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# NEW DIRECTION Mustard Seed

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*Dear Friends,*

I keep a large lump of pliable clay on the coffee table in my office. Its' purpose is two-fold: to represent how we are molded and shaped throughout our lives by a number of different variables – good and bad. Also, it is representative of the plasticity of the human brain. Neither of which are static.



One of my first clients, over 27 years ago, was a woman, who had spent a number of years in a mental institution, diagnosed with what was then called Multiple Personality Disorder. Today it is referred to as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). People with DID have two or more separate personalities. Some of the more severe cases have been known to have 100 or more. This woman was as a prism, with numerous fragments. The disorder is very rare, affecting between 0.01 and 1% of the population.

A friend of the client called on her behalf asking if I had ever worked with anyone with this disorder. I said I had not. I read a paragraph or two in graduate school as well as watched the movie Sybil. Other than that I had no experience. When asked if I was willing to at least meet with the lady, I agreed, saying that if I didn't feel I could help, I could find a referral.

As is often the case with those who suffer from such a disorder, this client had been the victim of childhood abuse and trauma; truly of greater degree than anyone with whom I have worked, or even read about, all of these years. She lived in a satanic cult, her parents in leadership. At a point in her teens she was able to run away, and was taken in by a family. Eventually she married and had a son. Over the years her husband knew something was a bit off in her behavior, "sometimes I feel like I am

married to different women”, but dismissed it as being a result of her valium and alcohol dependency. She was able to function as a manager of a motel for many years and was exemplary in her work.

A back injury landed her in the hospital. When flat on a table, in preparation for an MRI, she flipped out and came out swinging as if under attack. The medical staff realized there was something far deeper going on than a back injury. At that point she was placed in the psychiatric ward, diagnosed and eventually transferred to a state mental hospital, which had a special unit for research purposes: an entire ward of women with Multiple Personalities. “You can only imagine how chaotic a group therapy sessions was”, she said with a chuckle. I believe her sharp wit along with high intelligence, was one of the strengths which enabled her to manage through life.

I met with Sally (fictitious name), who shared her story of the most recent piece of her timeline. While in the psychiatric hospital, where she lived for many years, her husband began attending church and came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Once she was back home he would put her in the car, each Sunday, to go to church. She refused to go in, staying in the car while he attended the service. Eventually she agreed to cross the threshold, with the understanding she could bring a Screwdriver cocktail to drink on the way. That first Sunday she stayed about 5 minutes. The next Sunday a little longer. Finally the day arrived, when she stayed for an entire service. The sermon that day was about the holiness and faithfulness of God, how we are each created in His image and likeness, separated because of sin but brought back through Jesus. She had never really heard about God’s love or His plan of redemption. She stood up right in the middle of the service and said

**“I want this God to be my God.”**

I would have loved to have been there.

She was 52 on this, her day of salvation. She went home, threw out all of her liquor, and then proceeded to wean herself off of valium. She knew she was a “new creation”. Another important piece was there was no more splitting off into altered pieces of her personality. She, and her husband, believed she was totally healed of DID. Becoming fully immersed in their new church family and Bible study, this was the first time they felt as though they belonged anywhere. Life was good. As they became comfortable and safe in their church, they

shared about her childhood, consequent mental health disorder and years of psychiatric commitment. This history scared the church leadership who categorized such “nonsense” as nothing more than demonic. One can only imagine how traumatic such rejection was for Sally.

From an objective standpoint I understand, as humans, we tend to push away/cancel anything we don’t understand. If you have witnessed hamsters when something new is placed in their space, they tend to push shavings over it. Not saying we humans are hamsters, but we surely have that same tendency.

Subjectively, I cannot imagine how very painful this was for Sally and her husband to experience such rejection. It was just the catalyst to kick her dissociating back in. Soon after was when we first met in my office. I was clear to tell Sally I had no specific training in that area of mental health but believed that if the Lord wanted us to work together I would follow His lead.



Jesus says in  
Matthew 11:28-30  
“Come to me, all  
you who are weary  
and burdened, and I will  
give you rest; take my yoke upon  
you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in  
heart; and you will find rest for your souls.

What are we to learn? I would think most anything pertaining to life and godliness we don’t understand. But even more so to know Jesus more intimately. Step by step, as we walk in that yoke with Him, old ways of thinking, distorted mindsets, will be replaced with the plumb line of truth. Our thinking is the software. Our brain the hardware. Bit by bit, as our thinking is aligned with the mind of Christ, new neural pathways are created, filling in the ruts.

Upon closure of that first meeting we both believed we were to work together. When she failed to show up for our next appointment, I called her home. A child answered the phone whom I assumed to be her grand-

daughter. She told me Sally wasn't there. I called the home again that night and spoke with Sally's husband who said "the wife she.....is not good." When I told him I spoke to his granddaughter that morning, he said "that was one of Sally's personalities you talked with. Sally would not be able to drive to your office in this state."

So I went to meet with her at their home. As I left for that uncharted territory I felt led to take a print of Jesus holding a lamb. Sally seemed delighted to invite me into her home, where she felt safest. At noon a large grandfather clock began to toll. Sally became extremely fretful, telling me this happens to her every day at this time. I said, "let's pray". We both bowed our heads and prayed aloud. When I raised my head, before me sat not the Sally with whom I had been meeting, but a fearful, childlike Sally who with tears said to me, "who are you?" I explained I was Sally's friend, Bridget. At that point I showed her the print of Jesus and the lamb, explaining I was representing Him. This only served to frighten her even more. "That man is going to hurt that animal. Bad man." I explained to Sally this was Jesus, Who rescued the sheep to protect it from harm. He was Sally's friend. He is good." She calmed down and then proceeded to listen as I told her a condensed, flannel board child's version of the gospel. She finally said "I think I like Him."



Thus began the amazing journey of Sally and I walking in the yoke with Jesus. Bit by bit fragmented pieces of her personality became integrated through the renewing of her mind. An important aspect, was the opportunity for her to tell me about the traumatic events. One thing I learned early on was that Sally was not one who wanted to continue life as a victim. She fully embraced "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the

mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Her favorite saying was "let go and let God."

Part of our journey entailed my accompanying her into the operating room on two different occasions. Because of her tendencies, the doctors felt if I was beside her she might not feel the need to flee. As is true of many who have had extensive childhood abuse, Sally suffered from a heart condition.

It was in our third year of working together, the day came when Sally and I realized she had incrementally become whole; fully integrated in Christ. No longer shattered fragments. No longer a need to hide out.

I often reflect upon the gift of those early days and what the Lord taught me. First of all He taught me that although most textbooks will say there is no cure for Dissociative Identity Disorder, this is according to man's limited understanding. "The best case scenario for those who suffer from this disorder is that through a number of treatments symptoms can be reduced, but will have to be managed for the rest of one's life". I witnessed, first hand, the incremental healing of Sally, who continued to walk in freedom, no longer bound by the trauma of her past or a diagnosis.

That piece about healing being a process, I believe, is most important. We live in a day and time in which we want an immediate fix. We want the healing from Jesus to be in the moment miraculous. The first miracle for Sally was her salvation. As is true for any of us who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. We cannot save ourselves. To be born again is a miracle of God.

Once salvation occurs then begins the renewing of our minds. Old thought processes, distorted ways of thinking, need to be dismantled as the truth is downloaded. This is a process. What we think leads to our emotions which leads to our behavior. What we think affects the chemistry of our brains. We are prone to treat symptomatic behavior rather than going to the root of the problem.

Several years ago I found myself to be curious about how PTSD had become such an often used terminology in our country .One would think that because an individual had suffered trauma it would be a life-long sentence of being disabled from PTSD. I wondered if this maybe had become as an idol in our culture. So I attended a two day conference conducted by a world renowned expert. I found that the majority of individuals who have experienced traumatic events of various sorts

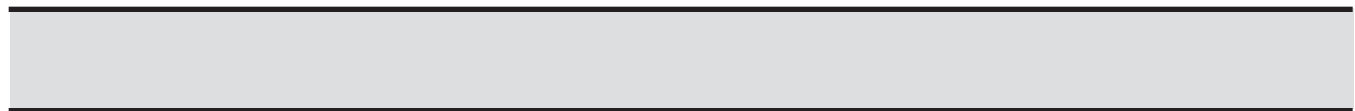
will be able to heal. There is about 16% of the population who may continue to struggle throughout life.

Sally taught me the power of freedom that comes from forgiving the unconscionable; the power of believing that all of the promises of God are yes in Jesus (she claimed each and every one of them); and the power that comes from the knowledge of being a prisoner of darkness but now set free to go and tell the world about the Healer. In many ways her story reminds me of the woman at the well, a woman bound in shame and rejection, who face to face with Jesus came to know Him as the Messiah. She left a woman set free, and ran to town to tell all about the Messiah she encountered. “And many came to believe.” This became Sally’s lifelong mission. She rarely ever talked about her past. She focused on the One Who set her free and the path of eternity set before her. Sally wanted everyone along the way to know the Good News of the Gospel.

As I work with clients who have had past trauma in their lives and struggle with living in freedom, I reflect back upon Sally who, once was terribly bound, then set free and continued to walk in that freedom. What was the key in her experience? I believe it is that she believed that Jesus is exactly Who He says He is and that He was able to heal today the same as yesterday. But she knew it would be a process of healing. She devoured the Word of God which became integrated into her belief system. There was never a time she wavered in unbelief. As far as all of her suffering? She became a walking testimony of Romans 8:28.

I am so very thankful the Lord allowed me to walk with Him and Sally. The lessons learned in those early days have become the foundation of walking with others.

Thank you for your support of the Mustard Seed



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Encompassing Hope and Care For Families.