

Survivor Matters

A Newsletter for the Christian DID Community

Is Denial a Bad Word?

For too long, denial was viewed as merely a stubborn stance adopted by a survivor who was reluctant to face her issues. Clinicians failed to realize that not only is denial the natural outcome of dissociation, but the need for denial is actually the driving force behind it.

If the goal of dissociation is to protect the Original Self and Primary Presenter from conscious awareness of those events that were too overwhelming for them to cope with, they naturally have no idea that any such events ever occurred. However, the strength and tenacity of the denial they continue to carry in spite of experiencing vivid flashbacks and other indicators of the reality of severe trauma in their lives signifies a deeply rooted investment in this dynamic.

The truth is that denial is intricately entwined into the very fabric of dissociation. DID would not exist without the mind's seeming need for denial. The Original Self needs denial for the purpose of survival; the Primary Presenter needs denial for the purpose of function; and the many alter-identities exist purely to make this denial possible for them.

More specifically, denial is what protects the Original Self and the Primary Presenter from having to face the seemingly intolerable psychological conflicts embedded in the traumas that the alters carry (see "Why DID I Split?" in the last issue). Therefore, denial will continue to be needed until all of these conflicts are addressed and resolved. On the other hand, *when denial is no longer needed, neither is dissociation.*

Eliminating the need for denial must therefore be a primary focus of the therapy process. This goal will not be accomplished by working only with alter-identities. While the alters are generally the parts that are most wounded, carry the greatest pain, and are responsible for most of the survivor's dysfunctional issues, they are not the ones in denial. They are not the ones that are unable to cope

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with the reality of the trauma. For the most part, they are the “heroes” who had no other choice than to find a way to cope with it.

The protected Original Self and Primary Presenter are the identities that need a drastic change in perspective in order to be able to accept what originally seemed absolutely intolerable. For many, this means a major shift in focus for the therapy process.

While memories still need to be processed with the alters that endured them, the Primary Presenter and Original Self must also be brought into the process. With the alters the focus needs to be on identifying and addressing (1) the beliefs they carried away from the event that are causing ongoing pain and dysfunction and (2) any free will bonds they may have made to an entity of darkness during the event.

When these have been addressed and resolved, the focus needs to shift to the Primary Presenter, or the Original Self, if she is available. The critical question to ask at this point is “What would it mean if this is true?”

This will bring to light the beliefs that make the event seem intolerable and needing to be denied and dissociated. When these beliefs can be challenged and brought into alignment with truth, the obstacles to owning the event are often eliminated. This brings true healing to the memory at all levels and opens the door for integration of the alters that handled the event.

For example, one day after being suddenly triggered with flooding memories of my participation in Satanic rituals mocking the sacred Christian events of the crucifixion, baptism, and Holy Communion, I was so overtaken by emotions that I could not even speak. When I could finally explain to my therapist what was happening, he quickly asked me, “What it would it mean if these memories are true?”

Sobbing uncontrollably, I finally blurted out, “Then I would be unacceptable to God!”

Very calmly and confidently he suggested, “Let’s see what He says about that,” and proceeded to ask this question of God.

Immediately, I saw a vision of Jesus sitting with me at a table. He had one arm around me, and with the other He was serving me Holy Communion. Nothing could have more powerfully impacted me with the truth that God knew my heart and that these events had not changed my acceptability to Him!

In this case, due to the emotional crisis the memories had caused for my Primary Presenter, my therapist jumped immediately to addressing them at this level. This is perfectly legitimate and at times may shorten or eliminate the work needed to be done at the alter level.

Jesus, do You really love me?

Jesus, I still wonder if I’m really to blame.

Oh, I feel so bad inside with guilt and shame.

I’m afraid to trust You.

You know how hard I’ve tried!

Just as I start to open up, I panic, then I hide.

O My child, please come to Me.

I’ll never blame you.

How could one as small as you know what to do?

It was not your fault, dear.

Please bring to Me your shame.

I died for you that you might find

sweet cleansing in My name.

Jesus, I’m beginning to believe You love me.

But it’s hard to trust Your love with all I’ve seen.

If I could make wishes, I’d wish that on this morn

You’d sweep me up into Your arms

and love me evermore.

O my child, I really love you. Please believe Me!

I made you a special way, so beautifully.

Please keep trying to trust Me amidst the

raging storm.

Just rest within My shepherd’s arms, they’re

gentle, tender, warm.

As you trust Me fully, your eyes will start to shine.

Your eyes will start to shine.

You’ll know that I am truly yours and

you are truly Mine.

Wanda Viola

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Survivors share...

One day I feel completely normal and the denial part in me says, "See, nothing happened to you." Then something happens and I switch and am completely different. I often feel like I don't know what reality is and have a hard time believing these awful things happened to me. I often feel like I am going crazy!

Blanne

*"So if the Son makes you free,
you will be free indeed."*

(John 8:36; NASB)

flip a coin
tails you lose
how can that be?
every time it doesn't change
why can't i win?
just once? do you suppose...
this has been a set up?
--no name

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God's Resources

Another gift that God gives to His children is freedom from guilt. No matter how greatly you or I have sinned or been involved in acts of darkness, the sacrifice of Jesus' own life on the Cross has totally satisfied God as a just payment for those sins. This means that in God's sight they never happened. They're totally gone! Our slate is clean!

This is the big picture of God's forgiveness that should bring us much relief concerning the very sordid histories that we have had to own. Sometimes zeroing in on the specific things that have been most troubling or guilt-provoking for us and getting God's perspective on them can be equally freeing. One survivor was astounded when she asked God about her guilt in a horrible sacrifice she was forced to make. His response to her was that she was "as innocent as the knife." Truly God understands the difference between our being forced to perform evil acts and our entering voluntarily into them.

While many of us have had alters that seemed to commit themselves to Satan and voluntarily participate in immoral or criminal acts, God knows the circumstances behind their choices and fully recognizes that those alters don't represent our true hearts. Even when our sin does come from our true heart, not only does Jesus' payment on the Cross take care of the eternal consequences of it, but if we will simply confess our sin to God, He will also cancel the temporary consequence of that sin, which is lost fellowship with Him.

Christ's death really does make it possible for our slate of sin to be erased very quickly and easily. It is a wonderful gift of God's love to us.

If we continue to live under the weight of guilt for that which God has removed from our record, what we feel is the illusion of guilt that Satan has put there. He is a master of illusion and deception. Don't let him trick you with this lie!

Survivor Retreat CDs & Notebook

Healing from DID *Understanding the Journey*

Suggested Donation:

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\$15 MP3 Version

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How to Have a Real Relationship with God

Once you have become a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ's death on the Cross for your sins, you need to grow in understanding God and your relationship to Him. How does He feel about you? How can you communicate with Him? How can He communicate with you? How do you show your love to Him? How does He show His love to you? What things affect your relationship to Him? How can you understand Him and how He operates better?

The Apostle Peter encourages those who are new to the family of God to grow by taking in the Word of God. While the Bible is a complex and fathomless book, the Holy Spirit, as your divine, inner Teacher, will touch your heart with increasing understanding of its truths.

Those of you who have experienced any form of ritual or spiritual abuse or have suffered trauma by a member of the clergy or in a church setting may be strongly conditioned, or even brainwashed, against putting any faith in this Book. This is understandable. However, I urge you not to let your perpetrators be the final authority on what the Bible says or means, for in doing so they may deprive you of a source of divine wisdom, insight, and guidance that could greatly enrich your life. You deserve to be able to make your own choice about what it really says and means.

*"How blessed is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord . . .
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers" (Ps. 1:1-3; NASB).*

Testimony

Shortly after my flashbacks began, I received healing from a memory which served as a foundational truth for the remaining years of my healing journey. After recalling specific aspects of a ritual whose purpose was to make me believe I was taboo to God, my three-year-old part invited Jesus into the memory through the power of the Holy Spirit. She asked Jesus, "Why do they do bad things?" He replied, "When they were little, they had bad things happen to them. I reached my hand out to them, but they walked the other way. I'm reaching my hand to you. You can either receive Me or turn away." I exclaimed, "Oh Jesus, I want You! I want You!" Jesus scooped me up and took me away from the scene. His words comforted me, "Although they wanted to make you taboo to Me, you will always be my precious child." This message seeped deep within me as The Truth. In the years to come, whenever I was repulsed by God because of the heinous rituals that defamed Him, the Lord gently brought me back to The Truth. Regardless of what they did to me, I will always be His precious child. – Roseann