

Assumptions of the IFS Model

1. **Multiplicity.** It is the nature of the mind to be subdivided into an indeterminate number of subpersonalities.
2. **Self-leadership.** Everyone has a Self. Self can and should lead the individual's internal system.
3. **Positive intentions.** The non-extreme intention of each part is something positive for the individual. There are no "bad" parts, and the goal of the work is not to eliminate parts but instead to help them find their non-extreme role.
4. **Systems.** As we develop our parts develop and form a complex system of interactions among themselves. Systems theory can be applied to the internal system. When the system is reorganized, parts can change rapidly.
5. **Transformation.** Changes in the internal system will effect changes in the external system and vice versa. The implication of this assumption is that both internal and external levels of the system should be addressed.

At the heart of each part is the Self of the part, no matter how extreme its role or distorted its beliefs. All parts have Self at the center. They carry the burden of the role they've taken on. The burdens of parts include beliefs, feelings, ideas, behavior, and stories: about you, about others, about the world.

We don't get rid of any part, we get rid of its burdens so that it can return to its preferred role.

Goals of the work

1. To facilitate the relationship between the Self and the parts.
2. To achieve balance and harmony in the system: the Self leads the system and the parts are in their preferred, wholesome roles.
3. To help parts release their burdens so that they can find their preferred, healthy roles in the system.
4. To differentiate and release Self. When Self is in the lead, it respects input from the parts, who in turn respect Self to effectively lead the system.
5. To allow Self energy to express itself unhindered in the external world.

Qualities of Self-Leadership

Calm	Finding inner stillness in the midst of activity. Bringing calm in difficult situations. Having a calming presence with others and with our own parts. Easing tension, anxiety, anger, and conflict.
Curiosity	Being genuinely curious about yourself and others, instead of becoming upset or judgmental over what other people do or say. Maintaining a friendly curiosity about why our parts or other people are behaving the way they are or feeling the way they do.
Compassion	Recognizing all forms and signs of suffering, and not turning away. Seeing behind our own or others' extreme parts to see the fear or pain behind them.
Confidence	Trusting that even if other people are upset with you, or you make mistakes, you can experience yourself as a good, worthwhile person. Able to be self-assured in challenging situations or with difficult people.
Courage	Facing difficulty with equanimity. Not retreating into some form of escape, denial, or self-soothing. Speaking for your own parts when they are activated and also apologizing to others for the harmful or extreme behavior of your parts. Standing up to injustice, cruelty, and oppression.
Clarity	Maintaining a clear, undistorted view of situations. Seeing beyond your own perspective. Making skillful use of capacities and resources available in yourself and in the situation.
Connectedness	Maintaining open, caring connections with all parts and with all people. Not distancing, alienating, distracting, or isolating yourself so that you can be fully present. Not trying to fix or manipulate others in any way.
Creativity	Radical openness to possibilities. Embracing spontaneity and improvisation, and cultivating skillful means for expression. Being free to realize creative potential and to enjoy exploring novelty; to encourage one's parts to express themselves, unencumbered by burdens of fear, worthlessness, or shame. Embracing wonder.

