

Relationships - Inner Child

## *Check-In With Your Inner Child*

A worksheet for navigating through complex relationships  
towards fulfillment

A resource written by Stephanie Sheridan

About Stephanie Sheridan: *I provide support to navigate relationship complexity in all areas of life. My experience is that we continue to seek a daily resolution to relieve us from our complex, internal complications, by*



*finding familiar experiences in which we first developed aversion to intimacy. The journey of self exploration is the most rewarding life experience that we have, and I hope that you will benefit from the tools that we have to offer here. I encourage you to read through the check-in, practice it, journal about it, bring it into other areas of your life, and see how things go. If you would like one-on-one exploration, please contact our office to set up a session*

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## **Inner Child Check-In For Relationship Growth**

Without awareness of our hurt parts, of the parts of us that are being protected, we may not fully understand our motivations for being in certain relationships. Naturally, we seek intimate moments in which we can reveal our true identity and intentions. If we learned early on that our intimate sides were not accepted, we seek to recover from these by seeking affirmation and acceptance from similar personalities and experiences in which we were hurt. “If only this person accepts me, I will finally feel all right.” Or so the storyline goes.

Internal complications arise from unresolved experiences in childhood, at times when our brains were forming and behavior patterns began to take hold. Looking at our lives, and how our coping mechanisms play out, is an invitation into deep vulnerability.

As adults, we think and act according to the ways that our coping strategies helped set us up for success to deal with the limiting environments that we grew up in. Naturally, the patterns block us from experiencing true intimacy.

Our patterns, our triggers, our defenses, reactions and attractions, were developed in order to protect us from being overwhelmed from the pain we felt from the lack of intimacy in the environment in which we first developed coping strategies. Nowadays, the lack of intimacy in our lives may be driving us crazy.

Our internal dialogue may be sound something like:

*Why can't this person just do what they say they would? I am doing my part, why can't they? If only they did this action, then I would finally feel safe to let down my guard and feel the level of intimacy I seek.*

This way of trying to deal with our problems is perfectly logical. We are seeking to correct the abandonment we felt at such a vulnerable stage in our lives with someone who seems like they can do that. However, the logic leaves us stuck in the place where we were before we began to try to repair. Isolated and alone. Disappointed in others and ultimately, ourselves. Why do I keep choosing these environments to live in, these people to work with, these types of partners and friends? Why will my mother, father, brother, sister, grand parent, never really take an interest in my life? What do I have to do to get their attention?

Where once we felt alone, abandoned, unsupported, put down, we seek to repair. We have many self protective parts that keep us busy, focused on goals that we identify as necessary to achieve in order to finally receive the recognition that we have been looking for from those that may have hurt us long ago. We may lose sight of ourselves in the process.

Oftentimes, the depth to which we are conflicted, can take a while to really surface. The goal of deep introspection is to help challenge the self limiting beliefs they hold and to let go of these in order to acknowledge that we most likely already have the support that we need, right now, in this very moment.

A note about the exercises in this material. These are only suggested. These exercises have been helpful to me and others. Before beginning, I suggest reaching out to a trusted person in your life to let them know what you are attempting to do. The support will feel good. I invite you to bring your thoughts to your therapist, coach, spiritual teacher, guide, sponsor, or anyone that you feel is a safe person to accompany you on this journey. If you feel like the questions are overwhelming, I recommend taking a break. Allow yourself the time and space to revisit the material. Come back to it as you are able. Allow yourself the time to explore, to feel and to grow.

## **Exercise 1, Week 1:**

To begin, set aside a journal to record your answers to the questions contained in this material. As you write, try to notice the sensations that arise in your body. Try to notice the different parts of you that show up. Even if we tried, we cannot write all of what we are thinking and feeling. Some ideas are louder than others, and that is okay. Try to notice, however, if you are limiting a part of yourself from being vulnerable.

This section is about diagnosing the problem. Try to steer yourself away from the need to fix yourself, and notice any tendency to focus on finding solutions to how you feel. Instead, allow this to be an intimate moment with yourself to explore, without offering solutions and without silencing yourself.

## Questions for your contemplation and review:

Why are you looking for support? Do the relationships that you currently have in your life feel limiting, do you feel trapped, unable to express yourself?

Are you feeling let down by people that you are supposed to feel close to?

Is this something new or have you always felt this way?

Do you experience volatility in certain relationships in your life that cause you stress?

Have you wanted to but been unable to develop a close and fulfilling relationship with a lifetime partner?

## **Exercise 2, Week 2:**

In your journal, take several days to contemplate and write on this exercise. If meditation and prayer are a practice for you, bring the exercise into your practice. Allow your body to feel comfortable while doing this. Try using your breath to contemplate each question, without rushing.

There is no rush, no finish line. Our understanding of ourselves is continually evolving.

If you feel comfortable moving forward, try writing down a list of your relationship history and the common feelings that you experienced in those relationships that felt like a block to intimacy.

## Relationship List:

Person: What I was looking for (affection, security, escape, validation, fun, commitment): What happened, what did I get (sadness, rejection, yo-yo back and forth, lack of commitment): What were the experiences that kept blocking me from intimacy (anger, pulling away, shame, dependence, co-dependence, judgement, unrealistic expectations, lack of validation):

Questions for your contemplation and review:

Are there similar traits in your mates?

Your coworkers, bosses, important religious figures in your life?

Notice what happens when we look at the patterns in our lives over several years. We can find themes.

What were we seeking in these relationships and what blocked us from achieving our goals?

## Closing Gratitude:

Finally, take a moment to complete a gratitude list for the people that are in your relationship list. What are you grateful for about this person's presence in your life? It may be just one thing, or you may find that as you write, the gratitude begins to flow.

As you complete the above exercises, you are entering into a compact with your inner self. You are allowing your inner self the time, space, security and love, to begin to open up. Chances are that you will find out new things about yourself and this is an opportunity to celebrate! As we look inwards, we find that the outside circumstances of our lives may have changed several times over, but we remain the same. We are always with ourselves.

Congratulations! I invite you to continue to explore, reflect, inquire and observe. Your innermost self is always with you, observing and looking for safe opportunities to open up. You will find them.

**For more information and to book coaching with Stephanie, please contact:**

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