

DVD Review Part 1 - Dec 2010

Courage is a word familiar to Trish Fotheringham, a survivor of Ritual Abuse and Mind Control, who is breaking the silence and offering much to the survivor community. Trish has gone public with her DVD set, "*Healing from Ritual Abuse and Mind Control: Survivor Trish Fotheringham Speaks Out*." This medium, whose purpose in Trish's own words is to "spread understanding, hope and inspiration," is a must for the libraries and book shelves of survivors, therapists and anyone working to eradicate the atrocities of abuse on all levels.

Trish's article, "Patterns in Mind Control: A First Person Account," found in *Ritual Abuse in the Twenty-First Century: Psychological, Forensic, Social, and Political Considerations*. (Editors: Randy Noblitt and Pamela Perskin- Noblitt, published by Robert D Reed Publishers pgs 491-540) sparked an interest from Ellen Lacter, Ph D whose own contribution: "Guidelines to Differential Diagnosis between Schizophrenia and Ritual Abuse/Mind Control Traumatic Stress" (pgs 85-154) is also found in *Ritual Abuse in the Twenty-First Century*.

Dr. Lacter and Trish spoke on the phone a few times and from these interactions the idea of giving the world a tangible piece of healing was conceived. With Dr. Lacter interviewing her, Trish takes us through her healing process from Ritual Abuse and Mind Control in an honest manner, at times humorous, but always blatantly bold with disregard to her childhood/ young adult training. "The more they told me not to talk, the more I did," says Trish.

Due to the complexity of the DVD set, my review will be broken into two parts, the first part dealing with the diagnoses of DID through to how to deal with alters and memories. Part 2, due out at the end of February 2011, will cover the bases of Trish's training structure, the often dreaded "I" word—integration, self care, and how to achieve some level of happiness.

Her hands steady, her voice strong and clear Trish answers questions from Dr. Lacter, who has worked with survivors of Ritual Abuse and Mind Control since the mid 1990s. A small rubber heart shaped ball, clenched and squeezed in Trish's hands, is the only indication of nerves, giving credibility and reminding us of the human side of Ritual Abuse and Mind Control.

As a child and young adult, Trish was with "two different secret cults: my father's ancient patriarchal clan which had a few brutal sexual 'family traditions' and my mother's matriarchal 'healing magic coven' which had some painful, twisted rituals. Each subjected me to ritual abuse and mind-control training from birth." (Page 492, *Ritual Abuse in the Twenty-First Century Psychological, Forensic, Social, and Political Considerations*).

Trish was barely 29, her father had passed away and she was struggling with college courses on child abuse when she began experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Panic attacks, anxiety, acute asthma, and nightmares became increasingly intrusive and debilitating. This was a time when Dissociative Identity Disorder was formerly named Multiple Personality Disorder and was met with disbelief with the public and some mental health workers. Therapists were accused of interjecting memories onto their clients which led to lawsuits by parents of survivors. The whole world around DID, RA and MK was a mess. And in the middle of it, we survivors were fighting to stay alive.

Dissociative Identity Disorder: A Fear or a Blessing?

When diagnosed with DID, survivors take on a range of emotions from fear to finally relief—now answering the many questions they had. Dr. Lacter asks Trish if the fear of DID was present when first diagnosed.

"I was shocked, overwhelmed and puzzled," says Trish, but for the first time it made sense to her. Fear didn't play a role in the label. Instead, Trish laughs remembering, "Oh no! This is going to be a lot of work to heal from." She describes DID as a "highly functional survival mechanism." My initial reaction was similar to Trish's. Fear was the furthest thing from my mind. My first thought was I felt I had been caught doing something wrong, yet had no idea what that something was.

The Decision to Heal

Trish says from the age of 29-37 were her worse times. She described herself as "useless - I couldn't look after my home or work and parenting. I no longer laughed or had fun. I stopped socializing and cried all the time. I could only do therapy." How she broke free from this time in her life is an inspiration to all.

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Suicide, an aspect of severe abuse, was no stranger to Trish. We have all experienced the disconnectedness of alters trained to suicide. When talking about the decision to heal, to reach past suicide takes a determination all by itself. "Are you going to use energy to run from it or face it? It takes more energy to run. Why not get healthy?" These simple statements are the lock. Trish has the key; this gamut that runs throughout the DVD. As a survivor is she crazy, people wonder? Trish laughs and says, "I wish I were. Therapy would have been much easier to handle." This is a common trait that runs through survivors. It feels crazy because it is crazy what they did to us, but we are not crazy. If we were we would have been locked up a long time ago.

Trauma Work: A World Divided

Early in the DVD, Dr. Lacter explains: "There are conflicting ideas among the therapy world. Some people say, 'don't do trauma work' and other people say, 'no, you need to do the trauma work, you need to know consciously what happened to heal.'" She asks Trish to comment on this.

Paraphrasing, Trish believes for herself that knowing what happened and going through the feelings of memories, gives the freedom to let them go. At the same time she states that not every memory has to be worked on in this fashion. It is not possible to go back through every little piece or fragment of memory. What you can do is group them together, deal with similar pieces of programming, training or memories as one. My own history includes the identical training of programmers on levels 1-9 so parts of their histories can be grouped into one memory session.

Trish further expresses the need for learning, not only what happened, but what was the lesson, the feelings and beliefs about yourself, using what she terms the "World View Change," where everything changes after trying to assimilate a new memory or newfound alter. This occurs on a "physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental plane." It's all about choice, Trish says. "You need to know what happened, how it impacted your life, and then you have a choice." In RA/MK families, there is no choice, only pain and then more pain.

DID Alters

Dr. Lacter questions the split that occurs within the DID realm, the difference between such intense trauma where the self splits versus an outsider, an abuser, forcing a split. Snapping her fingers, Trish demonstrates the need for lightening speed when switching from one emotion to another, one alter to another. Many created alters have one feeling/ one emotion. One alter can have despair and another happiness, but some alters learn "character development" with a wide range of emotions. An abuser or handler controls the survivor with rapid switches for their immediate need, be it a sex slave, a business woman, or a tough soldier; anything for their own agendas' and purposes. Abusers need a range of alters always backing up one against another for what they perceive as safety. This concept of control is discussed more on the DVD.

A six year child needs comfort, food, safety, warmth and a whole number of concerns which parents provide. A DID six year old child needs the same. Trish says we should "embrace our alters," especially new found ones who believed they were alone in the body and thinking that the abuse is still occurring. Even the so called 'bad alters.' "There is no such thing as a bad alter," explains Trish. They are just like all the rest who have been told what they are. Alters need to be on the outside of the world as well as the inside. When these needs are met, there is less acting out and goals can be set and matched. It is common for alters inside to do new jobs, have new names, and form friendships, just like a person who does not experience dissociative tendencies. On the DVD, Trish continues this thought to encompass the final result of alters coming together, working collectively for a common good—health and ultimately life.

How does an abuser or handler make these alters? Music to set the atmosphere mood, colors, the way you are talked to, light and stage theatrics. Add in a mix of pain, either implied or experienced, to a child or even an adult, to themselves or another person, the outcome is instrumental in creating alters. A young child is personable. Tell him it's black when its white, he will be adamant that it's black when taught to him under such conditions as described.

Memories- Processing Pain

Therapy is supportive, or at least it should be. But you have to leave your therapist's office at some point and if you have just completed memory work, you need to continue to function until your next interaction with your therapist. Many survivors rely on their DID alters or system as a whole since as Trish describes, "there is always some part that knows how to steer the process. Ask for your wisest part that knows and understands (to come forward and help)." You need time to process the pain so you need to be gentle with yourself and depending upon your home situation that can determine how to proceed. For example, if you live alone and

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have no children around, you can spend the next 24 hours to get through the pain from the memory. If you have children that need your attention, this can seem insurmountable, but if you use your system you can find the controls to shut the pain processing down until after your kids are in bed.

This next section is a summary of many talked about supports from various parts of the DVD.

Support System- Outside DID

Unfortunately, our safe people, our friends, have more fear than we do and sometimes it takes a while before they come on board. Trish's friends who originally told her 'to get over the abuses,' to 'stop wallowing in self pity' and didn't understand she was getting on with her life as well as she could, exclaimed "Of course this makes so much sense," when informed what DID is. When this understanding occurs we gain a support system that sees us through the worst of times. Trish wholeheartedly supports the issue of outside people helping out. The training programs, rapes and other terrible abuses left us alone and frightened. Isolation is a breeding ground for sickness. We cannot heal in isolation. We need loving and nurturing relationships to help us work through our memories. Not only do we need support, we can tell ourselves that we *deserve* it. It is okay to talk to safe people for feedback. It is okay to talk to people about our feelings and it certainly is okay to cry and have a shoulder there for us. Everything they told us in the cult, rituals and training need not be believed by survivors fighting to make a better world for themselves, family and friends.

We end Part 1 of "*Healing from Ritual Abuse and Mind Control: Survivor Trish Fotheringham Speaks Out*," on an incredible note. The last line in "Patterns in Mind Control: A First Person Account," simply says: "Patterns can Crumble." Dr. Lacter asked Trish to explain the meaning behind those three words. At the age of six, while in her bedroom, her father approached her with a piece of paper. He told her that one day her life would be her own and asked her to take the paper and put it under the roots of Mr. Tree — a structure that was placed inside her by her abusers and in this case used against them—and those three words with the code resided inside her throughout her life. Though he could not stop his daughter from being abused, he could give her a gift and she believes he "is guiding me."

"He would be proud of me being here talking."

End of Part 1

DVD Review Part 2 - Feb 2011

Welcome to Part 2 of the DVD set covering the bases of an implanted structure, the often dreaded "I" word-integration, self-care and how to achieve some level of happiness.

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We left Part 1 discussing support systems. This entails internal ways we care for ourselves as a system and the external such as friends and therapist support. Trish's self-care involved drawing, journaling, art and singing—all releasing feelings locked away or opened up during therapy. Regardless of how, the feelings need expression.

Massage, metaphysics, healing ceremonies, EMDR, regression therapy, mapping, charting, and programs for parenting your children are all positive ways to self care you and your alters.

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As DID systems are individualized there are many ways in which we can take care of ourselves and the list above is not exhaustive. As always, take what will benefit you and leave the rest behind.

Unlocking memories leads us down a road of self discovery. Finding new alters is vital to healing. Often times we have alters such as Demons or Devils (alters who did the unspeakable) who worked against the system until therapy set them free. They in fact, were only doing their training and often times took abuse directed at other alters. Trish has a special message to those she calls 'nasties:' "You have incredible skills that we can use to heal us today. Draw the nasty scene or write about it, (anything) to let it go." This allows the other alters to know collectively what happened to the system. Knowledge is power and power is healing.

I dread the "I" word—integration. The thought of possibly losing alters who help me maintain my life on a daily basis and the healing work I have put in the past twenty years, scares me. The thought of losing Brian, the other half of LisaBri, who handles any difficult task or situation I encounter, terrifies me. I don't know how a singleton can get through a day without a "Brian." Every therapist I have ever spoken to says the same thing: "You will not lose any characteristics of alters; instead of seeking out a particular person to do a job, the knowledge will instantly be there for you." It still scares me.

But integration doesn't have to be about becoming a single entity. When asked by Dr. Lacter about integration, Trish says: "Aim not for one, but wholeness (of the) mind, body, heart and soul. Integration can be functioning together as one or a hundred co-operative alters."

Trish's system all wanted things to be different so the barriers of resistance were lowered. "(We) all had a united purpose—to not hurt and to work fixing ourselves. (To) not go through life coping and processing—the alternative to death was integration." Even though Trish went to bed multiple and woke up a single entity, looking back she states it was a year long enterprise of "absorbing (the) knowledge of (her) alters."

Now her approach to life is feeling whole with hope for the future.

I will mention one structure that Trish discusses on the DVD set. Known as "Mr. Tree," this was a programming training that began when she was 2-3 years old. Initially, it was simple. Trish was taken to Arbutus trees and was allowed to play with them, climb them and be friendly with them. She was told a lot of stories about trees and their wisdom. Then the stage theatrics started. She could literally go under these 'trees' into their root system and feel part of one.

She was asked by her abusers if she wanted this structure, Mr. Tree, inside her so she would never be alone and it would protect her. Who wouldn't go for that? Through a ritual, she was subjected to electroshock and Mr. Tree became the central part of her system.

"Mr. Tree was the installed mechanism with branches of training where they put (the) young alters. Each alter had colored leaves that held their programming." As the years progressed, Mr. Tree was built upon as the 'whispering leaves told the alters what to do.'

Trish continues to describe Mr. Tree's root system where alters under six were placed. These children held childhood beliefs and magic. They would never age, and would continue to hold concepts of life based in the twisted virtues their programmers besotted on them. The programmer exclaimed "Love this man" prompting the learned response—the alter performed a lap dance, seducing him.

As an integrated self, Mr. Tree's place of honor is still part of the control anchor of the deserted and abandoned inner world—just in case...

We end this review with messages from Trish to groups such as the clergy. She looks straight into the camera and says: Don't get rid of Demon alters. Find out their purpose and listen to the client. Do not under any circumstances impose your ideals.

To Significant Others: Be patient and feel loved by your partner for sharing this with you. It is okay to sometimes hate them for yet another suicide attempt. Learn the value of a hug or not a hug and above all take care of yourself through support and self-care.

To Therapists: Don't presume to know it all. Every survivor is different in their inner worlds and what they need to heal. Be open to ideas out of the realm of the norm and "think outside of the box."

To the Abuser: You have to listen to the DVD set to learn what Trish has to say to her abusers.

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**To you, the Survivor:** Don't give up. Refer to the DVD for other tips for survivors not otherwise mentioned through these reviews.

Finally, how is Trish now?

"Everything is good and life is amazing. I wait for the ax to fall but I keep breathing the good stuff. It's safe. I'm on less medication than ever in my life. I can think clear, have more choices, (my) friendships are healthier and I keep the self care going. I listen to my mind, body and feelings and I'm learning to be aware of old dissociative messages. If I'm hungry, I eat. If I'm tired I go to bed."

**I would like to thank Trish and Dr. Lacter for the gift of these DVD sets. And my readers, who allow me to bring the healing to you.**

~~~~~**End of Part 2**~~~~~

Order Information:

Healing from Ritual Abuse and Mind Control: Survivor Trish Fotheringham Speaks Out
Interviewed by Ellen Lacter, Ph.D

Price: (2013 note: - now in Canadian dollars CAD)

One DVD set is \$18

Each additional DVD set is \$12

Provincial and/or Federal taxes may apply to Canadian Orders.

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