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Getting to Know Unpopular Parts

When we choose a target part, we need permission from all other parts in order to communicate with it. To find out who might object, we ask the client, "How do you feel toward this part?" As we locate reactive parts, we try to persuade them to separate and let us proceed with the target part. Some target parts are extreme, unpopular, and will evoke a big reaction. This is an exercise for getting acquainted with unpopular parts.

Find a target part, write it down:

Notice how you feel toward this part and make a list of every feeling:

If you are doing this alone, embody each reactive part, allowing it to express itself (which can affect posture and movements) and say what it wishes by way of introduction.

Then ask it: "Why do you feel this way toward" (the target part)?

Once you understand, ask: "Will you trust me to get to know (the target part) so I can help with this problem?"

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If the answer is no, ask: “Are you willing to let me get to know you better?”

If the answer is yes, thank the part and move onto the next until you have permission from all of them.

Return to the target part and ask:

- “Did you watch me negotiate with those parts who react so strongly to you?”
- “What was that like for you?”
- “What do you want me– and those parts– to know about your job and how you are trying to help?”
- “What would happen if you stopped doing this job?”
- “If we could help that part, would you need to keep doing this?”

Finally, set an intention to return and help with the underlying problem (the part) this protector has named.

Adapted from: Frank G. Anderson et al. *Internal Family Systems Skills Training Manual*.