

The Little Book of Self Leadership



Dave Williams

Foreword by Richard C. Schwartz, PhD

The Little Book of Self Leadership

*Daily Self Leadership
Made Simple*

Dave Williams

Foreword by Richard C. Schwartz, PhD

Published by SLR Coaching & Consulting Pty Ltd

First published 2017

Second edition published 2018

Text and image copyright David Williams 2017

Design and typography by Logo Chap

This book is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1986 and subsequent amendments, no part may be produced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means or process whatsoever without the prior written permission of the author.

Where other sources are referenced, the author has ensured that the source is recognized so that readers may access the original work to further their knowledge and understanding.

ISBN: 978-0-6481801-2-8

ISBN: 978-0-6481801-3-5

David Williams, 1960 –

Neither the publisher or author are providing professional advice or services to the reader and are not liable or responsible for any loss or damage allegedly arising from information or suggestions in this book.

Dedication

May there come a day when it's common sense that people treat their inner Parts as people, and that we consequently treat our children with even more calm, curiosity and compassion. And may that Self Leadership radiate across the generations and across our worlds.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	6
Foreword.....	8
About This Book	9
About The Author	12
Section 1: Getting to Know Your Inner Family ...	14
Noticing My Parts Now	14
Parts of Me Remember.....	16
Parts that Doubt	18
My Self	20
My Self Experienced.....	22
Confusing Parts for My Self	24
Speaking for My Parts	28
Personal Integrity and My Parts	30
SIFTing with My Parts.....	32
Treating My Parts as People.....	34
Respecting My Parts	36
Rejecting Restricts.....	38
The Most Powerful Question.....	42
My Exile Parts.....	46
My Protector Parts.....	50
My Manager Parts	54
My Fire Fighter Parts	56
The Self Leadership Model.....	60

Contents

Section 2: Your Self Leadership Journey	64
Gaining My Protectors' Permission	65
Are My Parts Aware of My Self?	70
Updating My Exiles	74
Witnessing My Exiles	78
Re-parenting My Exiles	82
Retrieving My Exiles	86
Locating My Exile's burdens	90
Unburdening My Exiles.....	94
Reclaiming Disowned Qualities	96
Transforming My Protectors	100
Unburdening My Protectors.....	104
Rehearsing	108
Waking Up	112
Dreams.....	116
The Self Leadership Road Map	119
What Have I Learnt?	120
Self Leadership Building Exercise.....	129

Acknowledgements

Reading about Internal Family Systems (IFS) Therapy was a light bulb moment. It crystalised my learnings from Psychodrama, Buddhist meditation, executive coaching and Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR), into a simple, accurate model and method. So a huge thank you goes to Dick Schwartz¹ for having the insight and persistence to create and communicate Internal Family Systems Therapy.

Every book needs to be proof read again and again. My thanks to Lisa Monk, and my wife, Claire, who have done that task with great care. More than that though, my wife has been a patient supporter throughout our adventure together, and for that I feel very grateful.

To my fellow practitioners who have listened to me enthuse about Self Leadership and its potential to ‘change the world’ – thank you for listening, challenging and contributing. Our conversations have helped enormously to rehearse how to more clearly articulate the IFS concepts and Self Leadership experience. My special thanks to Paul Ginter, Michelle Glass, Leona Dawson and Linda Yeomans.

¹Schwartz, R, (2001). *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, Oak Park: Trailheads Publications.

Finally, I am indebted to my clients for trusting me to apply my skills as a coach and therapist to their inner world of Parts, and to gain the precious satisfaction that comes when someone's Self Leadership grows – and empowers their lives, families and careers to grow.

It's my hope the Self Leadership that my clients and their children display in their communities will contribute over time to the evolution of an even more Self-Led World.

Foreword

I am honoured that Dave Williams has distilled so much of the theory and technique of the Internal Family Systems (IFS) model, which has consumed most of my adult life, into this very readable book.

It is full of examples that will resonate with any reader, delivered in a format in which the IFS concepts are presented in a logical order that build on themselves.

It is intended to be a succinct guide for anyone interested in using IFS for personal exploration and healing. It succeeds marvellously!

Richard C. Schwartz, Ph. D., Developer of the IFS model and method, founder of The Centre for Self Leadership www.selfleadership.org, and author of *The Mosaic Mind*, *Internal Family Systems*, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*; and *You Are The One You've Been Waiting For*.

About This Book

For all the people who believe they are this ‘sort of person’, and wonder why – with particular people or in certain situations – they become someone else? This little book is for you.

For example, Part of you is reading this book right now, while another Part is probably thinking about all the other things you could be doing. Most of us live our lives unaware of which Part of us is taking the lead at any one particular time.

This book will give you the opportunity to connect with your inner Parts and (re)establish your Self as their leader. This shift in viewing your inner world as comprising ‘Self’ and ‘Parts’ is seismic and transformational.

The book is thus divided into two sections. Section 1: Getting to Know Your Inner Family, introduces you to the different members of your inner family, aka your inner ‘Parts’.

Section 2: The Self Leadership Journey, takes you and your inner Parts on a journey of personal healing and growth developed by Dr. Richard Schwartz . To bring this journey to life, I’ve chosen an example of a person who has Parts that are driven to succeed, and yet remembers the discomfort of failing, and fears failing again.

You'll notice that the pages of this book are intended to be read in pairs. In the printed book, the left hand pages have poem-like accounts and instructions on how you can grow your Parts' trust in your Self Leadership. If all of this sounds too abstract, then you'll find everyday examples on the right-hand side pages.

To the wordsmiths, I offer my apologies for using unconventionally succinct sentences. The brevity is aimed at echoing the simplicity of how we experience our inner lives, without the overlay of linguistic conventions and concepts.

A special note needs to be made about terminology. For the sake of ease of reading, the words, *I*, *me* and *my* are used to refer to what Schwartz named, the 'Self' - that aspect of ourselves that is aware of our Parts. So rather than confuse you with the technically correct expression, 'My Self is aware of a frustrated Part', I have chosen to use the more colloquial, 'I am aware of my frustrated Part', where the words 'I' and 'my' refer to my Self that is aware of the frustrated Part within me.

It is my hope that the book will be either a catalyst for you to start working with an accredited IFS professional or be used as a resource between sessions to progress your growth. You can find an IFS professional at selfleadership.org/find-an-ifs-therapist.html Importantly, if you begin to experience feelings that concern you, please contact your mental health and/or medical professional promptly.

Finally, I do hope you enjoy transforming your relationships with your Parts and the people around you. Because with a team of Self Led Parts within you, you'll find your life flows and fulfills. Here's to contributing to a Self Led World of calm curiosity, clarity, compassion, connectedness, creativity, courage and confidence.

About The Author

Dave Williams is a registered psychologist living in Sydney Australia, who worked with leaders in the corporate world for 17 years. In the year 2000, Dave set up his own mentoring business, joint ventured with an executive coaching firm, and has since worked one-on-one with hundreds of leaders of Australian businesses, big and small.

In 2016, Dave read the book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, by Bessel Van derKolk². It's here that Dave started his journey of understanding and applying Dick Schwartz's approach to Self Leadership. He realised that what he had been doing with his Comfort Zone Coaching was actually identifying what Schwartz called inner 'Parts', and in particular, the Parts that his clients were uncomfortable with. By enabling his clients to step back from their Parts, Dave learnt that his coaching had been enabling people to lead from a place that Schwartz calls 'Self'.

'Self' is that core sense of calm clarity within you that has the potential to lead the internal resources of your Parts with curiosity, compassion, courage, confidence and creativity. It's a presence that empowers any person to handle the highs and lows of life with greater

²Van Der Kolk, B. (2015). *The body keeps the score*: New York: Penguin Books.

ease and effectiveness.

So this book aims to enable you to be even more Self Led. And if through your example, others are inspired to learn and become more Self Led as well, then it is Dave's hope that in some small way, this book contributes to the evolution of an even more Self Led World.

You can contact Dave via:
dave@selfleadershipaustralia.com.au

Section 1: Getting to Know Your Inner Family

In this section you will discover that the mob of chattering thoughts inside your mind actually comprise three types of inner Parts, that are like a family that interacts within you, and impacts your daily happiness, relationships and results. Above all you'll become even more aware that the natural leader of the different Parts of you is your Self.

Noticing My Parts Now

Part of me wants to read this book, another Part of me can't be bothered.

I'm recognising the Parts that are within me right now.

Like the voice that says 'you can', versus the voice that says 'you can't.'

Whenever I say 'I'm struggling' with something, it's my Parts inside of me who are struggling.

When my Parts connect with me, life is less of a struggle.

Connecting with my inner Parts gives me more power and peace.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Do you have a 'Driver Part'? A voice inside you who says something like 'Do this', 'Be successful', or 'Work harder'? OR...

An 'Indulgent Part' who suggests to you, 'Do it later', 'Take it easy', 'Have a rest', 'Life's too short.'

OR...

A 'Fearful Part' who warns you about what could happen if you take on too much and reminds you how much you 'hate failing'. You could call that your 'Fear of Failure Part.'

It's common to have some Parts within you that argue with each other. Their arguing creates internal confusion, lowers your energy and erodes your capabilities to handle challenging situations. Next time you hear a Part saying you're 'struggling with XYZ', go inside and see if it's really different Parts of you who are struggling?

Parts of Me Remember

We've all had our fingers burnt.

It might not be a big burn, but it did hurt.

Part of me remembers ... it's happening inside me right now.

Other people may doubt it, but it's real for me.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Do you have a Part inside you that remembers doing something in front of people important to you and realising they weren't responding to you the way you wanted? Were they staying silent, looking distracted, even frowning and whispering?

Suddenly your heart began to pound, or your voice got shaky, maybe you got tense in your stomach and unclear about what to say next.

Over time you develop a Part within you that fears you failing to get people to like what you've done (and to like you). That 'Fear of Failure' Part inside of you keeps a look out for situations where that could happen again, except now you're older and you've got to do presentations and projects in front of your boss, clients and team all the time. That means your Fear of Failure Part has a big impact on how you lead your life.

.

Parts that Doubt

All this talk about Parts. 'It's a bit weird. You're just imagining these Parts.'

So now I've got a Part that insists my other inner Parts aren't real.

Ah, that's my Sceptical Part. I almost missed that Part.

Hello Sceptical Part.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Have you ever noticed a Part of you that tells you privately the reason why someone is being 'nice' to you, is because they 'want something from you', not because they genuinely like you? Such 'Distrusting Parts' fill us with doubts about other peoples' true motives. Many of us put up 'a wall.' It may not be a physical wall, but people can sense it. Why do we do this? Because we have other Parts of us who know what it's like to be hurt by someone. And so we attempt to protect our more vulnerable Parts from getting hurt again by doubting and keeping our distance.

OR...

How familiar are you with a Part within you that asks questions like, 'Why did you do that? Or maybe you have a Part of you that tells you 'You should have done this.' That's your 'Self-Critical Part' whose inner doubts undermine your capabilities and self-confidence.

My Self

Who's aware of my Parts?

Well, I am. That's a stupid question.



Is it? Who's the 'I' that is aware?

That's my Self who is aware of my Parts.

It's my awareness of my Parts that empowers my Self to be the leader of my Parts.

When I'm being my Self, I accept and welcome all my Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Talking to yourself – Sometimes you may be aware of a conversation happening within you. Like the voice inside that asks ‘What are they thinking about me?’ Another voice might say, ‘I don’t care what they think about me.’ It’s my Self who’s curious to hear what my Parts are saying inside of me.

Looking in the mirror – When you look in a mirror, you can do it a few ways. You can see that familiar face, brush your teeth and move on, or you can become aware of the Parts of you that judge the features on your face. Like the Critical Part who analyses your creases and blemishes for age, attractiveness, cleverness, health and happiness. And then there’s the presence in the background who is aware of both that physical face and the mental commentary. My Self feels compassion for that person in the mirror.

My Self Experienced

What's my Self like?

Deep breath. Let me go inside and step back from what's happening inside me.

My Self I call 'I' is always there in the background.

The Self is timeless. Has no colour, nor creed.

When I'm my Self, I feel calm and curious.

I look outwards with soft eyes and see clearly.

Alert, I'm ready to respond ... effortlessly, creatively. No craving or criticising.

When I'm being my Self, I don't reject. Only Parts reject.

And I'm compassionate towards others - connected and separate at the same time.

My Self is the ideal leader of my Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Moments with nature – When was the last time you stood beside a still lake, stared out to the horizon, or looked up at the stars and experienced that sense of vital stillness within you? In these sort of moments, you are experiencing being in 'Self'. Spontaneously you become more calm, clear, confident, connected and creative in handling whatever is happening within you and around you.

'In the zone' – Have you ever done something really well without thinking about it? You probably weren't worrying about what could happen, nor were you going over what had happened in the past. You were most likely simply handling whatever was happening in front of you moment to moment - without a lot of thinking and effort. That was your Self in action.

Confusing Parts for My Self

It's so easy for me to confuse my Parts for my Self.

I say 'I'm frustrated', when really it's a Part of me who is frustrated.

I'm not always frustrated, so it can only be a Part of me, my 'Frustrated Part.'

So to be more accurate, 'I am aware of my Frustrated Part.'

So wherever you read, *I*, *Me*, or *My*, who we're really talking about is my Self relating to a Part.

Examples – How do you relate to this?

Disliking Parts of Me – Is there something about you that you don't like? Perhaps you've said 'I don't like how quiet I get in groups', or 'how I can't switch off', or maybe you relate to not liking some feature of your body.

You could argue that because you're aware of yourself having these thoughts it means you're being your Self. But in Self Leadership, your true Self is curious and compassionate towards your inner Parts. It's our Parts that dislike and reject. So if you notice some sort of rejecting happening, it's a Part of you who is doing the rejecting, not your Self.

Self-Like Parts – Have you ever met someone who professed to want to help you but really just wanted you to change in a way that they wanted? Similarly, sometimes you'll notice a Part of you that seems well-meaning and sympathetic, but really believes another Part of you is deficient in some way and 'should change.' You can spot these Self-Like Parts because they often have an agenda or plan of how to fix something or someone.

Whereas when you're being your Self, you accept your Parts and seek to understand them, their history and reasons for being the way they are. Like people, our Parts often just want to be accepted for who they are. Understanding and accepting your Parts builds trust and enables your Self to lead and genuinely help your Parts.

Parts I've Noticed, Promises I've Made

Speaking for My Parts

Speaking for my Parts is a life skill.

I practise by saying, 'A part of me is'

And I notice there's 'Another part of me that is ...'

There are Parts of me that are 'Frustrated', 'Flat', 'Vulnerable', 'Focused', 'Excited', 'Loving', 'Playful' and everything else in between.

Naming my Parts empowers my Parts to recognise my presence and 'unblend' from me.

That's when I notice which Parts are running my life.

Examples – How do you relate to this?

Too Tired to Talk – You get home tired and your partner wants to tell you about what has happened during their day. You say, ‘A Part of me really would love to listen to you right now, and another Part of me is really tired and needs some quiet time before I can really listen to you. Can we talk in 30 minutes?’

Getting respect – Your Partner doesn’t really listen to you and treat what you’ve got to say as important, so you say, ‘A Part of me is feeling unimportant, and another Part of me wants to feel close to you. Can we talk?’

Handling interruptions – A work colleague interrupts you, and you say, ‘A Part of me really wants to help you, and another Part of me wants to get this task done that’s due in 30 minutes. I could meet with you in one hour, how does that work for you?’

Personal Integrity and My Parts

When I say 'A Part of me is feeling ...' I accurately describe that Part.

No half-truths internally or externally.

No justifying, no gossiping, no blaming. My Parts are my responsibility.

By declaring my Parts, I own my Parts.

Making my Self whole, restoring my integrity.

Examples – How do you relate to this?

Breaking promises – Your phone rings and it's that person you promised to do that job for by yesterday. You haven't done it. You say, 'A Part of me feels guilty because I haven't done that for you yet. I really apologise for any hassles I've created for you. And another Part of me is committed to getting it done for you by today. Can that still work for you?

Getting hurt and apologising – One day you overheard this person saying you're not really honest. Instantly a Part of you feels hurt, quickly followed by another Part of you that wants to hurt that person back. And then your Self steps back and knows that retaliating will only further damage the relationship. So instead of blaming the other person, your Self shares with that person what each Part of you is feeling, and apologises for any hurt you imagine you may have contributed to them experiencing. Regardless of how the other person reacts, admitting your contribution to the conflict makes you feel stronger on the inside.

SIFTing with My Parts

Something or someone upsets me.

Something or someone excites me.

I go inside and gently ask each Part...

What ... **Sensations** can I sense in,
on and around my body?
... **Image(s)** appears? What's it like? How
old?
... **Feeling(s)** arises? What's it feeling?
... **Thought(s)** occurs? What's it saying?
What's its job?

SIFTing fleshes out my inner Parts.

Makes them more real and easier to relate to.

Example – How do you relate to this?

SIFTing with your Self-Critical Part – Say you go inside and remember a time when you were critical of yourself. Start by scanning your body. You'll often be surprised that there are sensations that accompany the memory. Sensations such as a weight on your shoulders or perhaps tightness in your stomach. Because your Self-Critical Part has probably been with you for some time, it's common for images of other past events to appear. For example, your Self Critical Part may take on the appearance of someone who criticised you when you were younger. Then check what feelings the Part is experiencing? Perhaps it's fearing failing and anticipating the embarrassment of making mistakes in front of others. And what's the Part telling you? Is it telling you critical thoughts such as 'That was stupid', 'Why did I do that?' By noticing the Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts of a Part, you get to know your Parts much more fully.

Treating My Parts as People

My Parts have sensations, they see, feel and think.

My Parts remember the pain of the lows in my life. And they remember the highs as well.

My Parts act and react to other Parts within me, and to people around me.

My Parts act with a purpose. They take their jobs seriously.

My Parts look for someone to lead, be it me as my Self or another Part.

My Parts want someone to care for them, and to appreciate them.

My Parts are a lot like people.

The more I treat my Parts like people living inside me, the easier it is for me as Self to lead my Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Do you have a Part of you who drives you to work hard to be successful? Notice any Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts that come up when you focus on that Part of you that drives you. See if you can be your curious Self, and ask your Driver Part 'What are you concerned would happen if you didn't drive me to work so hard to succeed?' The answer will probably be that your Driver Part is trying to protect you from experiencing the embarrassment of failing.

And if you ask your Driver Part 'What's it been like for you to do that job for me?', you will mostly likely hear your Driver Part say something like, 'exhausting' and 'thankless'. See what happens when you tell your Driver Part that you appreciate how hard it has been working to protect you from failing? Notice how much your Driver Part wants to be appreciated by your Self.

So your Driver Part is like a person living inside you who has sensations, thoughts, feelings, and a job to do. And like a person, when you're being your Self, you can talk with your Driver Part, express appreciation and develop a closer relationship with your Driver Part.

Respecting My Parts

The more my Parts reject each other, the more rejected I feel.

When I'm my Self, I naturally respect my Parts.

How do I respect my Parts?

I respect my Parts by asking for their permission before I do things.

Like asking a Part, 'Is it OK if I speak to this other Part to get to know it?'

And I respect my Parts by thanking them for their commitment and cooperation.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Have you ever feared failing at something and so put it off?’ Go inside and flesh out the Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts of the Part of you that fears failing.

Now ask your Self, ‘How do I feel towards my Fear of Failure Part?’ Many people say something like ‘I dislike it’, or ‘I resent it for holding me back’. That’s a Part of you talking, not your Self. Your Self doesn’t dislike or resent.

So see if you can ask that Part to step back for a moment. That allows your Self to ask your Fear of Failure Part, ‘What’s it like for you to be treated like that?’ Your Fear of Failure Part will probably say it feels rejected. It may even ignore you or be just as resentful back. This counter reaction from your Fear of Failure Part demonstrates how when Parts reject other Parts, this leads to more rejection and distance between your Parts and your Self.

Whereas if I ask my Fear of Failure Part, ‘Would it be OK for me to get to know you?’ Notice how differently your Fear of Failure Part responds.

Rejecting Restricts

I notice that when my Self doesn't lead, my Parts take over.

And when my Parts take over, Parts of me over or under react, which restricts my relationships and results.

And then Parts of me rationalise my suffering. They blame my other Parts, and other people.

They blame other Parts for not being smart enough. For not being beautiful enough ... for not having enough money.

It doesn't take long before I believe I'm not enough and that I don't have enough. And that restricts my happiness.

When was the last time your Parts did that?

Example – How do you relate to this?

Have you ever got nervous giving a presentation? Perhaps you have a 'Failure Part' of you that remembers the embarrassment of having people in the audience whisper as you stumbled through your presentation.

You might recall the sensations of your heart pounding, a mental fog descending, and suddenly finding it difficult to remember what you were going to say next. In that moment, your Self was overwhelmed by the feelings of failure held by your Failure Part. You might have even stopped speaking.

Instantly your Fear of Failure Part rushes in to fill the leadership vacuum and urges you to take action, 'Leave the presentation!'. Anything to relieve the embarrassment of failing in public. The fear of experiencing the discomfort of failing only compounds your difficulty to speak fluently. Next your Driver Part kicks in to force you to read your presentation mechanically word for word.

But the audience can see these under and over reactions struggling within you. Your nervousness restricts your relationship with the audience as a credible source of information, which in turn restricts your capability to

influence them to do what you want during and after your presentation.

A moment later you may have rationalised what happened by blaming your Self for not being there to calm and comfort your Failure Part. And so you start believing, 'I'm just not a confident presenter'. Or maybe you blamed the audience by thinking they were 'judging me' and 'closed to new ideas.' Or perhaps you blamed the world by believing it's 'risky', 'cut throat', and so on.

When you reject a Part that holds discomfort, you instantly over and under react, which restricts your relationships and results, and then other Parts of you rationalise why you did that by blaming your Self, other people and the world.

Parts I've Noticed, Promises I've Made

The Most Powerful Question

Self Leadership is more than a concept.

It's the felt connection between my Self and my Parts.

How I feel towards my Parts creates connection or disconnection.

Thus, the most powerful question I can ask is, 'How do I feel towards this Part?'

If the answer is anything rejecting, I'm being a Part.

If I'm curious, connected and compassionate, I'm being my Self.

Example – How do you relate to this?

It's relatively easy to intellectually understand that you have a Driver Part and a Fear of Failure Part, both of which aim to protect you from experiencing the embarrassment your Failure Part remembers when you failed at something.

But if you select one of those Parts and ask your Self, 'How do I feel towards this Part?' Your answer will uncover what type of connection or otherwise you have with that Part.

For example, you may appreciate your Driver Part for driving you to achieve more in your life, but also resent your Driver Part for not allowing you to be satisfied with what you have achieved and enjoy a rest sometimes. If you accept that your Driver Part has feelings, then imagine what it's like for your Driver Part to get this mixed message from your Self. Most likely your Driver Part is feeling confused and unappreciated for all the hard work it puts in to help you succeed and avoid failure. When you realise this is how you have been treating your Driver Part, your feelings may shift more to having more gratitude and compassion for your Driver Part.

In which case, you could share these feelings with your Driver Part, and in all likelihood, you'll experience first-hand how your relationship with your Driver Part grows closer, which in turn affords your Self the opportunity to begin to be the leader of your Parts more often.

Parts I've Noticed, Promises I've Made

My Exile Parts

Parts of me remember
when I got my 'fingers
burnt'. From a little singe,
to a big burn.



Events with waves of
Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts wash
through me.

In an instant these waves threaten to wash my
Self aside.

Let me see if I can step back.

Gently I get to know the Part's Sensations,
Images, Feelings and Thoughts.

As my Self, I become aware of the Part's pain,
and how much it wants attention and relief.

Other Parts rush to push the pain out of my
consciousness, rejecting the Part and its
discomfort.

I ask my Self, if I was that Part that's in pain and
I got rejected, how would I feel?

I imagine that Part feels lonely, neglected,
abandoned, maybe even exiled.

I ask my Self, How do I feel towards that Part
now? Compassion wells up in me.

All the Part wants is for someone to understand.

The Part responds by 'unblending', allowing my
Self to come forward.

Now I can see that the Parts whose discomfort is
rejected and pushed away are my '*Exile*' Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Are you aware of a Part of you that has experienced failing at something? Usually it's when you were younger and more vulnerable than you are today. Perhaps you made a mistake in one of your first jobs? Maybe it happened on the sports field and you did something that lost the game. Or did you 'fail' an exam?

However you relate to these sorts of experiences, when you connect with that Part of you that failed at something, you'll start to contact the visceral experience of failing. Perhaps you'll sense in your stomach the sense of shame of making a 'fool' of yourself in front of others. You might also see images of a younger you trying unsuccessfully to participate. Those and other memories might trigger old feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness to change what you did and its consequences. You may also hear the Part thinking, 'I'm not smart enough', 'There's nothing I can do', 'I'm failing', 'I'm a failure'.

*But no sooner do you start to experience the discomfort of your Failure Part, than you probably get distracted by your **Fear** of Failure Part quickly jumping in with waves of fear that push aside those feelings of actually failing.*

Herein lies the problem. Too much fear makes it hard for you to think clearly, slows down your decisions, and makes your voice quiver. When that happens your Driver Part gets upset that you're not operating confidently, getting jobs done quickly, and looking successful. So your Driver Part tells your Failure Part it's not helping you to be successful and tries to control its feelings of failure by pushing them down.

So what has happened? Your Failure Part has been pushed aside by your Fear of Failure Part, and then criticised and controlled by your Driver Part. Given this, it makes sense that your Failure Part feels exiled from your other Parts and from your Self. Hence, you can call the Failure Part an 'Exile' Part.

My Protector Parts

Parts of me are really uncomfortable with discomfort.

Let me go inside, scan and connect with these Parts.

Like an over-protective parent, these Parts keep watch for anything or anyone who might make me uncomfortable again.

They insist 'Never again!' and are so determined to keep me comfortable.

They make me react, baulk, blow up, binge, blank out, and be too busy – to name a few.

In short, they make me over and under react, stressing me and straining my relationships.

Being my Self, I ask the Part, 'What are you concerned would happen if you didn't do what you do?'

The Part is afraid and says without me, you'd 'Lose it', 'Fall apart', 'Get hurt again', 'Die even.'

Ah, so this Part is actually protecting me from being overwhelmed.

So even though these Parts restrict me - adding friction, creating fall-outs, making me fail, I can appreciate how hard they work to protect me from continual discomfort.

These parts are really my '*Protector*' Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Say you have a Part that sometimes fears failure, or maybe you're aware of a Driver Part of you that drives you to work harder to succeed. Whichever Part you relate to, ask your Self, 'How am I feeling towards this Part?' If you are curious and compassionate for what that Part is experiencing, then ask the Part, 'What are you concerned would happen if you didn't do what you do?'

The answer will often be that the Part is striving to protect you from experiencing some sort of discomfort. The Fear of Failure Part will probably reply by saying something like, 'I keep watch for any risky situations where you could fail, and I protect you by making you avoid those situations.'

Meanwhile the Driver Part drives you to achieve success, so you'll never feel like a failure again. So both your Fear of Failure Part and your Driver Part are working to protect you from experiencing the discomfort of failing again. For this reason, you can categorise these two Parts as 'Protector Parts'.

And it's not always about the discomfort of failing. People experience countless types of discomfort, such as feeling hurt, helpless, weak, worthless, bad, abandoned, unloved,

unimportant, stupid and vulnerable, to name a few.

For example, you might have a Part that knows what it's like to feel hurt and helpless. In which case, you may have two Protector Parts. A 'Pleaser' Part, who works hard to make other people happy, and a 'Fighter' Part, who retaliates when people are perceived to have hurt you. Both Parts seek to protect you from feeling hurt. Indeed, just by taking the actions to please and retaliate, both these Parts also make you feel less helpless. Thus, both these Parts are further examples of Protector Parts.

My Manager Parts

I notice how some of my
Protectors want to control
my other Parts.



They're telling me what
I 'Have to' do, what I
'Shouldn't do'.

All to keep me from getting my fingers burnt ...
again.

I'll focus on one of these Parts, and its
Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts come
to the fore.

This Part is like a micro manager trying to keep
my inner team of other Parts under control.

The Part strives to protect my inner team from
the problems caused by the expectations and
emotions of other Parts.

I begin to appreciate how this Part helps me cope
with life's ups and downs. Focusing me on tasks
that make me look good.

These are my '*Manager*' Parts that my world
approves of.

When my Self is not leading, it's my Manager
Parts who run my life.

Example – How do you relate to this?

If you have a Driver Part, then you'll probably be familiar with that voice in your head that tells you, 'I've got to work hard to succeed.' Why? Because basically it believes you're deficient in some way. Do you relate to having a Driver Part who believes you're 'lazy' and 'not smart enough' to be successful? In any case, your Driver Part probably believes you can overcome these deficiencies if you are focused, prioritise your tasks and avoid any distractions, such as fearing you might fail or doubting you could succeed.

In this way, your Driver Part works hard to control the degree of influence your Fear of Failure Part and Self-Critical Parts have over you. When your Driver Part is controlling your other Parts, you'll tend to project manage your life with task lists, work longer hours and find it difficult to switch off. Because this Part attempts to manage your other Parts, your Driver Part is an example of a 'Manager' type of Protector Part.

My Fire Fighter Parts

Some of my Parts seem out of control.



They are impulsive, inflicting pain on people around me, on my Parts within me. Causing me crises.

They say 'Go on, you deserve it', or 'Do it, they deserve it.'

The temporary relief they give me turns to feeling 'bad' and 'shame'.

These are the Parts that are disapproved of and kept hidden. Secret Parts that no one else knows about.

Let me flesh out one of these Parts. Let me connect with the Part by noticing SIFT.

Being my Self, I ask the Part, 'What are you concerned would happen if you didn't do what you do?'

The Part answers, you'd feel, 'More frustration', 'More pain', 'Stuck', 'Powerless', 'Empty', 'Die even.'

Interesting, these Parts honestly believe they're helping me. Giving me relief by distracting me.

Like a Fire Fighter hosing down my other Parts' emotions, this Part is unconcerned about the damage done in the process.

Wow! They're so courageous and committed to protecting me from discomfort.

Seen this way I can appreciate my '*Fire Fighter*' Parts.

Example – How do you relate to this?

Have you ever experienced a moment of fear that you might fail at doing something, particularly in front of a group of people? Maybe you've been invited to give a presentation but the size of audience was larger than you're used to, or perhaps you were contemplating getting married, or committing to do a challenging educational course, or a major project at work.

If you relate to these experiences, then you'll know the fear of failure is not a choice. It washes through your body in an instant, clouding your thoughts, slowing your decisions, and making your actions and voice shaky. When the audience sees you behaving nervously like this, unfortunately they start to think you're not very confident about your topic/task. Ironically, your Fear of Failure Part has made you more likely to fail than to confidently do what you want and succeed.

And yet, if you ask your 'Fear of Failure' Part, 'What are you concerned would happen if you didn't make me so fearful of failing?' ... the answer you'll likely get is something like, 'If I didn't make you fear failing, then you'd get into more situations where you would fail, and you know how much you'd hate that!' In other words, even though your Fear of Failure Part

sometimes restricts your capability to succeed, the Part genuinely believes it is protecting you from re-experiencing the discomfort of failing.

Importantly, you'll note that unlike the Driver Part, your Fear of Failure Part acts with an urgency to get relief as quickly as possible. Moreover, your Fear of Failure Part does this with little or no attempt to control the consequences of injecting such fear into your body. It's this combination of intending to protect you, while being unconcerned about controlling the costs to you, that are the key characteristics of what is termed, a 'Fire Fighter' type of Protector.

The Self Leadership Model²

So when I go inside and take a deep breath....

I notice there are three types of Parts within my Self.

There's my curious compassionate Self that's always there.

Calm and clear, my Self is the ideal leader of my inner Parts.

But from an early age the pain of getting my fingers burnt can flood my Self with feelings. Make me cry and fall apart.

I can sense how my vulnerable Parts became more and more sensitive until they were pushed out of my consciousness. Exiled.

These are my 'Exile' Parts.

Naturally I feared getting hurt again, so two types of Protectors rushed to my defense. My Manager Parts, and my Fire Fighter Parts.

²Adapted from Schwartz, R, (2001). *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, Oak Park: Trailheads Publications.

I can appreciate how hard my Manager Parts work to protect me by keeping my other Parts and their emotions under control.

And I can sense how my Firefighter Parts step in to distract me when there's an emotional emergency that threatens me and my survival.

Together my Self and these three types of Parts do what families do. Sometimes they're loving, sometimes they're warring, but always they impact my wellbeing and my world.

3 Types of Inner Parts³



Self



Managers
- Control

Protectors



Fire Fighters
- Out of Control



'Fingers Burnt'

Exiles

³Adapted from Schwartz, R, (2001). *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model*, Oak Park: Trailheads Publications.