use their talent as escape artists. This is why no suicide and no self-harm contracts can be tricky. Protectors will invariably find any loop-hole or turns of phrase in the contract and use these to negate the terms in a way that is technically not dishonest. They generally have little respect for contracts because they do not believe in the power of mere words to keep anyone safe. They think actions are the only things that really work. For this reason, contracts are fairly useless unless they contain rewards for upholding the terms of the contract for a certain period of time, and/or consequences for breaking them.

The other problem involved with trying to outwit your protectors is that they have vast resources to back them up. If they suspect you or your therapist are trying to "trick" them, they can shut down all internal operations, sabotage your life so basically you come to a standstill, or drag out every dissociative technique they can to keep you confused, scared, and on the defensive. They will see you as the enemy and will fight back - for your own good, of course.

Instead of getting around them like this, you could instead approach them on an intellectual level and get them to use their brains to see the logic of your side of the story.

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

For example, when I was trying to get one of my protectors to stop cutting the body, I pointed out how difficult life was for him. We were always trying to take his power away from him and stop him from doing what he did best (keeping us safe from fear and shame by cutting us) and we had isolated him from the rest of the system because we were scared and angry with him. All in all, the circumstances made it very hard for him to do his job effectively. He responded to this rational argument much better than her ever did to our emotional pleas for him to stop cutting. We then got together and negotiated a compromise solution in which his needs (to protect us and express the system's bitterness) and our needs (to not be cut) were respected. Now, we support him to do his redefined job and give him praise, encouragement, love and company. His life is much better and so is ours. It's a win-win situation.

Like everyone, protectors only want to be understood and appreciated for the hard work they do. Try giving them positive and constructive feedback, rather than just complaining. Ask them for any suggestions they have for interesting and effective ways to protect you. There's a good chance they have studied information about healing and dissociation because they are very aware that knowledge is power. (It's common for protector selves to study up on MPD so they can point out all the symptoms you don't have, and thus 'prove' you aren't multiple.) They can draw on this factual knowledge to help you all.

Another thing you could try is going ahead with your healing without the protectors' support. You can ignore their complaints and protect yourself against their protection, for example by having another self 'sit on' the protector so they can't act. However, in the long this will damage your system as a whole. Protectors will never abdicate their jobs until they know 100% that the system, especially the children, will be safe. If you imprison them inside and disempower them they will either fight to maintain their power or will sink into despair. Its not only an abusive way to treat one of your selves, its only a waste of energy and talents which can be utilised to your vast benefit.

Try to keep in mind always that protectors, no matter how critical or stroppy or downright nasty, are as much survivors of abuse as are you. They have vast reservoirs of fear, sadness and loneliness. They yearn to belong and have someone protect them. In many cases protectors are only children.

Instead of shunning protectors, teach them the qualities you want them to have. Talk to them about feelings and let them observe or share the feelings of other selves - although only slowly, so they don't become overwhelmed. Give them their own private journal in which they can write about their fears (and which no-one else in the system will read without permission). Give them a paint brush or crayons and some paper, and encourage them to express themselves - reassuring them they can't get it 'wrong' and that you won't laugh at their efforts. Teach them how to hope and trust that you will survive by showing them the skills and capabilities of other people in your system.

Protectors are terrified of emotions. Despite their cold and fiercesome façade they are very vulnerable people, always trying to hide their deep, dark feelings from themselves and other people out of sheer fear. They don't believe feelings can be changed. Furthermore, they may equate feeling with action (for example, anger equals violence; desire equals indulgence) after having been raised with abusive parents who constantly acted out their feelings. As most protectors are control freaks (even if their methods include creating chaos in you) the idea that, if you have a feeling, you will not be able to control it, is appalling to them. You need to show them that it's possible to just sit with a feeling, experiencing it in small pieces and allowing it to evolve.

Protectors have a lot of influence in the system, built up over years of domination (and in many cases outright tyranny). You can harness this authority and turn it into something good. Protectors make wonderful teachers for the children. They can tell them about the dangers of the world, advise them of ways to stay safe, and help them develop their own natural strengths. They can supervise or stand guard when the kids are 'out' in the park or during therapy sessions. Protectors are also great to take along on rescue missions to 'remove' children from the past and bring them forward into the safe present time. And they're excellent with rebellious, confused teens, because they can deal with them in a straight forward, non-emotional manner to which teens respond best.

Protectors are wonderful creators. They have a talent for seeing patterns, balance, harmony, and fine detail, as well as the energy to see a project through to the finish. It might be hard to imagine your workaholic office-self or your bitchy wrist-cutter or your prim perfectionist writing a fairy story or taking artistic photos, but if you give them a chance you're likely to be pleasantly surprised by the results.

Protectors are often calm, confident and highly capable in dealing with the outside world, and can use this in their dealings with the inside world too. They make superb mediators between selves, can pass messages or translations on to the therapist, and keep order at your next system meeting.

Your protectors deserve your love and respect. I'm sure this isn't easy, though, as they have probably put you through years of hell. But remember, they have kept you alive, preserving the system at all cost to themselves (and much cost to you), even though it might have seemed at times they were trying to kill you. If you are able to come to good terms with each other, your protectors will give you the strength, courage, inspiration and sense of wonder that will help you to move forward and succeed with your life.

Reference : Goulding, R & Schwartz, R - *The Mosaic Mind*, Norton & Co, USA, 1995

Wonderland by Lili

Hi, I'm Lili. I have D.I.D. and I love gardening. Its hard to write about it because I'd rather be out doing it. I really love having a bramble patch to attack! I don my gardening gloves like gauntlets, pick up my secateurs like a spear, and sally forth to "fight the good fight". I like a challenge, something to get my teeth into.

I hate pricking out and potting up seedlings, irritating tiddly job, and they break. But our 'child personality', Rebecca, likes to do that, so its ok. When she was little she liked digging holes , just that - digging holes in the garden, so I let her, and followed along putting plants in them!

I like to be out in the fresh air, chopping things down, tidying them up, clearing out weeds, killing ants. As a city girl, with no idea what I was doing, I've had to come to terms with manure (I get pelleted stuff, its less disgusting), and mud. But I've never liked wearing gardening gloves. I like to feel what I'm doing (but beware the dreaded, lurking cat poop!). I don't mind going out in the rain (but I hate the cold).

I like making my garden a place with lots of lovely smells. And I like making it a sun place. It's "Lili in Wonderland". I like creating something. And I don't care it its untidy or unfinished - if there was ever nothing to do in it anymore, I'd be bored. I like having plans in mind..... some fruit, some don't. But I don't plan the whole thing.

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

And, I like learning. But learning by doing, rather than from books or T.V. programmes. Having not been out in the real world for most of my chronological life I've had a lot to learn too! (I didn't know those things were seeds and that they grew into new plants!)

Gardening is how I play, get exercise, work out my frustrations, avoid depressions. And it's special to me because it is something none of us did before, so, although it can be a meeting place, as we all share the weeding (plenty to go around!) it's something that I've been able to be in on from the start, as an equal partner. It's something where I can really be me.



We fit in by Angela & others

The longer we live with MPD the more difficult it becomes to fit in with the 'outside' world.

If, as we have finally done, you find a therapist who asks sensible questions such as "do you feel separate from your hands and feet?" you breathe a sigh of relief when they don't flinch or pass you onto someone else when you answer, "yes". Having MPD begins to feel 'normal' and you expect the rest of the world to suddenly understand and even want to know about it. Wrong!

I belong to a church and we also go to work part-time and I am feeling more and more on the outside of things. I find it really frustrating because you can't just drop the topic of having MPD into a normal, everyday conversation. Friends and colleagues have no idea of who 'you' really are. They can talk about maybe having a headache or a cold to other people who understand and maybe help each other to feel a bit better. I sometimes listen to their conversations and really envy them being able to say how they feel. We often walk into church or work feeling desperate, sometimes suicidal.

We may have spent part of the morning holding onto a table leg until a panic attack has worn itself out or, having a terrific noise going on in our head because everyone is arguing. But you can't say a word to these 'outside' friends. If one of them does happen to ask how you are, how can you explain that the younger children are crying or that a teenager is stomping around and threatening to hurt herself again and it is tearing you apart?

Fortunately, we have some "special friends". We don't stand on the 'outside' and feel 'different' with them to the same degree. We can be whoever we are and they don't mind. They keep us alive for one more day. I got home from church today feeling so isolated and separate from everyone else there that I have written this to say "Thank You" for First Person Plural. In this newsletter we have found somewhere where we do belong. We do fit in.

Why can't I be like everyone else by Christine

I live a strange existence. Professional woman during the day, responsible job, good pay - I'm one of the lucky ones. As soon as that 3.35pm bell rings I change. I change in as much as the life I lead no-one at work would believe. I spend most of my evenings trying to find relief, trying to find the magic key that will make me like the rest of the world. WHY CAN'T I BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE? Of course I do know the answer to this and even that is difficult to accept. Even though I never forgot I still find it hard to face up to the way my family treated me. Me, the badly behaved and unruly daughter. Me, the one who deserved it. Well this is what I was told.

I have had several therapists who have 'got rid of me' because I couldn't be how they wanted me to. You see, in my system I have someone who just loves causing trouble and works endlessly to 'get me the push' as she calls it. At the moment I have two therapists. One therapist doesn't know about the other and the other therapist knows about them both. Does this tell about my lack of trust or perhaps understanding of therapists or does it tell me more about my system and the games I play, or is it a combination of both?

Whatever it is it gives a little example of how complicated my life is on the inside. My current therapists try to understand me.

I have come to trust them and this has brought us a sort of calming down within. One of them doesn't have any formal qualifications but has worked with abused women for 'hundreds of years'. I have learnt it is the relationship that the client and counsellor make which is the most important thing, It says this in all the books but it is not a good thing to believe all one reads.

Equally important is their 'stickability' because without that there is nothing. If I had one wish in the world, it would be for all the women out there who have suffered and are still suffering to find someone who will help them find the magic key. The reality of it is unfortunately, that very few do.

Kindness by Wendy

The issue of kindness for victims of abuse is quite probably central to recovery.

In as much as a child is soul raped by her abuser, kindness and the ability to experience it and allow it in, takes us back to that exact same place of complete vulnerability.

Being that vulnerable again is the most terrifying place a survivor can go.

To be vulnerable and soul naked again to anyone is to precipitate and experience the complete vulnerability of abuse

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

Being naked to kindness cannot be thought about, reasoned through, approached with logic, or tentatively dipped into, though all these things are part of the lead up.

This may well be the central place for victims of abuse, around which our whole lives revolve.

Everything leads up to this moment and everything goes on from it.

A child is absolutely this vulnerable to just about everything. For an adult to go there demands a courage that defies description.

To go there, work towards it, desire it and yearn towards it is to embrace the possibility of wholeness. And we know in our souls, that each time we do not make it, in this moment, this hour, this day, we are withheld from the completeness of ourselves.

It is the absolute moment when we face the abyss of ourselves. Every abused person knows that place. Every survivor has stood, endlessly caught in moments of utter hell, a bone deep desire for wholeness and the endless utter torment and terror in each frozen moment of not being there.

The terror of therapy is to risk wholeness, to risk this place of vulnerability. The terror of never embracing therapy is to be endlessly bereft of being naked to kindness.

Survivors face this paradox every day of their lives.

Poem by Emily

Separate	THIS	Threads
Present and	WAY	Link
The Past	DOWN ↓	Between
To Keep	↓	The
And Another	↓	People
One Minute		Of
Between		The
A Space		Body
A Linking of one second		Who
To Another		Inhabit
In Time		The
Is Just A Moment		Space
The End	↑	That
	↑	Links
	↑ PU	The
	YAW	Minute
	SIHT	To
		Separate

The Past The Present and the Future

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