



YOUR TRUE SELF & YOUR SUB-PERSONALITIES: HOW TO GET TO KNOW YOUR MANY PARTS

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OVERVIEW

- Introduction to IFS Therapy
- True Self
- Parts
- The Process
- Parts Mapping

“But what of the idea that the self is not a unified being, and there may exist within us several realms of consciousness?... From our [neuroscience] studies the new idea emerges that there are literally several selves, and they do not necessarily ‘converse’ with each other internally.”

–Michael Gazzaniga, pioneer in split-brain research

“The legend of the single Self can only divert us from the target of that inquiry... It can make sense to think there exists, inside your brain, a society of different minds. Like members of a family, the different minds can work together to help each other, each still having its own mental experiences that the others never know about.”

–MIT Scientist Marvin Minsky, pioneer of AI

INTERNAL LEADERSHIP

- Parts are not just feelings but distinct ways of being
- Parts have their own characteristic tonality, vocabulary, body posture and movements
- Internal Leadership Skills: How well we listen to our different parts, ensure their needs are met, keep them from sabotaging one another

IFS THERAPY AS EMPIRICALLY BASED

- IFS is posted by NREPP (National Registry for Evidence-based Programs and Practices), which is maintained by US government's SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
- Subjected to “independent, rigorous scrutiny and are deemed to show significant impact on individual outcomes relating to mental health.”
- In particular, studies indicate promising IFS's effects on mind (depression, anxiety), body (physical health conditions), and spirit (personal resilience and self-concept)

THREE CATEGORIES OF OUR PARTS

EXILE PARTS

- Trauma injects parts with beliefs, emotions that force them out of their naturally valuable state
- For example, a childlike fun part reacts to abuse by becoming hurt, frozen, carrying pain, terror, and betrayal
- Exiles: Parts carrying burdens of trauma are toxic, so they're locked away inside

MANAGERIAL PARTS

- Parts organized to protect the Exiles.
- Hide the toxic Exiles, but in so doing, take on some of the energy of the abusers
- Critical, perfectionistic managers make sure we never get too close to anyone who you could hurt us
- Drive us to be relentlessly productive

FIREFIGHTER PARTS

- Also, parts organized to protect the Exiles.
- Also hide the toxic Exiles and in so doing, take on some of the energy of the abusers
- Firefighters are like emergency responders
- Act impulsively whenever experience triggers an exiled emotion

- Each split-off part hold different memories, beliefs, and physical sensations
 - Some hold the shame or the rage or the pleasure and excitement or the intense loneliness or the abject compliance
- ALL parts have a function: to protect the family from feeling the full terror of annihilation
- Recognize each part stuck with burdens from past and respect, appreciate its function in the overall family system
- Ensure all parts feel welcome and appreciate they were formed in attempt to protect the self-system

POSITIVE INTENT

- Every part has a positive intent for the person, even if its actions or effects are counterproductive or cause dysfunction.
- So never any reason to fight with, coerce, or try to eliminate a part
- IFS method promotes internal connection and harmony.

BASIC BELIEF IN TRUE SELF

- True Self — an undamaged essence, beneath the surface of the protective parts, that is confident, curious, calm, sheltered from destruction by various protector parts
- Once protector parts feel safe and trust the True Self, this True Self can naturally emerge and lead the other parts in healing process

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION OF TRUE SELF

- True Self then reorganizes inner system and communicates with parts to establish trust
- For example: Meditation increases activation of medial prefrontal cortex and decreases activation of more “primitive” structures like amygdala
- True Self like an orchestra conductor

WHEN THE TRUE SELF IS NOT IN CONTROL

- “Blending” — Condition in which the Self identifies with a part
- “I want to kill myself” or “I hate you” vs. “A part of me wishes I were dead” or “A part of me gets triggered when you do that and makes me want to kill you”

YOUR TRUE SELF: SUMMARY

- When you are in your True Self, you are...
- Connected
 - You naturally feel close to other people and to your parts, and you want to relate in harmonious, supportive ways
- Curious
 - You are interested in other people and your parts in an open, accepting way. You are interested in the inner workings of your mind. You're interested in the positive intents of your parts, what they're trying to protect you from, and why each part acts as it does
- Compassionate — a form of kindness and love arising from empathy with people in pain
 - You genuinely care about how others feel and want to support them through their pain. You feel compassion for your parts, including the more extreme parts reacting to pain

- Calm
- Clear of Mind
- Confident
- Courageous
- Creative

5 P'S OF THE "THERAPIST" SELF

- Playful
- Patient
- Present
- Perspectival
- Persistent

GETTING TO KNOW THE PART: THE 6 F'S

- 1. FEARS & CONCERNS: Are there any fear or concerns about working with that part?
- 2. FIND: Go inside and “Find the part in or around your body.”
- 3. FOCUS: Focus your attention on this part in whatever way you are experiencing it

- 4. FEEL: “How do you feel towards this part?” Check for critical mass of Self energy to proceed. If insufficient, ask this new part if it’s willing to step back.
- 5. BEFRIEND: Find out about the target part. Extend Self energy — How does it respond? Is it aware of your presence? What does it want you know about it? What’s its job? How does it try to help you? When did it take on this job? What would it rather do if it did not have to protect you in this way? Update it on the present. Offer it appreciation for its positive intent and how hard it’s been working. What does it need before trusting you more?

- 6. FEARS & CONCERNS: Address all its fears and concerns about what would happen if it didn't do its job. Is there a more vulnerable part it is protecting? What if there were a way to take care of the part it is protecting so it wouldn't have to work so hard?

UNBURDENING THE EXILES

- Extreme parts carry "burdens" (painful emotions or negative beliefs taken on because of harmful experiences in the past, often in childhood)
 - These burdens are not intrinsic to the part and can be released or "unburdened," allowing part to assume its natural, healthy role
- The True Self is the agent of psychological healing. The therapist helps the client to access and remain in True Self and provides guidance in the therapy process
- Protectors let go of their protective roles and transform only when the exiles they are protecting have been unburdened
- Cannot work with any exiles until True Self has obtained permission from any protectors who are protecting that exile.
 - This makes the method relatively safe, even in working with traumatized parts.

SYNOPSIS OF THE METHOD

- First help the client to access the True Self
- Then the True Self gets to know protector(s), discovers its positive intent, and develops a trusting relationship with it.
- With the protectors' permission, the client accesses the exile(s) it is protecting and discovers the childhood incident or relationship that is the source of the burden(s) it is carrying
- Exile is liberated from being stuck in that past situation and helped to release its burdens
- The protector can then let go of its protective role and assume a healthy one

MY JOURNEY

WHAT ABOUT YOUR STORY?

PARTS MAPPING

- Brainstorm a list of all the parts you can identify in yourself. No pressure. Just roll with it. Let your imagination fly.
- Then map your parts in relation to each other by first placing the True Self in the center

RECAP

- IFS as Evidence-Based Practice
- Parts
- True Self
- 6 F's
- Unburdening
- My Journey
- Parts Mapping