

Chapter 1

Why Am I So Stuck?



Romans 7:15-25 (NRSV)

Internal Family Systems (IFS):

A model of therapy developed by Dr. Richard Schwartz that understands human beings to be comprised of a core Self (referred to in this book as God Image or Imago Dei) and many different parts.

Parts:



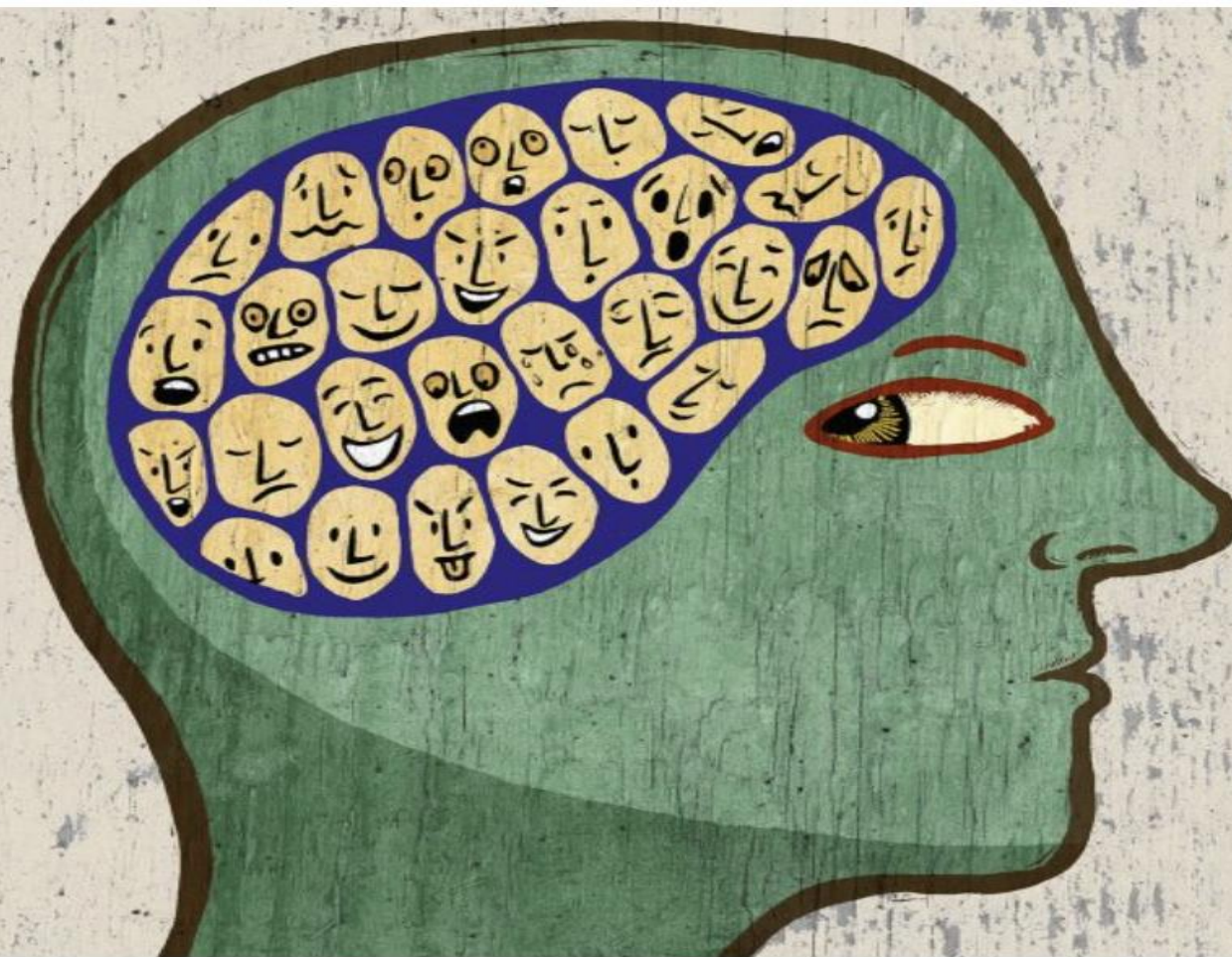
Unique aspects of our personalities (subpersonalities) that have their own thoughts, feelings, sensations, and agendas.



All people are born with many unburdened parts that together comprise their unique personality. All parts want something positive for the individual.



Some parts become burdened with pain (or strategies for coping with pain) from negative life experiences.



Dr. Schwartz teaches that “we are more like an alliance of different parts, all representing very distinct aspects of what we think of as “the real me.”

FINDING YOUR STUCKNESS

Here are some common places people find themselves stuck:

Feelings

Anxiety

Depression

Fear

Worry

Panic

Despair/hopelessness

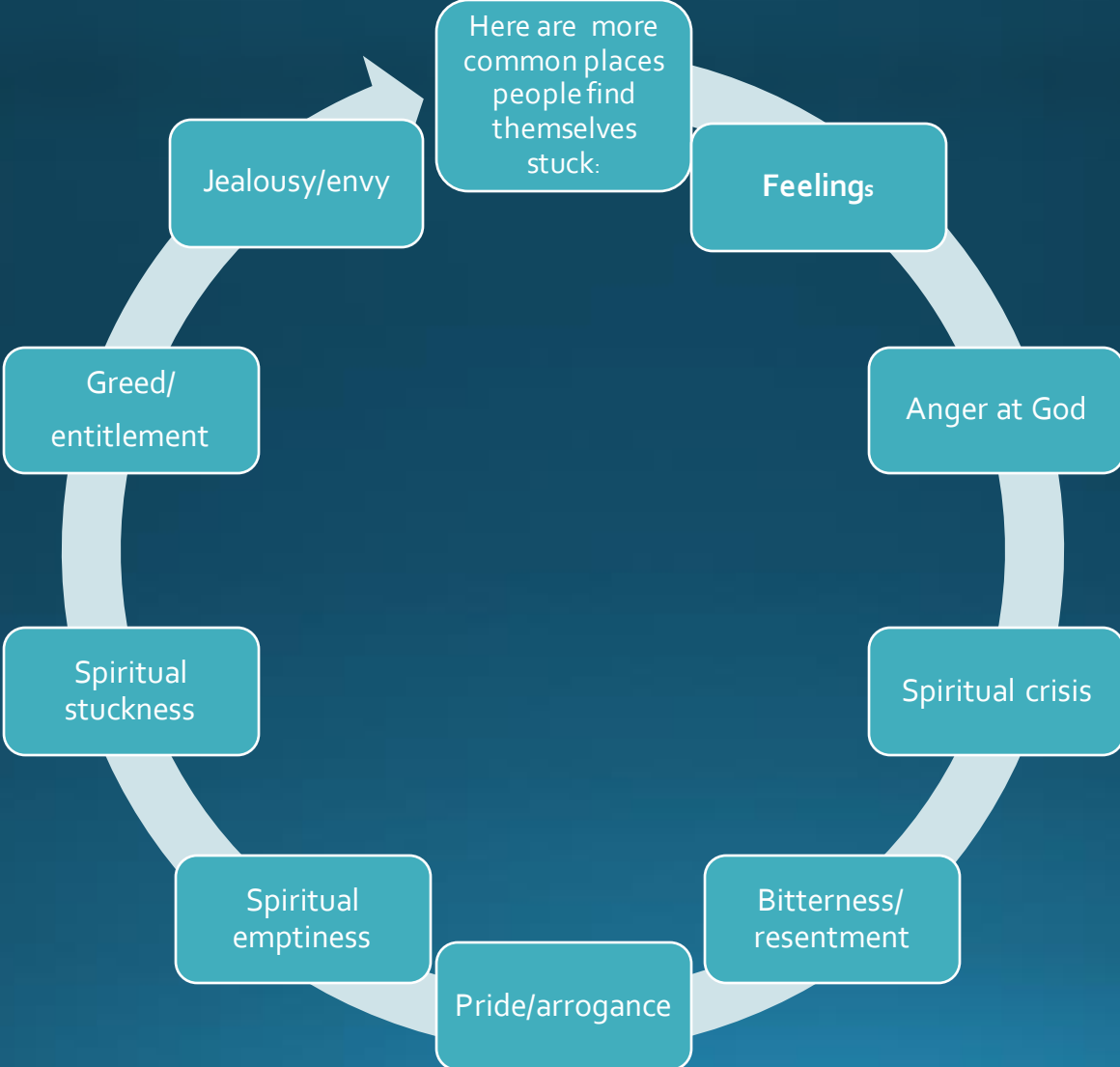
Loneliness

Isolation

Shame

Self-hatred

FINDING YOUR STUCKNESS



Thoughts and Behavior Patterns



Thoughts and Behavior Patterns

Undersleeping/insomnia

Drinking for relief or to
drunkenness

Drugging

Sexual acting out
(porn, affairs, etc.)

Sexual acting in
(avoidance, comparison,
etc.)

Dissociating/checking
out/binge watching

Avoidance
isolating

Denial

Procrastination

Relationship Patterns

Anger/rage/outbursts
of temper

Staying in toxic
relationships

Sabotaging
important
relationships

Making excuses

Blame

Lying/covering
up/distortion

Rescuing others

People pleasing

Discussion Questions

In what areas of your life do you wrestle with stuckness?

When part of you wants to do one thing and a different part wants to do something else, that's a sign that your parts are at war.

(Sleeping in vs. spending time with God. Eating Oreos vs. losing weight.)

How do you typically respond when you have parts that seem to be at war?

Have you ever felt afraid to be honest about your struggles?

What qualities in a person or environment make it safe to be honest about the tough stuff?

Have you ever heard “learn more,” “stop it,” or “try harder” in a spiritual context?

How did these messages impact you?

Are you prepared for God to turn your human way of thinking on its head?

What excites you about that possibility?