

Dormant Alters

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Alters in a dissociative system CANNOT die unless you do. They are all you and you them, so what happens to one happens to all. It may FEEL like alters have died, but it is a physical impossibility. That's why integration does not kill or silence alters because the alters will always be part of you no matter what.

Can alters go dormant? Absolutely. The sudden or gradual silencing of the voices and activities of the others may die down to a dull roar or become silent all together.

However, a dormant alter is like a dormant volcano. A dormant volcano is one that has gone silent for many years, sometimes thousands of years. However, under the correct set of circumstances, the dormant volcano can roar to life again.

Dormant alters act the same as dormant volcanoes. They may become silent for days or even years, but because they still exist, they will, under the right circumstances, make themselves known one day.

The decision to awaken an alter from their dormancy must be well thought out as there can be no doubt, but that alters can bring chaos to a system. However, if you find you cannot live without an alter, communication is key.

Go to your safe place in your mind and invite that alter to listen. Tell them that you love them and need them to come out of their slumber. Someone on Tumblr reported that she was rejoined by her alter, whom she had missed terribly within a moment.

However, think long and hard on your decision as dormant alters is often a sign of growth and healing. I have many alters in my system who have gone dormant because I no longer need their help and trust me to handle life for all of my system.

Dormant alters might mean you no longer need their services, and although you might feel lonely for them, it is vital to acknowledge your growth and theirs.

How to Cope When an Alter Goes Dormant

Sadness is normal when acknowledging that an alter, or a set of alters has gone dormant. Here are six coping skills that will aid in your grieving.

Remember. Remember, the dormant alter is not dead.

Acknowledge. Acknowledge the alters have not left but just gone dormant.

Allow the tears to flow. You are grieving over a part of yourself that feels it no longer is needed for you to survive. By allowing yourself to weep, you begin to heal from this unexpected event.

Celebrate. Have a small party to celebrate the alters retirement while letting them know that you understand they are still present. You might even have cake and ice cream to celebrate the birth of the new you.

Give yourself some time. Having an alter go dormant feels weird and maybe even painful. Give yourself room and time to adjust to your new circumstances.

Talk to your therapist. Let your therapist know your concerns and how you feel about the alter going dormant. He/she can help you come to terms with the change.

Like with any life change, it takes time to adjust and to feel safe again.

In Closing

Losing alters to dormancy sounds horrible at first, but I know from experience that one becomes accustomed and even grateful for the silence after adjusting to the new arrangement.

I've had many alters go silent over the time I've been working on my DID issues, and I always feel stronger, not weaker, because their knowledge has been absorbed into my whole self.

With enough trauma or stress, my dormant alter will come out of retirement and once again do their best to protect me, but I'm hoping that doesn't happen. My alters have endured enough stress, and it makes me happy that they now feel it is safe to relax and go dormant.

"Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it." – Tori Amos

"The soul always knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind."
– Caroline Myss