

The Solo Parts Party

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Abstract

Virginia Satir's Parts Party method was originally designed as a way to manifest externally through the use of role-playing, what was happening internally with the dynamics between and among the parts that comprise the self. The method is useful for differentiation and integration of the self. The Parts Party is generally conducted in a group setting and requires a minimum of 12 active participants to effectively produce desired results. Over the years, practitioners have adapted the method for use with children using figurines, puppets, and the like. Other adaptations have been made as well for use with couples, families, and organizations, although little is documented in the Satir literature.

Presented here is an adaptation of Virginia Satir's Parts Party method as a learning tool for use with adults in an educational, clinical, growth or training setting. The author suggests that this paper may be used as a guide to help individuals to:

- identify their personality parts and resources
- learn to use their internal resources more effectively
- study the dynamics of their system of parts
- assume greater leadership of their system of parts
- increase assimilation of positive resources
- transform parts you consider negative
- learn how to deal with internal conflicts more effectively

This solo parts party method might be used as an adjunct to therapy, as a tool for self-discovery in growth settings, as a project in educational classes or as an activity for therapists in training. The author posits that papers such as this combined with other methods may enhance outcomes for those willing to actively use them.

Keywords

Virginia Satir, Satir Model, parts party, self-esteem, self-concept, relationships, counseling methods, journaling, experiential learning, disowned parts, personality integration, polarities, transformation, internal family system

Introduction

Many people are interested in learning more about themselves so they can live well in this increasingly complex world. Learning how to manage oneself requires committing to an on-going process. But where do we learn the tools to do this? If you are lucky, you learned a lot of productive tools from your family and other family units who embraced you. But where there may be deficits or a desire to enhance, many of the tools and methods that Virginia Satir developed to teach her philosophy and theory are exceptionally useful and can be easily adapted in a variety of settings and populations. Satir's tools and methods provide vehicles for people to learn about who they are and, ultimately, to make better choices in their lives and function better in the world. One of my favorite books is *The New Peoplemaking*, written by Virginia Satir (1988). This book is a great introduction to her ideas about how life in the family affects life as adults and the importance of teaching congruence in society.

One of Satir's methods that is particularly useful in helping people to learn about themselves and to learn how to work better with their parts is the Parts Party (Satir, 1978; Satir & Banmen, 1984; Carlock, 1986). Normally, the Parts Party is conducted in a group and requires at least a dozen active participants, costumes, props, and five to six hours in order to prepare the party, conduct the party and process the dynamics of the party and the experiences of role players. The Parts Party is an illuminating experience and can be a deeply meaningful experience. If you ever have a chance to experience one, consider taking the opportunity.

The current paper is intended to reach people who are interested in self-exploration via a creative method. It is a different kind of parts party than its originator designed, one that you experience as an individual using only your personal network. This solo method is designed to help you to explore your different facets of self and to gain a handle on some aspects of your internal process. The paper can be used as an adjunct to other interventions in a variety of settings, both educational and clinical.

The process described here is intended for an adult audience, although, if supplemented with age appropriate examples, the paper could be adapted for use with adolescents as well. Unlike many articles that appear in professional journals, this paper is directed to the reader in a personal style. In this paper I break some of the rules about writing articles for professional journals. I break the rule of objectivity when I reach out to the reader navel to navel with my personal examples. The purpose of this article is educational and practical in nature. The tone is much more informal and the style is personal and anecdotal in places. The article, while useful to the professional, is intended for an audience who want to learn about themselves, learn how to function better and learn how to enjoy life more. Satir's dream was to reach the everyday person in the world with her ideas. We are all everyday people, aren't we, when it comes to how we function and our basic needs?

The solo approach described here is intended to help individuals become aware of their internal resources (a process of differentiation) and to assist them in productive application of these resources (Carlock (1986, unpublished manuscript). The paper could also be incorporated as a therapeutic tool for clinicians to use with clients in the course of therapy or for trainers to use in educational programs.

An Internal Cast of Characters

Imagine you are at a party: One minute, a fierce battle is unfolding in your mind as you struggle to decide whether to speak in the midst of a lively debate about climate control. A few minutes later, you are

dancing with full abandon in the next room. Half hour later you are standing on the porch alone looking at the stars. How do you account for these changes? We have many parts. Are you curious about your parts? Consider this an invitation to take a fresh look at who you are.

Let's lift the curtain and see who is inside. Satir's basic Parts Party experience (Satir & Banmen (1984); Satir, Banmen, et.al. (1991) involved at the start, asking participants to look inside and reflect on all of their parts (developed, undeveloped, known and unknown) and to think of each as a resource. She encouraged participants to look at parts as resources whether or not they considered the parts good or bad. This was a familiar invitation from Satir to look inside and reflect without judgment. You might choose to use this paper as a guide to help you raise the curtain on your inner cast of characters and to look with new eyes, compassionate, forgiving, curious, and loving eyes, at your full cast of characters.

Are you ready to tease out your inner treasures? You may truly have everything you need, but if your resources are out of reach, if you are not aware of them, then they are useless. Everyone has many self-parts that constitute who we globally call "self." Would you like to meet some of the many facets that make up who you are? By meeting "your many faces," you can explore your parts and learn how you can help your parts work better for you. You can even add parts if you find the need!

We are such fascinating, multidimensional creatures. I invite you to take a look inside and meet your cast of characters, your many faces, whom you have come to call, "Me." Many people have only a global, and, I might add, often-biased sense of who they are. They lack a more finely detailed awareness of their many personality facets (parts, I will call them) that make up who they are. None of us is perfect; life is about evolving. A desire to grow can nudge us towards filling out our picture of ourselves. As we connect with our parts and are able to form a friendly relationship with each of them, we are then able to free up the energy contained in each part, bring about greater integration of our parts, greater synergy. Through this greater integration, we then reflect more personal harmony and wholeness. Discovering who we are is a lifelong project since, I believe, we are ever changing and ever evolving as we interact with the world and move through the stages of life.

An overriding goal I have is to stimulate your excitement about finding out more about who you are and how you cope. By discovering and developing your myriad parts inside, you can enjoy many more of your resources. Awareness of your parts and your work to embrace them can then serve as a platform from which you can begin forming a vision of how you want to be and begin to act with greater choice on fulfilling that vision. We have all of the resources we need. Awareness or consciousness is the key to utilizing these resources in the best way possible.

Three Births

Did you know that we have the possibility of at least three, and maybe even four births of ourselves in our lifetime? Virginia Satir (1996) believed that humans have the possibility of three births. She referred to the first birth as the union of the egg and the sperm, the manifestation of the life force. The second birth, Satir designated as the miracle that occurs when we physically emerge from our mother's womb. The third birth, the birth of consciousness, is when we begin evaluating what we have learned, our behaviors, beliefs, values, feeling patterns and life scripts which we have internalized unknowingly. The third birth is the moment we begin the process of becoming aware that we have the power of choice (Satir, 1996). Some have offered a fourth birth as the birth of understanding that everything is interconnected; everything is one (Cox and Forshaw, 2011).

The “Third Birth” (Satir, 1996), the birth of consciousness, is when we begin looking at what we have learned, the behaviors, beliefs, values, and feeling patterns that we have assimilated unknowingly, the life scripts we have been following and we re-evaluate all of those. The third birth is the moment we begin to become aware of our power to make new choices based on this newly found awareness. I assume that since you are reading this paper, your “Third Birth” is already underway.

In this paper, I will first briefly explain the core self and then offer you several ways to identify your myriad parts from a loving position, rather than a judging position. Another goal of this paper is to give you an inside view of the internal workings of your parts. My hope is that you will be able to view yourself in a new, more expanded way, and that you will be able to be more in charge of yourself.

By learning to assume the observer position, or the “control tower” position as Satir called it, you will be able to see how your parts interact, which parts take the lead and when, which parts support each other, which parts challenge others, which parts have been overlooked, ignored or denied, which groupings of parts tend to work best together in what contexts, and which parts get stuck or embedded in conflict. Once you are able to see what is, you will then be able to make new choices as you see fit.

I encourage you to take greater charge of yourself. Awareness creates opportunities for change. You can alter the players and the story line of your life anytime you want. Coming to embrace all of your parts—the overdeveloped ones, the underdeveloped ones, the ones you consider “positive,” and equally important, the parts you consider “negative”—will allow you the greatest advantage in becoming more whole.

For those of you who are willing to make the investment, I suggest that you begin to journal your responses to questions, activities and concepts presented in this chapter. You might entitle your journal, “My Many Faces.” Consider allowing yourself to draw simple pictures to illustrate your ideas, use magazine photos and graphics to represent your concept of different parts of yourself, or use whatever creative means you can think of to record your experience as you proceed through this article.

Core Self

“The inner core of self is connected to the Life Force. This is the essence of self-worth,” according to Virginia Satir (Simon, 1985).

While the focus of this chapter centers on the changeable aspects of self, the many faces or facets of self we experience personally and/or show to the world, the core self refers to the immutable self, the Self unchanged after creation. Our parts can be injured by rejection, neglect, abandonment, trauma and other hardships or strengthened by nurturance, encouragement and reinforcement, but the inner core, our spiritual essence, remains pristine. This light within is connected with and is a manifestation of the Life Force.

“I cannot light your light,” Satir would often say. “I can only light mine and manifest the ‘Source.’ Then you can light your own.” Satir understood the power of rituals and to illustrate this transformation, she would often ask participants to take an unlit candle and join her in a circle. Satir would then light the small candle she held, make sure it was burning strongly and then, sheltering the flame, carefully turn to the person to the left or right of her and offer the flame to that person in hope that this person would see the flame and decide to light his/her own candle from her flame. At first the room is in darkness, but by one by one the flame would continue to move around the circle until all the candles were aglow. Imagine lighting

a candle of your own using the internal flame of the Life Force in all of us. I bring the flame inside of me. I invite you to turn on your light and declare, “I am a miracle of life!”

This simple ritual symbolizes the awakening of your connection to the Life Force. But awakening is not an event but rather a process of connecting and bonding with the universal energy force. At the level of the core self, I know that I am whole, a pure loving and loveable creature. Accepting that my core is pure and positive, spirit-whole requires that I accept this like a little child, without trying to understand it intellectually. When I am in spiritual unity with my core, I see the world and myself with soft eyes. It is with this attitude, this loving, accepting position, that I invite you to approach the uncovering of your many faces.

Many of us neglect to nurture our core self. Acts of love, compassion, patience and understanding towards self and others helps our inner core grow and become stronger. States of meditation, inner calm, contemplation, prayer, and communion with nature or with other living beings also help us to be more in contact with this life force. The energy of my inner core helps me to maintain hope and the expectation and energy for rebirth and transformation. Our core self is the cornerstone upon which our self is built. All of our many faces stem from this core. How much energy do you devote to connecting to your inner core, your Life Force?

Embrace Your Many Parts

Beyond this core self, there exists a multifaceted self, inclusive of myriad parts comprising personality. Personality forms from the amalgamation of our genetic make-up and our life experiences. We practice what we have learned and these behavioral patterns begin forming our personality. As we develop, the adults around us largely determine our experiences. As we mature and gain greater autonomy and control, we have more choices about our experiences. Sometimes families do a great job in helping children appropriately express who they are as they develop. Other families, instead, may try to control their children’s choices too much and smother their natural gifts and inclinations. At its best, parenting is a blend of modeling, teaching and shaping (whether conscious or not) and both guiding and following the child’s lead in aspects such as selection of friends, favorite activities, intellectual pursuits, hobbies, sports, foods, clothing, music, books, and film, to name a few.

Discover the Characters Inside

There are many ways to identify your cast of characters inside. In this section, I introduce several tools you can use to begin this process but feel free to use your imagination to invent more options.

Magic garden

Let’s begin to look inside now. In this section I will offer you some different ways to begin to discover the wide array of parts that comprise who you are. As you become more aware of yourself and open to whatever you find, more of your parts will surface naturally. We evolve until we die and, depending upon your beliefs, we may exist in some form beyond death.

To start the process of uncovering your parts, I invite you on a trip to a magic garden. This garden can be located anywhere you want it to be and it can be any kind of garden that you want. As we walk down

the road to your garden you can see an entrance that has your name on it. Imagine the gate before you. Describe the gate fully and then open the gate and enter. What kind of a garden is it? Is it formal, planned, or more natural in its feel? Is it a desert garden or a spring garden or a summer or fall garden or some other kind of garden? Is it well cared for or is it overgrown? Is it a vegetable garden, a flower garden, an herb garden, an English garden or some other kind of garden? This is your garden so make it any way you imagine it to be. Add whatever would make it *your magic garden*.

Now walk me through the garden and describe what you see, hear and smell. Describe whatever is there: colors, natural formations, animals, birds, flowers, moss and fungi, water, birds, sun, clouds, moon, insects, fruits, vegetables, ferns or butterflies. Make note of everything you experience. Notice the weather, temperature, how the sky looks. What draws your interest as you experience your garden? Take in the garden using all of your senses (smells, colors, form, texture, sounds, and tactile experiences). Study your garden more carefully now. What season is it? What time of the day? What do you notice? Take your time to look around and experience the garden as fully as you can.

1. Describe each of the elements that you are particularly drawn to in your garden.
2. List each element on a piece of the paper. There is no limit on how many you can select.
3. Examine the elements of your garden that you have selected and describe each of them using at least three adjectives for each.
4. Now identify with each element and describe yourself on paper using these adjectives. For example, “I am the old oak tree. I stand in the center of the garden. I provide shade for the plants that need it. I am sturdy and have big, deep, strong roots. I am solidly anchored to the earth. Birds, squirrels and insects all like my strong, arching boughs. My leaves reach out and absorb nutrients from the sun and water as it falls from the sky.
5. Reflect on how each of the adjectives you chose captures an aspect of you.

Take time to complete this exercise and record your responses now before you read on.

All of the elements of your garden represent gifts you have inside. Can you own these resources? Can you acknowledge that these are some of your gifts? Can you find examples from your life that demonstrate these gifts? I encourage you to make this project a priority. Consider creating a journal to record your gifts as you manifest them in your life.

Once you have a good fix on your “positive” traits, they can serve as resources. As you strengthen these resources, they become the steel rods that hold the structure of the self in place providing stability of self (Shub, 1999). I have found that people can easily recite a litany of what is wrong with them, but quite frequently they are very limited in identifying their strengths. In fact, even when I am able to prod people to tell me what they appreciate about themselves, inevitably they drift right back into telling me what’s wrong with them. Remedy this, and you are a giant step closer to a much more satisfying life.

Let’s take another look inside. The beginning of the process of “becoming more fully human,” Virginia Satir used to say in her many lectures, was when we accept the invitation to look within and discover the gems, the dilapidated or undeveloped parts of ourselves, parts we have difficulty managing, or, closer the bone, parts we don’t even like or respect. We need to find a way to embrace all, find the positive intent in each part, and/or somehow find some aspect of every part that could be used for our

betterment. In order to utilize parts that we find unacceptable or abhorrent, these parts will often require tempering or transforming by adding resources from other parts.

The prospect that Satir proposed excited me. Could I actually achieve greater inner harmony? Satir gave me hope and hope is contagious. Allow the hope of fulfillment to grace you as it has me through the years and grab onto your courageous part and your adventurous part as we go on a treasure hunt to find more of your many faces.

Now, assume the observer position again as we explore further the treasure trove of gifts that awaits you. No, it is not a desert inside of you. If you feel, see or experience a desert inside, stay with it, and it will soon bloom as you deepen your awareness.

What is in your basket of internal resources? As I noted before, some of you may be thinking “I don’t have much in my basket of resources;” or “I mostly have faults inside.” But if you look closer, you may find that there are gems even in parts you view as useless scrap, treasures even in the “junk.” Having a few troublesome parts does not make you a bad person. You are a human being and as a human being you are constantly evolving. You can change. This belief can open the way for you to uncover so many golden nuggets, a vast array of resources. The more you look, the more you find.

Like you, I inherited my first view of myself from my family who reflected back to me how they perceived me. They were good people as most people are, but flawed, as we all are. As with all caregivers, some of the traits they assigned to me were based on accurate, observable data and some traits were positive in nature. Other feedback was colored by the particular family member’s interpretation of and reaction to my behaviors which was based on their past experiences and personality and the values, attitudes and beliefs that flow from that. Of course, as children, we do not have the capacity to sort this out, and so the labels tend to stick with us. Often we internalize the labels regardless of whether they are accurate or not.

Family adjectives.

“We must not allow other people’s limited perceptions to define us.” (Virginia Satir in DeMoss, 1987)

Another way to discern your initial view of yourself is to think about adjectives people used to describe you or how you surmise people would have described you when you were growing up. Think of positive and negative words. For example, Jana was repeatedly told that she was smart, responsible, quiet, played well alone (independent, able to entertain herself). But she was also described as selfish, obedient, stubborn, and “fresh” (angry).

When Jana, the participant above, reflected on these words, she said, “My mother made it clear by her tone and facial expression that being “fresh” was something she thought was very bad.” “It was true,” Jana owned, “I could be fresh. I did “talk back.” That meant that Jana sometimes disagreed or said “No,” and those responses were not tolerated. “I’d get a slap across the face,” she reported. With maturity, Jana learned to temper acting “fresh” into behavior that was assertive, direct, genuine and respectful so that others would be more positive in their responses to her. Once Jana accepted this “fresh,” “disrespectful” part, she could more easily shape her expression so that she could achieve the result she was seeking. In an atmosphere where people are encouraged and supported to express their feelings, thoughts, questions, desires, attitudes, disagreements, anger, disappointment and resentments, people can then more easily express themselves in a direct manner that includes respect for the other person.

In some families, members' free expression is not welcomed, so when they blurt out something that they have been suppressing, they may *not* express their feelings/thoughts in the best way possible. Some parents are not prepared for their children becoming their own person and wanting to be treated with respect. What may seem like willful, insolent behavior may be the budding of an independent person who wants to express him/herself. Children and adolescents often push back very clumsily as they are establishing themselves. Their behavior absolutely needs shaping, but not complete crushing.

You might notice that it is easy to focus on negative attributes that were applied to you rather than the positive. Be careful of this. Do you have biases in what you attend to? Often people have difficulty internalizing some of the positive messages if the behaviors that support the traits (e.g., responsible, smart) were not connected to specific evidence. Assimilation is furthered when a person is caught in the act of displaying the trait and has it pointed out.

Often characteristics assigned to us, persist for a lifetime. When repeatedly assigned a trait (e.g., stupid, careless, responsible, loving), people often learn to focus their awareness on examples that prove that label. That is, we go through life believing these adjectives define us, and we gather evidence that these adjectives are the truth. We can develop a bias towards ourselves.

What adjectives did your loved ones use to describe you as you were growing up? Did you have a nickname (e.g., Bunny, Klutso, Juggs)? If so, does that name provide further clues as to how you were seen? Do these adjectives still fit for you? Have you been able to transform any of the negative attributes assigned to you? All parts are capable of being transformed in multiple ways. You will understand this idea more as we continue.

Friends and colleagues can also be helpful in identifying your parts. What have people said they like and admire about you? What are people's complaints about you? What is your reputation? How do people see you? What do you get down on yourself about? What draws people to you? What parts get you in trouble with others? Continue to journal about the parts you uncover.

Famous Figures

Another way to discover parts is to complete the following steps in Satir's Famous Figures exercise (Satir and Banmen, 1984):

1. Choose several people (3-5) in politics, history, movies, television, sports, business, religion or spirituality, fairy tales, comics, or any aspect of life for whom you feel a positive attraction or admire.
2. Now think of some people (3-5) from the same sources who repulse you or towards whom you feel anger or contempt.
3. Record the characteristics that stand out as you reflect on why you chose each person.
4. Code each of these characteristics (+) if you view it as a strength or (-) if you view it as a weakness.
5. Write down an instance when each of the characteristics you designated as positive could be a liability.
6. Write down an instance when each of the characteristics you designated as negative could be a positive attribute.

Please consider completing the exercise above before continuing to read.

Parts and pieces of all of these famous figures represent parts of you whether owned or not. To own a part is to be aware of it, to experience it fully, to know its strengths and its shortcomings, to take responsibility for it, to accept the trait as part of you and to take charge of the part when needed. In order to own a part you resist, you will probably have to engage a loving friend or two to help you to see when that part emerges. I stress the importance of learning to love and accept your parts. A safe environment makes owning and accepting parts, especially those you may judge negatively, much easier. Each part does the best it can at any given moment. I believe that the original intent of every part of us was to help us survive. But circumstances change as we achieve independence and parts need to be updated. You'll see later that we can help transform even the most unlikeable and troublesome parts.

I have personal journals that date back to the early '70s. Recently, I opened one of my journals from the early '80s and found a list of parts I had made for myself back then:

Bette Midler: wild, uninhibited, zany, sexy, direct

Jerry Falwell: rejecting, angry, judgmental, narrow-minded

Eleanor Roosevelt: intelligent, strong activist, visionary, open-minded

J.R. Ewing, Jr. (character from an old television show, *Dallas*): greedy, superior, dominating, egocentric, "Me," "Me," "Me."

Janis Ian: creative, speaks from her heart, personable, unassuming, cute

More recently I added:

Mother Theresa: loving, generous, seeking connection with God, searching

I became aware later, as this chapter developed, that I needed to find a character to represent my fearful part. My fearful part creates some of the bars in my personal jail. As I studied my parts, though, I could see fear in Falwell and J.R., but they cover over that vulnerability with anger, greed, selfishness, and meanness. I recognize that my fear often expresses itself as irritability and anger. I became aware that I already had Falwell and J.R. Ewing to represent fear. I just had to learn how to learn to express my underlying fear and vulnerability.

The reason Satir would ask people to come up with famous people to represent their parts was to create a fun-loving atmosphere to examine our various parts and how they work inside of us. She believed that we could learn about ourselves while having fun in the process. By exaggerating our parts and seeing them with humor, we can more easily accept them. Satir (1984, p. 524) also stated, "It wouldn't matter how absolutely outlandish you behaved on the outside, it couldn't even begin to touch the depth of the feeling inside."

I invite you to lift the lid on yourself once again and continue the process of learning more about your parts. Coming to know your parts is like being a kid in a really fine toy store. There are so many interesting characters to meet. I invite you to get to know each and every one of your characters, and hopefully, even create others when you find that you need other resources. Discovering my parts helps me to add pieces to my mosaic so that gradually a more complete picture of self takes shape, and along with this, a feeling of greater wholeness.

"We all have resources inside which can be tapped." (Satir in Loeschen, 1991, p. 61)

In the next section I provide you with several additional ways to continue the discovery of your many parts. By now you should have a working list of parts. Take some time to review your journal and check to see if there is any duplication of parts. Collapse these parts if appropriate and prepare your unique list of parts.

Develop Your Parts

Inner harmony is possible when people have access to all of their parts.

I invite you to spend time and effort in your daily life experiencing your parts, all of your different ways of being. Try to notice what circumstances bring parts forward and what causes them to retract. What causes parts of you to retract or to expand socially? Where, when, with whom and in what contexts do your parts surface, get stuck, or withdraw? In what situations are particular parts integral to healthy functioning?

You might highlight one part each week. Observe when it moves to foreground and when it recedes into the background. Experiment with deliberately calling on this part when you need it. Try asking the part to step back when needed. Notice what other parts align with this part. What parts are repulsed by this part? What parts can temper this part? Learn everything you can about this part and make notes in your journal as you go through your week.

Who is on your “A Team?” Which parts show up most regularly? Are there parts that run through every sector of your life? Are certain parts overused or underused? What parts do you show to the world? What parts do you show to your spouse, parents, or boss? What parts automatically activate in conflict? What other parts might be helpful to resolve or manage conflicts? What parts surface when you are at a water park, playing tennis, or at a party? What parts appear in large groups, intimate groups, in church, on the bike trails, in bed with your loved one? Are you utilizing all the parts you would like to have working in these settings? Would you like some parts to step back for any reason?

When I first began to lift the lid and look inside myself, I found only a few sketchy parts. I did not know myself very well. Some of what I saw I did not like and I wanted to close the lid back down. But I had learned from Satir and other teachers and mentors that by owning my parts, I could develop a healthier relationship with them and my parts could all learn to move together in greater harmony. I believed that. I also learned from Satir and came to believe myself that every part of me has an essence that is positive and vital but, if overdeveloped, some parts I would otherwise consider as strengths could be weaknesses in a particular context. For example, generosity could be a strength, but you can be generous to a fault if you consistently fail to take care of your own needs, or if you do not exert boundaries with those who take advantage of your giving nature. It is also possible to be generous to the point that you can cripple another’s ability to provide for self and be independent.

Selfishness is often seen as an undesirable trait, yet the positive seed in selfishness is the ability to honor one’s own needs. When balanced with a concern for others, this, too, can be a positive resource. Even greediness can be strength when you voraciously read everything you can find about a new subject of interest. Yet greediness can become a liability if you continually neglect other valued areas of your life in your eagerness to command a body of knowledge.

I like knowing the parts I have. When I am aware of my resources, I can utilize them more effectively, more deliberately. I can manage them. I learned toughness from my mother and I have found this attribute useful now that I have more choice about when I apply it. I now save toughness for appropriate

occasions. I discovered that her toughness motivated me to excel in the world and learn the skills of my profession as well as I could. Her toughness also enabled me to protect my boundaries and my interests in relationships, and to challenge clients and students to work to their capacities. I am aware now, though, that this toughness must be balanced with support, encouragement and validation. Maybe my mother could have parented less by fear and more by nurturance and support, but the point is, I succeeded in finding the marrow, or life-giving substance, in her approach. And, yes, how I manage toughness has been an issue for me and learning to love myself and be kinder to myself continues to be a major goal for me. Global peace must begin inside each of us. Global peace begins within me in my acceptance of all of my parts. Yes, I am still a work in progress. We all are in the process of becoming until we die. Greater wholeness is a lifelong project.

Missing Pieces

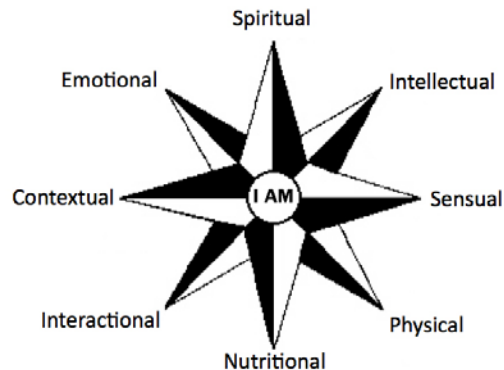
Once you have taken an initial look at your parts, check to see if there are any glaring omissions. These missing parts may represent parts in you that are undeveloped, hidden, neglected, rejected or simply not valued, often due to rigid family rules, roles, family dynamics, or traumatic experiences. For example, if you were the oldest girl in a family of several children, likely you were enrolled to help parent younger siblings. If you complied with the expectations handed to you, then you probably now behave very responsibly. You may have difficulty allowing yourself to have fun. Your overgrown sense of duty and responsibility towards others also may impede your ability to honor and take care of your own needs. Growing a fun-loving, carefree part or a part that is assertive and has good boundaries with others might be in order.

Another example of a missing piece that you might want to develop might be your artistic part. While you may not aspire to be an artist, I do believe that everyone can develop artistic skills. Are there parts that you would like to develop?

Sometimes parts that were once prominent in your life may suddenly move to the background to such an extent that they seem to disappear. For example, at one time in your life you may have been into stretching your extrovert self. At that time you may have been teaching courses, conducting workshops and trainings, and giving speeches before audiences large and small. However, if your first love had been setting up experiences whereby people can learn for themselves and then your teaching spontaneously flowed from those experiences, then that style of teaching may resurface. Once we master both ends of a polarity, for example, the introvert style and the extrovert style, we then have a choice.

I often use the Self Mandala (see Figure 1 above) as one check to see what is missing in your parts line up. Is your sensual/sexual part represented? What about your physical or your spiritual parts? In reviewing my own parts, I found that my spiritual part was very weak, and it still is, although I continue to work on strengthening that piece and have for several years. My father was a non-practicing Protestant, and my mother was a devout Catholic. At my father's insistence, we children were raised Protestant but we had no nourishment for this religion at home. My mother encouraged me attend the local Protestant church but I went alone. My mother was Catholic but she was very private about her faith. I'm not sure if this was just her nature or whether she was trying to respect my father's decision. I often wish she had felt comfortable sharing that part of herself since I lack that spiritual foundation that gave her such comfort and

Figure 1. Self-Mandala. Graphic designed by S. Buckbee, 2015.
(Satir, et.al., 1991; S. Buckbee, personal communication, August 5, 6, 2015)



faith. I reveal this not to blame my parents, rather to understand how that weakness in my spiritual base came about, so that I can be more patient and compassionate with myself. I can redirect the energy away from self-blame or blaming my parents and toward developing my longed-for spiritual strength.

Own Alienated Parts

Some missing pieces are parts we have alienated. These are parts we reject because of values or beliefs that have been internalized from direct verbal messages or non-verbal messages from parental figures and other influential people in our lives. Some of these beliefs and values we have never questioned or evaluated. Now is your opportunity to conduct that self-evaluation, if you have not already begun that process.

Sometimes we need to listen to the parts that pull us down, drag on our energy, put blocks in our way in order to discover their positive intent. What is each part trying to say? What does each of these seemingly obstructive parts need? We have to find some way to align with each and every part and understand its needs in order to have a healthy internal system of parts and in order to make any significant change.

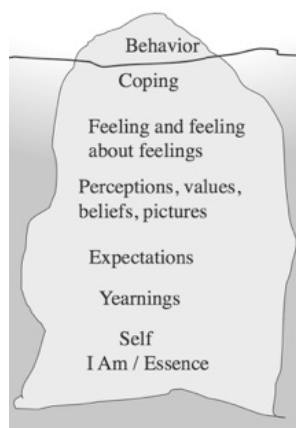
“How do you (Virginia Satir) remain whole,” asked Tom DeMoss (1987). Satir responded, “I’ll tell you what it means to me. That I don’t reject anything. That I don’t compare myself with anyone. That I see myself as an ever-evolving manifestation of life and I don’t have to be defined by anyone on the outside.”

Most people tend to cover up, deny, rationalize, or detach from parts that are shrouded in shame. We put our blinders on and avoid facing these parts. As is true of most people, I sometimes have to be knocked flat on my back by some outside circumstance to force myself to face any part I view as shameful. Like most people I would rather run from or cover over these parts. These are alienated parts and like it or not, to become more whole, we have to learn to embrace each part, learn how to relate to each part, understand the intent of each part and transform each so that it is more useful to us in the present context.

Remember that even our most hated and alienated parts have an essence, an inner core that can be sifted out, transformed when necessary and applied in prescribed circumstances so the part can be useful.

Root around in the dark stuff and reflect on the deeper yearnings of each part you deny, hide, or reject. Using the Satir, et.al. (1991) Iceberg metaphor (see Figure 2), we can examine below the water line to learn about the feelings, sensations, beliefs, rules, expectations and yearnings of even our most troublesome parts.

Figure 2. Iceberg Metaphor. Graphic designed by S. Buckbee, 2015.
(Satir, et.al., 1991; S. Buckbee, personal communication, August 5, 6, 2015)



Let's imagine that you have a very selfish, stingy part that you have named, Scrooge. Examine Scrooge through the lens of the Iceberg (Satir, et al., 1991):

BEHAVIORS	You find ways to make money however you can and give little away to others.
COPING	You hoard money to survive old age. You spend as little as you can.
PERCEPTIONS	You believe there is a scarcity of resources. You believe that lots of money will keep you safe and happy.
EXPECTATIONS	You believe that no one will be there to take care of you so you must provide for your own care until your death. You believe you cannot count on others.
YEARNINGS	You yearn to be loved, cared for and to feel secure.
CORE SELF	You are connected to the life force. You will have all that you need. You are loved.

Through this experience, you may come to recognize that your Scrooge serves a useful purpose. He represents your frugal self, your ability to delay gratification to a future time, your ambition, your ability to project your needs into the future, your ability to be responsible for yourself, your ability to delay gratification. But your Scrooge also needs a generous, loving part for balance. Scrooge needs a part that has faith that whatever you give will come back to you tenfold in some way. To be whole, you need a part that believes in abundance to balance the part that fears scarcity.

All parts are welcome. We need not get rid of anything, although I must admit, I sometimes relegate a part to the back of my closet if I use it rarely. Sometimes a part even drifts to a corner on its own. For example, as I age I find that my ambition for some formerly loved activities sometimes drifts back and I

have to work at stimulating my drive whereas earlier in my career, the activity was a leading force in my system of parts. My less developed spiritual part needs to be fed and exercised now, and my Bette Midler part wants more time to play.

Parts may also be suppressed, disowned as a result of unhealed traumas. David, a participant in one of my workshops loved the song, “I am a Rock,” by Simon and Garfunkel. David had been very hurt earlier in his life and had built a wall around him in order to avoid another emotional loss. “And a rock feels no pain; and an island never cries.” As a result of unresolved grief, David walled himself off from others to avoid further pain. However, he fails to take into account the terrible pain, loneliness and isolation that result from being cut off from others. Even when numbed, the pain of isolation exacts its consequences whether to our emotional, physical or spiritual self. Rules we make for ourselves may stem from our desire to protect self. In this case, the person’s survival needs are stirred, so seeking emotional safety, old family and cultural messages may arise such as:

- I can never get close to anyone again.
- I cannot survive the loss of another love.
- I must avoid pain at any cost.
- I must keep defenses up.
- I must always act strong.
- I must not show feelings of vulnerability.

With rules like those above, David could not realize even deeper yearnings to be loved, to belong. Rules are intended to protect, and, at the same time, rules can be like ropes around us that choke off the resources we need to meet deeper yearnings such as those for love, connection, and belonging. Below are some examples of rigid rules that will often cause parts to be disowned:

Rule	Part Disowned
Don't be angry	Self-protective part
Never enjoy your body	Sexual part
Don't interrupt	Assertive, spontaneous part
Hide your vulnerability	Open, soft part
Don't cry	Compassionate, sensitive part
Always be strong	Questioning, vulnerable, uncertain part

To further uncover rules that may alienate certain parts you possess, I suggest that you review the Self-Mandala (Satir, et al., 1991). As the Self-Mandala (Figure 1) shows, the mandala comprises eight resources. If you think about it, you have rules for each of the elements of the mandala (See Figure 1).

Record the rules (They might begin with “Always” or “Never”) you learned or messages you received (e.g., from parents or other significant figures, church, school, culture) or the beliefs you hold for whatever reason that are connected with each of the following parts:

Spiritual	Sensual
Contextual	Emotional
Nutritional	Intellectual
Interactional	Physical

The straightjacket of rules you learned growing up could inhibit you from allowing all of your parts to surface. For example, if you consider the interactional dimension, the rule, “I must never interrupt,” inhibits your power, as well as your ability to assert your needs and make yourself known. Some people dominate interchanges, and unless we interrupt, we lose our voice. As a rigid rule, to never interrupt can be disempowering. When a rule habitually causes you to say, “No” to yourself, when it habitually requires you to stifle your expression, it is toxic. As a guideline, a rule might be helpful, but as a rigid rule, it is disempowering and impossible to follow without great personal cost. Below are some other examples of missing parts and rules that might possibly be responsible for the omission of these parts:

Missing/Alienated	Rules/Beliefs
Parts	
Sadness	Don't be sad. Don't show your vulnerability. Buck up. You are weak if you show sadness. People will harm you if you show your vulnerability. You must protect yourself.
Spontaneity	Be reserved. Always keep to a schedule. Keep your “nose to the grindstone.” Plan ahead and follow your plan.
Dancer	You're fat, so always hide your body. Don't make a spectacle of yourself.

Yearnings motivate the internalization of rules, and rigid rules are the good intentions that eventually backfire. For example, your yearning for love and belonging might drive you to observe a rule, “Don't challenge authority,” if your parents punished you for expressing divergent views with a slap across the face or not speaking to you all day. Our basic needs drive the internalization of rules. Rules are not intended to harm. We follow rules to help us survive and to meet our basic needs. However, such rules eventually backfire if, once we are independent of our families, we fail to re-evaluate these decisions and make choices now that we know we have that prerogative. The ability to challenge authorities is an essential skill when applied appropriately.

Savoring Parts

In order to savor a part, you must first fully own it. To own a part, we have to know it from the inside out. You will need to become aware of and experience the behaviors, feelings, and thoughts connected with the part, notice how this part interacts with other parts and notice how much power, connection and self-esteem the part displays. Going through the process of using the iceberg to help you understand the part, as you learned earlier, can also illuminate the intent of the part, the need, the yearning and the transformations that need to occur in order to meet the yearning.

All too often, we take our parts for granted. I suggest that you give each of your parts some special attention and recognition. Let each part shine for a week. If you are shining a light on your generosity, notice all of those times during the day and day to day when you give a bit of yourself, when you are kind to another, or when you help someone even in a small way (Shub, 1999). Take a moment to breathe in that awareness and appreciate your generosity. While you may be aware that you can be stingy and selfish, you may be quite harsh and unfair with yourself about this. If so, you may find this exercise of highlighting your generosity to be quite balancing. Sometimes the person you need to be more generous with is you. I found that when I studied my own generosity, I noticed many more instances of generosity than I would have imagined. The individual generous behaviors were not particularly striking but rather often were very simple behaviors that I performed without consciousness. Do you tend to overlook and/or underestimate your assets too?

Focusing on your positive traits, in this example, generosity also may increase your awareness of opportunities to express yourself in this way. Perhaps that is a lesson. You might dedicate each day to a particular theme you want to develop. Monday, you can work on noticing your compassion. Tuesday, you can focus on your wit. Wednesday, you can focus on your sense of humor. We often have a very skewed view of ourselves based on what we were told about ourselves in childhood or based upon how people treated us. These distorted views can be challenged by new data and changed. By focusing on an aspect of yourself, you can observe the functioning of the part, and expand or contract the part if you deem that beneficial.

When you want to work on growing one of your traits for a week, let those close to you know about your plan and enlist their help. Because you are likely to be at least partially blind to some of your positive traits, you can help increase your awareness by asking friends and family to point out this particular positive trait when they notice that you manifest that trait. Asking for specific feedback is not a sign of dependency or unnecessary ego inflation, but is rather a genuine need to absorb what you do well! It really is OK to feel worthy of being nourished.

When you come into contact with a part of you that you do not respect (e.g., sneakiness), try to find a situation where this quality could be positive. For example, sneakiness comes in handy when you try to pull off a surprise or to surreptitiously investigate what others may be hiding that you, or others may need or have a right, to know. Being a stealth cat when necessary can be an important skill in self-protection and in helping others. When I can embrace even those qualities about me that I have previously experienced as shameful, and if I can exchange my judge for a neutral or compassionate observer, then I have a better chance of owning that “fault” and making better choices in how I use that quality.

As I mentioned earlier, many people tend to be self-denigrating and harsh towards self and have little appreciation of their beautiful parts. Many have also over-learned the rule, “Don’t brag about yourself,” to the point that they find it unacceptable to be aware of and, worse yet, to share what they truly enjoy about themselves. I hope you will now be able to challenge this rule and appreciate and share your most enjoyable parts. I enjoy when my dancer part spontaneously comes out, and I love the rich contact I can have with people. There is no shame in appreciating yourself. Are light bulbs turning on?

System of Parts

Our personality parts form a system inside. Like families or other human systems, systems of parts each have their unique strengths, weaknesses and functional and dysfunctional elements. Once you learn

how to take the observer or control tower position, you can spot troublesome dynamics and see what parts might be useful in different situations. You have more options available.

Human beings are amazing creatures. Most of us readily adapt to a multitude of situations we find ourselves in on a daily basis, and even a greater variety of circumstances across our lifetime. Much of our adaptability occurs outside of our awareness. Most of the time this unconscious, automatic functioning works for us and is a blessing. For example, when I catch sight of something beautiful in nature, my excited and expressive Bette Midler jumps out along with Mother Theresa who deeply appreciates the magnificence of nature and its connection to all things living. These parts spring together in unison as if choreographed. I do not have to direct the process at all. Luckily, most of the time, everything works smoothly on autopilot. Even when problems in the system do not arise, though, we need to attend to regular maintenance and growth of our system of parts. In this too, we need to work on the balance between stagnation and growth.

Not all our moments are mystical or flowing, though. There are times when you may feel conflicted about something or in conflict with another person. There are also times when you may feel pulled in many different directions and have difficulty deciding on the best course of action. At such times you might consider looking at what parts are in play at the moment. In the case of an internal conflict, you might play out all the sides of the conflict allowing the voices of the different parts to become more defined. Possible solutions become clearer as you allow each part to express what it feels and needs and hear each other. For example, over the past three years, I have been struggling with an internal conflict about whether and when to retire from practice. As I played out the voices of the parts in conflict, I discovered that the part that wants to retire actually wants more free time, wants to contain work to no more than three days per week (no more late evenings or weekends even for projects), and wants to travel more. The part that does not want to retire wants to keep my mind active, wants to continue to provide employment for the nine people the practice supports, and does not want to terminate all of my clients at once. I found a solution that, at this time, satisfies the feelings and wants of both parts. I have stopped accepting new clients but will accept clients I have treated previously if they can tolerate my travel schedule. I have also hired a new employee to treat referrals that I am refusing so that the practice can adequately support the overhead.

When the conflict is interpersonal, you can use a similar process or enlist other parts to assist you in working through the conflict. For example, when you feel attacked, criticized or threatened, you may automatically react in anger, defensiveness or you may even counter attack. Conditioned sequences of reactions such as this one do not serve you well and require your conscious attention. At such times, I have learned to call upon my Mother Theresa to soothe my hurt and affirm me as well as the person with whom I am in conflict. I also can call upon my Eleanor Roosevelt part in order to remain rational yet grounded in my feelings as well as curious about the other person's reactions. Now, when my temper starts to rise, I can choose to reach for those parts to help me effectively manage what is happening. That, then, becomes my consciously choreographed new dance. I am no longer subject to old habit patterns. I can make deliberate choices to achieve my desired goals.

Attending to your system of parts as a whole can help you to utilize more of your resources in any circumstance. When attending a party, I engage my Janis Ian part and Eleanor Roosevelt parts to help me make contact with people I know and people I don't know. If there is dancing, I engage my Bette Midler part to help me loosen my inhibitions and let go into the dance. Prior to learning how to do this, my Jerry Falwell part took charge all too often and out of fear, I would avoid contact with new people and tell myself, "There is no one here I want to get to know." By employing parts deliberately, I enjoy parties now.

Who's in Charge?

“The Body is the temple; the mind is the shepherd, the director; spirit is the life force.” (Satir, [n.d.], University of Santa Barbara, Archives Box 16, File 12 Notes in Virginia Satir's briefcase).

Every team needs a leader. Are you ready to take responsibility for the leadership of your parts and create a healthy functioning team? Now that you are aware that you have this capacity, the choice is yours. You can create a healthy system where all parts are honored, where parts respectfully communicate with each other, and where conflicts are resolved fairly.

How well does your system of parts work? The average person has a system of parts that work quite well together. However, most internal systems can benefit from minor alterations or significant change. Whenever I experience a symptom, I search for what actions I must take or I look for beliefs I need to alter, or ways of coping I may need to change in order to eliminate or at least reduce that symptom. When I refer to a symptom, I mean any significant disturbance. That could be anything from a change in behavior, a conflict with someone, a feeling of anxiety or sadness, a bout of irritability or anger, or a physical symptom like stomach pains, headaches, nausea or fatigue. These are cues for me to climb up the Control Tower and start recounting and examining what transpired on or around the appearance of the symptom. Symptoms are always clues to an unmet need somewhere in the system.

Try tracking any symptoms that are unique for you and reflect on what signal or message this symptom is trying to convey to you. What are you aware of about your present experience? Allow yourself some time to journal your responses.

Every system of parts must also have a leader or leadership team that handles maintenance duties, a part that serves as shepherd to our flock of parts. The system needs someone who makes sure all parts are accounted for and have not slipped so far away as to become unnoticed. Our internal system needs a part that makes sure everyone has a voice, is heard, and has their needs met. Maintenance parts also remind the system of its basic values such as:

- Equality
- Integrity
- Respecting and appreciating the good in all
- Philosophy of change through addition
- Using the “Iceberg,” a tool of transformation
- Increasing awareness, choice, wholeness and harmony

Once you are in the Control Tower, you are in a position to notice the dynamics of your system of parts. You can see which parts form alliances and work together well, which parts frequently conflict, which parts are isolated, which are over or undervalued. You then have the power to intervene to resolve issues and restore wholeness and harmony.

Our parts must work fairly well together or we could not carry out the multitude of functions that we do. When I find that I am having difficulty functioning in certain situations or in particular contexts such as work, family, friends, or sports, I know that my system of parts needs attention. When I notice a

symptom, I can look inside and try to see what's happening. I can also reach out and ask someone to help when I feel stuck. Can you?

Enticing Parts Out

I have found that one sure way of bringing parts forward to strengthen them is by placing myself in situations that will challenge those parts, while providing enough support, internal and external to ensure some degree of success. However, I would like to remind you that we can learn just as much, or maybe even more, from mistakes and failures as we can from our successes.

You also can set about the task of developing a certain part that you experience as weak. When I wanted to develop my extrovert, for example, I placed myself in situations where I would be in front of people teaching. Sometimes the situation involved taking the role of the leader of a small group or team, teaching a class, giving a speech to small or very large groups, or demonstrating skills in front of an audience. In the beginning, in order to help manage my anxiety, whenever I found it possible, I arranged for co-teaching or co-leading experiences. This strategy gave me external support. At this time, before the digital age, I used the now archaic "flip chart" as well as handouts so that participants had some basics to refer to while I could extemporaneously expand on the principles represented in these materials. This strategy lowered my anxiety and allowed me to be relaxed enough to allow the richness of my experience to flow to receptive students and mentees. I also found strength in my Janis Ian and Eleanor Roosevelt parts but I also would bring out my Bette Midler and Mother Theresa parts out too as my anxiety lowered.

I found internal support by owning that I was slower to warm up in new situations and would name that out loud at the beginning of these events. This helped me relax so more of me could come forth spontaneously. I also created a detailed agenda for the situation but permitted myself to wander from that agenda when appropriate or when I was in the swing of things and could trust the process. I learned as I went along. I studied great teachers, both live and in video recordings, as they conducted psychotherapy sessions and led trainings. I learned the skills and began to internalize those skills and beliefs which blended with my knowledge base, my experience, personality, values, and emerging style.

Another strategy for bringing parts out is choosing to bring particular people into your life who can naturally draw a part out. For example, I have a couple of friends who are spontaneous and, if they start dancing through the kitchen, I easily join in. Just hearing good dancing music can also activate this part in me. Another friend of mine practices meditation, and my Mother Teresa peeks out when he is around.

A dear friend for over 35 years, wanted to share some music before we left at the end of our Memorial Day cookout one year. She was so excited to share music from a group she had heard in Spain. I felt joy in her excitement. As the music played she was virtually swept off her feet. She began swaying with the music, and then, she began moving until eventually she was dancing. I watched, on the verge of joining in but I hesitated. The song ended and another song started playing. I joined Marilyn and danced to that piece, but it did not move me nearly as much as the first had and the flow between Marilyn and me was just not working. The moment was gone. We all have moments of potential sweet contact with people, with nature, all things living, with the entire universe. I want to miss fewer of these. I regretted stifling my urge to join. I had missed an opportunity to communicate through movement. Was my Bette Midler sleeping on the job or was another part sitting on her? I can experience more joy if I support myself to take risks. This is something for me to explore. There is always another snag to untangle, more housekeeping, more

maintenance, but I like the challenge and the pay-off is great. I hope you come to look at life's challenges as opportunities to learn.

I can point out the people in my life who have stimulated my ambition, creativity, my interest in and attention to my physical wellbeing—as well as my interest in art, oceanography, and music. We radiate a particular energy, and people are drawn to us or we to them, whether they turn out to be our next teachers or fellow explorers. I think that people sense each other's energy streams. There is a kind of magnetism that occurs. I'm lucky to have had numerous bridge people throughout my life who could supplement the support I have needed to expand. Other older adults in our lives can often fill slivers of empty space in our experience.

Conclusion

I hope that by now you have a much more enlarged and detailed view of yourself. One of my principle hopes in writing this chapter is to move you, the reader, away from global denouncements of self and towards a more nonjudgmental, careful and detailed understanding of all of your parts and how they interact in various circumstances. I also hope that you can cease making blanket assumptions, or worse, condemnations of yourself since these judgments are hardly accurate. They represent a general bias towards self-learned early in life and repeated over and over again.

We are all just human beings trying to figure out how to be in this world and have a better experience. As I have been writing this chapter, I notice that I am able to see my parents' quirks and limitations with a sense of humor, appreciation and forgiveness. With age, and after considerable work with my parts over the years, most of my major trigger spots have healed. Yet, there are always surprises as I move into even the later stages of my life. Life transitions often unearth residual or incompletely resolved internal issues.

Tracking data to demonstrate your progress is grounding. I do not assume people are static by nature. If they are, something is wrong, and I want to find the blocks to growth and remedy the problem so that the person might feel more whole and live a better life. We all have emotional buttons (triggers), and I have yet to discover all of mine. Will I ever? I doubt it. To me that is part of the excitement of being alive. New discoveries lead to greater wholeness. Focus on developing what you can grow. Pay as much attention to what you can develop rather than on the symptoms and deficiencies. Measure the relative severity of the symptoms as well as signals that you are beginning to flourish. Perhaps you will awaken with renewed energy, maybe you notice yourself humming, or perhaps you notice that you are laughing more or sleeping better or taking better care of yourself. Decide how you can evaluate the benefits of your efforts to bring greater harmony inside.

There may also be those of you who have a general positive bias **towards** yourself, regardless of your behavior, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and values. You may let yourself off the hook too easily, hold an inappropriately inflated view of yourself, make excuses for yourself, deny or shift responsibility, or blame others. You may need to take a harder look at those parts and test your assessment against feedback from trusted others, hold these parts accountable, and increase your awareness of the impact of your actions, attitudes, beliefs and values on other people. You may also need to take a closer look at the effects of your distorted self-view on your spiritual wellbeing.

We all have endless opportunities to remove our blinders and take a look at ourselves without judgment. We can summon our observer self, we can call on the parts of us that feel compassion for other people, and we can extend that love to ourselves. There are parts of you that know deep down in your bones that people are equal, and that you are equal and worthy. Your spiritual part knows this to be true whether you are connected to that part or not.

From my point of view, spirit manifests in the communion between people and between people and all of nature. I feel privileged to have experienced a great deal of the beauty in the world. At my core I now know that I am worthy and equal to others, no exceptions. Shine the light inward; feel it penetrate the deepest parts of your being. Try to absorb as much as you can as much as you can at this time. Savor the gifts you have chosen.

I hope that this article has given you the impetus to take a fresh look at yourself and I hope it has motivated you to understand how your collection of parts work a little bit better. Hopefully, you have also learned how you can expand your resources and you know a little bit more about how to move through the inevitable log jams and snarls within. If I have roused your curiosity and excitement about learning more about you and your willingness to continue to grow, then I have accomplished my purpose. I encourage you to seek the guidance of a psychologist, counselor or social worker if you wish to take the ideas presented here deeper.

In parting, I offer you four gifts that you may wish to consider for yourself:

- * The gift of appreciating and loving all parts of the “Me” you call self, warts and all
- * The gift of allowing someone to love you
- * The gift of allowing yourself to experience love deeply
- * The gift of expressing your love freely

Note: This article was originally written as a chapter in a book intended for a lay audience that was tentatively entitled, *Peace With, Peace Between, Peace Among*.

The author is eager to hear how you find the article useful as well as any suggestions to improve the article (jsecarlock@hotmail.com). Please feel free to send me your comments.

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