Exercise: Letter to Your Inner Loving Parent

One way to begin awakening the loving parent is to write a letter. We might say... "Dear loving parent, I need your help to create a gentler inner world. Please step in to lead if other inner family members take over. Please help me surrender the critical parent to a power greater than myself and show warmth and compassion to my inner child and inner teen. Help my inner family feel loved and whole. Help my inner child release their false beliefs one day at a time." In the space below or in your journal, write a letter to your loving parent. Keep the letter handy and read it often until it feels natural for you to contact this aspect of your true self. While this exercise is powerful when done on your own, sharing your letter with trusted others can help you connect with your emotions more deeply. Sharing gives you a chance to be seen and heard.

Reflections: Accessing the Loving Parent Inside

1. Can you recall a time in your life when someone you cared about was struggling in some way? A child or a close friend (or an animal)? How did you respond? What did your words, your tone of voice, and your body language say to them? Could you sense them receiving your compassion?

2. How do you usually respond to yourself when you are struggling? What do your words, your tone of voice, and your body language say to you?

3. What similarities or differences do you notice between how you treat others and how you treat yourself?

4. During your childhood, who or what was available to you in ways you needed? A teacher? A relative? Perhaps a pet or treasured stuffed animal? What did they do, say, or give you?

5. Who or what do you think of as modeling loving parent behavior? Historical figures, world leaders, other people you know or learned about, animals, nature, characters, or music? List them:

6. What qualities do the people you listed embody (e.g., kindness, love, wisdom, acceptance, etc.)? List as many qualities as you can, referring to the Feelings, Needs, and Physical Sensations sheet in Appendix D, if you wish.

The people you listed above can serve as loving parent role models. You can draw on their qualities as you practice becoming your own loving parent. Post their quotes, pictures, or a drawing of them at home, at work, or in the car. Ask yourself what they would do in a given situation. Imagine them cheering you on in your reparenting efforts.

"I first got an example of a loving parent by my sponsor modeling what an inner loving parent says with praise, affirmations, and allowing feelings. My sponsor saw the light in me that I now see. That light cannot be accessed when I numb out through 'don't talk/trust/feel' measures." -Fellow Traveler

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