



Exploring our Parts

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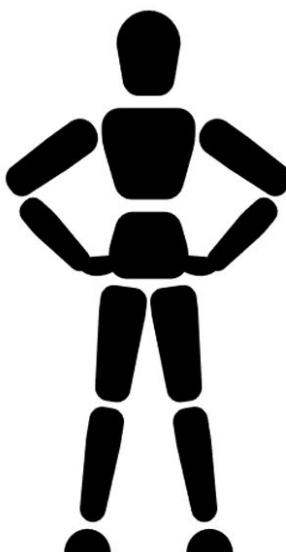
This communication offers strategies and a process to help you explore your **internal parts or characters** with **curiosity**, working toward greater **self-understanding** while reducing judgmental self-talk.

Approaching Parts Work with Compassion

In Internal Family Systems (IFS), our inner world is made up of different *parts*, each with their own voice, emotions, and role.

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is a therapeutic model that views the mind as made up of different “parts,” each with its own emotions, motivations, and protective strategies. These parts such as **managers**, **firefighters**, and **exiles** develop to help us navigate pain, cope with stress, and stay emotionally safe.

At the center is the **Self**, a core state defined by qualities like calmness, curiosity, compassion, and clarity. IFS helps individuals understand, honor, and unburden these parts so they can work together in healthier ways, allowing the Self to lead with compassion and authenticity.



Exiles

- *Isolated, Young, & Trauma Informed...*

Managers

- *Day-to-Day Routine, Protect, & Control...*

Firefighters

- *Come to the Rescue when Exiles are Activated...*

Take a moment to watch this example that illustrates the many parts of us that can exist.

- Link: [Susans](#)

The goal isn't to fix or get rid of them, but to understand and relate to them with **openness and curiosity**.

Strategies: Exploring Your Parts

Here are some creative and reflective ways to engage with your inner parts:

- **Journaling:** Name and describe your parts. What roles do they play?
- **Drawing:** Create images that represent each part.
- **Mapping:** Lay out the parts visually on a page or poster. Where do they sit in relation to each other?

- **Cut & Paste:** Use magazines or printed images to represent each character visually.
 - **Voice Recording:** Speak to or from the perspective of each part—note the tone, content, or feelings.
 - **Visualization:** Imagine sitting in a room with your parts. What do they look like? How do they interact?
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Process: Inspired by IFS

Follow these steps to explore your parts with mindful curiosity:

1. Notice the Part(s)

- Ask yourself: “Who’s showing up right now?”
- Become aware of the internal voice, feeling, or response that’s present.

2. Understand the Role

- Is the part functioning as a...
 - **Manager:** Protects, organizes, and controls day-to-day life.
 - **Firefighter:** Reacts quickly to protect you from pain (e.g., numbing, distraction, urgency).
 - **Exile:** A wounded, often younger part holding trauma, shame, fear, or unmet needs.

3. Name the Part

- Give it a nickname that feels accurate, playful, or symbolic:
 - “The Perfectionist” · “The Shy Guy” · “The Boss” · “The Rebel”

4. Observe & Feel

- Check in with your body:
 - Where do you feel this part?
 - What does it sound like?
 - Can you visualize it?

5. Practice Separating from It

- Shift your language to create space:
 - Instead of “I’m anxious,” say: “A part of me feels anxious.”
- Ask yourself: “Can I get some space from this part to learn more about it?”

6. Practice Connecting

- Approach your parts with **respect, permission, and care**:
 - Ask **managers** for permission to explore deeper parts like exiles.
 - Approach **exiles** gently and with compassion.
 - Ask yourself: “What does safety look like for this part?”

7. Dialogue with Your Parts

- Develop internal conversations through imagination, writing, or speaking aloud. Ask questions such as:
 - “What do you need?”
 - “What do you want?”
 - “How long have you been around?”
 - “Where did you come from?”
 - “Who are you trying to protect?”
 - “Do you feel misunderstood?”
 - “Why are you trying so hard

Final Note

Within each of us exists a variety of internal “parts,” each carrying its own perspective, emotion, and role based on our lived experiences.

These parts often develop to help us cope, protect us from pain, or pursue our needs, which is why some may feel driven, anxious, playful, avoidant, or nurturing. Together, they form an internal system that can sometimes feel conflicted yet ultimately seeks balance and safety.

Recognizing these parts not as flaws, but as meaningful pieces of our inner world helps us understand ourselves with more compassion and clarity, especially when guided by examples like those in the infographic provided on the next page.

This is an evolving process. There is no rush and no single “right” way to do this work. Return to your parts again and again with **compassion, curiosity, and care**, each visit deepens your understanding.

Samples:

- All or Nothing
- Black and White
- Pessimist | *Focus on the negative...*
- Disqualifier | *Acknowledges positives but refuses to accept...*
- Overgeneralizer | *Makes a conclusion based on a single event...*
- Mind Reader | *Assumes what others are thinking...*
- Fortune Teller | *Conclusions and predictions with no evidence...*
- Catastrophizer | *Over exaggerates situations as worst case scenarios...*
- Minimizer | *Diminishes the positive attributes...*
- Personalizer | *Takes things personal...*
- Blamer | *Points the finger at others as the reason...*
- Labeler | *Judgements based on limited evidence...*
- Fight to be Right | *Desire to be right - even if they are wrong...*
- Shoulder | *Disproportionate expectations that self "should..."*
- Muster | *Disproportionate expectation that self "must..."*
- Gut Instinct | *Relies on gut instinct regardless of facts and evidence...*
- Externalizer | *Control determined by external factors...*
- Internalizer | *Disproportionate responsibility for other's well being...*
- Changer | *Others should change not them...*
- Fight for Fairness | *The world must be fair & equal...*
- Hardworker | *If I only work hard everything will work out for me...*
- Denier | *Refuses to accept facts and evidence of the truth...*
- Displacer | *Transfers actions onto a 3rd party rather than the primary party...*
- Projecter | *Attributes thoughts, feelings, or behaviors towards others...*
- Rationalizer | *Justifies behaviors with other factors rather than the truth...*
- Regressor | *Retreats back to previous patterns of behaviors...*
- Opposite Reactor | *Instead of the truth, one acts or responds contrary to the truth...*
- Repressor | *Stuff's it away to avoid rehearsing the experience...*
- Redirector | *Masquerades less than desirable actions with socially acceptable actions...*