

Helping Stuck Clients Get Unstuck

Integrating Internal Family Systems with the Developmental Model of Couples Therapy

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Today:

- ☀ Introduce Internal Family Systems (IFS): how the internal system acts and reacts
- ☀ Integrate IFS with Developmental Model (DM): how our internal mechanics impact how we show up in relationships



Benefits

Provide you structure and strategic thinking processes to effectively integrate IFS and DM in your therapy practice

Provide resources for immediate use to support you in your practice



Using both models

- ☀ Relationships improve with awareness
- ☀ Gaining insight into which of our parts (feelings/thoughts) are getting triggered we now have a map for healing
- ☀ Taking ownership of our reactions gives us power to change



Characteristics of these models

They are both:

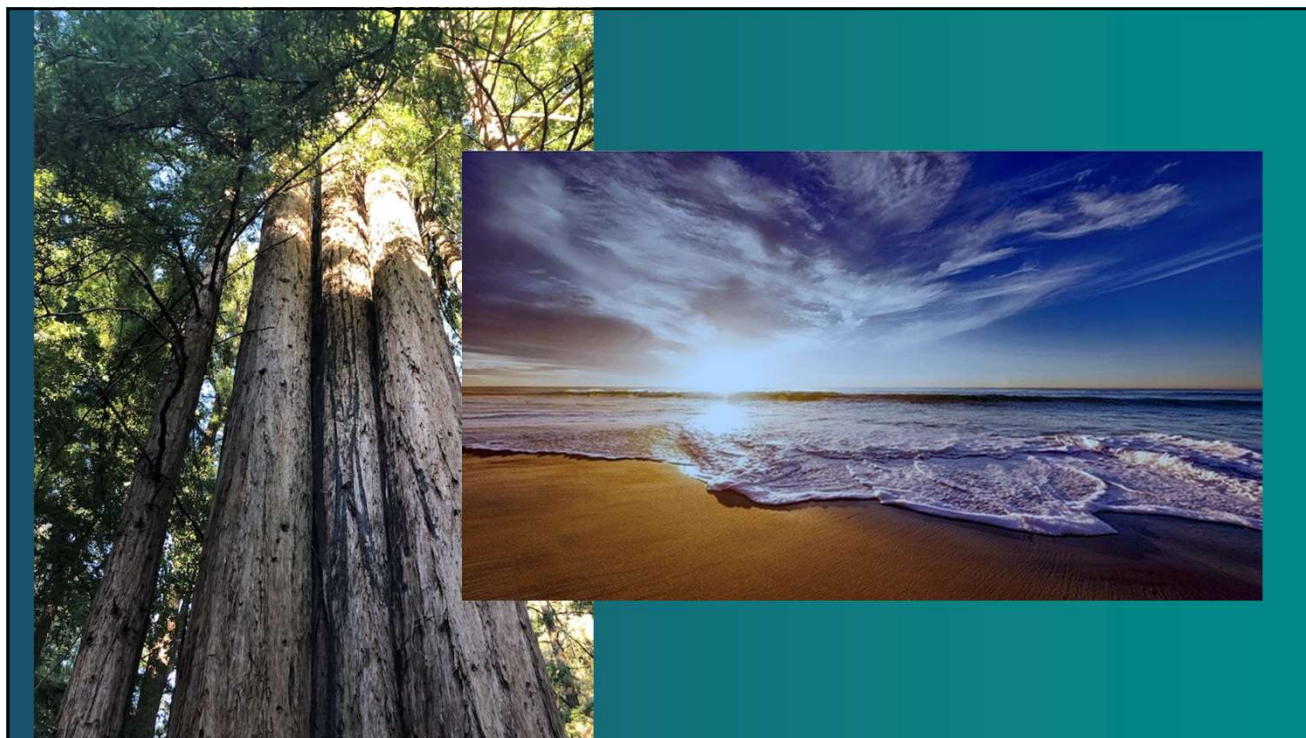
- ☀ Inclusive of the human experience
- ☀ Have a positive, accepting mindset; non-pathologizing
- ☀ Help people develop a way back to their centered, grounded self
- ☀ Build self-awareness
- ☀ Encourage ownership and accountability



How the Internal Family Systems model works

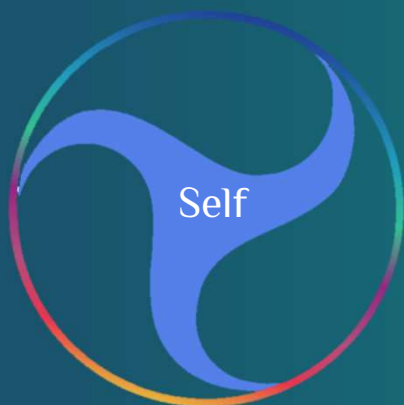
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Qualities or traits of being in “Self”

Underlies the parts that are
running our daily life



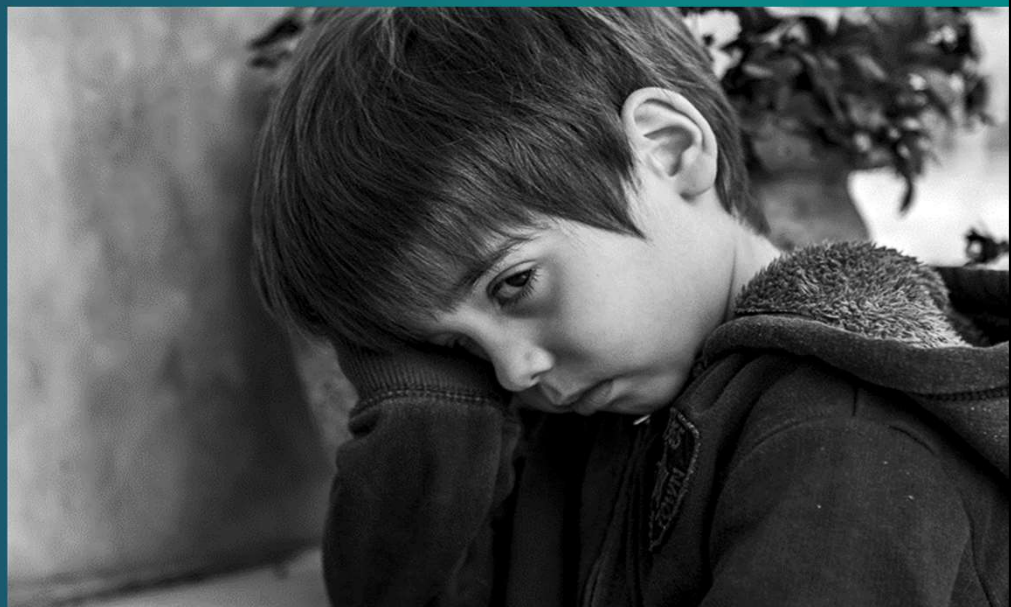
Caring
Compassionate
Curious
Calm
Connected
Courageous
Clarity
Confidence
Creative





The uncomfortable parts of
ourselves that other parts in
the system try to get rid of

Carry burdens from
being wounded.
Hold painful
emotions that are
not always
conscious in an
effort to protect the
system or create
safety. Become
increasingly extreme
in an effort to be
cared for and to
share their story.



Notice how individual systems react differently

- ✓ In many cases, we treat ourselves worse than we treat someone outside of us
- ✓ One part of ourself is beating up on another part
- ✓ We do this with a good intention, to keep the balance of the system



People often identify *who they are* with the parts of themselves in conflict with the exile

And tend to believe that the exile parts are not them

In reality, both parts belong to the individual



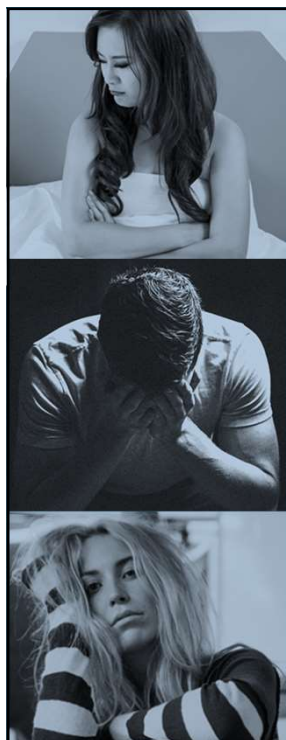
Protectors of the system – they attempt to **preempt** the Exiles from either taking over the system or from getting re-injured. One way is to keep the person in control of every situation and relationship in order to keep them from being hurt or rejected.



You have **2** choices:

- ✓ Blend with a part
- ✓ Witness a part





Blend with a Part

- ☀ When we blend with a part we are looking through the eyes of that part
- ☀ The part is taking over and our emotions are intense
- ☀ We have to feel all the feelings that part carries and we have whatever resources that part has to fix the problem



Witness a Part

When the part trusts enough to calm down and is no longer taking over, we are now in Self and are able to witness the part with compassion

Feelings are no longer flooding our system

We no longer have to feel the emotions.



Reactive protectors of the system – act after the Exiles are upset to either soothe them or distract from them. Any activity will work. Notice when you are driven or immersed in something: sleep, diet, sex, work, exercise, video games, computer, or shopping – and the system is calm



Healed Exiles
can be sensitive,
vulnerable, playful,
innocent, creative and
intimacy-loving parts



Adapted from graphic by Janet R. Mullen LCSW, based on the Internal Family Systems model by Richard C. Schwartz PhD

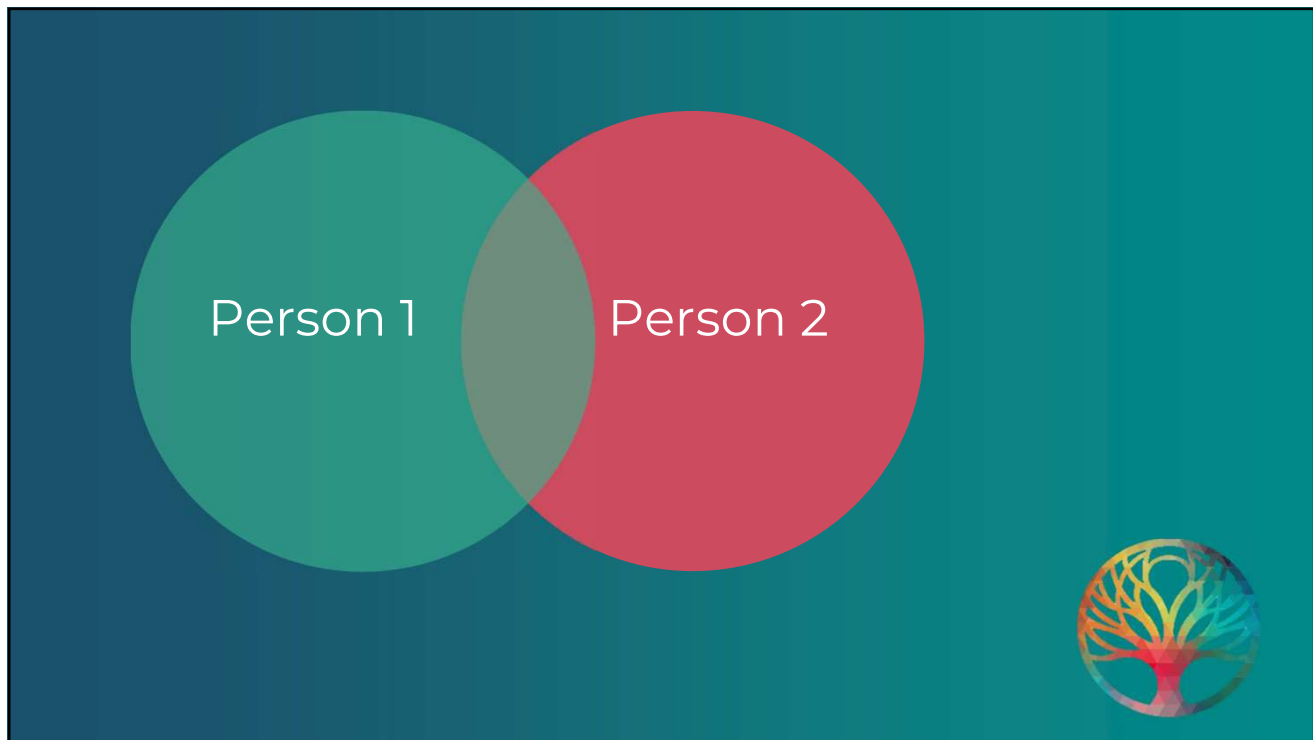
How does this play out in relationships?

And for couples?

Introducing the DM

- ☀ Pioneered by Ellyn Bader and Pete Pearson
- ☀ Based on the work of Bowlby on attachment & Margaret Mahler on stages of development.
- ☀ Introduces the idea that relationships follow the same pattern of development as an infant growing up





Differentiation

"Differentiation of self is the ability to identify and express important parts of yourself. It's about telling your partner what you think, feel, and desire.

You are taking a risk putting yourself out there.

Differentiation from one's partner is the ability to be curious about what your partner says while managing your own emotional reactions."

Ellyn Bader

Taken from "The Gift of Differentiation" - an interview by Kelly Schreiber

Negative impact of avoiding differentiation



The positive impact of differentiation

"Differentiation is the route to aliveness and expansiveness; to authenticity and vulnerability; and resolving conflicts and handling not liking each other at times."

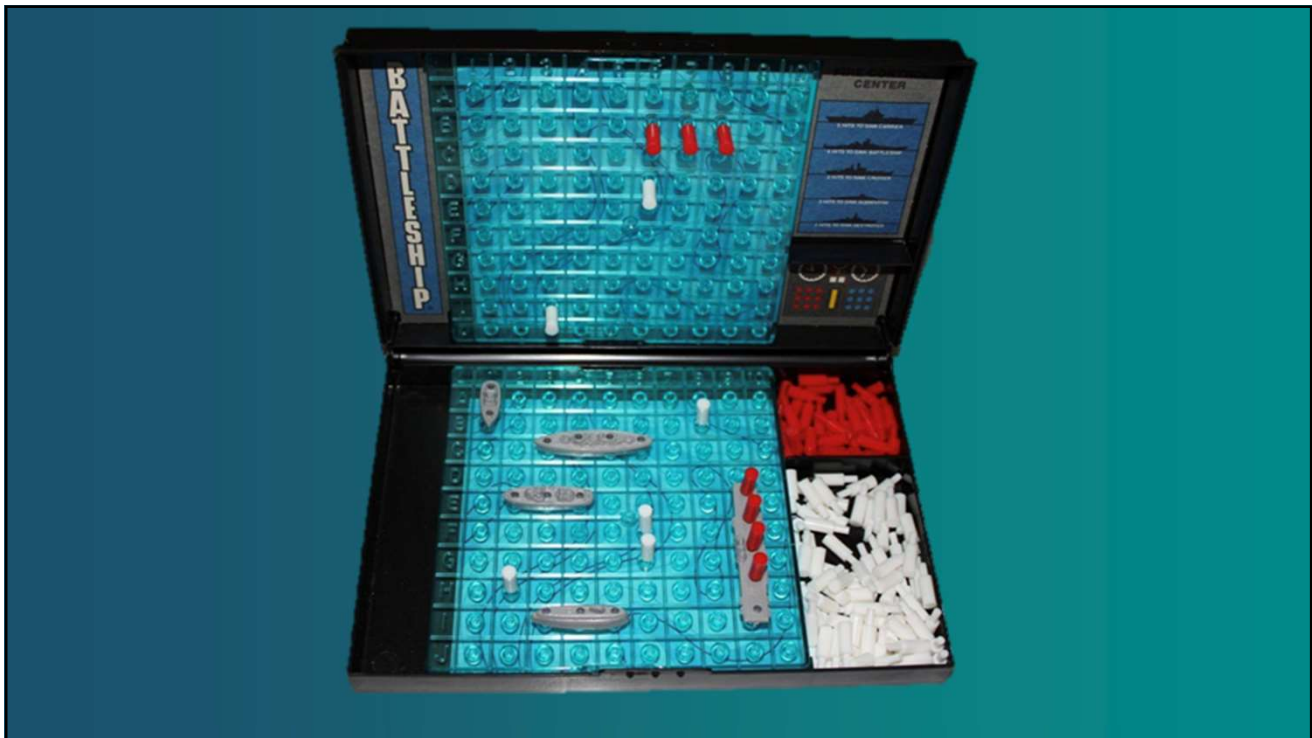
Ellyn Bader

Taken from "The Gift of Differentiation" - an interview by Kelly Schreiver



Integrating the Developmental Model with IFS Perspective

And how wounded or extreme parts
impact relationships



Using IFS to improve differentiation



Clients naturally

- ☀ Gain awareness about emotions or thoughts (parts) that they have not been aware of in the past
- ☀ Begin to react compassionately towards these parts of themselves vs. exiling them
- ☀ Become more accepting of their partner's part
- ☀ Become their own primary caregiver vs. expecting their partner to do it for them
- ☀ Begin to heal these parts, thus becoming less reactive to others in the future

Integrating these models gets clients unstuck and improves relationships

Often a client's partner, boss, or coworker acts as a tormentor, showing clients the parts of themselves that still need to heal

helps clients become aware of which parts are being triggered, and begin to take more responsibility for their own wounding



The 2 models intersect ...

Recognizing when your parts are triggered, and taking responsibility for them, leads to differentiation.

With healing hurt parts, you are not triggered as often. When the parts begin to trust and calm down, you are no longer blended with them and can talk for them vs. from them (i.e. sending fireballs).



Integrating IFS with the Developmental Model

- ☀ Builds self-awareness of each person's contribution to dissonance
- ☀ Reduces blaming the person who triggered us; we project our anger onto the person who hit our hurt part
- ☀ Focuses on helping each person improve and change their contribution to dissonance
- ☀ Helps partners to stop triggering one another and better tolerate the anxiety of differentiation
- ☀ Facilitates clear individual goals with self-accountability

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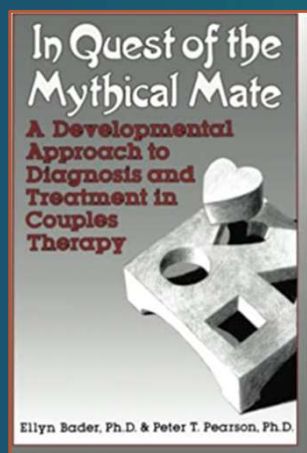


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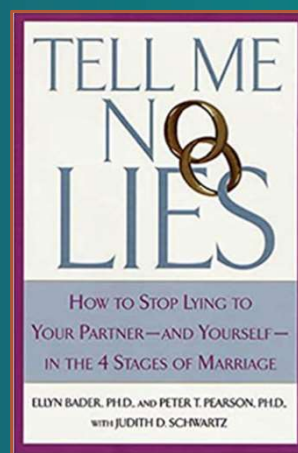


Developmental Model Books

For Clinicians

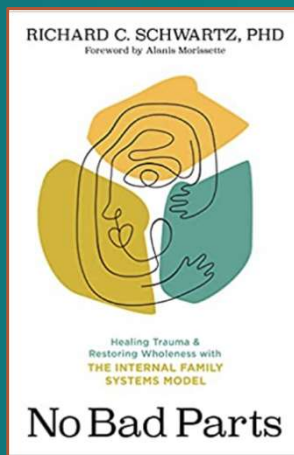
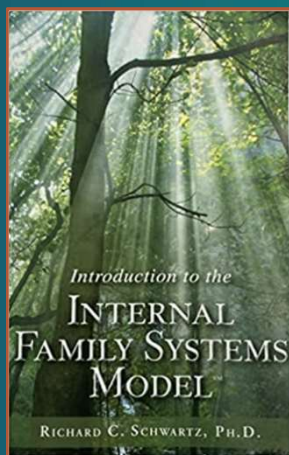
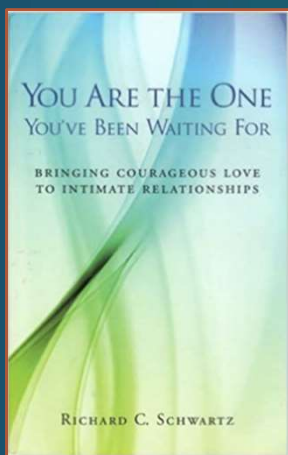


For Clients



Internal Family Systems books

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