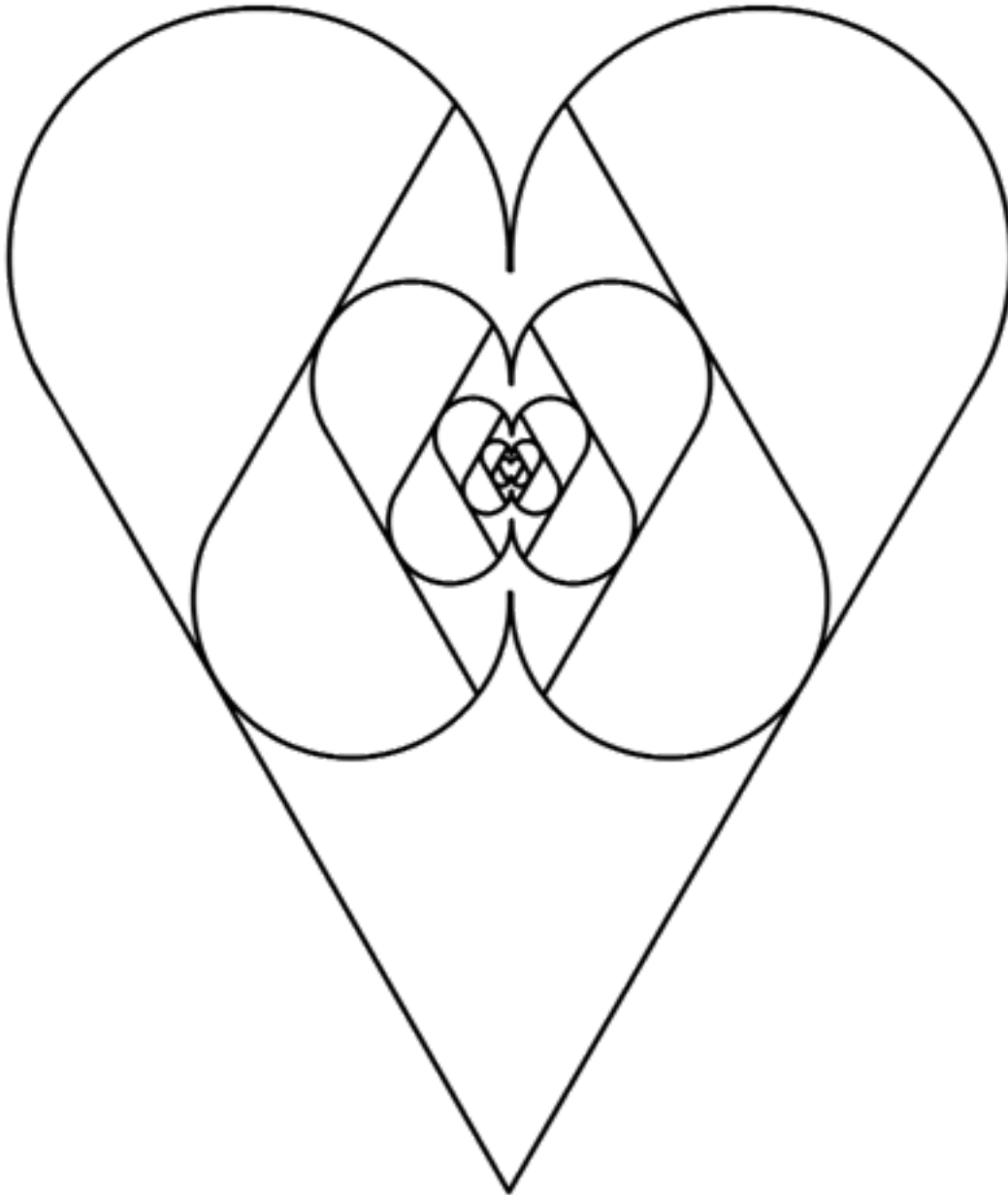


**Develop New Contracts:  
A Workbook for Personal Integrity**



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**You may use the electronic version of this workbook or print it for your own use. If you wish to save paper by printing only the pages that contain writing prompts, then print pages 8-10 and 12-14. An optional exercise can be printed on 16-17.**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Part I – Identifying What Wants Attention	8
Part II – Envisioning the Part	11
Part III - Listening to the Part	12
Part IV - Sealing the Contract	14
Part V - Carrying This Work Forward	15
Part VI - Questions and Troubleshooting	19
About the Author	21
Bibliography	22

## Introduction

Is there something you don't like about yourself but can't seem to change? Are you stuck in a pattern and have no idea how to get out? Do you keep saying the things you don't mean, worrying about things that don't ever happen, or backing down when you want to be standing your ground? Do you ever feel trapped in your own life?

You can find freedom within these patterns. This workbook will guide you through a strategy to help you gain new insight into this stuck way of being and the possibility of change. Within you will find a series of questions and exercises with space to explore yourself with curiosity, at your own pace.

This workbook is designed to help you identify and work through a specific problem, although you may wish to use the book again for other issues. If you find it useful, you can print out a fresh version of this workbook and start with another problem. Sometimes, as we work on ourselves, we find that one challenge connects to another, and then another, until it feels like life is a web of interconnected "issues" and we just want to be fixed and done already.

Every part of our life does affect the rest, and this can be a wonderful thing! If we can focus our energy and attention on one important aspect of life, the benefits will touch facets of your life you might not have thought relevant. When we try to fix everything at once, however, that energy and attention becomes scattered and loses power. I encourage you to practice patience and kindness with yourself as you work on your problem.

If, during the course of working through this book, you find yourself becoming overwhelmed, your problems become significantly worse, or you develop new and upsetting symptoms, I recommend that you stop this process immediately and find mental health support from a therapist or agency if you do not already have it.

## Working with This Book

This workbook will invite you to engage both creative and rational facets of your mind to perceive your problem or stuck pattern in a different way. Many of us, when we have been dealing with a particular part of our selves for years, have well-developed stories to explain why we are the way we are.

"My parents didn't push me hard enough, so I'm lazy."

"My parents pushed me too hard, so I'm a perfectionist."

"I don't know why, it's just the way I am."

"I'm an Aries so I'm impatient."

Stories can be helpful and they can limit our ability to grow. With ingrained patterns and ongoing problems, we sometimes need to find several different ways of looking at or understanding ourselves so that we have more opportunities to change. In this workbook, you will explore one strategy for self-understanding and change.

I call the crux of the process “developing new contracts.” First, you will identify the challenging pattern or problem. Then, you will think of this problem as coming from a part of you. Then, you will dialogue with that part to understand why it engages in the problem. Finally, you and this part of yourself will create a new practice, or contract, so that you can move toward the life you want.

Do not worry if you did not understand everything in the last paragraph. The rest of the workbook will guide you through the process with more thorough explanations. I will start by explaining the theory behind the process.

## **Your Self and Its Problems**

Here I will lay out one map of the Self, informed by the theory of personality laid out by Assagioli (1973) and the spiritual insights into Self drawn from Buddhism and Western Esoteric Traditions, particularly the works of John Welwood (2000), Tsultrim Allione (2008), T. Thorn Coyle (2009), and Gurdjieff (in Ouspensky, 1957). Laying out this map will help you to understand the steps that will follow. Every model or map of the Self has some insight and some blind spots, and this particular map may not make sense for your experience. The rest of the workbook might still be helpful to you, but that is for you to decide.

Most of us are aware of a sense of separate, singular consciousness — I remember what I did this morning, so I think of myself as the same person. This part of self that calls itself “I” could be named the “ego,” the executive function that helps us to move and operate in our daily lives while maintaining our independent, continuous sense of self.

Looking closer, however, we might notice variations in our experience. I wake up feeling great about myself and positive about the world. At work, I get caught up in projects and forget to eat lunch. I start to feel irritable and tired. I go home and my partner says something innocuous, but I feel hurt and begin to cry. “What is going on with me?” Another example — one day I decide that now is the time to return to school. I make a goal to work on applications that day, but later I start playing video games, and I play for five hours and go to bed. Part of me remembers wanting to work on the application, but I feel tired and maybe school’s not such a good idea with so much going on. Though all of these are “me,” you might notice distinct and separate “selves” that are working against each other.

One way of thinking about this experience is that our Self comprises many “parts” of self. Assagioli called them “subpersonalities” (1973). These parts may, and often do, have unique wants, needs, and fears that may be in conflict.

We struggle to realize the implications of this. The ego believes every decision we make comes from its own autonomous will, but the ego is like an empty command chair and our bodies are starships. Whomever sits in the chair controls the ship, and the ship does not distinguish between one commander or another. When the part of us that wants to be fit sits in the chair and resolves to go jogging every day for two hours, that

feels like it's "really me" making the decision. When the part of us that wants pizza *now* sits in the chair, it feels like it's "really me."

What we need to cultivate is the "Witnessing Self," the part of us that observes these parts operating without judgment. Make special note of "without judgment." We often confuse the Inner Critic with the Witnessing Self, as both seem to be watching our inner experience, but the Inner Critic responds with advice, criticism, insults, or other commentary, and this rarely helps us to become more conscious of who is driving the ship.

We can touch into states of self-witnessing by happenstance, but we can develop the strength of our Witnessing Self through self-observation, such as contemplative practices, meditation, or psychotherapy. Studying any new skill can also cultivate the Witnessing Self, as we learn to watch ourselves doing the skill and make adjustments without judgment or shame.

***Every part of ourselves has value and worth and can contribute to a meaningful life of gratitude and connection.*** What happens, however, is that some parts of us become wounded or toxic, their needs suppressed or ignored, and these parts begin to act out in harmful ways. The Inner Critic, for example, might simply want us to be our best and have the best life can offer, but we can become paralyzed by its style of motivation.

In *The Twelve Wild Swans*, Starhawk and Hilary Valentine talk about "wicked vows" (2001) These are the bargains we make between parts of self to protect us. We fall in love and get hurt. One part of us vows to never trust anyone again because it wants to protect the hurt and vulnerable parts of self from more harm. Consequently, these hurt parts never have space to heal the pain, and never have the opportunity to find the love they truly desire. The protective part becomes a tyrant, pushing away anyone who gets too close, holding in the pain.

To renegotiate these wicked vows, we need to sit down with our parts of self. We need to understand why they're doing what they're doing. We need to tell them why what they're doing is getting in the way. Then we can find a way for our parts to work together more effectively.

Soon you will begin the "work" part of this workbook. Each section will provide guidance, sample questions, and space to answer the questions should you make a printed copy. This book is designed to be followed sequentially, from first to last, but no one is watching over you to make sure you do everything "just right."

## **Procrastination and Will**

Take as long as you need to work through each section, but be on watch for procrastination that is coming out of resistance to the work. If you find that something comes up every time you sit down to work on this, or you have been working through the book with enthusiasm but suddenly you pause in one section and days or weeks pass by, the likelihood is that you have let your resistance stop you! This can be subtle.

Often, we believe we want change and release from patterns that are causing us pain, but some part of us has become attached to those patterns and quietly discourages us from change. We might be afraid of what we discover about ourselves. We might be afraid of facing the changes we will need to make in our lives as awareness increases. We might simply be stuck in a rut and need a little extra push to get going again. Sometimes these parts of self are protecting us from deeper, scarier feelings and patterns. Notice the quality that arises within when you think about getting back to the practice.

If procrastination is a problem, this is an opportunity to develop will. Will is simple but challenging to develop. We simply set an intention and follow it through. Deciding to spend a week brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand, and doing so, develops will. Do not make a huge commitment. Try just answering one question or doing one directive each day, and then follow through. If the day gets away from you and you have five minutes before bed when you realize you did not yet make your goal, take the five minutes to answer one question.

You also might consider starting this work by addressing the part of you that procrastinates.

One last issue before we start.

### **This Is Silly**

These exercise might look silly or feel embarrassing to do. The process as I present it utilizes the gifts of imagination, play, and pretending. All of these are qualities that are expected of, and often celebrated in, children.

These gifts are powerful and potent when used with intention. Feelings of embarrassment or irritation point to something powerful that we can experience by engaging in the process.

You can do this privately. No one needs to see you. Try it. Let yourself have fun, if possible. If feeling a little silly is the price of getting more ease and joy in life, would it be worth paying?

## **Part I – Identifying What Wants Attention**

If you already know what issue or part of self you want to work, continue to Part II. This section will offer you a variety of prompts to help you identify specific themes or underlying issues that show up as problems in your life. Use the following prompts, and use more paper if needed. You might also consider typing or using a voice recorder to record your responses.

Aim for self-honestly and avoid getting stuck on one prompt. If your immediate response to a prompt is irritation, sadness, or a sense of blankness, start by writing that down. If you feel uncertain, write whatever comes to mind regardless of whether it makes sense at first. Or: Guess what your answer would be. Draw a picture. Write song lyrics. Set a timer and write whatever comes to mind for 1-5 minutes per question.

**My biggest problem right now is ...**

**Where I feel the most stuck is ...**

**One thing I wish I could stop doing would be ...**



**Something I dislike about myself is ...**

**Other people often tell me that I ...**

Now review these responses. Do you notice any words, phrases, or themes that keep appearing? Does one statement or image feel particularly powerful? Circle it.

If your primary problems are external, such as problems with other people, problems with work, problems with systems, or problems with oppression, shift your attention to how you experience and respond to those problems. Those problems are real and will not be fixed by this workbook, but you could experience more freedom and healing by working on how your parts respond to the problem.

Now you will reframe the unwanted problem as something a part of you is choosing. For example, if you feel stuck in a job you hate, you might rewrite it as “A part of me chooses to stay in this job” or “A part of me chooses to stay miserable.”

**A part of me chooses to ...**

If you feel angry about this part of the exercise, that is okay! The point is not to blame yourself for problems you don't want, it's to create some space for curiosity. Pretend that a part of you *is* choosing this. Why would that be? Is there some benefit that you can't quite see? Is there some fear that you're not quite aware of? If you can explore this with nonjudgmental curiosity, you might discover the key to changing this pattern.

Before we can get to nonjudgmental curiosity, however, sometimes we need to process our immediate reactions. With that in mind, respond to the following prompts.

**When this part of me makes this choice, I feel ...**

**If this part of me were not making this choice, then I could ...**

## **Part II – Envisioning the Part**

Get a piece of paper and some drawing materials—pens, pencils, crayons, or whatever you like.

Slow down your breathing, letting your inhalations match your exhalations. Pretend that you can feel this part of yourself inside, or imagine it with your mind's eye.

What would this part look like? Is it like an animal? Is it like a person? Is it like a mythical creature? Is it like a mountain or a star? Is it like a place? What color is it? What would it wear or not wear? Where would it live?

Draw an image that represents this part of you.

Spend as much time as you need. If you feel inspired to do collage, poetry, or sculpture instead of drawing, allow yourself that freedom. Be cautious, however, if you notice that the project is becoming too ambitious for the time and resources you have available, as this can be a sign of resistance. For the purpose of this exercise, the image can be simple.

Another kind of resistance is, “I’m not artistic so I can’t do this.” It does not matter if all you can muster are scribbles, so long as it is intelligible to you. No one else needs to see this. Draw a stick figure and write words around it, if you like.

If you get really stuck, try drawing a circle in the middle of the paper and filling the circle with words, phrases, lyrics, or small images that feel connected to this part of yourself.

If you are really, really stuck, put all of this aside and set a timer for five minutes. Start the breathing exercise again, first filling your belly and then allowing your breath to rise into your chest. Try inhaling to a count of seven, holding for a count of two, and exhaling for a count of seven. Notice the thoughts and feelings that arise, and return your focus to your breathing and counting. You may do this with eyes open or closed. When the timer is up, try again.

Once you have your image and it feels “good enough,” ask that part if it has a name. Write the name on the paper or somewhere appropriate.

### **Part III - Listening to the Part**

Now you will pretend to have a conversation between yourself and this part. Note that you will be treating this part as if it is a separate being from “you.” This helps you to practice looking at the relationship from the perspective of the Witnessing Self. Regard this part of you as an honored guest or respected enemy.

Note: Attempting to destroy or mar the image to “get rid” of this part of you will not help.

Place your image in a position where you can easily look at it. You will be doing some writing, so you might choose to be at a table or desk, or put the image near a keyboard.

You can begin by telling this part of you about what you feel and think about it, going back to the information from Part I if needed. Share your anger, your frustrations, your sorrow, even your joys. Once you’ve said what you need to say, start asking the part the following questions and listen for the answers. Start recording whatever comes into your mind.

**What do you want?**

**What are you avoiding?**

**How are you helpful to me?**

If you have more questions, get extra paper and continue asking and recording the answers.

When you feel done, tell this part of yourself what you'd like to experience in life instead of the problems you identified in Part I.

Then ask the following questions:

**How can you help me get what I want in life?**

**What do you need from me?**

Now you have begun developing a new contract. Consider the answers of these questions as a proposal from this part. "I will do this to help you, if you do this to take care of my needs." Does this feel like a good deal? Is it mutually beneficial? Does it feel like a practice or change you can reasonably make in your life? If so, continue to the next step. If not, tell this part about your concerns. Make your own proposal if necessary. Allow it to respond. Try to reach an agreement that you can fulfill.

### **Part IV - Sealing the Contract**

Using the information from the last section, set up the new contract between you and this part of self. If you like, make the ceremony special or formal: dress up, use good paper and a nice pen, light some candles, anything that helps you regard this as a serious ceremony with consequences. You can use the text below:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **promise to ...**  
(Your Name)

**In return,** \_\_\_\_\_, **promises to ...**  
(Name of this Part of You)

Signed this date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

## **Part V - Carrying This Work Forward**

Treat the terms of this contract as a practice to cultivate.

For example, in doing this contract with an anxious part of myself, that part requested that I take a moment to seriously hear and consider its concerns. This meant I had to purposely stop, acknowledge the worry, and say “I hear you.” Once done, the worrying could stop.

What can help is to put the image of this part and your contract in a special place where you will notice and be reminded of it.

When you honor your obligation, you can begin to observe whether changes occur in your experience. If nothing changes, you can go back to the part of you with your contract and discuss its failure to comply with the bargain. Be prepared for the part to tell you how you’re not keeping your end! Over time, you can work with this part to find a contract that works. You can also continue to return to ask for more help and guidance.

When you reach a point in which you have integrated this contract, you can honor your work in the way you dispose of the image and contract. I admit, I usually put them in the recycling bin, but I offer thanks to the part of me for its work and acknowledge that it will return to the whole of me, as the paper I used will be recycled into a new form.

As this process depends heavily on creativity, you are welcome to develop or explore other ways to integrate this process and the ideas of this workbook into your own personal growth. What matters most is the increased sense of harmony and peace that is possible when your parts are working consciously together, lovingly observed by the Witnessing Self, that aspect of self that is both absence and full presence.

To deepen or carry this work forward, you might consider one of the following exercises:

### **Role Playing**

What kinds of clothes does this part of self like to wear? How would it move? How does it talk? Gather whatever clothes or props feel appropriate. Dress yourself up as the part or make a simple paper mask with the part’s face and appropriate holes cut out.

Take a breath. Imagine that the part is standing in front of you with its back facing you. Tell yourself, “I am going to move forward into this part of me, and then I will be wearing this part of me.”

Let the part tell you what to say to yourself, or what activity it wants to do. (If any of the suggestions would be harmful to yourself or others, do not do those activities.) Let it give you a speech about its life history. Use a mirror or record yourself so you can review.

When you are done, tell yourself, “I am going to step out of this part of me, and then I will call it back into its rightful place within me.” Move backward, and imagine pulling that part back to where it belongs: a piece of you, not the entirety of you.

## **Finding the Opposite**

For every quality we identify, we can find its opposite somewhere within us. As every aspect of ourself has strengths and weaknesses, we can invite its opposite to help us come into greater balance and integrity. Working with the part of self you've identified, answer the following questions.

**What qualities are the opposite of this part? What would it look like? What is its name?**

Make an image to correspond with the opposite. You might consider going through the process of contracting, or simply discuss with the part your interest in knowing it better. You might put the two opposing parts and engage in a conversation. For the sake of simplicity, I will name the two parts "Part A" and "Part Z."

**Part A, what are the limitations of Part Z? What are its strengths?**

**Part Z, what are the limitations of Part A? What are its strengths?**



**Part A, how can you help Part Z?**

**Part Z, how can you help Part A?**

**How can both of you work together to help me live my life more fully?**

## Exploring Other Approaches

Consult the Bibliography for more resources and other views on the work of internal “parts” or “systems.”

### Psychological Approaches

Richard Schwartz, PhD, developed an approach that he calls “Internal Family Systems,” which integrates the interpersonal family-systems approach with an internal-systems approach to self. He provides a categorization system that could be useful in understanding one’s parts: some are *Exiled* due to traumatic experiences or content that we are afraid to see; some are *Managers* that protect us from seeing the exiled parts; and some are *Firefighters* that reduce our emotional reactivity when exiled parts surface (Dick, Yalom, & Schwartz, 2009). Internal Family Systems has numerous techniques that could help us to see how our parts relate to each other in helpful and unhelpful way, with the broader perspective of observing how our parts related to the parts of others in our lives.

Focusing is another psychotherapeutic approach that takes a somewhat softer and more subtle approach to parts work. Instead of trying to identify a clear part, we say “something in me” is having a response, and we bring presence and attention to that experience so that it can unfold and bring its insight to the surface. Consider the texts by Eugene Gendlin and Ann Weiser Cornell for more insight.

### Spiritual or Esoteric Approaches

Tsultrim Allione, an author and teacher in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, offers a practice of *chöd*, or demon work, that provides a structured exercise in which we encounter the internal “demon,” discover what the demon is seeking, and “feed” it to help this part relax and become an ally.

T. Thorn Coyle, an author and teacher in the Western Esoteric tradition, offers several techniques of identifying and working with parts of self, and presents another approach to demon work, in her book *Kissing the Limitless*. Her approach calls upon more formal ritual protocol to identify and communicate with different parts of self and has inspired much of what is found in this workbook.

## **Part VI - Questions and Troubleshooting**

### **How does this process help me?**

Negotiating workable contracts between your parts helps you to deal with your problems more effectively or see your problems as something else altogether. This is a process of Self-transformation, an internal change that leads to outer change.

This is also a process of integrity. When our parts are working at cross purposes, then we struggle to make and honor our commitments to self and community. When our parts are engaged in conversation, we can be more honest with ourselves and those around us.

### **Why do I need to do anything for this part of me? Why don't I just tell it what I want it to do?**

Because that doesn't work! We want to believe we can simply command ourselves to act accordingly, but we do not always understand the reason why our problems exist. When you engage in the process outlined in this book, you will find that these parts of you are behaving in ways that make complete sense given their outlooks and need. Once you understand what these parts are trying to do and really need, you can find new ways of meeting those needs that supports the life you want.

Think about training a dog to sit on command. No one gets a new puppy, yells "Sit!" and immediately finds it sitting. You need to feed the dog, care for it, and get to know its needs and its tendencies. You need to help the dog to understand what behavior is desired when you shout "Sit!" and then reward the dog for acting appropriately. You have to tolerate some mischief and struggle as the puppy matures and becomes more capable of responding to commands.

Moreover, we might be ordering ourselves to obey a bad command. That moment of hesitation that spoils the deal might come from a gut instinct that accurately protects you from a dishonest negotiator. One day, my dog started pacing around and making weird noises, half-growling and acting anxious. I had no idea why she was doing it. Normally I would tell her to be quiet, but her behavior seemed strange. I followed her downstairs and opened the front door. My dog jumped out to bark at a person who had been walking around our yard. This person appeared to be intoxicated or otherwise not in their right mind, and they definitely had no business being in the yard. My dog was able to sense a danger to which I was oblivious.

There are aspects of your Self doing similar work, and sometimes the only way they can get your attention is by acting out. When you stop to listen and work with this aspect of yourself, you develop better working relationships. There is less need for the part to act out when you agree on a process whereby it can get your attention.

**Are there times when I should not use this process?**

If you are experiencing active addiction, severe depression, suicidality, homicidality, acute psychosis, or other severe mental and emotional problems, do not use this tool as a primary support. Seek help from trained therapists, inpatient centers, hospitals, mental health agencies, or other resources in your community. SAMHSA provides a treatment locator at <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> or you can call SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD).

Similarly, if you find your symptoms getting significantly worse when you use this tool, stop the process immediately and consult a professional.

Once you feel stable and have developed a strong, supportive network, you might find this tool useful in exploring and healing the problems that contributed to your crisis.

**What if I am working with a part and it refuses to contract with me?**

You might find that no matter what you say or do, you cannot work with this part. That might mean it's simply not the time to do so. Perhaps you need to work with another part first.

Sometimes we develop habits that seem destructive but protect us from something even scarier. We might need to heal those vulnerable and scared parts of ourselves before we can face the protective part and let it know that it can finally relax.

Try asking for more information as to why the part is resistant to contract. Ask why it is refusing the process, or what else it needs from you before it will talk.

**What if I am working with a part and it starts being abusive toward me?**

You might need to step up like a firm but loving parent. You are within your rights to set a clear boundary and state that this is not acceptable and that you will not negotiate with this part of you while it is acting in this way. Consider ways that you can contain its destructive energy. Develop a behavioral plan with conditions that you need to see this part fulfill before you are willing to talk with it again. This could include leaving situations in which you notice the part acting up.

And, again, consider seeking professional support.

**Can I give you feedback about how this has affected me, or ways this workbook could be made better?**

Please! You may contact me at [counseling@anthonyrella.com](mailto:counseling@anthonyrella.com). I will do my best to respond.

If you find value in this work, that email address also accepts PayPal donations.

### About the Author

Anthony Rella, MA, LMHCA is a psychotherapist and writer living in Seattle, Washington with his partner and dog. He graduated from Antioch University Seattle with a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in September 2013.



Anthony completed his internship at Compass Health in Everett, Washington, working with adults who were low-income and had chronic mental illness. After graduation, Anthony began working for Sound Mental Health in Seattle, Washington for the Sound Reentry program, providing mental health and case management services for adults involved in the criminal justice system, on probation, or transitioning from prison back into the community.

In April 2014, Anthony launched his private practice, Anthony Rella Counseling, offering psychotherapeutic services to adolescents and adults who are experiencing, or wishing to experience, significant life transitions, including changes of job, phase of life, gender, or relationship. Anthony specializes in problems with mood, anxiety, trauma, grief, spirituality, and gender. Anthony is affirming of esoteric and alternative spiritualities as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, genderqueer, polyamorous, and kink-identified people.

Anthony is available for individual and relational counseling. More information can be found at his website, [anthonyrella.com](http://anthonyrella.com), or by contacting him at [counseling@anthonyrella.com](mailto:counseling@anthonyrella.com).

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