

As you desire me: the psychology of a multiple personality  
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## PROLOGUE

The word "victim" has come to have a derogatory meaning. According to "Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary," "victim" means: 1) a person who suffers from a destructive or injurious action or agency (a victim of an automobile accident), 2) a person who is deceived or cheated, as by his own emotions or ignorance, by the dishonesty of others, or by some impersonal agency (a victim of misplaced confidence, a victim of a swindler, a victim of an optical illusion), 3) a person or animal sacrificed or regarded as sacrificed (war victims).

Together, these definitions are so broad they apply to almost everybody all the time. In the sacrificial sense, the third definition, victims are those who have been hurt or killed by persons or events out of their control. The implication is that injury occurred because the victims were unable to prevent it or protect themselves, that they were helpless and, because of that, hurt. In the first definition, damage is implied but not necessarily in the second. In neither the first nor second definitions are the victims necessarily helpless, unable to prevent the event or without personal responsibility. In the second definition especially, victims, however unwittingly, are major contributors to their own victimization.

Many years ago, except for someone who went down on the Titanic, almost no one was considered a "victim." Now, "victim" has grown to encompass the full range of experiences included in all three definitions. The meaning, however, which victims attribute to their experiences tends to be a "sacrificial" interpretation. The feeling seems to be that, no matter what the victimization was, how or why it occurred, they were helpless and someone or something else was responsible for it. For some, this feeling reflects real life events. And, for some, this narrow definition of "victim" has become an attitude, their outlook on life. And others, who may never have been sacrificial victims at all, have adopted the attitude, playing the role, walking the walk and talking the talk. And the word "victim" has become a label synonymous with the "sacrificial" attitude.

Disliking the attitude, I certainly did not look at myself as any kind of victim. I was not powerless or helpless! Independent and proud of it, I was master of my own fate, living my own life and making my own decisions. I was deeply insulted if someone indicated they felt sorry for me.

I could see I was different from other people; I didn't know quite how or how much, but I'd learned to live with it and around it. And my life was different from theirs; no matter how hard I tried, I could not seem to make things work for me like they could. The good things just didn't happen. I was willing to take responsibility for making the mistakes but, for some inexplicable reason, I couldn't find out what they were, why things went wrong or what the problem was. As a consequence, there was no possibility of changing anything. Although I was never able to do any better, I never doubted that it was MY problem and only I could fix it.

I could not see any logical reason for it. I was intelligent and tried to be a good person, responsible, honest and hard working. And there was no rational connection that I could see with anything that had ever happened to me. My upbringing was strict, my childhood unhappy, but so what? It didn't look that much different from anyone else's during those depression years. Certainly, none of my several psychiatrists had noticed anything unusual about it noting that my childhood years were the most stable years of my life. In 1988, just before the crisis, I read Alice Miller's "For Your Own Good" and realized there might be a connection between my overly strict upbringing and my lifelong problems. Subsequently, I learned that there was.

Miller says discipline that destroys the will of a child is "poisonous pedagogy." She claims it is psychological abuse the victims are unable to remember. This type of discipline, overly strict, frightening and oppressive, tends to be accepted under the guise of parental authority. When it continues over time, its affects are devastating on children who are helpless and powerless to prevent it or to escape from it. However, it does not end there. The adults these children become are debilitated because their lives are "different" in ways they are unable to comprehend. How could they possibly know their ontological needs, their emotions, even their thinking processes were skewed out of sync

in the beginning and, because of that, their grown-up lives are such a disappointment, so far from what they had planned for their eventual freedom, a graveyard of hopes and dreams.

Diagnosed with Multiple Personality Disorder in December of 1988, I entered therapy and, in 1990, began to write about my life and what I knew of the people who had shaped it. As I continued through the process, searching for answers to what had gone wrong with my life, I recorded my thoughts and feelings about it. Great insight resulted from the writing; to make my meaning clear on paper, I was forced to clarify it in my mind. Much as a blacksmith shapes white-hot metal, I hammered at words, at sentences, at paragraphs.

I was pursuing roughly five areas of inquiry: 1) the construction of my own system of multiplicity, 2) the retrieval of memories and feelings, 3) search for the cause of my personality split, 4) the reason, and the solution, for my inability to change my life, and 5) my problems with people. In revising the book, I did try to divide it into these sections but it was impossible to separate them. The insights and discoveries wove together like a tapestry. One insight would lead to another of an entirely different kind. Each one was like, "VOILA, now I understand!" only to be followed later on with another, deeper understanding.

Some of "Desire" portrays the state of mind I was in during the months of desperation and despair. Putting my thoughts on paper was a way to take my anguish from the inside to the outside, to give it shape and form and substance. From my perspective now, I would like to remove some of it altogether but I will not do so. By leaving it, readers can see the psychological mechanics working. They can see through the bizarre behavior, the crazy thinking and the emotional garbage to the simple, direct and logical decisions of a child determined to survive.

But many changes were made. Bits and pieces discovered over months were arranged into more coherent sequences; rambling discourses were condensed; childish language was rewritten and ugly words replaced. There was no effort, however, to alter the interchangeable nature of "I" and "we," "me" and "us," "myself" and "ourself" in parts of the text. Like unseen soloists stepping forward from an unseen choir, this book was created by many personalities and this change is impossible for me to make. The character of the book would be irreversibly altered and hopelessly inaccurate.

Asked why I wrote "Desire," I said it was a natural outgrowth of my experience that might generate an income. Possibly but not, however, the real reason I wrote it. The book was not a consequence but a driving force from soon after the beginning. In the beginning, I was told that nobody my age entered therapy. Overwhelmed by a driving compulsion to know what had happened, I entered therapy anyway. I had to find the answers. And I was overcome by a terrible despair; I looked back on all the years of my life and declared them wasted. With most of my life irretrievably gone, nothing could make up for the loss. Nothing.

Gradually, over the next few months, I came to believe that perhaps, out of the waste and the ruin, I could salvage something of value; I could create something worthwhile. No psychiatrist, psychologist or therapist, even the most highly trained, can see inside another's mind. But, if I REALLY wanted the answers, I would have to look into mine. By documenting that process, I could contribute first-hand knowledge of the mind and of MPD. I could be my own research project. "Desire" was born then.

Over time, my efforts to find the answers have resulted, almost as a by-product of the process, in changes that have made me different and my remaining years promising. And, concurrent with the process and an integral part of it, "Desire" became a reality. Inseparable, the book is both a cause and a result of my progress. For me, it became the value I had hoped for. Now, it is my hope that readers will also find something worthwhile, something of value in it. ETA

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