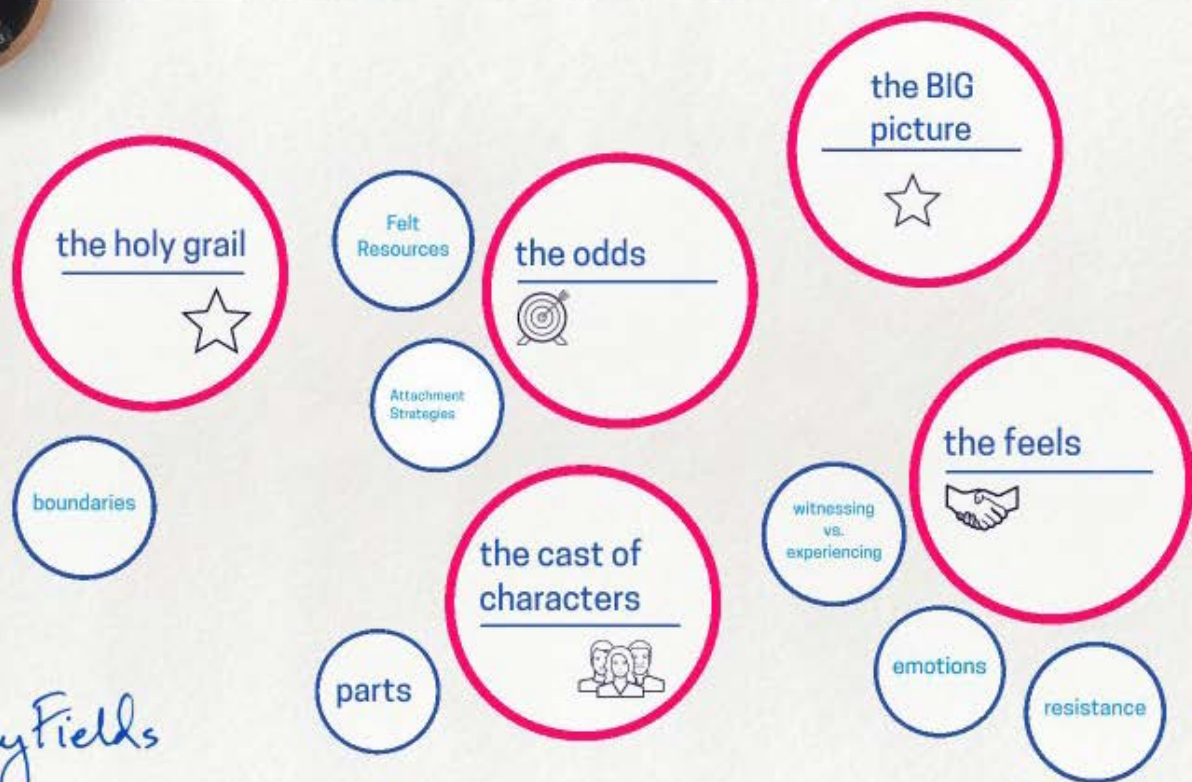


HAVE YOUR OWN BACK



JayFields

Welcome to Have Your Own Back!

I created this content so that you can guide yourself through the learning and practices necessary to build a solid and trustworthy relationship with yourself.

In the Table of Contents, you will see that the course content is broken into four chapters. For each chapter there are icons that are live links to the video lesson, and to the presentation slides and the workbook journal which includes prompts and practices for the lesson. You can follow along with the slides as you watch the video, or simply use them as the visual reference of what is covered in the video.

The digital workbook can be viewed on a range of devices. For the best interaction with the content I recommend downloading this PDF doc and saving it in a safe place. If you choose instead to engage with this doc within your web browser, I suggest right clicking on the video icon ► to open the video in a new browsing window. That way you can watch the video and view the document in separate tabs at the same time.

If you don't have a PDF viewer you can download a free app from Adobe [here](#).

You'll find that the videos are packed with a lot of information. They are yours to download and keep forever so you are able to watch them as many times as you like. The real meat of the course, however, is in engaging with the journal prompts and practices, so I highly encourage you to do this. Ultimately, having your own back isn't something that comes from an intellectual understanding, it's something that you do, and something that requires engagement and embodiment.

May this course help you to find a greater sense of home in yourself and more joy and freedom in your relationships, work and life!

My best to you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

click the blue arrow
to return to this page



TABLE OF CONTENTS

the odds.

how the cultural, neurobiological and relational odds are stacked against you having your own back.



the feels.

how to run your emotions rather than your emotions running you.



the cast of characters.

how to tell which parts of you are running the show and how to get your true self to show up instead.



the holy grail.

how to set boundaries and how to trust yourself to act on your own knowing.





the odds.

how the cultural, neurobiological and relational odds are stacked against you having your own back.



Having your own
back means being
willing to be with
yourself no matter
what--no matter
how uncomfortable
it is.



Having your own back
is hard because we
are hard wired to
avoid discomfort and
because many of us
weren't given tools
for how to be with
discomfort.



Because most of us weren't given healthy, effective tools to deal with discomfort, we are a big old mixed bag of coping mechanisms.



Once you learn how to be with your own discomfort--that is to self-regulate and meet your basic emotional needs for safety, belonging and mattering in a felt way--your true self, not your coping mechanisms, run the show.



the odds

neurobiological

cultural

relational



cultural

- we live in a culture that values thinking and doing over feeling and being.
- we live in a culture that tells us that discomfort is bad and that we can (and should) avoid it at all cost.



Conan-ing!



images from Conan the Barbarian, 1982



neurobiological

- We are hard wired to pay attention outside of ourselves.
- We have a critter brain to contend with.
- We are hard wired to have basic emotional needs.

exteroception
interoception

safety
belonging
mattering



exteroception

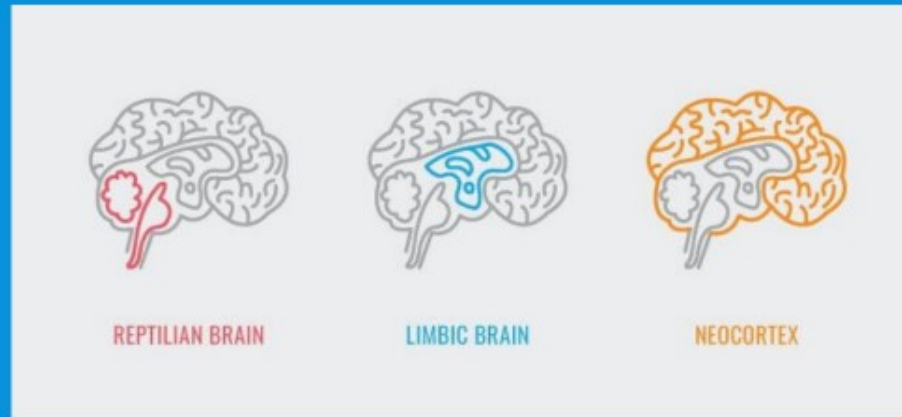
*paying attention
outside of yourself*

interoception

*paying attention to your
internal experience*



safety
belonging
mattering



Reptilian Brain

brain stem + cerebellum

- fight/flight/freeze response
- controls automatic responses such as temperature, breath, blood flow and hunger
- autopilot
- reflexes/instinct

Limbic/Mammal Brain

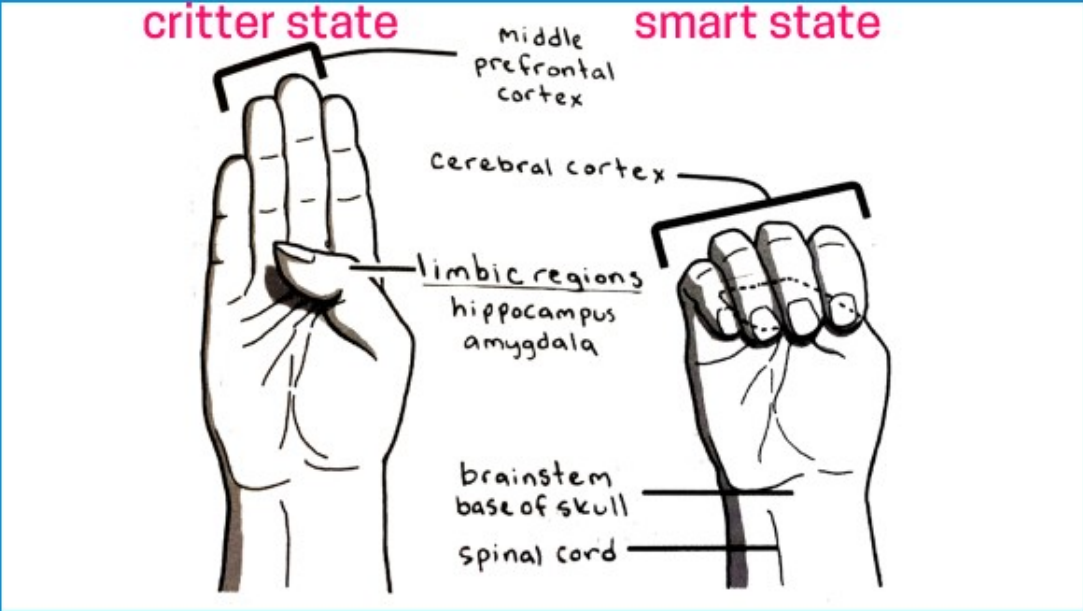
limbic system

- emotions
- memories
- habits
- sexual drives
- attachment center
- decisions

Neocortex/Human Brain

neocortex

- rational and logical thinking
- abstract thought and imagination
- information processing
- language
- consciousness





Felt Resources

grounding

centering

orienting

felt resources come from somatic experiencing. somatic experiencing is a therapeutic modality aimed at relieving the symptoms of PTSD and other mental and physical trauma-related health problems by focusing on the client's perceived body sensations (or somatic experiences).



trauma is any event or series of events that was too overwhelming at the time for a person to process.

the word trauma comes from the Sanskrit word *ama* which means undigested or unresolved.



grounding is about feeling safe and supported in the body, as opposed to feelings of anxiety, fear or danger we feel when we are not grounded.

put your attention on your feet and legs or any part of you that is physically supported .



centering is having a sense of personal power and control over one's life.
imagine connecting to the center of your body, to your core strength or to the felt sense of empowerment in your body.



orienting is about knowing where you are in space, which helps you to create a connection to what is real in the present moment.

look around the room, take in your surroundings-- the colors, shapes and textures of the objects around you.



self-regulation is feeling and being present and being able to manage your emotions, behaviors and thoughts in the face of stress or discomfort. Very few of us ever were given skills to strengthen the muscles of self-regulation. We've been practicing everything but this, so it's important we start practicing this now.



relational

- about half the population didn't get their basic emotional needs met when growing up.
- that not only makes it hard to have healthy relationships, but it also makes it hard to know what you feel and what your needs are.



Attachment strategies refer to how you adapted to the relationships you've had with important people in your life, especially your main caregivers in the first few years of your life. Did you feel seen, soothed, safe and secure?

secure

non-secure



secure attachment

about 50% of the population.
reliably had their needs met by
primary caregivers.



non-secure attachment

avoidant

20% of population. routinely didn't get needs met. felt shame about having needs and become independent. "dismissive" as adults in romantic relationships.

ambivalent

15% of population. sometimes got needs met, sometimes not. don't feel they can trust people and feel clingy. "preoccupied" as adults in romantic relationships.

disorganized

15% of population. an approach to avoidant or ambivalent attachment. experienced fear without solution. disassociate as adults in romantic relationships and have hard time regulating emotions.



You did the best you could with the resources you had then—as did everyone else.

Attachment strategies are not fixed—you have the ability to replace old beliefs and behaviors and learn to have secure attachment.

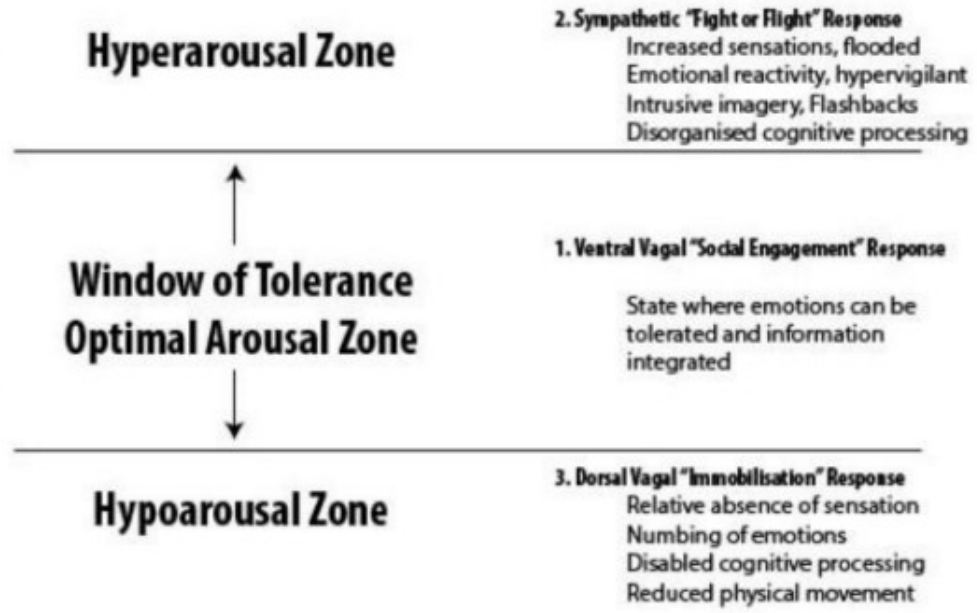


The **unfulfilled needs** of childhood shape the **strategies** we have to become unaware of those unfulfilled needs.

Which is to say, when you have a **non-secure** attachment strategy, it inherently means that you have been **practiced at becoming unaware** of your needs. Which means you have become practiced at not listening to your body and your feelings. Which can mean that you have a hard time even **knowing how you feel** or trusting that how you feel is how you actually feel because you didn't have how you felt mirrored or affirmed enough as a kid.



Window of Tolerance



Adapted from Ogden, Minton, & Pair, 2006, p. 27, 32; Corrigan, Fisher, & Nutt, 2010, p. 2



the gist.

having your own back, then, means viscerally trusting that the discomfort of unwanted feelings or emotions **won't kill you** because you know how to **self-regulate**. which means you know how to have a **felt sense of your own presence**. which means you know how to meet your basic emotional needs of **safety, belonging +mattering** by **seeing and soothing** yourself when you need to.

the most important tool for this—for self-regulation, for integration, for a **secure relationship** with yourself—is **your body**. Your body is at your disposal every minute of your existence.

Practice connecting with your body.



SELF STUDY: THE ODDS

exploration

1. What does having your own back mean to you? How does it feel in your body? What does it look like in action? (If you can't recognize it in yourself, can you recognize it in another?)
2. What do you think would be different in your life if you had your own back more?
3. What coping activities do you use to manage discomfort? (Eating, drinking, sleeping, etc.)
4. Can you tell when your coping strategies may serve you or when they don't? When they are compulsive vs when they are a choice?



5. Where do you most try to escape yourself or find yourself getting tripped up? Is it in relationships? Is it work-related? Is it when you're alone? When you make decisions?

6. What does it feel like to you when you've "flipped your lid?" What are the sensations that go along with being in the Critter State?

7. Think of three important people in your childhood. When you went to them in a moment of need, what is the response you grew to expect? Were you told "you shouldn't feel that way" or mirrored for how you felt and soothed? Was there eye contact and touch? Did you feel safe and seen?

8. How do you tend to show up in relationships as an adult? Are you equally comfortable being with someone as you are being alone? Do you have a hard time being close? Do you prefer to do things on your own and not let people close? Do you feel sad when you're alone or preoccupied with being in relationship or with how your relationship is going?



9. What effect do the three felt resources have when you try them?

Grounding—

Centering—

Orienting—



experience

Practice checking in with your most accessible felt resource—grounding, centering or orienting— throughout the week.

I'd recommend setting a timer to go off on your phone 3-5 times a day so that it catches you at random times and offers a reminder to pause and check in.

Another option is to put sticky notes around your house as reminders, or to choose an action (like brushing your teeth or getting dressed and undressed) that every time you do it it acts as a time when you also check in with your felt resource.

Notice what happens when you do this. Is it easy? If so, how do you know it worked? Is it hard? If so, what makes it hard?

Do your best not to have a judgment about your experience, just gather information. And try to get curious about your own presence. How do you recognize your own presence? What does it feel like when show up for yourself?

Add a practice—practice doing something uncomfortable for you.

resources

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk

Waking the Tiger by Peter Levine

A General Theory of Love by Thomas Lewis, Richard Lannon and Fari Amini

Wired for Love by Stan Tatkin



the feels.

how to run your emotions rather than your emotions running you.



witnessing
vs.
experiencing



conceptual self-awareness

the self thinking about the self

based in language + symbols

rational, abstract, explanatory

in the past or the future

facts, details, narrative, story, idea, interpretation



embodied self-awareness

self experiencing the self

based in sensory awareness

feeling + acting

creative + concrete

occurs in present moment only

temperature, pressure, movement,

pain, breath, energy level, mood



witnessing is
mental and
linguistic.

experiencing is
inherently sensory.



conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness are neurobiologically different.

as you practice embodied self-awareness you grow and strengthen the middle prefrontal cortex which ties the neo prefrontal cortex (higher thinking) with the limbic system (emotions).

* embodied self-awareness allows for:

↑ emotional balance + control

intuition

courage

empathy

ability to regulate your body

ability to respond vs react

ability to attune to others

(the necessary skill set for having your own back)



✧ Since you know that it's hard to pay attention to your own embodied experience and that doing so might cause you to feel uncomfortable sensations or emotions, it's **AWESOME** to know that growing embodied self-awareness is the very thing that puts you in touch with the internal resources you need in order to manage your emotions and reactions.

(felt resources
are practices
that allow for
embodied self-
awareness.)



internal mixing board:



think of having one slider for your awareness of the experience of your felt resource + one slider for your awareness of the experience of whatever the other feeling is. moderate the layers of your experience so you can be present without checking out or getting overwhelmed.



emotions

(emotions are our translations of sensations in our body)



flat line calm=
pulling the plug
on your
feelings,
numbing out,
calmness at
the expense of
your vitality
and presence

*vital calm=calm in a way that is quiet but alive, alert
and present to your internal and external experience*

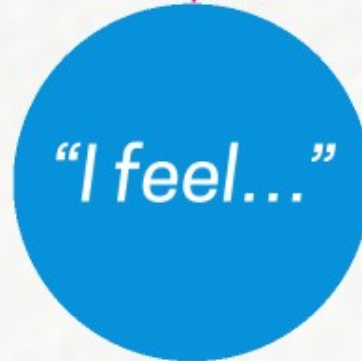


your emotions run YOU
when you indulge them or
resist them.

YOU run your emotions
when you use your felt
resource to make space
to feel the feeling.



felt resource + curiosity to sensations



speaking about your experience=being clever, using a lot of words,
conceptual self-awareness

speaking from your experience=a few words,
a 5 year old would understand it, embodied self awareness



resistance



the 5 f's of resistance

- * figure it out: trying to understand why you feel the way you do
- * fix it: changing something about the situation so you don't have to feel your feelings
- * fuck it: if you can't fix it or figure it out, pretending you don't care
- * fool yourself: feeling that you're above your feelings or spiritualizing the situation
- * force it: insisting you feel the feeling so you can just get it over and done with



the 6th f: feel it.

feel the resistance, make it conscious.

**“i don’t
want to
feel this.”**

which is you actually speaking from the experience of your resistance. (which means you’re still with yourself rather than ignoring or abandoning yourself because you don't want to feel.)



when you use your felt resource or your smart state to stay with yourself in an emotion, you can ride the wave of the emotion. when you do that, sometimes it's a smooth ride and sometimes you might get tossed around in the white water a bit, but it always eventually brings you to shore where you have solid ground under your feet again, and feel a restored sense of agency and clarity.

(i promise.)



being present with even the hardest of feelings is so much easier than trying to resist even the smallest of feelings.

giving yourself your own presence is giving yourself the felt experience of seeing and soothing yourself—of giving yourself safety, belonging and mattering simply because you've offered yourself your own presence, because the presence of your true self is inherently loving.

the idea:

to get to the point where the feeling of being disconnected from yourself is worse than the feeling of any other emotion. (that's freedom.)



SELF STUDY: THE FEELS

exploration

1. What beliefs do you have about emotions? For example, are they welcomed? Are they a nuisance? Do you think they'll overwhelm you? Or that they make you unproductive? It might be helpful to think about how emotions were handles in your family growing up.
2. How would you describe the difference between when you are witnessing yourself vs. when you are experiencing yourself? What do they feel like in your body?
3. Everyone resists feeling feelings, but most of us do so unconsciously. When you consider the types of resistance, which ones do you feel are your go to ways of resisting? Do you try to figure things out, fix things, say F-it, fool yourself or try to force your way through feelings?
4. Consider what might change about how you interact with people if you come out as a person how has emotions or start feeling more of your feelings? Or, if you're someone who feels like you have too many emotions, what do you think would be different if you could run your emotions rather than having them run you?



experience

I'd like you to keep practicing feeling your felt resources of grounding, centering or orienting. This week, though, try adding some pieces to this practice.

When you use your felt resource to check in with yourself in the present moment, be curious to the sensations that you feel in your body. Ask yourself, "How do I feel right now?" And then try naming the emotion that goes with the sensations that you are feeling. "I'm cold. I'm scared. I'm content." Remember: try not to be clever. Keep it short and simple and something that a five year old would understand.

If you're in a place and time when you can let yourself feel the feeling, see if you can use the inner mixing board to modulate your experience of your felt resource and your experience of the feeling you're having to a level where you can be present to your feeling without feeling checked out or overwhelmed.

If you're not in a place where it feels ok for you to have that feeling, make note of it, return to putting most of your attention on the experience of your felt resource and then come back to giving the feeling your attention when you are in a place that you can do that.

Watch out for resistance in any of its forms. If you find yourself resisting, make it conscious by saying "I don't want to feel this," or a simple, "no." It's ok to stay in resistance about something for as long as that is what is true for you—just make it conscious so you can stay with yourself.

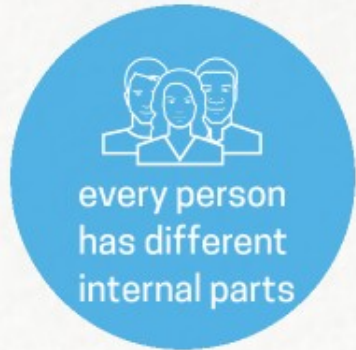


the cast of characters.

how to tell which parts of you are running the show and how to get your true self to show up instead.



parts



(parts are simply distinct patterns of activity in your brain that coincide with specific sensations, thoughts and behaviors.)

copyright 2018



every human
is comprised
of different
parts.

EACH OF THESE PARTS EITHER WANTS TO BE COMFORTED
OR WANTS TO STEER YOU AWAY FROM DISCOMFORT.

how they do this
depends on how
they make
conceptual sense
of what's
happening and on
what coping
mechanisms they
have available to
them.

** just as we resist certain emotions and wish they would go away, we also resist certain parts of ourselves and wish they would go away. doing so makes us incapable of acting in an integrated, smart-state way.*



pushing away
a part of
yourself is
abandoning
yourself or
cutting
yourself off
from your own
experience.



which part of you is driving?



all the parts of you have to come along for the ride, but you get to pick which part of you drives and which parts sit in the back seat.

which part of you is picking the station?



try to stay away from internal am (against me) stations and pick internal fm (for me) stations.
*and stay away from kfkf radio!



your critic actually loves you. a lot.

it loves you so much that it doesn't want you to ever have to feel some form of discomfort that you felt at some other point in your life—usually something having to do with core stuff like being loved, being safe, or having self-worth.

(it just has crappy and outdated ways of showing you love, and needs redirection.)



inner parts either:

1.
are experiencing
discomfort and need
seeing and soothing
and safety.

OR

2.
need to know that you've
got it covered if
discomfort does happen
so they don't have to be
so vigilant.



stay with yourself.



SELF STUDY: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

exploration

Take the opportunity to get to know your inner cast of characters by answering the questions below. I'd recommend starting with what you would call your true self, your critic and your inner child. Then add whatever other inner character you happen to notice who shows up frequently. Do this for as many parts of you who you can identify.

If you can recognize the different parts of you in an embodied and conceptual way, you have more of a chance of choosing who is running the show!



WHAT WOULD YOU NAME THE PART?	DRAW OR DESCRIBE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.	WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE IN YOUR BODY?	WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 THINGS IT SAYS?	WHAT DOES IT WANT MOST?
your true self				
your critic				
your inner child				
other inner character				



If the above chart was familiar or easy for you and you'd like to go a bit deeper, then work with this second set of questions about your inner characters. Try not to answer the questions from your head—get in touch with your body, bring this part of you to mind (see them and feel them with you), and have a conversation with them.

If that's hard or it doesn't make sense, don't worry about it. The most important thing is simply to be able to recognize the different parts of you by how they feel and sound, and to understand what their main agenda is.

The chart with the second set of questions is on the next page, but let me flesh the questions out a bit:

1. Which attachment style does the part have?

Different parts of us have different attachment styles, and depending on the part of us we spend the most time embodying, this becomes our dominant attachment style. Identify which attachment style each part has so it might help you understand which style you exhibit most of the time.

2. If this part of you were integrated, what would you be able to do better?

Often we think that the more challenging parts are dependent on us or don't have anything to offer us, and that's not true. Every part has a set of strengths and characteristics that, if they feel seen, soothed and safe (and can be integrated) they can offer you. For example, your inner child might be able to offer you a sense of playfulness or curiosity. Or your inner taskmaster, when integrated, might be able to offer you the



ability to focus and meet goals. If you embraced this part of you, what would you be able to do that you couldn't without this part's influence?

3. When it shows up, where is it in relationship to you?

If you imagine this part of you as a real person in the room with you, where does it show up? Is it next to you, behind you, in your face, lurking in the corner?

4. Where would you rather it be so that it feels like you're the one in control and it's there with you offering you the gifts that it has to offer?

In order to feel like this part of you is integrated and working with you, rather than against you, where would you like it to be? Would you want it next to you? Holding your hand? At your back? In the corner? What makes you feel like you get to interface with the world in the way you'd like to without making this part of you go away completely?



WHAT ATTACHMENT STYLE DOES IT HAVE? (SECURE, AVOIDANT, AMBIVALENT?)	IF THIS PART WERE INTEGRATED, WHAT WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO DO BETTER?	WHEN IT SHOWS UP, WHERE IS IT IN RELATIONSHIP TO YOU?	WHERE WOULD YOU RATHER IT BE IN RELATIONSHIP TO YOU?



experience

Keep practicing feeling your felt resources of grounding, centering or orienting. (Remember—most of us have had decades of practicing something else, so this will take a while before it feels like your default setting!)

Keep practicing naming what you feel—even (especially!) if it's resistance, and just trying to let yourself be with the feeling.

This week, though, add in a curiosity to the part of you who is showing up. Try to recognize the different parts by how you feel in your body and by what you're saying to yourself in your head. See if just naming the part can help you to come back to having choice over whether or not it's driving.

In particular, I encourage you to start to try to build a conscious relationship with the part of you who you identify as your true self. If you have a hard time connecting with this part, try saying, "hey—are you there?" and see what happens.

And if all of this gets overwhelming, just let it go for now and come back to one simple question:

"What's the most loving thing I can do right now?"

Ask yourself this question as often as you can remember to. Because this is a simple and direct way of coming back to being there for yourself and answering to your needs even if you can't name what they are or what part of you they're coming from. Practice looking for the most loving thing, and then doing it.



the holy grail.

how to set boundaries and how to trust yourself to act on your own knowing.



boundaries

being able to set and maintain boundaries that are healthy, embodied and compassionate requires that:

- you know what's true for you and what you need (embodied self-awareness mixed with conceptual self-awareness)
- you can feel strongly about something and communicate about it without flipping your lid (the ability to self-regulate)
- you are willing to be with the discomfort of setting and enforcing the boundary—(embodied self-awareness and self-regulation)
- you trust you will be there for yourself no matter what, and that your own validation in terms of safety, belonging and mattering holds weight (having a secure attachment with yourself)



setting a boundary means that you use your own experience to gauge what you ask for.

(as opposed to using someone else's experience to gauge what you can ask for.)



embodied integrity



being in alignment
with yourself, even
—especially—
if it's the more
demanding thing
to do.



where is your energy?



*it's subtle,
kind of like
a shadow
version of
yourself.
can you
bring it
back so
that it's in
your body?*



* if it doesn't make sense to think in terms of energy, then think in terms of "am I in my own lane in this situation?"



definition

you know the space you take up, what is true for you and what you need.

defense

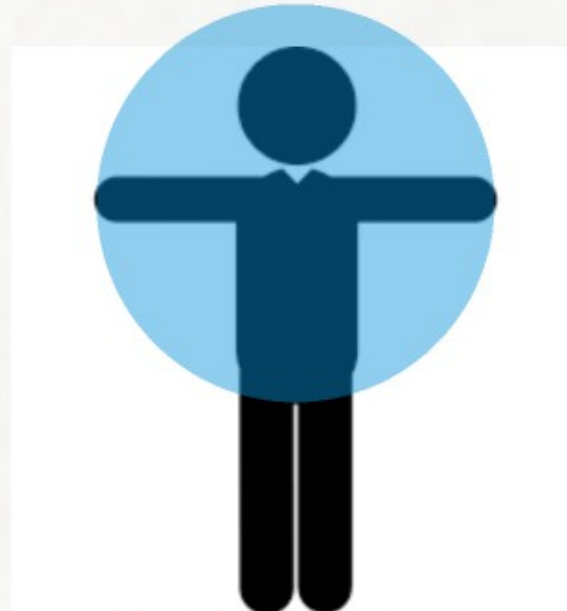
drawing a line in the sand and armoring up

if you're setting a healthy boundary that has compassion and respect for all parties involved, all you need is definition. (in fact, defense won't work.)



stand in your center

allow your awareness to extend to an arm's distance around you in every direction.





when you can trust that no feeling
will kill you and that you'll be there
for yourself no matter what, you are

FREE.



setting boundaries = one flavor of acting on your inner knowing



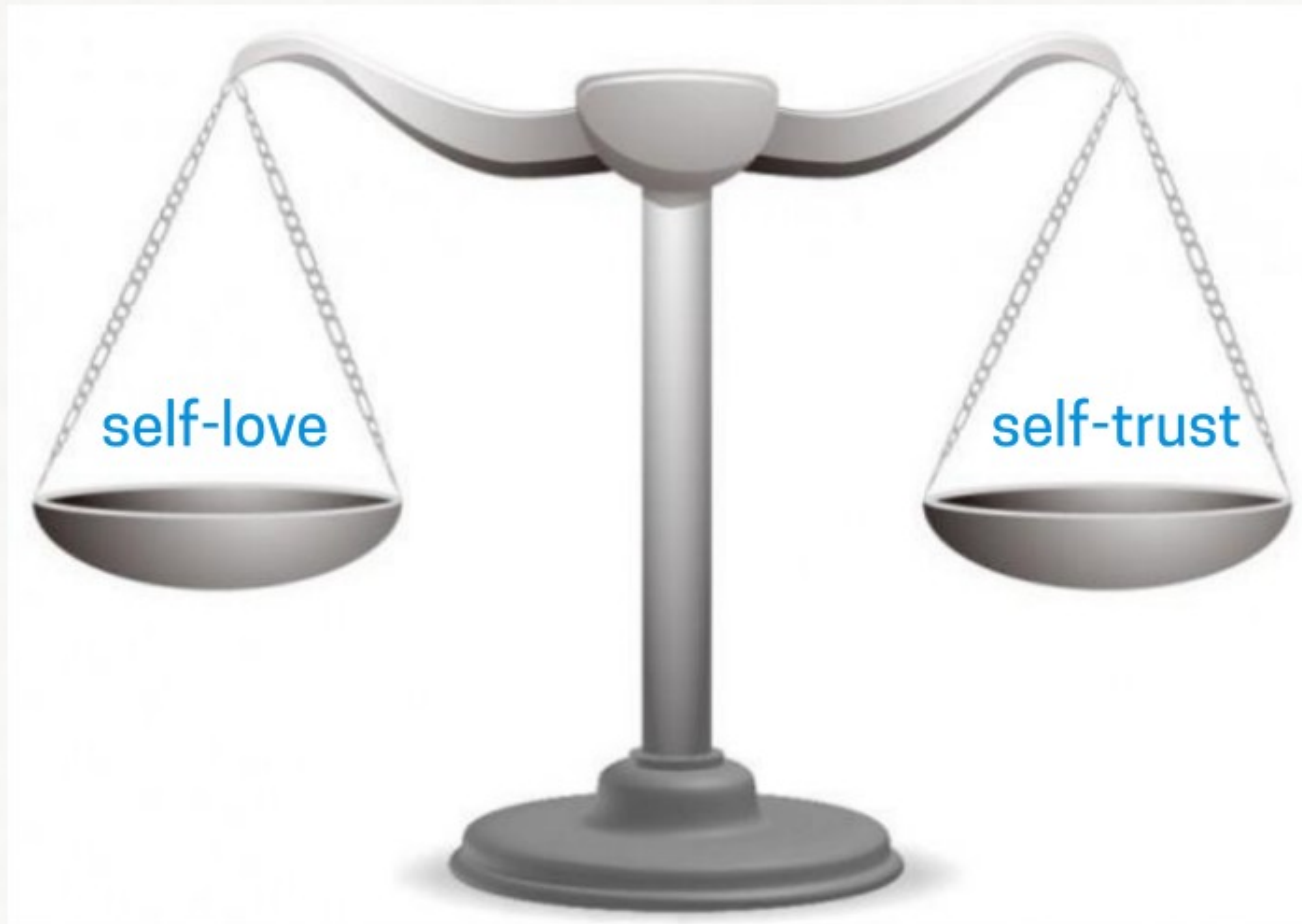


self-trust

you don't know what's going to happen, but you know you have what you need to handle it.

anxiety

you don't know what's going to happen, and you don't think you have what you need to handle it.





you love yourself by:

*making
yourself
important
but not
precious.*

*getting to know
what you like and
what you need.*

offering yourself your felt presence.

**SETTING
BOUNDARIES.**

**not
indulging
or
resisting
any part
of you.**

*not
indulging
or
resisting
any
emotion.*

staying in your
center rather
than puffing up
or shrinking.

validating your
own experience.

giving yourself safety, belonging and mattering.



dignity:

trusting that your best is good enough.



have your own back.



SELF STUDY: THE HOLY GRAIL

exploration

1. Think of a time that someone set a boundary with you. How did it feel?
2. When it comes to setting boundaries there are a few parts: 1) knowing what you feel and need, 2) expressing what you feel and need, and 3) not backing down when your boundary is challenged. Which parts are you good at? Which parts trip you up?
3. How well do you trust yourself? Do you trust yourself in some situations, and not in others? What would trusting yourself more look like?
4. What activity helps you to calibrate or regulate? Gardening, playing music, painting, going to the beach, walking in nature... What is your unique way of coming home to yourself?



experience

Boundaries

Consider whether you have a situation in your life where you need to set a boundary. Something where you feel “off” or put upon or run down, or a place where you have a hard time staying in your own lane.

If so, when you think about this situation currently, what does it feel like in your body?

Notice sensations. Notice where your energy is. If your energy feels like it’s out in front of you or behind you, see if you can call your energy back into your body.

Given how you feel, ask yourself what is it you need in this situation? (Don’t use what you think the other person will think as your gauge for what you get to need.)

If working with the energy in your body and feeling your emotions is difficult for you, you could also try asking yourself the question, “If I had my own back in this situation, what would I say or do?”

Let yourself sit with knowing that. Without thinking of how the other person will react, just let your knowing be true for you. See if you can feel that knowing and feel a strength in your legs while you stand, and a softness in your chest while you breathe.

Given what you feel and/or what you know you need, is there something you need to ask for or say or do?



Imagine that you say or do that thing. See if you can imagine yourself speaking or acting from your sense of knowing in your body. You might feel scared or shaky or your voice might crack, but can you imagine asking for what you need while also still feeling your legs underneath you and your breath moving in your body?

Practice this way until you feel like you can stand in your knowing and ask for what you need in real life. You've got this!

5 Appreciations

Research shows the importance of offering appreciation—rather than criticism—on a regular basis in committed relationships. The same is true for your relationship with yourself—if all you hear from yourself is criticism it's kinda hard to love yourself!

Try adopting an appreciation practice. See if everyday you can name 5 things that you appreciate about yourself. And instead of just thinking it, actually let yourself *feel* it—give yourself the felt experience of appreciating yourself.

If this is challenging to you, think small. You can appreciate yourself for trying to do the appreciation practice. You can appreciate that you have great taste in shoes. You can appreciate that you didn't yell at your spouse when they were acting jerky to you. You can appreciate that you love good food. You can appreciate that you always give your kid a hug goodbye when they head off to school. Make it ordinary. And really try to let it in as a feeling.

You deserve to be appreciated!