

# The Burdened Internal System

## MANAGERS

These protectors act preemptively to keep the person feeling secure by controlling people, events, and other parts. They carry huge burdens of responsibility for keeping life together and fear that relinquishing control will lead to much worse outcomes. They protect against anything that leads to vulnerability, pain, or instability. "Never again!" is their motto.

### COMMON MANAGER BEHAVIORS AND TRAITS:

Controlling, Analyzing,  
Criticizing, Judging,  
Caretaking, Pessimism,  
Planning, Numbing

## EXILES

These parts have been rejected or traumatized and, holding the deep wounds and memories filled with terror, pain, and shame. Young and childlike, often frozen in time and hiding for protection, they become increasingly extreme to share their story. They leave the person feeling exposed and vulnerable, something the protectors fear will destabilize the system. "Don't forget me" is their motto.

### COMMON EXILE BEHAVIORS AND TRAITS:

Sensitivity, Anger,  
Dependency, Innocence,  
Spontaneity, Openness

## SELF

This is the deepest essence or center of every person. When differentiated, Self acts as a wise, compassionate leader able to heal and lead the system.

### QUALITIES OF SELF ENERGY:

Curiosity, Calmness,  
Compassion, Clarity,  
Courage, Creativity,  
Confidence,  
Connectedness

## FIREFIGHTERS

These protectors spring into action whenever pain from other parts, especially the more wounded exiles, gets activated or threatens to overwhelm. Firefighters act powerfully and automatically to repress the emerging exiles, release pressure, and get out of danger fast. They can overpower managers' efforts to control the system. "When all else fails!" is their motto.

### COMMON FIREFIGHTER BEHAVIORS AND TRAITS:

Abusing Substances, Attempting Suicide,  
Bingeing on Food, Over-spending,  
Having Affairs, Dissociating,  
Distracting, Cutting

*Text by Mariel Pastor, LMFT*

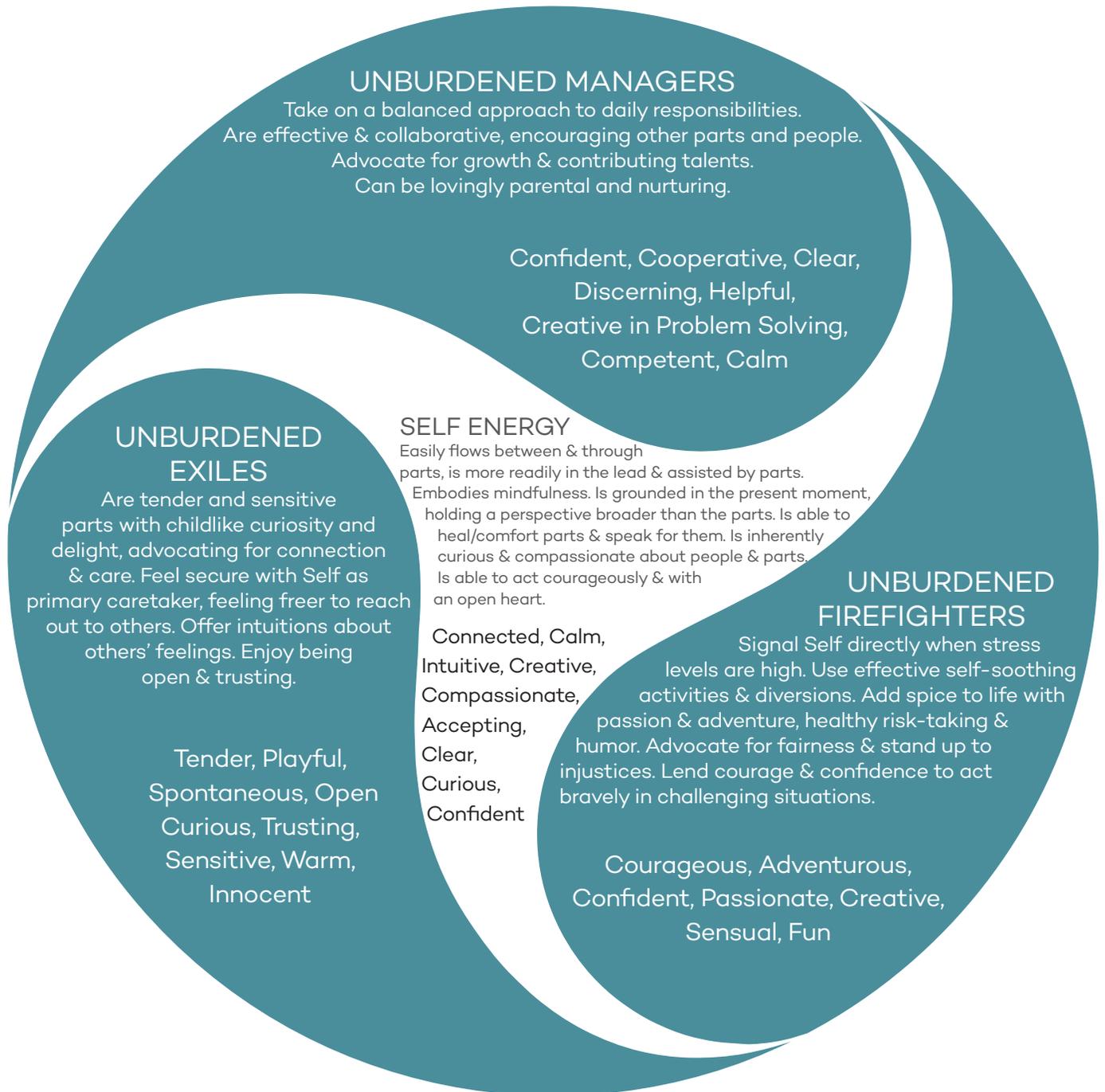
*Internal Family Systems by Richard Schwartz, PhD*

*Original graphic by Janet R. Mullen, LCSW*

# The Unburdened Internal System

*Mariel Pastor, LMFT with Richard Schwartz, PhD*

*(Full-color graphic available for download at [marielpastor.com/the-unburdened-system](http://marielpastor.com/the-unburdened-system))*



The Self-led person looks and acts comfortable in her own being, interacting with other from integrated parts and awareness. Parts work more harmoniously together with fewer burdens causing them to overreact. Many parts may be released from protective roles, while others will effectively protect only when needed. Over time the person is less easily destabilized and better able to recover from challenges in general. The inherent gifts of each part are more available, weaving in and out consciously. A Self-led person brings an abiding sense of curiosity, acceptance, and openheartedness to their relationships, naturally inviting others' Self energy to increase. Self energy flows seamlessly within a person, with a sense of connectedness to the Self energy that surrounds him.