

## The 5-4-3-2-1 Self Check-InSELF

5-10 minutes

A grounding exercise that helps you shift from part-dominated states to Self-leadership. Use this when you notice strong emotions or reactive patterns.

### STEPS

1. **Pause** and take three slow breaths. Notice you're noticing—that awareness is Self.
2. **Name 5 things** you can see around you right now.
3. **Name 4 things** you can physically feel (chair, feet on floor, air temperature).
4. **Name 3 things** you can hear.
5. **Notice** any shift in your internal state. Ask: "How do I feel toward myself right now?"
6. If you feel curious, calm, or compassionate—you're in Self. If you feel critical, anxious, or numb—a part is still active. Thank it for trying to help.

### Reflection Prompts

- *What shifted when I slowed down?*
- *Which of the 8 C's (calm, curiosity, compassion, clarity, creativity, courage, confidence, connectedness) do I feel most?*
- *What part was active before I started? What was it protecting me from?*

## The "Room" MeditationSELF

10-15 minutes

A visualization exercise developed from Dr. Richard Schwartz's work that helps create internal space between Self and parts.

### STEPS

1. Close your eyes and imagine you're in a comfortable room—this is your Self space.
2. Notice any thoughts, feelings, or sensations. These are parts visiting your room.
3. Gently ask each part: "Would you be willing to wait outside the room, just for now, so I can get to know you better from here?"
4. Parts don't have to leave—they just need to give you some space. Reassure them you're not abandoning them.
5. Notice what remains when parts step back. That spacious awareness is Self.
6. From this place, you can invite one part back in to learn about it with curiosity.

### Tip:

If a part won't step back, that's information. Ask it: "What are you afraid would happen if you gave me space?" Listen without judgment.

## Parts Mapping Worksheet

Mapping your internal system helps you recognize patterns and understand how your parts interact. This is foundational work for any IFS practice.

### The Parts Inventory

20-30 minutes

Create a map of your internal system by identifying parts that show up regularly. Don't try to be complete—start with the parts you notice most.

#### HOW TO MAP YOUR PARTS

1. **Notice a recent strong reaction**—anger, anxiety, shutdown, people-pleasing, perfectionism.
2. **Ask:** "What part of me feels this way?" Give it a name (The Critic, The Worrier, The Pleaser).
3. **For each part, note:**
  - What does it feel like in my body?
  - What does it say or believe?
  - What is it trying to protect me from?
  - When did I first notice this part?
4. **Categorize:** Is this a Manager (proactive protection), Firefighter (reactive protection), or Exile (wounded part being protected)?
5. **Map relationships:** Which parts trigger each other? Which work together?

#### Parts to Look For

- **Managers:** *The Perfectionist, The People-Pleaser, The Controller, The Critic, The Worrier, The Planner*
- **Firefighters:** *The Numbing part, The Rager, The Escape Artist, The Procrastinator, The Binger*
- **Exiles:** *The Abandoned Child, The Shamed One, The Lonely part, The Invisible One*

#### Important:

There are no "bad" parts. Every part—even the ones causing problems—developed to protect you. Approach each with curiosity, not judgment.

### The Trigger-Response Map

15-20 minutes

Track how external triggers activate your parts system. This reveals patterns and helps you catch part activations earlier.

#### MAPPING TEMPLATE

1. **Trigger:** What happened externally? (criticism, rejection, uncertainty, conflict)
2. **First Part:** Which part activated first? (usually a Manager)
3. **Escalation:** If the Manager couldn't handle it, which Firefighter showed up?
4. **Hidden Exile:** What vulnerable feeling were these protectors guarding against?
5. **Pattern Name:** Give this sequence a name you'll recognize ("The Criticism Cascade")

## Protector Appreciation Exercises

Managers and Firefighters work hard to keep you safe. Before asking them to change, they need to feel understood and appreciated for their efforts.

### The Protector Interview **MANAGER** **FIREFIGHTER**

15-20 minutes

Have a conversation with a protective part to understand its role. This builds trust and often naturally softens extreme behaviors.

### THE SIX F'S INTERVIEW PROCESS

1. **Find** the part in or around your body. Where do you sense it?
2. **Focus** on it with curiosity. Notice its qualities without trying to change anything.
3. **Flesh it out:** How old does it seem? Does it have an image or appearance?
4. **Feel toward it:** How do you feel toward this part right now? (If critical or impatient, that's another part—ask it to step back)
5. **BeFriend:** Ask the part:
  - o "What's your job in my system?"
  - o "What are you protecting me from?"
  - o "How long have you been doing this?"
  - o "What are you afraid would happen if you stopped?"
6. **Thank it** for protecting you, even if its methods cause problems. It's been trying to help.

#### After the Interview

- *What did I learn about why this part does what it does?*
- *What does this part need from me to feel less burdened?*
- *Has my relationship with this part shifted at all?*

### Firefighter Tracking Log **FIREFIGHTER**

Ongoing (5 min/entry)

Firefighters often act before we realize what happened. This log helps you catch patterns and intervene earlier.

## DAILY LOG QUESTIONS

1. What reactive behavior showed up today? (numbing, bingeing, raging, escaping, procrastinating)
2. What happened right before? (the trigger)
3. What feeling was the Firefighter trying to extinguish?
4. Did it work? For how long?
5. What might have helped the underlying feeling instead?

### Remember:

Firefighters aren't the problem—they're responding to overwhelming exile pain. The goal isn't to eliminate them but to help the exile so the Firefighter can relax.

## Exile Witnessing (Gentle Approach)

Exiles carry our deepest wounds and need careful, compassionate attention. These exercises are for *witnessing*—not processing trauma, which should be done with a therapist.

### Important Safety Note

Deep exile work—especially unburdening childhood trauma—requires a trained IFS therapist. These exercises help you acknowledge exiles with compassion, not process intense wounds alone. If overwhelming feelings arise, stop and seek professional support.

### The Witness Practice **EXILE**

10-15 minutes

Simply being present with an exile—without fixing or changing—is profoundly healing. This exercise practices compassionate witnessing.

### STEPS

1. First, establish Self-energy using an exercise above.
2. Notice a vulnerable feeling that's present—sadness, loneliness, shame, fear.
3. Ask protectors for permission to be with this feeling. If they're worried, reassure them you won't be overwhelmed.
4. Turn toward the exile with curiosity: "I see you. I'm here."
5. Don't try to fix, change, or make the feeling go away. Just witness it.
6. Ask the exile: "What do you want me to know?"
7. Listen. You don't need to do anything—your compassionate presence is the healing.
8. When complete, thank the exile for sharing. Reassure it you'll return.

### Reflection Prompts

- *What did the exile need me to understand?*
- *How did it feel to witness without fixing?*
- *Did any protectors get activated? What were they worried about?*

## **Letter to a Younger Self** **EXILE**

20-30 minutes

Write a letter from your adult Self to a younger part of you who needed support. This exercise builds the Self-to-exile connection.

### **WRITING PROMPTS**

1. Choose an age or memory where a younger part of you was struggling.
2. From your current Self, write what that younger part needed to hear.
3. Include: "I see what happened to you. It wasn't your fault. You didn't deserve that."
4. Tell them what you wish someone had told you then.
5. Let them know you're here now and they're not alone anymore.

#### **If emotions feel overwhelming:**

Stop the exercise, orient to the present (5-4-3-2-1), and thank your protectors for keeping you safe. You can return another time. There's no rush.