

Guided Meditation on IFS without Parts Language

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Bruce offered this guided meditation to participants of the training as an example of leading an IFS session without using parts language.

This lead-in does not appear in the audio recording:

Whenever we give IFS trainings, people are always asking, 'How do you get started with someone? How do you introduce IFS?' Many times, I like to lead them into an IFS experience without 'front-loading' the model. I often first facilitate an experience, and then back-fill by naming the experience with IFS language.

In today's meditation, I want to invite you to imagine that you are a client coming to a session and perhaps it is the first session with me. So this way I can demonstrate how I might do this and you can experience it.

The following is a transcript of the audio recording:

I'm not going to ask you to close your eyes up front. But at some point, you might just naturally do that. So, notice if that happens.

You're coming here today. You have stuff on your mind. There are issues in your life. You have feelings about stuff, maybe things you want to talk about. There might be something you want to focus on. So, I invite you to focus on whatever that is that you as a client might want to talk about today and imagine that you are talking to me about that, so that I get some kind of understanding about whatever that is.

I'm paying attention and listening, and I might be asking some questions to clarify things, and at some point I might sense an opening to ask you some kind of here-and-now experiential question of whatever it is that you are talking about. So, that question might be:

When you are in that situation or when you are talking about that situation or thinking about that situation, can I ask you just to notice what are you feeling right now?

Of course, that feeling question can be interpreted in terms of emotion or could be interpreted in terms of the body. I might even specify or the client might even ask. I might direct them to the body and suggest:

What's going on right now, what are you feeling in your body when you are thinking about this or feeling this way about that?

When they give me some feedback about what they might be experiencing in their body, I might give them a question or two about that to get even more detail.

What exactly does that feel like in your body right there?

Where exactly do you feel that? Is there a size or a shape or a depth to it?
Is there any kind of images or pictures in your mind when you are feeling this way?
I'm wondering if certain experiences or memories come up in your mind?
Is there any internal dialogue, things that you say to yourself about this or thoughts?

(I don't see anyone in the room with their eyes open.)

One thing that happens when you do this is people go inside. You will see that happen, and they may only momentarily go inside, and even if they open their eyes back up, in order to retrieve this information that you are asking them about, they do need to go inside. All this stuff is internal experience. And you are really getting information about a part or parts. And, if it's parts, you can start to sort this out:

So this seems a little bit different than that.

Maybe we could focus on this?

Which one seems to be the most intense right now?

This seems to be something that is competing with each other.

It's hard to tell which is more intense.

What ever that is that you are paying attention to right now in terms of feelings, can you let it know that you are noticing that? It's like as though you are sending it a message. Just say to it inside, quietly, you know I really notice that. What happens when you do that?"

Most of my clients will say, "I don't know, it just seemed like it settled a little bit. It kind of relaxed a bit." And I say, "yes, that's what usually happens when you are paying attention to something inside that needs your attention. Isn't that interesting?" Usually they say, yes, how interesting. So, I'll say, are you curious about this? And, sometimes they say yes or sometimes a part will say something else like I wish it would go away. And then you can say:

Whatever it is in you that wishes that would go away, could you just let that know you that you are hearing that, that you get that? Would that be okay if it just relaxed a little bit and let you be curious, not judge whatever this is that you are paying attention to now?

And that's a way to guide a client's attention inside toward a part, get a little space, get them unblended, to encourage curiosity. And, that all might be happening inside you right now, which would be okay.

(I didn't mention parts, Self, or IFS.)

So, take a little bit of time with your parts inside now:

Let them know that they are very important to you and that it will take time to get to know them and to understand them and help them.

And, that you need them to cooperate with you in order for that to happen, like stepping back when you ask them to, separating/unblending when you ask them to, so that you can be there for them, with them.

Take time with your parts.

Imagine each breath is a way to say to your parts, “I am here. You are not alone.
I am paying attention.”