

PART

I

The Path to
Wholeness

THE ANATOMY OF SUFFERING

Parallel to and essential for my healing journey was my introduction to the writings and lectures of an incredible individual who lived and taught during the turn of the twentieth century (1861-1925). He is singularly responsible for a multitude of creative, spiritual approaches to agriculture (bio-dynamic farming), child education (the Waldorf schools), medicine (Anthroposophic medicine), care for the mentally challenged (The Camphill Villages for children and adults with special needs), a natural medicine pharmaceutical company (Weleda), new forms of architecture and painting, and an ethical banking system (TRIODOS). All this was in response to one or more person's request to do spiritual scientific research on each of these subjects. His name is Rudolf Steiner. His main objective was the spread of spiritual science, a form of ancient spiritual wisdom specifically appropriate for the modern mind. The goal being to release the stranglehold materialism has on the human intellect of today.

The information that I am offering is garnered from his teachings, my hypnotherapy education, my work with the Mankind Project and all the personal experiences I have had working on myself and with others. I do not ask you to believe me blindly. What I do invite you to do is keep an open mind and heart while you sit with this information and see if it doesn't begin to illuminate some of the great riddles surrounding human suffering.

THE FOUR-FOLD HUMAN BEING – the visible and the invisible

This is meant as merely an introduction to the concept and basic workings of the different bodies or sheaths that make up the human being. I propose to aid the reader's understanding and eventually his/her ability to diminish emotional, mental and even physical suffering.

These four interpenetrating bodies may be looked at as a four-step process of densification that ends with the physical body, made up of visible matter. Of the four, this is the one modern science has concerned itself with because it can be measured and weighed. But quite often taken by itself the physical body leaves these same scientists in the dark and helpless to truly make a difference in real human suffering. I am in no way discounting the myriad of miracles bestowed on the human race by this same glorious science. My only hope is to get the reader thinking beyond the arbitrary limitations set by a science that only takes into account what can be weighed and measured.

I ask all of you do you love someone—a child, a spouse, a friend, or even a pet? Prove it! Show me the weighed and measured substance that is undeniable proof of your love. Of course the physical body will show some effect because these bodies interpenetrate. Endorphins will be released. But love is a much deeper and richer experience. It is an experience of the soul. So that begs the question—what is the Soul and what does it do? Before we can begin to make a dent in this question we must differentiate these four bodies.

THE PHYSICAL BODY is the most obvious of the four. Yet it is quite misleading to think that when we see someone standing in front of us we see the physical body. Just as a rainbow could not exist if the underlying components of water and light were not there in the right balance, the physical body could not exist as we see it if it were not penetrated by its underlying components of etheric body, astral body and Ego/I consciousness. These names are unimportant. You may call them anything you like. It is not until death that the physical body exists by itself. After death it is finally free to follow the basic principles or laws common to the whole mineral

kingdom with which it is akin—**entropy**-decay-the breaking down into its constituent mineral components-dust to dust and **gravity**-it can no longer stand and move freely about.

THE ETHERIC BODY is the densest of the non-visible bodies. You might say it has condensed to the point of having its own gravitational ether. It attracts matter. This is the body of life. The formative forces necessary to sustain life are contained in this body. Life brings forces into play that counteract the decaying forces of matter. Life also helps matter to defy gravity—plants grow up, animals and people stand and move about. The etheric body uses these life forces to build up the physical body. The human being has the etheric body in common with both the plant and animal kingdoms. Plants only consist of a physical and etheric body here on Earth. If you want to see the etheric body you may want to study the growth cycle of plants. This is a body of color and metamorphosis. It is the loss of the etheric body after death that instigates the decomposing and general graying of the physical body. A simple example of the existence of the etheric body is the fact that even though we lose consciousness during sleep every night our physical body does not begin to decompose. Although we become unconscious, the etheric body remains to build up and restore the physical body for a new day.

The etheric body is also the holder of all the pictures that make up our memory. The evidence of this can be found in the many stories recounted by individuals who have had a near-death experience. Although the causes and circumstances are varied, nearly all of the accounts contain the words; “I saw my whole life flash in front of me in pictures.” The loosening of the etheric body from the physical body causes this grand pictorial display. The etheric body can also be called the body of time. It carries all the symbolic pictures that represent our total human experience from the past into the present moment, giving us the ability to recall or have triggered these very same pictures or memories. I will discuss the structure and formation of these symbolic pictures a little later. I would offer up the connection that, if the etheric body is the architect of the physical body and also contains our memories from the past, then these memories could affect healthy new tissue when it forms. If one is dealing with a traumatic memory, the continuous stress could very easily lead to illness and disease in the physical body.

The etheric body is the body of repetition, which can most easily be seen in plants. From the root the etheric body causes the repeated and continuous formation of leaves. If it wasn't for the plant's astral nature, which dips out of the spiritual world and touches the plant from outside causing the flower to form, the plant would just continue to repeat the leaf pattern. In human beings the etheric body carries our habitual patterns. Once the energy of this body has been directed into a pattern—smoking, biting nails, playing a musical instrument, watching TV, etc.—it can be very difficult to change. Steven Covey says in his book “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” that the hardest thing to do is break the old habit. He is speaking of the unconscious energy pattern imbedded in the etheric body. If this habitual pattern is sustained long enough it becomes imprinted in the physical body—the muscle memory of bicycle riding, addictions.

THE ASTRAL BODY is the Soul body of consciousness. Beyond the physical body, which we have in common with the mineral kingdom and the etheric body, which we have in common with the plant kingdom, all animals including us have an instinct-desire driven emotional body. It has a picture consciousness. As a point of clarity it is important to realize that it is the astral body that allows us to take in sensory impressions from the surrounding world. But without the reflective and denser etheric body we would forget the image as soon as we turned our head.

Although the name is unimportant the reason it is called the astral body is because it is made up of spiritual, cosmic substance. The astral body brings closure, finalizing what it touches. It is intimately connected to the nervous system in the physical body. The nervous system has a difficult time regenerating new tissue.

The astral body uses the physical bodies senses—eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc.—to relate to and interact with the surrounding environment. This happens when the physical body's senses are stimulated. We are only conscious of these pictures/mental images because the etheric body is dense enough to reflect them like a mirror. During sleep the astral body and the I/Ego separate from the physical and etheric bodies. We lose consciousness during sleep precisely because, when the astral body and the I/Ego expand out into the cosmos, they no longer have the etheric body to reflect inner images or the senses of the physical body to receive new stimulus from the environment. I will go into detail in the next section.

The astral body can be looked at as the body that brings the future into the present moment. It leads us toward certain experiences in the future because it contains desire that has not been fulfilled. The undifferentiated emotional energy is used to either draw a person (or animal) towards something or drive it away from something in its environment—i.e. food, predator, etc.

Evidence of the astral body can be found in the fact that each night when we go to sleep we lose consciousness. The astral body and the Ego—body of self-consciousness—separate from the etheric and physical bodies during sleep. For consciousness to arise there must be a certain breaking down of life force and matter. A simple physical metaphor for this can be witnessed when we touch something. For us to become aware of something through our hands we must touch it, rub up against it. Even in this simple act of consciousness there is death. The friction caused by the contact of skin against the object breaks cells away from the body and they die. I am aware you cannot take this metaphor too far. Yet, it will suffice to give an example of what occurs between the astral body and the etheric/physical bodies to allow consciousness to exist. This is why after a long emotionally and/or mentally exhausting day the physical body feels so run down. Only during sleep can the etheric body build back up the physical body because it does not have to give its life force to the astral body and ego to maintain consciousness. The astral body must also replenish itself during sleep. It must return to the spiritual world where it corrects any damage that has occurred from being in the material world.

THE EGO or I is the spiritual body of self-consciousness. The I/Ego is the organizing principle behind the other three bodies and is the crowning glory of the evolution of spirit in matter. On Earth only human beings have this body of self-awareness. The best and simplest example of the I/Ego is the fact that each and every human being can use the word I to refer to him or herself. All others must use the word you.

By watching an animal it becomes apparent that the reason they can react so quickly to their environment is because they are conscious of everything around them except one thing. They are not aware of themselves. So for them there is no such thing as doubt or even hesitation.

The I/Ego is also the central kernel of the soul. Between the ages of two and three the etheric body is developed enough to facilitate the imprinting of the I/Ego in an image/picture that is retained in the soul. This is the only image in the soul that is of an entirely spiritual nature and signals the beginning of a person's ability to recall memories—i.e. memory starts at this point in time. Earlier memories may be recalled but usually only under an altered state of consciousness like hypnosis.

The I/Ego is capable of working on the astral body and the etheric body to facilitate change and growth in consciousness. If transforming the astral body can be compared to the minute hand on a clock then transforming the etheric body is like the hour hand. It is much denser and unconsciously controlled therefore more difficult to transform.

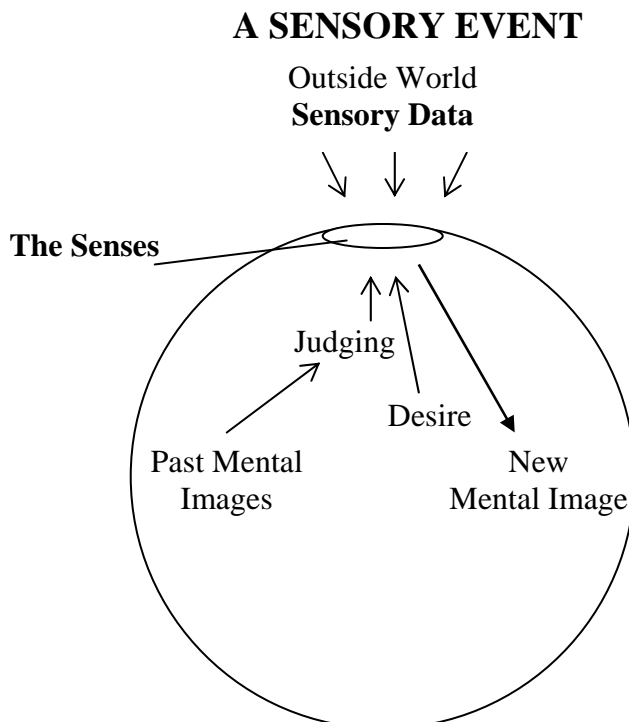
MEMORY PICTURES – how the soul relates to its surrounding environment

In this section the conscious and unconscious formation of mental images by the soul in response to either outer or inner stimulus will be described and analyzed. First we must differentiate the basic components of the soul—what elements or functions are the exclusive properties of the soul.

By observing the anatomy of a sensory experience it becomes clear that senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, etc.—are the outer boundary of the soul. The soul comes up to this boundary to meet the sensory data coming in from the outside world. It meets this data or information with two basic, active components.

- The first is the ability to judge-to mull over-to identify-to process the data—i.e. red – rose = a red rose is.
- The second is desire, which may be better described as the polarity of love or hate with all their subtle variations. This desire seems to come from somewhere beyond the soul and enters at its very core. It then surges up to meet the stimulus—move toward the red rose or away from it.

The soul or Astral body also checks other mental images imprinted on the etheric body in the past and if available brings them up to help in the judging process. Nothing of the outside world is taken into the soul. What the soul does do is create a symbolic picture or mental image to represent and record the event. The symbolic picture is colored and sometimes even distorted by the person’s past experiences and beliefs—i.e. their paradigm. The symbolic picture also carries whatever belief is formed in this encounter and any unprocessed emotion.



Some images can be unconsciously imprinted directly on to the etheric body through prolonged environmental exposure—i.e. cultural icons, religious symbols, subliminal advertising, and repeated parental behavior during childhood.

Fear and **wonder** or surprise is the result of the soul **not being able to judge** the sensory event. Also the soul may completely miss the event or be blind to it if it has no previous pictures of its own with which to meet and help process the incoming sensory data.

When the early settlers brought some of the original Native Americans back east to the cities, some of the objects of their industrialized culture were completely missed by the visiting Native Americans. The foreign objects blended into the unfamiliar background. A native culture so attuned and oriented to the natural world had no previous mental images in their souls with which to meet the new experiences and thus were sometimes unable to unpack them.

The soul can also combine two or more previous experiences and their imprinted mental images into a new mental image that contains different and/or expanded beliefs and a new emotional reaction. For example:

Imagine a woman waiting for a train. As she sits there she begins to reflect on the memory of something her husband said the night before at a party they were attending. At the time it had meant nothing to her but she had felt something in the tone of his voice. Earlier this morning at breakfast before they both left for work he had said something else completely unrelated yet he had that same tone of voice. Just now in the train station it occurred to her that one year ago when he had been afraid of losing his job he had that same tone of voice. She now made the connection that he must be worried about something important and hasn't told her about it.

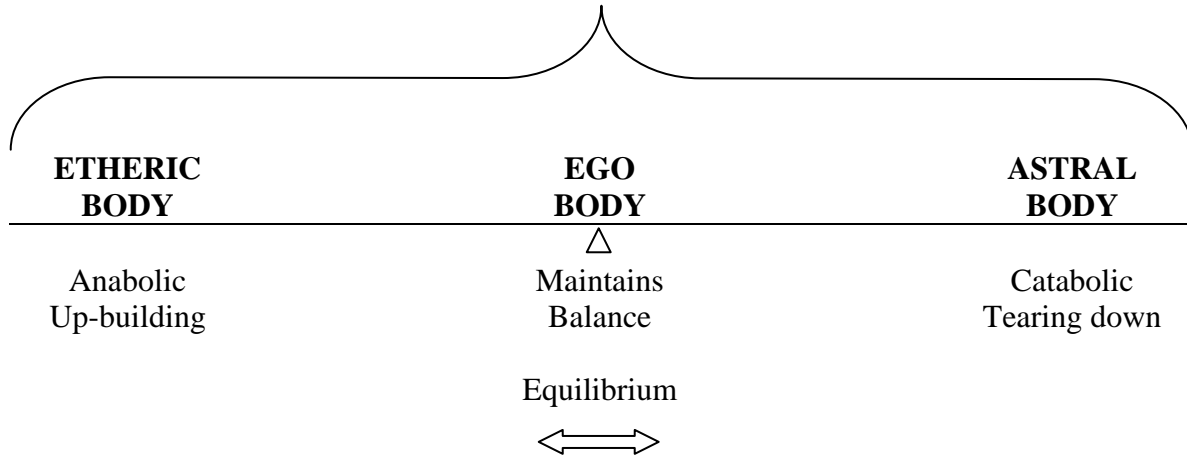
All of this took place completely within the soul as an inner experience with no immediate outside stimulus. I am sure I have left out important scientific information about brain activity and where these different things occur in the neural system. I do not claim to be a scientist. I do know what I have shared with you occurs and for the purpose of this book and a basic understanding of the soul's activities in relationship to human suffering, this information can be enlightening.

TRAUMATIC MEMORY PICTURES – how suffering is recorded in the soul

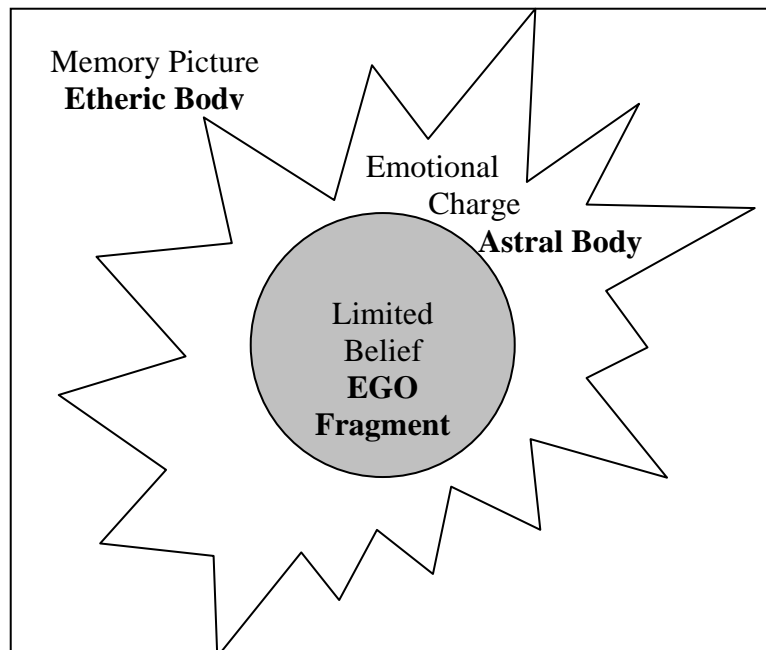
When the sensory experience is one of a traumatic nature the mechanism we have been discussing takes on a slightly different character. An understanding of how the other three bodies interact to maintain a healthy balance in the physical body will be necessary before discussing these differences. First of all let us recall that the etheric body has a building-up or anabolic effect on the physical body. The astral body has a tearing down or catabolic effect on both the physical body and the etheric body. The I/Ego has the important job of maintaining balance between the two. If the I/Ego is unable to understand the cause of the traumatic event it will quite often fragment off a part of itself and leave that part frozen in the memory picture. The fragment becomes trapped by the unprocessed emotion, especially if the trauma occurs during childhood. The fragment also invariably forms some limiting belief about the world and continues to carry the dysfunctional belief into any new life events that look anything like the original. The rest of the I/Ego attempts to block the memory from consciousness to keep from feeling the emotions it cannot process—i.e. fear, shame, terror, guilt, sadness, and/or rage.

Maintaining Balance in the Physical Body

THE PHYSICAL BODY



- The Etheric body is the architect or template for the physical body and the energy grid used by the EGO to store memory pictures.
- If the EGO fragments because of non-understandable trauma, the part becomes frozen in time and trapped by the unprocessed emotional charge.
- The unprocessed emotion and hyper vigilant, survival based fragment consumes energy from the Etheric body in the area of the physical body where the memory picture is stored.
- This energy is no longer available to regenerate healthy tissue sending the physical body out of balance—leading to tension, stress and can eventually end in illness.



These fragments can be triggered by various sensory stimuli—smells, taste, sounds in the form of specific words or phrases or tone of voice, sight as in colors or similar surroundings or objects, unexpected touch especially with sexual or physical abuse victims, etc. Once the memory picture from the past is triggered it will project itself over the present situation distorting the person's view of reality—i.e. my boss becomes my abusive parent. The reason for the projection is because the original memory picture remains hidden in the unconscious and only the emotional explosion is felt. The mind must find some explanation for the intense emotional charge in the present situation to keep from feeling crazy. A simple exercise to experience the unprocessed emotional charge in memory is this:

- Recall a recent, nonvolatile memory—like where your car keys are or what you had for breakfast.
- Continue to focus on the memory until the details become clear—if it is breakfast, what did you eat? Was anyone else there? What were you feeling?
- Now become aware of your body.
- Since there is no emotional charge around the memory you will probably not feel much different.
- Next, recall a known traumatic memory from your past.
- Continue to focus on the memory until the details become clear—what happened, where the event took place, who was involved, etc.
- Do you notice any resistance to bringing up this memory—if so, I invite you for the purpose of this exercise to move through it to the best of your ability.
- Can you feel any emotional charge still connected with the memory—i.e. unprocessed emotion?
- Now begin to scan your physical body with your awareness.
- Where do you feel the resistance if there is any?
- Where do you feel the emotional charge?

Thank you for having the courage to revisit a painful memory. Now imagine for a moment what life is like if I have many such painful memories hidden in my unconscious ready to be triggered by innocent, unsuspecting people in my life. Life can feel like a roller coaster. Now remember, these traumas are usually experienced when we are children, with a child's mental ability to comprehend, and with a child's vivid imagination. So these **traumas have the same effect whether they are real or only imagined.**

LAYERING THE ONION – self-fulfilling prophecy

A memory picture-mental image-holographic image has been created and taken up by the etheric body to represent the trauma. Remember, it is not important what we call this phenomenon. What is important is that we know it exists and begin to understand how it functions and affects our inner state of being. Later in the book I will share with you processes that can alleviate the suffering caused by these traumatic memory pictures.

The basic components of the memory picture are:

1. A fragment of the I/Ego – which carries with it one or more dysfunctional and limiting beliefs about the world.
2. An unprocessed emotional charge (astral body) – which explodes when triggered by a similar looking/feeling new event.
3. An imprint on the etheric body – the memory picture begins to use the creative, formative forces of the etheric body for survival purposes—develops a defense strategy/behavior to insure the trauma never happens again—rather than to maintain and re-build healthy new tissue in the physical body.

The fear usually associated with the memory picture is like a magnet. And the fragment's limited beliefs are creative. Add this to the power being redirected from the etheric body and we have the perfect formula for recreating over and over again similar types of traumatic situations. Even if the intent of the other people in the new situation is NOT negative, the tendency of the I/Ego fragment to project onto them can lead the wounded person into believing that it is negative by distorting his/her perception of reality.

Layers are created over the original memory picture by these new and distorted projections as new memory pictures are formed by the soul to represent them. If I remember my physics, I seem to recall that everything in the universe is energy vibrating. And energy wants to vibrate in a pattern. Once energy is vibrating in a pattern it takes a stronger force of energy to disrupt or change the pattern. This may be the reason that once a memory picture is formed in childhood and then begins to layer itself with similar memory pictures as we grow up, it becomes very difficult to change the pattern of behavior.

One of the more common names for these I/Ego fragments is sub-personality. A sub-personality is a very simple combination of emotion, behavior, beliefs, and personality. Most sub-personalities were formed at a very early age and are quite immature. A second sub-personality is often formed as the person grows up during this layering process of recreating the original scenario again and again through projection. The new sub-personality is also a fragment of the I/Ego. Its job or defense strategy is to keep the wounded child in the original memory picture contained so the core personality can continue to function in the world. Unfortunately the only way it knows how to do this is often dysfunctional, limiting and at times even abusive. It is important to remember that, in the original memory picture, the person with the power was the perpetrator, the abuser. The child will often identify with the perpetrator's power and, because it is all he or she knows, choose to take on their behavior. We will choose to hurt ourselves rather than letting someone else inflict damage. This usually works well enough to keep the rest of the child's core personality reasonably safe and sane in the dysfunctional situation. But, as the child gets older both sub-personalities and their behaviors become more and more difficult to deal with. Multiply this by the times a child feels traumatized and you can have a significant portion of a person's energy involve in sustaining these memory pictures, leaving the individual exhausted and ineffective. Let us look at an example of this process of layering.

FEAR OF CREATIVITY – an example of layering through projection of a traumatic memory

Imagine a small child three or four years old playing in his or her room. The gender doesn't matter. I will use a little girl for the purposes of this example. She is completely absorbed in playing. She has the thought; "I would love to draw a beautiful picture for mommy. I love her so much." She begins to pour her heart and soul totally into her masterpiece. The big box of crayons she got for her birthday is just the ticket. She is sure mommy will love this and proceeds to draw the biggest work of art she has ever created. Time seems to fly by.

Her heart jumps with excitement as she hears her mother's voice from the other room, "Sweetheart, whatcha doin'?"

The little girl puts the finishing touches on her gift and shouts back, "Mommy, come here. I want to show you something." She is bursting with anticipation.

Her mother enters the room and immediately starts screaming, "MY GOD, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE NOW! HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A STUPID THING? YOU KNOW BETTER!"

The little girl is terrified. This is not at all what she expected. She has no idea what she has done wrong. Her mother's anger is overwhelming and she begins to shut down. Nothing makes sense. Her soul is completely unable to judge the situation adequately. She fragments off a part of her SELF (I/Ego) and moves into survival mode. She cannot process the emotions—fear, sadness, and shame. They are stored in the memory picture with the fragment. The imprinting on the etheric body takes place over the next few days. The child continues to think and feel about what happened each time she sees the dreaded picture. She begins to hate the picture.

Now, I invite you to imagine a young woman in her late twenties. She is exhausted. A mother of three, her work is never done. When she is not at her job as a waitress, she is doing laundry, cooking meals, doing dishes, driving kids here and there, arbitrating squabbles between siblings, cleaning the house, taking out the trash, and trying to keep a marriage together without any training, role models, or tools. She gets the thought to check up on her youngest daughter while ironing her work clothes in the front room. She has been lost in worry over the argument between her and her husband the night before and hasn't heard a peep from the little one in the last thirty minutes. The silence triggers the suspicion—a series of memory pictures about all sorts of messes, swallowed little objects, and assorted other parental nightmares—that her daughter is doing something she shouldn't be. The young woman calls out as she heads toward her room, "Sweetie, whatcha doin'?"

The excited shout from the other room, "Mommy, come here. I want to show you something," only fuels her suspicions. She enters the bedroom and is aghast at the sight of crayon markings all over the wall. The markings cover a four-foot by four-foot area and in places are dark and imbedded in the paint. She immediately thinks of how her husband will respond to the cost of repainting the wall, the inference he will make of her mothering capabilities, and the pressure this will add to their already shaky relationship and she loses it. She starts screaming, "MY GOD, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE NOW! HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A STUPID THING? YOU KNOW BETTER!"

The first traumatic memory picture for the little girl is now in place and ready to be triggered again starting the layering process. As for the mother, this just adds multiple layers to her growing memory pictures of being a parent and a wife. If she is conscious at all and with a little time for reflection, she will probably feel some guilt at her over-reaction to the event. Her

marriage may also experience stress depending on her husband's reaction to the news—if any memory pictures/sub-personalities are triggered in him.

The little girl now begins to bury the memory because she is unable to figure out why it occurred; it is painful and does not fit with her feeling of love for her mother. She continues to grow up and reaches the first grade. One day at school she is asked to draw something on the blackboard in front of the class. The forgotten memory picture is triggered and only the emotions are felt. Not knowing where the emotional explosion is coming from she projects them on to the teacher and the situation—i.e. the teacher becomes her screaming mom. Not having the same love for the teacher she reacts with anger and willfully says no to the request. It has now turned into a power struggle between the teacher and her student.

The teacher is relatively new to the profession and has feelings of inadequacy. They stem from a childhood growing up to the continual cutting down of her self-esteem by an over-achieving father who really wanted a son—creating two incredibly wounded sub-personalities, i.e. layered memory pictures. The first to be triggered is her wounded little girl. This is an unconscious experience for the teacher and is so painful the second sub-personality is triggered to stop the pain. She had learned from her father how to use power in an abusive way and immediately starts to berate her student for daring to question her authority.

The first grader now has a new memory picture layered on top of the first, making the original stronger and even harder to access. It also reinforces the limited beliefs and the dysfunctional behavior of her wounded, immature sub-personality. The teacher has either added stress to her life through guilt over her actions or has strengthened her abusive sub-personality depending on her ability to consciously reflect or deny and rationalize.

The little girl's memory picture layers and the accompanying sub-personalities continue to grow in strength as she matures. As an adult, the core of her personality must spend an equal amount of energy to combat and repress the increasingly immature behavioral reactions as the difference in age grows between her immediate reality and the toddler fragment locked in the memory picture.

The unconscious memory pictures are like lost islands in the soul. Unless they are brought to the surface of consciousness and the unprocessed emotions released they can cause a great deal of suffering to the host and to those the host comes in contact with—i.e. family, friends, associates and even strangers.