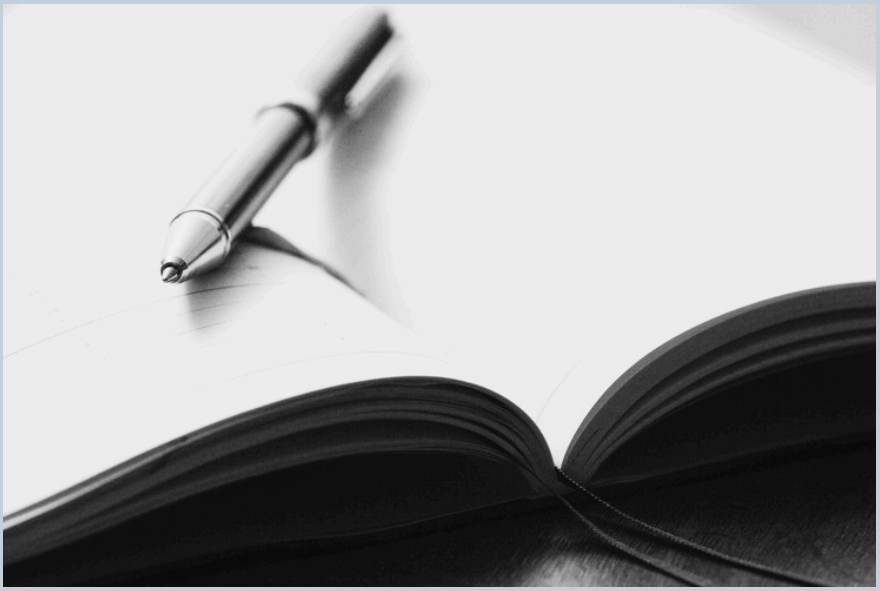
# Caring for your upset parts



A gentle journal prompt worksheet for moments when you are upset or distressed.

# Before we get started



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# Why Look after our upset parts?

Modern psychology through IFS conceives that we are not one unified inner consciousness, “instead it is more like every human being is a system of protective and wounded inner parts lead by a core Self” ref/ifs-institute.com/about-us

We have the healthy, wise Self, we have parts that push us, motivate and keep us going, and we have other parts that need our attention and care.

Our culture has encouraged us to *dismiss distress* and so we often try to brush off or bury thes parts of us that are upset or needy, only for them to cry louder.

**By offering our parts comfort and love, we create greater inner cohesion and self-acceptance.**

*Caring for our own upset parts helps us feel safer within ourselves.* Rather than ignoring our distress, judging it or expecting someone else to make it go away, we can respond with compassion rather than reactivity, take responsibility for our behaviour without shame, and communicate our needs more clearly.

This becomes the foundations for healthy self esteem, inner calm and the healthy relationships.

# How to use this guide

**Here are some tips to help you get the most out of this**

- **Find a quiet and private space**

This will work best if you don't need to worry about others interrupting you

- **Read the prompt and then close your eyes:**

These prompts are designed to connect you to the distressed part of you. This happens best by taking a few slow breaths, connecting to what is going on in your system and giving it the time it needs. Don't rush through this.

- **Take notes if you need**

You can take notes in your journal as you go, but it may be better to stay internal, Open your eyes, just to check the next prompt and take notes if you want, at the end.

- **Be Curious**

Approach your parts with curiosity — our parts are here for a protective reason. The more we can be curious and compassionate to what their protective origins are, the more we can help support them so that they soften

This is a tool to support your inner being — not a test. Be gentle with yourself as you go.

This tool is based on IFS. Nicole is an IFS informed practitioner. See the last page for further reading on the model.



# A bit about me

I'm Nicole Mathieson.

This is me and my husband of 26 years with our 2 fully grown kids.

I am a **couple therapist and relationship-focused counsellor** and I am passionate about helping people in long-term relationships get smarter, find sustainable happiness and deeper intimacy.

In my work, I help people come back to themselves and learn practical, experiential skills to create more loving, connected and harmonious intimate relationships — with themselves and their partners.

**So let's get started**

# 1.Acknowledge the part in your body

Take a deep breath, close your eyes, and put a hand on your heart.

**What do you feel in your body?**
*EG.*
*-Is your jaw tight?*
*-Do you feel tension in your chest or belly?*
*-Are your shoulders hunched?*

***Where/How do you feel it?***
*Can you describe it?*
*EG. I feel tight in my chest, like a big heavy rock is sitting on my heart and it makes it hard to breathe.*

**Can you name the part?**
*EG. Is this the Anxious part, the Fear of being alone part, the Dread for the future part? etc.*

**Acknowledge it**
*Let it know you are aware of it (turn to face it)*

*Say -"I see you, I feel you, there you are"*

# 2.Get Curious about the part

## What are the thoughts that the part is having?

*These thoughts might not be very wise or enlightened. They might sound more like a kid. That's okay.*

### What does this part want you to know?

Our *parts are often desperate for us to hear what they are worried about. It is counter intuitive really because the more we hear them, the more they relax, not the other way around.*

### What is this part worried about?

*Another way we word this is; "What is this part worried would happen to you if it wasn't do this job of being vigilant / anxious for you?"*

# 3.How do you feel towards this part

It is important for us to approach our parts with Self energy - the curious and compassionate energy.

So let's just notice all the parts that are anything other and then ask *them* to stand aside for a while.

**How do you feel towards your upset part?**

EG. Are you frustrated with it? Scared of it? or something else?

Notice that and let the <frustration> or whatever it is, know that it makes sense.

**Can you ask the frustration to stand aside so you can approach the upset part from curiosity or compassion?**

*Imagine it is stepping into a lovely safe room with a glass window that it look through and watch what is going on.*

# 4.Acknowledge the upset parts worries

**In what ways do the upset parts' worries make sense to you?**

*Consider your values / your history/ your sensitivities/ your traumas and everything that is important to you.*

**Let the part know that its worries make sense to you (to whatever degree they do).**

*Say "I get it, this makes sense because..... (and flesh out why it makes sense to you)*

*NB. You don't have to love or agree with how it makes you feel or behave to understand why it's worried and offer it acknowledgement.*

# 5.Appreciation of protection

**How is this part trying to protect you?**

What is it keeping you safe from? What discomfort or upset is it trying to help you avoid?

Let the part know that you can see that (even if you don't like how it makes you feel) it is protecting you.

**It has good intentions for you.**

Here we take the leap of acknowledgement that this part is doing this for you (sometimes vigilantly 24/7) because **it cares deeply for you.** It sees that you are worthy of care and protection.

Otherwise it wouldn't bother.

*Say – " I see all the work you do to protect me and I appreciate that you care enough about me to do this. Thank you"*

Take a breath and a moment to really let it sink in that this part protects you because it cares about you, because you are worthy.

Open your heart to this.

# 6.Support the part

**What support would the part need from you, to feel less worried and anxious?**

(think internal offerings such as acknowledgement rather than external changes or anything reliant on anyone else)

Think offerings such as:
-To check in on it
-To do some breathing activities
-To move more slowly
-To give it reassurance
-To let it know you are here with it etc.

**Make a commitment to your part to offer this**

Set up any reminders to yourself that you might need to follow this through. (such as a reminder to check in with the part, on your phone)

# You are done for now. Great work.

Let your part know you will be back to check in on it.

Bring yourself gently back to your Self and the room.

Take it easy for the next wee while.

Come back to this guide, everytime you feel a part of you is overwhelmed.



All the best,

*Nicole*

If you'd like to explore parts work further, here are a couple of helpful resources to get you started:

**No Bad Parts by Richard Schwartz**
An accessible introduction to Internal Family Systems (IFS) and how understanding and caring for our different parts can support healing and self-acceptance.

**The IFS Institute**
Explore more about the Internal Family Systems approach and the practice of working with our parts.