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**JOURNAL**

For survivors of ritual abuse, mind control and torture, and pro-survivors

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**Dear survivors, therapists treating surviving victims, support people and others:**

**In this issue we have articles by Randy and Pam Noblitt, Neil Brick and poetry by Dandelion.**

**This May we will be having our**

**Survivorship Ritual Abuse and Mind Control 2020 Conference**

**Regular Conference - Saturday and Sunday May 16 - 17, 2020**

**Clinician's Conference - Friday May 15, 2020**

**At The Reconnect Integrative Trauma Treatment Center, Pacific Palisades, CA**

**Conference information is at https://survivorship.org/ritual-abuse-and-mind-control-2020-conference/**

**Speakers Include: Dr. Randy Noblitt and Pamela Perskin Noblitt, Dr. Karol Darsa, Neil Brick and Cristina Mardirossian, LMFT**

**5 Common Mistakes in Trauma Treatment - Dr. Karol Darsa**

**Identifying the Personality Systems of Mind Control Survivors and Trauma Treatment - Cristina Mardirossian, LMFT**

**Extreme Abuse Survivors, Social Security Benefits, and Ethical Practice - Dr. Randy Noblitt and Pamela Perskin Noblitt**

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**How Do Survivors Physically Survive While Healing?**

**Randy and Pam Noblitt**

Survivors of extreme trauma frequently have uncontrollable and unpredictable symptoms of depression, anxiety, panic attacks, obsessive compulsivity, poor sleep, and dissociation of identity. Many also experience physical limitations due to co-existing medical issues and injuries that cause pain, fatigue, and malaise. These and other symptoms are generally incompatible with full time work, especially in our highly competitive working world where employers demand their employees maintain regular schedules, have few rest breaks or absences, meet quotas, get along with co-workers, supervisors and the public, concentrate for extended periods, and regularly tolerate the stressors common to all work. In California, our home state, the standard protections set by state statute is that workers are entitled to two 10-minute breaks and one 30-minute meal break per 8-hour shift. Anything in excess of these mandated breaks would, by definition, mean that the worker is not working an 8-hour workday and thus not a full-time, 40-hour a week job. Alternatively, survivors may attempt part-time work, but again, there is still a requirement to maintain a schedule, even a modified schedule, to perform duties cooperatively and in coordination with co-workers, meet quotas, and tolerate work stressors. By the same token, most part-time jobs are insufficient to fully financially support an individual. How is a person to survive while they do the hard work of recovery?

Some survivors are fortunate enough to have financial support from a spouse or partner, non-perpetrating family member, inheritance, trust, or savings. Others may not have these options, so it’s a good idea to explore alternatives that can help survivors support themselves and pay for treatment while they heal.

* State and Regionally Sponsored Resources
  + Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance is available to workers in many states but typically, the worker must apply for benefits within a few weeks of termination. Generally, the employee must have been fired or laid off to be eligible and the worker must agree to look for other work. The amount of the benefit is based on the worker’s past recent earnings. In California, the maximum monthly benefit for the highest wage earners is $900 a month provided in two equal payments of $450 each. The duration of benefits is based on the length of employment with a maximum of 6 months.

* + State Disability Insurance

Some states offer Disability Insurance (DI). It must be applied for within two-weeks of disability and verified by a treating physician or psychologist who completes a short form explaining the severity of the impairment. DI is based on the claimant’s earnings history. In California, beneficiaries can receive approximately 2/3 of their monthly salary or wages for up to one year.

* + County Mental Health Centers

County mental health centers can offer surprisingly good quality care. They are typically staffed by psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed professional social workers, and others and provide appointments and walk-in services.

* + State and County Health Clinics

These clinics can provide acute care, some specialist care, and other services.

* + Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Subsidized food assistance for low-income applicants.

* + Housing Assistance (Section 8)

Section 8 and other housing assistance is generally in short supply with long wait lists. Priority is given to women with infants and minor children, elderly and disabled.

* + Rape Crisis Centers

Survivors are frequently survivors of sexual violence, both past and currently. Rape Crisis Centers can offer counseling, medical care, emergency shelter, and other resources, depending on location.

* + Women’s Shelters

Available in most communities, these are generally havens for domestic violence victims including minor children.

* Federal Resources
  + Social Security Disability Insurance

For people who have worked within five years of becoming too disabled to work, SSDI can provide income and health insurance through Medicare. However, this can be a lengthy process taking up to two years for resolution.

* + Supplemental Security Income

SSI is available to people who have not worked within the past 5 years or who did not earn enough to pay into Social Security, and children. Recipients receive a small monthly income and Medicaid, or their state’s equivalent.

* + Veterans Administration

Free or low-cost healthcare, including mental health care, and other services are available to veterans of all uniformed military services discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

* Charitable and other Resources
  + Catholic Family Services

CFS may offer counseling, emergency financial aid, emergency housing, and referrals to Catholics and non-Catholics. The level of services is dependent on the resources of the community.

* + Jewish Family Services

JFS can provide counseling, emergency financial assistance, emergency housing, food assistance, transportation assistance, and referrals to Jewish and non-Jewish clients. The level of services is dependent on the resources of the community.

* + Salvation Army

Depending on location, may offer housing, food assistance, and counseling.

* + University or Hospital Affiliated Studies and Drug Trials

Pharmaceutical companies and university researchers sometimes offer free medical evaluation and medication to individuals with specific diagnoses or needs to assist in their understanding whether the medications are effective and viable. Some of these studies also offer cash stipends and local transportation costs.

* + University or Hospital Affiliated Clinics

Some medical schools, dental schools, professional schools of psychology, and schools of osteopathy, chiropractor, dental, acupuncture, and other similar programs offer free or low-cost services, performed by graduate students and supervised by accredited faculty.

Survival is a priority for those healing from extreme trauma and investigating the available options may not only result in some level of support, the effort may provide a greater sense of control over the survivor’s own future. It is only through survival that one’s truth can be shared and the survivor can regain ownership of his or her own life and future.

Randy and Pam Noblitt are co-editors of *Ritual Abuse in the Twenty-first Century: Psychological, Forensic, Social and Political Considerations* (2008, Robert Reed Publisher), and co-authors of *Cult and Ritual Abuse: Narratives, Evidence and Healing Approaches* (2014) and their new book, *Navigating Social Security Disability Programs: A Handbook for Clinicians and Advocates* (2020), both published by Praeger. Randy is on the Board of Directors of Survivorship and a professor of clinical psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University. Pam is a social security disability claimant’s representative in independent practice. She has represented more than 1,000 claimants. Pam and Randy are partners in both work and life. They have been married for almost 50 years and share two children and four grandchildren, Simon the parrot, and Murray, their rescue terrier.

**The 12-Step Healing Process and Survivor Advocacy**  
Neil Brick

This is adapted from presentation at the 2016 SMART conference. Please use caution while reading to this presentation. It may be very heavy for survivors. All accusations are alleged. The conference is educational and not intended as therapy or treatment.

For many years, I have been attending a variety of 12-step programs to heal the addictions I had before I started the main part of my recovery 16 years ago. During this presentation, I will be referring to the adapted 12 steps of Survivors of Incest Anonymous. For more information on Survivors of Incest Anonymous, visit [www.siawso.org](http://www.siawso.org) Please note that the interpretation of the steps below is mine only, and not necessarily representative of S.I.A. or any other 12-step program.

**Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over the abuse, the effects of the abuse, and that our lives had become unmanageable.

As a ritual abuse survivor, it is very difficult for me to admit that I am powerless. The power over my body and my soul was taken away from me at a very young age. The last thing I wanted was to be powerless again. But I realized that this step meant something different. What it really meant was that I was powerless over what happened. As a young child, there was no way I could stop the abuse. The effects of the abuse and the problems the abuse caused for me internally, I was also powerless to stop as a young child.

Once I realized I was powerless at the time, then I could let go of the guilt of the abuse happening and begin to heal and grow. I could take back the power from the abuser. I could become whole and healed and powerful in my own world.

It has always been easy for me to admit that my life had become unmanageable. This was easy to see. The first time I went to 12-step meetings, I started to realize what a mess my life appeared to be. I was in the middle of a relationship separation, geographic relocation and career change. I was trying to rebuild my life at the same time that all my memories of the abuse were coming up. I ended up going from job to job. My life was definitely chaotic.

**Step 2**: Came to believe that a loving Higher Power, greater than ourselves, could restore hope, healing and sanity.

As a ritual abuse survivor, this was a very difficult step for me. Most of the “higher powers” I had known in my life had hurt and abused me. It also forced me to admit that there is a power greater than me, something I did not want to admit. I did not trust any power greater than me. Now I realize that there is some sort of higher power, something that connects all of us that leads me to hope, healing and sanity. I realize this because I have healed a lot. I now have hope. I feel much saner than I did when I started this part of my recovery many years ago.

**Step 3**: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a loving Higher Power as we understood Her/Him.

It was one thing to believe in a loving Higher Power. But it would take a much larger step of faith to turn my will and life over to that Higher Power. I still haven’t totally done this. At times I get very willful and refuse to give in to what appears to be a better way of doing things. At times, I still don’t trust that Higher Power. I may even curse that Higher Power for the way things are. But in my saner moments, I realize that this power that connects things for me is the right thing to follow. This doesn’t mean that I give up my individuality or soul, all it means is that I go with the flow of things and adapt to the world.

**Step 4:** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, the abuse and its effects on our lives. We have no more secrets.

The two times I did this step fully in my life, I made major growth steps in my life. By writing down my “sins” and the things that had happened to me in my life, including the ritual abuse, I was able to see these things from a different perspective. Most of myself was able to see what I had gone through and concealed from the rest of myself. This tore down many internal walls and began a very big healing process. Now I had no more secrets.

**Step 5**: Admitted to a loving Higher Power, to ourselves and another human being our strengths and weaknesses.

I had shared the terrors and the horrors of my life with another person. I was no longer alone. I told them all of my memories. I told them all of my fears. By sharing all this I was breaking one of the rules of the abusers, do not tell. But I did tell, and it made me stronger. It also made the world a safer place, because more people knew about ritual abuse and it made it harder for the perpetrators of this abuse to continue practicing it in secret. I realized that nothing bad happened to me when I told. I was clearer-headed and was able to move forward in my recovery. It was all right if I had strengths and it was all right if I had weaknesses.

**Step 6:** Were entirely ready to have a loving Higher Power help us remove all the debilitating consequences of the abuse and became willing to treat ourselves with respect, compassion and acceptance.

During the recovery process, the debilitating consequences of the abuse were gradually lifted. The personality defects that kept me separate from other people started to disappear. One problem after another start to be removed. Though I was unsure about a loving Higher Power, I was becoming more sure that change was occurring. I was growing and healing.

It was more difficult to treat myself with respect, compassion and acceptance. For the longest time, I didn’t feel I deserved these. I felt that since I had been a participant in ritual abuse, I was evil and bad. It took me a long time to realize that I was forced as a child to do these things. I started to realize that I deserved to be loved by the world. I deserved to be respected and accepted by myself.

**Step 7:** Humbly and honestly asked a loving Higher Power to remove the unhealthy and self-defeating consequences stemming from the abuse.

I wanted to be released from the problems I had. I wanted to stop being so angry, so tense, so spaced out. I suffered from these and many other consequences of the abuse for many years. But I needed to ask somehow. I realize I did this even before I started having abuse memories. I wanted to know why my life was so messed up. Why I was so unhappy. Why I was so tense and angry so much of the time. I was tired of living this way. And the more I asked, and the more I worked on these problems constructively, the more I was released from these unhealthy consequences. By wanting to be released from these problems, I was asking. And I didn’t even need to direct my questions to a loving Higher Power. I just needed to ask. And after years and years of asking, I changed.

**Step 8:** Made a list of all the people we had harmed (of our own free will), especially ourselves and our inner child, and became willing to make amends to them all.

I did this years ago. The person that was hurt the most was myself. By continuing to live in the consequences of the abuse, I was continually hurting myself and others. It was never my intention to hurt anyone or myself. At the time, I didn’t even know I was causing myself or anyone else pain. But I was. I was willing to make amends.

**Step 9**: Made amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would result in physical, mental or emotional harm to ourselves or others.

I made amends to a lot of people when I was working the steps years ago. I wrote some and called others. If I felt it would hurt someone more than help them, I didn’t do it. I did it when I was sure emotionally it was the right thing to do.

**Step 10**: Continued to take responsibility for our own recovery, and when we found ourselves behaving in patterns still dictated by the abuse, promptly admitted it. When we succeeded, promptly enjoyed it.

Throughout the years of my recovery, I have learned that I need to take responsibility for my actions and when falling back into an old pattern, like holding a grudge or losing my temper, I admitted that it was an old pattern that I no longer needed. What has been more difficult for me has been to enjoy my successes. I am learning to do this now though. I need to be happy that I have succeeded and not fallen back into an old pattern again.

**Step 11:** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with ourselves and a loving Higher Power, as we understood Her/Him, asking only for knowledge of Her/His will for us and the power and courage to carry that out.

This has been a difficult step for me to follow. I have never believed in prayer. Whenever I prayed for something as a child, I usually didn’t get it. So I stopped overtly praying. But, I now realize that prayer for me can also be wishing and hoping that things get better. Meditation has always been easier for me. Sitting and meditating has been a big help in my life. It has helped me prepare for some of the major steps of my recovery. I have found a sense of peace and quiet in meditation. By being able to quiet myself, I have been able to learn how to heal myself further. By quieting myself, I have been able to see which directions I needed to go in to help others and heal.

**Step 12**: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other survivors and practice these principles in all our endeavors.

By working the 12 steps, I realize that I have had a spiritual awakening. I have grown and healed tremendously over the last 16 years and before that another 12. I am now able to carry the message to other survivors. I have learned how to let go, and let the healing process work for me. The newsletters, web pages, e-groups and conferences are all part of my carrying this message to other survivors.

Ritual abuse survivors face other difficulties in 12-step programs. These include sharing in groups and sitting in circles in groups. But these problems can also be overcome. It is incredibly powerful to be able to share in a group and stay present. This breaks the myth that one can’t discuss ritual abuse, or they’ll be hurt. I have shared many times, and it has only made me stronger.

Some 12-step groups may also be infiltrated by cults. I believe that in healthy groups, this will not be a major problem, since there are many examples of strong recovery already present. This is why it is important to support healthy ways of healing and for all survivors to continue becoming stronger.

I hope that this discussion of the 12-steps has helped people in their recovery.

# it doesn’t matter

# Dandelion

(may be triggering, describes violence)

To my first love and first relationship,

I have loved you since I first met you. You cared for others. You volunteered with kids and at church and cared for homeless people. Just like me. Just like me. You threw me parties. Because your sweet, because your sweet.

But you changed. No matter how many times. . . . You say you didn’t hurt me. Didn’t insult me. Didn’t make me feel and think that I was somehow worth less than I am. You did. No matter how many times you say you only hit me once. You still hit me. You slapped me across my face. You dragged and pushed me up a flight of stairs. Because I went downstairs. I didn’t want to be yelled at anymore. On a work night. You then pulled me off a bed. I said I hated you. You cried and said I was a bad.

So I washed my hair in the toilet to show my shame and regret. Of course what you did was okay and I deserved it. I didn’t clean enough tonight nor yesterday. Never mind that my work takes me longer to do because of my ADHD. Never mind my depression. I deserve everything you say to me. And no matter how many times you hurt me I will forgive you.

If only for my sake. But I will not say that what you did was okay. That it was right. That I accept it or that it was justifiable. No matter how many times. You try to tell me it’s okay. It wasn’t. I was hurting. Instead of helping me to heal you, you damaged me. No matter how many times he says I am okay.

My boyfriend he told me I ate like a little piggy. Cute, Right? Just joking of course. Of course. My boyfriend. So kind. Today I was studying late and I woke him up, so he dragged me of bed by my heels and swore in my face and told me I was shit. At this time I was 104. He picked me up by my arms and set me down. He said you shouldn’t have woken me up. This is your fault. You deserve this. I treated you fair. I still have bruises because he is bigger than me. I still have bruises.

But the scars inside me are what hurt the most. Because now I let guys use me, so I can have their affection. I still believe the things he said to me. But it’s okay, right? It is okay. He is doing better than his childhood and the things that they did to him. In Hispanic families this is normal treatment. A little leather belt treatment never hurt anyone. After all, he loves me and buys everything for me. He lets me vent to him about how I wish I were dead and how I hate me body. He lets me vent to him about how I am afraid of so many things and how I hate yelling.

Trauma bonding? He tells me today I look like a twig in that sweater. A twig. I know I don’t have boobs already. I wish I did. Maybe, he will buy me a surgery. That hurts. He jokes about me becoming anorexic when I am leaving late and grab a bowl of grapes. He tells me it’s a scary world! I have to be careful of men who will rape me, but also their our good men he says.

But I don’t believe that because I was never the pretty one anyway. He would say just put a little makeup on. I don’t believe it. I don’t like men too much. He asks me if maybe I am a lesbian. He says nothing he does is wrong and that he really does care, and he wishes that I loved and cared for him more. I woke him up again. Whoops such a ditz. I am such a ditz.

My memory glitched again. Damn ADD. Finally, getting diagnosed at 22! He pays for all my things. He dresses me real pretty and bandages me real nicely and buys me sparkly things and takes me to the doctor because we all know my head needs to be fixed. I constantly remember things wrong! I am so stupid. I want to leave you, and go somewhere far away. Because what you are doing isn’t okay. You make me feel like shit. I hate you, but also I love you.

I am going to the mountains I say. My Palenque. Where there is liberty. But of course he still pays the bills. 100,000 dollars he spent on me! He controls all the money. He tells me not to work! I can’t handle it of course and complains when I get my hair cut, or but detergent, or thrift. He asks to see me more and call me more. But all I see is the time that he stood in front of the TV and yelled at me. All I can remember are the cuts on my inner thighs I hid from him and the nights that I cried. He lets me call him when I cannot sleep and when I want to tell him I want to die.

He pays for my psychology, my education, my clothes, my home. I love him he cares and provides for me. I just don’t want to be with him because then I believe that what he did was okay. And I am pretty sure my depression, ED, and anxiety are symptoms of living with him. I believe that it really didn’t matter that it really was all fine and yes I forgive him but I don’t want to be near him does that make sense? Because when I am near him I know that I am ugly and worthless and men will rape me and use me and why wouldn’t they! Why shouldn’t they. Because, I mean if someone who loves me could well pull me off a bed if someone who loves me could get mad at me and you know pick me up by my heels and set me gently on my head as a child. Whoops did I say child? And hit me lightly with hangers and spatulas, or could tell me as I fade away.

Just eat just eat today or I will take your education away. I don’t know. Let's all push it under the rug, give me a hug! It doesn’t matter so you say. You pay the medical bills. But today you cut me off! How dare you! Your very voice annoys me. I only call you because I need you to live. I like using your money, it felt like I got a part of back. I could buy things to make me feel pretty, rich and valued. But damn you! You closed my credit card! Damn you who put me on an allowance. Damn you, if you don’t want to pay for how you damned me. For the many nights that I can’t sleep. For the days and days I ask myself if I am wrong and this is actually okay. And I am just ungrateful! Damn you took my sugar. Damn you took my sleep. Damn you gave me money. Damn you whom I don’t want to see. Damn you who took it out on me. Your own trauma and your pain. Take your blasted credit card and I’ll take back my name.

And now you changed. You did you did. As I sat silent on the stairs. You changed. You did you did. Move he says. Why not say please? I am only tying my shoes. Move he says or I will drag your ass down the stairs he says. I will leave I say. I will. I will. I was just tying my shoes, I said. I will. I will. And you have changed your better now. But you forget the things you said to me. I am better now. But I don’t want to see you. You are kinder now. But I don’t want to be with

you, You are wiser now. But I don’t want to hug you. Leave me. Leave me on my staircase at peace. It doesn’t matter.

Mamma whoops did I say mama. I was trying to be discreet! Because it's my parents it's okay right? Because it's my mom who birthed me and paid for me. And threw me parties and worked charities and tried her best! It's all okay because it's my mama it's okay yeah yeah of course it's okay even though every time I go home I feel like i want to die again i can't stop crying again. And of course I relive the anorexia and binge eating and memory and brain fog and swear words and your not very pretty implications. But hey its my mom and she raised me and tried her best right so it's all okay!? It doesn't matter.

Accept that i hate going home. And it doesn't Matter because that's just what parents die and the physical things only happen once a few. And moms say the darnedest things when their mad. But I live every day with the value you placed on me in my head. I live everyday battling wanting to starve myself or hurt myself and i'm just healing after 4 years.

Why would i come back home. Now that i have money why should I call. I forgive you but im sorry mom i don't want your calls. Because it doesn't matter anymore what you say or think of me. I am healing! Finally i can start to breathe! It doesn't matter. I'm moving on. I hope you heal and realize one day that you did indeed due a lot of wrong,. I don't hold this debt to you but I don't wish to see you it doesn't matter because im moving on.