



January 2004

RAINBOW'S END

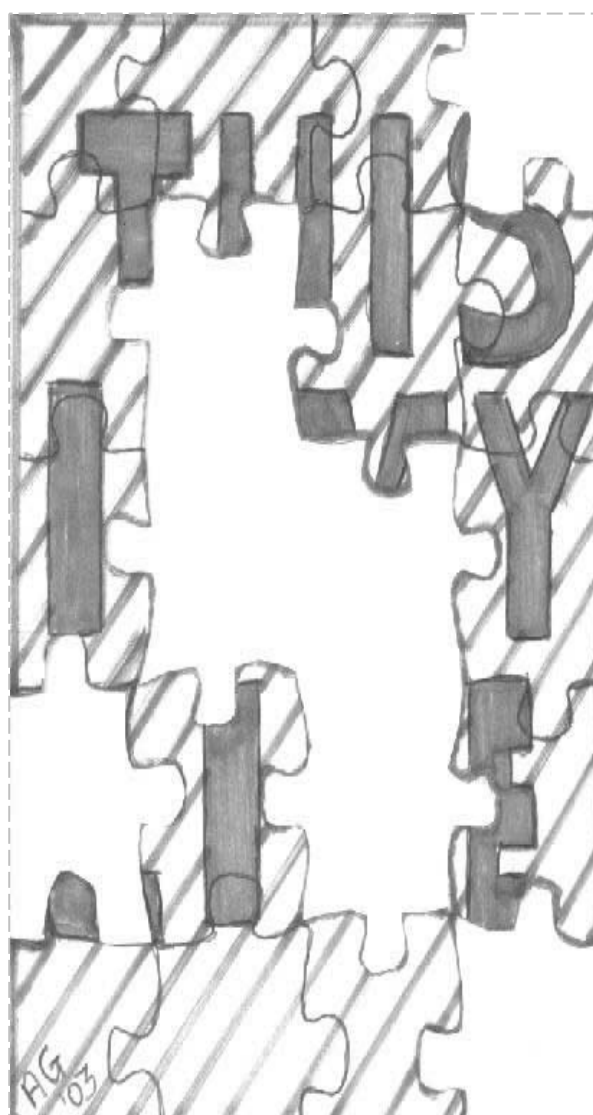
Volume 5

Issue 2

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

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Target Dates for Volume 5

Issue 5.3	March 2004
Issue 5.4	June 2004

THIS IS MY LIFE

By AngelaGee 2003

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While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are 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 is not a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only. The newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision. It is an addition to, not a replacement for, other networks of support.

Contributions can be sent in at anytime

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

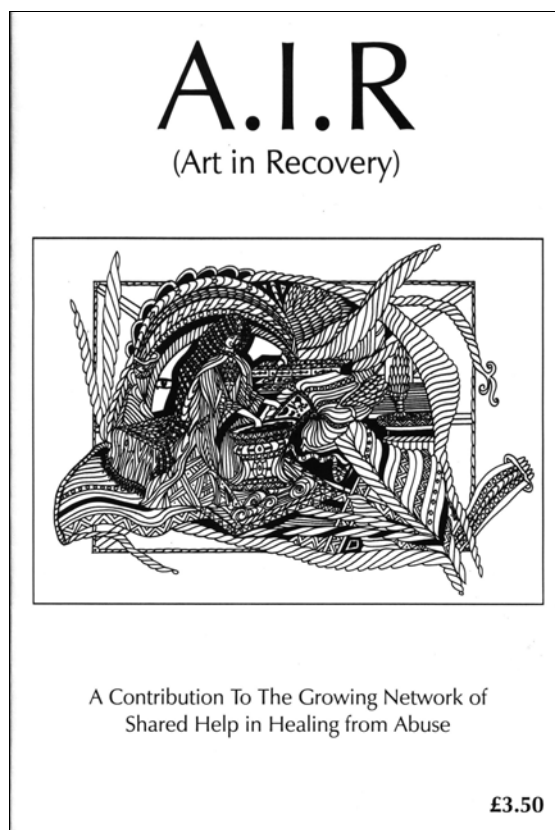
**To be considered for the next issue we need to receive them
by 13th March, 2004**

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

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

ATTENTION

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



First Person Plural member Sheelah Newport has published an A5 booklet of her artwork. The pictures may be photocopied and/or coloured in.

In her Introduction to A.I.R Sheelah writes.....

"In time, when all the words are spoken, written and recorded...there comes the gentle time.

A time when silence is a positive feeling and stillness and nothing happening are now your friends.

We have shared the pain... now we can also share the soothing comfort of moments of peace."

A.I.R can be ordered (price £3.50) by sending payment to Miss S A Newport, 7 Cuddenbeake Terrace, St Germain's, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 5LZ

Spirit Child by Sheelah



How do you tell friends? by ANON

How do you tell friends 'how it is', suffering from a dissociative disorder or DID/MPD, when probably, for some, their only idea of what that means comes from 'Sybil' or 'Three faces of Eve'? Once you tell there is no untelling. Does telling help or is it a hindrance?

I suppose half a dozen of my friends know and I suppose the degree of understanding and telling them more has depended on whether they have struggled themselves. But only a couple of people in my village know I'm in therapy and they don't know about the dissociation.

How do you tell a group of people? I belong to a book group and sometimes my mind seizes up and I don't have enough 'working memory', or I can't find the words I want and occasionally slightly different words with a totally different meaning come out. Or I forget things I should know, and I think it must be glaringly obvious something's wrong, but people are probably putting it down to a 'senior moment.' Other struggles I have and not being able to join in on other occasions can be put down to 'migraines', which are often real enough.

Would it help telling? Does it matter? In a sense I'm not being real with people, but in another I'm forging ahead and living in real-time. I think one of the problems is my difficulty in owning what has happened to me, because being dissociated, it didn't happen to me, it happened to them. When I've fully owned it, may be things will be different (we're working on it).

What do other people think? How have other people gone about the process of telling? How have you helped people understand? Does the MIND/FPP booklet on understanding dissociation help? I think it is superb to give to people in the caring professions but do we need something different to help us explain to friends? Is the way individuals who suffer from dissociative disorders similar enough to have a general explanation 'for friends' or do we each have to forge our own way?

On further reflection I think telling does matter – one reason is that secrecy was bound up in the abuse and it would be good to break that. Secondly, the more sufferers tell about their struggles with dissociation, the more people will be aware of its existence. Also, in holding back all this information about very important parts of myself, or at least the awareness that they exist, I'm encouraging the feeling of being apart, detached from others, a feeling of being unreal and not part of things.

However, I do need to consider safety, boundaries and looking after myself, and try to be wise about the process of telling (or not!).

Tell us your thoughts about telling. Letters or articles responding to any or all the questions raised by ANON will be published in the next issue
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Open Meeting Opens Hearts and Minds

It seems the FPP Open Meeting held in London on 4th October was a resounding success with the most common disappointments being that it wasn't long enough and didn't happen often enough. Here are some of the responses we received.

GLAD I WAS THERE by Geoff

I was there and I was so glad I was there. I have probably been putting off going to an FPP Meeting for the last 2 or 3 years.

Why this reluctance? Scared, that's why!

I had supposed it was alright being an armchair supporter of FPP. If it went any further it might become too challenging. However I had said I would go this time, arranged childcare and travelled with my best friend to London .

It turned out like no other group I have been in. In the video we watched on DID several therapists spoke about what clients should look for if they are considering being with are already with a therapist. Specifically:

- O Safety
- O Comfort
- O Support

The people at the heart of FPP have worked together for some time as a steering committee. Through the inevitable challenges, difficulties and fun too they have developed ways of holding these meetings in which none of these crucial ingredients is left to chance. Kathryn presented a wise and well tried group of groundrules. Her presence was full of heart and she proved to be both firm and sensitive as she steered us through the day.

Within this safe holding space we were able to meet and share our experiences in ways that helped sustain us in our healing.

Doubts, anxieties and fear were there but people held each other with such patience and respect that it was possible to witness some of these fears melting away. People made connections with each other through the group that brought light into new areas for each of us.

I wasn't a member of FPP. I came to the meeting as a supporter for my friend. But I was open to change. I have been learning how to come into contact with parts of me that feel disconnected or frozen or I pretend aren't there. Sandra in her presentation on the "freeze response" showed that the body – where the pain can be physically felt – can also be the gateway to letting go of extreme distress, safely, step by step. There is a deep biological "knowing" at work.

The shock and terror of abuse can break the connections that, in a settled state, we easily make between our senses, thinking brain and our automatic strategies of self preservation. If we are threatened and cannot run away or fight then the amygdala (small part of the brain) short circuits the system so that we freeze and we may dissociate. This may be crucial for our survival. But afterwards we may be left with only a fragmented sense of the world and unpredictable sensory overload. We cannot find words for any of it and parts of us may go missing. If we have lived to fight another day then we may start putting the pieces together again. People are trying to but unfortunately mostly on their own.

So this meeting became a special occasion. The lone struggle often with a disbelieving psychiatric profession was, for a few brief hours, a lone struggle no longer.

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I like getting carried away with things but it did seem to me to take on the features of something strong in the making. Here was a group of survivors and supporters who with trust, patience and commitment were prepared to be vulnerable together. THERE WAS A CLARITY OF PURPOSE HERE such as I have never experienced in a group before. I think the strength and farsightedness of the survivors meant that any self seeking agendas ceased to be relevant. I certainly found mine dropped away.

The anger people felt about how they were/are treated was palpable and acknowledged but held with quiet courage and many kindnesses.

Melanie talked very clearly about some of the 'strength in the making'. Over the last couple of years her local D.I.D. support group has got off the ground. She talked about how they help each other to feel safe, comfortable (or at least feeling the fear and doing it anyway) and supported. Trips nobody dared make alone, like going to the cinema, can be made together. Even then it is by no means straightforward, but she pointed the way. They will be going to the ballet before long.

I am not sure I will be able to just remain in this armchair (sic.) much longer. I may miss something special if I do.

A REASON TO FEEL GOOD

by Melanie

Over the last five years I have had the pleasure and honour and I use those words with their true and full meaning, of getting to know Kathryn, through both the good and bad times. We have developed a strong friendship built originally on the common factor of our both being DID, but very quickly this was expanded to include the many aspects that go into establishing a true friendship.

Kathryn has through this time worked tirelessly for FPP and I suspect that most readers are unaware that one driving force behind DID becoming recognised, accepted and understood is led by someone who lives daily with the most debilitating aspects of being DID. The newsletter is the area most of you will be familiar with but Kathryn also runs training sessions sharing her experiences of both her DID and of the mental health service.

She speaks out in an informed way when others are too frightened or refuse to acknowledge the reality of situations and she does all this while using public transport. That is not as irrelevant as it may sound. If you have battled with trains and buses over the recent past you will appreciate that this is in itself a challenge. It means that when she is running a training programme etc. she physically carries everything she needs on and off public transport.

Whatever Kathryn is doing she always prepares thoroughly, producing wonderful handouts and overheads. She never misses an opportunity in her many contacts with the mental health system, to keep DID on the map. This Open Meeting was organised and prepared by her and all the careful thoughts behind it that made the day so memorable are hers. So on all our behalves I would like to say THANK YOU.

I wish you could all have been with us on the 4th October to share the warmth and support that was generated. I felt the day offered about as much as was possible to fit into the short time we had. The speakers were members of the steering committee, which made the day even more special. It gave FPP members a chance to meet the people behind the scenes. On a personal level I had the opportunity to talk to a friendly group of people who metaphorically held and supported me throughout.

Kathryn had bought a selection of soft toys in pairs, from which each person chose one when they first arrived at the meeting. We then joined our soft toy pair and had a few minutes chatting together. This was a wonderful ice-breaker and helped small ones to feel a part of the proceedings. It was beneficial to the feel of the day to have people with a dissociative condition as well as their supporters, partners and professionals from the therapeutic world.

The ISSD video on Dissociation led to a fairly heated discussion on the difficulties that people have experienced in trying to get the right help for themselves and how the health system has betrayed them over the years. I felt this was, for many people, the first chance that they'd had to express these frustrations with other like-minded people.. Some shared positive experiences within the NHS and hopefully this will encourage others to stand up for their rights. There are positive changes even if they are few and far between. The video itself is very interesting but rather long in one sitting. We will review how we use it in the future while acknowledging that it is a very useful tool and one that can be used without having a PhD in medical terminology!

Sandra's talk, "Freeze Response to Trauma" was for me the highlight of the day. Sandra was incredibly nervous before her talk but her passion and knowledge of the subject quickly put her at ease and took her audience with her. For those who weren't there the first part of a serialisation of her presentation appears later in this issue with a second part being published in issue 5.3. I strongly recommend reading "Waking The Tiger". It is a book you will want to return to time and time again. I have always felt that the right book has appeared for me during my journey at the right time and this is certainly one of those occasions.

If Sandra and I do a talk on the same day again I will make sure I go first as she is a hard act to follow! My talk on "Starting a group" was well received. I am sorry I didn't have the confidence to develop a discussion on it. I am hoping to be given the opportunity to present it in discussion form at the UKSSD conference in May as I feel this is an unexplored subject with potential.

The perennial problem of there not being enough time for informal discussion is difficult to resolve but will be given considerable thought before the next meeting.

Kathryn closed the day by outlining where we are hoping to go with FPP and shared her delight with the way the day had gone. We have ideas for next year and I do hope that we are joined by more of you.

EVALUATION FORM COMMENTS

Best thing – 'Meeting others' 'Warm response' 'All of it' 'Being together' 'Normality & respect' 'Variation in the day' 'Open-ness & safety of speakers and participants' 'The talks' 'Overall mutual support & understanding' 'Not too heavy'

Worst thing – 'Some things went over my head' 'Nothing' 'Having to leave' 'Too short' 'Uncomfortable chairs' Video was too long' 'Window-less room' 'Being cold' 'Venue in scary part of London' 'Parking'

General comments - 'Good for us' 'Well done' 'Loved the ice-breaker and might pinch it' 'Keep walking the talk – thank you' 'Very enjoyable learning experience' 'Ice breaker was innovative and very appropriate for people with MPD because it let the kids have some involvement and acknowledged their presence' 'It was a fun and enjoyable day'

‘ Wow – let's do it again!'



PLAY

MEMORY GAME

Look at the picture on the left for 1 minute then close the newsletter. Write down all the things in the picture you can remember? If you don't get them all first time don't worry. You can try again as many times as you like. ☺

Hi, little people of all ages, do you have a joke, game, puzzle, story, picture to colour that you'd like to share with other readers of the Play Centre. If you send it to F. P. P. and you could see it printed in a future issue

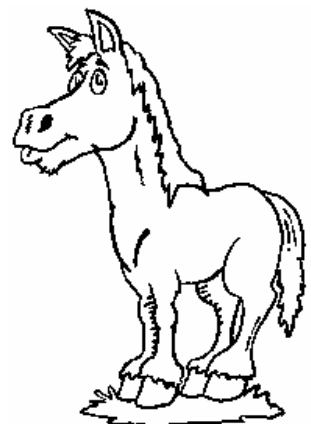
JOKES

Jane: I found a horse shoe today.

Jack: **Is it a lucky horse shoe**

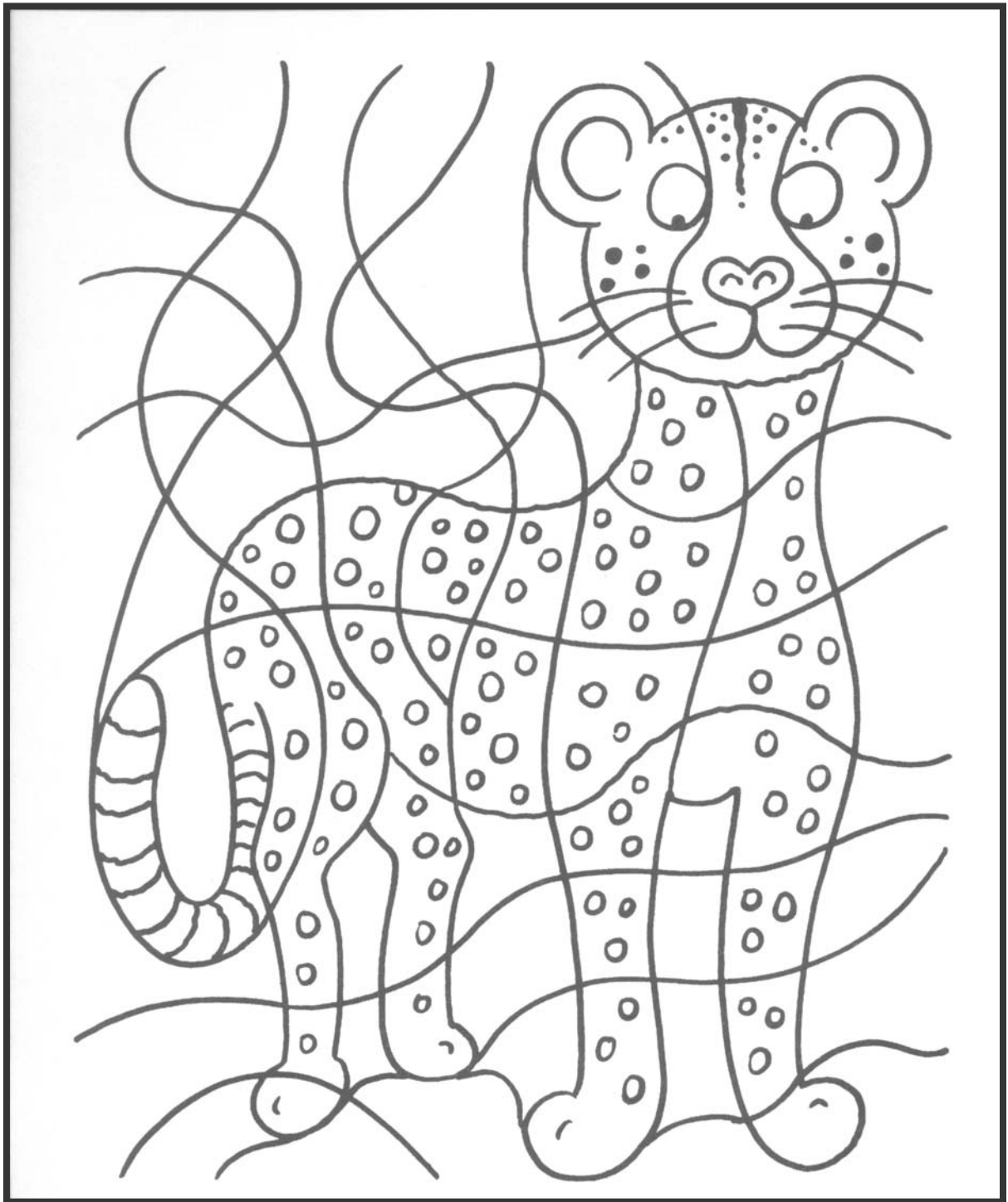
Jane: It can't be or the horse wouldn't have lost it.

Why did Carla put running shoes on her head?
Her memory needed jogging!



CENTRE

A Picture to Colour



How many spots does the cheetah have?

The Freeze Response (Part 1)

by Sandra Sunfire

This writing is based on a talk that I presented at the FPP Open Meeting in London, October 4th, 2003.

I am a full member of FPP and a member of the steering group. I speak as someone who has survived severe childhood abuse with dissociation and who began to look into current research into the effects of trauma on the neuroendocrine and immune system when my physical health collapsed. I believe my current and growing understanding which I have been able to act on with the support of other people, has been crucial to the rejuvenation of my health on all levels of my being. I have also trained in a body-centred form of psychotherapy – Post Reichian Therapy which I now practice and informs my understanding of bodymind (a term apparently first coined by Dianne Connely speaking from a Chinese medical perspective). I am currently training in Hakomi Experiential Method which brings together a body-centred approach with a mindfulness.

I want to speak about the freeze response as a natural response of a living organism to an inescapable threat and it's connection to dissociation and also to touch on moving towards "unfreezing".

Much of what I speak of is based on the work of Peter Levine who has practiced what he calls a "naturalistic approach" to healing trauma for the past 28 years or so. He says in "Waking the Tiger – Healing Trauma" which he wrote with Ann Frederick, "Increasingly I became convinced that the instinctual repertoire of the human organism includes a deep biological knowing, which given the opportunity to do so, can and will guide the process of healing trauma." As Peter see it "the roots of trauma lie in our instinctual physiology. As a result, it is through our bodies as well as our minds that we discover healing".

Peter Levine says that "Post-traumatic symptoms, the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, are incomplete physiological responses suspended by fear, that require discharge and completion..... If the discharge process is repeatedly disturbed (ie by ongoing abuse) each successive state of shock will last longer" ~ this is the freeze response.

Levine's Ethological Model

"The orientating reflexes" When an animal is under threat, it instinctually goes into a whole repertory of automatic responses, mediated by primitive structures within the nervous system, which unfold in different directions in different circumstances. As soon as an animal senses a threat it attempts to **orient** to the threat. First it goes into an **arrest state**. Then it tries to locate the threat to a specific location. If it can't locate the threat the arrest state continues and can become a locked circuit where the animal is constantly searching in an arrested state (this can become chronic hyper-vigilance). When it locates the threat it will **move toward** the threat to try to **evaluate the level of danger**. Once the threat has been localised and evaluated, if it is determined that the threat is sufficiently great, the animal **prepares for flight**, by turning away from the threat and searching for a safe place or looking for a path of escape. The animal will run and hide.

If the animal determines that the threat may be overcome or that there's a compelling reason to, it **prepares to fight** (the fight/flight response was initially described by Dr Hans Selye and is the response that most people have heard of).

Shock reflexes

If fight/flight defences fail (ie if the animal cannot fight off or escape the attack) then the animal will go into a second line of passive defences, the shock reflexes. The shock reflexes serve important survival functions.

First the animal freezes in a state of 'tonic immobility' of which there are two types: a 'frozen stiff' mode and a 'waxy flexibility' mode (whereby a limb can move but stays where it is moved to like modelling clay). This freezing is a 'playing dead' that is a successful survival strategy. It not only serves the individual but may allow time for other animals to escape. Simultaneously the animal goes into an **analgesic response**, into a **dissociated state** when pain is not experienced but there is a keen, altered state of awareness of what is happening. Robert Scaer MD who has written "The Body Bears The Burden ~ Trauma, Dissociation and Disease" says, "Dissociation very probably constitutes a major element in the freeze response and people who report symptoms of shock and numbness after a traumatic event and exhibit symptoms of dissociation, are actually in the freeze response at the time."

Because lower brain stem activity takes over, there may also be a **disconnection with rational, higher brain thinking**, which is connected with the loss of memory often associated with shock events. One common experience of shock victims is the sense of 'did it really happen or did I make it up'. This is partly because of the discontinuous states of consciousness which results in confusion and dislocation of different aspects of the shock event. The memory may be broken up into unconnected images, body sensations or a vague auric sense that 'something happened'.

Robert Scaer tell us that Nijehuis, Vanderlinden and Sinhaven have drawn "a parallel between animal defensive traits that are triggered by severe life threat, such as freezing, and the characteristics of dissociative states in patients with major dissociation".

The neuro-endocrinologist Bessel Van der Kolk has postulated that the freeze/numbing response in animals to prolonged severe and inescapable stress may be analogous to dissociation in humans exposed to trauma and that dissociation may be mediated by opiates that are created within the body itself.

The work of Bessel in researching trauma and it's effects has influenced my understanding greatly. He identifies immobilisation as being crucial to the development of trauma. Like beauty, trauma is in the eye of the beholder. What may traumatise one individual or group/community of people may not have that effect on others. Traumatic experience by its nature is overwhelming and induces a physiological stress reaction.

In the freeze state in animals there are increased levels of metabolic and neuro-chemical energy despite the immobility. If the animal survives there will be "somatic and autonomic responses including trembling, perspiring and deep breathing". Peter Levine tells us that "humans tend not to dissipate this energy, possibly through acculturated social restraint or neocortical inhibition, resulting in the storage of arousal based energy". In circumstances such as repeated instances of abuse and/or when someone who has suffered this abuse and does not receive the support needed afterwards, the discharge of this energy is prohibited. This is what leads to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and possibly dissociative disorders.

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Within the brain Bessel points to the dorsal vagal system being involved in the freeze reaction, saying that this also prevents anything else coming into the mind, learning is prevented once this system is activated (this is a reason to avoid high levels of arousal). He also found that the Broca's area becomes deactivated in this freeze reaction, preventing ability to talk and so in healing from trauma it is necessary to circumvent speech, to draw, to use movement ~ to move out of immobilisation which deprives a person of being in the world, of communication, of choice and the ability to imagine how things could in fact be different.

Being immobilised is a most uncomfortable place to be, I can vouch for that! I have also noticed how uncomfortable it is for others to be with, helplessness is often felt through the strong emotional impression of this wordless state.

Part 2 of this article will appear in issue 5.3 of *Rainbow's End* when Sandra will explore "Towards Unfreezing"

Recommended Reading

Peter Levine & Ann Frederick: Waking the Tiger – Healing Trauma

Candace Pert: Molecules of Emotion

Bessel Van der Kolk MD: The Body Keeps the Score – Memory and the evolving psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress (Harvard Review of Psychiatry 1994)

Bessel Van der Kolk, Alexander McFarlane, Lars Weisaert: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body and society (Adaptations to Trauma – The Psychobiology of PTSD)

Robert Scaer MD: The Body Bears the Burden – Trauma, dissociation and disease.

Being Adolescent by Melanie

Browsing through back issues of *Rainbow's End* I came across an article by Sara Lambert on "Communication Guide For Teenagers". As the teenage person in our family who is at the moment trying to deal with issues, live in the outside world and be true to myself, I found this both useful and frustrating. I try to behave in the way (external) people expect us to, be polite at work, wait my turn and all those behaviours that make you socially acceptable as a fairly uncomplicated adult. I am finding it difficult negotiating my way through, which the whole of my internal family know we need me to do to allow us to grow and for it to be less likely for me to rock the boat for us all. For our own personal journey it is the right time for me to work through this and not hand over to someone else.

All the stuff I read on this subject is fine if you have an internal adult barometer that can measure what is appropriate, but for us that is cheating and non beneficial as it is only by my learning for myself can I then move on. We are developing our own barometer as opposed to living by someone else's. As a system we have resisted this area for many years, in fact we always said we would never "do" adolescence. I feel that there is an assumption that somewhere within us there is a knowing about this stage, we just need to utilise it.

The reality is that we have never been through this stage in any form, we had become so dissociated by our early teens that we experienced those years drifting, watching and mimicking those around us.

As we went to an all girls school, geographically lived an isolated existence this has not really helped this stage. We never experienced the turmoil of adolescence, the mood swings, the black and whiteness of it and yet in another way we have never left this stage of development. We never fancied boys or girls, listened to music, argued, totally forbidden. Our views on most things were the views of others'. We couldn't go down that road, as it would have been too difficult. Throughout our body's adult life we have at times been shocked by our immaturity but not really understanding how to handle it, just try and behave in a more grown-up way ALL the time. We cut off our emotions, natural sexual development our very acceptance of being human.

How do I handle feeling grumpy most of the time, bored, don't like most things. The answer I want to give to most questions is no, boring, and that is the polite version. The anger at so many things that is so often verbally expressed very strongly. An anger that is often irrelevant or inappropriate. The need to act on impulses, immediately. The impatience, which often feels unbearable yet, I haven't a clue what I would like to do.

Then of course I have all the baggage that is mine to deal with that no doubt adds complications to my whole way of being. How, when in my fifties and married, do I learn to flirt in a safe way? I see adult friends quite comfortable with their body image and their handling of relationships with others. How do I learn this area from inside outwards instead of how we have always done it, watching and copying, without making a complete fool of myself?

As we move into a slightly less dissociated state, less of a thing, we are aware of people treating us differently, very subtle but different. I find this terrifying, as I haven't a clue how to handle this change. I suppose there must be a desire to negotiate this stage or I wouldn't be grappling with trying to put the impossible into words. When the younger ones are around there is an acceptance, liking of them, but I am experiencing the ambivalence that is so often shown to teenagers and this hurts. My adult friends really are unsure about us at the moment and the backing off by some who were quite happy with the younger ones, again adds to the problem of growing up.

When I let the barriers down for a minute and acted true to myself, my son's immediate response was, "Stop being so vindictive and grow-up, mother". In so many ways he was right, at that moment I was how I really would like to be all the time at the moment. As in all this I expect we will find a way through, a compromise. Some of my anger and shame is that we have never moved out of this level of hearing and reasoning. It is so hard as to grow I have to run the risk of being like this, knowing I cannot be rescued by any of the others as this is where we truly start from.

When the littlies are working through things they get tired quite quickly, so although this leaves a residue throughout we get a break from the intensity of it. For me I am doing this with a vengeance and unfortunately with a teenager's incredible energy level. It feels like we have all the difficulties of being in our teens without any of the true freedom. Oh what fun.

You have to laugh 'overheard' on a multiple's internet forum

- A.** I think there are ways that I do not fit the textbook example of being multiple so it is important that my therapist listens to what my experience is instead of thinking she already knows how it is for me because she's read the books.
- B.** Hear! Hear! There isn't an MPD factory out there spewing us out to a blueprint so that each of us is exactly like every other multiple.
- C.** Yes there is but we're all from a defective batch!



Multiple by Anonymous

In middle age I learn
I slide between personae like a fish between waves
- moreover I am used to it
my only way of being
know the struggle for mental survival
like no other
or like all the others
inside this cauldron in here
so hot they leap, leap like little fishes.

How many of me pass through in an hour?
No wonder I have no memory,
scalded out of myself by rape at two,
Auschwitz at home
nuclear war in the nuclear family.

How many of there of me?
Where? How?
How can anyone rape a two year old?
When can I stay in one place for an hour?
When dare I – we – venture forth into company?
O regiment of the damned, Monstrous Regiment
of tortured children screaming to be free
a company I shall caress
collect their tears for rain
fall on my – our – soul
be blessed.

When shall I lose the fear
that now I understand
of losing myself – daily, hourly.

What can I , we, do?
And who am I?
Which one speaks now
in the safe Bedlam-Bethlehem of my – our - mind

How many of us know
this news? Passed on –
how – in what subterranean depths?

Oh sweetest regiment of brave souls
marching to save a world
all contained in one small skull,
a torso, some few limbs
and organs, one most pitifully
deflowered in bitter winter
before even spring peeked over the horizon
flames of fire tearing through virgin territory
my life – in charred stumps
clawing for survival
imitating authentic humans
for my – our – life
for over half a century
quite unaware.

Neurosis by Paula Puddephatt

Am I still supposed to apologise
for my own existence?
I've done so,
many, many times;
yet, now
I'm not even sure
anymore that
I'm right with regard to my own
wrongness.

Bloody hell! You *have* to
laugh.

Poem 28 by Alison

It wasn't always so.
Once there was sunshine and
laughing

And walks along a sandy shore
And memories
warm and cosy.
But not now.
Now there are only winter days,
Cold and lonely with darkness
everywhere,
And not a sign of Spring.

It wasn't always so.
Once there were dreams of future
days

And hopes and plans
And excitement,
But nor now.
Now there are only misty dawns
And chill winds bringing sadness,
And still no sign of Spring.

But it wasn't always so.
Once there was a calm, blue sea,
Silver sand which shimmered in the
sun

And each day brought new joy.
But not now.
Now there are only echoing
footsteps

Passing me by –
And Spring will never come again

My world

by Jacqui L

Living in a dual world
Being in two places
In space and time
Exact time
Seeing, hearing, feeling
Both
With such pristine sharpness
Differentiation becomes impossible
Fear becomes a constant companion
Of being noticed
But where?
There or here
Which is which?
Poor tangled brain
Cannot decide unaided
I would write in blood
The pain of being whole
Of being so many separate pieces
I want to leave the past behind
In its rightful place
But it is often in me
A multitude of screaming parts
All clamouring for attention
Acknowledge those voices
You will label me mad
But acknowledge them I must
They are my companions
To deny them would obliterate me.
Time will find a way

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Real Stuff by Sheelah

None of it is real
It's all just stuff
I am not real
I am just stuff
He is not real
He is just stuff

And stuff and stuff
Can't hurt
Because hurt is not real
Hurt is just stuff
And real is not real
Real is just stuff

Everything is just stuff
So is crying real?
Or is that just stuff too?

Don't Say I Didn't Warn You

By Paula Puddephatt

Purposefully striding,
into your tidy, stamped and self-addressed,
world. She will grip tenaciously,
until some day she spies another

space, some place else, that simply *needs* creating:
one, of course, that only *she* could ever fill.
Then, and only then, will she slip out by the rear exit,
stealthily, yet already striding again, in her imagination.

Then in actuality,
conniving bitch that she is.
I shan't promise not to say,
"I told you so, you bloody fool."

FOR THE UNKNOWN - anon

Have you ever had that feeling that something happen to you well don't
be scared of these feelings they are all a part of you.

Don't rack your brain to try and work things out, because when your mind
is ready the memories will come flooding out.

Don't be surprised of your thoughts they are all very real; give yourself a
lot of time, then you'll be able to deal.

These memories are not nice, but they help you to reveal the locked up
child inside of you, who's helping you to heal.