

FALLOUT

A Survivor Talks to Incest Offenders
(And Others)

NAN MYKEL

Plus the Author's Dream Journal and Diary

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We must try to live a just life in an unjust world.

—Sheldon Kopp

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I look in the mirror and see a strangely content woman losing her femininity to the neutering of old age. I'm not sure why I cover the gray. Perhaps I want to be seen as someone still to be reckoned with—but was I ever? The antidepressant is helping not only to keep me centered but also to bank the fires of desire.

If I were still sexually desirable would I so easily reject my sexuality? Well, yes, I suppose. I began rejecting sexuality even while still married, although then it was the experience of being valued *only* for sex that I could not tolerate, since it echoed my feelings that I had nothing to offer another person *except* sex. I never integrated sexuality into my *self*. I can think, create, listen well, empathize, write, draw, analyze, and have a sense of humor, but I still struggle with the belief that I have little to offer a partner. And with that limitation the experience of romance and intimacy is not available to me.

There are many lessons already learned and incorporated: I am not sarcastic, I am not bitter, I do not “bad mouth” others. I no longer play Pitiful Pearl and Wooden Leg games. And since becoming an adult I have never used any power advantage to hurt others.

And I am not *special*, although I still struggle with this. During many years of “keeping the secret” and believing that I had wielded great magnetic power destructively, I did feel special—especially destructive, especially wicked, especially confused in the head. I still feel different from others. It's a weird mix of feelings, debased and inflated, and is a flip-flop survivors have come to know well.

Like many others, I am haunted not only by my father but by my response to him. Problems with perspective and judgment have always dogged my steps, in addition to the fallout of feeling shame. Although rationally I know better, in my eternal inner reality I stole my father from my mother. I am the other woman in her life. *I am his partner in crime.*

FALLOUT

So at this point in time and probably until the end of my time, I am a survivor but not a victim. (Although as a general rule I favor the use of *survivor* when one has begun dealing with the abuse, and *victim* when one is still in its thralls, in the pages that follow I may at times interchange them in an effort to be less repetitive.)

Instead of trying to change in an effort to be acceptable to others, I have come to embrace myself, with all my limitations and strengths. As someone once said, “I’m not okay, you’re not okay, and that’s okay.”

P R E F A C E

My professional graduate training did not prepare me for doing therapy with sex offenders, much less incest offenders. When I was scheduled to interview an alleged incest offender at the mental health center where I first worked after graduation, I hesitated. I would have gladly transferred him to another clinician if one had been available. Inadequate and unprepared for the task and the client, I don't know who was more anxious, the alleged offender or me.

I remained ignorant about the treatment of sex offenders until I joined the psychology staff of a state prison. Shortly thereafter, my warden assigned me the task of starting a sex offender treatment program.

Since I had been molested by both my paternal grandfather and my father, I experienced the assignment as both a professional challenge and a personal one, which it turned out to be, on both counts.

An early realization was that at the visceral level, *offenders do not believe their sexual abuse harmed their victim*. That is why this volume contains the hefty section on the effects of sexual abuse, especially incest.

The content of this book is frank. It is an attempt to by-pass denial, not to feed old resentments; to lift spirits, not to dampen them. I have changed names to protect the innocent and the guilty.

I kept my abuse secret from my children because I was embarrassed about it, didn't want to appear to make excuses or to present myself as a cripple, and was concerned that I might provide them with a loser's script. I was afraid to be myself for fear of contaminating them.

Sandra Butler writes,

FALLOUT

Perhaps the only lessons we have for our children are the truths about our lives—whatever those truths are—for that is all we know. (1985, 142-43)

Incest is real. It hurts the victim, the family, future children, future spouses, and even the perpetrator. Denial permits incest to continue unchecked. This volume's intent is to explore in depth the machinations of incest and its effects. It may be particularly helpful for the unreported offender whose secrecy bars him from treatment.

The tendrils of incest may reach down through generations to silently claim unsuspecting prey within the family circle. With stealth and intent, the invisible intruder leeches off both joy and harmony while the family, ignorant that it has been attacked by one of its own, leaves the victim alone without protection or redress. The incest offender is that invisible intruder, and may be himself a link in an older family pattern. (There is, however, no likelihood that most victims will become abusers.)

What is incest anyway? Incest is the use of children or adolescents for sexual gratification by their caregiver. Incest offenders can be divided into blood and non-blood incest offenders. The only significance of this distinction is to stress the fact that incest involves the violation of trust, and may include stepfathers, teachers, priests, coaches, scout leaders, etc. The emphasis is on the unequal power and influence over the child. This is especially obvious when the perpetrator purposefully builds rapport and friendship with the intended victim, a common practice known as *grooming*. Not surprisingly, the closer the relationship between the caregiver and the child, the greater its destructiveness.

I can attest to the latter statement. Although my paternal grandfather molested me as a very young child, I always saw him as somehow "different," and I never felt close to him. My father was another story, and I believe he caused much more damage precisely because our previous relationship had been close. The molestation by my father may have also built upon vulnerabilities inflicted on me by my grandfather.

Some might assume that “intercourse” would be included in the definition of incest, but the most common form of incest is *not* intercourse. Others might refer to sexual activity *between* an adult and child, but most agree that when sexual activity is involved, incest is something that is done *to* a child, not *engaged in* with a child. As discussed at length later in this book, children are incapable of giving informed consent to sexual activity with an adult. They don’t know what sex is, much less its ramifications and consequences.

Although the term “rape” usually refers to any forced penetration, it is a legal term and can be confusing due to its common association with physical violence. Most often, sexual abuse of a child involves manipulation rather than violence. Violence is rarely necessary when dealing with a child who is easy to manipulate, eager to please, and has been taught to obey adults. Being a legal term, however, *rape* is often the charge.

In the interest of maintaining the flow I have chosen to refer to victims as female and offenders as male. This by no means negates the fact that a number of child molesters are *women*, including mothers and stepmothers. One of the men in our treatment program and his brother were molested by their stepmother and together had explored several ways to murder her. Fortunately the marriage dissolved before they acted. When members of Parents United, a self-help group of recovering offenders, visited our program, one of them related having been molested by his own mother. He said that when he later confronted her, as an adult, she denied it entirely.

I primarily address father-daughter incest in the following pages, because that was my personal experience. However, many of the dynamics involved extend to other incestuous pairings. As we all learned in the prison program, prevention strategies that only focus on *stranger danger* leave the child still vulnerable.

I would like to think that perpetrators working on their recovery, survivors trying to make sense of their abuse, as well as other family members might avail themselves of journaling while reading this book, and afterwards.

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I also want to recognize the soul-searching and sharing by the men in Phoenix, our treatment program.

INTRODUCTION

First, I must tell you that I was not severely traumatized by my sexual abuse. I did not significantly dissociate nor develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I provisionally met the criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder at one time. I'm telling you this so you can place the effects incest had on me in perspective. Numerous others described herein experienced much more damage. Even with my non-violent assault, however, the damage should be obvious in the following pages.

FOR MEN WHO MOLEST:

It is probable that you are much more than a man who molests. You may engage in good deeds, be a hard worker and good provider. Like an animal that has developed rabies, however, you become a danger to society and will be/are being treated as such when your behavior is discovered. Your contributions to society become invisible and you are a *marked man*. The condition may not be terminal, however. In fact, you are far from alone in the population. Most men who molest children have not yet been reported and convicted, nor have they been exposed to some of the information provided in treatment programs. You can learn to understand your urges and explore strategies for controlling them.

David Finkelhor was sensitive to the potential usefulness of shared information when he wrote of prevention programs: "Even without specifically addressing the possibility that audience members might become abusers ... it is likely that these programs do have an important deterrent influence on anyone who is exposed to them, if for no other reason than that they clearly reinforce the norm that such behavior is exploitative of a child" (Finkelhor 1986b, 234). I hope the information in this book will both encourage men who are still free to resist molesting and strengthen the resolve of those currently in treatment.

The majority of incestuous fathers are *symbiotic*, in that they feel an emotional bond with their victim (Courtois 1988; Justice and

Justice 1979). Maddock and Larson (1995, 84) refer to “affection-based incest,” reporting that “a significant amount of incest behavior appears to serve as a means of expressing affection.” (There is a difference between affection and empathy, however; see Chapter 5.)

A glaring example of this misinformed motivation is reported by de Young (1982, 36), who quotes a molester as saying: “I wanted to be her lover, not the victimizer. I wanted her to remember our affair as one of affection and warmth, not fear and pain.”

Much of the thrust of this book is, therefore, to make a case for the fact that incest is damaging, especially for a child you care about or who is under your protection. I use myself as the example, since to outward appearances I have “succeeded” in life. Read my story and you will find otherwise.

FOR OTHER SURVIVORS:

I hope that survivors will find the information within these pages helpful, not only in the section for survivors but also the perpetrator section. I myself was surprised to learn that being able to make sense of my sexual abuse is healing, as discussed later in the book.

A group of female survivors and their therapist once visited our program during a group session. Each man introduced himself and explained why he was in prison. They answered any questions the visitors had. After the group was over, the survivors confessed they had been anxious, scared, and even angry with the men they were yet to meet. Upon leaving they reported feeling better about the men, whom they saw as working on themselves.

From time to time I wondered how my father or grandfather would have fit into our prison group. Would they have denied their culpability? My grandfather would deny his molesting behavior and perhaps convince himself that he was blameless. I can imagine him complaining—as I have heard more than one offender do—that “it’s gotten so you can’t even give your grandkid a hug any more.” I do not believe treatment would have deterred my grandfather. My father would have been more honest, but both would have denied that any damage had been done.

So do child molesters—especially incest offenders—harm their victims?

At first I resisted the idea that much of my life had been negatively shaped by the incest. Then as I learned more about the kinds of effects it exerts, I was able to gain a clearer perspective of myself. Coming to realize that I have dissociated was an eye-opener as well. Keeping a journal, along with a record of my dreams, has been beneficial not only at the time of writing but later, when tracing my journey.

FOR THE COMMUNITY AND FAMILY

It is no surprise that the community at large knows so little about incest. It's such an ugly topic and so difficult to discuss with children! That ignorance leaves both us and our loved ones vulnerable, however. We dress our little girls as sexy vamps, don't know the difference between "playing doctor" and juvenile sex offending, and don't know how to respond when our young child says she wants to marry us, *insists* she/he doesn't want to return to camp again this year, or begs for a different babysitter.

What if a family member who molested a child is chastened and "wants to make it up to her," or to work on building a better relationship with her? How should you respond if a family member who has been in sex offender treatment gets depressed and starts blaming his victim? Or decides to start coaching Little League? People can be wonderful in many different ways and still sexually abuse children. I hope you will find answers to these and other questions throughout this book.

FOR OTHER PROFESSIONALS

I once asked Jan Hindman why there were so many survivors treating sex offenders, and she said, "Because they know how important it is."

PART I

MEN

WHO

COMMIT

INCEST

WHO AM I?

The most striking characteristic of sex offenders, from a diagnostic standpoint, is their apparent normality.
—Judith Lewis Herman, 1990

The good news is that the incest offender is usually not psychotic, retarded or senile and seldom uses physical force against his victim.

Although it is not completely known what creates a sexual predisposition toward children on the part of an adult—what bio-psycho-social components, what developmental events, at what points, in what combinations and in what intensities are critical—we do know that a wide variety of individual differences do exist.
(Groth 1982, 226)

DIAGNOSIS?

You *may* qualify for a diagnosis; you decide. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2000, 572), known in the profession as DSM IV, defines a "Pedophile" as follows:

A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intensely sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally 13 years or younger).

B. The person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty.

C. The person is at least age 16 years and at least 5 years older than the child or children in Criterion A.

NOTE: Do not include an individual in late adolescence involved in an ongoing sexual relationship with a 12-or 13-year old.

Men Who Commit Incest

Specify if:

Sexually Attracted to Males

Sexually Attracted to Females

Sexually Attracted to Both

Specify if:

Limited to incest

Specify type:

Exclusive Type (attracted only to children)

Nonexclusive Type

Salter (1988, 51) has written, “It is this author’s opinion that, while many incest offenders are closet pedophiles, incest offenders exist who are not.” Apparently offenders against boys are more likely to meet the criteria for Pedophilia than offenders against girls (Herman 1990, 181-82).

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

You *may* also be a stepfather. Children who live in stepfamilies are unusually vulnerable, which means that stepfathers are at increased risk to offend. You *may* be an alcoholic or possess one of the disinhibiting factors discussed later in the book. It’s also likely that you tend to be a little suspicious of the motivations of others and haven’t completely embraced the adult role in society. As with the other diagnostic features, this may or may not describe you.

You probably had fantasies about molesting your family member long before doing it and then “groomed” her—like in a courtship—to woo her trust. This process is described in more detail in Chapter 6.

It’s quite possible that you have also molested non-family members at some point in your life, as suggested by one study in which twenty-three (34%) of the men known only to have molested outside the home also perpetrated incest, and 9 of the 18 known incest offenders admitted to undetected abuse of a child outside the home

(Weinrott and Saylor 1991, 292). A large study by Abel and Rouleau found that 131 individuals (23.3%) had offended against both family and non-family victims (1990, 16).

The response to the query “who am I?” may be “your own abuser.” This statement needs to be read carefully, because many victims fear an assumption that if they were victimized they will inevitably become an offender. This is *not* the case.

Sometimes, however, the offender was a victim himself, and dealt with his abuse by *identifying* at some level with his molester, consciously or unconsciously. In fact, when a child starts molesting other children it can often serve as an alert to the possible existence of an additional sexual abuser in the background.

This is a controversial topic in the literature. A number of incest offenders *admit* to having been molested as children. Some do not, and some falsely claim to be victims of childhood sexual abuse, presumably in order to gain sympathy from treatment staff (Hindman and Peters 2001).

It appears that males, with their testosterone, macho culture and possible genetic influences, may be reluctant to disclose that they have been abused. I realize now that admitting that they have been *damaged* by sexual abuse is tantamount to admitting vulnerability, a trait not in keeping with the offender’s self-image.

Briere (1989, 154) observes that “the developing male child may strive to reaffirm the power or masculinity he believes was compromised by his abuse—potentially leading to high levels of sexual aggression against others.”

Clarke and Llewelyn (2001) suggest that men and women cope with their abuse experiences differently, that male survivors are more likely to become abusers, females to be re-victimized. Carmen, Reiker, and Mills (1984, 382) report that in their sample of physically and sexually abused psychiatric patients, “the abused females directed their hatred and aggression against themselves. . . . In comparison, the mainly adolescent male victims, although experiencing many of the same feelings of self-hatred, more often directed their aggression toward others.”

Since a great many victims dissociate or otherwise block the memory of having been sexually abused as children until years later, why would this not also be true of victims who become abusers? The puzzle and controversy continues. During one therapy group session I had occasion to witness a child molester regain the memory of having been sexually assaulted by his priest. How much do *you* remember? That could be part of who you are.

YOU ARE A MAN

Marshall and Barbaree (1990a, 259) have observed that human males are biologically prepared for sexual aggression, citing the same sex steroids for both sexual arousal and aggression. "In our view, then, biological factors present the growing male with the task of learning to appropriately separate sex and aggression and to inhibit aggression in a sexual context" (260). This developmental task can be impacted by childhood experiences, cultural influences, pornography, and situational factors.

Smallbone (2006, 99), addressing Marshall and Barbaree's theory, writes that "the fact that normal adult males are typically most attracted to youthful and beautiful sexual partners suggests that it is the *exploitation*, rather than the *recognition* of young people's sexual appeal that characterizes sexual offending behavior."

In this sense sexual offending against children is much more like theft or robbery than it is like non-criminal sexual deviations like fetishism or transvestism. The question of why most men do not sexually exploit children and young people is not all that different from the question of why most do not rob banks. (Ibid.)

It should not be puzzling, therefore, that there are many more male sexual aggressors than female.

IMPRINTING

Another possibility lurking in the background is the concept of sexual imprinting. According to this theory, one is imprinted by his first pleasurable orgasmic experience, and although he may repress the molestation (or not), a youth who was first molested by a man

may always carry the possibility of being sexually aroused by another male, although married and in love with a woman. William Prendergast shared this theory during a 1987 training presentation in Chillicothe, Ohio. Various aspects of that first physically pleasurable molestation may also be imprinted, as was the case with one of the men in our program who had been molested in a movie theatre. He became an offender, and the site of his offending was always in a movie theater, with one exception. The offense for which he was incarcerated involved him sitting beside his victim, in the front seat of a car.

Hunter has observed that “a large percentage of those who identify themselves as sexually compulsive or addictive also report experiencing childhood sexual abuse” (1995, 61).

FAMILY HISTORY OF INCEST

In response to the incest offender’s query “who am I?” another answer may be “someone vulnerable to acting out the adult-child sexual paradigm, either by having experienced it or knowing of its existence within the family.” Mrazek (1981, 104) suspects that previous incestuous experience or knowledge of it within the family may be the most significant factor in the continuation of incest with new family members. It appears, as she reports, that once the incest taboo is broken within a family, it is quite likely to be broken again.

Courtois (1988, 26) agrees, stating that

once the incest barrier is breached, there is little to disinhibit additional incestuous activity; incest becomes the ‘normal’ way to interact and seems to become unconsciously embedded within the family, even though the abuse is commonly kept secret.

There are differing findings and opinions in the literature about the importance of this transmission, however. Williams and Finkelhor (1990, 238) state that “although intergenerational transmission may be a factor for some incestuous fathers, it does not come close to being universal.”

Finkelhor is concerned that the popularization of the “simple-minded intergenerational transmission theory” terrifies victims,

who fear they are destined to become abusers. Moreover, “because the intergenerational transmission explanation relies exclusively on a childhood experience that we cannot return and change, it breeds cynicism that we can be effective in prevention” (1986a, 123).

On my father’s side, my grandfather molested me and several others in the family. Over the generations, at least seven members of the family line have been tainted by incest, as offender and/or victim. My father told me my grandfather also made sexual advances toward my mother. Soon after my father first molested me, he said that some experts maintain that “it” is damaging, but he didn’t believe it.

So—back to the identity question: What do you know about your own family? That, of course, is part of who we all are.

VULNERABILITY TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Are you vulnerable to child pornography? You know you are.

At one of our training seminars the presenter described a case in which a juror, along with the other jurors, was required to view child pornography as part of the evidence. Shortly thereafter the juror—who reportedly had never previously assaulted a child—began molesting children.

Child pornography appears to carry with it the potential, then, to ignite fires due to erotic vulnerabilities that were formerly under control. Both viewing child pornography and having fantasies of offending can be precursors to the act, especially when utilized while masturbating. A number of recovering molesters wisely avoid the Internet, due to reasonable concern about a possible relapse. Warning: on the Internet, pornography can pop up when you least expect it. After retirement I Googled “sex offenders” and got pornography, to my chagrin.

KINDLING OF FANTASIES

Watch out. Not infrequently, hearing that a child has been sexually abused precipitates sexual fantasies in an adult. Quick, change the subject before you are led astray!

As much as I regret it, before we leave this topic, I need to mention that a small minority of “healing professionals” take sexual advantage of clients who share their history of incest during therapy. Presumably their fantasies get stirred and disinhibit them.

SAD TO SAY

So far we have looked at the possibilities that the potential incest offender has a tendency to follow in the footsteps of his own abuser, has been sexually imprinted at an early age, may know of incest within his family, and may be vulnerable to the effects of child pornography and to fantasies ignited by learning of a young victim’s sexual abuse. He may also be that invisible intruder who visits sorrow upon his own family.

AM I A SEXUAL ADDICT?

When speaking of behavior rather than a physiological state, the usual term is *compulsion* rather than *addiction*. In our program we used Carnes’s *Out of the Shadows* (1992), still a classic in its field. For specific criteria see “The Sexual Addiction Assessment Process” by Carnes and Wilson (2002). They define compulsivity as “the loss of the ability to choose whether or not to stop or continue a particular behavior” (4–5).

One reason for the public’s reluctance to accept the “sexual addict” label is that it smacks of excuse making. But the alcoholic who gets a DUI is not excused because of his physical vulnerability to alcohol, any more than a sexual addict should be excused for acting out his compulsion. Nevertheless, the fact is that just as some people have more difficulty staying sober than others, it’s more difficult for some sexual abusers to avoid molesting children than it is for most of the population.

It was known in my community that I treated sex offenders, which is how I came to be contacted by a local Crisis Line in response to an emergency call from a child molester in another city. He had recently been released from prison for sexual crimes against children and was reoffending. He wanted to know if the judge would be lenient if he turned himself in. My answer had to be “no.” As a second time offender his sentence would probably be harsher.

His *modus operandi* was to pick up children from bus stops, take them and molest them and return them to the bus stop. Apparently one child’s shame and her fear response was so great that it touched him, and he became aware of the wrongfulness of his behavior at the visceral level and wanted to stop, but without living the rest of his life behind bars. Fortunately, I happened to have referral information to an emergency clinic that offered medical treatment for compulsive sex offenders. The clinic was in our state, and only several hours away. I don’t know the end of this story, but was thankful that I could offer him one possible solution.

Others interested in medical help for sexual addiction will want to consult a specialist about the most current treatment possibilities, as well as their side-effects.

One man, a grandfather in our program, reported that he used to lock his front door in order to keep his granddaughter out, so that he would not molest her again. He became suicidal prior to incarceration. Again, in the midst of scorn for child molesters, it may put things into perspective to remember that most of us do not have to struggle against an urge to molest children.

Salter said that the hair on the back of her neck stood up when she interviewed an obviously earnest and troubled minister with a conscience who molested his grandchildren. Salter realized that

if a man who truly believes in hell would be willing to go there in exchange for the chance to molest a child, this problem had a persistence and compulsiveness that few outside the drug addiction world could appreciate. (2003, 76)

If you have had to repeatedly struggle against urges to commit sexual abuse, you may in fact be on the brink of a sexual compulsion. Once breached, the inhibitions are weakened, and with repetition over time develop into patterns and then into habits (Hunter 1995, 57). If you have already become sexually compulsive “much of the emotional material that is fueling the behavior is not conscious” (57). “By the time someone has developed a psychological addiction to an act, it has taken on a life of its own. The actions are so automatic that the addict will report that they ‘just happen’ as if he or she played no role in the action” (60).

While some individual offenders may try to use the concept as an excuse, there are a great many cases in which having a sexual compulsion is a statement of fact rather than a cop-out. Recognizing and owning that you have a problem can be a first step to taking the problem seriously and working toward recovery.

As Herman (1990, 187) says:

Addiction interferes with normal maturation and destroys social relationships. These problems remain even after the compulsive behavior has been given up. ... Once an addiction has become established, it must be considered a lifelong process. An addict may achieve abstinence; he does not achieve cure.

and

Highly structured group treatment and self-help programs appear to be the most successful modality for the social rehabilitation of addicts, including sex offenders. ... A new source of self-esteem is provided by the structure of a program which requires acknowledgment of the harm done but offers an opportunity for restitution and service to others. (Ibid., 186)

(See also discussion of Circles of Support and Accountability in chapter 12.)

Sexual compulsives are welcome at AA meetings, but they must be circumspect in details that they divulge as they work on their problem. Although a confidential group, felonious conduct is sometimes reported to authorities by other members. There are other groups specifically for these men and women, including Sex

and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, and Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Most apparently follow the 12-step program developed and utilized by Alcoholics Anonymous. Local chapters of the above groups vary in their commitment to working on the problem, but a visit to any such self-help meeting should offer an idea of the support available from that group.

This may be an appropriate place to repeat that child molesters are never *cured* of their attraction to children, but with support and sufficient motivation they can strengthen their inhibitions and continue their struggle to never reoffend. Although quality treatment can decrease recidivism to some extent, men who molest children can never be trusted alone around children again, nor should they want to be. In most cases continual self-monitoring is required. The future is more hopeful for the man who is in recovery and constantly working the steps of his treatment program or relapse prevention plan, instead of denying that he really has a problem. One of the most dangerous thinking errors of sex offenders is, "I'll just put it out of my mind."

A hopeful note lies in the fact that we are discovering that the brain *is still plastic and capable of change*. For example, a new conceptualization and treatment of obsessive-compulsiveness has been developed that may be helpful in treating the recurrent deviant thoughts that usually precede sexual assault. While description of this treatment, which was pioneered by Jeffrey M. Schwartz, is beyond the scope of this book, it can be readily accessed in Norman Doidge's *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (2007).

AM I A PSYCHOPATH?

Psychopaths are not addicts or compulsives. They have no inclinations or inhibitions to struggle against, since they lack a conscience (Hare 1999). If having committed one or more sexual offenses does not bother your conscience, you may in fact be a psychopath. The psychopath's diagnosis is Antisocial Personality Disorder, described on page 706 of the DSM IV.

BUT I LOVE CHILDREN!

What's a man to do if he has to stay away from the people he prefers? What is his alternative? His choices are killing himself, abusing (and harming) the same or another child, or exploring other avenues, including support groups, medical therapy, psychotherapy, 12-step programs, and establishing friendships and activities with other adults. It is recommended that sexual involvement with anyone be postponed until an alternative pattern of meeting needs is developed.

Killing oneself bestows a heavy burden on anyone who cares about you, including the victim. Having a family member who commits suicide is a risk factor for future suicides in the family.

We are all part of the web of life with its interdependencies, and there is no escaping the fact that a single behavior can have ever-expanding effects, for better or worse.

IS THIS YOU?

No friends; emotionally and physically isolated from other adults; lonely; unaware of the effect of your behavior on your family (perhaps your drinking, excessive self-focus, etc.); a talented manipulator; non-assertive; obsequious outside the family; lack of respect for your wife; socially ill at ease; feelings easily hurt; morally somewhat strait-laced; lack empathy; some feeling that you deserve more than life has given you; distrustful of the motivations of others. This is an apt description of my father. Can you relate to any of these descriptors?

HOW CAN I MAKE IT UP TO MY VICTIM?

You can't. Let go of her. Let her be free of you. More about this difficult and painful topic in the Trauma Bond chapter, where snipping the trauma bond is discussed.

2

WHY DID I DO IT?

The late Dr. William Glasser (1965) often began his lectures on Reality Therapy with the following scenario: “The phone rings. You answer it. Why do you answer it?”

None of the replies volunteered by the audience offers the response he is looking for. “You answer it because you want to.” It is true that the machinations of choice are at work. But why do you want to?

After the abuse began I puzzled over why my father was different from the fathers of my cousins.

Groth states that the sexual offender is not committing his crimes to achieve sexual pleasure “any more than the alcoholic is drinking to quench a thirst” (1982, 227). He suggests that other needs being met include but are not limited to loneliness, a sense of power, and attention. At best, treatment can only reduce the risk of reoffending. Gaining or re-gaining control of the behavior is the goal, as with treatment for alcoholism. Groth is aware of the perpetrator’s emotional over-investment in his victim and refers to “the sense of pleasure, comfort and safety he experiences in the relationship with her” (230).

Sgroi, Blick, and Porter refer to incest offenders as “me-first” individuals for whom the sexual relationship with a child feels “safer, less threatening, less demanding, less problematic than a relationship with an adult” (1982, 27).

A study of the childhood experiences of child sexual abuse perpetrators (Thomas et al. 2012, 195) revealed that

many participants never had an opportunity to grasp the meaning of the concept of love, nor to differentiate

it from sex. Thus, they never evolved to more adult sexual behavior but continued to seek the kind of sexual activity to which they were first introduced and which, in some cases, had filled their early longings for meaningful contact with another human being.

Other professionals warn against the tendency to view the offender's behavior as a longing for human intimacy. Herman (1990, 183) suggests that reformulating the offending in this manner is to detoxify it, to make it more acceptable. *Aye, there's the twist*. Some therapists, like surgeons who feel a need to keep their emotional distance from patients, often struggle against the tendency to pity the man who molests. I was aware of the fuzzy cognitive state I slid into when experiencing empathy for the men in our program. Herman cautions, "In attempting to establish an empathic connection with the offender, the would-be-therapist runs the risk of credulously accepting the offender's rationalizations for his crimes" (ibid.).

Having the ability to corrupt a child, having the ability to steal her innocence, having the ability to show her something about life she didn't know—all these are powerful rewards for the man whose life is so unsatisfactory that it contains little more than a sexual preference that may not even be sexual.

Four major factors that contribute to molestation have been proposed and widely accepted (Finkelhor 1984). They are sexual arousal, preferring children emotionally, being blocked from an adult relationship, and failure of the offender's inhibitions. A reliable assessment of the offender's dynamics is often difficult. Information is provided to the offender in treatment, however, and he is invited to consider the information and share with his group which dynamics he thinks apply to him. Similarly, this book can help any unapprehended molester ferret out his own patterns. Survivors may also use the material to make some sense of their experience.

In the prison program we utilized Finkelhor's Four Factor conceptualization (Finkelhor, 1984), fitting it into a mnemonic device (BEDS) in order to aid *overlearning* the material. (We re-arranged his factors to enable the device):

B – Blockage

E – Emotional Congruence

D – Disinhibition

S – Sexual Arousal

BLOCKAGE

A man can be blocked from consorting with another adult due to internal or situational factors. A shy, socially awkward and insecure man may find sex with another adult too anxiety-producing. Occasionally a man experiencing the breakup of a relationship or separation from his partner may turn to a child instead of another adult because in his mind molesting a child is not being unfaithful, whereas he may consider sex with another adult to be adultery. It is true that thinking errors are rampant in this population, and many child molesters are overly moralistic. Some deny themselves the sexual release of masturbation and maintain that molesting a child is less sinful than masturbation or adultery. One of the men in our program realized with surprise that he had felt molesting his niece was morally preferable to having sex with another adult.

In Mrazek's experience (1981, 105), "Of all the contributing factors mentioned in the literature, the most predictive are likely to be the absence of a strong satisfying marital bond and *prior* incestuous behavior somewhere in the family."

Some men erroneously believe that there are limited alternatives available to them if the penis is no longer functional. A man who is unable to perform with women may turn to children, since children are less likely to criticize his performance or make unfavorable comparisons of his genitals. Becker and Coleman (1988, 200) refer to the "sexual myth that an erect penis is necessary to satisfy a sexual partner. The unfortunate equating of sex with penile-vaginal intercourse can result in considerable performance anxiety, a major cause of sexual dysfunction." In rare cases men with misshapen or micro-penises turn to children instead of other adults capable of making comparisons. Some offenders admit that they chose children because they were easier to deal with than women.

Gaddini (1983, 358) sees incest as an early developmental failure. She writes, “In no way is incest close to mature adult sexuality.” She sees it as a very primitive sort of sensuality ... a continuous acting-out on the basis of needs.” The following letter from my father years ago would appear to illustrate such an early developmental failure:

MY FATHER’S STORY

The Two Three Four Three Bears

Once upon a time, there were two bears, Mama Bear and Cubby Bear. Now, Cubby Bear loved Mama Bear dearly, and Mama Bear thought there just wasn’t anybody in the whole, wide world like her Little Cubby Bear.

Cubby Bear would climb up on Mama Bear, and put his little paws around her, and Mama Bear would say “M-mmmmmmm!” and would squeeze little Cubby Bear real tight. And Mama Bear would say, “What does Mama’s little Cubby Bear think he is doing up there?” And the little Cubby Bear would chortle with glee, because he loved Mama Bear just like Mama Bear loved him.

One day, a package came down from heaven—or somewhere—addressed to Mama Bear and the Cub Bear. They opened the package, and found little Nancy Bear! And the three bears lived happily ever after—or at least until—

One day, another package arrived—and, you guessed it—there was little Mary Bear! “Uh-oh!” said Mama Bear, who had read all the latest books. “The book says that ‘Once upon a time there were three bears, and here we are with four. This will never do,’” and Mama Bear wouldn’t play any more with Cubby Bear. And she would tell him, “You are not Cubby Bear. You are Grumpy Bear. But the Cub Bear either could not, or would not, take the hint and he kept on loving Mama Bear right on, and Mama Bear didn’t know what to do!

Now, Nancy Bear, when she got older, began to read all the latest books. And she, too, found out that once there were three bears, and she talked the matter over with Mama Bear. But, try though they would, they could not make the Cub Bear understand that he was not the Cub Bear any longer, but that just made him want to be the Cub Bear all the more, so Nancy Bear and Mama Bear didn't know what to do!

Then, one day Mama Bear and Nancy Bear saw Grumpy Bear (because—let's face it—he wasn't a Cub Bear any longer, he was Grumpy Bear) skipping rope. Nancy Bear said to Mama Bear, "I know, Mama Bear! Let's give Grumpy Bear more and more rope, and maybe Grumpy Bear will hang himself!"

So they gave Grumpy Bear more and more rope, and still more rope, and—sure enough—Grumpy Bear hung himself. Now, when Grumpy Bear found out that he had hung himself, he weeped and wailed, and begged for them all to let him get unhung again. And Mama Bear said, "No, Grumpy Bear. You hung yourself, you can get unhung yourself." And Grumpy Bear said, "I am not Grumpy Bear, I am the Cub Bear." But Mama Bear had forgotten that there had ever been a Cub Bear, and Nancy Bear didn't care if there had ever been a Cub Bear. And Mary Bear didn't know what was a Cub Bear, so Grumpy Bear hanged, and hanged, and hanged. And thereby hangs a tale, but not like in the old days, when—

The tale itself was passing fair,

And it all belonged to the Cubby Bear.

The End

Men for whom the blockage factor is significant may be more likely to prefer and fantasize their victims as young versions of adults. The growing tendency of parents to dress their young children in provocatively-cut "swinger" garb makes it easier for these men to transfer their sexual desires onto children.

SEXUAL AROUSAL

Sexual arousal is another of Finkelhor's factors. A history of the offender's own sexual abuse as a child—possible imprinting—may make the child a primary sexual object in the eyes of the offender, in addition to the fact that he may have observed the adult-child paradigm within the family. Developmental antecedents are a continuing area of research in this field. In rare cases a hormonal imbalance or neurological anomaly may tip the scales. Child pornography may also be a culprit, with the potential for sexual arousal in predisposed individuals. Regarding the juryman discussed earlier, perhaps he had been victimized as a child, either within or out of memory, and viewing the child pornography was sufficient to breach the dam of longstanding inhibitions. Sleeping in the same bed with a child has also been known to precipitate sexual arousal in some cases, leading to abuse. For information on treatment of deviant sexual arousal see Chapter 4.

EMOTIONAL ATTRACTION

A third factor which can contribute to molestation of children has been termed "emotional congruence," which refers to the degree of comfort with, emotional attraction to, or identification with, children among men who molest. Those who deny their culpability will say without batting an eye, "I would never molest a child; I love children!" And they often do, demonstrating by their statement the presence of marked thinking errors. Children can also be seen as attractive because they are passive, enabling the offender to experience a degree of dominance that he lacks with other adults.

Groth (1982, 230) speaks of the incest offender's

emotional overinvestment in his victim; his monopolization of her time; his restriction of her outside interests, activities and relationships; his sexual preoccupation with her; the role-reversal in their relationship with her being regarded more as a peer than as a child; the identification he forms with his victim, the narcissistic sense of entitlement to her, and his projection of his own needs and desires on her; his preoccupation with fantasies about the victim, and the sense of pleasure, comfort, and safety he experiences in the relationship with her.

Some child molesters who are emotionally attracted to children feel childlike themselves, and thus prefer the company of other children. I recall one inmate who, upon being paroled for a non-sexual offense, began telling me enthusiastically how much he preferred the company of children, and that “they are the only ones you can trust.” Needless to say, I had my suspicions about him.

DISINHIBITION

Before a sex offense can occur, the potential perpetrator must have the desire to offend, he must have physical access to the victim, and he must be able to overcome the victim’s resistance. However, even in the presence of all these conditions, sexual abuse will *not* occur if the would-be perpetrator’s inhibitions against offending are in place. Therefore, instilling *inhibitions* against sexual abuse is one of the primary goals of treatment, and effective techniques must be *overlearned* and strengthened. Unfortunately, after the inhibitions have failed once, they are easier to breach. A man may go thirty years without giving in to his illegal desires, but it may not be another thirty years before he does so again. It may be the next day.

Besides alcohol, disinhibiting factors include abuse of drugs, an acute negative mood change, and child pornography or other source of sexual arousal. Anger and the seeking of revenge are other disinhibitors, as demonstrated by sexual assaults on children during visitations with an estranged parent. Thinking errors can also be a powerful disinhibiting factor, as delineated in Chapter 3.

Like silently rising water against a dam, one pressure added to another can overcome the barriers of inhibition, and once breached the resistance is greatly decreased, or non-existent. It becomes easier and easier to break the law and ignore one’s own values. Occasionally an individual’s inhibitions will be immediately dissolved upon his own victimization, and he will respond by identifying with his or her abuser and acting out against others, in an attempt to regain a sense of power.

I find it remarkable that I remember the day I became aware of “floaters” in my eye. I must have been nine years old, and told my mother I saw things but wasn’t sure they were really there. To her

credit, she did take me to our pediatrician. His first question was whether my father was still drinking, whereupon I said ecstatically, "Oh no! He's quit drinking! He hasn't had a drink in a week, has he, Mother?" (I assume it was their exchange of glances that flagged the incident in my memory.)

Now I'm recalling that Daddy did have a chance to change, via attending Alcoholics Anonymous. At some point (early 1946?) he ran into a parked car while drinking. The judge must have sentenced him to attend AA, at least once, because I seem to remember attending one of his meetings. I don't recall the content of the meeting, only the room it was in.

At the time he first molested me my father had been an alcoholic for twenty-five years, but he was not drunk that evening. He never drank without eventually passing out, but that night he was sober. It is my memory that my father lived in bed, except when he went to work as a bookkeeper five days a week. (Three years later he would be fired for passing out on the floor at his work.)

What disinhibited my father? That night I had bounced boisterously on his bed, in a rare fit of exuberance, while my mother fixed dinner. I suspect my roughhousing with him while he was in bed that day was a primary immediate disinhibitor for him. Apparently he became aroused and when I settled under the covers with him to listen to our only radio, he touched me. My first thought was what would my cousins think if they knew Daddy was like our grandfather? He later told me that when Mother brought in supper that night she reached under the covers and found his penis erect but made no comment.

Shortly before initiation of the incest, my mother had confessed to a single act of infidelity years earlier. He now threw it back in her face, although he had promised not to mention it again. (How do I know? We lived in a very small duplex with thin walls.) Experiencing what must have been for him a blow to his manhood may therefore have been a disinhibitor, in addition to his sexual arousal and significantly warped thinking.

About a week after he first touched me, my father referred to it. He said my mother had asked him to educate me about sex. He also

said he thought he was in love with me, that incest was a capital crime in our state and that I was not to tell anyone, ever. I promised. He told me experts say incest is harmful, but that he didn't believe it. He pointed out that Errol Flynn had sex with a minor and wasn't convicted for it.

Looking back now I realize that an additional disinhibiting factor was that he knew that his father had molested within the family. He also suspected (correctly) that his father had molested me, much earlier.

“EVERYBODY’S DOIN’ IT!”

All right, I will admit this is *not* one of Finkelhor’s Factors leading to sexual abuse, but I believe it was a strong motivator in my being molested within the family.

As Courtois (1988, 40) observes,

Multiple incest in one family may be the norm. It appears that in many families, the breakdown of the incest taboo allows for its continuance either within one generation (horizontally) and/or across generations (vertically). . . . Incest is now believed to be transmitted from one generation to the next through several such mechanisms.

This remains a controversial topic, however, as reported earlier.

IN SUMMARY: MY FATHER’S MOTIVATIONS

How should we categorize the influence of knowledge of incest within the family? Modeling? Certainly at the very least it contributed to my father’s disinhibition to commit incest. Other disinhibitors included whatever lifelong alcoholism had done to his brain and self-esteem; whatever internal wound had resulted from my mother’s confession; and perhaps a desire to get even with her, added to her request that he teach me about sex. Some pretty weird thinking errors had also been established, as revealed by his discussion of earlier reading on the subject of incest.

I believe that *Blockage* was a factor, in that he was too fearful to seek sex with an adult outside the family, being unable to deal with

the specter of rejection and/or exposure. Probably his concept of “adultery” also kept him homebound. In addition, he was blocked from a meaningful adult relationship by an apparent developmental failure (see above). *In later years, upon visiting my grandparent's house where he then lived, I was shocked to find a maudlin tribute to mothers, framed and on the wall in the entranceway.*

Emotional Congruence came into play after he had elicited my admiration for his intellect and tennis playing abilities and my willingness to pay court to him by listening, and listening. He was hungry for attention, I now realize. I did enjoy his sense of humor.

His *Sexual Arousal* in response to my bouncing on the bed was an “accident waiting to happen,” as suggested by the fact that he had already taken me to two square dances as his partner. (My mother “had nothing to wear.”)

THE PATHWAYS MODEL

As noted, more than one of Finkelhor’s Four Factors must be present in order for child molestation to occur. (The *Disinhibition* factor is always present.) A complementary model has been introduced in which all of four—*other*—distinct and interacting psychological conditions *must* be present in order for the sexual transgression to occur. This Pathways Model, proposed by Ward and Siegert (2002), highlights *offender deficits* and consists of deficits with intimacy and social skills, distorted sexual scripts, emotional dysregulation, and cognitive distortion. *Incidentally, all four of these deficits were present in my father.*

HARDWIRING OR OTHER ANOMALIES

Physiological abnormalities occasionally contribute to offending. One elderly man became increasingly jealous of his teenage granddaughter’s boyfriends; six months later he was dead of a brain tumor. In addition, several studies have found evidence that some

child molesters may be “hardwired” differently than others. For instance, two out of three pedophiles show temporal lobe dysfunction in the left lobe of the brain, as measured by CT scans (Langevin 1990, 109). It is unclear, however, what the differences reflect.

I believe my paternal grandfather was neurologically impaired. I sensed he was somehow different, but I did not (and still do not) know in what way. I also do not know what abuse, if any, he experienced as the youngest of six boys in his family of origin. Once I was told he had hardening of the arteries, and in recent years a family member said he had Tourette’s— which my father also had—but I do not recall ever witnessing any Tourette’s symptoms in my grandfather. I can recall at least one marked episode of my father grunting and ticcing, however, but I must have grown to ignore the signs. I never puzzled about them, apparently just accepted the behavior. Perhaps that could have been an issue in my father’s blockage from others .

HOW COULD I DO IT?

“How can they do it?” is a question in the minds of most non-offenders confronted with a case of incest.

Even after we understand *why* some men molest children, the question of *how* they can do it remains unanswered. How can they bring themselves to destroy a child’s trusting innocence? (For some offenders, being innocent is the major attraction.) This question really should be directed at the *first* time rather than the most *recent* time, which may be the one that brought a man to prison. Too many offenders maintain that “this” time *is* the first time, and so that distinction is a lost opportunity for insight.

The incest offender has developed the ability to break taboos through the use of contorted thoughts and beliefs variously called thinking errors, cognitive distortions, deviant thinking or just stinking thinking, as discussed below. Core beliefs about self, others, and the world have been found to underlie behavior patterns and instances of thinking errors, and are known as *schemas*.

Most men who commit incest, especially those who were abused themselves as children, continue in denial of its effects. Neither survivors nor victims-turned-perpetrators let themselves realize how destructive their own molestation is likely to have been. One imprisoned incest offender in our program, when told during treatment that incest was destructive for the victim, denied it, saying, “What about me? I was molested and I turned out okay.”

Initially I had trouble understanding how anyone, especially any victim of child sexual abuse, could grow up to become a perpetrator himself, much less deny that it is harmful. As if the situation were not sufficiently complex, an exploration of *mindreading* in sex offenders has raised questions about their capacity for empathy. (*Mindreading* in this sense is a “theory of mind” and refers to

how well an individual can understand the motivations and feelings of others.) Castellino et al. 2011, 1621) concluded that their findings supported the hypothesis that “sexual offenders suffer from a deficit in their ability to understand and attribute mental states both to themselves and to others.” As a group, the sexual offenders performed worse than non-offenders on each of four scales assessing aspects of empathy. Moreover, the findings indicated that “the worse is the score on the theory of mind task, the higher the risk of reoffending” (ibid.).

THINKING ERRORS

Since behavior is largely a product of thinking, the deviant thoughts of sex offenders are of utmost importance. Incest offenders in one study were found to possess deviant attitudes in three domains: sexual entitlement; perceiving children to be sexually attractive and sexually motivated; and minimizing the harm caused by sexual abuse of children (Hanson, Gizzarelli, and Scott 1994). *My father had deviant thinking errors in all three domains.*

Pollock and Hashmall analyzed over 250 justificatory statements from 86 child molesters and divided them into an “excuse syntax” useful in the formalization of judgments about the extent to which an individual accepts or denies responsibility for his actions, his degree of defensiveness, and the logical consistency of his justifications.

1. Denial of fact (“Nothing happened.”)
2. Denial of responsibility (“Something happened but it wasn’t my idea.”)
3. Denial of sexual intent (“Something happened and it was my idea but it wasn’t sexual.”)
4. Denial of wrongfulness (“Something happened and it was my idea, and it was sexual but it wasn’t wrong.”)
5. Denial of self-determination (“Something happened and it was my idea and it was sexual and it was wrong, but there were extenuating factors.”)

(Pollock and Hashmall 1991, 57)

Their study was conducted to aid clinicians who routinely determine the probability of reoffending based on the perpetrator's excuses.

I see that the only statement that would apply to my father is the denial of wrongfulness, as evidenced by his statement when my sister was stricken with polio, described later in this chapter.

As Maltz and Holman (1987, 18) observed,

It is this distorted thinking that encourages an offender to victimize the most vulnerable person available—a child who depends on him.

Perpetrators make their behavior acceptable in their own eyes by their twisted thinking. As Salter (1988, 124) has pointed out, "Their motivated self-deception acts as a 'releaser' which allows the offender's destructive urges to be acted on. Without such rationalizations the offender may have some capacity to resist his deviant attraction and to seek help when his own coping mechanisms fail."

The victim may not say "no." Many child molesters interpret silence as permission, oblivious to the unreality of the incestuous situation for the child. Mistaking the physical response for the ego's response appears to be a common error. (Just because the body responds does not mean the child understands what is happening and consents to it.)

I recall several years ago when a man brought suit against some women who had raped him. There were disbelieving jokes about the incident, but our bodies are built so that stimulation of the genitals, even forced, can be pleasurable *in the genitals*. But we are more than our genitals, and much of mankind's anguish and nightmares reflect the struggle between right and wrong. What could be more hauntingly "wrong" to a child than "doing the nasty with Daddy" and coming back for more?

The defense mechanism of projection is involved when individuals block their own urges, behaviors or feelings from awareness and instead imagine that they exist in another person or persons. A not uncommon thinking error in our society, that women "really want it" even though they say "no," is an example. This thinking error

may even trace back to the influence of genetic differences between males and females (Buss 1985, 314). How easy, then, for sex offenders to convince themselves that their victim “wanted it” and therefore wasn’t damaged by the abuse.

A sexual offender needs to internalize the information on correcting thinking errors *and apply it to himself*. In our prison program one man retained glaring thinking errors but made a perfect score on a lengthy True and False test of these errors. We had him take the test a second time, by himself, because we could not believe he had such a good intellectual comprehension of thinking errors, yet failed to see how they applied to him.

EXAMPLES OF THINKING ERRORS

BLAMING THE VICTIM

Devaluing and attributing blame to the victim covers *dehumanization* (“she was a whore, anyway”) and *attribution of blame* (“most women want to be raped.”)

CHILDREN CAN BENEFIT FROM INCEST

She loves special attention, she’ll really love this; I have to show my grandson how to masturbate—how else would he find out? I’m in love with her—this is a way to show it; she needs sex education by a loving partner; she looks sad—I’ll make her feel good. “I was only teaching her what she should keep her boy friends from doing” (reported by Frisbie 1969, 168).

BLAMING AND MISATTRIBUTIONS

She runs around in her nighties so she must want it; she’s seven going on seventeen; she dances sexy, like on MTV; she likes to sit in my lap, so she must want it.

CHANCES OF BEING APPREHENDED

Nobody will believe her if she tells; she wouldn’t turn me in—she loves me too much.

SPECIAL JUSTIFICATIONS

My wife has been unfaithful—I'll get even; my wife cut me off—I'll show her I don't need her; I didn't want to go outside the family for sex; it's not like I'm committing adultery.

SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT

I'm oversexed and have to have it—my wife isn't interested; I'm her father so I'm entitled to check on how she's developing physically; I'm just breaking her in for her husband; I brought her into the world, so I own her body.

CHILDREN AREN'T HURT BY INCEST

It isn't harmful—Errol Flynn did it; she can't get pregnant yet, so there can be no harm; it happened to me and it didn't hurt me.

MINIMIZATION

It's not like it was really sex; it's not like it was her first time; we were only playing around; we were just playing the tickling game.

WARPED LOGIC

The judge proved I didn't touch her; the doctor proved I didn't touch her; when I woke up she was unzipping my fly—what could I do?

Groth's response to the latter, as widely quoted, is "What would he do if she had been going through his *wallet* when he woke up?" He suggests that if the child is behaving in a sexually explicit fashion, "a responsible adult will not encourage or promote such behavior, but instead will correct it and try to determine why the child is behaving in this manner" (Groth 1982, 234).

When my sister had been taken to the emergency room with what turned out to be polio, my father started touching me sexually and I said, "How can you do that at a time like this?" He said: "If it's not wrong other times, why is it wrong now?"

I should have said, "It is wrong, all the time!" (Why didn't I say that? But I was speechless.) Besides, I was afraid he would punish me if I admitted engaging in something I knew was wrong.

I received the following letter from my father after he had molested me for some time. I had succeeded in escaping from the home, and my mother had succeeded in separating from him due to his long-term abusive alcoholism.

June 2, 1953

Dear Nancy,

I hope that you get to go to Berea, or otherwise get to go to college. But, whether you go to college, or work, or get married, or all three, you are still, in a very real sense, about to go out into the world, and whether, as I say, your world is to be the business or social or college world, I do not think that you are prepared for it; to wit, you do not have a personal code of ethics that will permit you to fit into it. It has appeared to me that your code consists of doing whatever seems to suit your convenience, comfort or pleasure, then trying to justify it by appealing, when possible, to someone else's code, failing which you justify it with "I don't consider it wrong." The only fly in the ointment is that I am not sure that you consider anything wrong, because you have no code to govern yourself by. You scorn both religious teachings and parental counsel, and you consider one's conscience not only unreliable, but an imposter.

For instance, here is how your code will run counter with the normal code that you will come in contact with in the near future. Your mother tells me that you and Carole came to her apartment fuming. "I have always behaved myself," said you. "And I am not going to stay home and sleep." By the normal code of ethics, you were not behaving yourself when you made that statement. For one thing, you were expressing an intention to disobey your mother's injunction to sleep at home. You were not violating your code there, of course, because there is nothing in your code that suggests that you should obey your parents. But what is your code? ...

Here, I think, is where your lack of a code of ethics may have done, or may yet do, irreparable harm. No matter how much you

felt constrained to justify yourself to your mother—no matter how much you felt constrained to defend Carole—you knew that I am fighting with my life to save my tottering home, the destruction of which will mean the culmination of a twenty-year romance that, incidentally, brought you into the world. If you had a code of ethics worth a tinker's dam, you would never have brought Carole into your mother's apartment. Here is what you would have told Carole: "Carole, you know that I am your friend. But you know, too, that my father is trying right now, with might and main, to win back my mother for his wife. You know that you want him to lose in that attempt. You know that you have an antipathy for my father, and your mother knows that you have an antipathy for my father. If you come into our apartment at this time, the antipathy that you have for my father might affect my mother subconsciously, and my father might therefore lose his fight to restore his home."

Nancy, ten years from now I do not believe that you will be happy that your mother and father are divorced. And I do not believe that you will be happy that you gave Carole aid and comfort in her efforts to bring it about. If she divorces me, I forgive you for your part in bringing it about, or in not doing more to discourage it. And, since you don't believe in God, I suppose it doesn't much matter to you whether He forgives you or not. But I have a feeling that, just a few years from now, you will be finding it difficult to forgive yourself. At any rate, however you may regard me,

I remain with truly best wishes for your greatest happiness,

Your Old Pop

What was most surprising was the fact that he seemed to forget who he was writing to. He must have known that I knew about his own ethical limitations, and yet he was so successful in projecting and compartmentalizing them that he could write the above "with a straight face."

I remember that about this time he asked me if I had ever “told” my mother, whereupon I replied in the negative. According to him, my mother had said, “I know what you’ve been up to.” He didn’t know what she was referring to, and I presume was too afraid to ask.

It is just now, only a few weeks before submitting this book for publication, that I remember having told Carole about the incest. I’m sure elsewhere in this book I have stated that I never told anyone until years later, but I forgot. Did my father not guess why Carole had such antipathy for him? How did he explain her antipathy to himself? At the time all this was going on, Carole and I were not even “girlfriends.

TREATMENT

To be considered for release from Wisconsin's Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center, a civil commitment facility, inmate "patients" must demonstrate that they have sustained change in their thoughts, attitudes, emotions, behaviors, and their management of arousal (Harkins, Beech and Thornton 2013, 7). This chapter describes some treatment approaches towards that goal, but please note that it is *not* all-inclusive...

The field of sex offender treatment is still young, and was in its infancy in 1986, when our program began. As staff we diligently read master pockets and took lengthy histories, searching for etiological clues that might suggest the best treatment approaches. We turned to the research, the professional literature and professional organizations, even became clinical members of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. We attended annual conferences. We ordered books, had a victims' group visit the program, attended training workshops, watched Oprah and Geraldo, and developed a mnemonic device to aid overlearning the effects of child sexual abuse. We came to realize that we could not think in terms of a cure for sex offending, only of decreasing the likelihood that the men would reoffend.

The sex offenders seemed most open to rehabilitation when they first entered the prison system. We admitted them to treatment immediately if they took responsibility for their offense.

After several years in the program, however, most received lengthy "flops" from the parole board. Working with an incest offender who receives a five-year flop after four or five years in the program is discouraging for the offender, the treatment staff, and other group members.

By the time I could retire, treatment at our prison had pretty much ground to a halt. There was pressure not to admit men into treatment until they had served a significant amount of time. Unfortunately, by that time the offenders had usually acclimated to prison mentality and were not good prospects for treatment.

It is fortunate that there is a new movement afoot in the treatment of child molesters. As recently as 1972 one could find procedures in the literature for “aversive therapy,” based on the 1966 work of Azrin and Holtz, whose guidelines based on animal experiments included such recommendations as *no unauthorized escape is possible; the punishing stimulus should be as high as possible; the frequency should be as high as possible*, etc. Serber and Wolpe quote the recommendations, writing that “the use of these guidelines in clinical practice may be expected to enhance materially the use of aversive therapy” (Serber and Wolpe 1972, 246).

Despite the seriousness of the topic I had to laugh when I read in Azrin and Holz (1966):

A frequent reason for attempting to eliminate punishment is that aversive stimuli in general, and punishment in particular, produce disruptive and undesirable emotional states. (439)

and

The changes in the punished response per se appear to be distinctly secondary in importance to the social products of the use of punishment. (443).

My copy editor said she didn't think it was funny. Maybe I do have a weird sense of humor, but the idea of serious researchers having to conclude that people don't like being shocked made me laugh.

Marshall and Barbaree (1988, 505) reported on their own study, which utilized a mild electric shock at an intensity which was set by the patient at “an unpleasant but tolerable” level. As early as 1990 Quinsey and Earls observed that electrical aversion had gone out of fashion (285). By 2009 no programs reported using electrical aversive conditioning to control sexual arousal in a Safer Society survey (McGrath et al. 2010).

A less controversial—and less painful—form of behavioral therapy is *covert sensitization*, discussed by Fernandez, Shingler, and Marshall (2006), utilizing the imagination. A deviant fantasy is paired with negative consequences that are realistic to the offender—involving for example disgust, fear, being caught, beaten, etc. Positive outcomes for avoiding offending may also be imagined.

For those in outpatient treatment, the use of smelling salts is one way of countering deviant thoughts. When experiencing deviant arousal, the patient “is to hold his bottle of smelling salts, with the cap removed, and take a rapid and deep inhalation. This reduces deviant thoughts and provides the opportunity to initiate more positive thoughts” (Marshall and Barbaree 1990b, 366).

While the treatment we engaged in during the eighties and nineties was not overtly punitive, I realize that in some ways we de-humanized the men in our program. In the literature today slaves are rarely called slaves, but “enslaved people.” A similar case has been made for men who molest. Fernandez (2006, 191–92), for instance, states that adopting positive language in therapy can help offenders identify their existing strengths and find adaptive ways to meet their needs more appropriately. “One particularly valuable way to do this is to refrain from describing clients as ‘sex offenders,’ ‘rapists,’ ‘child molesters,’ or whatever legal/forensic term is applicable. Distinguishing people from their behaviors has a long tradition in behavioral research and treatment. ... It is also important not to allow clients to label themselves.” (But of course AA does.) With the goal being to help the man who molests to identify with his core self rather than with his destructive behavior, some programs even correct him if he refers to himself as an offender rather than as a man. It isn’t realistic to practice that convention in this book, where there’s so much to say and only so many ways to say it, but I recognize the point (despite the book’s title—sorry).

Fernandez (*ibid.*, 188) also speaks out strongly against aggressive confrontation. “If there was one thing we could recommend to sexual offender therapists it would be to avoid an aggressive confrontational approach with clients. Therapists inevitably serve as mod-

els to their clients, thus their actions should exemplify social behaviors and attitudes.” What better way to teach empathy than for therapists to model it in treatment group? Instead, we prided ourselves in our skills at confrontation, despite Salter’s (1988, 92) caution about the need for empathy:

The critically important factor is the simultaneous capacity for the therapist to extend respect to people as human beings, to empathize with their pain, and to believe in their capacity to do better in the future while not colluding with sexual abuse a single inch.

Negativity and excessive confrontation have been observed to deprive the man who molests of hope that he can meet his needs more appropriately. Fernandez (2006, 188) observes that “apparent treatment gains of clients exposed to confrontational challenging are either superficial or do not generalize outside of the treatment context.”

In treatment a difficult task for the therapist is to help the offender accept responsibility for his actions, to realize the destructiveness of sexual abuse—especially incest—to become motivated never to repeat the abuse, and to learn how to get his needs met in less destructive ways.

According to Anna Salter (1988, 178):

The single most vital issue in sex offender treatment is whether or not the offender can change his behavior. An offender must begin to understand that behavioral change is more than simply announcing, “I won’t do it again.” Behavior change involves a series of lifestyle changes designed to minimize the risk of reoffending. It involves learning techniques for intervening when deviant impulses arise, and showing a willingness to implement them.

While strengthening the role of choice in behavior and taking responsibility for it are important, so are other contributing factors, all of which need to be addressed in treatment. Helping offenders understand what thinking errors are and how they contribute to offending also needs to be non-threatening.

In this approach the offender is told:

After awhile, the things you say to yourself become almost automatic and you may not even realize you are saying them. Our job is to help you identify these things and try to show you why many of them are not true. We call these things you say to yourself excuses, justifications, minimizations, and cognitive distortions. (Murphy 1990, 337)

Murphy also recommends that treatment staff need to guard against contaminating treatment by immediately attempting to change the molester's distortions (no matter how convoluted). Some molesters deny "because of their elaborate network of distorted ideas, which have been arrived at through biased processes" (ibid).

Determining the factors that have weakened the perpetrator's inhibitions against molesting a child is an early but difficult task in treatment, since it must be done without encouraging excuse-making. An initial and ongoing history is taken and expanded as additional documents are extracted from the inmate's master file. To what extent is he being truthful? How well does he remember? Since a full and accurate report of his offense history is almost never forthcoming, there is heavy reliance on an educational approach in treatment. Soon after initiation of our prison program it became apparent that there was a need for education in a number of areas, including assertiveness training, child development, why men molest, thinking errors and, yes, even human sexuality. Another advantage of the educational modules was that members of our IDDI group (the I-Didn't-Do-Its) could be involved in most of them.

Marlatt and Donovan (2005) reported that the major therapeutic approach for treating individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder (usually survivors) might also be used with perpetrators, along with Relapse Prevention. The approach is dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), developed by Marsha Linehan, who has since "come out" in the *New York Times* as a survivor of Borderline Personality Disorder (Carey 2011, A1).

Addressed in DBT are four areas of relevance to both survivors and perpetrators:

1. The “mindfulness” module addresses maladaptive thought processes and teaches skills for improved self-monitoring and regulation.
2. The “emotion regulation” module addresses mood lability and affective dysregulation and teaches skills for effectively identifying and managing emotions.
3. The “distress tolerance” module addresses maladaptive coping behaviors and teaches skills for managing impulsive/harmful behaviors in the face of inevitable life stressors.
4. The “interpersonal effectiveness” module addresses interactions with others and teaches skills for more effectively getting needs/goals met without violating the rights/needs of others.

(Marlatt and Donovan 2005, 342)

I have come to realize that several approaches can be profitably used for both perpetrators and survivors, including assertiveness training, schema work, and even, as reported by Naitove (1988), arts therapies.

A treatment approach relating to shame that targets adolescent sex offenders struck me as also appropriate for use by victims’ therapists. See Chapter 18 for more on the issue of shame.

Most sex offender treatment occurs in a group setting. Effective exercises may include role-playing (having the offender role-play a policeman or other individual whose job it is to confront distortions; the therapist then role-plays a child molester who uses various distortions, and gets confronted by the molester). Many variations of this format are possible, as is a Gestalt approach in which a perpetrator may speak alternately as a molester and the policeman. .

Having the perpetrator write an apology letter to his victim (but not to mail it) is another useful exercise. These letters can then be scanned in order to reveal the offender’s continued lack of empathy for his victim (Webster 2002). Statements are also checked for evidence of the offender’s intellectualized reabuse/reabusive stance

(overt and/or covert use of language that reabuses the victim), minimization of responsibility, and the participant's egocentric stance/self as important (for example, "I feel better now I have written to you.") Webster provides extremely helpful scoring templates for rating the letters of both child molesters and rapists in his article (Webster 2002, Appendices).

During a training presentation in 1989 Jan Hindman described her Thinking Errors component, in which members of a treatment group keep a Thinking Errors Journal. If any of them verbalizes a thinking error and 6 seconds pass without other members confronting it, all members must own the thinking error and claim it in their journal.

Group work is also useful in exploring *schemas*, using the analogy of what one sees depending upon what kind of sunglasses one wears. "Making use of humor, clients explore different situations as they would be seen through different pairs of schema-spectacles. "The exercises aim to make learning as light-hearted and engaging as possible" (Mann and Shingler 2006, 182).

TAKE THIS TEST

A responsibility scenario may be posed to the sex offenders:

Mary and her husband live on the south bank of a river. Her husband wants her to stay at home and not cross the river to the town. She wants to go to town. There is a bridge across the river, but men have been robbing and killing people who cross the bridge, and Mary's husband won't give her money for the ferry. Mary begins saving the grocery money and crossing the river to town on the ferry while her husband is away. Finally, she meets a man in town and takes him as a lover. She crosses the river more frequently and he gives her money to get back home. He gets mad at her one day and refuses to give her the return fare home. She asks the ferryman to let her charge the return trip but he refuses, saying it is against company policy. Finally, she crosses the bridge and is killed.

The discussion question is, "Whose fault is it that Mary was killed?" (Responses and answer are on the last page of this chapter.)

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of encouraging the offender to take responsibility for his behavior is to enable him to realize that in the future he can also be responsible for making a different choice.

During treatment, sex offenders try to find their place within the motivational framework in order to better understand their own offending dynamics. Despite lip service to accepting responsibility for the offense, it usually takes a long time for the men to realize and/or admit to having actually planned the molestation with forethought. There is a focus on “it just happened” —a thinking error—an approach that allows them to feel less responsible for their actions. A period of fantasizing about and grooming the destined victim almost always precedes the abuse (Christiansen and Blake 1990).

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Harrison has authored a thorough introduction to treatment by pharmacotherapy, which she defines as “the use of drugs to lower testosterone and in consequence lower and in some cases eradicate libido, fantasies and deviant behavior” (Harrison 2010, 136).

A combination of psychotherapy and medical treatment has in some cases resulted in zero recidivism, although there are side effects that need to be taken into consideration. Its main use is to reduce sexual desire in the offender. “Some argue that the offending ‘organ’ is the brain, not the penis, and physical castration will not prevent an individual from using some other means to rape or molest” (Meyer and Cole 1997, 13).

However, one cannot overlook the fact that biology does play a major role here. The endocrine system, in this case the testes, does affect behavior, particularly the quality and intensity of sexual arousal, whether normal or deviant. ... This subject is clearly controversial and even regarded as barbaric by some. However, one could argue that society needs to carefully explore a variety of means to help reduce the epidemic of sexual violence and prevent further victimization. (Ibid.)

Harrison (2010) observes that one of the most contentious issues concerning the use of pharmacotherapy is whether it should be provided on a voluntary or mandatory basis (that is, whether it is treatment or punishment).

SEX EDUCATION

Although it may appear incongruous, sex offenders—who are often prudish—are usually in need of sex education. After exploring what’s illegal, one leading program emphasizes the normative nature of a whole range of sexual activities:

Within this context we attempt to relieve guilt associated with masturbation and reduce prudishness relating to various precoital acts and to various positions during coitus. We attempt to counter myths concerning sexuality, such as the relevance of the size of the male penis, the goal of simultaneous orgasm, and, indeed, the idea that orgasm is the only goal of sexual interaction. (Marshall and Barbaree 1990a, 368.)

As Becker and Coleman (1988, 200) point out,

It is important that offenders have accurate information regarding male and female anatomy, sexual response cycles, and sexual behavior and attitudes. The knowledge can reduce the offender’s feelings of sexual inadequacy and result in a more satisfying sexual relationship with his [adult] partner.

In order to de-sensitize both offenders and staff to talking about sex, one day we retired to a classroom with a large blackboard, shut the door and wrote the vernacular words for everything sexual we could think of. As someone pointed out, the windows were damp with condensation by the time the session was over.

RELAPSE PREVENTION

Two significant pieces of writing were required in our treatment program—an autobiography and a relapse prevention plan. The autobiography is written and re-written to include more data as suggested by treatment staff. Getting an overview of one’s life is therapeutic, and filling in the details as requested can be enlightening, often revealing unrecognized patterns and schemas.

The autobiography is assigned toward the beginning of treatment, and the relapse prevention plan a little later. In writing a relapse prevention plan, therapist and offender pull together information which helps the recovering offender recognize and itemize risk factors, triggers, coping responses and sources of support. Relapse prevention is hard work and needs to be continuing. William Pithers, addressing an Ohio conference in 1988, likened relapse prevention to walking up a down escalator. If one stops walking he is carried back in the direction of re-offending. "Men ask me when they will get a certificate of completion of treatment. I tell them that their next of kin will get it—it will be their death certificate. Treatment will be a life-long process of vigilance."

Since most treatment programs operate within a relapse prevention/cognitive behavioral framework, most include the following components, as listed by Murphy and Smith (1996, 185):

1. Confronting denial
2. Identifying risk factors
3. Decreasing cognitive distortions
4. Increasing victim empathy
5. Increasing social competency
6. Decreasing deviant arousal
7. Where appropriate, addressing offender's personal victimization

Finkelhor (1984) has drawn together factors from a number of researchers in the field and has conceptualized The Four-Preconditions Model of Sexual Abuse, which can be utilized along with relapse prevention. The first precondition, which may often be overlooked, is that the potential offender must *want* to molest. Otherwise, there would be nothing for his inhibitions to struggle with. If he wants to, then at that time he will need to struggle with his *internal* inhibitions. If they are sufficiently robust, that precondition will not come into play and there will be no sexual assault. However, if he *wants* to and his inhibitions fail, then he must overcome any *impediments* to committing a sex offense, such as getting the intended victim alone. Finally, he must find a way to undermine or

overcome the child's possible resistance to sexual abuse. So there are four pre-conditions, the *absence* of any one of which will prevent the potential sex offense from occurring.

Of course it's far easier to *avoid* a tempting situation than escape from one. When you find you have not successfully avoided the situation, you can always *escape*, but it will be more difficult than avoiding. Even if you haven't escaped and you find yourself about to cross the final line, *take emergency measures*! As Pithers pointed out in 1988, "Even when one senses a sneeze coming, one can still turn away, cover one's mouth, or leave the room." You have learned that you are in control of your life and responsible for your actions.

If well crafted and taken to heart, the relapse prevention plan will become an important document for the offender. Ideally, it is a personalized blueprint for not reoffending, to be kept and updated forever. The molester who is no longer in treatment, or who has never had treatment, will have to delve into his own mind and heart and "work on himself." Perhaps he will seek whatever therapy is available in his community.

DEVIANT FANTASY TREATMENT

Sex offenders pleasure themselves by rewarding deviant fantasies of sex with children by masturbating to orgasm. In order to establish the existence of a deviant arousal pattern, a penile plethysmograph which measures the tumescence of the penis in response to the presentation of graphic slides, audio tapes or videos may be utilized. Unfortunately, some sex offenders have been able to fake the testing of their sexual preference (Quinsey and Earls 1990, 289).

In addition to the amount of arousal elicited, the procedure may be helpful in revealing the preferred sex and age range of the child, as well as the degree of force fantasized. This procedure would be part of the early assessment of the offender.

For treatment of a man's deviant arousal pattern, there are three behavioral options. In addition to instructing the offender to abruptly stop his deviant fantasies once he becomes aware of them,

he can also be encouraged to have the deviant fantasy while he masturbates, up until the “point of no return,” and at that moment to switch to a previously constructed fantasy of consenting sex with another adult (which has been authored by the therapist and the molester together.) That accomplished, the offender is instructed to gradually move the timing of the switch earlier and earlier in the scenario, until hopefully the deviant fantasy is totally replaced by the vision of a successful, loving and consenting sexual encounter with another adult.

A second approach is the use of “boredom tapes,” involving satiation, an extinction procedure in which the man climaxes and then continues to repeatedly verbalize his strongest deviant interest while continuing to masturbate to the point of boredom, then to aversiveness, and finally to disgust at having to ruminate about the deviant behavior. Salter (1988,117) has an excellent description of this procedure. Having the offender audiotape his satiation sessions so that the therapist can spot-check the tapes and teach the patient to use the satiation procedure most effectively insures compliance with the treatment. The historical development of this behavioral approach is described by Marshall and Laws (2003).

A third behavioral technique is covert sensitization, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Our treatment program was in a small prison with meager material support and minimal staff. We were limited in resources and could not utilize the procedures described above. We were, however, extremely fortunate in state-sponsored training opportunities, a library of educational videos utilized in treatment, and access to conferences such as those sponsored by the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse (ATSA), in addition to peer support from programs in other state prisons.

THE GOOD LIVES MODEL

Ward and Stewart (2003, 23) write that “the way to reduce reoffending is to give individuals the necessary conditions to lead *better lives* (i.e. ‘good’ lives) rather than simply to teach them how to minimize their chances of being incarcerated.” The possible

goods will vary, but might include friendship, enjoyable work, loving relationships, sexual satisfaction and positive self-regard (ibid., 28). A 2009 survey of 1,379 sex offender treatment programs conducted by the Safer Society listed the Good Lives Model (GLM) as one of the top three treatment choices in a third of U.S. adult and adolescent programs and in one half or more of the Canadian adult programs (McGrath et al. 2010).

THERAPY FOR OWN VICTIMIZATION

Thomas et al. (2012), who researched childhood experiences of child sexual abusers, warned that “unless the victimization of sexually abused adult offenders is taken seriously, the offenders may not be able to develop empathy for their child victims” (ibid., 187). Their in-depth study of 23 perpetrators found that half had been sexually abused as children.

ANSWER TO RIVER CROSSING

Of the twenty responses to the scenario earlier in this chapter, five men said it was Mary’s own fault, with one man adding that “she should have stayed home.” Nine men felt it was the husband’s fault. Four thought it was the ferryboat owner’s fault. One thought it was the lover’s fault. And ONE decided the fault lay with the man who killed her—in other words, the person responsible for the killing was the killer. His answer was correct. (The first time I heard of this exercise was during a training presentation on Victim to Victimizer by Dr. Carolyn Cunningham August 29, 1989. I have come across it several times since.)

HURDLES IN TREATMENT

MOTIVATION

In traditional *outpatient* psychotherapy the client comes into treatment for assistance, willing to pay for the privilege of obtaining help from the therapist, based on the client's report of his problems. "This model is absolutely useless when applied to sex offenders. Incestuous fathers are generally not in distress so long as they have sexual access to their daughters. They almost never seek treatment voluntarily, and they do not reveal the full extent of their offenses" (Herman 2000, 150–51). Many sex offenders in treatment give misleading information to their therapist, due in part to their continued vulnerability to the legal system (i.e. Parole Board), in part due to their shame about their offending, and in part as a result of their cognitive distortions, or "thinking errors."

LACK OF VERACITY

After twelve years with offenders in treatment I increasingly realized that I was not given the full story. In some cases I had no way of validating or confronting the men's information, but in most cases I think I was too trusting. Did a victim really bring his fiancée to meet his molester in later years and reminisce about the good old days? Was an adult kidnapping victim really physically turned on by her attacker (who records show was unable to get an erection)? Did the victim of an exhibitionist really approach him and comment favorably on his genitals, and then begin a relationship with him?

The second wife of a prisoner convicted of molesting his stepdaughter routinely drove long distances to visit him in prison. She still had faith in her husband's innocence and did not believe her daughter's allegations. Later, at his parole board hearing, the man's

entire first family testified that he had also molested them. As a result, he did not get paroled. Confidentiality and safety concerns prevented the information being shared with the second wife, or the perpetrator. The last I knew, she still believed him innocent.

Another case involved a man who had been in treatment over a year before it was discovered he had sexually assaulted a woman in another state. When confronted he said, "I didn't know you were interested in what I did across the river."

A number of child molesters have been fired from their jobs "without prejudice" or legal action. Even the employment records of teachers and counselors, for instance, cannot be relied upon for accurate information.

Yet another man who quit the program, convinced that he had "completed treatment," had only discussed his molestation of members of his Boy Scout troop. He denied having molested his daughter. It was not until after he terminated treatment that the presence of a son in his household came to light. Still another man, convicted of molesting two of his daughters—one in a wheelchair—denied molesting the latter, saying he had never been that hard up for sex. Another man, who was an ex-police officer, denied ever handcuffing his daughter when she was alone with him on his boat.

I observed that it is not at all unusual for men with both sons and daughters to be convicted of molesting a daughter, while denying any molestation of a son. I suppose sons are more reluctant to report than daughters, feeling that it casts aspersions on their masculinity. When one man's family (excepting the admitted victim) visited him in prison, the father made fun of the length of his son's hair, and asked him if he wanted a bobby pin. The young man in question had been reported to be depressed and self-mutilating. Later, after I had queried the father, the son wrote a letter assuring me that his father had never molested him.

FANTASIES

Dealing with deviant sexual fantasies is one of the most difficult treatment hurdles for the man who molests. During the day an offender may be working on his thinking errors, learning about the harm victims experience, and reviewing his offense patterns, while at night in the privacy of his own bunk he may be undoing his treatment by mentally reviewing the offense and rewarding those fantasies with an orgasm.

Fantasizing about offending is practicing to reoffend, especially when masturbating. Even admitting to having continuing fantasies is a signal to the treatment team just how close the offender may be to reoffending, if released. At the same time, it should also be a powerful warning to the offender himself just how vulnerable he is to repeating an offense, a very sobering thought that may help the most motivated men.

Letting go of the attempt to influence the program's report to the Parole Board, and instead jumping into the painful but cleansing jaws of a real commitment to therapy means relinquishing control, a scary proposition in prison, where one has so little control.

LACK OF EMPATHY/DISBELIEF IN DAMAGE

Sex offenders have little empathy for their victims. Although they have some ability to empathize with others in general, they empathize less with victims of sexual abuse (McGrath, Cann, and Konopasky 1998), and even less with their *own* victims (Marshall, Hamilton and Fernandez, 2001). Empathy can be thought of as the ability to *accurately* attribute mental states to other people. One incest offender demonstrated his inability to do so when asked how he thought his daughter felt after she delivered her stillborn incestuously-conceived baby in the bathroom while at high school and had to carry it home in a paper bag on the bus. Her father replied that he had no idea how she felt. The lack of empathy for his victim follows in part from the perpetrator's observation of her physical arousal, which she cannot control, from projection, and possibly, as mentioned earlier, from *faulty mindreading*.

The empathy deficit makes the goal of this book even more challenging. In order to minimize the likelihood of the men in our program ever again molesting a child they care about, they were encouraged to carry with them in the forefront of their minds the information that child sexual abuse is *damaging*. Unanswered is the question whether an abundance of cognitive information will have the ability to impact their future behavior. For many incest offenders, feelings of affection are misread as sex, while subsequently, for the child, the two become polar opposites. (That is, sex becomes the polar opposite of affection.)

THE TRAUMA BOND

As explored at length in Chapter 9, the bond between the perpetrator and victim can be extremely resistant to treatment.

DISTORTED BELIEFS ABOUT TREATMENT

Many child molesters deny the need for treatment: One man maintained that the best approach is just to put “it” out of mind; another resisted doing a relapse prevention plan, saying that if he had to have it in writing, then...; and another’s minister told him to quit the program because he shouldn’t be around a “bunch of sex offenders.” Some may not want to be “cured” of their deviance. Others may feel it’s hopeless—that they would only be going through the motions.

PSYCHOPATHY

Is psychopathy too large a hurdle for treatment? At one point it was thought that treatment made psychopaths worse, but a further study by Barbaree, Langton, and Peacock (2006) laid those concerns to rest.

For some reason and with few exceptions, I had difficulty conversing with an offender while wondering if he was a psychopath. One who may have been psychopathic had been reported by other inmates to have masturbated while sitting on the front row when a high school choir visited to sing Christmas carols to the men. He was the same man who had to be cautioned for being too physical across the table when his grown daughter came to visit. Another

was a man who raped his mother who later died, and he told me with disgust that she was a liar. She had reported being afraid of him. His excuse for raping her was that he could hear her in her room, masturbating. Still another tried to arrange for boys to visit and be counseled by him while he was in prison. He was the same man who ordered a book on the MMPI prior to evaluation for the parole board, and was the same man who drew a naked woman in his House-Tree-Person tree, and when queried said, “Doesn’t everyone?” Those are just several that come to mind as I reflect back on my twelve years with the prison system. Wondering if someone is a cold calculating psychopath while you’re talking to him, trying to understand him while imagining what it must be like to be him, didn’t come easy for me. I had less trouble with the man who pointed to the scarf around my neck and told me that on the outside that scarf might be used to strangle me.

A recent article maintains that individuals scoring high on the test for psychopathy can profit from treatment designed specifically to meet their needs and take their characteristics into consideration (Harkins, Beech, and Thornton 2013, 6). They are, however, a “hurdle” in treatment.

REMIND ME, WHAT’S REALLY WRONG WITH IT?

Sex before eight or else it’s too late...

—Slogan of pedophile organization

What’s wrong with having sex with children anyway? Usually sexual abuse occurs between a child and someone the child trusts, and often by someone who cares for the child. Rarely do children bleed or show physical signs of trauma as a result of sexual abuse by adults. Children are able to have orgasms from birth. Why not include sexuality in our teaching?

On January 20, 1972, I was enrolled in a course in Human Sexuality and wrote in my journal: “[J] in class today made the startling suggestion that parents should initiate their own children to the sex act. The professor said that it was grounds for a good argument, but her objection was that any time there is an inequality

between partners (patient-therapist, father-daughter, teacher-student, etc.) the less equal of the two has essentially no real freedom of choice."

Finkelhor (1984, 17-8) writes that incest is not wrong because it fails to honor a sacred, time-honored prohibition, but because "it violates the powerless—vulnerable wards who are not yet in a position to consent or refuse." And what would they be consenting to or refusing? Children cannot give informed consent because they are not yet "informed" about sex and sexual relationships, what the likely consequences of incest will be for them in the future, or how other people are likely to react. "The child is not truly free to say no."

MODUS OPERANDI

Each case of incest is unique in the details, but there are some recurring patterns. Unfortunately, these are patterns of destruction.

GROOMING

Both pedophiles and incest offenders utilize the process of grooming to achieve their ends. For the pedophile, initially it's the child's family he grooms. One said, "My victim's parents saw me as such a nice person. I just complimented the mother. Treated her nice. ... They'd say 'He's a real gentleman. So polite. ... He's decent'" (van Dam 2001, 97).

When incest perpetrators groom their future victims they are in the process of luring them into a state of trust. "Rather than being a sudden, initially traumatic occurrence, most father-daughter incest involves a gradual, deliberate, and predictable entanglement planned and carried out by the father, whereby the daughter is 'groomed' to participate in sexual intimacies" (Christiansen and Blake 1990, 98).

The goal of grooming is to manipulate ("trick") the child into believing in the perpetrator. The relationship that the molester orchestrates is not just an ordinary relationship, but a relationship of "persuasive warmth. Children are in every case hungry for love, but offenders sometimes choose children who are starving for it" (Salter 1995, 81).

DeYoung (1982, 35) observes that

A majority of incestuous fathers and stepfathers "rehearse" incest, for lack of a better term, with their daughter. ... slowly encroaching on her personal life and free time, all the while continuing his tentative, covert sexual advances.

According to Christiansen and Blake (1990, 88-89), grooming includes

talking about sex with their daughters, leaving pornographic materials for them to find, exhibiting themselves to their daughters, and spying on their daughters while they are undressing. These behaviors are designed to obligate and eroticize daughters, while exciting and gratifying fathers.

Many have been lured into incest in this way. Occasionally a father will not bother with grooming, but rudely tear the victim from the fabric of the family in a forceful assault. Some fathers have crept up on their daughters while the daughters slept. When awakened, confused and afraid, they pretend to still be asleep. One victim said she never knew if it was her brother or father on top of her.

THE EFFECTS OF GROOMING ON ME

I feel like my father's attraction to me was more than sex—but isn't that typical of those caught in the trauma bond? We seemed simpatico in a number of ways, and I recall him cautioning my mother not to use curse words around me. I was his only confidante, at least at the time. It seemed that he told me almost everything that crossed his mind. In 1951 he took a solitary vacation to a nudist camp in Pennsylvania. He told me about trying to see a woman's vagina as she sunbathed there. I would not be surprised if he was heterosexually a virgin when he married my mother. He once told me that when they were introduced she was described as "the nicest girl in the city," which probably meant she was inexperienced, too.

None of his cautionary stories about prostitutes involved any description of personal experience, other than something about men lining up at one's house or that they became old soon and disfigured with disease. He even told me about bringing a girl who had a dirty neck home and his mother telling him that "they aren't our kind of people." But he said nothing about actually interacting with a prostitute, which I believe he would have related if he had ever visited one.

His grooming of me worked. I may have mentioned elsewhere in this book that he took me to a couple of square dances as his partner prior to the incest. We were close buddies, even reading books together. When I think of the first time he touched me and wonder why I didn't reject his advances, I know that escape never crossed my mind. It wasn't something I had an internal debate about—it was just that Daddy was like his father, who had molested me when I was much younger. I recall feeling ashamed that my father was like my grandfather, and wondering what my cousins would think. I had no friends, nor had he. And yet, knowing that being re-victimized is a frequent effect of incest, I wonder if my paternal grandfather had not earlier molested me, I could have rebuffed my father's advances, as my sister did later.

THE SECRET

The goal of grooming is not only to build the child's trust, but also to ensure that she will keep the secret. At the moment of the incestuous assault, the victim not only has her lifelong schemas about the world trashed, but is given "the secret" to carry, hidden from everyone else in the world. Having the secret gives her the uninvited power to destroy the family and her father, and drives another wedge into the already troubled relationship with her mother. At that moment, with reality unraveling, keeping the secret means that she now is an *accomplice*. Carrying the secret adds to her sense of isolation and being different from everyone else. All the while, she is fighting the shame of her out-of-control body's response.

One survivor recalls, "Even at the time it never occurred to me to tell anybody. I didn't know who to tell, I didn't know how to tell, I didn't know what the consequences of telling would have been. I just wanted it to stop, but it never occurred to me to tell" (Draucker and Martsolf 2006, 63).

Herman observes that for many women, the incest secret formed the core of their identity (2000, 97).

The excuses or threats a perpetrator uses to ensure that his victim doesn't tell vary. Some fathers, of course, assume (and tell her) that no one would believe her if she told. Others threaten such consequences as suicide, death of the mother, torture or killing of a pet,

banishment to a foster home or orphanage. In one case reported by Davies and Frawley (1994, 131) the perpetrator threatened to cut out his daughter's tongue.

My father told me incest was a capital offense in our state.

Offenders in treatment are invited to reflect on how they managed to get their victim to "keep the secret," thereby making her powerless to seek help or support.

SIBLINGS AT RISK

Although personalities and situations vary, some victims of incest assume the role of trying to protect their younger siblings. The oldest daughter is usually the first victim, and then, like magic, another potential victim appears. Some victims become jealous of their father's interest in the younger sibling, some become protective, some welcome becoming less the focus of the father's demands, and some assume he would never molest anyone else. I knew of one case in which the oldest daughter refused to leave home because her younger sister would then be unprotected.

It did not occur to me that my father would ever molest my little sister. I had believed his report of being in love with me. I have since learned that he did attempt to molest her, too, and that she escaped by telling our mother. I assume that this occurred while I was at school in another state, and her rebuff may have been the reason that my father called me back home from my maternal grandparents.

We have been focusing on father-daughter incest rather than mother-son or mother-daughter, or father-son or sibling-sibling or other incest configurations, mostly because this is my story, at least the one with which I am most familiar.

AMELIORATION PHASE

In the great majority of cases, the molestation will stop as the daughter matures and her options for escape increase. The incestuous perpetrator attempts to tighten his grip on her, and she rebels, often leaving home as a runaway or eloping to escape. Christiansen and Blake (1980, 97) have called this the "amelioration phase." If

there is a younger sister at home, the assaultive process may start all over again.

Herman (2000, 91) says of her sample,

As the daughters reached adolescence, they often became more assertive and rebellious. The fathers responded with intense jealousy. ... They did whatever they could to seclude and isolate their daughters and to prevent them from developing normal relationships with peers.

I, too, left, ultimately because my father placed unreasonable restrictions on me, such as forbidding after-school activities. I escaped to the home of a friend and her stepfather, but at about the same time had apparently been talked into moving into my father's new apartment, with the understanding there would be no incest involved. What happened is covered elsewhere in this book.

I say "apparently" because this all transpired over two or three days and I still haven't got it straight in my memory even now, over 60 years later. This may have been the day after graduation.

Earlier I had been able to stop the incest by telling my father he was getting too careless when drunk, and I would not go along with it while he was drinking. He looked frightened in response, and of course he couldn't give up drinking.

An editor questioned my version: "It never becomes clear to me whether you put a stop to it because of a letter you wrote or because of this 'too careless when drunk' excuse. In any event you come across here and elsewhere as way more powerful than I would have thought possible."

My response to the query: I was powerless to ask for what I wanted, or to be assertive, to hurt his feelings or to confront his manipulateness. Actually I didn't know what I wanted. You may recall I have seen myself as the protagonist, not my father or grandfather. I was never moved to write a letter as I recommend to others trapped in incest, because I had no idea that it was damaging me. However, when he was careless when drunk while mother was at home, the solution just seemed to fall into my lap. I was not

exerting power; I was taking advantage of a serendipitous situation and somewhat cunningly put the ball in his court.

WILL I DO IT AGAIN?

That depends. A study by Harris and Hanson (2004) involving 4,724 sex offenders revealed a reconviction rate of 14 percent over 5 years, 20 per cent over 10 years, and 24 per cent over 15 years. Even after 15 years, most sex offenders do not reoffend. Farmer and Mann (2010, 20) have pointed out, however, that not all sex offenders are at equal risk, so within the overall picture there are some groups of offenders who are reconvicted at an extremely low rate, whereas smaller groups of offenders are reconvicted at far higher rates.

Thornton et al. (2003) followed the reconvictions of sex offenders released in 1979 for 19 years. Reconviction for the low risk offenders was 8 per cent, 18.1 per cent for the medium-risk group, 40.5 per cent for the high-risk group, and 60 per cent for the very high-risk group. The determination of risk level was based on “static,” or relatively unchanging risk factors to subdivide the groups. Examples of static risk factors include alcoholism, number of prior convictions for sex offenses, sex of preferred victim, and the presence of a personality disorder. Static risk factors are limited in that they do not account for changes in an offender’s life, such as completion of a treatment program.

I never heard the word *desistance* until recently. It is a more positive term than “failure to reoffend.” Desistance refers to an offender’s total change to a law-abiding life. *Persistence* is not stopping. (See Maruna 2001.)

At the heart of desistance theories and research is an ethical assumption that offenders are people like us and deserve the opportunity to live normal lives once they have been punished. (Willis, Levenson and Ward 2010, 546)

A “must have” book for men interested in becoming “desistant” is *How Offenders Transform Their Lives* by Veysey, Christian, and Martinez (2009). I regret that we did not have this book for use in our prison program. (It had not yet been written.)

ASK YOURSELF...

As research proceeds, new and better ways to predict recidivism are statistically determined. According to Serran and Marshall (2006, 113), “negative emotional states (along with interpersonal conflict)” are an especially dangerous combination. How would you score on some of the following “Psychologically Meaningful Risk Factors According to Their Strength of Evidence for Predicting Sexual Recidivism,” as developed by Mann, Hanson, and Thornton (2010, 199)? These are just a few of the factors connected with reconviction rates, translated into my own vocabulary:

Do you find children easier to relate to than adults?

Are you preoccupied with thoughts of sex?

Do you get turned on by a *number* of paraphilias—(deviant sex practices such as exhibitionism, voyeurism, pedophilia)?

Are you a loner? Never married? Have intimate relationships been lacking or conflictful/unstable?

Do you frequently find yourself wanting to get even with others?
Do rules and authority rub you the wrong way?

Have you bounced about in life, with frequent job/living arrangement changes? Do you often act without thinking?

How long is your history of molesting?

Are your residence and the buddies you fraternize with on the fringes of society, and possibly involved in the drug culture?

Is there a problem with how you respond to stress?

Do you masturbate to child porn?

Do you abuse substances?

Be aware that the first nine and one-half months after discharge from prison is the most common period for recidivism (Frisbie 1969, 154).

Do you still share the deviant attitudes of most incest offenders, as described by Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott (1994, 196): “The incest offenders were the most likely to perceive children as sexually attractive and sexually motivated, they minimized the harm caused by the sexual abuse of children, and they often endorsed attitudes supportive of male sexual entitlement”?

YOU CAN BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

If the above list reminds you of any vulnerabilities to reoffending, then you have a “growing edge” that you can begin to work on. Ask yourself, honestly, whether you want to reoffend. Since you’re being honest, I’ll be honest: if you primarily molest boys you’re going to have to work *extra hard* not to reoffend.

Many offenders are “able to clearly articulate what ‘turns them on’ and gives them the urge to offend. ... Specialized testing can also help offenders develop insight into what ‘hooks’ them” (Hanson 2006, 22). Since you’re focusing on yourself now, in the privacy of your own mind, you can *isolate* those events and thoughts that lead to offending, and *commit yourself to avoid* them.

Sexual assaults have such devastating effects on innocent victims that “any reduction in the rate of offending should be viewed as beneficial” (Marshall, Laws, and Barbaree 1990, 2). At least one child’s future aspirations will be spared.

Then again, if you’re currently incarcerated and *if* you’ve been just hankering to get back on the streets so you can re-offend, jump right in, but know that you’re destroying two lives: yours and another human being’s.

Let me tell you a horror story, in case you missed it:

A REAL LIFE HORROR STORY

Following a 2009 decision the Supreme Court gave federal authorities the right to imprison people indefinitely under suspicion of future dangerousness (Birgden and Cucola 2011, 305). *The New Yorker Magazine* of January 14, 2013, on pages 36-45, describes life under the conditions of civil commitment in the United States. By Rachel Aviv, it is entitled “The Science of Sex Abuse: Is it Right to Imprison People for Heinous Crimes They Have Not Yet Committed?” The main real-life character is a man sentenced after downloading child porn and attempting to rendezvous with a 14-year old girl who turned out to be a female officer working with the Military Police Investigations Unit and the FBI. A year after being released on parole he recidivated by downloading more child porn and getting caught for it again. He has never been convicted of a single child molestation, yet is now imprisoned indefinitely under his state’s civil commitment laws. There is a special treatment program for those in his state who are serving indefinite sentences. Sex offenders in this program told Aviv that since the treatment program gives the offenders credit for “honesty,” the inmates make up assaults they never committed.

A METAPHOR

QUICKSAND!

Many “normal” men can admire a nubile child but keep a safe distance. They can stay away from the quicksand of losing control. The quicksand is alive and bubbling, and emitting sucking sounds, ready to pull you down. Can you hear it? You don’t have to step in. You don’t have to go under. Isn’t it hell down there? Isn’t prison hell? A “normal” man—or one who is working on becoming “normal”—will run like the devil in the other direction, to save his hide and his soul.

WHAT’S NORMAL

Finkelhor observed that it’s normal for men—as opposed to women—to see persons who are younger and smaller than themselves as appropriate sexual partners. “It is less of a contortion for a man to find a child sexually attractive because children are merely an extension of the gradient along which his appetite is already focused” (Finkelhor 1984, 13). Fantasizing about sex with a child and then reinforcing those fantasies with an orgasm, however, would bring you perilously close to stepping over the line *into the “non-normal.”*

Years ago a good friend of mine was heartbroken that her father basically cut off emotional ties with her when she turned pubescent. Suddenly, she felt she had lost her father’s love. By contrast, in graduate school my professor of Human Sexuality told us what a turn-on his two teenage daughters were, and, knowing him, I am sure he told them so in what must have been a comfortable, affectionate exchange. *I only wish my father had been able to do likewise.*

WHAT'S NOT NORMAL

So the good news is that being attracted is normal. On page 14 of this book Smallbone (2006) was quoted as observing that while many men are attracted to money, most do not rob banks. Masturbating in response to the fantasy of a deviant sex act reinforces and strengthens the power of that deviant fantasy. As remarked on page 39, it is practicing to offend. Focusing on the fantasy brings it closer to reality. (Maybe you've read articles about the effect of imagining new tennis skills, applying for a job or asking for a raise.) The reality of molesting a child, however—acting on your urges from a confused moral, maybe physiological, morass—would be that extra step over the line that messes your life up.

One of the major goals of treatment is to decrease the offender's deviant arousal. The alert about the dangers of fantasizing to the point of orgasm is an attempt to "head off" a potential offender BEFORE he gets in so deep that he commits a crime. The focus needs to be on preventing the first time a man transgresses, because the second and third times tend to become ever more automatic. If you're one of those men who think it's worse to masturbate or have an extramarital affair with an adult than to molest a child, reconsider. One is against the law, the other two aren't. One will harm a child who trusts, maybe loves, you. Sometimes it's difficult to do the right thing. But if only you can grab a handful of the power you imagine you would feel when seducing a child and apply it to the shaping of your own life, then...maybe then...It may help perspective to realize that "it is easier to accept the notion of error rather than evil, and coldly plotting the sexual molestation of children strikes most people as something very close to evil" (Salter 1995, 38). Marshall and Barbaree (1990a, 268) hold out some hope when they write, "Obviously, sex offenders are able to control themselves, since they typically restrain their tendencies until the opportunity arises for them to enact their desires within a context where the possibility of being caught is limited. Clearly these men recognize, and are responsive to, the social rules which constrain other citizens."

THEE AND ME

I realize it's likely that no man who molests children, especially his own, will ever want to be seen reading this book, even if he'd like to. Maybe a treatment provider will make a copy available, or just possibly your daughter, or son. Or wife. I know I've flip-flopped between pretending you're another human being versus being a spider who draws your victim into your web. You're suffering from my ambivalence.

PART 2

BONDS
THAT
BIND

THE TRAUMA BOND

The victims of soul murder remain in large part possessed by another, their souls in bondage to someone else. The victim's deepest feelings are invested primarily in the soul murderer.
—Leonard Shengold, 1989

TOXIC TENDRILS

The trauma bond is that powerful valence which often manifests itself between victim and perpetrator. Similar to the Stockholm syndrome, it is a curious aspect of human nature. The name Stockholm syndrome derives from a hostage situation in Sweden, during which the hostages formed an attachment to their captor and later refused to testify against him. The Patty Hearst kidnapping in 1974 is a particularly famous example of a victim falling prey to the trauma bond. Battered wives who refuse to leave their batterers suffer from the same condition. In cases of incest, the effect is even more severe and destructive, due to the impressionable age of the victim and the fact that the violation occurs within a caretaking relationship. The more grooming that has taken place the more vulnerable the victim is to the tendrils of this toxic relationship. For more on the Stockholm syndrome as it relates to child abuse see Shirley Julich's 2005 article.

The self-abuse of many victims reflects their identification with the perpetrator.

Even if the survivor is no longer in contact with her victimizer, a strong attachment to the internalized object is tenaciously protected and preserved. This may be particularly potent if the survivor has not yet remembered her abuse. Identification with victimizing aspects of the abuser pays tribute to the survivor's real and internalized relationships, protecting the patient from experiencing painful object loss. (Davies and Frawley 1994, 132)

Frawley-O'Dea (1997, 98–99) writes,

The adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse almost always has an identification with her abuser that is split off and repugnant. ... All survivors, unconsciously identified in some ways with their abusers, are terrified that they will not maintain a sufficiently clear demarcation between internal processes and action.

Shengold (1999, 99) observes that “what seems to be the most destructive effect of child sex abuse is probably the need to hold onto the abusing parent or parent figure by identifying with the abuser.”

If you, the reader, are a survivor, I invite you to reflect as you read this book, whether or not you are journaling. If you were abused, take a moment to introspect. How do you feel towards your perpetrator? Angry? Protective? Sorry for him? Hate? Regret that you told or didn't tell? How frequently does he cross your mind, and what do you experience at those times? Have your feelings changed over time? How? Have you moved beyond anger? Or did you short-circuit your anger into a “flight into health?” Do you feel compelled to forgive him? Why? Are you in any kind of continuing relationship with him or did you escape the tendrils? I was surprised to learn that strong continuing feelings between victim and perpetrator are an acknowledged and normal response to incest. The feelings resonating within the bond are stirred together: hate, love, pity, disgust, shame, fear, empathy, guilt.

According to Davis,

Survivors rarely feel just one way toward their perpetrators, particularly when the abuser is a family member. Most feel some combination of love, anguish, hatred, rage, confusion, fear, loyalty, and longing. This is natural. Even when they are treated terribly, children hold on to the hope that they can change things by altering their own behavior. ... Children will twist things so they don't have to see the adults around them as unreliable, hurtful, or out of control. (1991, 212)

A letter from my father after everyone split:

January 24, 1954

Dear Nancy Bear and Nellie Bear,

As you are doubtless aware, tomorrow your dear father will be 47 years old—on January 25, that is. Now, in order that this important date should not go entirely unobserved, I am taking occasion to give myself a little surprise birthday theatre party in its honor and am enclosing an invitation to each of Daddy's big girls.

The picture I have chosen for this event is H. G. Wells' "War of the Worlds." I do not know just when it will come to your favorite theatre, but we will all make believe that it comes at the same time; and, since we are all seeing the same picture there, we can make out like we are all there together again, looking at it. It is what we psychologists call Being together through the sharing of a common experience. As soon as we see it, we will write the other two and tell them about it. I think it will be nice being together again, even if it has to be by what us psychologists call Being together through the sharing of a common experience.

Now, if either of you think that maybe I am not nice enough for you to come to my party, then I am going to say right now that I am a lots nicer than some people would like to give me credit for being. I like to think of myself, more and more every day, as being good old coconut cream pie. Here is the gimmick: The man had finished his dinner, and the waitress asked, would you care for some dessert, sir? And he says, That raisin pie looks mighty good. And she says, That is good pie, sir; but it isn't raisin, it is coconut cream pie. And she swished her apron over it, and said "Shoo!" And, sure enough, there it was—good old coconut cream pie. And that is just what your old Daddy is, down underneath, good old delicious, nutritious coconut cream pie, no matter who would like to go on thinking that he is raisin pie! ...

Give my regards to your dear mother. ... As for me, I will love you both forever and that Forever didn't end in May or October—or when Nellie was born. All my love, dear girls,

Daddee Raisin Pie (or Coconut Cream, which?)

I think he was attempting to tweak the trauma bond, and he almost succeeded.

I am recalling a man in graduate school who told his therapist that he hated him, whereupon the therapist said, “Thank goodness; I thought you didn’t care.”

The desire for nurturance and support from one’s abuser while, at the same time, feeling hatred toward him or her—typifies a frequent issue. ... The survivor may become enmeshed in a cycle of continually seeking “fatherly” behaviors from his or her abuser—a self-defeating process that keeps the survivor tied to the perpetrator and increases the likelihood of revictimization. (Briere 1989, 139)

The conflict and ambivalence resulting from the incest may last a lifetime. I don’t know if I made the phone call or if hearing about it later burned it into my brain, but when a quiet, youngish incest offender died in prison, someone on staff had to inform his family. His wife was informed. In the background screams of anguish could be heard, a voice sobbing and calling after her daddy. It was the victim, no doubt. How heavy her load must be.

One survivor, who earlier dissociated, expressed it this way:

The force with which I came to hate my father was a measure of the love I and my other self once bore him. I know that now. ... I also forgive my father because I love him. That is the biggest shock of all. Not only that I once loved him but that I love him even now. ... I love my daddy. I know that now. (Fraser 1987, 241)

Van der Kolk (1989, 399) reports, “Many observers of traumatic bonding have speculated that victims become addicted to their victimizers.”

Salter writes that

because of the silence surrounding the abuse, the offender’s voice will ring loudly. His comments, his manner, his attitude about the abuse—all are subject to internalization by the child victim and are often carried

decades later by the adult survivor. . . . His thinking will interweave with the adult survivor's more authentic voice as a spreading weed interweaves among garden plants. (1995, 250)

Trauma bonding is a very difficult treatment issue, and one that usually meets resistance from both offender and victim. Some offenders have insisted that their victim is the most important person in the world to them—they want to get out and “make it up to her.” A rigid church member anguished that if his victim did not forgive him the victim would be going against holy scripture with potentially damning results. He wanted his victim to forgive him for the sake of the victim's own soul!

We discovered that one of the members of our group had been exchanging valentines with his victim daughters every year since his incarceration. Another incest offender included “fatherly advice” in his apology letter. A number of incestuous fathers expressed a desire to return to family life again “like it was before the offending.” It was difficult to help the incest offenders see that trying to strengthen the relationship with his victim was harmful. (Of course, it also greatly increased the likelihood of reoffending.) In one case an offender's daughter, who had been trained to trade touching for rewards, developed a pattern of sweet-talking her dad, signing her letters with x's and o's, and following them up with a request for money. She had not received any therapy and he was advised to break off contact with her, whereupon she became angry and chose to interpret that he was rejecting her and using the therapist as an excuse. In treatment, we often had to point out that the incestuous fathers were in effect training their daughters to prostitute themselves.

Occasionally family members who are in denial contribute to the trauma bonding between perpetrator and victim. A woman whose husband was in prison for sexual abuse of boys sent him a nude photo of their new grandson. Another mother began sending the non-family perpetrator photos and updates on the victim.

Some excellent and well-crafted family (reunification) therapy approaches have been developed with skill and thoughtfulness. The longevity, strength, and toxicity of the trauma bond make family

reunification a troublesome concept, however, and account for a significant controversy regarding treatment. The family systems approach sees the entire family as the culprit.

Finkelhor has noted the difficulty (1986, 141), writing that “debate has raged ... over whether or not it is safe to try to reunite daughters with their formerly sexually abusive fathers after these men have been treated.”

Anna Salter has been outspoken about this: “Today, the notion that the family is responsible for incest is far more alive than the [earlier and also mistaken] notion that children are responsible for seducing grown men” (2003, 56). Salter’s remarks were published in 2003, the year Henry Giarretto—a leading reunification proponent and therapist—died. In 1971 Giarretto had founded the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, (CSATP), a family reunification program in Santa Clara County, California, primarily composed of clients referred for father-daughter incest under current investigation. He stressed the need for a humanistic approach to treatment.

Courtois (1988, 347) writes that “these programs have been criticized for their efforts to keep the family together by those who feel that once the incest taboo has been breached the family is never again safe for the child.” She notes that “in incest therapy, the goal is not to reconstitute the family but to help the survivor realistically perceive her family and its functioning ... and decide what is *best for her*”(ibid., 348).

Those who support the family therapy approach feel that it is in everyone’s best interest for the family to be reunited once the father has been rehabilitated. *Rehabilitated?* Does that mean *cured*? Everyone seems to agree that men who molest children can never be cured. As Salter has observed, “No one in my field today even speaks of a ‘cure,’ any more than alcohol and drug counselors speak of a cure for alcoholism or drug addiction” (2003, 59).

Reconstituting the family may be psychologically impossible, according to Briere (1989, 138). He cites the potential for further abuse, the continuing anger and distrust by the victim, and the recognition that “recovery from sexual abuse can take years, and

pressures for ‘forgiveness’ usually serve to stifle pain and anger that should be expressed” (ibid., 139).

Maddock and Larson (1995, 8-9) have compared the underlying assumptions of Victim Advocacy versus the Family Systems approach. They cite 14 differing assumptions, one of which jumps out at me: “The Victim Advocacy approach encourages children to confront their parents directly and be taught to report the abuse if it happens again.” [In other words, to empower themselves to protect themselves via assertiveness and self-reliance.] “The Family Systems approach maintains that professionals should do the confronting to avoid violating the family hierarchy and promoting *grandiosity* [*italics mine*] in the children.”

Herman, in a study of forty female incest survivors, found that most of them

felt that in their fathers’ minds, the incestuous affair never ended, and that their fathers would gladly resume the sexual relationship if they were ever given an opportunity. Though all the daughters [in her reference group] eventually succeeded in escaping from their families, they felt even at the time of the interview, that they would never be safe with their fathers, and that they would have to defend themselves as long as their fathers lived. (Herman 2000, 95)

What if the incest offender relapses? When incest offenders are returned to live with their families, including their victims, there is an “especially great reluctance of families to report re-offenses, even by formerly convicted relatives” (Finkelhor 1986a, 135).

Courtois (1988, 347) observes that “these programs have been criticized for their efforts to keep the family together by those who feel that once the incest taboo has been breached the family is never again safe for the child.” She notes that “in incest therapy, the goal is not to reconstitute the family but to help the survivor realistically perceive her family and its functioning ... and decide what is *best for her* (348).

Briere states his opinion that

the sexual abuser forfeits the possibility of reconciliation by virtue of his actions against his victim and ... the vast majority of victims do better, and are safer, when their therapy and future lives do not include their abusers. (1989, 138)

As Meiselman (1978, 183) warns, "It would seem to be quite unwise to assume that disclosure automatically terminates the incest affair or prevents another one from occurring." The trauma bond with its ambivalences is tenacious.

The relatively low rate for reoffenses by incest offenders "may indicate that those offenders offend less, or it may indicate that reunited victims disclose less" (Salter 1995, 81).

Kroth's 1979 evaluation of the CSATP, however, portrayed it as a success, in that by the end of the 14-month treatment, half of the mothers felt "very much responsible" for the incest. Initially, none had (114). More troubling were his findings that if a repeat offense did occur, they "might keep it a secret" (ibid.).

Herman (2000, 158) observes, "It is possible that those offenders who do suffer exposure and are forced to undergo treatment merely learn to be more cautious and to cover their tracks better the second time around."

Her strong recommendation—the most sensible I've come across—is that "fathers who return to their families should therefore remain on probation for as long as their daughters remain at home" (ibid, 160).

After reviewing the later effects of incest, Courtois summarizes: "In order to heal, the survivor must grieve for the losses which accompanied her abuse experience, and separate from her family. Although she cannot undo her experience, she can be helped to disengage from it in order to proceed with her own self-development" (1988, 128).

Briere has a name for separation from the family. It is "paren-ectomy," which, although likely to improve the survivor's general mental health, nevertheless extracts an unavoidable price. He refers

to it as “psychological surgery,” and notes that while it primarily refers to the offending father, it also includes the mother who continues to defend the molester.

A KEY REUNIFICATION CONSIDERATION

The U.S. Department of Justice has officially recognized the issue of reunification of adult sex offenders and their victims. In a 2005 publication, *Key Considerations for Reunifying Adult Sex Offenders and their Families* (found online at

<http://www.csom.org/pubs/familyreunificationdec05.pdf>), they write,

Despite the potential hazards involved, many sex offenders will, in fact, maintain contact with and return to homes where victims may be at continued risk. ... A genuine commitment to the ongoing emotional and physical well being of the victims must always take precedence.

Doubts about the strength of the trauma bond may have been responsible for their caution that “Some victims may express a desire for reunification without having been provided the opportunity to fully explore or understand that reunification may not be in their best interest” (ibid). Those involved with decision-making are cautioned not to take silence on the part of the victim as implicit agreement.

We round out our discussion of the trauma bond by recognition once more of the tenacity of the bond between survivor and perpetrator, which keeps the survivor tied to the perpetrator and increases the likelihood of revictimization. Briere speaks of the “desire for nurturance and support from one’s abuser while at the same time feeling hatred toward him” (Briere 1989).

MY TRAUMA BOND

Like many survivors of father-daughter incest, I fell victim to the trauma bond with my father. At the moment of the molestation he became a different father, one who could never be reclaimed in a fathering role. The important parenting role of the father in the building of a daughter's self-esteem (Marone 1987) was erased and replaced by its opposite, the trauma bond.

That bond is arguably the most difficult aspect of incest to comprehend. It has been especially debilitating to me, since my father strengthened it by telling me he was in love with me. I recall the disbelief most of us in the treatment program felt watching Oprah Winfrey's television show about women who married their rapists. I should not have been surprised. I should have looked in the mirror.

What a tangled web we weave when there is incest within the family! One night when I was 16 and we had moved to his parents' house after my father lost his job, we all played the card game Setback, and my father and I conversed in our usual lively manner across the table. My father had a clever, lively repartee and I guess there had been frequent eye contact and shared jokes. When the game was over both my grandmother and grandfather remarked on how my father and I had related. I recall my grandfather—he who molested me when I was much younger!—saying, “The man is going to ruin that girl!”

When I was alone with my grandmother, she expressed her concern to me and I said I didn't know what she was talking about, to which my grandmother replied, “Oh yes you do.” That was the first and last time I ever lied to my grandmother. My mother had participated in the card game and made no comment.

Trauma bonding had turned us almost into lovers. Intellectually I sensed that something was very amiss, but distance is necessary in order to gain perspective, and I was too close to the situation to see it.

Although I had already managed to stop the incest, that night was the first time our camaraderie had been witnessed by others. It is remarkable that even my grandfather had been able to observe and comment on the destructiveness of the relationship between us. During this same visit my grandfather complained to my grandmother that every time she left the room, I did too. (I sure did!)

For the first time I am wondering if my grandmother may have also spoken to my father, since I do not recall subsequent similar interactions with him. Of course, that was the year when I attended four different schools, so my attention was drawn elsewhere. But as revealed in this book, the trauma bond was not eradicated. When I reflect on how hungry I continue to be for intellectual stimulation I come closer to understanding the nature of my trauma bond. The incest was free of overt coercion. I have no memory of my father ejaculating, but I do recall seeing semen for the first time. He refrained from intercourse. He said he wanted me to remain a virgin until I married. Or, alternatively, I could get a million dollars in Hollywood for my maidenhead (!) My father was very lonely, as was I. And despite years of alcoholism, he remained very cerebral—except, of course, as the evening wore on and he became more intoxicated.

The dynamics of “replacing my mother” did leave me with a great deal of shame and guilt. The family survived for six more years after initiation of the incest, and did not disintegrate until I left home in revolt against my father’s restriction of after-school activities during my senior year. This final period, when the daughter ends the exploitation, is called the amelioration phase, and, as in my case, is often a response to the father’s increased restrictions.

I mentioned I had been able to bring the actual incest to an end earlier, but it was not until my senior year that I physically escaped the trauma bond by removing myself from home. Given the pull of the trauma bond, it’s surprising that I was so relieved to finally feel

protected from him (and myself), at a school counselor's behest. Obviously my feelings were confused, conflicted, and ambivalent toward my father. This patterning of emotions has extended to other would-be intimates.

I married in 1959, and my husband and I spent the first night in the honeymoon suite of a hotel in Saint Augustine. I had the strongest feeling that the suite was wired for sound, and that the owner was eavesdropping. Maybe he was, but maybe not.

Looking back, I can see that the trauma bond was part physical and part intellectual. My father had such a wry sense of humor and such an active mind when not drunk that I absorbed part of his personality. Years later, after I was married, he had a stroke and was moved into a nursing home in the city in which I lived. I would occasionally take him for a Sunday drive. I drove him past my house once, but I found myself unable to stop and invite him in. Although he could no longer talk, I feared seeing my home and my family through his eyes.

At one point I began to feel guilty about not visiting him more often in the nursing home, but the visits were stressful for me. When the guilt feelings started to set in, I reminded myself that the way I felt around him was something he had caused, and the results were simply the way he had shaped me to be.

Daddy died from a final stroke several years later and was cremated. When asked, I agreed to accept his ashes, little realizing what that would entail. When the doorbell rang that day in 1972 and I was handed his ashes, I shrank from them. They were heavy, as though the six-foot red-headed man was all in there somehow, compressed into the tin container. I had not anticipated the effect they would have on me. Gingerly, I carried them to the closet and deposited them up on the shelf.

Then things got spooky. Whenever I opened the closet to hang up clothes or take them out, I experienced what felt to be menacing vibrations emanating from the container. Finally I called a friend to come and take them out of the house. With their departure I

breathed a sigh of relief. (I realize now that the menacing vibrations were from me, projected onto his remains and bouncing back, via projection.)

My father's ashes resided in the basement storage room of our church until the minister was transferred. I still couldn't deal with having them near me, so I asked my younger sister to claim them. She did, and they rode around in the back of her station wagon until the container's tin covering wore thin, and she feared its contents were about to be dispersed inside her vehicle. I asked her to place them on the shelf in her garage for a while, and she agreed.

Broken boundaries, loss of boundaries, incorporation, intrusion, invasiveness, the edges of my self were in tatters. My defenses were down. I was haunted. Not only was Daddy the master manipulator, but also the stealthy intruder who entered my dreams in various guises. For some time I had dreamed of a huge spider, sometimes waking in the middle of the night to see it up on the ceiling over my bed. Then one day I saw the connection, with a flash of clarity: the spider was my father's hand, its legs his fingers. With that recognition, the spider dreams stopped forever. I don't believe I ever wrote that down in my journal.

The trauma bond remained, however, and I was both surprised and horrified years later to produce the following:

ON WRITING A LOVE POEM

Pen Poised, trembling,
undercurrents
of shapeless forms
ripple through the shadows
of malevolence.
Must every love stalk
the parched cliffs, sand blasted
in the year of the locusts?
Choked sounds,
silent passings,
a presence in the deep.
Come for me oh
my bogeyman.

When my father died I scheduled a single therapy session to deal with his passing. My therapist offered me the opportunity to do a Gestalt “goodbye” to him. The thought frightened me and I refused. It felt as though there would be nothing left inside without the connecting link (trauma bond) to his personality. I am still consciously hungry for intellectual stimulation, having been enamored of my father’s active mind. Reading thought-provoking books together with an intimate would be my fantasized relationship goal had I not put those wishful thoughts to rest.

Then my sister died, and her husband asked about the ashes. At the time I was living in a different city, and I took them from my sister’s garage and drove them to another state, where I deposited them in my own garage. While writing this book I got out and read some of my father’s old letters and began to feel stressed and irritable. I was falling under his spell again... I realize there is so much of him that is still in me. I began empathizing with him and recalling how I enjoyed aspects of his wit. Then I turned back to my task of this writing and saw once more that I was still trauma-bonded with my father. I had remained in a sporadic arm’s-length relationship with him until his death, and even after he was long gone I was still in his thrall.

While reading the abuse literature I found myself described by Briere (1992, 54) with the concept of adversariality, which almost, but not exactly, describes my former way of relating to the world. Briere says survivors often manifest a chronic tendency to view interpersonal interactions as battles. I was the one in class who asked too many questions and made too many observations. In my own personal therapy and analysis with male clinicians I was confrontive to a fault. The metaphor of dueling with rapiers lay just below the surface of my interactions with males, most of which were challenging. I was a unicorn who butted other heads. My vagina was also in my head. I was truly a mélange of the sexes. I was blocked in my healing because of the strength and complexity of the trauma bond with my father. I like to think that this is another of the areas in which I’ve grown some, but I am still isolated from intimacy.

Nineteen fifty-three found me in the death grip of the trauma bond. I had agreed to move in with my father, but there was to be no incest. My mother had left him, and I was scheduled to move in! (This was the point at which the school counselor, ironically due to my father's intervention, met with me and my mother and intercepted that potentially tragic move.)

BONDING AS APPROPRIATION

This morning I realized how much of me my father appropriated for himself. At my birth he named me after a wealthy great-aunt in hopes she would remember me in her will. (Of course she did not.) Initially he wanted me to become another Shirley Temple, so he paid for drama lessons when I was very young. He failed in that appropriation because I was innately shy, and not nearly as cute as Shirley.

Then followed living out his dream of becoming a great tennis player through his own tennis lessons for me, and years later I did become number one on my high school's tennis team. He shaped my religious beliefs by reading aloud Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason," although that backfired on him, because I threw out both Jesus and God with the bath water, so to speak. He had only wanted me to banish Jesus from my firmament. He later held my atheism against me.

Next, in the summer prior to my twelfth grade, while driving a taxi, he struck up a conversation with the editor of a weekly newspaper, somehow resulting in my getting a paid job as a weekly columnist. By that time my father had also seen that I learned to draw cartoons, so I not only wrote but illustrated for the paper. And then he sprang. He started having me turn in his work as mine. (I still have nightmares about the deceit involved in taking credit for something that wasn't mine.)

A final attempt to appropriate my life was when he made me promise to dedicate my first book to him. I'm afraid that's another promise I'm breaking. And yet, I think how pathetic to depend upon an acknowledgment in someone else's book for a sense of importance, and then to have that attempt fail, too.

While researching for this book I came across Putney and Putney's description of the "loving" parent who projects himself onto his child:

He hangs on the child his own unrealized potential and sees not the child but the projected image of the person he would like to be. The loving parent has clothed his child with a great deal of himself and he clings to the child possessively. (1964, 129)

THE SEXUAL BOND

DEVIANCE

How does one transition to love-making from a history of incest, and how can the experience of making love with a legitimate and loving partner blot out and come to replace the early deviant history which has become a template for later arousal? Anxiety-ridden flashbacks are painful and destructive, but what of the arousing fantasies which shame many survivors and which come unbidden out of the shadows even during masturbation?

Having been both classically and operantly conditioned to become aroused by deviant sex is a secret that hangs heavy on the heart of many victims of incest. Opening themselves to the possibility of sexual pleasure can be extremely difficult for survivors. As one woman said, "If positive sexuality is my right ... I don't think I want my right" (Maltz and Holman 1987, 7)!

CONTINUATION OF THE INCEST

As an adult, the victim occasionally maintains a chronic state of overstimulation, according to Shengold (1989, 97), partly by repeating the original traumata with others, partly by continuing relations with the original overstimulating "soul murderer" and, most important, by identifying with him. It is not the continuation of sexual fantasies of the incest in these cases that is the victim's greatest shame, but the continuation of the incestuous relationship itself when grown, sometimes even while in therapy.

Briere (1989, 127) reports that unfortunately,

for a small number of adults (e.g., approximately 5-10% of the author's lifetime survivor caseload) and a larger group of older adolescents, the victim is still 'involved' with at least one of her perpetrators. ... This

secret can be quite destructive, however, as the survivor's guilt escalates and as she continues to withhold the truth from her therapist.

One such victim could not escape the tendrils, even while in college and in therapy. Her body was found, overdosed, in a Walmart parking lot. Most likely she was struggling with the "fifth level" of guilt experienced by some incest survivors, designated as the "Know Better" phase, as described by Victoria Kepler during a workshop in 1988 (See Chapter 16).

THE STAIN

Davis (1991, 203) speaks of the sexual imprinting that often occurs in the child victim, who is

bombarded with a variety of sensations—sexual arousal, terror, love, physical pain, humiliation, shame and confusion. ... Adult survivors frequently need to recreate the feelings they had as children, when they were first sexually stimulated, in order to be sexually aroused. ... To heal sexually, these patterns eventually have to be acknowledged, accepted for what they are, and gradually broken down.

Davies and Frawley (1994, 135) refer to the "intensely eroticized hyperarousal" of survivors due to the pairing and fundamental learning paradigms:

The realization that frightening painful situations or fantasies are likely to stimulate intensely sexual responses is one aspect of the intrapsychic organization of adult survivors that most confirms and maintains the survivor's sense of inner badness and shame. (136)

Weiner and Kurpius (1995, 147) observe that "Incest is very confusing because the victim often has a dichotomous experience. Not only does the victim endure the fear and pain associated with the sexuality, but she also experiences tremendous sexual stimulation." They share the words of one insightful patient: "I mean, it's both repelling and a turn on. It's like a compulsion, you can't stop until you relive the whole damn thing. I'm OK now, but I had to go through months of this. It was hell. I had to relive it in my body. And it was really, really hell" (148).

“The only reason to uncover traumatic material is to gain conscious control over unbidden re-experiences or re-enactments,” writes Van der Kolk, (1989, 402), who also observes that “childhood abuse and neglect enhance long-term hyperarousal and decreased modulation of strong affect states” (405).

Maltz and Holman (1987, 76-77) quote one survivor as explaining, “Many women, including me, are attracted to what happened and get very aroused with a repeat. Why do you think bondage, S/M, etc. are so popular? It’s a repeat of incest—this is how I react. Loving gentle sex is too scary—a repeat of ‘torture’ arousing, in a very scary way.”

According to Anna Freud, it is “fear of the parent, coupled with natural dependency, a passive-submissive attitude which makes suffering exciting and which ties the victim as firmly to her aggressor as do positive, loving bonds.” She adds that masochistic trends are not inevitable, however (Freud 1981, 33).

Blume is unequivocal: The incest survivor “must not masturbate for the wrong reason, from anger and self-abusive SM fantasies. The incest survivor needs to become clearly aware of what effects she is furthering by being sexual, whether alone or with a partner. ... She can learn to treasure an arousal that feels safe, one that feels like a gift rather than a betrayal” (Blume 1990, 231).

Saphyre is a survivor whose story is included in Bass and Davis’s *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (1994, 274). Saphyre embarked on a conscious program to change her ingrained sexual responses from sadomasochistic to normal. “I came to the point where I really understood that they weren’t *my* fantasies. They’d been imposed on me through the abuse. ... Once I separated the fantasy from the feeling, I’d consciously impose other powerful images on that feeling—like seeing a waterfall. If they can put SM on you, you can put waterfalls there instead. I reprogrammed myself.”

Hunter recommends that his clients masturbate without the use of fantasy, “because fantasy by definition is not being focused on the present moment in reality.” He writes that his clients report that when they stay focused on their body and the sensations they are

creating, rather than on mental images, they masturbate less frequently but experience more physical and emotional pleasure and fewer shame responses or compulsive urges (Hunter 1995, 73).

According to Bass and Davis (1994, 274), it is possible to undo the deviant early conditioning, but the survivor needs to be ready to do it.

In addition to the above observations, the bondage situation relieves the “slave” from responsibility for the sexual activity, a handy fantasy when a survivor is troubled by self-blame for the incest. I recall once in my own personal group therapy after I reported that my father had said he would do something nice for my mother if I would cooperate sexually with him in some way, the therapist and group pointed out that a big smile crossed my face. I had not been aware of it, but apparently in that instance I welcomed a noble reason to be sexual with my father, which relieved me at least temporarily of some portion of my guilt feelings. I also recall a fantasy that involved a virgin being totally restrained by men and sexually titillated for several days until she was insatiable, and she obviously was not responsible for any of it.

Jacobs (1979, 135) sees it thusly: “In part the shame of incest is the shame of experiencing pleasure at the will and domination of another. Just as the daughter’s body has been taken from her, her sexuality is conditioned by the control of the more powerful other, hence, the experience of submission may become merged with feelings of love and the erotic in the unconscious of the victimized daughter.”

I believe that as a young child I sensed my father’s arousal when he spanked me and unconsciously responded to it. My cloudy memory is that he licked his lips and said, “I’m going to have to give you what Paddy gave the drum.” There was a weird scene when I was in fourth grade as we were both standing in the living room and he said, “You’re too old for me to spank any more, right?” I agreed and that was the end of it, although there was a strange tension in the air. I don’t know that he was sadistic, but I have been told that during the housing shortage after the war, when they were not supposed to have infants in the hotel rooms,

my father spanked my little sister until she quit crying. He also made my little sister pick big green ticks off the dog shortly before she came down with Rocky Mountain spotted fever. When I recall that one of the books he read was "How to Win Friends and Influence People," I now wonder if he was practicing to influence me...

PART III

COMMUNITY

AND

FAMILY

AFTER HE RETURNS, THEN WHAT?

This section is addressed to the support network of the incest offender once he is released from prison. There are a few important dos and don'ts, whether the support network is comprised of extended family or family of origin. I am assuming that he is not returning to the family in which the incest occurred, for reasons discussed in the chapter on the Trauma Bond. At the same time, positive community attitudes toward sex offenders have been found to be critical in supporting the offender's law-abiding transition back into society (Willis, Levenson, and Ward 2010).

Martinez, who interviewed a number of former prisoners about their families, found that "Family support mechanisms are important elements that contribute to the successful reentry of former prisoners to society" (2009, 67). "They perceived that their family members would be emotionally supportive, would provide validation and companionship, and that both parties would provide such support to each other" (64). "There was also the perception and implicit notion that family members would not support former prisoners who continued on the same pre-incarceration path. Former prisoners viewed this condition as showing that their family members' purpose was to ensure and promote their non-criminal well-being" (63).

Farmer and Mann (2010, 31) have observed that "there is a growing body of evidence to suggest the importance of social links and bonds in reducing the likelihood of reoffending." This approach emphasizes the ethical and human rights process following release from prison of "community inclusion through support rather than social exclusion through restraint" (Birgden and Cucolo 2011, 308).

As McGrath et al. report in the 2009 Safer Society survey,

An informed network of family and friends can provide much-needed positive social support that helps reduce re-offense risk. Pro-social support persons can reinforce pro-social attitudes, help clients secure and maintain stable employment, avoid and cope with high-risk situations, and develop lifestyles incompatible with sexual offending. (McGrath et al. 2013, 64)

A currently growing movement is the expansion of Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), a community-based initiative to deal with the release of high-risk sex offenders from prison. Begun in Canada in 1994, COSA uses trained volunteers to help meet the needs of both victims and the community as well as meet the needs of ex-offenders for support and assistance in returning to the community. “The COSA model is a fascinating hybrid of restorative and community protection practices that challenges assumptions and forces us to rethink theoretical boundaries” (Hannem 2013, 270). The circle meets weekly as a group, and the volunteer members take turns to meet with the “core” member individually on a daily basis. The movement has circled the globe and is being tested in the United States (Duwe 2013).

What follows represents my attempt to highlight several areas of concern. Among other topics these involve the trauma bond, thinking errors, embarrassment, the trust problem, and relapse prevention.

LET THE TRAUMA BOND WITHER AWAY

After the incest offender is released, I would recommend not attempting to unite the perpetrator and victim in a “healthy” relationship. Let it go. (Prior to release I would recommend their having no visits and writing no letters, except as suggested and supervised by the victim’s therapist. This is where reality can get very fuzzy, to the disadvantage of the survivor.) From my vantage, the enterprise is doomed and dangerous.

Support each in getting their needs met elsewhere, and don't consider that a failure. Letting the trauma bond die is a healthy, hopeful response for the family.

Sometimes an offender wants to get home so he can revert to being a good parent, like he was "before the abuse took place." More than one man in our program has caught himself having fantasies of using what he's learned in therapy to "help" his victim. It is necessary to keep an eye on the trauma bond—of both victim and perpetrator—and not to encourage it. Some incest victims have continued to write to the offender while he is in prison. Families should not encourage this phase of the trauma bond, but rather redirect the child.

DON'T REVICTIMIZE THE VICTIM

Do not try to make the offender feel better by criticizing his victim, either to him or in remarks to her. Hopefully he has become accountable for his abuse, so your offering him palliative statements or trying to place some of the blame on his victim is re-victimizing her and detracting from his treatment.

The victim may be struggling to become a survivor—that is, to work through her feelings of betrayal and powerlessness, of having become "damaged goods" through no fault of her own, and of dealing with the guilt and shame that accompany her violation. Don't remind the victim that her perpetrator "still loves her" or that she should "just try and forget it." Don't make excuses for him. Say nothing that she might interpret as blaming her.

Davis (1991, 49) recognizes that many well-meaning people who want to be supportive give contratherapeutic advice to the victim. "They wrongly assume that the pain started when the survivor started *talking* about the incest. It didn't. It started with the abuser and the things he or she did. ... To an outsider, it can seem like giving attention to the problem *is* the problem, but focusing on the hurt (for a time) is actually the only way to really get through." Be aware that the victim feels shamed by the sexual abuse and will be highly sensitive to being treated as "damaged goods," or as not a good person. This will only add to the damage she has already endured.

OTHERS DENY, TOO

Family of origin members do not want to believe the perpetrator is really a “sexual pervert.” They want to believe that it was a fleeting anomaly and that after treatment and/or incarceration he is his “old self” again. They will often send their own child off for a walk in the park with the perpetrator in order to reassure themselves that their family member is trustworthy once again. *Red alert! Red alert!* This is an extremely dangerous tendency. Do not put any child in harm’s way as a test! In their determination to reassure themselves that their beloved transgressor is really a regular guy, family members may cooperate with relapse prevention plans on a *temporary* basis only, not a life-long basis, as required if re-offending is not to occur. One offender who had been in treatment lived across the street from a playground. After his release his wife confided that she was not letting him go over to the playground “yet.”

“In the absence of well-documented criteria for distinguishing situational offenders from early addicts, it would seem prudent to consider all offenders potential addicts” (Herman 1990, 185). There is agreement among clinicians that even after the achievement of an apparent full recovery, some ongoing maintenance activity will be required indefinitely to prevent relapse.

Everyone tries to avoid thinking about or mentioning embarrassing topics, and what could be more embarrassing than recognizing the fact that a family member has engaged in sex with a younger family member? The more the adult family members can be realistic about the situation and address the topic with the offender in a matter of fact way, the better. Reoffending is more likely to occur when family members or his support team seek to put the problem out of mind and hope for the best, figuring that since he’s been punished for his crime he won’t ever do it again. Unfortunately there is always the risk of his reoffending. Some men have been able to desist (refrain from reoffending). Others have refrained until much later, when they have grandchildren or nieces available, for instance.

Let him share any literature he has, or papers he retained from therapy. What are the conditions of his parole? Will his address be published on the Internet? Listen out for where he stands on accepting

responsibility, his understanding of the effects of his behavior, and how he plans to avoid reoffending. Don't encourage him in denial, minimization or blaming! Don't encourage his resumption of a relationship with the victim, not even to improve it! Don't test him in situations with children or condone getting a job around children. Don't ever leave him alone with children again. *Ever*. Don't discourage any outpatient treatment or 12-step program meetings. Encourage him, but don't try to make him feel better about having offended. Don't shame him, but *support* his efforts not to reoffend. It's a difficult assignment and goes against the grain of how many of us relate to each other, but can be crucial in whether there is another offense or not. Remember that unless he is a cold, hardened psychopath without a conscience, he needs to be able to see that although he may have done terrible things, he is *not* a terrible person, and is worthy of achieving a better life.

Don't assume another offense would necessarily be with another family member, or that the victim would necessarily be the same age or even the same sex. It has been my experience that if a man is in prison for molesting his daughter or granddaughter, and has sons or grandsons, that there's a likelihood that he has also molested his sons or grandsons or will do so in the future. In one study 44% of the incest offenders who had molested female children in the home had also molested female children outside the home, whereas 11% had molested unrelated males (Becker and Coleman 1988, 191).

SUPPORT HIS RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN FOREVER!

Relapse prevention is a well-thought-out and tailor-made plan designed to help the offender refrain from ever committing another sex offense. If he is lucky enough to have such a plan, ask him if he will share it with you, and support him in following it *forever*. He has been taught to spot triggers and situations that may put him at risk for reoffending, and how to avoid and cope with them. As quoted elsewhere in this volume, deviant urges are expected to return even after the very best treatment program. Being on guard against triggers and risky situations in the environment minimizes the risk of reoffending. Perhaps he won't, with your support!

NO CURE

There is no “cure” for sex offending. Families are encouraged not to mislead themselves by wishful thinking. It would be erroneous to believe that an incest offender can be cured. There is always the *risk* of recidivism. That’s why denial by the family is so dangerous. The offender can be helped, however, by his family respecting the implementation and continuation of his relapse prevention plan, and choosing not to “trust” him with a situation he may not be able to handle.

Salter (2003, 59) reports that sixty out of one hundred sex offenders would still reoffend after the most effective treatment available today. Another way of stating this is that “the forty out of one hundred offenders who would not molest again after treatment translates into numerous children who will be spared abuse if offenders get proper treatment” (ibid.). (See, however, Chapter 7, on Risk Factors.)

Too frequently well-meaning people will encourage the offender to put the offense out of his mind and think about other things. We have had ministers encourage offenders to quit treatment in order to escape the influence of other sex offenders. Another’s new wife encouraged him to quit receiving the treatment program’s newsletter because he “no longer needed it.”

Salter observes that

Naïve family and friends (and sometimes even the therapists) may assume that remorse will prevent relapse, an assumption made particularly when shame over disclosure is misread as guilt over the behavior. (1995, 92)

It’s possible that members of the family may reinforce dysfunctional behavior, or they may not support the individual in his quest for change. As mentioned above, friends and family may reinforce the man’s view of himself as a victim, and they may want to see the offender as not fully responsible for his offenses.

BECOME ALERT

Become alert if he starts using thinking errors again; abusing drugs or alcohol; seeking time with his victim; cruising in his car; having unaccounted time; refusing to discuss problems; having a rapid religious conversion; not attending therapy or programs that formed a support network; maintaining secrecy associated with the computer he uses; experiencing significant blows to his self-esteem; spending *any* amount of unsupervised time with a child, *ever!* Some molesters have been observed tickling and roughhousing with children, even in front of their approving parents. One molester who was interviewed by Van Dam (2001, 155) considered “tickling and roughhousing to be such a significant indicator that he felt adults should develop a *zero-tolerance* policy regarding such contact.” The item about injuries to self-esteem reflects findings that a sudden negative mood is one risk factor for re-offending.

If the sex offender is returning to the family, those interfacing with him need to know how to spot thinking errors, not to confront him with them, but to help avoid getting led astray yourself and reinforcing his warped thinking. It’s easy to be convinced by a sex offender that he is the victim. He does not need support for his thinking errors by anyone in his own family or support network! These were earlier discussed, but reminders are as follows:

“Before it happened” = “before I did it.”

“It wasn’t really sex.” When offenders say this they are committing a thinking error. They would like you to think that only intercourse is “sex.” The *least* frequent form of sexual abuse with children is intercourse!

Be aware that a surprising number of instances of incestuous assaults take place while others are in the house, even in the same room. (What does that lap blanket over grandpa and his granddaughter while watching television cover?) Yes, it’s distasteful to think of these things, but less distasteful than permitting incest.

The above is provided so as to give his support network an idea of the kinds of behaviors that might cause concern. Ideally the child molester would not live in the same location as any child.

MORALISTIC RELIGIOSITY

According to Salter (1988, 106), trading treatment for religious conversion does not reduce the risk of re-offense. Since the Catholic priest molestation scandals, it is not news that molesters can also have religion. Molesters' religion may take the form of "religiosity," however, which manifests as a moralistic, "holier than thou" attitude.

Religiosity can be detrimental and intrusive, as when the offender in our program described earlier worried about the state of his victim's soul if he/she didn't learn to "forgive" the offender. He was ordered to stay away from his victim but went to the end of his victim's driveway and threw a candy bar down it.

PROTECTING

As a member of the community at large, you may want information on protecting children. Be aware that some child molesters have bragged about their skill in spotting potential victims. One said,

I can look at the kids in a school yard and tell you who is an easy mark. It will be the child alone and off by himself, the one who appears lonely and has no friends. The quiet kid—the one that no one is paying attention to—that’s the one who’ll respond to some attention. (Groth 1979, 142)

In an article that included questioning child molesters’ *modus operandi*, “the typical victims described were passive, troubled, lonely children from broken homes” (Budin and Johnson 1989, 84).

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

PREVENTION

When small children are molested, they often lack the language to tell. Exercises for teaching “good touch” and “bad touch” and the concept of “private zones” have been developed, and the child is encouraged to “yell and tell” if someone tries to touch them in a bad or confusing way. The stress needs to be on “someone” or “anyone,” rather than a “stranger,” for obvious reasons. Conte (1990, 19) points out that “children are more likely to be sexually abused by members of their own families and by acquaintances than by strangers.”

Most parents have some difficulty talking to their children about sex, and even more about sexual abuse. The topic has been referred to as an “emotional minefield” by Finkelhor, who observes that as

a result “many parents choose to skirt this territory entirely” (1984, 145).

Finkelhor observes that most parents warn their children about the danger of kidnapping, “which is far less likely in a child’s life than sexual abuse” (1986, 230). If parents do educate their children about the possibility of sexual abuse, they often wait until too late. A third of sexually abused children are abused before the age of nine (229). He speaks of parents “abdicating their responsibility” by not educating their children about sexual abuse and telling them how to respond in various situations, using whatever words they can find.

I have to confess that I abdicated my responsibility also.

Linda Sanford offers a number of helpful suggestions in her book *The Silent Children: A Parent’s Guide to the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse*. Especially useful are a number of “what if?” game scenarios. She strongly recommends that children be warned about possible molesters at four different levels: stranger contacts, acquaintance contacts, child-care contacts, and contacts with people the child loves (Sanford 1985, 217-69). It is also recommended that prevention efforts include both adult and juvenile predators (Kikuchi, 1995).

If you want to discover whether your child has been sexually abused, plan how you are going to ask the question ahead of time, then speak calmly and in private. The child will be very conflicted about whether to tell you or not.

Should your child admit or report having been molested, try to curb the outrage response; you don’t want your child to start feeling guilty about having told or to want to protect her molester. This may be a good time to calmly inquire if anything like this has ever happened before.

Don’t “awfulize.” Also curb the incredulity response; she will fear you don’t believe her. You can respond calmly by thanking her for telling you, saying that you know it’s hard to talk about, and that you’re sorry it happened. Attempt to remain focused and thoughtful as you empathically listen to her. The child trusts that you will

know what to do about the molestation, or she wouldn't have told you. (You can then privately seek support and counsel if need be, for yourself.)

A good book for such an occasion is *When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parent's Guide to Healing and Recovery—Putting the Pieces Back Together*, by K. B. Hagans and J. Chase (1988). Especially useful are the guidelines and specific responses for the mother and/or the child to have ready when approached by nosey or well-meaning acquaintances.

If the perpetrator is another child and you have the occasion to speak to him, say that his behavior made the victim feel bad.

The primary goal is for children to stop abusive behavior because they have learned it makes others feel bad, not because they will get into trouble if they do not. (Kikuchi 1995, 121)

If the child asks why it happened, Wheeler and Berliner suggest that you reply, "He tells himself it's okay to do it even though he knows it's wrong" (1988, 241), rather than saying that the perpetrator is sick. The latter proffered reason may make the child feel sorry for him and possibly regret telling. It is important for the child's development that she does not confuse sexual abuse with healthy sexuality. Kikuchi (1995, 120) cautions that "Normal sexual behaviors of juveniles should never be labeled as bad, dirty, prohibited, or subject to punishment."

Kepler (1984, 229-30) reminds us that

there are two critical periods in a child's life when it is essential that s/he receive a straight message from the parent of the opposite sex. During the first developmental period (ages 3-6) ... the child may actively seek out their parent and actually court him. ... Yet this is not the time for Dad to teasingly remark, "We'll have to get rid of Mom first and then we'll live happily ever after." ... A more appropriate response might be, "I love you too, sweetheart, but I'm married to Mommy. When you grow up you'll marry someone else who will love you just as much as I love your mother. And maybe some day you'll be as lucky as we are and have a little girl who you will love as much as we love you."

The next critical period occurs when a daughter is approaching adolescence and is testing her feminine wiles on her father. She is preparing herself to relate sexually and socially with males outside the home. She may even outright flirt with Dad, assuming him to be safe. ... In reality, she is only trying to come to terms with her developing body, emotions, and her approaching womanhood. Just as when she was five years old, a fifteen-year old daughter should get a clear message from her father that he is not a suitable partner. (Ibid.)

In the same vein, Alice Miller has written:

All I can say is that the behavior of young girls who experiment a bit with their seductive arts within the security of their own family is entirely normal and does not justify either incest or sexual abuse by strangers; and it certainly does not represent an invitation to adults to perform sexual acts, which as a rule are instigated not by the child but by the male adult, who alone bears the responsibility. (Miller 1990, 69)

EXPLORATION OR EXPLOITATION?

Criteria for distinguishing between innocent sexual play and curiosity versus sexual abuse include *the emotional* response. Curiosity with age mates often involves giggling and playfulness, while with abuse the receiving party is troubled. How can you tell if sexual activity between a child and young person is curiosity or sexual abuse? If you are not sure, ask yourself the following questions, adapted from several sources: Were threats or bribes involved? Is there a marked difference in ages? Is this a recurring activity? Is the behavior sophisticated rather than exploratory? Did the initiator insist on secrecy? Is the receiver troubled by it?

Use your own judgment what to do next if you feel another child has been sexually *abusive*, but under no circumstances *ever* allow your child to be alone with the abusive child again. As Kikuchi writes, “Do not wait to see if the situation escalates” (1995, 121).

The aggressive child’s parents or grandparents want to believe the best about their child, and will want to deny the presence of a serious problem. Don’t let their psychological denial affect what *you* do. Continue to protect your child with vigilance.

Some children have become abuse reactive, acting out the abuse, with themselves in the role of aggressor. A number of abusers have been apprehended due to their victim displaying behavior that is sophisticated beyond their years. “A child who has never baked cookies at home would not suggest such an activity. Similarly, it is unlikely that a child not exposed to sexual activity would suggest doing it” (Cantwell 1995, 86-87).

This is the point at which a family member can intervene and request an evaluation by professionals instead of trusting that the pattern will disappear by itself. Clearly, any person who sexually offends, whatever their age, ought to be assessed and treated, if the evaluation reveals such a need.

THE CULTURE AS VICTIMIZER

Some men who molest children like to imagine the victims as adults, while others prefer to see them as children. Those who prefer to imagine them as adults are well served by the teeny bop scene. There is some lesson to be learned from the murder of Jon-Benet Ramsey, but we can't know what it is, at least not yet. Kepler (1987) reported that in 1987 (the last year for which she had figures), more money was spent on Little Miss America than any other beauty pageant in the world, and that there were 264 magazines distributed and produced in this country that depicted children in sexual acts. (There are probably fewer now, due to the popularity of the Internet.)

“If children are immersed in sexual images, their perception of wrongdoing by a perpetrator are severely blunted,” as Cantwell (1995, 86) observes. Protecting children includes shielding them from the harmful influence of pornography, blatantly sexual videos, movies, television, and the dangers of the Internet. Anna Salter warns of the increasing danger from the Internet and especially the chat rooms. She cautions that it is risky to let your children surf the Internet alone with no guidance and no software filters. She additionally points out that it is incredibly easy to accidentally wander into porno sites, even sadomasochistic ones (2003, 233).

I can attest to that. Upon retirement from the prison I clicked on “sex offenders” and got pornography, to my chagrin.

Salter has a thoughtful discussion about living and thriving in the world while being ever vigilant and seeing everyone as a potential perpetrator. She advises that

‘wearing rose-colored glasses’ can make us more susceptible to predators. We think we can detect liars better than we actually can. ... But where our illusions become dangerous is when they cause us to assume that specific people and situations are not dangerous, when they allow us to assume the best about others without considering the worst. ... We must act as though the world could be dangerous, even if we believe it will not be. (2003, 190)

STEPPDADS

Single moms, as though you didn’t have enough to worry about, before you re-marry consider if your man could be wanting to marry into a family of potential victims. Check out his “references,” including former wives. Don’t feel guilty about doubting him—it’s called protecting your children. Marshall and Barbaree report that “some of our patients told us they sought out women to live with who had children of their preferred age and gender” (1988, 502).

Do be cautious about the stepfathers. In one study stepfathers were found to be five times more likely to sexually victimize a daughter than a natural father. It makes sense if you think about it. One cautious mother terminated the relationship when her fiancé remarked what a “knockout” her daughter was going to be.

Although it’s not clear how much the incest taboo constrains incest, obviously it is a negligible factor in non-blood cases.

WATCH THE GOSSIP

Elsewhere we have discussed the frequency with which victims are abused by others who have heard of the original abuse, but it bears repeating. The thinking appears to be that since the victim has already been molested, she either won’t mind it or will like it. At least the new abuser won’t be the “first” one. And—“she’s already damaged goods!” I suspect that the re-abuse occurs because the

seed has been planted in a third party's mind and his fantasies ignited. This may occur in men who would not otherwise molest children.

In fact, this occurs so often that I would caution caregivers to think twice before sharing a child's history of abuse with others, except when warranted by particular circumstances.

Bass and Davis (1994, 104) describe one grim example:

Sometimes telling led to further abuse. One child confided in her best friend. That girl told her father, who asked for details. He then took both girls into the garage and did to them all the things he'd just heard about.

Before coming to the prison to work I heard about one case in which a child was molested by her father, then by her babysitter's boyfriend, and then, after she was removed to her grandparent's house, by her grandfather. Little understanding the dynamics at the time, I thought half-seriously, "What bad karma she must have!" No, it wasn't karma; it was the dark side of human sexuality.

In another case a grandfather's molestation was revealed and the entire family met to discuss it. After the meeting the abused child's father had sex with her. "He said I was already broken in" (Davies and Frawley 1994, 35). This raises the question of how wise it may be to share a child's history of sexual abuse with anyone.

Be careful that *you* don't start seeing her as dirty or sullied.

THE DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED

Be cognizant that developmentally challenged individuals—both male and female, both children and adults—are at risk for sexual abuse. I recall one situation in which a retarded young woman's mother died and her father became her caretaker. When he died while having intercourse with her, she could not move him off her and lay immobile for several hours, pinned beneath his corpse.

PART IV

THE
SURVIVORS

THE FALLOUT

Q: How did dealing with incest affect the rest of your life?

A: What rest of my life?

—Bass and Davis, 1994

The first draft of this book contained no references. It was my experience, my story. Then I realized how easy it would be for incest perpetrators to discount me and my words, especially since they would not want to believe what I had to say. Thus I turned to the research and literature in order to validate my experience and observations, although that decision added years to the project.

The primary purpose of this book is to foster empathy and understanding on the part of offenders for survivors in order to decrease the likelihood of reoffending. This book also has the potential to answer some lingering “whys” for survivors.

DOES THE SURVIVOR KNOW IT WAS HARMFUL?

This section focuses on some of the many damaging effects of incest on traumatized survivors. While dealing sensitively with probable effects of incest might seem depressing, especially to survivors, studies have indicated that understanding what happened to them actually helps survivors resolve issues in their own minds and allows a better recovery (Silver, Boon, and Stones 1983).

Frequently, “a survivor who enters therapy is driven to seek help with problems that she does not associate with her childhood abuse, even when the memory of incest is accessible” (Meiselman 1990, 99). The most common symptom reported in the literature for adults molested as children is depression (Browne and Finkelhor 1986, 152).

I think I said it elsewhere in this book, but it was easy for me to go through life taking my troublesome sexuality, my feelings of shame, my obsequiousness, my hurt, my anger, and my fear of men for granted. I had never experienced me differently. What was me and what was the flotsam of the incest? It never occurred to me that I had a different, healthier, core self.

Just as the offenders deny that incest causes damage, so do many victims. They don't make the connection because major fallout may not occur until the victim hits certain "potholes" later in life (Hindman 1989). These include: puberty, when the victim attempts to become sexual, sanctioned sex, birth of a child, and when the victim's child reaches the age at which the victim was abused. In reality, the list goes on and on. Powell (1988, 273) calls these "sleepers effects" that may not be evident until years later.

One of the "potholes" referred to by Hindman was the birth of my daughter with Down's syndrome in December of 1971. Although the molestation had not fully traumatized me, my response to her birth was similar to that experienced by traumatized victims of incest. The effects of her birth are shared in my 1972 journal entries.

I am fully aware that helping other survivors see ways in which they may have been touched by the incest is a tricky undertaking. We already see ourselves as damaged goods, at least to some degree. However, stepping outside the frame in order to see the big picture, to observe behavior that doesn't make sense even to us, can be therapeutic.

Underestimating the extent of the victimization and its long-term effects may result in avoidance of psychotherapy and other help-focused treatment (Briere 1996). Perhaps the journaling samples in this volume's final section may suggest additional areas of possible fallout that may deserve investigation.

Presumably Emily Dickinson found some healing in her journaling and poetry, although "her journey to recovery was never completed. ... The trauma of Emily Dickinson's childhood seems to have robbed her of a sustaining sense of community" (Perriman 2006, 238). That she was a survivor of incest appears to be widely accepted (ibid.).

The necessity for a reliable yardstick with which to measure damage from incest is brought into focus by an early report by Bender and Grugett (1952). After studying fifteen cases, they concluded that most of the victims had “adjusted well” years after the abuse. When Conte and Schuerman (1988, 158) reviewed the data, however, they noted that the fifteen cases had included a successful suicide, repeated hospitalizations, and drug and alcohol abuse. Reading Bender and Grugett’s article is a disheartening experience, reflecting as it does the earlier misconception of the dynamics and often delayed effects of incest.

BETRAYAL BY THE BODY?

I felt and still feel that my primary betrayer was my body, not my father, although intellectually I know better.

According to Bass and Thornton (1983, 18-19):

In some instances the child’s body may respond to the sexual stimulation even as her consciousness is horrified. ... Because she does not know that her body can respond without her consent, or even that it can respond in such a way at all, the abused child feels that she must have wanted the abuse, must have asked for it in some way. It is this betrayal of herself by her body that she sometimes finds the hardest to forgive.

Bass and Davis are outspoken, saying that sexual pleasure is *not* a betrayal of the body. Speaking of one survivor, they said, “Her body did what bodies are supposed to do. You were betrayed not by your body, but by the adults who abused you” (1994, 117).

Hamilton goes one step further when she writes, “We achieve self respect for ourselves through bringing our sexuality home within us—instead of wishing it didn’t exist. Abusers, not sex, assaulted us” (1992, 231).

AMBIVALENCE

A frequent characteristic of incest survivors, and one that is often used against us, is our *ambivalence*.

As bad as it must feel to be physically overpowered by an aggressive perpetrator, it is also painful to be enticed and aroused so that

one is powerless to control one's own responses. While being manipulated by a trusted loved one is heartbreaking, being betrayed by one's own body is calamitous.

Genital touching is experienced as "sex" by the survivor, and "nasty" may be her first impression of it. Fear of the erotic state of sexual enjoyment—erotophobia—is familiar to many survivors, as is a phobia of penises. The offender is never privy to these severe aftereffects, and is free to continue reassuring himself that no damage was done since "she got married," or "she got a good job," or "she seems happy enough."

Inner conflict, impaired judgment, wanting to change reality, and the push-pull of sexuality and conscience often result in behavior that others see as seductive. How many "prick teasers" have been acting out their fears and ambivalences? Being conflicted about vital life issues is not pleasant, planned or purposeful. Later relationship problems? How could it be otherwise? Courtois (1988, 136) refers to these ambivalences as "polarities."

Body memories during sex with one's partner in later life frequently produce flashbacks of the incest. The survivor's hypersensitive and conflicted sexuality requires a very secure and caring partner in order for an intimate relationship to survive. Caring partners of incest victims are often involved in their partner's therapy.

Orgasmic disorders are also common to both male and female survivors (Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport 1993, 14). The authors report that in their experience, "survivors will often oscillate between abstinence and promiscuity" (15).

Having been exposed to a situation rampant with mixed messages, double binds, and guilt-inducing conflicts, is it any wonder that we lack integration? We say and feel one way one minute and the next are "coming from a different place." Others are uncomfortable with our inconsistency. Sometimes we don't make sense, even to ourselves.

One young girl whose father was in prison for molesting her chose as her goal in individual therapy to have a better relationship with

her stepfather. At the same time she was in trouble for making obscene remarks at her church youth group.

Stressful ambivalence is seen in many victims when they reach adulthood and either withdraw sexually, plunge into promiscuity or flip back and forth from one pattern to the other. On her wedding night the movie starlet Sandra Dee, who had been molested by her stepfather for years, sat fearfully on the sofa in her coat for twelve hours, until her new husband went to bed (*People Weekly*, March 18, 1991).

A young incest victim accompanied her mother on a visit to the prison where her father was incarcerated. (She was not the “victim of record,” so she was allowed in.) He was in treatment and I had been invited to meet his family. We sat around a table in a small closet-like space, and as I looked on, his daughter’s behavior vacillated markedly between anger, sarcasm and flirtatiousness. When it came time to take a picture in the courtyard, she obliviously inserted herself between her parents.

As discussed in the section on the Trauma Bond, victims’ feelings are confused, conflicted and ambivalent toward the abuser, and this pattern of emotions often extends to other would-be-intimates in life.

Unfortunately, incest is a topic that tends to cause anxiety in many. My daughter once said that a friend had told her about being “incested,” and she didn’t know what to say to her when she saw her after that.

While growing up I did feel different from most of my classmates. I was carrying a deep dark secret, one that had the potential of blowing up my world and the world of my family. That feeling grew until being different took on that aura of being worse than others and yet special at the same time. The feelings served to distance me from others, and as an adult one of my challenges has been to let go of this and other distancing mechanisms.

I have been unable to overcome my discomfort around men, but I do engage in safe discussion and other group situations, and experiment with intimacy as I can. I remind myself time and again

that I am no better and no worse than others. However, it feels safer to either look down upon or look up to others, rather than claim my space on the level playing field alongside the other members of the human family. (I recognize that it's not men I fear but my response to them.)

ACTING OUT

It is not uncommon for abuse victims to “act out” their ambivalences instead of experiencing their conflicts. In retrospect we can often make some sense of our acting out behaviors after the fact. Survivors reading this book may want to stop and reflect on any of their behaviors that might be considered acting out.

An example from my own adolescence: I was “seduced” by my father, who warned me that incest was a capital offense in our state, and that I must never, ever, tell anyone. He made me promise. My subsequent acting out consisted of threatening to tell our mother when I discovered my little sister “playing doctor” with the little boy next door. In fact, I blackmailed her, threatening to tell unless she outlined the picture of a dragon on her pillow every night before going to sleep. Moreover, I told her that unless she did so she would die young. She took her only escape: she told our mother, who never confronted me. My sister was six years my junior, and did die young. She was still a child and we still lived in the same duplex next to the city dump when she contracted both Rocky Mountain spotted fever and polio, illnesses that miraculously failed to claim her at the time. I was in my early sixties and working on this book before I made the connection between wanting to tell on my father and blackmailing my sister.

At the suggestion of my husband's therapist while we were in college, I scheduled a counseling appointment. There were papers to fill out, and I recall writing that my father was dead. During the subsequent session, when I mentioned my father it was not as a deceased person, and the counselor called me on it. I had written down what a part of me wished was true.

Another example: When I was twelve a neighbor boy knocked on our front door. He had dressed with care for the occasion. I opened the door and he politely asked if I would like to go to the movies

with him. Without hesitation I yelled “NO!” and slammed the door in his face. I regret that he had to bear the brunt of my abuse-related anxiety and to hear the misplaced “NO!” to my father’s molestation directed at such an inappropriate target. Hopefully he was not traumatized by becoming a secondary victim of the incest!

DO YOU REMEMBER?

I am thankful that I can remember most of my abuse (I think). While the memories are painful, not being able to remember any specifics might be even more unsettling. The counselor in college who had me describe the incest in detail during my single visit assured me there was a reason for asking. I did not question her, but believe now that verbally describing the abuse at that time helped strengthen the memories so that I have more access to them now than I otherwise would have. The Olympic runner who carries the flame and passes it on endures less stress than one runner who attempts to carry it the entire way. Depositing memories in a journal can function in the same manner. Still, at times I puzzle over my dreams of things hidden within walls.

Hindman stated that a peculiarity of recall is that a single episode of abuse can be remembered in greater detail than a series of molestations. This is because the series of events replaces, overlaps or fuses into one, while the single episode can remain independent of any subsequent interfering memory images (Mykel, 1994).). Hindman also maintained that a victim who has a clear memory of the abuse is less traumatized than a victim with a befogged, lost, or reconstructed memory. Little and Hamby (2001) have extended this finding to clinicians with vague or no memories of their child sexual abuse (CSA), concluding that these clinicians experience more discomfort treating victims of CSA than do clinicians with a clear memory of their own abuse.

I’ll re-state that: therapists who only suspect or have vague memories of their own sexual abuse have more trouble treating victims of sexual abuse than therapists who have a clear memory of their own abuse. Being able to remember one’s own history of sexual abuse would seem to be psychologically beneficial. However, survivors sometimes go to great lengths to deny their memories.

As reported by Bass and Davis (1994, 97), “One woman convinced herself it was all a dream. Another dismissed her memories by saying, ‘Oh, it’s just a past life.’”

The debate about false memories surfaced while our treatment program was in full swing. It did not impact us, however, because no one in our program was maintaining that he had been falsely accused.

Williams (1995) cites an earlier study of hers (1994), in which 129 women with documented histories of hospital emergency room admission for child sexual abuse were interviewed 17 years after the abuse. Of these, 38% did not appear to recall their victimization or their visit to the hospital.

BODY MEMORIES

A number of clinicians and survivors agree that the body remembers what the mind forgets. Sometimes these are referred to as skin memories. Maddock and Larson (1995, 122-23) observe that

sexual abuse experiences, particularly at the hands of close relatives, almost invariably disrupt the developmental sequences that characterize normal psychosexual maturation. Once these experiences occur, they are reclaimed as ‘body memories,’ even if (in some cases) details of the abuse are unavailable to the victim’s conscious memory.

Startle responses or “flashbacks” are not uncommon to survivors. *I recall only one flashback, but it was so vivid that I jumped in alarm. I was attending to some task when my youngest daughter came up behind me and put her hands into my armpits. Immediately I flashed on the memory of my father fondling my breasts from behind me while I was engaged in a serious telephone conversation. That may be the only time that I recall feeling angry at him. Now I understand that it was one of many boundary violations.*

Some body memories do not easily get erased and remain beyond cognitive intervention. Davies and Frawley describe the formation and eventual translation of body memories. They describe “the profound sense of unreality, an unreality that defies verbal expres-

sion,” and speak of “the forging of historical and interpersonal intelligibility out of overwhelming chaos and disorder.” Body memories, then, are manifestations of experience that have been

mentally preserved in a different way and at a point in time when appropriate words failed. ... Ultimately words must be found to describe and make sense of these moments. ... How can we expect the patient to believe in something about which she has never been able to speak? (1994, 210-12)

DISSOCIATION

There is research that indicates that severe, repeated sexual abuse in childhood may lead to damage to a brain structure that helps to orchestrate memory. “This cerebral injury may predispose people to experience an altered state of consciousness known as dissociation” (Bower 1995). Gil describes dissociation as a “common occurrence among adult survivors” (1988, 149).

Briere writes that

the presence of depersonalization, derealization, compartmentalization and so on may produce splits or shifting boundaries in the child’s sense of self. ... In the words of one angry (but articulate) adolescent survivor: “Don’t you understand? There’s nobody inside here to hear what you say. I’m just empty. I just do what happens.” (1992, 46)

Reporting on another survivor, Gil (1988, 149) wrote,

She had simply split off from an unbearable reality. In so doing, she perfected a process which was later a reflex reaction which she experienced as out of her control. The treatment helped her to control her dissociative process, and a number of feelings were then experienced and expressed.

Briere (1996) defined dissociation in a way that would include most abuse survivors. Even with this liberal definition he and Runtz found that the presence or absence of dissociation by his definition made a valid diagnostic discriminator between sexually abused and non-abused college women (Briere and Runtz 1988).

The authors considered “reduced responsiveness” a form of dissociation (ibid., 11) and reviewed a constellation of dissociative symptoms that seem familiar to me, including “spacing out,” derealization (experiencing things as unreal), and depersonalizing (experiencing oneself as different from our usual self). Other symptoms were out-of-body experiences and lost time.

Briere describes spacing-out behavior and disengagement as withdrawal into a state of affective neutrality, where

thoughts and awareness of external events are, in a sense, placed on hold. Most periods of disengagement are relatively brief, ranging from seconds to several minutes, and the depth of dissociation is usually quite shallow. (1992, 37-38)

A METAPHOR FOR FORGETTING

The difference between the kinds of forgetting can get a little fuzzy at times, especially when the literature refers to horizontal versus vertical splits. A metaphor that has helped me is to imagine that a woman is a house, and when she wants to suppress something she sets it in the pantry and cuts off the light. When she wants to retrieve it she can return to the pantry and find it after looking a little while. When a memory is repressed it slinks into the basement on its own and pulls the trap door shut behind it. It may signal its presence via steam escaping through the vents, appearing in dreams or through other manifestations from its hidden place in the basement. Then there are the memories and threatening perceptions and events that secrete themselves within the walls of the house. The insides of the walls are not connected to each other, and memories contained in one wall can take on a life of their own, unbeknownst to the owner of the house and the other walls. That’s dissociation.

Sylvia Fraser, who possessed a marked ability to dissociate, describes her “other self” as follows:

Though we had split one personality between us, I was the majority shareholder. ... She began as my creature, forced to do what I refused to do, yet because I blotted out her existence, she passed out of my control as completely as a figure in a dream. (1987, 24)

Of her own experience, Fraser writes:

For more than forty years the memories of my other self lay deeply buried in jagged pieces inside me—smashed hieroglyphic tablets from another time and another place. (Ibid., 218)

I do not recall how I chanced upon the poem “Ego,” which was first published in the July 9, 1949 *New Yorker*, page 46. I can assure you that I was not reading the *New Yorker* in those days, but somehow I came across it and was awed. I knew what the author Dilys Laing was talking about. I am including it as one more example of the kind of unseen damage possible.

Ego

Vague, submarine, my giant twin
swims under me, a girl of shade
who mimics me. She's caught within
a chickenwire of light that's laid
by netted waves on floor of sand.
I dare not look. I squeeze my lids
against that apparition and
her nightmare of surrounding squids,
her company of nounless fright.
She is the unknown thing I am
and do not wish to see. In flight
I swim the way my comrades swam
and hide among them. Let me keep
their safety's circle for a charm
against that sister in the deep
who, huge and mocking, plans me harm.

Dissociation is elsewhere described by Reviere as involving

coexisting constellations of cognitive elements that are kept more or less separate by interruptions in a sense of conscious continuity. Further, dissociation in this sense can be thought of as involving that which is not accessible to voluntary conscious awareness (1996, 19). . . . Particularly for the child whose developing and fragile schemas may be shattered by traumatic information, dissociation may provide an adaptive route to avoidance of decompensation or psychosis. (40)

Fraser describes the end of her 15-year marriage to a very loving, accepting man—whom she described as having given her unconditional love—due to what appears to have been a compulsion precipitated by the dissociated part of herself:

She wanted to reunite with daddy. ... The man she chose was, like most kings, married. ... A triangle allowed her to hate his queen as a projection of the jealous fury she felt for the mother-rival who failed to protect her. (1987, 153)

In compartmentalization an individual can separate out, yet keep available, different feelings, behaviors and facts. An example would be the child molester who argued that molesting wasn't harmful; he was molested and it didn't hurt him!

Those with troublesome dissociation problems, including multiplicity, may want to look into *Coping with Trauma-Related Dissociation* (2011) by Boon, Steele, and Van der Hart.

SEARCH FOR MEANING

The ability to find meaning in one's victimization facilitates effective coping, as Silver, Boon, and Stones established. In their 1983 study, women who were able to make some sense out of their experience reported significantly less psychological distress, better social adjustment, higher levels of self-esteem, and greater resolution of the experience than those women who were not able to find any meaning. Elsewhere this has been referred to as a need for belief in a just world (Lamb 1986).

How did those women who were able to make sense of the incest do so? For many, the search seemed to take the form of a need to understand the dynamics that allowed the incest to occur. Therefore, in finding meaning, most respondents tried to make the response understandable, examining the character, motives or behavior of their fathers, or by considering the situation in their homes at the time. (Silver, Boon, and Stones 1983, 90)

LOSSES

In addition to the specific effects of child sexual abuse, there are a multitude of losses which, being non-physical, are often overlooked by both the victim and perpetrator.

In discussing loss, Courtois (1988, 126) reminds us that “victimization of any sort involves loss—of control, of life assumptions, of a sense of safety in the world, and very often of the self as it was before the victimization.” Self-esteem is lost, and body integrity. The most obvious loss is the loss of innocence. (Some molesters admit to being excited by the innocence of their victims.) The world is no longer a “blooming buzzing confusion” to the child, but dirty, dark and secretive. Childhood’s special light has been extinguished forever.

“The loss of self-esteem, sense of personal worth, and body integrity are often less outwardly dramatic than the loss of home and property. And yet, it is so much more significant and profound” (Courtois 1988, 126). [And so much easier for the perpetrator to deny.]

“The most devastating effect ... is the suppression of joy in life that depends on having been cared for, and on being able to care for another human being” (Shengold 1989, 79).

Another loss is a chunk of her life as reflected in memories. “She will never not have been abused—the past will continue to exist as memories, and it will always be a part of her life” (Briere 1996, 84).

A loss that was brought home to me concretely is the loss of the ability to touch comfortably. While in graduate school I gave a client a brief backrub in an approved manner and subsequently broke out with a rash on both hands. My supervisor asked me to rub her back in the same way and then told me my touch had sexual undertones, of which I had not been aware. The rash receded, and I relinquished thereafter any attempt at therapeutic touch. A related lingering loss is the ability to casually, affectionately, and comfort-

ably touch one's older children. What kind of message do the children get when their mother's touch is anxiety-ridden and uncomfortable?

A 1994 study of the effects of incest on a population of high-functioning professional women revealed that survivors of sexual abuse reported significantly more interpersonal difficulties than their nonabused peers (Elliott 1994, 84).

After the incest, later love relationships are filtered through the early abusive template. The body remembers what we may choose to forget. The survivor's husband will lose, her children will lose, and *their* children. And she will have lost a piece of herself. The damage incurred becomes a given of her personality, in many cases without causal attribution.

Grieving these losses and letting them go is a significant step toward healing. It is difficult, but possible, to scale the mountain of losses. Fraser is one such person who succeeded:

Mine was a story of early loss—of innocence, of childhood, of love, of magic, of illusion. It was a hazardous life, which began in guilt and self-hate, requiring me to learn self-forgiveness. (1987, 252)

Courtois (1988, 126) reports that

Survivors in my research told me that they felt the incest irreparably changed them and that they did not develop *as they might have been*. I was struck by the remarkable consistency with which 50 women described this loss to me. Survivors described themselves as feeling as though they have holes in themselves and in their development, as though they don't know where other people leave off and where they begin.

If the child “keeps the secret,” she comes to feel alone and different from all others, having no way of putting the incest into perspective. As far as she knows, no one else in the world ever experienced what happened to her. Living a lie is a painful way to spend a childhood. The offender sees none of the effects, nor does he want to. His quirky mind twists the kaleidoscope of reality until he can brag, as more than one did in our program, that he was able to educate

his daughter about sex in a more gentle manner than she might have experienced otherwise.

In her sample of 40 adult incest survivors, Herman found that the most common complaint was a feeling of being set apart from other people. "Many of the women described themselves as 'different' or stated that they knew that they could never be 'normal,' even though they might appear so to others" (Herman 2000, 94).

The woman who is molested by a male figure, especially a close relative, will be less comfortable around men. (And that's half the human race.) A subtle or not so subtle fear response to males often becomes a given of her life. The man who is molested by another male may come to question his manhood, wondering "Why me? Did he sense something in me of which I am not aware?"

It is my experience that when a father molests his child, the child loses a father. One of the offenders said, "I was a good father except for the molestation." *From my point of view, this is impossible.*

Herman has written, "From the moment that the father initiates the child into activities which serve the father's sexual needs, and which must be hidden from others, the bond between parent and child is corrupted" (2000, 70).

Although the victim's relationship with the non-offending mother may be poor prior to the incest, unless the victim tells her mother the secret and is believed, a deepening rift of deceit forms between them. An unfortunate sidebar is that many victims come to believe that their mother aided and abetted the abuse via her silence, even though the mother may have been totally ignorant that her child was being sexually victimized. The child can be left an emotional orphan.

Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport (1993, 61) observe that

The victim of father-daughter incest becomes the other woman in a very dysfunctional triangle. She has bested Mother in some way by having sex with Father, and

yet the victory has devastating consequences. By winning she has lost any chance of a normal mother-daughter relationship.

I can resonate to the description of the victim as being “the other woman,” since that was the role I cast myself into when feeling guilt. But I question that there was ever any chance of a normal mother-daughter relationship between my mother and me.

DAMN THE DAMAGE

It affects me now 10 years later. ... It's just like a scar you get on your body. But only it's on the inside (it's there forever).

—Silver, Boon, and Stones, 1983

As a moth is drawn to a flame, the child who is touched by incest doesn't know until too late—sometimes years later—how destructive the flame was. She won't ever be free of her history of incest. She will never be able to quite reach the full potential she was born with. Ney and Peters wrote of their survivor group members, “The discrepancy between what they are and what they could have been produces an enormous incipient rage” (1995, 88).

It comes to me now that we were all gobbled up and didn't even realize there was a shark in the water.

Fraser reflects:

All of us are born into the second act of a tragedy-in-progress, then spend the rest of our lives trying to figure out what went wrong in the first act. I know that now. (1987, 241)

Much of what is eventually labeled as adolescent or adult psychopathology can be traced to the natural reactions of a healthy child to a “profoundly unnatural and unhealthy parental environment” (Summit 1983, 184).

Briere sees four major psychological effects of the abuse, which often overlap in the same survivor. They are posttraumatic stress, cognitive effects, emotional effects and interpersonal effects (1989, 5-34).

After reviewing ten years of research with survivors of child sexual abuse, Putnam (2003, 273) found that regardless of their psychiatric diagnosis, individuals had “significant problems with affect regulation, impulse control, somatization, sense of self, cognitive distortions, and problems with socialization.”

Courtois (1988) lists chronic anxiety and depression with or without impulsive and hostile characteristics, low self-esteem, substance abuse, mistrust of others, social withdrawal, and stress responses as possible limiting effects which affect functioning both on the job and in the community.

Hindman (1989, 77-94) researched which aspects of sexual abuse produce the most severe effects in survivors. Criteria for the most damaged included: four or more marriages or 60 or more partners after the age of 16; involvement in domestic violence; inpatient treatment for substance abuse; two or more suicide attempts, etc. Hindman then explored what kinds of abuse experiences correlate with each of three levels of increasing traumatization.

From her work I learned that I experienced only five of the nine factors of sexual abuse most likely to cause severe damage. The factors were surprising to me:

I was stimulated sexually—taught to have orgasms but not “hurt.”

The perpetrator had positive attributes in my mind.

I couldn’t see myself as the innocent victim.

I didn’t report the offense.

A trauma bond was developed with the perpetrator.

I was exposed to a continuing relationship with the perpetrator.

I did not experience the four remaining factors associated with the most severe damage:

The victims reported but never got any help.

The offense occurred at a younger age.

There were “terrorize-building” activities (having to wait in anticipation, for example).

The victim coped in self-destructive ways.

Other researchers have found that especially damaging factors include the number of different incidents/perpetrators; that the perpetrator was a father or stepfather; there was penetration, and the sexual abuse was accompanied by force (Browne and Finkelhor 1986). In her study, Peters (1988, 110) found that a higher number of contact abuse incidents, the duration of the abuse, and being older when first abused were associated with greater difficulties in adulthood.

Davies and Frawley (1994, 119) refer to the “mind rape that exists at the heart of all child abuse.”

Briere (1996, 84) cautions that

one is never cured of an abuse history; one can only process, desensitize, and integrate those experiences, slowly change one's relationship to the memories, and live more fully in the present. ... The past will continue to exist as memories, and it will always be a part of her life. ... The past need not, however, continue to be an acute and overwhelming source of adult symptoms and discontent.

Draucker and Martsolf (2006, 37) found that in therapy, exploring the abuse experience often provokes a period of grief and mourning as survivors come to terms with the reality of the abuse and the losses and missed opportunities associated with it.

Courtois (1988, 42) states that “Children from abusive homes often complain of not feeling whole and of having holes in their sense of themselves. Thus, they very adequately convey the consequences of having grown up in an environment which fosters fragmentation rather than intactness.”

Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport (1993, 67) observe that the quest to change and grow through relationships remains alive to some degree. “What survivors are searching for is a desire to be healed and reparented. They seek to have the gaps and deficiencies from the family-of-origin experiences filled in.”

TRAUMA

Trauma has been variously defined. To Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 117), it is “the abrupt disintegration of one’s own inner world,” more specifically, “the shattering of very basic assumptions that victims have held about themselves and their world” (ibid., 3). To Maddock and Larson (1995, 117) trauma is “an emotionally intense experience that occurs without a suitable framework of meaning within which it can be placed for understanding and mastery.”

McCann and Pearlman (1990, 10) have written that

an experience is traumatic if it (1) is sudden, unexpected, or non-normative, (2) exceeds the individual’s perceived ability to meet its demands and, (3) disrupts the individual’s frame of reference and other central psychological needs and related schemas.

There is greater trauma from experiences involving fathers or father-figures compared to all other types of perpetrators (Browne and Finkelhor 1986, 73).

By definition, trauma overwhelms. Part of what is overwhelmed in a sexually traumatized child is the ability to cognitively contain and process the enormity of the relational betrayal and physical impingement with which she is faced. (Davies and Frawley 1994, 28)

Van der Kolk (1987, 31) refers to traumatized persons having a “disorder of hope”:

The essence of psychological trauma is the loss of faith that there is order and continuity in life. Trauma occurs when one loses the sense of having a safe place to retreat to within or outside oneself to deal with frightening emotions or experiences. This results in a state of helplessness, a feeling that one’s actions have no bearing on the outcomes of one’s life.

If an event is truly traumatic it “has the potential of disrupting subsequent development and contributing to adjustment problems that occur much later” (Meiselman 1978, 54).

Trauma is an undesirable life event that “often shatters people’s views that they live in an orderly, understandable and meaningful world” (Silver, Boon, and Stones 1983, 81).

Ulman and Brothers (1988, 68) speak of “the subjective disorganization resulting from a shattering and faulty restoration of central organizing fantasies. The ‘search for meaning’ may be understood, in part, as an attempt by incest survivors to ward off terrifying experiences of fragmentation and disintegration.”

Victims of sexual abuse are likely to experience a shattering of fundamental assumptions “since the source of their pain or trauma lies within the system from which they derive greatest security and meaning” (Maddock and Larson 1995, 121).

Briere and Runtz suggest that the global notion of “post sexual abuse trauma” describes the long-term effects:

This latter construct refers to those experiences and behaviors that were initially adaptive responses, accurate perceptions, or conditioned reactions to abuse during childhood, but that elaborated and generalized over time to become ‘symptoms’ and/or contextually inappropriate components of the victim’s adult personality. (1988, 92-93)

DIAGNOSES?

The insight I had during one therapy session that “It’s not men I’m afraid of, it’s my response to them,” was about betrayal of my own body. It would be much easier if effects of the abuse could be pigeonholed so handily. Just one problem in isolation? I would have settled for that any day. I could have put all my energies into working through my fear of me with men. So many other fears and conflicts are activated following incest, however, that the problem cannot be isolated and dealt with so easily. The abuse has a buckshot effect. The abuser’s target may be isolated in his crosshairs, but the repercussions are widely broadcast.

While some victims of sexual assault do not appear to experience long-term effects, all too often the hurt child becomes the hurt adult (Briere 1996, 33). The damage is greater the closer the child is to the perpetrator, and the greater the trust she has in him.

The resulting damage from incest therefore extends over several possible psychiatric diagnoses. An early diagnostic category was (and still is), *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, which focuses on the effects of the trauma the child experienced at the hands of the person she trusted. *Borderline Personality Disorder* has been connected to invalidating childhood experiences, the most extreme form being childhood sexual abuse. According to Linehan (1993, 53), "It may be that sexual abuse, in contrast to other types of abuse, is uniquely associated with BPD." For those who present with marked dissociating problems, the diagnosis would usually be *Dissociative Identity Disorder*, which includes the earlier diagnosis of Multiple Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association 2000).

True, one approach to understanding incest's damage is to give the survivor a diagnosis. Whether her abuse history is known or not, what do her symptoms most closely resemble? As Finkelhor and his associates (1985) have observed, there's not one *single* diagnosis that fits all survivors. Although there is heuristic value in spotlighting symptoms to enable treatment, the symptoms can be better understood as stemming from the effects of traumagenic powerlessness; stigmatization (the feelings of being damaged goods); betrayal, and sexualization (Finkelhor and Browne 1986).

Rather than get lost in the gamut of possible diagnoses, which include personality disorders, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, sexual disorders, and memory disorders in addition to PTSD, Briere has suggested that instead of a pathology-focused stance, survivors do better with an abuse-focused therapy which suggests that "the client is not mentally ill or suffering from a defect, but rather is an individual whose life has been shaped, in part, by ongoing adaptation to a toxic environment" (1992, 82).

Briere summarizes the therapeutic approach as focusing on the defensive and adaptive components: "From this perspective, severe sexual and/or physical abuse is seen as a stressor that would induce significant psychological disturbance in almost anyone, such that later 'abnormal' behavior is reinterpreted as situationally appropriate coping responses and/or normal reactions to an overwhelmingly aversive event" (ibid., 130).

A PERSONAL NOTE

Embedded in my memory are my father's words, "boys only want one thing," and "don't ever get in the habit of sex." I rarely think of his words consciously, or of how much shame permeated me following the incest. As though pulled by invisible strings, however, and inhabited by "skin memories," I find myself still an alien. At 79 I have accepted that I always will be, although I have made many steady gains, and have come to value myself.

Survivors of child sexual abuse know there's a big difference between mind and body, between the soul and the corporeal, and between self and other. What our body says and what our mind, conscience, and ego say may differ radically. Why do many survivors experience more trauma than I did? I attribute most of it to the early nurturance of my grandmother on the farm. (She enjoyed being with me!) I also credit my journaling for providing a steadfast source of grounding and support, although I was too afraid to convey the "secret" to my journal for fear of discovery. I wish I had dared to do so! Could I have ended the abuse earlier? As it was, my intelligence was cajoled along with my genitals, so that I grew lopsided. There were holes left in my personhood.

For many years I denied to myself the pivotal role incest played in my life. Thoughts around my own abuse were still murky when I suddenly found myself in charge of a prison sex offender treatment program. We all learned a lot about sex offenders, incest offenders, why men molest, thinking errors, the effects of sexual abuse, and relapse prevention, yet until the act of writing this book rubbed my nose in it, I failed to internalize the information and take a really close look at the extent and manner in which the incest shaped me. Its major debilitating effects became visible everywhere once I began to seek them out instead of running from them. Coming to understand the common effects of sexual abuse was freeing for me. It freed me to be able to make sense of the confusion I have experienced about myself and others.

I wish that I could present myself as "cured" but in all honesty I cannot. I see myself as a three-legged table that originally had four legs. It stands alone adequately until too much pressure is put

on one side. Then it surely needs some extra support, such as suggested in Chapters 21 and 22. And then too there are those holes in my personhood. At 79 I remain the three-legged table and a piece of Swiss cheese.

MAKING SENSE OF THE DAMAGE

Finkelhor and Browne (1986, 185) noted that the extensive list of behavioral and emotional problems related to a history of sexual abuse in the clinical literature is “conceptually shallow and does not encourage deeper understanding of the phenomenon.” The authors presented four “traumagenic dynamics” which can be used as an organizing framework for the effects of child sexual abuse. This conceptualization seemed like a useful way to educate the men in our program about the effects.

We constructed a mnemonic device for our treatment program, much as we had for “why men molest,” above. In the case of the damaging effects, we came up with “Pretty Damn Bad Situation” for the four traumagenic dynamics:

P – Powerlessness

D – Stigmatization, which we called Damaged Goods (later on, Malignant Magnetism)

B – Betrayal

S – Damage to victim’s Sexuality

POWERLESSNESS

Knowing no other way, the incest survivor protects herself through the building of walls that substitute for the power she cannot exercise.

—E. Sue Blume, 1990

Powerlessness, one of Finkelhor's damaging effects from incest, is due to the victim's experience of being trapped by the perpetrator's manipulations, her body arousal, and the no-win situation. The child has been cast into a script that she may follow for the rest of her life. It seems the victim of incest becomes acclimated to looking up at the world from a childlike position.

How does this happen? In the majority of instances, the child victim is powerless to resist an adult family member's sexual abuse. She has been purposefully groomed to value a close relationship with the molester only to find herself at the mercy of this older, more experienced, sneakier, cunningly manipulative and desire-driven individual who is determined to violate her boundaries, toy with her personhood, and blatantly put his needs foremost. Clinical symptoms associated with the experience of being powerless include nightmares, phobias, depression, eating disorders, and dissociation, to name a few. The individual also is vulnerable to subsequent victimization.

One effect of being powerless is to assume the victim role in life.

In adulthood, the abuse survivor may continue to feel helpless and powerless, the powerlessness alternating at times with feelings of being powerful but malignant.
(Courtois 1988, 105)

I fully experienced my powerlessness to halt the abuse, which I theoretically could have easily done. If anything overruled my will it was my own body and its hunger for touch. I struggled with myself

and lost. (I also wanted to keep peace in the family, as Mother would say.)

As discussed earlier, the child is not only at the mercy of the manipulations of her abuser, but also powerless to control her physical response. This sense of helplessness often produces a life of passivity, non-assertiveness, failure to protect one's own child from molestation, lowered self-efficacy, loss of self-respect, and perception of oneself as a victim. It is difficult for many survivors to go on to become competent, self-actualized and successful women, trusting their own judgment, perceptions and perspectives. But what is it exactly that has such a profound effect on the victim's self-efficacy? Peters suggests it is her feelings of helplessness that erode the victim's self-esteem and sense of mastery. "It is these enduring changes in a woman's experience of herself and her capabilities that create a greater vulnerability to psychological problems later in life" (1988, 115).

Apparently the same can also be true for males. While out walking in a large city park one day Alex, an incest survivor in his twenties of my acquaintance, noticed a man following him. Nonverbal signals suggested the man was "cruising," and Alex found himself frightened. Rather than turning and telling the man he wasn't interested, he approached a nearby policeman for protection. In recalling the incident, Alex became furious, and it was unclear whether he most resented his own weakness or his stepfather, who had molested him several times a week during one summer when he was a teenager, or his mother, who he believed knowingly permitted the abuse. He had never told anyone. As an adult he continued to feel powerless to protect himself.

It was while reflecting on Finkelhor's Powerlessness effect that I began to realize that my father must have been molested by my grandfather, the man who much later molested me. My mother told me he had dropped out of his first semester in college in order to escape the sexual advances of an older man. He saw withdrawal from college as the only way to protect himself. My father told me my grandfather had molested relatives, but he never told me of his own sexual abuse by either man. I think Daddy was afraid the revelation would cast doubt on his manhood, and was too ashamed to

tell me. His story of setting strict limits with a homosexual while drunk as related in the following letter must have been just that, a story.

He wrote:

On the day that I left, I was staggering across N.E. 3rd Street, at the Post Office. A man about my age took my arm and walked across with me. "Where are you heading for?" he asked. "To my car," I answered. "I thought you might have a car somewhere nearby," he said, "and I am afraid that I had better drive it for you." "Thank you very much," I said, "but I am leaving for another city." "Well," he said, "I wasn't counting on leaving [this town] yet, but I will drive you there." I said, "Your kindness will be much appreciated, on my conditions." "Whatever you say," said he and I said, "I will pay our expenses to Richland and *I will let you have it one time* [my italics]. But I am going to tell you goodbye when we get there, and you will have to go on North alone." You see, it would be heinous if I were to take a person like that to a decent person's house, and Carole is no better than he.

Note to my father: *How could you so strongly criticize me for befriending some homosexuals without even once apparently realizing that it was my fear—engendered by you—that initially led me away from men? "They aren't our kind of people," you said. Just what the heck is "our kind of people?"*

While re-typing these pages I realized that you could not have set limits with the man who drove you north as you describe. You were pretending to me that you had been firm with him, to make yourself look strong. You were a victim too (of your father and perhaps others), and I never recall your being interpersonally assertive or having good boundaries. I don't believe you were capable of setting such firm limits. ("You can have it one time.") You see, I'm a victim too, and I know the limits of my own interpersonal skills.

Another possible effect of powerlessness, especially for men as mentioned earlier, is for the victim to become an abuser of less powerful individuals.

BOUNDARIES

According to Blume (1990, 15):

The child must learn boundaries—where she ends, both psychologically and physically, and where the other person begins. She must learn that she is, and is entitled to be, a separate self, distinct in identity, needs, desires, feelings.

Individuals with weak boundaries are powerless to protect themselves. If you don't know that boundaries exist, how can you protect your own or avoid violating others'? The incest survivor's boundaries have been violated by the perpetrator and probably by the non-offending parent as well. Becoming sensitive to personal boundaries is a major step toward socialization and positive parenting. Briere (1996) defines boundaries as an individual's awareness of the demarcation between self and other.

Shengold is referring to boundaries when he writes that “murdering someone's soul means depriving the victim of the ability to feel joy and love as a separate person” (1989, 2). He goes on to quote a character in Orwell's *1984*: “*You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves*” (260).

I feel that a portion of my fear/hesitancy about men relates to my poor boundaries. When I have (rarely) been in a relationship with a man, I have lost myself. I'm no longer able to voice or even be aware of my own needs. That's why I am satisfied with a single life. I can take better care of myself!

Elliott (1994, 65) reports that “people said to have poor or weak boundaries have difficulty knowing where their identities, needs and perspectives end and others' begin, such that they either allow others to intrude on them, or they inappropriately transgress on others.” Children in school are currently taught about the physical boundaries of acceptable touch—the child who is aware of her boundaries is less vulnerable to having them violated. What a precious rarity are parents who respect their child's boundaries—feelings, opinions, thoughts, and privacy.

The construction of boundaries is fostered by caregivers in childhood “who are able to relate to the child as an independent agent, with needs and experiences different from those of the parent. ... The data suggest that the more severe and/or chronic the violation of boundaries the greater difficulties in adult relationships” (Elliott 1994, 84).

THE DOUBLE BIND

My father made me promise never to tell anyone. Ever.

Herman (2000, 98) remarks that, as guardians of the incest secret, survivors have been warned time and again that they could bring disaster upon their families by revealing what they know. Ironically, the victim of incest has been handed the power to destroy the family, yet the double bind she is in renders her powerless to act.

De Young (1982, 51) cites one victim who said:

O.K., here I am, 12 years old and my dad’s screwing me practically every night. If I tell someone he goes to jail, my brothers and sister won’t speak to me, and my mom’ll have a heart attack or something. But if I let him keep screwing me I’ll go nuts. So what do I do? Tell my folks I need a weekend alone at the Holiday Inn to think things over; or tell them I’m going to the corner bar to have a few drinks and discuss it with my pals? No, I pack up my clothes, rob my piggy bank, stick out my thumb and split. And I keep on splitting every time the cops catch me and bring me home.

Butler acknowledges the grim struggle of “young people trying to survive on the streets of our cities whose greatest fear is of being caught and returned to the homes from which they had fled” (1985, 28-29).

It may very well be that a large number of teenage suicides are by youths who find themselves in a similar no-win situation, prevented from even leaving a suicide note, keeping the secret until the end and beyond. “There is no way out, no place to run” (Summit, 1983, 184).

Offenders are provided with all this information during treatment.

While it is true that she is not responsible for the situation, the victim does have the power to maintain the family—such as it is—or to blow the whistle, send Daddy (or someone else in the family) to prison, and almost certainly lose the family's home, source of income, and reputation in the community while destroying the tenuous pretense of family life. When incest is suspected, social workers usually urge victims to "tell," so the family member can "get some help." When victim advocates urge victims to report and "get him the help he needs," they are doing their job but are misleading the victim. Once it becomes apparent that there's little or no "help" available in most prisons, the victim feels betrayed not only by the perpetrator but by the "child protectors."

I have a concern for the new crop of victims who must feel the extra burden of having "told," only to experience the devastating fallout. In many cases, the world *did* fall apart.

According to Gaddini (1983, 357), "Years after the incest, survivors who did not report often wished they had, and those who did report wished they had not."

In the classic role reversal of child abuse, the child is given the power to destroy the family and the responsibility to keep it together. The child, not the parent, must mobilize the altruism and self-control to insure the survival of the others. . . . There is an inevitable splitting of conventional moral values. Maintaining a lie to keep the secret is the ultimate virtue, while telling the truth would be the greatest sin. (Summit 1983, 185)

The victim cannot seek support in dealing with her decision to report or not, and is actually as trapped as she feels, especially with the current reporting laws, which vary from state to state, but all of which have mandatory reporting requirements.

Professionals required to report in Arkansas (Ann. Code § 12-18-402), for instance, include:

coroners; dentists and dental hygienists; domestic abuse advocates and domestic violence shelter employees or volunteers; employees of the Department of Human Services; employees working under contract for the Division of Youth Services of the Department

of Human Services; foster parents; judges, law enforcement officials, peace officers, and prosecuting attorneys; licensed nurses, physicians, mental health professionals or paraprofessionals, surgeons, resident interns, osteopaths, and medical personnel who may be engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons; public or private school counselors; school officials, including without limitation institutions of higher education, and teachers; social workers and juvenile intake or probation officers; court-appointed special advocate program staff members or volunteers; attorneys ad litem; clergy members, which include ministers, priests, rabbis, accredited Christian Science practitioners, or other similar functionary of a religious organization; employees of a child advocacy center or a child safety center; sexual abuse advocates or volunteers who work with victims of sexual abuse as employees of a community-based victim service or mental health agency such as Safe Places, United Family Services, or Centers for Youth and Families; rape crisis advocates or volunteers; child abuse advocates or volunteers who work with child victims or abuse or maltreatment as employees of a community-based victim service or a mental health agency; victim/witness coordinators; victim assistance professionals or volunteers; employees of the Crimes Against Children Division of the Department of Arkansas State Police; employees or volunteers at reproductive health-care facilities. (Child Welfare Information Gateway, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health & Human Services. December 2005.) [Available by state online at https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/mandate.cfm]

POWERLESSNESS IN THE FACE OF THE ACCOMMODATION SYNDROME

It took years for the widespread existence of incest to become admitted and acknowledged by the culture and the legal system. After all, some of the accused were so respected in the community that everyone knew “they wouldn’t do such a thing.” Hadn’t Freud decided that reported cases were just daughters’ wishful thinking?

Most telling of all was that children who reported having been molested later said that they had fabricated the report. So frequent were the retractions that Roland Summit (1983) called attention to the phenomenon and gave it a name: *The Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome*, which he described as being the result of pressure to recant by family members. The ambivalent feelings that accompany the trauma bond undoubtedly make the child more malleable than otherwise.

Giarretto and Einfeld-Giarretto observed that the family resorts to denial and

will urge the victim to recant her story. They will paint a foreboding picture of what will happen if she sticks to her allegations. She will be forced to live with strangers and her father will be sent to prison for many years where he will be beaten severely and possibly murdered. Her father promises never to abuse her again, and it will be far better if she will allow the family to deal with the problem privately. (1995, 222-23)

According to Summit,

In the chaotic aftermath of disclosure the child discovers that the bedrock fears and threats underlying the secrecy are true. ... Beneath the anger of impulsive disclosure remains the ambivalence of guilt and the martyred obligation to preserve the family. ... Once again, the child bears the responsibility of either preserving or destroying the family. (1983, 188)

Moreover, “the daughter is greatly at risk within her family once the incest secret has been revealed. By defying her father’s orders to maintain secrecy, she has in effect made him her enemy” (Herman 2000, 133).

Given the stuck, powerless situation a number of victims find themselves in—with the abuse continuing for years in some cases—I’d like to share one possible survival plan which, due to its importance, will also be repeated in Chapter 22, on Getting to Okay.

Since the victim often accrues more guilt and a greater sense of hopelessness the longer the incest lasts, once she is both willing

and able to break free she must take immediate action to halt the molestation. In order to do so, she must get physically away from the offender. She must tell him—*preferably by writing a note*—that she will report his molestation to authorities if there is any further discussion about, alluding to, or attempt at touching or otherwise engaging her again. Then she is to keep out of his way! If she decides to report or not report anyway, that is her choice. It is recommended, however, that she also explore options for moving to another household, such as in with a relative or a friend's family. If she has already been able to arrange this, she should let the offender know in the note and tell him he is expected to support her move. The ban on further discussion with the molester is necessary due to the unequal match. The adult has had more experience with manipulation and will tweak the “trauma bond,” as discussed earlier. Both the victim and perpetrator are vulnerable to it, but stopping is much more important to the victim's survival than to his.

Reporting to the non-offending mother is risky at the time of the incest. Unfortunately, the response by mothers is unpredictable. At the very least it will not be a calm, well thought out, informed and rational response. More likely it will be a slap in the face accompanied by name-calling.

One *is* powerless when ensnared by an experienced manipulator. As Blume (1990, 50) points out, “powerlessness is an issue for all women, although incest survivors are generally more sensitive to it.”

I was not inclined to argue with my father, but if I had been, it would have been impossible for me to prevail.

MY POWERLESSNESS

I am astonished when I realize how close I came to shaping a marvelous life for myself, had I been willing to hurt my father's feelings. (However, since at the time I had already been molested, maybe I wouldn't have been able to shape a marvelous life, after all.) I attended the ninth grade while residing in another state with my maternal grandparents, who shared their lovely home, their cultured lifestyle, their civilized values and invited me to stay with them and complete all my schooling. The difference between the

two homes was incredible. At one point I told my maternal grandmother, "I think I'm going crazy," to which she responded, "Nonsense. This family doesn't go crazy." (If only she had known.) These were the people my mother had run away from to marry my father, following one of many altercations with her mother.

While with these grandparents, I recall avoiding eye contact with any males I happened to pass to and from the bus stop, for fear one of them would wink at me. But I was on a transit bus when there was eye contact with a man getting on. Before I left the bus he had given me his phone number on a slip of paper. Upon reaching my grandparents' home I immediately told my grandfather what had happened and he took the paper from me, saying he would take care of it.

At the end of the ninth grade I recall receiving news that my father was insisting that I return home for the balance of my education. I do not recall nor did I show any emotions in response to the news.

I could have told my grandparents I wanted to stay and they would have told me my parents had greater claims on me. I could have told them about Daddy's alcoholism and if that didn't work, about the molestation, but I didn't want to hurt my father and I had to keep the secret to protect him. So after a year of dancing lessons, getting my teeth fixed, my hair done regularly and relaxed evenings playing canasta or Twenty Questions with my grandparents, I returned to my "other home," where my father would stagger through the living room in his underwear and occasionally tell me to come into the bathroom to watch him pee, until passing out in a drunken stupor. Four years later, at the age of 18, I had to have all my teeth pulled due to their deterioration, which I attributed to stress.

Like other incest survivors, I was raised to be powerless, and being trapped in the incest scenario reaffirmed my nonentity status. To stay with this set of grandparents, like the earlier set on the farm, was not in my repertoire of possibilities. I was raised not to ask for what I wanted, nor even to hint. (I did come down with rheumatic fever soon after leaving, however, and had to recuperate on the farm.)

My distrust of myself is as great as my distrust of others. I am impulsive. I recall my surprise at myself that day I blurted out in therapy, “It’s not men I’m afraid of; it’s my response to them!”

Distrust of self overflows into a number of self-regulating areas. To what extent can I trust myself to make decisions in my own best interests? In my life I have been overly dependent on the advice of others, in part to avoid responsibility and in part from an appreciation of my own limitations. I struggle with distrust of my judgment, my abilities, my competence and my perspective of situations. I suspect that my distrust is attributable to developmental dead ends, but I’m not sure.

Back home, I sat and listened closely to my father’s words—very closely, for fear he would ask me to help retrieve his train of thought, and I feared the consequences if he found out I had been daydreaming instead of listening. I listened, he talked. I listened some more and he talked. As I earlier observed, it was unthinkable that I could have reported my dad, believing what he told me, that incest was a capital offense in our state. But that is not the only thing that kept me from “telling.” The other reasons are scattered throughout this book.

DAMAGED GOODS

The notion that a truly evil “other” is embedded deep within the victimized daughter is a reflection of the sexual nature of her violation. The penetration of the body is experienced as the penetration of her true self, creating within her psychic being a place of evil and shame that is a source of stigma and self-hatred.

—Janet Liebman Jacobs

This is Finkelhor’s “Stigmatization,” a mouthful we couldn’t manage in the treatment program. In the memory device we developed we used “Damaged Goods,” but finally arrived at “Malignant Magnetism” as being more descriptive of what the victim feels.

It is frightening to suspect the presence of a power within to unconsciously attract—to have a malignant impact on a loved one. The malignant magnet phenomenon underlies the feelings of guilt, shame and of being damaged goods, and that the victim has somehow “polluted” those around her. The experience of shame associated with seeing herself as toxic is insidious, being absorbed and accepted as a fact of her personality. *I still catch myself looking down at the ground when out walking, and when I see someone else walking with their head hanging down I wonder if they were sexually abused, too.*

Many victims take with them into adult life the perception that they have committed an unpardonable sin that left them permanently stigmatized. “The feeling of being malignantly marked, of being placed outside the covenant of normal social intercourse, caused many of the women intense pain” (Herman 2000, 99).

Herman further observes that “the profound sense of inner *badness* becomes the core around which the abused child’s identity is formed” (1992, 105). Blume refers to the survivor’s sense of being “soiled and spoiled” (1990, 244).

Butler (1985, 58) quotes another survivor as saying, "I feel that sometimes I've grown up to be poison. If I let my power out, my meanness out, I will contaminate other people." She also had trouble with feeling special: "I grew up with a very distorted imbalance between feeling I had no power and feeling that I had tremendous power" (59).

The same survivor related,

It's sort of like a deal I made. Okay, God, get me through this and I'll be good. You know? And I do feel like I have to help people. Because if I don't, maybe I'll kill them. (58)

Yet another admitted that in the sixth grade she came to school with cigarette burns all over her left arm. "I had done it because I was feeling scared that I was beginning not to feel anything. I needed to see if I was still real, if I could still hurt" (ibid., 45).

The mechanics, the motivations and the interactions involved in adult sexuality are still mysterious to the child at the point when most incest occurs. One paternal sexual assault is usually sufficient to challenge some of the victim's basic views of her world. With continuation of the incest, the specter of guilt emerges, and the longer the sexual abuse continues the greater the load of guilt the victim carries.

Reassuring the victim that she is not to blame for the molestation carries little weight when juxtaposed with the experience of her own imagined malignant magnetism. That a grown man's whole body trembles and shakes and his breathing becomes labored when touching his victim certainly suggests to the child that she is exerting a propelling force on the perpetrator. The child experiences herself as somehow manifesting a malignant magnetism. In her own little mind she imagines that she is that *malignant magnet*, and therefore basically bad.

Kepler delineated five increasing levels of survivor guilt, and by the occasion of a Children's Services workshop for professionals on May 23 and 24, 1988, she had added a sixth.

LEVELS OF GUILT

(1) The first is a feeling of being “damaged goods” due to fearing she must have done something to cause the abuse. (Surely this never happened to anyone else. *(Why her?)*)

(2) The next level of guilt is the “whore phase,” which occurs when the victim becomes aware of experiencing some physical pleasure from the abuse.

(3) A further level of guilt is the “fair game” phase, when she is sexually abused by another (possibly having heard of the original abuse).

(4) If the sexual abuse continues, a fourth level of guilt is the “switch phase,” more prevalent among older victims who have been engaged in ongoing long-term sexual abuse by an adult. When the “switch” occurs, the victim realizes that she can benefit from the abuse by bargaining for special favors.

(5) In the fifth level, or “know better” phase, [which Kepler inserted to the list], a victim revisits the web of her abuser, resulting in further abuse of herself or her children.

(6) Finally, the “crossover” phase occurs *if* the victim should begin to molest others. (Again, *not* a frequent occurrence.) Feelings of guilt in connection with crossing over the line is considered appropriate. [Abstracted from Kepler 1984, 202–8]

Some offenders welcome frailties in their victims, including promiscuity, and cite these qualities as an indication that the abuse was either initiated by the victim or fabricated. I recall at least two incest offenders who used their daughters’ psychiatric hospitalization as proof she couldn’t be believed.

It should not be surprising that a number of victims who experience themselves as possessing a powerful sexual magnetism continue on in life identifying themselves as an intrinsically worthless sex object, expecting little more from themselves or from others around them.

My father stressing that “boys only want one thing” undoubtedly fed into my self-devaluation. I assume now that at that moment he was excluding himself, but I was not sufficiently quick or brazen to call him on it.

The victim's experience of poor self-esteem and self-loathing may be one of the “sleeper effects” referred to earlier, in that it seems to increase over time. Many victims do not seek psychiatric help until they are in their thirties, and even then they do not make the connection between the incest and their symptoms, often failing to report it in their histories unless specifically asked. Depression, suicidal ideas and attempts, sexual dysfunction, sexual addiction, substance abuse, and eating and dissociative disorders are common in this population.

BETRAYAL

Betrayal is the experience that someone you trusted has let you down. If the father has molested his child, then he has betrayed the child. Children learn from their parents, and the incestuous father has “tricked” her into deviancy for his own ends. Molesting a child may be compared to giving her cocaine. Just as a child may fail to turn down cocaine, not knowing what it is, so is she ignorant of the toxicity of her father’s encroachment.

When someone says, “I don’t get mad, I get even,” it is likely that he or she has experienced betrayal. It is one of Finkelhor’s four factors in child sexual abuse and carries with it anger, depression, clinging, impaired judgment of others, and isolation. When the child’s personhood is blatantly disregarded and they are related to only as a sex object, there is also bitterness. “At the moment of abuse, with its profound betrayal of relational and generational boundaries, illusion is forever smashed” (Frawley-O’Dea 1997, 95).

According to Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 3) fundamental to the healthy personality are three assumptions that need to underlie all human experience of the world: “(1) perceived benevolence of the world, (2) meaningfulness of the world, and (3) worthiness of the self.”

Of course the biggest betrayal we can experience is betrayal of our body, as we observe it doing things we do not will it to do. Erikson (1950, 248) writes of trust: “The general state of trust ... implies that one has learned to rely on the sameness and continuities of the outer providers, but also that one may trust oneself and the capacity of one’s organs to cope with urges.”

Crosson-Tower reports a survivor’s feeling shame and guilt:

I was angry with my body for feeling pleasure. I felt it had betrayed me. It had actually enjoyed something that my mind knew was wrong. (1989, 19)

Elsewhere in this book we are reminded that our body was doing what it was supposed to do. I suppose I just don't like it that there's such a chasm between our soul, if you will, and our animal nature. And it's primarily the "soul" that suffers. It's that suffering that the perpetrator discounts, disbelieves and denies in himself and his victim.

Diabolically, some non-familial offenders admit to seeking out children who are particularly trusting (Conte, Wolfe, and Smith 1989).

Sexual abuse by a parent is more traumatic than by other individuals, due to the level of betrayal involved. In later relationships it is not unusual for survivors to evidence their ambivalence by vacillating between rage and passivity. Extreme dependency and an inability to assess the trustworthiness of others are also common. In the absence of healing, prognosis for a good marriage is guarded, due to what Shengold calls a "pseudorelatedness that disguises a deeply seated mistrust of others based on experienced reality" (Shengold 1989, 315).

Salter observes that this betrayal of intimacy, particularly, leaves a painful residue with a long half-life (1995, 83). According to Freyd,

Amnesia for the abuse can be adaptive, allowing a dependent child to remain attached to the abusive caregiver, thus eliciting some degree of life-sustaining nurturing and protection. (2002, 169)

An offender in our prison group said he thought it was the therapist rather than the offender who elicits anger in the survivors. This, of course, was a thinking error that we thought might best be answered by survivors themselves. Our group occasionally dialogued with a group of survivors on the outside, through their group leader. The survivors wrote that they wanted the offenders to understand that their anger is their own, and that it is persistent, whether they are in therapy or not. This does not mean that survivors of sexual

abuse all hate their perpetrator—usually their feelings are complex and conflicted—but the resentment about being violated never completely goes away. Perhaps it would but for the fact that life events continually revive old memories.

The survivors said that the role of the therapist is to validate feelings. Therefore, anything that deals with feelings is a step forward. In addition, the adolescent survivors wanted the offenders to realize that their whole perception of reality had been affected by the sexual abuse and their whole outlook on life tainted.

In addition to increased avoidance, betrayal can also result in impaired judgment about people and sexuality. Victims *want* to believe they can trust people, and often put themselves in harm's way in order to test the validity of that belief. Judgment has been impaired, sometimes leading to re-victimization. *Wanting to change reality and difficulty getting an accurate perspective of situations and people has been a struggle for me.*

Although anger may be an emotion the survivor expresses right from the start of therapy, it is common for feelings of rage to occur during the course of treatment in conjunction with feelings of loss and sorrow. (Courtois 1988, 228)

Incest victims are often angrier at the mother—if she is the non-offending parent—than at the incestuous father. The mother's betrayal for not *protecting* her child is resented, even if she was ignorant of the molestation.

Alex, who was mentioned in Chapter 15, was convinced his mother knew about the abuse by his stepfather but did nothing. "Otherwise, why would she remain in bed every night while her husband leaves the bedroom for ten minutes?" There was evidence that Alex's mother blamed marijuana for the strained relationship between her husband and Alex in later years, prior to her death. Alex continues to be convinced that his mother knew and did nothing to protect him. I was told that she tried to leave a letter for him on her deathbed, but didn't know what to say.

The child's bond with the mother thus gives way to the trauma bond with the father. I remember the story my father told me about a

man who was urging his child to jump in the water, assuring the child that she or he would be caught. Finally, in a leap of faith, the child jumped in, and the father stepped aside and did not catch the child. My father said, "The lesson is, don't ever trust anyone."

As I reflect back on his words, I think what a strange story to tell one's child! I'm not sure if he told it before or after he began to molest me. At some level he may have been expressing anger at my mother's single infidelity, and perhaps it was said for her to hear, in the next room. This is all conjecture on my part.

After a great deal of psychotherapy my own phobic mistrust remains, directed at both men and myself. I knew I had been angry at my mother, but not why, until I re-read my journals and realized how thankful and relieved I was that she finally took steps to protect me, although it had to be at the direction of a high school counselor. Like other survivors, I must have resented her failure to protect me.

Feelings of being damaged goods and feelings of powerlessness are self-perceptions. Betrayal refers to the facts.

Unlike rape, incest frequently takes place in what perpetrators experience as a "caring" relationship. "In fact, to describe what occurs as a rape is to minimize the harm to the child, for what is involved here is not simply an assault, it is a betrayal" (Herman and Hirschman 1977, 748).

MY ANGER

Those of us who believed the abuser really cared for us, only to discover later that we were also being disrespected and toyed with, carry anger at some level in addition to the shameful feelings.

When I read these lines from my journal written on June 2, 1975, I cannot deny my own anger, or the drawing done on February 2, 1979:

My anger sits inside
on fat haunches
and comes out at night
to eat rats.



February 2, 1979

2-2-79

I was interested to read in Shengold (1989, 116) that “many myths show the connections among the teeth, the projection of cannibalistic aggression, and mice and rats.”

There’s also a dream I recorded in my journal on October 9, 1981: I am eating a long limb with warm blood running down my chin, then using the bone to hit people around me in frustration.

As the above suggests, my underlying anger is oral aggressive. I think that’s the borderline part of me, which has access to “the dark side.” I have both taken and taught assertiveness training, and yet it remains one of my “growing edges.”

What I realize is that being an angry person fills me with hate, which is bad for me. It eats me up and robs me of what self-respect I have.

Since I was a child I have rarely, if ever, “acted out” my anger, at least not against other people. I have my journaling to thank for that, in large part. From time to time I suspect an underlying competitive strain, and I know that when I feel disrespected my anger jumps up like a jack-in-the-box—surprising to me, but imploded, not exploded. I have become aware that I possess an “aura” of touchiness toward authority figures or those I feel insecure around. I believe they process this as my discounting them, whereas I am really just wrapping my defenses around me. (Yet, maybe a part of me really wants to have them for dinner?)

My underlying anger makes me vulnerable to self-fulfilling prophecies at times. When I project my distrust onto others they often comply with my expectations, in a twist on “smile and the world smiles with you.”

I can still recall a searing article on anger in Ms. Magazine decades ago, in which the author described her rage at construction workers who whistled and made sexual comments as she walked down the street. In the waning months of my marriage I became overly sensitive to being related to only as a sex object.

During the treatment program we found *When Anger Hurts* (McKay, Rogers, and McKay 1989) to be an excellent resource. I heartily recommend it. In fact, I recently bought another copy.

OTHERS' ANGER

Hamilton, a survivor, reflects,

It's a sobering experience to be over sixty years old and to meet this deeply feared emotion for the first time as a friend—as a valued partner in my total self. As the rage showed itself out, power rushed in with more courage than had ever been available to me. (1997, 164)

Fraser, another survivor, wrote, “Anger was my salvation, the way I survived in my father’s house but it became my prison, blocking softer emotions. Now, as that tough shell cracks, a more vulnerable self is released” (1987, 224).

We are entitled to respond to betrayal with anger. It’s okay to refuse to forgive one’s abuser. Then what? Anger has a way of sticking to the bone.

A lot of people get stuck in that rage and that hatred and that fear. But I realized I didn’t have to hang onto it. I started to think of it like a big wad of mucus that I had to cough up. (Bass and Davis 1994, 174)

Herman (1992, 189) cautions, “During the period of mourning, the survivor must come to terms with the impossibility of getting even.”

Meiselman (1990, 110) explains that the “goal of therapy should not be to eliminate anger altogether but to channel its energy into the responses that will be most likely to preserve the client’s rights *and* relationships.” Courtois refers to anger as a “spur,” recommending that “if a survivor cannot forgive, she must have enough resolution or disengagement from the past to be able to claim her

present and future for herself. She must not remain stuck in futile anger but rather must use it as a spur to her development” (1988, 349).

Briere (1989, 17) refers to lack of trust and a sometimes seemingly “inexhaustible depot of rage.” This can manifest itself by rebellion against authority, cynicism, sarcasm, disrespect for the law, destructive and self-destructive acting-out, depression, carrying “a chip on the shoulder,” and having few friends.

And what of the anger at ourselves for our body’s betrayal? Letting go of anger at others goes hand in hand with letting go of our own self-loathing, a difficult task. Difficulties with basic trust are usually part of the core reaction to the incest situation. Betrayal is not a feeling. It is a fact.

TRAUMAGENIC SEXUALIZATION

Sexual abuse experiences, particularly at the hands of close relatives, almost invariably disrupt the developmental sequences that characterize normal psychosexual maturation. Once these experiences occur, they are reclaimed as body memories," even if (in some cases) details of the abuse are unavailable to the victim's conscious memory.

—Maddock and Larson 1995

EROTICIZING

The most insidious, lingering, and destructive effect of the incest was its impact on my developing sexuality. I suspect that is also true for other survivors.

In the Four-Factor Theory, “*traumatic sexualization* refers to a process in which a child’s sexuality (including both sexual feelings and sexual attitudes) is shaped in a developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional fashion as a result of the sexual abuse” (Finkelhor and Browne 1986, 181). Experiences in which the offender makes an effort to evoke a sexual response from the child, for example, would be more sexualizing than those in which an offender simply uses a passive child to masturbate with” (ibid., 182).

“At the age when incest commonly starts, most children will have very little idea of their own anatomy, let alone of adult sexual behavior” (Renvoize 1982, 27). “Even though the incest victim may never have held hands, someone is masturbating his frightening penis in front of her in an atmosphere of secretiveness and coercion” (Blume 1990, 210).

As part of his attempt to educate me about sex, my father began pointing out everything sexual around us. He bought sexual car-

toon books and explained the punch lines to me. (I remember learning what the term “hot” meant in this way.) I recall him explicating the sexual connotations in the lyric “Don’t Mess with Mr. In Between.” One of the results of being shown so much that was sexual in the surrounding culture was to achieve his goal of eroticizing me. At one point he encouraged me to learn to cartoon for some of these dirty joke books. He wanted me to write better than he wrote, draw better than he drew, and play tennis better than he had. I’m not sure what he wanted me to accomplish sexually better than he had—maybe to take my virginity to Hollywood and sell it for a million dollars, as he said was possible. (That is, if I did not save my maidenhead for my husband, which he also recommended.)

Meiselman (1978, 221) reports that the most striking finding in the psychotherapy sample of incest case histories was the frequency of sexual problems that had occurred years after the incest. Briere and Runtz (1988, 89) noted a “large effect” on sexual difficulties in their sample of 152 walk-in mental health clients who were survivors of child sexual abuse. These findings might have been anticipated, given the incest perpetrators’ efforts to eroticize their daughters (“turn them on” to genital awareness) while at the same time demonstrating by example deception, disregard for morality, and the gulf between love and sex.

AROUSAL

On the outside I appear to be a fairly normal person. At least many people on the street do not do a double-take. But on the inside my sexuality is scrambled like an egg. My primary opponent in life has not been my grandfather or my father, but my sexuality. I feared that it had the power to take me places I did not want to go.

*Back before analysis, when I would look in the mirror and see the **real** me as a slut, I had to remind myself that while we share the sexual drive with animals, we as humans have some “higher” values that are important, too.*

My sexuality, which was just beginning to bud when my father started molesting me, became forever warped. One of my first titles for this book was “Too Much Water For the Fire,” reflecting a lack of trust in my ability to appropriately control my own inner fires.

The following dream, as recorded in my journal January 18, 1976, more than thirty years after initiation of the sexual abuse, reflects my continuing struggle to control my raging libido:

I am in a hotel lobby and a woman is pointing to the ceiling, where the plaster is crumbling. She says she is afraid the whole place is going to collapse. She says it is because there has been a fire and too much water was being used to put it out. I go upstairs with a friend to investigate.

My father warned me not to ever get the “habit” of sex, hinting that I would become an old streetwalker wracked with disease. He even drove me downtown and pointed some out to me.

I didn’t get the “habit”—not the habit of having orgasms. My first orgasm scared me so much I didn’t have one for another 20 years. I felt scared, guilty and ashamed and never mentioned it to my father for fear I had done something wrong. I was genitally caressed every Saturday morning while my mother worked, almost brought to orgasm before I turned myself off. Orgasm was a word he left out of my sex education. I see that Davis (1991, 204) writes that “stimulating a child to orgasm is an effective way of reinforcing the child’s sense of compliance, shame, and silence.” We side-stepped that issue, possibly due to the ignorance of both of us. Perhaps it boomeranged on my father. Once he wanted to know if I had been in my bed the night before “playing with myself,” and I told the truth: “No.” I wonder what his response would have been if the truth had been “Yes.”

The pairing of my first orgasm with fright, shame, and guilt did not portend well for future climaxes. I did not masturbate for many years because arousal led to such frustration.

Terr (1994, 144) quotes a survivor who woke up when her father was molesting her, as she was at the point of an orgasm.

And when I understood what was happening—ah, uh, a horrible feeling went through me. I knew instantly, even though I was young, that this was *wrong*. This was *bad*. I shut off my feelings just like that. And I have to tell you that the shut-off has had a lifelong impact on my ability to have an orgasm with a man.

A friend of Marilyn Monroe's reported that Marilyn (who had been molested by foster fathers) never had an orgasm, and is reported to have attempted suicide nine times (Blume 1990, 211). By withholding orgasms was she protecting her real self? Did she keep her anger clutched tight inside and hidden?

According to Anna Freud (1981, 33), the after-effects of an incestuous experience are of two contrasting kinds:

In some cases an insatiable longing for repetition persists, with the individual concerned either in the role of seducer or seduced. In others there is massive defense activity, denial ... directed against sexuality as such, leading in adult life to frigidity and impotence.

The confused incest perpetrator, who is often *overly moralistic*, passes along confusing information about sexuality to his daughter, and in the process inadvertently teaches her to exchange her body for favors and affection. When the perpetrator relates primarily to and values his victim's genitals, she identifies her body as her *self*. Experiencing herself as an object leaves little room for self-respect or self-esteem, and makes her especially vulnerable to resentment in later life, when she perceives others being attracted to her body.

Bass and Thornton (1983, 27) write that

when a man sexually uses a child, he is giving that child a strong message about her world: He is telling her that she is important because of her sexuality, that men want sex from girls, and that relationships are insufficient without sex. ... When he tells her not to tell, she learns there is something about sex that is shameful and bad; and that she, because she is a part of it, is shameful and bad.

The negative connotation that comes to be associated with sex can contaminate all later sexual experiences and generalize to an aversion of all sex and intimacy. Finkelhor and Browne (1986), focusing on the damaging effects on the child's sexuality, refer to the conditions under which a child's sexuality is shaped in developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional ways. They refer to traumatic sexualization.

Maltz and Holman report that:

Women in our study reported associating several feelings with the sexual experience. These included helplessness, disgust, anger, loss of control, guilt and hate. This negative conditioning is very strong in survivors because the sexual abuse usually constituted their first experience with overt sexual stimulation.” (Maltz and Holman 1987, 76)

Due to innate personality differences, early histories, different assault scenarios and ambivalences, specific effects on the survivor’s sexual health vary from frigidity to sexual addiction, sometimes flip-flopping. Shengold believes that the overwhelming overstimulation of the child threatens psychic structures, and that the “rage of the victim is complemented by the angry destructive impulses that are part of identification with the parent-aggressor” (Shengold 1989, 19).

The lessons the child learns from the incest include the “fact” that sex has nothing to do with trust or equality, that she cannot set limits or make choices for herself, that sex and she are shameful, that she can only be valued for her genitals, and that sex does not equal affection.

It is particularly stressful on a relationship when the survivor resents the expression of sexual affection. Blume has pointed out that for perpetrators, affection is not affection; it is sex (Blume 1990, 221).

Being responded to as an object rather than as a person leads not only to sexual difficulties but also to increased feelings of being damaged goods. One woman became incensed every time her husband came home from work, greeted her and gave her a friendly pat on the rump. Another survivor and her family came to counseling because she sought an operation to decrease the size of her breasts.

Body memories during sex with one’s partner in later life sometimes produce flashbacks of the incest, triggered by the current situation. The survivor’s hypersensitive and conflicted sexuality re-

quires a very secure and caring partner in order for an intimate relationship to survive. Marriage sometimes causes survivors to feel trapped. Some have been known to resist wearing their wedding bands, “which to them symbolize being trapped and out of control” (Courtois 1988, 112).

COPING

One can cope by sublimating (turning unwanted drives into more wholesome activities), developing a prickly non-sexual personality, numbing oneself, or becoming unattractive. Or, one can tackle the problem head-on, in therapy. Two excellent resources that may help with this issue are *Allies in Healing* (1991) by Laura Davis and *The Sexual Healing Journey* (1991) by Wendy Maltz and Beverly Holman.

Non-verbally broadcasting an avoidant message in the presence of men was effortless for me. (In fact, I had no choice in the matter.) I can recall at least two would-be intimates who withdrew quickly in response to a non-verbal response of fear from me. A very few times my sexuality did take me where I did not want to go, but for the most part I maintained control of the inner beast.

I hungered for touch yet feared it. Maltz and Holman (1987) describe the ambivalence thusly:

Touch hunger in a woman may coexist with or lead to touch phobia. The untouched woman may vacillate painfully between longing and fear. She may be afraid of the feelings that come up when she is touched, the tears, rage, wishes, or memories just below the surface. (Ibid., 44-45)

Fear of the erotic state of sexual enjoyment—erotophobia—is not unfamiliar to me, nor is the phobia of penises. (Some women like them, but I do not.) Such an attitude negatively impacts any intimate heterosexual relationship. I believe it was ambivalence about sex that was illustrated by my dream of a police dog killing a pet snake as recorded in my Journal on July 29, 1979.

Some survivors settle for celibacy rather than travel the rocky sexual road. One survivor expressed it this way:

All that extra flesh is the separation I need between myself and my sexual feelings. I don't trust my feelings, and if I can keep myself fat and unattractive, I don't need to deal with them at all. I'm smart, funny and people like me. I have decided that will simply have to be enough. (Butler 1985, 21-22)

Erikson (1950, 264) has pointed out, however, that “the avoidance of such experiences as close affiliations, in orgasms and sexual unions ... and of constriction from the recesses of the self ... because of fear of ego loss, may lead to a deep sense of isolation and consequent self-absorption.” He was speaking of the developmental stage of Intimacy versus Isolation, an especially difficult stage for incest survivors to traverse.

SEXUALITY

One of incest's many destructive effects on my sexuality was my preference for other individuals who were considered deviant or had emotional problems. (Obviously my father was troubled.) Straight “healthy” people bored me. I still recall that feeling, although this is an area in which I have fortunately moved ahead. I still experience the old tug towards the deviant and/or troubled, but am able to recognize it for what it is and take a step back. Earlier, however, being afraid of my response to men and preferring deviancy, I drifted into the homosexual culture as it was in the early fifties, alongside a high school classmate who reminded me of the grandmother I had slept with on the farm of my youth.

My father tried mightily to interfere with my relationship with my lesbian high school friend. He wrote me a letter that said in part,

If you ever feel compelled to be a martyr, then be one for something more worthy than unnatural harlotry, which is all that it amounts to.

(Evidently he meant more unnatural than incest.) I left, ultimately, because he placed unreasonable restrictions on my after school activities. As mentioned earlier, this terminating phase has been referred to as the “amelioration phase” by Christiansen and Blake (1980, 97). Being a very recent incest survivor, my judgment about people and relationships was severely impaired.

I was drawn to, even fascinated by, the fringes of the homosexual lifestyle. I don't consider homosexuality as negative, but my lack of sexual identity was certainly a negative effect of the incest. I didn't know what I was, and some of my dreams still reflect my sexual ambivalence. Perhaps that "what" should be read as "who," but of course I knew even less about who I was.

My classmate Carole befriended me and introduced me to her homosexual culture. I sat with her in Walgreen's basement, where a table had unofficially been commandeered by her friends. I was intrigued with them and toyed with the idea of writing a book about their lifestyle (at least that's what I told myself). Perhaps you see the writing on the wall. I was afraid of men but not of women. Then my father forbade me to stay after school for extra-curricular activities. He felt, correctly, that he was losing control of me. I drew the line at not being able to participate in these activities and was subsequently invited to move in with Carole and her stepfather. No one attended our high school graduation except Carole's stepfather. At the time my parents were busy separating, and my mother said she had nothing to wear. An old letter from my father explains what happened next...

"On that last night, I told you two that if I could talk to you for thirty minutes that I would take you over to Carole's house, either that night or the next morning, whichever you had rather, and you could stay with her. No sale. I begged you not to leave with her. 'I have no choice,' said you. 'You have insulted my friend.' I then told you both, quite frankly, that if you left with her that I was going to the proper authorities and have them keep you two from ever keeping company with each other. You both laughed heartily, and left. I did my best to keep my word. I went down to the Sheriff's office and they arranged a meeting between me and Judge Mason. I told him exactly what was going on. I asked his advice and I asked his help for you. You are my daughter, whether you realize it or not. I did it for you, not me. I thought you in danger, and evidently he thought you were, too. He has had lots more experience with your set-up than you have, and he thought you were in danger. You know you are not

in any danger, because your whole idea of danger is the danger of having to do something that you don't want to do."

Thank goodness I did not stay and listen to him. He was a master manipulator, and I would not have stood a chance. At least I had learned something about protecting myself from him: Run!

Soon after I received the above letter my mother and I were summoned to the downtown office of a school psychologist. He said he understood that my father was an alcoholic and that I planned to move in with him after graduation. He questioned the wisdom of that arrangement, and my mother, as though seeing the light for the first time, concurred. He then turned to me and said, "If you tell me that Carole is not a lesbian, I will believe you." A look of consternation must have crossed my face, for he hastened to add, "but I'm not going to ask you that question." I remember nothing else of the session, since I was so happy that I hadn't felt forced to lie about Carole. To this day I bless that man.

My relationship with Carole was a replay of the warm and nurturing time I spent with my paternal grandmother. However, although I was now an adult, I lived out the script of powerlessness and damaged goods. I clung dependently to her, so much so that she developed stomach problems and had to see a therapist for support in order to leave the relationship. I never quit loving her. Yet while I felt myself still scrambled inside, lacking both good judgment and a clear sense of self, I always knew I wasn't gay.

In graduate school, my depression and stress grew so great that I sometimes went out to a gay bar for relief. I felt entirely comfortable that I was not seen as a sex object there. I joined a lesbian poetry group and even a lesbian softball team. The local lesbian "safe house" allowed no men—not even homosexual men—and there too I felt totally safe and accepted.

Carole died years ago. I had, and still feel, a tremendous admiration and respect for strong women. Some would say that I have projected my own strength and power onto other women due to incest's powerlessness effect. After grad school I did not return to the gay lifestyle, although a homosexual man I met in a therapy

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group became the closest friend I ever had. He too has died—of AIDS. The only men that I completely trust are homosexual.

THE MONKEY WRENCH EFFECT:

A PIGGYBACK ON FINKELHOR

Sexual abuse is so developmentally toxic that it must be walled off and enshrouded in a kind of psychological cocoon, set aside from the mainstream of consciousness to remain dormant or to grow as it will, emerging unpredictably in some alien metamorphosis.

—Roland Summit, 1988

The Monkey Wrench Effect is a way of looking at the damage of incest, based on the child victim's developmental stage when first molested. It is as though a monkey wrench has been thrown into the child's developmental machinery, interfering with the learning tasks of that and later stages. The child victim's legitimate developmental needs and their accompanying mental expressions are by-passed and short-circuited. Reality is twisted. "Abuse of whatever form induces states of mind in the child reflecting an unnatural type of imposed reality" (Pollock 2001, 3). Miller (1990, 6) refers to the "fossilized child within."

As Courtois summarizes, "Child sexual abuse has been found to affect the victim's personality development and every major life sphere, either at the time of the incest and/or later in life" (1988, 117).

The "teachable moments," when a special readiness to learn a developmental task arises, are negatively impacted in young victims of incest who should be learning sex differences and sexual modesty, learning to distinguish right from wrong, and beginning to develop a conscience. According to Havighurst,

A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to

success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks. (1972, 2)

Tasks vulnerable to being interfered with in middle childhood include building wholesome attitudes toward oneself, getting along with peers, learning appropriate sexual social roles, and continuing to develop a conscience, morality, and a scale of values (Havighurst, 1972). Is it surprising that the victim of incest is learning all the wrong lessons about these important values?

Briere (1996, 51) speaks of “core effects,” which are thought to be “the direct result of traumatic interruptions of normal childhood development, such that the child’s early personality is shaped by adaptation to victimization.”

The incest survivor grows up with sexual abuse as part of her development, and it becomes part of her view of herself. She grows up feeling as if something inside is putrid, disgusting. ... Feeling dirty becomes a part of her character rather than the response to an event that happened to her. (Blume 1990, 113)

“The uniqueness of sexual abuse experiences, particularly at the hands of close relatives, almost invariably disrupts the developmental sequences that characterize normal psychosexual maturation. Once these experiences occur, they are retained as ‘body memories,’ even if (in some cases) details of the abuse are unavailable to the victim’s conscious memory” (Larson and Maddock 1995, 122-3).

Briere writes that “although this failure to learn and grow at developmentally appropriate points in time is a serious problem, many therapists have found that the former victim can, to some extent, ‘catch up’ on old gaps in learning, given the psychological opportunity to do so” (1989, 108).

Puberty is an especially difficult transition for girls. Thompson (1981, 235) speaks of hormones “catapulting” girls into puberty at about eleven, with menstruation beginning between the ages of ten and thirteen. “Puberty occurred for girls at age seventeen in 1833, and in contrast it now begins at age nine or ten” (236-7). A move towards separating from the family at puberty as she individuates

is normal. Being introduced to ties that bind and limit personal development is not.

Anna Freud sees great harm in incest, and maintains that

where the growing young person, instead of being allowed to shed his dependent involvement with the parents, for the sake of new objects, is bound all the tighter to them on the basis of shared excitement and experience. (1981, 34)

In a longitudinal study of the psychobiological effects of sexual abuse, Putnam and Trickett (1997, 152) conceptualized childhood sexual abuse as “a model of chronic, developmentally embedded trauma.” They found changes in the level of stress-related hormones and neurotransmitters, the regulatory dynamics of neuroendocrine systems, neuroendocrine responses to stressors, and patterns of correlations between some hormones and behaviors (ibid.,158).

CHILDREN ARE NOT SMALL ADULTS

Given the importance of incest’s effect on children, a separate module on child development was introduced into our prison treatment program. Among areas covered were the capabilities of young children at different ages.

It helps to gain perspective on the likelihood that the child is plotting to seduce her father when, excerpting Schuster (1986), at 18 months the child begins to follow simple one-step directions, and to signal wet pants; at 2 years the child can name 3 body parts and is just beginning to learn time sequences; at 2 ½ years the child can name 6 body parts and is just beginning to understand “tomorrow” and “yesterday”; at 3 years the child can give first and last names, count to 3, and may wake up dry; at 4 years the child can name the color of 3 objects, count to 5, and give the opposite of “up” and “hot”; at 5 years the child knows the days of the week, can count to 10, and can follow a 3-step direction.

Girls first molested before the age of nine are affected differently than those who are first molested after the age of nine, as measured by the Rorschach ink blot procedure and reported by Zivney, Nash,

and Hulse (1988). This is a remarkable finding. Age of victimization, then, can affect the way they see the world—or at least ink blots they have to make sense out of. Based on the responses, girls first abused after the age of nine appeared to be angrier, and those in the younger group more depressed and needy.

The adult victim is developmentally the age at which the abuse began. A 35-year old woman in the therapist's office is in a sense a five-year-old child concerning attitudes and feelings regarding sexuality and sexual abuse. Therapeutic demands require that the precious *child* be rescued and that the undeveloped *child* feel protection, nurturing and acceptance by the *adult* counterpart. Childhood sexual development needs to be rekindled for the five-year-old inside the 35-year-old. Developmentally, the child has stopped and was never allowed to proceed to adulthood. (Hindman 1989, 211)

It is not surprising therefore to find that daughters of incest victims tend to view their mothers as children. With rare insight, one daughter observed that her mother wasn't able to grow past a "broken child" (Blume 1990, 261-2).

A 1972 poem from my journal appears to illustrate this observation:

Frozen in time, immobile, sit I.
All that I have ever been is with me still,
 keeping me, stifling me.
My shackles are the bars of a play pen.
I am a frightened child, even as I sit
 holding a child
 who is holding a doll.
I am the big person in her world
 but there are no big people
 anymore
 in mine.
Where have they gone?

"To get the nurture you needed as a child, you have to continue being a child. Therefore, your children are shortchanged. They need their parent to be an adult" (Ney and Peters 1995, 89).

In one study of the daughters of incest survivors, the daughters said they often felt lost in reaction to their mother's perceived emotional neediness. "I just felt the heaviness of Mom's pain" (Voth and Tutty 1999, 34). Another daughter said, "She wasn't able to grow past where she got left as a child" (30). Some survivors report difficulty touching their children comfortably. Parenting suffers when closeness and affection have been melded with sexual overtones. *I can touch, but not comfortably—awkwardly.*

The spectrum of incest's effects is broad indeed. If a survivor thinks it has had little impact on her or that she has finished dealing with it, perhaps she might be willing to tap into her depths just to make sure she is not overlooking a significant hot wire. Jan Hindman made a valid point in a 1994 presentation to professionals when she compared the theft of a bicycle to sexual abuse of a child, saying a bicycle can be replaced but a childhood cannot.

I believe that my father didn't see me as a total human being, and while intellectually I know that was because he wasn't one either, that doesn't seem to matter. After we left the farm there was no one to mirror my personhood back to me.

On my fifth birthday I recall "riding" the swinging garage door on the farm and wondering what I would be like as an adult. Would I still be me? I hoped so! I pledged that on each birthday for the rest of my life I would "check in" to see. On many birthdays I have followed my five-year old decision, and am still me. Why my negative view of adults? I think the peculiarity of the living arrangements on the farm in addition to my parents' histories led to an unflattering model for me to emulate. Recently a family member related that once Daddy's two sisters visited from out of state, with their children, and neither of my parents emerged from their bedroom to see them the entire visit.

Some therapists are more hopeful than others. Gil (1988, 60) writes that "trauma resolution is a kind of repair process that parallels the process of child development. In adult survivors, development has been blocked. These clients must be helped to complete the developmental process. The therapist acts in some respects as a parent, providing a corrective experience."

One therapeutic approach that attempted to address developmental blocks was that designed by Ray Helfer (1978), a pediatrician. His program, *Childhood Comes First: A Crash Course in Childhood for Adults*, includes a series of graduated exercises which a learner who has “missed childhood” completes with the guidance and support of a coach (who may be the therapist). Helfer’s re-educational and corrective program was unique and ambitious, but does not appear to be widely utilized.

Mayer reports that

I have been most successful when I have based my treatment on standard psychotherapeutic technique through a theoretical framework of what I believe to be normal child development. I try to understand the developmental stages of the child and the functions that they serve, and then help the patient to pass successfully through them. ... I can view the patient’s behavior as survival strategies rather than acting out, which is pejorative. (Mayer 1995, 89)

This reminds me that when my psychoanalyst asked what I had gotten from my first major therapist, I did not hesitate: “Love.”

PART V

SHAME

FREEING SHAME

Shame is not a disease ... it is a mark of our humanity. —C. D. Schneider

In this chapter an attempt will be made to recognize—instead of deny—the presence of shame in both survivors and perpetrators.

SURVIVORS

It has been stated perhaps ad nauseam that “no matter what the other family problems might be, the aggressor alone must assume the full responsibility for having chosen to eroticize his relationship with his child” (Butler 1985, 66).

Porter, Blick, and Sgroi (1982, 116) insist that “the therapist’s message to all must be that the child had a right to expect protection, not abuse, from the perpetrator, and that he or she had a right to disclose the secret of the inappropriate sexual activity.”

Self-mutilating behaviors on the part of adolescent and adult survivors of severe child sexual abuse may include “repetitious cutting or carving of the body or limbs, burning of the skin with cigarettes, or hitting of the head or body against or with objects” (ibid., 66).

Motivations prompting self-mutilation range from relief of psychic pain to an effort to “feel.” This behavior has been referred to as “tension reduction,” (seeking relief from painful emotions) and is very different from actual death-seeking behavior. Briere (1992, 61) quotes one clearly suicidal survivor as saying, “I want to stop hurting forever.” As reported elsewhere in this book, a list of reasons not to kill oneself may be found in Bass and Davis (1994, 436). The authors also have an excellent discussion of self-care when feeling suicidal (ibid., 212-213).

Feelings of guilt and shame are sometimes difficult to differentiate, although Shapiro (1987, 48) has written that “shame is the more

profound affect because it develops at a more primitive level than guilt, and the psychological implications of shame may be more difficult to resolve and may result in self-mutilating behavior.”

Blume concurs:

The child victim of incest feels shame as well as guilt. We feel guilt over what we have done, but shame over what we are. ... Shame is a deeper sense of worthlessness, a sense of inner, innate badness, not in relation to one's actions but one's very self. (Blume 1990, 112)

Davis speaks of survivors who feel ashamed of their sexual feelings. Many times “survivors believe their bodies betrayed them when they were children: they responded sexually to abuse. This is one of the deepest pockets of shame many survivors carry” (Davis 1991, 203).

More devastating than the inability to ward off the abuser is the perception that one cannot trust oneself. In my case it was an accurate perception. My body follows me through life; my father does not.

The experience of abuse enters the self-concept; a significant number of incestuously abused children come to believe that something about them, something inherently wrong with them, caused the incest to occur. These beliefs, coupled with guilt and anxiety, result in a shamed sense of self—that the self is unlovable, deserving of abuse, and unworthy of care and good attention. (Courtois 1988, 217)

One thing offenders and victims have in common is a tendency to blame the victim. I had been aware for some time how ineffectual the phrase “you were not to blame; he was the adult and you were the child” seemed. That this observation carries little weight with victims has been observed in the literature and theorized about.

Telling the survivor that she should give up her guilt is not useful. Sgroi and Bunk (1988, 164–5) state, “We believe that adult survivors who tell us that they feel guilty are telling us the truth. An appropriate clinical intervention is to acknowledge the comment by saying, ‘That’s right, you do feel guilty. Many people who were abused in childhood tell us that they feel guilty. We think that one

way you will know you are better is when you are feeling less troubled by guilt.”

Salter (1995, 126–7) observes that telling a client that the sexual abuse is not her fault speaks only to the conscious mind, which is likely to “know better” anyway. “It is a feeling, a sense of guilt, and not a rational thought process that causes the adult survivor to believe that the abuse is indeed her fault. Arguing with her will simply cause the belief to go underground. The essence of therapy is affective change, and affective change cannot be dictated.”

As Davies and Frawley (1994, 137) observe, “it is these very fleeting moments of pleasure that the adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse holds to tenaciously as the living testament of her eternal sense of shame, rottenness, humiliation, and damnation.”

Shame is a sense that one is inherently bad or disgusting, guilt has to do with feeling that one is unworthy because of one’s specific actions or behaviors. (Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport 1993, 58-59)

Shame dissipates through the process of exposure and acceptance. ...The therapist helps the survivor to expose and discuss the shameful activities and to air her feelings of being soiled, damaged or rotten. He or she has to know the full extent of the survivor’s imperfections and weaknesses and still accept her as okay. It is this acceptance of all of the client’s perceived flaws that is crucial to healing her shame.” (Ibid., 116)

Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 9) state that “self-blame can be functional following victimization, particularly if it involves attributions to one’s behavior ...rather than to one’s enduring personality characteristics.”

How does blaming oneself help protect one’s self esteem? Wortman (1976) has observed that self-blame can serve as a defense against feelings of total powerlessness.

Sgroi and Bunk (1988, 162) conclude that “feeling guilty about the abuse (and about cooperating with the abuser) serves both a protective and a helpful function for the adult survivor.”

Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport (1993, 57-58) discuss two kinds of betrayal shame; shame for believing she has polluted her molester (being “toxic”), and shame for betraying her real self and personal integrity:

In denying the incest and maintaining family loyalty, the survivor has sold herself out. She knows that she is no longer being authentic—and she cannot run far from that knowledge. ... She often develops an elaborate false self, designed to gain approval from others and to hide the bad, shameful real self.

Feeling guilty about being inauthentic would appear to be way down the hierarchy of imagined travesties. Earlier we quoted Summit to the effect that

in the classic role reversal of child abuse, the child is given the power to destroy the family and the responsibility to keep it together. The child, not the parent, must mobilize the altruism and self-control to insure the survival of the others. ... There is an inevitable splitting of conventional moral values. Maintaining a lie to keep the secret is the ultimate virtue, while telling the truth would be the greatest sin” (1983, 185).

If the child should disclose the abuse, Courtois notes that “giving up her role as ‘protector of the family secrets’ can produce a great deal of anxiety and a different kind of guilt, that of being disloyal” (1988, 221).

The survivor’s experience of guilt is often so strong “that it is generalized to their very existence. They may find themselves feeling guilty and apologizing for themselves almost continuously” (ibid., 220). *I have to tell you that I am haunted. I am haunted not only by my father and my response to him, but by hundreds of misdeeds—mostly small but hurtful—misdeeds which are clear to me now but at the time were not experienced. Maybe I fall into one of Briere’s lesser forms of dissociation. Most of them are misdeeds of omission, not commission. Often, when flashes of my self-serving omissions come to me I find myself mumbling, “I’m sorry, I’m sorry. I’m sorry.”*

Briere (1992, 125) cautions that “therapist response to client self-derogation should balance confrontation of inaccurate self-perceptions with the need, in effect, to avoid blaming the client for self-blame.

Herman (2000, 189) observes that “the incest victim’s feelings of shame are often so intense that once she has revealed her secret, she has a strong impulse to flee from the therapist and finds it difficult to return.”

According to Rothschild (2000, 62),

One of the difficulties with shame is that it does not seem to be expressed and released in the same way as other feelings. Sadness and grief are released through crying, anger through yelling and stomping about, fear through screaming and shaking. What can be done to alleviate shame when it does not discharge, abreact, or cathart? Acceptance and contact appear to be keys to alleviating shame. Though it does not appear to discharge, it does seem to dissipate under very special circumstances—the nonjudgmental, accepting contact of another human being.

Twice my sister mentioned that Daddy had tried to molest her. It seemed she made the remark to invite a sharing from me, but I could not force myself to affirm what she must have suspected, that he had been successful in molesting me. I was simply too ashamed to utter the words.

Erikson (1950, 252) writes that

shame is an emotion insufficiently studied, because in our civilization it is so early and easily absorbed by guilt. Shame supposes that one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at.

According to Nathanson (1989, 381), “shame monitors our sense of self. There may be no emotion that wounds as deeply as shame, no pain as searing.”

To the extent that shame reflects weakness, frailty, vulnerability, defect, or deficit, we are ashamed of ourselves for being ashamed. (383). . . . Nowhere in the literature on the treatment of sexual abuse have I found a

competent reference to the psychology of shame or the cardinal importance of designing a therapeutic strategy around an understanding of the relationships between shame and sexuality. (385)

I now believe that the shame associated with sexual abuse of children can be traced to the fact that despite all other factors, the *stroking of genitals is pleasurable*. Nathanson describes a personal communication with Johanna Krout Tabin, during which she recommended that child sexual abuse be referred to as *child sexual exploitation*, which would note “the child’s ambivalences in the situation without diminishing the adult’s responsibility” (ibid., 386).

Thornton (1983, 18) quotes a survivor as saying, “I still seek ‘worldly success’ to prove I am worthy of being alive ... A’s in school, publication of my writing ... always the search for redemption.”

Rothschild (2000, 62) defines shame as “disappointment in the self.” I can relate to that.

What shames a child depends in part on the child at the time of the abuse. I don’t know where my parents’ child-rearing practices came from, but I know while visiting at a friend’s house when very young, I called home to confess that I had dropped a piece of candy on the floor and hadn’t washed it off before eating it. In the third grade I was talking out the back door to a neighbor in my class and said something negative about a classmate, whereupon both of my parents let out a yowl of condemnation for saying something negative about someone. That may have been the same year that I got a diary for my birthday with instructions from my father to record whether someone had “wounded my ego” that day, or “expanded my ego.” In the sixth grade I turned myself in for chewing gum on my Safety Patrol post, and received my demerit. Less than a year later I was being molested.

The physical response of pleasure at the hands of the abuser is horribly shame-inducing. The child experiences an intense conflict between her developing sense of right and wrong against the backdrop of her body’s betrayal. *Not only do the victims learn not to trust others, but also themselves. I recall saying “No, Daddy. No!*

Stop!" all the while remaining within his reach. The struggle was transferred from me against him to me against me. I recall now that when I said "No," I said it softly so the lady who lived on the other side of the duplex would not hear and get Daddy in trouble.

Lamb (1986, 304) takes a slightly different approach to the treatment of victims:

It is not clear whether emphasizing the adult's responsibility to the child is particularly useful in therapy. Currently, the pronouncements that the child is blameless is a major part, if not the basis, of most treatment approaches. ... If they relieve these children of guilt, the effect is probably only temporary. In doing so, they may also remove any sense of efficacy the child may have experienced.

Children act and "make choices that reflect bad judgment from the perspective of the adult and may lead to continued abuse. Secrecy itself is a choice." Of therapists, Lamb says that "ironically, by perceiving these children as powerless, they may unconsciously be seeking to soothe themselves" (ibid., 305).

Instead, Lamb recommends that therapists should work with these children to help them understand the abuse situation as one containing a number of choices. "Teaching children that some of their choices showed poor judgment is not to label them as 'bad,' but to point out that children merely have not yet learned enough about the world to make the best choice in certain situations" (ibid., 306).

Sgroi acknowledges that "it is no more helpful to absolve a youngster of appropriate guilt feelings than it is to ascribe guilty responsibility inappropriately. Instead, responsibility for behavior should be appropriately ascribed. Then the task of the therapist is to help to relieve the child of inappropriate guilt or blame while at the same time to assist him or her to expiate legitimate guilt and to redirect future behavior" (1982, 117).

Behavioral self-blame enables the victim to believe in his or her own control over future victimizations ... In addition to helping in the areas of vulnerability and esteem, behavioral self-blame also provides the victim with a means of making sense of the event. (Janoff-Bulman 1985, 30)

Earlier when I wrote that I had not told my children about the abuse because I was embarrassed, I wasn't embarrassed. I was ashamed, and I was ashamed of being ashamed.

It goes without saying that the act of “shaming” someone else is radically different than empathically listening to the self-shaming secrets of another.

OFFENDERS

As Proeve and Howells observe, “If the experience of shame serves to reduce an offender’s readiness for and responsivity to treatment, then shame itself needs to be a focus of treatment” (2006, 133).

I was led into the above serious exploration of shame by the description of an outpatient treatment program for “young men” (ages 13-20) who have sexually abused:

The sense of disgrace which accompanies shame can feel toxic to the point of annihilation, so that most young people who have abused invest much of their time and energy in desperate strategies to avoid the experience of shame. (Jenkins 2005, 114)

In Jenkins’s program the abuser “is assisted to separate his actions (what I have done) from his identity (who I am); to recognize that he may have done a terrible thing, but that he is not necessarily a terrible person” (Jenkins 1998, 164).

Jenkins’s article contains examples of effective comments:

When you think about your abuse of Amy, how does it make you feel about yourself? ... What would it say about you if you didn’t feel ashamed? ... Does facing up to this fit with the kind of guy you are and the kind of guy you want to be? (Ibid., 183)

I immediately had two thoughts upon reading the article: How would it work with adult offenders (“men”), and how would it work with victims? I learned that Jenkins has already written a book on utilizing the approach with adult offenders (*Invitations to Responsibility* 1990), which space does not permit me to elaborate upon. It is worth considering how it might work with victims and their shame.

Shame is also a major problem for sex addicts. Defenses against the experience of shame, shame-reduction strategies, and sexual boundary development are discussed by Adams and Robinson (2002) relative to their work with sex addicts.

GUILT

Obviously there is some overlap between shame and guilt. Victoria Kepler's ascending levels of guilt experienced by victims of sexual abuse, depending upon stages of the abuse, were delineated earlier, in Chapter 16 (Kepler 1984, 203).

PART VI
THE
MOTHERS

ROLE OF THE MOTHER

I can't avoid this chapter. Somewhere in it I reflect on why I never told my mother, even after my father's death. I say I didn't want to hurt her, but the truth is twofold. I was ashamed, and I knew she would deny my words.

Summit observes that the sexually abused child may fight with both parents, but

her greatest rage is likely to focus on her mother, whom she blames for abandoning her to her father. She assumes that her mother must know of the sexual abuse and is either too uncaring or too ineffectual to intervene. Ultimately the child tends to feel that she was never worth caring for. (Summit 1983, 185)

Mothers who are consciously aware of the victimization and accept it are extremely rare, according to Faller (1993).

Herman and Hirschman (1977, 746) report the message from some mothers:

Your father first and you second. It would be too dangerous to fight back, because if I lose him I lose everything. For my own survival I must leave you to your devices. I cannot defend you, and if necessary I will sacrifice you to your father.

One study of mothers whose children were victims of incest indicated four different types of responses:

The first group responded immediately, to protect their children, directing their anger at the offender, and took protective action without being pressured by the authorities. A second group was more conflicted in their allegiances, feeling torn between their spouse and the victim. They had difficulty taking sufficiently strong measures to protect their children without the intervention

of protective services. A third group was immobilized by the disclosure of the abuse, denying its occurrence or significance. They did not, however, blame the child. The last group of mothers blamed their daughters, sided with their mates, and took no action to protect their child (Gomes-Schwartz et al. 1990, 119).

After in-depth interviewing of mothers of incest survivors, Johnson (1992, 120) recommended that “it is important for workers to be sensitive to the different levels of a mother’s knowledge of the incest event before disclosure and to differentiate among mothers who (1) actively fostered the incest; (2) knew about and condoned it; (3) suspected the incest but were unable to confront their suspicions; and (4) really did not know about the incest.”

A study by Elliott (1994, 84) found that the relationship with Mother was more predictive of a sexual abuse history than any other factor, and after reviewing a number of studies, Finkelhor (1986b, 74) referred to this as “one of the most consistent findings to date.”

Davies and Frawley (1994, 17) recall Ferenczi’s words in *The Clinical Diary of Sandor Ferenczi* (1988, 18): “But the most frightful of frights is when the threat from the father is coupled with simultaneous desertion by the mother.”

ANGER AT THE MOTHER

“During therapy, intense feelings of unresolved anger and grief at the mother usually emerge and tend to consume much more therapeutic time than feelings about the incestual perpetrator” (Meiselman 1978, 159). *I had no idea how typical my anger at Mother was, until writing this book. The reader may want to reflect on this observation, also.*

“With few exceptions, the daughters seemed more tolerant of their fathers’ shortcomings and more forgiving of their failures than they were toward their mothers, or themselves” (Herman 2000, 82). It is not unusual for adult survivors of incest to deny the extent of their victimization and its long-term impact upon them.

“A mother’s victimization ... mutilates the daughter who watches her for clues as to what it means to be a woman” (Rich 1976, 247). *In later years, after the divorce, I overheard my mother tell an acquaintance how lucky the latter was to have had sons instead of daughters.*

My Freudian psychoanalyst required an autobiography before he scheduled the first session. I came across it recently, and the following are quotes from it describing my mother: “At least during the first ten or so years of my life she had a way of being ‘gushy’ nice to others (she called it being ‘gracious’). ... She could upon occasion be gushy with me and my sister, but there’s an unbelievably mean vicious witch in her that comes out when she’s frustrated or feeling hurt. It’s really breathtaking to witness—I saw this behavior this past April when I visited my sister and saw my mother there. She was doing it to my nephew, not to me. ... We have to keep her at arm’s length because of her excessive hostility. ... My mother gets a terrific charge from telling true horror stories. Not long ago she took exquisite glee in repeating a news story she had heard, about an old woman who held out a plate of pennies to children on Halloween and who cackled when they burnt their hands on the just-out-of-the-oven coins. My mother has an unbelievable powerful wicked part and the sad thing is that she sees herself as a good kind person, and a victim.”

Of them all, I am feeling the saddest writing this chapter. There are of course exceptions and minor variations, but realizing the ubiquity of the situation with the mother is nauseating, for some reason. In the second grade she would lock me out of the house to “enjoy the fresh air,” and she always ran me out of the kitchen when she was cooking. At my wedding reception she made a belated effort to teach me how to wash dishes.

I recall very late in her life my mother saying, “I never could understand why your teachers and bosses always bragged about you so. I could never see it myself.” I was sufficiently mature to respond, “That’s a terrible thing to say to your daughter!” She grinned and assured me she was only joking.

DID MY MOTHER KNOW?

In cases of continuing incest by the father, to what extent is the mother aware? Is there a subconscious knowledge? A conscious awareness, even complicity? Mothers of incest victims fall into different populations. The following is based on my own reading of the literature. There are mothers who did not know about the incest, and evidence for this is their swift response following disclosure. There are mothers whose daughters told them about the abuse only to have the mothers deny and turn against their daughters, failing to protect them. Evidence for this is the daughter's report in addition to admission by some mothers in treatment. There are also mothers who are inadequate, have limited coping skills, and who carry perceptions of male entitlement and superiority. If they suspected the incest they seem to quickly repress and deny it to themselves. Evidence for this is the large number of inadequate and overwhelmed mothers, many of whom were sexually abused themselves and inherited the effects of powerlessness and damaged goods from their own childhood. The final population is comprised of those mothers who not only knew about the incest but who encouraged and allowed it to continue for various reasons. These are the *collusive mothers*.

Some of the debate in the literature about the role of mothers in incest appears to be due to the fact that so many members of the patriarchy—including judges, welfare workers and others in the field—have tended to blame mothers, even at times their daughters, for the incest. Quite understandably, the blaming of victims and the excusing of perpetrators of the crime is without merit.

HER BACKGROUND

My mother was emotionally abused by her mother, who sought to live life vicariously through her daughter. My mother's mother revered men, negated the importance of women, and touted the value of superficial appearances over reality. Making a good appearance and reputation were her lifelines to success. Unfortunately, my mother disliked tea parties, preferring instead automobile mechanics.

Mother had curvature of the spine and once told me she had always known she was ugly. She possessed average innate intelligence, but her capabilities paled in comparison to her father and brothers, all Harvard men. There were probably no plans for her to ever go to college. Once, while I was in college, I told my maternal grandmother I was taking a course in logic, to which she responded, "Whatever on earth for?"

Following a particularly hostile attack by my grandmother, Mother ran away. It was later referred to as an elopement, but my father did not know she was coming. They were married, however, and afterwards my father worked as a shipping clerk in the family's furniture company in another state. I have since been told that he and my mother were treated rudely there, due to my father's alcoholism. I don't know if his reputation preceded him or whether he actually drank while there. I was born about a year and a half after their marriage.

I was told about the time when as an infant and prior to the move to the farm, my parents left me alone in my crib and went to church. A relative stopped by, and finding me alone, took me home with her. There was a short interval during which my parents feared I had been kidnapped. When I was about two the couple moved to his parents' farm for the balance of the Depression. They kept to themselves in a back bedroom, coming out primarily for meals. My mother was not adept at culinary or housekeeping skills, and assumed second-class citizenship in the household. My father told me that one kitchen wasn't big enough for two women. Eventually he found a job as a bookkeeper.

MY PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP

After the birth of a second child, my parents were hunting for a house to rent. Both my mother and my father told me separately and secretly not to criticize the new house if I didn't like it, so that the other parent wouldn't feel bad. With these cautions and concerns I could not bring myself to hurt both my parents by letting them know I really didn't want to move away with them, but to stay on the farm with my grandmother. The irony is that the new house was the best house we ever lived in. It was all downhill after that.

NOTE: I see this as a seminal point in the development of my personality and much that happened later: “Don’t honor your own feelings and never hurt anyone else’s feelings.”

Although my father’s alcoholism was kept in check on the farm while living with his parents, he began drinking again during the succession of moves partly attributable to the housing needs of returning World War II veterans. Our standard of living plummeted. We were living in a duplex immediately adjacent to the city dump in 1947, when I was eleven years old. By this time my father always drank until he passed out.

Mother was very much an enabler, and seemed to be in a continual state of obeisance to my father, partly so he wouldn’t start drinking again and partly so his feelings wouldn’t get hurt. The atmosphere of not doing or saying anything to hurt my father’s feelings was a given of the household. Looking back, I can see that my mother was always trying to protect him from reality. Once she told me that his wearing dentures was a secret, because my father feared I wouldn’t love him if I knew. I was also instructed not to mention the slight concavity in his chest, about which he was sensitive, which I had never previously noticed. It was interesting that she never told me to ignore his grotesque Tourette’s ticcing, manifested possibly only when intoxicated. Perhaps she thought I wouldn’t notice. I did notice, but never wondered about it until years later, thinking back. I saw the gesticulations and the snorts, but took them for granted, never questioning or commenting on them.

Daddy was not respectful towards my mother, and not a good provider, possessing no work ethic. One night my mother confessed to him that she had been seduced—once—by the landlord of the last room we had temporarily rented. She asked my father never to mention it again, and he promised. She was therefore hurt and in tears later, when he threw her behavior back in her face. Shortly thereafter she asked my father to tell me about sex. It would have been just about the time of my first menstruation, during the summer of 1947, when I was eleven.

Mother separated from my father six years later, soon after I left home for Carole’s, thus precipitating Daddy’s romantic chest-

beating and quoting of Stardust in mournful letters to her. This is when he wrote letters accusing me of trying to break them up. This is also when he saw himself as a rejected Cubby Bear (see earlier chapter on Emotional Congruence).

MOM AND ME

It is my continuing perception that my mother both resented me and felt rejected by me. She didn't like me much, much less love me. She had a very painful labor, and told me the medical staff cuffed her to the bed because she kept getting up and falling. Someone once told me I had been a breech birth, but I was unable to confirm this. Mother said I was angry when I was born, and made a furious face to demonstrate my first response to her. I refused to nurse, turning my head away, and caused her swollen breasts a great deal of pain. Moreover, her parents relented and in a move toward reconciliation paid for me to stay in the hospital nursery after my mother was discharged, so as to give my mother a rest. Bonding with her was thereby further blocked. I do recall her crying when she and my father returned from a brief Florida vacation and I as an infant/toddler failed to recognize her. (I suspect that I did recognize her.) Initially I slept in a crib in my parents' bedroom, but was later moved into my grandmother's room and slept with her. This grandmother became my surrogate mother and in my heart remains so. That I loved the farm so overwhelmingly suggests to me that it was partly because of the contrast between it and my earlier life alone with my parents, until I was two.

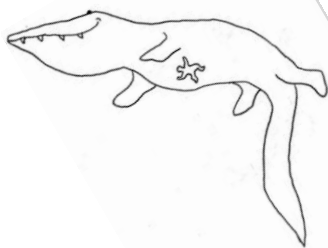
I was told about another time when I was two and while still living alone with my parents, that I ran out into traffic and a truck almost hit me. Apparently I was spanked so hard that I went in the other room, slammed the door and held my breath until I fainted.

Early memories of my mother include her reciting "Little Orphan Annie" and how the "goblins will get you if you don't watch out!" She could and did recite the entire poem several times. I recall in the dark her saying spookily, "Oooh, I'm not your mother, little girl!" And since this was the era of the song "The Little Man Who Wasn't There," I recall feeling frightened when told to look on the stair and see him. My father joined in the game of frightening me

with “The old woman said, ‘Old man, what time is it?’ He replied, ‘Old woman, WATCH YOURSELF!’” These renderings were usually delivered in the darkness of their bedroom, where only the red of their cigarette ends was visible.

Mother’s hurt was palpable one day when I got off the school bus in first grade and went in to see my grandmother before stopping to greet my mother in the back bedroom. At the time she was pregnant with my little sister, who arrived shortly thereafter accompanied by much less birth trauma than I had caused her.

My experience was that my mother never enjoyed my company, whereas my grandmother did. My mother was rough when braiding my hair, and in later years invariably yelled at me if I entered the kitchen while she was cooking. She was very high strung and volatile when stressed, and she was usually stressed. My image of us together was captured in this drawing from my journal in 1974:



1974

I was seven when a parakeet we had died. I recall my mother telling me it was my fault because I hadn’t fed him and he starved to death.

When in the sixth grade I remember running to meet my mother, who had gotten off the bus and was walking up the hill towards our house. I was happy to see her, but when I ran up to her she began yelling at me for having gotten into the newspaper before my father had seen it. (It was under my arm.)

Shortly before the incest began, I had been tentatively diagnosed with tuberculosis. My mother was animated and seemed happy as she described how nice it would be in the sanitarium. I noticed that she was not smiling when she gave me the news that the tuberculosis turned out to be only bronchitis. Then there was the day I was sent home from school, sick, and she angrily instructed me not to

bother her. And the day I felt embarrassed when, out in public, a kindly woman observed that my mother must be proud that she had such a fine, big girl to help her, whereupon my mother lost no time informing her angrily that I would not help her at all, oh no!

I clearly remember the evening when my mother let my father drive off with me beside him and a gallon of wine on the floor in the back seat of the old Chevy. I lack good recall of emotions from childhood, but I do remember that I hoped she wouldn't let me go, that I was frightened, and that it occurred to me that she was relieved to get him off her hands for a few hours. I remember her cheerfully waving goodbye to us. "It'll be all right," she said. Did she not know that it would not be all right? Ostensibly, Daddy was taking me to a local school to practice hitting tennis balls against the walls. It must have been soon after he had begun molesting me, because during that car ride he questioned me about whether his father had molested me when we all lived on the farm. That was also when he told me that my grandfather had made a pass at my mother while we were living there, and that my grandfather had molested others.

I also recall, within this timeframe, sitting alone in that old Chevy in front of the duplex waiting for Mother and Daddy to decide about the future of their relationship. I sat there with a migraine headache, hoping Mother would come out resolved to leave, but that did not happen. Was this just prior to initiation of the incest? Perhaps.

I have reported elsewhere in this volume how relieved I felt when my mother appeared to interfere with tentative plans for me to live with my father after graduation. A school counselor, to whom we were referred following my father's appeal to the judge, suggested it was not appropriate, and my mother agreed it would not be a good idea. (She sounded like that had never occurred to her). At this point I'm seriously considering whether it had been her idea originally, in which case her act to "protect" me would indeed have been miniscule!

MOTHER'S ROLE?

I thought little about my mother's possible role in the incest until many years later, when she was living in a nearby retirement community. An older man befriended her—his wife was in a nursing home with Alzheimer's. My mother arranged for her friend and me to go out somewhere together. I think this embarrassed both of us, and I don't think it ever actually happened. I wondered then, however, about the dynamics of her machinations. Had she also tried to hang onto my father by using me?

While writing this book I have been searching for positive memories of my mother. I could not originally recall any, but then remembered her making delicious fudge when we lived at the farm, and my being taken to the movies and being swung between my parents while walking to and from the car. I remember being told about my mother running across the tomato field in her high heels in response to my screams, one day. I had been playing on a stack of lumber and when a plank slipped my ankle was trapped. I also recall my mother sitting up late with me one night on the farm, teaching me to spell "blackboard," an assignment from my first grade teacher. (It turns out that I was successful, although the teacher had only instructed us to "think about" how we would spell the word.) Fast forward to about 1970 and while visiting us my mother burned her hands putting out a fire she had just stumbled upon in a closet. The fire had been ignited by a bare light bulb, and she was temporarily a hero.

The closest real communication I can recall is her hesitantly warning me that when I collected my children from the babysitter I was too obvious in making a beeline to greet my youngest at the time, a son. I recall many hurtful things I did to my mother but have been over those in my mind for years and choose not to go over them again here.

My mother was probably not as bright as Daddy and me. (She was supposedly an "ice box" baby when she was born, whatever that meant.) She did not enjoy talking about or hearing about hypothetical or other ideas. My father did not cherish her. I probably mir-

rored his disdain for her. I can imagine her being jealous and resentful of me, feeling Daddy and I were making her an outsider and her deciding to give us enough rope to hang ourselves (see Cubby Bear letter), if we were so set on ousting her from her place in the family. She wasn't getting anything from my father but a lot of pain. She was not ready to let her parents say I told you so, but my father was daily becoming more repulsive.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT MY MOTHER

Some victims feel convinced their mother must have known about and allowed the sexual abuse to continue. It is humbling to hear that mothers who were "incested" are more likely to have children who also become abuse victims. Where do we find ourselves along this seemingly never-ending continuum?

In reading my old journals it appears that my analyst had an Oedipal interpretation for my relationship with my mother, to the effect that the incest with my father caused me a kind of castration anxiety. He may have been right, but the child in me says, "She didn't like me first!"

Might the pre-existing relationships in our family have paved the way for incest to occur? Perhaps a stronger mother-daughter bond might have inoculated me against violation. (My little sister and mother were much closer than Mother and me, and my sister was able to escape my father's tentative advances later.) It has recently occurred to me that my father may have made my mother feel inadequate in caring for me.

Could I have been the sacrificial offering from my mother to atone for a single infidelity? Did she also feel resentment at exclusion from the intellectual closeness of our father-daughter relationship? Sending me to my father for sex education could have been an over-determined act, motivated in addition by bitterness, feelings of rejection and inadequacy.

Mother pushed us away, together, even as she was ousted from her rightful place in the family. In bitterness and in denial she withdrew from the playing field. Two findings in the literature were not true of our situation. There was still sex between my parents during

the incestual years, and I was never put in the position of filling her household responsibilities. I now think my mother semi-consciously colluded in the incest. I had not connected her saying "I know what you've been up to" to my father at the time of divorce until proofreading this book.

I can imagine and empathize with my mother's struggles and ultimate losses. In an early draft of this book I wrote that it seems I felt sorry for my parents for most of my life, and a manuscript reader remarked that I wouldn't have felt that way. I don't have to wonder how I felt, since that is the way I did feel, at least the way I was conscious of feeling. I saw both my parents as tragic in that their striving for happiness took them farther and farther away from it. It seems that this perception underlay much of my chronic depression, for whenever I fleetingly reflected on life, their plight was what came to mind. Yes, I did consciously reflect on their tragedy and not on my own.

FROM MY MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE

"Let them have each other and leave me alone!" She was the maid, not the Mrs.! "Go away and good riddance! Go talk yourselves blue in the face! Go to your square dances and tennis games and just give me some peace and quiet!" When I was so clearly dismissing of her there could be no possible thought of protecting me. From what? She needed protection from us!

REFLECTIONS

Telling my mother about the incest was unthinkable. Even in later years I could not do it, although I entertained the thought. I remember not wanting to hurt her. But how much was noble concern and how much was my shame or the fear of her wrath? I always knew she would deny the whole thing, so perhaps I was just not willing to experience her response.

Then again, there was a point when I might have told her. In graduate school I had learned some exciting new methods of structuring communication that had the potential to bring individuals closer. I had just started trying out this new attempt with her one day when the phone rang. It was her brother, and she immediately began to

loudly complain to him how I was trying to lay a bunch of that psychological “garbage” on her. That put an end to my belated, overly optimistic attempt at closeness with her. I can feel the sadness and frustration of that now.

The extent of her tendency to deny was quite frustrating. A very clear example followed a visit we made to a bedridden aristocratic friend of hers from her childhood. When we left I mentioned to my mother that I had smelled urine, whereupon she flew into a rage. Of course I hadn’t smelled urine!

She did not think and feel like a caring mother because she was not one, never having experienced one herself. She was doomed to trail along in the wake of her poor decisions until it all played out and there was no more. She tried and she lost. My father tried and he lost. I tried and came out a little better off than either of them. And I was the victim!

What one perceives depends upon where one is standing. It seems there is no single correct perspective, only an abundance of limited ones.

Years later my husband would drive a wedge between me and our daughter, and I was unable to conceptualize, verbalize, or respond effectively to it. Even now I can only imagine going to a marriage counselor for help sorting it all out. But I knew nothing of marriage counselors at the time. I cannot think of what I could or should have done, given who and what I was—and am.

I realize that holding mothers up against the standards of some highly polished ideal is neither helpful nor empathic. However, my copy editor remarked this week that while writing this book I appeared to become more hostile toward my mother. I cannot deny it, and regret it.

We long to be able to love her and to see ourselves loved in her eyes. We long to be known, to be seen in our deepest selves and liked for who we are by this woman who is our earthly origin and most often our primary caretaker. (Carlson 1989, xi)

The Mothers

At a deeper level, in my nighttime dreams, I believe I have connected with my mother and do love her.

PART VII

RECOVERY

GETTING TO OKAY

As survivors we must find ways to give ourselves what we were denied as children—our self-respect.
—Barbara Small Hamilton

My first major therapist asked me how I managed to survive the incest. I thought back and said, “I imagined telling someone all about it.” But I didn’t really tell, at the time. I just imagined telling; not the authorities, but some supportive, caring person I dreamed up.

SURVIVOR GROUPS

I was never in a therapy group of abuse survivors. I know I would have learned from them, and further depleted my pile of guilt, but there weren’t such groups back then. I learned how supportive groups could be through several consciousness-raising groups.

More recently I did join Survivors of Incest Anonymous, a leaderless 12-step program, and attended until its core membership moved to another city. It was a very positive experience. The first time I attended I arrived early, alone, and fearful for some reason I don’t understand now. I stood awhile looking at their literature, and finally took a chair and joined the group, with my heart in my throat. “Hi, I’m Nancy, and I’m an incest survivor.” “Hi, Nancy.”

If you are ever fortunate enough to have access to the SIA program, I heartily recommend it. Although leaderless, structure and support are built into the program. It is a safe haven. I found both the male and female survivors in the group to be very special people, and I profited from knowing them, hearing their stories and sharing in their continuing struggles.

Herman (2000, 194-95) observes that sharing the secret with a therapy group of survivors offers the experience of belonging, and does

far more than any therapist can do to break down the victim's feeling of isolation:

Group therapy also offers a fuller opportunity for the resolution of feelings of shame and guilt. If the therapist is able to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual acceptance, the group members will be able to grant each other absolution, in a way that no therapist can. For while each woman believes herself to be a terrible sinner, she generally does not feel the same way about others in the group. . . . Sooner or later, each participant is able to apply the group's more tolerant judgment to herself.

However, individual therapy is often crucial for the survivor's recovery. Frequently, follow-up of individual therapy with group therapy is optimal. In this chapter we explore what kinds of questions survivors may have when considering a psychotherapy endeavor.

THERAPY

There are a number of discussions pro and con about the preferred sex of the therapist. Some feminists (Herman and Hirschman 1977, 753) have maintained that "we believe that the male therapist may have great difficulty in validating the victim's experience and responding empathically to her suffering." Moreover, Herman (2000, 185) observed that "the male therapist often has great difficulty permitting the patient to express anger at the offender."

Courtois (1988, 238) wrote that "the learned helplessness of incest and its contribution to revictimization unfortunately makes incest survivors the likely targets of sexual abuse by therapists, individuals who are in positions of authority with them."

Blume (1990, 214) referred to an American Psychiatric Association survey in which a significant percentage of practitioners stated they believed a sexual relationship between a therapist and a patient could be good for the patient's mental health. *Somehow I am reminded of the vulgar sexist remark "All she needs is a good fuck."*

Forward and Buck (1988, 178) reported that in their experience “the great majority of victims, regardless of the gender of the molester, will open up more fully and comfortably to a female therapist.”

Michael Stone (1989, 252) writes that boundary violations by male therapists are more apt to occur with female patients who have an incest history and that referral to a female therapist, at least for the opening phases of treatment, may be the optimal strategy. From some of the published work it is obvious that excellent male therapists for incest survivors do exist. Stone goes on to say that “ultimately, of course, the victim of incest needs to see she can trust a male therapist, as a prelude to trusting men who would be romantically available to her in the outside world” (ibid.).

Briere (1996) has compared the pros and cons in some detail. Use your own judgment, after querying your potential therapist as advised by Forward and Buck further along in this chapter.

It is possible for a survivor to receive psychotherapy for years without the incest ever being explored directly, because the survivor fails to make a connection between her current problems and the incest. The primacy of the problem has recently been realized and a number of therapeutic approaches developed. Therapists are beginning to recognize that “here and now” often directly relates to “there and then.” Authorities tell us that in therapy for survivors, the original abuse should be one of the key (“abuse-focused”) treatment issues. Some adult survivors enter treatment desperately hoping just to be asked.

A word of caution here: Occasionally trauma therapy can become traumatizing itself, in which case the therapist must be prepared to slow the process down. Onno van der Hart and Kathy Steele (1999) propose that clients who are not able to tolerate memory-oriented treatment may still benefit from therapy geared to improve coping skills, relieve symptoms, and improve daily functioning.

Rothschild advises that

with judicious application of the brakes to gradually relieve the pressure, the whole process of trauma therapy becomes less risky. (2000, 80)

When repression and/or dissociation are present, even the willing therapist who suspects that incest has occurred is challenged by a survivor who clings to her blocked memories.

Davies and Frawley (1994, 95) have found that in their experience “Disclosure of abusive memories, affects, and associated fantasies is essential to the successful treatment of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.” Select a therapist who is willing to stay with you and the pain of the incest. Some therapists think they’re helping survivors when they collude with them to avoid re-experiencing the pain.

“The therapist must be completely open to hearing about the incest traumas in order for them to emerge into the client’s consciousness and be shared in the therapy” (Kirschner, Kirschner, and Rappaport 1993, 109).

Frawley-O’Dea (1997, 98) also notes that “the adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse almost always has an identification with her abuser that is split off and repugnant.”

Briere writes,

Because you are not sick, therapy is not about a cure—it is about survival at a new level, about even better survival. Your job is to marshal your courage, to go back to the frightening thoughts and images of your childhood, and to update your experience of yourself and the world. (Briere 1992, 83)

In *abuse-focused* psychotherapy, “memories of traumatic events are repeatedly evoked and explored in a safe, nonpainful environment” (ibid., 139).

Often in working with survivors of child sexual abuse, the patient’s “inner child” is engaged. “Only by allowing the child self to emerge, speak, and mourn will the emotional trauma be healed and

the structural insufficiencies mended” (Davies and Frawley 1994, 76).

We have found ourselves—and have had confirmed by numerous colleagues, students, and supervisees—that speaking directly to the child persona and understanding tenaciously entrenched therapeutic stalemates from the child’s perspective ... changes profoundly the nature of the analytic work. (77)

Herman (1992, 181) observes that

the fundamental premise of the psychotherapeutic work itself is a belief in the restorative power of truth-telling.

The victim often feels, “If I look at what happened I’ll die.” During a presentation in 1994, Jan Hindman compared the victim to a cat on a hot tin roof. What should the cat on the hot tin roof do? “Stop. Have the courage to stop. Settle down onto the pain. Soon after the cat stops dancing and avoiding the tin, the roof under its feet begins to cool.”

Ney and Peters (1995, 89) write that

the realization that one has been robbed of a reasonable childhood, and that it can never be recaptured, can produce despair. People fear that despair—they have looked at it often—and wonder if they can possibly proceed through it. They feel that there can be no hope on the other end. My practice, over many years, has confirmed my impression that people who are able to go through the despair find a resurgence of strength and hope. ... The deeper into the despair that one allows oneself to go, the more realistic and strong is one’s hope.

“Grieving is a natural and painful process that leads to healing. During the process, the survivor must adjust to the loss. ... Emotional energy is withdrawn from past relationships and reinvested in the self and in the development of new relationships. This does not mean that the survivor no longer cares about her family but that she is separating from them to reclaim herself and her development” (Courtois 1988, 127)..

There comes a point when the descent into mourning is at once the most necessary and the most dreaded task of recovery. "Patients often fear that the task is insurmountable, that once they allow themselves to start grieving, they will never stop. ... Only through mourning everything that she has lost can the patient discover her indestructible inner life" (Herman 1992, 188).

Authorities tell us that in therapy for survivors, the original abuse should be one of the key ("abuse-focused") treatment issues. But "many clients will not volunteer victimization experiences unless specifically asked" (Briere and Runtz 1988, 93).

According to Davies and Frawley,

These are patients with conscious memories of their childhood traumas who want to speak but may not unless and until they know the therapist is willing and able to hear their stories. Just asking about a history of sexual abuse is frequently enough to facilitate disclosure from these patients. (1994, 90)

Unfortunately, some therapists are led to avoid the topic from a belief that they should not re-expose their client to her pain. The therapist may want to be spared, also. And often the client will collude with the therapist to avoid disclosing her abuse, and her own pain.

Forward and Buck (1988, 178) remind us that the therapist works for the client and that we have every right to interview a therapist. They recommend that anyone who has made the decision to seek treatment for incest ask the following questions of a prospective therapist:

- How many incest victims have you treated?
- Have you had special training in this area?
- What is your treatment plan for me (individual, group, etc.?)
- What kind of techniques do you use, i.e. letter writing, role-playing, visualization, homework assignments?
- Will you see other members of my family, if I want you to?

When addressing the question of whether the memories have to be fully remembered in order for survivors to heal, Davis (1991, 118) answers:

No. It's possible to heal from the effects of the abuse without remembering the details of what happened. Some survivors gain complete recall of the abuse; others never get more than a funny feeling in the pit of their stomachs. The crucial thing is for the survivor to put together whatever clues she has so she can accept the fact that the abuse took place. ... The important thing is for survivors to eventually reach a point where they can say, "Yes, it happened. The effects are imprinted in my life. I'm going to accept the fact that I was abused and make a commitment to heal, even if I never remember the specifics." Memory is not a prerequisite to healing. Willingness, determination, and courage are.

As Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 13) remind us, "People can be helpless in preventing their own victimization, while powerful in coping with it."

Meiselman describes an eclectic blend that "draws heavily on trauma theory but also uses some of the more traditional techniques associated with gradual personality change during longer-term therapy." The goal of *reintegration* therapy is "to reconnect remembered traumatic events with their associated affects and to allow any unremembered traumatic events to surface and be placed into the context of the survivor's emotional reactions" (Meiselman 1994, 92). She refers to the latter as "derepression" (ibid., 96).

Miller cautions that in her experience, "to feel something momentarily, to sense something for a short time or even to know it intellectually, is a long way from enduring the truth permanently and integrating it" (1990, 151).

Agosta and Loring (1988, 121) state that "there is no one 'right' way to treat victims of child sexual abuse. Providing a sensitive, safe environment in which the individual feels a sense of control is the first step." Briere advocates a "growth" model of treatment rather than a clinical one. The survivor is seen as "someone who made entirely appropriate accommodations to a toxic environment.

These accommodations were ‘healthy’ at the time of the abuse, and thus the client’s current predicament is more one of updating her survival behaviors and perceptions” (Briere 1989, 60).

Three therapeutic approaches seem promising for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to published studies. Van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Van der Hart (1996, 417) report that cognitive-behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing ... or pharmacotherapy, have shown “quite positive results” when used in the treatment of survivors who carry a PTSD diagnosis.

For the most part we aren’t sick – we’ve just been objectified and dehumanized.

Summit (1988, 55) agrees:

Dissociation is not a weakness or a pathological trait
any more than being sexually victimized is a confirma-
tion of badness or unworthiness.

Clinicians who work with survivors with PTSD stress the importance of repeatedly “replaying” the memories until the survivor can honestly say the memory is “not as frequent, the physical distress is not as great, and the intensity of the memory has decreased” (Burgess and Holmstrom 1978, 331).

Then there’s phase-oriented treatment, which includes a more or less lengthy initial stage of symptom reduction, stabilization and ego-building, which is sometimes the entire treatment (Van der Hart and Steele 1999).

The goal of the Eye Movement Desensitization Reprogramming approach developed by Francine Shapiro (1989) is *not* to recover memories, according to Parnell (1997, 128). Parnell states that “Rather it is to become free from the limiting beliefs, images, emotions, and behaviors” (ibid.). The client focuses on the traumatic material that is bothering her and then she is led through rapid eye movements as a way to desensitize the trauma associated with the experience.

The fact is that no one knows why the eye movement portion of EMDR works. Parnell writes that

It may be that such stimulation dislodges the dysfunctional material that is lodged in the body-mind due to a small or large trauma. There is a theory that the eye movements are associated with part of the brain called the hippocampus, which is linked to the consolidation of memory. Another theory is that the dual attention the client maintains with EMDR, focusing simultaneously on the inner feelings and the eye movements, allows the alerted brain to metabolize whatever it is witnessing. (Ibid., 52-53)

Generally speaking, EMDR is a briefer therapy than those previously described, and although the warmth of the therapeutic alliance is less developed, both EMDR and eclectic therapy have had successes (Edmond, Sloan, and McCarty 2004).

The usefulness of EMDR, especially for survivors with limited treatment options available to them due to a lack of insurance coverage or financial ability to pay for therapy was pointed out by Edmond and Rubin (2004) who reported an 18-month follow-up study which found a 1999 EMDR sample to have not only maintained their therapeutic gains but improved slightly on every standardized measure. The authors acknowledged that while it was possible to achieve and maintain some treatment gains from such a relatively short period of treatment [6 sessions], the findings do not represent complete resolution of a childhood trauma.

David Grove's approach to treatment of survivors is similar to EMDR in that it does not delve into buried memories, but enables the patient to move forward in her recovery through the use of her own metaphors (Grove and Panzer 1989).

It is wrong to assume that he necessarily needs to go down into that past; regurgitating it all, exploring it, and understanding it in the process. ... Another possibility is to cross over it. The client can do so by walking over it. He can build a bridge and walk over in safety, leaving the black hole behind. (Ibid., 175)

Stone (1989, 244) maintains that "the experience of incest inevitably distorts one's perceptions and one's expectations of self and

the world of adults so grossly as to render psychotherapy (in all but the mildest instances, in the strongest persons) mandatory.” It is his perception that “the incest experience is difficult to integrate with the rest of the personality even when the traumatization has been brief, nonrecurrent, and not severe” (ibid., 247). Porter, Blick, and Sgroi are in agreement, writing that “we believe that all child victims of sexual abuse need some level of therapeutic intervention, regardless of the identity of the perpetrator” (1982, 111). They suggest that failure to follow through with therapy for their child reflects the parents’ own wish to forget.

We are reminded by Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 7) that victims will still need to “face the task of reestablishing a view of the world as meaningful, in which events once again make sense; and coping will involve regaining a positive self-image, including self-perceptions of worth, strength and autonomy.”

While the goal of a “complete cure” is tempered with caution, a few survivors have expressed elation at how much they have profited from therapy. Barbara Hamilton is quoted by Bass and Davis (1994, 71) as having described her outcome as finally living in “Technicolor.”

One of Silver, Boon, and Stones’ survivors said, “I learned over the years that nothing as bad as what I had been through was going to happen again. Now I know there is virtually nothing I cannot overcome” (1983, 90).

Alice Miller, a therapist and survivor, has written that

the process of deepening one’s insights is never fully terminated, nor need it be. But today I can afford, to a far greater extent than ever before, to know what happened to me in my childhood. I owe a lot to this knowledge: I am now free of physical symptoms, some of which I had suffered since childhood, and I have lost the fears that have also accompanied me all my life. (Miller 1990, 63)

Herman (2000, 179) quotes one woman who was lucky enough to find a good therapist:

To those of you who are incest victims I would like to say this: digging into my family experience has been (still is) one of the most depressing and painful periods of my life and I didn't start to do it *until I was ready* and really wanted to do it, feeling I had to understand myself. Through therapy I have come to see pain and fear as teachers, not as something to push down and run away from. ... I know my pain and fears will never disappear entirely, but at least they won't control me anymore.

Van der Kolk, who has reported on brain studies of chronic hyperarousal and difficulties with self-regulation, says in an interview with Lisa M. Najavits that "there has been a lack of focus on developing treatments that addressed the inability to concentrate and modulate affective arousal. ... It's been worrisome to me that we have not prioritized treatments that address the modulation of arousal states" (2013, 519).

People with PTSD can be like quicksilver:

They seem to move immediately from stimulus to response without actually realizing what makes them so upset. (Van der Kolk and McFarlane 1996, 13)

VICTIM, SURVIVOR, OR...

In this book my preferred term is "survivor." "Victim" sounds like an inferior position, and "survivor" reeks of strength. Russell prefers to use "victim," a word with which victims of less severe forms of abuse are able to identify (Russell 1986, 14).

Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983, 13) acknowledge that "we tend to think of the prototypic victim as female. The term 'victim' seems to connote weakness and helplessness and may thus be stereotypically applied more readily to females than to males. In fact, this connotation of weakness has led some researchers to prefer to use the term 'survivor' rather than 'victim' when describing men and women who have experienced traumatic negative events." They prefer "victim," however, because it serves to relieve victims of responsibility for their victimization.

"She is a 'survivor' because a 'victim' is characterized by passive helplessness and is seen with pity. But ... there is strength, dignity,

resilience, and entitlement of respect. To continue to call her a ‘victim’ is to insult her by overlooking the victory of her survival” (Blume 1990, 20).

Interestingly, Chew objects to both “victim” and “survivor.” As a part of identity, she says, “The survivor label views a woman’s sense of self in relation to the history of sexual abuse as well as the aftereffects. ... By placing primary importance on the abuse that has been suffered, a woman’s identity becomes rooted in the abuse” (Chew 1998, 20). The therapy group Chew leads, therefore, is simply called *Beyond Survival: Discovering Pathways to Healing*.

EMBRACE YOURSELF

At 79, I am no longer in psychotherapy, and I am content. It feels strange, however, to look at myself and observe my shallowness, a histrionic strain, self-centeredness, superficial knowledge about world events, visceral discomfort with men, and to try and accept me as I am, with all my pluses and minuses.

Then I come across a woman who is quoted by Bass and Davis (1994, 179):

Finally, I had to realize it was part of me. It’s not something I can get rid of. The way I work with it will change, but I think it will always be there. And I think I have to get to the point where I love it, because then it’s really loving me wholly. If I’m going to really love myself totally, then I had to love all of me, and this is part of who I am.

After a long struggle with alcoholism George Sheehan found himself in recovery, and wrote that “I have found out who I am. And I have no intention of impersonating anyone else” (Sheehan 1998, 50).

Weiner and Kurpius (1995, 150) quote a survivor who was able to accept all of herself, also:

You have to not only accept what happened to you but embrace it as the wound that has given you much of your power. ... When I embraced my woundedness, I began to heal and the abuse began to lose its power

over me. Otherwise, I would have been stuck. ... I'm actually saying, "I accepted what happened to me totally." I embraced it. And when I did that I no longer saw myself as a victim. ... Instead, I see myself as a wounded healer. In Native American cultures, there's a whole tradition around a wounded healer. ... By finding meaning in the experience, one's life can be enriched. (Ibid., 151)

The preceding survivor has survived *despair*, one of the stages many survivors need to go into and get through.

Grieving is very much part of incest therapy and usually proceeds simultaneously with the experience of anger and outrage over past abuse and neglect. The survivor is encouraged to understand the pain as a natural consequence of the numerous losses inherent in incest and as a necessary but uncomfortable part of the healing process. (Courtois 1988, 127)

Bass and Davis (1994, 130) share that "to release these painful feelings and to move forward in your life, it is necessary, paradoxically, to go back and to relive the experiences you had as a child—to grieve, this time with the support of a caring person and with the support of your adult self."

Rothschild (2000, 63) speaks of *grief*:

Grief is a response to loss or change. It is a great resource in the treatment of trauma and PTSD. By its nature, grief is a sign that an experience has been relegated to the past. It is usually a positive sign when a trauma client reaches the stage where grief arises. Sometimes a client will fear that his grief is a regression into trauma, but it is usually just the opposite, a healing progression. When working with body awareness, most clients will notice that their grief helps them to feel more solid, less fearful, if more sad.

Armstrong (1979, 259-60) reports a conversation with herself:

"How do you feel about it now?"

"Talking about it? Sad. Very sad."

"So it doesn't go away?"

“It recedes.”

“I don’t like that.”

“You don’t have to like it. You just have to live with it. Like a small, nasty pet you’ve had for years.”

My thoughts take a turn, and I try to equate my psychological wounds with physical ones. If the abuse had left me with one leg and no left hand, how would I regard myself? At some point with acceptance, I hope. Of course then no one, not even the perpetrator, could deny the consequences of the incest.

EMERGENCY!

When you or the world seem to be falling apart, Briere (1992) suggests some grounding techniques to increase your sense of personal identity, contact with the here and now, and perceived personal control. Examples of such occasions include being threatened by the impact of derealization or depersonalization, overwhelming rage or panic, repeated flash backs, or intense reliving of traumatic events. It’s back to basics: repeating to oneself one’s name, location, and immediate location; touching or concentrating on objects in the immediate environment, or feeling one’s feet on the floor or one’s body in a chair. This practice is sometimes referred to as “centering,” and includes breathing!

Maltz (1991) advises to initially

stop whatever is triggering the flashback, if possible. Calm yourself, ground yourself and experience your boundaries. Affirm and reorient yourself through the five senses. Take action if there is anything else you need to do in order to feel safe. Acknowledge what’s happening. Assume that you have hit a trigger and are reacting to past sexual abuse. Try to determine what triggered your reaction. Take this trigger seriously, even though it might seem silly or inconsequential. See if you can make a connection between the trigger and something that you experienced in the abuse. (Ibid., 161)

Although Van der Kolk does not use the word *meditation*, he does recommend ways of regulating autonomic arousal by techniques

like breathing, Qi gong, drumming, or yoga. “To become the master of your own ship you need to learn to modulate, deal with, and befriend your internal sensations. ... To my mind, healing from trauma starts with noticing yourself and coming to terms with the sensations in your body” (Van der Kolk 2013, 520).

An important part of Recovery centers around taking responsibility for protecting and soothing yourself. Right now, look around your life and check that you are physically, emotionally and interpersonally safe. If you are not safe, problem-solve. Where does the danger lie and what can you do about it? Then do it. Remember, denial is the bugaboo. Safety concerns might include birth control, protection from STDS, abuse of substances, illegal activities such as shoplifting and DUIs, an unsafe living arrangement, acquaintances who have a toxic effect on you, impulsive behaviors—yours and theirs—frequenting unsafe places, etc. Many survivors find themselves in relationships which they do not see as abusive because of their past. Ask yourself if you are being respected, listened to, and free of physical and emotional abuse. (Emotional abuse includes being called derogatory names). We were all trapped in the incest, earlier, for which we were not responsible. We are responsible now if we allow ourselves to be further abused in any way.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

As discussed earlier, the road ahead for those who long remain in the role of sexual abuse victim is uphill. It is long and hard, usually accompanied by increasingly heavy loads of guilt and shame, a greater sense of powerlessness, and a more damaging impact on your sexuality.

If the molestation is continuing, you can stop it immediately by getting physically away from the offender. Write him a letter (and make a Xerox copy of it for yourself) telling him that you will report his molestation to authorities if there is any further discussion about, alluding to or attempt at touching or otherwise engaging you again. Then keep out of his way! If you decide to report or not report anyway, that is your choice. If you feel that you cannot trust yourself to stay at a safe distance from your abuser, and you cannot bring yourself to tell, then make arrangements to move into another

household, such as that of a relative or in with a friend's family. The ban on further discussion with the molester is due to the unequal match. The adult has had more experience with manipulation, and will tweak the "trauma bond," as discussed earlier.

Remember, you're both vulnerable to it, only it's much more important to *your survival* than his.

Stopping the abuse is more important than any other decision, except for the decision to go on living. Do not try to make up for halting the incest by trying to replace it with a healthier form of relating. The pull to do so is the trauma bond, and in order to escape its tendrils you must sever the relationship completely.

LIVE

Do you feel safe from physical harm by yourself *to* yourself? Someone has called suicide a case of mistaken identity. Do not hurt yourself or anyone else. When you hear the caustic inner voice, go in search of that wiser voice, the part of you that has kept you alive and kicking all these many years, and *listen*. Your inner strength wants to dialogue with you. *You've got good protoplasm*. I tell myself that this may be the only chance I'll ever have to be me, and I hang in there. Tomorrow may never come, so the only time available for growth is now. Bass and Davis address the topic of suicide in their 2-page spread, "Don't Kill Yourself" (ibid., 1994, 212-13). Note that one of the phone numbers on your self-soothing list (see below) needs to be the number of your local suicide hot line. If you pose a danger to yourself, ask for help!

I am satisfied with my much earlier decision to hang onto and value life. There are far too many victims who give up and give in to self-mutilation and suicidal urges.

A recent verse from my journal:

DON'T DO IT!

Don't tie that noose around your neck!
Are you leaving the world better off?
Speak your travails!
Sing your song!
Somewhere, there's a turtle
crossing the road.

From my inspirational readings I find an apt comment: "One star is brightest among all: the self. I found the source of livingness inside me, something I didn't even know existed" (Ferrucci 1982, 60).

HOPE

Ney and Peters (1995, 89) observe

the realization that one has been robbed of a reasonable childhood, and that it can never be recaptured, can produce despair. People fear that despair—they have looked at it often—and wonder if they can possibly proceed through it. They feel that there can be no hope on the other end. My practice, over many years, has confirmed my impression that people who are able to go through the despair find a resurgence of strength and hope. ... The deeper into the despair that one allows oneself to go, the more realistic and strong is one's hope.

No one can change unless they believe they are capable of changing. Where does one find hope? Some have found it deep inside themselves. Those with multiple personalities (dissociative states) have taught us about the existence of an almost magical healing part of ourselves whom they have christened the Inner Self Helper, or ISH (Crawford 1991,1).

Blume (1990, 80) writes of the existence of the "inner guide" in many incest survivors. She describes it as

an aspect of the incest survivor herself. This internal caretaker ensures that no matter how complicated or painful the incest survivor's outer life becomes, she can protect herself enough to "keep on keepin' on."

Recovery

In many instances, she is uncannily wise. How does she so unerringly know what decision to make? This manifestation of the survival spirit is outstanding in many women who endured sexual abuse as children. I do not mean to describe a magic or perfect solution. ... many, many incest survivors have within themselves this spot of wisdom—especially survivors who are strong enough to seek help and healing.



My ISH

Not to quibble with Blume but to expand on her: in my experience with Quakers and others who meditate, everyone has an ISH. (Yes, even incest offenders.) What varies is the recognition.

Rothschild (2000, 130-131) refers to this process as *developing dual awareness*, and recommends it for protection when reliving traumatic memory:

It is not possible for clients to safely address traumatic memories until and unless they are able to maintain a simultaneous awareness and discrimination of past and present. They must be able to know, at least intellectually, that the trauma being addressed is in the past, even though it may feel as though it is happening now.

It has been suggested that when processing what's going on within us and describing to ourselves what we are experiencing, we think as if from the "third person pronoun." Stone writes that:

If we get just a little distance on all this emotional weather, we notice that it's the feelings themselves that are always and forever changing, endlessly arising and

subsiding like the clouds in the sky outside our window. ... Getting that crucial distance from the emotional weather is what happens when we substitute the third-person pronoun or our own name for that ever-captivating "I". (1996, 69-70)

The technique may also be useful during panic and anxiety attacks.

SURVIVAL MANUAL

It has been recommended that we develop our own list of things to do in order to *self soothe*, the calming process that babies learn and as adults we sometimes forget. A partial list of self-soothers might include:

Get out your copy of *The Courage to Heal*, and re-read.

Call a friend, whose phone number is:_____.

If she or he isn't home, call the next name and number:_____, etc..

Have the phone number of the local crisis or suicide hot line written down along with your other sources of support.

Breathe deeply.

Center yourself.

Take a warm bath or hot shower.

Cuddle your cat.

Journal.

Go to the library.

Listen to your favorite music.

Make your bed (just joking).

Take an Assertiveness Training Workshop.

Pray, if you have anyone to pray to.

Write a poem or do a spontaneous drawing/painting.

Read *Love After Love*, a poem by Derek Walcott:

LOVE AFTER LOVE

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome,
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was yourself.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

—Derek Walcott

I've used a list like this in the past, only my list at the time was primarily composed of one phone number after another of friends and support people. I kept my list taped to the wall by the telephone. I also included journaling on my list, and smelling Mentholatum, which reminds me of the farm.

If I can, I laugh at myself in a tolerant way. When going through a stressful time, such as a trip to the hospital, I try to find some wry humor in the things that I'm subjected to, and what others say. They're there if you look for them. Once home, I write them down and can laugh. It helps me avoid depression and feeling powerless.

When besieged by anger, here's a suggestion, again from my inspirational reading: "Whenever I feel anger rising in me, I immediately convert this energy into putting my apartment in order. And I always have a very tidy apartment" (Ferucci 1982, 88). Maybe I wasn't kidding about making that bed!

THERE'S NO RUSH

It may be useful to guard against feeling healed prematurely. Some have called this a “flight into health.” There is no rush, no need to confront or forgive your abuser, *ever*, unless it feels totally okay. If you decide to confront him, get some support in planning what to say. Be prepared for denial or a hostile response. “The only forgiveness that’s required is to forgive yourself. If you should decide to confront *him*, the only purpose should be to free yourself, in essence to take back your power, to prove to yourself that you will not be frightened or controlled any longer, and thus to guarantee that you will never be a victim again” (Lew 1988, 231).

Weiner and Kurpius (1995) remind us that the danger of forgiveness is *not* that it eventually might happen, but that it may come prematurely.

Alice Miller distrusts forgiveness. “I regard the moral demand for reconciliation with parents as an inevitable blocking and paralyzing of the therapeutic process” (1990, 154).

Other survivors have found it helpful to “take a vacation” from sex (become celibate for awhile); become monogamous; learn to be assertive (*Your Perfect Right* by Alberti and Emmons, 1974, is an excellent book); learn to be patient and give yourself time; journal; get clear on your sexual and other boundaries; learn to communicate with your partner if you have one. As you settle down, you may find that you are calmer and better able to face your life with equanimity.

I used to feel that normal life was dull and boring. That feeling led to fringe acquaintances and behaviors. I can still remember the feeling, but am now contentedly comfortable with the ordinary.

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

I never wanted to be known as “that woman who was incested.” I preferred to be known as something a little more human, maybe “that old lady with the red cat.” If you would rather be you than a stereotype, protect your privacy, within reasonable limits. Of

course, I realize that I am outing myself with this book, but hey, I'm 79!

UNMAILED LETTERS

If you tend to be impulsive at times, and aren't sure about your judgment or perspective, try writing the family member who molested you—or the ones who didn't protect you—not to be mailed right away, if ever, but to get it out!

LET GO OF SPECIALNESS

Partly because we had to carry the secret, most of us felt shame. At the same time, many of us also felt we were “special,” along with that old devil *ambivalence*. The problem is that both shame and specialness distance us from others. In order to re-join the human race we really need to rub elbows with others, on a level playing field.

As Courtois (1988, 219) observes,

Some survivors inflate their sense of self and their abilities in order to defend against their badness and their depression. ... Grandiosity can be used to set the self apart in a superior way that alienates or intimidates others. This reinforces the sense of being different while intensifying loneliness and isolation.

Fraser's wise self-reflective words come to me:

My main regret is excessive self-involvement. Too often I was sleepwalking through other people's lives, eyes turned inward while I washed the blood off my hands. (1987, 253)

LISTEN TO YOUR INSTINCTS

Although the *effects* of a sexual transgression may be minimized, it has been my experience that the transgression itself is seldom minimized. While an offender can dismiss what he may refer to as “a quick feel,” to the recipient it is an aggressive invasion of her private and vulnerable space. I recall an old man who dismissed (minimized) his occasional peeking at his granddaughter while she bathed. When the granddaughter entered treatment she was having

frightening nightmares involving staring eyes that followed her. This was prior to discovery of the peep hole in the bathroom wall. Arousal can be telegraphed at the preconscious level. *I recall my daughter telling me she was uncomfortable around a friend of mine who later proved to be a pedophile. I believe I unconsciously perceived my father's arousal when spanking me, years before the incest.*

There are comfortable hugs and yucky hugs. In animals (including humans), communication sometimes occurs via pheromones. Most females can experience a creepy or icky feeling around someone without being able to describe why. Honor your instincts and listen to them! A line from my journal: *If I'm taking care of myself, at least I'm being taken care of.*

READ

It has been soothing to read the works of people who faced the pain of living head-on. Seeing how others whom I admire and respect have dealt with their pain helps me feel less alone. This has been especially true while reviewing the literature for this book.

There are so many good and helpful books out there! Ney and Peters (1995) wrote one I couldn't put down, about the life of a therapy group of survivors. I'm sure the humor wasn't intentional, so maybe it was the rebel survivor in me who laughed through much of Robert S. Mayer's 1995 "Treatment of the Very Difficult Sexual Abuse Survivor." I enjoyed it tremendously.

JOURNALING

You may have discovered the value of journaling years ago. I have included a big chunk of my personal journal in the second half of this book, which includes dreams, reflections, poems, memories, spontaneous drawings, recording of events, healing passages from other writers, and internal dialogues. I've also done collages "straight from the gut." These are on my wall, not in the journal. In addition, I maintain a list by years of major occurrences—such as moves, graduations, etc.—without which I fear I would be engulfed by a mass of scrambled data. My mind just doesn't keep

track of years (such as for surgeries or even deaths). Anything to help me with my problem of perspective!

Alice Miller found healing in her spontaneous painting, which helped her not only to discover her personal history but also to liberate herself from the mental compulsions and concepts of her upbringing (1990,7). Another value of journaling is that writing memories down increases their chances for retrieval. Terr explains that “those who have continual access to journals or sketch pads have a better chance of remembering than those who don’t” (Terr 1994, 234).

Briere (1989, 106) recognizes the value of journaling for the survivor, referring to it as being her own therapist, encouraging creativity, and strengthening self-control by analyzing her internal processes.

I have attempted to make friends with my unconscious, and from time to time it gives me a soothing dream or dreams. I had the following three dreams the night that I finished an early draft of this book:

In the first I am at my mother’s house or apartment and look down and see something like a teeny knothole on the floor. I notice it because there is fire behind it. I alert the others, but almost immediately the fire has been put out and there is no problem. In essence, I have acted and feel protective of my mother and her house.

My second dream fragment from the same night has me in a neighboring woman’s yard. Somehow the ground next to me gives way, leaving a hole in the dirt. I seem to have had nothing to do with the large hole. Peering in, I notice that some flower bulbs which were near the surface have fallen to the bottom of the hole and are too deep now to bloom. I notice the hole is on an embankment and that one side of it is more shallow than the other. I cross to the more shallow side and am in the process of taking the bulbs so that they can be re-planted closer to the surface and bloom when the weather turns warm.

In the third dream fragment, I am in a woman’s kitchen and look out the window to see a wounded animal. It has lost one of its legs

and is being taught to walk with only three legs. It is being led with care, and I feel appreciative of the gentle manner in which it is being handled. The 3-legged animal learning to walk recalls the 3-legged table I have compared survivors to.

Frawley-O'Dea (1997, 94), values both fantasies and dreams in psychotherapy. "Fantasies, somewhat like dreams, at least to some extent, escape the defensive censoring operations of both patient and clinician to give voice to unconscious, disowned, denied, or regressive aspects of the patient's internal world." This extends to fantasies that emerge in spontaneous artwork.

Barbara Hamilton writes, "In looking back I marvel at the healing process I found in writing my way through despair; how I have been turned around and put back on track by insights from within" (1997, 163).

I now have a different take on all the hand-wringing I did in my journal, when I read something like the following:

There is no such thing as absolute healing. You never erase your history. The abuse happened. It affected you in profound ways. That will never change. But you can reach a place of resolution (Bass and Davis 1994, 178).

I now realize what my lifelong struggle as revealed in my journal has been about, and that is validating. During much of my journaling I did not realize that my depression, confusion, lack of integration, and problems with perspective traced back to the incest. I have accepted that now, and in turn have tried to demonstrate to incest perpetrators the damaging fallout of their actions. It's difficult to believe something you don't want to believe without evidence, and I have attempted to present some in this volume.

TELL OR NOT?

I will not presume to recommend whether "to tell" or "not to tell." As mentioned earlier, most of those who told regret it and most of those who didn't tell also regret it. What I will recommend is escaping the molester's tendrils, *now*. Because any professional you confide in is duty bound to report the abuse to authorities, you can

only obtain support anonymously while working through your decision whether to tell or not. (My suggestion on how to escape was included earlier.)

LET GO OF THE “ABUSE IDENTITY”

Helplessness in the face of victimization is different from helplessness to recover from it. In survivors with long histories of trauma, a diffuse identity is sometimes replaced by an “abuse identity” that perpetuates the identification of the abuse as a primary feature in the survivor’s life, repeating in a distorted manner the importance of the perpetrator in earlier life. (Reviere 1966, 126-127)

I recall being drawn to Bertrand Russell’s statement, “To know people well is to know their tragedy; it is usually the central thing about which their lives are built” (1967, 287). I resonated to his words. They seemed to affirm me. I am reading them differently now. At the time I only experienced a kindred spirit. Now I see a danger in becoming overly focused on the tragic aspect of lives. Perhaps I’m just fending off depression. But it is true that for a long time I was bothered by a quote I can no longer attribute, to the effect that one can seek either the truth or happiness, but one can never have both. (I’m now closer to having both!)

INTERRUPT NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

Although shedding low self-esteem is difficult, it is possible to interrupt negative self-talk, especially calling oneself names.

Lowered self-esteem is a continuing bugaboo for me, and it frustrates my friends who don’t understand where my self-negativity comes from. I’m in a small spirituality support group, and one night I suggested we discuss how we experience our shame. No one else in the group admitted to carrying any shame!

REMEMBER, IT’S NORMAL TO...

Experience a number of different feelings about the incest, *even at the same time*. Perhaps you feel sadness, anger, grief, shame, fear,

hurt, regret, even caring. Remind yourself that how you feel is normal. What someone else *did* to you is not. Carrying scars from the incest means you survived.

SAY NO...

Until you really want to say yes, as Maltz and Holman (1987, 85) advise. Practice a statement you can manage easily, like "I need some time to think about that," and don't let anyone bully you out of your position! Bass and Davis (1994, 192) remind us, "As you say no to other people, you start to say yes to yourself."

PART VIII
PROFESSIONAL
REMARKS

SURVIVOR AS THERAPIST

COUNTERTRANSFERENCE?

How did being an incest survivor affect my treatment of the sex offenders in our prison program? I don't know whether it hurt or helped. We were short-staffed and as mentioned earlier my ability to put things in perspective was questionable, and continues to be. I had no need to be "Mr. Nice Guy," nor did I have difficulty confronting clients' dysfunctional behaviors.

When treating sex offenders in the prison system, I was guilty of "boundary crossing," probably because I cared too much about whether the men reoffended. I also encouraged them to stay in touch with the prison program after they left. Most of the written concern about ethical infractions with sex offenders deals with negative, punitive attitudes towards them. I was not one of those.

I published "Open Line," a monthly newsletter primarily for men in our program who were released. They were encouraged to stay in touch. Many of them did, and some of their wives also. We sent the newsletter to other treatment programs, and some of their program members corresponded, in addition to their treatment staff. The men in the program had been mutually supportive, but parole rules forbade them from being in contact with each other after release.

I drove to another city and had a cup of coffee with one of our former members a year after his release. I attended the graduation from nursing school of the wife of another released group member, and I exchanged Christmas greetings with him and his wife. I once shed a tear in group when a new member said that he had been told he would get along if he "agreed with everything Nan says."

At one point, in what I felt was in the service of treatment, I shared with the group the fact that I was an incest survivor. This was a mistake, in that it provided fodder for the prison's gossip mill. Possibly it was a mistake in other ways, but I'm not clear on that.

For years my hobby has been producing programs for public access television in my hometown. After a bright, articulate former educator was released from prison, I featured him and his wife in a short series called "Don't Touch That Child." They lived in another city, weren't personally identified, and stayed in my home when they journeyed to be videotaped.

Both those videos and this book may be additional offshoots of my desire to prevent further victimizations.

McCann and Pearlman (1990, 136), writing about the effects of working with victims, stated, "It is our belief that all therapists working with trauma survivors will experience lasting alterations in their cognitive schemas, having a significant impact on the therapist's feelings, relationships, and life." The authors anticipate a "more realistic view of the world, through the integration of the dark sides of humanity with healing images" for both therapist and the victim. I believe the same can be said about working with incest offenders. A disadvantage in working with offenders is that you are never sure whether the experience has had any therapeutic impact. Feedback is lacking, which is hopefully not the case after therapy with victims.

FINAL THOUGHTS

What a mess, and there's no end in sight. In a study of college males by Briere and Runtz (1989), seven percent of the students said they would have sex with a child if sure they'd not be caught. Add this attitude to the recent environmental effects of estrogen on a child's body and a youth culture that outfits children as little vamps, and the danger to children becomes palpable, especially if the child's fun-filled imitation of Lady Gaga dancing is perceived as an expression of sexual desire.

Is an innocent, carefree childhood a thing of the past? Or was there ever really such a thing? Can there ever be one?

Some readers may be surprised that I don't give the victims advice as to whether to tell or not, but only suggest an alternative via escaping the incestuous situation. There are several reasons for this. First, the justice system is flawed; enough said. Second, the family suffers significant economic hardship, often losing the house and car, both vital to its continued survival. Third, the victim experiences additional guilt. Fourth, too much taxpayer money is not only going down the drain, but in many instances doing harm, as inmates become hardened by the prison experience. Fifth, incarceration doesn't seem to solve the problem.

PART IX

FURTHER STEPS TOWARD CLOSURE

LETTERS

This section includes material created to aid myself in the survivor process. Although never delivered or even written while the addressees were still alive, I found penning these letters helpful. Perhaps the exercise might be of use to someone else.

LETTER TO MY PATERNAL GRANDFATHER

I don't have much to say to you, although I feel sorry for you because you were somehow "different." Looking back, I remember you being slow to move or to react, and from the way you sat, moved your legs, laughed, opened your mouth a little, licked your lips, rearranged your crotch and got a funny look on your face, you appeared to always be aware of your penis. I was told as a child that you had hardening of the arteries, and a family member told me recently that you had Tourette's syndrome, although I never observed those symptoms. I can recall thinking that riding your knee in the game "Giddyap horse" was fun, and the candy from your liquor closet was special. I didn't realize I was just a means to an end.

However, you let loose a torrent of pain and shame that is still reverberating. Only one family member attended your funeral. Years before, after visiting the farm with their children, others departed, never to return. They had not realized you would try to touch their children.

Recently I learned that your last move with my grandmother was a forced one, following your sexual assault of a girl out in a boat. I hope she wasn't one of the friends I played with when I lived on the farm. Whoever she was, I'm sorry for her. To the best of my knowledge it was the only time you molested a non-family member.

The forced move to another state was to a much less desirable setting, and a much reduced occupation. You used to sing *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny*, but I don't believe you could return there, either. You lived to a ripe old age, supported by a good woman who devoted her life to you. You were very lucky. I believe that you were abnormally *hardwired*. I regret that for you, your wife, and our entire family.

LETTER TO MY FATHER

Daddy, you've been gone for more than thirty years now. Your ashes are spread in my back yard flowerbed. Some of them have been carried by the wind. They have all been carried on the winds of time. You said you were in love with me, your daughter, and that what "we" were doing wasn't wrong. It was so obviously and totally wrong that it is difficult for me to believe you did not see it.

Alcoholism isn't an excuse for anything, but I wonder how much that contributed to your misspent life. You told yourself you were in love with me. What did you tell yourself when you tried to molest my little sister years later?

I just re-read some of your earlier letters, and I wonder: How can you perceive my support of mother's divorce as unjust? How can you say I helped destroy your "romance of twenty years," when you were screwing around with her daughter for a number of them?

I can see how strong our trauma bond was, and how continuation of the relationship even beyond the grave keeps me ensnared. I still can't tell you goodbye because there's too much of you in me. [See, however, the Gestalt Goodbye in Chapter 26.]

When you died in that hospital room, I kissed your forehead. My sister shuddered and said she didn't see how I could do it. I'm not sure if she meant how could I kiss a dead body or how I could kiss you.

When I was treating sex offenders, sometimes I wondered what kind of group member you would have been. I don't believe you would have denied committing the incest, because my experience was that you usually told the truth as you knew it, and you always

trusted that I was speaking the truth. My feeling is that you would have denied that molesting me was damaging, however. Perhaps this entire book is an attempt to convince you otherwise. I recently read my 1951 diary and see that in the tenth grade you wanted to prevent me from dating and that I cried. Then you relented and said I could date only once a week with different boys, alternating. I could, however, be “at home” on Sundays to anybody. Did you think you were taking care of me or did you know that you were taking care of you at my expense?

To think it took this long for me to realize that you were molested by your father too, but felt it reflected on your manhood and were ashamed to tell me about it!

I know you always had the potential to molest me, since you said that the thought crossed your mind when I was about five and we shared a Pullman berth together. You did not transgress, however, until years later, after Mother told you she had been briefly involved with the man we had rented rooms from. I think you couldn’t handle that blow to your ego. When she later asked you to tell me about the birds and bees, you jumped at the chance. I suspect that your other murky motivation was retribution against Mother. You had difficulty handling slights, imagined or otherwise. I remember sending you Carl Rogers’s *On Becoming a Person* one Christmas. I had been introduced to it in one of my psychology courses and thought it might be as meaningful to you as it was to me. After your stroke I found it in a drawer, obviously unread. It flashed on me that you must have felt I was making a derogatory statement about your personhood and that made you feel ashamed.

Five years after your death I finally felt capable of dealing with your ashes. I carried them from their storage space in my garage to the back yard and braced myself as I removed the lid from your container, fearing the impact of facing you inside that box. To me, it was you, not your ashes, inside that heavy box. I turned my back to the wind, shuddering at the possibility of breathing in a lung full of you.

It wasn't until March of 2013 that I learned that there was no capital punishment in our state for incest. You lied.

When burying your ashes behind the garage I had three options. I could place them in the flowerbed, in the vegetable patch, or in the compost pile. I shuddered again at the thought of eating you in next season's vegetables. I chose, instead, the flowerbed.

Kneeling in the grass, I smoothed the soil. *Rest in peace, you very wounded man.*

LETTER TO MY MOTHER

You had many strengths which I did not take note of at the time. You were capable in many ways—such as going out and getting a job for the first time in your life, when we lived in the duplex. I remember you sitting up late memorizing the names of staff so you could do a good job on the switchboard at the daily newspaper. You made friends easily with the other switchboard operators, but of course the friendships couldn't extend to home, because of Daddy. Unhappily, it was while you were working Saturday mornings that the molestation took place.

I remember that after the divorce you worked many long hours driving a jitney under the hot Miami sun, where you interacted cheerfully with a broad range of passengers.

Despite the everyday hardships you never sank into dysfunction. You were durable. You tried for a relationship with another man, after Daddy, until near the end. I remember that you were set to get married when the bridegroom came down with physical ailments that suggested ambivalence in him. I could never tell you that I was sorry. I can't even remember now how I learned about it.

I feel sad when I recall your saying that you had always known that you were ugly. You were lovely in photos taken before your marriage to Daddy.

I regret displacing my anger at Daddy onto you. I recall a meeting in the principal's office at the high school, with me being incredibly rude and insulting to you.

And I'm sorry that I wasn't up to seeing you after Mollie's birth. I just couldn't handle it.

When you couldn't find the words to tell me your father had died and just said you needed a new dress, I'm sorry I became impatient and judgmental, instead of comforting you. A hug from me would have been nice, wouldn't it? It's remarkable how long I carried resentment toward you for not being more expressive of your feelings. It is just now (as I am writing this letter) that I am realizing that I was no better. In that way we failed each other.

I recall my irritation with you for being unable to get out of the bathtub before you went into the nursing home. It was my ignorance in not knowing how one has to turn oneself in order to climb out of the tub. I have since learned, and I often think of you when I get out of the tub now.

I recall that although my sister and I were living in the same town as you, you had a hysterectomy without telling either of us until you were home from the hospital.

I am sorry that I was not with you when you died, in the nursing home. I denied to myself that you were in your final struggle, although your rapid breathing should have alerted me. After visiting you a short while, I left, asking the nurse to look in on you.

I also regret not having put an obituary in the paper for you.

LETTER TO MY SISTER

Oh how I wish I had another chance to be a loving big sister to you! You were so beautiful and so lonely and so bullied by me. Me, six years older, who should have been protecting and supporting you instead of bossing you around and blackmailing you. I'm sorry for that, and sorry for not selling Daddy's old house immediately after his death so there would have been money for you and your husband to buy your own house. You asked me to, but I ignored your request and the house went to ruin. You never did own your own home. I am sorry.

When you mispronounced my son's name at the dinner table and my husband got angry and asked you to leave, I deeply regret not

coming to your defense. I can't even imagine the shoe being on the other foot and your husband ordering me out of the house. I can't say forgive me because I don't feel that I deserve forgiveness for that.

I remember how generous you were to me with your clothes, and how you burst into tears when you learned that my baby had Down syndrome.

I do have one comforting memory, however. I remember that when I told you how guilty I felt that I had not sold Daddy's house right away—and instead let it deteriorate until the city tore it down—you said with a laugh, “Oh, good. I'm glad somebody besides me feels guilty.”

LETTER TO MY FATHER'S MOTHER

I miss you. You gave me unconditional love and actually enjoyed my company. It's not your fault that as a result of your upbringing and the mores of the times you strove to stick by your man the best you could. How your heart must have ached in the early days of your marriage, having to support him in the face of evidence he was sexually abusing family members. Did you know about him molesting his son, my father? Is that why he became a Mama's boy, as a result of your trying to make it up to him, and is that why he became an alcoholic so young? Recently I learned that soon after your marriage one of your brothers asked why you married the man you did, since he was a sexual scoundrel, and that your stoic response was, “Now you tell me.” In that era marriage was a lifetime commitment. After five live births, the last of which was a girl who soon died, you stopped sexual relations with your husband. Did you blame yourself for his behavior? Birth control was an unknown. You once said that a day never went by that you didn't think of that baby girl.

It was not until this week, while finishing this book, that I realized one reason you and I were so close. You kept me by your side to protect me from your husband! Thank you.

Years later, while I was still with the prison, your oldest daughter asked me whether I thought incest offenders should be incarcerated. I knew she was thinking of your husband, her father. I regret that the question set me thinking so hard that I never answered her. I wish I had. It would have opened a much-needed communication channel between the generations, but I'm still not sure what I would have said.

In later life, having to leave the beloved farm and the state due to your husband's assault on a non-family member, you did not complain, but continued, steadfast in your commitment. One of my fondest memories after you had to leave the farm was during a visit, counting coins with you at the dining room table after a long day at your little grocery in colored town.

I want you to know that you were the rock of my life, and still are. I love you.

LETTER TO MYSELF

I know you're embarrassed (ashamed) that you haven't healed more than you have. I understand that this book has not been about your personal growth but your struggle, in the hope that some incest offenders or potential incest offenders will comprehend how damaging incest can be, and that some family members may better understand the effect on the survivor.

You've gained insight during the writing and research associated with this book, and you've felt a little hurt by the realization that Daddy ruthlessly used you to meet his own needs. I'm not sure whether your honesty as reflected in this book is brave or exhibitionistic. There's that old problem of perspective.

GESTALT GOODBYE TO MY FATHER & EPILOGUE

Things that I *appreciated* about you, Daddy: your encouraging me to write creatively, your encouraging me to draw; your teaching and coaching me to play tennis; your intelligent and lively mind; your sense of humor, and the day I left my homework at home and you chased the city bus downtown to give it to me.

Things I *resented* about you: your lack of a work ethic; your lying in bed all the time you were home; your sense of entitlement—it seemed you thought the world owed you a lot that you really didn't deserve; the way you treated Mother; your molesting me; your scrambling up my mind with conflicting messages about sex and life; your lack of insight into your problems; your being willing to subject the family to your alcoholic lifestyle; your insisting I return home when I had the chance at a much better life with my maternal grandparents; your frightening me when you staggered through the house.

Things I *regret*: that you remained a weak victim of your father's molestation; that you suffered, and did not become a father I could respect; that you gave up on yourself and tried to live your life through me. I'm afraid that covers it all. Goodbye to you and all that.

EPILOGUE

My task is finished. The book is done. The bubblings of memories, images and dreams continue, however. The bogeyman stirred in his slumber. My re-reading of his letters quickened him. The Gestalt Goodbye is a giant step toward freedom.

In March, 2014, as I was wrapping up this volume, I came across my original description of the night I rode with my drunken father. I had enrolled in an Autobiography Workshop at a Friends General Conference. Our task was to look at history as we experienced it, and describe it from our point of view. It was to be written and not shared. While others wrote about hearing of President Kennedy's death or Pearl Harbor, I wrote about the "Tennis Lesson." The following is verbatim, and includes a bit of repetition from earlier in the book. The reader will see by comparing the two versions, as I have, how vividly it remained with me over the years.

THE TENNIS LESSON

Whenever Daddy started drinking, he wouldn't stop until he passed out. By high school I had learned to peek inside the house first, then if necessary "go for a walk" with my little sister until he passed out. There were a lot of long late walks during high school.

When it was safe we could creep back into the house, quietly, falling into our beds, still dressed.

Before high school I hadn't learned the walking escape, and it seems I had to deal with him a lot. My mother worked Saturdays. I remember especially one summer night in 1947, when he invited me to take a ride to Berryhill High School, where he would show me how to improve my forehand, hitting tennis balls against the school walls.

I was eleven, and hoped to improve my tennis game, and he had won the 1940 men's singles tennis tournament in our city. Mother was starting supper. We wouldn't be gone long.

Then, surreptitiously, he brought out the brown paper bag containing a jug of cheap wine.

My face fell. I looked to Mother to intercede. Her expression didn't change. She nodded to me. "Go ahead, it'll be all right."

I must have grimaced. I knew it wouldn't be all right. Didn't she know it wouldn't be all right?

Stoically, I climbed in the old black '36 Chevy and we headed for Berryhill High.

We drove and stopped. A little driving and a lot of stopping and drinking. "Hand me the bottle. If you practice what I teach you, you can grow up to be a champ, maybe play at Wimbledon."

"It's getting dark, Daddy."

"It's getting dark, the lady said. Better hurry." He ran the car onto the berm, then back onto the road.

"Watch out, Daddy! Watch out! Do you want me to steer?"

"Yeah, you steer. I'll just operate the little pedal down there."

The old Chevy continued in the direction of Berryhill High, slowly at first, with me nervously steering. I reached across him and turned on the headlights.

"Daddy! Don't go so fast! Take your foot off the gas!"

"Can't. I'm paralyzed." I grabbed at his leg as the car swerved. His leg was rigid.

"Take your foot off the gas!"

"Paralyzed," he said complacently.

Some hectic maneuvering followed and the car finally pulled off the road with a jerk, and shuddered to a stop. Finally. Summer crickets sang in the field next to us, but there was silence inside the car. I sat very still, my heart pounding, angry and frightened. He had pretended to be paralyzed in order to scare me. In the process we could have wrecked.

He was part of the night next to me in the darkened interior. "You could have killed us."

"Didn't, though, did I?"

His words were slurred. I heard him searching for a Camel and a match, and watched as his familiar features, pale and puffed, were momentarily illuminated by the light of the match. He was slumped

down in his seat, faded wisps of pale red hair falling down his high, perspiring forehead. I drew back a little as he turned his glazed blue eyes toward me and stared emptily into my eyes.

With fearful fascination I watched this unpredictable man, my father, lift the cigarette to his unsmiling lips, take a deep drag, then extinguish the match with a quick snap.

The darkness enveloped us again, and the silence.

Then, suddenly: “Watch out for those sons of bitches. Those rich capitalist bastards. They’re out to get the poor man. Sons of bitches!”

Without warning, he struck out at the darkness, contacting not the sons of bitches but the windshield, which splintered loudly.

I sat for a minute, then got out of the car. The air was damp. This was southern countryside. There was no moon. We had never reached Berryhill High. I didn’t know where we were. The only lights were about a half mile down the road.

I started walking down the deserted road, hugging my chilled arms to myself.

It wasn’t a house. There was a high fence, a gate, and a building. Signs—Keep Out and No Trespassing. It was some kind of prison camp. A dog began barking furiously nearby. I had to keep on. I approached and called out.

“Can I use your phone? We’ve broken down and I need to call my mother.”

A friendly responder looked out into the night. Fearful that they would insist on returning with me to help, to find my drunken father passed out across the steering wheel amid the glass fragments, I spoke quickly, almost in code, to my mother, and left as quickly as I had come. Without knowing where we were, my directions were vague. I was afraid to ask the guard for the location. Big men, with revolvers, let me back out into the night, to return to the Chevy and wait.

It seemed like a long time, but an empty stomach, the silence of the night and the lostness of us blended into a kind of timeless enduring. Was that a light on the road's horizon? No—yes! It's turning around! Frantically I ran toward the light, waving with both arms, but quietly, wishing still to hide our plight from the uniformed men inside the fence.

The lights stopped, then slowly approached. Was it a stranger? A new source of fear? The car was not familiar. "Nancy?" It was my mother's voice. "Nancy?"

It was warm inside the taxi. As I climbed in the back seat to sit beside Maude Mason, our neighbor, my mother was climbing out of the front seat to find my father.

How is it that at this time of my life I undertook this work? Seeking closure? A final working through? One of Erik Erikson's latter developmental tasks for adults involves despair versus integrity. Do I recall reading that in old age we visit once again the unresolved issues of adolescence?

A message for me from writing this book has been encouragement and permission to finally snip the trauma bond. It has bled a little—just like the umbilical cord. It was time.

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DREAM JOURNAL WITH DIARY

SELECTIONS FROM MY JOURNAL

What would I have done without the practice of journaling? It has been my touchstone, a home base. It is my continuing thread to which I return again and again for validation of myself as a person. I'm not very well rooted, and my journals have helped stabilize me.

The journal that follows is not polished. It is included for others to see what kinds of "invisible" damage can occur from incest. Hopefully it will also demonstrate how spontaneous and uncensored one's own personal journal can be, and what a wide range of forms and experiences it can contain.

As the dreams, drawings, poetry, reflections, free associations and self-dialogues are pulled together, I feel a little self-conscious about the focus on myself, but then that's the function of personal journals. I have followed the convention of giving each dream a title and attempting to record it in the present tense. The drawings are dated too, and were created independent of any specific dream.

PSEUDONYMS

Paternal grandmother:
SARY

Paternal grandfather:
BEN

First born, a daughter:
SUE

Second born, a son:
SEAN

Third born, a daughter:
LUCY

Fourth born, a daughter:
MOLLIE

My sister:
NELLIE

Lesbian friend:
CAROLE

1951

Sixteen years old

Jan. 1, 1951 Dear Diary, Today is the first day of 1951 and also of the second half of the 20th century. I went to school today, but a lot of kids didn't because we usually have a holiday the 1st...

Jan. 9, 1951 Dear Diary, ...For homework we have to hand in a paper on something we think. I'm gonna take capital punishment, I think...

Jan. 13th, 1951 Dear Diary, We were going to the library today and a show, but Daddy got mad after we were all dressed and we didn't get to go...

Jan. 14th, 1951 Dear Diary, Daddy got mad cause I wanted to study biology instead of going to church and so whole family stayed home!...

Jan. 17th, 1951 Dear Diary, Wrote letter to the News today about shooting draft dodgers...

Jan. 22, 1951 Dear Diary, Never so excited! Got my letter from "Ned Bass" in the paper! Daddy gave me 25 cents as he has always promised. Daddy bought Nellie "Alice in Wonderland" and me "Pepys's Diary."...

Jan. 23, 1951 Dear Diary, Stayed home because I missed the bus. They had the Calif. Mental Maturity tests and I wanted to go! Daddy said I might not be able to go to school next year—work—but the year after it, to return to 11th grade (if I pass 10th!)

May 18, 1951 Dear Diary, Bill Riley asked me to go to Junior Senior Prom...

May 25, 1951 Dear Diary, I went to the prom! ...At first of evening Daddy said no more datings and I cried, so he said dating

only once a week with different boys alternating, but I could be at home on Sunday to anybody...

September 4, 1951 Dear Diary, Went to school today for first day...When I got home no one was there. In about 30 minutes Mom and Dad pulled up. Dad got fired for passing out on the floor at work. They said we were moving to Richland. Just like that. This afternoon after packing up a few things in a bag to wear, we were off. Sary was nice but surprised to see us...

1952 or 1953

Three Souls

The ant looked up at the table;
the top would be his goal.
The top would be heaven,
the bread his god.
The dog cried and howled at the moon;
his god changed with his owner;
he wasn't sure of anything, and
his nights were filled with sore awareness.
The man offered a smug prayer;
his god was on his side.
His god would win his battle;
his god would meet him later.
The lightning flashed,
the heavens crashed,
and Fate chuckled with glee.
The man was dead,
the ant had bread,
and the dog had changed his master.

1955

2-17-1955 (20 years old)

(1) **Snake as Torture:** A man is brought into police headquarters for questioning about some crime, but won't talk. He is put in a steam box and hit around the neck and shoulders with a clothes hanger. Next he is put in a chair and his hands are tied behind his back. A big back snake is put on his lap. Although the snake's poison has been drained away, it can still bite and crawl slimily all over him. I wake up moaning.

(2) **Flaming Box Car in the Sky:** I see a large object in the sky like a box car. It is on fire—all in flames.

1955

Survival Of

The wisp of a tree stood all alone
in the barren grey of solitude.
Its bark was thin and curled into
many a ringlet of damp despair.
Limbs of this tree were spirit broke
and scraped the ground in a boughing sag.
It would never see another spring.
Tree seeds splattered in terror and grief –
premature labor and fruitless birth,
for Nature is the Judge Supreme
and a mis-cast mold is better broken.

3-1955 **High Water:** I am in a house with some people, at the beach. Waters of the Gulf rise so high that we have to keep the door shut to keep the water out.

1955 **Passageways:** Recurring dream of crawling between the high dirt banks of the basement and the bottom flooring of the first floor. I am looking for something interesting that is either buried or lost, but which I know is there. I crawl and crawl and am very pleasurably excited doing it. The feeling of slipping through passageways

and sliding under boards in order to find something really interesting was recurring for awhile.

9-22-1955 **Hole in Plate:** An old lady is very nice to me, and to show my appreciation I take a tin plate of spaghetti over to her. But there is a hole in the bottom of the plate, and when I get there it is almost all gone and I am ashamed so I say I brought it for her cats, who have already begun to eat it.

1957

3-21-1957

(1) **Rock Crown:** I am in a theater going down a row. I have on a rock crown and have to be careful the way I hold my head so it won't fall off and hurt somebody.

(2) **Black Spot:** Someone comes over to me to rub a black spot off my forehead. There is a hole behind it. Then comes off a cork layer, then rubbish, then there is an asphalt cover beneath. It seems to me that I remember that being put there after an operation or something.

1958

Our Mental Mire

On my fifth birthday, riding on the swinging garage door, I wondered about life. I wondered, as only the young do, about the absence of the awareness of conscious existence. Why was there no direct rapport between my realization and that of others? What did existing entail? My first five years had only served to confuse.

I saw two sets of worlds: the world of myself as against all others, and the world of children as against adults. I never believed I would grow up. Not really.

One thing worried me especially: would I essentially change as I grew, or would the "me" of myself remain constant? That afternoon by the garage on my fifth birthday I resolved to keep in contact with myself from birthday to birthday. I promised myself on

my fifth birthday to pursue this question on every succeeding birthday.

Recently I came across a letter written five years after that fifth birthday. It was addressed to the “me” of the future. It read: “Hello, How are you? What do you think? Have you changed?”

What could I say? Of course I’ve changed, and for the worse, as do all people in growing up. Childhood is the age of innocence and wonder and faith in the infallibility of adults. Since my childhood my innocence has become tainted by knowledge, my wonder has been dulled by complacency, and my faith in mankind has been demoralized by observation. I can still remember the jarring shock I received when I witnessed an adult act in childish temper.

I feel somehow guilty that I have changed. It seems I should have kept the girl of five alive to a greater extent than I have. I make compensation in some degree on my birthdays. I re-familiarize myself with the five-year old and gain a renewed perspective on my adult status. [Written in 1958, while in college.]

1967

8-23-1967 From Bertrand Russell’s *Autobiography, 1872-1914*: “To know people well is to know their tragedy: it is usually the central thing about which their life is built” (p 287)... “There is a thousand times more experience in pain than in pleasure” (p 247).

1970

1970 Me and Mom Swimming: My mother and I are in the ocean water, abroad. Big waves start coming in and we ride the waves. At one point they are so high that I realize I am holding onto her for support, though formerly I have been holding her to support her. I did not realize she was a little bit taller than I am. I am not really aware of being afraid, though. With all the high water she begins to bleed rather much, as she is still recuperating from her hysterectomy. I want her to get cleaned up in the stateroom bath

but she wants to go straight home and get cleaned up there. I waken feeling kind of nice and like I may have begun my period.

I wake with the feeling of having had an intrauterine dream. Is my anxiety related to my mother's hysterectomy? My husband and I had joked before going to sleep about the (unlikely) possibility of my being pregnant. [Ha ha.]

1970

(1) **Caught in Ship's Mooring:** I come out in a clearing and step right over the edge. It is a cliff and there are clouds below and I can't see bottom. Hanging in mid-air for a second it is as though I refuse to experience the terrifying fall and become a second person looking over the cliff. After awhile someone says "She's here—she got caught on the ship's mooring."

(2) **Maggoty Food:** I serve some food to a bunch of people but it turns out to be maggoty. A woman puts the "bad" half of a head of cabbage up on the side of a hill, or a bank, and glancing up later I notice that it and half the hillside is covered with roaches.

(3) **Policeman with Billy Club:** I am in a sort of open-air Unitarian service. We are in a parking lot and rows of chairs extend to the sidewalk, sidewise. It is sort of a progressive jazz service, and at one point someone comments maybe the chairs are too close to the sidewalk. Why? It seems a policeman across the street is beginning to swing his billy club menacingly. We start to move the chairs but in front of each doorway across the street there is a man swinging his billy club fast in a circle. We all stand up and draw slightly back from the street. Then they start throwing balls at us, fast. They are pelting us. One hit me square on my pregnant belly. I said "all right, where's the guy who threw a ball at a pregnant woman?" No one speaks up and the balls keep coming. One guy said, "When are you coming back," and I said "—uh—" (trying to count up when I wouldn't be pregnant any more.) He said, "I can tell you when I'm coming back; never!" I wake up and realize I'm afraid my husband won't come back from California.

FALLOUT

1970 or 1971

(1) **Beach at Night:** I am at a party and begin kissing a girl –big deep nibbling kisses and I want to fondle her breasts and I have a fantasy of getting in bed with my husband and the girl some time. My husband calls on the phone to see when I am coming home and I can scarcely talk to him—I am very hoarse—like when I have laryngitis. He can't believe I am really trying to talk. Next I am out on the beach. Three little girls are with me—my daughters and a neighbor girl. I am admiring the mist and bits of sunset that were visible (tho it was black at night). The sky has green and blue bands in it and I keep thinking "It really is like that!" I've seen it painted that way but haven't seen it in nature before. I am mean and snap at Sue for letting her sister fall, like I sometimes do. The beach and water and mists are beautiful.

(2) **Aquarium:** My husband gives me a lovely aquarium.

(3) **Fire at Children's Home:** There is a fire at a home for dumb children and I am able to get them out in time.

(4) **Boat Ride with Husband:** My husband takes me on a boat ride to Jamaica.

1971

8-1971 **Night Train:** A night train in the sky comes roaring by out of the dark every night at midnight. As the lights flash by I can see the face of the engineer and am afraid to look and cover my face in real terror.

8-25-1971

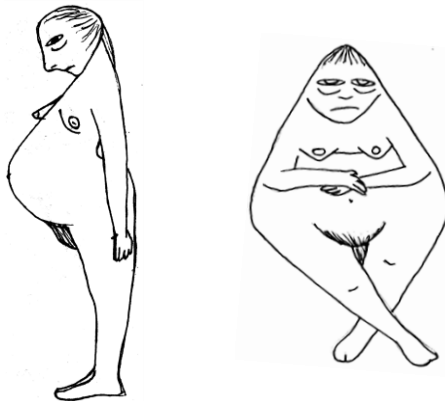
(1) **General Patton:** I am walking with my husband and in front of us is a big man with a fighting helmet on. He is sort of staggering and aggressive and approaches a nearby jeep threateningly. Somehow I know that this is General Patton. I have thought he was dead but realize that they have just relieved him of command. The fellow driving the jeep is mad and asks us to go report Patton—we start to do this...

(2) **Missing Knife:** I am on a boat that has a cabin. There is a guy on board that is trying to kill me. I can't turn my back on him. There is a third person there, sort of a refugee. Most of the time we are eating at the table on the ship. It is sort of like a joke because people would laugh when he'd make a jab at me. Our dueling weapons are knives. I reach down quickly to my place at the table for mine but I can't find it in time. When we are through eating a couple of fellows go out on deck.

(3) **Tidal Waves:** Someone says, "Look at the waves!" (About a 100-foot wave goes by about 50 yards away—very high and pointy and traveling very fast.) Some girl says I must tell mother to slow down. If we hit the wave head-on our own speed would add about 26 miles an hour to the collision. About that time I realize the fellows who have gone out on deck must have already been washed overboard. Going through a door into a gallery I remember waiting for the boat to start tossing and turning like it did when my husband and I took a freighter across the North Atlantic one March. Then we are in port but I think no, it isn't home port it's only Key West. I woke up as from a nightmare. The tidal waves were terribly frightening.

(4) **Little Girl:** I have a little girl with me like Lucy. I realize the parents might be looking for her and will either be glad to find I have her or angry at me for not letting them know I have her. I go to find them with her.

12-19-1971



Eleven days before I gave birth to Mollie

1972

1-8-1972 Sean and Lucy have chickenpox and Lucy also has pink eye.

1-9-1972 ...Everything is perspective...It is interesting that the major difficulty I experienced after learning Mollie [born 12-28-1971], was mongoloid was a problem of getting a perspective on the situation. In his foreword Watts was dealing with perspective. Is "nature" serene and "good" and eternally reassuring or raw aggression re which we try to delude ourselves?...Back to my pre-occupation with perspective; I don't think it's a matter of whether my perception is accurate or not; I don't think there's anything more than relative perspective in the world. I doubt if anyone else perceives anything exactly as I do. But isn't it the qualitative gradations of perspective and places along the continuum that one chooses to occupy from time to time that gives life its texture? Without the texture we might fall through.

1-14-1972 Yesterday I told Rosemary I was afraid of fate now. My luck may have turned, and I'm scared. This morning I had two moles taken off—no more trusting to a benevolent fate to care for me. Bad things won't happen because I'm bad but conversely good things won't happen because I'm good.

1-15-1972 Mollie and I went to the PSYCH 872 marathon. I was pretty damn fluid in my discussion of perspective, reality, death and mongolism. What I found myself saying was that death was real and a mongoloid child was real but most else in life is only a matter of perspective which one can manipulate or control and is therefore only relative. Someone responded that the fact that Mollie will get milk when she cries is as real as anything else—even death and mongolism—and I realized that my perspective is still a little out of whack (I resist saying warped).

1-18-1972 ...what hit home today while reading Marco Vassi was his reference to his own use of pain as a defense against

something else. I suspect I am prone to grovel in pain. This is back to perspective—escaping pain vs. experiencing present pain and a Pollyannish attitude vs. being open to joy. I may focus on pain to avoid depression. Conversely, could depression be the avoidance of pain? I know that my body is physically depressed now, and that if I tried I could be emotionally depressed. But where's the percentage? Depression almost seems like irresponsible pain. Of course, pain vs. depression is not really the original question; it's a clinging to grimness at the expense of joy that I have been guilty of for some time now. Of course it's all how you (I) look at it.

1-21-1972 It seems that depression has more an element of my own participation in it—and is more typified by a lack of hope for meaningfulness in my existence. Pain, on the other hand, seems less lonely. An external force is present, acting on me, and so I feel more rooted in reality. This, from Watts, turns me on: "Death seems simply to be a return to that unknown inwardness out of which we were born...the truly inward source of one's own life was never born...Outwardly, I am one apple among many. Inwardly, I am the tree" (p 47).

1-22-1972 Nothing can be done about death and mongolism, and now I'm in touch again with my statement at the marathon about reality being limited to things like death and mongolism. I was defining reality as that which exists and over which I have no control. ...Life, then, is less real than death in that we can end life but not death. Again, however, we can begin our own death on purpose but not our own life, so on second thought they may be equally real.

1-26-1972 Last quarter I got in touch with some of my "Late Oral," with fantasies (pleasurable) of cannibalism, but I am nowhere near experiencing or enjoying or even successfully imagining my "Early Oral." I have some kind of syndrome associated with breathing, swallowing, my throat and neck that has never fallen into a meaningful pattern for me. When two years

old I got mad and held my breath til I fainted. I cannot exhale under water and don't enjoy deep kissing. I had bronchitis in high school and bronchial pneumonia last year. It may relate to birth trauma or poisons within my mother's womb...I enjoy Mollie's "Early Oral" because she is getting satisfied, but I guess it's the pain associated with mine that I'm not anxious to re-experience. Did they hold my nose to keep me from crying? I know my dependency was betrayed in some profound way.

2-5-1972

(1) **I Overhear Dream:** I hear my husband's voice in my head. I hear him call out "Ohhh," and it seems to be inside my head. It seems I can hear his REMS and think, "He's dreaming and I hear part of his dream."

(2) **Course in Fire:** I am working hard for an A (doing extra credit stuff) in a course on Fire. I am reviewing articles on how to extinguish fires, how to build them, etc. I remember seeing someone else's project, though, and it's a doll collection. [Dream while taking a course in Human Sexuality]

2-5-1972 Reading Edrita Fried (*Active/Passive*). She talks about maladaptive masochistic lifestyles of women with rejecting or neglecting mothers. They often neglect their experience "with the hope of keeping rejecting mothers at bay by appearing needy and harmless—To be a mother's daughter is a dangerous fate when the mother has herself had inadequate maternal care—Among all the ways out of the female dilemma only one works. It is to become a loving female rather than to remain a plaintiff, hell-bent on compensation for original deprivation."

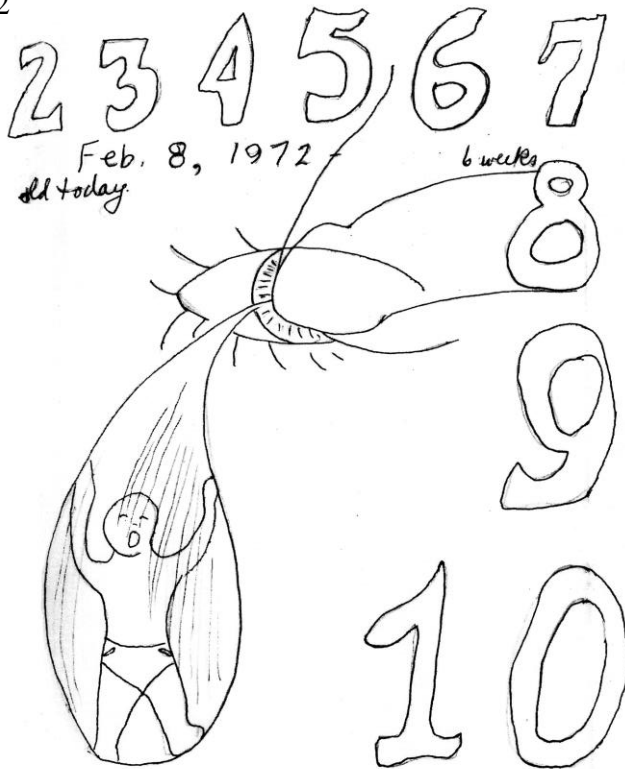
2-6-1972 I am adrift. Someone has played a dirty trick on me. I must have a mooring somewhere, but where?

2-7-1972 Mollie is only an ounce heavier than at birth... She does have a heart defect. The most common amongst mongoloids is a hole where all four chambers join and is inoperable. Oh yes, now I remember what depression's like. I *can* be with my pain

while I'm depressed. The difference is energy. ...I found myself telling myself, "There's no nothing nowhere."

2-8-1972 **Coven of Witches:** I attend the meeting of a coven of witches. I tell one I don't know whether or how to participate and she tells me I'd better moan. I stepped outside for a minute and when I returned the meeting was over. I said, "Well, there'll be another time," and one witch said "We only let outsiders in every Valentines Day."

2-8-1972



Six Weeks Old Today

FALLOUT

2-16-1972

Where Have the Big People Gone?

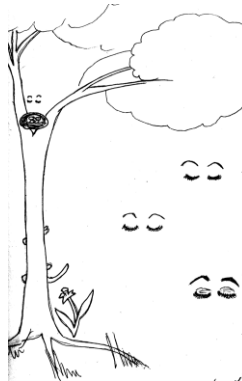
Frozen in time, immobile, sit I.
All that I have ever been is with me still,
keeping me, stifling me.
My shackles are the bars of a play pen.
I am a frightened child, even as I sit,
holding a child
who is holding a doll.
I am the big person in her world
but there are no big people
anymore
in mine.
Where have they gone?

2-17-1972



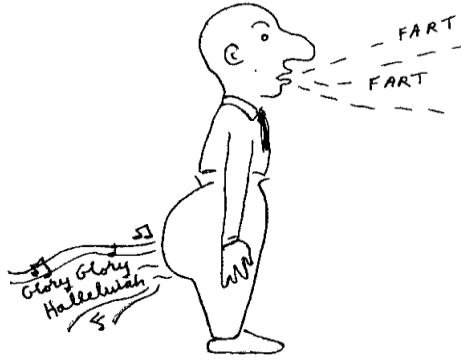
Sexualized

2-17-1972



Shame

2-29-1972



Cartoon

2-29-1972 I'm really afraid of everything. I can use my mind, tho, as a rapier and make other people afraid of me and at the same time not be so aware of my fear. And I have so much magical thinking very near the surface in me. For instance, I really believe that if I betray Mollie that she would die and that my betrayal would somehow cause her death. (By betrayal I mean something like letting psychologists study her as an example or case study of a mongoloid). I feel so bad about Mollie.

3-1-1972

(1) **Rotten Egg:** I am home and the house is a terrible mess and I am scarcely dressed and a guy comes to see me. It seems he was a subject or something. Then R and P start coming in, and then I am at the corner store buying something. I go to the cash register and pull out a rotten egg from my purse and drop it in the trash can. I am sort of apologetic that it might smell there.

(2) **Windshield Flooded:** It seems I was tested. I sat in the car awaiting results. Then I am behind the steering wheel and a man is putting in gas. Only he puts it in under the windshield instead of in the tank and it starts coming in over the dashboard inside. The motor is running and I have my foot all the way down on the brake and the emergency brake on too, but I was idling too high and go forward and he disappears and I am afraid I have run over him. I get it to stop by putting it in neutral and look back. It seems he has

FALLOUT

just fallen to the side of the road and wasn't run over. Then the testing lady comes out and gives me a paper to sign. I try to read the results and there is something on it about my mother and early training—cleanliness and removing the “spot.”

3-2-1972 During a psychic group meeting at Quaker House I was aware of a tightening in my throat as I rejected the approach of “good people” and “positive thoughts.” And remembered my father making me swallow whole raw eggs in the second grade (“they're good for you”).

3-3-1972 A great sadness is coursing in my veins. I feel like all my stops are out. It feels purgative. Surely I have enough roughage in my system. Last night I got the image of my being an anus at both ends. (That's really what the cartoon drawn Tuesday suggests.) Now, as I write this, I am vaguely aware of being “shafted” down my throat and a real life-death struggle. I do want to live. The throat muscles seem very important. They keep the tears in, poison out, they barricade and contain. If my gates are open I may be cleaned out, leaving only my shell.

3-4-1972 ...Knowing that I can never propitiate the gods it seems dishonest for me to go to Quaker House. If they knew I thought we were all shit-eaters they'd probably throw me out. I guess I'm a hypocrite if I continue to go.

3-5-1972 Ferenczi mentions equating the mouth with the anus...

3-27-1972 I want to be sufficiently occupied so as not to be morbid but not so rushed as to lose touch with my grounding (mooring). I feel some anxiety now about being rushed, but really all I must do is look forward to taking the PSYCH 883 course and doing my thesis. Surely I can manage that. I could probably finish my thesis this summer if necessary. Having trouble being fully in the here and now. I'm so little, in there.

3- 26-1972



*Am I sad or
striking out my
tongue? Or
looking at you?*

Mandala?

3-27-1972 **Man Who Canned Babies:** I am in an apartment and pass a berth down the hall with six babies in it of varying ages, and one man. Then I read in the paper about a man on the loose who eats babies—no, he cans them and exports them to Germany. I run and get the head man. When we come in the man comes in behind the cops in front of me—he is carrying groceries in his arms. But the cops don't recognize him and he gets away.

4-30-1972 From "R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry" (Page 103):
"It sometimes happens that despair itself provides the very condition of urgency that brings a man to ask those serious—we might call them tragic—questions about his life and the meaning and measure of his particular humanness..."

5-2-1972 From Laing, page 100: "The fountain has not played itself out, the frame still shines, the river still flows, the spring still bubbles forth, the light has not faded. But between us and it, there is a veil which is more like fifty feet of solid concrete..."

5-2-1972 **Cat Crosses Sky:** I am in a big field like it is a special gathering for retarded kids. There is some danger in what is going to happen. A football will be launched up and sometimes they misfire and I am telling people who don't have to be there to leave. While I am waiting I look in the sky and see a big cat racing across the sky. It is a leopard. At first it seems like a zodiac animal that has come to life. Then outside I tell someone this is a testing area when the football's starting to be shot. One comes right at me and I run toward it to pick it up and toss it away but at the last minute get frightened and hesitate. Then I wake up and sort of will to see

FALLOUT

what happened and it explodes white light but we don't die. I'm not sure if I'm a captive or what.

When I woke up I looked, frightened, at the ceiling with my eyes open, not sure if I was closer to the ceiling than I should be.

7-30-1972 Day of Decision [I decide to get a divorce.]

8-1-1972



Bombs

1972

(1) **Buried Key:** I am at an old homestead and find a buried key and steal it from the people who live there now.

(2) **Car Demolished:** I break a couple of laws driving. A car is demolished outside. People are stealing the plastic parts left of the car (which evidently was made of plastic). I manage to get a big undersection of the car. I think people might be using them for rafts. When I get inside it has turned into a safety seat necessary for use in motor boats. There is a \$1 price tag on it.

(3) **Not Enough Food:** I am getting food for a special occasion. The man cuts one of my ears of corn in half so I don't have quite enough.

11-17-1972 **Riding Wave:** I am riding waves. I look around and a huge wave is coming (it almost blots out the sky). I hold my nose and ride it fine. I am way out away from the beach and ride it fine.

1973

1973 **Animal Crossing Sky:** I see a large animal crossing the sky. It is maybe a hippopotamus or Eeyore. I casually see him go across and think nothing of it. And then do a double-take. I've been watching the sky and see a man in an airplane, too.

1-7-1973

(1) **Kitten into a Lion:** I make a kitten into a lion [I think] by thought-power but it frightens me awake.

(2) **Foetal Position:** I am lying on a bed in foetal position. I discover I remember how I felt in the womb and can be supported as I move on the bed – sort of swish in supporting fluid. I am delighted. (In an earlier dream the same night I make a kitten into a lion by thought-power).

(3) **Sitting on Toilets:** I am sitting on a toilet and in a room to my back my husband is sitting on another toilet. I can see his reflection through a mouse hole on the floor and am very quiet so he won't know I am there. I feel he will shame me for sitting on the pot if he knows I am there.

1-13-1973 **Cannot Pay Maids:** Four maids walk in and start cleaning my house. I am cowering in a corner because I think I must have done something wrong to make them think I can pay them.

1-15-1973 **Putrid Grapefruit:** I want some dessert in a cafeteria. I go to the dessert section by the cash register and someone says, "That must be one of those people we read about in the manual." I think they are referring to ill-mannered or pushy people, so I go on to the end of the line. When I get to the dessert section there is only a dried-out putrid piece of grapefruit left. It doesn't smell, though, so I take it. It is 35 cents and I only have a quarter so I can't even get that.

FALLOUT

1-17-1973

(1) **My Sister's Ghost:** Nellie dies and I am concerned about Mother. I see Nellie shortly after her death and she seems already disinterested in life but I ask her to stop by and see Mother, which she does. It helps, I think.

(2) **My Cousin Dies:** I dream my cousin dies and I want to protect Sary. I rush to get to her nursing home before she hears of it, but I'm not sure I make it in time. They bring in a very fancy stretcher wheelchair for her just as I get there, for some reason.

6-11-1973 **Secret in Breast:** A secret is carried in a woman's breast. Not sure if it's a secret weapon or a secret ingredient. I see a "takeoff" in a newspaper on some guy getting overcome by the "dimensions" and is oblivious to the secret.

9-21-1973 **Chain for Bed:** I am at a boarding school. A guy I'd passed outside gets to my room by mistake. He talks a little and is about to leave. I try non-verbally to get him to stay. He does. He touches, kisses and hugs me. I am able to get him to leave without intercourse. Good thing, too, because one minute after he has gone the owners of the school come in measuring a chain for the bed (or fixing a chain). I help them. The guy is too young for me.

10-7-1973 **Maggot Inside:** I get turned on and see my genitals opening up. I look and see a small maggot inside.

Fall 1973 **Might Blab:** I am hugging a large retarded relative. It feels so good I keep on and he wants to have sex. I am going to even though I know it is incest. I realize, though, that he might blab so I decide not to.

1974

4-23-1974

(1) **Cops Rifle Purse:** I get 2 or 3 traffic tickets for exceeding the speed limit. Both times the cop rummaged through my purse.

(2) **Stained Walls:** I agree to buy an old apartment from K. It is on Parrot Road and I hope a good investment. I recall seeing that the wall was stained from once when the trap door to the attic leaked.

4-28-1974

(1) **Unconsummated Marriage:** I am with a guy who I know has problems but when he suggests we get married I am only too happy to marry him. For some reason he is afraid to consummate the marriage and after three days we have not had intercourse. Immediately after marriage I say something like “Now we can have sex all the time,” and I think “this is what I wanted but my God are we going to have sex all the time? It might get boring not doing anything else.” But then it doesn’t turn out that way. At one point I look at his face and it looks older than it had when we married. But then I realize the man approaching me was his Uncle Charley. Uncle Charlie runs the kids out and kisses me. I respond but then he says “L’s afraid to put his penis in you. I’ll do it and he won’t be so afraid,” and then he tries to force himself on me. Physically I want to have intercourse with Uncle Charley but I am L’s bride and I fight him off successfully. At one point in all this I think of having the marriage annulled when I realize all the problems I am asking for. There is a strange flavor of good feelings and bad feelings in this dream. I felt kind of good waking up, as I usually do when any sex is involved in a dream.

(2) **Sex in Back of Truck:** Me, a guy and a gal are in the back of a station wagon or truck or trunk. He tells her to go ahead and take her bathing suit off and she does and they began feeling each other up and masturbating, with me there looking—and—not-looking.

4-30-1974 **Client and BM at Workshop:** I am attending a professional workshop. My male client is there too. There is some demonstration on the floor: one person lays down without any underwear and begins having a bm. It comes out hard and straight like a phallus. Patty is on her knees by it and scrapes at the sides with a spoon and tastes it. I am in some position of responsibility at the workshop and someone has forgotten to lock the front door. Suddenly there are these straight people coming through and I am trying to hurry them out the back door. They are looking over their

shoulders, etc. It seems people keep coming through. It is clear that some have seen enough. Afterwards, I phone the leader and warn him that some people might make trouble.

1974 Unscrewing End of Penis: We are in a house, in a living room and I see my husband has bm on his bottom and then I see it all over the floor. I take him to the bathroom and unscrew the end of his penis and the urine isn't well-directed and just goes messy. I notice his cheeks have grown baggy and he throws back his head and opens his mouth in a laugh and the cheek pouches rise and I see hollow holes into him under each one. I decide he is dying and I can remarry him for the remaining time. Part of my motivation seems to be that I can get another man easier as a widow than a divorcee. [*Similar to the top of the flying saucer coming off in a later dream.*]

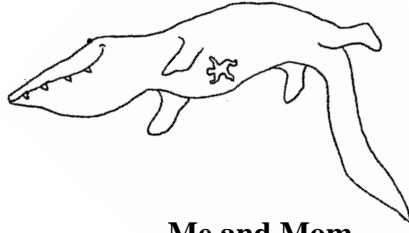
5-5-1974 Toilet Wets Plaster: My paternal grandfather Ben's toilet on the second floor overflows and dampens the plaster on the ceiling downstairs. The way it overflows is not at the basin—it goes down all right. But there is an opening in the drain system and it is clogged up or something and then overflows. I find out what the trouble is (we have all looked above and seen it), and feel glad to have found the source of the trouble.

5-14-1974

(1) **Me and Monkey:** I am with some other people in a hotel room. They go in another room and a monkey that I am in bed with sticks his penis in me just once, quickly. I want it but want not to let him do it, too. I feel embarrassed to think of the fact that I've done that. *In writing this, I had the memory or dream memory of a girl asking if anyone knows what it's really like to commit bestiality. I thought, "I know."*

(2) **Clear Sky Over Hotel Ceiling:** I push one of the overhead tiles up and discover much to my surprise that they are in the act of tearing down the hotel or something. Whereas we have thought we were on the ground floor of a several-storied hotel, there is only clear sky overhead and some signs, where demolition has taken place. My main affect is one of surprise.

1974



Me and Mom

6-8-1974 **Burying Man:** I am out in the open drawing in the sand. It is some kind of convention and a man is talking over a loud speaker. They mention a man has died and my mother says I should bury him. He died part-way under my fence. They announce that and I agree. Very mild affect. Things happen including a man doing something dangerous with his truck and my mother reporting him. They tell her he is one of 7 who are being exported to Florida or Cuba for something bad. When I get home my mother or mother-in-law has moved the furniture. She fit an old chest of drawers in under an old counter top. It fits very well and you can't see. It is getting late and I have to bury the man.

6-23-1974 **Eating Daddy Long Legs:** I dream roughly the same dream all night. I dream a dream in which I think about what it means and at one point am writing the dreams down in this journal. They go in two different categories. It seems that situations I get into for one reason are also equally important to me for another reason. There is something about eating a Daddy Long-Legs. At one point I am riding in a car with my husband and someone comes riding up on a rug and hands me something about my husband's future.

8-2-1974 **Eating Baby Ruths:** I am in my kitchen and notice that the food cabinet over my counter is gone. There is nothing but the bare white wall. Then I am in my therapy group. I have brought some candy on the way there. I devour the Baby Ruth and feel hungry for more. But I only have two Hershey Bars. I decide to go to the refectory for more Baby Ruths. It seems I am aware I might as well get a lot of Baby Ruths because I am insatiable for them. I am aware I am breaking my diet and as I wake up I am glad it was only a dream because I want to stay on my diet.

I got in touch again with my oral hunger, my emphasis on male nurturing, my male castratingness, my incorporating tendencies, my anality and my confusion between openings. Possibly my aggressiveness too, because besides looking like turds, they have nuts I can chew on.

8-3-1974 **Dead Mouse:** I am at Sary's house and she tells me to come with her – she has a dead mouse and we'll cook it and eat it. I am surprised at the thought of eating a mouse and decide to just let (or watch?) them eat it. She then carries some bacon and says "One of the pieces is a snake." I wonder how a piece of bacon can change to a snake, or how strange a snake will be with similar-appearing bacon strips. I think it might just be a tapeworm. My grandmother touches the snake and gets stung. The last I see, the cat is playing with it – killing it, eating it or something.

8-27-1974 **Crushed in Elevator:** Two women have been spying and have just gotten caught. One of them is in a hurry to get away and starts to get on the elevator. The "mob" moves in. The see-through inner gate shuts and as it shuts they push her in between the outer elevator door and the inner. She doesn't get really killed until the inner cage moves all the way down—you can hear her piercing screams for several minutes as she is crushed.

8-28-1974 **Symbol of Death in Sky:** I see something flying in the sky and in my dream recall that is a symbol of death and means I am dying.

8-29-1974 **Bird Mud Balls:** I am at a big river and just before I am to leave a scientific-type couple comes to explore the river. I show her how the baby birds hibernate in mud-balls. She finds one but it wasn't the usual kind. I try hard to tell her what the bird looks like but can't do too well with words. The woman says she's been sick with some condition for a while but wonders if that is really what she had. I have to go to the bathroom later and find that she'd been throwing up and wonder about her condition. At some point during the dream I am returning home high up in the air—like precariously balanced on a unicycle. I am trying to make it from telephone pole to telephone pole.

8-30-1974

(1) **Affair with C:** I am having an affair with Professor C. We love each other very much and like to even sit and look and gently touch. I briefly think about his lovely wife and children but the feelings on both sides are prepotent.

(2) **Affair with G:** I am having an affair with my former anthropology professor. This is lovely. *Both of these dreams occurred later in the day during which a librarian told me she mainly goes out with married men, and mostly ones who live out of town.*

9-26-1974 **Barking Stomach:** A man is calling from another room to a person with me: "Hal. Come here! Come in here. You've got to see this!" I open the door to see what is going on and behold the man holding my baby tight so it can't even struggle a bit. He is fiercely tickling the baby, who can't move a hair's breadth. The baby has been pushed into madness and sounds—like a nervous dog—are coming from its belly. Its eyes are shut and it seems unconscious. I go for the baby in fury and awake breathing heavily and with heart pounding. I believe this is a very early memory. I have never had a dream in which I was more rageful than in this dream. *[Much later, during analysis, it occurred to me that I may have observed the primal scene and that the dog's barking from the stomach may have represented sounds from their intercourse. I did sleep in my parents' bedroom until an unspecified age. I can barely remember gazing up at the mantel in that room.*

10-14-1974 **Negative Hallucination:** I have a negative hallucination. I do not see a girl's head even tho it is there. I just see the space behind it. I say, "That is a negative hallucination."

10-18-1974 **Cafeteria Line:** The head of the counseling center is giving me feedback (I am a student intern) and says "H agrees." I have just been in a cafeteria line and either they ignored my order or gave me the wrong thing and I got angry and assertive and the

head of the counseling center referred to this as one of the ways I over-react. *I wake in a cold sweat.*

11-4-1974 **Peach Outcropping:** There is a peach outcropping on a bank. It is rich in pure pastels. *This is about the clitoris.*

11-18-1974 **Autopsy:** I am at a party near the hospital and they are doing an autopsy on a male youth when he starts showing vital signs and rush him back to the hospital. I don't look closely at him because he is covered in blood. Then I am at a party near another hospital and they are doing an autopsy on a male youth who stirred—I tell them that he had been sent back to the hospital and they should have kept him—I reached out to him to comfort him. Then one of the doctors says it is only a peculiarity of death to have a temporary remission. I think that his parents would appreciate the opportunity to speak to him before he dies again for good.

1974 **Totem Pole:** I am at my paternal grandparents. Ben starts getting euphoric – very good-humored and joking a lot – and it comes to me that a part of him knows he is going to die. My main concern is that I am going to be sleeping with him that night and am dreading waking and finding him dead beside me. How will I tell Sary? I decide very gently I'll wake her and say, "Ben's passed away." I know that my grandmother will go then to her daughter's in another city and that I'll be able to see her more often and am happy about that. I also look at a few things in the house I might get. One is a very tall totem pole that I think they'll let me have since I study Indians.

1975

2-3-1975

(1) **Eating Squirrel's Face:** There are two rabbits. One starts chasing a squirrel and eating its face while it is alive. I run. A man with a bow and arrow shoots the arrow. It goes into another man. Stoically he pulls it out. I am aghast and point that he has shot the man and not the wild rabbit. The man who has been shot said "I am not the same man." I go back to a cabin where there are scary noises. I think, "If they get me I will not be the same person." I wake up in

the morning in the woods. There has been havoc and the others have done mischievous stuff like cut a boat from its mooring and wrecked a Greyhound bus. I feel good I slept through it all.

(2) Mouse Eats Mouse: The mouse eats the other mouse—gobs of red meat are around and you can see the bulges where the eyes were. Red bloody meat gobs.

3-17-1975

Vertigo

Caught in the womb, warp,
loom of time,
nursed—lips dripping wet
sticky sweet—by karma;
the round brown sound
is deafening me as
I stagger down the
endless tunnel,
away from that
which I go toward.
Give me your hand.

4-15-1975 **Trough in Back Yard:** There is a huge trough in my back yard. It is open at the sides but covered over with pieces of plywood. It has started to stink. I am embarrassed about the neighbors smelling our shit. Then I see it isn't shit but only two rotten eggs and feel better.

4-18-1975 **Comet:** I see a small comet overhead and a man (my husband or my father) throws me up in the air so I'll be closer to it and can see it better. Of course I am so concerned about the plummet down that I cannot see the comet. This is repeated except the second time a very large spectacular comet is involved.

4-19-1975 **Lose Place at Table:** Something is wrong with my car and it is at this house to be fixed. I go inside. There are a couple of guys and some radical lesbians, I believe. I am eating in one room with some women friends and we get up to move into the other room to re-locate at the new table. They do not save me my seat. In fact there is no seat for me. Feeling awkward I leave the room. —Waiting for my car to be fixed.

FALLOUT

4-27-1975

Fast Descent

Hurling through the mirror maze
young-old embryo. Contorted, misshapen,
falling back one-eye. Cry "Please!" Cyclops crazy
beady, heavy. Where am I?

Who?

Brown, old cantankerous brazen brassy
witch-bitch delirious. Stop! Simple smirky
purple prude. I am the glamorous sham.

Damn.

Staccato waltz loping trot forget-me-do

Who?

Who is that spinning, passing prisms
fancifully fragmented to pieces. Vertigo.
Butch fem all of them am I-Please, no.

Red. Gaping maws dirty paws
shiny smelly ripened belly.

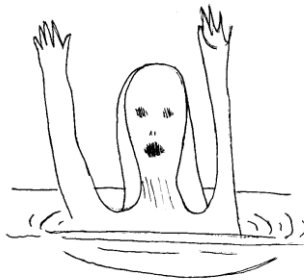
Yes, no, true. My God
hell-o.

6-2-1975

Anger

My anger sits inside
on fat haunches
and comes out at night
to eat rats.

7-28-1975



Drowning

9-1975 At Quaker meeting I shared part of a poem about how we fear death like a baby fears being shifted from one breast to the other.

40 Years Old

9-26-1975 I let an inpatient with senile dementia play with the Block Design when I finished testing her because she asked if she could work with it a little longer (and since she had no memory I knew I wasn't compromising the test items themselves). She was discharged later that day, before I could retrieve it, and took it home with her. I contacted her husband and he said he would mail it in. My boss found it was missing and phoned me at home and raised holy hell. I failed to protect confidentiality of the test materials, I was unprofessional, this was a very grave matter, very grave, he couldn't believe I did it, etc., and furthermore he wants me to be in his office first thing Monday morning...I made it through the weekend somehow, determined not to make the children suffer any more than necessary. I told M and R and felt a little better. I may get fired tomorrow. I have to ride it out. Hope I don't oversleep tomorrow because it's going to be difficult getting centered for a chewing out about something I did that was careless...I do not feel guilty about letting the old lady have "overtime" on the Block Design, however. I knew she wouldn't remember. The Lord have mercy on my soul.

9-27-1975

(1) **White Maggot:** There is a white maggot in the garbage that came out of the mouse cage

(2) **Poor Vision:** I run into a pedestrian while not wearing my contacts.

9-30-1975: My boss asked me to resign in a very very nice way. He said he had been angry Friday and he wasn't angry any more. But he said he felt this position was difficult and had certain requirements that would take more training for me to master and they didn't have the time for it. He suggested a setting

FALLOUT

with neurotics such as a counseling center. He said he'd let me have a month to get a job and I could leave sooner if I got one sooner. He said in a reference he could talk about my conscientiousness, etc. He said it said nothing about my therapy skills. From what he'd heard me say in staffing he saw no difficulty there. But you need to work under pressure at the hospital with very crazy people and to be able to capture in a nutshell the most important info for the doctor to have, and I was not doing the job. I feel frozen, like I need to conserve my energy. At least he didn't say I needed therapy, or even ask what was going on in my personal life, and I especially asked him what he felt the difficulty was.

10-14-1975 **Cracking Ceiling:** The ceiling of my house is starting to crack and I have to get everyone out in time. I can hear the sound of running plaster from a pressure point. It seems we get out okay. I see where our stone chimney has fallen to the ground.

10-16-1975 **Frozen Banks:** I dream how dangerous it is to put my weight on banks that have been frozen, etc., because they often give way suddenly.

10-21-1975 Attended Lucy's Brownie ceremony today and stepped in a pot hole...

10-26-1975 I have made an Adult decision to never tell anyone else that I don't have orgasms. It "doesn't work," and the pleasure of telling the truth does not offset the anxiety, tension and loneliness that follows.

11-1-1975 **Bird with Blind Left Eye:** I am able to easily catch a brown bird like a parrot. I catch it and then discover it has gotten away. At one time I can see it has a blind left eye. I am trying to get help the last time it got away.

11-3-1975 I'm feeling very nervous and grouchy. Couldn't find Mollie's shoes for a long time this morning and her hair is

sticky and she peed in her shoes after she was dressed and I yelled at her and the fish died...

11-21-1975 My god I feel angry frustrated impotent hurting and dizzy-disoriented. My gut hurts. I'm stuffing myself with garbage...I feel like I may be in the pincers of something that's not me...Where am I? Oh god, ever so often this happens. I have to teach Sean his Law of the Pack quickly this afternoon for his badge tonight, and get his uniform in shape for inspection. (He's lost his cap and I couldn't find another to fit him)...

11-23-1975 I feel especially sad about the potential for education and nurturance I could give my children but am blocked from doing so because of my own limitations. My babies, I'm sorry.

11-24-1975 **Masked Bandits:** I leave on a bicycle and some boys at school kind of threaten me. An off-duty cop protects me. I come out of school to see masked bandits in a limousine taking off with tommy guns. I don't look. I go inside when they leave to see about the people. The police come and I say I wasn't really diverting the policeman.

12-15-1975

Untitled

She lay down clean and whole
but before she woke
green moss sprouted on her cheeks,
and lichen puffed her nostrils.
Alice, living, died alive.

12-28-1975



Negative Specialness

FALLOUT

12-28-1975



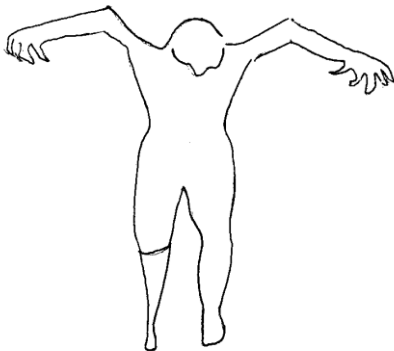
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12-28-1975



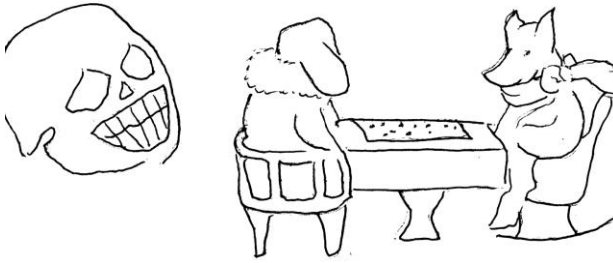
Ambivalence 2

12-28-1975



Peg Leg Father

12-28-1975



Untitled

12-28-1975 Mollie's fourth birthday... I'm really going to need long term therapy for me to get less wobbly.

New Year's Eve, 1975 New Year's Eve at 40 years of age. How can I keep my head above water? I may not make it. I must get the dissertation behind me but it seems to be crumbling into nothingness...I have thought, today, perhaps I can decide to put sex behind me forever. ... I'm living as though the world of bills is about to descend all around my ears within the month, if the house is not sold. I amaze myself, how I can appear oblivious to the bills ... My God living is so difficult to experience.

1976

1-1-1976 **Hospital for Misshapen:** A woman talks about a child who has been displaying herself but who isn't "right." Older people have been tolerating her and making fun of her. A report has been written requesting testing on a man, listing his symptoms. The report comes back that nothing is wrong. I go down to investigate, perhaps indignantly, and am told that the trouble is that a young medical doctor thought a practical joke was being played on him and didn't take it seriously. I walk further on and see some observation rooms. In one, doctors are carving on a cadaver. Suddenly I see I am in a snake-pit type place. Some people are behind the glass, and some of the attendant types around me are horribly misshapen and grotesque. This is not a display of clinical psychology

cases but almost a zoo. Physical deformities. They are near me and I am afraid. I begin walking away and one is following me. I am afraid to run and so I don't panic. I look at the shadow between us so I know he isn't grabbing me. On the way back to the room there is a woman on a stretcher. A cover is over her face and I think she is dead but then I see the top part of her head is covered in a black hood. I think, "I really need to experience the humanity of those people back there instead of run away," and go back.

1-17-1976 **Autopsy on Baby:** This time they are doing an autopsy on a baby, it appears, and I want to experience seeing a dead baby. As I look it seems my face reflects horror and I believe I think my professor might be moved by the horror on my face. And then to my real horror there is movement near the baby's eyes. I believe it raises its eyebrows a couple of times. Its face is quite white. There is a mountain of intestines that have already been taken out behind it. I say to someone "The baby's alive" and perhaps someone nods disinterestedly. They know what is going on. I go to leave. At some point I know that this is a mental hospital. I believe it is closing time and a guard pierces my clothing with a sharp hook on a pole and says to come on. I looked incredulously at him and said, "You can't think I'm a patient!" and he looked at me but didn't release me a minute. Then I become embarrassed and say, "Let me go – I'd never live this down at school," and he let me go. I say "Surely I don't look like they do," and he says, "You look like they do the first month." Then he says, "Maybe you have heart trouble," and leaves and I wake up.

1-18-1976

(1) **Too Much Water for Fire:** I am in a hotel lobby and a woman is pointing to the ceiling, where the plaster is crumbling. She says she is afraid the whole place is going to collapse. She says it is because there has been a fire and too much water was being used to put it out. I go upstairs with a friend to investigate. I'm not very afraid. *I have used too many defenses to keep from sexually acting out, and jeopardizing my ability to function.*

(2) **Black Woman Counselor:** I am in a parking garage counseling someone. There is a black woman there, like a counselor, and she

goes to take the other woman to where she needs to go. She tells me she will be back to talk to me, and I say I don't need help and she said "Well, I want you to know I'll be available until 10:40." I tried to help this other woman get in touch with her creativity, and the counselor sees me as needing help. I am puzzled.

2-5- 1976 Flying Saucer Lands 3 Times: A flying saucer lands about three times and I'm not too afraid. The first time me and two guys met them and there was a ritual of sorts (they seemed to do several dance steps and perhaps sing a song). It seems deceitfulness is somehow related to their next landing. Some time ago I believed flying saucers symbolized the penis head to me and my fright over flying saucers dealt with my fright over the primal scene. I'm glad to have less fright remaining [Note: no perception that it may have to do with the incest.]

2-7-1976 Two Flying Saucers: I look out the front door and there are two flying saucers in the air. One lands and I can see men in a costume of our bicentennial on board. One man comes in and says something like, "Don't you recognize me?" and I may have lied but Mollie says, "Yes, you're General..." (Almost like Washington.) I wrote in my journal that I wasn't afraid at all of the flying saucers— excited but not afraid.

2-26-1976 My God I feel depressed and terrible worse than in a long, long time. I went to supervision and I guess I got into my Adaptive Child— At any rate I said I didn't want supervision with either J or I next quarter. She agreed...She said I do good therapy when I'm straight and centered and "okay" therapy when I'm Adaptive and that when I come on adaptive in supervision the supervisor probably doesn't know that I do as good a therapy as I guess I feel disappointed with myself to turn down I and J. I used to value quality of input supervision at any cost — Please God help me emerge from this morass.

3-8-1976 My ex told me that he filed bankruptcy last Thursday and advised me to get a job.

3-9-1976

Reality Is a Breakfast Tray

Containing nuts, bolts and mildewed blocks.
Overflowing, the contents fall off the edge.
Empty, it thuds dully when thumped.
In bad weather it warps, and sometimes cracks.

3-12-1976 I have painful strep throat and am feverish, and a vet friend calls in penicillin for my "dog." The pharmacist asked what kind of dog it was and said it must be a pony...

3-17-1976 I began testing T. today and the first thing he did was to turn over all the furniture in the room. We got along famously.

4-4-1976 Visited a fellowship today and at the end Patti sang "Caterpillar," which moved me so much I left immediately rather than let the experience become diluted.

4-10-1976 **Conspirator in Abortion:** I know someone is going to commit abortion and I either let it happen or advise it to happen. A man was the contact person, my co-conspirator. Then I am with the man and the woman. She hands me some things to carry. It turns out one of them had the dead baby in it. Then we are at Sary's house and I left it there. The guy is real promiscuous and once when I try to talk to him I see he has another woman's apartment key stuck in his hat. It seems I need to tell him the dead baby is there, with us, and ask him how to dispose of it without getting caught. Well, the house turns into a warehouse and I try to sneak back at night to get the dead baby so there'd be no evidence. I go in and have left a light on. I go back to turn the light off and a night watchman is sitting there and sees me. I am leaving again and realize I've left my purse. I am beginning to realize I am setting it up to get caught because I feel guilty. I imagine people saying she should have had the baby, that it would have been adopted.

5-21-1976 I feel lousy. I took the house off the market and as yet have not made any other money arrangements. My mouth hurts, my stomach twinges. I did lousy therapy today, it's very

cold, and I'm depressed about life. Not to mention my dissertation.

7-16-1976 (Partial Dream) **Imaginary Game of Checkers:** My uncle said something like "there's an imaginary game of checkers" and someone else said "but we can see them!"

8-30-1976



Monkey Woman

8-30-1976



Winged Animal

1976

Vignette

LOOKS DON'T MATTER

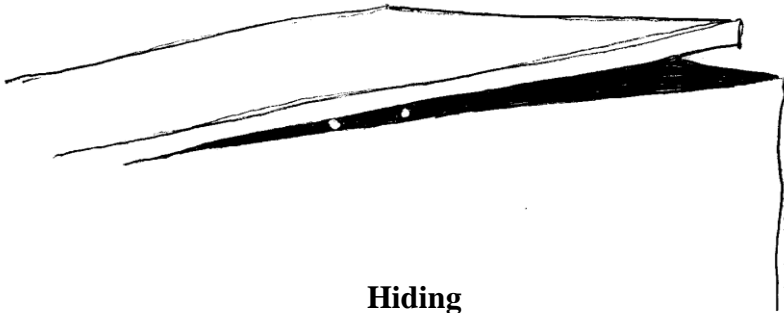
She stoops, sags a little and has a mole.

NOR DO THOUGHTS.

Murderous fantasies overwhelm her at times.

BEHAVIOR CAN BE CHANGED.
Old patterns of obsequiousness remain.
SEX ISN'T EVERYTHING.
She was raped, at eleven, by her uncle.
IT IS THE SPIRIT
Alive, under an imperfect breast:
THAT DEFINES
the woman.

8-30-1976



Hiding

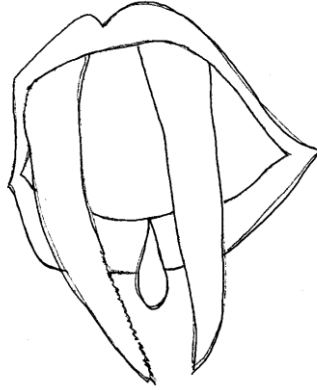
(1) **Scary Swimming:** I am swimming and a large animal passes me. Seems like a giant jellyfish. In order to see better I get out of the water and look through glass underwater.

(2) **Unprepared:** I am teaching a history class and go in unprepared. I have to fake it and it is pretty obvious that I don't know what I am doing

(3) **My Baby Dies:** A baby is in my care and I don't respond quickly enough to its illness, hunger, etc., and it dies. There is a receptacle covered with urine and flies.

9-3-1976 **Sex with Son:** After my children leave for camp I hear them and they've turned around and are returning before going, deciding not to go after all. I am glad. I am in the middle of, or about to, engage in sexual acting out with my son when I realize with a start how destructive it is. What strikes me is how much I have taken it for granted, earlier, that it is harmless.

1976



Fanged Mouth

9-5-1976 **Sex with Student:** I almost begin to have intercourse with J (student). I realize it is wrong, though, and I stop it.

9-11-1976 **Chased in Attic:** I am looking for something – perhaps my children. I go upstairs to a passage in the attic. There is an entrance to outside there and two men begin coming up a fire escape. I come to the other door and lock it behind me or try to.

9-16-1976 Mollie had her heart catheterization yesterday. The doctor, whom I like very much, said it was too early to tell for sure, but there was already pressure in her lungs. He does not yet know about the resistance to the pressure, etc., but if it's too much then repairing the heart would be closing off an escape valve or something. I went from the talk with the doctor to my group and got support from them. My group bought me a birthday dinner at the Sizzler. Sue baked me a birthday cake and J.F. called and offered me a half-time research associate job for \$4,800 a year. Lousy pay but good company...

1976

Untitled

I don't want to play at being a man.
How shall I be a woman?
If I were black I could say

“Black is beautiful!”
But would that make it so?
If I were a woman I could love women
but would that give me balls?
A sexist thought!
Where is my strength?
I am a receptacle.
A woman is a receptacle.
She receives what others
choose to give. Put in me. Plant in me.
Pee in me. I am a
woman.

9-22-1976 **New Bannister Ends:** I am at the house where my father is living. He has put on new glorious bannister ends—says he had traded an organ (pump organ?) for them. They are of course new banisters to the stairs. At the end of the stairway is an emblem containing two roosters or hens. They are alive and have to be fed chicken food. He is also refinishing a large dresser in the dining room. – Stripping it of paint and it is lying on its back. There is another (similar?) piece of furniture in the kitchen. My father is in a “good place.”

10-1-1976 **Successfully Ride Tornado:** I am driving a car. Up ahead is a whirlwind or tornado coming and someone said, “jump out!” I say no and drive the car into it, completely turning the wheels so as to maximize my own power and though it is awfully exciting I am more exhilarated than scared. It passes and I am the victor.

12-1976 **Girl Raped for Own Good:** I participate in getting a young girl to my house and leave her with two people who will rape her for her own good. I come in just when it’s over and wash her dress for her. A little blood still doesn’t come out. Her mother comes in and I hope she doesn’t tell her mother on me. She doesn’t, but when we are leaving the mother comments on some toys on the living room floor they must have been playing with and someone says, “It wasn’t B and my daughter...Some boys who were over did that.” I have a fantasy that the mother will take the daughter to

the Dr. who will discover she has been violated and my role in it will come out. She leaves with me feeling guilty and scared and hoping she isn't pregnant.

1977

1-1-1977 The New Year just came in. It seems a little sad. Twice while driving down today I thought of my father and wondered where he is now. His ashes are—finally—in the mountains, I believe [Note: It turns out they weren't], but where is he? I wondered if he and his parents are together. I like these passages: From George Sheehan's book *Running and Being*: "I have found out who I am and I have no intention of impersonating anyone else." (P 50) Also, "Living the good life," wrote Nikolai Berdyaev, "is frequently dull and flat and commonplace. Our greatest problem," he claimed, "is to make it fiery and creative and capable of spiritual struggle."

2-27-1977 Mollie is doing very well post-operatively. I was not moved to journal during the experience. She came through the operation marvelously. The next day in I.C.U. she had two heart stoppages, but they got her going again within seconds. Something traumatic is happening now to me and the children. My plans are to leave April 1, and to begin work in the new setting on April 15. My ex plans to file a custody case to prevent me from taking the children out of state with me to my new job. Furthermore, Sue began crying the other night because she didn't want to have to choose between us. I told her I didn't think she'd have to, that the judge would not make her do that. In repeating this conversation to my ex he said, "I try to make her realize that by not choosing she's choosing."...I don't want a tragedy to occur such as him killing himself if or when our daughter chooses not to go with him, or he kills me and leaves the children orphans. Or—worse—if he kills everybody. I remem-

FALLOUT

ber that he has many guns in his house. If I take off north immediately I may provoke him into acting out. I need more facts before I decide.

2-28-1977 This afternoon my ex informed me that he was going to file an injunction Monday against me taking the children out of state to my new job.

3-2-1977 I phoned an attorney Sunday night and she said if it were her she would "get out of the state tonight." She also said my ex might say I relinquished my custody of Sue if I let her live with mutual friends and finish her school year. I counseled with some friends and the next morning I took all the kids to their four schools and told Sue I'd pick her up about 10:30 a.m. When I went by to pick her up her teachers wanted to talk about it because they knew my daughter was sad about leaving school. After I talked to them for a while one of them said she had wanted to discuss it and had phoned my ex. So we ran first to Sean's school because I knew after Sue's school my ex would head there next. So I picked him up in a run. We passed my ex heading in that direction as we went down a highway towards Lucy's school. He may of course have been heading toward the Court House to file the custody suit, and even have skipped Sue's school. I picked up everybody and dropped them by my friend R's on the way to seeing my client for the last time. R dropped them by another friend's and later took them all out to dinner. I had to get a new driver's license and finally phoned R to ask that he drop the kids off at the Unitarian Church. My ex stopped payment on the \$200 check. On the way north we stopped by my aunt's house and spent two nights. We arrived at our destination about 4 p.m. tonight, which is Sean's tenth birthday. We stayed in a local motel for \$17.00 and had the remains of the lunch my aunt fixed for us, for dinner.

3-5-1977 We moved into a 3-bedroom rented house today (\$175/mo.). The landlord and landlady are great-brought over

a mattress and blankets tonight and are letting me pay the second half of the rent in two weeks. Mollie and I had done an educational video for a friend in the physical therapy department before the operation, and she sent a check for \$500 instead of \$50. —Said she had a grant and it was worth it. Seems like something always comes along to save us. My youngest has infectious hepatitis and I won't be able to begin work Monday...I hope the other kids don't get it because they may miss much school if they do...I am in a quandary as to what pets to have R bring up when he comes. I feel like it's pushing it to ask him to bring one.

3-6-1977 I'm feeling very anxious—my stomach is churning. I tried to reach my ex at 8:45 a.m. this morning and he was not there. He was also not there at 3 p.m. today. I'm recalling that he knows the name of the kids' school up here and am afraid that he will be there to intercept them either in the morning or afternoon. I guess I'll let the kids call him tonight and if he's not in I'll try to get a Legal Aid attorney before I take them to school in the morning.

3-9-1977 Mollie has pneumonia. Her "hepatitis" may be hepatitis or heart infection or Flu B. She is in the hospital — went in last night. Kids spent the night at a Center staff member's home. I took the kids for gamma globulin. When we left, her fever was 101.8 and when they saw us it was 103.6. I arranged for her heart surgeon to phone her current doctor at 12:30 p.m. to discuss her results after the heart surgery. It's about 2:30 p.m. and I don't know what's going on. They took cells from her ear lobe to see if there was heart infection. This current doctor mentioned the possibility of sending her on to a larger city after this "acute" episode is over. I hope that's not necessary because of the kids. I tried to reach their father last night but he wasn't home. R and two other friends from my group are bringing up my furniture Sunday...I need to pay \$75.00 more for the place I'm in, to complete our month's rent...I know this is a temporary situation and

FALLOUT

that I will be settled and working soon. I need to remind myself of that periodically when everything seems to be falling apart!...The two doctors did not talk, apparently—just got a request for the heart surgeon's name and number from our current doctor. I'm sitting in Mollie's room while she sleeps. There's a soothing view outside her windows—rolling hills sparsely populated. I hope this situation isn't taking a high stress toll on me. At least I can't get depressed when so much is going on!

3-9-1977 End of my first week on the job...I discovered yesterday that my ex filed a petition wanting custody of all the kids and child support and alimony from me so he can stay home and care for the kids!

3-10-1977 Mollie is going home in a day or two. The doctor talked with another doctor at the hospital where she had her surgery and decided the bile in her urine plus enzymes in the blood plus anemia are from her heart surgery and should improve with time. She may need a transfusion or two in the meantime and we'll watch her. Her white blood count needs to stay around 25. I sure hope the Crippled Children's coverage comes through soon...

3-27-1977 I have to do some therapy on myself. Am discouraged about how little money I take home and about what kind of life I might be able to provide for the kids. Thinking again about what kind of life I'm going to have, also. Again neared trying to go all-out finding a husband, but stopped when I realized that's putting all my eggs in one basket in the future and under someone else's control. The way to go is to be from day to day myself, enjoying simple pleasures. I do experience pain that many others don't and I will bear the pain, even if I must turn again to my journal or other writing to share it...Self-therapy: Breathe deeply... Pretend this is the last day of my life...Be real...Eat right...Stay in control of finances/check book...Crank up my Adult...Do Light exercises.

1977 P in my peer therapy group confronted me and it was so painful I became inappropriately mad and stalked away when it was over. The next day I phoned J long distance about the island therapy workshop and she didn't think I should go because I "might decompensate and not get it back together right away!" I said okay.

7-2-1977 **Trying to Reach Class:** I am professor of a course in perception and it is time for the final exam. I am trying to get to the class. I realize I have not prepared the final exam. I can not ascertain the time of the exam and am futilely trying to reach it. I get in a car someone else is driving and they go somewhere else. I try to reach the class by phone but the phone is busy. I get ragefully angry and am banging the buttons with my fists.

7-5-1977 **I Visit a Whorehouse:** I visit a whorehouse. It is like a place of Roman orgy. It seems there is something else, to do with politics, there, as though I am there with politicians. I don't recall my role there. It seems I am one of a group of people, male and female, that go in together as a party and order some food and it seems that there is some going down on dicks, possibly babies doing this. I think that I would serve somebody at this house just to have that experience. .

7-8-1977 **Mollie Is Lost:** I am sitting in a big group of people talking and Helen, a colleague, says, "I wish you'd find your child." I say, "What are you talking about?" She says "Mollie. Mollie is lost." And I just panic. I get to the phone and I am so panicked I can't even think of who to call. When I look up Mollie is just standing there by my colleague.

7-15-1977 **Vat of Animal Organs:** I am standing by a big vat of animal organs and one of them I come up with is a heart with things running into it.

10-9-1977 Experience chops itself up into bits and pieces sometimes, and then too there are different ways of choosing to view the same experience. There's nostalgically, processing life from a place in which one's feet are in the past and our beginnings. Then too there's an experiencing from that place in memory in

which lack of structure for the day meant anxiety and insecurity. Real freedom, then, reminds one of falling, of losing one's bearings, of the smell of real horror. Today, sitting in my yellow bedroom, I can choose to recall anxiety, to sniff at horror's nearby odor, or I can watch my fingers go tap tapping on the keyboard of my typewriter, a mechanical occupation in a mechanistically-viewed universe. My old conflict of sensuality and comfortableness versus the intellect and possible charges of defensive withdrawal is looking like a temporary win for the intellect. Animals loll about and mate, but man it is alone who craves ideas, creativity and the arts. If sublimation is a defense, and one which should be avoided, what is the alternative? I know the arts have value. I observe that much of the arts come from sublimation. Certainly the artists were in a state of some withdrawal or at least introspection when they performed their feats. I might die in this bedroom, someday. I might die in this small town in Appalachia, on the Ohio River, where the mountains are less than majestic and the ground shifts with the rains, robbing the land of the illusion of security and stability and eternity...Some music is sublime, and some writings and some paintings and some dancing. Men cannot be sublime so long as they are alive (i.e., searching for perfection). Exposure to distilled perfection, then, assumes a certain isolation from or occasional withdrawal from mankind...My life is sometimes a tightrope between boiling cauldrons of stink...At other times it is a broad highway, with high fences surrounding the cesspools. The memory, the taste, the stink and the death in those vats underpins my reality, helping me onward. Travelers along the road overlook the pits, and I could swear some know not of their presence. As I travel along from time to time I throw a lifeline to some fellow creature near the precipice. How did I choose to make my life's work this caretaking along life's highway? Perhaps to remind myself that the pits are everpresent?... How can my dog be noble and wise? How can he feed my soul through his presence? Or, how does his presence enable me to use his presence to feed myself? Too deep for

tears. I would like a Jungian analyst. I want someone to introduce me to my monsters, shadows, animae and guides. I don't want to ride my unicorn alone...She. Tits and a cunt. Female woman. Weaker physically than your average man. An inferior second-rate citizen. Born of A dam. Receptive, passive, reactor rather than actor. Pawn to be moved by powers and forces, leaf in the wind, ink in the pen. Difficult often for the ink to willingly flow to someone else's words or intent; difficult to know when humility and humbleness is a virtue, or whether the job to be done is to focus one's energies on willful intervention and willfulness towards the good as perceived by Self...Writing can be my life raft, a floating perspective which may not reflect reality but gives the illusion of an anchoring, a place to be in the grey void...Where shall I go but towards the center?

10-10-1977 **Owl Man:** A man comes to see me in the form of an owl. I believe I am a little bit jumpy and want him to sit still and talk to me rather than being all over the place.

1978

2-10-1978 **Man Gliding:** I see a man gliding in a pair of wings overhead.

9-12-1978 **Knitting-Purse Woman:** I am presenting a woman to a group of people. She has knitting in her purse, perhaps she is a woman detective. Suddenly at a crucial point she disappears and I say, "Whether she was here or not is hard to tell," whereupon I wake, chilled and chattering as I sometimes do from a nightmare.

11-5-1978 **Car Brakes Fail:** My car's brakes either fail or in backing up I get another car without a driver going. It coasts all the way down a hill with me chasing it. It seems to stop of its own accord without untoward incident. I was awakened by 3 hypnompic raps, a not uncommon occurrence.

FALLOUT

12-29-1978 I'm jumping the gun to begin my journal before 1979 but admitting to my impulsiveness...The kids are visiting their father...I had my first talk with the new head of one of the Center's programs today. At one point it felt like we were having a heated argument but it was not on the surface. When we discussed clients getting dependent on therapists—it may have all been because of my overcharged affect re this issue (which I brought up myself). I am displeased with how much of me I shared with him. I must remember, "privacy, privacy, privacy."

12-30-1978 ...After getting my hair done I received an overdue note from the bank and a \$100 check in the same mail, so I took care of one with the other. ...I began cleaning up while listening to two tapes of my astrological reading by Zipporah Dobyns...

12-31-1978 The kids called and I spoke to them all....Sean got on and said he wants to live with his father "more than ever." Kind of a down for me...Right now I'm in a Days Inn Motel room in Jellico, Tennessee, waiting for the New Year to come in. [On the way to meeting my returning kids]. While cleaning Sue's room earlier today I found a packet of cigarette papers and a joint...I guess New Year's is sad because of the backward reflections.

1979

1-1-1979 **Memory Lapse:** I have a memory lapse...I am in the back seat of a car being driven by J.B. somewhere. I believe B.B. is in front. Suddenly I realize we are going to the wrong clinic, and tell them. The next thing know, I have arrived at the right agency with no memory of having turned around, etc., to get there...1:15 p.m. Same day. Waiting in a restaurant for the kids and their father. Raining hard. I left the dogs chained in the basement; I pumped it out before I left, but fear water rising again now. Buttons up on a shelf, Sinbad has a raised plank, and I can't recall about Shivers - but he's had his distemper shot.

1-2-1979 ...I have increasingly been aware of Mollie's retarded looks (as seen in her school pictures, etc.) She is just as lovable as ever, however. Unfortunately, Sue's clock radio woke me with chirping, which I was unprepared for, so I forgot most of last night's dream. Sue says she's had the joint and the cigarette wrappers for at least a year. Huge fight with Sean, who got out his train set before finishing all his homework.

1-3-1979 I just checked Sean's homework and it's all wrong. The house is getting messy again and I'm getting discouraged. Sue is talking shitty to me, etc. The day was pretty well lost - little of permanent lasting in it (yet).

1-4-1979 **Something Wrong with Car:** Short dream: I am sitting in my car and something is wrong with it... Trying to keep house clean and to clean living room of Christmas stuff. I'd like to feel satisfied with myself merely for being home more and keeping house cleaner and more organized...

1-6-1979 **Balloons:** ...I send up four huge weather-type balloons and go back and easily get three. I could have gotten the fourth if I'd waited... Good day today because of my neat "air" dream. Sue is at the movies with her boyfriend and quite happy. "Family Day" today.

1-7-1979 The kids aren't going to school tomorrow because of the icy conditions. Sue is mad because she has to watch Mollie tomorrow... Sean is working on a song about Mohammed Ali.

1-10-1979 **Bloody Ceiling:** I am visiting in a jail and a prisoner there is concerned and asks me to look into the ceiling over his head - bulging and dripping blood. I try to make a phone call but get no answer. Later I see a janitor who says he is going to look inside it. Then I learn it is probably the body of a minister whose approach is to be real spontaneous - I'm not sure if he was a born-again Christian or spoke in tongues or was just of a spontaneous calling. I think his way has gotten him killed and his body is up there.

FALLOUT

1-11-1979 **Flying Glass Casket:** While at Friends General Conference I have a dream about a flying glass casket.

1-17-1979 Kids out of school today. I required Sean to do two pages of math and Sue to correct them. When I got home Sean had lost both pages.

1-23-1979 Today I saw a man who said as a child he used to go to sleep with a hatchet under his pillow because he was afraid of his nightmares.

1979 **Burning Curtain:** I rent a new house and my husband sets off fireworks and catches the curtains on fire. Water gets on the floor in the bathroom and there is a thin coat of oil on it.

1979 **Faceless Babies:** I am in an animal lab and the animals there have been borne by women. I see one woman come up and hold her "baby," which I don't even recall as having eyes or a face for sure. I lie down and start sobbing because of the sadness of it all...

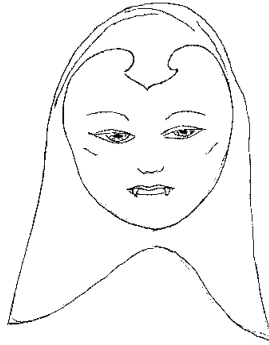
2-1-1979 I'm attending a 3-day Centering Conference in Chicago at the Blackstone Hotel. Jean Houston is a major presenter. She told about having met Teilhard de Chardin accidentally in a park when she was thirteen. At one point he paraphrased "*Fiddler on the Roof*" and he and she danced and sang. Jean Houston said the most sensitive person she ever met was Margaret Meade. Also the most intelligent.

2-1-1979



Kneeling Fanged Male Angel

2-2-1979



Fanged Woman

1979 Types of Fire: I am editor of the high school or college newspaper. I assign stories to various people I know. One is a story series on different types of fire – Another assignment is on the various sports departments and how to participate....

2-12-1979 Children's Home Fire: I smell smoke and see flames up on a hill, to the left of my house. I think it is a Children's home and go there and see it has been on fire.

2-21-1979 Smoldering Coal Fire: I notice a fire in the floor of a building and it is deserted. I go two doors down, perhaps to a liquor

FALLOUT

store, to tell them. I don't get too excited. I look and a man is pouring water on a coal pile in back of the building which is about to catch on fire.

2-28-1979 *Several crises have happened since I wrote last in this journal. For one, Mollie had her stomach pumped because she got into rubbing alcohol. Then Sean fell on the ice and had to be x-rayed. Lucy's bike was stolen and someone called the Health Department about our dog's shit. I am a mortgage payment behind, the medical clinic has called about our bill, etc.*

3-2-1979

(1) **Chandelier:** A female colleague is sitting in a chandelier and C says, "she always sits in a chandelier and plays with herself at parties."

(2) **Arrowheads:** I come up to a homestead and the people are sitting on the porch. I remember that years ago I looked for and found arrowheads in their fields.

3-24-1979 **Cat's Paw:** I am in an apartment and show a woman a beautiful scene out the kitchen window. Mr. West gives me a ride and we stop by his house. The *cat* causes combustion with his *paw*. [To be labeled a "cat's paw" means someone has taken advantage of you and you weren't smart enough to "cat" ch on. It originates in an old folk tale in which a clever monkey tricks a cat into reaching into a fireplace to pull out some roasting chestnuts. The monkey gets the chestnuts and the cat gets burned.]

4-1-1979 *Sean [who turned 12] went to live with his father today. [He recalls later that not one word was spoken by either of us on the 6-hour trip.] I exchanged at Lamb's Inn and on the cement at the service station I found a soft plastic bluebird which I told myself was the comforting bluebird of happiness. I still have it, in my glass box.*

5-5-1979 **Dog Taped in Tree:** I am part of a church service. I wear a black monk's cowl and mainly process from one place to another in what may be a cathedral. The second time I am to do it I am late.

I try to find the cowl, also. Perhaps I am back at my church trying to find one to wear. I process and then go through a cafeteria line to hang the cowl up. I see two older women I know and they speak. They are all each other has and I imagine if one dies, at her death-bed the other will be tremendously comforting. Then I am outside hanging my cassock up (it has turned into a short cowl-less robe), perhaps on a tree. I see my ex-husband's Marlborough cigarettes in the pocket and get them out. I look up into the tree and see what appears to be a black dead dog taped to the tree. I can't see how it is affixed, but its legs are taped together. Its face seems drawn and I think it might have thirsted to death. It is a large dog like a doberman pinscher.

5-9-1979 **Snake Taped:** A black snake has been rubber-banded together and can't crawl right. It sort of crawls like a crab.

6-2-1979 ...I am feeling almost frantic about my life. I want so to get a direction and follow it...I feel terribly alienated and withdrawn. How can I pass the time until my death?... I'm a rotten mother, a so-so therapist and unsatisfactory supervisor. Can I will myself sufficiently to take my life in my hands and rationally shape it to meet my goals?...

7-29-1979 **Snake Killed:** Several of us come walking up and see a beautifully colored snake coiled on itself—not necessarily to strike, tho. My animals are barking but afraid. I wonder what kind of snake it is—then a large police dog comes up and goes straight for it and kills it.

New Year's Eve 1979 Alone in a motel in Jellico, Tennessee. Meeting my three daughters returning from their father's. I reflect about the past decade. During the past decade Mollie was born and Daddy died. I separated and divorced. Mollie survived open heart surgery and I got my Ph.D. and have worked almost three years in my first job. I also bought a car and a house by myself. Lost two clients to suicide. Sean went south to live with his dad. My friend Sarah died. Entered a law suit with my ex. I read Julian Jaynes the last few days and wonder how conscious-

ness will change to adapt to the new burden of felt insignificance...I saw a photo of perhaps 50 novelists holding their books in front of Dalton's Book Store and many of the authors look dumber than me. They must have more self-discipline. During the next decade I will go through menopause, Mollie will complete her education and all the other children will leave. All my bills should be paid except the house. I hope to find my faith again. I am feeling so very sad this New Years Eve. I'm sure it's a combination of the date (end of a decade) and the kids having been with their father for 8 days.) I recall the eradicated past (Daddy and his parents) and the fact that the farm was unrecognizable when we drove by three years ago...we couldn't even see where the house had been. I want to be a good mother before the kids leave. I want to give the kids a stable home life, the hardest thing for me to do for them....I want to be a good mother and a good daughter and am ending up not being much good for very much, so far...The New Year and new decade just arrived and I'm lonely...

1980

1980 Picking Bugs: I am with J. F.'s daughter and I see some small bugs on her and absentmindedly pick them off. Then I realize she has lice and that her hair is cut short.

1-22-1980 My Father Stage Directs: My father (who's dead) is on a stage directing people. I wake in a cold sweat.

1-24-1980 Two of Me: I'm going to find somebody and see that there are two of me. (My consciousness isn't in either of them, maybe).

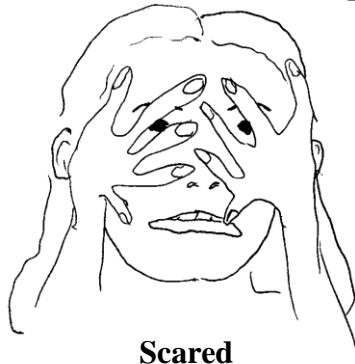
5-13-1980 Burning Church: I am in a burning church and I am hiding in the dark from someone who is trying to kill me. I am in a room with a woman and she has a metal contraption in her hand but I can't be sure if it is to be the murder weapon or not. My children are lying low looking for the murderer, also.

5-14-1980 I am struggling with what's most important in life and how I should proceed from here...I used to know my values

and at bottom was where or how I *lived*. I felt I could always get a rented room and be happy. Now I am having more of an awareness of my family responsibilities. I regret Sue is graduating next year before I have a "nice" home to offer her. My career overlaps home and work and personal growth and although I opened this journal thinking I'd stay another year, I know one day I may look back and see it as a year wasted out of my life if I get nothing from it but older. I know what I'm doing is planning a defense against depression. I have to feel like I'm growing intellectually and personally, and I know I'm doing neither now. I could be losing irretrievable gray matter daily. It's scary to pick up and leave a job I know I love, but I also know one of my strengths is always loving my jobs...

5-17-1980 Still depressed and still trying to get un-depressed. Spending money—bought a color tv two weeks ago and a stereo today. I am reading *Understanding Mysticism*. Am unclear how to differentiate between the described mystical hunger for God and an infantile hunger for Mother.

May 1980



Scared

5-26-1980 I slept on the back porch last night and it was a pleasant experience. Am sitting on the back porch now listening to Debussy. Am getting "organized" again. Am loving the house more. Also love my job. I know some of the things I'll be losing by moving but it feels impossible to remain because I would

FALLOUT

know the rest of my life's content ahead of time...I planted my caladiums this weekend.

7-11-1980 I have been reading a new book on Jungian dream analysis and last night while reading it I realized that my policeman fantasies have not changed over time. Then I dreamed:

I am in a position of power in the police department. I have the key to some things and in general am a person in good standing with the department. When I awoke it occurred to me that my success with forensic evaluations may have influenced the dream.

7-28-1980 **House Burning:** The seams of a house are burning.

9-12-1980 **Weeping Willow:** I am next door and meet a young man who lives in that city. From that vantage point I can see that a weeping willow tree is growing in my yard and I had never noticed it before.

1980 I feel pretty bad. People do not enjoy me and my peers do not respect what I can offer them in supervision. I am too competitive and angry and hungry. Tonight I left on time with the center vehicle and everyone chose to wait an hour later to ride home with J. No one in the church has ever invited me anywhere...I can't afford to get the lights on the back of my bus fixed and my Vega battery is dead. In the past, pain turned to growth and improvement. I feel now like I am going downhill every week — having trouble parenting the kids and trouble keeping a stiff upper lip at work, where I feel as though I am ignored or treated as though I had an unmentionable disease. What I say or how I sit feels self-conscious and inappropriate. I long for my southern friends...I recommended S.N.'s workshop to staff and no one evidenced interest in attending.

1980

The reptile eye

sees
food
behind each

sinew,
each
soul a
morsel for
mastication.

10-4-1980 **Thirst to Death:** A woman and child have died and they have thirsted to death.

10-20-1980 **Closeted:** A man comes in a small closet to fight me. He is between me and the door and I awaken with a panicky feeling of being closed in.

10-21-1980 **Forget Baby:** I have a small baby in a baby chair and I keep going off and forgetting it.

10-26-1980



Engulfing

10-26-1980



Dinosaur Woman

FALLOUT

10-27-1980 **Five Arrowheads:** I find five arrowheads in a clay bank and am excited and one has a rainbow of color in it.

11-1-1980 I bought and read James Hillman's *The Dream and the Underworld* ("a dream tells you where you are, not what to do.") (p. 108) "All daylight consciousness begs the night and bears its shadows."

11-9-1980

Hell Is...

A state in which sleep
no longer exists,
nor unconsciousness.
The karmic cycle is over
and we are stuck
with our
weaknesses forever,
and daydreams persist
of wrong roads taken.

11-9-1980

Footprints

There are footprints of the hunter
in my garden.
The air is damp behind my back.
He shoots these words straight as an arrow
but I am not his prey, alas.

11-9-1980

Hell

Is hell not in my living room
where a white mouse awaits the
pet snake's sting?
Or across the room, where
retarded Mollie sings of husband
and of babies that shall never be?
Or upstairs where the middle child
sleeps alone, neither first born
nor last, eternally forgot.
Or here, touching with words
one another, disturbance of

heart already past?

11-10-1980 *Tears while reading "How Shall I Be a Woman?"...*

1980 **Imprisoning Me:** I say that being in prison is one of the safer ways to survive a war. The rations would be cut way back but it would be some kind of security. *Is this what I'm doing in my life? Staying safe by imprisoning myself?*

11-14-1980

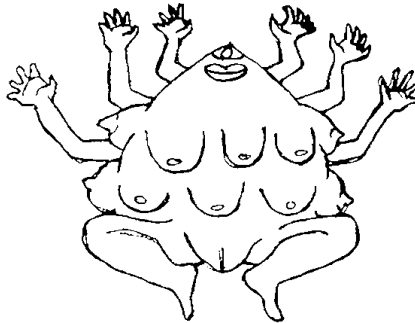
(1) **Feces:** I'm at a restaurant or dinner party and the one giving it has arranged things so as to somehow involve the bathroom/feces, etc.

(2) **Precocious Baby Boy:** I stop my car along a country road and a baby boy gets in my car. He is cute and somewhat precocious. He has a stump for his left hand. His mother comes for him and he smiles to go to her. He was a nice experience.

11-1980 **Sling Shot:** I am looking for rubber for my sling shot.

11-15-1980 **"No":** I am living with an attractive young couple. I am especially close to her. She leaves the room and he tries to embrace me sexually and I am clear, comfortable and unconflicted in my "no." Another time I am telling him something positive about their marriage just as she is returning. At one of these junctures – I think shortly after the first – I am in the other room and she says, "Oh, no!" Someone has tracked black footprints on the floor. They are fresh and we are going to be able to wipe them up.

11-16-1980



Six Armed Woman

FALLOUT

12-1-1980 *Analysis* — I lost my car key and was 15 minutes late. The Jungian therapist saw it as resistance and heavily tackled my need to be a Jungian therapist, etc. He ignored my reports of dreams and drawing. I cried and said he was cold and uncaring and rejecting me. I did not look back at him when I left.

12-6-1980 **Protect Baby:** I have a baby and my mother is with us. She reaches for the baby and I caution her not to burn the baby with her cigarette.

12-8-1980 *Analysis* — The Jungian analyst invited out my negative feelings, criticism, etc. I told him his weakest part was his voice. I also told him I thought he was a good therapist because he did the same things I would do, but my clients don't wonder if I like them. I also told him that last time I felt like he was taking care of himself by trying to get rid of me because he was threatened by me. Of a dream that I had been sexual with a patient, he made fun of my super-ethical position and said many Jungian therapists are "rogues." I had been afraid that because of my dream he would be afraid for clients to be exposed to me.

12-15-1980 *Analysis* — The Jungian therapist continues to laugh spontaneously at me. I report a dream in which I hear that an infant girl has been injured and I am afraid to ask about it...it snowed this morning. I had left my lights on during the session and I had a dead battery. I stood in the snow in my sandal heels waiting for the AAA man and then couldn't find my card....After Christmas I began to consider not returning to therapy. I needed to quit awhile because of overspending Christmas. Also I had a dream in which a former group therapist tried to lead the group without his female co-therapist and it was not a success. I wrote the Jungian therapist a straight letter describing my reasons for terminating...[The Jungian therapist I saw briefly (too far to drive) said he's aware of two parts of me: the part anxious to please and the part with teeth.]

12-31-1980 **Better Bite:** I am trying to have a pair of teeth made that will provide a better bite.

1981

1-6-1981 **Protect Rabbit:** I am chasing an escaped tame rabbit. I want to catch and protect it. The dogs are wanting to eat it.

1-13-1981 I felt good today because I did a forensic evaluation in a home and got a "superior" from Peer Review...

3-1-1981 At times my parts get too separated, and I'm not solid. I need to legislate a "count to 10" lag in me. I want the esteem of my peers and to get/keep it I need to slow myself down and get more solid. Sean called tonight (tomorrow is his 14th birthday) and when asked he revealed that he has no friends and that everyone at his school is a "jerk." Then Sue mentioned that Lucy has no friends and I'm feeling like I have passed a diseased life-style to my kids...

5-31-1981 I finished reading Masterson's *Psychotherapy of the Borderline Adult* today...Masterson's book didn't mention identity conflicts but enough rang true with me, especially how I felt I would die if Mollie did...Will I ever have anything to offer others? It's getting late for reconstructive therapy. Should I move to where it is offered? What if I can't "take" it?...At some time I must have thought I could please my mother...When I feel abandonment depression (lost, in a void, rudderless) I get hungry for a spiritual experience (reunion)...Perhaps it wouldn't be so hard if I weren't avoidant also. Do I want to find a nook to hide my borderline condition in or work on changing sufficiently to get a meaningful relationship? That kind of therapy would cost a lot of money with no assurance that I'm salvageable...I need to watch myself for externalizing and acting out conflicts rather than experiencing them. After reading Masterson I dreamed of a mother cat eating a baby cat....

June 1981 There was an incident when an incestuous father had come in to the mental health center depressed and wandered off again and there was some concern that he might be suicidal. I

over-reacted and was going to go out looking for him. My peers confronted me and as a result it was recommended that I get some "therapy." *[I began psychoanalysis with a non-Jungian therapist who was closer to home.]*

7-3-1981 In Bed with Analyst: I am at my analyst's office and he is in bed with me in the therapy office. I feel surprised at that and think surely he's not going to make a pass at me! Then he begins caressing me and I think that blows the therapy anyway, if he'd do that, given my history with Daddy. I don't stop him right then, possibly because it is too late to save therapy anyway. Afterwards I am so sick he has done it and am wondering what to do... I think maybe turning him in to the Ethics Committee might put a different ending on my problem than in real life with Daddy, because I never reported him... I am still fretting about my analyst when I realize with great elation that it hasn't happened! It is a dream! I am so happy.

7-8-1981 Analysis — I reported two dreams today. He made no comment, preferred I tell them rather than read them. He asked how I felt about my former female therapist in graduate school and I said I loved her. He asked more about why I wanted therapy and I said I was puzzled that he was puzzled, and he clarified that he was trying to understand my motivation. I think he decided it was in anticipation of changed living arrangements next year. He asked me to free associate if I knew what that meant, and to tell him what that meant. I said I felt like I was being tested and he said yes and I got angry and said I was angry, that if I failed the test it was a question of life or death for me, whether he would see me for therapy, and he said not whether he would see me for therapy. He asked how I had felt about him last time and I said better than I expected to, and said I'd heard he yelled at his patients and that I didn't like being yelled at, and he smiled. I also told him about Sary's Parkinson's and he smiled. I think he is mirroring. He is being gentler than I would have thought possible for him. I spoke of a dagger, blood and an eagle, a golden garbage can top, soft feathers, a dog I had as a child, a horse, a pin-up photo of me in the eighth grade,

I told him about my maternal grandfather and my paternal grandmother and the scary poem my mother used to recite to me: "Little Orphan Annie." He asked what the blank wall in my living room reminded me of and what the round garbage can top reminded me of. I cognitively thought of the breast but felt it did not apply.

7-13-1981 **Dividers Fall Down:** I have been living in a house for some time. It has a good tin roof and cement floor, but in the past year the room dividers have fallen down and it is just one vast bare space inside.

7-14-1981 *Analysis* — I felt very angry during the session and connected it only to having to drink raw eggs as a child. I became aware of fear, too. Also realized I never remember feeling anger as a child, only fear. Warmth too, with Sary.

7-16-1981 *Analysis* — One irritation is his referring to the "rules" of free association.

7-18-1981 **Playwright:** A male playwright has been living in my house for some time without my knowledge.

7-20-1981 **Two Cut-off Breasts:** Someone hands me two elongated cut-off breasts to take down the hall to the pathology lab or something. They vaguely resemble penises.

7-23-1981 *Analysis* — ...I told him the "rules" thing had bothered me. I also thanked him for not "messing" with me...I told my analyst that I hated him but also was grateful he was being quiet and not bothering me...

1981 **Lion:** I have a lion that I have to keep in and not let out.

8-13-1981 *Analysis* — I went back to "What am I afraid of?" and decided it had to do with sex and my father...He commented on the Super Ego and...it appears my fear of men is my fear of the Super Ego.

FALLOUT

8-23-1981 Analysis – I spoke of my life being one undoing of incest, my not wearing makeup for fear of competition with my mother, etc. Also that a part of me wanted to seduce my analyst and turn myself in. What part of me wants to sabotage therapy? “That’s a good question.” I suggested I could tell my mother but nixed that because I’ve been destructive enough already. I neutered myself (my Super Ego did) so I would not be re-exposed to acting out as I had done earlier. I got an image of my Super Ego as a very uptight somewhat humorous and appalled part (female) who finds me totally unpredictable and a “problem child.” So...my fear of men is my fear of my Super Ego.

8-1981

Biography

A DARK TAPESTRY, WITH CONVOLUTED STRANDS

The edges of life recede into shadows of consciousness.

HEAVY, SO HEAVY IN THE CORNER ON THE FLOOR

Mute. Choked whispers. Grandma’s rocking chair is stilled.

HIS CHEAP WINE HAS LEFT A STAIN.

Heavy footsteps, fear. The hunted hunts.

WOOF BITING INTO WARP, CRUELLY.

Without a dagger, lionhearted female child.

SUBTLE COLORS OF A GRAND DESIGN, SPLASHED

Loveless, loves. Fearful, dares.

WITH MILK AND TEARS AND BLOOD AND DIET RITE

Herself in the caverns of the day, herself

NUBBY TEXTURED, REINFORCED WITH BORROWED

THREADS

In the quagmire of Cheerios in a man’s world

FINISHED, COMMON DOMESTIC DESIGN

The hunted hunts.

SOLELY WENDING ITS WAY TOWARD THE RAGGED END

Hope, hoped, hoping, will have hoped, would have hoped

BUT WAIT. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN THE NAP

Here. Right here.

HELD TO THE LIGHT, JUST SO.

8-27-1981 *Analysis* — I remarked at my father's lack of brutality with me and burst into tears with an overwhelming feeling of being in love with my father. I said, "I feel softer," and did.

9-3-1981 *Analysis* — I was into my aggressive fantasies today—Fighting bucks, rhinoceri, kicking over the desk, kicking out windows, castrating analyst with a broken piece of glass. Feelings of being a dirty old man or bad kid.

9-7-1981 **Watering Hole:** There are monster tracks at a watering hole and a line of kids to be baptized.

9-8-1981

Early Memories

Like muted thunder rolling ominously
but difficult to pinpoint
or the shadows of
swiftly darting minnows in a brook;
reaching out a hand to grab a fistful of itself.
Rending the veil of earlier consciousness
to no avail. Associations echo voices from the past
through the child's ears.
The child hears muted thunder
in the night and the silent swish of quickly
darting minnows in a brook.

9-9-1981 ...the necessity of a mooring for me. I see myself as attached by an umbilical cord or some other vulnerable attachment, without which my world would not be stable.

9-21-1981

Untitled

It's such a complex day, like yesterday...
lost among the crannies and the cracks.
Four gargoyles throw catcalls from the
corner of my room.
And I, zipping up and buttoning down,
one foot before the other, go just so
down the cold slab of sidewalk

toward tomorrow.

9-24-1981 *Analysis* — I spoke of fighting being a response and of wanting to drink the blood of life. I said a part of me feels I am being a problem for him and he said why and I said because I'm a problem for me, I don't understand this...

9-25-1981 **Pregnant Man:** A man is going to have a baby.

9-28-1981 **Mom Obstetrician:** My mother is an obstetrician.

10-5-1981 *Analysis* — I think about my analyst saying I am the man who is pregnant in my dream and I imagine telling him how I felt about that. It comes to me that I want to be born to my father, not to my mother. I think of my gaining weight and that it's an acting out. He'd say I shouldn't act out but I think a part of him doesn't want me to be any hungrier in sessions! I think both his masculinity and boundaries are threatened by my suction.

10-9-1981 *Analysis* — I reported a fantasy of eating a long limb with warm blood running down my chin, then using the bone to hit people around me in frustration.

10-10-1981

Death

Under the subterfuge of sleep
he stole stealthily through the
folds of slumber, embracing,
encompassing, incorporating
'til they were one eternally.

10-12-1981 **Black Dead Dog:** I am part of a church service. I wear a black monk's cowl and mainly process from one place to another in what may be a cathedral... I look up into a tree and see what appears to be a black dead dog taped to the tree. I can't see how it is affixed, but its legs are taped together. Its face seems drawn and I think it might have thirsted to death...

10-25-1981

Tom's Wife

Tom's beagles lapped warm milk
in the sunlight. But at night
the howling of the hounds would
set the dark unspeakable
to gnawing inside Tom's wife.
Once when the hounds hushed
the gnawing didn't, and
when they carried her off
she was baying at the moon
while the hounds hid.

11-4-1981 ...At the end of the session today I began wondering if I'm making myself seem sicker than I really am for masochistic reasons or something. I thought, "I can't really be that bad." But by midnight tonight I'm not sure. I said I'm not afraid of my insides. I am afraid of losing perspective.

11-5-1981 *Analysis* — My analyst does have trouble keeping a straight face at times. Today I said maybe there was a little tiny part of me that is masochistic, "it's just that she's got a big mouth," and I didn't think he would successfully suppress spontaneous laughter.

11-13-1981 **Over Dashboard:** I am in the car awaiting testing results. Then I am behind the steering wheel and a man is putting in gas. Only he puts it in under the windshield instead of the gas tank and it starts coming in over the dashboard inside. The motor is running and I have my foot all the way down on the brake and the emergency on too, but it is idling too high and goes forward and he disappears. I am afraid I have run over him. I get it to stop by putting the car in neutral and look back. It seems he has just fallen to the side and wasn't run over. *Repressed memory of fellatio?*

11-17-1981 **Low Walls:** I drive up a very narrow dirt precipice road and leave my car and walk to the abode I seek. It is a 2-level dirt house without a roof. I enter on foot by a cave-like entrance. I am comfortable there with many people, like a commune. Either I

FALLOUT

was nude at times and no one noticed and/or there is a unisex bathroom open, also without anxiety. I remember seeing what looks like urine in the sink. I am accepted. There are no dividers in the house. The outer wall is only a few feet high. I realize that I don't have to go down under to get in the house but could have just stepped over the wall. I do, getting out. I don't have to regress to the cave to improve myself and I'd like to believe that. Could it be only a crucial step away? Over the wall? Over the wall to other people?

November, 1981

UNTITLED

If Dorothy's Oz
was a disappointment,
what am I to me?

11-19-1981 *Analysis* — I said part of me was crouched in the corner sulking because I was made up as a blonde now. He asked me what that part was like and I tried to get into the feelings of that part to tell him a 2-year old dirty old man.

11-27-1981 **Face Changes Again:** I see a dead bird or birds. Then I am sitting on a bed with two men, talking. Again (for the second night in a row) I notice particularly the man's face, but it is different from last night's. I think I might like him. He has narrow marks down his face that appear to be burn marks.

12-1-1981 *Analysis* — As I left the session today my analyst asked how I felt and I said confused, and he asked what I was confused about and I had to laugh because I realized I'm confused about *everything* — who I am, what I want, how I want it, etc.! I left laughing.

1981

To a Delusional Patient

Your delusions are walls between us.
I sit in wonder at your constructs
and hear the voice
of the crying child within,
seeking to be rescued

by someone bigger than us both.
But no one comes
nor will they.
There's only two inside this room,
one barred out and you,
buried alive there somewhere
beneath the words.

12-2-1981 *Analysis, Session 50* — I reflected on this being my 50th session and said I felt he was less distant, less fearful and more relaxed. I also feel more finite than when I began, and somewhat good — tho I'm confused, I feel more finite — simply a batch of scrambled eggs.

12-16-1981 *Analysis* — Told analyst about running in front of a truck when I was two and getting so angry at my father spanking me that I went in the other room, slammed the door and held my breath until I fainted. (I have no memory of this, have just been told). Tears over Mother's hurt, frustration, hostility and limited capacity.

12-18-1981 *Analysis* — When my analyst asked if I missed my mother I said I never had one. The next session I had the fantasy that he has a supervisor and that the supervisor misunderstood that I speak metaphorically and that he had asked him if I had dissociated my last session. I assured my analyst that he can ask me directly about things like that.

1982

1-25-1982 **Wanted Photo:** I saw a Wanted Poster with my father's face in it.

2-6-1982 **Pretty as My Mother:** My mother and I are signing out of a movie to go to a party. On the way out I am putting on my bra. I have lipstick on and am pretty and think that I look as pretty and as young as my mother.

4-10-1982 **Floor Ignites:** I look in another room and see my father has caused the floor to ignite – not a blazing fire but red coals glowing in the litter on the floor. I am unable to get out the words but manage to summon his nurse who says he has taken six different drugs that day.

4-11-1982 **Dead Woman's Hand:** Company was over when I see a garbage bag with a woman's hand in it bob up. I don't announce it loudly but mutter to someone like my father to go outside and look. In the living room a new rug that belonged to my sister has been put down over our old rug. I stop along a road, seeing what I think is a black sheep. Its mother is across the road behind a fence. It is really an adolescent black bear and I can't do anything to help return it to its mother because I can't get close enough.

4-15-1982 *Analysis* –[Reading the following, I feel a little humor in the situation]:

"Shit Day" I attacked my analyst all day (my 104th session). I said he was cold and either unable or unwilling to mirror. I threatened to leave analysis in a veiled way. Said I hated him. Felt like I'm in a test tube when I'm with him. Not validated. Said I'm *definitely* more Narcissistic than Borderline...I told him I hadn't taken him inside me and could stop analysis and not think about him. At one point he said, "It's like you're saying Dr. A doesn't understand me," and I hit the roof and said that "Dr. A" pisses me, that he's not "Dr. A" to me, that I had read that any analyst that calls an adult by their first name instead of Mr. or Mrs. is in countertransference, and I thought that was horseshit, that those values were so *false*. I told him he tries to distance himself from me and still wrinkles his brow to keep from being present with me [keep from showing his facial expressions], that he keeps himself from being human...He said I might misunderstand his non-verbal communication.

4-16-1982 **Father Maneuvering:** My father is maneuvering into a position where he can rub himself against me. I put a lot of energy into keeping him from doing that. At one point I am aware of feeling like I should just go ahead and have sex with him.

4-16-1982

DEATH

Under the subterfuge of sleep
he stole stealthily through the
folds of slumber, embracing,
encompassing, incorporating
til they were one, eternally.

4-17-1982 *Analysis* — I don't like myself for not liking myself. In therapy I feel very exposed and vulnerable and got an image of myself as a mess of seaweed dashed against the rocks and left exposed to the birds to pick the sea-grape from my hair. I remembered that one of the reasons I left therapy with D.T. was because I didn't think he liked me, even disliked me. I realized I still feel "Dr. Analyst" at least respects me and my struggle. I couldn't stay with any analyst that I believe *dislikes* me, either.

4-20-1982 I imaged me in the womb eating my umbilical cord.

5-5-1982

On Writing a Love Poem

Pen Poised, trembling
undercurrents
of shapeless forms
ripple through the shadows
of malevolence.
Must every love stalk
the parched cliffs, sand blasted
in the year of the locusts?
Choked sounds,
silent passings,
a presence in the deep.
Come for me oh
my bogey man.

FALLOUT

5-6-1982

Trip to Pomeroy

Middle-aged bleached me
in a used yellow Gremlin
heading up Route 7
on Woden's Day,
slow truck in front,
burdened, toting
sixteen logs that slip
toward the front, inside
their iron chains,
sixteen logs from the forest,
leaving sixteen stumps behind.
At eight-twenty a.m. on
May five, nineteen eighty-two, in
Appalachia, decade
of Brooke Shields,
century of Ann Frank,
millenium of St. Joan,
a mud-spattered Ohio
license hangs beneath
rough-cut faces
of former trees,
somewhere, pressed
between yesterday and
tomorrow on the long
journey to the mill

5-6-1982

Valentine's

Downs Syndrome drops
from the lips so sweet
as Upside Downsies
and Cinnamabob.
But the tabloid
Mongoloid
hurts
idiotically.
Mollie,

baby girl,
flesh of flesh, heart
skip of my beat,
I love you.

5-7-1982 **I Smell Bad:** A man backs away from me and says I smell bad. It isn't just a bad smell but an overwhelmingly nauseating stench that brings up unthinkable images because I recall sharing the sensation but not the images.

5-8-1982 **Walls Pull Apart:** Someone points out that the walls have pulled apart in a corner of my house and it will now be difficult to sell.

5-11-1982 *Analysis* — I report the thought that my unconscious has thought Mollie was my father's baby when she was born.

1982

Dropped from ADC

Do you know why they tell
you not to feed the bears
in state parks? It's not
because of the danger when
you feed them. It's what
happens when you stop.

5-13-1982

On Writing Poetry

Embracing chunks of life,
trying to convey the experience
in thin black words
on a cold white page,
failing
because
words can't breathe,
won't bleed,
and don't whimper
in the dark.
They just lie there,
impotent fossils,
barren husks,

dropped spoor,
not the real thing at all;
not the rustle
in the weeds
nor the shrill screech
of the wild boar.

5-27-1982 **I Look Like My Mother:** I see my face and it looks like my mother's and I am aware of feeling a great deal of rage inside.

Before 6-15-1982 **Making Love with Analyst:** I am at my analyst's and after 15 minutes he leaves and his secretary starts acting like my analyst. She stops after 15 more minutes. As I am leaving I get angry and assertive and look my analyst up. He doesn't have his jacket on and seems sexually attracted to me. We are going into another room together and I break a glass. I pick up some pieces and also a spring or corkscrew which I drop into a dishwasher. We go down on the floor under the desk. His penis is huge and healthy-looking. He is having trouble inserting it because of its size. There is a sound at the door and he asks me if I've locked the door. I haven't. I thought, that means his secretary doesn't know. I have already seen evidence that he is not married. I smell something burning and feel guilty I have dropped something in the dishwasher and apparently it is heating up. I know I'll look different at work and realize I can't tell them I have been making love with my analyst. I realize a female colleague would be furious at him. I realize I've been furious at women in the past at women who don't report their doctors but I realize I am not going to report him. I enjoy it too much and it seems he really thinks this is good for me. I don't feel used. At one point I walk through his house and there are casual lovers standing around.

6-15-1982 **I Am Drugged:** I am apparently at a party and I hear the voice of a colleague who is a lesbian. I say, "Where are you, L?" because I am disoriented and there is laughter and I realize it is by L. who has her finger up my vagina. I try to get my bearings and they put a piece of gauze in my mouth and I realize it has been treated with a drug. Another woman was there. L says something about the breast being a very sensual area and I realize that they

have drugged me and I have been behaving in a very sexual manner without realizing it and feel kind of proud.

8-5-1982 **Baby in Trash Can:** I see what appears to be a newborn baby in the trash can in the file room. I see some movement so I know the baby is alive. I don't look closely or help the baby but mention it to someone else that "something's in the trash can." I am afraid if I look and hold the baby that I might get hurt.

9-24-1982

(1) **Analyst Wears After Shave:** My analyst is wearing aftershave that smells good and he is in a very good mood in a session.

(2) **Analyst Wears Kilt:** I am in my analyst's house and he is wearing a green plaid kilt. I am waiting for him in a large room. It isn't clear where we will sit.

(3) **Stain on the Wall:** I give my bedroom to 3 college boys and go downstairs. I see a stain on the wall and see it is from water still running from upstairs and I show them.

9-25-1982 *Analysis — I've had 164 analytical sessions...I feel that my analyst misinterpreting my man having a baby dream is that he did not want me.*

9-28-1982

Untitled

If we were born
as we are
when we leave
who
would stay
for long?

October, 1982

CALENDAR

A scream pierced the night;
only the March wind.
Raindrops fell,

an autumn storm.
The earth moved, and it was
my winter heart.
Where did summer go?

October, 1982

UNTITLED

If tears were fertilizer
for the soul
how wise then would I be.
If pain should feed like rain,
how strong.
Or fire that tempers steel,
would it temper me,
I should endure.
But no and no and no.

10-2-1982 **Small Spiders:** I reach down to flick off some small spiders and their bodies stick to mine. I am almost frantic getting them off before I get stung or bitten.

10-9-1982 *Analysis* — I'm in emotional pain. I feel like I'm having birth pangs. At least my analyst doesn't take me too lightly any more. I think he knows I'm struggling. I'm sitting around today, troubled, hungry, introspective. Feeling I'm trapped in a formless lump of clay — in there somewhere — ouch, a sharp elbow in there, being jabbed...Began some prose today re guilt. I'm crying in the dark, a being without form. We're born with such a burden, an automatic responsibility for the feelings of those who interface with us. Immediately. It requires a good baby to make a good mother. Immediately we can hurt or gladden adults. And we can never leave without inflicting more pain. Excuse my shadow, literally. Why?

10-22-1982 *Analysis* — I thought of stealing something from my analyst. I decided to get an appointment card. I realize it's a *transitional object*. I see myself as a phallus-shaped piece of shit. That accounts for my smelling bad. I realized I'd wanted to

merge with my analyst from the start. My analyst *did* have a baby – I got in! I feel angry tears at the fantasy of him wanting to get rid of me before I'm ready to get out! My trouble with perception may relate to being merged – I can't see because I'm too close. I want to be my own obstetrician and get out when I want to, at my own pace! I had a fantasy of leaving the session and telling him to shut up. I don't want him to say anything in the session! Tears. Real people have 9 months in the womb. A little turd baby ought to have awhile at least. Paradoxical intent – I have to be where I am before I can move.

10-30-1982 **Glides into Wires:** I am at the home of a lesbian friend. We are on the side of a hill and she is wearing glider wings. She pushes off and is gliding beside high tension wires. She flies into the wires.

10-31-1982 **Snake Holes:** I have to go down in a ditch and plug up snake holes. I am afraid I'll get bitten before I plug them up.

11-10-1982 **Analyst's Shabby Bed:** I am in a sunken field and can't get out...A man who looks like my analyst has been talking high finance and I start walking out of the field with him. I take his hand and he slips two pieces of candy into mine. I give him one back. He has been speaking of the Kiplinger News Letter. I realize, however, that he has gone bankrupt. I go with him to his house and see a shabby bed. Apparently his wife has a back problem and half of the bed is a straight board tilted at an angle.

11-26-1982 **Sex with Analyst (After he gets a couch):** (Similar to 7-3-1981 dream.) My analyst has come to my house for a session and after the session has to use the bathroom, He comes out of the bathroom nude and I believe he may have asked me to rub his back. I am standing next to him and he has an erection. His face has changed—not like him or my father, possibly with black hair and square jaw, possibly like an unpleasant preacher-type person. I know it is my analyst, however.

[Brief balance of dream accidentally lost].

12-5-1982

(1) **I Don't Look:** I come across a many-vehicle auto accident. All is quiet in all the cars. I feel inadequate to help and don't look too close for fear someone will ask me to help in a way I cannot. In one car I see a man and son. I am afraid to look too close – may be traumatized.

(2) **Sex with Crummy Misfit:** I am taken to a cave of bums and am supposed to have sex with a crummy misfit. I am undressing under the blanket....

(3) **Sex with a Hunk:** I am in bed with a man. I recall him being very pressed to my back. It seems my mother is arranging an orgy for him and me soon. I feel it is a little scandalous that my mother would do this... Then I am downstairs at work and G comes and we make love. Just before he enters me he asks about using something and I say No and he says Oh—Well, happy birthday, as tho running the risk of giving me a child was a gift to me. I am really happy and feel special when I tell him I am permanently fixed. I went down on him and then we had intercourse. I don't remember climaxing, just the sexual feeling. Afterwards I open the door and H sees my face and makes some joking remark about my being downstairs doing that while they were working so hard upstairs. My face looks soft and relaxed and glows. His girlfriend comes in and is doing something and makes a casual remark that leads me to believe she knows and isn't jealous.

1983

1-4-1983 I took the phone off the hook ...

1-7-1983 The left door fell off my yellow Gremlin (came off its upper hook entirely – rusted out) and I have no choice now but to play "Dukes" as Mollie calls it, and crawl in and out of my car window, totally undignified for a clinic chief, especially a mental health clinic chief!

1-24-1983 My mother was afraid all weekend that the Russian satellite was going to fall on her — She thinks she can eat chocolate because it's dark like whole wheat bread. From my new study of music comes this unforgettable quote: "Critics can't even make music by rubbing their back legs together."

2-3-1983 This day was a bust. It began with me paying \$10 for a battery jump, driving 2 blocks to Helmsworth Gulf and requiring another jump, driving to the red light and needing a push across the street to another service station. The loose connection wire fixed (\$5.23), I came on to work and got two cancellations, leaving me time to write and pout.

2-14-1983 Valentine's Day. Got a stop sign ticket.

2-21-1983 Blew water hose in town. Finished "Brothers Karamazov."

3-12-1983 Car getting carburetor.

3-14-1983 Nellie called and is having a biopsy Wednesday.

3-15-1983 Muffler fell off in town.

3-16-1983 Nellie called and had an adenocarcinoma tumor removed from her arm. Results of 72-hour bone test not in yet.

3-21-1983 The car repairman just phoned and said he was putting a new muffler and water pump on my car tonight and when he pulled out it froze up on him. Apparently Mollie had broken a key off in the ignition this morning and he had to spend 1 1/2 hours taking the ignition apart and for tomorrow anyway I have to start my car with a screwdriver! Glad the key broke off instead of working. Mollie may have been long gone down the street!

3-22-1983 My car stalled after I left for my psychoanalytic hour and I had to cancel! Nellie was discharged from the hospital...!

FALLOUT

can't stand it. You should try and start a car in the dark with a screwdriver down an even darker hole.

3-23-1983 Typewriter broken.

3-24-1983 Car locked, wouldn't shift. [This must be why I blocked on remembering this interim car was a Pacer.]

3-29-1983 Learned my power steering is a lot more wrong than I thought. Car jerking.

3-30-1983 Decided to get new car...Heater broke at Maryann's...

3-31-1983 Drove to Huntington and got a Dodge Colt. My Pacer broke down about 10 miles from the place. Mother and Mollie were with me...

4-6-1983 Nellie back in hospital.

4-7-1983 ...They're putting Nellie on morphine today. Cancer has spread all over...

4-8-1983 Called the hospital tonight and Nellie answered. Was so happy to hear her voice!...

4-9-1983 ...At midnight I decided to go see Nellie. Packed car. The next morning when Mother and I left for Atlanta, I accidentally locked Blacky the cat in the house. By the time Marvin, our next door neighbor, noticed him at the window and let him out, it was WHEW!

4-11-1983 We visited Nellie again and drove back all day...To-day was Nellie's 41st birthday.

4-12-1983 At 11 p.m. B phoned and said it was a matter of hours.

4-13-1983 I was called from Peer Review Committee about 9:30 a.m. and was told Nellie's last breath was two minutes 'til 1 a.m., and her heart stopped at 1 a.m. MY SISTER DIED.

4-14-1983 My mother and I drove all day and arrived in time to receive friends with family at the chapel. I'm afraid I became inappropriately angry at Mother for several times asking, "Who died?" It seemed Nellie was entitled at least to a mother who could mourn her.

5-26-1983 **Me in Coffin:** Some people were saying a child on the farm has been depressed. I want to know who. I look and see a coffin with 5-year old me in it.

Before October 1983 **Ugly:** I see a photo of me and my father and both of us look very ugly.

10-28-1983 **Unsupported Flooring:** I suddenly realize that there is a place in my upstairs or attic floor that is thin and unsupported from below. In fact, maybe one of the planks is broken at one point (they had gotten thinner and thinner). I see maybe what caused it: an eave was leaking and hitting and running down one of the floor planks, weakening the whole thing. These planks don't have the underpinning I thought they did.

1984

1984

Loss

Not long ago I stopped
by the old home place.
There was nothing left,
not the foundation
nor the tree nor even
the hyacinths that nestled
by the old house. It was
as though I had dreamed
my childhood and woke
with pounding heart. What
else will vanish too,
without a trace, even as
the mists of dreams evaporate
by noon of day?

1985

3-28-1985 **Worm in Apple:** There is an apple and a worm is coming out of it. Someone says, "Once the worm gets in the fruit it's hard to resist picking."

4-13-1985 **Implanted Chick:** I am talking to staff at the mental health center and some nurses come down the hall and one lets me peek at an embryonic baby bird that is going to be re-planted inside a womb so it can grow more. I see its little head plainly and I am surprised it is so developed.

4-20-1985 **Hole in Sky:** I am with some other people and call their attention to a hole in the sky. There is something a little scary about it and no one denies they see it. Later I am out again and see another hole in the sky. These people won't believe it was there – There isn't so much fear about the second hole.

4-24-1985 **Family Disappears:** My mother and all the kids have disappeared and I have not seen them for several days...My father, who is in bed, begins tearing photos out of the family album. I fear he has done something to them and might to me.

4-27-1985 **To Outer Space:** I am going to join some people on a trip into outer space. I am selecting clothing. It seems that warring factions are going to be there and we have trouble trusting each other. I am called to step forth and participate in practice maneuvers and I am not ready – cannot get my clothing fastened in time or in some other manner ready in time for the practice. I see one of the men in our crew slide off a porch roof incorrectly. There is some anxiety associated with the dream.

4-28-1985 **Mother's Boyfriend:** My mother's boyfriend tries to get in bed with me. I get out of the bed when he tries to get in.

5-1-1985 **Opened Blouses:** I am working at an historical art museum but somehow it borders on the sexual. I see one picture of activity and everyone is walking around with opened blouses.

5-6-1985 **Carry Load:** I am buying some presents for a girl child. My mother is with me. She asks if I can carry them all as I leave and I am going to try.

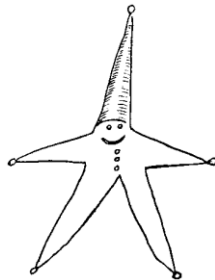
6-14-1985 **Angry & Groaning:** A banquet has taken place and a man has not put the food away and at least a large platter of meat has been ruined. A woman with me is so angry she begins crying and beating on the table. At one point a friend of mine is angry and moaning and groaning so that I am embarrassed for her. I hear a loud squeaking in the house and am horrified to see several rats. The cats do not bother them.

7-1985



Crested Bird Man

7-18-1975



Developmental Delay

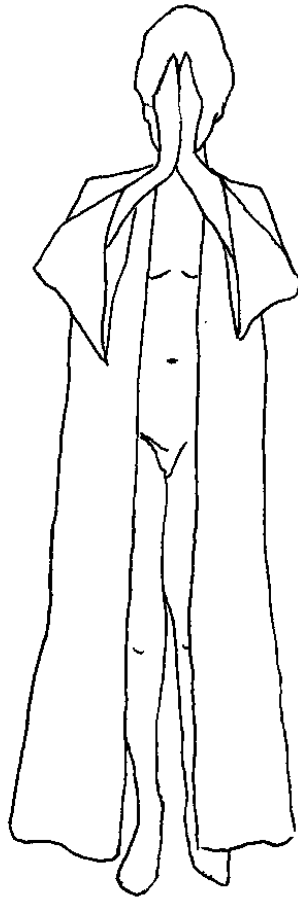
FALLOUT

9-8-1985

(1) **Gift for Nellie:** Nellie has lost someone and I want to share a gift with her that I know she will enjoy. I go to her house but she is not at home.

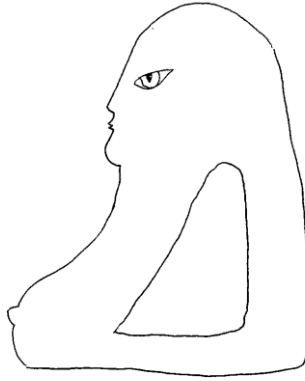
(2) **No Damage to Truck:** I am in a large open garage-like place and a delivery truck begins rolling and I open the door to try and put on the brake. Before I am able to do anything definitive it gently bumps into a wall. No damage is done and the driver isn't even angry when he comes up.

9-16-85



Shame 2

11-4-1985



Swiss Cheese

12-10-1985 **Smoking Carpet:** A woman's husband gets in bed with me. Mollie is in bed, too. I know he is going to be sexual and I hop up. Then I notice the floor and carpet all over the house are smoking. I can't be calm enough to ring the Fire Department. I run outside and some neighbors are looking at the smoke coming from the house. I see a fire alarm box and run to pull it. Next I look in the basement and see where something like soft carpet is caught up in something like a heater and smoldering. I unplug the heater and the fire danger is past.

12-1985 **Car Overheats:** My car has overheated and I am trying to figure how to get down the hill and cool it.

1986

4-1986

Imprisoned

Touch the little bugs in the garden
and they roll into tight balls.
The possum plays dead to the world,
and the turtle hides inside his cell.
And the man? Somebody is
in need of help, but he sits
there daring you to help,
a tough guy, inmate, con,
you name it,
His Mama's baby boy. But he

don't need no help. Just sits
there, indifferent, on his bunk.
Tough guy, all alone
In the crowded dorm.
His Mama's baby boy; tough
turtle doing troubled time.

(Before May 19, 1986) **Cubs Eat Dead Mother:** I am at a place with cages where they do experimentation on animals. It seems a mother lion has died and there are two cute kitten cubs playing. I learn to my horror that the kittens are never going to get out of their cages but will eat the dead meat of their mother and fester and die. The kittens don't realize it, tho. There is snow on the ground and I have one boot on. I realize someone else's mother has found it and thought it belonged to a kid.

5-19-1986 **Two Tornados:** I am high up in a hotel and two tornados are coming and they come and destroy much, but me and my friend are not killed.

7-13-1986 **Car Breaks Barriers:** I see a white station wagon turn right into an area, pick up speed and break the barriers going right off into the blue. It is as though they do not realize the road does not go on.

1986 **Sunday Go to Meeting**

Hungry, thirsty, ravenous;
craving, burning aflame.
Tweed coat and alligator shoes,
no one knows my name.

8-1-1986 **I Look For Privacy:** I look all over for a place to masturbate, but people keep coming in.

1986 I could not sleep last night
for the worlds of words and the
night images that bubbled up
from the recesses of my
night soul.

∞

I am a cracked tea cup
on the shelf of life..

∞

A slinky sheathe of snake,
the sliver of vigor, rippled
my consciousness.

∞

They throb, growing louder
and louder, energized
heartbeats, the pangs
of passionate rebellion
deep, oh so deep
in this child's soul.
Look out!

1986

Lies

These are not common
chameleons, my friend,
but the studied dark
deviousness devised
from deep within
the dejected heart
of my friend Gladys.

1986

Untitled

We looked at each other
and listened. There it was
again, words
without a source, echoing
in the corridors of my
mind. Distrusting my
senses I turned to you.
What do you hear? You
nodded sadly.
“The dreams of yesteryear.”
We stood listening, arms entwined,
then turned our backs and
together headed back down

the long narrow path
toward home.

1986

Agatha

When the cold indifferent clod
upon our slumbers falls
it will be too late
my dear, too late
for aught but a
final dumb obedience
to the feast of life,
and I don't mean the heavenly host.
And when you are food
for worms, will you then
be cold and haughty
or will you of necessity
rejoin the ranks
of the exquisitely
vulnerable?

1987

2-7-1987 **Dinosaur Speaks:** There is a stone in the living room that looks like a dinosaur's head. I see its two eyes move and I call Ben's attention to it. Then it seems like a piece of stone again. I insist I saw it move and that it came to life and started speaking. Ben said it could represent all men and to listen to what it says. I want to tape his words and run to get a recorder. My aunt is downstairs crying and my middle daughter is downstairs too, and a laundry man with dry cleaning wants \$5.00. The dream ends before I get back to hear the dinosaur. It was a discarnate entity speaking through it.

4-22-87 **Gouge Myself:** Unbeknownst to me, I have gouged myself and have a wound open to the red meat, with no skin coverings. A couple of people call my attention to it with disgust.

1987 I am depressed and discouraged. I need to keep my mouth shut and hang in there. I talk too much in groups and supervision. I am hungry for people and erroneously try and get my needs met in inappropriate ways. Yuk pooh bah...The only thing I can do dammit is to try and learn from it and be more circumspect with my behavior in the future. At this point in time I feel like no more students for awhile but that would be ultimately hurting the inmates. If I slip back into hating myself and withdrawing and pouting I will have regressed and not have progressed at all. "It's one thing to make a mistake. It's another to compound it." I will respond in a healthy manner to my recent mistakes.

9-20-1987 I can definitely grow more and definitely be me more, without a significant other. [I lose myself in relationships]. But when I'm all alone for good in the house...? I don't like the idea of being literally alone in my house for life.

12-31-1987 (10:40 p.m.) New Year's Eve: I've been reading Bruno Bettelheim again. The single most important thing in parenting is the thing I'm worst at: modeling self-discipline. I saw a new client today...I didn't do well at all. Of course her sulen depression didn't help...I'm lonely. I'm selfish and self-centered and cold toward others, really. My life is pretty hollow, or rather I am. I made a photo collage of the family this holiday. I am feeling sorry for myself. I am so vain and lazy. Here it is almost the New Year and I'm depressed and withdrawn.

1988

1-1-1988 (3:15 a.m.) I wake with heartburn. It takes 8 bone meal tablets to put out the fire. Am I working on a stomach cancer to avoid my problems? I hope not. I'd like to have time to get ahold of myself.

FALLOUT

4-23-1988 **Ape Call:** I am supposed to meet Carole in a field. The sand is very white. I do my ape call to let her know where I am. We are going to look for arrowheads.

9-17-1988 **I Refuse to Participate:** I am preparing to go on a dangerous assignment with some people. I finally realize that I can just back out and refuse to participate. I will not be on the plane when they meet it.

1989

3-13-89 **Leeches or Roaches:** I have something on my ankle and think they are leeches. But maybe they are roaches. While I am away from home somebody breaks in and I am afraid they will do it again when I am home. A tiger is led out to oppose some other animal.

1990

1-22-1990 **Father Directs:** My father (who's dead) is on a stage directing people. *I wake in a cold sweat.*

1990 **I Can't Remember:** I am with Carole. She has decided to live with me again. We have been in a building and leave to go somewhere else by bus. We miss one bus. Then I am in line for a ticket and can't remember the name of my destination. The man shows me a map to see if I can recognize the name of it and I don't try.

1991

5-2-1991 At a Psychology and Religion Workshop led by David White: "Why is the door to our most precious place through grief? The only thing real to us is our longings...Give yourself over to your longing and it does the work for you..." He read Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese."

1992

8-21-1992 **Forgotten Daughter:** I see a young daughter I had forgotten all about and have not been caring for.

8-27-92 **To Be or Not to Be:** I am at a public out-of-doors place with some significant other. It may be a theater. Mollie comes up and says I need to speak the lines of Shakespeare's "To be or not to be." Somehow there are 25 words. I need to memorize them. I begin reciting them. From what memory I have of them, I begin reciting it and it is easy to do it well—I felt the lines and tears came. When I awoke I took it to be a warning to look at how poorly I am taking care of myself. I also took it to suggest that I need to improve the *QUALITY* of my life, especially my home life.

9-16-1992 I think I've gotten crotchety. I'm querulous and have gotten somewhat judgmental of inmates. I need to *WORK* on this. Needing to be confrontive of sex offenders has impaired my empathy.

9-18-1992 One of my problems is that down deep I believe (know?) I'm unlovable.

10-10-1992 Quote from someone: The aim of therapy is that the patient experience his existence as real.

10-16-1992 A way to improve my self-concept is to live out what I admire.

10-23-1992 I am again feeling that I want to be real. In what ways am I not real? Sometimes it seems my anger is being real and at times it is a crutch, or a stuckness.

IN THE FOLLOWING, "T" STANDS FOR MY INNER THERAPIST (ISH)

10-30-1992 I am dissatisfied, troubled, running.

T: From what?

From responsibility and depression.

FALLOUT

T: They go together?

I want frivolous joys in my life, not dull grindings. Besides, once my house/life is all in order, then what? If I cook good meals, have music in the air and cleanliness, who will come? I am hopeless about a meaningful relationship.

T: You are afraid of one.

Yeah, maybe it's easier to pretend I can't get one than to admit I'm afraid of one. But I don't think it's just afraid — I can't trust myself.

T: To—or not to?

To stay in balance. To find an appropriate place for it in my life. I still have unintegrated areas.

T: The worst likely thing to happen would be—

I don't know if it would be loneliness or losing myself and my integrity again.

T: S said you like to keep busy.

I know.

T: You're killing yourself.

It's the easy way out. If I were on my death bed I'd fight it but not knowing, denying...

T: What do you wish you had balls enough to do?

To go home, clean off my desk, pay bills, buy an iron and get my clothes in shape, catch up on my correspondence, have the window put in, do my 1991 taxes, give a party or reconsider my circle of friends. That's scary because they're all I have. I enjoy them in a comfortable way but they are not emotionally conversant.

T: Is there anything else you'd like to do?

Be a better mother. Yes. Be here and now. Don't run from the small details. I feel I do it because I'm lonely and frantic that I'll get more lonely and more depressed. Now I'm over the hill (not physically attractive) I feel even worse about myself.

T: You jumped over the hill. Look at J, look at P...

I know, but an old woman wanting sex is a ridiculous figure.

T: Ah. You would rather go without than appear ridiculous.

There's shame. I can't easily be appropriate.

T: How about being real instead of being appropriate?

When I'm real I often come across as angry. People don't enjoy me.

T: Do you enjoy you?

No.

T: So you're still angry?

Maybe not but I haven't replaced it with anything.

T: What if you started cooking? Baking bran bread? You're fat anyway. Why not cook the food you eat?

That's a thought. So, I start cooking and get a referral to a doctor to prescribe hormones for my osteoporosis and get on top of my finances...and get my daughter's clothes shaped up, and her good shoes home, the others discarded...My dresser straightened...

T: Be as competent as you can, and live out that which you admire. If you are left in inconsolable pain come back to me.

1992 MORE

T: Yes, I see you struggling. You are going to die.

Shouldn't I be worrying about that, not you?

FALLOUT

T: Oh, I'm not worrying. Just stating a fact.

I want to make a difference to someone, that I lived.

T: You have.

I mean a positive difference. I know I wasn't that loving as a daughter, wife, mother or friend.

T: Wasn't.

Aren't.

T: What prevents you?

Anxiety.

T: What's that about?

Not wanting to fall into depression.

T: You don't know if it's still there.

But if it is it might be too late.

T: Whether it is or not, it's never too late to love, to give attention and care.

Are you so centered? So serene?

T: Join me.

The picking at scabs, the grinding of teeth, ferment, foment, randy pandy rowdy dowdy, run away fly away come back exhausted to hide your head beneath your wing, inaccessible even to you/me.

1992 Dialogue

My mother ran, just so.

T: Yes.

What if she had ever stopped?

T: Yes?

It would have been something I would have treasured forever.

T: Yes.

I still feel guilty that I didn't put her obituary in the paper.

T: What do you want to do about that?

Put a Personal Remembrance in the personals, maybe...

11-27-92 In Journal Writing Group at the prison I read the Forgiving Meditation. Now I am following instructions to draw or write my vision. The person I forgave was my father.

1993

2-17-1993 Tonight P came over and discussed her dreams. I had the "baby returning" dream that night.

2-18-1993 **Return Baby:** I have taken someone's baby and am going to return it. The baby is placid and not crying. I feel guilt about having taken it and fear reprisals. [Earlier I discussed a baby as sometimes representing the phallus. It seems this dream may relate to the guilt I feel about the incest and to represent an attempt at undoing.]

2-19-1993 Last night I had another "return baby" dream. In both cases the baby was placid and not crying. In both cases I felt guilt about having taken the baby and fear of reprisals for having taken it. The night before the first baby dream I talked about the meaning of one baby dream being a phallic symbol. The last two days I have thought fleetingly of my former husband and have felt like I wished him well and regretted not having been a better wife...Oh yes, that night when talking to P I also talked about how many guilt feelings come over me when I'm driving a long distance. I felt guilty in both dreams for having borrowed the baby. An incest guilt dream? The first night I returned it to its father and my former husband was in that dream (he was in bed and had kind of passively been watching it). The second

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night I returned it to its mother. The first night I tried to get the police to help me return it. The second night I was hoping they weren't going to press charges.

5-2-93 **Histrionic:** I'm talking to someone. My hair is almost shoulder length and brown. I think that I am pretty. However, I can also see how shallow and ingratiating I am with the person I speak to. I think that I am histrionic.

5-10-1993 **Neck Tumor:** I am talking with some people and look in the mirror. I am rapidly becoming fatter around my neck. I feel my neck and find a tumor about the size of a tennis ball. I tell the people I have to go to the doctor. I am not very upset. The fat in my neck is hiding the tumor. Is my fat hiding something self-destructive?

5-13-93 **I Commit Crime:** I have committed a crime. The clue is that I haven't returned a key that I should have. They know that I am the culprit a little bit before I am actually apprehended. They are biding their time. Among other things I worry about is my reputation.

After 6-4-1993 **Tornado Excites:** A tornado is coming. You can see the funnel out the window. Then out the other window I see a burst of energy/light/action involving a tornado. My affect is pretty up.

9-2-93 **Twin Daughters:** I have twin daughters. Have I misplaced them? I also am near a stocky man. We decide to marry.

10-28-93 While sick and at home I called R's work and was told he is no longer working. I called his home and left an invitation for him to come see me on Thanksgiving. No answer. I fear he is ill. I know he has AIDS. I regret not phoning him when I was in the city for my daughter's wedding. I thought a lot last night about P and imagined writing her a letter of apology. Then I remembered L.C. telling me off. I rarely write my children, give my youngest little attention. My priorities are messed up. I re-read early dreams of mine. Have I lived my whole life trying not

to be in the here and now? Again I want to deal with my life on a more mundane level. How could Public Access (that almost nobody watches) ever be more important than my family and friends? For the sexual sublimation? Is that sexual drive my downfall yet, due to its non-integration into my development? How do I turn it all around? How can I stomach myself when I see how I have held myself aloof from R and used P? I feel afraid when I think of losing (I have lost) the mooring of those old friends. I believe this drive for creativity is sexual. It's like sensual straining for a bm, or laying a baby/egg. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Why don't I get it together so I don't have to be sorry? I read earlier in this journal that I'm afraid of depression. If I get depressed maybe I can get a new personality with Prozac!

Something else I don't like seeing is my being so harsh with sex offender X. Does he remind me of my father? I have anxiety about social contacts. I have no best friend. I am lonely. I think of returning to therapy. I think of needing someone or some thing bigger than me. I listen to An English Ladymass. I wish I had God in my heart. Or a dog (dog?) to be close to. I am lonely and do not let me experience myself. In reading through my early dreams I see that "an archaeological find among the dirt" is most certainly discovery of the clitoris.

1994

5-13-1994 I cried in sex offender group today when someone said that when he first entered the group several men told him he should "just say what Nan wants you to say." I am somewhat disconcerted because I am partial to this inmate who will almost certainly reoffend and is more violent than most of the men in the program.

6-24-94 **Fire Dept., Police:** There are 3 separate cover-ups. After 3 events happen someone else and I either hide the clues that it happened or make misleading clues. The fire department is one authority, the police another. One woman seems to find a piece of

incriminating evidence because she “smelled it.” At one point I am going to call the police and find they are already there.

11-15-94 **Woman Punishes Horse:** A woman is jumping or racing a horse in a competition. I see her with the horse after the horse loses the competition. She has tied its front and back legs so it can only awkwardly hop on its hind legs, and she has either blinded it or covered its eyes. There is an odoriferous packet of food on the end of a stick. They are near the edge of a precipice and she is waving the food packet so that the horse will be led over the precipice on purpose. The woman is punishing the horse for not doing well. *This reflects my harsh unforgiving attitude toward myself for participating in the incest. [!!Being the victim of incest!]*

1995

4-9-1995 **Red Cross Doll:** Some men are berating and rejecting me as too inferior for a job or task. Then I am at a dump place. I leave an old vacuum cleaner and put a newer one I find in my car. In the meantime another man comes up and gets some good items before I can. I go up and admire some of what he is getting. One is some kind of Red Cross doll or doll furniture set. He says I can have it and I also get a pair of Laurel and Hardy dolls. I am going to give the Red Cross doll set to my oldest, I think.

4-22-1995 **Dog to Pound:** My father is staying in my house. I go away awhile and when I return he may have been fondling me and ignoring what I am saying. I ask him where my dog is, that I’ve been keeping in a room or porch. It dawns on me that the dog has been a nuisance to him and he has taken it to the pound. I ask when, thinking I might still retrieve the dog and it comes out that he took her there the day I left so the dog would have already been put to sleep. I tell him I hate him as I had when he took my dog to the pound in the second grade. Then the enormity of him staying in my house and getting rid of my dog hits me and I order him out of my house. He is not visibly stressed and is in the process of leaving when I wake up.

6-3-1995 **Father Breaks Mirror:** I am on a tour. It seems like I am riding with a bunch of people. Just before we leave I learn there

is a huge old castle built into the side of a cliff. I see a photo of the inside with the owner sitting in a huge room filled with furniture that matches and he has had built. A woman and I are going to walk up opposite to the castle to look at it and I say let me get my camera. I go into the hotel room to get my camera and then it phases into my being in the hotel with my mother, and my father is there. It seems I hear him at night drinking. It seems he may be unhappy. The next morning I see where there is a fist mark left on a mirror. I look at that mirror and notice some places where the mirror has fragmented into strips inside the mirror, from him hitting it. I wonder about how much this is going to cost us. My mother mildly, with no criticism in her voice, reminds me gently that the night before I had called in for him to hit it again and to get it all out. When I see him the next morning I hold him and seem to comfort him. I am feeling empathy for him. He seems to want comforting and then makes as to get in the bed between me and my mother and I say or think oh, no, and get out of bed. He says something about not being able to go with me and my female friend to look at the castle, and firmly but gently I say, "I don't want to hurt your feelings but you weren't invited." He says he's leaving that night at 7 pm (this does not seem to be in response to my statement), and I begin thinking about how he might be regretting the molestation. I woke up and remembered how he had been aware in other areas of how child rearing practices change the child. I wondered if he realized my going off with Carole was a product of his behavior, and if his calling the school about her was a way of atonement as well as jealousy. After I woke I thought about my therapy and S.I.A. and my depression...

9-4-1995 I went in the hospital about 3:30 p.m. Friday. I have atrial fibrillation which can reflect heart failure and which increases the likelihood of a stroke. Tomorrow they will either shock my heart to get the fibrillation under control or decide it won't help and just put me on meds. [They did both.]

9-5-1995 I had another image of stepping on ice-covered cement and almost falling. How do I get centered again with healthy images? I've said the light exercise. I'm imagining a huge rope

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tied around my waist and the other end--does it go into the other world or this?...My mitral valve is "borderline," but the doctor is going to try the shock. I know that churches and church-goers irritate atheists. Also that I have four church pictures in my living room. I am moved by churches and folks in churches because it seems to represent hope, at least, with some striving for what is best in humankind. That moves me. [Hundredth Psalm transcribed.] A nurse just tugged on my iv and it hurt and I cried. It looks like I'm still somewhat labile...I went into ICU and had a series of two shocks. The second was 300 volts, more than he usually gives. At one point I woke up and sat up but recall no pain...No bible in the hospital drawers. Interesting. Why in motels and none in hospitals?

9-5-1995 **Inappropriate Sex:** Tonight I dreamed I had sex with an inmate. 1. Am I that horny? 2. Am I still that divided re sex? 3. Is my self-esteem still so poor? 4. Is it less threatening to think about sex with someone totally inappropriate?

9-12-1995 **Sinbad in My Arms:** Sinbad is tied to the dog house and a snake suddenly darts into his house and Sinbad jumps into my arms. The snake would have chased us but another larger white dog gets loose and comes running up and throws the snake a far distance.

60 Years Old

9-18-1995 **Give Inmate Ticket:** I dreamed an inmate put his finger in my crotch and I gave him a ticket.

9-30-95 **Darkened Car:** I dream that I pass a darkened car. It is going the wrong way down the expressway. Has the need to bite lessened? Is there not a place to return to that is healthier/more adult?

1996

1-1-1996 **Where Am I?** I enter a small empty building. A woman comes in and I tell her I do not know where I am. She says she

doesn't either. I wake up having trouble believing her. How could she not know either?

3-12-1996 **Mother Staying:** I am happy because my mother is with me and going to stay. My sister is there too and seems a little envious. Good feelings.

3-14-1996 **Grandmother There:** I am at Sary's at the farm and she is there. Good feelings.

4-6-1996 **Parents Together:** I am in a house with my parents. They have a bedroom together, and the atmosphere is pleasant. I apologize to a young child that I have slighted. Someone points out to me that I have failed to meet any of my four obligations in a class. One is that I should have worn a rabbit suit in a presentation (or song) I did.

6-28-1996

(1) **Double Dorm Room:** I am the new girl in a double dorm room for four. Someone lends me a neat pair of shoes which I put on. It is almost the last day of the semester.

(2) **Pretty Mother:** I am with my mother and her face is younger and pretty. At one point she is at work and I call her on the lunch hour. Her boss answers and is pleasant. He says they are trying to find her and she walks up to me. I tell him. I am calling from outside, under a tree.

8-1-1996 **Babysitter's Dying Baby:** My ex-husband has a dog masturbate my new baby. Her babysitter has a dying baby covered in chickenshit. It is hidden. I'm lost in a big city trying to get to a phone to report it and forget where my new job is (I started work that week and am late twice the first day). While I am at a strange business trying to use the phone to find Juvenile Hall or my work place, one of my bosses calls and asks why I have been late twice my first day at work. I tell him I am glad he called—I ask for the name of the place I work, etc.

10-25-1996 **My Table:** I am at a restaurant and someone has some mean spiteful things [words written?] put on the table someone else

thinks it theirs. I hear them laughing and saying, "I'm glad it isn't *my* table!" I look and see it is *my* table.

1997

1-19-1997 I think of Emily Dickinson's poem "Some keep the Sabbath going to church, I keep it staying home. With a bobolink for a chorister..." What does a bobolink look like...Where was I when Madeline Murray and her son were kidnapped and disappeared? How frightening and strange that I haven't come across it...I can't yet crank up beauty or inspiration from within but I can resonate to it OUT THERE.

2-9-1997 If I take care of myself at least I'll be taken care of.

6-15-1997

(1) **At Work:** I spend a little time at work looking up the word "redoubtable" in the dictionary.

(2) **Whispering:** The female warden is visiting my office. The assistant warden is there briefly and I whisperingly ask the warden what he is doing there.

(3) **Unlocked Toilet:** I am in a public toilet with flushing/privacy problems. There is trouble with locking the door to the larger bathroom itself.

7-3-1997 **Hurt Lizard:** I show a man a lizard and am preparing a water pan for the lizard when I see the man pick the lizard up and twirl him around and around and I realize I shouldn't have trusted him.

7-7-1997 **Boundaries:** I am in bed with my father and he is pressuring me for sex and I am aware of his not respecting my boundaries.

7-9-1997 **Stolen Food:** I am at a beach finding beautiful shells. I am at a hotel-like place. There is a dinner set out for members of a certain group. I take food off the serving table but am not entitled to it. Towards the end it seems I might be caught.

8-30-1997 **Moving Van:** I am packing an over-crowded van and notice that the van is moving. Someone in the driver's seat is too young to know how to drive. I reach over and am able to bring the van to a safe halt...

8-31-1997 **Cat and Lambs:** I am finishing a class I have taken related to unconscious determinants. The female teacher is cordial and is in the process of offering an extended additional period when someone nixes the suggestion. As I leave I realize how well the class supplements other classes and work I have done. I think I am pretty well qualified for a specific job slot in my future. Then I am at an outdoor gathering. My cat comes over and little lambs are playing with it and the cat just lies there unafraid. It looks like a tornado might come but it doesn't develop.

9-28-1997 **Can't Steer Car:** I am living at home with my parents. They go away and I drive-- maybe their car and can't steer it so I pull over and leave it...Then I am driving to work and I am late. The car starts driving erratically. It won't steer too well. Rather than have an accident I don't go forward when the light changes, even though a policeman is there. I am in the far right lane. I think maybe I back down the street and pull into a cul de sac. At the end I am sitting in the car I can't trust. There are some kids who know me, making suggestions. I look for clothes in the car but I'm not dressed well now. I may not have two matching shoes.

1998

1-3-1998 At the ripe old age of 62 I take pen in hand to put my life in perspective, to flesh out the puzzle. Puzzles have the potential of being pieced together to make a meaningful whole. Someplace, from some perspective, there must be a context sufficient to encompass my life. What puzzles me: I distrust myself but don't know how much is justified and how much is pathological. I am embarrassed by being so self-centered. Miraculously, my children love me and like to be with me. What a blessing....I feel trapped inside a hall of hundreds of mirrors, all warped but one. And I cannot identify the one.

FALLOUT

1-9-1998 The voices are hushed, somewhat comforting, of women in the offices surrounding me as I sit in the waiting room to see the neurologist. I am 62, and have been referred to “make sure” there’s no problem. I am at one of those possible junctures in the road of my life. I’m not very frightened, even though my uncle died of brain cancer, Nellie of stomach cancer, and my mother of colon cancer. I’m not very apprehensive—is it denial or the fact that my body knows it’s OK? My dreams have not been unusual or foreboding. I am hopeful and not ready to die.

1-11-1998 **I’m Assertive:** A woman asks me if she can do something which is against the rules. I am starting to answer her and a guy cuts in and says he wants to answer her. I say, “Listen to what I say and if you still want to give your opinion you can.” I say, “When you want to break a rule, take responsibility for breaking it. Don’t make someone else responsible by telling them.” She is staring past me not listening. I don’t think I ever get her attention.

1-14-98 One of my problems has been differentiating between open assertiveness and neurotic petulance. When I am neurotically outspoken I feel shame which militates against the next potential sharing. I am damaged and need to accept that and accept myself at the same time.

1-19-1998 **I Will Report:** My mother is living with a man named M. She is back and forth between the two abodes. He drinks and every now and then there are sharp screams from one of the perhaps seven children who live there. At times he comes through laughing good-naturedly and I doubt perceptions. I call my mother outside and tell her I am getting away and am going to report him. She doesn’t demur. I am trying to decide who would be the best person to report it to. One possibility is deep in conversation with someone else. I think of a woman I know with Children’s Services. I wake up having to go to the bathroom and without having actually told anyone yet but I have escaped from home and am about to report.

1-22-1998 **I Report New Staff:** We get two new staff in our prison classroom from another facility. They come with a batch of new

inmates. They are teaching my class and on break they are loving up on a couple of inmates. I tell my boss.

1-23-1998 **Drop Class:** I have enrolled for a class. I'm not learning the stuff. I ask the teacher if it is too late to drop and she says no so I leave.

1-25-1998 **I Worry About Little Boy:** I've moved into a house with my kids and mother. I recall talking to a neighbor on each side. It is adjacent to a farmer's market. When I go around to try and find a route to it out back I come upon a lot of children coming up a rock incline and heading for the water hole. I am worried about one little boy and leave to tell his father he is there and needs watching. Concerning the house, we are going to go through all the rooms and write down what items need fixing so we eventually get to all of them.

1-28-1998 **Fire Popper:** My father has been visiting and he is going to leave soon. I come through his room and see his belongings sitting in a paper bag and feel a little sorry for him. A couple of couples have been staying with us. He or someone shows me this large tank-like "fire popper" one of them has bought us in case a fire breaks out when the animals are home alone. But the question is, who would operate it in that eventuality?

1-30-1998 **Privacy:** Z is visiting and we are looking for privacy so we can be sexual.

1-31-1998 **Man Breaks Law:** A man on a bicycle has broken the law and I am supposed to apprehend him. Another person helps me stop him, but I have to kind of talk him into going with me.

2-2-1998 **I'm a TA:** I am a TA in a class and we have a final exam. I haven't studied some of the stuff. I take up the exams (including my own) and am going to score them. I haven't scored mine yet when I wake up.

2-12-1998 **Wet Basement:** The ceiling in my basement is wet and so is the floor. A handicapped woman has been cooking a HUGE vat of soup and may not have rinsed the pots before putting it in.

FALLOUT

2-15-1998

(1) **I Start to Steal, Then Don't:** I am in a store with Sue discussing eye drops. I find the medicine is more than we had with us and I started to steal a \$3 bottle but put it back.

(2) **Where Is My Car?:** I park my car and then forget where I've parked it.

(3) **Scared Puppy:** A car runs over two cats either side of a puppy who is crouched in fear in the road. I take the puppy home.

(4) **Huge Task:** I have a huge job to do, involving a big piece of machinery.

(5) **Research:** I am going to do research in an important area. I am gathering pre-research from people at a gathering.

(6) **I'm on Wrong Side:** I am going down the left side of the road and a car goes by on the right. I realize I am on the wrong side and correct.

(7) **Authority:** I am in a room at the prison with the warden and others discussing things. I am appropriate.

2-16-1998 **Woman with Info:** I am on a project with a woman who has a wealth of information in her head. I realize how fortunate we are to have her with us. I come up with a clinical research study that I am pleased with. I am enthusiastic.

2-20-1998 **Discover New Rooms:** I am considering buying a big old house that has rooms we keep discovering. I am considering making one room mine due to the beautiful view. In one large room the huge floor planks have been weakened and I caution someone against stepping on them.

2-27-1998 **Keeping Lion In:** I have a lion that I have to keep in and not let out. Something about my father. My father needs a book from another town's library and I am successful in having a man there give a positive reference. I manipulate the man. I get him to say he has given me a good recommendation.

2-28-1998 **Space Ship Trip:** A space ship comes and a man says it is coming back at a certain time. My ex and I can go. He gives my ex a number to reach him if he needs to. (It turns out to be a beeper service). The time comes and we go to another planet. Several times, each time I worry if we will make it—it is dangerous. I guess my ex is the main one he wanted, but he allowed me to go too. I think I will always go with him so as not to be left out of the new life. Then it seems I am not needed on the next trip. I step forward and shake his hand gratefully for the experience. He shakes hands awkwardly and may not have had five fingers. Then I realize that most people don't know about it. I am in a crowded park – like a fair or music on the green. I want to tell someone. I start to tell Lillian but she thinks I am joking. I run into P.E. and I am telling her I have been to another planet several times and back (although it sounds crazy I know). I realize it is crazy and I have been imagining it all, though at the time it still seems true, I know it can't be.

3-2-1998 **Offered Job:** I am offered the job of office manager at \$68,000 or more a year.

3-6-1998 **Get Text Book:** It is the day before an exam. I don't have the text book! I am going to buy one and study most of the night for the exam. I'm not sure of the name of it but realize since I know the class the book store will know. Earlier I called the prison and they know where I am. Puzzled, I knew: caller ID. I joke with T and ask him something and he complies.

3-8-1998

(1) **Spaceship May Crash:** I am in a plane or spaceship that may crash any moment, or it may land safely. (There is trouble and it's going fast). I calm myself by realizing there won't be time for pain, it will happen so quick...I am at the prison and look out the window and a plane tries to make a landing but our runway is too short...

(2) **I'm Not the Preference:** The prison guys prefer my assistant to me. I am not that threatened...I say, "No wonder I have trouble with getting my night dreams and my day dreams mixed up, be-

FALLOUT

cause last night I had that dream.” After writing this down I realize I’m to bring in a book on lucid dreaming for an inmate tomorrow.

3-10-1998 **Sex with Inmate?** I am at a therapy conference. I am being affectionately sexual with an inmate and we are planning to live together. The seat next to me in the audience is his. While he is out I realize I can’t be sexual with him because of ethics. My old colleagues are there. I say something like, “Oh no, I forgot!” and they laugh. The next time I come back in the meeting I run to my seat because I am naked. While sitting I look for a way to cover me. There is a shirt/blouse in the inmate’s seat beside me and I put that top on. A lady says something about appropriate dress. The inmate comes back and we are on break and I start telling him we cannot continue with our physical relationship. I am going to have to make a decision whether or not to continue to even do therapy with him.

3-1998 **Forest Fire:** A forest fire is spreading. We are at my aunt’s house and can see the red reflection of the fire in the sky. We have to leave but I think we are going to do something like hose down the house.

3-1998 **Orphan Annie Doll:** It is gift-giving time and my father gives me an Annie doll but it turns out to be a paper doll.

3-24-1998

(1) **White Cat:** A woman and I are waiting for a bus. I have carried my white cat to the line and realize I should have put it down closer to home so it wouldn’t get lost.

(2) **Father Needs Money:** I am in the back seat of a car with my father and he is needing money to get to a program later in the day. He needs \$20. I am piecing it together from my change.

(3) **Father Invades Privacy:** My father is in my bedroom reading my diary or letters. I almost ask him not to read my personal things. He isn’t drinking and I am afraid he will start. I come out of my room with my mother and I say, “I wish he wouldn’t read my

stuff,” and he comes out and may have heard what I said. I wake up.

4-7-1998 **Caterpillar:** Sue has a kind of collage she’s made. She is very proud of it. One of the parts of the collage is a caterpillar. It is still alive. I point out she’ll have to kill it to keep it part of the collage. She is proud she had built a little staircase in the collage, too.

6-17-1998 **Out of Milk:** I am with a woman and we are walking through a house and she recognizes a couple in the other back yard and calls out to them like long lost friends. I think we were hungry. The house I live in is in a building attached to another building that is disintegrating. “What does it feel like to be in a building that’s falling apart?” ...I’m late getting to school and have my baby with me. I realize she’s been hungry for a long time and may be behind in her weight. I wonder if people will notice she hasn’t been well-fed. I may have been driving a red car. The road I am on turns into the top of a road barrier, with cones blocking my progress. Two men help remove the cones and help my car get on firm ground. I go into a store to thank the man and buy something. They have no milk. I go out front which is a bus stop. Many people are waiting on many buses. I am asking how do I get to my school and a young woman says she is going there, I can follow her. She drives off quickly tho and I have to walk back to retrieve my car. When I get there I am having trouble finding my keys.

1998

SOME THOUGHTS

I used to think I would be a child prodigy but then I got old. Formerly I had fantasies of rubbing elbows with cultural and academic leaders but that did not come to pass because I did not become a cultural or academic leader, or any other kind of leader for that matter. I am not even an “Alpha Dog,” a term learned from a friend who had to become “Alpha Dog” in order to influence her own pet. (When her dog gazes back, she never looks away first).

FALLOUT

For years I expected to become a published author, but in passing I could not avoid the fact that I had little to contribute to the world's bulging dumpsters. I'm embarrassed to report that I also considered my primary process artistic productions powerful, rather than mildly neurotic.

Which is not to say that I disrespect myself, only that I am beginning to doubt my potential for making a mark on the world. If I focus on self-discipline I may be able to keep my garbage removed on a weekly basis, to keep the kitty litter box changed, the clothes clean, the dog watered, fed and walked, but that just catches me up to the starting mark again.

When writing, I physically grapple with words, wrestling them from their indifference into attempted chunks of experienced awareness. I sit heavily on my chair, I breathe in artificially cooled air, my eardrums note the tap tap of the word processor and the steady uninterrupted sound of the air conditioner. What is that sound? The roar of the ocean from 30 yards away...Inside, my thoughts are balls in an electronic game machine, bouncing hither and yon from lever to lever. I am a little grim and intent until I recall an early dream related by a black man in the prison this morning. He said that when he was a small boy, back home, he dreamed he was standing on his front porch pissing, and that he suddenly found himself pissing stars...

7-25-1998 **Late to Work:** I have dawdled or something and am going to be late for work. I am trying to decide on a story to tell my boss. As I awaken I have an image of me hurrying along a path that leads over a cliff.

7-29-1998 **I Forget Man:** I agree to meet a man at a conference and forget all about him until the rendezvous time is past.

Bef. 10-23-1998 **Yukky Toilet:** I am in a large room with a couple of female relatives and have to go to the bathroom down the hall before we leave. The toilet is so yukky I can't use it—even the seat. There is even some white goo. I remember someone telling me they

have a 60-foot worm in them that they can never get rid of. At another time during the night I see two roaches on the floor. One is spreading its wings as though it was dying and the other doesn't move.

11-1-1998 **Something Terrible:** People know that I have done something terrible and are just waiting for the right moment to get me.

11-2-1998 **Hiding from Nazis:** I am on a bus hiding from authority, like Nazis. I am on the floor under the seats. Some of the children see me and don't call attention to me, but when it is time to get off the bus I know I will be discovered.

1999

1-17-1999 I do feel that I'm at a crossroads in my life, though possibly a crossroad near the end of the line. What will develop out of my retirement? I am very much taking a wait and see attitude. I feel what's right for me will emerge, in time. I still have dreams and ambitions, as strange as it may seem. I want to produce, to create, to give birth to something that is unique to me, that possibly has more meaning than I have been able to manifest in my 23-year career...I wonder if "letting go" of a belief in a benevolent universe would free me to focus on values that feel more real?...What would I do differently if I knew for sure the universe was indifferent and there was no benevolent plan? It's possible I would be more loving, not less, appreciating more fully the brevity and insignificance of our time on earth. I would feel more compassion for the religious zealots, seeing their need as more desperate. How is it that I cannot feel as real with the current values I embrace? Some of it may have to do with the extent to which I know I can fool myself. I can make myself believe almost anything, with sufficient motivation. If there is a God I believe He would be more concerned with actions than words or even ritual. What is the real importance of believing?

1999 Several dreams: In one my mother forgot to wake me up one morning but I woke up myself and I knew I wasn't going to be late. In another I helped my inmate clerk go to a work interview from the prison and later realized I hadn't arranged it with security. I had to go tell them why count was off. I was glad I was leaving anyway, so wouldn't mind that much if I was fired. I felt more hilarity than chagrin, and he did come back.

1-24-1999 I have a thirst to "be myself" and quit worrying about hurting others if I am myself. That's really a grandiose idea, that I would have that power.

2-5-1999 Three weeks before I retire. I've bumped into one way I limit myself: time. When I get in bed at 7 or 8 pm I flash on how bizarre this is and what people would think. I want to feel free to sleep every other hour for 24 hours or to sleep only in the daytime or to stay up for 24 hours if I like. Part of me wants to be slim in my retirement but I have gone off my diet. Who is kidding whom?...It comes to me now that I do not need to use up energy in a conflict over diet. I have other growing edges, surely!

2-8-1999 In re-reading several pages in this journal I feel a little pompous. I am striving for great insight and putting off human relating.

2-9-1999 HERE I AM! Several times today I repeated that and felt centered. I was assertive with the Substance Abuse clerk and asked for my coffee to be free because it had been too bitter to drink yesterday.

2-15-1999 Today is my last paid holiday. I slept quite a bit yesterday afternoon. Retiring is becoming a little unconsciously stressful, I guess. I have been biting down so hard I almost get a headache. I am grateful for my life and situation. I sense a potential weakness in my ability to cope with any significant hardship that could be experienced by Mollie. My guilt makes me over-identify with her and still renders me vulnerable.

2-19-1999 Edward Osborne Wilson, *Consilience*: "The knowledge that we are all related is no easier to swallow than the harsh facts of hard work, brief retirement and death. How can scientific materialism give meaning to our lives?"

3-12-1999

Dialogue —

T: Who are you?

The bound dog from my dream.

T: What do you want?

To be free.

T: Why are you here?

You summoned me.

T: What is your name?

Shame

T: Why is that your name?

I am evil.

T: Why are you bound up?

I can't trust myself.

T: What do you need to get free?

Perhaps a chain instead of the rope.

3-12-1999 Two weeks ago I retired...I have given myself a retirement party....This venture is part of my activity relative to my Spiritual Growth Group and my decision to value and seek truth and authenticity as opposed to protecting myself and those around me from vaguely sensed despair and my shadow. So can I develop a new self- image devoid of sexual fantasies and wishes that I be different? What would it really mean if I fully accept

myself as celibate? I can tell the feeling is different. One of my problems has been differentiating between open assertiveness and neurotic petulance. When I am neurotically outspoken I feel shame which mitigates against the next potential sharing. I am damaged and need to accept that and accept myself at the same time. The following is about being a table that is missing a leg:

3-12-1999

Song of the 3-Legged Table

I am a 3-legged table, that is what I be. See
the grain of my wood, the tint of my sheen,
the curve of my sides. Here I be--
3-legged --carved from one piece
of a pattern for four.

Here I Be

Thank You God for Me
How shall I be me?
No more struggle to break through—
my anger makes my kindness suspect.
Here I am, God. Here I be.
Flawed, defective, damaged I be
but I am me as you see.
A bird with only one wing can sing
but not fly with its kind.
Is a bird with one wing any good?
Does God love a race horse with a broken leg?

3-14-1999 I'm at my maternal aunt's house reading *On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear* by Matthew Fox. "It is by changing one's own being that one makes a contribution to justice in the world" (p 107). "The keystone to growing awareness is growing honesty" (p 79). "To be humble is to be truthful, especially about oneself. This truthfulness applies just as much to one's talent as to one's limitations" (p 81).

3-17-1999 **Inappropriate Flirtation:** I am in a home with a family of friends or acquaintances. The man of the house is acting flirtatiously and inappropriately with his daughter. This continues. I decide to do a single sex offender family counseling session, knowing I am being a little bit unethical but feeling it's for the best. Before getting into it, after gathering them together, I fly a trial balloon to which the man responds so defensively I abandon my plans. He thinks he is teaching her.

1999 **I Report Molester:** A man molests or tries to molest me and a young girl. I run off and report him to someone. When I tell my mother she mumbles something and I ask her sharply what she'd said. I suspect some enabling comment. At one point I am hiding from the man and later I tell him I've reported him.

5-5-1999 **I Quit Paying Rent:** My father returns to the family in a drunken condition. I try to get him to leave to no avail. Finally I realize I am paying the rent and will no longer pay it. I am leaving the house.

2000

April or May 2000 **In Group with Father:** I am in a big therapy group with my father. It is obvious a topic is about to be child sexual abuse and he is sitting in a chair next to me. I am on a small sofa stretched out so he can't sit by me. We decide to meet the next day instead. He is heading for his truck and keeps yelling for me to come on. I want to share something with a fellow group member but can't. I do stop by a long table where some family members and others are eating. I say MAKE me talk tomorrow because I am afraid I'll lose my nerve. They laugh a little. I go out to the lot and see he has left. I thought about him and realize he will justify himself to the group as having been in love with me....

2000 **Poison in Mouth:** I am in a room which is kind of a virtual reality. A man is trying to prove he isn't an undercover agent and really has a history of heavy drug use. They give him a poof of something in the mouth that shoots out and is highly toxic. He is

shot backwards some but recovers immediately and says something like “what next?” At the time they do it to him I shut my eyes and can’t look. *Repressed memory of fellatio?*

April or May 2000 **Molested Man in Group:** I am in D’s therapy office and in a group of men. I am talking about the prospect of being in a therapy group and saying that I wished my father was dead because he had molested me and one of our kids. [!!!*Freudian slip!*] A man in the group grows agitated because he has been molested and D assures him I wasn’t talking about him.

Wed. a.m. **Pedophilia:** I am at work in a mental health center that has just been re-organized...Then a scene occurred which I knew was coming, and don’t want to see. A man starts approaching a little boy and I leave the room because I know this is going to be an example of pedophilia. I go in the other room.

7-23-2000 This week my change in dreams of Sary I have at least temporarily increased my self-discipline: I wrote 5 letters and mailed them, washed some of my windows, cleaned the deck, and labeled all my notebooks...A figure in a dream this morning reminded me of the Pieta, and the same figure reminded me to contact a friend’s brother to see if an AIDS quilt square had been made for him...I also realized ways of inner knowing include coincidences and memories. I want to keep track of coincidences, memories, thoughts that seem to come from nowhere, in addition to my dreams and images. I also realize that the unconscious does seek closure on things, so as we deal with one issue another is freed to rise to the surface.

7-30-2000 This week I fell asleep most nights, imaging. I study what artistic techniques would be necessary to reproduce those images. Of course I’m also looking for those images...

8-1-2000 **Molester’s Home:** I have heard about this molester and suddenly I am at his home with some people. He is very charismatic and I can feel myself being drawn to him. We are all in his outdoor playground with various kids around. I can see that he is capable of hitting on women and he has just gotten divorced. I

make myself leave, not to come under his sphere of influence. Then I am in a school that may have been his...In the hall of the school are beautiful vases that have occurred naturally in the area—produced by limestone in the region. I am taking a test. It is a final and I haven't been attending class. I just have a chance to look at it and see it is really foreign to me...I move my desk away from a woman student so I *won't be tempted to cheat*. In writing this I think of some of the things I feel deeply ashamed of and wonder how that affects my unconscious. It occurs to me I should write them all down and do something with the list (a story just came to mind). I wouldn't show it to anyone but maybe I could burn the list or do something that would help my unconscious not be so burdened with my guilt complexes.

About 8-10-2000 **Chopped-Up Human:** I am getting ready for an appointment. I live in a small apartment. My maternal grandparents arrive. There's too much junk and nowhere to put it. They are the first to arrive. There is a bed in the living room and they both lay down on top of the covers. There is a human in small pieces in one container with the serving dishes. I ask someone, maybe my mother, if we shouldn't make a sign saying what it is because at least one person has eaten a finger without knowing what it was. I am afraid they'll vomit when they find out. A few people come. I am on one side of the bed and try to do a nice formal introduction of a girl to my grandparents. I start to introduce her and she changes her name to *Fang*...

9-2000 **Move Away:** At one point I am sitting next to my father on the sofa and I think I might have felt some slight pressure from him against me and I get up and seat myself across the room.

9-17-2000 **My Mother is Young:** My mother is home again and being a wife to my father. She is young-looking and doesn't resemble my mother. I have a new job teaching psychology graduate students. I am in the process of planning out my tasks which are many. I have asked one young male student to follow up with a male patient. I realize I need to tightly schedule my tasks and prioritize. When I go to check on the male student I realize I can't remember his name. I also realize I need to register the student therapists with the Board of Psychology. When I come home I see a huge mess in

the kitchen. My mother hasn't cleaned up our supper things. I roll up my sleeves to tackle the task.

9-21-2000 **Men's Uniforms:** ...I am outside nude and find some men's uniforms hanging and get into one.

9-22-2000 **Little Furry Animal:** There's some kind of funny little brave furry animal who is going up to confront great big animals. Someone saves her.

9-30-2000 **Man Staring:** I meet a man – big and with blonde hair that's a little long. I may have gone out with him or talked to him at a restaurant or something. He says a few inappropriate things and I part company from him. I am in my 2-story house and I see him sitting silently by the door. Then he is sitting out in the yard somewhat hidden, where he can watch the door. My kids have come home. I am in an upstairs bedroom putting things away and I see a 10-year old boy standing just outside the second story window. He's quiet and we are too. He tells us there's a man outside watching. I ask him if he knows where he came from and the kid says he used to have a house down the street when he lived with his parents but no more. I go to another window to show my daughter but he is gone...*It is not the existence of self-judgment that is the problem but the yardstick. Can I fashion a more humane yardstick? I know I have reason to distrust myself. I know that I tend to be impulsive and to have trouble with self-discipline, and that sometimes I vacillate wildly between under and over-evaluation of myself. And that I focus on myself to the exclusion of others at times. To what extent is it advisable to accept my weaknesses as opposed to aiming at growth and better integration? The front of my sweatshirt logo reads, "I'm Sorry." The back reads, "I'm working on myself." It may be true that the un-examined life is not worth living, but which is the best lens to use? This is probably how the religious concept of grace arose—in this need for self-forgiveness and acceptance of our frailties.*

10-5-2000 **Mother Fails Me:** I am alone in a big building at night with a drunk old man who seems attracted to me. Some of the doors are locked. I go in the next room and call my mother to come get

me. She isn't very responsive and seems to be talking to somebody else at the same time. I call several times. A female friend is there and I beg her not to leave me alone with him. She agrees. At one point I see a female employee locking the front door to the lobby and hail her. I describe the situation and she lends me enough money for a cab. I go back in maybe to call a cab...I later find my mother and ask her why she hadn't responded to my call for help. Seems she was at work in her cab and received the call on her cab radio or cell phone.

10-07-2000 **Tearing Down Wall:** ...At the prison. Inside a building someone is tearing into part of a wall. Some things we remember are there.

10-11-2000

(1) **Mayhem Across the Road:** I hear about a girl getting kidnapped and maybe killed across the street from my grandmother's house on the farm. I ask her about it. She says it happened about 4 years ago. I try to narrow it down. I ask her if my grandfather was still alive when it happened. We see a big fire across the street and just out of sight. Someone says I should grab my camcorder but I can't find it.

(2) **Phone to Myself:** A man has a phone on which you can push and talk to yourself back and forth (hear your voice). When I first pushed the button a black woman's voice came on and I asked her if she was a real person and she said yes....

10-15-2000 **Frenzy:** My father has come to stay with me and my mother. He has to sleep in my bedroom. He tries to kiss me and I successfully avoid him. I have an exam the next day and am trying to study for it. I think maybe he would help me study for it. I explain I am in college and am taking 15 credit hours. He seems to indicate that I must have a lot of money in order to go to college. It is the next day and I am not wearing my watch and had thought from reading others' that it is an hour earlier than it is. Suddenly I see that the exam has already begun. I am frantic. I ask a friend if they'd give me a ride. They say they have to do something else. I ask my father if he'd give me a ride and he says no. I am shaking and almost in tears. Somehow I get there with a lot of stuff (clothes,

etc.). I cannot think. I forget how to get to the exam room and stop in the building to ask someone. They will look it up for me. I can't remember the professor's name or the name of the course! Somehow I get the professor's name, although the name of the course comes and goes from me. I think the way I find the room is to see a fellow classmate who has finished the exam. I enter and am handed the test. There are questions I vaguely remember the answers to but can't recapture. If only I'd studied! There are questions I recall him stressing to us and I haven't studied them. I cannot function, and leave. I am sitting somewhere in public and some of my classmates who are leaving extend sympathy to me as they pass on. One leaves a fancy bottle of good liquor. A male student offers me the text book but I refuse, saying I couldn't do that. I think how hollow my grade or degree would be if I cheat and don't even deserve that. Some friend stops and offers to talk. Somewhere in the dream I find a note from the professor, to the effect that I wasn't to worry, we'd work things out. I wonder why I was so dysfunctional and think of telling him about my father. Then I marveled that my father could have so much influence over me and cause me to get dysfunctional. It seems I can do a research paper instead of the exam...

12-10-2000 **No One in Car:** ...My car's brakes have failed. No one is in it as it starts rolling slowly downhill. It will come to a stop at a busier street. I know I should be there to see it does no damage but I am distracted by other concerns.

12-11-2000 **Taking Someone's Baby:** Someone is going to go out and leaves their baby alone. I go in and change the baby and take it with me. It seems to understand what I say. At one point it asks for its parents.

12-16-2000 **Flash Flood:** I am driving a car full of people and we come to a place where the road is washed out and it is like a flash flood before us. There are men and machines everywhere working on the problem. I watch the water swirling and when it doesn't seem too bad I drive on down the bank and safely across the hazardous place.

12-18-2000 **Dirty Vagina:** A photo falls out of a book or papers. It is a big photo of a dirty vagina. I feel a little turned on, seeing it.

2001

1-2-2001 **Funeral Party:** I am trying hard to get to therapy with D. Someone has stolen my car. A funeral party is where it had been.

1-13-2001 **Forgetful:** I am at my house and am going to move. But first I am going to have a final dinner party. Only one couple comes. I am going to teach a class at the U at 7 p.m. and it is almost 7. I don't remember the exact name of it or the location of it at the U...

2002

10-11-2002 **Bath Tub Faucets:** The bath tub faucets start running again and I have to open a narrow passageway to the basement, removing stuff as I go. I feel a little claustrophobic. I wonder if some animal has crept in for protection, but don't run into any.

2004

4-10-2004 **Gracie Isn't Dead:** I am with Sue and see that my pet dog Gracie is dead. Then, a little later, I see her move slightly and I say, "She's NOT dead!" Later I am inside a public place and look out the window and see Sue and Gracie walking across a field.

5-2-2004 *From Anam Cara: "There is no cage for the soul."* (p 14)

5-3-2004 **Three-Headed Snake:** Someone is leaving the side door of the house and calls out a warning to me. He tells me to inform someone to look around the corner of the house or nearby. I look and see a large brown snake with what seems to be three heads. I call somebody and they are familiar with such snakes – at least says what kind of snake it is. Later I am at some kind of classroom without paper. Someone offers me some. I tell them about the snake and they call it by a different name. I do not approach the snake but leave the scene. *"Three-headed gorgon" comes to me. I*

look it up and see that a 3-headed gorgon refers to one of three snake-haired sisters whose gaze turns one into stone.

5-9-2004 How could one believe in original sin and also experience creativity?

5-15-2004 **Scheduled for Tooth Pull:** I am with the family, maybe on a vacation, when one of my back teeth gets broken off. It is kind of a clean break (smooth, and a layer has broken off.) I obtain a dentist appointment, or maybe my mother does for me. It is at a facility associated with a university. When I arrive – early – several people are in a room in dentist chairs and the dentist himself doesn't have time to speak to me then. I'm to return for a midnight appointment. I will need to pay \$25 up front, however. I realize I don't have my check book with me but realize that one of my family surely has \$25 to put up for me. I look forward to reading in the college library all day. (Last night I typed the dream in which I settled for a putrid grapefruit for dessert and then found I only had 25 cents and couldn't afford it. This seems like a little progress and reminds me of the tremendous support I have received over the years from academic pursuits and reading. I realize the cost of these sublimations (self-centeredness and a life devoid of many close friends), but I have stayed afloat. Does an extraction at midnight refer to my anticipation of my own death?

5-16-2004 In re-working and organizing my "journals" recently I have found myself tending to leave out dreams that contain any kind of archetype, as though I disbelieve the dream. I (temporarily) left one out that contained a unicorn horn and another in which I said I had not been here for 3,000 years.

7-28-2004 **Impressing My Parents:** I have not seen my parents in a while. They are visiting and reading local newspapers. I point out a photo of me on the front page of the newspaper.

8-22-2004 **Sex:** I am going to have sex with Dr. N. I feel him pressed against me while we are still dressed. I am happy and anticipatory. I awaken hot and happy and alive. I realize I never experience the actual act while dreaming.

8-23-2004 **Activity in Sky:** We are going to go camping with another family. Sary is there, too. We are doing the finishing touches of packing. I want to walk down to the beach before we leave and a male relative agrees to go with me. I see his knapsack is empty and tell him to use that to put things in. I look out the window into the sky above the far horizon and see much activity. Pieces of dark clouds separate out and with their own quick energy shape themselves into shapes. The dark clouds reach far up. There is silence as it happens. Some of the family and neighbors come in and it seems everyone has seen it and don't know what's going on. No one seems overly concerned. I ask someone if it's the end of the world and they don't know. Our plans to go camping are going forward. I am curious and apprehensive but not panicked. It seems at a safe distance.

10-25-2004 **Short-changed:** I raise my voice to the owner when rushed from the table before my drink has been brought. *I've been having anxiety dreams about a week now.*

2006

(1) **Maternal Grandfather Talking:** My *maternal* grandfather starts talking and I interrupt and say "let me tell you something" and he says "No, listen to this. I want to read it to you and it'll last only about 10 minutes." So I close my eyes to listen and suddenly realize he's not reading and there's only silence and I wake up.

(2) **Wolves:** Two people are talking and one says, "Once the planes start coming in here there'll be no more wolves."

3-10-2006 **Right Price?** I am with some people and we are trying to see if a mistake has been made or if I've been charged the right price for something. They turn an item over and seem about to discover the answer but then look up and in a surprised way say "No price." The price tag has not been marked.

3-11-2006

(1) **Leveling field:** I am looking for something to help me level out a field

(2) **Preparing for Communion:** A priest or minister is in a chapel dispensing communion. I want to go in and receive communion but am not sure of the protocol. What am I supposed to say or do, etc.? I am asking someone to instruct me.

3-14-2006 **In a Pyramid:** I am inside a pyramid or tomb. I have been working on my family tree. I see that some of the family members are running around inside doing things like touching the departed members' hands and shrieking with laughter. It's like an interactive game, and fun. The people can run up to the family members' grave (inside like a pyramid) and change the way they lived or died, usually shrieking good-naturedly. It is like in the halls of a pyramid.

3-18-2006 **Broken Seat Belt:** I am at a new job. I have to go to the bathroom but there isn't any door and it opens into the hall. I sit down and a man comes out of the door we had been in and goes into another door off the hall next to it. He sees me but doesn't pay any attention. I am smelly and dirty and a male employee is assigned to take me home. The car isn't very new and he is kind of sprawled in the driver's seat and is drinking. A couple of times I have to tell him to watch out because we almost wreck. I discover my seat belt is broken.

3-23-2006 **Angry Man Threatens Me:** A man – like a patient – is angry at me and it's not clear if he is just verbally attacking me or also physically menacing. He follows me as I am with supportive others, even following me from building to building. Maybe I have been told to confront him and his anger comes roiling out. I talk on the phone to my psych assistant who is concerned that this man has followed me and is harassing me. He asks what kind of harassment and I let him know it is sexual harassment, "the father kind of thing." Vituperative confrontation from the man, threatening. I am with others. At one point I think I am out of sight but look down the street as he is driving through an intersection a block away. He goes on to my relief but has seen me and backs his car up and comes. No one can really definitively protect me from him, only support me. Maybe he's drunk. He spots me and has so much threatening rage. Although I am not alone, no one has the ultimate

power to restrain and/or move him. I am in a college campus setting.

4-6-2006 **Feces:** I discover I have quite a bit of shit showing on me and I go to a toilet stall to try and clean myself up. Both Mollie, Lucy and my mother see it and I am cross and embarrassed that they didn't give me sufficient privacy to clean myself without their seeing. *Funny I neglected to share this with my dream group.*

4-17-2006 **Grandfather's Parkinson's Spill:** I am visiting the prison, inside the gates. A comes to escort me through. His hair looks nicely trimmed. The mood is good. I ask about T — seems he's still in or out and in again. I fart and apparently he says something original and clever. We laugh. I head for the bathroom. Maybe Mollie is little and we both go in. Then I am walking across the cafeteria floor and see that Ben is having trouble filling his glass or stabilizing it. Sary passes by and I say, "He had a little Parkinson's spill." *In my dreams at least I put my first molester in prison!*

2007

7-9-2007 **Snake on Wall:** *This afternoon I had a snake dream – the first in a long while:* We are coming in the house and see a large snake along the wall to the left of the door. Inside the house there are one or two active snakes. It seems we are warning some people about them.

2010

12- 11- 2010 **Hanging Tombstones:** At one point, I look up toward the ceiling of an old out building or the basement and see some hand carved tombstones. Then I noticed there are a lot of them going WAY back. Later in the dream I realize I don't have to worry about paying for them or their being willing to sell to me because they are on our own land, a parcel with my house where they hung! At one point I notice they have been out of sight because they are hanging between the walls.

2012

1-8-2012 **Woman Hiding in Walls:** A woman is hiding between the walls because a man was after her. I get her to come out and try to find rooms to hide her in. I see him down the street and pull the trigger on him, expecting to see blood from the bullet across his shirt but the gun is out of bullets. Now he seems to be after me. I go to neighbors for help, even talk to the police, who don't seem to take it seriously. They say he often causes problems but is an alcoholic and wouldn't actually hurt anybody. I see someone leading the man back to his house.

4-22-2012 **Daddy Tries to Molest My Baby:** Long dream which I didn't capture but was busy protecting my baby from my father. I even call his sister for help.

4-23-2012 **A Little Grandiosity:** Long dream in which I inform someone who turns out to be a relation that she too is related to Francis Scott Key. I also give goal-setting advice to her siblings somewhat authoritatively (re what to do with their lives). I am still with my husband (who may be my father) and still watching and protecting my baby. I'm involved in a legal process to curb him.

May 2012 I've been trying to really figure out what is wrong with me. In trying to run down my personality problems I recall some interviews for jobs I didn't get. On one job interview I got too hyper-enthusiastic. In another I got too honest. I'm sure the interviewers sensed a lack of centeredness, appropriateness and stability — nothing glaring, just a subtle lack of integration. My parts don't stick together!

7-7-2012 (10:05 a.m.) I reflected while still in bed this morning how I have always strung my reality along a timeline. It seems my whole life would come clunking down over my head in an unrecognizable mess without it. I guess it's the perspective that I'm missing. [Since I attended eleven schools in twelve years, a good bit of my early life is clunked by the teachers I had.]

11-2-2012 **Everything in Its Place:** I am back visiting the home I lived in when my children were born, and the yard is meticulously well-tended. The neighbors either side have donated their driveways to grass cover so that the yard has expanded along the street and is almost like the neighborhood “green space.” The only flaw is where a flower bed had been moved and not all the bordering bricks had been re-arranged. Someone said Mollie had done this. Everything in the house was in order! I told my mother what a good writer she was and how she should do something with her talent. I began making the bed for her while she dressed, before we left on a brief vacation to our house on the water. Then I was overlooking a nursery school or kindergarten and the teacher was telling the children that this year they were going to learn to dress themselves (or maybe put their coats on by themselves). When I woke up I realized my mother probably never learned to keep house, and I remember a night when I was seven and had been left alone, with Nellie in her crib, and I would call out in a loud voice from time to time, as though someone were upstairs, so an intruder would not know I was alone. A woman knocked, and she came in and chatted a little and when she left she suggested I not mention she had stopped by, because my mother might be concerned that the house was not as neat as she might have liked. I could tell that meant she thought the living room was a mess. I looked around and thought it looked *better than usual*.

2013

4-14-2013 **Confront Daddy:** I am in the living room at the farm. My father is there and also my mother, all standing. My father says how much he loves me and I answer that he *did* know “it” was damaging, that he had read it was. My mother seems to know what we are talking about and goes about her business. I am not angry or afraid. Then I am going through my mother’s chest of drawers looking for something presentable for her to wear. We are like friends.

4-26-2013 I’ve been searching for a metaphor to express what incest is like—it’s gutting out the insides of a house. The interior

FALLOUT

has been left in shambles but you can't tell from just looking at it. It would not have been desecrated if the contents had been seen as worth saving. I am recalling a sex offender in prison who said that if a woman wasn't into anal sex he wouldn't have anything to do with her. As startling as that statement is to me, how different is that than regarding a youth with a future of possibilities ahead of her as "young nooky"?

This is not a "poor me" scenario of which I write, because inside himself, the perpetrator is also gutted. Our task is restoration.

8-30-2013 **In Ocean:** A boat I am in capsizes and I become the only person in the wide wide ocean, wondering about what sea life may be circling me underwater, while searching the 360 degree horizon for any hope of rescue. I awoke before fear hit me. I was more focused on accepting my extreme and unanticipated situation.

9-3-2013 **Black Toilet Seat:** A racial uprising is beginning – from Indians and blacks against whites. They are suspicious and rejecting of me because my skin isn't dark enough. An acquaintance probably saved me from attack by intercepting me when I started to sit down on a toilet with a black seat. Whites were only permitted to use white toilet seats.

9-9-2013

DON'T DO IT!

Don't tie that noose around your neck!
Are you leaving the world better off?
Voice your travails.
Sing your song.
Somewhere, a turtle is crossing the road.

2014

4-9-2014 **I Tell My Sister:** I tell Nellie about the incest. She responds calmly and in an accepting manner. This dream was two days before the anniversary of her birth.

6-6-2014 It just occurred to me that my problem with perspective is the result of seeing things from both my father's point of view and also mine.

6-7-2014 I came across a line from Alice Miller today: "The tragedy is that a person caught in a trap and seeing only one door can't resist that door."

I was trapped by my father's ignorant and self-centered love for me. Notice, no quotation marks around the word love. It was almost like a "folie a deux," in which we were both entwined. I was trapped by his crazy love, and my confused perspective is a reflection of that. This week I found a forgotten letter that I received from him following a visit from me and Carole. We had hitchhiked in from Kentucky to visit Sary, but he was living with her at the time:

My Dear Little Nancy Bear,

This is the third letter I have written you since your little visit with us. The other two letters were devoted to cussing you out worse than hell, but either your guardian angel or mine kept me from mailing either of them. I am glad, because I don't feel like cussing you out anymore. You are just a kid with a problem—my kid. Nancy, we all of us love you. No matter what ever happens, don't ever forget that. And we will always love you, no matter what...

6-14-2014

A Life

At two she had a wooden toy
with red knobs for moving apple
into apple space and boat into

its own space, though she knew neither.

At five she found a jigsaw puzzle
under a lilac bush, but saw
it was not a child's puzzle, and
lacked the big picture to aim for.

Yet she wondered. Mother was a
large piece as was Dad and the baby.
They would all fit together, she was sure,
if she could just figure out how.

Her effort to attach Santa
next to God failed; the dog who died
refused to link with soap bubbles;
all big pieces that did not fit.

As she grew older, some pieces
fit better, while others fractured.
Some stuck together by themselves,
and would not be separated.

At twenty the "big picture" was
found under her bed. At first she
thought it was someone else's, but then
she recognized it as her own.

College tripled the puzzle's size,
and errors began to appear.
One piece seemed to fit, but then it
buckled outwards. Should she use force?

Now the "big picture" which had served
as her blueprint began to morph
on its own into discordant
images in misfitting shades.

Bereft, she shredded the puzzle,
and taking hammer and chisel

trimmed, forced and glued all together,
leaving only one piece missing.

7-4-14 **In Hospital:** *Several doctor/hospital dreams recently. In this one I am in a hospital room and get word that my father and another family member (maybe Nellie) are here for a visit. I say okay and when they come I have no ill feelings toward my father, who seats himself across the room in a chair.*

8-1-2014 *Most people don't have a chance to add a postscript to their lives. But then most people haven't felt the necessity of "keeping the secret" in so many aspects. I lived a life of dishonesty by omission. If someone tried to get a perspective on me, they would see shifting sands in a dune. My mother was not honest with herself — nor me — and the same is true of my father.*

I hugged the secret of who I am out of a lifelong mis-learned lesson. Today I feel that I am much closer to understanding my problem with perspective. The sands covering me wouldn't have shifted so much if I had let the rock beneath—and yes, the magma—surface. This morning I am re-valuing Carl Rogers' book "On Becoming a Person," and recalling the earlier-quoted words of therapist and survivor Alice Miller, who wrote that "the process of deepening one's insights is never fully terminated, nor need it be."

November 11, 2014 **Sary Talks to Me** – I am with Sary, at her house, and my dad and Ben are living there too. I look out the window and see the green foliage of a tree across the street, giving privacy to the house across the street as well as a pleasant view from our window. We talk, and she asks me why I only brush my teeth in the morning and at noon, not morning and night. I am thinking of a response and don't answer her but waken, feeling good.

Here I am, waiting for the final proof of my book to be completed, and my process hasn't stopped, but continues. This is going to sound crazier to the reader than anything to date, but is bringing me a sense of peace. I realized that I can't just leave my father all alone and unhappy in his small shabby room, while I blithely publish my first book without the dedication I promised him. And yet it can't be the dedication he had envisioned. In my mind's eye I had to do something to definitively deal with him, so in order to go on with my life I am putting him in a homey room with his mother Sary, his tennis loving cup, his bridge-playing partners from long ago, a tuned piano, a good cup of coffee and even his Camel cigarettes. He no longer has sinus trouble or Tourette's, and he is not drinking alcohol or lusting. He is as content as it is possible for him to be. In my mind's eye he is cracking a joke and feeling relaxed and valued. And his untapped writing talent has been unleashed. His old typewriter has many finished pages beside it, and he is in touch with the good man in him which had been buried under childhood hurts. And now, knowing he is in a good place (although imaginary), in the sacred unfolding of love, I can truly let him be. I have backtracked and dedicate this book to him, in good faith and love. Nothing in the book proper foretells this, so I have written from a different, concomitant truth. (See Dedication, below).

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my father, Alton Ellison B.

