

DO Therapy

From Inside to Outside

What we experience internally and what we communicate externally aren't always the same.

We might feel disappointed but say we're fine. Want connection but act indifferent. Feel overwhelmed but insist we've got everything handled. Or experience appreciation, affection, or excitement without expressing it.

Sometimes we're aware of the difference. Other times, we don't recognize it until later.

There are many reasons for this. We may have learned to keep emotions private, avoid uncomfortable conversations, protect others, or simply haven't had much practice expressing what we experience.

This exercise isn't about expressing every thought or feeling. It's about recognizing what happens inside us and practicing greater alignment between our internal experience and how we show up externally.

NOTICE

Start by paying attention to the relationship between what you experience and what you express.

Think about your everyday interactions with friends, partners, family, or colleagues.

- What am I experiencing internally?
- What am I communicating externally?
- How often do those two experiences match?
- What emotions or needs do I express comfortably?
- What do I tend to minimize, hide, dismiss, or keep to myself?
- When do I feel most comfortable being myself?

Maybe you:

- Feel disappointed but say, "It's no big deal."
- Want support but say, "I've got it."
- Feel hurt but respond with irritation.
- Disagree but go along to avoid tension.
- Feel proud but downplay an accomplishment.
- Want connection but wait for someone else to initiate.
- Feel uncertain but present yourself as confident.
- Appreciate someone but rarely tell them.

What happens between what I experience and what I express?

Maybe you worry about how others will respond. Don't want to be a burden. Feel uncomfortable with certain emotions. Need time to understand what you're feeling. Or have simply become accustomed to keeping things inside.

Not every internal experience needs to be expressed. Now ask: Am I making an intentional choice, or am I automatically hiding part of my experience?

REVIEW THE GAME TAPE

Think about a recent situation where what you communicated didn't fully reflect what you were experiencing.

Slow it down.

- What happened?
- What was I thinking or feeling internally?
- What did I say or do externally?
- What was different between the two?
- What influenced my decision to express or withhold something?
- What happened afterward?

Now consider:

- Was I aware of what I was experiencing at the time?
- Did I understand what I wanted or needed?
- Was I protecting my privacy, managing the situation, avoiding discomfort, or responding automatically?
- Did my outward response communicate what I wanted the other person to understand?
- What might I have communicated differently?

Look for the gap.

- **INSIDE:** What I actually experienced.
- **OUTSIDE:** What I communicated or demonstrated.
- **OPPORTUNITY:** What I might want to express differently.

Sometimes the opportunity isn't to say more. It may be to say something more accurately.

PRACTICE

Choose one situation where you'd like your outward expression to better reflect your internal experience.

Not every emotion. Not every interaction. One.

WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE?

- I notice:
- I feel:
- I want or need:

WHAT DO I USUALLY SHOW OUTSIDE?

- I typically say or do:

TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

- Next time, I will try:

Make it specific enough that you can actually practice it.

Instead of: "Be more emotionally open."

- Try: "When someone asks how I'm doing, share one feeling rather than automatically saying 'fine.'"

Instead of: "Stop hiding disappointment."

- Try: "Say, 'I was actually disappointed by how that turned out.'"

Instead of: "Be more authentic."

- Try: "Express my actual preference rather than automatically agreeing."

Instead of: "Ask for support."

- Try: "Say, 'I've been feeling overwhelmed and could use some help.'"

Instead of: "Show more appreciation."

- Try: "Tell someone specifically what I appreciate about them."

Now expect something important: IT MAY FEEL UNFAMILIAR.

You may feel awkward, exposed, uncertain, or tempted to explain away what you just shared.

That doesn't automatically mean the expression was inappropriate. You're practicing something that may not feel natural yet.

Afterward, ask:

- What happened?
- Did my words or behavior better reflect what I experienced?
- How did I feel afterward?
- What worked?
- What would I adjust next time?

BUILD REPS

Greater alignment develops through awareness, experimentation, and practice.

You may have spent years communicating in familiar ways. Give yourself opportunities to try something different without expecting every interaction to go perfectly.

Look for small moments where you can express yourself more accurately.

REP 1

- Inside:
- Outside — What I tried:
- What happened:

REP 2

- Inside:
- Outside — What I tried:
- What happened:

REP 3

- Inside:
- Outside — What I tried:
- What happened:

REP 4

- Inside:
- Outside — What I tried:
- What happened:

Now notice:

- Am I becoming more aware of my internal experience?
- Is it becoming easier to identify what I think, feel, want, or need?
- Am I expressing myself more accurately?
- What situations or relationships make this easier or harder?
- Am I learning when to share, when to pause, and when to maintain privacy?

Remember: The goal isn't perfect alignment all the time. It's developing the ability to recognize your internal experience and make more intentional choices about how you express it.

KEEP THIS IN MIND

Authenticity isn't the same as saying everything you're thinking or feeling.

You can be authentic and still choose privacy. You can feel something strongly and decide it isn't the right time to express it. You can also acknowledge an emotion without acting on it.

The important distinction is whether you're making a choice or following an automatic pattern.

Sometimes greater authenticity means speaking up. Sometimes it means acknowledging a feeling to yourself. Sometimes it means allowing yourself time to understand what you're experiencing before communicating it.

Instead of: **FEEL SOMETHING → AUTOMATICALLY HIDE, DISMISS, OR DISCONNECT**

You're practicing: **NOTICE → UNDERSTAND → CHOOSE → EXPRESS**

Over time, you may discover that greater awareness of your internal experience gives you more flexibility in how you respond externally.

TEST & LEARN

Notice one situation where your internal experience and outward expression don't quite match.

Pause. Identify what you're thinking, feeling, wanting, or needing. Consider whether you'd like to express something differently.

Choose a small, appropriate way to experiment. Notice what happens. Learn from the experience and adjust.

Build reps.

Notice → Review the Game Tape → Practice → Build Reps

The goal isn't to share more of everything. It's to become more aware of yourself and more intentional about what you communicate.

You don't have to express everything you experience. But you can learn to express more of what matters.