

“The Seven Steps”

(of healing from MPD/DID)

Although the healing process is different for each person with DID, there are general stages or steps a person goes through as they move toward wholeness and healing. I used the title *“The Seven Steps”* sort of tongue in cheek since many people are aware of *“The Seven Steps to Freedom”* by Neil Anderson. What I am attempting to do is to convey the concept that recovery is indeed a process, not one event, not one integration point.

Since those who have DID are usually convinced that they are going crazy, I have used that phrase and related terms to describe the different stages of healing. The titles of the steps may sound a bit unusual for those who do not have DID but the person with DID can easily identify with them. Another resource related to this is an audio cassette called *“You’re Not Going Crazy”* which can be given to the person with DID to help them get past the perception that they are losing their mind.

Step One

the “I’m going crazy” part

Step One: the “I’m going crazy” part --- Perhaps for years the individual has experienced unusual, unexplainable events: loss of time, two different sets of clothing in the closet, people whom she does not know seeming to know her, being told she said (or did) this or that without any memory herself of having said or done it, etc.

Step Two

the “You’re going crazy” part

Step Two: the “You’re going crazy” part --- When MPD is first suggested as a possible cause for these strange events, the person usually has a hard time believing that this is true. This difficulty in accepting MPD will likely remain — at times stronger than other times — right up until the healing process is completed. This is partially due to the fact that the amnesia about the abuse serves to keep the lie in place: “This didn’t happen to me.” You can help the person at this stage by encouraging them to not get distracted in resolving the inner anguish of “did this/didn’t this happen” and simply affirm: “I choose to believe the truth about my past”.

Step Three

the “We’re going crazy” part

Step Three: the “**we’re going crazy**” part --- In most cases at the beginning of the healing process, the core person doesn’t realize when another personality “takes over” and begins talking. (This is not true in every case of those with DID.) But as the healing progresses, there is a sensation similar to dreaming where the core person may hear or vaguely be aware of what another personality is saying (either within their mind or audibly).

Step Four

the “We’re going crazy all the time” part

Step Four: the “**we’re going crazy all the time**” part --- Usually during some part of the healing process, the person may become triggered (and switch to another personality) so often that one personality after another comes “to the top” (as I call it). As the Lord begins to allow the memories to surface, the emotional pain the different personalities hold is expressed, causing lots of emotional upheaval. This can be one of the most distressing stages for the counselor to watch since the level of pain and confusion is difficult to watch.

Step Five

the “Let me help you not to go crazy” part

Step Five: the “**let me help you not go crazy**” part There may come a point in her healing that the person can take on a new role in helping those personalities inside her. This is an encouraging stage as the core makes allies of the parts and moves away from feeling that the parts are responsible for the core's pain and difficulties is functioning normally. If, for example, she realizes that she is suddenly feeling terrified inside, she may be able to ask those inside what the problem is: “Why are we afraid?” Sometimes those inside will cooperate by indicating the cause of the terror. The core person can then speak truth to the situation and may not only find relief from the terror but may also experience spontaneous merging (integration). For example, if someone inside says, “I’m scared he’s going to kill me,” the person could ask, “Who’s going to kill you?” The answer: “My father.” The truth that can be expressed is, “Our father is dead now and he can’t hurt us anymore. Why don’t you tell the Lord Jesus about this is? I’m sure that He would want to know.”

Step Six

the “I’m not going as crazy as often” part

Step Six: the “I’m not going as crazy as often” part:--- During this stage there are less triggers. The core person is better able to keep potential blow-ups from escalating by working, herself, with her parts. There may still be suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts, for example: that are as intense as those during the earlier stages, but you can encourage the person by reminding them that there has been more space, or a longer period of time in between these intense suicidal episodes.

Step Seven

the “I remember when I used to go crazy” part

Step Seven: the “I remember when I used to go crazy” part --- This is a time of continued emotional healing and growth. The person moves forward into a place of stability, more normalcy and spiritual freedom. However, at this stage, a new level of healing is just beginning: that of seeing the Lord "make up for the years the locust have eater." In other words, now that all or almost all of the integration has occurred, the person begins learning how to deal with having all their emotions available to them as the core person. They begin to learn many of the developmental and maturity issues that most people learned as children.

How to encourage those at the different stages of healing from DID/SRA

The following suggestions were collected from a class of those from a DID/SRA background and represent things they felt were most helpful to them as they moved through the stages of healing from DID:

Stage One:

Don't be scared of me.

Don't try to get me to remember a recent event I may have no conscious memory of.

Remind me that I'm not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Two:

When the anguish comes: “Did these horrible things really happen to me?” remind me to affirm: “I choose to believe whatever is true about my past.”

Remind me that I’m not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Three:

Don’t tell me everything another “part” of me did or said to you unless I want to know.

Remind me that I’m not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Four:

Don’t believe the lie that my “parts” are merely demons that need to be cast out.

Just be with me during the very hardest time.

Don’t be afraid of me.

Remind me that it won’t always be this bad

Don’t treat me like a space alien after a bad episode.

Remind me that I’m not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Five:

Teach me how to work with myself.

When I’m triggered, don’t try to get me to think rationally. Instead, lead me to the truth about what I am believing at the time.

Remember that I am reacting on two levels. Don’t take what I say or do personally.

Remind me that I’m not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Six:

When my progress forward seems to take a dip, remind me that it’s not the same as it used to be.

Point to the amount of time between my bad episodes.

Don’t be afraid to let me use my spiritual gifts to minister in appropriate situations.

Remind me that I’m not going crazy.

Tell me you believe me.

Stage Seven:

Leave the door open for me to come to you occasionally when I may need a “mini-tune-up” or a word of encouragement.