

### 3.4 Talk To Your Inner Selves

A way to get in touch with the deeper parts of you.

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We all have parts of ourselves that we keep stuffed deep inside. If we don't acknowledge these different facets of ourselves, they will only become more powerful. When we are tired, scared, or otherwise low on resources, these parts can dictate how we think, speak, and act. This may mean we say things we don't intend or behave in ways that hurt ourselves or others. By getting in touch with these inner shadow selves and integrating them, we can gain better control of our lives.

This can be a process of positive dialogue and conflict resolution. By improving communication between our different parts, we can create better relationships between them, as well as between ourselves and each inner part.

Note: Some parts of ourselves are more in the light than others. This technique can be used to talk to every part of yourself, whether shadowed or otherwise.

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- The shadow parts of yourself can control your behavior. Once you access your shadow selves, you can identify them and reduce their power over you.
- As you integrate more parts of yourself, you will feel calmer and experience less internal struggle.

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- You will feel powerful resistance, for example, fear or disgust, to connecting with your shadow selves.
- Many people fear that talking to themselves is an indication of insanity or mental disturbance (although it's actually contributing to positive mental health).
- What you discover in these conversations can often be hard to digest.

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You can connect with your shadow selves in various ways: internal dialogue, writing, talking out loud, or even through movement.

To begin, ensure you are in a safe space where you won't be interrupted. Verbally, in writing, or in your mind, ask who wants to speak right now. Then, wait for this particular self to respond. Often it's helpful to give these characters names—you can start by asking "Who are you?" or "What's your name?"

At first, it may not be obvious how to distinguish between yourself answering as opposed to a shadow self, but if you push through the confusion, you will feel a distinctive feeling, as if you're replying from a different "you." The inner part that replies may be a classical archetype, such as your inner child, Satan, God, or a parent, or it may be something harder to define and name. Either is okay; whatever you encounter, try to feel its unique energy and identity.

After your shadow speaks, you can respond to it and hold a conversation between the two sides. This might feel weird or awkward at first, and that's quite normal. Remember, this is a safe space, and you can fully express all parts of yourself here, just like in therapy. Some of what you discover in these sessions may scare or even disgust you, which can be hard to tolerate. Allowing yourself to feel any emotions that arise from connecting with these different parts of you can be a unique opportunity to integrate them instead of having them dictate your behavior.

Once you have a conversation going, this is your chance to ask them questions, get to know them, and express to them what's on your mind. Some questions you can try are:

- When and how were you born?
- How do you feel? What do you want or need?
- What would you like me to know about you?
- How can we reach an agreement that fulfills both of our needs?

Another way to work with your inner selves is to choose a particular topic on which you are conflicted and set a timer for thirty seconds, a minute, or more. First, talk from one point of view in a fully present, fully expressive way, uninterrupted by other parts. Warmly invite this part to share what it does want for you, not only what it doesn't want. When the timer expires, reset it and let another one of your inner selves speak its mind. This structured approach ensures all sides are heard and can facilitate better communication.

Your challenging emotions can be an excellent gateway to your shadow parts. For example, if you notice that you are judging yourself, this is a clue that, in reality, one part of yourself is judging another, and that these two parts are active and accessible in that moment. Additionally, when you feel a strong emotion, such as envy or hatred, toward another person, this may be an indication that a part of you is not completely realized. The envy or hatred you feel can represent an opportunity to know these parts of yourself better.

The more your different selves feel that you are considering them and the more you can reach agreements with them, the less power they will have over you. This will allow you to navigate your inner landscape with greater ease.

Your inner selves are always available to you whenever you need to communicate with them. It's important that you follow through on your agreements and adjust them as needed. Periodically, check in on your inner selves to see how they are doing and whether they need anything.

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##### 1. Carl Jung:

1. <https://thesap.org.uk/articles-on-jungian-psychology-2/about-analysis-and-therapy/the-shadow/>.
2. <https://healthline.com/health/mental-health/internal-monologue>.
3. <https://frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00227/full>.
4. <https://goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/voice-dialogue#>.