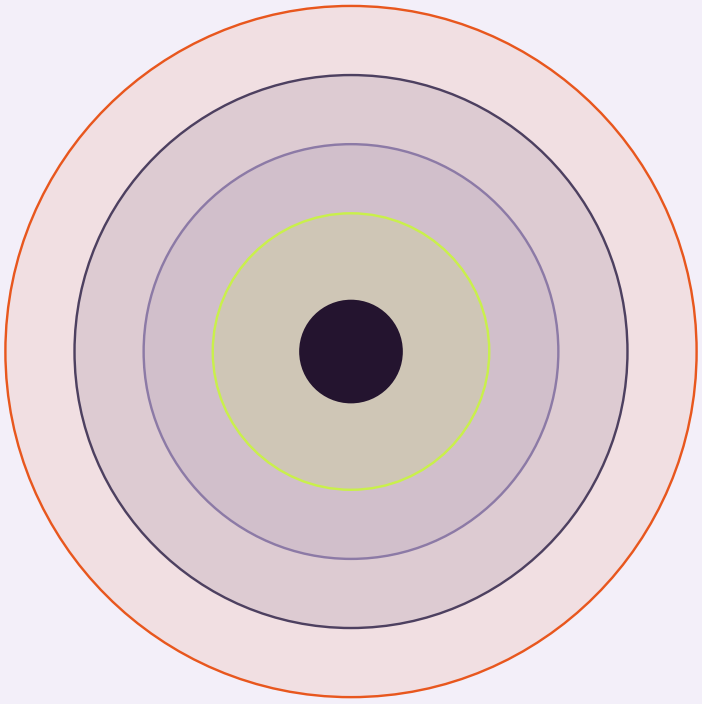


The Internal Family Systems Workbook

A reading of the book by Richard C. Schwartz (2024)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Internal Family Systems Workbook, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Richard Schwartz's workbook on his Internal Family Systems model — more than fifty practices, exercises and meditations for meeting the managers, firefighters and exiles inside you, and for leading them from Self rather than from whichever part shouts loudest.

Below are the 8 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

There are no bad parts — only good parts pushed into extreme jobs they never wanted.

This is the load-bearing claim of the IFS model, and the practices are meant to make it something you try rather than only read.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You are not the anger. You are the one who can turn toward it.

Separating from a part — unblending — is the first skill, because nothing else in IFS works while a part is wearing you.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Managers keep the day running. Firefighters put out the fire at any cost. Both are guarding the same wound.

Naming the protector's category tells you what it is defending against, which is far more useful than judging its methods.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Protectors are not obstacles to the healing. They are the gate, and you ask them before you walk through it.

In IFS practice, going around a protector to reach an exile is what risks flooding, which is why asking its permission comes first.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Self is not something you build. It is what is there when the parts step back.

In IFS, calm, curiosity, compassion, clarity, courage, confidence, creativity and connectedness are described as qualities of Self that surface, not skills you acquire.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

If you cannot get curious about a part, a different part is standing in front of you.

Your feeling toward the part is the diagnostic — irritation, fear or impatience means there is another protector to meet first.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Unburdening is a release, not an eviction — the part stays, the load it was carrying leaves.

Nothing is amputated in this model; the exiled part is retrieved, relieved of a belief that was never its own, and given a new role.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The question is never what is wrong with me, but what this part is afraid would happen if it stopped.

Ask a protector about its fear and the behaviour you hate about yourself usually turns out to be the least bad option it could find.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Draw your system on one page
- [ ] Give three protectors a name and a job description
- [ ] Walk one part through the six F's
- [ ] Write down your blending tells
- [ ] Ask permission before you go near the wound

KEEP UP DAILY

- [ ] Check in with the loudest part each morning
- [ ] Speak in 'a part of me' language
- [ ] Unblend before you reply

30 days · Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Draw your system on one page

Put a circle in the middle for Self and scatter the parts you already know around it — the critic, the striver, the numb one, the one that eats at midnight.

Nothing has to be accurate; it has to be visible.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Give three protectors a name and a job description

For each: what it does, when it shows up, and what it is trying to prevent.

Write the job description generously — a part described with contempt will not talk to you.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Walk one part through the six F's

Find it in or around the body, Focus on it, Flesh out how it appears, notice how you Feel toward it, beFriend it by asking about its role, then ask what it Fears would happen if it let go.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Write down your blending tells

List the signals that a part has taken the wheel — the jaw, the flat voice, the certainty, the phrase you always say in a fight.

You cannot unblend from something you cannot notice.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Ask permission before you go near the wound

Address the protector directly: would you be willing to step aside while I get to know the one you're guarding, knowing you can come back the moment you need to?

If the answer is no, work with the no.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Check in with the loudest part each morning

Five minutes: who is here, what do they need today, and can they let you drive.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Speak in 'a part of me' language

Say "a part of me wants to cancel" instead of "I want to cancel." It sounds like a technicality and it is not — the phrasing itself creates the gap the whole model runs on.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Unblend before you reply

In a charged moment, pause and ask internally who is answering.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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December 2026

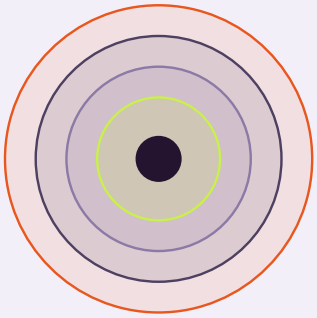
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



All parts are welcome.

RICHARD C. SCHWARTZ