



Becoming One: A Story of Triumph Over Dissociative Identity Disorder

Sarah E. Olson

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This is the 2014 ebook edition of the 1997 paperback *Becoming One: A Story of Triumph Over Multiple Personality Disorder*, ISBN 978-0962387982, by Sarah E. Olson. It includes a 2014 Addendum, a new Foreword by Howard Asher Psy.D, and a new linked resources page.

Two little girls, the author and her sister, were routinely terrorized and assaulted over a period of years by a family friend. One grew up closed and withdrawn, the other angry, self-destructive, and dissociated. Most painful of all, their common suffering resulted in estrangement from each other. *Becoming One* began as Sarah Olson's attempt to provide a written account of her memories for her sister as a means of reconciliation and healing.

Becoming One documents Sarah's four-year process of discovery and recovery from Dissociative Identity Disorder. Utilizing letters she wrote to her therapist, Howard Asher, Psy.D, and transcripts from key audiotaped therapy sessions, Sarah created a book which offers a model of healing and hope to survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

The author's courage and generosity in candidly sharing her remarkable experiences provides important insights into the world of dissociation. This book is a highly personal look into an individual life, the dynamics of a troubled family, and the healing power of the therapeutic process.

Praise for *Becoming One* (from the 1997 edition, ISBN 978-0962387982, format: paperback):

"Sarah Olson has written a fascinating account of her amazing healing journey and the mind's creative capacity to surmount unimaginable horror. Everyone can benefit from this inspiring book." ~ Lynne D. Finney, J.D., M.S.W., Author of *Reach for the Rainbow: Advanced Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*

"*Becoming One* is a hopeful book which both dignifies people with Dissociative Identity Disorder, and sensitizes the rest of us to what that means and what can be done. Highly recommended." ~ *Midwest Book Review*

"Piecing Sarah back together is like piecing a puzzle or mosaic together. Once all the pieces are in place, you are left with a beautiful image. Sterling work." ~ BeatleBangs1964 Vine Voice

"This book gives incredible insight into the work required by both the therapist and the patient with DID. ... I recommend *Becoming One* for both therapists and for those who continue to suffer from Dissociative Identity Disorder." ~ Meowzer

"Wonderful book for a reference for my classes." ~ Wild Blue

"In process myself and working through much of what Sarah describes, I could only say that I feel validated and believed, and perhaps for the first time, understood, by someone else." ~ raysemma

Becoming One: A Story of Triumph Over Dissociative Identity Disorder Details

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Author : Sarah E. Olson

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From Reader Review Becoming One: A Story of Triumph Over Dissociative Identity Disorder for online ebook

Danessa Violette says

Enlightening Novel!!!

Finally someone wrote this down!! Although few books have claimed to present a factual publication of Dissociative disorders none have a knowledgeable detailed description that this book conveys. With a very small amount of information available to the public on Dissociative disorder and many misconceptions this book has broken down the facts making it simple to understand. This story itself is so interesting that you don't notice that practical knowledge is being shared along with the novel. Informative, well written, creatively structured read!!

Bee Halton says

I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review:

#amreading this book since February and it had a deep impact on me. At times it was hard to read what Sarah had to go through as a child. There have been parts that I could not read because they were just too close to home. And it has triggered memories that I rather would not have seen. Still I believe like her that it is important for the healing process to have a look exactly where it hurts and why. It clearly has helped me to get to the next step of healing.

I know about Dissociative Identity Disorder since many years but I believe even if you have no idea what it means this book will give you a brilliant insight. Of course the idea that there are more than one person in a body is scary and confusing. But if you are open to this fact and can get over the notion that a person with DID is crazy then you will learn an awful lot about what abuse in childhood means for an adult.

You do not forget. Your soul does use any means possible to deal with the memory even if it is not available to your consciousness. And once you are ready and safe your soul will ask you to take charge of your life and your memories and to process them. There is no way of escaping that and that is so often the difficulty because how can you?

Thank goodness there are therapists out there like Howard Asher who are understanding enough and tenacious enough to go on the journey of healing with survivors to help them become a thrivers.

This book no matter how hard the topic is is also a testament to the fact that you can heal from childhood abuse and that you can live the life that you were supposed to live. That you can process what happened and live a good life afterwards. It is hard. It is a challenge but it is possible. This is a book one should read no matter what!

PS: I have written an early review on my blog for the publishing date of this revised and new e-book version of "Becoming One" something I do not usually do. But I believe this is an important book and therefore it was important to me to give it as much publicity as I can. You can find my early review [here](#)

Kirsty says

I won this book for free through Goodreads First Reads. Review to follow.

Katy Sauer says

Disclosure: I received this book free from NetGalley

I admit I went into this book with some fairly negative thoughts in mind. Living as someone with DID and knowing others with DID, and having read a fair number of books, memoirs, and more on the topic - none of which really felt like they fit 'me' - I did not have high hopes for this either. But, out of sheer curiosity I decided to have a go at it. What I found so interesting about the book and why it differs from so many available is that it has a mixture of both speaking about the history that resulted in the DID as well as focusing on the healing. At no point in the book did I feel drowned in either psychology or overtly graphic narratives of abuse. At the same time, neither was sugar coated - it had a feeling of being very real to me. I went into this being very skeptical but now know it's a book I will most likely reference again and again for quite some time and most likely involve in my own journey to healing.

Jill Stoking says

I have so many emotions swishing around at the moment over this memoir. Sarah has Dissociative Identity Disorder formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder. This invariably develops as a result of being the victim of extreme child abuse, as a defence and protection mechanism and the insight we get into Sarah's childhood uncover events that should never have been experienced by any child, ever. But long after the danger has passed, the multiple personalities remain and cause havoc of their own devising. That's my interpretation in layman's terms but as someone who had a close association with a cousin who had DID. I've read several books on this subject before - to try and get to grips with DID - but this one avoids the sensationalism trap that many books on this subject fall into. We sit beside Sarah in the consultation room and witness Sarah's struggle with her alters – the many 'others' who constituted her internal family and who were of far more value to her than her real family. The ultimate aim of Sarah and Howard, her therapist, was integration but not everyone was in agreement.

One reason why this book is so compelling is that here in England, mental health issues are dealt with by medication and/or incarceration and not so much of the latter these days as many residential units are being closed and there is no where for vulnerable people to go, to be safe.

This book should be on the 'Must Read' list of every student of psychology/psychiatry because it demonstrates that long term therapy - with a therapist who will be there with the patient, to guide, mentor, explain, protect and work towards the ultimate goal of integration, however long that takes and beyond - is the most effective treatment. There is no quick fix, but as this account makes clear, there is hope and there can certainly be a positive outcome but it takes time, patience and most of all love. Sarah meets with resistance from her inner family, who we learn to love for who they are and the roles they have played in Sarah's journey.

I learnt so much and as a result I feel far more equipped to empathise with anyone who has DID. Sadly, too late to help my cousin who committed suicide three years ago.

Rebecca Lombardo says

After having dealt with many types of mental illness in my life, I am always skeptical about books on these topics. I admire anyone that has the courage to bring something this painful and realistic to light. Very well written. I found myself extremely emotional quite frequently.

Charlene says

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We believe unconsciously that we arrive in this life a complete picture, but somehow through what happens when Life commingles with “Me” sometimes pieces fall apart.

That may be, however it may be that all of us are destined to find a way to reassemble pieces of whatever we believe constitutes “Me” out of the bumps, bruises, rips, tears, rapes and tortures that Life sometimes delivers.

Our efforts as therapists, psychiatrists, counselors, social workers et al falls upon the broken pieces. With most people their caverns result in what is termed Complexes. That’s the experience you’ve likely had of realizing, too late, that your behavior was way, way out of line.

I heard a Jungian analyst once explain that you know you’ve been in a complex by the number of people to whom you must apologize. We get out of ourselves and the usual kind, generous, loving people we wish to be at all times frays at the corners, revealing our jealousy, dislike, our frustration. A complex in our behavior is the result.

The difference with those who have experience with DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder, previously referred to as Multiple Personality) is memory. Those with DID perform actions, make decisions and can’t remember how or who made those decisions. Their psychic fissure remains similar in kind but much deeper in cut than a complex. And just as those of us who have experienced a complex must work diligently, sometimes feeling helpless against the onslaught of the powerful energy at the heart of a complex (“why did that happen again? why oh why do I always...”) so too those with DID feel the helplessness and frustration of not being able to steer the ship of their lives, except they can’t remember why. Why did I wake up in that strange place? Who are those people who said they knew me?

The nightmare of DID haunts those among us who have suffered the most deeply through the trauma of abuse. And just as we have little understanding culturally of how a complex manifests and what can be done to release its energy into conscious command, so too we have too few patterns of those who have reassembled their pieces from the deepest cuts. We lack the maps that provide hope.

So it was with Sarah E Olsen. She was born, whole we presume, and was delivered into a Life that dealt more than the usual: ritual torture, rapes, unending singularity by way of abandonment.

Yet she was born with something else, a quality we recognize but for which we don’t yet have a full name. Courage, certainly. Persistence, yes. Determination? Without doubt. All of these and something more, the spark that makes the true engine of a human being come toward Life and integrate the pieces of what Life has delivered into a more whole unit.

We often think of whole or complete as finished, or over. That’s an error in our thinking. Whole and complete, when it comes to the human beings, means for now. In process. Forever partial and partially done. For all of us this is true.

Sarah E. Olsen has with stunning courage, without sentimentality, minus all the capital “D” drama, written a

book about her experiences with several personalities and how she corralled them into a functioning whole. For now.

To hold the new we must let go of what has been. Each step toward wholeness means a painful letting go of all that came before. So it comes clear to the reader as Sarah E. Olsen shares from her journal and from her many letters to the therapist, Howard Asher Psy. D, who, thank the gods, accomplished his professional responsibility to push, prod, support and gentle her toward wholeness, towards being a more complete unit than before.

She shares also in diplomatic, but never gratuitous detail the slime from which she had to rise, slime smeared upon her by a man so sick he does not deserve to be called human and a mother twisted enough to corroborate with him.

Hard to imagine yet Olsen's clear and simple delivery of the worst, winding through with the moments in which she comes to clarity, to a new level of consciousness, provide the reader with a platform from which to keep reading.

The poetry Olsen writes is also worthy of being noted. Good as these poems are, their voice speaks to a larger wisdom, a greater vision and a poetic sensibility I hope will see further fruition.

Something more needs to be said about what Olsen has achieved here. In bringing to readers her unique way of reassembling the pieces of her psyche she shares a potential for all who have been deeply gouged. She lights up the capacity in humans to carefully add piece by piece toward a new Life, one of renewed energy, vitality and interest. She lights the map of hope for us all.

Cyril Patrick Feerick says

Previously known as multiple personality disorder, Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is one of the most controversial psychiatric disorders, with no clear consensus regarding its diagnosis or treatment. Author Sarah E. Olson reveals her past struggles and explains how she was able to push past them and take back her life. She puts forward a really inspiring story and is a beacon of hope to anyone in a similar situation. Much has changed in the treatment of DID in the past number of decades so I would highly recommend this to anyone who wants to know what it is like to have DID. Thank you Sarah for taking the time to write it, and I look forward to your follow-up book: Living Purposefully with Dissociative Identity Disorder.
