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Getting To Know Your Protector Parts (Part 1)

Use this experiential meditation to connect inward with the part of us that protects us from hurt or being overwhelmed.

This meditation is done through an Internal Family Systems (IFS) lens.

Step 1: Settling In

- Start by sitting up straight, getting into a comfortable position.
- As you inhale, first focus on your abdomen (belly) to breathe
- Push your navel out and let the belly expand as you inhale
 - Many people put a hand on their belly to help them.
- Exhale and contract the abdomen. Notice the rising and falling as you breathe.
- Notice your back against the chair, your feet on the floor and your contact with the ground.
- Focus your attention inside and notice any thoughts, feelings or sensations that show up.

Step 2: Getting to Know Protector (Take it slow and take pauses)

- See if you can identify a part of you that likes to please, works hard, thinks a lot, is the caretaker, wants to be funny, likes to look good, eats clean. See if you can identify just one of these.
- Once you have one in your mind's eye. Notice where it is located in or around your body.
 - Does it stay with you in your chest, gut, legs?
 - Do you see it? Feel it? Hear it? How do you sense it?
- How are you in relation to this part?
- As you focus on this part of you. Notice how you are feeling toward it (frustrated, irritated, cautious, open and curious to it)
- See if you can get to a place where you can be open and curious about this part of you (even if it is a negative part). Can you extend some open-hearted curiosity towards it?
- How does this part respond to your curiosity? Is it interested in connecting with you or is it guarded.
- If it is open give it some space to let it share:
 - Can you ask it to share what it's holding onto?
 - Why is it holding these feelings or beliefs?
 - What is important about holding this?
 - Why is it necessary?
 - How does it help?
 - How long has it been doing this job?

See if you can validate what you are hearing. Even if you don't agree, validate it.

- What is it afraid would happen if it stopped doing what it was doing? What is its fear?

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- Would it like some help not having to work so hard? Is it interested in getting some relief? Is it interested in you letting it help it?
 - Allow yourself to sit in the space. See if you can thank this part for showing up.
 - Showing gratitude for sharing what it did (Even if it didn't share much, send some appreciation towards it.
 - When you are ready to finish take two slow deep breaths and when you exhale on the second breathe open your eyes.

Practice this to help get a better understanding of this part and the role it serves. Part 2 provides more questions to utilize.

Reflection:

- What did you learn about this part?
- What was the experience like?

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Weiss, B. (2013). Self-therapy workbook: An exercise book for the IFS process. Larkspur, CA: Pattern System Books.