

What a Self-led System Looks Like

Pamela: Hi. Welcome back. In this segment, we're going to talk. I'm going to talk with you a little bit about what it means to be self-led like we're doing all this work, and we're healing all these parts, and we're unburdening exiles, and we're unburdening protectors, and the system is getting all reorganized, and what does it look like when that happens?

For me, I like to think about it in terms of being self-led. Not in-self, but self-led like when I was first starting out, I was always trying to be in-self, and it was like such a pressurized situation like, "Am I in-self? Am I not in-self?" That's where the duality I think can be ... Well, for me, it was triggering, and for other people, it can feel very triggering and pressurizing, so it also sets up this belief that the self is good and the parts are bad, and that's not really true at all, that to be alive and engaged in the world, we need both our self and our parts.

This is my way of looking at it. For me, my self feels like a very spiritual energy in me, and my parts are really my humanity. They're what help me engage in the world and be connected with people, and so I want to be fully able and aware of not only my self, but my parts, and I want them to be in relationship with each other. This whole process is about developing a relationship between us and our parts, so the self is a resource for the parts, and the parts are a resource for the self. We're in this flowing relationship. Okay? What does and doesn't that look like?

One of the common misconceptions that people have about being self-led is that, "Nothing is going to bother me. No matter what anybody does, it's going to be fine. I'm just ... I can take anything." Right? Everything. Whatever anybody does is okay, and that's not true at all. Actually, when we're self-led, we're very clear about what our boundaries are, the ways in which we want to engage with people, and the ways in which we would like to be engaged with, right?

It doesn't mean that I'm impervious, that I'm never going to feel anything again. That's another belief that sometimes we have. "I won't feel. I won't get hurt. I won't feel shame. I won't feel worthless." That's not true either, right? What self-leadership means is that I hear ... Because I'm in relationship with my parts, I can hear from all my parts, not just some of my parts, and I will know when my parts are hurt. If something happens and I feel I'm rejected or someone doesn't like me, some of my younger parts will still be hurt by that, but because they have a relationship with me and they're no longer burdened about that, they can come to me when they don't get what they need in the outside world.

Like for example, I've been married for a really long time, and I still have some parts that really long to be taken care of by other people, or to be seen by my husband, or taken care of. He's a really great guy, and sometimes he can do that, but he's a human being also, and sometimes he can't. In those moments before my parts were unburdened, when he couldn't take care of these parts, I would have protectors that would get really angry at him, and blame him, and want to talk about what an awful guy that he was, right?

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Now that these parts are less burdened, when he's not available to take care of them in the way they might like to be taken care of, they can come to me, and I can take care of them, right, so that my protectors don't have to act out so much in regards to him, but I might actually be able to speak for this part and say something like, "You know, it really doesn't feel good to me when I'm trying to talk to you and you're ignoring me." Right? I start to feel rejected by that, so that I can speak for my reaction or for what's happening for me rather than my protectors having to go out and attack.

That's one way in which we feel our parts, so we feel our parts more when we're self-led rather than less, and the other thing that's true also is when parts ... Remember that when parts are burdened, right, they're stuck back in that point in time where they picked up that belief. Say like that I'm unlovable, right? When a part is burdened ... If in today's... my part is burdened, it gets triggered. It feels unlovable. It's not only about what happened today, but it's about every time that that part felt unlovable all the way back to the very beginning, so the intensity of those feelings can feel quite big and overwhelming, but once a part is unburdened and I begin to feel unlovable, it's about the present.

It's about this experience here and now. It's not about today and every day that came before, and that's a really different way to live also. It feels extremely different, right, and so we don't want to be in this place where we don't feel because there are moments where it's appropriate to feel grief if we ... if someone close to us dies or someone we love gets hurt. That can be very sad and filled with grief, but again ... so we don't want to say, "Oh, I'm never going to feel those things again." We want to feel them when they're appropriate and when it's about ... just about this present day experience.

I talked a little bit earlier about when we're self-led, we can set boundaries with people also, so it doesn't mean that we tolerate anything that anybody wants to do to us, or in regards to us, or say to us. It means that ... Remember, one of the qualities of the self is courage, and so we become much more courageous in setting boundaries with people.

Like for example, when one of my kids was an adolescent, he would just get furious. Something would happen, and he would just get furious, and he would start yelling, and rather than ... Right? If my parts were burdened, what I would do is yell back at him. Rather than yelling back, I can become aware of how my parts are being impacted by that, and I could respond to him again speaking for my parts saying, "You know what? It's really not okay for me that you talk to me like that. I'm happy to hear what you have to say, but it's not okay for it to happen in this way, so if you can talk to me about what's going on for you in a different way, I'm happy to do that. Otherwise, we're going to have to wait to have this conversation until it can be different than this."

That's a really different message than just letting the part take over and yell

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back at him, so really what ... This is another crucial aspect of our model where we talk about when you're self-led, we speak for our parts, not from our parts. As I know my parts, as I can listen to how people are impacting them in the outside world, I can say what that is, right? Rather than ... Again, like with the example with my husband or the example with my son, rather than letting that part take over and speaking from that part which was really more of a yelling attack, fighting back, right, which is just like them throwing gasoline on a fire. It doesn't work all that well.

The other thing that I can do when I speak for my parts is I can begin to notice what impact that has on other people because if I'm in a relationship, I can be self-led, but if the other person isn't able to meet me in that relationship, right, it's some dependent on how they can be also, and if their behavior can't be different or they continue to act in particular ways, now, if I'm self-led, I may choose to limit my relationship with that person or maybe even end a relationship with someone, but being self-led allows me to know what's acceptable for me and my parts and what's not acceptable for me and my parts, and then making courageous decisions around that.

I hope that's helpful. One of the things that I always like to remember is that phrase that I said at the beginning of the segment that the self is a resource for the parts and the parts are a resource for the self, and it's really this flow and this connection. For me, one of the most important qualities about the self is connection, and I feel like when we're self-led, we're incredibly connected with all of our parts, and they are connected with us, and that's a really, really different way of living. Thanks so much. Nice being with you this month, and I'll see you in month 12.