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Felix: Hello everyone. Welcome to the call, the IFS call with Dick Schwartz. The recorded teaching will begin shortly. So just hang tight while we let everyone shuffle in. Thank you.

Dick Schwartz: Okay, so ... Hi, everybody. So welcome to my second live session with you in this round of the Online Circle program. I hope you're enjoying it. This is actually my last live one, in the sense that we were so happy with some of my sessions last time that we decided I'd be with you live for the first two, and then we'd show, uh, re-broadcast others. But I'll be there to answer questions and maybe stop the broadcasts at different times and discuss the material. So it's sort of live, but not. But I'll be there.

So anyway, welcome again, and the topic today is what I'm calling the "self" of you and your clients. And, for me, I think I have to say this would be what I consider to be [IFS' biggest contribution to psychotherapy and potentially to our culture and our understanding of the mind. So it's one of my favorite topics, and it could go in a whole variety of different ways, and maybe some of the questions and answers will take it those places. But I'll talk a little bit about how I stumbled onto it, and then some of the characteristics of it, and I'll do an exercise where maybe you can experience a little bit of it. And I might show some video if we have time of a guy who spontaneously accesses a lot of self through taking MDMA. He's part of the MDMA project that you might have heard about to help heal PTSD. So anyway that's what I had in mind today. So let's see.

So you know last time I talked a lot about parts and how I became intrigued with the way they operated as a system because of my background in family systems ideas. But I was also interested in part from family therapy background, in what kind of leadership these inner systems had because what we found in working with families is if we could improve the leadership then a lot of the conflicts would resolve on their own. Because a lot of the conflicts were the product of the absence of leadership. And so as I would have people talk to their parts, I would try to figure out, is there somebody in there who could be a good leader? And a lot of the time was discouraged that it was just like Animal House in there or Lord of the Flies. But I nonetheless was trying to get clients to talk in a supportive way or a caring way toward the different parts they were finding after I got hip to the fact that these parts weren't what they seemed, that they actually were valuable, but were in extreme roles, like kids in a family.

So anyway, as I'm doing that, it's clear that it's a mess. And I'll have my client talk to one part, another's jumping in, and so I began helping clients ask parts to just

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separate, to just grab the ones who are interfering in their mind and ask them to just stay out of it for a little while. And they would sense a kind of separation, a shift when the part would leave, and as they did that, it was like suddenly this other person would come forward.

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Sometimes maybe three, four parts would have to separate. But it seemed like when enough, protectors in particular, separated, suddenly and almost universally, clients would shift into a state in which they could be a good leader or caretaker in this inner system, and they would suddenly say things like, "You know, now I'm just kind of curious about why this part is doing what it's doing" or even, "I feel sorry for it" where seconds earlier they hated it or wanted to get rid of it. "I care about it, I want to help it." Things like that.

And, so, I got excited because it did seem like there was somebody in there that could do this. And so I began asking them to describe this person, this part. And clients would say, "You know, that's not a part like these others. That's me, or that's myself." So I came to call that "the self", and indeed, when I could access that state, clients would know how to relate to the parts in a healing way and would begin to take over sessions and actually do that. And parts would respond to self in a much better way than they had when other parts were even trying to take care of them, but most of the time trying to push them around.

So when I found it in my first client, I thought, "Oh what a great client, who's got this level of ego strength, that they can actually do this." Then a few days later, I tried it with another client and, indeed, almost it was like the same person popped out of them and started to take over. Then I started getting excited, and it was after maybe the fourth or fifth experience of this process, of getting parts to separate and finding this person showing up that I started, "This could be amazing. What would it be like if this was in everybody?"

So now, 35 years later, thousands of clients later, thousands of therapists doing this with clients all over the world, we can pretty safely say that, what I'm calling South, is in everybody and it is just beneath the surface of these parts, and when they open space, it will emerge spontaneously, suddenly and universally and will emerge with a knowledge about how to heal, both internally and externally. So we'll begin to relate to parts in a way that's healing for them, and also when the client leads from self in external relationships, will lead in a way that's healing in that area too.

I was amazed when I ran into this, because I'd been schooled like many of you to believe that that isn't possible. That people had to have had certain kinds of good parenting at critical periods in their childhood to have anything like this inside of them. Many of my clients, I would scour their histories to find the person they got it from unsuccessfully, and ultimately had to conclude that it didn't have to come from a

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relationship - which is heresy, because basic attachment theory says it does - but in fact could come with us when we're born. That it's an essence that's our birthright.

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So that's the position that I take now, that it can't be damaged. Which is quite amazing, because I've used the model with people with horrible, horrible histories where you would think anything of health like that would have been totally blown apart, and in fact ... again, some of those clients, it takes longer for their protectors to open space. But when they do, just as suddenly, the same self emerges and takes over. We've done this with DID clients. Some of those clients, they don't want self to return. Their parts are afraid of it, because their perpetrator would torture them when they saw any evidence of self. So it's a hard sell in some clients, which is why it takes a little longer. But once they open space and allow self to show up, again it's the same self that comes forward.

So it's such an important topic. Again, in contrast to other systems that talk about some kind of internal leadership, this is not comparable to the ego or to an adult part of the person. There are systems that talk about self in some ways comparably, but as a kind of passive observer. Mindfulness would be one of those, at least the mindfulness I'm familiar with is designed to help you separate from your parts - what I call your parts, which are your thoughts and emotions - and people find that once they achieve that separation they, again, spontaneously feel better. They feel kind of centered and feel a sense of well-being and they feel accepting, and sometimes even loving toward themselves and others.

So from my point of view, that mindful exercise of separating is accessing self, and that's the power of it. Because most mindfulness practices don't believe in parts and see the ego as just containing these thoughts and emotions, there isn't any impetus to actually go and embrace them and heal them and help them, in the way we do with IFS. But anyway, it is that state that people access, I think, at least in some cases, when they meditate. We're sort of bringing that to this internal family. I see some questions already, so let me just pause and see what they are.

Okay, Inga. "I and who is this I, let one of my parts drive the bus and then eventually come back to self. Feel badly for my body and other parts, not to mention other people, like my husband. For having been hurtful. I find I want to apologize to my body and other parts, which then leads me to thinking about forgiving the self for what feels like abdicating and that it abdicated. Yet it seems I'm missing something with this perspective. That self isn't an art," ... a part, I guess. "And if it is our core, then forgiving doesn't really fit. Is there a part in there that's somewhere on the continuum between parts and self, that's a witness observer who is responsible for connecting to self, and is that part to forgive after an episode of time of not being connected to self. Okay, I'm confused and would love to hear from others on this."

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Let me see if I can address some of that for you, Inga. So for some reason that still remains unclear to me, parts do have the ability to overwhelm and throw self out of the driver's seat and take over, even often when self doesn't want that. So yes, when that happens, and it sounds like maybe it's an angry part of you or a rageful part of you that took over with your husband, then it is incumbent on you to try to make a repair and speak to him about how you're sorry that part took over and to you other parts, and that's always a good thing to do. And to then turn to that part and not scold it, but actually work with it to try and heal it so it doesn't keep having to do that. What I'm trying to say is that self that can do all of that is in there, and when the angry part separates enough and the other part protectors, who are polarized with it, separate enough, you'll have access to that.

Okay, I'll return to the questions in a moment. So this is what I'm calling self, and so this is what I call a constraint releasing approach, in the sense that when we go to access self, we're not trying to resource the client in the way that some systems do. Where you might think of a time when you were strong in some context, or you might do some breathing exercises or things like that. Grounding exercises. By constraint releasing, my position is that self is in there. It's covered over, it's obscured by these parts that blend with it. If they separate it will be there, sometimes in full glory, more often in gradations of it. As you go along, in parts of you it's safe to separate more, then you get more.

There are reasons for doing it that way, rather than resourcing people, because there are times and in some clients, whereas I said earlier, they have parts that believe that accessing self is dangerous and they'll backlash if you actively try to resource it, and you'll lose trust in them. It's just safer and no less efficient, in my experience, to just go at the pace that's safe for the parts to trust it's safe to let self back into the body and back into leadership. So as I was doing that, I became interested in who is this person, what are the qualities that categorize, or characterize I'm sorry, this inner leader who shows up? We have what we call the eight C's of self leadership that we will be alluding to throughout the program. I'll go over some of them quickly that these qualities all began with the letter C, oddly enough. Also, I like alliteration. I mentioned Curiosity, some clients who initially hate a part and you get that one to step back and say, "Now I'm just curious about it." But they'll say it from a calm place.

So, Calm is another one. And they'll also have Confidence relative to it. Enough confidence to get to know it and to explore even regions that they were afraid to before. And even more amazing, or maybe the most amazing aspect, is that they will

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suddenly often have compassion for a part that maybe has done a lot of harm to them in their lives. So, Compassion for these inner enemies is built into us, actually.

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Some of these spiritual traditions are trying to get us to do that with our external enemies, and I actually talked to the Dalai Lama last year about why he advocates fighting our inner enemies when he advocates going to our external enemies with compassion. Anyway, compassion is another of those C words and then Clarity, so the part might initially look very scary. But when the parts that are scared step back, looks like a teenage kid maybe.

Creativity. When you're dominated by a par, you have very limited ways of relating to another par. That steps out and you're out of the box, you've got a lot of creativity in the way that you can relate to a par. The same goes for people.

Courage, so you have the courage to stand up to inner bullies. It turns out there's not the inside you that can hurt you if you're not afraid of it. You have the ability to, not in a bullying, strong army way, but you can speak truth to power, the parts that have a lot of power inside of you. And also go into these inner abysses or cysts and rescue the exiles. And I can't remember how many that is.

Connectedness. Connectedness that comes from knowing that we're not separate, that we actually ... Self just has this knowledge that we're all interconnected. So, if you get hurt then some level I'm getting hurt too. Self also has a desire to connect to the self, and another person, and to the self in parts. We'll be talking about how parts have self and parts have parts. So, it's little fractals all the way down.

Okay, somebody is saying the video cuts in and out so I hope that it's still good to hear me at times. I hope that that's not a general problem. Okay, so ... no video, everyone "not a general problem" okay, good. Sounds like we're okay.

There are these eight C qualities. There are other qualities we didn't include, partly because they don't begin with the letter C, but people will feel a, kind of equanimity and they'll feel some joy, and there's a kind of forgiveness that comes with Self automatically, perspective. This was amazing when I first encountered it, and continues to be amazing. I struggled to explain it initially because I said my clients hadn't had the right kind of parenting, and I tried to come up with evolutionary explanations that ultimately didn't really cut it. I wasn't at all a spiritual person, but some students and clients even started talking about it from a spiritual perspective, and how different spiritual traditions have words for this. And that turns out to be the case.

My friend [inaudible 00:25:52] and I are coming out with a book. My hope within months, that in which one part of is exploring what I'm calling Self and how it shows

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up in all kinds of different spiritual traditions and I thought a little bit later, "I'll read some of the conclusion of that book."

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Because I think it describes the spiritual side of it well, and I also want to say that we don't impose that on anybody whose learning IFS. It's just where I've gone with it, so if you're an atheist or you're not at all spiritually inclined, I apologize and also hope you'll indulge us going in that direction a little bit here.

I used to say that Self didn't have an agenda, it didn't have desire. It was just there to be comforting. But, as I thought about it more, it's not true. Self doesn't have an agenda in the sense of how you might understand the word agenda, but there is a kind of internal desire or intention to generally create harmony, healing, connection, integration, those kinds of things. When people are in Self, like I said, there's an inherent desire to begin to connect to their parts in a caring loving way. As if finally this good inner parent has showed up.

Let me just check in before I start reading this to see if there's some other examples.

Yeah, Self does actually care and compassion is part of that. So, I'm going to read from this book that is called 'Many Parts in One Cell', and there's a subtitle that I can't remember right now.

"Whether it's known as God, the Godhead, Brahman, the Dao, the ground of being, Ein Sof ... Most spiritual traditions see a supreme principal, a ground of being in the universe. That's good but unknowable, Buddhism being a notable exception. In addition, most of you humans is containing essential indestructible element of that, whether it's called Imago Dei, which is 'Image of God Within'. Buddha nature, Atman, Tao in Daoism, not sure that's how you pronounce it, or the Self, the inner light, the sparkle of the soul, the [inaudible 00:29:34]"

Point being that every spiritual tradition has a word for this. Also, each subscribes to the idea that that essence is covered over by something. The ego, Nafs the conditioned mind, social conditioning, ignorance, false self, or in IFS burden parts. The idea is, in each of these traditions, that these elements, these ego, conditioned mind, sin elements separate us from our essence. This separation is described in different ways. In Judaism and Christianity, it's called the Fall, Hinduism speaks of falling into the Maya, and Taoism, one has lost connection to the Tao and is off course. All of that corresponds pretty well with IFS, because if you think of burdens and the process of carrying them as separating us from self, and maybe even separating self from something bigger, that's a nice correspondence.

Finally, each tradition, the goal is to overcome that ignorance and become aware of our divine nature. That is, to shift our inner center of gravity from the parts with which

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we identify, and that make us feel essentially unworthy, or fearful, or urge-driven, to the knowledge of self.

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First, "Know thyself," is an almost universal recommendation throughout these spiritual traditions. What is thought of as enlightenment is simply that shift in your center of gravity, or center of your universe, your inner universe, from identifying as self, or identifying with your parts, to knowing yourself.

Most also believe that the path to doing that is through quieting or emptying the mind. When the mind is successfully quieted, there are remarkably similar reports across tradition of the resulting experience being filled with love, light, a sense of connection with all of life, or humanity, joy, humility. That's what I was talking about earlier with mindfulness practice. If you saw the movie *Inside Out*, and those five characters, what if they all went to sleep? Who would be there? Would it just be an empty room? My contention is no, there would be what I would call the self there, we fill it up with light, and love, and all that.

As Roger Walsh puts it eloquently, "When the mind is still and clear, we have a direct experience of our self. This is not a concept of, or an intellectual theory about the self. Rather, it's an immediate knowing, a direct intuition in which one can not only see the divine spark, but identifies with and recognizes that one is the spark." The parts are listened to, loved, and respected until they relax inside, which opens space, this is the way that IFS quiets the mind. Just as it's true with these other systems, once the mind is emptied, self emerges spontaneously.

This [inaudible 00:33:20] approach to emptying can be less effortful than finding or ignoring parts, which some spiritual traditions advocate. When that's the case, you have to become very disciplined, and you have to meditate all the time, or pray, because the parts will resist being pushed away and ignored. As a result, in IFS, self can often be accessed relatively quickly, maybe even quicker than a lot of other traditions, because we're not fighting with the parts, we're just asking them in a polite way, and we're honoring them, and respecting them, and bringing hope to them of a better life if they actually do open space.

The accessing of self in clients and meditators includes, initiates a virtuous cycle in which self often spontaneously shows compassion, acceptance to each part, which allows each of them to know their own divine nature, and become who they were designed to be. The result is a kind of connecting of divine dots. The unburdened parts no longer obscure the person's self, which allows the person to feel more connected to God, if you'll pardon the expression, and humanity. The parts, most of whom had felt isolated and polarized, now feel connected to the person's self and to each other. That's the goal, basically.

The sparks or the eternal flame that had dispersed into people and parts are uncovered

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and reunited.

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People feel integrated, like they belong in the universe, like they have come home. They feel love for their parts and for people around them, because they know, at a deep level, they're all interconnected. This love in Christianity is called agape. In Buddhism, it's known as metta. In Hinduism, it's bhakti. It comes naturally once one senses this interconnectedness that comes from accessing self.

That's my pitch, that self is more than just the ego, or some kind of internal leader, that it's connected to something bigger than that, and that I stumbled, or we stumbled onto a way to access it, and to not only experience it, but to actually release it to heal in these inner and outer relationships. Let me just see if there's anything else important to tell you about all this. Yeah. This brings us to the question how a self-led person acts in the external world.

Much religion is concerned with imparting moral codes, and designed to help us behave ethically by invoking ideas of justice, empathy, altruism. Some also instill fear of divine retribution if we don't, and the chance for eternal happiness if we do. Once we access self, I find, on the other hand, moral codes, rewards, and punishments become far less necessary, because when we realize we're all interconnected, you naturally want to love one another, and relieve suffering wherever possible, and relate with compassion to those who would do us harm. Once you achieve this identity shift, you're no longer a fearful, separate self looking out at other threatening, pitiful, or desirable separate selves. Instead, you are self seeing the selves, Buddha nature looking at other Buddha natures, Atman enjoying other Atmans.

Similarly, as your parts come to realize they're part of a larger mind that is you, they increasingly realize that, when one is burdened, it affects the whole system. They help and care for each other and out of that awareness, are blind to one another. It's all kind of parallel. They increasingly trust your self to lead inside and outside, so they support your external altruism with the knowledge that you'll care for them too.

There are three basic goals in IFS. One is the liberation of parts we've already talked about, so they can be who they're naturally designed to be. The second is the restoration of trust of the parts in self, and the restoration of self as the leader. Then the third is the re-harmonizing of this group of parts, so they begin to connect with each other more and more. The releasing of burdens is what facilitates all of that kind of healing.

At this point, I thought maybe I'd lead a brief exercise, to help you maybe experience some of this, if you're up for it. If you're not, you can just zone out for seven minutes or so. If you want to give this a try, then go ahead and in your mind, think of a dilemma you're facing in your life. If you can't think of one, then God bless you, but if

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you can think of one, then just notice for a second the parts on each side of that dilemma:

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One part advocating that you do something, the other part maybe advocating that you don't do it, or afraid to do it, whatever the dilemma is. Then of those two, or those groups, pick the one that you like the least, and focus on it. Find it in your body or around your body and then notice how you do feel toward it. Because I had you pick one you don't like, it's likely that you don't like it. You'd like to get rid of it, or would like to get it to stop doing what it does, or something like that, or just annoyed with it, wish it would calm down.

Let's just ask the parts of you that don't like it if they're willing, just for a second, doesn't have to be a long time, to give you a little space to relax a little in there, step back, so you can get to know it and maybe even help it change. Who knows? We're not going to give it more power by listening to it, and these other parts will have a voice too, but if they relax a little and step back, it might be possible for you to change things in there in a way that's good for everybody. Just see if they're willing to do that.

Then return your focus to the original target part, and notice how you feel toward it now. If now, you do feel at least curious about the target part, then it's safe to begin to talk to it, and get to know it, and ask it to let you know something about itself. Just see what it wants you to know about itself. Another good question is just to ask it what it's afraid would happen if it didn't take this position relative to the dilemma. Okay. Then thank the part for whatever it shared with you, and let your other parts, give them some appreciation for stepping back, if they did. Then you can think again about the dilemma you're facing, and see if it feels any different. It may not. It may be that there's considerable more work that needs to be done, or it may be something you can't really resolve. Then, when you're ready, come on back here.

I suspect that at least some of you had that experience, that the second that those other parts, or the parts that didn't like the original one, open space, you had a completely different feeling toward the target part, and could be purely curious about it, and maybe even suddenly felt sorry for it, compassion for it. Some of you didn't, and that's fine too. Your parts just wouldn't step back, but my contention is that if they did, you would also have that sudden experience of feeling sorry for it, or care about it and want to help it or get to know it, that is absolutely universal.

This is how we do it. We just have a person focus on one part at a time, ask them how they feel toward it, if it's anything extreme, it does not fit that list of C words, by definition, it's a part, we ask that to step back. If it does, the person immediately shifts. I wanted to give you a little bit of an experience of that. Now, I want to show a video

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that may be a little controversial.

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Whenever I show it in workshops, people get very focused on the fact that the person is taking a drug, which might not be healthy for him. I don't want to get into that this time.

This is part of a ... This video comes from a project that now is in phase three trials, led by a man named Michael Mithoefer, who is an IFS therapist, and got permission from the FDA to use MDMA, which on the street is called ecstasy, with what are called treatment-resistant PTSD survivors, many of whom were combat vets, but not only. His phase one and phase two trials were remarkably successful, with very extensive research, and outcome follow-ups, and so on. Now they're in phase three trials, which are multi-site, multi-million dollar experiment, and I know many of the people who are involved with it.

The reason I'm showing it is because, at least in some people, the drug, it seems to help them access a lot of self very quickly, and Michael reports that the protocol he submitted to the FDA didn't involve a particular form of therapy, more of a Rogerian, they would just be with the client. They stay with the client for six hours at a time, and just be supportive. If the client ever spontaneously started working with their parts, then they would shift to IFS.

Over 70% of these guys, people, spontaneously started to work with their parts. It just seemed that the drug opened things up to the point where they entered this other world, where the parts live, that we take clients into, and they entered it from self, and they began to do this work. That's why I'm going to show you this video now. This is, it'll say, is I think an Afghan vet who had a lot of trauma in the war, and I think the rest is pretty self-explanatory.

Speaker 2:

Are you ready to take your castle?

Speaker 3:

Sure. Jump in there.

Speaker 3:

I just wanted to tell you all, I had this really intense feeling come over my body, and my heartbeat started beating real fast, but I didn't get ... At first, I started feeling a little afraid, but then, once I started breathing, I'd never felt that before. I literally felt my heartbeat start to slow down and everything, when I started breathing and just relaxed, and felt the sensation. It was amazing how not quickly it went away, but just how in control I felt making it go away. Usually I've had those feelings. In a way it kind of felt like when a panic attack kind of comes on.

Speaker 2:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Speaker 1: And my heart beats and I felt my whole body flush and get real hot and then I was just amazed how I was able to, not really fight it but kind of relax.

Speaker 2: That's good.

Speaker 1: I just thought y'all ...

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Might want to know that.

Speaker 3: Yeah, right.

Speaker 2: So you may have way ...

Speaker 1: I just feel like should play on something I was just really amazing. It's hard to put it in words. I feel things that would come up and then every time that would just blow away like sand and just ... and I even purposely tried to think of things bothersome. Like money issues or something and this voice, this part of me just like so wise and so intelligent just brought this peace over me and just said you've always been taken care of, you always will be taken care of, there's nothing to worry about. Then it just flows away like sand. Then I try thinking about that aspect of me that's just really grateful and also besides that image I told y'all about the fighting with them. I had this image of it, like that jail cell, like I have that part of me locked up in jail and it's just got ... it's dark but it's got bright red eyes and just really evil. I thought of that and I felt like had put that person there and I went to it and just opened the door and hugged that person. Then the eyes just faded away. It no longer had kind of an evil look to itself. I visualized both of us just taking apart the jail cell and just really becoming friends. Then I visualized that image I told you about of me, like it coming out of my hips and it stabbed me in the side and everything. I just had a strong visualization of me reaching up where the knife was in my side and taking it out and I took my hand off of it's neck and didn't choke it anymore and just really embraced it. I don't know, I feel like, I don't know, like part of me realized that I think that I was talking that person and keeping him locked up cause I was so afraid of him and then by putting them in that cell and keeping him locked that I was just making it worse for him. It really, more beneficial if we kind of worked together

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and I'd be, I don't know. It was really amazing. I never realized how much I thought I was being a peaceful person but I didn't realize how much I was punishing that aspect of me.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: I think I was just ... I think maybe in Iraq I saw what I was capable of and I think I was too afraid to you know, and a part of me just feels so bad that I did that to him.

Speaker 3: Mmm.

Speaker 1: I mean, I know it's me but I just [crosstalk 00:54:50].

Speaker 3: Part of you.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: That was really amazing and I don't know I just got this amazing sense of just, I guess wisdom. I really don't know.

Speaker 2: Hmmm.

Speaker 3: Sounds a lot like wisdom to me.

Speaker 1: It was really amazing and you know why I try and think of that really reachful aspect of me, like I can't even ... I know it's fair but it just doesn't ... I really feel like so much more at peace with everything.

Speaker 3: Great.

Speaker 1: Even if I try and think about Iraq and everything, I somehow feel really peaceful about the fact that's my journey and that ...

Speaker 3: Yeah, thanks for sharing that.

Speaker 1: I know this is part of the drug but when I try and think am I gonna be able to hold onto this understanding, this somewhat of wisdomous knowledge that I have now. Just ask myself that question I feel like it's so profound that I don't think I could really forget it.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Speaker 1: I really felt like I met that aspect of me, which is very calming, very sage like. It was very comforting and I had one that's amazing how I felt so much lighter. I keep thinking about that aspect of me that I kept in a cage.

Speaker 2: Sounds like that part of you needs some lightness.

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Speaker 1: I know and it feels like ... I don't know, I feel like best friends now. Like you want to chat and get caught up.

Speaker 3: Hmm, beautiful.

Speaker 1: I really feel like you said, that that part of me is a protector and it's not dangerous. Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Just thinking about it now, whenever I blow up on people or blow up on my wife and get all angry and yelling at her, I feel like it's because I kept that person locked up and of course it's gonna be hateful and resentful for being locked up. So when it comes to the surface like that, it's gonna be mean and make people cry.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: I really felt like letting it breathe and letting it be, just kind of be.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So much better for me.

Speaker 3: Think so.

Speaker 1: This part of me that keeps talking, it's saying that I should feel bad for keeping that aspect of me, like part of me that's saying it's all your fault that you created all those feelings, the anger and all of those stuff. But then, I don't know what part of me is saying that because every time it says that, the sage part of me just says its part of being human.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: I don't know why I couldn't have come up with this on my own but I'm glad I found

it. Speaker 3: I'm glad too.

Speaker 4: Okay, so again the point isn't that I'm advocating for the use of MDMA and psychotherapy or anything like that. The point is that when people, for whatever reason, access a lot of self they will spontaneously know how to heal themselves and that Michael and Annie, his wife who was there with this guy, neither of them cued

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him in any way to do this work. He just did all that work spontaneously. He spontaneously saw this rage, I guess, that he had put in jail, inside because he was so afraid of it, as not

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what he thought and he spontaneously let it out and got to know it and befriended it again, and that's what we do, and they aren't ever what you thought initially when you go to them, so that's why I love this video. It just shows how this is the natural process that I stumbled into facilitating, that everybody has this capacity once you can access enough self. They just know how to do this work, so anyway, with that, I think I'll go to some questions....

Dick Schwartz: Here I am in the present. That was a couple of years ago, I think. Why don't I answer questions.. Now I see we have like 45, 46 now questions. I have less than 15 minutes so I'll do my best. Let's see, [Afshan], "Can you use IFS for someone who's in a frozen fear state and has a part who just wants to die? How do you start working with the fear?"

Yeah, so with the hypo freeze state in IFS... So it is definitely a part and you have them focus on it and find it in their body, how do you feel toward it? And they might be very blended with it at first. So you might have to do what we call direct access, where you would talk to it directly for awhile. So, "Oh, you're the frozen fear part. Tell me about yourself? Where are you stuck and so on." And then ask it to separate and if it cooperates then you can have access to the self. But to treat it like any other part.

Anonymous, "I often find myself in an imposter self. Any ways besides asking the part to step back, to connect with self energy? How important is it to have parts name themselves? I feel this is causing a block, parts come up and I can't keep track."

Yeah, what might be called imposter part is usually a little manager, we now call self-like parts who are trying to protect you by hiding what they think is your [violentness?] and trying to put on a front to everybody. They're just trying their best to keep you safe and unrejected. So you find that part and you show it a lot of compassion for trying so hard to protect you, but also so maybe negotiate permission to go to what it's protecting and heal that. "How important is it to have parts name themselves?" You know, we don't

give names as a therapist to clients, so we have clients come up with their own names and the names often change as the parts transform. But in the beginning it's very useful to have specific names that you can put on a map maybe and keep track.

Don, "Self changes over time as one grows and changes through life.." That I don't agree with actually. "Also someone who meditates and finds a pure witness, how does this effect what is possible when working with someone? For example, someone might

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have a level of development in which something is permissible that in someone else at a different level would not feel okay about. More simply how do you deal with ethical and moral..." That's not more simple. That's a lot, Don, and I'm not sure I have time to answer a lot of that. So I'm not going to try.

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Dick Schwartz: Okay. Stephanie, "Can each part be associated with a different part of the body?" Not necessarily. A lot of times parts will use different parts of the body, but they don't necessarily, they're not necessarily located there or they don't live there per se. They're more, you know, hanging around in our minds. But sometimes asking clients where they seem to be located, most clients will be able to find a place. Then that's just where they're at least hanging out today and you can have them direct their questions and listen for the responses from that place in their body.

Zoo, "On a practical level, how does one develop the leader in the self? Where does it mean start?" Self is a natural leader. You don't need to develop that, but you do need to release the self. So this is what I said about being a constraint releasing process. So you find the parts that are blended and that they're covering over the self and you actively get them to separate. Then people act like the guy in the video I just showed, they begin to naturally know how to relate to their parts.

Daniela, "I find my access to parts in my dreams is a lot different than my access in waking life. Some protectors seem to not be present at all. I know that was IFS is pretty adamant about not bypassing protectors. But is it safe to assume it's okay, if they show up in my dreams in the absence of protectors?" That's an interesting question, Daniela. I would in your waking life, go to your protectors and just be sure you have permission and not try to bypass them. Because a lot of times dreams are where exiles can get access to you because the protectors are sleeping. So we still want to go with permission.

Jessica, "How do you work with a client with complex trauma whose protectors are very active and have conflict with one another?" I have a client who's protectors have difficulty settling down and not overwhelming them by talking and arguing all at once."

Yeah. If you have a client who is that polarized and dominated by protectors, you really have little choice but to talk to each side directly, can process, what we call direct access. I'll be covering in some of the next several of these. And I would say, well, let me talk to this part and you step back. And then let me talk to this... and you could even use chairs for that. As they connect with you and see that you're going to try to listen to each of them, just like in a family or just like in a polarized company, you want to connect with each one first and then maybe have them come together and talk. It's basically the same process.

Brian, "Is there a relationship between how our parts organize and our external families?" There does seem to be Brian. And then you can also find parallels at larger

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systems too. I'm totally intrigued with the parallels. I just don't have time to talk about it today.

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I wrote a lot about it. We have a second edition of the original book, "The Guilford" 1995 book coming out in October. I devoted a lot of time to those parallels at different levels.

Ronnie, "Can self compassion, forgiveness be the expression of self?" Absolutely, that compassion and forgiveness are totally qualities of self.

Joan, "What does self sound like when it's responding to parts? How do you know its self versus an adult part?" Okay, so this is really important Joan. So the question, "how do you feel toward this part?" The way the client answers it and the tone of voice and the facial expression, the words, the tone of voice, the facial expression are all clues to how much self is present. When you ask that question, the client says, "you know, I just kind of neutral toward it." That's not really self. Self would have at least some feeling toward it. So you might ask the neutral part to step back. You do that until you get, oh, I'm curious. I'd like to get to know it or even I'd like to help it. So that's how we do it. We try not to have the client interact with parts until they're in one of those self qualities.

Ray Jean, "Thinking in terms of your laws [inaudible] from your book, "Greater than the sum of our parts". The self can be in one place as we're going about our lives and much more expansive place when you're meditating. How do you believe there is a physical location where parts reside or perhaps is it more metaphysical realm?" You know, parts will, like I was saying earlier, you can find them in your body, but it's not really, it's where there... It's the place in your body they're mainly using most of the time. I don't really know where they reside. In your mind, wherever that is.

Kirsten in London, "Is self universal? Is yourself like myself? Qualities universal?" My experience is yes. Yes, the self in me is the same as the self in you. When you access it, it'll have the same qualities and that's pretty amazing.

Evelyn, "In some spiritual practice the state of witnessing is described and considered positive. Is the witness the same as what you call self?" Yes, I believe it is. And the difference is that instead of just being a witness, as in Jungian psychology too, the self becomes an active leader. So you're not just witnessing with acceptance and compassion, you're actively interacting with these parts, with those qualities, and asking some to step back and others to come forward and so on. So that's the big difference between this and many particularly eastern traditions.

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Gregor, "Is the self seen as something uncreated and innate? Or is it created through relationships? For example, the data describes awareness as non dual ground of all experience, which is non creative. Most psychological theories describe self is created through relation, as in contextual self and act.

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" Yes, that's the distinction. Gregor, IFS totally believes that it's not created through relationships and it's a contradiction to basic attachment theory. Because they say to have these qualities, you had to have had certain kind of parenting during a crucial period in your life. I find that that's just not true. That this is in us. It's innate. It's our birthright, right? And it doesn't have to be created, doesn't develop, can't be damaged. In that we're much more aligned with some spiritual traditions.

Lynn, "I study sociopaths of the world. It seems like they don't have self. Are there some people who were born without access?" There's a difference in the language.

"You describe working with people who had traumatic history. What about those were just born without a conscience?" So Lynn, I haven't worked with thousands of sociopaths, but I've worked with, you know, probably 20 people that have that label. Once we got past the part that fit the profile, the sociopathic part, they had self and they had a conscience. In fact, their conscience often was more brutal, which is why they commit suicide after they get caught. But that protector who doesn't care about people and will manipulate and take advantage is, you know, very powerful. So sometimes it takes a long time for them to trust that it's safe in my relationship with them to get that to step back. So I actually don't believe in that diagnosis of sociopath.

Patricia, "How does the self keep the body grounded, but parts remove you from being grounded in your body?" How is, I guess we'll be continuing to talk about that. It just is. Parts have that ability to take you out but self doesn't disappear. It just is blended with these parts who can make you feel very ungrounded.

Okay. "You have a client," Krishna, "you have a client who has parts that thinks accessing self is not safe, how do you handle this? What technique to avoid a backlash?" Some of it is just upfront convincing or selling parts that it is safe and that you can understand why they're afraid of it. But if they give it a try, you'll find that the other

shoe doesn't drop. And you get them to step back and separate and self comes forward and then they're terrified, the parts are. But then as they see nothing bad happens then they calm down more and more. So that's been the way I've done it.

Susan, "You just explained about perpetrators repeatedly punishing me when I was in self leadership to the point of parts feeling abandoned by self and feeling forced to play a role of leadership that they're incapable of carrying. It so explains my very great difficulties to try to unblend from my parts. If my parts don't believe in myself." Yes

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and that is one of the big tactics, they distrust self. "How to proceed?" Well, that is one of the big tactics of these really clever perpetrators. They get self, they get you to lose faith in your own self and then they can pump in anything they want.

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Just call it brainwashing. So again, it's just over time helping parts try it out. Just getting to know the self by separating and see who shows up.

Paigey, "Are they're protectors of the protectors that sometimes..." Yes, there are. "Often it seems that way and it over complicates things. There are several layers." Exactly. "Can you talk about working..." So there are these little puppet masters you'll find sometimes who are just throwing different parts out. At some point I'll say, is there somebody pushing you to do this? And they'll point up and we'll have to go up and find the mister big that's behind it all and work with it or we don't get anywhere.

Nicola, "Can you explain how you unblind parts to access..." I guess, "separate parts to access self. Is it done by identifying protectors, acknowledging them then?" Yes, it is. Exactly. Nicola.

Judy, "What do you mean parts have self and self has parts?" I was waiting for that question. So that's, I can't cover that in three minutes either. But it's pretty mind blowing.

Anonymous, "How do we deal with interjected parts from tormentors in IFS?" There aren't interjected parts so much as there are interjected burdens that parts carry. You would have a part of that carries this critical mother energy for example. And then we would help it unburden that. All that's to come in the ensuing sessions.

Tara, "These characteristics seem as the soul from some traditions you..." Yes, very much the soul is a lot of what I'm talking about here.

Eleanor, "How would you convince a protector to go away for awhile to allow self to emerge?" So we will be talking about that in the next couple sessions a lot. But it's, a lot of it is just sales. I'm kind of a salesman.

Gregor, "Is self similar as transcendent self?" I don't know enough about that to tell you, but it sounds similar.

Kristen, "Hi Dick. Are you teaching from self? Or is it you're teaching parts? Or do they still blend? Self and mom parts are some roles we have in her lives." Mostly right now, cause I can tell from my tone of voice and other ways that I check, I'm teaching from self. I do have teaching parts that try to hang around and remind me to say certain things. But right now I'm pretty much in self.

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Dick Schwartz: Paige, "How do you see the relationship between self and the body? Parts in the body?" Yeah, the parts use the body. I have a chapter in this new book I'm mentioning the Second Edition, on parts of the body. So I refer you to that.

"Can you discuss the difference between DID and parts?" The only difference is Barbara, is that people who are classified DID their parts, their alters got blown apart more by the horrific trauma they suffered. But they are... Our parts are just as much full range inner personalities as what I call alters. And I know that's a radical position.

Anonymous, "Are there any experiences with people using IFS with psilocybin?" I am not aware of it. I am actually planning to try that coming up pretty soon. I'll let you know how it goes.

Michelle, "How to work with someone who insists that a part is demonic and must be ignored?" Now that's a whole other topic cause sometimes there are these things that aren't parts that we call on unattached burdens that are kind of demonic. But that's a whole different topic.

Nicolas, "Sounds like charity and unconditional love." Yes, pretty much.

Christine, "I have a client who has such an antagonistic part that it's hard to help him come to his self because he's blended. It's hard to enlist self." So you have to do again what we call direct access, where you talk to the part and kind of love it up and get to know it and what it's afraid of.

Patrick, "At the end, when I looked at the situation again, I was understanding both sides with Karen. I was also..." I guess that's the dilemma exercise. That's great. "I was also in indecision and overwhelmed by it." So you can just ask them not to overwhelm and to separate a little bit so you can continue to show them each care and have them begin to talk to each other with your help to try and work something out.

Kirsten, again, "Anytime we act outside the 8 C's are we acting from a part?" Yes. You know, some of the other words too. But anything besides those eight C's is usually a part.

Danielle, "I'd like..." Daniel. "I'd like to do a level one, but they're difficult to attend and I'd have to fly. Retreat style options are..." Yes, we plan to launch 50% more

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trainings next year because we just can't keep up with the demand. It's a nice problem to have. But we're gonna grow by 50% next two years.

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Carl, "Thank you for showing the MAPS Mithoefer work. The MAPS training last summer was how has introduced to IFS." Oh, that's great. That's great.

Lisa, "Can the self feel sad, guilty, etc. Or do those feelings belong to parts by definition?" Yeah. Guilty, angry, sad, most all of that is parts. There is a kind of grief the self can feel out of compassion, but it's a different kind of sadness then from the parts. There's a kind of anger that isn't judgmental, that can be forceful that comes from self. But it's not really angry because angry by definition involves, at least for me, some kind of judgment.

Daniela, "What's your experience working with bilingual people who have excellent English skills but whose native language is... Yeah, the younger parts?" Yeah. We just work with whatever language is easier for the younger parts, Daniela.

Lisa, "A situation where not sure the client is really being self-led. They're saying they're curious, but it doesn't feel whole hearted. It is unlike Dick's description of self." We have what we call a critical massive self. So if somebody says, you know, I don't feel a lot, but I feel open. That seems like it's enough to get things going in a decent way. I'll usually go ahead. Or you know, I'm willing to talk to it and get to know it better.

Christine, "I recorded a metta meditation for him to send loving kindness to himself and his parts, but it's pretty intractable. Any suggestions?" Yeah, if you've got this massive critic and then you trying to counter it with metta meditation, that's just going to antagonize the critic. My advice is not to do that and instead to get to know the critic and a lie with it.

Oh, I'm over. I'm so caught up with these great questions. I really apologize. I'm not going to be able to answer the rest. Please do bring them next time. I'll see you next month. Okay. Have a great one. Bye. Bye.