

TREATING DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

January, 2017

Following is an overview of the approach that I keep in mind in counseling people with Dissociative Identity Disorder, with Anxiety, and with most forms of Depression. In presenting it to you, I hope that it may help you find direction as a counselor or as a person who is in counseling. In case you are interested in having me speak to counselors or to a religious community, these are the ideas that I am interested in sharing.

“A CHOICE” is an acronym that can help you understand what I pursue in counseling for DID people. Over the years I have found that people in general who seek counseling need help with their “parts and wounds”, as do DID folks. This approach includes issues like marriage counseling, depression, and anxiety, as well as eating disorders. Here is what people keep telling me: “Part of me” is the problem. I need a better approach to deal with those parts of me who disagree, especially those who are in pain, and have relationship problems. Please keep the following points in mind for planning and carrying out counseling with DID people.

Anxiety is the first focus. Until the anxiety is comes down a little, it is difficult for people to learn or to receive healing.

Cooperation among parts is essential. Getting to know the major personality states, and helping them to work together, is a great place to begin. *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD* and *More than Survivors* illustrate how to make this happen. Personality Parts are all “good”, but have been through difficult times, and often have suffered. When healed, they can overcome their differing directions, and do pretty well together.

Anxious parts need to cooperate with each other, so that they will not act independently. Busted budgets and weight gains show uncoordinated direction from anxious parts. Lowering anxiety helps. So does getting to know the parts better, and seeking to unify their direction.

Healing must be sought for wounded parts. Traumatized parts are broken off because of traumas. The traumatic stories need to be uncovered, so that we will know what to pray for. Tell the story and pray for healing. *The Life Model* and *A Far Better Life* dwell on this in many places. There is a lot to learn about healing.

Anxiety and fear definitely block healing. God’s presence promotes healing. Keep in mind that general prayers can bring anxiety and fear to lower levels, but specific prayers are needed for the particular wounds that have resulted from early traumas.

“Out with the bad” needs to be a high priority. “Delver us from evil” is what Jesus taught us to pray. All kinds of evil in a person’s background need to be addressed. Being hurt by family members or by groups of strangers certainly has spiritual after affects. We need to continue to send away the bad stuff. Inviting God’s help cannot be overlooked. “Out with the bad” also refers to finding out the bad things that happened, and praying for healing. Resolution comes after healing and deliverance.

Spiritual Warfare cannot be overlooked, especially in cases of Satanic Ritual Abuse. In those rituals Satan is worshipped, so there is plenty of “bad.” But our weapons have divine power to break lies (2 Cor 10:4), and since love is stronger than fear, success is assured. Spiritual Warfare is a central focus in *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD*. Please do not launch out in this arena on your own. Working together with experienced people is essential, particularly those who know how to discern the difference between a person’s dissociated parts and demons. Voices inside accompany DID, so “voices” certainly do not necessarily suggest demonic interference.

“In with the good” must be a person’s intentional direction. The Apostle Paul has just that in mind in *Philippians* chapter 4. Fill your mind with whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Enjoy God and His family. Steady attunement with God and enjoying His family are two perfect sources for what is truly good.

A person’s everyday life can also be a steady source of “in with the good”, or it can be a steady reminder of traumatic times. *The Life Model* highlights how the environment either supports or does not support progress in counseling. It is crucial for “in with the good” to fit into every day, spiritually, musically, interpersonally and emotionally. Blocking “in with the good” by hitting reminders of traumas from the past, can make progress difficult, if not impossible.

Healing wounds is “in with the good.” So is joining dissociated parts. These both lead to joy. But joy is more than a side effect. It automatically springs up when people are happy to be together, or are happy to be with God. Enhancing these relationships, which is a crucial aspect of counseling, leads to joy, and that is always “in with the good.”

“Chapterize” your life. Disentangling the feelings from the past and present is a very important accomplishment. Once treatment has begun, the traumatized feelings that have made their way into the present are identified and targeted for healing. It is very difficult to see how different life is today, when feelings from the past blur the difference. That makes it crucial to treat every strong feeling correctly, in that it is being driven by past wounds. The childhood training was developed in an earlier chapter of life. The abuse, torture or extreme neglect that is the source of the traumatized feelings from the past, can be helped most effectively when it is disentangled from the present.

Chapterize your life. The bad stuff is in an earlier chapter. You were Bob, 1.0 back then. Today you are Bob, 2.0. You are now living the current chapter of your life each day, and you will do very well if you can keep the awful feelings from the past out of this chapter. Let’s do our best to get those feelings chapterized, so that they can stay in a chapter that has come to an end.

Education helps a lot. The problems that have repeatedly interrupted life for years can be understood under this heading: *It’s all about Parts and Wounds*. Reading the above books will help overcome many day-to-day problems. Reading books that promote spiritual maturity, like *Renovation of the Heart*, should not be left out of the education.

This area was highlighted very early in my training as a counselor for DID. The problem that I repeatedly came across was that the readings that should help were written for counselors, and not easily understood by those in treatment. Here is what I have in mind in all of my books: I

try to frame the ideas in ways that will be clear to counselors and counsees, so that they can more easily understand the process together.

Counsees' progress slows when either the spiritual or the psychological is not included in treatment. Unless God's Spirit directs, His goodness and healing will be missing. It also needs to be kept in mind that the psychological framework sheds much needed light in the areas of child development, family dynamics and trauma recovery. For best results, all of the work – both the spiritual and the psychological – should take place in the same setting. With this in mind, counselors should seek education in both disciplines.