

Survivor Matters

A Newsletter for the Christian DID Community

Why Do I Switch?

Switching, the process by which a person with multiple identities changes who is in charge of the body, can be an annoying and disruptive occurrence in your life. Understanding why it occurs can help you know how to move towards greater stability, as well as healing.

Ordinarily your primary identities are meant to handle your everyday life. They are the ones that have the greatest capacity for functioning and adjusting to changing situations and are therefore most suited for this role. The alter-identities were created only as limited ability, pinch-hitters, specifically designed to handle one particular type of experience that was deemed too overwhelming for your primary identities.

As you live your daily life now, these alter-identities will emerge primarily in response to two kinds of situations. Both involve your primary identities encountering things that remind them, consciously or unconsciously, of unresolved, intolerable issues/conflicts. We call those reminders "triggers."

When these triggers are tied to unresolved traumatic memories, the emotional intensity of the evoked fear response will quickly divert executive control, and perhaps consciousness, away from the primary identities and bring forward either a victim alter that was involved in the original event and feels it is in danger or a protector alter that is ready to defend against such danger. In either case, the triggered alter needs to come to the assurance that the current situation is not a true danger, even if it resembles a past traumatic experience. Only then will it retreat and allow your primary identities to return. Eventually, bringing healing to the memory will diminish the strength of the trigger, making it less likely to cause further switching.

The other situation that can cause switching is also related to trauma, but more indirectly. It involves a primary identity confronting a situation that creates an intolerable



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conflict with a belief it carries from past experiences. It is able to avoid facing that uncomfortable situation by allowing an alter to handle it instead.

In these situations the alters that come forward will not be reacting in fear. They will simply be trying to handle the life situation from which the primary identity abdicated. Often these will be alters that are deemed to be stronger and thus more apt to handle the situation.

Nonetheless, because alters are created for very specific jobs, they are not as flexible in handling life experiences as primary identities are. They are therefore less adept in assessing what is needed in a particular situation and how to respond, which can often lead to embarrassment or faulty performance. They get stressed much more easily too because of their limited abilities, which can lead to volatility and/or further switching and instability.

This is why strengthening the primary identities by identifying and resolving their intolerable conflicts needs to be a major focus of the therapy process. Taking note of when switches occur and retrospectively analyzing them can be a good way to identify these conflicts.

If the switch did not bring out fearful alters but enabled a primary identity to avoid facing an uncomfortable situation, you can ask yourself, "What would it mean if I had to face this?" For instance, if you always switch when you face an authority figure or when you realize you did something wrong, you can ask yourself, "What would it mean if I had to face an authority figure?" or "What would it mean if I did something wrong?" This question will lead to a significant belief that you are carrying, such as "I am powerless before authority figures" or "I will be absolutely demoralized or severely punished if I do something wrong."

These beliefs usually come from past traumatic experiences, and they will continue to cause these automatic avoidance responses by the primary identities until they are identified and challenged. Changing them will be most effective if you are emotionally connected to the situation that gave rise to them. Therefore, you need to trace the belief back to its origin. Then, in that context, ask God if the belief is still true, or examine its truth in some other objective manner.

When your belief is changed by this more objective truth, your perception of the situation previously precipitating the need to switch will be changed as well. Usually, it will no longer present an intolerable conflict for you.

By resolving primary identity conflicts, the alters that were created to handle the original trauma giving rise to the troubling belief will also obtain healing. Focusing on the reasons for switching thus provides a very efficient way to bring your entire system to healing.

Emotions

Emotions....

*There are so many,
Some want to devour me,
Others give me hope!*

*Sometimes emotions
Change into a carousel
Turning round and round
Until all that is left
Is negativity and pain...*

*How do I handle this?
Pain that wants to engulf me?
Do I hide again
In a shell of anger?
Anger that smoulders
Until it bursts forth like
An active volcano!
Creating destruction wherever
It flows....*

*Emotions...emotions...
Rejection; hopeless no good whore!
You do not know love,
You only seduce, ensnare
And deceive everyone!
Yet you want to know
The beauty of true love..*

*Emotions become too much
They quarrel inside my head;
Telling me to let go,
To give up...
No do not give up!
Continue, get healing,
No stop it, stop it!!
It is dangerous,
Oh keep quiet, keep quiet!*

*Who can understand?
Who can help me?
How can I explain
The emotions running riot?*

--Orna

Survivors share...

The dark places aren't dark any longer
When the light shines through
The darkness fades
Slowly, ever fighting within
It has lost and I have won --- CJ

I have a joy book. I look for God in my everyday life and draw a picture or write out the lyrics to a cool song—anything goes. Once I was really down and I happened to glance out the window just as a yellow balloon floated by! I love balloons! That made it into my joy book. --- Anon.

“Surely I will set you free for purposes of good.”
(Jer. 15:11; NASB)

I'm not a far-away God
as some people think, daughter.
I'm ever present, all knowing,
and all seeing.
I've never left you or abandoned you.
It's in My Love that I created you!
It's in My Compassion and Mercy
that I saved you.
It's nothing to take the small and despised
and raise them up for my Kingdom purposes!
I can set you before Kings and Presidents!
It's with My right hand
that I give you the rod of authority!
--Mindy Sanblanet

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given through our website:
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God's Resources

Self-image can be especially challenging for an abuse survivor, as it is an area in which Satan works hard to destroy your perception of what God has given you. You have a choice, however, whether to believe God's truth or Satan's lies.

The truth is that God deliberately made you in His very own image so that you would be able to enter into a fulfilling love relationship with Him. While God cares for every living being and even the flowers of the field, man is the only part of His creation specifically designed with the capacity to be a counterpart to Himself in love. What a destiny is yours! If you do nothing else with your life but fulfill this calling of loving and being loved by God, you have accomplished the greatest purpose for which you were created!

Satan's efforts to sabotage God's plan to bring such a high level of fulfillment for both man and Himself began in the Garden of Eden, where he succeeded in disconnecting the entire human race from God. Since then he has used evil men and women to traumatize and degrade as many people as possible, especially in their formative years. He then reinforces the damage done to their self-images by implanting lies about their state of defilement and unworthiness of relationship with God.

The good news is that Satan can neither stamp out God's image in you nor thwart God's original plan and design for you. Christ's death on the Cross is the all-sufficient antidote to your separation from God, providing complete forgiveness of your sins when you accept Him as your Savior.

At that point God gives you the Holy Spirit, who can potentially transform your character to reflect His own (if you let Him). In addition, the more time you spend interacting with God through genuine worship and prayer, the more your image will also begin to reflect His glory. Any damage Satan may have tried to inflict upon your self-image will be more than overcome through these divine resources.

A Helpful Resource

Who are the Shattered in Soul?

by Diane Hawkins

This new 30 minute CD can be used to introduce the subject of DID and ritual abuse to people unfamiliar with the diagnosis and the need for treatment.

Suggested Donation: \$5.00

Available at www.rcm-usa.org

Testimony

I was raised in the Christian Science Church, a cult. As a child, I experienced incest by multiple family members and Satanic ritual abuse at age 7. These memories were all repressed until I was 53 years old and in a pit of depression and despair, even as a born again Christian, when I entered an eating disorder outpatient program. After being off sugar and white flour for several weeks, the memories began emerging. They were horrifying, yet they explained my unhealthy behaviors. That was 1992, and my deliverance, healing and restoration journey has unfolded over the last 20 years. I'm now 73 years old, and I am free indeed, by the grace of God and the power of the cross of Christ.

The lies planted by the enemy in a child's mind, i.e., "I'm a bad girl," "I'm evil," "no one could love me," and for me, the big one, "I don't deserve to be loved," all became strongholds in my mind that I had to pull down in order to be able to receive the truth of who I am in Christ and experience the Father's love. My journey included Christian counseling, 12 step groups, Celebrate Recovery, a Christian 12 step group, and Theophostic ministry. --Karen S.

Questions & Answers

Why would a survivor have a 'name block'? In other words, why is it that I don't know any of the names of my parts, and when I ask, they are all unwilling to share, even the little (primary kid) parts? Some don't even know their names. They won't even allow me to name my stuffed animals that I let my little ones sleep with.

This is not an unusual situation at all. Many survivors find that their parts do not have distinct names. In order to distinguish them, they may refer to them by their age or a unique characteristic that they manifest.

The reason that they don't have names can vary. Sometimes the system never developed to the point of ascribing names, or the parts have not participated in life enough to need a name, or they do not want to be known as separate parts. At other times they remain nameless for the sake of safety. Having a name gives another person a degree of power over them, as they can then be called out by their name. Remaining nameless thus makes them less accessible to perpetrators.

Because your parts do not want you even to name the stuffed animals you give them, this latter issue may be involved. You could explore this by asking your parts, "What would it mean if you had a name?" or "What would it mean if we gave the stuffed animal a name?"

Do a lot of integrated persons want to change their names? Do people find the name everyone calls them by is really their primary presenter? I find it "weird" always referring to "my heart or original self" (who I really am) without a name...it's so clinical.

While considerable variation exists, most commonly the Original Self (OS), and often a majority of the primary identities, carries the birth name, so you would have "Original Susan," "Presenter Susan," "Denial Susan," etc., although outside people would just know you as "Susan." When the Primary Presenter uses a nickname, the OS usually retains the official birth name. Sometimes the OS bears a name of special endearment, like "Precious One." If a totally different name is used, there will always be a reason for it. Nevertheless, I have found very few people who officially change their names after integration. Some may return to the official birth name, if a nickname has been used most of their lives, or adopt a variation of it.