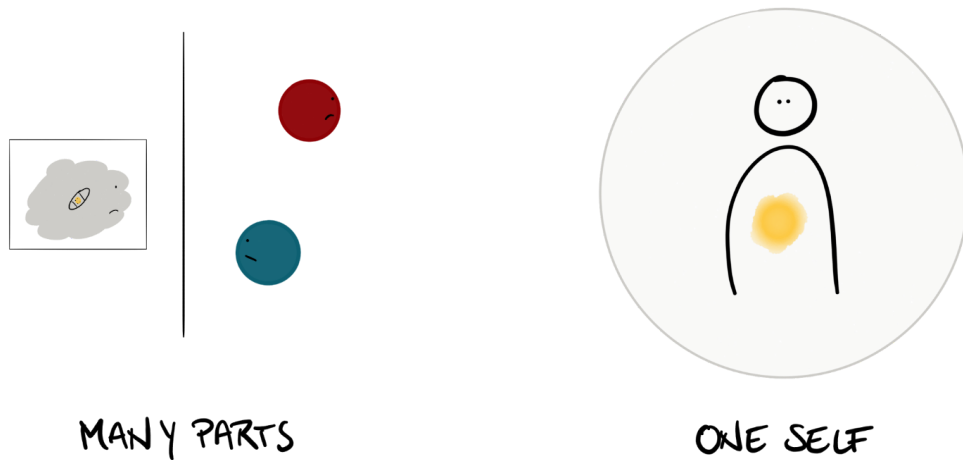
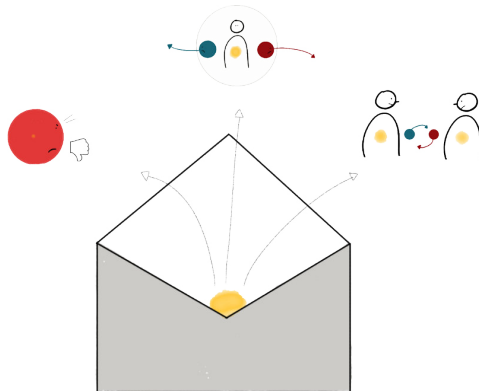




Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model

A companion to the
"Introduction to Internal Family System Therapy"
video series
([blue videos](#))

by Lucas Forstmeyer



Sign up to my Newsletter
and receive high quality videos exploring
Advanced Parts Work Concepts

- Inner Critic
- Polarization
- Interpersonal Dynamics
- Self-Like Parts

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About this Document:

This PDF is a companion for the video-series: **“Introduction to Internal Family System Therapy”** (the blue videos).

You can find the videos here:

<https://lucasforstmeier.com/introduction-ifs-video-course/>

In this document you'll find the important concepts of the Internal Family Systems Model explained using simple drawings.

1. What are Parts?

(Video 1&2)

STARTING POINT: MULTIPLICITY PARADIGM



HUMAN MIND IS NATURALLY ORGANISED
INTO MULTIPLE SUB-PERSONALITIES
AKA PARTS

A Part is a subpersonality.

We all have multiple parts, each with their own view of the world, perceptions, feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Depending on which part is active in our system at a given moment, we will feel, perceive and act according to the part's personality.

Each part has a role in our psyche and life - a quality or capacity they bring to our internal and external life.

At the core of each role is a Positive Intent: Each Part wants to avoid pain and create psycho-biological wellbeing in our life.

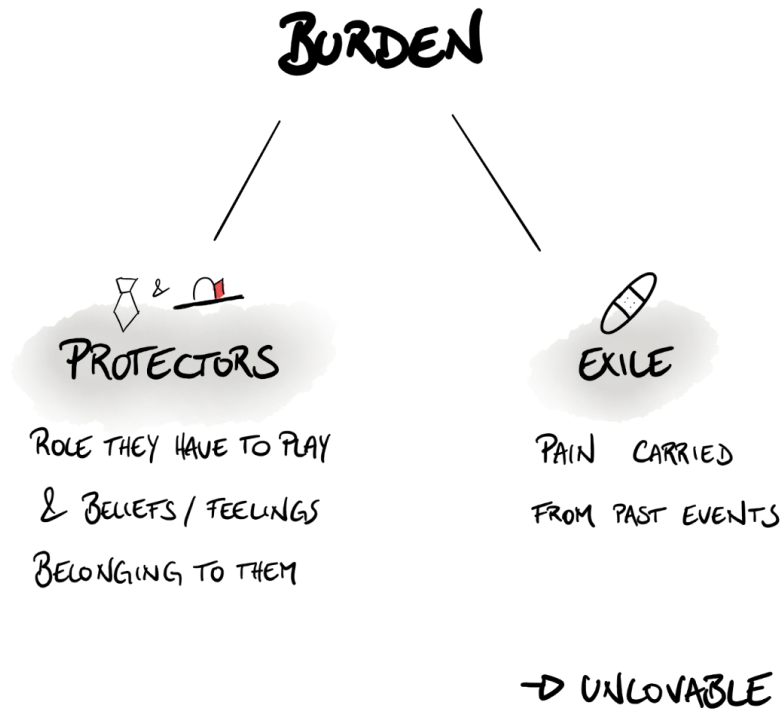
"LIKE LITTLE PEOPLE"



Each part has Positive Intent for us and our life. That means: Parts act in certain ways, because they try to a) avoid pain and b) make us feel better (in technical terms: they try to support our psycho-biological wellbeing).

However, some parts have extreme roles, which arise from distorted perceptions and behaviour to reach their intention.

Healthy parts did not take on burdens or extreme roles in the past. Thus they have access to their healthy qualities and capacities and usually support our psycho-biological wellbeing.



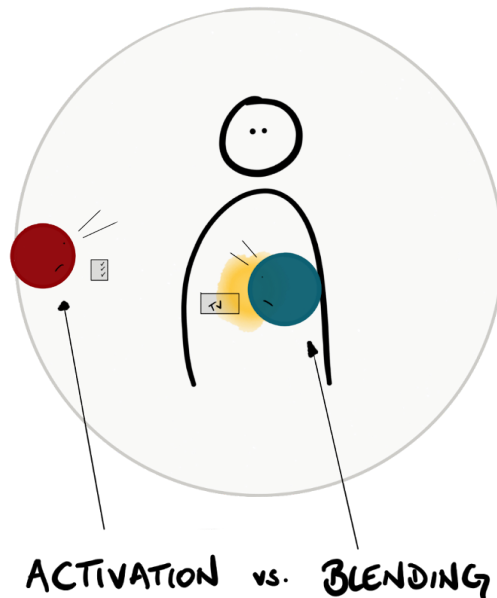
A Burden is a painful emotion, belief or behavioural pattern that a part took on because of a painful situation or relationship in the past.

In the case of Exiles, the Burden is the pain and belief they are still carrying. For Protectors, their burden is the protective Role they took on..

2. Understanding Blending & Activation

(Video 2&3)

WHEN PARTS TAKE OVER



A Part is *active* when it is “triggered” and influencing us, without having completely taken over.

A Part is *blended* when it takes over the seat of consciousness, so that the person experiences its feelings, thoughts and perspective as if they were reality (or them).

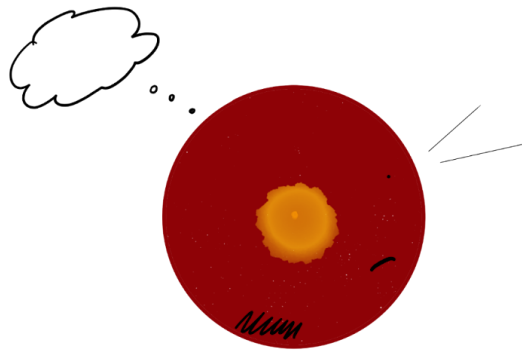
Unblending refers to the moment when a part separates from the Self and gives space for a person to be connected to their Self.

As a Practice we can support Unblending through multiple tools:

- Asking a part to step aside,
- Grounding Meditations,
- Supportive Touch
- Visualising the part as separate

3. Protectors

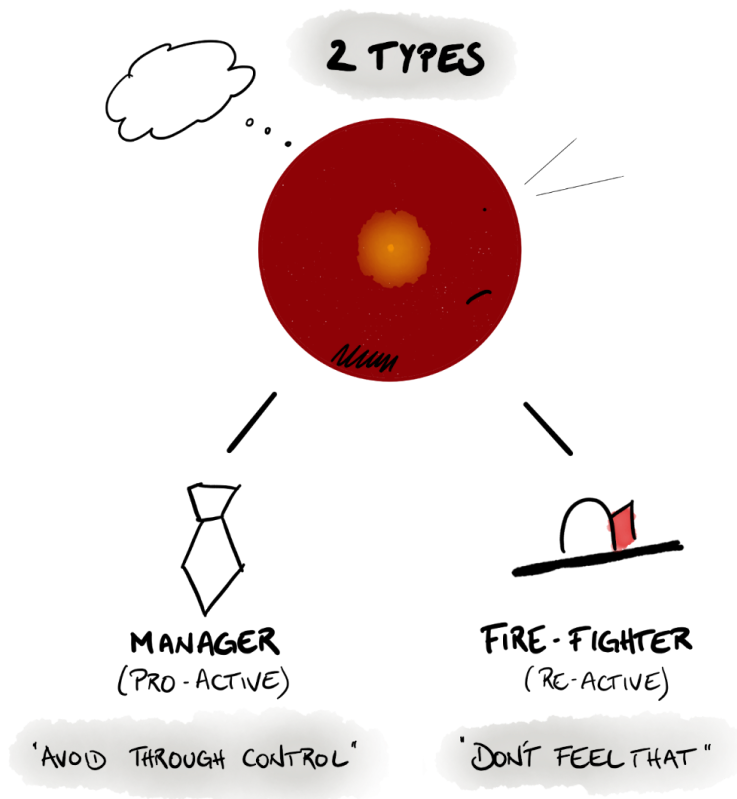
(Video 3)



TRYING TO PROTECT
=
POSITIVE INTENT

- AVOID SITUATIONS → NEVER AGAIN!
- ACHIEVE SITUATIONS → SAFETY
- KEEP EMOTIONS & MEMORIES DOWN

Protectors are Parts in an extreme Role, trying to protect specific Exiles or the whole system from situations and feelings. They try to avoid specific overwhelming experiences from the past being repeated or felt again.



IFS distinguishes between two types of Protectors:

- Managers, pro-active parts, trying to organise our life in such a way that we stay safe and do not get hurt. They generally try to control us and life.
- Firefighters, reactive parts that get activated once an exile has been triggered. They try to suppress specific feelings and beliefs which Exiles are still carrying as burdens.

IMPORTANT:
PROTECTOR ≠ ROLE

THEY FULFILL THEIR ROLE.
BUT OFTEN DON'T WANT TO!

4. Exiles

(Video 4&5)



EXILES:

- STUCK IN TIME & SITUATION/MEMORY
- VULNERABLE / CARRY UNPROCESSED "PAIN"
 - EMOTIONS
 - BELIEFS
 - SOMATIC

Exiles are Parts (often young child parts) carrying painful burdens from the past. Exiles are usually stuck in a painful experience and are kept out of consciousness to not overwhelm the system.



- BURDEN FROM BACK THEN
- CARRY IMPORTANT QUALITIES
 - OFTEN IMPORTANT NEEDS & SELF-QUALITIES

5. Self

(Video 6)



SELF
=

THE SEAT OF CONSCIOUSNESS
& ENTITY ASSOCIATED
WITH NATURAL QUALITIES OF
PRESENCE (8 C's)

SELF-ENERGY

THE ATTITUDES &
FEELINGS SELF
NATURALLY DISPLAYS
TOWARDS
PARTS & HUMANS

The Self is our essential nature, spiritual core or who we really are. IFS uses two concepts to refer to our spiritual centre:

- "Self" refers to the experience and reality of being a true individual or Being.
- "Self-Energy" refers to the attitudes and qualities of presence that arise naturally when we are connected to our Self, called the 8 C's: We are curious, compassionate, calm, centred, courageous, creative, connected or confident towards our parts, other people and the world.



"SAME PERSON UNDERNEATH"

— 'HEALTHY ADULT' —

· MATURE PERSPECTIVES

· COMPASSIONATE ATTITUDES &
INTERACTIONS WITH

· PARTS

· OTHER HUMANS

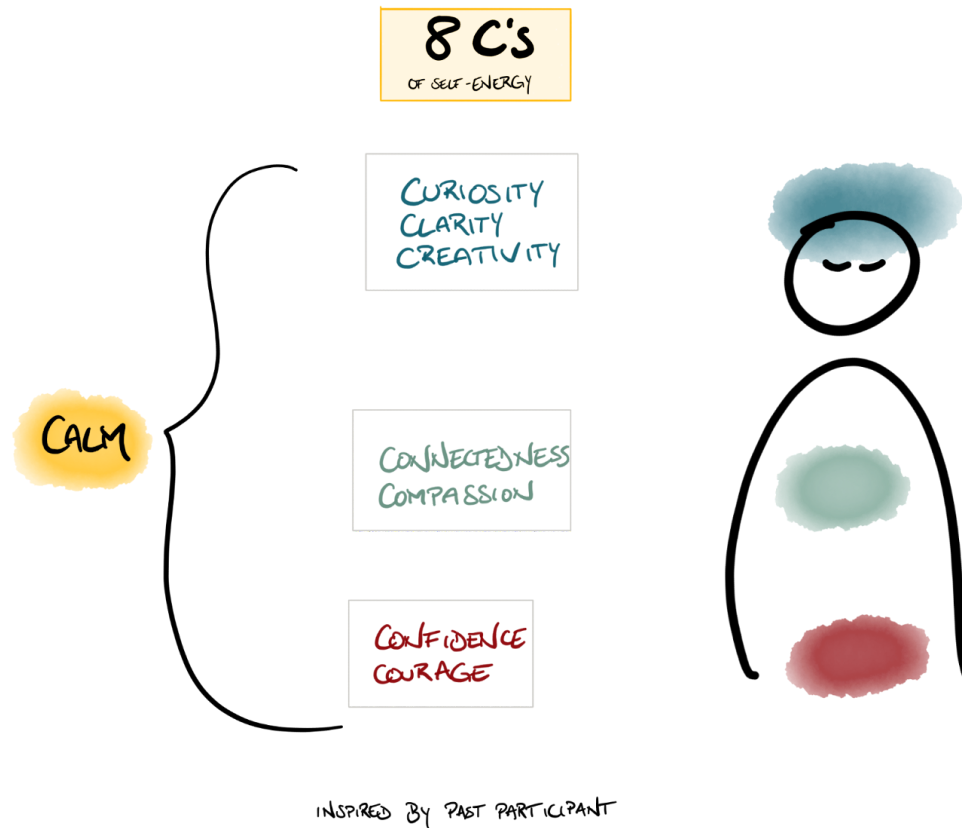
· WITHOUT GOOD PARENTING

· WITHOUT HEALING

· JUST THERE

6. 8 C's of Self-Energy

(Video 7)



This is the list of qualities that often arise in people when parts have unblended. They are: Curiosity, Compassion, Calmness, Confidence, Creativity, Courage, Connectedness and Clarity.

Self-Leadership is the state of the internal system when the Self is in charge and the parts trust the Self.



I hope this PDF is helpful to you.

If you have any questions or remarks, please feel free to get in touch.

Love,
Lucas

<https://lucasforstmeyer.com>