

# Survivor Matters

A Newsletter for the Christian DID Community

## Levels of Dissociation

One of the well-established factors cited as necessary for the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder, or DID, is over-whelming trauma that has an onset before the age of 8. This generally triggers the formation of full-blown alter-identities that recurrently take control of the person's body.

The reality of life, however, is that over-whelming trauma can happen after the age of 8 as well as before it. Furthermore, less than overwhelming trauma can happen at any age. So how does a person's brain respond in these situations?

The answer is with lesser degrees of separation, which can be manifested in a number of ways. Often when trauma is significant but not overwhelming, a process we have come to call "desynchronization" occurs. This is when the primary pain-buffering identities that we refer to as "Denial/Function," "Buffer/Guardian," and "Pain/Emotion" are created. These primary identities are not nearly as separate or as different as alter-identities would be, but they provide a less extreme means of coping with pain by separating a functioning self from a pain-bearing self with a buffer self in between.

Because they are formed at a primary identity level (near the identity center in the front of the brain), they are often difficult to discern or differentiate as they all feel like you. Many, if not most, people have these, often without realizing it, as very few people escape having some degree of traumatic pain come into their lives at some point.

Another possible option when over-whelming trauma occurs after the age of 8 or less than overwhelming trauma occurs at any age is the formation of what I

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call “ego states.” These are very much like alter-identities, but they do not emerge and independently take over the body. They are accessible internally, however, and serve to encapsulate a trauma further from the true self than is possible through desynchronization.

This means that a person could have primary identities alone or primary identities with internal ego states without being classified as having DID. These lesser degrees of dissociation are usually referred to as “Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified” or DDNOS, for short.

Various factors contribute to determining how traumatic an event is perceived to be and thus the degree of dissociation that will occur in the person. One of these is the nature of the relationship of the abuser to the child. The stronger and more positive the emotional bond that is created with the child, the stronger the sense of betrayal will be if that person becomes an abuser.

Emotional capacity is also a factor. This refers to one’s threshold of tolerance for handling negative emotions and is generally determined by the strength and quality of the emotional attachment one was able to form with a primary caregiver in infancy. The more positive this experience was, the greater the capacity he will have for enduring situations that arouse negative emotions. If capacity is low in the child, lesser degrees of trauma will cause greater levels of dissociation.

The frequency and duration of the time period over which the trauma occurs also play a role in determining the extent of dissociation a child needs in order to cope with it. Thus, children who are repetitively abused in their own homes and have little reprieve from their abusers are much more likely to develop full-blown DID.

Understanding these levels of dissociation can be helpful in analyzing the dynamics occurring in one’s life. The treatment process differs little, however, regardless of how separated a part or a trauma is from the true self. We have found that the Primary Identity Approach is still the most effective treatment strategy for all levels of dissociation.

## *Who Am I?*

I HAVE BEEN BROKEN,  
SHATTERED INTO PIECES  
LONG AGO AS A CHILD.

I DID NOT REMEMBER,  
I THOUGHT I WAS NORMAL,  
DOING WHAT EVERYBODY DID,  
AND YET NOT.

I WAS AFRAID OF THE DARK,  
AFRAID OF ANGRY MEN,  
I BECAME UPSET EASILY,  
WAS UNSURE OF MYSELF,  
WORKING HARD TO PROVE  
THAT I WAS WORTHY,  
TO GET PRAISE AND FEEL GOOD.  
I WANTED TO PLEASE EVERYONE  
AND YET NOT.

I BECAME CONFUSED,  
ANGRY AND TEMPRAMENTAL,  
CONTROL BY OTHERS SCARED ME.  
I REBELLED,  
WANTED TO DO MY OWN THING,  
NEARLY SUCCEEDED,  
BUT GOD STOPPED ME,  
SENT ME AN ANGEL,  
MY HUSBAND.

I RECIEVED FOUR MORE ANGELS,  
MY CHILDREN,  
I TRIED HARD TO BE  
THE BEST MOM,  
WILLING TO CHANGE MYSELF  
AND YET NOT.

WHAT I DID NOT KNOW,  
WAS THAT MY PIECES  
INTERFERED.....  
CAUSING PAIN AND PROBLEMS,  
FOR THE ANGELS I LOVED.  
EVENTUALLY ALSO CAUSING MORE  
CONFUSION AND PAIN,  
IN MY OWN LIFE.

THEN GOD INTERVENED,  
SENDING ME PEOPLE  
WHO COULD HELP ME,  
SO THAT I CAN BECOME  
THE PERSON HE INTENDED ME TO BE.

*Orna*

## Survivors Share...

O Jesus, please do not leave me  
I feel so lonely, forsaken  
Teach me, O Lord, to walk with You  
Help all of me-s receive Your love  
To know Your truth that sets us free  
We need You, Lord  
To heal and make us whole

*Hannah*

***“Cast all your anxiety on him for  
He cares for you”***

*(1 Peter 5:7; NIV)*

I need you  
You are my one Defense that I have  
Where You are there I am free  
Lord I need You—I need You every second of the day  
Help me to rise up to You  
Release my feet from the snare  
I know, that when I cannot stand I can fall on You  
You will uphold me in Your mighty right hand  
Don't let me lay down—don't let me give up  
I need you more than ever

*Your child Yolandie*

You may have only one or two people willing to walk with you, but remember to thank God for them every day and focus on the beautiful gift they have become in your life. God has brought them your way, and they chose to listen, and that in itself is a miracle and a blessing of our heavenly Father!

*Tammy M.*

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## Survivors' Retreat 2016

August 4-7, 2016

Echo Mountain Inn  
Hendersonville, NC 28739

See details at [www.rcm-usa.org](http://www.rcm-usa.org)

## God's Plan for Us

Sometimes stepping back to look at the long-range plan God has for us helps us to put in perspective the difficult times we may be going through now. God recently opened my eyes to this bigger picture and helped me see that our current lives are not the endgame but only a preparation for God's ultimate purpose for us in eternity.

1 John 3:2 says that when we see Him, “*we will be like Him.*” Can you even imagine that? God wants us to share in His own holiness, glory, and the epitome of love and joy that are part of who He is!

Our current life is our training and proving ground to prepare us for this. This is when we have the opportunity to choose whether we will accept God's supreme act of love in sending His Son to be our Savior from sin's penalty. If we do, we are set free from our sin and become His beloved sons and daughters!

The next step is for us to get to know our “Father” better by studying the Bible, talking to Him in prayer, and spending time genuinely worshipping Him. As we do, His Holy Spirit begins the process of transforming us to become more and more like God Himself.

Because of the final goal God has in store for us, He will often use trials in this life to test our love for its genuineness, strength, and endurance. Just as Jesus did, we will have to endure Satan's efforts to break us through these trials and to keep us from our destiny, but God will give us the strength and grace to prevail if we hang onto Him.

God also promises to compensate us for the suffering and losses we endure at Satan's hand. In fact, the greater our suffering, the greater will be our ultimate reward. If we faithfully persevere and overcome just as Jesus did, we earn the right both to share in His glory and to reign with Him! ✦

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**Primary Identity Approach Simplified**

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## Dimensions of Grace

Cracks and fissures; scars manifesting the pain  
Priceless treasure in shreds; blood-stained  
Dreams shattered; believing enemy lies  
Shame-filled; pride forms a disguise  
Secrets behind the mask; a broken heart  
Like a fractured mirror; distorted; set apart

God's love breaks through, causing walls to crumble.  
His truth penetrates; the darkness trembles.  
Speaking His Word activates the sword for the fight.  
Motives exposed; shadows now enveloped in light  
Struck down, not destroyed; supported by His hand  
Hard-pressed, not crushed; empowered to stand  
Rumbling like thunder ensues as God's army battles for me.  
Wonder of wonders; chains break; I'm being set free!

Eyes fixed on Jesus; He guides every step  
Courage grows where immobilizing fear was kept  
Tattered rags exchanged for garments of praise  
Though I'm weak, His strength's offered always.  
Representing His life in this jar of clay  
Grief, loss, and death can no longer stay  
Amidst His cleansing flood destruction loses its hold  
The enemy must return all that He stole  
Ministering reconciliation, daughter of the King of Kings  
Knit within His family; wearing His signet ring  
An imitator of Christ; choosing His ways  
The light of His presence illumines all of my days.

*Judith D. Hiett*

## Peace by Piece

Peace by piece,  
One part at a time  
Like putting a puzzle together  
when you are blind  
Not knowing what the final picture will be  
But trusting Him  
to make it something heavenly.  
Peace by piece  
One step at a time  
Is the only way for my spirit to find  
Any rhyme or reason in this life of mine.  
Trusting God with all I have  
Searching for Him  
In the fragments of me  
Knowing only—  
His healing is what will finally set me free

*Rachel S*

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