

24/09/2018

Entry 1

My name's Dan. I'm currently in treatment for DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder) and me and my therapist thought it would be a good idea to have a place to catalogue my thoughts, but also let people have a read through them so they know they're not alone in how they're feeling. I checked with everyone, and they all seemed fine with it, so I've decided to go ahead and write my (or our) first entry.

It's a Monday, so like every Monday we had therapy today. One of the big problems I encounter with DID is losing time, by this I mean that sometimes I will "wake up" and have no idea how I got somewhere or why I am there, and time has passed since I was last aware of what I was doing and where I was. These memory gaps are very common for me, and everybody else in my "system". Today the first thing I remember wasn't waking up in bed, or getting dressed, or even going downstairs. I became aware sat on the couch in the living room of my house with my Nan. She told me that one of my alters or "personalities" called Marcus had been out this morning, which explained why I was unaware of what had happened before hand. My Nan and I are quite used to this happening, so after the initial thoughts of "Oh god! What happened? Why am I here?" I can quickly calm down and understand where I am and what I am doing. I asked what Marcus had been doing and my Nan told me and said there was nothing to worry about.

Before I understood what was happening to me, or got diagnosed with DID, this used to terrify me. I used to think I was mad or possessed. I even asked my doctor if I had Dementia! (I'm only 19 years old!) and I've heard that it's extremely common for people with undiagnosed and untreated DID to come to these assumptions, which in a way are logical, as you have no other explanation!

In therapy today, the main focus was on the feeling I had of not having a "purpose" or no real reason to get up in the morning, which is when me and Mike (my therapist) got talking and eventually decided that making these posts could benefit some people who may feel alone and isolated with their experiences. You're definitely not alone, and you don't have to suffer in silence either. The road to recovery is tough and long but possible. Take small steps like I have today. If you're not in a mental health team and you're experiencing similar issues, it might be worth talking to your GP or even a trusted friend or family member. If you are already in a mental health team, I'd suggest talking to your Care Co-

ordinator. My Care Co-ordinator is actually the very person who recognised I was showing signs of DID and got me referred to treatment! It doesn't hurt to speak up, but it takes a lot of courage. You don't have to fight alone.

I'm going to end today's entry here as it's quite long, and Butch (my 10-year-old alter) is being quite insistent that he wants to play Minecraft! He has about an hour each night to play a video game of his choice, and this was agreed between us, which we learned to do through therapy.

I'll be adding more entries as I continue my journey, so to whoever reads this thank you for taking the time to read my story, and if you're struggling, remember to reach out!

- Dan

Entry 2

25/09/18

Today was tough. Last night we didn't get much sleep. The last time I checked the clock was 6 AM. We were just lay there, waiting, hoping sleep would come, but it didn't for a long time. This is something we've dealt with for a very long time, so we're used to it, but it doesn't make it any easier.

The main thing we do before going to bed is our routine. Usually Matthew will take charge of this. He makes sure that everyone is ok, no one is hungry, and everyone is settled in time for bed. This usually consists of letting Meeko check the doors are locked, the stove is off there are no taps running, all downstairs windows are closed, all animals are inside and all the lights are off. Then Oscar will usually do some writing if he feels like it. After that Lucy will usually get us washed and changed into pyjamas. By this time, Butch, Alistair, Oliver and Kevin are usually tired and ready for bed, but sometimes Butch can be a bit hyperactive (probably like any 10-year-old you might know). Last night this was the case, so Butch got 15 minutes to colour and draw. When most of the team were either asleep or ready to go to sleep me (Dan), Chris and James listen to music to chill us out.

This is the main routine we follow but of course sometimes it varies. But even though we followed our routine, most of us couldn't seem to drop off. Especially me and Meeko, we were the last to sleep. I guess a benefit of having DID is you always have someone to talk to, so when I was lay there waiting for sleep, I could chat to Meeko about things on my mind, and vice versa. Eventually Meeko fell asleep so I was on my own.

I'm sure there were many times I fell asleep briefly, but this obviously isn't substantial sleep. Anyway, we were all very tired today because of this, especially James. When we're tired its even harder for us to get things done and to organise what needs to be done. To add insult to injury, today things just didn't seem to be going our way. It seemed like everything that could go wrong did. Obviously this wasn't the case, but being in that emotional state, it felt like the universe was against us.

As the day became the evening, we started to feel more calm. Personally I'm a night owl, and I know James and Chris share this trait. Meeko could be classed as a night owl, but its mainly the fact that he's awake worrying.

As we write this we've finally managed to chill out and feel a lot less agitated. I think having an outlet that might actually help people is something that cheers us up. Hopefully tonight we'll have a better sleep, and tomorrow will be a better day. Tomorrow is exciting for me (Dan) as my partner is coming over to spend the night, so I'm sure I'll wake up in a better mood tomorrow.

We all sincerely hope that anyone and everyone reading this has had a good day, and if not we hope tomorrow is a better day for you, just like we're hoping for ourselves. Thank you for taking the time to read our thoughts, it's nice to be able to share them. Best wishes.

- Dan and Co.

Entry 3

26/09/2018

Today was a pretty hectic day to say the least! But we still had a great day. It's a Wednesday, so we have a therapy called DBT which stands for Dialectical Behavioural Therapy. That sounds really complicated and fancy but basically it's a group therapy for people who struggle to regulate or control their emotions. Nine times out of ten we enjoy DBT, and we really enjoyed it today! We're quite close to everyone in the group so we always have a laugh, and they're all very understanding of our DID which is great, because we can be ourselves! After therapy finished, we had to rush back home on the bus and get ready to go out tonight, as my (Dan) partner and me were going on a night out in Chester.

We got home with just enough time to eat something, shower, get dressed and pack. When we have very time constricted tasks like this, a lot of the time we can all work together to get it done when we're all feeling good. Its helpful to have a type of team behind you with tasks like this, and everyone in our system has different skills and can get different tasks done more efficiently.

We got there on time and had a great night out! We were all tired afterwards but really enjoyed it. My partner is really understanding of my DID and very supportive, so we all feel comfortable with him. It just goes to show that even sometimes life with DID can be extremely challenging, sometimes it can be amazing.

Again, thank you for reading this entry and I hope you're doing well. We're going to try and have new entries everyday, because it makes us feel great and like we have a purpose.

- Dan and Co

Entry 4

28/09/2018

It's a Friday today, so we didn't have any appointments to go to for a change, Dan's partner was supposed to come over, but had to cancel again, so we mainly spent the day resting and preparing for family to come down and stay over on the weekend.

To be honest we really struggled today, we woke up feeling quite down and we started to notice we were getting easily agitated and upset. Nobody really knew what was wrong we just felt "off" which can happen quite a lot of the time. Sometimes we just wake up and it feels like a battle straight away. Friday was one of those days.

We tried distraction techniques, and different people tried different things, so a lot of us kept losing time, but in the end, we learned that we might just have to wait patiently for it to pass.

We ended up playing some video games to try and distract ourselves but it just didn't seem to be working, so we went to bed. However, we couldn't sleep as we were too agitated and wound up. Nobody really knew what to do and eventually we ended up needing our PRN. PRN is basically code for "emergency medicine" so it's not medicine we take routinely, but we use it to calm us down if we can't do so in another way.

Eventually on Saturday morning we fell asleep, and just hoped that when we woke up we would feel better. Not all days are good days, but not all days are bad. We just try to remind ourselves of that. Thank you for reading this entry, hopefully our next one will be more positive. Take care.

- Dan and Co

Entry 5

27/09/2018

Its a Thursday today! We woke up feeling really happy and energetic which is always a plus. Soon after we got up we headed out to go to therapy. This therapy is still DBT, but it's an individual session, so we get to talk about some more personal problems that may be affecting our lives, we always find it very helpful and we get on really well with our therapist too. The session went well and we left feeling motivated and happy, and set off on our journey home.

Once we got home we got to thinking, we've mentioned a few names of the people in our system, but we haven't given a description or quick summary of what each of us is like, so we're planning to do that soon!

Originally today we had planned that Dan's partner would come over and spend the night, but he ended up cancelling. We understood why, but Dan was still upset. He wasn't angry with his partner, but he felt a bit let down. This is where DBT can come in handy, we used some skills called Distress Tolerance, and afterwards felt a bit better.

As the night went on, a few of us, mainly Dan, were starting to feel a bit worn out and agitated. Which makes sense considering how busy our week has been. Even though we didn't feel great, logically we know that it will pass, it will get better and we will survive it. It took us a long time and a lot of work to realise this, as a lot of the time when we experience an emotion, it feels so intense that it feels like we have always felt that way and always will.

A good thing about being so tired however is that we managed to fall asleep earlier than usual, so the next day (the day we're writing this) we felt less tired and more able to cope.

We all hope that anyone and everyone reading this is having a great week, and we look forward to making our next entry. Thank you for taking the time to read this!

- Matthew and Dan

Entry 6

16/10/2018

It's been a while since we made an entry, but today we finally managed to get the motivation to do another (mainly thanks to Matthew!). It's been a tough few weeks but things are a bit better today.

Around this time of year (October, November, December) we always struggle a bit more than usual. There's most likely a subconscious reason for this, and we will overcome it eventually.

The brain is an amazing thing, and even though we've lost a lot of time recently, deep down we know it's our brain trying to protect us by shifting responsibility to someone who it feels can deal with the situation better.

It's tough when things get dark, but there's always a light at the end of the tunnel. Never give up. Keep fighting. Make your life the best life you could live. You deserve to be happy, and so do we. We'll all get there.

Best Wishes,
Lucy x

Entry 7

12/11/2018

Since nobody else seemed willing, and after speaking to Mike today, I guess it's time for my diary entry. My name is Oscar. I love to write, and I love to explore new ideas, and believe that everything should be approached with curiosity and inquisitiveness. I don't speak verbally, so sometimes it's hard for me to communicate with Dan and the rest of the team, however, me and Dan communicate a lot through writing entries in our notebooks. I like to describe myself as a curious philosopher, but I'm not really sure how anyone else would describe me. I enjoy writing out theories and questions and trying to find the truth in every answer. I also help Dan by giving him questions to answer in our notebooks, as I know he wants to improve his intellectual abilities. Lately me and Dan have been "bonding" a lot, as we all feel safe, so I now have time to teach Dan many subjects and to talk to him about things he - and the rest of us - may be interested in. I understand that James, Matthew, Meeko and Lucy have their roles, and therapy with Mike has helped me to come to terms with that. Because we have felt endangered a lot, they have all had to

deal with the threats and keep the rest of us safe, but now that we generally feel safe, I've had time to get to do work with Dan.

I want to help him discover his own interests, passions and strengths. I watched him struggle through college, but didn't really have chance to help him, because there was so much going on in our system at the time, certain things had to be prioritised, and I'm glad they were. Even though I haven't found my voice yet, I've found it through Dan. I feel understood and accepted finally, and I enjoy helping him with his research, writing and exploration of the world's possibilities. This entry is rather long now, so I'm going to end it. However, I'd like to thank anyone reading this for taking the time to try and understand us. I also hope you are reading this, Dan, and I hope it helps you know you're not alone. I look forward to working with you again Dan. As for everyone else, I hope these entries shed light on what life is like with Dissociative Identity Disorder, and how it's not always a negative thing. We're all here to help, it's just everyone tries to help in their own way, which might not always be apparent at the time, but we are all just trying to survive with our own skills in the ways we know best. Again, thank you for reading this, and farewell.

Yours sincerely, Oscar

2019: Diary Entry 8

12th February

Hello everyone, and a (very late) happy new year, its been quite a long time since any of us last posted. There has been a lot of things happening and changing the last few months so none of us have really had much time to write a substantial entry. There have been ups and downs but thankfully quite a lot more positives than negatives. We have made it through the tough situations quicker and with less sadness and stress than we would have used to. We actually managed to turn most of the stress we would usually feel into energy and motivation to make positive changes in our life, and we have.

A big problem we all faced, but especially Dan, was a feeling of uselessness and having no purpose. Although we still struggle with this a big change we have made to combat these negative thoughts is that we have got a part time job! This is something we didn't really believe would be possible. When Dan first found out he had DID he was quite disheartened. He felt it would stop him from having a happy life and doing "normal" things. He felt like it was pretty much his future being written off. Quite the opposite!

Now that we all understand more about DID and attend therapy and

treatment, and more importantly, the RIGHT therapy and treatment, we are growing in ways we never knew we could and overcoming obstacles previously too large for us to even think of conquering. Its a good feeling!

I will try and remind Dan and our other team members (alters) to keep posting more often! Take care, and thank you for reading.

Written collaboratively by:
Matthew, Oscar & Chris

Diary Entry 9

Thursday August 15th, 2019

It's been a while since we last wrote, there was a lot going on in our lives, some good, some bad. We have managed to pull through now though and are back on the road to recovery! Yesterday we stayed at a supported accommodation that we are planning to move to so we could see if we liked it there. All of the staff and residents were very friendly and welcoming. We all felt relatively safe (as safe as we could feel in a new, unfamiliar place, surrounded by new people, at least!) and enjoyed our time there. We're excited to stay over again and eventually moving in properly.

We and our family believe it is a big step in our personal road to recovery as we want independence, but it didn't work out too well just moving out completely on our own. This gives us the chance to be independent and supported at the same time which is exciting and reassuring. Things seem to be looking up and we can't wait to find out what our journey ahead involves. We know there will be bad days, but also good days! A rainbow needs rain AND sunshine after all. We will try to keep this more up to date now. We got caught in a cycle of wanting to write, but feeling nervous as we had left it so long, so we would leave it again and the next day the cycle continued.

Thank you for reading this (rather lengthy!) entry. We all sincerely hope you are doing well.

- Dan & the Others