

Treating Yourself Well – Week 3

Working WITH Protector Parts

Why protector parts?

When trying to establish your self-care routine, protector parts can feel like the biggest obstacle. What if I told you, they are NOT the biggest obstacle? They can actually be your greatest ally! Protector parts go by different names: firefighter, protectors, defenders, warriors, or a variety of other names, but it is the job they do that is important.

Protector parts were developed as a part of your Trauma Coping System (TCS) to help reinforce beliefs and contain emotional/physical pain when you were too small to do so yourself. The thing is, they were small too. They did the very best they could to help you survive. Now that you are an adult, they are still working hard at their jobs. Many of them have no idea the trauma is over, and if they are aware of your adult life, they often believe the trauma will happen again at any moment. They are vigilant, determined, and intent on keeping you alive the only way they know how.

When you first begin to talk to them, it is likely you will encounter resistance. This is not because they are rebellious or difficult – regardless of how it seems – it is because they are committed to helping you. Conversations with protectors should always be opened with respect and kindness. It is unlikely they will respond that way to you, so be prepared, but you as the primary have a bigger picture of what your life is now. You need to approach them with the level of maturity and patience that you have grown into.

At first, they will likely be angry, defiant, and maybe even full of hate for you. These attitudes were all necessary for them to help minimize the impact of the trauma in your life. As you are patient and kind with them, you will begin to see their true heart. Their true heart is actually wounded, tired, and full of compassion. Keep going until you find this!

Negotiate needs:

- 1) What does the protector want to do?
- 2) What need does this meet?
- 3) How might this be the same as what you need/want?
- 4) Is there another way to meet this need?
- 5) What are steps you can take to work towards a new way to meet the needs?

Have internal meetings:

- 1) The GOAL is ALWAYS TO LISTEN first. You need to get to know each other.
- 2) Everyone gets a turn to talk.
- 3) No one is allowed to be cruel to each other.
- 4) Invite the Lord into the meetings.