

Overcoming Overwhelm

This is a practice for times when you're feeling overwhelmed. Imagine that your thoughts and emotions are held by parts of you - members of your inner family. Your loving attention will help them relax, bringing peace.

Preparation

Eliminate as many distractions as possible. Turn your attention inside. Take a deep breath. The space you create with your breath allows just the right distance for good connection. It can help to select an anchoring verse such as, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Inner Awareness

With full attention to your inner experience, notice thoughts, emotions, images, and sensations. These are held by members of your inner family. Allow your breath to be a calming reminder of the presence of God. Begin noticing if you are curious about connecting with whatever is there.

Focus

Focus on whatever is most present or intense. Notice whether you are open to connecting with this part of you - a member of your inner family. Are you curious to learn more about why it is overwhelmed? Often, more than one part will be present simultaneously, which can block your curiosity. Gently ask others to wait their turn so you can connect with them one at a time.

Befriending - The Heart of the Practice

It is helpful to remind yourself that this is no different from developing any other relationship! It involves listening, being open and curious, and allowing your love to create a gracious space for connection. Curiosity is vital because it will prompt questions that help you learn the part's intention. What does it want you to know? How is it trying to help you? How does it feel about the job it has to do? What is it afraid would happen if it didn't do it? Notice the response to your questions. Let it know that you are grateful for what it showed you. As with any relationship, consistently connecting with this member of your inner family will strengthen the relationship, a process called *befriending*. Befriending releases constraints to resources you possess because you bear God's image. Connection calms the overwhelmed parts of you. You will also notice more compassion, clarity, and confidence!