

- Why can't the prince walk?

## Why Can't the Prince Walk?

There is an ancient Persian legend about a physician named Rhazes who was called into the palace for the purpose of diagnosing and treating a young prince. Apparently, the prince could not walk. After the usual examination of the day, Rhazes determined that there was nothing wrong with the prince's legs, at least not physically. With little more than a hunch, Rhazes set out to treat what may be the first recorded case of conversion. In doing so, he took a risk: Rhazes unexpectedly walked into the prince's bathroom brandishing a dagger and threatened to kill him. Upon seeing him, "the startled prince abruptly fled, leaving his clothes, his dignity, his symptom, and undoubtedly part of his self-esteem behind."

—from *The Neuroses* by H.P. Laughlin, 1967

# Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders

The inability to deal with anxiety and stress can lead to somatoform and dissociative disorders.

# Somatoform Disorder: Hysteria

- Two major types of Somatoform Disorder are:
  - Conversion Disorder: the conversion of emotional difficulties into a loss of a specific voluntary body function. (ex. The prince)
    - Very Rare.
  - Hypochondriasis: a person in good health becomes preoccupied with imaginary ailments.
    - Spends a lot of time looking for symptoms of serious illness, misinterprets minor aches/pains/bruises.
    - Represses emotions and expresses them in a symbolic physical system.

# Dissociative Disorders:

- Dissociative experience:
  - “Zoning out”, daydreaming and not hearing your friend calling your name
- A disorder in which a person experiences alterations in memory, identity or consciousness.
  - Dissociative amnesia
  - Dissociative fugue
  - Dissociative identity disorder

# Dissociative Disorders

- Dissociative Amnesia: inability to recall important personal information; usually associated with a stressful event.
  - May not know who they are, where they live, and who their family is.



# Dissociative Disorders

- Dissociative Fugue: amnesia associated with an active flight to a different environment.
  - Travel away from home/work, and is unable to recall the past. If not helped may establish a new identity.
  - Dad at the Denver Bronco's game that randomly disappeared and was found over 100 miles away.
    - His explanation for his disappearance?
      - “He felt like going for a walk.”



# Dissociative Disorders

- Dissociative Identity Disorder: a person exhibits two or more personality states, each with its own patterns of thinking and behaving.
  - The Three Faces of Eve- 22 separate personalities
  - Sybil- 16 personalities



# Dissociative Disorders

- Dissociative Identity Disorder
- Usually suffered severe physical, psychological, or sexual abuse in childhood.
  - Still stressed from their experiences they will simply forget them through the creation of these personalities.
  - Reduces the anxiety they feel.