LISTENING TO THE PARTS OF YOU THAT NEED LOVE

Have you ever noticed how certain struggles seem to follow you through life — no matter how much therapy, journaling, or inner work you do?

Maybe it's the part of you that can't stop overthinking. Or the one that works too hard to please others. Or maybe it's that wave of self-doubt that still sneaks in when things start to go well. It's easy to believe these patterns mean something is *wrong* with us. But what if they're actually showing us exactly where we need to look?

Real healing isn't about forcing yourself to change — it's about listening more deeply. It's about getting curious about what's happening beneath the surface, and discovering that the parts of you you've been fighting against might actually be trying to protect you.

Why We Repeat What We Don't Resolve

So often, we try to "fix" ourselves by managing symptoms: setting boundaries, pushing harder, numbing out, or chasing calm. But those are surface-level solutions. The deeper truth is that every reaction has roots — often buried in old pain or unmet needs.

That anxious part that keeps scanning for danger? It might have learned long ago that staying alert was the only way to stay safe.
That perfectionist voice that won't let you rest? It may have grown from a childhood belief that love had to be earned.

When we start to see these patterns as *protectors* instead of problems, we move from self-blame to self-understanding. And that's where healing begins.

A New Way to See Yourself

The Internal Family Systems (IFS) approach offers a beautiful reframe: we're not one single, unified "self" — we're a collection of parts, each with its own fears, hopes, and stories.
And beneath all those parts lives something steady and whole — your *Self* with a capital S — the calm, compassionate awareness that can hold everything without judgment.

When this Self takes the lead, your inner world begins to relax. You stop being at war with yourself. You begin to feel at home — within.

How to Start Healing from the Inside Out

Here are some gentle ways to begin exploring your inner system and connecting with your parts:

1. Notice Without Judgment

When you feel triggered or caught in a pattern, pause. Instead of reacting, try asking:

"What part of me is here right now?"
"What is it trying to protect me from?"

Just naming what's happening — and offering it curiosity — begins to dissolve resistance.

2. Make Contact with Compassion

If a part feels anxious, critical, or overwhelmed, take a breath and say silently:

"I see you. Thank you for trying to help."
This simple act of acknowledgment helps these parts feel safe enough to soften.

3. Listen Through the Body

Your parts often communicate through sensations — the tightness in your chest, the lump in your throat, the exhaustion that hits from nowhere.
Instead of pushing those feelings away, gently place a hand on the area and say,

"I'm here. You can tell me what you need."
Often, your body knows what your mind has forgotten.

4. Write it in a Journal

Write from both perspectives:

- "A part of me feels…"
- "Another part of me thinks…"
- "My Self says…"

This brings clarity and compassion into your internal conversations.

5. Remember the Qualities of Self

The IFS founder, Dr. Richard Schwartz, describes the Self through the *8 Cs*: calm, curiosity, clarity, compassion, confidence, courage, creativity, and connectedness.
Whenever you sense one of these qualities, know that your Self is present — and your healing is already happening.

From Self-Criticism to Self-Compassion

Every part of you began with a purpose — to protect you, to keep you safe, to help you survive something painful.
They might have become overactive or extreme, but their intentions were never bad.

Healing at the root means helping those parts trust that *you* — your grounded, compassionate Self — can take the lead now.
When that happens, life starts to feel less like something you have to control, and more like something you can gently guide from within.

Try This Reflection

Take a quiet moment.
Ask yourself:

"What part of me has been working the hardest lately?"
Close your eyes, breathe slowly, and imagine offering that part gratitude.
"You've carried this for so long. You can rest now — I'm here."

That's where true transformation begins — not by fixing yourself, but by remembering that every part of you deserves love.

Listen to podcast episode 54 – Healing at the Root