

Internal Family Systems Therapy
Month three: Understanding the
Protective System
with Toni Herbine-Blank

Many Parts

- Not all wounded



Protectors?

- Defenses
- Adaptations
- Strategies
- Coping mechanisms

Protective Parts

- Two categories of protective parts:



- **Managers:** Proactive

- **Firefighters:** Reactive



- Both are dedicated to safety and homeostasis



Managers are: proactive

- They keep exiles locked away for their safety or the safety of the system
- Admit to being tired of their role
- They carry burdens of fear and responsibility and like to maintain control
- Their motto: "never again"

Firefighters are: reactive

- Deploy when managers are unsuccessful
- Claim they like what they do and don't want to stop
- Appear to care less about consequences
- Can feel rejected, isolated and shamed

Common Manager roles:

- critics
- controllers
- caretakers
- analyzers
- worriers



Common roles of firefighters

- Addiction
- Extreme acting out
- Rage
- Activated ANS
- Polarized with managers



Loyal Guardians



Hiroo Inado



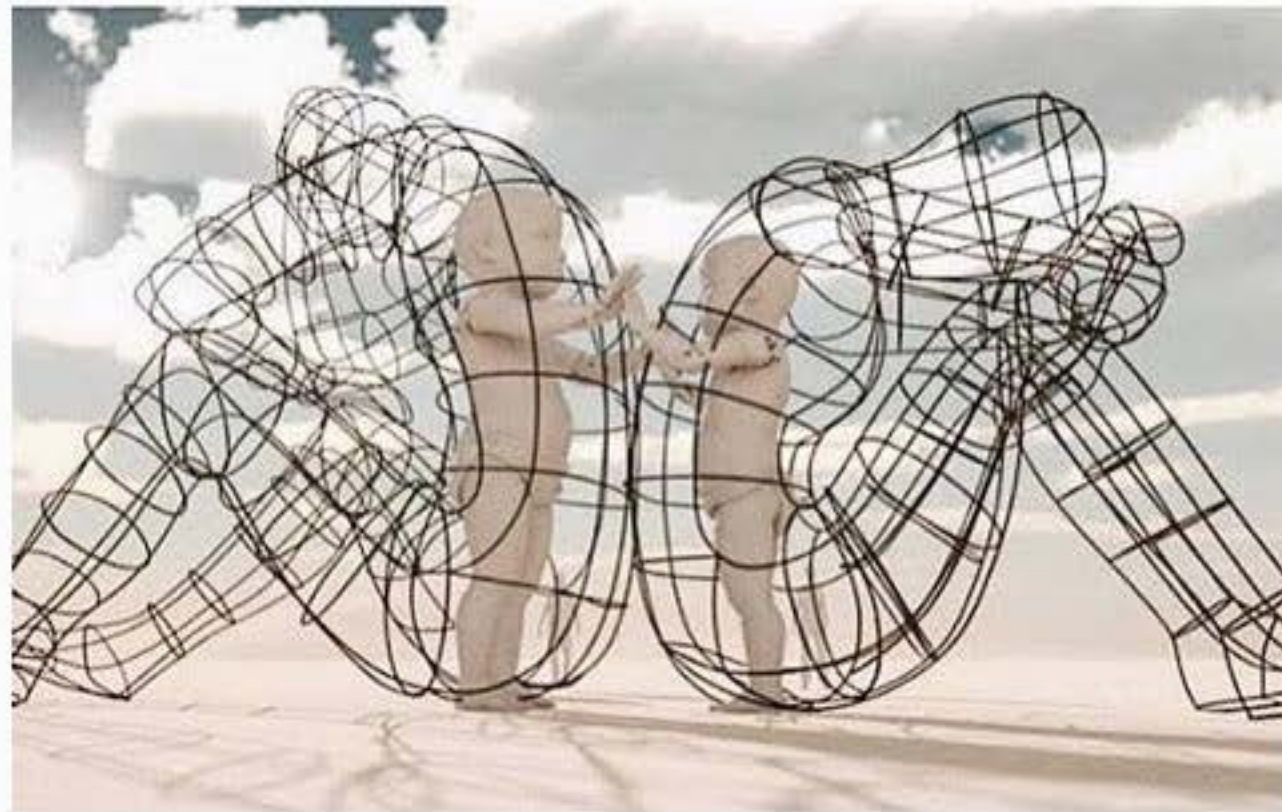
**Developing a relationship with Protectors is essential:
They can't relax until the vulnerable parts they protect are safe**

- **Often exhausted and long to stop doing what they do**
- **Have evidence that they're role is critical and have fears of letting go.**
- **More likely to relax if taken seriously**

Protectors need:

- To be honored, respected and appreciated
- To feel welcomed and understood
- To learn to trust Self
- To be be-friended as well as negotiated with

Entering the system safely



Sculpture by Alexander Milov

The 6 Fs

- Un-blending
 - 1. **F**ind the part
 - 2. **F**ocus on it
 - 3. **F**lesh it out

- Relationship building

- 4. How do you **F**eel toward it
- 5. Be-**F**riend it
- 6. Validate and negotiate all **F**ears