

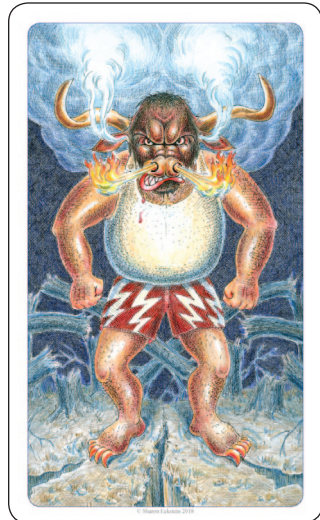
# Understanding Parts with Inner Active Cards

Parts can be categorized into groups depending on their roles. Just like in a large family you will find those who like to manage, those who protect and those who need protection. You will find rebels, helpers, and those who ruminate and worry. You will find those who are warriors, and those who can't cope, all the different masks we wear to get through our days. And buried deep down within us are the exiles, Parts that hold painful memories, traumatic experiences or unacceptable behaviors that the system perceives as unbearable, overwhelming, and dangerous. Problems begin when our Parts struggle to take over our consciousness, or "the living room" as Tom Holmes calls it. Another analogy is to imagine a part hijacking a bus or an airplane. Suddenly a person may say, "I don't know what came over me..." suddenly I punched the guy" or now you have nude photographs on Facebook!

This may sound a lot like Multiple Personality Disorder, but the difference is that switching from Part to Part in our daily lives is normal and we usually remember what we said and did. But people diagnosed with Multiple Personality Disorder, which is usually the result of severe repeated trauma, are so fractured and split from Self, Parts become compartmentalized and they act unilaterally, having no knowledge or memory of other Parts and their actions; each part lives and functions in its own world.



Parts under Self-leadership are working in harmony, like members of an orchestra, with eyes on the conductor, each one quite aware of the others. And as there are different sections of an orchestra; brass section, strings, woodwinds and percussion etc, so are there different sections of Parts in our inner world. And as long as each section or group keeps their eyes on the conductor and is mindful of the other players, inner harmony will ensue.

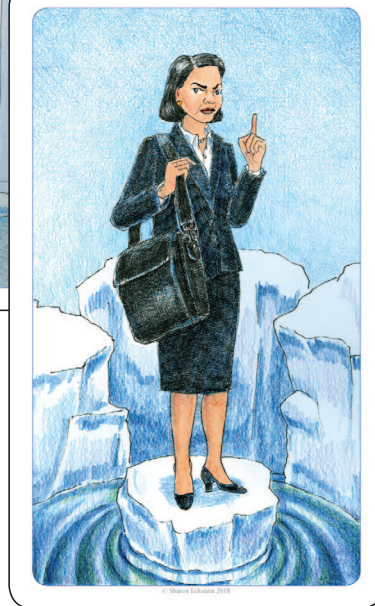
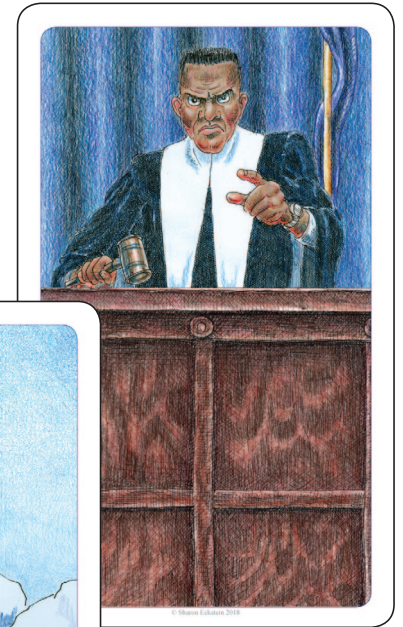
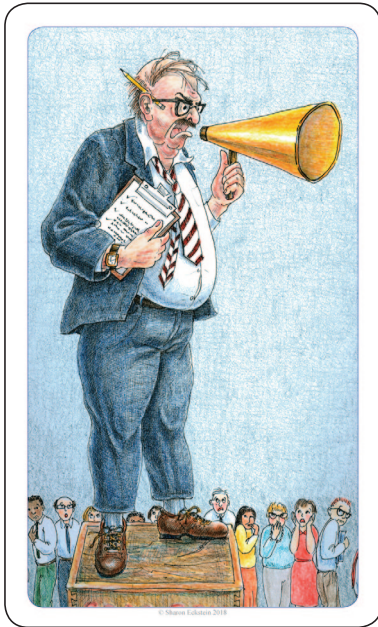


Here is an over view of some of the groups. Even though cards are being called out by descriptors such as "Boss", "Judge", "Helper", "Rebel," and categorized into groups, it is important to keep in mind that each person will view a card through personal eyes and may hold a different meaning than what is being described here. That is why we do not have titles written on the cards. There is no right or wrong way to relate to a card.

Also some cards can serve more than one function, For example the Angry Bull can be both Rebel and Protector. It can also be a manager: People may tiptoe around those with hot tempers to avoid an angry outburst. So how do Parts function in our inner worlds?



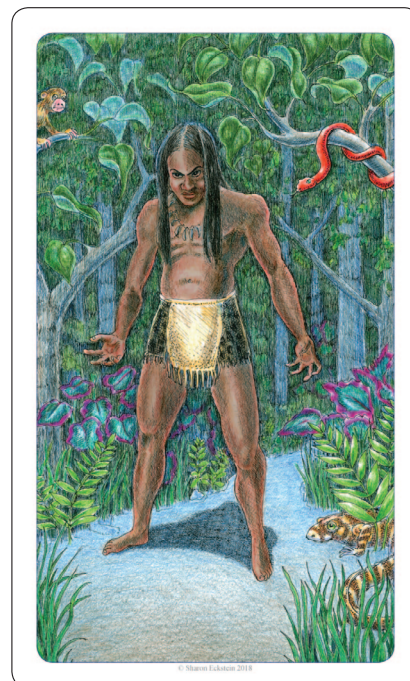
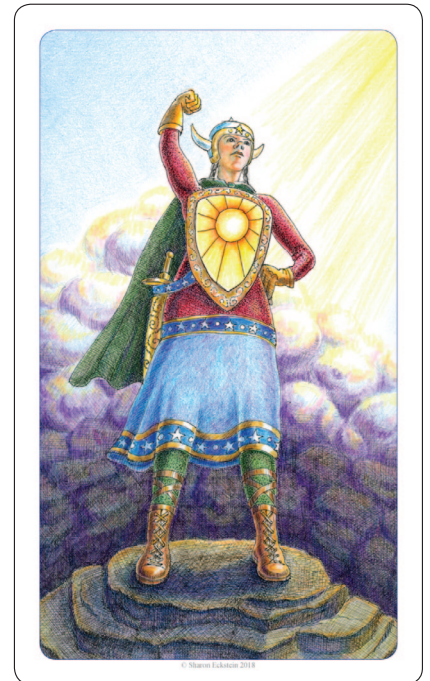
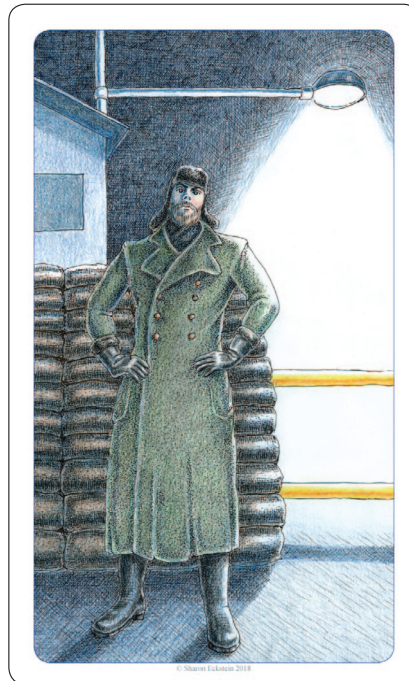
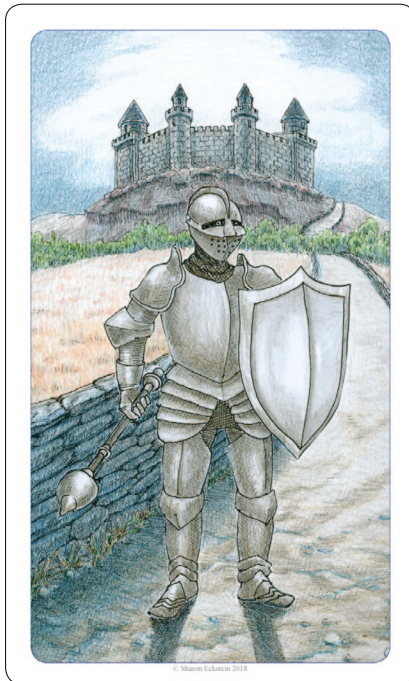
**MANAGERS:** Managers like to be in control. They like to take charge and make sure the inner system runs in a certain way according to their established beliefs about life. These beliefs come from our family, religion, culture, and life experiences, beliefs so deeply ingrained, they've become unconscious and the managerial behaviors automatic. Managers believe they are working for the benefit and safety of the inner system. And when managers take over and have little faith in Self, we often hear their voices as judgmental, critical or the classic "I should....". We may feel guilt, inhibition, the need to please, help or achieve, fight or avoid conflict, depending on what kind of managers are in charge. Managers can be extreme, causing conflict in the inner world as well as in the outer world.



Or a manager can be centered in Self and carry Self imbued qualities into the world. When working with a manager, it is important to understand "why" they are there. Managers can be tough negotiators, and they fear annihilation. It is important to gain the trust of managers by respecting their purposes. Working with managers and getting them into a positive relationship with Self is step one.

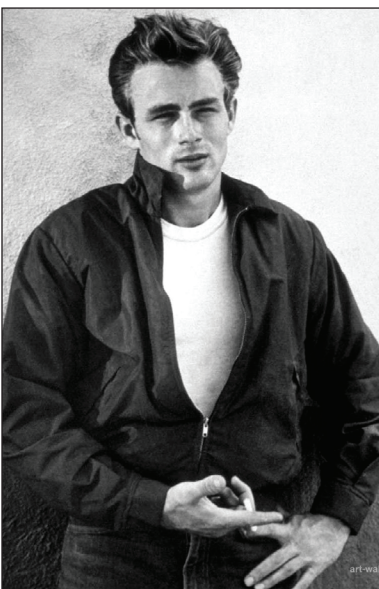


**PROTECTORS:** Protectors are close to managers and the two are often allies. Protectors function as their name implies and develop to keep vulnerable Parts, like child Parts, safe. They may also guard the door to the deeper realms of our psyches where secrets, dangerous emotions, disturbing memories and wounded parts are hidden away. These are the Exiles. Protectors are not likely to cooperate with a therapist who is eager to open the door to the exiles. Therapists who do not respect the protector will likely lose their clients and /or cause more harm than good. Again, protectors must learn to trust Self to lead and the rest of the inner system must be integrated and strong enough to contain what lies in these deeper realms. An extreme protector can block personal growth and experience, while a protector under Self-Leadership makes healthy and wise choices in relationships, business, careers, where we go and what we do.





**REBELS:** Rebels are reactionary, often problematic, bucking the system, going against the grain, getting clients in trouble, however they serve an important function: they know something is keeping the client from living an authentic life. It is common for rebel Parts to activate in teenagers as they struggle to find their personal identities. This is a normal process and conflict is expected as they flex their wings and experiment with life. But a teenager with a difficult childhood may develop rebels that follow them into adulthood. Their rebels can become self-defeating, even dangerous, especially when allied with anger and impulsive Parts.



James Dean represents the classic “Rebel without a Cause.” Rebels, like all other Parts, must be acknowledged and understood before healing can take place. And often, once an extreme manager Part comes into balance, the rebel Parts calm down as well, and their energy can be directed into roles that benefit the person as well as the world.



A rebel rooted in Self can lead to significant personal growth and positive change in the outer world. In the outer world, a rebel may start a revolution against an oppressive regime. Rosa Parks, for example, was a rebel for social change.



## RUMINATORS AND WORRY PARTS:

Everyone needs a Part in the lighthouse keeping an eye on the horizon. Is that a charter boat taking a family out to spot whales? Or is that a pirate ship? Healthy discernment of what's on the horizon comes from a part under Self-leadership and operates in our best interest. But when a Worry Part is extreme, anxiety builds and we become easily overwhelmed, even unable to function. This behavior can become habitual as we make data points of everything negative that has happened to us and expect will happen again as soon as we let our guard down. Then Ruminators develop and keep their dialogue running 24/7. Again, their intentions are to keep us safe – always reminding us of what went wrong – but they're driving us crazy in the process.



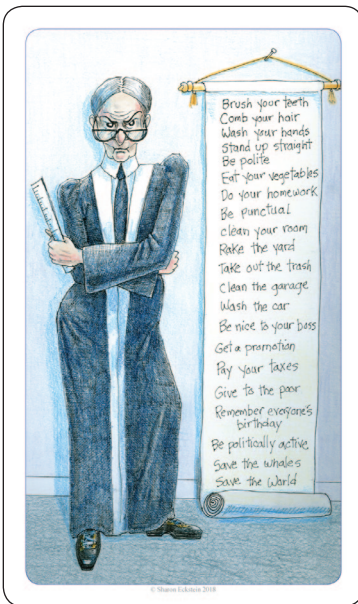
**BIOLOGY:** Human beings are not robots. We get hungry, sex hormones wax and wane, we get sick, we get tired and we die. Parts that form from our biological influences can be the source of rich human experiences or the cause of serious problems. If we lack essential coping skills we may self-medicate with food or sex. Or if our life situation demands a heavy work load (or an inner manager demands too much of us) we can become physically and mentally exhausted and then resort to caffeine or drugs to induce some artificial well-being and energy. The body can't go on like this for long before physical signs of trouble begin and we end up sick. For example, the Happy Pig is there to keep us fed and nourished. We need to eat to live.







But do we need to live to eat? When the Happy Pig is out of balance and allied with a rebel or a firefighter, a person is likely to develop an eating disorder.



A harsh manager, or a ruminator may be involved as well contributing to internal stress. However, getting parts under Self-Leadership will bring these parts into balance and work to keep us healthy while helping to meet our body's needs.

Death is also a “Part” of our life cycle and our Western culture is good at avoiding the topic. Some organizations such as Hospice have recognized the value of honoring this stage of life thanks to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and have opened doors to engage friends and family in the process. Death can be a teacher and a guide as it sharpens our awareness to the fleeting beauty of life, beckoning us to Self-Leadership and the courage to live full, meaningful lives in the time we have on Earth.





**VULNERABLE AND CHILD PARTS:** When negative experiences happen to us in childhood, our young Parts can become fixed in time and carry the pain and trauma into adulthood. Protectors, managers and rebels may form around wounded child Parts to keep them from further harm. Depending on a person's temperament and outer support system, certain beliefs about the world may form that can lead to either resiliency or despair and everything in between. As stated before, it is vital to work with the managers and protectors before approaching child parts even if clients are aware of them and have reliable childhood memories. And more important if you suspect a child part has been exiled, that is, repressed from the client's conscious awareness because it carries so much pain the conscious ego is not able to cope with it. But child Parts, under the guidance and protection of Self can bring delight and playfulness to our tired lives, restore trust in the wonders of life and unleash our creativity.

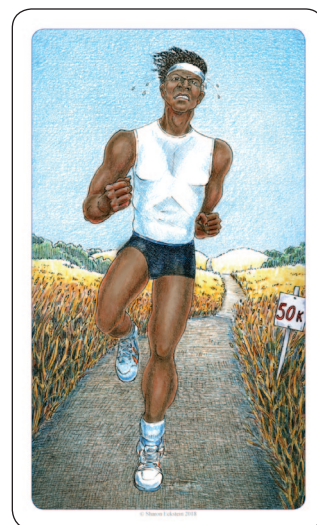
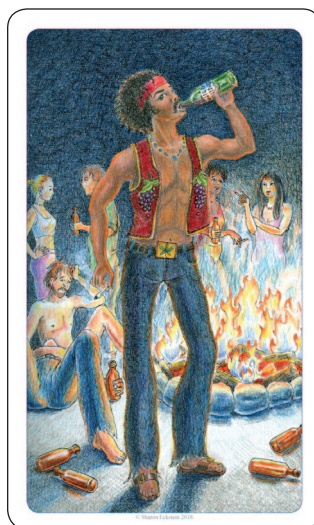
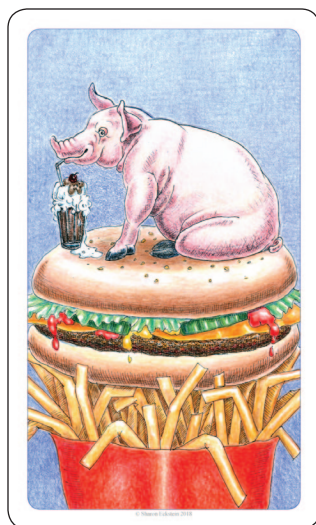
Vulnerable Parts usually have to do with the "heart." Love can put us at risk of heart break if we loose someone either through rejection, trauma, dementia or death. Vulnerable Parts can also be creative. Seeking self-expression in the world – the singer, the artist, poet, or scientist publishing research – may become targets for harsh critical reviews. To put yourself out in the world is taking chances. Yet, under Self-Leadership, child and vulnerable Parts will feel safe and secure as their inner family is there for them, supporting them, even in hostile or tragic situations. One can learn to view critics from the detached perspective in Self with compassionate insight to why critics behave as they do. Usually the problem lies with them and not you.





**DISTRACTERS AND FIREFIGHTERS:** Distracter Parts develop in response to conflict and emotional or physical pain. It is their jobs to take our minds away from the trouble and give us something else to focus on, usually something sensate. While there are healthy ways to keep us distracted from problems such as meditation, yoga, taking a walk in a park, or watching a movie, unhealthy ways of coping can cause more problems than they avoid. Some people may become workaholics, putting in long hours at the office to avoid problems at home. But most people are really seeking ways to avoid the raging critics in their heads; managers that constantly monitor and criticize their actions.

People these days can be seen chatting on their cell phones in the company of their friends. Some people wear earbuds, listening to music to drown out the mind chatter that drives them nuts. Television was the #1 mode of technology used by distracter Parts: People appear glued to the couch watching mind-numbing programs one after another. Computer games and Facebook have added new tools to the distracter's arsenal and can be as problematic as TV, especially if they interfere with peoples' livelihoods and relationships. Still others need to keep incessantly busy, afraid to sit and rest lest their inner critics catch up to them.

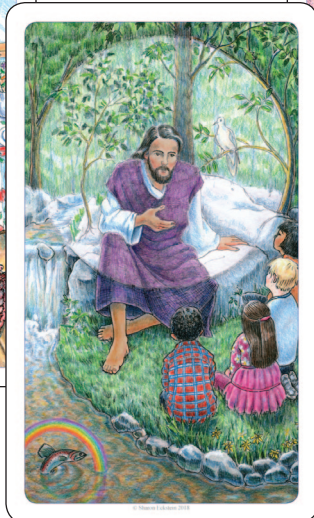


More extreme distracters take the form of firefighters and they do as their name suggests: they rush in to douse emotional fires with physical sensations that temporarily rescue people from extreme mental or physical pain. Cutting, drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, deviant sexual behaviors, even shop-lifting, all are examples of firefighter activity. Firefighters usually develop in response to traumatized Parts that have been exiled because their burdens are perceived as dangerous. You can often find a firefighter allied with a rebel and caught in a polarized loop with extreme managers and protectors, all working overtime to keep an exile from erupting like a volcano. Again, firefighters believe they are helping us by keeping the inner world from being overwhelmed by emotional fires, whatever their source, even if it results in suicide. People with active firefighters need professional help finding their way back to Self-Leadership, and we strongly recommend a therapist trained in *Internal Family Systems*.



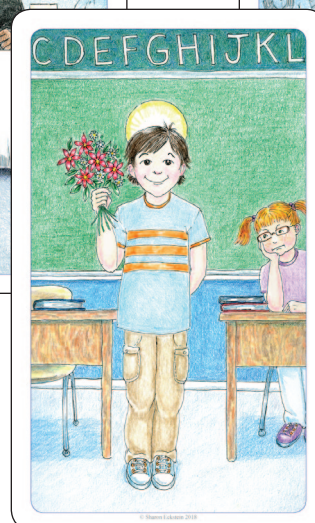
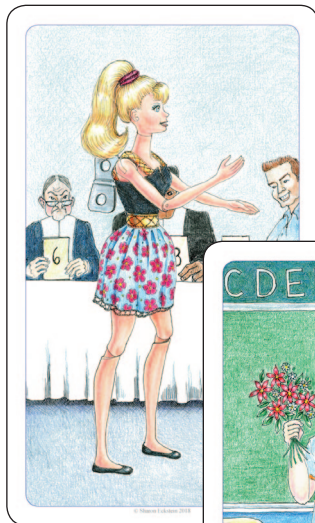


**NURTURING AND HELPING PARTS:** Helping Parts care for others and all creatures great and small. This can be a rich source of spiritual and social connection and happiness. Sometimes however, even our helping Parts can take over and become entangled in co-dependant relationships and become enablers. People in the helping professions, clergy, teachers, nurses or social workers are especially vulnerable to over-active helping Parts, often pushing to the point of exhaustion. Parents too, must balance how much they give to their children and know when to step back and teach their kids how to live independently in the world. If a nurturing or a helping Part becomes extreme it is important to find out the reasoning behind their behavior. There is likely a need to be needed, to feel safe, loved, and even praised. Who wouldn't like to hear "Oh, you are so kind and good hearted"? Sometimes an extreme manager is pushing them to compensate for lack of self-esteem, and such praise becomes positive reinforcement for their extreme behavior.



Most helpers, however, have an innate gift for nurturing and enjoy helping people, whether they are teachers, therapists, nurses, house cleaners or volunteers at the food bank. Others have the good intentions to save others from a fate or injustice, say starting a refuge home for battered women or offering legal

assistance to illegal immigrants. Whatever the cause, helper Parts need to be rooted in Self to experience the healthy strength of love, channel it into daily life, and keep it in balance.



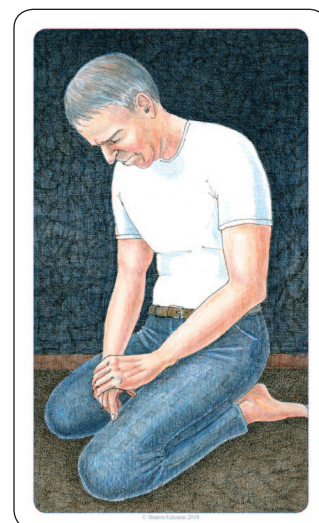
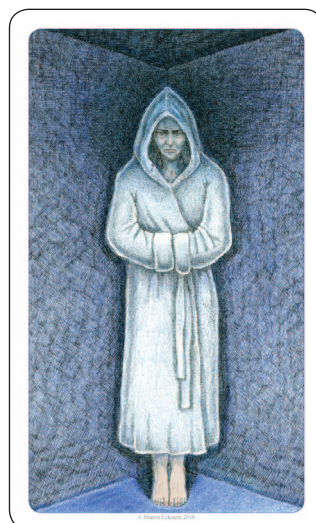


**PLEASING PARTS:** As we grow up we soon learn that pleasing others pays off; by saying nice things to another, doing favors for someone, or making someone laugh we are accepted by friends and we are praised and rewarded by parents, teachers and bosses. If we enjoy pleasing someone and we are under Self-Leadership, our lives will be fulfilling and our personal relationships healthy, but if we please at the expense of our authentic Selves to be accepted into a click of conditional friends, to get love in a one-way relationship, or hide our true feelings behind a mask of cheerfulness, a sense of emptiness and depression will soon haunt us.

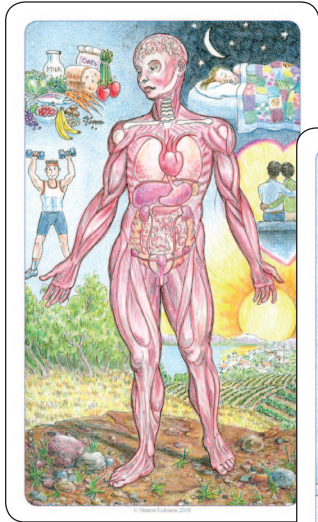
Or perhaps we discover pleasing is a good way to manipulate our way into getting what we want. Leave it to Beaver's Eddie Haskell personifies this type of Part: "You certainly look nice today, Mrs. Cleaver." She thinks, "OK, what do you want Eddie?" In any case, pleasing Parts develop with good intentions, basically for acceptance and security in a social group. When Self is behind our good intentions, pleasing others is a part of our authentic Selves and every one benefits.



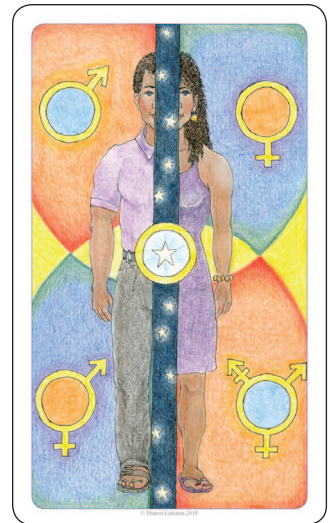
**DEPRESSED AND SAD PARTS:** Depressed Parts can present in many different forms, for different reasons and in degrees of power they hold. Some are situational, forming in response to something, usually negative, we experience and by the meaning we give to it. Divorce, a death, job loss, rape, or a diagnosis of a serious health problem, even aging, if we identify with our culture's emphasis on youthful beauty and vitality, can trigger Parts who leave us leaving blue, feeling worthless and longing for the good ol' days. These types of depressed Parts may actually be asking us to stop, step out of our harried lives, and spend time doing the inner work; *Parts Work*, meditation, journaling, prayer, etc., that is needed to get centered in Self and find clarity. We may come to realize loss is a part of life and we need time to grieve and heal, and realize how our thinking can either make unfortunate situations much worse or make them opportunities for personal growth.





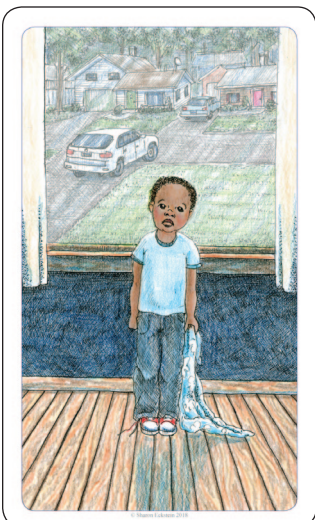


Some depressed Parts form as a result of a brain chemistry imbalance or a physical illness and people may need medication to get their chemistry back in balance. Even so, it is important to include some form of talk therapy to help break the cycle of negative thought patterns the depressed Parts hold. Studies have shown that therapy in conjunction with medication is more effective than medication alone. In situations like this, **Parts Work** is effective in helping clients manage their depressed parts through Self-leadership while taking medication. In all cases of depression, Parts are trying to let us know something is wrong and they need our attention and care.



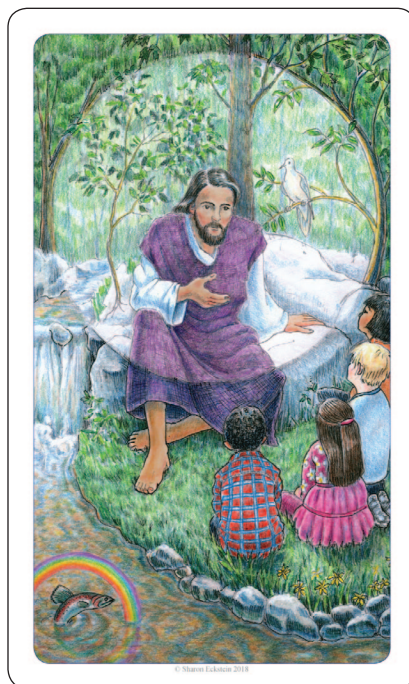
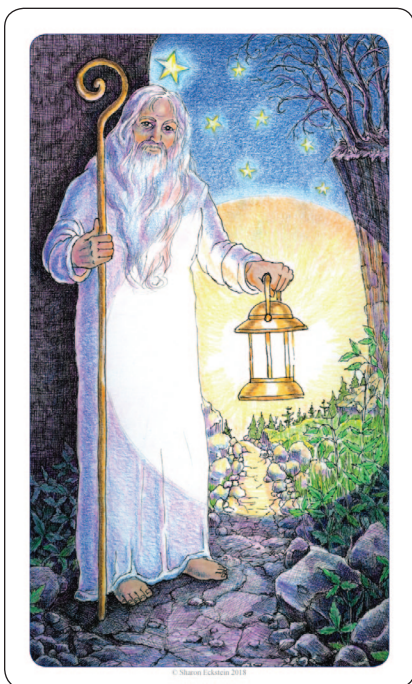
Other depressed Parts may develop because we are living inauthentic lives, exiling parts we believe threaten us in some way. Maybe we are afraid to admit we are gay, or to leave an unhealthy relationship, or a job that doesn't fit our temperament.

Or maybe we experienced neglect or severe trauma as a child, or in war time, and these sad and depressed Parts have been exiled by our hard-working managers in fear of their emotional burdens. Anxiety disorders may develop and/or a person can become physically ill. Although exiled, their sadness and depression will leak through the cracks, summoning distracters and firefighters to step in, making matters even worse. In these situations, as stated before, people need professional help.





**SPIRITUAL GUIDES** can hold Self qualities, and some believe they are actually Self taking a personal form. Some think they are Parts and some believe they are separate entities like Guardian Angels. I have experienced the transforming power of spiritual guides and it's very real, although they remain a mystery to me. They can be called upon to help a client when she is stuck with stubborn, deeply wounded or fearful parts that prevent Self awareness, and called upon to help the therapist navigate difficult situations in therapy. Therapists sometimes report feeling flooded by negative energy when with certain clients and guides have proven essential to help them unburden and garner strength to deal with it. Also, be aware that there are forces in opposition to spiritual guides and they can be tricky. Remember, Spiritual Guides hold Self qualities.





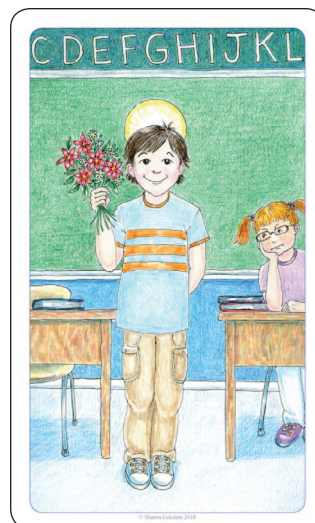
**PARTS AND OUR PERSONALITIES:** We need our Parts to interface with the outer world. How our Parts organize to process incoming information and determine our actions is not only a response to our experiences and formed beliefs about the world, but each of us is “hard wired” in a unique way that supports dominant Parts, who in turn, give us our individual temperaments. For instance, dominant Parts can determine how our psychic “batteries” are charged: Are you charged by being with people and find interacting in the outer world stimulating and satisfying? Or do you find that you need time alone to recharge, find the inner world of ideas and imagination stimulating and satisfying? If you answered yes to the first question, chances are you have extroverted Parts playing dominant roles in your personality, whereas if you answered yes to the second question, you are likely to have dominant introverted Parts. Again, it is important to have dominant Parts centered in Self or they too will become extreme.



I appropriated an example of dominant Parts bumping heads that Tom Holmes includes in his book. Tom uses a Z pattern to illustrate how a husband, who is introverted, and the wife, who is extroverted, interact at the end of a work week and need to recharge their psychic batteries. The husband needs to stay home and chill, while the wife needs to get out and party. Conflict ensues. This how the scenario could play out if a marriage counselor asked them to select cards active in their dialogue.



First the wife announces she has made plans for them to meet up with friends for a Friday night dinner and a movie. She is bubbling with excitement, so happy it's Friday and she has been released from her cubby hole at work.

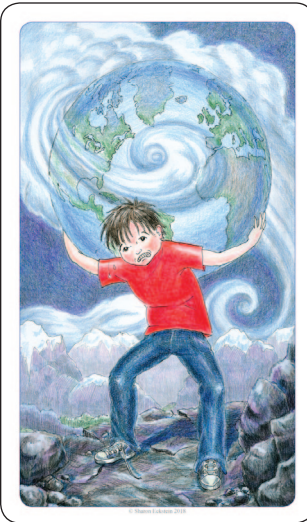


The husband sighs as his Good Boy takes over to please her and make her happy. He agrees to go, but he finds the idea of going out exhausting.





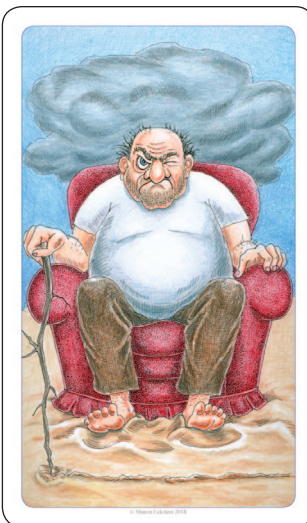
Then the wife's Social Manager steps in and reminds him of the picnic she has scheduled for Sunday.



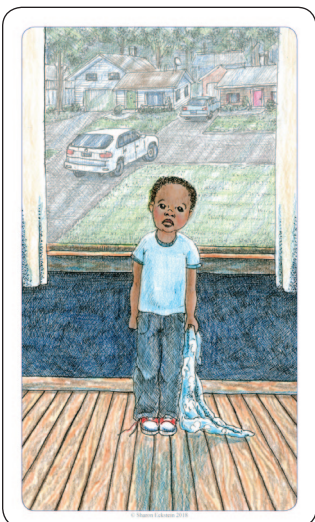
Now the husband is feeling his Good Boy take on the burden of what feels like "the world". He just doesn't have the energy to go extrovert at a picnic. It's the day of rest! He had plans to meditate, get some reading and writing done. He glares at his wife with stressed eyes.



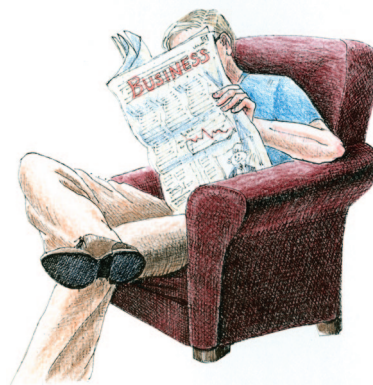
The wife tries to appease the Burdened Boy by offering to bring him a beer. Her Nurturing part wants him to feel better, relax a little, and not be upset with her. She tries to convince him how much fun it will be. "The Andersens are coming, John Franklin and his new wife and her kids and Carol Smith...."



"Carol Smith! Lord help me! That woman never stops talking! That's it! I'm staying home all weekend - BY MYSELF! Now his Grumpy part has taken over. In this case Grumpy serves as a manager, a protector, a rebel, and is rooted in the man's psycho/physical wiring. He needs down time to recharge and has to set boundaries to get his needs met.



Now the wife feels hurt and neglected. Her Sad Part takes over, and she begins to cry.



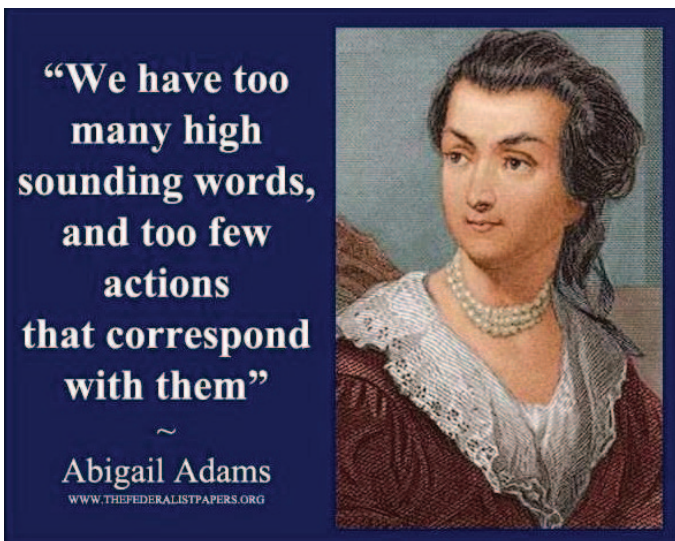
Grumpy refuses to give in to her sobbing, Sad Part and picks up the newspaper to shut her out. They have reached an impasse.

From this interaction you can see how Parts rise up and take over to protect the system and get basic needs met. All the Parts had good intentions but were not under Self-Leadership. If both of them had had more Self-Awareness they would have been observant of what Parts were being activated and addressed them before they took over. Using "There is a part of me ..." statements about how they feel and the ability to respect their differences and make compromises could have avoided the mounting tension and resulting impasse..





Striving Parts can also be hardwired. We all know of the goal-oriented, determined people who stop at nothing to accomplish their tasks and dreams. While some people are content to keep their dreams in dream land, these driven folks, especially in their extreme forms, are like bull dogs that don't stop until they drop, bringing amazing, often visionary dreams to reality, but with a cost to family, the bank account and health. Think of the modern miracles of technology, medicine, exploration, leadership in social causes, and the list goes on.



Not forgetting the unsung heroes of home and community who take on more than their share of hardship to make ends meet and get their kids through school. I'm reminded of Abigail Adams, who raised her family through hard times while her husband, then President John Adams, was away sacrificing his family life for our country. And slave, Harriet Tubman, who was instrumental in the underground railroad, working day and night in danger of her life, arranging shelter and transit for black people seeking safety in the north. Amazingly, courageous and determined people striving to make life better for others.





Our Striving Parts, especially when powered by Self can give us the strength and determination we need to accomplish our goals, no matter the adversity. For some these Parts are readily available as part of the hard-wired personality. For others the Part may develop when adversity strikes, and suddenly the person feels a warrior emerge that had been buried deep in the unconscious. Josephine Baker is a good example of a dancer who anesthetized herself in the entertainment culture of sex and drugs, but whose warrior blossomed during WW2, assisting the French Resistance and receiving the French Military Honor Award.

The cards can be used with new clients, introducing them to the dynamics of their inner world, or with established clients who already have a conscious, working relationship with their Parts. In any case, as a therapist, you will witness the efficacy in using the cards as the images capture your clients' inner system dynamics, often to their amazement. Clients take ownership in the process of self discovery with a sense of confidence as they "illustrate" their own inner story and see for themselves who is who, how and why Parts behave and what their Parts believe. Clients are able to give their once muddled inner world visual clarity, lay it out on the table, and with the help of the therapist, dialogue with their Parts, learn to separate, step back and experience Self-Leadership.

As therapist you have the opportunity to observe your client's emotional reactions, hear the changes as the client shifts from Part to Part, and note what roles the cards play in your client's inner system: manager, rebel, child, firefighter, or exile. Here you are able to employ your own professional experience and style: asking questions, educating and guiding, processing, debriefing, comforting and supporting as your clients inner story unfolds, and most importantly creating transformational space for healing and Self-Leadership.

