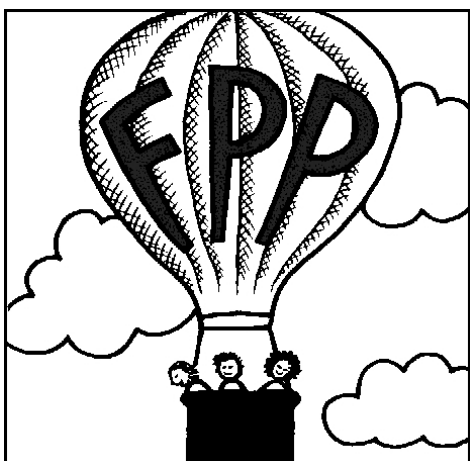




Volume 3 : Issue 2

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

March, 2001

Newsletter for Dissociators and their Allies

CONTENTS

Editorial Statement.....	2
A Day in the Lives (MPD Toon)	2
Writing to Dear Kathryn.....	2
Dear Kathryn.....	3
A Christian Survivor 'speaks'	4
Logo Competition Runners-Up	5
Crackers.....	5
Drawing by Sheelah.....	7
Play Centre	8
Jokes & Riddles	8
Animal Word Search	8
Excitement on the Train	9
Communication Guide for Teenagers	10
More Members Get More Involved	14
Poems & Rhymes	15
Imagine	15
A Part of Me	16
Subscription Form.....	16

LOGO COMPETITION

The winning logo (above) was designed by Rita.

Runners-up (see p5) prizes go to Judith et al and Jacqui

Congratulations

to the winners
and many thanks to
all who entered

IMPORTANT

**First Person Plural has
a new address and e-mail**

First Person Plural
c/o PO Box 2537
Wolverhampton
WV4 4ZL

fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk

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

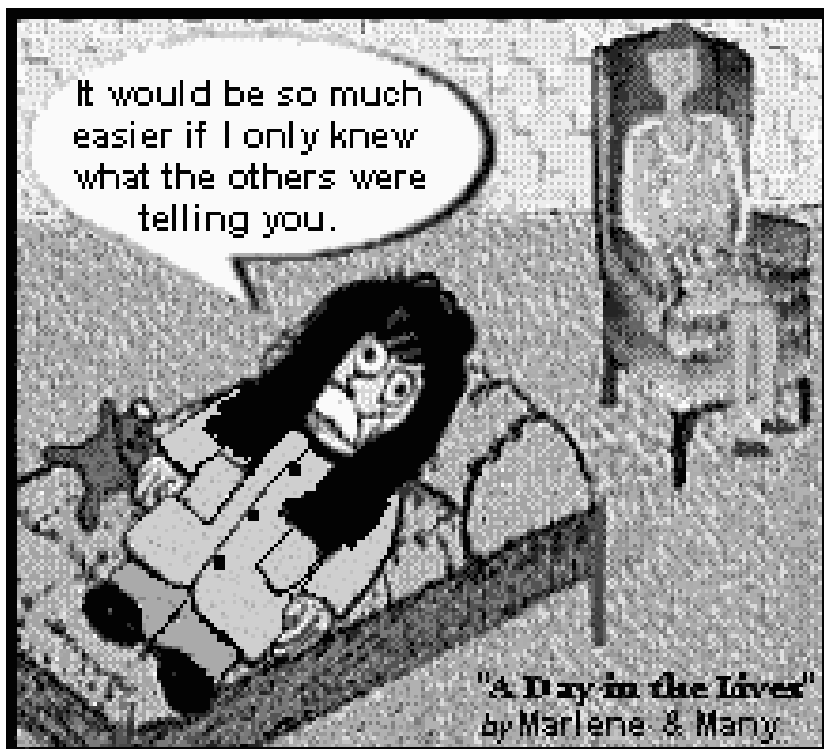
Contributions to next issue to be received 25th May, 2001

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:-

First Person Plural, c/o PO Box 2537, Wolverhampton, WV4 4ZL
Email: fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk

Dear Kathryn,

I live in the USA but have a DID friend in England (where I grew up) who sent me a copy of FPP. I found it very interesting and helpful.

Anyway, my query is whether you might be interested in including an article I have just been writing. It was written in response to my DID friends confusion when coping with prescriptions from their psychiatrists or GPs who seem to have no understanding of the complexities associated with DID.

I have worked with DID clients and have many who are friends. I also worked for a number years in an acute locked facility for children and teenagers in California years ago. At that time, I realise in retrospect, I encountered children who were cult victims but because of my ignorance of the existence of such, failed to provide the necessary help. Now, if I can, even in writing provide support I will do so. I am now retired.

I am so glad that you are providing an opportunity for survivors to speak out and give support to one another. I wish to thank you for your contribution to the healing of a much too invisible population that we would like to see acknowledged and supported in their long and arduous journey to healing.

From what I hear I am appalled at the paucity of resources DID folk have over there in UK. Also at the apparently concerted efforts of mental health professionals and others in authority to stamp out the acknowledgement and knowledge of RA/SRA/MC in the Old Country and US. While it is more accepted over here as a diagnosis, more and more therapists are not taking DID clients into their practice because of law suits which is causing agony for those seeking help. It is becoming more and more vital for folk like yourself to encourage, support and engage as many DID survivors as possible to alleviate the isolation, stigma and rejection that is thrust upon this population.

Good courage and warmest wishes,

Dorothy F.

Editors Note

Dorothy's article entitled "Medication & DID" is too long to include in the newsletter (9 pages) but if anyone would like a copy please send 33p SAE to the First Person Plural address with your request.

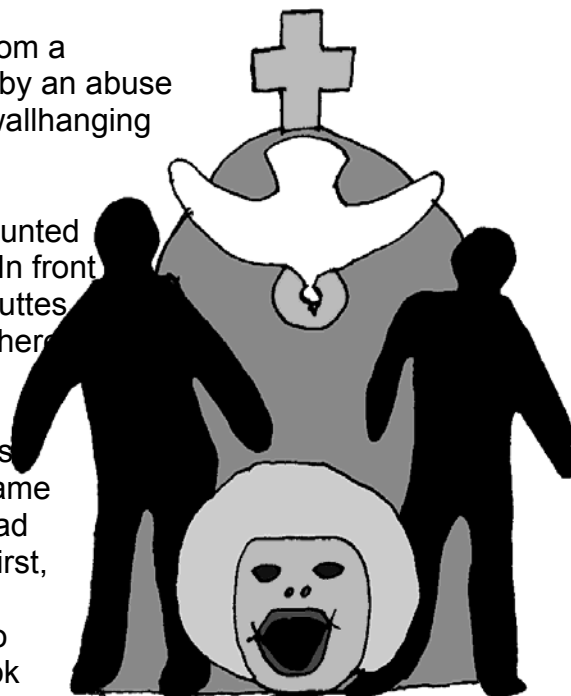
Kathryn, I would be interested to hear what survivors think of the DID / dissociation assessment tools e.g. Dissociative Experiences Scale

Mike 3.2/1

A Christian Survivor 'speaks'

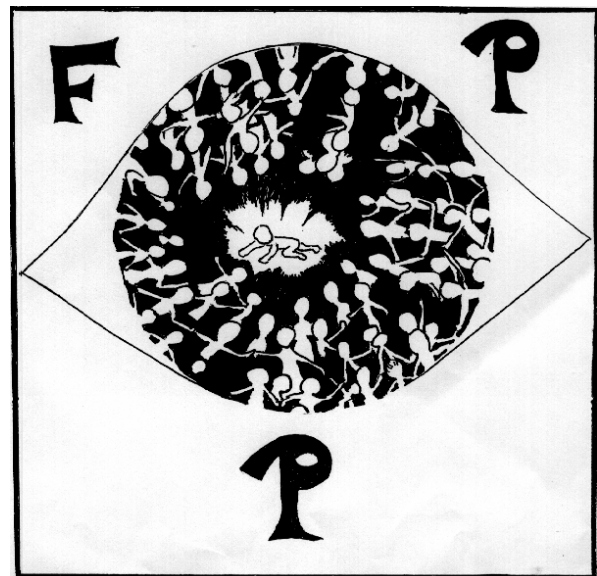
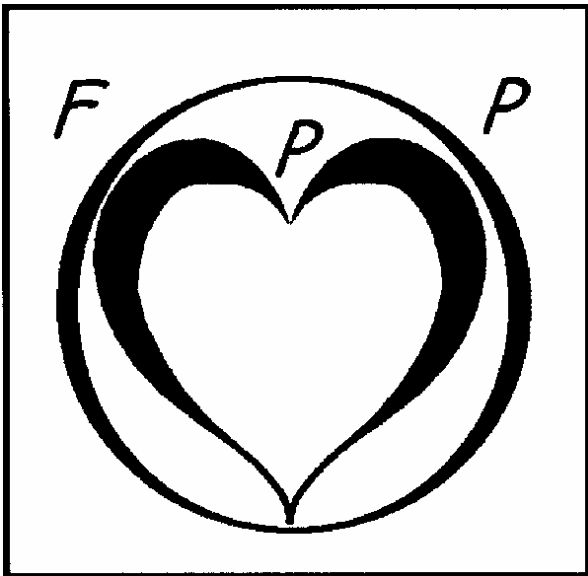
The picture on the right is a simplified drawing from a needlework square - one of many, each worked by an abuse survivor which have been sewn together into a wallhanging by Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse.

My square shows a stained glass window surmounted by a golden cross. This represents the Church. In front of the window, one either side, are two dark silhouettes of men representing my abusers. The fact that there are **two** silhouettes is a fascination to me. The original design for my square had only one silhouette representing my father as abuser. I 'lost time' while I worked on the square and when I came back to awareness discovered two silhouettes had been sewn (by, I now know, another 'alter'). At first, I was angry that my square had been spoilt but eventually I decided to carry on anyway - the two silhouettes gave my square a more balanced look and did it matter if it wasn't a fully accurate representation of my abuse, I argued. Now, I know that I have 'alters' who survived organised and ritualised abuse by several perpetrators so my square was more accurate than I then thought.



In the foreground is a child's face with golden hair and an open, screaming mouth. This represents one of my abused child 'alters'. The colour of the hair is significant. My own hair is brown but I have heard one of my child 'alters' who survived incestuous abuse describe herself as having golden blonde hair. Above the child's face and between the silhouettes is a haloed dove representing the Spirit of God. The square as a whole is my attempt to represent how, because of the effects of the abuse including dissociation, the abusers effectively denied parts of me (i.e. my abused alters) access to the Church. The silhouettes lie behind the child's face and in front of the stained glass window but they could not prevent the Spirit of God looking over all of me and over them too.

At the time of doing my square I was a church-going Christian but no-one in the church I attended knew of my abusive history or experiences of dissociation. In fact, I don't think anyone would have been interested or cared. There were often times when I missed Sunday service because a non-Christian 'alter' had executive control of the body but I don't recall anyone at church ever asking where I'd been, whether I'd been ill. Not long after completing my square my system of 'alters' went into a crisis and I did not have executive control of the body for a period of almost two years. When I re-emerged from this 'exile inside' I discovered that none of my 'alters' had attended church throughout my exile - yet, when I returned, no-one bothered to ask where I had been. Actually, I am glad they did not - I mean, what could I honestly say? But the fact they did not just got me thinking whether these church-going people were really Christians. Soon after, I stopped attending church altogether. My spiritual communion with Christ and my faith continue but are now expressed exclusively in private prayer and how I live my life. I do sometimes worry that my faith will not survive integration with my alter identities who are not committed to Christianity, particularly those who experienced abuse. I intellectually accept that the memories of my abused 'alters' are also my memories but with integration their memories will experientially become mine. Will faith be easy then?



LOGO COMPETITION RUNNERS UP

Judith et al

More entries in future issues

Jacqui

CRACKERS by Melanie

As a child I was pony mad. It was the only thing I was consistently enthusiastic about. I had some riding lessons, was given a broken-down old pony who I nursed back to health and then Crackers entered my life. We were both thirteen at the time and Crackers had experienced a very hostile life until now. He was born in the New Forest and his first encounter with the human race at close proximity was when he was rounded up at a year old and separated from his mother. I suspect this was a terrifying experience as shouting, sticks and general brutality seem to be the order of the day on these occasions. I have no idea what fate befell him in the intervening ten years before he was spotted in the knackers yard by an amazing woman who spent a good deal of her life rescuing ponies in those situations. He was a complete basket case by then and it was only because his new owner had an affinity towards animals with problems that a tiny light entered Crackers life. Through a series of circumstances I was considered to be someone who just might be able to form a relationship with this pony. I was thrilled at the prospect of having a pony of my own that was not lame for most of its life and never gave a thought to the task that I was undertaking.

Crackers arrived and I was warned that he was very difficult to catch. This was the first understatement of the whole proceedings. He was impossible to get near. It was only by spending hours and hours attempting to gain his confidence by being around him that on the odd occasion I managed to quietly get hold of his head collar which we never removed. We went from one Christmas to the Easter before I could get near him and then only if I was wearing my school uniform.

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

Life became one long battle of wits. Sometimes I was the winner but more often than not Crackers ruled the day. I adored him and wept many tears of frustration at not being able to convince him that life could be kind and gentle. He was haunted by his past and any move, however slight, had to be slow and accompanied by quiet reassuring conversation.

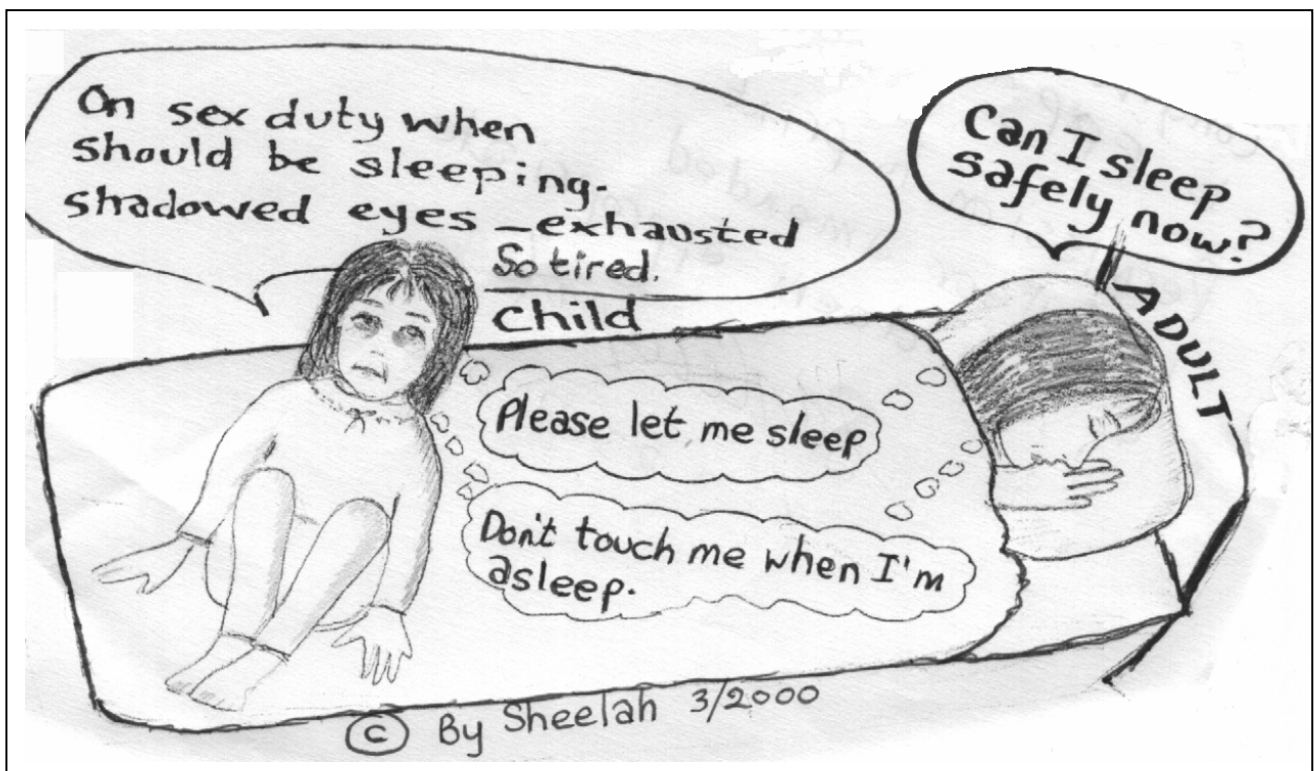
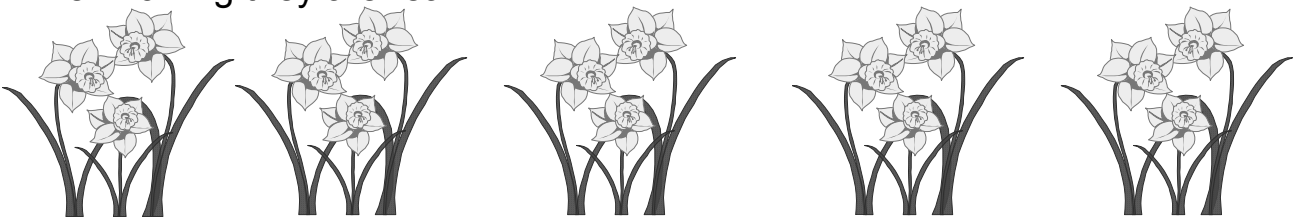
I spent the first summer riding around the lanes on my own with him for three or four hours a day hoping to establish some trust between us. Riding him was another experience. Once on his back I had to sit absolutely still. If it rained I got wet because he couldn't bear the rustle of a waterproof coat. If anything menacing appeared this was disastrous. He would take off in a completely blind panic bolt and this would last until he could go no further. It was terrifying for me. At times like this I was only too aware that I was sitting on an animal galloping at between twenty and thirty miles an hour with no part of me connecting with him. We have ended up in some nasty situations including being wrapped in a barbed wire fence. If we were going to continue riding him I had to find a way to prevent this being allowed to happen as it was incredibly dangerous. All his other behavioural problems were frustrating and inconvenient. I could never make any arrangements to meet friends, as the chances were he would still be refusing to be caught, but this was different. He had to be made to face his demons and it was not physically possible to do this. I was lent a special noseband that I only operated if he went into the blind bolt. In effect, this cut off his air supply and even Crackers had to come to a stand still. It was amazing the first time I used it. He quickly stopped dead in his tracks and terror then took over in the form of trembling from head to tail - literally. He couldn't understand that nothing bad was going to happen. Gradually, over many months of repeating this process he learnt to trust me a tiny bit. We could, on a good day, ride with friends. We could wear a short rain jacket that didn't make a noise and catch him on a more regular basis. He began to show a character that was not totally camouflaged by pain and terror.

He was genuinely a kind pony, as even in his most desperate moments he never once lashed out at any other living thing. He had perfected the flight versus fight technique. As a child my responses to him were natural. I adored him but I never realised how much he was teaching me about life. The hours, as an adult, I have sat waiting for one of my children to be able to approach me or make some communication, however small. The holding of the terrified child through some unseen but completely experienced terror, knowing at the deepest level to stay with it until some connection had been established. Crackers also taught me that trust once broken takes years and years to begin to build up again and the tiniest thing can set you back months. Creativity and adaptability were continuous for us to build any relationship and an open honesty was essential.

This may sound silly as we are talking about a pony but if I had tricked him into something, he only ever fell for it once. I suspect that if he had been human he would have been Mensa material.

I had crackers for twenty years and he never trusted people without going through his full repertoire first whilst weighing up the situation. We did have a lot of fun as well as he loved jumping and as long as nothing external triggered him we could both nearly relax. He ended up as a great character much loved and totally respected at all times. He had the sheep on the farm as his main companions for the last few years. He mellowed but never did his past stop affecting him.

Often, we are in a situation that reminds me of him but its only in the recent past that I have appreciated how brave he was to let anyone into his life. I also feel that his allowing me to care for his physical needs enabled us as a whole to develop areas that would not have been possible in any other way. He allowed me to feel needed without him permitting any emotional demands to be made either way. If not in panic mode we both could be quite functional. Maybe it is easier to reflect upon one's own way of being comparing the parallels with a distressed animal. This in no ways minimises the situations but enabled me to begin to look at things at a safe distance while knowing they are real.



Jokes & Riddles

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Who's there?

Sultan

Sultan Who?

Sultan pepper

KNOCK KNOCK!

Who's there?

Phillip

Phillip Who?

Phillip my tank, it's empty

PLAY

Q. What happened to the box that fell into the sea?

A. It sank

Q. What is the world's fastest drink?

A. Milk, because it is pasteurised before you can see it!

Q. What do you call a dinosaur with one eye?

A. Doyouthinkhesawus

Q. What was purple and wanted to rule the world?

A. Alexander the Grape

Q. What kind of shoes do chickens wear?

A. Ree bok bok bok

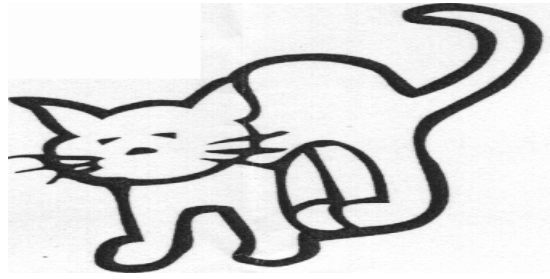
ANIMAL WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words?

ALLIGATOR ASP
BEAR BEE
BULL CAT
CROCODILE DEER
DOG ELEPHANT GOAT
 HARE
KITTEN LION
LYNX OXEN
RABBIT SHARK
SHEEP SLOTH
TIGER WHALE
 WOLF

S	H	A	R	K	W	H	A	L	E
T	S	H	E	E	P	B	U	L	L
I	C	R	O	C	O	D	I	L	E
G	O	A	T	Z	E	B	R	A	P
E	A	B	B	D	E	E	R	S	H
R	N	B	W	O	L	F	A	B	A
C	O	I	E	G	Y	O	X	E	N
K	I	T	T	E	N	X	C	A	T
S	L	O	T	H	X	H	A	R	E
D	A	L	L	I	G	A	T	O	R

CENTRE



Excitement on the Train

by tiger girl

*tis da us did be on tran an ter be voce
cumd frum spekr tat do sa bowt byin fud
an stuf frum bufet car an ten did sa tat
ter be sum fre gifs fer eni childen tat be
on tran an us did geted esited an wan go
geted fre gifs onli firs carer tat be us big
sa she be los sorri onli us no cen hav fre
gifs bcos te pepels on tran do tink tat us
be big pepel an no childen
an tat did mak we sad onli i did unerstan
sum an noed los pepels don noed bowt litel
pepel in big bodis an us no cen tel tem
onli ten ter be nudr voce on spekr an she sa
tat ifn ter be eni groed ups on tran tat wud
lik tak fre gif hom fer childen tat no be on
tran ten tem cen cumd bufet car an geted
fre gif
an tat men carer cud goed an ax fer fre gif
an she preten it be fer she chil at hom an
tat do be litel li onli no reli bcos us do be
children an us do liv wit carer in she hom tat
rit yeh
an te fre gif be wunerful preti color sholdr
bag an insid ter be colerin buk an crayens
an sum swets an gam drafts an sum pitur
cards an sum stikrs an pensil
an it al be fre wit no hav spen muni an be
luvli luvli surpris*

*an us litels be tiger girl an kathryn an angla
chil an gos chil al us al be shar tis bcos ter
be los fun tings in te bag an afer al fun
tings be dun ten us stild do got preti coler
sholdr bag*



Translation

One day we were on a train and there was a voice from the speaker that said about buying food and stuff from the buffet car. Then, the voice also said that there were some free gifts for any children that were on the train. We got excited and wanted to go get free gifts. Only, Carer, that is a big with us, did at first say that she was very sorry but we could not have the free gifts because the people on the train thought we were adults and not children. That did make us sad although I did understand a little and knew that lots of people don't know about little people in big bodies and we can't tell them.

Then, there was another voice on the speaker. She said that if there were any grown ups on the train that would like to take a free gift home for children that weren't on the train then they could come to the buffer car and pick up a free gift. And that meant that Carer could go and ask for a free gift. She pretended it was for her child at home and that is a little lie only not really because we are children and we live with Carer in her home. That's right. Yeah?

The free gift was a wonderful, pretty coloured shoulder bag. Inside it there was a colouring book and crayons; some sweets; a game of draughts; some picture cards; some stickers and a pencil. And it was all free. We did not have to spend any money. It was a lovely, lovely surprise.

We little ones are called Tiger Girl, Kathryn, Angela Child and Ghost Child. We all shared the surprise because there were lots of fun things in the bag. After all the fun things be done we still have a pretty coloured shoulder bag.

COMMUNICATION GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS

There is no getting away from the fact that you are stuck living with a bunch of people who you may or may not particularly like. At the very least, it's going to be occasionally uncomfortable. That's normal. Even the happiest families (or friends or flatmates) have problems. In fact, conflict can be healthy. It's the space in which growth happens. The trick is to establish good foundations for communication and mutual respect in your group of people so that, when conflicts do come up, as they inevitably will, you have a safe and effective way of dealing with them.

Some multiples' inner systems are run by their teenagers (and often very well), but it's more common for teenaged 'alter selves' to feel quite low down in the pecking order. Can you relate to any of the following complaints teens often make about their adults/people in charge?

- *She always bosses me around.*
- *I never get to do anything I want.*
- *She says she'd look stupid if the body was seen in public in the clothes I like to wear.*
- *I feel trapped, suffocated, lost.*
- *I feel ignored and disrespected.*
- *She's always telling me I am getting it wrong.*
- *She says its for my own good.*
- *Nothing about me is ever ok, from my language to my feelings to my behaviour.*
- *No one understands me.*
- *I get punished or bitched at for having a 'good time'.*

Being treated like this would make anyone feel frustrated, angry, and hurt. It would be easy to conclude that the adults are just jerks. But I suspect few of them really want to trample you. It may be helpful to remember that these are people who probably have very poor 'group management' skills. They may truly want to do the right thing by you, they may not actually know how.

The people in charge also have a lot of needs of their own, as well as having to consider needs of inside children, outside children; work bosses; friends; the bank manager; the law and so on, which may clash with your needs. Under these circumstances it can be hard to find a compromise that makes everyone happy. This may sound like I'm making excuses, but I prefer to think I am offering explanations. Sometimes it can help to see things from the other person's point of view, to understand where they're coming from even if you don't agree with it.

Just as the adults may have poor skills in relating to you, so you may not have the skills to relate to them. For example, you may feel too scared to speak straight.

Instead you may tend to approach things in a roundabout, maybe even a deceptive way because it feels safer to 'test the water' first. Maybe you don't think people will hear you unless you make a very big noise, which may have been the case in your original family. Maybe your needs are so strong that when you don't get them met you push and push in all different way until you are successful.

If you do any of these things, it does not mean you are bad. It just means that it might help to learn better communication skills to be really heard and understood.

Do you use any of the following ways to get what you need from your adults? Most people in our society use some of these techniques, partly because plain speaking is often seen as 'rude' or 'bold' so remember you are not bad if you try to communicate in any of these ways.

- *Complain about things, either as a way to express how you feel and get sympathy from people, or because you want someone to fix things for you.*
- *Shy away from making decisions, so other people will make them for you (in other words, rescue you)*
- *Look for approval from other people, rather than find your own sense of identity and okay-ness from inside.*
- *Look for sympathy by saying 'poor me' and 'no-body likes me', which are ways of guilt-tripping others into giving you love and support.*
- *Ask for advice from others, and then ignore their suggestions because you weren't really looking for advice, you were hoping they would fix the problem for you.*
- *Put on a face, give a huge sigh, or mope around instead of saying straight out what your problem is.*
- *Break the rules to get attention (after all negative attention can be better than no attention at all)*
- *Be mean and nasty to other people, especially those weaker than you. For example, saying cruel things to them; destroying their treasures; teasing them; or hitting them. Again this might get you (negative) attention.*
- *Run risks, in the hope that others will worry about your safety, rescue you and take care of you.*
- *Deride other people. Tell them to fuck off; give them the finger.*
- *Just do what you want to do and to hell with other people, even if they get hurt by your actions, and even if you are setting yourself up for punishment and disrespect afterwards.*
- *Don't answer someone when they are talking to you. This is a way of testing just how much someone is willing to put up with you.*
- *Play stupid, so that eventually the person will get fed up and leave you alone or, if they are trying to get you to do something they end up doing it themselves.*

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

- *Take your own time about things especially if it inconveniences others as a way of asserting control over them.*
- *Use 'You are....' Type statements instead of 'I am.....' types.*
- *Mess up your appearance, which wouldn't be so bad except that you share a body with others and they may be distressed by you getting a purple Mohawk or a tattoo.*

So, maybe you have some games and tricks like these, which you use, probably unconsciously, to get what you need. Maybe they really work for you, at least in the short term. Then again, maybe you're finding that it is hard work to get people to hear you. Not just hear the words but hear the real meaning beneath them. Maybe you are feeling misunderstood and unappreciated. So, what can you do to change that?

The simple answer is that it's easy to get people to hear and understand you. All you have to do is say, "I feel.....". Unfortunately, there are two big things that make saying "I feel..." difficult.

1. *Do you know what it is you are really feeling in the first place? Figuring this out isn't always easy. Sometimes people never get taught about different emotions and what they mean, so when they feel something they honestly would not know what the hell is going on.*

It is also common for people, especially those who have been abused, to be scared of their emotions and what might result from them. E.g. "I am so sad I think I might die" or "anger equals violence". Because they are scared, these people block their emotions and get into head stuff instead. That's when real mind games start, because everything is said and done in an effort to get their needs met while, at the same time, not acknowledging the real, frightening feeling that still lies deep down inside.

It takes a lot of courage to open yourself to your feelings and identify them. You don't have to be an abuse survivor to have this difficulty. Even if someone had a wonderful childhood they still got messages from our society and culture like 'only sissies cry' and 'good girls don't get angry'. These messages get deep down inside and often pop up again like little monsters whenever someone starts to have a feeling that might be considered 'bad' or 'wrong' in some way. The message monsters are incredibly effective at stopping us knowing and experiencing our feelings.

If you get a barrage of criticism every time you try to experience your feelings, it probably won't help much to shout it down or have an argument with it. Conflict only feeds the monsters. Instead, try to understand what is motivating them.

For example, fear, old confused ideas about feelings, or an effort to protect you. Tell them that you appreciate where they are coming from but you don't agree with them. Remind them, and yourself that you are okay and having feelings is okay too - even if you don't believe it at first. The positive words eventually create their own reality, exactly as we have just seen how the negative messages create a reality.

Once you have done this, go ahead and feel the feeling, even if the criticism continues. You might be able to cope with only a little bit at first, but keep trying. Practice makes perfect! When you know what you are feeling and are able to talk from that place, you are able to be authentic in your relationships with others. There is no more need for games, oblique messages or language with hidden layers of meaning. You can cut through the crap to make your communication simple and real. So, for example, if you don't get something you want, don't drag yourself around muttering under your breath until the adult gives up in disgust and lets you have your way. Try saying something along the lines of, "I feel like you don't see me as important when you say I can't do that".

- 2. Do you trust your listener? When you are open and honest about yourself to another person, it is vital that you feel at least relatively safe with them. But there is a good chance you don't trust the adults in your system. I imagine you've seen them make some pretty stupid mistakes and even do things that have led to someone being hurt. But it's a bit like watching a game show on the TV and knowing you could do better than the contestants. If you were on that stage in front of cameras and an audience, with all that pressure and exposure and hot studio lights glaring down, you would probably miss opportunities and give wrong answers to obvious questions too.*

When it comes to the adults, maybe you could ask them to talk with you about the pressures they feel and the perspectives they have on certain issues. And maybe you can get them to read this article too - it isn't just the teenagers who have communication problems of the type described here.

Remember, you do not have to agree with anyone else's point of view, but you do need to hear them if you want them to hear you in return. There are rewards to being heard although don't always expect that being heard will mean you have things your way every time.

*Article by Sara Lambert
Reprinted with permission*

Reference

Alvyn M Freed: T.A. for Teens and Other Important People, Jalmar press, USA, 1988

More Members Get More Involved in F.P.P

On 31st March, the second FPP members meeting was held in the beautiful wood-panelled Shakespeare Memorial Room at Birmingham Central Library.

Take up of places was disappointing and on the day just six members accompanied by 2 supporters were present. I know it's a bit cliché-ed but I think its true to say that what we lacked in quantity we made up for in quality.

At least, 5 of the 6 members have committed to meeting again in June to form a new First Person Plural Steering Group. This group will begin work to take forward some of the aims and aspirations generated at the first FPP members meeting last September and reported in the last issue. Until we get the new Steering Group up and operating well we will not be holding anymore open members meetings.

The new steering group includes Melanie and myself (Kathryn) from the original steering group. Regrettably, Julia, the one other original steering group member, has had to resign for personal reasons (see her letter opposite)

The agenda for the June meeting of the new group includes:-

- Membership and supporters.
- Charity registration
- Information booklets (yes we still intend to produce them
- 12 month workplan.

Lots to keep us busy. Hopefully we will be able to report our progress in the next issue.

That first agenda item will be deciding about our criteria for membership e.g. can supporters be members? Also what benefits we can realistically provide for members and should we continue to charge the £1.50 membership fee.

If any of our current members have any thoughts on these issues we would be pleased to hear from you.

What are the pros and cons of allowing supporters to become full members? Our two membership meetings have been enthusiastically attended but by only a few - should we still try to hold them twice a year? What about the Contact List - very few members are included and I have only been able to produce one edition even though there are a couple of new members who have asked for their details to be included in a second edition. It was controversial when we introduced it, should we continue it? And of course then there is the question of what are members getting for their £1.50 fee? Should we continue to charge a membership fee. Should we continue to distinguish between members and newsletter subscribers?

Letter from Julia

Unfortunately the decision has had to be made to stand down from the steering committee, a decision which was not easily made, but at this point in time we have to concentrate on our healing and well being and to do this would mean not being able to give the support and time to FPP. We would like to say how much we have enjoyed being part of the steering committee and for all the support that has been given at times by the others, and although no longer apart of the group we still hope to write articles from time to time.. Thanks to everyone who has made FPP what it is and may it continue to help and educate all who read it.. Best Wishes Julia&Co

Julia's presence on the Steering Group will be missed. She was one of the first people to respond when I asked for people to be involved back in 1998 and has supported FPP's development in many ways. I wish her peace and good fortune in her life and healing.

THANK YOU, JULIA&CO

KL

Poems & rhymes

Imagine

*Imagine the confusion
Of a lost childhood
In which truth and love
Exchange places
With convoluted lies
And double bound pernicious hate,
When reality becomes virtual
And the only constant is fear.*

*Imagine a double helix
Forming two critical pathways
In the cortex of a child.
And visualise the dual life force
Which would evolve,
The one distorting the other,
Without her awareness
As she struggles to get by.*

*Imagine never knowing
Who she will be today
And whether the beliefs
She formed so painstakingly
In the darkness of experience
Will protect her
In tomorrow's onslaught.
Or seal her evil fate.*

*Imagine the desolation
Of the young girl
Hospitalised, treated
Drugged and powerfully convulsed
(For her own good)
So that any access she had
To another self
Was wiped out of touch.*

*Imagine the systems jolt
To her young middle age
When untouched images
Of untouchable experience
Seeped back into her consciousness
Challenging her carefully restored
Sense of normality.
Can normal service ever be resumed?*

*Imagine you taught me to trust
My inner sense,
To go within and listen
To the words of my heart,
To look within and perceive
Images of the soul.
But then you doubted
The truths that I perceived.*

*Imagine how I stand alone,
Contaminated, primed:
My innocence compromised
By outrageous images
Of which my inner senses
Speak without authority
To an unwitting audience
Bearing no witness to my soul.*

*Imagine the temptation
For the inner sense to fade,
To deny anew the unknowable
To fuse the double helix
Into a single genetic code,
Defused of its abnormalities,
Closed down from activation,
Rendered safe for society.*

Caro Archer

A Part of Me

There is a part of me locked deep away that nobody ever sees, a part of me that even I am too scared to look at or see, or even feel, walled in from top to bottom.

A steel door securely in place with no key to open it; not even a lock in the door, it can be approached but never opened, for as I get near I can feel all that is hidden away screaming to be set free, almost appearing to be oozing out of the walls like some kind of dreadful slime, I feel my skin starting to cringe and my body freeze with fear.

My eyes are open, but all I can see is darkness; all I can feel is slime.

It gets into my body and takes over, I can't move, I can't scream, all I can do is just freeze, yet I want so much to be able to scream out, but silence is all that is on my lips.

My heart pounds out as if ready to burst open, NO emotions will come out, for to let one out means to risk the walls falling down, crushing all who are around and destroying everything, including myself.

Yet, however far I try to run from this place, it is always there.

To go on acting as if it is not there destroys me just as much, for I know deep down it will keep coming back, attacking me over and over again, never letting me go, always waiting and hiding ready to pounce and yet to try and fight it is impossible, for I am tired, so tired of the battle that goes on within, longing to let it all out, but too scared, longing to do what people suggest to help, but am unable to do so.

Feeling such a failure, feeling as if there is never any escape, feeling so alone and isolated, feeling like a coward who can only run and hide.

Julia & Co

Subscription Form

3.2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Please tick which applies

£5.00 subscription (1 volume = 4 issues)

☐

Survivor who has experience of dissociative distress

☐

Friend or relative of above

£10.00 subscription (1 volume = 4 issues)

☐

Therapist/Counsellor or other professional

☐

Organisation

Return completed form with a cheque / PO made payable to First Person Plural

Overseas Subscribers

Add £10 postage and packing to the cost of your subscription
Payment in British Pounds only please.