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# RAINBOW'S END

Volume 6

Issue 3

**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

*Registered Charity No: 1109464*

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*Congratulations on  
surviving Christmas  
Hope you enjoyed at least  
some of the holiday*



Wishing all our members

# A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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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 made by the editor and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the executive committee 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 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2006

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

## Book Review by Kate Evans

### **"Misinformation concerning child sexual abuse and adult survivors" by Charles Whitfield, Joanna Silberg and Paul Fink, Haworth Press, 2001**

According to this excellent collection of articles, (also published as "Journal of Child Sex Abuse, Vol 9, Nos 3-4, 2001) 'false memory syndrome' is a 'pseudoscientific syndrome that was developed by an advocacy group formed by people seeking to defend against claims of child abuse" p30

This book is a major resource for everyone in the area, containing as it does the findings from several scientific studies which debunk the myth of false memory syndrome as defined by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. Although one or two of the articles contain a little specialist statistical analysis, most of the material is accessible. In my view the two most helpful ones are:-

**The 'False Memory' Defense – Using disinformation and junk science in and out of court, by Charles Whitfield** – This is an essential resource for advocates in adult CSA cases. It specifies the various tactics of the defence and recommends ways to tackle each.

**Implications of the Memory Controversy for Clinical Practice – an overview of treatment recommendations and guidelines, by Christine A Courtois** – This details good practice for therapists to avoid getting drawn into the FMS dispute, including Judith Herman's advice to "be technically neutral but morally cognisant of the prevalence and possibility of abuse" p202. As a therapist who has recently worked through the issue that my therapist cannot validate individual memories, my experience is that this can seem a difficult and painful step, but be surprisingly easily resolved.

The book is in some ways a shocking read – of a convicted paedophile gaining widespread sympathy as a wronged victim of a 'witch hunt'; of the influence of an internet site that looked like that of a prestigious institution but was, in fact, a personal site of one of its members; of how the vast weight of scientific research on CSA can be ignored etc. etc. But that is all part of the picture and this is a formidable work, a wholesale deconstruction of the 'false memory' position.

**You do believe me, don't you?** *by Carole & Co*

I am a survivor of severe and prolonged childhood sexual abuse including incest. I am about to tell you about my relationships with my mother, who was one of my abusers, and a strategy I have used to cope with this.

Just over seven years ago I saw my first therapist. I was falling apart and knew I needed help. I told her I needed to talk about my stepfather's sexual abuse of me when I was a child. His abuse was the only abuse I hadn't totally dissociated from and was able to attempt to confront at that time. But, whenever I tried to talk about it with her, she would stop me and say, "That's enough. It's obviously very distressing, and, in fact, you will probably never need to talk about it. But you appear to have some issues with your mother and perhaps it will be better if we work on those."

Of course it was distressing trying to talk about what my stepfather did to me! Childhood sexual abuse is extremely distressing, but it obviously distressed her more, as she was doing her utmost to avoid it. What mother issues was she talking about? I couldn't comprehend what she was saying. I was extremely shaken, angry and confused. I believe she thought she had picked an easier option by recommending we work on my 'mother issues'.

At a further session with this same therapist she brought out a tray full of stones of different shapes, sizes and colours. Then, proceeded to ask me to pick a stone to represent myself and continue choosing stones that would represent each of my family members, and to position these around my stone according to how close or distant I felt them to be, and who was most important to me. I was completely paralysed by her request and was unable to even begin to think about who meant what to me; let alone pick out stones to represent family dynamics. My head and body had gone into orbit!! I told her I couldn't do it. So she said, "OK, but I am going to bring it out every week until you do." How I restrained myself from upending the whole tray, I don't know.

I never went back to her again. Which is just as well, because if she couldn't deal with what my stepfather had done, she sure as hell would have lost the plot if we had explored my "mother issues"?

It wasn't until I had been in therapy for some considerable time that I became aware that I had two very different ways of knowing and perceiving my mother. Completely opposite views and feelings towards her yet I was totally unaware that they were contradictory.

One self, the outside self, always believed that she was a good mother and we had a good mother / daughter relationship. We would talk together; she would talk with me about all sorts of things. She would tell me about very personal, private and intimate sexual issues about herself and had done so since I was a very small child. They were things I didn't want to hear about. Things a mother should never talk to a child about. I know that now, but I didn't then.

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I was the one she depended on, she told me, and she expected me to be there for her; to support her in every way and step in and run everything when she couldn't – which was quite often. This too I had been doing since I was a small child. I also had to be the peacemaker between her and most other family members. She needed me! – BIG TIME!!

I took all this to mean we had a good close relationship and I had to believe that. I even accepted that she needed to be strict with me as a sign of her being a good mother and that she loved me. On the outside, that self saw her as a good caring mother and was really convinced we had a strong relationship, and that whatever she did to me was for 'my own good'. All of her abuse was very deeply buried inside of me.

Another self had totally different feelings and beliefs towards my mother. This part lived deeper inside and was completely determined to be as different from her as possible.

I was going to be a much better mother. I didn't want to be like her, not even a little bit. My children weren't going to grow up the same way I had, although I couldn't have said what way that was – then. My children wouldn't be made to feel they owed me anything. I wouldn't force them to love me.

I was going to love and care for my children the best way I could. My children were important and special to me. My children would never be afraid of me, because I knew I was terrified of my mother. Just being physically near her and her smell would create total panic and fear in me. Why? I didn't know.

I would keep my children safe. I wouldn't hurt my children. I would love my children. I was never going to be like her. EVER!!

In everything I did, I would make sure there was no way I did any thing that would make me be like her. I was terrified of being like her, I still am. I didn't know why at this stage, but I did know it was essential to never emulate her in any way or any thing. Especially once I'd been able to leave home and have a family of my own. Even to the point of deliberately buying a different soap powder than she used, rather than be like her.

None of this was easy, as she still had strong control over me and my life. But I knew one thing for sure. She was never going to get my children!!

So, these two totally contradictory feelings and beliefs were running through me simultaneously on two completely separate tracks that never came together. They never joined up or crossed over. They never came close enough to each other for me to even question or be aware that there two opposites existed. I coped because I was able to so completely separate one set of feelings and beliefs from the other. One self never knew how the other self felt.

If I, the outside self, was asked how I got on with my mother and what kind of relationship did we have. I would say and believe, "We had a really great mother / daughter relationship."

Regarding these relationships with my mother, I needed to be only able to acknowledge and know about the good mother / daughter relationship. I needed to believe and have others believe that I had a good caring mother who loved me. Not until I was in a safe enough space and stable enough could I risk acknowledging and managing the full horrors of my mother's and others' abuse of me without it totally destroying me.

Imagine that I am a survivor who is also your friend, colleague or your client. In those early years of therapy I needed to talk to you about my abusive childhood and my feelings about my family. I told you I have a good caring mother – YOU DO BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?

### 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006 Members Open Meeting

A Members Open Meeting is planned for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006 in Birmingham. These meetings are an opportunity for members to meet each other and the committee in a safe environment. Further details will be sent to members in February.

The second of this year's Open Meetings will be on 9<sup>th</sup> September and it is planned to hold this meeting away from the West Midlands - possibly in the North or East of England. Don't forget there is also the Annual General Meeting scheduled for June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Birmingham.

### Who am I? by Bobby Best

Say to someone, "Jack died."

And the response?

"But I only spoke to him on Tuesday"

As though Jack had no right to die after this person had spoken to him.

In a similar way I say "I have a condition which means there seem to be other people inside me"

And the response?

"Well, I've never met these other people"

What they haven't seen cannot be – Christ and doubting Thomas.

Other people say, "You're not yourself." – Disappointment.

"You're not very cheerful" – Entertain me.  
Not me.

"You used to be always ready to party"

Who me?

"I used to enjoy our away days. You went in the sea whatever the weather."

Me?

"You always had some exciting project on the go"

Who me?

"I loved the drawings you did on the wall before you stuck on the wallpaper"

Was that me?

I'm none of these and all of these.

And some of these some of the time, and none of these most of the time.

So, who is emerging?

A new me or an amalgam of them all.

Who'se me?

The Stillness Inside and Out *by Donna w/ Wings*

Here I sit alone with my spring bulbs still not planted. All the cats are either napping or outside exploring the fresh snow that has fallen once again. Perhaps they are in the woodshed chasing all around what still moves even if it is just a leaf.



it

All that I can hear is the ticking of two clocks. I hear the heavy snow that breaks free like puzzle pieces from the old rusted roof and slides falling to the ground with a great big thud. The snaps and crackles from the burning pine that keeps us warm and cozy for now. Later in the year we will have to burn ash and maple to stay warm, but for now pine is fine. I can hear the occasional car that goes by yet somehow the snow muffles the loudness and the car seems to be much farther away than it really is. The sound of my pen flowing across this paper that shares our experience in the northern light of early morning and winter, but really fall.



The electricity went off some time during the night so there is no sound coming from the ice box, radio or loud TV, or the constant hum of my computer. No water running except outside where the rivers tumble with rage...reaching their banks and in some places overtaking the land that usually forms the shape of the river keeping the river in place until the spring of the year when the river outgrows its shape and sculpts with broken ice new forms, shapes and banks of rock and dirt...trees.



I see the sun trying ever so hard to peek through every now and then leaving beautiful shades and shapes of light on the kitchen floor and walls... table and chairs. It's warmth is shining through the hanging crystal which paints rainbow colors all around us and the room. Angelisse calls them fairy lights of roller coasters. I see a few flurries left behind in the air dancing around each other as though they are doing a winter waltz. I see the onions that grew out of hard work as they lay in a garden basket drying... getting ready to go in homemade spaghetti sauce; a sauce that was made from cooking down fresh tomatoes that were picked from my garden with tenderness and care. I see all the projects that have been left undone due to the past two storms. And today that is okay with me. We have enough put up for the winter with forty four jars of wild grape jelly. I guess I am ready now.

I see a small chickadee that sits on a sunflower branch in my garden, covered with a white blanket of snow, eating sunflowers seeds from the center of the flower. I am pleased to see this as the blue jays already ate most of the seeds in early fall. I am sure there are plenty of seeds underneath the snow and in the spring we will discover new sunflowers popping out of the ground in all directions...every where. All will be ready for a new cycle of growth and life.



I smell my coffee which was made on the wood stove and the oregano and basil which hangs above drying. Oh how I love the scents of drying herbs. For me it brings healing of some sort. The scent fills me with magic and peace and perhaps love. I smell the wood smoke that hangs low in the air yet at the same time the crisp freshness of the outside that has been cleansed by the falling snow in darkness. I think I can even smell the snow itself.

I feel as though time has stopped and I would think that to be true if I didn't hear the tick tock of the clocks which surely tell me time is still moving forward. I feel peace, a peace that comes from deep within and from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head. The peace outside my window. I feel the slowness of my heart beat...my breath. There is a stillness that is okay. It is not scary like it usually is. It just is. I guess the snow has a way of slowing everything down both inside of us and outside of us. It is as if Mother Nature could see and feel or in some magical way know that we needed to slow down before we broke down and crashed. Funny how nature knows things and can do the things it does long before we know them or can do anything about it.



Yes the falling snow, like angels, shut down the power last night. For a time, life is simple now. In this very moment life is worth embracing and living.

This morning I give thanks for the fallen snow and I leave a little tobacco, sage, cedar and sweet grass in my garden of both light and darkness...inside and out.



*Dear frends in tis pla centr*

*my nam is tiger girl an I be 7  
I wud lik fer tel yu bowt wen I goed  
to tronto tat be in canda*

*I did fly in big eroplan an tat did be  
esiten. In tronto we did visit los plases onli my beses  
be wen us did go tronto zoo tat zoo be veri veri big an  
us no cud see all annals but did see tigers tat be beses  
of al an los oder annals lik fises an rino an birds an  
monkes an der an big grisly ber an mummy gerila did cary  
baby gerila on she bak*

# PLAY

*Her do be sum pikturs of annals fer yu to coler*

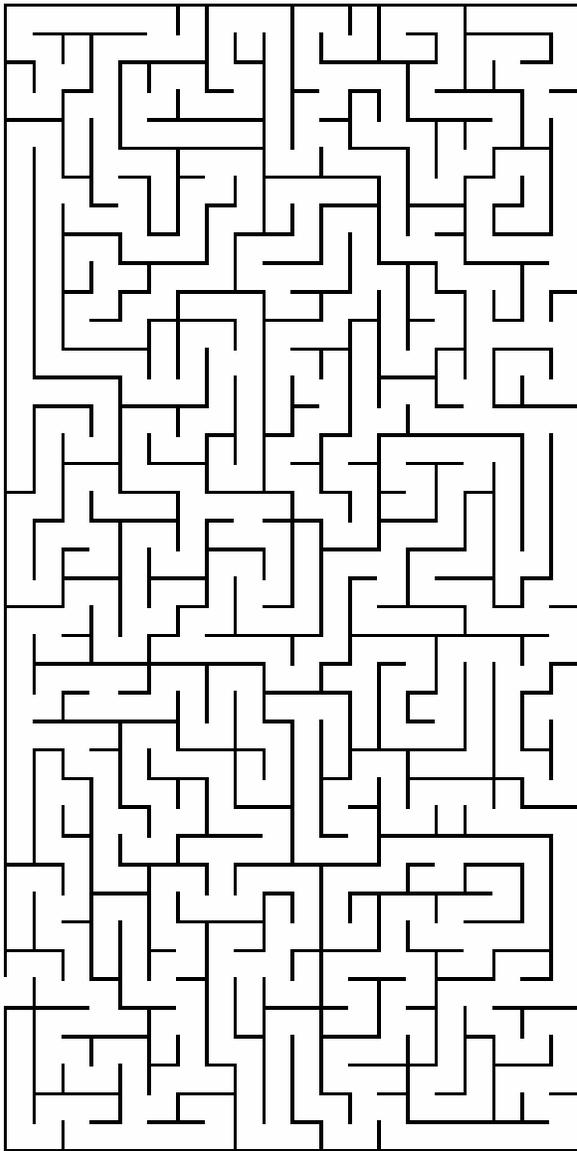
*Bye bye frum tiger girl*



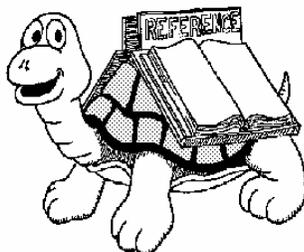
## TRANSLATION

Dear friends in this play centre, my name is Tiger Girl and I am 7. I would like to tell you about when I went to Toronto, which is in Canada. I flew in a big aeroplane and that was exciting. In Toronto we visited lots of places only my best was when we went to Toronto zoo. That zoo was very, very big and we couldn't see all the animals but we did see tigers that be the best of all and lots of other animals like fishes and rhino and birds and monkeys and deer and a big grizzly bear and a mummy gorilla was carrying a baby gorilla on her back. Here are some pictures of animals for you to colour. Bye bye from Tiger Girl.

# CENTRE



**Can you find your way through the Maze?**



## JOKES

**What do ghosts eat for dinner?**

Spook-ghetti

**Doctor, doctor, my sister thinks she is a clock.**

Well, stop winding her up then!

**What do you get if you cross a bell with a very large gorilla?**

A ding dong, king kong.

**Why is it dangerous to do sums in the jungle?**

Because if you add 4 plus 4, you get eight (ate)

**When is the vet busiest?**

When it rains cats & dogs

What an experience. I have lived in the middle of a field all my life so when we were in the taxi from Toronto airport going through urban areas for over forty five minutes, with not a blade of grass in sight I was wondering however was I going to manage nine whole nights in a hotel (I don't do hotels; tents, youth hostels, but not hotels) in the middle of what seemed like an endless city as well as having to be polite and sociable. I really thought I had set myself up for one enormous fall. The conference itself was not a problem mainly because the workshop Kathryn and I had prepared was on a subject Kathryn is very used to delivering, 'Learning from the Experts'. I also had the luxury of being in a supporting role that is very different from taking full responsibility.

Toronto is tall. Everywhere you look in the centre is amazing, skyscrapers with the very occasional ordinary height building. Toronto is the financial capitol of Canada. Yonge Street, which is the longest street in the world, was at the bottom of the road where our hotel was situated. It was an amazing shopping centre and then you had all the underground shopping malls! Kathryn luckily has a much better sense of direction and Terry (my husband) and I soon found ourselves very happily following her and we always ended up where we wanted to be.

I would just like to share cameo snap shots of the conference as it was three very long, extremely full days. My personal highlight was Steve Gold, who was the president of the ISSD in 2003/04 coming up to

me and saying he had very much wanted to meet me (and Kathryn) as he so admired and agreed with the work we were doing. He said he had visited our web site and felt the information on it was exactly what people need to know and lots and lots of other very complimentary things. I am afraid I stood there with my mouth open and just said how excited I was to meet him and behaved very much like a dumb-struck teenager with her favourite pop idol and that was exactly how it felt. When we finished talking I was bursting with excitement not only about meeting him but the fact that he had, quite of his own accord, introduced himself and endorsed the work we are all trying to do through FPP. What bigger compliment could we hope for at a conference of this magnitude?

We met several people from the UK whose names we knew through our membership of the UKSSD, but it was good to put faces to these names. Each person represented different aspects with the common thread of promoting awareness of dissociation coming through very strongly.

I attended workshops and papers sessions, as well as the main plenary sessions and it was not always the big names that I got the most from. Because it is an academic conference you get PhD students delivering papers as part of their course work. Two of these I found extremely interesting, both concerned attachment. One was with new young mums and the other with young mums in the States whose husbands/partners were serving with the forces in Iraq.

Both pieces of work were obviously in the early stages but the correlation between mums who had dissociative symptoms and the way they were finding it hard to respond to their baby or young child begins to indicate that these mothers may well require more support at stressful times in their lives. I know those of us who are dissociative and parents would say it is obvious and I am sure we all have examples we could quote. But we have to have the research to make it scientifically acceptable for change to happen. Another speaker was talking about working with children and how comparatively quickly an improvement can be seen with a child who is correctly diagnosed and receives the appropriate help. I think the amount of work being done in picking up on dissociative symptoms in children is really heartening and for me was one of the most exciting aspects of the three days.

For Terry and me a paper on working with both the dissociative client and a friend/partner etc right from the start was something we both think is so essential. This can probably only happen if people are diagnosed much earlier while we still have friends/partners etc. Many of us are alone with much added baggage through incorrect diagnoses and medication by the time we get the help we need, that it makes this approach to include the non-abusing family hypothetical. It was very painful to hear someone else saying the things my husband says, like, "he always feels he is treading on eggshells, never sure what to do or say". I do hope we see the changes outlined in that paper.

Another highlight was sharing a room at a meeting for International delegates (i.e. non-USA) with representatives from twenty-four countries, and finding that every single country is struggling in their work with dissociation and sharing the courage and energy that is being put in by all these folk to make change happen.

The perfect ending for me was to hear Marlene Hunter who wrote, 'Understanding Dissociative Disorders – a guide for family physicians and health care professionals' which is a bit of a bible for me, speak. She is an amazingly wise, humorous woman, who has worked in the field of dissociation for many years but is still able to share her energy and enthusiasm on the subject and has an ability to connect with the whole of her audience. I felt very privileged to hear her speak, energised and positive about the never-ending task of working for change within the NHS.

As in all good endings there are people to thank. Firstly my husband Terry who was the most sensitive, strong, empathic support that Kathryn and I could have hoped for. I know without him that neither of us would have been able to enjoy ourselves nearly as much. And then there are Remy Aquarone and Dr William Hughes. They have offered both academic and general support over the months of preparation and were there in Canada with us and both were very willing to again offer a steadying few words when needed. Thank you to three very generous men.

**Trauma & Dissociation versus Dissociation alone by Melanie**

During the ISSD conference there was a Town Hall Meeting. Everyone was included in this forum. All attendees were allowed to have a voice. Very quickly the question about whether to rename the International Society for the Study of Dissociation (ISSD) to include the word Trauma became the focus of this session. It was very interesting from several angles. Firstly, most people who had been involved in this apparently ongoing debate came with quite fixed views. At the end many were honest enough to admit they were a lot less clear. I started from a point of pure interest and no other agenda. Many people gave their views, some for and some against but all with very plausible reasons as to their train of thought. Gradually as others held forth, some very passionately, I found myself disappearing; depersonalisation was kicking in big time. At the time my feelings, which probably were over-riding my rationale, was that for years I had no sense of self or identity, no sense of belonging and gradually as I have become aware and accepting of being DID I have gradually gained a sense of who we are and through FPP and others a sense of belonging.

One male therapist said he felt it was like coming home in his professional life when he could put a name to a client's distress. This really hit home for me as I remembered the very first conference I attended over eight years ago and I described it as 'coming home'. For two days I fitted in without having to justify myself and all the lecture topics resonated throughout.

For people who have DID the therapy is very specific; tremendous overlaps as for trauma, especially the more complex situations but still specific. I feel certain that if all the family inside had not been allowed a voice, to develop and heal, we would be no further along our road towards co-operation and for us, eventually integration. I wonder by not working specifically with our DID if it would have done a lot more harm. The intolerable frustration felt by all when we were just addressing abuse (trauma) issues could often leave us suicidal.

If dissociation is put in with trauma will this give the powers that be even more opportunities to not address dissociation? On the other hand is this the way to get dissociation onto the agenda more quickly and maybe get some people speedier help? Logically with the enormous amount of over-lap between trauma, complex PTSD, in which many of the dissociative symptoms are recognised, and DID this is the way forward. In the ideal world Trauma and Dissociation have to be looked at alongside each other. With the enormous amount of research, which is supporting the crossovers, it becomes impossible to separate out the two. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) held their conference on the preceding few days to the ISSD at the same venue and many delegates attended both. I received the ISTSS conference details and I have to admit they had many sessions that I would have really liked to have attended.

Being a cynic I think that if we put Dissociation in with Trauma, those of us who are DID will get even less help, if that's possible, than we do now. I fear we'll be back to feeling, as clients, that we are failing because the models for helping other trauma victims who are not DID do not help us. All the old messages that it is our fault will be back on the agenda big time.

To attract wider recognition and funding the use of the word Trauma with Dissociation is probably makes the field a much more marketable product. For a quick term fix should the longer-term implications be ignored? I am glad I do not have to make the decision.

## An experience with M.E. (myalgic encephalitis) by Kate Evans

Over the past year I've had and recovered from M.E., and share my experiences hoping they may help others. It all began with a chest infection that didn't clear up with one course of antibiotics. The second course the doctor prescribed was oxytetracycline, a broad spectrum antibiotic, although I'd told the clinic I was allergic to this group. I got so weak while taking them that I could hardly get upstairs. The next week I returned to work, collapsed, and got a second chest infection through which I didn't sleep, but sweated all night with a racing heart followed by utter exhaustion. I didn't get better. The doctor said, "There's nothing wrong with you", telling me I had post-viral fatigue.

Before the illness my then therapist had been pushing me into a course of action I could not do and felt trapped by, pushing myself way beyond my limits. After her break, when I told her I was ill, she had problems believing me and said she would have to work closely with the doctors I disliked. I stopped the therapy.

Soon I was incredibly weak, terrified I'd need nursing, and facing financial anxiety. One morning I gagged on the Echinacea I was taking for my immune system. At once I thought of allergies. Twenty years previously I'd been bedridden for 12 months out of a two year period with what looked like chronic bronchitis but turned out to be an allergy to my new cat and her kittens. I got better as soon as I found them a home and went on the anti-Candida diet.

So now, I booked in for tests with local homeopaths. They found thirty sensitivities, including soap and dishwasher liquid, with so many foods they almost didn't tell me, not knowing if I could manage to exclude them. But I did, though I lost weight fast. Within a week the sensitivities were down to 15, then 10..... the extreme weakness gone, never to return.

With homeopathic drops and pills, and a new therapist, I slowly recovered strength over 3 months.

Over a Christmas holiday I realized how much I hated the area I'd recently moved into, then relapsed as soon as I started work, and again when I went to check out a new area. This time I was also severely triggered by someone from my paedophile childhood. I was ill with what was now called M.E., alone and scared – THEY knew where I was and my new name. Each time I got better enough to go out I'd get badly triggered – purposeful or coincidental made no odds. I became scared to go out, got in a bad state, lost the homeopaths and in desperation got some Chinese herbs. They were great, enabled me to rest, and then my therapist told me that positive thinking for a multiple was to nurture my insiders. This turned my world around. I began to use the time the illness gave me to calm my inner children and found I could be happy alone.

By now a friend had taught me how to allergy check my food myself, and I dosed everything with a key ring on cotton thread, which felt crazy but it worked. I'd asked it for a swing that meant yes, and another that meant no, and I allergy checked every food at every meal, avoiding those that checked no. This meant I ate a widely varied diet, as the illness seemed to set up allergies. I also found excellent acupuncture, and a new homeopath who took my psychological journey on board. Working with my therapist on trigger management soon enabled me to start getting out.

However, I was still getting relapses, mostly now from depressed insiders taking over when I was down and pushing the body too far. And I was terrified of the approaching month-long summer therapy break. My new therapist knew an M.E. expert.

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She'd already told me that he found that people with immune systems badly damaged from traumatic backgrounds often got M.E. Now, she added that he also said that people with M.E. usually got better when the trauma was resolved. She knew I accepted a total body/mind link and suggested I work with my insiders, telling them they could be safe and well.

By now I'd experienced being able to get to sleep after an insider meeting and nurturing panicky insiders. I didn't know how far insider control of the body went, but I was prepared to try it. Then, returning from an acupuncture session I had suddenly to take 3 buses, which would ordinarily have given me a relapse. I spent the two hours repeating a calming mantra for my insiders. No relapse. It worked. Since then I've had no relapses.

So, what have I found out? My first homeopaths had quite a good success rate with homeopathy and allergy testing, and they also recommended acupuncture. The Chinese also were a success – their medicine is excellent for immune system diseases, being holistic, rather than symptom oriented. And many people I spoke to had experience of antibiotics at the start of their M.E. The best article I've read about it was ten years old, from the "What Doctors Don't Tell You" newsletter. I was utterly shocked that material I had found accurate had been known for so long but was not in general circulation. From their article and my experience I'd recommend the following approaches:

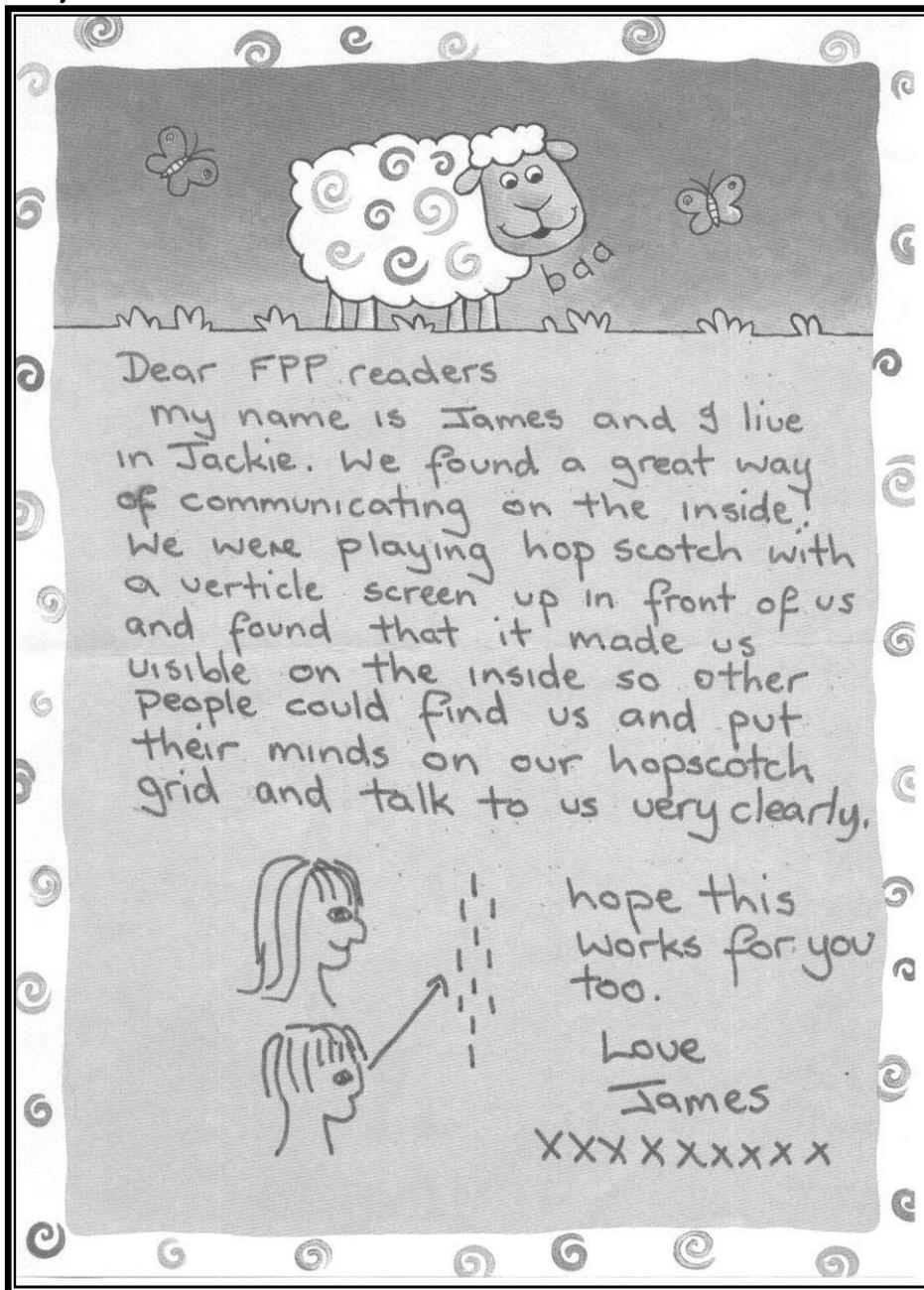


**Reminder** : First Person Plural does not necessarily endorse the views or recommendations expressed in any article published in this newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is for information and support only. You are advised to take appropriate professional advice before acting on treatment or therapy recommendations made by any contributor to the newsletter.

- Nutritional : "A survey of 695 patients carried out by Action for M.E. in 1991 to assess 34 different therapies, showed that of the 80% who changed their diet, 73% experienced improvement in their condition" (article in "Control Your Health, Vol 4 No 5). Eat good, simple foods – "You are what you eat" by Dr Gillian McKeith is excellent on basic nutrition. Take supplements, especially Vitamin B, EFAs, Calcium and Magnesium and maybe Potassium. Go on the anti-Candida diet – no yeast, no sugar, no tea, coffee or fermented substances etc. Books in health food shops give information.
- Regular allergy testing. I found an NHS patch test made me very faint, whereas I found the Vega machine and muscle testing methods most helpful. It all sounds crazy, but I found it worked.
- Gentle exercising to oxygenate the blood, and "nourishing breathing" from the belly, 20 minutes at a time.
- Homeopathy and acupuncture treatments to strengthen the body.
- Psychotherapy – partly because of the depression from the isolation that M.E. brings, partly to help with the life changes from the situation that brought on the M.E.

If you have little cash, a minimum package might be to learn to allergy check, do exercising and breathing, and try to get some counseling or other support to change your lifestyle. And keep trying. One of the homeopaths I first saw didn't think I'd a chance of recovery, with my psychological problems and past allergy illnesses.

*Hopscotch Communications*



**WANTED Pictures, Articles, Tips, and Quips**

One of the contributing factors to the delay in this issue of the newsletter was that the editor's file of contributed pictures, articles etc is getting very thin. Please consider writing or drawing something for inclusion in future issues. Artwork is particularly needed, but must photocopy well.

**Influencing National Policy & Practice**

Further to Kathryn's involvement in an advisory group for the Department of Health/NIMHE & Home Office Victims of Violence & Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP) she was invited to join a Panel of Experts being consulted as part of the VVAPP's DELPHI research project to evidence good practice in the treatment and support of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. She has completed the first stage of this three stage DELPHI consultation process and naturally has focused her comments on what works for abuse survivors who develop DID and other complex dissociative conditions. This is a long term goal but we hope her involvement, on behalf of FPP, will have an influence on changing national policy and practice to ensure that dissociative survivors are better able to access the help they need.

P O E M S and R H Y M E S

May 33<sup>rd</sup> by Kate E

To me the face shows hatred,  
- to you, all smiles.  
Welcome, it's May 33<sup>rd</sup>.

I see the hand poised to strike,  
- you see it waving.  
Welcome, It's May 33<sup>rd</sup>

The words I hear are encoded with terror,  
-to you, it's a kindly hello.  
Welcome, It's May 33<sup>rd</sup>

As I fight for my life and sanity,  
-you hear, "She was always crazy."  
Welcome, it's May 33<sup>rd</sup>

We are no threat! By "The Team"

We hurt inside, we know we do;  
It's there each hour of every day.  
Memories, thoughts and question marks  
They never cease – for play.  
Sometimes we're lax and feelings show –  
Then some others cannot cope.  
They have weak areas in their life –  
If ours escape –  
They may, too, lose their hope.  
We then become their "danger"  
They'd prefer we hide away.  
THREAT lies not in what we say, or do –  
Not how that see us feel.  
That THREAT is deep inside themselves!  
It's their Achilles heel!

**RECOVERY is...** "like trying to completely gut and re-model your house while living in it"  
Judith Herman

**The Voice of Poetry, Cocoon my Spirit**

by 63

This voice that sings and quietly whispers to me,  
Voice buried deeply, out of sight, within my symmetry,  
That mine own reflection cannot glimpse he.  
For he bathes within the spirit that dwells within me;  
Purifying my thoughts for his voiced poetry.  
Then shall it be written for you to feel and see;  
Then your voice will speak, as mine speaks to me.  
Then the cocoon of your spirit will sing  
In true harmony with thee, See  
His pure poetry can only be written  
Within pure emotions, for pure is he.  
One can only write pure poetry if one can hear and see  
The love and suffering within humanity.  
Deafness cannot befall for one's heart is the spirit.  
Listen to it beat, incessantly.

**Black is the night**

by Rhymaster

**Black is the night,**  
Wide is the sea,  
Terrible the sight;  
Listen to me.  
**Black is the night**  
Dark is myself;  
Oh for the light  
To see my true self.  
**Wide is the sea,**  
Broad is the space  
Twixt self and me  
We must fill this space.  
**Space must be filled,**  
Light be provided;  
Sea must be dried  
Night must be ended.  
**How is it done?**  
Answer me, please.  
Can night be gone;  
Can sea grow trees?  
**Does light ever shine;**  
Is any space filled;  
Have I the time  
Or shall I have died.