

“Meet the Parts of You in the Parenting Struggle”

An IFS-Based Reflection for the Overloaded Mother and the Peacekeeping Partner

This gentle guide is written for you — the parent who finds themselves doing too much, holding too many pieces, and feeling increasingly alone in the emotional load.

And also for you — the parent who just wants peace, who gets flooded and freezes when emotions rise, and who is tired of always being told you're not doing enough.

Inside, we'll meet two powerful internal protectors:

1. **The One Who Carries It All** (often in the mother)
2. **The Peacekeeper** (often in the father or partner)

Each part developed to help you survive — but both can soften when Self takes the lead.

PART 1: Meet the One Who Carries It All

(Often the Overfunctioning Mother)

Take a breath.

Let your body settle.

And let these words speak directly to the part of you that always steps in — because no one else will.

Reflection Prompt

Close your eyes and bring to mind a recent moment when:

- Your child was crying or whining at your partner
- He froze, gave in, or avoided setting a limit
- You felt your body tighten — and something fierce surged forward

That part that rose up? Let's meet her.

A Letter to the “I’ll Do It Myself” Part

“I see you.

You’re the one who double-checks everything.

Who carries the calendar and the crisis plan.

Who spots the long-term damage and steps in fast.

Because if you don’t, who will?”

You didn’t start this way.

But somewhere along the way, you learned:

Peace isn’t safe unless someone is watching everything.

And you’ve been watching ever since.

You carry the resentment.

You carry the guilt.

You carry the fire that says, *“No, this matters.”*

Even when your voice shakes. Even when no one thanks you.

You are not the problem.

You are a protector — born from chaos or neglect or invisibility.

But you are tired.

And you long to be held. Seen. Joined.

You don’t have to let go — just let **Self** step in beside you.

Journal Prompts

- What am I most afraid will happen if I stop doing it all?
- What does this part believe about my partner? About my child?
- What does she need — not to go away, but to **relax**?

PART 2: Meet the Peacekeeper

(Often the Conflict-Avoidant Partner)

Take another breath.

This time, imagine a moment when:

- Your child began to whine or cry for you — “I want Daddy!”
- You felt overwhelmed, unsure how to respond
- You gave in, stayed a bit longer, avoided the meltdown
- And then felt your partner’s anger simmering nearby

This part of you — the one that avoids conflict, who just wants calm — has a story too. Let’s meet them now.

A Letter to the Peacekeeper

“I see you.

You’re the one who tries to keep things smooth.

You scan for tension. You freeze when voices rise.

You soften your edges because somewhere, once,

being soft was safer than speaking up.”

You didn’t choose passivity — you learned it was protection.

Because when you were young, maybe:

- Big feelings meant danger
- Anger led to rejection
- Holding a boundary got you punished or ignored

So now, when your child cries and your partner pushes,

Your nervous system says: **Just make it stop. Give them what they want. Stay safe.**

But deep down, you’re not actually at peace.

You’re flooded, uncertain, quietly bracing for the next wave.

And part of you knows:

The very thing you’re avoiding — conflict, limit-setting, “upsetting” your child — might actually be the doorway to connection and confidence.

You’re not weak. You’re protective.

But you, too, deserve support.

Journal Prompts

- What am I most afraid will happen if I hold a boundary with my child? With my partner?
- What does this part believe it's protecting me from?
- What would it feel like to lead from Self instead of fear?

A Note for Both Partners

These two protectors — the **Overfunctioner** and the **Peacekeeper** — are not enemies.

They are both scared.

Both tired.

Both formed in households where emotional needs weren't met consistently — where childhood emotional neglect shaped their nervous systems.

They love your child.

They want your home to feel safe.

And they will keep clashing *until Self steps in* and says:

"You don't have to do this alone. We're on the same team now."

That's the invitation.

To begin leading not from panic or passivity, but from grounded compassion — toward each other, and toward the child you're both learning to raise *while reparenting yourselves*.