

Internal Family Systems Therapy
**Month four: Addressing fears
of protectors**
with Pamela Krause

Common protector fears

- Exiles will overwhelm the system
- No benefit from re-visiting the past
- Going “in” will trigger dangerous behaviors (firefighters)
- The therapist won’t be able to handle the material and become contaminated, repulsed, or overwhelmed. This could lead to rejection or abandonment

- Protectors fear losing their job or role
- Secrets will be exposed that the system (internal or external) can't handle
- The external world can't or won't support the changes
 - They need the protective cloak of a manager or will become too dependent, needy or vulnerable placing the person at risk

The nature of exiles:

- Young vulnerable parts
- Isolated from the system
- Sensitive, loving, vulnerable, playful, innocent, creative intimacy seeking
- Have experienced trauma or other overwhelming hurts
- Stuck in the past at the point of initial wounding





- Become increasingly more extreme and desperate to be heard and cared for
- They long to be seen and understood
- Isolated in or from the system
- Crave redemption

Relating to exiles

- Gentle approach
- Follow the pace and tempo of the vulnerable part



Burdens



- Beliefs, feelings, sensations and energies accumulated by past hurts or traumas
- They reorganize the role of the part

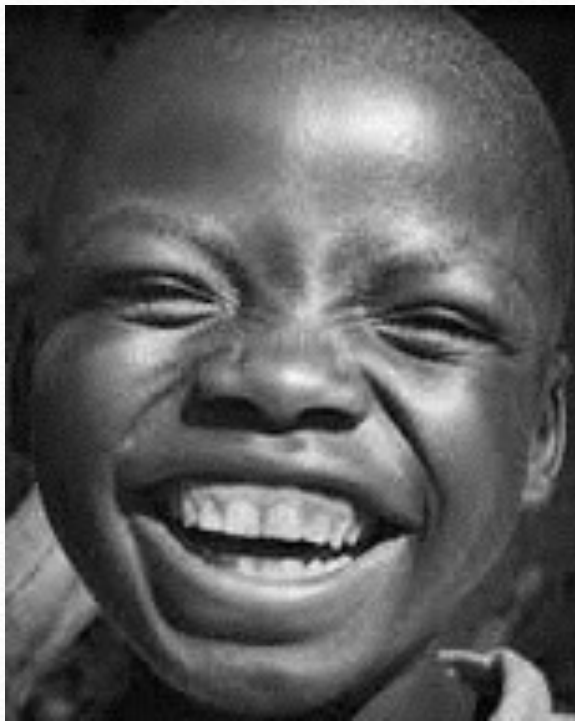
Examples of burdens



- **Beliefs:** I am worthless, unlovable, undeserving
- **Feelings:** Shame sadness, fear, lonely
- **Energies or sensations:** empty, hollow, untethered



Releasing burdens



- Exiles need to tell their story
- When the exile feels understood (by self) burdens can be released
- Parts can return to their original nature
- More room for Self