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### **Introduction**

Spiritual direction and supervision have gained throughout the years from modern disciplines such as counseling, sociology, and psychology. One of the latest contributions from psychology is the therapeutic approach known as the Internal Family Systems (IFS) method, created by Richard Schwartz in early 1980. IFS is compassionate, inclusive, spiritual, powerfully healing, and deeply respectful of our inner life. Its spiritual dimension makes IFS a comprehensive source of study to enrich the field of spiritual direction and supervision.

The IFS idea of multiplicity as the human person's essential phenomenological experience and the Self as an organizing principle resonates with many spiritual traditions. The IFS concept of the Self as an essence each person has that remains untouchable no matter how broken the person may be is compatible with the True Self, explained by Christian spiritual authors as the reality of who we really are and who we are created to be. Various spiritual and psychological traditions have recognized this core Self within us and named it in diverse ways: Imago Dei, Contemplative Presence, Observing Ego, Witness, Inner Light, Buddha-nature, Beloved Lover, Atman, the Tao, Christ-centeredness, True Self, Self-transcendence, and Self-awareness.

Although the IFS approach is compatible with the contemplative, evocative, and compassionate stance of spiritual direction and supervision, there is not much written about integrating IFS into spiritual direction and supervision. I only found the works of Noel Cabigting and Frank Rogers, who, like me, are former supervision students of Maria Tattu Bowen, who introduces the IFS method to

students in her programs Together in Mystery and the Advanced Certificate in Supervision at Fordham University.

### Internal Family System (IFS)

Richard Schwartz, grounded in systems thinking and informed by his career as a systematic family therapist, developed IFS in response to clients' descriptions of various parts within themselves, focusing on the relationships between parts and noticing systemic patterns in how they were organized across clients. He also found that when the clients felt safe and were allowed to relax, they would spontaneously experience some qualities such as openness, confidence, and compassion that Schwartz came to call the Self. In addition, he found that clients would know how to heal their parts when in that state of Self (IFS Institute).

IFS is named after the insight that our parts are related to one another like a family system. Knowing one's inner family and how the members interact with one another can help us understand our behavior, for example: why we suddenly become impatient, get angry for a nonapparent reason, or engage in compulsive behavior, not able to stop ourselves even though it harms us or others.

*Multiplicity asserts that it is the nature of the human mind to be divided into subpersonalities called parts. Systems as a concept views the personality as a living system of parts meaningfully organized in a family relationship, thus the name "internal family system." With the use of these two concepts, inner psychic relationships are more understandable and thus more treatable (Harris, 44).*

By knowing how our inner world works, spiritual directors and supervisors will be better equipped to help directees and supervisees unpack, explore, and understand their emotions, feelings, desires,

sensations, fantasies, images, behaviors, and thoughts, and find the sacred invitation amid them.

In his book *No Bad Parts*, Richard Schwartz explains that we have grown up believing in the mono-mind system, the idea that each of us has a mind from which thoughts, emotions, impulses, and urgencies emanate. Schwartz says that the concept of the mono-mind system is so ingrained in our culture that they have never analyzed the truth of it. IFS considers the possibility that everyone has multiple personalities and asserts that this is a good thing.

*I'm not suggesting that you have Multiple Personality Disorder (now called Dissociative Identity Disorder), but I do think that people with that diagnosis are not so different from everybody else. What are called alters in those people are the same as what I call parts in IFS, and they exist in all of us. The only difference is that people with Dissociative Identity Disorder suffered horrible abuse and their system of parts got blown apart more than yours and mine, so each part stands out in bolder relief and is more polarized and disconnected from the others (Schwartz 2021, 7).*

From a Christian perspective, IFS therapist Julie Honeycutt explains that IFS multiplicity is attuned to Christianity. The Christian God is relational, three in one. God is in perfect relationship with Godself; there is no disharmony whatsoever. If we are made in God's image, we are also in a relationship within ourselves. However, since we are not perfect, we have disharmony within ourselves; part of our spiritual journey is learning to live in harmony, especially when we find opposites in ourselves. Honeycutt says that this is possible and reflective of our Creator, who is both the Lion and the Lamb, the Alpha and Omega, complete opposites and yet wholly unified (Honeycutt).

## Parts

We are composed of parts. “Parts are experienced by us in several ways: thoughts, feelings, sensations, desires, and behaviors” (Harris, 37). IFS therapist Jay Earley explains that one can think of them as little people inside us. Each part has its own perspective, feelings, memories, goals, and motivations (Earley, 17). For example, one part of you might be trying to lose weight and another might want to eat whatever you want. We all have parts like the inner critic, the abandoned child, the pleaser, the angry part, and the loving caretaker. Since parts are like little people inside you, you can contact them, get to know them, negotiate with them, encourage them to trust you, help them communicate with each other, and give them what they need to heal (Earley, 40).

IFS teaches us to welcome all our parts with curiosity and compassion, seeking to understand them and appreciating their efforts to help us. Every part is rooted in positive intent, wanting what they think is best for us. IFS invites us to a radical inner hospitality.

*Our parts can sometimes be disruptive or harmful, but once they are unburdened, they return to their essential goodness. When we learn to LOVE ALL OUR PARTS, we can learn to love all people—and that will contribute to healing the world (Schwartz 2022).*

So, we do not lose sight of how some parts may be causing us problems. Instead, we develop a relationship of caring and trust with each part and then take steps to release it from its burdens so it can function healthily (Earley, 30).

*Parts relate to each other systematically. Some parts are allied, and others are polarized (opposite each other). We have an example of polarization in the Bible when the apostle Paul says, “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do” (Rom 7:19). Some parts protect others,*

*while vulnerable parts hide behind other parts' protection. Some parts are initiative-taking and prevent danger, while others are reactive and respond to danger.*

*Parts develop to secure survival and flourishing and to avoid pain and suffering. Some parts are impacted by beliefs a social system carries concerning gender, orientation, and racialized skin color, absorbing unhealed social, historical, and institutionalized trauma (such as white-body supremacy, gender discrimination, sexual orientation discrimination, etc.) and personal trauma (including family trauma we inherit genetically and through the way they treat us, or both) (Menakem, 45).*

*Parts come in three types—managers and firefighters, which are protective parts, and exiled parts that are wounded, vulnerable, and often buried.*

## **Manager**

Protective part whose primary function is to secure day-to-day survival and functioning. Common managers include achievers, planners, caretakers, analyzers, critics, judges, and sentries.

## **Firefighter**

Protective part whose function is to distract us from experiences and emotions that may be overwhelming or immobilizing. Familiar firefighters include bingeing, shopping, drinking, rage, working, suicidality, self-harm, and addictions.

## **Exile**

Wounded part who carries the pain of an unhealed wound, unhealed shame, or undeveloped gift or power. Exile parts ache to be heard, healed, and integrated.

## Burdens

“A burden is a constraint given to a part to carry for the inner family, such as a traumatic memory, a core belief such as worthlessness, a hopeless or resentful attitude, or a harmful protective role within the inner family” (Harris, 43). Schwartz categorizes burdens as personal burdens and legacy burdens. The latter come from nondirect experiences, while personal burdens derive from direct life experiences. Legacy burdens can come from our parents, who acquired them from their parents and so on; they can also be absorbed from the ethnic group or culture in which we live. According to Schwartz, legacy burdens can be equally or more powerful organizers of our lives and are not as evident as personal burdens (Schwartz 2021, 18–19).

It is essential to clarify that parts are not burdens. This differentiation has far-reaching implications, especially in the treatment of addictions. For example, Schwartz says it is common to believe that a person who wants to be high all the time is an addict with an irresistible urge to use drugs. This belief leads to focusing recovery on combating the urgency that a person has, the effect of which is polarizing this addictive part or the willpower of the addict. Understanding that the addict’s drug-seeking is a protective part that bears the burden of keeping this person away from severe emotional pain and even suicide is crucial. This approach can guide the person to know this part with curiosity, compassion, and gratitude, and to negotiate permission to heal the part that this additive part protects (Schwartz 2021, 19).

Differentiating parts from burdens is critical in understanding that parts are not bad, but that some keep a secret, a story of pain, or a trauma that makes them assume a role that motivates the person to act in ways that are not positive. Unburdening these parts leads to healing, conversion, and transformation; the parts then assume other value roles. Julie Honeycutt says that there are no parts better than

others. They are all made in God's image. So, if we want to label something as good or bad, we can say that parts are good and burdens are bad (Honeycutt).

Shame is one of the most common burdens people share in spiritual direction. It is usually expressed by "I have to" and "I should." Shame is also reflected in the misunderstanding that one must be perfect and good to deserve God's love. Unburdening from shame is challenging, and it requires that the spiritual director hear the story about why it is there and how it got there. Some people have shame-based personalities. Julie Honeycutt says that the average person has three parts with shame messages, while someone with a shame-based personality person is going to have ten to twenty parts. Honeycutt asserts that people with shame-based personalities need to learn to accept themselves and that it is through this radical acceptance that they will grow and change (Honeycutt).

"And Yet"

— Ann-Marie Brown

## Self

Every person has a Self and the capacity to access it. Psychologist Loch Kelly affirms that everyone has a Self, and everyone is essentially Self, whether we know it or not. Knowing and living from Self is called self-realization, awakening, or being self-led. Self is the "I am" prior to and beyond "I am this or I am that." Self is equally available to everyone, as both who we have always been and the loving presence we have been looking for. Discovering the fullness of Self is described by many people as "returning home."

Kelly states that Self is not a part but is within all parts. Parts can learn to know Self and see from Self. Though parts will initially protect what

they believe, all parts long for Self, and all are ultimately happy to unburden, feel compassion from Self, and be Self-led. Realizing Self, and welcoming all parts, can be considered “the ultimate medicine” because it relieves the root of suffering, which is, paradoxically, caused by not experiencing and living from the Self that we are (Kelly).

### **The Eight Cs, the Five Ps, and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

Richard Schwartz found that, no matter what parts came up in a session with a client, when all the parts agreed to step back, clients would start to show certain qualities. These qualities of Self are known in IFS as the eight Cs: calm, clarity, connection, creativity, courage, curiosity, confidence, and compassion. Other C words could also apply to Self, like consistency, care, and contemplation. The five Ps are playfulness, persistence, patience, perspective, and presence. One could also add peace and perceptiveness.

*The qualities of Self resemble the Galatians 5:22 description of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Honeycutt reminds us that the world's three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, recognize that we are made in the image of God. From a Christian point of view, the Self is not the Holy Spirit, says Honeycutt, but rather the image of God we all have, which sometimes will emerge organically, and sometimes we must cultivate like a growing organism, like a flower (Honeycutt).*

Jay Earley defines the Self as the spiritual center. He explains that the Self wants to get to know each part, develop a relationship of caring and trust, and understand what makes it tick. The Self assumes positive intent for a part, compassion for pain or difficulty, the need to defend against pain, and whatever might drive a part to an extreme role. Even if parts have strong feelings or intense pain, the Self is calm, centered, and spacious. Self can work with each part to unburden it.



The goal for IFS work is aid this unburdening of each part, so each has a healthy role and trusts the Self to lead (Earley, 31). “The Self can bring wholeness towards the parts because, by its very nature, the Self is the organizing, integrating principle of the internal system” (Cabigting, 3).

## **IFS for Spiritual Development**

Frank Rogers recognizes three spiritual purposes that guide IFS:

**1.** Interior Freedom—a contemplative groundedness where we are aware of our interior movements without being possessed by them. He explains it as “a long, loving look at the real,” which is Walter Burghardt’s description of contemplation (93); a self-reflective detachment, a snow globe settled enough to see what is inside with clarity.

**2.**

Self-Leadership—living from our Self-essence, which Jay Earley explains as the situation in which your parts trust Self to make decisions and take actions in your life (424).

**3.**

Spiritual Alignment—being infused with the spiritual energy that is intrinsically restorative and has the capacities for calm within the chaos, confidence within challenging circumstances, and compassion even toward those who are difficult. The spiritual energy is in harmony with the Sacred energy that flows through the universe and sustains all things.

According to Rogers, there are two qualitatively separate ways of being in the world: enmeshed in a part and grounded in Self. These extend along a continuum:

### **flooded**

Totally hijacked by a part, with no or virtually no awareness of it ("I am so mad right now I can't think straight," or "I'm fuming").

### **blended**

Enmeshed within a part or possessed by one, but with some awareness of one's experience ("I know I'm really mad right now but ...").

### **self-led**

("I'm grounded and calm and aware that something in me got really triggered and angry.")

### **self-presence**

A profound, compassionate, often wordless connection with both my own inner world and with those around me.

## **IFS-informed Spiritual Direction and Supervision**

The Internal Family Systems model, with its focuses on a nonpathologizing approach towards every part and Self-leadership, is compatible with spirituality, especially with regards to the ministries of spiritual direction and supervision of spiritual directors (Cabigting, 2). Frank Rogers explains that spiritual directors can use IFS as the lens to discern the inner landscape of the directees by asking:

- *What part of them is more dominant right now?*
- *How do they feel towards that part—does another part have a reaction?*
- *Which other of their parts are activated?*
- *How are these parts trying to serve the directee?*
- *Are they accessing their Self-energy right now?*
- *Where do we see Self-energy in them?*
- *How do they embody Self in their unique way?*
- *How do they connect with their sense of the sacred?*

Rogers states that the spiritual director assists the directee in restoring Self-leadership and discerning the Sacred's invitation within the directee's life circumstances. In other words, the spiritual director helps the directee to come back to their Self, sense their connection to the sacred source of their own wisdom, and discern how to live more fully from their Self-essence. Rogers developed a five-step guide under the acronym of PULSE.

- ***Paying Attention:*** mirror back the directee's parts and invite their contemplative awareness of them.
- ***Understand Empathically:*** invite them to listen to their parts with curiosity and hear the resounding cry or FLAG within them. (FLAG stands for: F—fears that something life essential is threatened; L—longings that are unsatisfied; A—aching wounds that are still tender; and G—gifts that are stifled and yearn to flourish.)
- ***Love with Connection:*** invite them to tend to their parts with warmth and care.
- ***Sense the Sacred:*** invite them to sense how the Sacred might care for their parts.
- ***Embody New Life:*** invite them to discern how to embody their best Self in their life while honoring their parts.

The spiritual director tends to their own parts in a spiritual direction session and discusses with a supervisor when necessary. I believe that in a supervision session, supervisors can help the spiritual directors take their own PULSE and listen to the FLAG within them. An IFS-informed Contemplative Reflection Form (CRF) and IFS-informed Remembered Dialogue Form (RDF) will help to map the parts activated in a spiritual direction session and learn of activation triggers for parts.

## **IFS Fundamental Skills**

IFS's fundamental skills are as follows: detecting and naming parts; knowing when speaking from Self and from part; unblending; mapping; and unburdening. These can be of help when needed in spiritual direction and supervision sessions.

## **Detecting and Naming Parts**

Parts communicate via thoughts, bodily sensations, inner voices, fantasies, emotions, images, behaviors, and gestures. Jay Earley explains that sometimes a part is not clear at first. It starts as a vague image or felt sense—for example, “folded over on itself.” You get to know a part like this by staying with the experience in a patient and curious way. If you are open and interested, the part will know that it is welcome, and the nature of it will become clearer in a few minutes. For example, “folded over on itself” might gradually reveal itself as a part curled up to protect itself from attack. You might feel a vague emotion, such as a sense of poignancy, a narrowing in your chest, or an empty place in your body. When the sensation or image is not entirely clear at first, it simply means that your access to the part is still forming. The Focusing method is excellent for allowing parts to come into view gradually (Early, 175–76).

In her video *Learning Focusing* and in chapter 4 of her book *The Power of Focusing: A Practical Guide to Emotional Self-Healing*, Anne Weiser

Cornell guides us in how to begin focusing—relaxing, detecting, and naming a part. Cornell calls it a felt sense. For Cornell, a felt sense does not have to be felt explicitly in your physical body. She states that for most people, the word *body* indicates a narrower, more restricted space than the one in which a felt sense can happen. There is not a better word than *body* for this complex field of experience. So, when focusing, we need to let our awareness go more expansive than we usually would.

In the next chapter, Cornell describes how to deepen the focusing by sitting and having a conversation with the felt sense, listening to its story with curiosity and without hurry. Questions to the felt sense are welcome. For example, if the word describing the felt sense is scared, you can ask what gets you so scared? Or what gets you the most scared? Do you need something from me? What do you need to happen next? What would you feel if everything was fine? The last question is interesting because the body, according to Cornell, has the capacity to know how it would feel if everything were okay while the logical mind has no clue how to solve a situation. The question welcomes new ways of being and new action steps.

### **Speaking from Self and Speaking from a Part**

Jay Earley explains that speaking from Self is advisable rather than speaking from a part. For example, if a part is angry instead of saying, “Hey you, stupid creep!” it is better to say, “There is a part of me that is angry.” When you speak from the Self, you are more likely to be responsible for the part’s feelings and issues rather than blaming others. As a result, you are less likely to say things that will hurt other people. Speaking from Self is particularly useful when you are talking with someone about a touchy emotional issue or trying to resolve a conflict with someone. It is a simple rule that helps you to engage in genuine dialogue. This is especially helpful in intimate relationships. It is also advisable in work with conflicts in groups (Earley, 406–7).

Differentiating when a spiritual directee or supervisee is speaking from Self and when from a part is critical in detecting spiritual bypassing. John Welwood, a psychotherapist and Buddhist practitioner, first coined the term *spiritual bypassing* after observing members of his spiritual community using their spirituality as an excuse to avoid facing emotional difficulties, personal character flaws, and unmet psychological needs. A part doing spiritual bypassing can show as one or more of the following behaviors: toxic positivity (pretending that everything is okay to avoid negativity), emotional numbness, living in a fantasy, denial of anger, misguided compassion, avoidance of responsibility, self-loathing, and self-aggrandizing (Mindfulness Exercises).

Spiritual directors and supervisors can help directees and supervisees become aware and detect spiritual bypasser parts. One of the most common developed by Christians is a moralizer part that keeps track of the sins. It can criticize un-Christian thoughts and behavior and sometimes thinks it oversees one's spiritual growth. A spiritual directee or supervisee may confuse their moralizer part for the Holy Spirit. They share that the Holy Spirit said something is wrong when it was really just a part of them. The martyr part is also typical. This self-sacrificing part might say you should always put others first. Though putting others first can be a fantastic value, it can also cross boundaries and become a burden. Another common one is the performance orientation part, preoccupation with what others think (Honeycutt).

## Unblending

When one is flooded with feelings of a part, becoming ungrounded and caught up in the part's identification, this can lead to blending of a part with the Self. When you are blended, not only do you believe you are that part, but that part believes it is you. Self can be differentiated from parts through unblending, a process of disidentifying with the parts and identifying with Self. Unblending begins by helping parts

trust that it is safe for them to relax. It is essential to show respect to the blended parts. One can unblend by asking the part for more space between Self and that part.

The goal is for it to be activated but not blended. To unblend, we ask the part to separate so we can get to know it. For example, one can ask the part to move out of the body and contain its feelings. If the part does not separate, ask what it is afraid of when separated? Explain to it the value of separating or reassure it about its fears. Usually, this means explaining that one can be there to hear it and understand it better if it separates. If this does not work, one can take a more active role in unblending. Honeycutt offers the following unblending techniques:

- *Are you feeling those feelings or are you those feelings?*
- *Imagine that this part is a piece of clothing such as a hat or a jacket. Then, imagine removing this article and hanging it on a hook so that you can see it from a distinct perspective.*
- *Imagine yourself looking in a mirror, and the image in the mirror is that part of you. Now step aside and maintain the image in the mirror so you can see that this part is separate from you.*
- *On a scale of one to ten, how strong or intense is this part? Would it be willing to turn down the volume two or three notches?*
- *Is that part bigger or smaller than you, or the same size?*
- *How close is that part to you? What would it be like to take two or three steps back from this part for perspective?*
- *Does it feel like it is you? Let this part know that you want to get to know it better but that it is tough to hear and understand because it is so close to you.*

- *What percent of you feels this part? Could this be toned down 5 percent?*
- *How do you sense God feels about this part?*

Honeycutt explains that to unblend, we also must be able to detect Self. But the Self is sometimes covered up by pseudo-self-parts known as Self-like parts. So, someone might say, “I am really curious about that part, I want to understand it so I can get better.” But that person is not talking from Self, because Self would not express that type of curiosity. The Self does not have an agenda. One can tell by the tone, language, and intention that it is pseudo-Self.

## Mapping

Parts mapping consists of identifying parts and writing the information on paper. It can be a list of names and may include the characteristics of each part and information like when and how the part manifests, its name, age, role, and intention. Parts mapping aims to identify the parts in the inner system and how they relate. We can map our parts as a spiritual exercise by identifying the parts that are currently active, the main parts of our system, or the parts that come up around a specific topic or experience we’ve named. An IFS-informed Contemplative Reflection Form helps map the parts activated in a spiritual direction session. An IFS-informed Remembered Dialogue Form assists in identifying the moments when parts were activated in the session.

Before mapping the parts, it is good to start with a grounding exercise, inviting Self-energy, evoking the eight C qualities: curiosity, creativity, compassion, calmness, courage, confidence, clarity, and connectedness. Then, once one feels grounded in those qualities, one invites parts to manifest in their preferred order relative to a specific question. Listen until a part has expressed everything the part wanted you to know about them, see them walk away, and invite the next part. IFS offers a structure to map parts called the six Fs.



## Internal Family Systems Parts Map – Six Fs

With each part, you can go through the six Fs (Pasterski).

1.

**Find the part**—Listen for a thought, feeling, gesture, energy, or word and see if you can locate it in your body.

2.

**Focus**—Focus on that specific element, the place in your body, and see what emerges.

3.

**Flesh it out**—Notice how you feel the part in your body. Are there any thoughts or emotions emerging? How far are you from that part? How old do you think it is?

4.

**Feel**—How do you feel towards this part? Here you check for self-energy and the eight Cs.

5.

**Befriend**—What would the part like you to know? What is its role? What is its purpose? How old does it think you are? How old is it? What does it want from you, from the world, from God? What is its desire?

6.

**Fears**—What is it afraid would happen if it were to stop doing what it is doing?

Each time you may note the answers until nothing more comes.

## **Unburdening**

In the IFS releasing process called unburdening, mentioned earlier, a part lets go of a burden it carries. There are techniques to help parts unburden. Each part has its own way of unburdening, so letting go of burdens takes different forms (Rizzo).

IFS treats the unburdening process involving exile parts with care, compassion, and respect. The model I have learned from therapist Deborah Klinger is explained as follows:

### **the self**

The Self cannot connect with an Exile without permission of the Protectors. They give permission if they have a trusting relationship with Self.

### **Witnessing:**

Once permission has been granted and the Self has established a connection with the Exile, the Self is invited to go into the past, into the situation where the Exile is stuck. The Exile is allowed to tell its story.

### **retrieval:**

When the Exile is ready, the Self can bring it out of the past and into the present. If the Exile is not prepared to return to the actual place where one is living, the Exile could go to an imaginative site: a beach, a playground, or another place the Exile desires to be.

### **unburdening:**

The Self assists the Exile in a ceremonial releasing of its burdens. For example: if Self and Exile are on the beach, the water can help purify,

clean, and release. It is crucial to ensure that all burdens are gone; unnoticed burdens can cause a part to slip back into the past. Once the burdens are gone, the Self helps the part by inviting back any essential qualities that the burdens had displaced.

### **the self**

Self then checks in with any protective parts that moved aside earlier in the process to see if they have any questions, comments, or concerns and to express appreciation to them.

### **integration & completion:**

The unburdening and reintegration into the present system of Exiles enable protective parts to become spontaneously unburdened. When protectors are released from their extreme roles, they get new jobs. In other words, parts have ongoing existence.

Exiles need to be carefully reintegrated into the system (Holmes et al., 97). Spiritual directors and supervisors must use the tools of this model safely. When a spiritual directee or supervisee has experienced so much pain and trauma in their lives that their internal systems are sensitive, reactive, chaotic, unstable, or strongly conflicted, it is recommended that the directee or supervisee be referred to a therapist. Of course, this also applies to oneself.

### **An IFS-informed Spiritual Direction Supervision Model**

I propose a sixty-minute supervision model that integrates IFS in the supervisory ministry of spiritual directors. Twenty-four hours before the supervision session, the spiritual director fills out and submits to the supervisor the *IFS-Informed Contemplative Reflection Form* (CRF) and the *IFS-Informed Remembered Dialogue Form* (RDF).

The supervision session starts with a grounding exercise to contact Self, facilitated by the supervisor, followed by the presentation of the case by the spiritual director with clarification questions if needed. Then, the supervisor guides the supervisee to work with a part activated in the spiritual direction session that the director thinks needs attention and is related to a focus question. Reading the portion of the spiritual direction conversation that triggered the part during the session would help activate the part in the supervision session.

The supervisor could use Frank Rogers's five-step process named PULSE or the IFS six Fs process explained previously. These processes can be applied to each of the spiritual director's parts involved in the spiritual direction session if the director wishes it and time permits. The consultation question is discussed at the end of the session. Finally, we conclude by sharing learnings and insights from the supervision session, whether any new freedom has arisen, and what the spiritual director is taking away for personal life and ministry of spiritual direction.

## Conclusion

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is an evidence-based form of psychotherapy that provides a spiritual path map and a process of personal transformation. IFS offers spiritual practices to awaken Self-energy in our everyday life to promote Self-leadership. Assessing the Self and cultivating Self-energy is congruent with the aim of spiritual directors and supervisors to increase the ability to be in presence during sessions. Self-energy allows a contemplative groundedness to live in a wise and relaxed way and to listen to the Sacred invitation amid our circumstances. Grounding in Self enhances spiritual directors' and supervisors' genuine curiosity and radical hospitality to whatever directees and supervisees bring to the sessions, in addition to cultivating compassionate care for them.

IFS's simple way of talking about Self and parts is a tool within a contemplative, evocative, and compassionate approach to spiritual direction and supervision. IFS mindfulness meditations and the Focusing Method are paths of deepening and bringing balance into our spiritual life. The practice of Focusing is an excellent method for allowing parts to gradually come into view. IFS fundamental skills are excellent means to use in spiritual direction and supervision. Spiritual directors and supervisors must be cautious about using IFS's unburdening process with people experiencing past or recent traumas. Abiding by the guidelines of ethical conduct, we must be aware of the limitations of our capabilities and in such situations refer our spiritual directee and supervisee to an appropriately qualified person such as an IFS therapist.

The capacity to accept and forgive parts is the beginning of self-transformation and reconciliation with others, ourselves, and God. IFS reflects an apostolic dimension in that the more we develop our capacities to love ourselves and our inner family system, the more we become agents of love in the world.

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