

"When we first started working with incest, it seemed to be a terrible but rare occurrence; and then the dam burst, and the frightening reality of both its frequency and the damage done engulfed us. Now it's ritual abuse. Our first encounters seemed too frightening to be real, and yet now we hear unbelievable and similar stories much too frequently. Ryder's work is a welcome and sorely needed resource for therapists and survivors alike."

Pat Melody, executive director of the Meadows,
Wickenburg, Arizona

Pia Melody, author of *Breaking Free* and co-author of
*Facing Codependence: What It Is, Where It Comes From,
How It Sabotages Our Lives*

"As a mental health clinician with several years' experience treating child survivors of Satanic ritual abuse, I can recognize the real contribution Daniel Ryder's book will provide those of us who are working in this field. It takes courage to stand up and say, 'I believe that this type of abuse occurs.' It takes perseverance to compile a composite of treatment approaches and treatment issues pertinent to Satanic ritual abuse. There is no doubt in my mind that many of the children ritually abused today will turn to substances to blot out their painful memories tomorrow. It is time that clinicians combine their knowledge of the psychodynamic principles of post-traumatic stress disorder with the proven methods of the Twelve Step programs. We are all working together to heal people."

Pamela S. Hudson, M.S.S.W., A.C.S.W., L.C.S.W., author of *Ritual Child Abuse:
Discovery, Diagnosis, and Treatment*

"Anyone working with survivors of ritual abuse will find this book to be a wealth of information. *Breaking the Circle* abounds with helpful insights, no matter what your opinion of Satanism is. Ryder tells you what others are doing, what works for him, and lets you decide for yourself. I recommend this book highly.

The Reverend Dr. John L. Spangler, M.Div., D.S.T.
Green Bay, Wisconsin

"An excellent book-must reading for every psychotherapist and counselor. And if you are like me, hug your fear and read it anyway!"

Janet Hurley, MA., licensed marriage and family therapist,
founder and co-director of TASK (Take a Stand for Kids),
Carmel Valley, California

"Many of the dynamics discussed in this book have not been disclosed in any previous forum on the subject. The unsettling 'reality' remains that there is a remarkable consistency in the victim/survivor experience as portrayed in this book and the independent findings of a wide range of professionals. I would strongly recommend this book to any professional or significant other who interacts with the victim/survivor."

Sgt. Jon Hinchliff, Minneapolis Police Department

"Breaking the silence and secrecy surrounding all types of abuse has historically been the key factor that has enabled survivors to seek and obtain professional help. This book is an

important resource for professionals to help them identify and understand the signs and dynamics of this previously hidden type of abuse."

Ellen Luepker, MS.W., licensed psychologist, co-author of
Psychotherapist Sexual Involvement with Clients:
Intervention and Prevention

"Breaking the Circle of Satanic Ritual Abuse is both a mind-blower and a mindhealer-it horrifies, yet heals. It offers tested techniques and Twelve tried-and-true Steps for recovery from abuse so terrifying and unthinkable that its shocked-for-life victims can't remember what evils ail them without this kind of help. One valuable component of the book is the author's compassionate and insightful sharing of his own Twelve Step recovery and that of others, as part of working through this extreme trauma."

Joe Klaas, MA., author of The 12 Steps to Happiness and Staying Clean

"... can bring much-needed understanding to therapists, law enforcement officials, and anyone else who questions whether this really happens. I also advise survivors to read this very powerful book-which at times can be quite frightening and bring out the hidden memories, dreams, and flashbacks to aid in the healing process and take back what was theirs in the first place-to be whole. Written by a survivor, this gives me hope that, after being abused throughout my life, I and others like me can mend, change, and build our rainbows for our future."

Tammy T., ritual abuse survivor

"For me, Ryder has sounded a new classroom bell. But this class is for teachers. We have much to learn in these pages. And the lesson may help us save a new generation of young people, some of whom don't even know they are crying out for our help."

A schoolteacher, California

"As president of Families Of Crimes Of Silence, I would not hesitate to recommend this book to therapists who are new to the field of ritual abuses, as well as to parents who find that they have children who were abused in this manner."

Doreen Grace Kenney,
president of FOCOS (Families Of Crimes Of Silence)

BREAKING
THE
CIRCLE

SATANIC
RITUAL ABUSE

RECOGNIZING
AND
RECOVERING
FROM THE
HIDDEN TRAUMA

DANIEL RYDER, C.C.D. C.J.S.W.
CompCare Publishers
2415 Annapolis Lane
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

© 1992 Daniel Ryder
All rights reserved.
Published in the United States by CompCare Publishers

Reproduction in whole or part, in any form, including storage in memory device system, is forbidden without written permission, except that portions may be used in broadcast or printed commentary or review when attributed fully to author and publication by names.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ryder, Daniel
Breaking the circle of satanic ritual abuse/by Daniel Ryder p. cm.
ISBN 0-89638-258-3
1. Child abuse-United States. 2. Adult child abuse victims-Counseling of-United States. 3. Cults-United States. 4. Satanism-Controversial literature. I. Title.
HV6626.5.R93 1992 91-47929
362.7'6 dc20 CIP

Cover by Jeremy Gale

Inquiries, orders, and catalog requests should be addressed to:
CompCare Publishers
2415 Annapolis Lane Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441 Call 612/559-4800 or Toll free
800/328-3330

This book is dedicated first of all to all those who have been victims of ritual abuse; to the ones who have died and to the ones courageously struggling to recover. It is also dedicated to the therapists, police, social service workers, cult researchers, and friends and families of the victims, who are just as courageously working to expose the abuse, fight back, and support the victims in their recovery.

61

Because of the sensitive nature of the material and the possible risks to some victims, most of the case example names in the text of this book have been changed. And to further protect their identities and honor client/therapist confidentiality, many of the examples have also been constructed as composites.

The first-person stories in the Appendix came to us directly from the survivors, although most have chosen not to use their own names.

Recognizing that ritual abuse recovery is just beginning to come into public awareness-and that it is constantly evolving as professionals document and survivors relate their experiences-CompCare Publishers does not endorse any particular ritual abuse therapies, recovery groups, or organizations.

Although the dynamics of Twelve Step recovery as it applies to ritual abuse are parts of this book, the book does not represent any one specific Twelve Step ritual abuse group, nor is it connected, except in theory, with the evolving Twelve Step ritual abuse movement.

NOTE: Some of the accounts of ritual abuse contained within are quite graphic and may trigger repressed memories and feelings. They may even cue some cult programming-suicide or selfmutilation, for example. It is highly advisable for ritual abuse survivors to develop a strong recovery network when dealing with these issues. Reader's who know or suspect they are ritual abuse survivors and are in therapy would do well to check with their therapists before reading it.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments Editor's Note Forword
Author's Preface

CHAPTER 1

"What the Hell Was That?" 1

Fear of circles • Fear of being the center of attention • Vague memories of childhood • Overreaction to violent or "supernatural" films • Problems with sex • Exaggerated codependency characteristics • Fear of authority • Lack of trust • Problems with relationships • Fear of abandonment • Compulsivity • Use or avoidance of alcohol and other drugs • Survivor's guilt • Ritual abuse characteristics list • Codependency characteristics list

CHAPTER 2

Satanism

Opposition to traditional Judeo-Christian values • Rebellion against authority • Personal power • Transgenerational cults
Crime/abuse variations • Satanic holidays • Satanic symbols

CHAPTER 3

Recruitment 27

Influences and attractions • Leaving the cults

CHAPTER 4

What Therapists Are Seeing 33

In addictions/codependency treatment • Working with children exposed to ritual abuse • As a ritual abuse specialist • In mental health counseling

CHAPTER 5

It Isn't 'Only a Dream' 49

Dissociation • Violence and symbolism • Recording dreams

CHAPTER 6

Other Clues 55

Colors and themes in art therapy • Addictions/compulsions

• Slow-very slow-realization of cult experiences • Sensitivity to violence on the screen •
Fears • The need to regain personal power
Self-abusive behavior • Sexual problems • Body memories
Indicators of ritual abuse survivors • Psychological indicators of
ritual abuse • Ritual abuse survivors' obsessions/repulsions
Possible fears and phobias of ritual abuse survivors

CHAPTER 7

Mind Control 77

CHAPTER 8

You're Getting Warmer ... 85

Suggested therapy • Compulsive/addictive characteristics

CHAPTER 9

Primers 89

Longer flashbacks • Introducing "primers"

CHAPTER 10

Reactions to Violence 93

Adrenaline addiction • Family dysfunctions and vulnerability to cults • Negative
excitement

CHAPTER 11

Threats and Infiltration 99

Monitoring by cult member~ • "Code of silence" programming

Colors and themes in art therapy • Addictions/compulsions • A personal story

CHAPTER 12

The Inner Child 107

A guided meditation • Reviewing the meditation • Reparenting

CHAPTER 13

Uncovering Advanced Clues 115

Dream symbols • Revisiting familiar places • Meditative The danger of suicide • Bringing
up the topic of ritual abuse techniques

Crossover ritual abuse and the "marionette syndrome"

CHAPTER 14

Support for Survivors

Inpatient treatment • Twelve Step and other groups

119

CHAPTER 15

Twelve Step Ritual Abuse Groups

One group's beginnings • A place to meet • Fear of infiltration

Format

129

CHAPTER 16

Twelve Step Applications for Abuse Survivors

The First Step: Admitted we were powerless • The Second and Third Steps (or, turn my will over to whom?) • The Fourth and Fifth Steps • The Sixth and Seventh Steps • The Eighth and Ninth

Steps • The Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps

143

CHAPTER 17

Multiple Personality Disorder

Recognizing MPD • Co-consciousness •

*Antagonistic alters • Building trust with alters y Cult mock thers apy sessions • A memory breakthrough • Satanic alters • MPD

integration • Assuming the persona of another • MPD integration: A personal story

CHAPTER 18

Drugs as part of ritual abuse • Re-experiencing a drugged state

CHAPTER 19

New Messages

167

Messages for survivors • Supporting the survivor of ritual abuse

CHAPTER 20

Demons: Real or Imagined

173

Demonic imagery • The demon phenomenon: Some explanations

• Diagnosis through drawings • Reactions to supernatural films and literature • Demons exorcised (so to speak)

CHAPTER 21

To Family and Friends

Education • Mood swings and uncharacteristic behavior

Escalation or detachment

CHAPTER 22

Fighting Back

Los Angeles County's Ritual Abuse Task Force • Setting up a ritual abuse task force •

JUSTUS Unlimited • Monarch Resources • Minnesota Awareness of Ritual Abuse

(MINNARA) • California Ritual Crime Investigators Association (CRCIA) • Ritual abuse seminars

• Responding to concerns about youth • Combatting violence of nontraditional groups •

Breaking out • Christian ministries • State legislation

CHAPTER 23

Looking Ahead

About the Author 210

Appendix: Personal Stories 211

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous 256

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous	257
The Promises of Alcoholics Anonymous	258
The Twelve Steps for Ritual Abuse Survivors	259
Resources	260
Bibliography	264

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To God.

To Holly Hector for your support, as well as for your faith, courage, and commitment to helping satanic ritual abuse victims. You really make a difference.

To other professionals who have come forward to help survivors and also to fight back in any number of ways, including being interviewed for this book: Maggie Irwin, Pat Melody, Pamela Hudson, Jack Roper, Ellen Luepker, Marita Keeling, M.D., Marty Smith, Myra Riddell, Bruce Leonard, M.D., Carolyn Grame, Ph.D., Janice and Dick Lord, Maureen Brugh, Sgt. Jon Hinchliff, and Linda Callaghan, M.D. And to all those others who are making a difference through their research, development of treatment techniques, and commitment within the broad context of ritual abuse.

I would also like to thank all those connected with the Los Angeles County Commission for Women's Ritual Abuse Task Force, Minnesota Awareness of Ritual Abuse Network, and Monarch Resources. In addition, I would like to thank Pam and all those connected with Cleveland's Twelve Step Ritual Abuse group for your cooperation. And also to the many survivors who have allowed parts of their stories to be used in this book-Faith Donaldson, Gina, Victoria, Jo G., Dan, and countless others-your courage is an inspiration.

I also want to acknowledge the staff at CompCare Publishers for taking the risk to stand up about all this, especially the editors for believing in the project initially.

Another note of special thanks to my agent, Mary Barr, of Sierra Literary Agency, for going "above and beyond" with this.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This book, like recovery from ritual abuse itself, is a process. Symptoms recur. Experience is affirmed. Counseling techniques evolve. The Twelve Steps are worked and reworked. Like survivors themselves, struggling to reach their often-blocked memories of abuse, this book, too, gropes for truth behind the wall of secrecy and controversy that surrounds this topic.

Ritual abuse refers to practices or patterns of harming behaviors through which persons or groups seek to exert power over others. Ritual abuse is usually traumatic-physical or sexual, as well as mental, emotional, and spiritual. It is sometimes ceremonial, often centering around a commitment to an authority or "deified" leader, such as the Biblical satan.

Many groups throughout the world's history have been associated with traumatic physical or sexual abuse within ritualistic contexts. The theories and recovery techniques presented here may apply to survivors of a variety of ritual traumas.

Daniel Ryder, a counselor and journalist, as well as a ritual abuse survivor, has interviewed other survivors, therapists, representatives of human service agencies, and

law enforcement officers from several parts of the country. What emerges is the first book to deal not only with what seems to be the increasingly visible phenomenon of traumatic ritual abuse-especially satanic ritual abuse-but also effective ways to recover from it.

We recognize that the subject of ritual abuse-involving criminal violence, sexual and emotional abuse, and the total disregard for personal boundaries and human worth-is not only controversial but bizarre and horrible. Some readers, unless they have known survivors like these, will find some of this book very hard to believe. But whatever the degree of skepticism, we do know that there are people in our world who have been and are being ritually abused. We respect their pain and wish fervently for their healing.

FOREWORD

Breaking the Circle of Satanic Ritual Abuse is a powerful book that exposes the violent acts of satanic cults which have infiltrated the very core of our society. The content of the book is disturbing in that graphic details of victims' torture reflect such malevolence. The author/survivor's search for truth led him to many places in the country to interview human service providers. The author not only unmasked the cult's modus operandi, but gave insightful ways of breaking free of cult abuse to begin the process of recovery. The book gives a sense of unsettledness because the perpetrators appear like ordinary people, who go about doing normal activities by day and are often in positions of authority, thereby making it very easy to deny such evil exists.

For all of its horror, the book is about the courage of the survivors and the triumph of good over evil. It also gives us hope, in that the author, an excellent writer, who as a child was abused by a cult, has successfully broken through. This book is must reading for everyone, because this evil thrives in lies and denial. Awareness mitigates these.

Linda Y. Callaghan, M.D.

Board certified psychiatrist in private practice in Traverse City, Michigan; active staff member in psychiatry, Munson Medical Center; former assistant professor, Michigan State University Department of Psychiatry; member American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association; Michigan Psychiatric Association; author of *Inrage, Healing the Hidden Rage of Child Sexual Abuse*.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

An alarming phenomenon is surfacing with more and more frequency. A phenomenon so bizarre, so unlikely, it's hard for many to believe. Yet it is frightening how often it seems to prove to be true and to what extent it has happened-and is happening.

The phenomenon: people are reporting having been exposed to satanic cult ritual abuse while growing up. Growing up in Los Angeles, in Minneapolis, in Cleveland-and in any number of other metropolitan areas and rural towns. The reports include stories even scare tacticians like author Stephen King would be hard-pressed to match.

There are stories of children being buried alive, then being brought back as sons and daughters of satan; stories of child sexual abuse, of orgies, of torture, of murder and sacrifice. There are also stories of highly sophisticated brainwashing to ensure

compliance and silence. And even stories of children forced to be accomplices in some of the killings.

As more of these stories surface, we will begin to understand much more about what's happened to many missing children and adults. We will know more about the past traumas of some people afflicted with psychiatric disorders, such as severe paranoia, schizophrenia, or multiple personalities. And we will also know more about survivors of ritual horrors who, thus far, may not have developed psychiatric disorders, yet are afflicted with many codependency characteristics in the extreme.

While it is becoming clear that cult ritual abuse has been going on for generations, the horrible tales are only now surfacing with steady frequency, simply because only recently has an environment been created to support survivors getting in touch with these kinds of memories. This environment is partially, if not largely, attributable to improved counseling techniques, better understanding of the psychological effects of trauma, and the evolution of the Twelve Step self-help movement (begun by Alcoholics Anonymous) into areas of codependency, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse.

Codependency can be defined as a condition marked by an inordinate reliance on person(s), thing(s), or activities, for personal well-being and self-esteem. (For a complete list of codependency characteristics, see page 9.)

As a survivor of satanic cult rituals, I have experienced firsthand the abuse just outlined, while growing up in an uppermiddle-class suburb in the Midwest. Not only have I experienced the abuse, but also the recovery-step by painful step-in my own personal therapy and through the Twelve Steps.

I'm also a counselor and have worked with people who display symptoms of having had satanic ritual abuse in their backgrounds as well. Often they come to therapy for other problems. I specialize in codependency counseling, for instance, and they come because their anxiety level is increasing, or they can't seem to shake their depression, or their, maybe, twelfth dysfunctional relationship is on the rocks.

Some would commit to recovery in therapy, and perhaps in a Twelve Step program as well. They would unearth the repressed feelings and memories connected to, say, Dad's drunken, raging physical or verbal episodes, or Mom's or Dad's more covert emotional manipulations, or even the compulsive behavior of a teacher or coach. Then some of these people would start to get significantly better.

However, a percentage of them didn't get significantly better, and had to continue to look back some more. As they probed deeper, more scarring levels of abuse began to surface. Now it might be sexual abuse by Dad or Mom, or a babysitter or neighbor. From anything as pronounced as forced sodomy to as subtle as Mom's occasional exhibitionism around the house, this abuse had left deep emotional scars. As these clients worked through these issues, many of them got significantly better as well.

But even with all this, there was a certain percentage of people still experiencing high anxiety, some deep depression, and any number of other problems. Some pretty extreme symptoms would continue to surface consistently.

For instance, some of these people would begin to have some of the most macabre dreams: dreams of black-robed figures; people levitating out of coffins with blood pouring out of their eyes; people being shot, stabbed; dreams about demons.

Also, the level of repressed feelings coming up now was...well, the word intense is an understatement: volcanic rage, convulsive fits of sobbing. Often they would have

thoughts of suicide. And the fear about getting in touch with whatever memories were there would come in waves and was often at almost phobic levels. One client, for example, began to have flashbacks of a black-robed figure standing over him as a warning about remembering.

Also at this time, I was beginning to notice in some clients the beginnings of pronounced personality shifts during the sessions.

Given my personal recovery experience, these components were fairly easy to read as satanic cult ritual abuse symptomatology. Like many other counselors starting to cope with this, I attended seminars (now being conducted around the country) that were just beginning to deal with clinical methods for treating such survivors.

About this same time I referred these clients to a counselor with some experience working with satanic ritual abuse victims. And for the next year or so, I took time off from my counseling practice in order to spend part of the year interviewing satanic cult survivors and representatives from the fields of therapy, law enforcement, social services, and cult research from around the country for this book. Prior to being a counselor, I had been a journalist.

What has emerged is a multidimensional look at satanic cult ritual abuse and recovery. This book illuminates the underlying dynamics of the highly sophisticated, transgenerational cults, as well as the more amateurish teen satanic cults-and explains how someone can be drawn, or forced, into each of these. It includes ways to diagnose ritual abuse, then provides a stage-by-stage look at the recovery process, from a Twelve Step recovery perspective and also from a general clinical perspective. Interviews are included with some leading therapists in ritual abuse pertaining to each stage of the clinical recovery process.

This book goes a step beyond personal and therapeutic issues to looking at how society is beginning to respond. I interviewed the chairperson of the Los Angeles County Task Force on Ritual Abuse, as well as a police sergeant in Minneapolis who has counseled countless cult survivors about personal security and also helped organize an innovative program to combat ritual abuse in that area.

Breaking the Circle of Satanic Ritual Abuse includes a scene from an emotion-charged Twelve Step ritual abuse meeting, and also outlines how to get one of these groups started. It features an interview with a representative from a group of satanic cult survivors in Colorado, who have banded together to start an outreach network across the country to provide referral information and treatment scholarships for fellow survivors. Included in the Appendix are poignant personal stories, poems, and artwork by survivors. The picture that has developed from this investigation is, on one hand, extremely scary and, on the other, optimistic. Scary in how heinous this type of activity is and how widespread it seems to be, and how well it has been protected by secrecy. Scary, too, because of who cult members are reported to be: parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, lawyers, priests, respected business owners-the list goes on. There is concern not only about what these people are doing behind closed doors, in basements or attics, or out in the woods at two o'clock in the morning, but about the evil stemming from these groups weaving itself into the fabric of society in broad daylight. This could take the form of such things as illegal insider stock trading, indiscriminate environmental

polluting, kidnapping, illegal drug sales, political bribes, illegal pornography-evil never seems to exist in a vacuum.

The optimistic side is that people finally are starting to see some of this and fight back. Survivors are beginning to recover, and to speak out publicly. Therapists are committing to help by developing and refining new treatment methods for ritual abuse survivors, as well as often extending their sessions beyond the "standard hour" for these people. Law enforcement officials are now taking survivor depositions and attending seminars on ritual abuse. Task forces are forming.

And, while a lot of this has been going on in pockets all over the world, it is time to take the next step-networking to combine more forces, share even more information.

My hope is that this book will help.

I recently gave a seminar on satanic ritual abuse to some of the psychiatric and substance-abuse counselors at one of the country's leading hospitals. During the presentation, I outlined some of the more abominable forms of abuse, described common survivor symptoms, and outlined stages of the recovery process.

Because there is still debate about the credibility of this issue, I expected at least some skepticism. I got none. Or at least none was voiced. Instead, I got a number of informed questions about the recovery process, other possible symptoms, and what sources of help might be available for referrals locally. It turned out that one counselor in the audience had worked with several satanic cult ritual abuse victims. And the seminar left several other counselors wondering if they, too, had worked with some cult victims without realizing it.

Several months later, however, I did run into some skepticism during a radio talk show in Ohio. At one point, the host proposed that these reports were nothing more than the products of active-very active-imaginings. And besides, how could someone exposed to that much trauma not have any memories of it until recovery?

I found myself spending the first minute or so responding in rather clinical terminology about the psychological effects of such an experience, and how memories too horrible or frightening to deal with can be repressed in the unconscious. I tried to explain, too, how the unconscious can repress-or numb-a feeling, and then at some later point when it seems safer, release it. I then related, in less clinical terms, a therapy group episode involving a ritual abuse survivor.

During the group session, a woman was describing a flashback to an experience at age six. She had watched an infant being cut open during a cult ceremony, then was forced to put her hand inside the incision, while the cult members chanted to satan. She knew, even at age six, that it was not safe for her to rebel, to get sick, to get hysterical. She had to, in effect, go numb.

However, recounting this story in group, she began to shake, then to retch. When she couldn't handle the impact of the memory any longer, she left the group and went to an adjoining

room. I sat beside her on the floor as she cried convulsively.

I then explained to this skeptical radio host that it is extremely difficult to fake feelings like this. And more than that, "Why would you want to?" I asked him.

He didn't know.

CHAPTER 1

"WHAT THE HELL
WAS THAT?"

It happened in Mark's senior year in high school during a football scrimmage. Because of the informality of a scrimmage, the coaches were on the playing field. Mark played quarterback. The offensive coordinator gave him a play to call. He knelt in the middle, the circular huddle closing in around him, the coaches leaning in as well.

"Slot right, forty-two . . ." Mark's muscles started to tighten. His stomach clutched. He began to get claustrophobicreally claustrophobic. What's happening to me? He groped for a reason. Almost in a panic, he blurted out the rest of the play, then broke the huddle in a hurry.

There were ten plays in the series, and the feelings repeated ten times. Mark walked off the field in a daze, totally drained.

"What the hell was that?" He kept shaking his head. "WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT!?"

Fear of Circles

What that was, Mark was to find out years later, was a reaction to a well-hidden experience in his past--one some satanic cult ritual abuse victims have when they find themselves in a circle of people, or even worse, in the center of the circle.

During the cult ceremonies, human circles would be formed. Mark discovered later that as a child he had been abused physically and sexually in the center of those circles. He watched others physically and sexually abused---even killed---in the center of those circles. For the longest time, human circles had scared Mark. He just never quite seemed to know why.

That is, until the experiences started breaking through into his conscious memory a few years ago. With this realization, he was finally able to begin to break the circle.

Fear of Being the Center of Attention

That is another thing about ritual abuse survivors: a lot of them don't like being the center of attention much-ever.

Hal, another satanic ritual abuse victim, reacted typically. For most of his life, Hal had a hard time trying to speak in public. His face would flush. His heart would seem to palpitate, some times race almost out of control. The words would come out shaky, and he always cut his talks short, that is, when he had the courage to speak at all.

And it wasn't as if he hadn't tried to change this. Public speaking courses. Power-of-positive-thinking books. Learning everything he could about his topics. While each of these helped somewhat, the fear remained obtrusive.

He would still have a hard time expressing himself at, say, a staff meeting at work, or in the codependency Twelve Step meetings he'd been attending for the past several years. No matter what he was telling his conscious mind, Hal had this little child living inside him who was afraid, extremely afraid, for his life every time Hal became the center of

attention. Because,

again, when you were the center of attention in cult ceremonies, you were hurt, sometimes even killed.

In Hal's case, just doing self-talk affirmations about being poised, confident, and knowledgeable about his subject would never have been enough to reverse all of these deep-seated fears.

He also would need to give himself-and his inner child-real messages about being safe now.

Now that Hal finally is in touch with his cult abuse memories, and is doing specific self-talk about his safety, this fear is subsiding measurably.

2

Hal was in codependency recovery and therapy almost five years before the ritual abuse memories started to break through. For some, it takes longer. For others, it happens sooner.

Generally, though, people seem to be in recovery in therapy and/or in Twelve Step self-help groups for other issues for a time before any satanic ritual abuse memories start to surface.

Vague Memories of Childhood

Another common trait among many ritual abuse survivors is that their memories of childhood in general are usually vague or almost nonexistent.

Oh, they may remember whom they took, or wanted to take, to the high school prom. And maybe they remember the name of their eighth grade math or English teacher, or even some minor things, like losing their milk money one day in second grade.

But other than these surface kinds of happenings for them, childhood is pretty much a blank.

One of my clients, who demonstrated several satanic ritual abuse symptoms, assigned perhaps the best metaphor I've heard to this phenomenon. "It's like the memories are a few staggered rocks jutting up near the shoreline of this otherwise huge ocean, blanketed in mist."

Overreaction to Violent or "Supernatural" Films

Most satanic ritual abuse survivors I have known have similar reactions to watching graphic depictions of violence or of evil supernatural phenomena, as in movies. One of the topics at a Twelve Step self-help ritual abuse survivors' meeting recently in Cleveland was reactions to these kinds of movies. Several who spoke said it was extremely difficult for them to watch violent or "supernatural" movies. And on the rare occasion when they did watch a film like *The Exorcist*, or a violent "slasher" film (in which knives or guns were used), they said they would become unnerved. This was not, they said, a "normal," short-term adrenaline rush of fear (the kind these movies are designed to evoke) but rather a fear often bordering on panic. The most frightening parts of the movie often continued to replay themselves in their

minds for weeks or months afterwards.

Again, because some survivors have personally seen people knifed, shot, or dismembered, as well as what appeared to be supernatural phenomena, such as demonic possession, these movies to them are much more than external experiences to be set aside quickly.

Problems with Sex

Other common characteristics among cult victims are multifaceted problems with sex. They might seem a natural reaction to being exposed to the "kink" (offbeat sexual practices) of cult orgies, which often included their parents, neighbors, or other community members. Also, having been sexually abused physically in any number of different ways, and having had to watch other children exposed to the same abuses, a survivor's sexuality often becomes skewed.

Some survivors experience physical problems with sexual dysfunction, such as impotency and frigidity. Or they are unconsciously attracted to forms of sadomasochistic practices, exhibitionism, and voyeurism. Some also become addicted to sex.

Exaggerated Codependency Characteristics

Another dynamic that is becoming clearer as these experiences come to light and survivors seek therapy and support is that, besides the straight ritual abuse characteristics, these survivors also have most, if not all, of the widely accepted codependency characteristics in an exaggerated form. (See page 9.)

Fear of Authority

A codependent's typical fear of authority is magnified even more in a ritual abuse survivor because, again, there is the long-held, often unconscious belief that an authority figure, a boss, a teacher, or a leader of any kind could actually kill.

4

Lack of Trust

Another codependency characteristic seen often in ritual abuse survivors is difficulty with intimacy and, in general, difficulty with trusting.

This only stands to reason.

Here's a child, Johnny, whose parents go to church on Sundays. The father owns a reputable business in the community. The mother goes to PTA and volunteers at the local hospital as well. Then there's Mr. Smith up the street, who's Johnny's Little League coach. And what about Dr. Walker, a benevolent- appearing family physician, who's known the family for, well, almost as long as they've known St. Mark's Father Denzik and Patrolman Jones.

So, what happens to Johnny psychologically when he sees these same people late at night changing personas, donning black robes, calling out for satan, taking part in orgies, torturing, even killing?

Well, what happens to Johnny, to put it simply, is that his trust in people is significantly

eroded, if not destroyed.

Problems with Relationships

Later in life, Johnny has difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships with women, with friends, with anyone. Unconsciously he's reluctant to initiate relationships because of the fear of being hurt again. As many codependents have a tendency to isolate themselves, the same is even more true of ritual abuse victims.

And if Johnny-now John, the adult-is in a relationship with someone, the first time this person makes a mistake, it will often push John into a black-and-white attitude about people either being all bad or all good.

John has a real struggle remaining in the relationship after his trust, even over a seemingly small incident, has been broken.

Fear of Abandonment

Many codependents characteristically fear abandonment. If you've grown up with any kind of family dysfunction, you experience degrees of physical and emotional abandonment. If you're not able to express this fear-talk it out-it remains repressed and influences how much you're able to risk getting close to someone later in life.

For a cult victim growing up, fear of abandonment is so pervasive that it's almost impossible to try to relate substantively here. In watching killings, for instance, children fear that someday the parents might be killed as well, leaving them alone in the world. In cases where the parents seem to be possessed by demonic spirits, the children actually fear they may somehow lose their parents totally to the demon. In watching their parents in a sexual orgy with neighbors or others, children also experience severe forms of abandonment, worrying that one or both parents might someday leave to live with the neighbors or whomever.

Compulsivity

Another common codependency characteristic is being compulsive about things like work, shopping, sex, exercise, eating, religion, volunteering, gambling, and so on. These activities are often overused by codependents to avoid painful feelings and memories festering in the unconscious.

Wherever there are some unresolved issues, there is often some compulsion. If there are many unresolved issues, then there is usually a lot of compulsion. If you're an untreated ritual abuse victim, there's a good chance your life may revolve around compulsion.

Other codependency characteristics are included at the end of this chapter. And, again, most of these generally seem to be more severe in a ritual abuse victim.

Use or Avoidance of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Another dynamic for some ritual abuse survivors is the development of alcoholism or chemical dependency. Alcohol and drugs are consistently used to get over the pervasive fear that has developed in different areas of a survivor's life, or they are used as numbing agents for all the repressed pain just below the surface, or they are simply used as an

escape.

Conversely, there are a lot of other survivors who won't touch any form of mood-altering drug. For one thing, they are unconsciously petrified about ever being "out of control" in any way-as they were during the abuse. For another, many ritual abuse victims were forced to take drugs during the ceremonies to make them more malleable in participating in such cult activities as torture, drinking blood, and sexual abuse. Consequently, an unconscious aversion to drugs, including alcohol, has developed.

Survivor's Guilt

The last characteristic I want to touch on here is the tendency to love those who can be pitied and rescued.

Because of having witnessed torture or killings, perhaps even having been forced to participate, ritual abuse survivors often experience survivor's guilt. And because this is so pervasive, survivors often look to people they can help in some way, unconsciously to atone for not being able to stop the killings, and also for their own guilt at surviving when others did not.

Ritual Abuse Characteristics List

Having some of the following characteristics may indicate ritual abuse in one's background:

1. Dreams with reoccurring images of blood, robed figures, demons, candles, satan, etc.
2. Vague, scattered, or almost nonexistent childhood memories.
3. Pronounced panic reactions to films like *The Exorcist*, *The Omen*, and violent "slasher" type movies or literature.
4. Self-mutilation. Cutting oneself, burning or hitting oneself, or having preoccupying thoughts of similar kinds of self-abuse.
5. An extremely passive nature. Inordinate fear of physical violence, knives, guns.
6. Hypersensitivity about being the center of attention. Being uncomfortable in, or around, human circles of any kind.
1. Sexual perversion or dysfunction. For example, sadomasochistic tendencies as a victim and/or perpetrator, or continual fantasies about sadomasochism.
8. A propensity for urinary problems, rectal symptoms, colitis, odd-shaped rashes (body memories) in the form of 6's, upside-down crosses, and other satanic symbols.
9. Hypersensitivity to unexpected touch and loud noises.
10. Extreme difficulty with trust.
11. Codependency characteristics in the extreme.
12. Extreme scrupulosity.
13. Phobia about snakes.

This is a compilation taken primarily from a list being used in Twelve Step ritual abuse groups. Characteristics 1, 7, and 8 were provided by Marita Jane Keeling, M.D., assistant clinical professor for the Health and Sciences Center in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Keeling presents seminars on the subject of adult survivors of ritual abuse. (See pages 67•72 for more behavioral, psychological, and physical indicators of ritual abuse.)

Codependency Characteristics List

Having any of the following may indicate a problem with codependency. The degree of the affliction depends primarily upon the amount of trauma one has experienced.

1. We became isolated, afraid, and/or defiant of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval seekers, and lost some of our identity in the process.
3. We often experience unmet potential in our relationships, work, etc.
4. We sometimes became alcoholics/chemical dependents, married them, or both. Or we tend to find other compulsive personalities, such as workaholics, to fulfill our unconscious abandonment needs.
5. We sometimes live life from the viewpoint of victims, and are attracted by that weakness in our friendship and career relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility. It is also easier for some of us to be concerned with others, rather than ourselves. (We also take what we do too seriously.)
 1. We sometimes get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves. And we often give in to others.
8. We become addicted to excitement, although we have difficulty experiencing real fun.
9. We have difficulty with intimacy, confusing love with pity. And we have a tendency to "love" those we can pity and rescue.
10. We have often "stuffed" our feelings from childhood because of varying degrees of trauma experienced. And we have lost some of the ability to feel and express our feelings in the present. (Our being out of touch with our feelings is one of our basic denials.)
11. We have a tendency to judge ourselves harshly, and often have a low sense of self-esteem.
12. We've developed dependent personalities, afraid of abandonment. And we will sometimes do almost any

thing to hold on to a relationship-no matter how dysfunctional the relationship is.

13. We are sometimes super-responsible, or superirresponsible, but in each case we tend to be impulsive, looking for immediate, rather than delayed, gratification.
14. We often are reactors rather than actors, overreacting to things often beyond our control.
15. We are loyal, even when the loyalty is undeserved.
16. We guess at what "normal" is.
17. We have difficulty following through on projects.
18. We have compulsive natures.
19. We often seek approval, but even when it is offered, it is hard to accept.
20. We sometimes lie, even when it would be easier to tell the truth.

These characteristics develop in people who come from families suffering from dysfunctions. They are families in which one parent or both parents had been afflicted with alcoholism/chemical dependency, an eating disorder, compulsive gambling or spending, workaholism, chronic mental or physical disorders. Or from families in which there was extreme religiosity, incest, physical abuse, satanic ritual abuse ... the list of dysfunctions goes on.

There is now a network of Twelve Step groups across the country to help people afflicted with these characteristics. Among these groups are Codependents Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA and ACoA), Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families (ACDF), and AI-Anon. Some of these groups will be listed in your phone directory.

Others, if they are relatively new in your area, may not be. If you cannot find a listing of meeting locations, contact a social service referral line or a local hospital with a chemical dependency treatment program.

The above list of codependency characteristics is a compilation of generally accepted lists being circulated in Twelve Step groups.

CHAPTER 2

SATANISM

Satanism, for the most part, is all about power, as are witchcraft, Druidism, Santeria, and other practices sometimes associated with ritual abuse. (As the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse inflicted in these groups may be similar, the recovery dynamics for survivors are basically the same as well.) People involved with satanism call upon the powers of satan to be able to manipulate the world around them through prescribed ritual.

Satan: A spiritual being, opposed to God, supremely evil. According to Christian tradition, an angelic being, once called Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12), created by God for good purposes, but who led a rebellion against God, and was cast out of heaven.

Satan is believed to be the serpent in the Garden of Eden who tempted Eve to disobey God saying, "You shall be like God." (Genesis 3:5). Satan is also called the Father of Lies.... He is the ruler over demons and evil spirits who work to interfere with the relationship of God and man, by provoking man to evil.

This excerpt is taken from a Ritual Abuse booklet distributed by a task force for the Los Angeles County Commission for Women. (See chapter 22 for further information about this task force, and the ground-breaking booklet, which covers many aspects of ritual abuse.)

Opposition to Traditional Judeo-Christian Values

The heart of satanism supposedly is to oppose all the values of Judeo-Christian tradition, in what appear to be the most horrible and twisted of ways.

Colorado therapist Holly Hector, MA., specializes in working with satanic cult ritual abuse survivors, and presents seminars nationally on the topic.

Along with what seems to be an insatiable quest for personal power, Ms. Hector said satanists have other primary goals. One is to try to completely shut the door to children ever choosing Christ as their God. Another is to try to make sure as many human souls as possible, simply put, go to hell. (Hell, to them, is construed as a desirable place to go.)

In satanic cults, children are systematically abused in order to turn them against the teachings of Jesus. They are told, said Vs. Hector, that Jesus died on the cross because he was a thief and a liar. Children may also be raped physically with crucifixes. Some of these are wooden crucifixes. Some are fashioned out of knife blades. Many have the figure of Christ on them.

"This is Jesus-and he is raping you!" cult members will often scream incessantly, as the child is being abused.

Other times cult members may dress as stereotypical depictions of Christ (in a white robe), said Ms. Hector, then either *ape or torture the children. Children may also be given replicas of Bibles, and will receive electric shocks every time they try to open them. They may)e made to watch Bibles being desecrated with blood and excrement.

Ms. Hector also said some children and adults who have betrayed the cult are sometimes hung on crosses-even sacrificed on crosses-as part of the cult ceremonies.

"Some children are even forced to choose who will be sacrificed," she said.

Satanists find a rationale for these sacrifices beyond merely placating their sadistic impulses. As chronicled in the Old Testament, God would seem to call for animal sacrifices from his people. However, after Christ's ultimate sacrifice-death on the cross-sacrifices were no longer required.

However, satanists try to discount that Christ was the if-nal sacrifice by continuing to sacrifice to satan, according to Ms. Hector.

She added that the more pain and torment cult members can inflict on a victim, and the more fear they are able to instill, the more power they feel they gain internally. They also are reported to practice cannibalism, believing the "eating of flesh" adds to their personal power-because flesh is "of the world," said Ms. Hector, "and they believe satan to be the prince of this world. Christians, on the other hand, believe that the power comes from the spirit."

Another way satanic philosophies become the antithesis of Judeo-Christian values is through opposition to the Ten Commandments. The overriding theme of the Ten Commandments is reasonable self-restraint. Some versions of satanism's "Ten Commandments" read almost exactly the opposite: the pervasive theme is self-indulgence. Some satanic doctrine can be found in the Satanic Bible, written by Anton LaVey, the organizational head of the Church of Satan. Another publicized satanic organization is the Temple of Set.

Both organizations are reported to worship openly in "churches:' And both have issued disclaimers over the years asserting that they are not in any way associated with ritual abuse of children, or in the sacrifice of animals and humans.

The groups that do reportedly participate in the abuse and killing are-and this goes without saying-anything but open.

Rebellion against Authority

Director for the Christian Apologetic and Research Information Services (CARIS) based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Jack Roper has extensively researched both satanism and the occult. Roper has also served as a consultant to law enforcement agencies across the country on the subject and was used as a consultant on cult dynamics for "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

One of the main underlying themes of satanism is rebellion against any authority, said Roper, accounting for the reversals of the commandments, as well as killings and grave desecrations.

Personal Power

Another main theme is attainment of personal power. For teens, this translates into power over parents and other authority, as well as sexual power. For adults in transgenerational cults, it's also power over authority, sexual power, and financial power. That is, a midwestern satanist farmer may offer a sacrifice for a good crop, or a stockbroker may offer homage and sacrifice to satan for wise investments, a business owner for the success of his enterprise.

Roper said it is his opinion that one major reason the transgenerational cults haven't been exposed is because of who these cult members are in the community—from Jane Smith who owns the realty office on Main Street to John Doe who volunteers at the local church.

Roper also cites the lack of tangible evidence cult survivors are able to produce once they start having memories. Roper said these cults are highly sophisticated at hiding evidence. With infant sacrifices, for instance, he talks of reports of cannibalism with the flesh of the victim, then feeding the bones to dogs, or looking for a grave that perhaps had been dug the night before, and sneaking in and burying the baby a few feet below the level that's been dug. The next day it is cemented over and the coffin is put in place. No one ever knows.

Transgenerational Cults

Transgenerational cults are those perpetuated through family generations. They are not exclusive to satanism, but may be based on other forms of religious tradition. Children brought up in such environments often view cult activities as the norm. Power, heritage, and programming keep the transgenerational cults flourishing. Some of these cults engage in prayer ritual, mind control, sexual orgies, child sexual abuse, torture, murder/sacrifice. And while cult activity is hard to quantify at this point, many of the therapists, researchers, and law enforcement officials interviewed for this book indicated that it is a lot more prevalent than almost anyone would imagine.

Sgt. Jon Hinchliff, a twenty-three-year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department, is one of the people who holds this belief. Hinchliff has been actively investigating satanic and other ritual abuse crimes over the past five years.

From the data he's gathered, Hinchliff said he believes transgenerational cults are strongly rooted and may have evolved from the "old country." That is, various forms of occult practices, including satanism, were brought to America from European countries, Africa, and Australia.

Sometimes working in concert with a cult survivor's therapist, Hinchliff will advise the person to do a complete family tree, tracing back as far as possible in search of historical clues. (This is more a psychological help than anything else because if some somewhat solid connections are made, it makes the reality of the abuse much more credible to victims programmed to think they were making it up.)

Within the context of most transgenerational cult beliefs, blood lineage is extremely important. Because cult members believe that, as power is acquired through practicing the rituals, the most effective way to pass it on is literally through the family blood.

Again, satanists believe power is stored in the blood.

For transgenerational cult groups, this, too, translates into power over authority, power in sexual conquest, power over relationships, power that blesses them with, again, good crops, other business successes, prestige-power they feel will last eternally.

In past centuries, among cult groups and cult families there was a lot of intermarrying just for the purpose of carrying on the power, said Hinchliff. Today this goes on covertly.

Some cult victims, said Hinchliff, are starting to find evidence later in life that their real father or mother may actually have been a cult-involved uncle, aunt, or grandparent.

Hinchliff has worked with a large number of professionals-therapists, law enforcement officials, lawyers, and social service workers-around the cult issue. He is also the co-founder of MINNARA, Minnesota Awareness of Ritual Abuse, a group that has formed to link people dealing with this issue at any level throughout the state. (See page 196 for an explanation of the goal; and evolution of this organization.)

Also, within transgenerational cults, Hinchliff has learned that certain children are earmarked for certain roles. For in stance, if a child seems to demonstrate some psychic ability (telepathy, telekinesis, or other paranormal abilities), she or he is groomed for channeling roles (as a conduit to the "spirit" work for instance). Some children are groomed to be high priests o

priestesses, some to be recruiters. Some are designated to be entrusted with the more sensitive secrets, such as where and how to dispose of victims' remains.

The children who learn about cleaning up the remains, for instance, learn they can't make errors. There's no room. The continued existence of the cult depends on it, said Hinchliff. For even minor mistakes, victims report severe punishment, such as isolation, bondage, or being placed in cages with snakes.

Like Roper, Hinchliff believes it is this attention to detail, combined with highly sophisticated mind-control techniques, and the identity facade of who the cult members appear to be, that may account for these types of cults going undetected for so long.

As an example of precautions taken as a cult ceremony is going on, some cult members are designated to monitor police scanner frequencies. Others, said Hinchliff, are stationed as perimeter security, establishing one, and sometimes even two, perimeters.

The sergeant said that, from the reports he's gathered so far, a lot of the ceremonies take place in remote rural settings. However, a significant number of ceremonies are also reported to be in urban and suburban areas.

According to Hinchliff, disposal of physical evidence is very thorough. He has heard reports of cannibalism as well. Reports of grinding the victim's bones to mix with farm animal feed. Reports of dismembered victims being cremated in homemade, stone grills and other types of "cookers."

Sometimes, said Hinchliff, a victim may be buried in an isolated spot on private property in a rural setting.

Hinchliff also said reports indicate the transgenerational cults are also highly organized on other levels as well. There are reports of women designated as breeders for baby sacrifices (the births never being recorded).

There are also reports, said Hinchliff, of a sophisticated network for kidnapping. That is, a child may be abducted from the Midwest and taken to a cult on the West Coast for sacrifice. While this causes a stir in the town the child is abducted from, it doesn't draw

any attention to the town in which the cult is located. Or, if a child from the cult's general neighborhood is killed by the cult, after the evidence is disposed of, the child can merely be reported as kidnapped.

Again, Hinchliff agrees with Roper's belief that another factor in keeping the cult activity hidden is the status of cult members in society. Hinchliff said victim reports show some of the members are doctors, lawyers, respected business people, PTA mothers, regular church attendees, clergypersons, law enforcement officials.

"They seem to have all the bases covered," he said.

Besides their mantle, or rather facade, of respectability, by being strategically placed, these people can make highly calculated countermoves before any disclosure makes cult activity public.

Say a victim starts having memories, goes to a police department, and files a complaint.

If there is a cult member on the force, that information is relayed back to the cult.

Shortly afterward, the cult starts to mount a harassment campaign to scare the person and trigger the old code-of-silence programming: harassing phone calls, letters, threats of harm to the victim or family members. (In Cleveland, an informal "safe" network of police has formed for people reporting cult-related crimes.) The victim's therapist may begin to be threatened as well. Another cult response may be to rally family members to see that the victim is incarcerated in a psychiatric unit. Because of the extreme forms of abuse victims are exposed to in the cult, these campaigns are often successful in intimidating them. Victims tend to believe nothing can be done to stop the cult.

One of Hinchliff's functions is to work with victims on security issues. He advises victims to record telephone calls and save threatening letters as evidence. Because he gets calls from across the country, he advises victims to go to as many law enforcement agencies (police departments, sheriff's departments, FBI) as possible in their area to give depositions with specific lists of names, and then, if possible, to see that this information is relayed to the people doing the harassment.

According to Hinchliff, the cult's biggest fears revolve around being exposed, and sometimes this is enough to get them to back off.

Also, because much of the intensity of the victim's fear is based in the past, Hinchliff noted that a good therapist who is able, over time, to empower the victim psychologically can help reduce some of the fear.

Another reason this has not attracted more public attention, Hinchliff believes, is the prevailing climate of the judicial system. He notes that ritual abuse is where child sexual abuse

was some fifteen years ago—that is, sporadic reports in the judicial system viewed with much skepticism. Hinchliff also said that, in a number of child sexual abuse cases that have now been prosecuted, the child will also talk about satanic cult abuse to lawyers and social service workers; but cult abuse sometimes will be left out of the court testimony because the lawyer feels that bringing up this issue may jeopardize the rest of the case. Again, usually there is no tangible evidence.

Hinchliff said it is imperative at this point for more and more professionals from different disciplines to keep coming together to share information, and to mount united efforts in starting to deal with cult abuse.

Crime/Abuse Variations

The intensity and extent of ritual abuse vary among the various satanic cults survivors have been exposed to. This is beginning to be validated consistently by law enforcement officials and therapists.

Carolyn Grame, Ph.D., is a therapist and researcher at the Menninger Foundation Psychiatric Hospital in Topeka, Kansas. At the time of the interview for this book, she had four patients in her case load reporting satanic ritual abuse.

Based on these patients' memory retrieval, she was seeing graduated distinction in the types of cults they had been exposed to.

One patient reported being exposed to what Dr. Grame refers to as a "high orthodox" transgenerational cult—a cult that carried on ceremonies in an elaborate underground tunnel system. She said that the patient reported often witnessing human sacrifice. This patient also reported a heavy emphasis on prostitution and the production of pornography, including "snuff films." Snuff films, said to show people literally being tortured and killed, are sold through covert networks as part of the pornography industry. Another of Dr. Grame's patients was drawn into a satanic cult comprising a mix of teens and adults. This was a relatively new group, not transgenerational. Most of this patient's memories revolve around cult members self-mutilating, generating child pornographic material, and the sale of illegal drugs. This patient had memories of this cult carrying on animal sacrifices primarily, although one human killing was witnessed. Also, a focus of this particular cult was the desecration of figures and symbols relating to Catholicism. The person left this specific cult, then became involved first with the Ku Klux Klan, later with the NeoNazis, and eventually with yet another satanic cult before finally getting into therapy.

Satanic Holidays

Satanists and other occult groups are reported to share certain "holidays" when there is a marked increase in ceremonial activity. Of specific note are Jan. 17 and Feb. 2 (satanic revels); Mar. 21 (Spring Equinox); Apr. 21-26 (preparation for sacrifice) and Apr. 26-May 1 (Grand Climax); June 21 (Summer Solstice); July 1 (demon revels); Sept. 7 (Marriage to the Beast Satan); Oct. 13 (Halloween backward); Oct. 29-Nov. 1 (All Hallow Eve, Halloween); and Dec. 22 (Winter Solstice). Satanists often perform matching ceremonies opposite Christian "holy times," such as particular saints' days, Easter, Christmas, and Halloween (the day before All Saints' Day). There is also reportedly increased cult activity around full-moon nights and all Friday the thirteenth.

CHAPTER 3

RECRUITMENT

I had a conversation with a man who unknowingly may have ventured into the early stages of satanism in Sacramento, California.

He'd known a woman at work for a couple of years. The relationship evolved into a romance. After several what could be described as regular dates, she began to confide in him things that seemed, well, somewhat bizarre, yet also somehow intriguing to him.

She told him, for instance, one night, that she was Jesus reincarnated, then held out her wrists. There were no apparent cuts, yet both wrists were bleeding. Another night, reportedly through a series of chantings, she somehow telepathically sent an orgasmic type of feeling into him that he reported lasting almost twenty-four hours. Then, as quickly as it had been sent, she supposedly shut it off while in his presence. As she was doing this, he said, she flashed what appeared to be a cold-very cold-sinister look. This sinister aspect of her personality he'd never seen before. And while he was concerned, the orgasmic feeling he reportedly had experienced really hooked him, and he continued to see her.

One day he found a book on witchcraft in her apartment, and took it to a friend, who, at one time, had been involved in the practice of white witchcraft. After looking at the book, and hearing some of the stories, his friend advised him he was possibly being lured gradually toward satanism, and that he should be extremely careful.

Shortly after that, he ended the relationship.

"The whole thing got to really scare me after a while," he said. "And what was even odder was, I had known her for almost two years and in no way suspected she was into any of this."

The man is now in Twelve Step recovery for his codependency issues, and is exploring the dynamics around why he was unconsciously drawn toward this type of person in the first place.

On a societal plane, there are different levels of satanism, and different ways people are drawn into it.

As a cult researcher, Jack Roper said he looks at satanism as the "hub" of much of the occult movement. And according to Roper, there are any number of outside spin-off groups that may desensitize and then draw people toward satanism.

Among influences that may begin to pull some young people toward satanism, Roper cites the game "Dungeons and Dragons," which introduces them to the concept of demons and occult imagery. He also said there are any number of other fantasy role-playing games out now that include occult imagery and terminology.

As a follow-up to the interview with Roper, I went to a store in the Los Angeles area that sells these types of games. Other names of games I came across were "The Restless Dead" and "Death on the Rock." The game covers displayed demons, dragons, snakes, and, well, so much horrifying imagery that I actually felt ... I don't want to say overwhelmed, but definitely uncomfortable, just being in the store with all these images staring down from the shelves.

Roper said many of the games, designed to be highly interesting, actually can become addictive for a significant number of people. At the same time, they also begin to desensitize people.

At a three-day seminar in Indiana on ritual abuse crime, Roper said a police officer from Albany, New York, presented a case study of a nineteen-year-old who was brutally killed by a satanist. The officer displayed some of the murder and torture weapons confiscated from the satanist. They included various types of daggers, guns, and electroshock equipment. All these are things, Roper noted, that magazines that report on the horror film industry don't hesitate to display prominently each month.

The pornography industry also desensitizes people to satanic practices, said Roper. This includes, along a continuum,

anything from hard-core "snuff" films (actual torture and murder), to child pornography, to sadomasochistic "porn," to even more soft-core porn that depicts threesome sex scenes. (Sexual orgies are reported to be a part of some satanic cult ceremonies.)

Another influence, especially on youth, according to Roper's research, is heavy metal music. Some bands sing about hate, death, and social destruction. Some bands prominently display images and symbols that are also sometimes used in connection with satanic cults. These may include lightning bolts, demons, swords piercing hearts, skulls, and Nazi swastikas.

And there's another, more hidden, psychological dynamic to heavy metal attraction as well. If a kid has grown up in a dysfunctional family, especially in a highly dysfunctional one, he or she learns to function in-and actually is drawn to--chaos. This chaos may be represented by music that features erratic, raucous sounds and hard-pounding beats. In adulthood, the same person may be attracted to a crisis-oriented job or stormy relationships.

"Heavy metal speaks to the pain I've been through," Roper said a teen he was working with once told him. The youth was trying to get out of a satanic cult he had been drawn into.

Getting pulled into a satanic cult is often a methodical, well-calculated, and very insidious process. That is, unless you've been raised in a transgenerational cult, and already are programmed.

Roper described what he views as a typical process. The first stage, said Roper, may be an invitation to a party where alcohol and "light" drugs are being used. Invitations come from people designated by the cult as recruiters.

The next step often is to introduce sex into the equation. A prospect is then "fixed up" with another cult member in a sexual liaison. Maybe this happens several times. Then, stronger drugs are often brought in, purportedly to enhance the sexual experience.

Then the recruiter will start to turn the prospect on to occult literature detailing spells and other types of incantations, so the prospect, in essence, can develop the power to win over any woman/man. At this time, the prospect also is introduced to other areas of occult study.

In addition, by befriending the prospect, the recruiter will have been able to determine to what degree someone has experienced life trauma, such as being from a dysfunctional family, and they will proportionately "love bomb" the prospect, as some other cults do, said Roper. This essentially entails creating a caring facade, spending a lot of "quality time" with the candidate.

Eventually the prospect may be allowed into the "inner circle," where he or she is exposed to satanism and the ceremonies. And with this, there are generally initiation rites-rites of passage, so to speak.

In the cults made up mostly of younger people, prospects have to "prove their worth" through actions like animal sacrifice. Sporadically in teen cults, humans are also killed. Another initiation rite, said Roper, is grave-robbing. And initiates are often specifically instructed to take the skull, because the skull is the container for the brain, which satanists believe contains spirit powers. Besides, the skull is also a symbol of death, and death is the ultimate victory for satanists because in death they expect to be with their lord, satan, for all of eternity. Again, they look at hell as desirable.

In 1989, in a somewhat rural town about forty miles west of Cleveland, Ohio, three young men—two aged eighteen and one aged twenty—were indicted for breaking into a cemetery. Excerpts from the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper at the time read:

Three Norwalk area residents charged with opening two graves, beheading the corpses and stealing the skulls, were part of a cult that had recently gotten instructions on how to sacrifice babies to satan, Norwalk police said yesterday. "We're taking this very seriously," he [Police Chief Gary Dewalt] said. "They admitted sacrificing small animals to satan. They said they smashed their heads and drank the blood. One of them has mutilated himself with a knife. These aren't just kids fooling around."

Leaving the Cults

Some survivors get out of the cult (also see chapter 22) when they move out of the house, go away to college, get married, or change locales for whatever reason. However, according to Holly Hector, the survivors who go away to school, for instance, will often become reinvolved when they come home for the summer or other vacations. And some will move back to the same town after completing college.

It's important to note, said therapist Holly Hector, that it is most often some of the alter personalities in survivors with multiple personality disorder (MPD) that get reinvolved with the cult, or a cult in another city, without the "birth person's" conscious knowledge. Survivor reports indicate victims are often programmed to come back later in life to the original cult, or to get involved with another.

Sometimes the original cult may no longer be in existence, because of company transfers or cult members dying out. However, because of incomplete survivor memories, not enough data about cult evolution, including disbanding, there is little we can do other than hypothesize at this point.

In recent years there have been a number of avenues created to help people break away from satanic cults, including survivors' groups and other networks.

(See chapter 22. For a list of support network referrals, see pages 260-264.)

Some referrals may include "safe houses" that have been established, as well as "safe" law enforcement officials to contact. Also, there are now some Twelve Step ritual abuse groups where victims can go for support as well, although the openness of Twelve Step meetings can make them vulnerable to infiltration by cult members.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT THERAPISTS ARE SEEING

In Addictions/Codependency Treatment

Increasing numbers of ritual abuse victims have been getting in touch and dealing with memories of ritual horrors in inpatient addictions/codependency treatment programs. Professionals at the Meadows, a treatment center in Wickenburg, Arizona, first started seeing this phenomenon around 1987, according to Executive Director Pat Mellody. The Meadows specializes in such addiction and compulsion problems as alcoholism/chemical dependency, eating disorders, sex addiction and love addiction, compulsive gambling, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The center also deals extensively with codependents. The program is open-ended, with an average stay of five to six weeks, according to Mellody.

The intensive concentration of group and individual therapy in treatment programs like those at the Meadows is often very effective in helping people break through layers of denial around specific disorders and build a solid foundation of strategies and tools to use in ongoing recovery.

This type of therapy-intensive setting will also often provide a safe atmosphere for long-repressed feelings and memories to surface—memories of parents' drunken rages, of incest and other kinds of sexual abuse, and ritual abuse, such as satanic ritual abuse.

"This issue seems to be a lot bigger thing than anyone

would imagine," said Mellody. And he projects that centers like the Meadows will see increasing numbers of satanic abuse survivors as time goes on.

At the time of this interview, in a client census of fifty, seven satanic abuse survivors were being treated at the Meadows, with three others exhibiting similar abuse symptoms without as yet having any memories, according to counselor Maggie Irwin.

One of Maggie Irwin's special areas of expertise is working with satanic abuse victims. Ms. Irwin, who has had twenty four years of counseling experience, reports that many people who come to the Meadows have had significant degrees of recovery in such Twelve Step programs as AA, Codependents Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics (and other dysfunctional families), Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, and Incest Survivors Anonymous. She said that many satanic abuse survivors have been experiencing fragmented flashbacks to cult abuse prior to coming to the center. "For example, they are repeatedly seeing things like daggers, or maybe hooded figures," said Ms. Irwin. Others, she said, might not be experiencing bits of memories yet, but are starting to have overwhelming panic attacks, with no concrete situations to attribute them to. Or they may be reexperiencing pronounced pain in the form of body memories, often anally or vaginally in connection with sexual abuse.

Also, some ritual abuse survivors come to the center in the midst of working on other incest/sexual abuse issues, and sequentially begin having ritual abuse memories while in the therapy-intensive setting. A significant number of ritual abuse survivors, said Ms. Irwin, have some of the memories prior to coming to the Meadows, but believe they are nothing more than the most bizarre delusions.

An initial procedure at the Meadows is the administration of a battery of psychometric tests, including the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), to develop as extensive a picture of the patient as possible. As part of these tests, a patient draws pictures of the childhood family (family of origin) and pictures of the same family now.

Ms. Irwin said this is often quite telling, and sometimes this will be the first point at which suspicion of ritual abuse arises. Recently, she was presented with one patient's drawing of some family members sitting around a table dressed normally, with an uncle and other family members in the background as sinister skeletons with swords raised in their hands. (This wasn't a symbolic depiction of the death of these people, since they were all still very much alive.)

Ms. Irwin couldn't surmise satanic abuse just from the drawing, but based on this she would watch more closely for other symptoms of satanic abuse in this person.

Other symptoms, she said, can come in dreams. Some satanic abuse victims dream of people being knifed, of having to drink blood, of robed figures. Often in individual sessions they share some of the dreams or fragments of flashbacks they've been having- then wait tentatively for a response.

Ms. Irwin feels it is extremely important that survivors perceive they are being believed at this stage. This assurance opens them up to pursue, as well as to share, their increasingly more horrible memories.

As therapeutic rapport builds, survivors sometimes spontaneously go into age regressions during group and individual sessions. Ms. Irwin describes these regressions: "boundaries, time, and space fail, and the person goes back to experience the memory as if it were happening in the present." She said it is not uncommon for a satanic abuse survivor to end up on the floor in a corner of her office in one of these regressions, screaming, "GET THEM AWAY! GET THEM AWAY!" while telling her about being forced by cult members to eat part of a sacrificed baby, or being forced to help kill a cat, or being physically or sexually abused.

During these moments, Ms. Irwin tries to get as much data as possible about what is being remembered, and then, as calmly as she can, talks the person back into the present.

Ms. Irwin estimates that at least 90 percent of ritual abuse survivors emerge from the trauma with such extreme "shamebound" internal identities that they actually experience many of the codependents' characteristics on a life-threatening level. She compares the internal sense of guilt they feel with that of some war veterans. However this guilt is often even worse for ritual abuse survivors because they started to experience it as children, with no mature, rational perspective whatsoever. Other extreme codependent manifestations in such survivors may include unconsciously and repeatedly putting themselves in circumstances in which they could be raped or badly beaten; pursuing with abandon dangerous driving or sports; indiscriminately and heavily using drugs; constant compulsive overeating, or, at the other extreme, starving through anorexia.

Ms. Irwin's task is to help these survivors start to see these connections.

In addition, during this phase of treatment, she is often able to help patients explain any quirkish phobias they may have been plagued with throughout their lives. For example, one survivor felt she could never leave the house unless everything was clean and exactly in place. As the memories started to surface, she was able to see the connection; if she had left anything even slightly out of place after a ceremony she would have been beaten, tortured.

Maggie Irwin also helps patients construct some psycho

logical boundaries between themselves and the past, so they don't become so overwhelmed when experiencing the memories. In addition, she tries to promote memory retrieval through more drawing, and through having survivors pose questions to themselves about the abuse and then "journal" with the nondominant hand. This latter is a method recommended by many therapists as a way of gaining quicker access to the unconscious.

Ms. Irwin believes it is imperative that ritual abuse survivors spend a lot of time focusing on codependency recovery. A

primary area is restoration of choice. Her work with these survivors indicates to her that typically the primary intention of the cult is to take away any kind of choice-making process for victims, so essentially they become nothing more than pawns of the cult—much as some POWs' spirits are broken. Even when satanic abuse victims were allowed to make choices during ceremonies, said Ms. Irwin, the consequences were usually so horrendous (they may have been forced to decide who was to be sacrificed) that this could only lead to decision-making paralysis later.

This choice-making deficiency can extend in later years into almost every area of a survivor's life. It becomes very difficult to make any decision—from picking out a shirt to choosing a college or profession. What is always looming in the unconscious is the threat of being killed if she or he makes a mistake.

In attempting to empower survivors in choice-making, Ms. Irwin tries never to tell them what to do. Rather she gives them choices about many things—which outside Twelve Step meetings to attend, which topics to address in discussion groups, which treatment goals to set for themselves.

Another recovery area Ms. Irwin focuses on in treatment is either reclamation or further development of the victim's spirituality. She works with survivors to determine how they tapped

into a source of goodness to survive growing up, with all the evil and mayhem going on around them.

"For every minute they spent with the demons, I believe they also spent a minute with the angels," said Ms. Irwin, speaking both figuratively and literally (the latter, according to her own spiritual beliefs). Ms. Irwin said she has never encountered a group of people more capable of "deep spiritual connectedness," because of the strong sense of spirituality satanic abuse survivors had to draw upon consistently in order to survive.

For example: "Some people put themselves into a monastery and lead contemplative lives just to experience what a satanic abuse survivor [because of their past experiences] can sometimes draw on in only seconds while driving down the freeway," Ms. Irwin said.

It is her personal belief that, in working with these survivors, therapists should come to terms about their own ideas of good and evil on a spiritual plane, because good-vs.-evil becomes such a consistent dynamic in dealing with a survivor's recovery. "If you [the therapist] can't believe in evil, or a concept of a loving God, patients are sometimes going to get stuck [in therapy]," she said, adding that, if that were the case, it would then be best to refer the person to another therapist.

She also believes it is imperative that therapists understand that there is meaning to almost all ritual abuse in the ceremonies, that these are not random acts (see chapter 2).

"If we don't understand the theology, we often don't know where to take people to get

them out of the horror," said Ms. Irwin.

For some survivors, reaccess to belief in the spirituality they drew on as children isn't accomplished until some of the repressed anger and shame are worked through. Some of this happens in therapy group situations at the Meadows. One of the best shame-reduction tools is to talk about the abuse with others, she said. The groups at the Meadows are mixed, with people from all types of abusive backgrounds. Part of the treatment philosophy at the center is that abuse runs along a continuum of severity, and, while the symptoms abuse produces may also vary in severity, they involve basically the same issues-such as the codependency characteristics. Likewise, no matter what the degree of severity may be, many of the recovery stages are basically the same for most abuse victims.

Since at times in group a ritual abuse survivor's sharing

becomes pretty intense, Ms. Irwin does a number of things to help the other patients deal with this intensity. She spends a lot of time talking to patients about erecting psychological and physical boundaries, so they can experience the sharing without taking it on internally. Also, sometimes group members experience "feeling dirty" when hearing an incest survivor or satanic abuse survivor graphically describe the abuse. If this happens, she recommends that after group people wash their hands and their faces and take showers, as a physical manifestation of reinforcing the psychological boundaries they have set.

Another way that has been devised on a group level to maintain these boundaries after a satanic abuse survivor has shared something particularly heinous is for the group to "go on cosmic record" by shouting NO! repeatedly, said Ms. Irwin-NO! to more abuse to the survivor. This is also a declaration that other group members are not psychically taking on any of the abuse by simply hearing about it.

Ms. Irwin tells other group members to try to stay as open as possible to a satanic abuse survivor's sharing, because there might well be a spiritual reason for their ending up in this particular group. The sharing may trigger aspects of some type of abuse they, too, may have repressed from childhood.

Another recovery focus for ritual abuse survivors in treatment at the Meadows is the diminishment of survivor's guilt. Besides allowing a person to talk and process some of the feelings about this, the Meadows has gone a step beyond and started a Survivors' Quilt, with felt graphics and painting done on 12" x 12" squares. The quilt serves two purposes: it honors the memory of those killed during the ceremonies, and it symbolizes that those who did survive now continue to choose life.

Ms. Irwin said that the length of treatment at the Meadows for ritual abuse survivors varies, depending on such factors as how they react to the memories, how quickly they assimilate recovery tools, whether or not they have multiple personalities (see chapter 17).

As part of treatment exit planning, she always recommends ongoing therapy for the survivor. Also, she recommends that a person think about attending a Twelve Step ritual abuse group or an Incest Survivors Anonymous meeting. However, she realizes that some survivors are not ready to talk about this issue in a forum of this kind, and this needs to be

a personal choice for each individual.

Ms. Irwin believes that treatment centers like the Meadows will see a substantial increase in ritual abuse survivors as it becomes safer to talk about the abuse in Twelve Step meetings, in therapy, and in treatment. Like other counselors interviewed for this book, she sees parallels between this growing awareness of traumatic ritual abuse, especially satanic abuse, and the recent evolution of incest/sexual abuse awareness.

Working with Children Exposed to Ritual Abuse

Pamela S. Hudson, LCSW, is a child therapist with a county mental health outpatient department in California and author of the book *Ritual Child Abuse: Discovery, Diagnosis and Treatment*. Ms. Hudson has presented training sessions for professionals on child abuse in the United States, England, and Canada.

Ms. Hudson first began to identify the symptoms of satanic ritual abuse in several children who had been referred to her at a county mental health agency in early 1985. What was to follow was a most frightening phenomenon: throughout the remainder of 1985 and into 1986, twenty-four children, all from the same day-care center, all exhibiting many of the same satanic ritual abuse symptoms, were brought to her by concerned parents. What is even more amazing is that the cases came to her individually, without the parents initially talking among themselves.

Common symptoms seen among these children included phobic reactions about water; extreme anxiety about being alone in bedrooms, going to the bathroom, eating certain types of food. In addition, some children exhibited such behaviors as using needles, pens, and other sharp objects to poke the eyes out of people in magazine photographs. And thirteen of the twenty-four children, many of them under the age of ten, consistently attempted to masturbate and have sex with other children or animals.

Most of the children also were experiencing frequent night terrors, night sweats, and extraordinary anxiety on other levels. For example, eighteen out of the twenty-four felt extreme separation anxiety if the mother was out of sight even for a short time.

Early in her work with the children, Ms. Hudson reported the cases to the county's Children's Protective Services. (The names of the day-care center and the mental health center have been omitted at Ms. Hudson's request, to avoid legal or other re

percussions.)

About six months after Ms. Hudson began working with one girl, the silence finally was broken about the specific nature of the abuse. The girl named a particular supervisor at the daycare center and described this person inserting sticks in her vagina and other orifices—an abuse frequently reported by satanic ritual abuse victims.

Shortly afterward, other children started to talk as well about specific abuses, and Ms. Hudson began to compile corroborative data. Abuses reported included being locked in a cage the perpetrators called a "jail"; being buried in "boxes" (coffins); being told their parents, siblings, and pets would be killed if the

children talked; being held underwater (the genesis of phobic reactions to water); being injected with needles, threatened with guns, defecated and urinated on; being forced to watch animal and human sacrifices. One child reported helping kill a baby, as an adult female perpetrator put her hand over the child's, gripping the knife and forcing it down into the baby.

The children also described being taken off the grounds to other day-care settings, to private homes, even to a cemetery.

As the stories surfaced, the parents started coming together and talking. It was at this stage in the revelations that Ms. Hudson began to work with the parents rather intensively. In these sessions, she allowed parents to vent their grief, their rage, and revenge fantasies of killing the perpetrators. These feelings are normal. Often the emotional devastation

comes so pervasive that that even basic task cleaning, getting the children to school, going to work are disrupted. So part of the therapy emphasizes just maintaining the normal "rhythm" of the family.

Ms. Hudson teaches the parents therapeutic techniques to help with the child's stabilization and recovery. In the case of night terrors, for instance, Ms. Hudson teaches the parents not to discount the dreams, but rather to let the child talk about them and then reassure the child that everything is fine now, and the child is safe.

Parents are taught to help children process anxieties and repressed feelings triggered by everyday occurrences. For example, one of the abused children, with her parents at a fast-food restaurant, looked up to see someone enter the place with a shiny red jacket on. This sight triggered her memory of seeing a perpetrator dressed in a devil's outfit during a ceremony. The anxiety was so overwhelming that she actually crawled under the table to

hide. Instead of the parents responding by telling the child, "It's nothing," or to stop misbehaving, they had been trained to talk to her about what scared her and what this incident was evoking for her from the past. Afterward, they offered the child more reassurance that she was safe now.

Ms. Hudson also asks parents to keep a written record of the child's behavior during the week, as well as any memories of the abuse that are disclosed.

Besides the twenty-four from the particular day-care setting, Ms. Hudson has since worked with twelve more children who reported being abused in the same manner, from another day care center, by members of the extended family, and by neighbors.

Ms. Hudson devised a questionnaire and polled a group of parents involved in litigation cases of purported ritual abuse around the country. She procured names from an organization called Believe the Children. This group was formed by parents involved in the highly publicized McMartin Day Care Center case, and included parents from seven other similar day-care center cases in southern California.

Using her questionnaire, Ms. Hudson did telephone interviews with parents whose children were involved in the McMartin case, and in day-care cases in San Francisco and New Jersey, and in a satanic ritual abuse case in California involving a baby sitter. She

talked also with parents in Texas and Oregon. In all, she interviewed one set of parents from each of ten cases across the country. In the findings, she also included data from the cases she had worked with.

No matter where in the country the abuse had taken place, the children demonstrated many of the same post-traumatic stress symptoms-night terrors, fear of the dark or of being alone, uncontrolled vomiting. All the children in the survey had demonstrable medical indicators of sexual assault. Many reported being photographed during the ceremonies. Of eleven victims, ten reported being threatened with guns and knives, and nine reported watching people killed as part of the ceremonies. (A full report on these findings is included in Pamela Hudson's book, *Ritual Child Abuse*.)

She said that the similarities in these cases across the country are not only alarming but an indication that perpetrators actually follow prescribed rituals that are fairly consistent and

calculated. What's more, she said that the types of torture and mind control reported to her by the children derive from conditioned response techniques reportedly developed for use with political prisoners or prisoners of war. These include sensory deprivation and physical tortures, such as electric shock or drug-induced states.

In recent years, Ms. Hudson has visited England and reports that therapists there also are seeing similar types of ritual abuse symptoms in some of their patients, both children and adults.

As she works with ritually abused children, Ms. Hudson said the disclosures of abuse generally come incrementally. The reports range along a continuum, from what seems most credible to, much later on, what seems least credible. A child might at first report that a day-care worker or baby sitter touched her or his "private parts." Later, children may talk about someone "pooping" on them, then maybe about being tied up, then having to watch an animal being killed, then maybe even a baby.

Sometimes a child talks about being taken away by "aliens." Ms. Hudson said it became apparent to her that perpetrators actually set up stagings for incidents of abuse. Perpetrators dressed as space aliens or cartoon characters, so that later when a child was questioned by a therapist, lawyer, or police officer, the child might say that the abuser was an alien or Mickey Mouse-and the whole story might be dismissed as fabrication. "Some of these people are extremely clever," said Ms. Hudson.

In therapy, Ms. Hudson uses a combination of techniques: psychodynamic therapy (helping parents determine underlying psychological dynamics in their children), role play, behavior modification, play therapy, art therapy, family therapy, and group therapy. She said the art therapy is extremely helpful in bringing up data around the abuse.

"Simply, the children were threatened about talking about the abuse, but not necessarily drawing about the abuse," she said.

Often, Ms. Hudson said, a therapist doesn't need to make concerted efforts to have a child regress to the trauma. As the therapeutic rapport is established, the child often regresses spontaneously. During this regression, a child may go back to the behaviors of the developmental stage when the abuse took place. A five-year-old child beginning to deal with repressed trauma that took place at age two may, for a time, go back to two-year-old behaviors, using baby talk, occasionally wetting or soiling.

Working with ritually abused children, therapists also often encounter multiple personality disorder and need to move the alters through the trauma toward integration, just as with adults (see chapter 17).

During the course of therapy, if the child is now in school, Ms. Hudson consults with the teacher(s) on an ongoing basis. Early in therapy, Ms. Hudson coaches the parents in apologizing to the child. Not that the parent is really at fault in any way, but, according to the young child's perception, he or she was taken by parents each day to a place to be hurt.

"The parents need to apologize to the child, and also continually tell the child they have been tricked too," said Ms. Hudson. "And it has been my experience that, eventually, the child will forgive the parents."

Also early in therapy, the child has extreme fear about being alone, sleeping alone. Ms. Hudson advises that the parents spend as much time as possible with the child, and in the beginning let the child sleep with them as often as he or she wants to.

She adds that it is important for the therapist to try to maintain a presence of calm and confidence that the situation is going to get better. While she realizes that this might seem elementary advice at first, it takes on a whole new meaning as the therapist enters into the maelstrom of disruption the abuse has caused for the child and the family, in the school system, even in the judicial system.

She also recommends that a therapist develop as much peer support, individual and group supervision as possible, in order to stay professionally and personally balanced while dealing with this.

Ms. Hudson agrees with Maggie Irwin's belief that a therapist can't gloss over the spiritual aspects of the abuse and recovery. She said it is common to hear ritually abused children say things like: "I can't go in the bedroom-the devil is there," or "I know the god below wants me to . . ." Ms. Hudson said it is ineffective to simply ignore the underlying references to evil and deal only with behavior modification. Since much of the abuse revolved around "dark side" spiritual abuse and programming, children continually need to be reassured that there is another, "good" spiritual power that is stronger and can protect them.

Maggie Irwin and Pamela Hudson agree that, in working with such abuse victims, therapists need to come to terms about

their own beliefs around the spiritual dynamics of good and evil. Pamela Hudson also recommends that parents do a lot of education with the child around spirituality. In the case of the twenty-four children reporting ritual abuse from the particular day-care center, Ms. Hudson said that, although most of the parents professed some type of religious affiliation, few were actively practicing it. On the therapist's recommendation, most parents became involved again with their churches. They began to learn as much as they could to counter with their respective church's beliefs when a child began talking about a "dark side" philosophy or fear. Children need to be assured over and over that they are inherently good, that what was done to them or what they did to others could not

be helped, Ms. Hudson said.

She added that some of the parents scheduled time to go over a picture book about Jesus with their children-his life, his professed power over satan. Ms. Hudson said that, even in dealing with biblical subjects, the parents had to be careful. She cited Old Testament stories (Abraham about to "sacrifice" Isaac, for instance) or pictures (King Solomon poised with a sword over a baby) that need to be edited out, so they don't trigger a child's fears, and so the child won't connect these in any way with satanism.

As careful as one might be, a scene as seemingly innocent as the baby Jesus lying in a manger might even bring on hysteria for some ritually abused children early in recovery. She encountered reports of children forced to watch as perpetrators killed a baby around Christmas time. Then they forced the children to chant, "Baby Jesus is dead. Baby Jesus is dead."

A major concern for parents, Ms. Hudson said, is what will happen to their children later in life as a result of being exposed to this kind of abuse. Are they more susceptible to being drawn back into a satanic cult? Are they more likely to become perpetrators of physical or sexual abuse? With effective therapy, and good spiritual and family support, these possibilities are measurably diminished. However, Ms. Hudson suggests a long-term study with children now reporting this abuse, in respect to predilection for emotional, physical, and sexual abuse patterns, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicidal tendencies.

Because of the sophistication of the perpetrators in keeping it hidden, Ms. Hudson said she had no way of knowing the extent of this kind of abuse worldwide. However, "Anyone who's had

44

a brush with it [therapists, friends of victims, or law enforcement representatives] can't seem to drop it." As people learn about its insidiousness, the heinous nature of the abuse, the sophistication of the cover-ups, and the possible organizational ties, they "begin to recognize it as a threat similar to the growth of Naziism-and they need to keep telling other people about it."

As for the day-care center case involving the twenty-four children, the District Attorney's office made a decision not to prosecute. A disappointed Ms. Hudson attributes that decision to the lack of physical evidence, the children being perceived as too young and also considered to be too emotionally traumatized for the stories to appear credible to a jury. Other similar cases around the country have gone to litigation.

Her book (see Bibliography, page 264) deals at length with techniques for working with children exposed to ritual abuse.

As a Ritual Abuse Specialist

Holly Hector, MA., specializes in working with satanic cult ritual abuse survivors, and she presents professional seminars on the subject around the country.

She didn't start out to be a ritual abuse counselor, or for that matter, a counselor at all, she explained in an interview. She had gone to Colorado State University to major in business. However, while doing volunteer work for Campus Life Ministries at CSU, she came across several teenagers who were involved in satanism.

"A lot of these kids were from dysfunctional homes, and were just trying to fit in anywhere," she said.

As a college student recognizing the danger of satanic influence on these kids, she began

reading whatever literature was available on satanism, so she would be in a better position to understand and to help.

This experience turned her toward counseling as a profession, and she eventually went on to get a master's degree in counseling psychology from the University of Colorado at Denver.

As part of the master's program, she did an internship at the Menninger Foundation Psychiatric Hospital in Topeka, Kansas, where she worked in the children's wing. By this time she was quite familiar with satanic cult ritual abuse symptomatology. She

said she saw a significant number of children she believed had been abused in just that way.

After graduating, Ms. Hector began specializing in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which afflicts many abuse victims and cult abuse victims in the extreme. During this time, she continued to study and research every aspect of satanic cult dynamics.

"If I had gotten out of school then and billed myself as a, satanic ritual abuse specialist, it would have scared people away," she said.

A short time into her professional career, Ms. Hector began to work with a trauma and dissociative disorders unit at Centennial Peaks Hospital in Louisville, Colorado. Again, a significant number of people being treated at the trauma unit turned out to be ritual abuse victims.

What is excellent about the concept of a trauma unit, she said, is that it is not referred to as a "psych" unit, which often implies-to some people anyway-that a client is somehow "crazy."

»

"In a trauma unit, we are saying, you [the client] are not crazy," she said. "The world around you was crazy."

Ms. Hector has seen more than she has wanted to of the damage and pain cult victims carry with them. She affirms that she is committed to helping these people, no matter what it takes.

In Mental Health Counseling

There are few therapists at this point who specialize in the treatment of satanic ritual abuse victims. However, many therapists now are coming across this kind of abuse occasionally and sporadically in their counseling practice. Ellen Luepker is one of these. Ellen T. Luepker, MSW, is a licensed psychologist and licensed independent clinical social worker in Minneapolis. Like many mental health practitioners across the country who are not specialists in ritual abuse, she has nevertheless confronted the needs of certain clients who demonstrated symptoms of this kind of abuse.

Ms. Luepker has been counseling for over twenty years in child and adult mental health services. Besides her general practice, she also specializes in working with psychotherapists and clergy, dealing with inappropriate sexual misconduct in therapeutic settings. She is co-

author of the book *Psychotherapist Sexual Involvement with Clients: Intervention and Prevention*.

Ms. Luepker is quick to point out that she is not an "expert" on satanic cult ritual abuse. But, as she worked with two particular clients, one an adult, the other a child, on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, the satanic cult abuse issues surfaced.

As she continued to work with these two individuals, she attended seminars on the topic and networked with other therapists who had been working longer with satanic cult ritual abuse victims. She said, basically, that the therapy matched that of work with sexual abuse victims, or victims of other types of physical or emotional abuse where PTSD symptoms had developed.

In general, in the early stages of PTSD work, Ms. Luepker helps the victim begin to make sense of the sensorial memories, and bits and pieces of flashbacks they are having. "That is, I help the client to find words that assist them in organizing the traumatic experience," she says. Later, the therapeutic role progresses to helping the victim go back through the full memories and repressed feelings around incidents of abuse.

Ms. Luepker notes that the process is the same with satanic cult victims, although "it is harder to treat them because the systematic installation of fear regarding talking about the abuse is so insidious and ritualized." She also notes that both clients had come to her initially with extreme and unrelenting anxiety.

Being sensitive to client confidentiality, Ms. Luepker only talks about client memories in a composite fashion. She said the reports included people dressed in dark cloaks often standing in circles, burning candles, being placed in boxes (coffins), drinking urine, or smearing feces, as well as animal killings.

During therapy with cult survivors, another area Ms. Luepker has found integral to address is work with a victim's family, whether a spouse, siblings, or children. They must be educated about the issue, so that they can be as supportive as possible. And they also need emotional support in dealing with the person's mood swings, or perhaps multiplicity. (Multiple personality disorder-MPD-is addressed in chapter 17.)

Ms. Luepker believes cult ritual abuse will continue to come to light more and more in the next few years, accelerated by an increasing awareness in the therapeutic community. And

she draws an analogy with sexual abuse issues.

Ms. Luepker is respected nationally for her work in the area of sexual abuse issues, issues that are now talked about quite openly, and which we have found are frighteningly prevalent in society. However, back in the mid-1970s, Ms. Luepker, like most therapists at that time, knew very little about sexual abuse dynamics, "So I didn't know how to ask about it [with a client]," she said. And consequently, much went undetected.

CHAPTER 5

IT ISN'T 'ONLY ADREAM'

As ritual abuse survivors who haven't yet had or processed the memories move further into therapy and/or Twelve Step recovery, their dreams often become more intense and more macabre.

The human unconscious seems to use dreams like this to begin to prepare the person for later flashbacks to actual events. These dreams are somewhat analogous to preview film clips.

However, in many of these initial dreams, some of the components of the cult abuse may appear in slightly altered form-often because the victim isn't prepared yet to face the reality of *exactly* what happened and *exactly* who was involved.

A satanic ritual abuse victim had been in therapy and codependency recovery about two years when these dreams started to come up for him.

One dream in particular really scared him. And relating it he was somewhat short of breath. The description came haltingly.

He described sitting rather high up in an oval football stadium. (For some reason-he didn't seem to know exactly why-"oval" was significant.) It was night. The stadium was empty, except for-strange-a couple of older people from a neighborhood he had grown up in. He hadn't really even known them that well; they were just neighbors. There was a coffin on the fifty-yard line. Eerily it began to open on its own. A very young girl began to levitate up, then turn toward him. Blood was streaming from her eyes and mouth. "It was like a scene from the worst horror movie you can imagine," he shivered. The dream ended.

Mark eventually was to have flashbacks to being exposed to a satanic cult growing up-one that involved his parents, the neighbors who had appeared in the dream, and others. He recalled being forced to watch the murder/sacrifice of young children.

It is also important to note the feelings that accompanied the dreams-in this case specifically fear. What the unconscious seems to do in this early stage of awareness is to use dreams to evoke feelings that have been repressed. Releasing these feelings is imperative to the recovery process.

Dissociation

During cult ceremonies, in order not to incur the wrath of cult members, and to stay intact psychically, victims often have to dissociate from the actual experience. Dissociation is defined as segregation of any group of mental processes from the rest of the psychic apparatus. Simply put, instead of coming toward an experience to join or associate with it, a victim of trauma, for instance, will move away psychologically. In some of the most extreme case, this "moving away" can mean the development of multiple personalities to deal with wave after wave of new abuses. In other words, this process becomes a defense mechanism against psychological and physical overload. Multiple personality disorder is defined as a condition in which two or more distinct personalities or personality states are an essential feature (*DSM-III-R*). This is further explained in chapter 17.

Again, trauma victims dissociate to numb the feelings registering inside as well. Fear, of course, is one of those feelings. A person who is scared will experience an increase in adrenaline. Fear can be expressed through shortness of breath, "the shakes," talking at an accelerated pace, or just generally appearing to be "freaked out."

Again, however, during a cult ceremony, showing fear is dangerous, so emotions become frozen.

Some ritual abuse survivors experience specific frightening, recurring dreams.

The following is a dream one satanic cult ritual abuse victim reports having had repeatedly since early childhood:

Mary describes being on an elevator going down. Down into a sub-basement. The doors open. There's a room full of children, a few adults. They're all laughing, playing. But there's something wrong. Just ... something. As she moves into the room, a trap door suddenly pops open. Mary tumbles through into another room. In this room, there's fire. There are adults. But these adults look sinister. There is laughter here, but it is coming from demon-like figures near the walls. There are kids here too, but they're not laughing. They're screaming. Mary always wakes with a start right here.

Through the recurrence of this dream over a period of years, Mary's unconscious has attempted to keep a clue to her ritual abuse close to the surface. Mary had no conscious memories of the abuse. And while the particulars of the dreams are different, these recurring dreams are common for some satanic abuse survivors.

Upon analysis, the sub-basement in Mary's dream probably is symbolic of the memories being buried in the unconscious. The laughter and gaiety in the first room is a facade-the facade cult members construct to hide their undercover activities.

The fire is symbolic of hell. The sinister expressions of the adults attest to their extreme dysfunctionalism, and just plain "evilness." The presence of demons in her dream indicates that Mary may have seen some supernatural manifestations of demonic possession during some of the ceremonies and/or demonic stagings. In addition, some of the demon imagery could be symbolic of the heinous nature of the abuse and Mary's unprocessed feelings of shame and anger. (See chapter 20.)

Violence and Symbolism

Satanic ritual abuse survivors' dreams often are violent in nature. They often include dream experiences such as being pursued, shot at, or knifed. During a Twelve Step ritual abuse meeting recently, a member talked about a dream he remembered from a

few weeks back.

He recalled being chased by an army in a canyon. He frantically scrambled along paths, up cliffs, through a river. And still they came, and came, led by-he wasn't sure-but it seemed like some strong, armed dictator "like [Saddam] Hussein, or maybe [Manuel] Noriega. Whoever it was, I sensed he was extremely evil."

At one point he was actually able to turn the tables and kill one of his pursuers. Shortly after that, the dream ended.

This dream was significant on a couple of levels.

For one, this dreamer saw himself "running to freedom." Through his recovery process, he was escaping from the problems the cult had caused in his life, even years later. Also, confronting and killing one of his pursuers could be symbolic of his reaching a stage in his growth process where he has been able to confront other repressed feelings and get closer to actual flashbacks.

Colorado therapist Holly Hector also has heard many cult-related dreams from her clients prior to their having the actual memories. In these dreams, she said, clients talk of being chased, or of having a sense of being watched. They also dream about never being left alone, of their boundaries being constantly invaded by people either physically or emotionally, in school settings, on the street, at home. This perhaps is symbolic of the cult seeming almost omnipresent to the victim.

They also dream about being at family-of-origin gatherings, she said, like picnics or parties, and feeling not at all safe. In fact, they feel extremely scared. This, again, may be the unconscious's way of providing another clue, further preparing the victim for the truth.

"As they get closer to the memories, I've observed that a lot more blood imagery starts to surface in the dreams," the therapist said. "And people will also start dreaming about giant, almost monster-like animals. Dogs, cats, rabbits."

Some of the dreams about giant animals can be symbolic of the huge impact that watching animal (and perhaps human) sacrifice has had on their psyches. Also, Ms. Hector notes, the significance of animals, like dogs, in the dreams, may be related in part to acts of bestiality that a victim may either have had to participate in or watch.

Dreams can be important in any recovery process. They offer insight into the past, clues to how the dreamer was really affected by past events. Sometimes they can be a window into the future, or they provide a gauge as to where someone currently is in the recovery process.

For example, if you're an adult child of an alcoholic in recovery, and you're having dreams in which you're confronting an abusive parent or some other authority figure, this probably is an indication that you're doing just fine in your process. While you may not be actually confronting the person in real life yet, this dream confrontation is symbolic of your progress in going back to confront the truth, the real truth, about your past.

Many therapists agree that whatever happens in dreams is usually symbolic. The situations are symbolic. Oftentimes the people, too, are symbolic.

Unraveling the meaning of dreams requires some thought. It is helpful to run them by a professional therapist, or an experienced Twelve Step sponsor, to gain some insight or at least another perspective. Self-analysis of dreams may be too subjective. That is,

people might read into dreams what they want to hear. Or, if they tend to be overly critical, they might read into dreams what they don't need to hear.

Another misconception about dreams: you'll hear people say something like "Aw, I just dreamed about the monster because I saw one of those B horror flicks before I went to bed last night." Usually, your unconscious doesn't dredge up these images for no reason at all-like, "Hey, let's really freak him out with this monster thing tonight!"

What the unconscious seems to do regularly is pick out images a person is familiar with or perhaps has just seen, as in the case of the movie, and transplants them into a dream to represent something else. Maybe, in this case, the monster signified a compulsion that is rampant in the person's life. Or it is symbolic of the overblown stature this person has allowed an authority figure to take on in his or her life. Or perhaps the monster is representative of something out of the person's past, as Ms. Hector explained.

Recording Dreams

For many, it is important to write down the dream right after waking up. Dreams are recorded in the brain's short-term memory bank, and the simple act of writing them down can transfer them to long-term memory-much the same as taking notes in class helps you recall.

Usually it is not essential to write everything down-just note the main scenes. The rest seems to come back when you need to draw on it.

I advise my counseling clients to keep a notebook and pen somewhere near the bed. And if for some reason they are having problems remembering their dreams, I have them repeat to themselves a number of times just before going to sleep, "I will remember my dreams ..."

I know that sounds simple, but it usually works.

CHAPTER 6

OTHER CLUES

In systematically exploring areas of a counseling client's life, therapists find that a distinct mosaic starts to appear. And while each person is unique, granted, similar character patterns start to emerge among people who are, say, chemically dependent, or codependent, or, for that matter, ritually abused.

Colors and Themes in Art Therapy

While doing art therapy with a specific client, a therapist may begin to notice that the two dominant colors used in many of the drawings are red and black. These colors seem to stand out in almost every drawing. Red trees, red grass, red clothes, black clothes, black birds, black horses, black clouds.

This is a common phenomenon among satanic cult ritual abuse survivors.

These two colors are most dominant in satanic cult ceremonies. The black represents the robes. The red represents blood.

It is as if the unconscious is working hard to keep the reality of the abuse as close to the surface as possible, as in the recurring dreams. On another level, it is almost as if the unconscious is trying to purge some of the residuals of the abuse by calling for these colors over and over.

One satanic cult survivor was an artist. In his work, he combined the abstract with realism. Many of his works were centered in or were accented by multicolored squiggly lines. They were so prominent they became almost a trademark, a signature of sorts.

Several years into codependency recovery and therapy, this artist started to have satanic cult ritual abuse memories. Among these, he recalled several times as a child being locked in a small cage during the ceremonies--a cage teeming with snakes.

Understandably, this type of torture, also reported by other cult survivors, instills massive amounts of fear and makes the child much more malleable, willing to perform certain acts during the ceremonies without rebelling.

Throughout these years, the artist's unconscious was keeping the memories of the snakes close to the surface through his art, and again, on another level, his painting served as a partial purging process.

(However, I believe-and many other therapists agree that the only way for survivors like this man to experience recovery fully is to go back to confront the memories and uncover the painful, repressed feelings.)

Other themes that sometimes appear in cult victims' drawings, even before the memories surface, are depictions of extreme violence and evil, supernatural imagery.

For instance, one survivor who was well into codependency recovery believed that the most extreme form of abuse he was exposed to growing up was neglect. Yet, as his anger surfaced during the recovery process, he began to draw graphic depictions of his mother or father standing over him as a

young boy, with a hatchet or knife buried in his head or back. Blood was splattered all over. (Typically, the drawings were all done primarily in red and black.)

When his therapist pushed a bit, expressing the belief, based on the violent images in the drawings, that there might be more in his past than neglect, he became extremely defensive.

"It's parental neglect that *kills*," he said adamantly. "*It all but destroyed me! What more do you want?*"

Sometime during the following year this survivor began having satanic ritual abuse memories. At the time when he had first been confronted about the possibility

of other abuse, the cult

programming kicked in, triggering his extreme defensiveness.

One of my clients, who demonstrated many of the satanic ritual abuse symptoms but hadn't yet found the memories, would draw swirling circular masses around the outside edges of all his pictures, with guns and knives jutting out from every angle. All were aimed at a child positioned in the center of the picture, often curled in a fetal position.

The child was always proportionately very small. This "smallness" is common among survivors' drawings, indicative of low self-esteem, as well as the overwhelming feeling of powerlessness while the abuse was going on.

This client early in his recovery saw the swirls as merely symbolic of the maelstrom of abusive authority figures around him as a child-parents, teachers, neighbors. And the knives and guns? Well, they again symbolized the verbal and emotional abuse aimed at him during this time.

On one level, that was probably all true.

However, as he continues his recovery process, it is my professional belief, based on similar stories, that he will also find that the swirls are reminiscent of cult circles. And the guns and knives also may be just what they appear to be: guns and knives.

Several years ago the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* ran a series of articles on people across the country beginning to report satanic cult ritual abuse. The following are a couple of excerpts:

"A patient will recount stories of satanic rituals in which she saw babies stabbed to death and eaten. Often, the woman will say that she too participated in human sacrifice, and killed her own children."

"In Los Angeles, 3-year-old children tell a doctor they know how to cut up people, accurately identifying the areas of the body where a knife can and cannot penetrate, and offer descriptions of what internal organs look like when they are exposed."

Addictions/Compulsions

As mentioned earlier, a percentage of cult survivors will use alcohol or other drugs excessively as an escape, to medicate pain, to get over fear.

Likewise, other ritual abuse survivors will use overeating, overworking, excessive sexual activity, or compulsive gambling for the same purposes. As these compulsions may block the recovery process, it is integral to the process that the victims be working some type of recovery program around these issues in

tandem with working on the deeper issues of ritual abuse with an experienced therapist.

Within this context, for example, many satanic cult victims seem to be plagued by compulsive indebtedness. There are a number of reasons for this.

For one, growing up in such acute dysfunction, a child's

adrenal glands will constantly be pumping-so much so that vic

tims may actually become physically addicted to the adrenaline and emotionally addicted to the frenetic feelings that go with it.

Satanic abuse victims have a difficult time feeling calm and will unconsciously create situations to keep their adrenal glands pumping-whether that's getting involved in a dysfunctional relationship or a high-stress work environment, or continually creating debt

situations to worry over.

Another angle is that satanic cult victims sometimes become compulsive paupers, remaining underemployed, doing without, or becoming overly frugal.

Because of the abuse, victims were made to feel worthless, and later in life this can lead them into abusive relationships, or the unconscious belief that they don't deserve financial prosperity.

Debtors Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous are examples of Twelve Step

groups that deal with these other issues.

Slow Very Slow Realization of Cult Experiences

Again, many cult victims are in therapy and/or Twelve Step recovery for their own addictions, or for codependency or as adult children of alcoholics, usually for years before the cult memories start to surface.

However, if a therapist starts to suspect ritual abuse, based on some of the symptomatology being displayed, it is advisable, in as nonthreatening a way as possible, to start to move the client toward acceptance-much the same as you would start gradually to move a suspected incest victim, who hasn't had the memories yet, toward the realization of the incest.

It is important to note here that this process must be very cautious and measured at first because of the extreme secrecy of the messages a cult victim carries. Approaching the idea of ritual abuse too blatantly, or too early, can cause the client to become frightened and back out of therapy.

Ritual abuse recovery is still so new and professionals are still learning, and no matter how cautious a therapist may be, some clients are going to get scared and drop out. That's just the nature of this work. Personally, I just pray they come back or find other help.

An advisable approach for a suspected ritual abuse survivor would be to first explore, over time, some of the ritual abuse characteristics in a generalized fashion.

For instance, if the subject of family violence comes up during a session with such a client, after some processing about the specific issue, the topic could be taken to a more generalized form.

Sensitivity to Violence on the Screen

Another indicator of traumatic abuse is how the person reacts, say, to graphic violence in TV shows or movies? How does he or she react to plots that contain evil supernatural phenomena? Does the reaction go beyond fear and revulsion to actual panic? Can the person watch them at all?

Fears

How does the person react around authority? Is there some fear? A lot of fear? Does the person become nearly paralyzed with fear? Does the person have any phobias? What are they?

The Need to Regain Personal Power

Some survivors identify with the perpetrators. They sometimes remain in the cult and become perpetrators themselves, getting caught up in the same addictive practices as their perpetrators inflicting sexual abuse and pain. Others, while they don't continue with the cult, later become perpetrators of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in other areas of their lives.

This is a fairly common psychological reaction to victimization. If someone victimizes you over and over, and you won't, or can't, fight back, this erodes your personal power in all areas of your life. If you don't, at some point, get into a recovery process to work this out, often you will unconsciously turn around and victimize someone else, in order to try to reestablish some sense of personal power and keep your own emotional equilibrium.

Victimization of this kind can set up a domino effect. As an example, while growing up, Dad was beaten and yelled at by his alcoholic father. It wasn't safe for him to fight back, so he took the abuse and collected years of repressed feelings. To make matters worse, as an adult Dad also takes a lot of abuse from his boss, and he doesn't fight back here either. Internally, Dad's not feeling good about himself. His self-esteem is extremely low. However, Dad is not afraid of his kids. And so, when Billy screws up or Mary comes home with a low grade, Dad blows up. He rants, yells, beats the kids. What Dad is doing is venting his repressed anger about his own abuse on his kids.

The sad thing here is, this actually works to a degree. While it doesn't in any way fix Dad's internalized lack of self-esteem resulting from his upbringing, it does give him some sense of power, no matter how distorted, and it does give him an outlet for some of his repressed anger.

If some of the anger isn't vented, eventually it can turn into depression, paranoia, destructive compulsions, and any number of other emotional complications.

Since cult victims are often drained of personal power, some, when they are offered a chance later to seize some power back, will take the opportunity, either consciously or unconsciously.

As a youth, another cult survivor from Ohio tortured and killed cats for several years. He had been helpless to do anything about the torture or killing during the cult ceremonies. So he unconsciously turned to victimizing something weaker than himself in order to try and reestablish his own power.

In another case, it was a pattern for a gay, sex-addicted individual just getting into recovery in Los Angeles to act out sexually on a consistent basis with a number of different partners. The specific sexual acts, for the most part, were considered somewhat traditional within the context of gay culture. However, a new partner had expressed that he was into S and M (sadomasochism) and wanted to play the passive role.

"It got really scary for me," he recounted. "At first it was sort of like this bizarre, strained theater. Then something took over inside me, and I really started getting into it-to the point where I started to get scared."

He described hitting really hard, being extremely verbally degrading, not wanting to stop. "And I can't seem to get it out of my mind, and I keep thinking about when we're going to do it again. It's just not like me," he said, puzzled.

While this man had been in a victim mode most of his life (he demonstrated many satanic

abuse symptoms), this incident illustrated the strong, unconscious need to try to seize some power back and somehow gain mastery over the trauma that had all but destroyed him as a child. In much the same way, a person who has been damaged by an abusive parent while growing up may unconsciously seek someone with a similar personality in a relationship, so that he or she can somehow gain power over that abusive personality this time-and finally be psychologically free. It's a phenomenon known in psychiatric circles as "repetition compulsion." And I have never known it to work.

I believe that, as time goes on, we will find that more and more people who are engaging in sadomasochistic practices were ritually abused as children.

Humans have a natural aversion to pain. And most of the time when people start to feel pain, as quickly as possible they try to stop whatever's happening that's causing the pain (unless, for example, an athlete has his eye on breaking a record).

If I have come from a healthy, nurturing family, unless there's been some outside trauma, this is simply how I'm going to react. I'll take my hand off the hot stove, so to speak.

However, if I have been brought up in a setting where I've sometimes been sexually abused or physically tortured by parents, neighbors, or others from whom I am, by the natural order of things, supposed to feel love, my perspective is distorted. I begin to equate pain with love. So I become unconsciously accustomed to, even drawn to, physical pain-just as some codependents are drawn to emotional pain.

Self-abusive Behavior

Another ritual abuse victim characteristic is preoccupation with--or actual-self-mutilation, without sexual overtones.

As a teenager, Mary, a satanic cult survivor from Massachusetts, would regularly lock herself in the bathroom and cut up her arms with a razor blade-not deeply, and not the wrists.

This self-abusive behavior, quite typical of some cult survivors, can be explained on a number of different levels. Mary often felt neglected, and this act of cutting herself would elicit attention, as did the cuttings for children being tortured during the cult ceremonies. (One of the torture tactics was, as everyone present watched, to trace cult symbols with a knife on the skin of cult members' children to evoke fear as part of the brainwashing. They would trace only lightly on the children's skin to avoid leaving marks that teachers or other authorities could identify.) For Mary, even though the razor-blade incidents often elicited negative attention, it was attention.

On another level, as I've mentioned earlier, cult victims, because of the abuse, have no feeling of specialness or importance, as other children do. Instead, internally they feel unloved and worthless, perhaps even that they are the cause of some of the abuse. (I say "internally" because, in order to survive, people who have been severely abused many times develop a false ego state and sometimes have no idea that their real self-esteem is so weak.)

Because of feeling unloved and worthless inside, when cult survivors act out anger, instead of venting it on others, they often take it out on themselves. Besides cutting themselves, they will sometimes burn themselves, hit themselves repeatedly, attempt suicide. Or they will choose subtle forms of suicide: smoking; not practicing safe sex or abstinence; drug use; driving dangerously.

Also again, victims are often programmed to self-destruct in some way if they should ever get close to the memories.

Perhaps a more obscure reason for Mary's cutting ritual was that, even though the cuts were primarily surface passes, they did draw blood. And many cult victims cut themselves, pick at themselves, or bite themselves, in order to draw blood. From being consistently exposed to dysfunctionality and evil, many survivors unconsciously believe the "evil" has actually gotten inside their systems. Also unconsciously, they try to "bleed it out," in much the same way as in the once-common practice of bloodletting to cure disease. In the book *People of the Lie*, author Scott Peck, M.D., talks about this phenomenon.

Sexual Problems

Another area to explore, also in as nonthreatening a way as possible, is a suspected cult victim's sexual practices and fantasies.

Because of the traumatic forms of sexual abuse by cult members and exposure to adult orgies, victims exhibit certain psychological effects.

For example, as mentioned earlier, many cult victims are drawn to mild or not-so-mild forms of sadomasochistic practices later in life.

An article published in the *Child Abuse and Neglect Journal*, "Patients Reporting Ritual Abuse in Their Backgrounds," Vol. 15:3, spring 1991, cites a case study of thirty-seven patients, in several clinical settings, reporting ritual abuse in their childhoods. The study indicated that 100 percent of these patients reported experiencing sexual abuse during the ceremonies, and 86 percent reported that they now experience various forms of "sexualization of sadistic impulses."

Some cult survivors will take on the passive (slave) role in sadomasochistic (S and M) encounters, allowing their partner(s) to degrade them, humiliate them, and inflict physical pain on them during sexual acts.

One cult victim now involved in ritual abuse Twelve Step meetings talked about not being able to be aroused sexually at all unless she was cast in the slave role, or was fantasizing about it. She was specifically aroused by being tied up, hit, and screamed at degradingly—all related to the abuse she experienced from cult members while growing up.

This same person had been date-raped several years before getting into recovery. Sadly, it actually required a couple of months and several reality checks with other people in her Twelve Step group for her to realize she actually had been raped.

Some ritual abuse victims have difficulty becoming sexually aroused unless there are pronounced elements of "kink," even devoid of S and M. This is primarily attributable to having witnessed cult orgies, and the bizarre sexual acting out they saw from cult members. Survivors, later in life, may also act out in a variety of ways.

One cult victim from Florida, now in recovery, was an exotic dancer for years. Her choice of profession had very little to do with money, she says. She would, in essence,

get a "high" from
OTHER CLUES

the attention. And the exhibitionism carried over into all areas of her life: outrageous, see-through outfits, exaggerated makeup, acting zany in public, sexual promiscuity. All of her behavior was highly attention-seeking.

In watching the cult orgies, she had concluded that there was a premium on nudity, which accounted for her exhibitionist tendencies. And she also noticed that the more you acted out sexually, the more attention you were shown. This was the only experience she had to equate love with. Sexual promiscuity never filled the internal void, but it was all she knew before recovery, so she kept seeking sex in an addictive cycle that was taking her nowhere.

Holly Hector relates that a good percentage of her satanic cult survivor clients demonstrate sexual promiscuity/acting out in many different areas. Again, there is an unconscious attraction to this activity because of what they were exposed to growing up. Some survivors are drawn to orgies or hard-core pornography (including child pornography). During the ceremonies, it is reported that children are sometimes photographed in sexual positions, and some of the pictures are sold to pedophiles. Still other survivors go in an opposite direction. They become shut down sexually. They experience problems with impotency, frigidity, and premature ejaculation (to get the act over with as soon as possible). Because the abuses were so toxic, the acts so reprehensible, some have a hard time consciously or unconsciously equating a sexual act with any sort of pleasure. Even if they don't have a physiological sexual problem, some of these survivors will downplay their sexuality by wearing loose-fitting clothes, no makeup, and no cologne, and avoiding dating as much as possible. Engaged in some form of sex, these ritual abuse survivors must maintain almost total control over the situation to feel safe.

Body Memories

Body memories may surface in early, as well as in later, phases of recovery for ritual abuse survivors. They are often precursors to flashbacks and are sometimes unconscious cues, set up through the cult's conditioning processes, to try to keep the victim from remembering.

As she got closer to her own satanic cult flashbacks, a woman from Ohio talked of waking up at 2 or 3 A.M. some nights with what could best be described as a prickling, burning sensation along a stretch of her right shoulder. Again, this is often the time of night the ceremonies are held.

There were no physical marks on her shoulder, she said. But the sensation and the pain were very real, and would last anywhere from twenty minutes to two hours.

Although there were many obstacles, and she had a lot of fear, the woman stayed in recovery, and the cult flashbacks finally started to come. Among them was one memory that put this physical sensation into perspective.

During one of the ceremonies, this woman, who was six years old at the time, was forced to watch a baby being sacrificed with a knife. After the stabbing, one of the cult members took the same knife, pulled her shirt back from her shoulder, and lightly ran the edge of

the knife along her shoulder blade to her throat.

The message was clear: If you talk, you will die like the baby. And, as she got closer to the memories in recovery, this old warning started to kick in.

A body memory came in another form for another cult victim. During the ceremonies, he had been sexually abused by cult members who poked stick-like objects in his ears, mouth, anus. (Besides these stick-like objects, survivors have also reported that cult members would push small snakes in the victims' mouths or vaginas.)

Just a few months prior to his first cult flashbacks, this victim was startled out of sleep with the sensation of something being rammed up his rectum, although there was nothing there. "The sensation was so real and startling, I could have sworn someone was standing right there ramming something into me," he said. "And there was enough physical pain that the sensation stayed with me several hours."

Memories also can somatize, taking the form of visible rashes, flaring up at the spot on the body where a victim was at one time cut or burned. Sometimes it is reported that the rashes actually take the form of satanic symbols that were traced on the victim's skin during the ceremonies: 666's, pentagrams, upsidedown crosses, and any number of other symbols.

Dr. Marita Jane Keeling has seen a number of these rashes spontaneously appear on her satanic cult ritual abuse clients over the years.

For example, a rash in the form of an upside-down cross

OTHER CLUES

appeared recently on the back of one of her ritual abuse clients.

She said that no one at this point knows the exact process that causes such a physiological phenomenon. But she hypothesizes it's some sort of "conversion reaction," somewhat similar to that which can be induced in a deep trance state.

For instance, someone under deep hypnosis can be given the suggestion that a part of the body is burning, and sometimes a rash will appear in the designated body area. "This is a fairly well documented occurrence," said Dr. Keeling.

Likewise, if a cult victim has been burned or cut as a past warning about not talking, it seems that in some of these cases this early programming can actually be activated in the form of body memories years later.

Counseling ritual abuse clients is not as simple as asking a few questions: "So, do you participate in any bizarre sexual practices? Do you have any strange rashes? Or do you ever cut yourself, or think about cutting yourself?"

These subjects need to be approached delicately, with the client maintaining most of the control and timing on the selfdisclosure. Another aspect of this, however, is that many ritual abuse victims have very weak boundaries, because their boundaries had been so thoroughly invaded as they were growing up. And sometimes information about sexual practices and selfabuse is volunteered, often at length, in the first couple of counseling sessions, or even over the first cup of coffee with a person they have just met in a Twelve Step group.

The following lists were developed by Holly Hector, MA., for use in her practice as a therapist. They provide possible further clues to a client's background of ritual abuse.

SYMPTOMS AND OTHER INDICATORS OF RITUAL ABUSE

Holly Hector, M.A.

- Sleep disorders: insomnia, fear of falling asleep, inability to stay asleep, regularly wake at certain times of night, nightmares, night terrors
- High pain tolerance:
painless childbirth, unaware of injury to self
- Seizures/epilepsy with or without organic evidence
- Liver malfunctions
- Adrenal gland malfunctions
- Digestive tract disorders
- Genito-urinary problems
- Chronic bladder/kidney infections
- Frequent skin irritations, disorders
- Headaches/migraines
- Asthma
- Overweight
- Gynecological maladies and symptoms:
- vaginal/penile/rectal scarring
- frequent, persistent vaginal discharge
- urinary tract infections/diseases
- sexually transmitted diseases
- uterus is sterilized/scarred/absent
- Unusual scars (shape, location, design) various places on body
- Exaggerated reactions to particular olfactory stimuli:
the smell of blood, urine/feces, alcohol, formaldehyde, burning hair, smoke from fire, incense
- Significant pain/numbing/psychic paralysis in different parts of body
- Exaggerated startle response: loud noises, surprises

OTHER CLUES

- Easily triggered into "fight or flight" syndrome
- Hypervigilance
- Panic attacks
- Allergies
- Missing digits (fingers, toes)
- Chronic pain

BEHAVIOR INDICATORS OF RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

Holly Hector, M.A.

- Seeks out any form of pain
- Noticeable aversion to drinking water (prefers coffee, pop, juice)
- Extreme fluctuation in behavior and skills

- Self-mutilation/self-destructive behavior:
- cutting skin
- burning skin
- hitting self with fists/objects
- head banging
- history of driving vehicle at high speeds or in dangerous manner
- placing self in physically dangerous locations
- seeking out physically abusive relationships (conscious or unconscious)
- Artwork/poetry has themes of death, pain, occultism
- Suicidality:
- long-standing history of suicide attempts
- obsessive thinking about or planning of suicide
- Speaking in unknown languages
- Chemical dependency:
- alcohol
- other drugs, illegal or prescription
- Eating disorders:
- anorexia
- bulimia
- bulimarexia
- compulsive overeating
- Extreme mood swings
- Speaking indifferent voices-extreme intonation changes

70

■ Draws or "doodles" occult/satanic symbols

- Often fascinated by or drawn to aspects of:
- the supernatural
- the paranormal
- psychic phenomena
- Multiple psychiatric hospitalizations with minimal alleviation of symptoms
- Amnesiac periods/fugue states [a pathological condition: one is apparently conscious of his/her actions but has no recollection of them after returning to a normal state]:
- childhood amnesia
- loss of time, identity
- Easily induced into a trance state
- Fear of being photographed/videotaped
- "Fires" or switches therapists frequently
- Avoids or seeks out physical contact
- Sexual dysfunctions:
- hypersexuality
- sexual perversion
- bestiality
- sadomasochism

- frigidity
- Frequent unexplained crying or laughing
- Frequent regressive behavior
- Strong negative responses to certain holidays
- Fear of one's birthday
- Compulsive washing of body/genitals
- Sense of panic when one becomes the focus of attention
- Bedwetting (as child or adult)
- Strong reaction to circles, even discomfort when sitting in group formed in a circle

OTHER CLUES

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS OF RITUAL ABUSE

Holly Hector, M.A.

- Fear of talking to therapist, authority figures
- Extreme reaction to animals killed on roadways
- Frequent diagnostic labels:
- multiple personality disorder
- dissociative disorder
- paranoid schizophrenic
- borderline personality disorder
- manic/depression, bipolar
- psychotic disorder
- addictive disorders
- depersonalization disorder
- psychogenic amnesia
- psychogenic fugue
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- Frequently labeled "malingerer," "liar," "hypochondriac," "imaginative," as a child
- Occult obsession/revulsion:
- drawn to or repulsed by occult themes, books, art, concepts
- Imagined taste of blood in mouth
- Extreme claustrophobia
- Pervasive sense of impending doom
- Convinced they are "possessed," "evil"
- Belief that they are controlled by something/someone outside themselves
- Imaginary friends/playmates as a child or adult
- Unexplained loss of time-hours, days, more
- Intense paranoia/dreams of family being hurt/killed
- Auditory/visual hallucinations
- Sense of surrealism, unreality
- Feeling that they could belong to satan

OTHER CLUES

■ Black and white thinking

- Sense of being "dead"
- Contempt/rage at God, Jesus Christ, Christianity
- Different styles of handwriting
- Exaggerated trust issues
- Flat or blunted affect
- Claims of being "haunted," seeing spirits
- Acquired items they cannot account for (clothes, books, jewelry, toys, etc.)
- Use of "we" rather than "I" in referring to self
- Unusual fears/phobias
- Denial of behavior witnessed by others
- Sudden shifts into unusual behavior
- Conversion symptoms, hypochondriasis
- Numerous diagnostic labels
- Hearing voices/chanting inside or outside of body:
 - voices often urge/demand self-mutilation or suicide
- Belief that they are "crazy"
- Belief [that they are] always being watched or followed
- Depression
- General sense of terror
- Repressed tears or repressed screaming
- Perpetual fear of abandonment
- Belief that they will be institutionalized for the rest of their lives

RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS' OBSESSIONS/REPULSIONS

Holly Hector, M.A.

Survivors may be either obsessed or repulsed by the following:

- Death
- Dead humans/animals
- Costumes/masks
- Fire
- Violent, bloody films/books
- Mutilation (self/others)
- Telephone
- Certain colors (red, white, black)
- Raw meat
- Blood
- Feces/urine
- Satan/demons
- Knives, blades, sharp objects
- Menstruation
- Bestiality

- Pornography
- The supernatural realm
- Occult themes

OTHER CLUES

POSSIBLE FEARS AND PHOBIAS OF RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS

Holly Hector, M.A.

- Christian symbols/artifacts:
 - P „crosses
 - Bibles
 - altars
 - robes
 - chalices
 - Churches
- Authority figures:
 - lawyers
 - law enforcement personnel
 - doctors
 - judges
 - teachers
 - therapists
- Incarceration/imprisonment/confinement
- Hospitals
- Medications
- Any type of surgery
- Bones
- Needles
- Blood
- Feces/urine
- Certain symbols/designs (often occult)
- Coffins, trunks, boxes, cages
- Cemeteries
- Ropes, chains, wires
- Water
- Raw meat
- Crying babies
- Pregnancy
- Pits/holes
- Certain letter/number configurations
- Certain animals:
 - goats
 - cows
 - pigs
 - rabbits
 - cats

- dogs
- birds
- rats
- snakes
- spiders
- Camera/video equipment
- Being photographed
- Electrical stimuli
- Hypnosis, relaxation techniques
- Mirrors
- Receiving mail, phone calls
- Particular colors (red, black, white)

CHAPTER 7

MIND CONTROL

Many cult members are highly sophisticated in the art of mind control and torture. As mentioned earlier, it is important to stay measured and cautious while exploring the possibility of cult abuse in someone's background, whether you're a therapist or a friend. If you get to the core of the problem too fast, and the person doesn't have a strong support network, as, for instance, a number of friends in Twelve Step self-help, you risk losing that person because of cult programming.

Even if the person has telling dreams, and other symptoms are coming to the surface as well, this doesn't mean she or he is ready yet to face the possibility, let alone the reality, of satanic cult abuse.

An example of the satanic cult programming came up in a conversation I had recently with a therapist in Ohio. He is working with a client struggling with satanic cult flashbacks from her childhood.

One of the client's memories was that, as a child of four, during one of the ceremonies, a small incision was made in her stomach. Then one of the cult members told the girl they were placing an eye—that's right, an eye-of another cult member in her stomach.

That eye, they told her, would watch her the rest of her life, would know her every move. And if she should ever talk about the cult in any way, she would be found and killed by the cult.

Certainly, the story about implanting the eye may sound ludicrous to an adult, but to a child of four, it's all very real-and threatening. And a message like that, recorded in the unconscious, doesn't reverse on its own.

As a mild analogy: Do you remember as a child your parents telling you something that was out of their parental "universal truth" file? You know, a collection of statements that aren't based in reality, but are imparted to you as truth, with all-toodead-serious inflections. One day, when I was about six years old, I spilled some salt. My mother solemnly and oh-so-authoritatively said, "You know, whenever someone spills salt, it's an omen they are destined to get into some type of fight or argument during that day." Now how inane is that, right? Yet to this day, every time I spill salt, guess what my first thought is?

So magnify that about a hundred times and you can imagine what was going on in this cult victim's unconscious anytime she came close to having the memories, not to mention having to talk about them-even in the confidential setting of a therapist's office.

What's more, when someone is being threatened with death by people they've watched actually kill, the threat hardly seems idle.

To take this a step further, many survivors report that they were forced sometimes to participate in the murders. Knives, for instance, were placed in young children's hands, then a cult member's overlapping hand would help push the knife down into the victim. This makes the youth feel like an accomplice, and if you're a child, you believe you are an accomplice. This tactic further ensures silence, as well as helps to block the memories. A woman who grew up in Indiana was exposed to a satanic cult. Her mother was the high priestess, and the girl was being trained to take over that role. Initially, when the girl was a young child, her mother would wake her and they would practice carving into frozen and thawed chickens and turkeys at two or three in the morning.

Later, she would be forced to help kill animals as part of the ceremonies. And also in her youth, finally, she reports having had to help kill two humans, again, as part of the ceremonies. This woman was in therapy almost three years before any memories of the cult started to surface.

According to the Child Abuse and Neglect Journal article mentioned earlier, out of the thirty-seven patients reporting cult ritual abuse in that particular study, thirty-one reported witnessing and being forced to participate in human adult and infant sacrifice.

In 1988, the Los Angeles County Commission for Women established a task force to deal specifically with ritual abuse. The task force includes lawyers, therapists, law enforcement people, social service workers, victims, and family and friends of victims. In one section of a Ritual Abuse pamphlet they've published, they list some of the types of threats and brainwashing they've heard reported by victims. The following are a few ex

cerpts:

Threats of punishment, torture, mutilation, or death of the victim, the victim's family, or pets.

Victims are told it is futile to disclose because "no one will believe you."

Children are threatened with the parents perhaps no longer wanting them, and that the cult will become the child's new family.

Victims are sworn to secrecy, again, under the penalty of death. They are subjected to mind control regarding how to harm themselves, or even commit suicide, rather than to remember or disclose cult activities.

The Danger of Suicide

The latter point about suicide is another reason to approach the subject of ritual abuse carefully, and to make sure the person has some support in place.

Cult victims in a recovery process sometimes do begin to be suicidal as they are approaching the memories.

Just prior to having cult-related dreams and initial flashbacks, a cult victim from Akron, Ohio, made three serious attempts at suicide.

Because the cult programming is so ingrained, it's important for therapists and friends to establish suicide contracts with a person who is in any way threatening to take her or his life, or even just mentioning it in passing. The contract should be a written statement, signed by the person, agreeing to call the other party, or an alternate, before making an attempt at suicide.

Although no such technique can in any way be guaranteed to prevent a suicide, in many cases this has worked. And what is more, when someone takes the time to create the contract, the person often really feels cared about. ("I must matter at least to someone.") Sometimes just feeling cared for is enough to avert the suicide.

Another factor to be considered if the person has multiple personality disorder is that the "lost" person might not be suicidal, but one or several of the alter personalities may be. (This will be explained further in chapter 17.)

If you have a serious concern that someone, anyone, is suicidal, and you cannot intervene directly, or feel incapable of intervening, contact your community mental health agency immediately. They can connect the person with professionals specifically trained in suicide intervention.

Bringing up the Topic of Ritual Abuse

The following is a firsthand example of what can happen in broaching the subject of ritual abuse too early with a client.

Jean had been in therapy with me approximately a year, and with another therapist for about nine months prior to that. She also had been going to Twelve Step meetings for adult children of alcoholics and other dysfunctional families for about three years.

As more was revealed about her lifestyle and character patterns during the sessions, I became increasingly convinced that Jean might be a satanic cult ritual abuse survivor.

Even though Jean was in a supervisory capacity at work (she was a counselor) and made fairly good money, she would compulsively spend it on eating out or buying expensive gifts for people. As for providing for herself, she had virtually no furniture in her apartment. She slept on a mattress on the floor, and she had three or four outfits, at most (an example of the compulsive pauper syndrome mentioned earlier).

This again was indicative of how little self-regard she had, which also indicated some type of pronounced trauma in her past.

She was also extremely passive, compulsive about sex and work, and couldn't seem to keep a long-term relationship. In addition, she was starting to have dreams with cult themes, like being chased, or being drugged, but there wasn't, as yet, any overt satanic symbolism.

In putting all this data together, I decided to bring up the subject of satanic ritual abuse as subtly as possible.

Jean had mentioned something about violence in her family while she was growing up, and later in the session I made an allusion to another type of "violence" I had been reading about that had really shocked me. I asked her if she had ever heard anything about satanic cult ritual abuse.

Just as I got the words satanic ritual abuse out, Jean's eyes shot wide open. She started to hyperventilate and was literally frozen in panic in the chair.

It took a couple of minutes to talk her back into a semicalm state. Then we explored what had happened.

Yes, she said, she had heard of it. In fact, there had been a training session recently on it at the place where she worked. However, even though she had panicked at the mention of satanic ritual abuse, she denied it in her own case; there was no way it could be in her background-no way.

Her father and mother went to church. Her father worked hard. They had raised three children. Sure, the parents were somewhat dysfunctional, but "Come on!" she said. "Ritual abuse?"

At that, I almost let it go for the time being. But, just before the session ended, I said, "Jean ... being a counselor yourself, you know that when something happens, like what happened today, there usually is some significance, even if there is no conscious awareness of it yet. So I'll say nothing more other than to hope you stay open to anything."

If I had just left it there, even that would have probably been all right. But, no. I brought it up a bit in the next session, and in the session after that, each time explaining more about the general dynamics of these cults, and exploring whether any more feelings or awareness had come up between sessions.

Jean started to miss appointments sporadically. Then, she called, saying she needed to take some time off from therapy, even though we had been progressing extremely well with her codependency issues, as she had noted several times during the year.

Then Jean called one day, saying thanks, but it was time for her to move on to another therapist. She had some issue or other-I can't even remember what it was now-that she thought BREAKING THE CIRCLE

MIND CONTROL

this other therapist would be better at dealing with.

That would have been fine, if that had been the real reason. But I felt sure it wasn't. And I also knew, in this case, I had not used the best judgment in pushing her toward something she was not yet ready to deal with.

All I can do in Jean's case now is pray that when she is ready to face whatever caused the panic in her that day, God will put the right people in her path.

Crossover Ritual Abuse and the "Marionette Syndrome"

Some therapists are beginning to see in their ritual abuse patients an alarming indication that some may have been abused by a combination of techniques inherent in more than one destructive cult or group, and that some of this abuse apparently is intended to turn people psychologically and physiologically into "puppets" for the group.

A certified therapist in the Midwest, who requested anonymity for safety reasons, said that some clients who had memories of being abused during cult religious ceremonies also had memories of being abused in laboratory-like settings. This laboratory abuse is seen as being "experimental."

This therapist, who regularly presents seminars on ritual abuse, said survivors have remembered being hooked to electrodes and administered a series of shocks in, for instance, an apparent attempt to curb their "affect"-to make them emotionally numb or

robotic.

The electroshock techniques recalled by survivors also indicate that some are designed to set up muscle reactions as a response to cues. That is, if a person is cued psychologically, or even physically within the limits of an electromagnetic field, certain facial expressions or arm movements, for example, may be activated.

In conjunction with these techniques, some survivors remember being trained relentlessly to be more assertive or aggressive.

The therapist said she believes these techniques to be characteristic of some ethnic/religious "supremacy" groups or other special-focus groups. She also believes that the experimen

tal nature of this abuse may indicate that some groups actually have been attempting to program "special" people, as was the documented intent of human experiments carried out by Nazi doctors during World War II.

The phenomenon of certain survivors having memories both of ceremonial ritual abuse and of experimental, laboratorybased abuse may also indicate that some groups network to relay information about abusive behavior modification and other programming techniques.

This therapist said that she has observed reported "crossover" abuse within her own case load as well as in other cases for which she has served as a consultant. She said it has also been reported by other therapists she's talked with around the country.

Holly Hector, noting that the effects of this kind of behavior modification abuse are sometimes referred to as "the marionette syndrome," agreed that crossover abuse is being seen with increased frequency by therapists working with ritual abuse survivors. As therapy has progressed in the past few years with several of her clients who are satanic ritual abuse survivors, symptoms of "the marionette syndrome" also have surfaced. Besides the electroshock techniques, Holly Hector said survivors report having memories of surgical procedures-of being operated on. She said some therapists surmise that this is related, at least in part, to medical experimentation.

Ms. Hector also reported that, in recovery, more than one of these survivors' alter personalities claim they remember being programmed to assassinate people in powerful political positions if cued.

Ms. Hector said that, in her counseling experience, people exposed to crossover abuse have been the most difficult survivors to work with because of the complexity of the abuse and

the layers of intricate programming. She also believes that more and more "marionette syndrome" reports will come to light as more ritual abuse survivors seek recovery. Ms. Hector believes there is grave cause for concern about who actually may be involved with these kinds of abuses.

CHAPTER 8

YOU'RE GETTING
WARMER . . .

Beyond the caution espoused so far about moving through the process slowly with a ritual abuse survivor, experts advise even more caution as the survivor moves closer to the realization. As in the case of an incest victim, it is still most advisable to allow the person to choose her or his own pace.

Suggested Therapy

A therapist can keep the process moving by advising continued consistency in therapy, even by increasing the frequency of the sessions. The therapist can suggest that the client either begin journaling, or increase it if the client has already begun this practice. In addition, a counselor needs to support persistently the client's efforts to expand outside support networks, such as Twelve Step groups and other friends.

And as each of these support areas grows stronger for the survivor, the unconscious concurrently will release more clues.

Survivors at this stage are not only having dreams, but some are starting to experience millisecond flashbacks to pieces of scenes-like a bloody knife, a person screaming, or a dead cat. The flashes are generally so brief that a setting is usually not even established. Because of the macabre images and the brevity of the flash, a victim often regards this as merely some type of surreal psychological concoction ("My mind is playing tricks on me").

Yet at this stage the combination of dreams and flashes are causing the person to really start to wonder, to become really concerned.

Holly Hector advises that the professional still should not push for revelations, but a therapeutic atmosphere should have been created in which it is safe for the client finally to initiate serious conversation around the subject.

"I want them to ask me something like 'Why do you think I'm having dreams about animals being killed, babies being killed?' " she said. "Or maybe they'll ask about why they are having these strange, scary flashes."

Ms. Hector often will turn the question around. "Why do you think you're having them?" She is careful at this point not to refer to the fragments of flashbacks as memories. Instead, she uses an analogy with her clients, likening the discovery process to a puzzle. Each of these dreams or flashes is like a piece of that puzzle.

She sometimes has her clients write these incidents of dreams or flashes on separate pieces of paper and place them in a box or envelope. After enough have been accumulated, they can be taken out, and she and her client together can look at them for any pattern that may be emerging.

"I really try to honor all of the pieces," she said. "The worst thing a therapist can do at this point is to invalidate any of these occurrences, like dreams or flashbacks, by saying things like 'Oh, it's probably nothing. I wouldn't worry about it.'"

After some more seemingly blatant, cult-related dreams and other mini-flashbacks, the client might say something in therapy like: "Does this-oh, it can't be possible-but does this, do you think, have something to do with a cult?"

"At this point, I will probably say, 'Well, anything is possible. Why don't we just wait and see what else happens, or comes up,' " said Ms. Hector.

During this time, it's Ms. Hector's personal bias that, in the case of those clients who are willing, it is very helpful for them to pray for help and insight with the process. I also

suggest this with clients who are willing. In addition, we both pray for them as well. During this time also, Ms. Hector said she works intently on nurturing and helping to bolster the client's ego because when the memories come, it is inevitable that the person will start to decompensate for a period.

"In a way, I prepare them for battle, even before they know they're going into battle," she said.

Compulsive/Addictive Characteristics

Ms. Hector also has noticed that, as a person gets closer to the memories, any compulsive-addictive characteristics begin to be evident-in acts of avoidance. That is, perhaps clients will become obsessive about sex, or they will become more addictive about certain relationships, or they will work more, gamble more, or compulsively eat more.

Ms. Hector's knowledge about the first phases of clients' getting in touch with ritual abuse memories was gathered in her first few years of counseling. Now that she has developed a reputation as a satanic ritual abuse counselor, about 75 percent of her case load is made up of satanic ritual abuse victims who have been referred to her after they have begun having the memories.

"My concern is that codependency counselors, church counselors, and a lot of general therapists are seeing people in different stages of this problem, but not recognizing it simply because they don't know," she said. "My hope is that this will continue to change."

CHAPTER 9

PRIMERS

Longer Flashbacks

The dreams and flashes persist. And for some, now there may be longer flashbacks of cult scenes: black-robed figures standing in a circle, chanting; or a dead cat, then a pail of blood.

While it's still hard to make out any faces or locations, the flashbacks are now starting to gnaw at the person, who may express more openness to exploring the possibilities of cult abuse. Even if the longer memories haven't yet come to light, enough dreams or mini-flashes will often lead someone who is really intent on recovering to become open to the possibilities.

At this stage, it is often helpful for therapists to tell clients their suspicions about cult abuse, based on the data gathered in earlier sessions. This "leveling" should still be rather brief and general, so clients don't feel any more overwhelmed than they're already feeling.

If a client still seems receptive, the next step is to show the person a list of the characteristics of ritual abuse victims (page 67-75) and go over some of these with them, bringing up any observations related to these characteristics that have been noted during

prior counseling sessions.

Introducing "Primers"

When a therapist believes the person is ready (although no one is ever totally ready), the next phase is to introduce some rather PRIMERS generalized articles about satanic ritual abuse (not graphic at first) to begin the desensitizing process, as well as to assure the person that recovery is possible.

One of the best primers for this, I believe, is a short chapter toward the end of the book *The Courage to Heal* by Laura Davis and Ellen Bass. This book is a step-by-step look at incest/ sexual abuse recovery, with a series of personal stories in the back.

The chapter titled "Annette's Story" (Annette is a pseudonym) was written by the woman who founded Incest Survivors Anonymous. At the time of the writing, Annette was sixty years old. In the chapter she reports being a cult ritual abuse survivor from an upper-middle-class town in the Midwest. She had been in recovery for her own alcoholism and incest issues for years before any of the memories of the cult abuse started breaking through. The abuse memories included watching orgies, torture, and murder, although she doesn't go into much graphic detail.

The cult members included Annette's parents and other seemingly respectable community members.

If a person is a cult survivor still without specific memories, one of the biggest stumbling blocks to accepting the possibility of cult victimization, as had been the case with Jean, is simply what the person remembers on the surface about who, for instance, their parents and neighbors were. Maybe they did go to church. Or they drove car-pools of children. Or they did community volunteer work. "Dad cut the grass Sundays, then watched the golf match on television. I mean, that's the type of family we had!"

Yet what satanic cult survivors find, time and again, is that respectability, even community involvement, can be part of the ruse, and part of what has kept the secret for so long.

One woman remembered that her family doctor was the high priest of the cult she was exposed to. This man went on to be chief of staff at a highly respected hospital.

Other survivors have had memories of police officers, city council members, and business leaders involved with satanic cults. This information has begun to be corroborated by former cult members, like Mike Warnke, who have broken away from satanic cults and have begun to write about their experiences. (See Mike Warnke's book *The Satan Seller*.)

Survivors who suspect cult victimization can at this point supplement their reading of "Annette's Story" with a book men

tioned earlier, *People of the Lie* by Scott Peck, M.D. (Peck also wrote the best-selling *The Road Less Traveled*.) While Peck doesn't talk specifically about satanic cults in *People of the Lie*, he does write about the facades (the lies) that people who are genuinely evil construct in order to cover their tracks.

Everything I've learned so far indicates that the fabric of satanic cults is evil-not merely dysfunctional, but a step beyond: evil. I hope *Breaking the Circle of Satanic Ritual Abuse* can be another "primer" to help people move closer not only to the realization of their abuse, but to what actually fueled the abuse. Putting the abuse in context makes the

whole horror more believable for victims.

In *People of the Lie*, Peck also describes demons and possession within the context of several exorcisms he witnessed. These are dynamics that reportedly come up during cult ceremonies, and reading about them helps the victims accept more easily the reality of what they may see in their own memories later on.

There is another component to "Annette's Story" that, as I've mentioned, is typical of almost every cult victim I've ever met. Annette had blocked out all memories of the cult abuse, even though it had gone on until she was in her late teens.

This is a documented psychological phenomenon called repression, also mentioned earlier. That is, sometimes when a person is exposed to extreme trauma, the memories of it are buried in the unconscious in order for the person to be able to keep her or his psychic (emotional) balance.

For example, if a child is exposed to torture or murder with a cult, the child usually has nowhere he or she can feel safe to get help. The child has to continue to live with the parents, go to school, do all the things other kids do. It would be too emotionally taxing, at the same time, to be consciously grappling with the guilt, the confusion, the sense of betrayal that this awful reality fosters. So the unconscious flips into a survival mode, and files the memories somewhere outside of the conscious mind.

And, as also mentioned before, it is often not safe for a victim to express outwardly the feelings registering when the trauma is going on, so the unconscious again takes over and actually numbs the feelings. A cult victim may experience waves of fear, rage, sadness, even nausea, during the ceremonies. But since the emotions cannot be expressed at the time, obviously because of possible repercussions from cult members, they are repressed as well.

However, memories and feelings do stay alive inside and start to fester over time. And just as someone who is repeatedly or continually exposed to radiation at some point is most likely to develop cancer, someone who has a build-up of toxic trauma in the form of these buried memories and feelings will start to develop depression, high levels of anxiety, feelings of fear, paranoia, and other emotional disorders.

Most of these conditions are symptoms. And at some point, for those afflicted—whether they're codependent, incest survivors, cult survivors, or survivors of other kinds of abuse—to become really free, long term, they must begin a recovery process based on taking them back into the past to unearth and deal with both the memories and the feelings.

CHAPTER 10

REACTIONS TO VIOLENCE

Beyond the dreams and whatever flashbacks the survivor is experiencing so far, at this stage in recovery the person also will have intensified reactions to seeing or reading about

graphic depictions of violence.

For instance, one satanic ritual abuse survivor, while reading about a young child's leg being severed by a falling structure during the San Francisco earthquake, was racked with waves of almost debilitating repressed fear and nausea. Later he remembered watching people being killed and dismembered during the cult ceremonies.

Prior to therapy and Twelve Step recovery in an ACA group, his reading of such accounts provoked nothing even remotely close to that reaction. When he thought back about this, there had been a few isolated occasions over the years when reading something similar did produce stronger than normal reactions. Again, this is the unconscious keeping the reality of the abuse as close to the surface as possible, before the survivor gets into a recovery process.

Also, it's important to note here, if someone is in therapy and/or Twelve Step recovery, many repressed feelings around the cult abuse often surface long before the truth of cult involvement is even suspected.

In the book *Out of Hell Again*, by Joe S., a personal saga of satanic cult abuse and recovery, the author describes an incident in which he accidentally ran over a jackrabbit one night. Almost immediately he was overcome by waves of almost paranoid fear, then extreme fits of rage for ten to fifteen minutes after the incident.

He had been in Twelve Step codependency recovery and therapy some five years at the time of the incident. And it would be almost two more years before he would uncover the real significance of his reaction that night. As a child of four, he was forced to help stab an infant to death as part of a satanic cult ceremony. While this horror was going on, he had to numb all of his feelings.

In another case, a woman was trying to be supportive of a friend struggling through satanic ritual abuse memories. The woman had been in codependency recovery about a year. As she allowed the cult survivor to vent some of the memories with her, she herself would sometimes break down almost convulsively in tears, and later, after the conversations, experience waves of rage.

The woman interpreted this merely as sympathy for the victim and outrage at the abuse. While some of that was true, about a year later the woman would begin having her own satanic cult ritual abuse flashbacks. And she would understand that she was reacting substantially to her own repressed feelings, which were triggered through the conversations with her cult survivor friend.

As is often the case, the woman was not yet able to deal with the whole reality of the abuse, but because of her own recovery work with codependency up to that point, she was ready to cope with at least some of the feelings.

Sequentially, as a person begins to deal specifically with the issue of cult abuse in therapy, and develops a support network for that as well, more of the repressed feelings are apt to come to the surface, and are even more intense.

For some, fragmented flashbacks also persist during this time. And while some of the flashes may now last longer, the faces of the perpetrators are often still indiscernible. It is still hard to identify the setting, and no specific acts of abuse are seen.

One of my clients experienced a somewhat prolonged flashback during this stage.

We were in the midst of a visualization exercise, in an attempt to take him back in time to explore more of his past. Just as he was about to recall a time in his early childhood, the client tensed, and froze in the process. He was also visibly shaking.

I asked what was happening.

The client said he was seeing a black-robed figure standing over him. The figure's arms were folded defiantly and, although the face wasn't visible, the client sensed he was being glared at. His overriding feeling was that it wasn't safe for him to continue further in the regression.

Shortly after that we ended the exercise.

In the following weeks, I suggested that the client become involved with a Twelve Step ritual abuse group to increase his support. As a suspected ritual abuse survivor moves into this phase, some therapists will recommend, for instance, limited viewing of violent movie scenes that may involve knives, guns, or other instruments of abuse. This may help some victims with the desensitization needed to face the graphic violence of the memories. This approach needs to be used with caution, after assessing the psychological state of the survivor. (It is not for every survivor.) Also depending on the psychological state of the survivor, it may be recommended that he or she view the scenes in the presence of a therapist.

From what we are learning about cult activity, many of these movies are actually tame compared to some of the actual cult abuse.

According to the Child Abuse and Neglect Journal article referred to on page 63, the following are forms of abuse reportedly experienced by the thirty-seven people in the case study reporting ritual abuse exposure:

A majority of these people from around the United States reported witnessing animal mutilation; witnessing and being forced to participate in human adult and infant sacrifice, cannibalism, and drug use; and being temporarily buried alive in either graves or coffins. In addition to movies, there are several books available now that describe, in graphic, first-person accounts, satanic cult abuse. These also can be helpful with the desensitization.

Some of these include *Out of Hell Again* by Joe S.; *Michelle Remembers* by Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder; and *Suffer the Child* by Judith Spencer.

Adrenaline Addiction

About graphic violence on television and in films and some psychological effects on people in general: people may go to these extremely violent movies for an adrenaline high, or "fix." These

people often grew up in homes where there were varying degrees of chaos and confusion, as well as pronounced mood swings. Physiologically, this type of atmosphere keeps the adrenaline levels high, as mentioned earlier, and eventually a child will become addicted to this feeling. Later in life, the person will seek out experiences that will continue to keep the adrenaline pumping fairly consistently.

Now, there's nothing wrong with some healthy excitement or fun that gets your adrenaline going at times. That's all part of life. What I'm talking about is way beyond that.

Adrenaline-addicted people will be drawn toward crisis-oriented jobs, for example, air traffic control, fast-paced journalism, or emergency room work. Or a person will continually create crisis situations, like becoming heavily in debt, or becoming involved

in chaotic relationships or thrill-seeking sports. Or, again, she or he may be drawn to the slasher film genre.

I believe that this adrenaline addiction is a basic psychological reality. Otherwise, how psychologically healthy, or for that matter, even natural, is voluntarily watching people get sliced up and shot?

Another dynamic to this, and an insidiously scary dynamic at that, is that exposure to this type of movie does, over time, desensitize people to this type of violence. Just the same way as, say, continued exposure to classical music, over time, often cultivates a preference for classical music; or exposure to romantic novels often increases one's sense of romanticism. Or, if you eat spinach often enough-even if you don't like it-you're probably going to start to like it.

If you're exposed to an experience consistently, you often acquire a taste for it, or an immunity to it.

This dynamic becomes particularly significant in the scenario of someone being drawn into a satanic cult.

First of all, you don't just walk down the street one day, and someone comes up and says, "Hey, if you're not doing anything, would you like to join a satanic cult? Torture a few cats? Kill some people?"

No. As explained earlier, people are first lured into the cult, without their even knowing it is a cult, through promises of sex or drugs or power. And if they're drawn in further and are exposed to actual graphic violence, they have less natural aversion to it if they have been desensitized earlier by violence in movies or other media.

Family Dysfunctions and Vulnerability to Cults

It's an extremely good bet that people drawn to cults that engage in ritual abuse didn't come from the best of homes. And I'm not talking the "other side of the tracks" here. I'm talking about coming from a home, rich or poor, where parental dysfunction eroded the child's personal self-esteem, leaving the child with a lot of fear, a poor sense of self, and little sense of belonging.

Counselor Marty Smith, who has been working in the Los Angeles area and on research around the addictive nature of perpetrators of ritual abuse, concurs. The degree of childhood trauma often dictates the degree of "ontological [sense of being] insecurity," said Smith. People raised in dysfunctional homes often live under a created superstitious belief system that he compares to "Newspeak," the mythical language described in George Orwell's novel 1984. That is, children's development does not follow natural emotional growth, but is instead oriented more toward overt, or covert, forms of self-destruction. Later in life these people look for things that offer power and a sense of belonging, good or bad.

Along comes someone perhaps with demonstrable clairvoyant capabilities. The person apparently can move an object with his or her mind (telekinesis), or he can tell you something accurate about your past. Or you can turn over a card in another room, and the person can tell you what it is.

Paranormal phenomena such as these do exist, and have been documented over the years, through studies at Duke University and elsewhere.

Now this particular person with the clairvoyant powers just happens to be a witch. But a good, or "white," witch. Or, maybe the person claims to be a mystic. But, again, a "good" mystic.

Some people gravitate toward this power, this kind of person. They, too, begin to try to communicate with the "spirit world." Perhaps they personally experience some paranormalsome would even say supernatural-phenomena. "Good" phenomena. Seemingly harmless phenomena.

However, as is sometimes the case, as things progress and these seekers' trust grows, they are moved closer and closer toward the "inner circle," so to speak. They are now invited to some alcohol and other drug parties. Then they're connected sexually with others. A while later, they're invited to stay after the party for a small orgy.

And a while after that, at least some may be lured into a full satanic ceremony, where they watch, for example, a cat being killed. Later they may see people being killed, or witness what appear to be demonic possession and other "dark side" phenomena.

Now, the natural reaction to watching a person being tortured, then stabbed to death, is extreme aversion and disgust.

However-and this is key-if someone has grown up watching violent films, that person usually has become somewhat desensitized to violence and so may react with less than normal revulsion, may not be as shocked. The person may actually get a vicarious thrill from watching or participating in such horrible deeds.

In spite of some studies which seem to show otherwise, I believe that these movies have an effect on personality and behavior-not to mention broader aspects of societal violence they

may directly or indirectly influence as well.

Negative Excitement

Marty Smith also said that the more insecure perpetrators are, the greater the payoff in masking their own internal fear and pain by acting out on their victims during the ceremonies. This also feeds the addiction to negative excitement, he said, and dominos into cult members continuing to support each other in their "craziness" once the cycle is under way.

The addiction to negative excitement and patterns, like that generated in a satanic cult, Smith attributes not only to a chaotic/dysfunctional family of origin but also to what he calls "neophobic" learning. This is a learning that comes from the most primitive of senses and is often overlooked, but nevertheless is important, said Smith. "At one level, man somehow still internally believes if we sacrifice someone in a volcano the crops will be plentiful the next year," he said, trying to explain how perpetrators unconsciously rationalize some of their behaviors on this base level.

CHAPTER 11

THREATS AND INFILTRATION

As mentioned before, ritual abuse survivors have often been programmed to believe they will be hurt, even killed, if they ever talk about the abuse. And, so far, some survivors who are now talking about the abuse in the media, or to law enforcement officials, or at Twelve Step meetings, are experiencing some forms of harassment and threats. Others have had none. But this threat can definitely become an issue in a survivor's recovery process.

Shortly after a man in Cleveland started talking about his ritual abuse issues in Twelve Step ACA meetings, he received a threatening early-morning call from a person talking in what sounded like backward jibberish. However, a couple of key words like "satan" and "death" were discernable.

The satanic alphabet reputedly is comprised of a backward pattern of letters. The significance of the backward alphabet is just another part of the overall cult theme, standing for the reversal of all societal norms, including the alphabet.

Monitoring by Cult Members

In their May-June 1990 issue, *Changes* magazine for adult children did a comprehensive piece on satanism, including how it is being talked about with more frequency in Twelve Step meetings across the country. The article also included talk about the fear that some cult perpetrators were attending some of the meetings, in essence, to monitor what survivors were saying.

According to Myra Riddell, chairperson for the Los Angeles County Task Force on Ritual Abuse, this type of monitoring is often a given, in her opinion. She is convinced some cult members do attend Twelve Step meetings, and, for that matter, also seminars on satanic ritual abuse, and public meetings conducted by the task force.

Holly Hector also said she believes many of her seminars are attended by a percentage of cult members as well.

"They want to learn everything they can," Ms. Hector said. "It's important for them to know the latest in counseling techniques with this, for instance, so they can devise strategies to reverse and undermine the effectiveness."

Ms. Riddell adds that she believes some cult members are actually designated to infiltrate organizations, like task forces, the court systems, and the police forces, to gather information.

In the *Changes* magazine article, Washington, D.C., investigator Larry Ziliox, former director of the New York/New Jersey Cult Awareness Network, seemed to agree with other experts that many satanic cults have lawyers, judges, and police officials among their members. Besides influencing public policy, Ziliox said, these kinds of people would also be quite adept at disposing of incriminating evidence.

In *The Satan Seller*, Mike Warnke, who reports having been a satanic cult high priest before leaving the cult, not only talks about infiltration on these levels, but also says there are actually select cult members targeted to influence those in top governmental positions all over the world.

And as hard as it is to believe how heinous and farreaching these crimes may be, it is even more unbelievable that they have been kept so secret for so long. Yet the revelation process isn't without precedent. It seems to me that it's somewhat analogous to the Mafia expose in the 1950s.

Up until the fifties, the public heard about the Mafia occasionally, but it was only rumors. And the public heard about the killings too, but they were just isolated homicides, right? I mean, a whole organized group of people planning "hits"? Extortion? Selling drugs? Running numbers? Influencing government officials? How likely was all that?

But then came Joe Valachi, a former member of La Cosa Nostra who finally broke the code of silence. Yes, there was a highly organized network. Yes, they did operate "front" businesses.

They did extort money, sell drugs, torture, kill, influence government officials.

Now, all these revelations were amazing enough then. But what was even more amazing was how long this had gone relatively undetected.

It seems these transgenerational satanic cults are some what like the Mafia, only even more secret.

"Code of Silence" Programming

Another tactic cult members reportedly use sometimes is to follow victims who are starting to get in touch with the memories in recovery and harass them by trying to trigger the "code of silence" programming.

Ms. Riddell said she knows of victims in recovery who have been conspicuously followed and have received threatening late-night calls. She talks of cases in which the victim's therapist is harassed as well; there may be, for instance, plants in the therapist's case load to level trumped-up malpractice lawsuits.

Shortly after a man in Ohio started talking publicly about his satanic ritual abuse, his therapist received a threatening letter from the victim's family. About the same time, in what appeared to be a totally unrelated issue, one of the therapist's clients threatened to bring a malpractice suit against the therapist for sexual inappropriateness.

Because of her intensive work with cult survivors, Ms. Hector said she also worries about being the target of faked malpractice charges. And she, too, has had to deal with the threats.

She has received harassing calls from cult members and death-threat letters, some even written in blood.

Another woman from Ohio had been having satanic cult memories for more than a year when she decided to share the memories with a brother, and, in addition, did a four-hour police deposition about the crimes.

Shortly afterward, she started getting cult-related harassing phone calls and letters. Her husband was roughed up one night, and the brakes went out twice on her car. They sold their home and moved to another state because of the harassment.

However, if she had to do it over again, she said she would.

Getting in touch with the memories, going to the police, and taking a stand is the only way she could really be free inside.

A counselor who works in an adolescent chemical dependency unit in Toledo, Ohio, has had a lot of experience with teens involved in satanic cults. She also presents ritual abuse seminars.

During one of her seminars at a college in Ohio, this woman reported that other cult members start to get scared when one of the members comes into the unit for a chemical dependency problem. They are afraid cult activities will be revealed during treatment. One of the tactics cult members on the outside will use to try to ensure silence from the member in treatment is to send what appears to be a wholly innocent message, such as a "get well" card. However, the intent of the card will be anything but innocent. If the person, for instance, has watched cats being killed as sacrifices during some of the ceremonies, the patient may receive a card with a cat on it. Or the card will be primarily red and black. Or the person might receive a card with specific words underlined, such as "power," "sacrifice," "father" (satan), "silence."

Shortly after going public about his cult abuse on a radio talk show, a man in Los Angeles received a Christmas card from his mother. The cover displayed a pristine forest snow scene that also included a small deer and a young girl. Inside, all she wrote was "Love, Mom."

That night the man woke in a panic around 2 A.M., and began having flashbacks to a little girl being stabbed to death during a cult ceremony—stabbed to death by his mother, who was the cult high priestess.

Not everyone who has begun to talk about satanic ritual abuse has experienced harassment.

For instance, several survivors who have been regularly attending a particular Twelve Step ritual abuse meeting have had no forms of threats.

Also, at the end of "Annette's Story" in *Courage to Heal*, an addendum was added by Sandi Gallant, a special investigator in San Francisco P.D.'s Intelligence Division. "Many adult survivors believe they are at risk talking about these things," she said. "And in some cases this may be true. But in many cases I believe they are feeding off the threats and intimidation they experienced as children [in the cults]."

"I've never been threatened, and I've been the most outspoken person in law enforcement in the country on this issue."

Colorado's Dr. Marita Keeling said she too has never been threatened and she has been very visible in her work with survivors, as well as in conducting seminars and writing on the subject.

In early 1991, Dr. Keeling wrote an article that dealt with threats. While she stated that, conceivably, there is a real possibility of threat to some survivors, many of the reports may simply be paranoid reactions.

Because of the extreme abuse and systematic programming by cult members, said Dr. Keeling, many victims are naturally fearful, and may perceive attacks from many sources (friends, acquaintances, strangers) that are in no way based on reality.

In the cases of survivors she's seen with multiple personality disorder, this issue may be further complicated. That is, a survivor may, for example, find threatening notes or some type of object, for example, a knife, lying around.

Initially these are seen as real threats from the cult, but later in therapy the survivor may find that these were left by one of the alter personalities, with the "host" personality having no memory of writing the letter or leaving the knife. (See chapter 17 for more about the phenomenon of multiple personalities.)

A Personal Story

One of the most courageous sagas (although these are all phenomenal stories) is that of a woman who chose to break away from a satanic cult in Oklahoma several years ago. And breaking away wasn't without risk-a lot of risk.

While her story is about the trauma she faced getting out of the cult, it is also about the help she found from some extremely caring people. (For this woman's entire story, see page 218).

In late July of 1989, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) crisis hotline in Texas received a call from a woman-let's call her Gina-in Oklahoma, claiming her daughter had recently been run over and killed by a drunk driver.

The details were sketchy, but the phone counselor realized that the woman was extremely troubled and decided to keep the lines of communication open by talking with her every couple of days and offering emotional support. The woman sounded very distraught and had made some allusions to suicide. Janice Lord, MADD's National Director for Victims' Services, was brought in to consult on the case, and began talking to the woman as well.

Over time, Gina shared the information that her daughter had been run over by a cult member in retaliation for Gina's starting to rebel against the cult. And now the woman was trying to

leave the cult altogether. She had been what is known as a "breeder" for the cult, forced to turn her babies over for sacrifice.

Mrs. Lord, although she had had no similar experiences either over the MADD hotline or in any other way, still found the story credible. She was disturbed because the woman seemed to have nowhere to turn for protection.

After she talked it over with her husband, a minister in a Disciples of Christ church in Texas, the couple decided to help. "We, at that point, took the situation out from under the umbrella of MADD and took it under our own personal umbrella," Mrs. Lord said.

Mrs. Lord and her husband, Dick, helped get Gina situated temporarily in a women's shelter close to their home in Texas. The couple then arranged to move her into some subsidized housing, also nearby.

"We were frankly afraid to take her in because of the possible repercussions from the cult at that point," said Mrs. Lord, who is also a licensed professional counselor and a certified licensed social worker.

The cult eventually did track her to Texas, and one night she was physically assaulted and raped. After she was released from the hospital, the Lords decided to take her into their home for protection, in spite of the possible risk to themselves.

Several nights later, when they took Gina to her apartment to pick up the rest of her things, they found a plastic bag that had been left on the front steps by cult members. The bag contained animal entrails and dismembered animal body parts, with a note. The note said this was a reminder of what had happened to Gina's babies and would happen to her if she didn't return to the cult. This was the beginning of a series of notes and threats both to the Lords and to Gina. All of this evidence has been turned over to the police.

Shortly after Gina moved in with the Lords, the story took on another dimension.

Gina was having a particularly restless night. Janice Lord attempted to lead her in some deep-breathing relaxation techniques she had developed in her professional counseling.

In the midst of this, Mrs. Lord said that Gina's eyes, and her overall countenance, took on what she reports was a "demonic- looking appearance." Then, in a foreign voice totally unlike her own, Gina began speaking in a backward-sounding language, which Mrs. Lord today identifies as satanic.

Janice Lord said she had the presence of mind to invoke the name of Christ, and began speaking back to what she believed to be the demonic spirit.

'She doesn't belong to you anymore, but to us," Mrs. Lord spoke emphatically. "This is a child of God. "

A big scene ensued, culminating in Gina's running to the bathroom and attempting to slit her wrists with a razor blade. Mrs. Lord reported struggling with her, finally getting her to release the blade before any major injury happened.

The next day, the Lords contacted an Episcopal priest who specialized in exorcisms. The priest quickly gathered an exorcism team, and the Lords took Gina to the Episcopal church that evening.

Initially, some of the symbols in the church were "triggers" for Gina-candles, a gold bowl, crucifixes. These were all things Gina had seen used during cult ceremonies. She lost control, and ran wildly out of the church. Eventually, however, she came back. First she asked the exorcism team to pray for the souls of the babies she had turned over for sacrifice. After a while the team began to pray for her deliverance from any demons. The experience culminated for Gina in violent episodes of coughing, vomiting, and retching.

The next day, Janice Lord said she noticed a marked difference in Gina. She seemed much more calm, and also more willing to talk about spirituality.

"You know, if you would have talked to me a couple of years ago about cults, much less demons, I would have thought you were crazy," said Mrs. Lord. "But now that I've had these experiences, I'm convinced all that exists."

Another thing Mrs. Lord is now convinced of is the existence of angels. She said she has been providentially assured their home is protected by a circle of angels.

At the time of this writing, the Lords have had Gina in their home a year and a half, and no harm has come to their family.

However, there have been other complications.

Shortly after the exorcism, it also became clear that Gina had multiple personalities, not unusual for someone who has been subjected to such extreme abuse. Using her counseling skills, Mrs. Lord has spent countless hours helping counsel and nurture these alter personalities toward integration.

Then, while working toward recovery, Gina was again abducted and raped one night - it happened on a Good Friday. A satanic symbol, a circle with an upside-down cross, was branded on her stomach. She was able, however, to make her way back to the Lords and continued to work on her recovery.

Eventually, Mrs. Lord came across several other cult survivors in her area, and she decided to start a closed support group for these people. The group has been meeting for around a year, and has proved to be of significant help in each survivor's process of recovery.

CHAPTER 12

THE INNER CHILD

Probably you've heard about the "inner child."

You could have heard about it in relationship to an ego state within the study of Transactional Analysis. Or you could have heard about it more recently as it relates to codependency recovery.

What some therapists are starting to believe as they delve further into codependency study is that there actually is a "child" who exists within each adult. If you've come from a dysfunctional family, it is a child who needs to be nurtured through the developmental phases that weren't negotiated all that effectively the first time around. (The similarities and differences between the inner child and child alter personalities will be explained in chapter 17.)

One of the main keys to lasting recovery, whether from codependency, incest, or ritual abuse, is to find this child and begin the nurturing process in some tangible ways.

Usually, this inner child doesn't just suddenly reveal himself/herself. The revelation generally happens in phases, and many times only after the person has been in Twelve Step recovery and/or therapy for a time.

When first approaching the issue of the inner child with clients, for instance, I will ask them to tell me how old they think their inner child is. At the most I give them five seconds to answer.

Now, while consciously they usually don't have a clue, somehow their unconscious always seems to come up with an answer. And what I've found in my work is this: Always trust the first number that's given.

After the age is determined, the next step is to begin to establish some trust. For example, Tim, who's a thirty-seven-year-old computer programmer, guesses his inner child is six. We then discuss things that six-year-olds like to do. (And you can be sure it won't include reading Tim's Wall Street Journal.)

Six-year-olds, as a rule, like to color, watch cartoons, have stories read to them, build sand castles ... well, they like a lot of things.

Tim's next task was to do some activities appropriate for a six-year-old.

Now, at first, Tim, who is super-responsible and productivity-oriented, not to mention a product of very neglectful parents, saw all this as extraneous, a waste of time.

However, after ignoring the suggestion for a while, and staying stuck in his process (and probably getting very tired of hearing me mention it every week), he grudgingly gave in. He had also begun using the Sixth and Seventh Steps (see page 256) to help with his lack of motivation in this area:

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcom

Tim first went to the children's section of the local library and picked up some books for six-year-olds. Then, at night before bed, he would read to his inner child, out loud and with expression, as you would to any child. He later got some coloring books for his inner child, then started a baseball card collection.

During this time, he was also doing daily affirmations with his inner child, holding a teddy bear and talking into a mirror.

As he did each of these things, he kept getting the impression that his inner child was moving closer and closer to the surface, which is generally what happens.

(Early on, the inner child often holds back, does not reveal himself/herself, primarily because to be revealed and then ignored would amount to the ultimate rejection, would hurt too much. So the child holds back to see if the efforts are going to be somewhat tangible, somewhat consistent.)

After a time of these real efforts, the inner child will some times simply show up in such a way that the person finally knows the child is, in fact, there.

Tim, for instance, had an overwhelming feeling of childish excitement while picking out a particular children's book in the library one day. "There's no way that could have been me," he said, still astonished. "No way."

Or take Bianca, a forty-year-old loan manager, who, also reluctantly and skeptically, was doing some experimental inner child work. She was skeptical, that is, until she found herself late for a conference meeting one day because she had somehow found herself engrossed with a doll house she was playing with. Or, rather, that her inner child was playing with.

A Guided Meditation

Another way the inner child will sometimes show up is through a guided meditation. During a therapy session, I'll ask the client to relax. Just relax, sit back, breathe deeply, rest. (Also before we move into the next part, I will suggest, if the person is okay with it, that she or he take a few moments to pray, as I do, for help.)

After this, I have the client breathe deeply some more ... close the eyes ... and begin to drift ... then, that's right, drift some more ... farther, then farther away ... leaving the stress of the day, the week . . . behind. Drifting farther ... and farther

When the client is ready I ask him/her to picture a place from the past. A safe place. A place to go as a child to get away. I then allow time for that image to come into view. It's usually a place, well, for instance, by a lake. Or off in the woods. Or maybe it's a favorite room in an old house. Perhaps this client is a man. I tell him I want him to be in this place, not as a child, but as an adult. Then I have him describe what he is seeing and experiencing in detail.

What does the sky look like? What's the temperature? What kind of trees are around? Is the pond calm? Or, what's in the room? Where is he standing in the room? What kinds of books are on the shelves?

Then I have him go to a place in the scene to get comfortable, to sit in a chair, on a log, whatever.

"Now I want you to breathe deeply some more. That's right, relax ... just let the relaxation happen."

Also, at this point, I'll often have him say another prayer to himself for help with the next phase.

"Without any preconceived notions, I'd like you now to ask if there's anyone else there that would like to come join you. You can ask either out loud, or to yourself. But ask. Then wait."

Sometimes it happens right away. Other times it takes awhile. And sometimes, it just doesn't happen.

Say another client is a woman. Often she will see the child, a hesitant child who will walk

into the scene.

The client reaction will vary at this point, but I can usually tell the moment the child shows up as well. The woman will start to cry. Or she will smile, or look perplexed. Sometimes, for some inexplicable reason, my inner child can tell when the other's inner child has shown up, and there's this feeling-I guess the best way I can describe it is, this feeling of inner excitement.

After she acknowledges that the child is there, I direct a bit more at this point. "Tell her you love her. And that you're there to protect her. Ask her also if she'd like to join you." Sometimes the child immediately comes over. Other times it takes some patient coaxing. And other times, well, the child doesn't trust enough yet, and keeps some distance. Other times, the client will sense the child is there, but just outside the picture, because, again, the trust level isn't there ... yet.

I then either ask the client to hug the child, or hold the child's hand, or, if the child is still at arm's length, I have the client just talk to the inner child reassuringly.

As the conversations are going on, I ask the clients periodically to share with me some of what's being said. Then, a bit later, I have the persons ask the inner child if there's any place the child wants to go. On a path through the woods? To the other side of the lake? Or does the child just want to stay here? (It's important at this juncture that the child feel in control of the situation.)

Then, generally, if the client has taken his/her inner child on some sort of junket or journey, periodically I ask the person to describe where they are going, what they're seeing.

Then I again direct the person to ask the child what the child likes to do.

Some like to play jacks or hopscotch. Others like comic books, playing ball, playing with dolls. The list goes on. Sometimes, as with their initial appearance, some inner children will remain hesitant about letting the adults know what they like to do-merely because if a person knows, and then doesn't attempt to follow through on any of this, an inner child will feel extremely rejected.

I then allow the client the last couple of minutes to say some closing things to the child, and vice versa. And then I suggest some more hugging.

At the end, I have the person ask the child if he/she wants to come back. If so, fine. If not, I suggest the person tell the child he/she will be back again, and again.

"Now, take a couple of deep breaths and slowly, slowly ... start to see yourself back, and back ... And when I count to three, you'll be back in the room.

"One ... another deep breath ... two ... three."

Generally, what's left of the session is spent processing what's happened-often after a kind of stunned silence about what really seemed to have taken place.

Again, it's one thing to hear, or even believe, there's this inner child existing in some psychological dimension of the unconscious. It's another to not only meet the child, but to realize that the adult and inner child are somehow separate beings, with separate likes, dislikes, moods, feelings ...

Reviewing the Meditation

How was the experience? What were the feelings? How did the child seem? Pensive? Fun-loving? Sad? What?

What did the child look like? What was she wearing? What did he say he liked to do? For instance, one inner child says she likes to swing. "Can you, maybe, three times this week after work, stop by a playground and swing?" Then I add I would like for the client to report back to me the following week on how that went. This adds a little incentive, and shows I'm interested.

If some inner children don't show up for the first meditation, or even for several meditations, this is often merely an indication that they are still hesitant, for any number of reasons. In this case, I simply praise the clients for the progress they have made, and continue to focus on getting them to do more affirmations and generalized play reparenting in preparation. I also ask them to make a conscious effort to keep focusing on the Sixth Step.

When it is time, it inevitably happens-the child shows

Reparenting

There are at least three good reasons why getting the inner child and reparenting are keys to many recovery touch with processes, including recovery from ritual abuse. Note: Many of the same therapy techniques and rationale about dealing with the inner child apply to child alters in the case of multiple personalities. (See chapter 17.)

One reason for reparenting: there seems to be a direct correlation between the amount of tangible reparenting and the rate at which the buried feelings and memories come back. Since the inner child, along with any child alters, has to re-experience both as well, the unconscious seems to gauge where a person is in the reparenting process-how much actual time and emotional support the person is able to give to these inner entities before releasing each wave of feelings and memories.

The second reason: the inner child and child alters are saturated with the old dysfunctional programming, whether it's the highly sophisticated cult messages that came from Cousin Charles about being quiet during an incestuous act, or just the free-floating, funky messages you got while growing up in a just generally dysfunctional home. The more time you spend with the inner child, the more the child accepts you as the new "parent" and the more the child will start to accept, really accept, new messages from you.

During the middle phases of the ritual abuse recovery process, one of the most important new messages is: It is now okay to remember.

The third reason to connect with the inner child is that, through this connection, some of the fun-loving, trusting innocence still left in this child rubs off on the battered, understandably jaded adult.

What I've seen as a consistent pattern is that, once the person really connects with the inner child, the adult and child go at the tangible reparenting with a newfound zeal. They increase

the play time. They become more consistent.

However, there's a psychological catch after a while. As I mentioned, as the reparenting increases, so does the catharsis. And, as more of the buried memories and feelings move

to the surface in direct correlation, this starts to become uncomfortable for the person. The natural reaction is to do something to cut back on this process, or to even stop the reparenting altogether.

Another dynamic here is that, generally, the things the child likes to do aren't necessarily what the adult likes to do. (I mean if you're, say, twenty-nine years old, hopscotch and jacks don't really capture your attention.) So reparenting also entails sacrificing adult time. This does not come naturally when you've come out of a home with chronic abuse and neglect and no parenting models you could depend upon.

So, when the reparenting process starts to sour a bit, I suggest a couple of supplemental things.

For one, I have the person at this juncture start to focus on the Eighth and Ninth Steps of the Twelve Step Program:

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The inner child becomes one of the top people on the list, once a person realizes he/she is treating the child in somewhat the same way dysfunctional parents had treated him or her. And in consistently relying on God for help with this, the client realizes that a lot of things just evolve serendipitously.

Say your inner child lets you know he'd like to start a baseball card collection. Yet you keep just, well, putting it off. Oh, sure, you're going to get started on it; it's just that it's been busy at work, repairing the house, and the car keeps breaking down.

When a person realizes, to his consternation, that he's been sounding a lot like his parent(s)--he starts turning to the Eighth Step on a daily basis, to the best of his ability. And wouldn't you know ... the next day at work, a coworker is talking proudly about his kid's baseball card collection. And, in the newspaper a couple of days later, you see an advertisement for a baseball card show the next weekend, or you notice there's a sale as you're passing by a card shop, or ...

Then, seizing the moment, or the day, or Darryl Strawberry for that matter, you use the Ninth Step and buy your inner child some cards, then some more, then even a folder to organize them. And before long, you're back on the reparenting track which moves you ultimately into deeper levels of recovery.

And if you're a satanic cult survivor, this may mean more painful memories and feelings may shortly be in store for you.

CHAPTER 13

UNCOVERING ADVANCED CLUES

There are more flashbacks now, still of the fragmented variety. More milliseconds of what appear to be black-robed figures standing in what appears to be a circle. No faces yet. Or there's a flashback to a bloody knife, or flickering candles, or to someone screaming in terror. Yet, the survivor still can't see who it is.

Concurrently, cult dream themes are becoming more prevalent. Dreams of being drugged

or chased. Dreams of seeing a person or animal being tortured, or killed, but in settings outside of a cult ceremony. Then, in some of these dreams, neighbors may start to appear as perpetrators of the violence.

It seems weird to the survivor " . . . because, I mean, Mrs. Smith up the street would never, I mean NEVER be involved with anything like a cult. She sang in the choir at church. She volunteered at the Red Cross. She . . . "

Dream Symbols

Other survivors, during this phase, will dream of their current friends or acquaintances, who, in the dreams, are also perpetrators of violence. But upon analysis, it becomes apparent their unconscious is using these people as symbols of other destructive persons in their backgrounds.

For instance, Jane dreams of Bill, an acquaintance who, in the dream, stabs a young child. Now Jane has known Bill for a long time, and knows pretty assuredly Bill's not like that-at all. However, upon analysis, it's learned that Bill's personality is sometimes moody, authoritarian, narrow-minded-much the same as Jane's father's was.

And while in therapy at this time Jane is not ready to accept consciously that Bill in the dream is the symbolic representation of her father, this idea does get filed somewhere and becomes another clue-another step in the desensitization phase.

Again, the unconscious uses these dreams as a way of continuing to prepare the victim for the eventual shock of what happened, and who was really involved. To get there too fast would overload the psyche. Again, it's important to respect the client's pace.

Revisiting Familiar Places

If the client is ready, besides the violent movies, there are other ways to jog memories. One is to go back to the neighborhood(s) one grew up in. Drive around, even walk around, if possible, remembering, or trying to remember-remembering the adults in the neighborhood, remembering the children. What were their personalities like? Did anything ever seem odd? Odd, especially in the light of what the survivor might be learning now?

What was quirkish about a certain adult? Do you remember any adults who seemed especially sadistic, or overtly sexual, so that you always felt uncomfortable around them? Also, what's happened to some of the children who lived in the neighborhood? Did some develop psychiatric disorders? What kind? Is there a possibility the disorder is related to extreme trauma?

If at all possible, arrange to go back through the old family home. While the cult memories still might not surface consciously, there's a good bet that familiar settings can trigger memories for the inner child, and for alter personalities if the person has MPD. Of course the safety of the survivor must come first. The possible dangers of such a visit must be weighed carefully.

This moves survivors into an even more active role in their own recovery process. They, in effect, become investigative reporters, viewing their past almost from a safer, third-person perspective, at least for the time being.

Meditative Techniques

Another helpful therapeutic adjunct is for clients to learn some type of meditative technique, like self-hypnosis or other relaxation techniques, and schedule times each day to work on slowing their systems down, to allow time and a clear passage for the memories to come. (In this phase, there's again an unconscious tendency to turn to compulsive behavior of any sort-sex, work, gambling, shopping-to block both the memories and the feelings.) Also, it is important for a person to stay as regular as possible with Twelve Step meetings, therapy, and the meditation, if that's been incorporated into the process.

CHAPTER 14

SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

Part of the recovery equation is that the more support victims have, the more quickly and effectively they move through the process.

As victims move into the phase in which they start to accept internally the reality of the cult abuse, it is important to hook them up with other people going through the same process.

This can be facilitated on several different levels.

Inpatient Treatment

At first it is sometimes advisable to send victims to inpatient treatment. There are a number of hospital settings across the country now set up for people reporting satanic cult ritual abuse. (For a list of some of these, see Resources.)

Twelve Step and Other Groups

Another avenue that is extremely helpful is referral to a Twelve Step group focusing specifically on ritual abuse issues. As more people working other Twelve Step programs, especially as recovering chemical dependents and codependents, have started to have cult memories during the past few years, these Twelve Step ritual abuse groups have begun to evolve and now can be found in some major metropolitan areas. They have either formed as autonomous Ritual Abuse Anonymous or Cult Survivors Anonymous groups, or they have been incorporated into ACA or ACoA as special-focus groups. (See pages 256-259 for the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Promises of AA, as well as the Twelve Steps for ritual abuse survivors.)

Cleveland's first Twelve Step ritual abuse group was incorporated as a special-focus ACoA group in the fall of 1989.

The format for this particular meeting varies. Once a month someone volunteers to share his or her story of abuse and recovery for anywhere from fifteen to forty-five minutes.

The group comments on the sharing afterward. At another meeting, someone will give a mini-talk on one of the ritual abuse characteristics, its genesis in and how it has affected

that person's life, and what the person is doing to get over it.

At another meeting there will be a general open discussion. And the remaining week of the month is spent discussing one of the Twelve Steps.

The atmosphere in the group is very supportive, or at least as supportive as it can be, given the circumstances. Everyone is given a chance to share, but no one is forced to. The meeting is often quite dynamic and cathartic. As people share some aspect of their abuse, it will often trigger others' recollections of experiences, evoking repressed tears, anger, fear. And, as these feelings come, group members often show an empathy that can only come from other survivors. During all of this, the group bonding strengthens.

For newcomers, the group helps them move further into recovery.

However, getting newcomers to attend one of the meetings can be hard. For one thing, the individuals are extremely selfconscious. ("Well, I'm not as sure now whether it really is ritual abuse. I mean the dreams, and those flashes, could have meant anything.") Also, they worry that the group might be infiltrated with cult members. ("Besides, even if it is ritual abuse, can't I just deal with it in therapy?") And then, unconsciously, they're worried that they are going to relate with the group, which will really force them to look deeper.

After the meeting, people often go for "fellowship," over coffee or whatever, and friendships begin to develop.

It's important to note that these meetings are far from perfect. People attending them are hurting emotionally. Many have major fears and trust issues. Some people are more empathetic than others. And because the groups are still new, there will be organizational problems. (Well, after all, that's how AA started.)

So the first experiences at meetings are not always entirely positive for some who are new. However, it's important to encourage those who didn't particularly take to the first meeting to go back, and back again. And if they still don't like the meeting, and if they have the luxury in a particular city to find a different one-it's recommended they try another meeting. Sometimes the group chemistry happens right away. Other times the assimilation simply takes time.

(See chapter 15 on the evolution of these groups, and also how to get one started.)

If there isn't a Ritual Abuse Anonymous meeting in the area, another possibility for survivors is an Incest Survivors Anonymous group. Since incest/sexual abuse is part of the cult experience, this can also be a forum for starting to talk about the trauma.

It is often the case that once people have worked through some of their codependency issues, then have started to deal with incest issues in these more specialized groups, the cult issues, if they are there, finally start to break through. So it isn't unusual now to hear talk of satanic ritual abuse in the incest groups as well.

Also, as Holly Hector pointed out, the closer a person gets to the memories, the more that person's primary addictions or compulsions start to kick in. And it may also be necessary for victims to be in other Twelve Step groups concurrently, actively working on these issues as well-Overeaters Anonymous, AA, Narcotics Anonymous, Workaholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous.

Besides Twelve Step meetings, groups led by professionals, such as incest therapy groups, ritual abuse therapy groups, and groups for people with multiple personalities, also provide supportive/intensive settings for cult survivors.

CHAPTER 15

TWELVE STEP RITUAL ABUSE GROUPS

One Group's Beginnings

The meeting started tentatively, a couple of minutes late. It was late July in 1991. A muggy evening in Cleveland. An old fan clacked in the corner of a basement meeting room.

The format was a free-floating group discussion this night, and the first person to talk, a man about fifty, spoke about this being the first Twelve Step ritual abuse meeting he'd been back to in a couple of months. He had also temporarily dropped out of codependency Twelve Step meetings and therapy as well. And, as a result, he said he really noticed himself starting to slip back into depression and some old dysfunctional emotional patterns.

He went on to say that he knew, in order to continue to recover, he needed to keep coming back to the meetings.

Later, however, he said some of the memories were still continuing to come despite his lax attitude toward recovery.

"I was driving on a rural back road recently and had just pulled up at a stop sign. At that second-and I don't even know what triggered it-a crystal-clear memory of a [satanic] ceremony abuse scene came into focus. So clear, it was as if I was standing right there again.

"And, as for how horrendous that was, I thank God He's allowing the clarity so I know, really know, exactly what happened."

At first the man wasn't able to describe the actual scene. However, as the evening went on, his description became more graphic.

Another man talked about remembering having the inside of his eyelid cut as a seven-year-old, as part of a torture/ brainwashing ritual. He trembled as he recounted the memory, unable to look up at anyone as he talked.

A twenty-five-year-old woman talked about lying down for a nap earlier in the week, when, all of a sudden she flashed to a bathtub covered with blood and dismembered animal parts. "I HAVE TO WASH THE BLOOD OFF. I HAVE TO WASH IT OFF!" She screamed, wide-eyed, looking around the room imploringly. Then she broke down sobbing.

Respectful of her process, her tears, the group members remained silent.

After a while, one of the other members asked if she needed a hug. She did.

And as they hugged in the center of the circle, some members were now crying, too.

Others, somewhat dissociative perhaps, were staring off into space. Others reached out to hug her too, with an empathy only one survivor could have for another.

Others there that night weren't having the actual memories yet, but were having cult-related dreams and intense feelings. Also, they could relate to any number of the satanic cult ritual abuse characteristics. They, too, were just as welcome.

The meeting lasted an hour and a half. There were more tears. There was anger, and even

occasional laughter to break some of the sustained tension. There was also hope, hope that this could get better.

This night, there were ten people at the meeting. Sometimes there are more, sometimes less. At the time of this writing, this is the first Twelve Step ritual abuse group in the northern Ohio area. It had been in existence about a year and a half.

At this stage of the group's development, a small core is attending regularly, with another group coming sporadically, and a couple of newcomers generally are added every week or two.

Soon, a few of the core group people will probably spin off to create other Twelve Step RA groups, typical of new Twelve Step group evolutions.

This group's founder, Pam, said that since the group started, about thirty-five people have come through the doors. She has observed the new group ebb and flow as it has struggled for identity. Initially there was a lot of enthusiasm among the people coming together to form the group, and attendance and group participation were fairly consistent during the first couple of months. It wasn't hard to solicit participation in group tasks, such as setting up the meeting room or volunteering to be the monthly chairperson or treasurer.

However, said Pam, as the months went on, getting volunteers got harder and harder, and attendance started to drop off. For about five meetings, only one person showed up.

Yet Pam and a couple of the other core group members kept pursuing it, and eventually attendance started to increase again. The nucleus began to grow larger, get stronger.

In order to get the word out about the group, a couple of members have collaborated on putting together a flyer to be distributed to treatment centers and therapists throughout the area.

Besides fluctuating attendance and a fluctuating level of volunteering, Pam also cited some other struggles the group has had, in order to give those thinking about starting one of these groups an idea of what to expect.

A Place to Meet

First of all, she said, finding a place to meet was somewhat of a struggle, because of preconceived notions about any group having to do with "satanism," even if it was purely recovery-oriented. Though she had thought about describing the group just as a "ritual abuse" group to those who rented the meeting halls, she felt it was important to be totally straight with them up front, so there would be no problems later. Plus, if the group was meant to happen, said Pam, "God would work out the details."

A church was finally found, a Catholic church with an open meeting room in the basement.

The location proved a mixed blessing. For some who had been exposed to the cult's mock religious stagings and had just started working through this issue, coming to a religious center, with its traditional Christian symbols, was a trigger for them at times. Cult members may have dressed up as Christ, priests, or ministers and raped children with crosses, or made them drink blood from chalices. However, this triggering did cue some of their repressed memories and feelings, which, although painful, are necessary for their recovery.

The positive side was that some who had relied heavily on God as a protecting force over

the years found the setting felt extremely comforting and safe.

Another issue had to do with meeting in the basement, said Pam, because some survivors had been exposed to cult ceremonies in basements. Although one survivor said that, by forcing herself to go into the basement week after week, she has gotten over some of her claustrophobic fear about being in confined spaces.

Fear of Infiltration

Another concern that comes up consistently for cult survivors is fear of the group being infiltrated by cult perpetrators.

This particular group has adopted a mini-screening process. Since Pam's phone number is given to people interested in coming to the group, she usually conducts brief conversations with prospective newcomers about their backgrounds. Reciprocally, Pam describes what the group is about and its format. Although this process admittedly is in no way guaranteed to keep out infiltrators, it may give some preliminary clues about newcomers' backgrounds.

Format

The format of the group, as mentioned earlier, varies.

Some nights it will be an open discussion. Other nights a specific Step or RA characteristic will be discussed. However, even on these nights, no one has to stick specifically to the topic if other issues are pressing. And some nights there is a lead-someone shares some of what happened in the past, how recovery began, and what he or she is doing now in recovery.

At the beginning of the meeting, the RA Steps, the characteristics, the Twelve Traditions of AA, and the following description, drafted by Pam, are read:

Ritual abuse is that physical, emotional, mental, sexual, and/or spiritual abuse that is perpetrated in a ceremonial (or ritual) manner most often by a group of perpetrators. However, the same damage can be caused by a single perpetrator when performed in the same ritualistic manner, such as a parent who perpetrates the abuse in the same order and place, and often at the same time of day. Group perpetration includes such cults as satan worshipers, witches' covens, pseudo-religious groups ...as well as fringe and mainline churches. (Because the intent of the group is basically good doesn't mean that an individual within the group can't twist beliefs and standards to meet his or her own sick needs.)

Pam notes that watching the group evolve has been an extremely positive experience, especially seeing some of the people in the group get significantly better over time. A combination of the support group and concentrated work on the Steps seems to move people through the process more quickly, taking them to deeper levels of recovery. There is not much to starting a group, she said. A group starter packet basically consists of what is read at the beginning of the Cleveland meeting, and any specific policies about the treasury, group literature, and so on. These policies can be worked out during monthly "group-conscience" meetings.

Note: It was a group-conscience decision of this particular group to allow me to use vignettes, somewhat altered, from this meeting.

On a Twelve Step recovery level, it is often advisable for ritual abuse survivors to attend either Codependents Anonymous (CODA) or Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACoA) Twelve Step meetings, where there is a concerted focus on reversing the codependency characteristics that usually affect the survivors to the extreme.

CHAPTER 16

TWELVE STEP APPLICATIONS FOR ABUSE SURVIVORS

The First Step: Admitted we were powerless ...

The First Step for cult ritual abuse survivors in Twelve Step selfhelp is: "We admitted we were powerless over the effects of ritual abuse-that our lives had become unmanageable." This, like all the Steps, is multilayered. Deeper and deeper awareness of the effects of ritual abuse comes to a survivor over an extended period of time.

First, the part about being "powerless."

The nature of children for the first nine or ten years of life is often narcissistic-not in an adult-vanity, addicted-to-mirrors way, but in the sense that children believe what happens around them is usually directly because of them.

If exposed to a satanic cult, child victims often believe that something they've done creates this prevailing climate of evil mayhem. Much the same as kids in families with other kinds of dysfunctions believe that if their conduct were just a little better, or their grades were higher, Dad wouldn't drink so much or Mom wouldn't yell so much.

Ritual abuse survivors unconsciously carry an enormous guilt; if they had somehow just been different, none of this horror would have happened. This guilt fuels extreme shame, shame that erodes self-esteem in the survivor.

Without a sense of their own worth, many survivors find it virtually impossible to meet their potential in relationships, careers, hobbies, or other pursuits. Some even drift aimlessly, not really living, just surviving.

Added to this shame is the survivors' belief that somehow they could have stopped the sexual abuse, the torture, the killings. And, of course, they didn't--couldn't-which adds to their survivor's guilt.

Cult survivors, like many people in other forms of Twelve Step recovery, are afflicted with massive amounts of shame. Shame, more often than not, is one of the core problems in recovery.

An excellent book on this subject-though not specific to ritual abuse problems-is *Healing the Shame That Binds Us* by best-selling author John Bradshaw.

When survivors first enter ritual abuse recovery, much work must be done to help them come to terms internally with the indisputable fact that they really were "powerless."

While an adult can often accept this cognitively, it's quite another thing to accept it

internally and actually begin to let go of the shame.

Generally, this acceptance will take time, talking with other survivors, reading other survivors' stories, and a lot of dialoguing with their own inner child. If they have developed multiple personalities, this also may require dealing with alter personalities as they work toward integration. (See chapter 17.)

Survivors need to reach another level of awareness about powerlessness. Gradually they come to find that they were not only powerless over the situation in their youth, but that they are powerless over something now-the long-term effects the ritual abuse has had on them, especially the survivors' typical characteristics.

What's often the case is that they begin therapy or become involved with ritual abuse recovery groups and learn some of the reasons behind the "unmanageability" in their lives. At this point some will drop out of formal recovery and, armed with this new information, go out to try to change things on their own. (Doing things "on their own" is not unusual for ritual abuse survivors; in fact, they've relied on this kind of independence for most of their lives.)

Realizing now that the boss isn't really life-threatening, they set off to confront him or her-only to balk at the last minute, or to end up shaking through the whole attempt at confrontation, just as they've done so often before.

Or, now realizing why they are attracted to dysfunctional relationships with a certain kind of person, they set out to choose someone different-only to find that, after a time, much to their chagrin, they've chosen the same type of person all over again.

The painful realization-which is, in fact, all a part of working the First Step-is that it will take time, support, and the working of the rest of the Steps to really effect lasting change. To work the First Step-actively work it-simply means to keep showing up for recovery-for the meetings, for therapy, and for seminars-and to make use of whatever supplemental reading is available.

The Second and Third Steps (or, Turn My Will Over to Whom?)

Step Two: "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

Recently, during a satanic cult ritual abuse seminar, a counselor asked how distorted one's sense of spirituality can become from being exposed to this type of cult while growing up.

The answer: very. On many different levels. And it will be important to address these within the recovery process.

First of all, a child's internalized sense of who "God" is comes primarily from how the parents act toward the child. It's the psychological phenomenon of transference. In this case, a child usually can't see "Our Father who art in heaven." But as kids, we can clearly see our father (or mother) who art on earth.

And if the parents, or first caregivers, are controlling, perfectionistic, and punishing, that becomes the child's-later the adult's-internalized sense of who "God" is. (No matter how

many times he or she has heard about a loving and caring God.)

To take this a step beyond, or actually a lot of steps beyond, a transgenerational cult victim's parents and other neighborhood role models were people bent on total control, blatant abuse, even killing. On top of all that, they worshiped an entity that epitomizes dark power, evil.

In addition, because of all the contrived abuse to discredit Christ, explained in the chapter on satanism, many victims have developed a strong unconscious aversion to Christ. Some victims consciously do believe in "God." However, their internal perception is often that God is extremely controlling, judgmental, and punishing.

Burdened with this belief system, many cult victims before recovery are plagued with extreme scrupulosity, or guilt obsessions.

The situation becomes even more complicated when a victim gets into Twelve Step recovery.

The Third Step reads: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him."

The message that comes from a cynical cult victim's unconscious may go something like this: "Yeah, right. Sure ... I'm really ready to turn my life over to some maniacal god or other!"

So this Step really can be a stumbling block for many survivors.

However, the Second Step reads: "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

That "power" for many cult victims, no matter what they believe, can be the new kind of love they begin to feel from others in the Twelve Step fellowship or from a caring therapist. (Or for that matter, the kind of love cult survivor Gina felt from the Lord family; see chapter 11 and the appendix.)

Survivors in Twelve Step groups are accepted basically for who they are, cared about, empathized with. And yes, while people in the fellowship have their problems (cliques, gossip, some closed-mindedness at times), who's perfect? I believe that God nevertheless seems to use these Twelve Step people as channels for healing. Through these groups, victims gradually start to feel some unconditional love. Slowly, sometimes very slowly, they also learn to trust for the first time in their lives.

Through this love and acceptance, a victim becomes open enough not only to begin to trust others in the group, but also to develop the trust necessary to begin to turn his or her will and life over to the care of this God talked about in the Third Step.

The Third Step lays the groundwork for the Eleventh Step: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out." These Steps become a continuing process of praying for God's will, then actively taking the time to listen, so to speak-whether it's intuitively sensing that you're hearing God talk through someone else one day, or taking note of a part of a book that seems to speak to a situation you find yourself in, or in countless other ways.

I've also observed that a percentage of cult survivors seem to have had an extremely strong spiritual belief in Christ, even before they got into recovery. In the ritual abuse Twelve Step meeting, some would talk about going to church regularly, always wearing a cross, keeping pictures of Christ all over the house, praying to Him a lot.

Frequently they talk about this not so much in a free-flowing, "God is love" sense, but

rather as a reliance on God in almost a hypersensitive need for protection. What sometimes emerges is a memory of some sort of seemingly tangible supernatural experience in which Christ did actually come to protect them during a ceremony-and they have held strongly to the experience.

The Fourth and Fifth Steps

Step Four: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Step Five: "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

As recovery progresses in any Twelve Step Program, the individual will work the Fourth and Fifth Steps. There are several formalized guides for these Steps, whether a person is in AA, AlAnon, Codependency Anonymous, or whatever. Generally a person who has been in another Twelve Step Program prior to getting to the satanic ritual abuse memories has often done a Fourth and Fifth Step.

While the Fourth Step format varies a bit from program to program, there are some basic common denominators.

In this process, people basically go back over their lives in an analytical fashion. They look at times they've been dishonest with others or themselves, times they've been verbally, emotionally, or even physically abusive to family members or friends. They also look at things like problems around sex. Many of these Fourth Step guides also call for making a list of fears. If victims are codependent, they'll also look at things like their own controlling behavior, their own victim behavior, choices of people they've gotten into relationships with, choices of people they've got into relationships with (no ... this is not a typo, it's just that this is often repeated behavior and a big area for many codependents), being overly responsible, or really irresponsible.

Now some will attempt the Fourth Step in one fell swoop, while a lot of others will approach this Step as a journaling process over time. That is, as they move along the recovery continuum, they remember more of their past, and also become more and more aware of their present dysfunctional behaviors, as is the case in any good therapeutic process.

While cult survivors become clearer about their behavior as they move through therapy and Twelve Step recovery, they generally don't achieve deep, lasting levels of recovery until they've finally gotten to the "exact nature of our wrongs" talked about in the Fifth Step.

And the exact nature of much of the core dysfunctional behavior seems always to be rooted in the cult abuse. Again, it is integral in this process not only to get to the memories, but to the repressed feelings as well.

Also, the patterns often can't be significantly reversed until the genesis of the "exact nature of our wrongs" is actually seen, then actively worked on through different therapeutic techniques, including a reparenting process (see chapter 12).

In many Twelve Step recovery processes through notebook after notebook of emerging memories and realizations as part of working the Fourth Step.

The Fifth Step is a process of sharing with God-yes, actually reading the Fourth Step

analysis to God, coming to terms with it oneself, and then admitting it all to someone else. For a cult survivor, as intimidating as this last part seems, this sharing becomes an essential part of the process and an excellent shame reduction tool.

As mentioned earlier, cult victims have tremendous internalized shame around whatever type of involvement they had with the cult. Some of that dissipates as they progressively accept their "powerlessness" in the First Step.

However, the next step in this acceptance process, and an even more tangible way to reduce the shame, is to share the details, as they become available, with a therapist, sympathetic friend, sponsor in the Twelve Step group, priest, rabbi, or minister.

The Sixth and Seventh Steps

Step Six: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Step Seven: "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

Okay, so a person is moving closer to the memories.

Another way to help accelerate the process at this point is consistent work with the Twelve Step Program's Sixth and Seventh Steps.

It is recommended in this phase that the person pray daily, or at least as frequently as possible, to become "willing" to have the "defects" removed.

This becomes the free will part of the Step for the person. And from what I've observed, once God has the green light, so to speak, He'll begin to take over.

Some of the main "defects of character" for ritual abuse victims are fear, and more fear, and yet even more fear (this is quite understandable, given their background).

This can be fear of the intensity of repressed feelings that may surface, fear of authority, fear of being sent to a psychiatric unit, fear of being harassed or even killed by the cult if they remember or talk-and, paradoxically, fear of getting better.

Now, it seems to be the experience of many in recovery when working the Sixth Step that God doesn't come down with this magic wand or something and do a pseudo "poof" routine. Hardly.

What instead seems to happen is that circumstances "coincidentally" seem to come about that start to help push the cult survivor through fear.

As an example, Ralph knows he has more repressed anger, sadness, and nausea that need to come out, but he's been balking of late-cutting down on the Twelve Step meetings, therapy sessions, and prayer time.

However, another self-help group member notices this, and confronts Ralph on it. The confrontation brings Ralph out of some of his denial. In order to get back on track, because he doesn't seem to have enough motivation on his own, Ralph begins working the Sixth Step daily.

As he does-wouldn't you know it?-he meets a couple of other people with satanic ritual abuse in their backgrounds. And someone at another meeting, seemingly out of the blue, recommends a book that has triggered a lot of repressed feelings. Or, perhaps, a potential confrontation situation evolves at work with Ralph's boss. This situation offers an opportunity for Ralph, through confronting this authority figure, to take back some of the power that he lost to the abusive cult authority figures in his past.

Now the cause and effect here seem to be that through praying for the "willingness" in the Sixth Step, these situations have seemed to materialize, as they do for many working the Sixth Step. But again, there is no guarantee that Ralph is going to take action to increase his support network of friends, read the book, or confront the boss.

That's where the Seventh Step comes in.

When faced with one of these situations, then Ralph, ideally, will go off and pray specifically for any fear (a "shortcoming") to be removed-so that he can start to respond and change.

There is no guarantee that the fear will be totally removed, allowing Ralph to go in and do an ultra-assertive routine with his boss, or smoothly establish a rapport with these new people. For that matter, Evelyn Wood's speed-reading skills will probably not mysteriously infuse into Ralph's brain.

However, generally through this process, Ralph will be given just the motivation or strength to get through. And each time that happens, he will grow a little bit stronger emotionally. And his faith will grow a bit stronger with each of these experiences as well. I also need to say here that people who are intently working these two Steps consistently will know they're really working them if, at times, they really hate the process, hate the situations they need to react to, hate all the effort. But it is through this very process that people-I hate to sound like a Pollyanna-reach deeper and deeper levels of recovery.

This brings up another point. A lot of people, whether satanic cult survivors, alcoholics, codependents, whoever, are unconsciously, and sometimes even consciously, afraid to recover. Oh, some will do enough recovery work to pull themselves out of a deep depression, or to get over some debilitating fear.

However, when it comes to pushing through the barriers and working toward long-term consistent emotional health, they are afraid. Afraid of success, of the added responsibility that

comes with success, of the unknown. All that.

The way to get beyond this fear is to rework the other Steps that relate to this. Other defects, such as fear, are in the list generated during the Fourth Step.

The Eighth and Ninth Steps

Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."

Step Nine: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

People working the Steps can usually derive most of the Eighth Step list from their Fourth Step inventory. This list basically includes people in our lives we've somehow abused, whether physically, verbally, or emotionally.

Some satanic abuse victims, upon first getting to these Steps, as with the Fourth Step, have a hard time looking at those they may have abused because they are so focused on how they themselves had been abused and how damaged their lives had become as a result. (This is entirely understandable.)

But after a time, as they begin to work through issues, it becomes more and more apparent to the survivors that there are people they have harmed. Maybe by being too

controlling with a child, a spouse, a friend. Maybe by transferring some repressed anger onto someone who didn't deserve it, through physical or verbal abuse. Or maybe in a more passive-aggressive manner consistently showing up late for appointments, not returning someone's calls, being neglectful to a child.

As recovery progresses, it becomes more clear who those people we've harmed are.

And as one prays for the "willingness" to make amends, the timing and how to go about that begin to become clear as well.

The actual amends in Step Nine can take several forms going to someone personally, explaining about one's recovery process, and directly apologizing to the person for past wrongs, or writing a letter to the same effect.

Also, there may be gestures, "living amends." Besides the apology, the person in recovery makes a consistent effort to be more caring, more concerned for the person they've harmed.

As in AA, there are times when making these amends could prove "harmful," as, for example, walking back into an old lover's life to apologize for some past indiscretion when the person is involved with someone else. Or, it might be dangerous for a cult survivor to go back and attempt an apology with people who may be still cult-involved. While doing this Step, it's important to consult continually with a Twelve Step sponsor, your therapist, and friends, on the timing and appropriateness of the amends.

The Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps

Step Ten: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it."

Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out."

Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other ritual abuse survivors, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

These Steps are referred to as the "maintenance" Steps in most Twelve Step fellowships, and that holds true for Twelve Step ritual abuse groups.

As ritual abuse victims get more and more insight into some of their distorted character patterns and how they affect others and themselves, especially from working the Fourth Step on an ongoing basis, they have a frame of reference to gauge their daily behavior. Their patterns may include being overcontrolling, overcritical or overly fearful, lying, or being compulsive.

The Tenth Step is all about taking spot-check inventories, in as timely a way as possible, and continuing to make amends for wrongs affecting others (or oneself).

Say a victim has been in recovery awhile and has just gone back to college. On his first Economics test he gets a 78 (a high C). Fine. Passing. However, being afflicted with perfectionism, the victim goes into a funk and spends the better part of a day beating himself up emotionally, constantly going over the questions he missed.

Then that night, reviewing the day in the light of the Tenth

Step, he catches what he's doing here.

The next day, he spends some time affirming himself and his inner child for having the courage to go back to school and, for that matter, having the courage to hang with the recovery process.

Perfectionism is often extremely strong and deep-rooted in satanic cult survivors, simply because if they didn't do everything just so during the ceremonies, it would mean terrible abuse for them, even death.

With the Tenth Step, as with the Fourth Step, it is just as important to highlight and note the positive as well as the negative. This helps reverse a tendency to self-criticism and at the same time helps rebuild a highly damaged ego structure.

For example, it's important to acknowledge facing a certain fear, even thinking about facing that fear. Or, to applaud oneself for a project at work, for taking time to relax, for going to a self-help meeting. (Some days just acknowledging having gotten up is a big thing!)

Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us, and the power to carry that out."

Again, for some satanic cult survivors working Step Eleven, prayer and meditation, because of the programming, is not always easy. However, as people progress in Twelve Step recovery, they begin to even out emotionally, and it is in this calmer psychological state that they can open the door to work on deeper spiritual levels.

In this more balanced condition, more time is allotted for both prayer and meditation.

And in this state, the quality of both generally improve as well. Typically, before recovery, many satanic ritual abuse survivors often exist in an almost frenetic state of racing thoughts and compulsive behaviors, all functioning to keep the memories and feelings repressed. Or a survivor may exist in an almost catatonic state of numbness.

Like almost anything else, meditation takes practice and is also multidimensional.

Some people in the Twelve Step Program incorporate relaxation techniques they've learned through any number of the "deep breathing" methods, to slow themselves down to listen to God. Others will take reflective walks or runs. Or they will just quietly watch an occasional sunset, listening. (Well, sometimes listening.) Or they will read daily a passage from any one of the many Twelve Step or spiritual reflection books, in order to increase their understanding of the God they have found and the knowledge of His will.

While knowledge about His will becomes more apparent as time goes on in recovery, there seems to be at least one constant in this emerging realization. Each person seems to have been sent to this planet with talents—a talent for athletics, for painting, for writing, for mathematics or science. Or the ability to work with people, to parent, to do public speaking, to ... the list is endless. Anyway, it would seem that part of the plan or God's will would be to use the talent(s) to the best of one's ability, giving the credit to God.

Because of the abuse cult survivors have been exposed to, they are often saturated with fear that blocks talents. However, since the recovery process can help alleviate fears, survivors can get on with their lives the way God intended them to, carrying out His will, His plan.

Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other ritual abuse survivors, and to practice these principles in all

our affairs."

As survivors work the Steps, they experience spiritual awakenings, often again on different levels. Many people experience serendipity as they go on--coincidences that they have a hard time writing off as just coincidences.

The Twelve Step fellowship is filled with countless "You're not going to believe this, but . . ." stories. Someone has a specific problem, then miraculously hears an unsolicited answer at a meeting. Maybe you need a job in a specific field and wouldn't you know it?-you meet Harry, who knows George, who just happens to have a job opening in that very area.

However, while these things go on quite frequently, another level of spiritual awakening happens in quite a different way. As the Alcoholics Anonymous "Big Book" describes this, the person in recovery "finally realizes he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone." What this means is that, through working the Steps, the recovering person has learned to tap into another Source for insight and guidance.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness," the "Big Book" goes on to say.

For cult ritual abuse survivors, this relying on a supernatural source is often doubly hard because of traumatic and detrimental supernatural experiences.

"Carrying the message" (the Twelfth Step) means that those who are established in Twelve Step ritual abuse groups become involved in outreach work with others who are ready to begin recovery.

This may include meeting with a prospective newcomer-making what's known as a Twelve Step call, and sharing their own stories, or offering to take these new people to meetings.

Another aspect of "carrying the message" is sharing with other members what the Steps mean to them and how they work them.

Other Twelve Step work entails helping schedule the meetings, or setting up intergroups and, just as important, taking on some of the weekly meeting responsibilities-like set-up and clean-up, and treasurer, secretary, and chairperson duties.

Some people also give Twelve Step work a broader application-going public with their stories in the media or at seminars, most often anonymously, other times not. If you're a satanic cult ritual abuse survivor, of course this public openness can be a risk. But for some, because their stories may help someone else break free of the cult programming, and because they take personal power back by speaking out against the cult, it becomes worth the risk. (There is also belief that the more public survivors are, the safer they are because of the cult's worry about drawing attention in any way.)

CHAPTER 17

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY

DISORDER

A desperate call came through on a national youth runaway hotline. A sixteen-year-old girl was calling, reporting that she had been raped violently.

The call was referred to a social service agency in New York. The girl was extremely distraught and presenting strong suicidal tendencies. She was brought in for shelter and observation, and concurrently assigned to a counselor with a rape crisis center. The social service program director, Robin Jones (not her real name), described observing a pronounced "injured child persona" (an alter that was extremely vulnerable and damaged) in the girl. Another of the personalities was adult and very cold and impassive. ("I'm tough. I can handle this. Leave me alone.") A third personality demonstrated a strong degree of aggressiveness.

Another disturbing dynamic was some of the poetry the girl had written. Ms. Jones described it as "dark poetry," dealing with pain, despair, suicide, and demons.

Often, experts are coming to find, a child exposed to extreme and consistent forms of ritual abuse will develop multiple personality disorder (MPD), or multiple personality syndrome (MPS), as others prefer to call it. While usually referred to as a disorder, because of the multiple problems of living it can cause for a person, it's important to note that the initial development of MPD in an abuse victim is actually a coping mechanism that helped the victim survive the trauma. According to the Los Angeles Task Force's *Ritual Abuse* booklet, MPD is:

The existence within the person of two or more distinct personalities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and think

ing about the environment and self).

"At least two of these personalities, or personality states, recurrently take full control of the person's behavior." (DSM III-R, 1987.)

Richard Kluft, in describing the kinds of events that trigger the creation of new personalities in children, delineates the following criteria: 1) the child fears for his or her own life; 2) the child fears that an important attachment figure will die; 3) the child's physical intactness and/or clarity of consciousness is breached or impaired; 4) the child is isolated with these fears; and 5) the child is systematically misinformed or brainwashed about his or her situation. These criteria are certainly met in the events encountered by the ritually abused child.

It is important to remember that multiple personality disorder is not a thought disorder, and that although different personalities may be in touch with different pieces of memory and reality, they are not delusional. The memories that they express, however painful and frightening, should not be dismissed as hallucinatory fantasies.

As one example of how MPD can develop: During a cult ceremony, seven-year-old Shawn is locked in a cage with snakes, then physically tortured, and finally sexually abused. Shawn's psyche can only take so much (as can any of our psyches). So when Shawn is ready to snap, a new personality, a tougher personality in this case, is developed to handle the next wave of abuse. Or to handle the next scene-maybe of one of his parents sacrificing an infant or having sex with a neighbor.

Each time a new personality is developed, it becomes an inherent part of the host person's system. Later in life, this can really cause some problems.

Note: In codependency recovery, as mentioned earlier, we are working with the phenomenon of the "inner child." If a person has come from a dysfunctional home, some of

the stages of the maturation process get stunted. And, as also mentioned earlier, there are now ways to contact this child and take him/her back through the growing phases in an emotionally healthy manner.

People who have developed MPD often have many inner children (teen and adult) personalities that have developed because of the trauma. As will be explained, some of these person

alities have been developed by the victim as a response to dealing with the waves of abuse. And if the MPD is cult-related, some of the personalities actually have often been systematically formed by the cult as well.

With the inner child and with alter personalities, the task in recovery is basically the same-that is, nurturing them in a healthy fashion and supporting them through reliving that trauma.

Recognizing MPD

There are a number of classic signs for early detection of multiplicity.

According to Dr. Marita Keeling, one indication is when a person loses blocks of time he or she can't account for.

"A man, for instance, will lose some time during the day," said Dr. Keeling. "Several hours may have passed and he suddenly finds himself in a different place without knowing how he got there." (This can also happen in shorter or longer spans.)

As another example, a woman will come across an item in the house she can only assume she bought, but doesn't remember buying. The variations on this are endless.

During these times, what is happening is that one or several of the alter personalities have taken over and bought something, or driven somewhere.

"Or, and this can be quite embarrassing," said Dr. Keeling, "an acquaintance will come up and say hi, and the person has no recollection of that acquaintance, because it was originally through one of the alters that they met."

Over time, this gets more and more troubling and complex for the persons experiencing it. They often start to doubt their sanity.

"This starts to add to the problem," said Dr. Keeling; "because of the fears about sanity, a client sometimes doesn't readily offer the information that these lapses are going on."

In these cases, if Dr. Keeling has started to suspect multiplicity from other signs, she will sometimes confer with outside observers, such as spouses, about incidents they are seeing.

"Maybe a husband will tell me his wife is getting up at night and doing things, not remembering any of it in the morning," Dr. Keeling said. Or an outside observer will note the person is prone to extreme mood swings, and sometimes, for example, takes on the distinct persona of a little child or a recalcitrant teenager. Or maybe, if the person is generally quiet and shy, a personality will occasionally emerge that is bold and dynamic.

Besides worrying about their sanity, multiples are often merely too embarrassed to disclose this type of thing, or they simply don't consciously realize it's going on.

Another indicator of multiplicity is variable handwriting, distinctly different scripts at times.

"A person with MPD might get a check back with a monthly statement, and the signature on one of the checks is so different, the person thinks it may have been forged," said Dr. Keeling.

Also, many multiples will actually, at times, hear voices talking to them, sometimes voices that are very critical, even vile, depending on which alter is speaking. At other times the person will hear the alters talking back and forth to each other.

Because of this, Dr. Keeling said, it's been her experience that a lot of patients are misdiagnosed as having a psychotic disorder.

According to Holly Hector, misdiagnosed psychotic disorders in these types of cases include paranoid schizophrenia, bipolar disorders such as manic depression, and depersonalization (that is, actually being chronically out of touch with their physical/psychological functioning).

Because of all this, Ms. Hector said, multiplicity is currently referred to as the "hidden disorder."

"Family, friends, even therapists sometimes have a hard time believing it," she said.

As Ms. Hector also noted, research indicates that it takes an average of 6.8 years of therapy before multiplicity is diagnosed. (However, how fast this happens is also contingent on the type and consistency of therapy, and how much Twelve Step recovery or other support is being used.)

Tanya, a woman Ms. Hector had been treating in the trauma unit in Colorado, is a typical example. She had been in therapy, on and off, for seven years for schizophrenia and manic depression. A suicide attempt preceded her coming to the center.

During the evaluation process, Ms. Hector diagnosed multiplicity, and as her therapeutic rapport with Tanya grew, the rest of the "system" (alter personalities) began to surface.

Ms. Hector knew that this particular woman had a sports car and would often drive fast-90 miles per hour fast--on the freeways. When questioned about this during a session, the woman simply explained it away as one of the few "escapes" she indulged in.

Something in that explanation didn't jibe for the therapist. For the most part, Tanya demonstrated what therapists call flat affect--extremely flat affect. Which is another way of saying she wasn't animated in any way, her nature was quite depressive, and she showed little emotion or motivation. For a woman like this who isn't multiple, a radical "escape" might be to stay up an extra hour to watch a TV program she'd construed as risqué, like the "Arsenio Hall Show"--not to turn a Denver expressway into an autobahn.

Over time, through therapeutic empathy and acknowledging the alters, Ms. Hector, in effect, was giving the whole system permission to start to appear.

During one session, as Ms. Hector questioned the woman more about the driving, all of a sudden her eyes fluttered a bit, her facial countenance and expression changed.

"And up comes this bubbly, funny, actually hilarious person," said the therapist.

"I love to drive fast, fast, fast," said Gwen, a teenage sounding alter, in this fast-forward sort of falsetto. "I love it, just love it! And don't you try to get her to stop. Don't!"

Ms. Hector learned Gwen had been created so that the core personality could have fun, essential to keeping the human equilibrium.

Since Gwen was the first alter to surface distinctly, Ms. Hector asked her why she hadn't let Tanya know she was there, or that any of the other alters were there.

"Oh, we couldn't let her know," said Gwen, speaking for the rest of the alters as

well. "She would have thought she was crazy."

Ms. Hector said this is a common answer from alters early in therapy.

When alters come up, as described earlier by Dr. Keeling, many times they take over completely and the host loses blocks of time. BREAKING THE CIRCLE

Co-consciousness

Other times, there's a dynamic called co-consciousness, in which the alter will come up while the host, in effect, merely slips into the background, watching as a sort of third-party observer. And if the host person isn't aware of being multiple yet, she construes this as merely another part of her personality coming out, albeit, an uncharacteristic part or even what she sees as a "weird" part.

One reason for the co-consciousness is that the psyche sometimes allows this so the "birth person" doesn't lose some of those blocks of time, while continuing to believe the switches between alters are merely shifts in personality. The birth person simply is not ready to deal with multiplicity yet.

However, during the "discovery phase" in therapy, when the personalities are becoming more overt and pronounced, it is this same co-consciousness that helps the birth person then accept the multiplicity more easily, because she or he is able to watch, with new information, some of what's going on during the switch.

Another dynamic in all this is, the alters are often co conscious with each other as well as with the birth person.

"The alters are hypervigilant in order to be able to 'come up' instantaneously if there is any trauma," said Ms. Hector.

Also, an alter is able to come close to the surface, but sometimes not all the way out, just to transfer specific feelings to the birth person, such as anger or sadness.

Physiological Cues

Just before Gwen came up, Ms. Hector noted Tanya's eyes fluttered, which in some is a physiological cue that an alter is taking over. Other indicators include eyes darting back and forth rapidly, or eyes that will open extremely wide for a moment, then go back to normal. Other times the eyes will twitch or roll up into the head briefly.

Sometimes the change is subtle, almost imperceptible, while at other times it's very discernible.

Another obvious physical change is that the person's voice will change, sometimes slightly, sometimes radically. The mouth itself will actually sometimes change too, from what Ms. Hector described as a soft mouth to a hard one. That is, the lips will be drawn tighter.

"All this [physical change] isn't something someone could easily manufacture," said Ms. Hector, who has observed the changes in many clients.

As Ms. Hector built more trust with Tanya's system over time, memories of satanic cult ritual abuse started to surface as well, but not without a struggle.

Antagonistic Alters

As fragments of the abuse started to come to Tanya, and then through some of the alters,

another alter broke through abruptly during one session.

"YOU ARE A _____ JERK!" this alter screamed at Ms. Hector. "YOU'RE GETTING INFORMATION THAT WILL GET US KILLED! KILLED!"

This type of abrupt volatility is common, said Ms. Hector. And at these times she tries, to the best of her ability, to stay even and calm to avoid escalation.

In responding to this antagonistic alter, Ms. Hector will at first try to be as sympathetic as possible to the concern. She'll say something like: "You've been through a lot. It must be really hard for you. If it was me, I'd be scared too."

Bruce Leonard, M.D., Clinical Director at Columbine Psychiatric Center, Littleton, Colorado, takes a tack similar to Ms. Hector's when dealing with an antagonistic alter. Columbine has a program specifically for the treatment of people with dissociative disorders, including many people reporting satanic cult ritual abuse clients. (Dissociative disorders, such as MPD, are marked by amnesia and disconnected experiences of which a person is unaware.)

Dr. Leonard gave an example of an alter he had to deal with recently who had an extremely hardened personality. (This alter had been developed to deal specifically with any cannibalism the host had to participate in during the satanic ceremonies.)

The alter would burst out, challenging, shouting obscenities, glaring at him.

Dr. Leonard said he will first sit back and not respond to the hot anger, or the barbs either. He said he's come to know that the bravado and hostility of these alters is usually a cover for fear. And once that's played itself out, he tries to get the alter to talk about the trauma.

"I wonder what that must have been like for you [in this case, the cannibalism]?" Then Dr. Leonard will listen actively. (Listening actively is more than the stereotypical therapist's "unh-huh" at the appropriate places. It is regularly repeating back verbatim what the therapist has heard the client saying, and asking probing questions to get the client to elaborate more along his or her own train of thought, not necessarily where the therapist wants to direct the train of thought.)

After listening, Dr. Leonard tries to empathize as much as possible, and reassures the alter that he is not a perpetrator, and is not there to hurt him in any way.

"These [alter] personalities fully expect to be mistreated once they risk coming out," said Dr. Leonard, because in the past their trust was constantly being betrayed.

Based on his experience, Dr. Leonard advises bypassing dealing with the antagonistic personalities as much as possible in the early phases of working with the system, until there is an alliance built with the whole system.

Building Trust with Alters

Ms. Hector also makes every effort to assure the alters she's not a perpetrator. "I'd never do anything to hurt you purposely," she often says.

She said the child alters especially want to believe this. However, again, because their trust has been betrayed so often, systematically building an emotional bridge is hard.

In starting to build this bridge or alliance, Ms. Hector will often say something empathetic, like, "It's good you don't trust just anybody. And it's probably because you have been hurt by so many people. I'd be guarded too."

This often begins a new orientation because the latter statement isn't what a typical cult member would say at all.

Instead of just hearing the words, Ms. Hector tells the victim to watch her behavior

toward them over time. And she, in turn, tries to remain as consistent and caring as possible.

However, inevitably there will be a time when she isn't able to call back right away, or is late for a session. And because a cult survivor is typically hypersensitive to even a hint of what they imagine to be betrayal, they will sometimes lapse into a temporary nontrusting stance.

porary nontrusting stance.

"You said you'd call back right away, and you didn't," Ms. Hector said she will hear in suspicious, frustrated tones sometimes. "You said you weren't going to hurt us, but you did!"

This is when Ms. Hector reiterates what she had said earlier about never "purposely" trying to hurt them, which is often enough to begin to appease the system.

Cult Mock Therapy Sessions

To give another indication of how cunning and thorough satanic cult members are, some of Ms. Hector's clients have had memories of mock therapy sessions in which a cult member posed as a therapist. Then, while the victim relaxed into a regressive state, or carried out a visualization technique, the cult members abused the victim in some way, sexually perhaps, or through electric shock.

This staging was designed to set up an internalized distrust of any therapist who later might help the person remember.

"These people are extremely smart, extremely advanced," said Ms. Hector.

Dr. Leonard corroborated the stories of mock therapy stagings by cult members. He said he has to be very careful, for instance, in doing imaging with a client during a session, because victims recount being hypnotized or drugged by cult members, then taken through guided imagery, then being tortured or sexually abused.

Within the context of the cult mock therapy session, some words become trigger words for the victim. Ms. Hector said she is very careful to note responses to words like "relax," or "have faith," or "you'll heal." Sometimes because the abuse was going on while the cult member was repeating these words, if some victims hear them in session, they begin to dissociate.

In such instances, a therapist can actually be talking to the birth person, or an alter, for a while before realizing that "they have gone away," said Ms. Hector.

"It's like talking to an empty shell," said Ms. Hector, who then will begin to talk to the alter who has taken over. She will emphasize that it is important that the birth person, or the alter who is "up," complete the specific therapeutic work being dealt with. And she reminds the alter who has taken over of the contract she has made with the system: that when she's working with another part of the system another alter can't spontaneously take over like that. At this point the alter is generally fairly cooperative.

Early in the process, Ms. Hector said she establishes ground rules against persecuting alters damaging the office or physically accosting her. She also said it's important to give the system a right to rules, such as contracting with them that, if they are frightened, they have the right to end the session at any time.

A Memory Breakthrough

Ms. Hector had been working with Tanya's system awhile when the ritual abuse memories

started to break through.

The first memory was about a snake.

Tanya had a fragmented flashback to a snake. That was all. But it stayed on her mind, and she would try to journal about it. And it kept bothering her to the point that Ms. Hector began to look to another part of the system to bring back the rest of the memory. This was done by simply telling the system it was okay to remember now.

Tanya was around five years old. She was being held down during one of the ceremonies. A snake was placed near the inside of her leg, and it gradually slithered up her body, eventually wrapping part of itself around the young child's head, as cult members stood amidst candles all about, chanting.

Later, a cult member placed an axe in Tanya's hands, and she was ordered to first chop the snake's head off and then chop up other parts of it. Finally, he forced her to eat part of it.

One of the child alters related the story while Tanya, in this case, maintained consciousness.

"I heard me talking and I wanted to stop, but I couldn't make myself stop talking," Tanya would say later. If an alter has been with the birth person practically a lifetime, the alter feels very much a natural part of the person.

Other times, Ms. Hector said, the alter will come up to tell the rest, or all, of a particular memory, and the therapist will have to recount the whole thing to the host later.

Because not all of these memories come directly to the birth person, Ms. Hector suggests that they all be recorded in a journal as well, so that a consistent pattern starts to appear for the client. This also makes the reality of the abuse that much more tangible for the victim.

According to Ms. Hector, some therapists working with multiplicity don't see it as a "disorder" because, in reality, it functions to keep someone safe—from a hostile environment, or from a psychotic breakdown. Again, these therapists see it instead as a "syndrome" and refer to it as simply MP, to clarify misconceptions about the condition.

Satanic Alters

As in the case of other antagonistic alters, satanic alters can play havoc with the system and the recovery process.

A satanic alter is also commonly referred to as an enforcer, evil introject, or satanic introject.

According to Ms. Hector, there are several ways these alters are formed.

The first way is sometimes referred to as a "cult split." That is, the cult intentionally creates the alter (a "structured alter") in the victim in what can best be described as a highly sophisticated psychological technique.

First, the cult will evoke a dissociative state in the victim through scare tactics, torture, or some type of sensory deprivation (such as locking a victim in a dark space for an extended period of time, and/or starving the victim).

When the victim has reached the dissociative state, a cult member will actually call forth a new alter, name it, and tell him/ her which demon they belong to.

"It's a calculated, methodical split," said Ms. Hector, "designed to bring about total control of this alter."

These alters are given specific tasks. One alter, for example, may be assigned to bring a person back to the cult later in life. Another may be designated to commit suicide if

the system starts to get close to the memories.

Cult-created alters often won't give their names early in therapy-sometimes never-because they were led to believe there is power in the names, Ms. Hector noted.

However, as therapeutic trust builds, some do reveal the names. In the interim, Ms. Hector merely assigns new names to them. "And, interestingly, they almost always come up to that new name when they are called," she said. The other way a satanic alter is formed is by the victim, for a number of reasons. For one, the victim will create a personality to carry out terrible tasks of killing or of skinning the sacrifice, or, if forced to, of having to choose who will be sacrificed.

Also, as the victim is being brutalized himself, he will unconsciously create a (satanic) personality to match the aggressiveness of the perpetrators. "Although difficult to deal with early in therapy, these types of personalities are understandable to me," said Ms. Hector. "You aren't going to create Mickey Mouse to protect you from evil people."

One thing these victim-created alters (or "reactive alters") will do early in therapy to wrench the process is to shout rebellious obscenities at the therapist, or they may try other intimidating stunts.

"I can't tell you how many of them have come up, glared at me with this really sinister look, and bellowed something like 'I AM LUCIFER,'" said Ms. Hector. "Later, as they move along in therapy, they will say something like 'Oh, I was just trying to scare you.'"

”

Ms. Hector said these victim-created alters are a lot easier to get used to than the cult-created alters, because you can quickly see this personality is merely hiding, say, a frightened six-year-old. These alters, too, said Ms. Hector, are a lot easier to sway about going from the "dark side" to the "good side."

Both the survivor and the therapist need to honor these parts (satanic alters), because without these parts, said Ms. Hector, the survivor probably wouldn't have made it either physically or psychologically.

These parts, in effect, had to learn to like the rituals, almost as an acquired taste. Ms. Hector said a satanic alter will come up, bold, sinister, and blurt out something like, "I LIKE TO KILL!"

And, in turn, Ms. Hector will respond with something to the effect of, "Good for you," with sincerity. "If I was forced to have to do it [kill] I guess I'd learn to like it too."

She always tries to thank satanic alters for what they did, because their actions probably saved the system. Used to feeling chastised, a satanic alter will be thrown off and will often, even usually, respond positively. All this goes a long way toward building a necessary rapport with the alters.

There are other things to be aware of with satanic alters. Some are programmed, for instance, said Ms. Hector, to commit

suicide if the memories start coming up. And the suicide can come any number of ways. The alter can take over the system and drive off a cliff, slash the wrists, take a drug overdose, whatever.

As these destructive alters surface, it's important to try to negotiate suicide prevention contracts with them, similar to the contracts mentioned earlier. With some alters, said Ms. Hector, this won't be possible, but intensive work with the birth person around this issue and the rest of the system often works to defuse this.

Another function of a satanic alter is to simply cause the person to bleed if she or he gets close to the memories and to talking about them. This can be the genesis of cult survivors' self-mutilation. Seeing the blood will often trigger the victim back into silence.

Sometimes, said Ms. Hector, the host person will actually "come to," so to speak,

find the laceration, and be unaware that the alter has actually drunk the blood. (Again, the cult actually believes there's power in the blood.)

Some of the satanic alters, Ms. Hector said, are specifically designated to keep the person as far away from Christ as possible (see chapter 2).

A survivor might be heading for a church or a Christian bookstore, for example, and all of a sudden turn up across town from either place.

Another simply amazing thing, said Ms. Hector, is that the survivor may be back in a cult without actually knowing it. That is, one of the satanic alters takes over and continues to attend the ceremonies, either on a "dabbler" level, or even back in the mainstream of a hard-core transgenerational cult, perhaps even back in the original cult.

A person who is totally amnesic to the alter will know nothing about the involvement.

The cult involvement, however, said Ms. Hector, often becomes apparent in therapy. And while a therapist can tell the alter not to go back anymore, "it's pretty difficult to get them to stop until the internal parts of the system tangibly see the power of God."

Ms. Hector notes that, from reports she's heard, the cults are especially careful with the victims they detect as not fragmenting into alters. If child victims do not dissociate consistently, they often become afflicted with any number of major psychotic disorders. Those children, said Ms. Hector, are at risk because they may reveal the secrets. And these are the ones, often, who are killed. They will be reported as missing children. Or there will be staged accidental deaths, such as drownings or car accidents. Or a ritual will be carried out, including torture and ultimately the child's death.

MPD Integration

For survivors who are multiple, one of the keys to recovery is of ten to achieve some measure of integration. This, too, can happen on a number of different levels.

Dr. Keeling said one level is to achieve a functional group relationship among the personalities. That is, the host and the alters learn to communicate and negotiate as a team.

As an example, the child personalities are often just interested in playing all day, while the adults often like to work all the time, or follow "adult" pursuits.

When a person is in a continual work mode, for example, in rebellion, one of the child alters might take over one day at work, said Dr. Keeling, and begin talking the equivalent of baby talk to the boss.

The negotiated compromise here, as a person moves along in recovery, would be to work, say, eight hours, then reserve at least a couple of hours a day for some sort of play with the child alters.

As multiples keep working on these kinds of compromises, the alter personalities' distinctive traits begin to blur, until one day the therapist can't differentiate anymore, said Dr. Keeling. And after a while longer, the blurring gets to the point where the person can't tell either.

Dr. Keeling said this blurring typically happens in increments over time. That is, a block of five personalities may blur into one. And then another five. And then those that are left start to blur with the host.

Ms. Hector said she consistently sees basically the same process toward integration. She explains that moving the alters toward integration essentially means supporting them through all their past work. That is, the release of the memories, the repressed feelings, and resolution work around anger, fear, para

noia, and the cognitive distortion that is still going on in the present.

An example of distortion could be, for instance, the perception that God is going to rape them if they start praying, since they had been raped during ritual stagings.

"Why do you think that?" Ms. Hector will ask.

Often at this point, the rape memories will surface. And again, it will be explained to the alter that it wasn't God, but rather a cult member disguised as God. This can be reinforced by reviewing instances when the cult had lied about other things as well.

"This work entails a lot of unraveling of distortion, and then the rebuilding of truth," said Ms. Hector. Because this isn't an overnight process, some stopgap measures need to be employed to begin to combat any sabotaging. For instance, said Ms. Hector, just before a person is to go to church or, say a Twelve Step meeting, there will be mystifying local paralyzation of an arm or the legs--or again, all of a sudden a person will end up far from the original destination, unable to remember how she or he got there.

Using the analogy of a mansion, Ms. Hector will tell the sabotaging alters that they have a right to still be afraid and rebellious. However, at the same time, the system has a right to go to church or to a self-help meeting and it is advised that during this time alters simply have the right to go to their rooms and not participate. This usually works because offering them an option, instead of trying to force them, empowers them.

Ms. Hector said it isn't unusual to discover anywhere from several to a whole crowd of "parts" in someone with a multiple personality disorder. However, a therapist will usually have to do intensive therapeutic work with a relatively small percentage of these.

"For instance, if you ask an alter what his/her job was and the reply is 'one of the keepers of the secrets,' you know this is the alter you're going to be dealing with," she said.

Often alters' jobs might have been just to hide emotionally, with eyes closed, during some of the ceremonies. In these cases, there's not much trauma attached to these fragments and no significant resolution work needs to be done.

Ms. Hector said that over time it becomes quite apparent which alters need to be worked with intensively. When there's a question, if you simply ask the system directly, she said, it is usually fairly cooperative about offering the information about which one needs work.

During this phase, it is also important that the birth person do a substantial amount of reparenting with the system. Ms. Hector said she has her clients consistently affirm the system with healthy, loving messages. This can be done tangibly- holding stuffed animals, or doing mirror work with affirmations.

In addition, she has the birth person specifically reassure the system that she/he will do everything in his/her power to keep the system safe. One of the ways to facilitate this type of communication is to have an imaginary room in the imaginary house-a board room, if you will-that has been supplied with a bulletin board or chalk board, where messages are posted.

Another dynamic that's important to be aware of is that there may be varying degrees of resistance throughout-sometimes really strong-to integrating. The alters actually see it as death.

"I don't want to die. I won't get to play anymore, read my books," Ms. Hector said she may hear.

She explains to the alters that integration is not like death, but rather the merger of "two good things." She also reassures them that the alters who have done it are now, in effect, all copresent and have reached a wholeness they could never achieve separately.

She stresses there will be no more power struggles, no more arguing about who's "up."

One phenomenon Ms. Hector has observed is spontaneous integration. That is, she tries to call up an alter, and another alter explains he/she has merged with that alter, and they're now experiencing and feeling the same things.

While sometimes this type of integration is inevitable, Ms. Hector said she will often try to discourage spontaneous integration so that final grief work can be done: grief work around the system losing the distinct personalities, and grief work also for the therapist.

"It's just like terminating with any other type of client," said Ms. Hector.

Sometimes the integration will happen prematurely. Either there will be spontaneous integration or the longer termination process, and another memory might come up involving the alter, and the alter will fragment back out.

Another dynamic to be aware of is that some victims actually don't want to integrate, said Dr. Keeling. She explained that these host personality types are usually quite isolationist and enjoy the company of the alters.

Ms. Hector also has seen this and said she tries not to get into a power struggle about forcing integration in these cases. She said the main focus of MPD therapy is increasing the level of functionality and decreasing the level of crisis. And as this happens in the course of a natural progression, integration takes place on its own.

Ms. Hector said that victims who are multiples also worry about losing the parts of their personalities that function at work, take care of the children, or perform other roles. To diminish these fears, Ms. Hector continues to repeat the refrain about everyone being co-present, that no one gets lost in integration.

One dilemma for some therapists working with MPD, Ms. Hector said, is actually finding the birth person. That is, the system may be set up to protect the person constantly from the therapist as well.

While this may be somewhat unsettling for the therapist at first, said Ms. Hector, this basically needs to become a "nonissue."

In other words, in this case it's important to just keep working with the system and finally the birth person will emerge. Eventually, the system always releases the secret.

Assuming the Persona of Another

According to Ms. Hector, some therapists are seeing another phenomenon: during some of the trauma in a ceremony, a survivor may sometimes actually assume the personality traits of another person involved in the ceremony. And this personality will also stay with the system.

(A simple analogy to this psychological "borrowing" from another personality would be going to a movie and taking on the personality of an actor or actress-viewing *Casablanca* and assuming Bogart's speech or mannerisms, for instance, or *Pretty Woman* and "becoming" Julia Roberts.)

In contrast to cases of multiple personalities, even though this "borrowed" personality is often displayed in the system and can interact with alters, it is not an inherent part of the system.

Ms. Hector said many would just look at this as another BREAKING THE CIRCLE

alter personality. However, the personality itself will often admit to not being an inherent part of the system, and therapists have been consistently successful in releasing this "part" when it comes up, as opposed to trying to integrate it.

Ms. Hector said these personas usually identify themselves as, for instance, a cult member who has been sacrificed, or a child who has been sacrificed.

The therapist said that once these parts are found and identified, with not much prompting they will describe and do feeling work around some of the specific trauma they were exposed to. For instance, a sacrificed child persona will describe the act of sacrifice in detail, reliving the pain and horror step by step.

There are a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon. Within the cult ceremonies, Ms. Hector said some of their clients have described "transference" rituals. That is, just as a child or adult is being sacrificed, the cult will tell the victim that he/she can choose to have his/her "spirit" enter another person in the room, as a way of "staying alive." (By having the additional preprogrammed spirit in one of the other victims who is to live, the cult actually believes they will be able to exercise even more control over this person-as they believe they can over cult-created satanic alters.)

If that choice is made by the victim to be sacrificed, Ms. Hector said some of her clients report that the cult then goes into a chanting ritual, calling on Satan or other demons to effect the supposed transfer. Ms. Hector said the presence of these other "parts" in the system is so real to some survivors that they actually believe the spirit has been transferred, and they also report an overriding sense that the "spirits" of these people seem to somehow be trapped in this dimension, continuing to search for what they perceive would be some outlet for salvation of some sort.

In a related phenomenon, besides cult victims, occasionally these "parts" will actually identify themselves as, say, distant relatives from another century or even historical figures the person may have heard or read about.

Ms. Hector said one psychological theory for this phenomenon of borrowed personality is that a survivor, as a youth, watched a sacrifice. And, because of extreme survivor's guilt, the survivor unconsciously took on the personality of the sacrificed victim in order to somehow keep the victim protected inside and also alive, as the survivor perceives-so Satan, for instance, can't get to the victim. Or in another case, the transfer ritual may have seemed so real to the survivor and the consequences of not being able to demonstrate that he or she had taken on the "spirit" so dire, that the person actually, in effect, unconsciously forced himself/herself to take on the personality.

Again, it is counterproductive to try to integrate these borrowed personalities in any way. Instead, Ms. Hector said the therapeutic tactic is to release them. Once these parts have done their trauma work, Ms. Hector has developed a releasing ceremony to appease and bring resolution for the system. That is, good-byes are said between this personality (persona) and the alters, host, and therapist. Then this personality is presented with the opportunity of choosing Christ, or the "good side"-as the final part of the ceremony. Ms. Hector notes that if what seemed like a "borrowed" persona is actually an alter personality inherent to the system, it simply won't release.

MPD Integration: A Personal Story

Faith Donaldson had been in therapy on and off since 1979 for a variety of issues. In 1987 she had gotten to a point in recovery where fragments in the form of mini-flashes and repressed feelings around what would turn out to be satanic cult ritual abuse started to break through.

Her therapist, who had some experience working with satanic ritual abuse victims, recognized the symptoms and diagnosed the satanic ritual abuse. Shortly after that, he diagnosed Faith as having MPD as well.

Faith said over the years she was always aware that her mood swings and what she believed were just different parts of her personality were pretty pronounced. For example, she is an entrepreneur, and at almost any time she could "turn on" her extremely professional business acumen. Then, only a short time later, she could flip into consuming rage, or consuming fits of jealousy.

She didn't know what caused the extreme shifts, but continued to try to work on it in therapy. "One of my motivations was that I had children and I didn't want to hurt them with these swings," she said.

As therapy around the cult abuse progressed, the alter

personalities became more and more distinct. All told, thirty three alters emerged in Faith.

Gradually, each brought back pieces of the memories. However, Faith said this was an extremely hard process, because each time more memories were about to surface, the more the cult programming about not remembering, not talking, would invade the process.

"I had a very good therapist," said Faith. "He persistently and patiently just kept telling me, 'they lied to you, Faith, it's all right now to remember.'

"And the more I faced the memories, and the more I talked about them, the more I realized the cult wasn't coming after me to kill me, or coming to take me to hell."

Faith was exposed to a satanic cult growing up in a small town north of the Twin Cities in Minnesota. She is now living in Colorado. As a safety precaution, she chooses not to mention the name of her home town.

After a time, Faith decided to go public with her story, talking at ritual abuse seminars or on radio shows, and writing articles for several Colorado newspapers.

A short time after she began talking publicly-actually, after her first speaking engagement, she said-the final stage of the integration took place.

She was to give a talk at a seminar on ritual abuse at a local church. Just a few minutes before going on, she said the cult programming kicked in as if it were blaring over a loudspeaker in her head.

"YOU WILL NOT SPEAK! YOU WILL NOT DEFEY US!" Faith said she locked the door to a nearby restroom and shouted back: "YOU HAVE NO CONTROL OVER ME! NONE!" She then went out and did the talk.

The final integration took place only two weeks later.

"The reason they [the alters] were split was simply to protect me from the abuse and the memories," she said. "Once the memories were out in the open and there was no more threat, they realized they didn't have to do either anymore, and they integrated."

Faith said she hasn't had any threats or other forms of harassment as yet since going public.

Ms. Hector notes that Faith's integration process went fairly smoothly. Sometimes the integration takes much longer.

And, again, not everyone reaches full integration.

Besides talking publicly, Faith and two other cult survivors have formed a nonprofit national

organization, based in Colorado, to generate referral information, public training, treatment, and scholarship funds for survivors. The organization, JUSTUS Unlimited, is described in chapter 22.

18

DRUGS

Both child and adult victims of satanic cult ritual abuse report sometimes being abused with mind-altering drugs.

Drugs as Part of Ritual Abuse

The drugs are administered to the victims by cult members in a number of ways. According to Holly Hector, one of the most prevalent ways she consistently hears about from clients is with hypodermic needles. During the recovery process, victims will have body memories of needle pricks in such places as the arm or between the toes. Ms. Hector also said patients report remembering starting to feel dizzy and/or numb after being forced to drink urine or blood. Other times, the victim merely remembers being forced to take a drug orally under duress.

Re-experiencing a Drugged State

Sometimes, when clients are having such memories, they actually re-experience part of the drugged state. That is, besides reexperiencing the physical sensations, they will also experience cognitive distortion, where objects appear smaller, larger, or wavy, as if looking through convex or concave glass.

"The drugs are mainly used to make a victim more malleable about performing tasks during the ceremonies," said Ms. Hector. "And they also are used to make a person more passive and accepting of the reprogramming."

Dr. Bruce Leonard said, based on drug states described by ritual abuse patients he's worked with, the drugs used range from the likes of Benadryl, Valium, and other minor tranquilizers to strong opiates.

One ritual abuse patient at one point in her recovery was administered Thorazine, said Dr. Leonard, which triggered her remembering the exact feeling state during some of the ceremonies.

Ms. Hector said these drug-affected memories provide an other complication in the recovery process. Because these memories seem somewhat surreal, victims sometimes stay in denial longer about the abuse, trying to pass off the memories as hallucinations.

NEW MESSAGES

Because of the years of cult indoctrination, a survivor's perceptions have usually become distorted, skewed. A major part of the recovery process is to gradually reverse all this.

Messages for Survivors

Therapist Holly Hector has developed the following list of messages ritual abuse survivors need to hear as they progress during their recovery.

1. YOU DESERVE COMPLETE FREEDOM AND HEALING. You were brainwashed to believe you are worthless, incapable, and useless to anyone but the cult. These lies were to shatter any sense of self or break down any independence you might have and ensure your loyalty and eventual return. You are special, gifted, and worthy of health, of love, and of life as *you choose it*. Believe in yourself. Choose freedom. Choose healing.

2. YOU ARE *NOT* CRAZY. You were programmed to believe that if you told you would be called "crazy" and would be institutionalized forever. You are not crazy-the *world in which you lived was crazy!* You are having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Trust your truth.

3. YOU WILL NOT DIE FOR REMEMBERING OR TELLING. You were forced throughout extensive abuse, programming, and ritual work, to believe you would die if you remembered or told. This was to ensure your silence. The present threat may only be perceived-although it would be important to take as many precautions as necessary to safeguard against any harm. You must break the silence to aid in your healing.

through it, not *around* it, so that you can get to the other side of it and not be stuck running from your healing.

10. THE SHAME YOU MAY FEEL IS *NOT* YOURS.

The shame instilled in you by the humiliation and degradation is real, but-it is *not* yours. It belongs *only* to the perpetrators. It should not be your shame-give *it back to them*.

11. YOU SURVIVED WHAT FEW HUMANS COULD HAVE. HONOR THAT.

You employed resources from within that few people could develop or call on. Honor your survival. Honor your creativity. Honor your intelligence to cope and adapt. Take these gifts and redirect them into your healing process. You are more capable than most-believe it.

12. IF YOU SURVIVED THE ACTUAL EVENT, YOU CAN SURVIVE THE MEMORIES.

Often you will feel as though the reality of this will actually consume and destroy you. But remember you survived the event-employ your strengths to survive the memories and the healing.

13. IF (WHEN) YOUR BODY RESPONDED TO SEXUAL STIMULATION-HONOR THAT.

As children we have *natural, normal* physiological responses to sexual stimulation. This does not mean you chose or enjoyed the abuse. Release yourself from that guilt.

14. GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL *BAD* [to hurt emotionally]. As a child you had to lead a double life. You were expected to behave perfectly in school, in public, while you were being hideously abused in the cult. Allow yourself-NOW-to be okay with hurting emotionally. You deserve to feel bad.

4. EXPECT STRONG SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR DESIRES TO SELF-MUTILATE WHEN YOU REMEMBER.

5. NOTHING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU OR TO ANYONE ELSE WAS *YOUR* FAULT.

The torture, the pain, the sex, the killing-NONE of it was your fault, or your responsibility. You were told that you wanted it, chose it, and deserved it. This is a lie. You were an innocent victim who was not given any choices.

6. YOU ARE *NOT* A MURDERER.

All children of cults are forced to perpetrate (mentally, physically, sexually), even to murder. This is to ensure your silence and the belief that you are one of them, or "just like them." This is called "coercion to commit a crime" by law enforcement. You are NOT responsible-the real murderers are the cult members.

7. EVERY PERSON YOU MEET IS NOT A PERPETRATOR. You were systematically and calculatedly abused by a variety of people from a variety of professions and authority positions. This was to teach you not to trust anyone, ever. But not everyone is a perpetrator. It will be helpful to start slowly attempting to address the reasons and realities behind these trust issues.

8. DENIAL CAN BE EITHER HEALTHY OR UNHEALTHY.

A sense of healthy denial can be beneficial to put some distance between you and the horror. But denial can also be a powerful part of the programming to keep you from the truth. Work on not denying your truth-believe yourself. Remember: "You can't heal from what you can't feel."

9. BE PREPARED FOR BODY SENSATIONS (BODY MEMORIES) AND FLASHBACKS.

The body will give you pieces of the abuse (body memories) and the mind will also give you pieces of the abuse (flashbacks). You will feel out of control and feel like you are going crazy. You are not. Have a plan (written is best) for this part of the healing process. And try to travel *BREAKING THE CIRCLE*

SUPPORTING THE SURVIVOR OF RITUAL ABUSE

For therapists and others concerned with these victims, Holly Hector has these suggestions:

DOs...

- DO validate their pain
- DO reinforce that they are not crazy
- DO believe in them. They don't need skepticism; discrediting them plays right into the cult's programming.
- DO remind yourself and them that they need to honor and respect their own survival, even if it included dissociation or fragmentation.
- DO remember healing is *a process*, not an *event*. It will take a lifetime of support and love.
- DO remember it will take courage, support, and commitment from everyone involved to heal from this level of trauma.
- DO learn to *listen-not* advise, criticize, or ignore, but *listen*.
- DO remember survivors learned to lie and manipulate to *stay alive*.

- DO remember it's not the falling down that counts, but the getting back up.
- DO remember survivors were taught "opposite truths." (Bad is good, good is bad; right is wrong, wrong is right; etc.)
- DO find your own support group, therapy, etc. You may need a place to vent your fears, anger, pain, frustrations.
- DO remember Jesus Christ has won the victory over satan. His death and resurrection have sealed the victory. His shed blood has given eternal life. What the cult teaches about satan's dominion over Christ is a lie.

(Ms. Hector is Christian and uses this with counseling clients who profess to being open to the same spiritual belief. However, as explained under the DON'Ts [below], she in no way pushes her beliefs on clients, but instead allows for those who don't believe in Christianity to draw on whatever "good side" spiritual strengths they feel protected by and comfortable with.)

DON'Ts ...

- DON'T offer pat answers (like pray more, read the Bible more, forgiveness-these may come in time).
- DON'T try to "fix" survivors-instead, support, honor, nurture, and love.
- DON'T shove God [on them]. They have been tortured and brutalized with the concepts of God. They need to be slowly loved into the truth-not battered, or you will reproduce the cult experience.

20 DEMONS: REAL OR IMAGINED

Another subject that needs to be brought up here, because it of ten proves to be a block to survivors getting in touch with cult memories, is demons. This chapter presents a range of views on the subject of demons, by victims, witnesses, and clinicians.

A significant number of satanic cult victims report having memories of seeing supernatural manifestations of demons, satan, and the phenomenon of possession with their perpetrators.

During the cult ceremonies, part of the prayer ritual is to call up demons and satan, as Christians call for Christ during a prayer meeting. And as some supernatural phenomena are said to happen in Christian prayer meetings, so they are reported in satanic cult ceremonies as well.

This is a significant enough dimension for the Los Angeles County Ritual Abuse Task Force to have included in their booklet *Ritual Abuse* a section on "Demons and Evil Spirits." Part of it reads:

... spiritual beings who are evil and ruled by Satan. According to Christian tradition, they are angels who shared in Satan's rebellion and were expelled with him.

Ritually abused children and adults are victimized at rituals which invoke such beings. Victims report believing that perpetrators of ritual abuse possess control over these spiritual entities. Some victims are made to believe that these spirits have power to control the victim's life. For some, the fear of being controlled by them is more oppressive and debilitating than the fear of the perpetrators themselves. BREAKING THE CIRCLE

Because they are so prevalent, the stories from those who report seeing such demons and appearances of satan are hard to overlook. Whatever a reader of this book may believe about such supernatural phenomena, victims' reports must be respected and dealt with on a clinical- as well as a human-level.

A cult victim in the Cleveland ritual abuse Twelve Step group reported having a memory of being in a room crawling with snakes as a young child. She talked of a cult member forcing a small snake partially down her throat (reportedly a common form of satanic ritual abuse). Then, later, all the snakes in the room seemed to meld into one huge snake hovering over her, and emitting what seemed to her like "so much hate ... I just knew it was satan," she said. "I don't know how else to explain it."

Some therapists would believe the huge snake was merely a "metaphor" the woman was using unconsciously to explain the horrible trauma she was experiencing. Actually, some therapists believe the whole satanic cult memory phenomenon is a metaphor for other kinds of more ordinary abuse, like systematic beatings, or incest, or emotional torture of some sort. (When I say "ordinary abuse," I in no way want to diminish the significance of the effect of *any* abuse.)

Another reaction by others to the "huge snake" memory is that it is an image caused by hallucinogenic drugs cult victims are sometimes given before the ceremonies, not only to

enhance the experience, but also to make the victims more malleable. In *People of the Lie*, Scott Peck, M.D., writes of being involved in two carefully planned exorcisms that included priests, psychologists, and medical workers. During one exorcism, Peck noted seeing the reportedly possessed woman's head actually change into the head of a huge snake, with hooded reptilian eyes. The head would dart forward trying to menace the team, and would hiss and talk threateningly to them, apparently in an attempt to get them to back down. Peck also wrote that he believed that, in this case, it was satanic possession, as opposed to possession by more minor demons.

What's interesting to note is that Peck talks about sensing the "years of hate" in this creature-the same level of overwhelming hate, perhaps, that the child from Ohio felt.

Another widely read author, Malachi Martin, wrote the book *Hostage to the Devil* documenting five specific cases of possession. In this book he, too, describes at length supernatural phenomena connected with possession. There are substantial and distinctly different voices. Also strong feelings of what seemed to be hatred emanated from her. All these observations are consistent with other accounts of possession.

What I found extremely intriguing was that a priest who had been working all through the process, said that, at one point, one demon, through the girl, was able to talk about places the priest had been during the prior week, places the girl would have no way of knowing about.

Some say that, if this type of demonic power exists, it may be easier to understand how satanic cult atrocities have been kept so secret for so long, given the seemingly heightened ability to know the whereabouts of authorities at any given time-or, for that matter, the power to influence authorities.

Another dynamic of this demon phenomenon is the seemingly possessed person's inability to remember what happens once the demon actively takes over, for example, during parts of the cult ceremony. Is it like an alcoholic blackout? That is, the person continues to function, but doesn't remember? Or is it similar to what happens with some incest perpetrators, who, like some victims, sometimes suppress the memories of the incestuous acts? It is interesting to note that the woman in the "20/20" piece said she had no recollection of the exorcism once the demons seemed to take over and began battling with the exorcism team.

Demonic Imagery

A ritual abuse victim in Ohio reports having a memory of coming face to face with a demon as a child. This woman had been in therapy a couple of years, working through some extreme sexual abuse issues, and had recently begun having flashbacks to satanic cult abuse that included her family, neighbors, and the family doctor, who was also the high priest of the cult.

One day during this time, while seated in the first row of church, the woman glanced down at the carpet in front of her pew. In the carpet, she saw a vision of a baby crying, then what appeared to be hideous looking gargoyles biting and clawing at the baby. She watched transfixed, but didn't understand the significance.

Later that week, she had a flashback to watching a baby being tortured and killed by cult members during one of the cer

emonies. She felt that the image of gargoyles in the church may have been God showing her that these particular cult members were possessed by demons as well.

Then later in the month, the woman had another flash back. She was a child of,

maybe, six. She was in a dark cave-she believes it was in the Medina, Ohio, salt mines, just south of Cleveland.

In the memory, she was pushed up against the cave wall, terrified. There was a surreal eye pressed up against one of her eyes. As the memory progressed, and her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she could make out a "hideous looking creature" that somewhat resembled the gargoyles in the carpet. After a time, she said, the creature backed away, and was walking about the cave chewing on what appeared to be human flesh.

"This thing definitely wasn't human. I was so afraid, so afraid," she said. "And the stench coming from it was almost unbearable."

She said the cult she was exposed to would sometimes use isolated outdoor areas like salt mines or woods as settings for the ceremonies-a practice reportedly consistent with many cults.

This woman, who now lives in Massachusetts, has started one of the first Ritual Abuse Anonymous meetings in that state. She has also begun to write about her experiences, and is an accomplished artist. She has periodically drawn, or painted, depictions of different aspects of her recovery process, including some of the cult memories.

The Demon Phenomenon: Some Explanations

According to therapist Holly Hector, the demon phenomenon actually may be explained along a continuum.

First, some of the demonic imagery could be caused by hallucinogens.

Second, she said she has heard a number of survivor stories indicating that some of the demon imagery is staged. That is, cult members will ceremoniously call up demons in mock prayer rituals, then one cult member or several members will appear dressed as hideous demons and attempt to scare the victims.

At the end of these staged productions, the disguises often come off in front of the children, with a disclaimer like "just fooling you."

"For a while, this made no sense to me," said Ms. Hector, who in the course of her extensive experience has come to believe that demons exist and actually do manifest themselves during some of the ceremonies. Yet, she related, when she first started working in the field, she adamantly believed demons didn't exist, and that demon images were the result of hallucinogenic drugs, or simply imaginative metaphorical contrivances. "I used to talk about this in all the seminars at first," she said.

However, as she further contemplated the reports of stagings it occurred to her that the stagings were possibly being used as part of the brainwashing, a way to keep the demon phenomenon secret. By watching the stagings, then seeing them as a ruse, if victims did see actual demons, they would become confused as to their authenticity.

And later in life, if they ever got close to these memories, they again would be confused as to what they saw. "Gee, maybe it was all just staging. People are going to think I'm psychotic if I actually talk about seeing real demons. Maybe I did just see the staging."

Another brainwashing technique is to tell victims that if they ever talk about any of the abuse, they will be seen as psychotic and get locked away.

Diagnosis through Drawings

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways to diagnose early whether a victim has been exposed to demonic stagings or, for that matter, the possibility of actual demons, is to pay attention to

drawings they do about more general family abuse- drawings done in a therapeutic setting.

For example, when asked to draw something representative of Dad's alcoholism and/or physical abuse, a client may picture a scene with Dad standing over a child. The father may be raging, with a club or other weapon raised in his hand. However, in the swirl of other imagery in the background, there may be, for example, either a small or a looming drawing of demonic shapes or heads with sneering expressions.

The victim often consciously writes off this type of background imagery as merely his or her own way to accentuate the

horror of the abuse. But it's becoming apparent with some people who have dissociated to a degree during the drawing that the unconscious has taken over and depicted what the victims apparently saw as children: demons.

If Ms. Hector suspects satanic abuse or, for that matter, other types of abuse, but the person has yet to get to any memories, she will have the client do some drawing with the non-dominant hand. This is a method used by many therapists.

"The technique has a tendency to get a person into the unconscious quickly," said Ms. Hector.

Ms. Hector said she has seen the gamut of cult imagery in these drawings over the years-blood, knives, sabres, coffins, candles, circles, hooded figures ...

In the initial stages of therapy for cult abuse, the cult imagery is often vague and only a small part of the picture. However, as therapy progresses, the cult imagery in the drawings becomes progressively larger and more pronounced.

There is one exception to this process that Ms. Hector has noticed with a number of her clients. Sometimes early on in therapy, the cult imagery is not only vivid and looming, but also quite detached and graphic. In clients with multiple personality disorder, Ms. Hector attributes this to alter personalities who, at times, can take over when the person is drawing. She surmises that alter personalities, as a rule, do want to be acknowledged. And clues like these become a way for them to move closer to the surface.

Reactions to Supernatural Films and Literature

Another way to help gauge whether individuals were exposed to demons or demonic stagings early in therapy is to explore their reactions to movies or literature that include forms of evil supernatural phenomena. How did they react to *The Omen* or *The Exorcist*? (Incidentally, William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* is supposedly based on the true story of a young girl.) Is the person thrown into a state of panic when reading about or watching these? Can the person watch them at all? If not, why not?

Movies like *The Omen* and *The Exorcist* have some overt violence, but the scare component lies more in the supernatural phenomena. So if some clients are reacting with panic attacks instead of "normal" levels of fear, there just may be a connection to

their seeing evil supernatural phenomena or supernatural stagings somewhere in the past. In other words, on an unconscious level, it may be more than a movie to these people.

These clues become more and more helpful in formulating therapeutic strategies.

Another dynamic that Ms. Hector has observed somewhat frequently is that, as a satanic cult victim moves further into the therapeutic process, the fearful or even phobic reactions to these types of movies or literature increase proportionately. Most psychotherapy processes are designed to gradually dismantle defenses that have been hiding feelings and memories. And as the defensive walls come down, the intensity of reactions and feelings increases.

Ms. Hector said clients may express bemusement in this phase, that is, before the

memories have surfaced. "I didn't used to have such *strong* reactions to these types of movies ... or to the color red ... or to being around knives ... or . . . "

It's also important to note here that some cult victims are actually drawn to, if not obsessed by, movies depicting demons and other supernatural phenomena. They also may be drawn to slasher films and what the porn industry refers to as "snuff" films, said Ms. Hector. (Snuff films purport to show actual acts of torture and murder.)

Ms. Hector attributes the fascination to alter personalities that actually had to learn to *like* the torture and murder they were forced to participate in.

"They had to learn to like blood, the killing, if they were to survive," said Ms. Hector.

Because cult imagery, whatever the source, is so prevalent, it's a good bet that victims will at times be triggered by it, and in many cases construe that they are under some form of supernatural attack. No matter what a therapist's spiritual belief is, it is often therapeutically integral not to discount the fear, but to acknowledge it and allow the victim to talk about it.

Beyond this, it is advisable in a therapeutic sense to suggest that victims begin to make more concentrated efforts to turn to a "Power" that can prove stronger than any evil power. For some, that power becomes the collective strength of the Twelve Step ritual abuse group, along with therapists and other parts of a support network.

Likewise, at this stage, many victims also make a more concerted and consistent effort at what the Twelve Steps term "conscious contact" with a Higher Power. That is, victims will spend more time in prayer and other spiritual pursuits. If the victim has a formal religious affiliation, increased involvement with church activities is also encouraged.

Efforts in these areas often help to begin to counteract the fear, giving victims-as well as their inner child and any alter personalities-a sense of protectedness that will allow them to move closer to the specific memories.

Demons Exorcised (so to speak)

Demons, either real or perceived, need to be dealt with during the memory period, when victims begin to recall their past traumas.

Dr. Bruce Leonard at the Columbine Center said it is an issue that has come up consistently when dealing with satanic cult ritual abuse survivors. He tries to maintain as neutral a stance as possible with his patients as to whether demons actually exist on a supernatural plane or not.

"If that's what they [the victims] believe, it's important to acknowledge it," he said, explaining that discounting the patient's reality in this case erodes trust and is counterproductive.

One theory Dr. Leonard has developed is that some of the demons may be imagery, metaphors for abusive acts the victims were, at times, forced to perpetrate. And since the victims can't deal with the actual, physical act, they unconsciously create a hideous demon of some sort to represent the act-because it can't be blocked out altogether.

If, for example, a victim at age eight was forced to help stab a baby to death, since the memory is too horrible to live with, a horrible demon is created in the unconscious to represent the act. Later, in therapy, the existence of the demon will surface, and the victim will often then offhandedly want to simply reject it as a figment of imagination.

And if the act is uncovered, talked about, and processed that is, the memory and

repressed feelings around it are worked out-then there is reassurance that it was in no way volitional. And this type of demon is often "exorcised."

Interestingly, the older the person is when the act happened, the more ominous or hideous the demon appears to be. Dr. Leonard surmises that the older victims were when forced to carry out these deeds, the more guilty they will feel remembering

them, since they believe that they should have had more power in not participating in the abuse-as well as more power in getting out of the cult altogether.

Although Dr. Leonard does not attempt in any way to modify a person's spiritual beliefs, he said he does, at times, try to help illuminate for victims the genesis of some of these beliefs.

He said survivors sometimes find themselves in "this eternal loop of hopelessness," feeling overwhelmed by what they perceive as an "undefeatable" supernatural dark side.

Besides helping them into their memories, then seeing some metaphor links, Dr. Leonard also helps them discern what demonic occurrences were staged by cult members. The demonic stagings are done to further intimidate the victims and are incorporated into the ongoing mind-control scheme. That is, victims are told they will be watched by the demons throughout the rest of their lives for any form of betrayal.

An example of one of these apparent demonic stagings happened with a survivor Dr. Leonard was working with. The survivor had been plagued by what she perceived as a quite haunting demon. And during treatment she had a memory of being married to a "beast," followed by satan supposedly rising through the floor to consummate the marriage.

As the fragments of the memory were fitted together and analyzed, it became apparent that the "beast" was actually the girl's uncle wearing some sort of demonic costume, including a phallic device that was used to rape the girl. (She was eight years old at the time.) But because the girl couldn't deal with the reality of her uncle being a satanic perpetrator, her unconscious reinforced the belief that the perpetrator had been a demon.

As for satan rising through the floor, another costumed cult member created this illusion. What heightened the experience, Dr. Leonard surmises, were two other factors: she may have been given some type of hallucinogenic drug prior to the staging, and also, while she was being raped, she may, have had a dissociative, out-of-body experience, common to incest victims, POWs, and others who are severely traumatized. That is, she may have unconsciously "gone" to a place near the ceiling, watching from above, making the whole event that much more surreal-or supernatural-for her.

This is a protection mechanism, because the psyche of a little girl of eight usually can't handle the reality of the abuse without some sort of physical or psychiatric breakdown. And such a

breakdown could lead to screaming, crying jags, catatonic with drawal, or fainting-all reactions that could put a victim's life in danger during a ceremony.

"The mind is amazing, better than any computer," said Dr. Leonard. "It actually can project the unconscious all over like this [for instance, to the ceiling]."

Dr. Leonard also concludes that there is a range of possibilities to explain the demon phenomenon. He added that he is convinced it's not the therapist's place to try to convince a victim that demons don't exist, especially because many cult ceremonies are focused on calling up demons, in addition to directing these demons into some of the victims.

Because of this, he recommends that this subject be approached with as much objectivity as possible.

Ms. Hector agrees that demons exist for her clients on both of these levels-both as metaphors and as cult stagings.

However, Ms. Hector also believes in the existence of the supernatural realm. She

believes it was not only a factor during actual abuse, but that it remains a factor in therapy/recovery.

She believes in the phenomenon of possession both by satan and by demons. Her theory is that demons attach themselves (or enter a person) at the time of some trauma, attaching to the host personality, or the alter, or even to the actual trauma memory. However, in the case of victims, Ms. Hector believes the person isn't completely possessed, but rather that satan or the demon only has a "toehold," because the victim never specifically or volitionally invited the entity in.

Ms. Hector also said she believes that the supernatural phenomenon of demonic influence has accounted for much of the ultra sophistication of the brainwashing techniques, and the major reason it has been kept so covert for so long.

After working with satanic survivors and seeing things in therapy for which she had no other explanation, Ms. Hector has changed her original stance of believing demon appearances were always metaphors or stagings. For instance, while dealing with a child alter in therapy, she will often hear the child say something like: "It's really dark in here. I'm scared, really scared ..." (Ms. Hector explained that at this moment the child is still in the trauma, as if it were crystallized in time.)

If there is a demonic trauma, she will then hear something to the effect of "THE MONSTERS ARE GOING TO GET ME!!!" (Ms. Hector says the child alters often will call the demons monsters.)

Ms. Hector went through a similar scenario with one of Tanya's alters. Because she knew Tanya was a Christian, she got permission beforehand to call on Christ during the session.

Tanya's alter, Misty, was panicked and called out about a "monster."

"You need to feel safe, right?" Ms. Hector said as calmly as possible.

"NOTHING IS BIGGER THAN THE MONSTERS!" Misty repeated, still in a state of panic.

"Yes, there is, Misty. Jesus Christ is bigger, Misty," Ms. Hector said.

"DON'T YOU SAY THAT WORD [Jesus] AGAIN!" Misty screamed. "He hurt me!" (She was referring to stagings of Christ abuse- Tanya had been raped as a young child by a cult member dressed as Christ.)

Knowing some of the history, Ms. Hector repeatedly reassured Misty that the cult had lied. It wasn't Jesus who had hurt her- it was the cult.

"But why?" asked Misty, perplexed. "Why did they lie to me?"

Staying on a somewhat elementary level for Misty, Ms. Hector used an analogy.

"Pretend you were sick, Misty. And there was, like, a green pill you could take to get better. But instead they wanted you to stay sick. What would they do?"

"They'd hide it from me so I couldn't get well, or strong," she replied.

"Yes, and besides that, they might even tell you it's poisonous, to make sure you would never get to choose the good medicine, right?"

Ms. Hector then went on to tell Misty the cult members had done the same thing to her with Christ (the "good medicine"), and that Christ is really a power bigger than the monsters.

Misty then asked if she could somehow have Christ. Ms. Hector said that often the alters really want to believe, and want something they can really trust.

Her response to Misty was, all she had to do was ask Christ to come into her heart. Shortly afterward, Misty, apparently feeling safe, said, "There's light now. It's warm in here now."

Ms. Hector said that in every case (not most cases, but *every* case), when an alter personality has been asked to do this, the light and warm feeling is described.

What also may happen is that a child alter will describe the appearance of these "big white people" (angels). Because this has happened so frequently, if a child alter doesn't describe angels, Ms. Hector will say, "Ask Jesus to give you one." And, again, shortly thereafter, one usually shows up for the child alter. "Whether all this is a product of their imagination, or a supernatural phenomenon, I can't conclusively prove," said Ms. Hector. "But it sure always seems to work."

She said that a number of child alters have reported seeing angels-big angels extending up through the ceiling, with wings and swords, just as they are sometimes described in the Bible. Although she hasn't actually seen them, Ms. Hector said she believes they are there also. She also believes they have been protection for her while she's been carrying out this work.

Ms. Hector explained that, in spite of her own convictions, she does not force her spiritual beliefs on her clients. If a client does not come to her as a Christian, she accepts that, and instead will offer choices between the "good side" and the "bad side" at pivotal therapeutic points, as during the "monster" incident with Misty.

However, Ms. Hector argues that it is therapeutically sound and even essential for complete healing that, at some point, the survivor become emotionally free enough in recovery to choose or reject Christianity (as the opposite of satanism), because that choice has often been taken totally away from these survivors as children.