



October 2007

RAINBOW'S END

Volume 8

Issue 1

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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The Tale of the Sock Holder *by JJ*

Whilst talking to Ray, one of my insiders, he asked for an allowance of seven pence halfpenny. When I asked what he wanted to save for he said 'a sock holder'. He reckoned he would have enough in 3-4 weeks for his sock holder.

After about 20 frantic minutes of questions I was still none the wiser as to what a sock holder was. All I knew was that Ray wanted his socks neat and smart in a sock holder. Anyway I decided to ask Ray (who by this time was in a state of distress) to draw a sock holder. This is what he drew.



Now having been in the bedroom to look at the socks I recognised Rays' pic as a drawer! So, I emptied some things out of a drawer and put all the socks neat and tidy in it. Ray settled down and was happy. (The socks had shared a drawer with the bras and knickers). It only goes to show ordinary life can be very difficult and very rewarding for a multiple.

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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; personal experiences;
words are good; **brief snippets & artwork** are desperately needed

To be considered for the next issue we need to receive them **by 30th December, 2007**

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

B o o k R e v i e w *by Melanie Goodwin*

Breaking the Chains of Abuse: A practical guide *by Sue Atkinson*

Published by Lion £7.99 ISBN 978-0-7459-5135-5

The author has used her own personal traumatic childhood and the many ideas she has found that have helped her on her healing journey, to write this book. The book follows a clear format that is both comprehensive and easy to follow. It is written as a workbook but that does not exclude it from being a tool that could be used in many other ways. Dissociation is not often referred to directly throughout the book but the way Sue has used a collection of soft toys, each one having a specific role makes the book one that I feel many people who are dissociative will find helpful. I am unsure what I really feel about the book as a whole. Many of the ideas I have used during the early days of my therapy but for me it was not resonating as I feel I am probably further on in my own journey making it a reflective rather than an immediate read. While saying that I totally admire Sue's courage in facing her story head on and putting it into a book that I am sure will help many people. Sue writes from a Christian perspective while acknowledging her need to find many alternative ways to help her to begin to reach a place of inner peace. For me the book sensitively allows the reader to hold onto their faith without putting them on a guilt trip about forgiveness and so many of the other complex issues that so often surround healing and being a practicing Christian. In an extraordinary way the book manages to address a brutal subject in a very gentle, non abusive way. Sue seems to have found a way of talking and sharing some extremely tough issues without traumatizing the reader.

The Gift *by Cathy*

He is a child, yet older than time in many ways. He has walked through the fires of hell, and come through the other side, stronger in ways I may never understand. I never directly experienced the absolute horror he did because he was there when all of it happened. Yet he holds the innocence of the child he is in so many ways. The world and all its wonders are his to discover this time around.

For the past months I've walked the halls of memory with him, contracting to never leave him alone again. When I made that contract, I never realized how close to the brink of insanity I would come, how long the darkness would last, how strong a hold it would have on my mind. I never realized that I would wish so fervently that I could find a way to end my own life without taking the others with me.

He came to me just a short time ago, little more than a week or so I think. In his hands he held a box, old and weathered. Sitting beside me, he quietly explained what he wanted to do, explained that the means to do it were within that box. I thought he had truly turned the corner to madness. I thought he had no idea what he was facing, what he would end up with. I thought it was the worst idea he had ever had. I was terrified, uncertain, what if it did not work, what if I tried it but learned it was not for me, what if, what if, what if?

For each question I gave voice to, he seemed to have an answer even if sometimes the answer was, "I don't know. I can try though. I want to try." After much soul searching, I finally agreed if they could find a way to assure me that I could pull away if I wanted to. A belt looped around his waist, the other end anchored to a stout tree was their solution.

When I stood in front of him, finally willing to try, he explained the contents of the box. He told me he'd learned to feel again, after a lifetime of not feeling emotion or a physical sense of who he was in the body. He said that before he began to do the work he needed to do, he grew afraid of losing all the wonder that came to him when he began to feel. On a day not long before agreeing to begin to work with our therapist, he gave his innocence, his sense of wonder a physical shape and appearance. He placed it inside that box, kept it safe until the bulk of his work was done.

The box facing him, he lifted the lid. I couldn't see because the lid blocked my view, but light poured from that box, filled the air around him with a radiance I'd never seen before. I watched as his hand reached in and closed around the contents of the box. He carefully lifted his hand, tucked it into his pocket, and I watched the light fill him and shine outward. Bending over, he placed the box on the ground and straightened, standing tall and grinning from ear to ear. He took one step toward me and reached out his hand, offering it to me. I remember thinking this is crazy, this is totally nuts! Yet I could not resist the urge to reach toward him too.

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I took his hand, and felt myself fill with awe. He stepped into me, blended himself in and around me, and I wept. I never knew what it was like to be a child filled with joy. I never knew what it was like to feel this indescribable emotion. I never knew. I never knew.

I never knew that the waves in the ocean are for dancing in, for racing back to shore. I never knew that on a warm spring day, the sun shining down on that ocean makes it appear to be filled with the brilliance of a million diamonds. I never knew that a peanut butter and jelly sandwich could taste so good. I never knew that the laughter of my children could be so infectious. I never knew the feel of sand between my toes could feel like an affirmation of life.

I never knew that Star Wars was so breathtaking, so fascinating, so intriguing in all the special effects it pours out. I never knew that ice cream freezing cold on the tip of my tongue could taste so amazingly crisp. I never knew that the laughter of friends could fill my heart with so much contentment. I never knew that the grief of someone who loves me and will miss me could be so sharp, so painful. I never knew so many things. But I am learning them now.

We are together almost all the time now. He tells me he receives as much as I do in this blending thing. I cannot imagine how that could be, but I will accept his word for it. I know now, Danny does not lie, and he never has.

Still working towards joined up thinking and feelings *by MG*

I was fortunate in being able to attend a workshop led by Suzette Boon. Suzette is a clinical psychologist/psychotherapist in the Netherlands. She works in research and has her own clinical practice as well as being the author of many printed papers. She is the current president of the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation and has been extremely active in getting the society established. She had accepted an invitation to run her workshop on, 'Stabilising patients with DID: techniques, difficulties and pitfalls' at the UKSSD's Study Day.

I would like to share what the day brought up for me personally as it turned out to be another experience that gave me considerable insight. I know this is not unique to me but is no doubt experienced by many others in varying ways.

This was a day I had looked forward to as Suzette had been active in presenting at the UKSSD conference the previous year and I had really related to what she was talking about. I had appreciated how she metaphorically held the vulnerability of people who are dissociative while speaking about how she works with them along with some aspects of research.

Often people who talk about dissociation from their working stance, be it research or their clinical approach, can trigger strong feelings of depersonalisation in me.

Over the years the ones I have learnt most from have been those who somehow manage to juggle all the balls in the air and give an integrated, sensitive presentation.

On the study day I was probably the only person in the room who was not working clinically with a dissociative client and I found this extremely daunting. This was my problem as all the delegates treated me with great friendliness. I suspect this is a reflection of where I am personally. I use to be able to go to anything without even getting nervous. As my brain becomes a lot less compartmentalized I am finding I get very anxious about everything. I am learning (slowly), how to tolerate feelings and hope in time these learn to be the size required for the situation. At the moment they always seem much too big and I feel unable to measure if they truly reflect the situation or not. It is like opening a box marked 'feelings'. This box has been tightly shut forever and hey presto we are now into totally new territory yet again. As I re-read this I see I am talking about feelings as though they are personified and I am an observer. This is indeed how it often feels at the moment.

Another aspect of my own journey that this day has helped me to understand is I used to go to events and hear the words. If I was listening to something I understood I would remember the content very clearly, often word for word. I could repeat it but have no real feel for what had been spoken about. Over time this has been replaced by not remembering the actual verbal content but having a sense of the occasion and a feel for what was talked about.

So we learnt to wing it using all sorts of tricks so no one would guess how little we actually remembered.

Over the last year we have lost both the ability to remember or have a feel for something. This has been the most difficult time as we could no longer cover up the problem. I could read an article, attend a meeting but have no recollection of what I'd read or what I'd heard. I did not lose time and yet content had no impact on me. Often it feels like I just don't understand what I am hearing or reading and I no longer have the ability to get the gist of it. My brain is really struggling to make some sense of it but the information is being fed into an area that is not equipped to do this. I have felt quite paralysed by this on many an occasion.

Gradually it is beginning to change. At times I can remember what is being spoken about and have a linked feel for it as well. I can begin to see how this is a much more integrated approach. How I make sense of this is the brain has had to unlearn so many old ways of managing. It feels like we had to undo the learnt ways, established from birth, before the new, naturally developed ways could begin to be established and start to work. This is rewiring of or in some instances wiring for the first time, neural pathways. There was a day when the threads to the old ways were relinquished and we had to transfer completely to the new system. Proper scary, no going back! Never has there been a time when just being is so essential. I cannot be proactive in this stage or at least by consciously doing nothing I am being proactive.

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The days of memories surfacing and the detective work involved in trying to put them together and understand are a long way off. New memories do still come up but in a different way. Sometimes what I would have previously described as very difficult memories which would have knocked us sideways for many days are now dealt with much more easily. Maybe the whole of us needed to be at this stage before these were released into the consciousness. I think my brain is beginning to process information properly for the first time in my life.

Is this stage tough, yes it is exhausting? I am no longer terror driven but it does feel like getting through each day with an alien brain in my head. Talk about learning to trust my/ourselves! We have no choice unless we live on a desert island with no link to humans and for me that is not an option. I have to ask other people to bear with me more than at any other time.

More joined up thinking is very new but extremely exciting as it allows me to have a much more involved feel to both the way we think and the way we live. It is still in the very early days and is happening slowly, partly so I survive but also I suspect because of my age. As young bodies heal and accept change so much more readily so I feel sure would a younger brain!

Attending the study day and all this evolving as a consequence is a tangible example of the changes. Previously this may have happened but not at a level where I would have the luxury to think about it, return to it and develop and build on the experience. And best of all know that I am doing all these things.

INTEGRATION

*according to Marie Bridges
and the Gang*

Those who are not DID, we class as singletons. They have facets of their personalities which act differently in the roles they play in their lives, for example, Sue as mother, daughter, in social or work situations etc but all those facets know they are Sue.

Our main personalities, which have developed through trauma over time, are also singletons in their own right. They too have facets that they recognise as their own. We will never be one whole. Each of us holds severe trauma experiences and the long-term whole multiple traumas are diluted amongst us, allowing us to survive.

We do see therapy as bringing us more together, as blending / joining up / integration. Some think they will die or disappear but when they do join one or more personalities the best of what they are is still there in the new creation. We see it as a way to reduce to a number, where we can co-operate; co-existing with mutual respect that will give us a new quality of life.

We see ourselves as a large diamond with many colourful facets each being beautiful and precious.

POEMS & RHYMES

Love me, Love all of me by Anne-Marie

Love at first sight or so you say, this crazy blonde who has jumped into your life. She is mad, she is crazy, adrenaline freak that's how you describe me. This is the one for me, i'm signing up with her for the long term.

Dare I hope, Dare I dream is he the one for me. All of me the child, the brainy one, the hard nut, and all the rest till you get to me, and who that is i've yet to find out.

I'm a puzzle you see lots of different pieces each more complex and diverse than the last. Can he be the one who supports me, helps me on my journey to find all the pieces, until i'm all back together again?

Many have tried, Many have signed up for this same journey it's easy you see when everyone is playing nice. But when the going gets tough, their love was not worth the paper it was written on.

Will he be the one? do i have the courage to try again, to open up to let another into this family of me?

Inside Outside by Jay Lou

There's a rock in my head

And awareness will flatten

Planted by the demon

Dark nights with the predator

At the end of my bed

Keep watching the fire

And where do I go

The faces draw

When there's nowhere to hide

Into a safer quagmire

There is only one place

When the days become hell

We all run inside

Waking dreams on

When the infant first hurt

The body moves

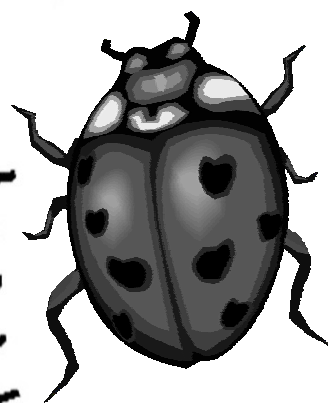
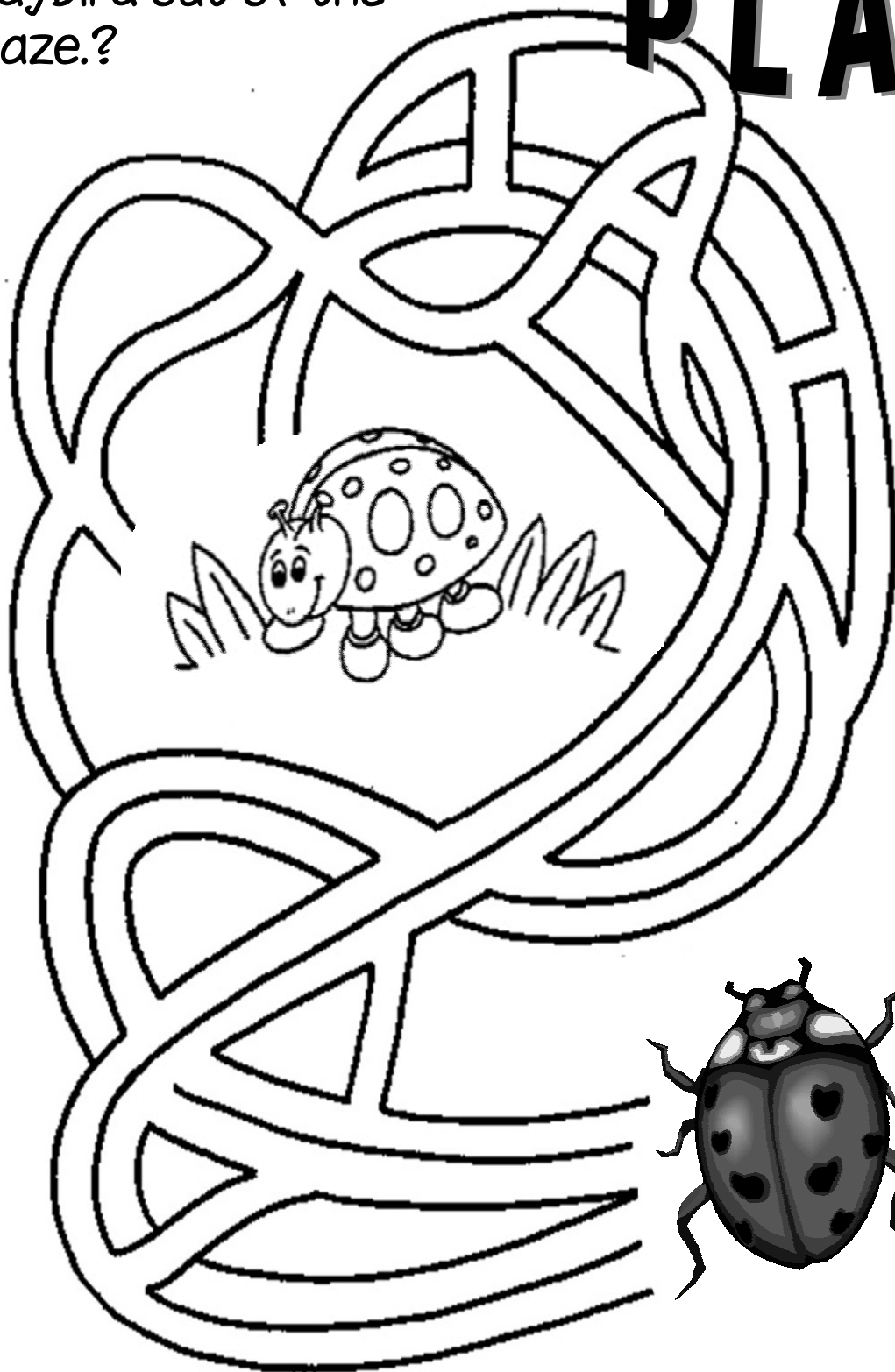
There were curtains with a pattern

But the mind ain't one.

Wait for the swirl

Can you help the
ladybird out of the
maze.?

PLAY



CENTRE

An Autumn Picture
to colour



Some thoughts *by Jacquie*

on the theory of structural dissociation of the personality

At the April 2007 Members Open Meeting in London, one of the discussions was about the theory of Structural Dissociation by Nijenhuis et al. I've since read some of his articles and they contain some very useful ideas, such as the difference between levels of consciousness and dissociation.

According to Hart, Nijenhuis, (2004) and other theorists much earlier, trauma causes a split into Apparently Normal Parts (ANP) and Emotional Parts (EP). The Apparently Normal Part can go about his or her daily business and function well. The Emotional Part contains the emotion related to the trauma and doesn't function well. The theory divides this into three levels. The levels being Primary Structural Dissociation, which relates to "uncomplicated forms of trauma related disorders" and is a split of one ANP and one EP. The second level is Secondary Structural Dissociation, which is a split between one ANP and several EP's and is present in "more complex trauma related disorders". The third level is Tertiary Structural Dissociation, which comprises of several ANP's and several EP's and is "limited to DID". The theory proposes that the ANP's and EP's are phobic of each other and go to great lengths to avoid each other. Other main points are that ANP's come out in more areas of life than EP's. Where there is more than one ANP the range of consciousness is restricted as are their range of actions. "their field of consciousness can be quite restricted in that they fail to appreciate the importance of other issues."

I don't like labels or models. This model produces more labels, in a sense it fragments the label of serious dissociation, (DDNOS, DID).

The problem with models is they assume, one size fits all and don't take into account either the complexity of individual experiences or the diversity. After the Open Meeting I tried to do a model of all my people and I couldn't do it. There were too many different variables, a hierarchy for memory, which was different, if knowing, was included, and another hierarchy for decisions, which conflicted with the hierarchy for control. We didn't make sense as a model because we were all idiosyncratic humans.

I don't like the distinction between Apparently Normal and Emotional Parts partly because I question the definition of 'normal'. Our fourteen year old, Charlie is perfectly 'normal' for a fourteen year old. She doesn't hold traumatic memories, does not have flashbacks, or emotional distress. She's also functional for a fourteen year old, but not for a biologically thirty four year old. She is highly functional and important to us in other ways but not in going to work or managing adult responsibilities. When I came to be, I was eighteen when we were biologically four and I came at the same time as a sister self who was the same age. We worked together for a long time looking after our four year old. Being slightly tougher than me, my sister self took the frontline position of fighting the abusers. We are now extremely different, I wouldn't ever say that she wasn't normal; she is normal considering her experiences.

We don't avoid each other, quite the opposite. When the biological self was very young, there was a central core of us and for a number of years we worked together in co-operation, although those working on the frontline kept away from the child so as not to contaminate her.

For a few years we stopped co-operating and went about our own business and there was fear. I was afraid of my sister self because she can be terrifying. Before I came to be, Beth was the earliest person to be created, not born and Beth is a lot older than any of us and always has been. She came about as a comforter, but now she is available to be alongside anybody who is conscious if they want her there. Beth is almost purely internal. Beth talked a long time about if people have only been subjected to fear and rage, they will be very defensive, so I understand my sister self better and accept her for who she is. Where Structural Dissociation theory talks about phobia between the ANP and EP, it doesn't take into account people like Beth who will mediate where necessary. My sister self would not fit into the full criteria of an EP, because although she can be very angry and sometimes cannot be seen or heard from for weeks, she can also function very well and has before carried the whole for a year. We work together to make connections with anybody who is isolated and in distress, but, only if the person wants that connection. It takes a long time. I don't agree that it is necessarily to do with avoidance. We have what we call a pit, in which resides a woman who is in complete and utter despair. She rocks, cries, and is totally withdrawn in her pain. She has a person similar to Beth with her all the time. My sister self has made several rescue attempts. We have meetings about her. She could certainly be classed as an EP. We do not avoid her and I don't think she avoids us, I think she is so locked in her pain, she doesn't know we are there.

I don't feel as though my range of consciousness is restricted, but, I don't know what the range of consciousness is like for somebody without DID. I don't know if people in the general population all have the same range of consciousness

I would have thought there were individual differences. I feel like a complete, distinct person and I know others within my whole do, particularly those who are central. Others don't feel so distinct because they have to trust the whole in terms of major decisions and responsibility. Obviously the woman who resides in the pit, her range is severely restricted, but others with a more restricted range of consciousness than me are not necessarily EP's. Several would be classed by Structural Dissociation Theory as ANP's. I don't find it helpful to split people within my whole into ANP's and EP's. Nonetheless, Nijenhuis is doing a lot of valuable research in the field of dissociation, including physical problems, memory, and hypervigilance.

All quotes taken from: Hart O, Nijenhuis E, Steele K, Brown D, 2004, Trauma-related dissociation: conceptual clarity lost and found. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 38, 906-914

Why I have found the concept of structural dissociation helpful

by Melanie Goodwin

I am an outside part of our family who was totally unaware of the others existence until I was forty three years old. I had no notion that we had an abusive childhood, that we were many and that some parts were capable of taking executive control if and when needed or later on when asked to or in consultation with them. From the age of sixteen onwards I had lived a fairly functional life, friends have commented in the recent past that it was, "Like I was driven by demons" and others had commented to my husband that I was heading for a breakdown. How little did they or I know this was to become a literal reality?

My internal structure was a mirror image of my nuclear family. Everybody kept themselves extremely separate and isolated. The way my internal family had been able to sustain this level of dissociation was by no one communicating with each other.

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There was always a momentary gap between one part and another taking over right from the time they each appeared. This way we were able to keep a tight vacuum between inside and out.

I have given this very brief background because I think it is one of the reasons that 'Nijenhuis and others' model of ANPs and EPs has helped me to begin to understand what was happening to me/us. When the internal barriers started coming down and we began to realize the true extent of the way we had managed as well as taking on board a history that was extremely fragmented throughout, it all felt enormous and without any form to it.

I also do not like labels or being put into a box but firstly I found the diagnosis of DID very reassuring that I was not mad and it was quite normal given the circumstances. Secondly the idea of ANPs and EPs helped me to begin to understand how my dissociation worked. I have not and indeed the insiders haven't either ever labelled who we consider to be what. In fact this model never impinged on the insiders' way of thinking. It was for me, who had to all intents and purposes been in control of our life for seventeen years, had and was bringing up a family, was very involved in their schools and worked. I needed a framework that enabled me to stay sane. I can see how this model could make you feel a lot more fragmented and I actually have not used it for several years as I have adjusted to our reality and we have all become a lot more autonomous as individuals and now at times as a much less fragmented whole.

I would like to give some examples of how the model helped me to see the bigger picture. Of course however tightly you seal the inside up triggers are going to penetrate it at times. I have always observed myself rather than being in the body so when I was breast feeding my baby and my head jumped around the furniture I can remember thinking, 'that's odd, I'll understand it one day', I can now put it into the context of an EP being triggered to respond covertly when in an intimate situation that was in a room that held very difficult memories for her.

When as the adult outside part I shared some information that it would have been wiser not to, the anorexic part took over for two years as I had told a 'secret'. I experienced it as a very difficult time of high anxiety and losing two stone in weight. It was a battle to stay just the right side of becoming severely anorexic. Again I stayed in dominant control but my way of being was totally influenced by what Nijenhuis would call an EP. The anorexic part had come when we were sixteen and our whole internal system had broken down. She kept the body in too weak a position to do anything except exist until all the internal family had things 'under control again'.

I have been very detached from the insiders, not totally from my choosing but they have kept me well outside of everything. As the internal communication has developed and everyone inside has developed more skills for sharing and supporting so the idea of ANPs and EPs has been very much less defined and in fact writing this it now feels like an alien concept. I think it was helpful when we were all extremely depersonalized and having a framework helped us to begin to see how we worked and helped us to define our roles. I can remember the day I was first introduced to the concept at a conference and it was one of those 'Oh yes' moments that have been so important to my own journey.

I feel this model was helpful at a certain stage of therapy because we had such incredibly well defined barriers and it gave me a way in to understanding. In one way understanding can be detrimental, buy into the fragmentation, but I needed to be able to do this to feel safe enough to even contemplate learning about my inside family and their/my history. As we all became more accepting of each other this model has, slowly become obsolete.

I find it extremely useful to use this model to try and demonstrate when training, what someone observing as a supporter, therapist etc may experience and how it is possibly happening for the person who is dissociative.

On the full day's training FPP have developed, we train people who are interested in the subject and very open to learning more but few in the audience really have a working knowledge. I want them to have a picture of how it works while acknowledging that everyone is as individual in the way their own dissociation works as in every other aspect of life. Nijenhuis' model gives me a framework to show how EPs can be triggered and because they are still, often stuck in the trauma their method of dealing with things may seem chaotic. If it can be understood within the framework of ANP and EPs it may help. The ANP is probably, quite rigidly stuck on one side and the EPs hidden inside and triggered out by unidentified triggers so they affect and influence the ANP's behaviour. No one is able to understand what is happening and even more importantly is usually outside of all concerned control. I hope this model can begin to remove some of the fear that often surrounds difficult situations that may well feel quite threatening if there is no comprehension as to what is possibly happening. At these times all parts involved are often in very polarized states. I then explain how the idea is that everyone moves more into the centre as all the parts get to know each other and the trauma is worked through. I visualize the centre as a place that everyone both inside and out are at when they feel they have more understanding so can exhibit an informed, autonomous way of being. It is a very basic picture but I think the concept of us having so many parts of ourselves who do not necessarily know about each other is very hard to grasp and it is trying to give the audience a starting point. I totally agree it is not as straight forward as that and there are numerous permutations of the whole concept with considerable overlapping. I also agree that for many of us we were never clearly one or the other but it did allow me to feel in control enough again to begin to face up to my life.

Grey Thinking & Talking Emotions *by Jackie J*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Ann, one of my insiders and myself, Jackie are going to talk you slowly through this. Our work on "grey thinking" was sparked by several articles, I Jackie have read, by various people, about the problem of black & white thinking. That is when people think they either like things a lot or hate things a lot and never seem to have any thoughts in between. Black and white thinking is apparently common for multiples and their insiders. We decided to tackle black and white thinking by using the scale below left. We asked people to choose something that wasn't 0 or 10. The idea is to change black and white thinking into "grey thinking", as things in life are seldom black or white, but some of both.

The way to use the scale is to put some sort of limits at each end and then decide where your opinion falls on the scale. We use it for pain, so it would have 0=no pain and 10=unbearable pain. So then you can say the pain is a 7 in your opinion and can you have some painkillers please?

This scale can be used for loads of things. I, Jackie, give my insiders statements to do, where 0= don't agree a lot and 10= agree a lot. An example would be "I like classical music". My insiders all give their numbers on the inside and one of them then gives me, what most people think and the range of answers. So what most people think is 7 and the range of answers was 4-9.

Ann speaking, the 0-10 scale can be used for talking emotions. The problem we had was that you couldn't put much emotion in our voices on the inside. It was difficult to tell how happy or sad people were. I asked my friend Sheila on a 0-10 scale with 0 being happy and 10 being ecstatically happy, what she was and she said 10. That helped me understand Sheila a bit, because I always thought she was unhappy.

Jackie here! There are a lot of things you can ask using the scale. You get quite accurate answers. My children (on the inside) apparently use it a lot to find out things.

We hope this is helpful.

**Lifespan Integration Workshop
Trauma & Abuse Group Conference 2007**

by Marie Bridges

At the TAG conference I attended this workshop facilitated by Nel Walker, one of the keynote speakers. Lifespan integration we were told can help to build ego-strength and heal trauma in a gentle way. The method was developed by Peggy Pace in the US and training it is hoped will become available in the UK.

As I understand it Lifespan Integration heals trauma without touching on the trauma itself. It can restore a continuity of time and help towards a more secure and cohesive sense of self. It can also be used to help resolve other mental health problems, including eating disorders, anxiety, phobias and dissociative disorders.

The idea of the work as I understood it was to take the client through time using visualization, from birth to the present day. In the demonstration held during the workshop an older lady was the client. Before hand she had been asked to write down a good memory for each year of her life that she could remember. Nel got her to relax and asked her if she had been born at home or in hospital. Then she asked her to be across the road from that place where her mother was giving birth; then to be there seeing herself being born. She was then asked to hold the baby and asked to let the baby know who she was and that she was the adult now, and to tell her how she grew up to be her.

Nel then took the 'client' on a journey through time, starting with 6 weeks old to lying on her tummy, lifting her head, on to sitting up, first steps, high chair, first words. Then Nel spoke through each year of age, stopped occasionally to tell her to hold the baby closer or to recount a memory at that age, at the same time getting the baby to look at that memory, working through to the present day. Finally, the woman was in the present and was asked to connect to the baby; to take the baby and show her where she lives, that she is a special part of her, has always been there for her and that they are now merged, taken into herself.

This work could lead towards integration of traumatized parts into the adult self in the present.

*To find out more about Lifespan Integration see Peggy Pace's website at
<http://LifespanIntegration.com>*

The Eaters

I am Ray, I live inside Jackie J, and I am an eater. I have to eat regularly otherwise I am hungry.

I like digestive biscuits dunked in my tea. If I don't get digestives for a while I get a hungry feeling and don't feel well. It is only food that makes that feeling go away.

I'm writing this to let hosts know that some of their inside ones may be eaters, whoa re frightened and are going hungry, too scared to ask for food like me.

I want to be sure eaters get regular food. It is important

Many thanks, Ray



Brief Information Sheet 1

(July 2007)

Dissociation & Complex Dissociative Distress

Dissociation is an instinctive, natural and universal ability of the human mind to separate off and keep apart the different aspects (e.g. feelings, thoughts, sensations, perceptions, behaviours and memories) of an internal or external experience which are usually linked to each other. The mind does this automatically and rapidly when what is happening is felt to be too distressing, painful, traumatising, over-stimulating or otherwise overwhelming.

Thus, dissociation is one way in which we are equipped to cope with threat and survive potentially life endangering events. Using dissociation at such times, the mind helps us to do what needs to be done by giving us just enough information, a piece at a time, so we can live through the event and, if possible, get ourselves to safety.

Everyone dissociates to some degree and even in ordinary situations the mind may use dissociation to keep from our immediate awareness information that is not essential to the task in hand e.g. the "highway hypnosis" that can happen when driving a familiar route which makes it common to arrive at your destination with no specific memories of the journey.

Some people even train themselves to use dissociation to relax or for spiritual or cultural reasons e.g. meditation or shamanism.

Dissociative distress or disorders can result if the mind has to use dissociation too often, particularly during early childhood (e.g. if the child experiences repeated abuse over an extended period). When dissociation is used repeatedly to survive such traumas the child's brain and thus emotional and personality development can be affected. Dissociation is such an effective survival mechanism that using it too often, blocks the development of alternative coping strategies. Unfortunately, an individual's sense of identity, reality and continuity depends on their feelings, thoughts, sensations, perceptions, behaviours and memories etc being mostly connected.

Using dissociation too often consequently confuses and/or changes your sense of who you are (**Identity Confusion or Identity Alteration**), and/or leaves too many blanks in your memories (**Dissociative Amnesia**) and/or changes your sense of your body (**Depersonalisation**) and/or your environment (**Derealisation**).

To a greater or lesser extent such dissociative effects occur in many types of emotional or mental distress, illnesses or disorders particularly when linked to neglect, abuse or trauma in childhood. But only when dissociative effects are the primary feature is the distress, illness or disorder categorised as dissociative.

First Person Plural is focused on those abuse/trauma survivors who experience the most complex types of dissociative distress or disorders. That is, which feature identity confusion or alteration with or without dissociative amnesia and usually with depersonalisation and/or derealisation.

In psychiatric terms, such complex dissociative distress is known as **Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)**, or alternatively, **Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD)** or, when identity disturbances are less severe or frequent and/or not accompanied by moderate to severe amnesia, the term used is **Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (DDNOS)**.