



First Person Plural: My Life as a Multiple

Cameron West

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First Person Plural: My Life as a Multiple Cameron West A Note from Dr. Cameron West

... First of all, for those of you who have read First Person Plural, thank you. Rikki, Kyle, and I have been very moved by the kind words many of you have sent, and for the stories some of you have shared about overcoming your own challenges.

I'd like to share something with you that Leonardo da Vinci wrote, which I think of as "Leonardo's Rule." He said, "Every object yields to effort." I remind myself of that every day, and when I'm having a difficult time, Rikki reminds me that this rule applies not only to the obstacles "out there," but to the more important ones- the ones we face in our own minds. Rikki lives by Leonardo's Rule; it comes to her naturally. Even though they are Leonardo's words, it is Rikki's actions that guide me and inspire me to work toward becoming a healthier and better person.

First Person Plural: My Life as a Multiple Details

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Author : Cameron West

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From Reader Review First Person Plural: My Life as a Multiple for online ebook

Soraya Putri Aprilla says

True story about the life of a man who had 24 personalities, Cameron West. The disease is called Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). He suffered traumatic events in his childhood. He got sexually abused by his mother and grandmother. But he was lucky, he had a wife and children who accompanied. Strengthened his spirit for struggling in creating comfortable place for his personalities. Cameron West thought he was crazy. But, with the help from doctors and therapists he accepted his illness. Even, Cameron West holds a doctorate in psychology. Cameron West wrote a dissertation based on suffering DID experience. He managed to control his subordinates (personalities). When they should appear. His wife and son understand about his condition. His life feels lighter. He could write down his experiences in this book. Giving a lesson that child sexual abuse is something evil and cruel. We must protect children from sexual abuse. That's our duty!

Kelly says

I started this book with not a little concern about my being able to read this book. While I can handle people's suffering and pain in fiction, I have a hard time with a true story along the same lines. But this book was impossible to put down or to let go of. I'm sure this one will be processing in my head for quite some time to come.

The pain and confusion that Cameron and his wife, Rikki, suffered is wrenching. Cameron was in his late 30s when he started exhibiting his multiples and being around the same age that struck a chord with me. How could he possibly handle finding out that everything he knew about himself wasn't really the truth? It wasn't easy or simple, but he has done an amazing job at piecing his "guys" together. His writing made me ache for each one of his alters. I'll be looking for a copy of this book for my permanent collection.

April says

I really did enjoy this book - it really gave a glimpse into the life of someone who has DID - but I had to knock down the rating due to the utter clunkiness of some of West's writing. I mean, okay, so being original with simile/metaphor is good... but not when it's everywhere in the book. There seemed to be either an increase in the weird simile/metaphor usage in the latter half of the book, or else I just became more aware of it... but I mean, stuff like saying that his sex life wasn't "mangoes in Maui - it was more like mukluks in Minsk" - I mean, okay, the readers get it. But what the hell do fuzzy boots in a place in Belarus have to do with Cam's intimate life?....

...Okay, maybe I don't want to know the answer to that. Haha. But still.

However, if you are a multiple and you're looking for a book that will have you smiling, laughing, frowning, and cheering Cam and his wife on the entire time... then I definitely recommend this one. If you're a professional who is treating multiples or are just someone who wants to understand more about DID, this might be an interesting read. I can see how it would be confusing to some, though... the process of switching is not easily explained by anyone who's never experienced it.

Li says

I first read this book in high school. By now, I probably have read it five times. It is one of a kind. (Later, I watched Sybil and read other books about DID, but this one was my very first.) I was shocked by its raw human cruelty, but in the mean time, intrigued by our omnipotent brain. My curiosity eventually drove me to study psychology and then neuroscience.

Ashley Lau says

This book took me through the author's 24 different alters, going into an experience that was truly unimaginable. It was difficult to empathize with his constant changes in his personalities, but I definitely felt the internal frustration that the author felt as the alters overtook his body. In the end it was inspiring to see Cam West, the author, push through his alters and succeed in the goal of becoming a psychologist to help others who may also be suffering from dissociative identity disorder like the author himself.

Jennifer says

I'm not sure why this book got so many stars. The subject itself is interesting, but the book reads more like a novel, complete with annoying hokey words and metaphors that sounded like something my grandfather may have used. I had to keep looking at the author's picture to see how old he was; do people really talk like that? The cause of his issues was harrowing, but explaining his day to day life with DID seemed almost like comedy to him; explained so casually and the personalities treated like oh, ok, here is another one just coming out of me, la de da! The wife coped with it as if it was natural to her as well. I thought that was all weird. I will finish reading but the writing and metaphors are so annoying, I have to mentally scan over them to get to the meat of the story. Ugh.

Ari Shaffer says

Fascinating book for anyone wanting to explore what it is like to be a multiple from the inside. Cameron's story is poignant and frightening. He is very descriptive in his style and the context of family gives this book an interesting angle. Interesting.

Denise says

Fascinating true story about a man with Dissociative Identity Disorder. It is both fascinating and tragic. As a lover of psychology I was drawn into his disorder, what caused it and the effect on those around him.

MonicaEmme says

"Io sono quello che siamo."

Emily Urke says

Incredible book! Please read!!!

Joe says

Cameron West is not a great author, but his life makes for a great story. First Person Plural tells the autobiographical tale of a man coming to grips with his multiple personalities. It's a story full of revelations, complex interplay (both interpersonal and interpersonality) and a logical, well-developed sequence of scenes and character-development. You will feel West's shock as he comes to grips with his other selves and the chilling events in his past that may have brought them about.

This is also a story that gets right what so many stories get wrong; it includes elements of the everyday to give you an impression of the characters as people instead of merely subjects. You witness West's wife and son react to his struggles to adapt (and try to love him in spite of the struggles) but you also get a sense of their lives and interests as well. This story gains from being true because truth necessitates so many more details.

West's greatest weakness is his insistence upon unnecessary and awkward wordplay. In particular, he owns a fascination with ill-conceived metaphors. For example; "Denial is a pointy rake that slices a jagged music stall into your naked back and plays its screeching, crimson melody over and over and over until you die." If you can handle these grandiose turns-of-phrase, this is a journey well worth taking.

Edited in September of 2015

Simon Cleveland, PhD says

I've always been fascinated with the intricacies of the human mind. After completing a book about a patient with schizophrenia, I picked up for a change this book about Dissociative Identity Disorder. I've to tell you, in sharp contrast to the effort it took me to comprehend the symptoms of schizophrenia, DID required challenging- no, scratch that- almost mind-bending attempt on my behalf to comprehend how the brain could invent such a mechanism to cope with abuse.

The story spans over the course of several months and examines in detail tribulation after tribulation. The author, Dr. West, paints a picture of a painful and chaotic existence, beginning with the emergence of several male and female identities and ending with his treatment. Thankfully, readers are spared the details of his childhood abuse. And who would want to read about the worst kind of sin? Of course, it must have taken a superhuman effort on his part to complete this heartbreaking book. How could one retain control of his own fragile mind when so many identities constantly struggle to burst out in the open and retain control of his body? Truthfully, it's beyond my imagination.

Despite Dr. West's attempts to keep a level of sanity within the pages, readers should be prepared for a quite confusing narrative. As identities came out, one is forced to struggle to understand the intricate emotions of each personality. There were times when I wanted to stop reading as my interest wavered during certain dialogues. At other times I was fully captivated in the story (especially towards the end when the author finally accepts the reality of his misfortune).

For someone who wasn't very familiar with this type of psychological disorder, I found the book very informative. For those interested in learning about how the disorder manifests itself in the beginning, what impact it has on a patient, and how the person learns to cope with it, pick up a copy of the book.

Fenix Rose says

Written in an easy flow story style, this story is easy to read.

The triggering aspects as kept short and dont go into great detail, just enough to let you know what was experienced.

It was honest about the effect on his marriage, the struggles his wife was having as his world tumbled apart into chaos.

Real life stories of people can be more helpful when you are struggling then a treatise by a doctor. A basic definition for DID is included as part of a conversation.

This book as it is written is a good way for people to understand what it is like being a multiple. Though each multiple is different of course there are basics that all share.

It is hard to not see all the personalities as one person since you only see one body.

But they really are separate individuals with their own feeligns,thoughts, experiences, needs, abilities, inabilities, wounds. The "body" is the house through which they interact with the outside world in. Yet like any community that shares space they need to learn to cooperate and respect one another, learn how to live together,and that isnt always easy.

Barbara says

WOW! If you like this kind of stuff it is extremely interesting and informative.

Jennifer says

I was reading "The Drowning Girl" (see other review) when a waitress recommended I read this. I guess she thought a novel featuring a Schizophrenic makes me a fan of mental illness! Being I'll read anything and she gave it such a high review, I picked it up at my local library.

The plot is fascinating. Cameron West is a multiple with 24 distinct personalities. These personalities were formed as a coping mechanism for having experienced physical abuse from his grandmother and mother among others. The plot focuses on his denial at being a multiple/having DID as well as the effect this illness has on his immediate family, his wife Rikki and son Kyle. At the very basics this is a novel about relationships and if it wasn't for the fact that Cameron has so many personalities by which to create relationships (among each other and the outside world), this work may be dull.

I didn't enjoy the writing here. It was an obvious case of trying too hard with similes and metaphors floating in places unnecessary. Sure they're valuable tools of the trade, but less is more and I honestly found myself skipping over the worst of them. I also found that Cameron was trying too hard to establish himself as an awesome family man. Again, give us a scene and let it speak for itself. Less would have also been more here. It confused me initially how the story is told from Cam's perspective but then in a future chapter you find yourself looking in on Rikki's interactions beyond Cam. I appreciated the attempt at giving her struggles a voice as this is so critical to do, but perhaps Cameron should have limited things to show only those struggles that he would have found out from her via their conversations or her actions with him directly. It would have been more appropriate and believable than having us readers eavesdropping on conversations Rikki had with friends, coworkers and possibly one lover/potential lover. I'm left with the confusion of how far Rikki did get involved with Andy and uncertain whether any of this Andy business was just a product of Cam's mind or it actually existed. It's not a major point for the reader, but something to consider when looking at the overall writing of the piece.

This said, again, I'd never read anything about DID before and certainly not a first person account of it. The idea that a person could switch into someone else before your very eyes and with no obvious sense of control of it is terrifying and amazing. This method of brain splitting (let's say) DID help Cam to be completely unaware of what had happened to him for years. This work did show how fascinating our brains can be and it's for this reason that I'm giving it three stars.
