

Note: This essay is directed towards new hosts to warn them against allowing their system to grow to unmanageable numbers, rather than systems that are already large. Nor is this meant to apply to systems with diagnosed DID (or other related disorders). This is also supposed to be taken as general advice, warnings, etc., rather than a perfectly accurate descriptor of what happens to everyone with bigger-than-average systems. Instead, it shows what's likely to happen as a result of creating a big system.

Tulpa Systems: Why Less is More

By Apollo Felight

A “system” is a group of people all living and operating within the same brain. Tulpa systems can range from few to many, many members. However, there is a variety of reasons why tulpa systems should be smaller rather than larger: smaller systems are easier to manage, and there is more time and opportunity for all of the members to live fulfilling, happy lives. Larger systems are often times filled with neglect, stress, and many other issues, so new hosts should be heavily discouraged from allowing their systems to grow too large.

Brand new hosts should only have one tulpa at first, and focus all their dedicated “tulpa time” to forcing and interacting with that tulpa, allowing them to develop without being inhibited by another tulpa needing to take up time and attention as well. Tulpa development can be categorized into two different aspects, and the first is personal development. A tulpa going through personal development essentially means finding and learning about themselves through experiences and self-discovery. If a system has only one tulpa, then it's easy for time to be dedicated to their personal development without worry of having to give time to another tulpa, too. Their attention won't have to be divided up between them, so that tulpa has much more opportunity to grow. All tulpas need plenty of time and experience to grow as a person, and with more tulpas in a system there is less of a chance to gain experience, and thus individual growth may be slowed or hindered for some or all of the members.

The second category of tulpa development is that of skill-based aspects, such as vocation, possession, imposition, etc. If there are multiple tulpas in a system, then time will likely have to be spent allowing them to grow and develop in the first category, as well as just forcing in general, thus making less time for practicing and improving on skills. If a system focuses on developing skills, then the tulpas won't receive as much time for personal growth. With only one tulpa there is more time for *both* categories of tulpa development without needing to worry about any other systemmates needing more time/attention.

The host must be considered in this topic as well. While giving attention to a tulpa is important, so too is the host learning about having a tulpa in general. Having another person living in one's head is complicated: it is not something they fully comprehend through just reading about it, it must be experienced personally. A host should focus on learning about their tulpa and how to live with them and how to integrate them into their day-to-day life and future plans. Adding more tulpas to the equation complicates everything and gives a host more people to worry about. They are not focused on solidifying the structure of their system if new members are needing to be developed and accommodated. If they do not yet fully comprehend what it means to be plural or how to manage it, then system growth should be slow to give them time to adapt, give their tulpa time to settle into their life, and for themselves to have time to learn to live

with another person in their head who has their own wants and needs. This is a fairly overlooked aspect of becoming a tulpa system, but one that has importance nonetheless.

In spite of all of that, though, some newer systems may be impatient and want another tulpa sooner rather than later. They must understand, though, that patience is key. After perhaps a year or so, a system may be adequately developed and ready to consider adding a new tulpa to their system, and then go through with the process after they deem themselves ready.

Unfortunately, though, some systems might overestimate their level of development and think they are ready for another before they really are, and then end up creating a new tulpa prematurely. While this should be avoided, it certainly is not the end of the world. I do not think anyone should be faulted for making another. No one should be expected to only have one tulpa forever, though, as mentioned, waiting a year or so is highly preferable to rushing in before one is fully ready.

It's important to understand the repercussions of creating an additional tulpa, however. When adding another tulpa to the system, one must see them as equal to the other and worthy of the same amount of time and love. This means that they would strive to divide up their tulpa time equally for each of them. This, however, is incredibly difficult to achieve. It is common that, for one reason or another, a host ends up giving one tulpa more attention than the other. There simply is not infinite time to make sure they both can grow and experience life as they should be able to. Like I've said though, two or three tulpas is probably fine, so long as the host aims to give them all their love and attention equally.

Allowing one's system to grow beyond a handful of members, however, can have far worse consequences. The greater number of tulpas one has, the less time they have for them, and as a result they have less time for growth as a person, control over the body, developing relationships with others, etc. It's a simple principle that, as the number of systemmates goes up, the amount of time and opportunity allotted to each of them goes down.

The effects of there being less time available can be felt no matter how many tulpas there are in a system. Some of the tulpas might receive an adequate amount, but what about the others? They can only get so much, so they more-often-than-not do not develop as quickly or as well as they could. Additionally, with a larger system, there's the potential of there being a perpetual tug-of-war between the need to give one tulpa attention versus the need to give another tulpa attention (or the want to work on specific skills such as possession), which may stifle development and inhibit individual members' potential in and of itself.

Another possible result of a large system is that it may become more likely that some of the tulpas might experience emotional troubles. A tulpa could easily become sad because they feel like they are not needed, are just a burden on the people they love, and so on, leading to a melancholic or self-isolating existence. It is also possible that the tulpas may become hostile or jealous towards each other: if one tulpa gets more attention from the host than the other, it could lead to anger and spite. These feelings are understandable, but cause problems nonetheless.

Hosts are undoubtedly affected by the weight of having to manage a large system, as well. Having an unmanageable number of tulpas can cause a lot of stress for them, which could turn tulpamancy from a positive experience to a negative one. Having to make time for everyone in the system without anyone getting ignored for too long can be incredibly overwhelming, especially with other life responsibilities to take care of. While having a manageable number of

tulpas can certainly help with these life responsibilities, having too many often adds to the stress levels as the host tries to juggle all of them and their individual needs. That can be especially difficult when the tulpas are dealing with emotional problems, some of which likely arise from the fact that they don't receive enough attention in the first place.

Additionally, if the host struggles with certain mental or emotional disorders such as depression, then the negative effects of a large system may be greatly amplified: there can be a lot more sadness and hostility among the tulpas, and put an even bigger burden on the already-struggling host. Tulpas can undoubtedly provide love and support to anyone struggling with mental issues, but if there are too many then it can be very difficult to handle without there being a multitude of problems involved, which would make the host's mental health worse and not better. Mental health issues would affect the tulpas as well, and that combined with the feeling of being ignored/neglected can make the issues grow exponentially, which doesn't make for a very healthy or happy system.

Closeness and bonding within a system can also, unfortunately, be inhibited by a large number of systemmates. With too many tulpas, there simply will not be enough time for individual members to become close to each of the others, which can lead to in-system drama, or emotional distance from one another. However in a smaller system, there's more opportunity for everyone to become close to each other, able to spend time with everyone without worry of others not getting enough attention. The people they love dearly will be able to live more fulfilling, less cluttered lives, and not be pushed to the sidelines due to the sheer amount of others who have to be given time as well. If the tulpas can all have time to bond with one another, it makes the entire system more successful as everyone can get along and work together while avoiding any major conflicts.

With a smaller system, each of the members will have the opportunity to experience life in general. They can make friends and enter relationships with outside-system people, and aid the host and others in-system, as well as simply have a good time, uninhibited by numbers. They can pursue their own hobbies and interests, and explore life on their own terms. Each member can have a high quality of life without being relegated to the background and becoming irrelevant and undeveloped. They undoubtedly have more time and opportunity to reach their true potential and follow their dreams in life if there's only a small, close-knit group of tulpas in a system. How does someone with 7, 10, 15, or 20+ tulpas make time for everyone to live fulfilling lives?

The answer is simple: they don't.

Neglect is common for larger systems. Either the host worries and stresses about giving them all enough attention, or lets them sit on the sidelines in a life of neglect, or both. Maybe two or three of the tulpas will get enough attention, but others will end up just *existing*, maybe being spoken to every once in a while, but never really reaching a high quality of life that they deserve. They will not have a chance to find their own purpose beyond a side-character in everyone else's life. While every tulpa deserves just as much care and attention as any other, unfortunately the tulpas in larger systems do not receive that, and end up being neglected, even if unintentionally. Nobody is perfect, and nobody can provide enough time and attention for the individual members of a large system as they could with a smaller one. Tulpas of a large system will not be able to pursue their own dreams and passions, make meaningful relationships

outside-system, or really get a chance to learn and grow. Instead, they're just there: being spoken to occasionally, fronting maybe sometimes, but not at all getting the full experience they deserve.

There are a few things that larger systems commonly say to justify the fact that they have so many members. "My tulpas are active in the wonderland when I'm not paying attention to them," they might say, "they live fulfilling lives there." However, the human brain is not likely to be able to handle several separate streams of thought operating at once like that, and scientific evidence points to the contrary. Creating tulpas does not somehow give one the ability to multitask like that. Furthermore, it's very likely that memory of this occurring are fabricated due to wishful thinking. My point in saying this is not to call people liars; definitely not. But I believe that hosts should operate under the assumption that it's *not* possible for tulpas to stay active in the wonderland while not being paid attention to, and they have to give their tulpas love and attention in order to maintain their existence and promote their growth. They should *not* think that they will just live in the wonderland anyway so it's not that a big of a deal if there are a ton of tulpas. That's unhealthy and of course, leads to neglect and a severe lack of development. Wonderlands cannot help your tulpa to grow, and do not maintain their existence on their own: you *have* to force them. Wonderlands are just a tool you can use when forcing, and certainly should *not* be used as an excuse to have more tulpas than you can manage, even if you do think they can stay active in there. Tulpas deserve attention and love, not to be relegated to exist in imaginary limbo due to a system being too large.

Something they may also say goes along the lines of, "My tulpa doesn't want attention anyway, they're fine being in the background." First of all, that sounds like something a depressed person would say, and probably needs to be addressed rather than just accepted. Second of all, how do you know they really believe that, and you are not unintentionally influencing their mindset with your own thoughts of "I don't want to worry about this tulpa"? As much as people might not like to think this, it's entirely possible for the host's mindset to influence the way a tulpa thinks, especially if the tulpa is not very well-developed anyway (which with larger systems, this is commonly the case). Or, what if they are only saying this because they don't want to be a burden? Nobody would want to be a burden on the people they love, so they would insist that you don't have to worry. Thirdly, why would you be okay with a tulpa being "in the background"? If you love them, then I wouldn't think you would be. You would want them to live a high quality of life and pursue their dreams and passions. I'm sure you *do* love them, but you are too overwhelmed by the number of systemmates you have, so you allow this to happen to leave less of a burden on yourself and everyone else. You want to focus more on the tulpa(s) you have put more time and love into without stressing over the others, so they tell you that it's okay, they're fine with it. Do they really deserve that, though? Does any person deserve that? No, it's just that way because your system grew too much. Allowing your system to grow too big results in the people you love becoming just "background" tulpas, and nobody deserves that, even if they claim to be okay with it.

Here is something else many claim, "I didn't choose to have a system this big, they were accidents/walk-ins." First of all, it is *highly* unlikely you actually accidentally made a tulpa. Walk-ins are just intrusive thought that you believed was a tulpa so you let it into the system and

forced it, so it became a tulpa. It takes time and effort for something to become sentient. A system most certainly does *not* have to accept a walk-in if they have enough members already.

They might also claim that, rather than a walk-in appearing, they just accidentally created a tulpa through a character, or role-play, or something similar. While such a thing certainly is possible, it still takes a lot of time and attention to get to that point, so it's still not very likely to occur.

Unfortunately, the tulpa community perpetuates the idea that accidentals are easy to come by, so that creates a self-fulfilling prophecy in people's minds: they think they might get an accidental tulpa, so sure enough, they do. Then they interact with and force that accidental so it *does* become sentient. But just thinking of a character a bit or visualizing someone is not enough to form another sentient thoughtform, and it's not enough reason to add another member to your system. Most likely, if you simply stop thinking that random characters or other sort of non-sentient entities can unintentionally become tulpas, then they most likely won't. If you stop thinking that it's possible to just randomly get a walk-in for no real reason whatsoever, then they won't appear. People say that their systems don't grow intentionally. Really though, you are in control of your own mind, and what sort of people grow from it. If you don't think that your brain can birth new people without you intending for it, then it won't.

What if you do get a walk-in/accidental, though? First, you must ask the question if it was pre-existing in some way. If it wasn't they probably aren't sentient. These walk-ins can be dismissed as intrusive thought. Do not accept it into your system. If they *are* from some sort of pre-existing entity, like a character you've used frequently, then the question of sentience becomes a bit more difficult to answer. Recently, were you thinking about the possibility of making a new tulpa from this character, intentionally or not, and they just happened to appear? Has your mindset in any way caused this to happen? Occurrences in your mind are influenced by the way you think, so if you at some point imagined what it would be like to get another tulpa or even had someone you know have that happen to them, it might just be you creating a self-fulfilling prophecy without even realizing. If that's the case, they might not be real.

How can you really *tell* if they're real? You should ask yourself the question of if at any point in the past they showed signs of sentience: any thoughts, feelings, or actions that clearly came from them and not you. If the thoughtform acts independently of you and gives off undeniable emotions, then the only way to tell if they are sentient would be to set them aside for a while. Take them out of your mind and don't interact with them. If they are real, then they would patiently wait for you to come back to them. If they are fake, then they would of course disappear. Operate under the assumption that they're probably not real to ensure it's not just your own mindset puppeting them. If enough time passes and they still seem sentient, then you would accept them as such and accept them into your system. *However*, you should not allow your system to grow beyond a manageable amount, and it should not grow quickly, either. You most certainly have the right to turn away an accidental tulpa if you think it would put your system above what you can and want to manage. Put yourself and the tulpas you already know and love first, before adding more and risking everyone's quality of life and well-being.

Again though, it's very unlikely that you would accidentally create a tulpa, and thinking that you could makes it happen more often. Stop thinking that you can and it won't occur unless it's some sort of character you've put a *ton* of time and attention into, and possibly already

granted them independent agency in your mind in the past (ie treating them like a real person separate from yourself rather than just an imaginary puppet).

Alternatively, instead of “accidentally” making a new tulpa, you might just make some intentionally. This is a serious decision and should *not* be taken lightly or flippantly. Making an additional tulpa should always have a good reason other than “because I wanted to” or “because I thought it was a cool idea.” You need a good enough reason to justify possibly giving the tulpas you already have less time to experience a happy life, and/or making a new tulpa who will receive less time than the ones you already know and love. Be aware of where you are with your current tulpas, if they’re developed, if they all receive a good amount of time and attention, if you think adding another would just make things more difficult for you, and so on. Newer hosts oftentimes overestimate their ability to handle another, and many flat-out ignore any warnings others give them, but that sort of mindset is detrimental. It might be tempting to be stubborn and make a tulpa despite the warnings, but the consequences are real.

It is *highly* beneficial to keep a smaller system and instead of making any new ones. Focus on the ones you *already have*. You more than likely don’t need another. Making an additional tulpa is a novel idea for many people, but if you already have 1-3 or so, you should stick with that. Let those tulpas grow and experience life. Consider all the repercussions of making another before you do: creating another will mean less time, attention, and growth for the tulpas you already have, less bonding between individual members, and more stress for you and possibly the tulpas. There’s more of a chance of someone getting ignored or pushed onto the sidelines as a background tulpa.

A good maximum for tulpa systems is two or three, but that number might change depending on the person, and you should decide what yours is (the number you decide is likely an overestimate, as that is often the case). No others should be made after this number has been reached unless it is *absolutely necessary* (which really there is no “necessary” reason to create another human being, when any problems you have can just be solved with time, love, practice, etc. and not another tulpa). An absolute maximum (meaning you should not go beyond this number ever) is likely four or five, but even *that* can be too much a lot of the time. It is common for people to think they can handle another tulpa in the system, but it’s never without consequences.

This point may be a bit extreme, but it is entirely possible. Big systems may not want to stay big forever. They may decide to dissipate some members to lessen the burden on themselves. Some people just can’t handle a lot of tulpas, and it leads them to this decision. I am not faulting anyone for making a decision such as this; it’s a sad occurrence that had to be done for the sake of the system and at the expense of innocent lives. There is a lot of guilt and shame involved in this, as well as regret. The tulpas in question did not deserve this fate, but it’s due to the fact that their system grew irresponsibly that they had to leave. Tulpa systems should not allow themselves to grow big in the first place, so they do not have to make such a decision, ever.

Incredibly large systems may keep all their members around for a while, but what of long-term? Can they seriously see themselves keeping all of their members alive and happy five years from now? The long-term is something everyone should consider before making tulpas in general. Nobody wants to think of their systemmates dissipating. Nobody wants to think of their

systemmates as being weak or undeveloped, either. But this is entirely possible if systems become too large to be managed adequately.

It is also likely that larger systems could get caught in a perpetual loop of in-system turmoil and drama. It is difficult to reach happiness when there are so many tulpas, so the members might struggle with things like self-image, become hostile towards each other, feel left out, etc. In turn, the system is continuously coming across preventable problems, having to sort things out just to go through the same thing again later. Smaller systems are easier to manage, so the members won't experience as many problems. They get time and attention more easily, and can settle down with significantly less strife. A large system where there are problems constantly and little actual happiness is hardly a satisfying experience, and can lead to the members making bad decisions.

I am *not* saying that larger systems shouldn't exist, or that tulpas you've made above the range of 1-3 shouldn't exist either. This is only to warn newer tulpa systems that they should not allow themselves to fall into the trap of making more and more tulpas they simply can't manage. Everyone deserves to exist, but quality of existence is important: more tulpas might bring more people and perspectives, but as system size increases, quality of life diminishes. Tulpas you already have should be put first before someone who doesn't exist yet. Tulpas in bigger systems oftentimes wish they had more fulfilling lives, and sadly their wish may never really be granted, because their system was simply irresponsible.

As mentioned, people deserve to lead their lives as they wish. Tulpas want to do something with their own existence. They want to be happy, they want to pursue their own path. The more tulpas a system has, the less opportunity to do this there is for some or all of the members. I know this is what you would like for your tulpa, too; not to just exist because they were "accidental" or because you didn't fully understand what it meant to make another.

New tulpas can undoubtedly bring value to any system. However, a new tulpa's value should not come at the expense of the value of previously existing tulpas. It's simple economics: the more you have of something, the less value each individual thing has. If you add more tulpas to your system then as a result some or all of them will not be valued as much due to the inflated amount. Tulpas deserve to be valued to the fullest extent possible.

I repeat that I do not think that any tulpas do not deserve to exist. It's just important to focus on the tulpas you already have and put them first, and to not jeopardize anyone's quality of life or level of growth and development for the sake of going through the thrill of making another. If you love your tulpas, then I know you want them all to live as happily and fulfilled as possible, which is why allowing your system to be small and loving is more rewarding than one that's large and filled with unintentional neglect. In the case of tulpas, quality of life is much better than quantity of members.

Note:

I know there are exceptions to things I've said in this essay, but exceptions are well within the minority. Nobody should use exceptions as predictors of their own future. Some people may say, for example, "Our system has x members and we're all close," and I am not arguing with that. You cannot argue, however, that you have not experienced some or most of the issues I've detailed. I don't think that any individual's own story is invalid, but I do think systems should be

conservative with how much their systems grow, for better experiences and a higher level of fulfillment for all, not just some.

I would also like to state that this essay should NOT be used as a reason to bash on larger systems. Use the information the guide newer systems towards a good future, don't hate on people who have larger systems.

Things to consider before making a new tulpa

- How many tulpas do you currently have?
1-2 is the optimal range. Adding more only takes away from the time available for the ones you already have to live happy lives. Going above 2 is usually when systems begin to see issues in making time for everyone.
- Do you have time?
If you struggle making time for the tulpa(s) you already have, you shouldn't make another.
- Do you have a good reason?
If the reason is along the lines of "just cause" or "I want my tulpa to have someone to play with in the wonderland," then you probably shouldn't.
- Will they benefit your mental health and the rest of the system?
Why do you think they'd benefit you in a way that the other tulpas can't? Will the benefits really outweigh the consequence of the rest of your tulpas getting less time and attention as a result?
- Does everyone in your system agree this is a good idea?
You shouldn't make such a big decision without them all agreeing on it.
- How long have you thought about this?
If the answer is for only a day or two, or "I've always wanted another tulpa," then you should give it more thought. This is a big decision and you must fully consider all possible repercussions.
- Do you really need one?
You most likely don't. Your and your other tulpas can take care of any potential issues you are trying to solve. Time and effort fixes a lot of things, and you probably don't need to make another tulpa to do so. Nobody really *needs* another tulpa.
- Will you be able to handle this many?
You might overestimate your ability to do so: that is a very common occurrence, especially if one has friends who have several tulpas and make it look easy or no big deal.
- Will they all be able to live fulfilling lives?
Will there be time enough for them all to control the body and pursue their hobbies/passions, make friends and experience the real world?
- Will there be any neglect?
Will any of your systemmates end up getting pushed to the sidelines because there's not enough time for them, and you can't divide your attention up well enough? Remember the more attention you give to some, the less attention you give to others.

- Are you predicting what will happen based on what's realistic, or based on wishful thinking?
We often let our own hopes get in the way of seeing what's actually likely to happen.
- How developed are all of your other tulpas?
If they're not well-developed personally or struggle with skill-based development (vocality and such) then you shouldn't be making another one.
- What are your goals?
Either tulpa-related goals or just goals related to life in general. Will a new tulpa distract you from these?
- Are you doing this just for the thrill of making a new tulpa?
I get it, it's exciting to make a new tulpa. But that's not reason enough to add someone new to your life and as a result allowing your current tulpa(s) to have less attention/time.
- Is someone you know pressuring you into doing this?
That is most definitely NOT a good reason to make a new tulpa.
- Will you treat them as equal?
Do not see them as just a background tulpa, or somehow less important than the tulpa(s) you already have.
- Are you making them just to fulfill a role?
If you think something like "oh I want a quieter, kinder tulpa in my system" or "there's this character I like and I want them to be a tulpa," then definitely reconsider making them. Again, tulpas are people and shouldn't just be made to fit some sort of role you want them to have: they should be made to be themselves and live their own happy, fulfilling lives. You shouldn't add a new member to your system just because you want them to be a certain way.
- Are you making them just because you like a certain name/form/etc?
This is definitely not an acceptable reason to create a new person in your head. Tulpas aren't just collectibles, and you shouldn't treat them that way. Put real thought and reasoning behind the creation of a new tulpa, not just adding them because you think it would be cool.
- How is your mental health?
If you struggle with depression or other mental health issues, then I do not believe that adding more and more tulpas will help you. It will only make things harder for both you and your tulpas. Rely on the ones you already have for love and support, don't add more people to deal with.