Multiple Personalities Do They Really Exist Essay, Research Paper

Multiple Personalities: Do They Really Exist

Multiple personalities- the existence of two or more distinct

personalities or personality states within one person. In actuality, up

to ten or even more personalities can coexist within one person, some

documented cases have revealed over one hundred. But, the question

remains, what exactly is the multiple personality disorder (MPD)? First

I will look at what exactly the disorder is. It is, in simple terms,

many complex personalities all inhabiting the same body. At any given

time, one of those personalities is in control of the body. Each one has

different tastes, style, thought process, and many other things that

define a person. However, research has proven even more than that. In

clinical studies it has been found that of the different personalities

of one person, the eye prescription, allergies, athletic ability, and

even diabetes can exist in one of the personalities and not the others.

The person can switch at any given time from one personality to another,

often not realizing it. This can account for memory loss and time loss

in the primary personality, who often does not have access to the

memories of the other personalities. A common misconception among the

general public is the confusion of MPD with the disease of

schizophrenia. Schizophrenics do NOT have distinct personalities,

rather, they have hallucinations of voices outside their heads.

Schizophrenia is caused by brain malfunctions and can be treated with

drugs, whereas suffers of MPD cannot because MPD is an almost purely

psychological disorder. MPD seems to be caused mainly by incredibly

violent and terrible childhood abuse. In fact, about 98% of MPD

sufferers were abused as children. The disorder also occurs between

three to nine times more in women than men, the person being abused

creates other personalities to handle the pain. In the case of a man

named Milligan, his father beat him and sexually abused him. Then he

forced the boy to dig his own grave, burying him alive with only a stove

pipe to breath through. Then the father urinated into the pipe onto the

boy’s face. With that kind of abuse, you either go crazy, die, or

develop other personalities. That is why, in many people with MPD, there

are agitated and distracted child personalities. These personalities

were created in order to suffer the pain of abuse. When the abuse was

over, their call was no longer needed and the primary personality could

resume control, dropping with that second personality all memory of the

event and continuing as if nothing happened. This type of personality

exists in almost all MPD sufferers. Another common personality is the

Persecutor personality. This personality is created to absorb the rage

the person feels towards his abusers. It often lashes out, either at

other people or at the other personalities, because it believes some of

the punishment was their fault. To punish that personality it will often

harm the body of the person, not realizing it is hurting itself in the

process. A final common personality is the Protector personality. It is

created to give a feeling of protection to the child personalities and

to try to prevent the Persecutor from lashing out at others or itself.

These are obviously not all the personalities, found, but they are the

most common. Due to all these conflicting interests the personalities

often argue with each other. This is why the person often hears voices

“inside his head” whereas the schizophrenic hears them from outside in

the world. Many people dispute the existence of multiple personalities.

They argue that such an idea is impossible and that the people are

simply making it up. However, I believe the opposite, and many people

share my opinion due to one study. Around 10 years ago a Dr. Putnam

conducted an experiment, whereby he hooked several MPD sufferers up to a

machine that measures brain waves. He then subjected each personality of

each person to a set of stimuli. Each personality reacted differently,

the difference was around the same as between two separate people. The

control group of volunteers faking the disorder could produce any

difference, indicating to me that something is very different about

those states of mind, and they cannot simply make up the changes in

response to stimuli, nor can they fake diabetes and different physical

requirements as I stated earlier as examples in differences of

personalities. To move on to treatment, there is virtually no treatment

a psychiatrist can offer other than extensive psychotherapy and

hypnosis. In bringing out the suffering that caused the development of

personalities, usually many personalities will “fuse” into a more

complete whole, though some retain a few personalities. Some MPD

sufferers would rather keep their personalities, they fear that the

special skills each one has might be lost if they are all fused into one

big personality. For one of the most complicated areas of this topic, I

will now discuss crimes. Crimes where a multiple personality is in any

way involved immediately become very complicated. Who is at fault? Who

is testifying when that person gets on the witness stand? Are they

faking it to get an “innocent by insanity” judgment? It is an easy way

out, to lie about having MPD to get an innocent verdict, and that must

be decided by the jury in a trial. The real problem comes when the MPD

person is the plaintiff or defendant. In one example, a woman with

twenty or more personalities ended up sleeping with a man whom she knew.

He claims one of her personalities consented to have sex with him. While

having sex, one of her child personalities came out and she thought she

was being raped, though she didn’t voice this until afterwards when she

complained of being raped. He does, however, admit to knowing about her

disorder. So who is at fault here? I would have to say it is not the

man’s fault, she consented and therefore it was not a rape. However,

others claim else wise. They say that since he knew about her disorder

he was taking advantage of her. I cannot agree, for as long as she

consented, he didn’t intentionally commit any crime and cannot be

prosecuted for it, even if it wasn’t her main personality, it was still

“her.” The other type of case involving multiple personalities is even

more involved, that is where one personality commits the crime, to the

others’ horror and surprise. In this case, is that person liable for the

damage another personality caused? In the example of Juanita Maxwell she

had a violent personality named Wanda who robbed two banks nine years

after being acquitted on the insanity defense for killing a

seventy-three year old woman. What do you do with this person? Do you

lock them up and throw away the key? Do you release them on grounds of

insanity? Seeing as she was acquitted for murder, apparently the legal

system thinks they should be allowed to be treated. I agree with this.

However, many people disagree vehemently over this subject. Many feel

they have committed a crime and should be punished the same as anyone

else, and sometimes this happens. However, it happens more often with

men than women, who are usually steered towards the psychiatric

treatment route and are prosecuted less than men. Men offenders are

viewed as brutal beasts, while women are seen as disturbed oftentimes,

or at least that is how it seems to me. However, offenders with true MPD

should not go to jail, where conditions might worsen the disorder due to

more abuse and bad conditions. Also, in jail, there is almost no hope

for diagnosis and help, so when they are released they will not be any

better than when they went in and will probably offend again. So putting

them in jail is hurting society, not helping it by keeping them off the

streets. However many are too paranoid to realize this, they just want

to throw them where they won’t be seen for a long time. These paranoiacs

don’t look in the long term, just the immediate results. I feel they

should go to therapy to help get rid of their problems. Research has

shown psychotherapy is the only effective way to help MPD, and it

doesn’t come in prison. If they go to therapy for 2 years and are cured

it helps society more than if they are locked out of sight for 20 years.

So in cases where it can be proven it is a case of MPD I say send them

to the psychiatric ward. All in all, multiple personalities are kind of

an obscure subject. Not much research has been done on them, though I

think they have fascinating potential, both in curiosity and in the

effects of mind control on the body as I discussed earlier, and they

should be researched much more.