



# Breaking Free: My Life with Dissociative Identity Disorder

*Herschel Walker*

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## **Breaking Free: My Life with Dissociative Identity Disorder** Herschel Walker

The NFL legend and Heisman Trophy winner shares the inspiring story of his life and diagnosis with dissociative identity disorder.

Herschel Walker is widely regarded as one of football's greatest running backs. He led the University of Georgia to victory in the Sugar Bowl on the way to an NCAA Championship and he capped a sensational college career by earning the 1982 Heisman Trophy. Herschel spent twelve years in the NFL, where he rushed for more than eight thousand yards and scored sixty-one rushing touchdowns.

But despite the acclaim he won as a football legend, track star, Olympic competitor, and later a successful businessman, Herschel realized that his life, at times, was simply out of control. He often felt angry, self-destructive, and unable to connect meaningfully with friends and family. Drawing on his deep faith, Herschel turned to professionals for help and was ultimately diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder, formerly known as multiple personality disorder.

While some might have taken this diagnosis as a setback, Herschel approached his mental health with the same indomitable spirit he brought to the playing field. It also gave him, for the first time, insight into his life's unexplained passages, stretches of time that seemed forever lost. Herschel came to understand that during those times, his "alters," or alternate personalities, were in control.

Born into a poor, but loving family in the South, Herschel was an overweight child with a stutter who suffered terrible bullying at school. He now understands that he created "alters" who could withstand abuse. But beyond simply enduring, other "alters" came forward to help Herschel overcome numerous obstacles and, by the time he graduated high school, become an athlete recognized on a national level.

In *Breaking Free*, Herschel tells his story—from the joys and hardships of childhood to his explosive impact on college football to his remarkable professional career. And he gives voice and hope to those suffering from DID. Herschel shows how this disorder played an integral role in his accomplishments and how he has learned to live with it today. His compelling account testifies to the strength of the human spirit and its ability to overcome any challenge.

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