



Welcome to Module #8

Connecting with your Inner Child



“In every adult, there is a child who wants to play.”

Carl Jung



“We are not held back by the love we didn’t receive in the past, but by the love we’re not extending in the present—to our inner child.”

Marianne Williamson

Who is the Inner Child?

Your Inner Child: The Key to Healing and Joy

Your inner child carries both your early creativity and your deep wounds.



Avoiding the pain your inner child carries creates numbness and unhealthy patterns.

Reconnection with your inner child heals, restores joy, and revives authenticity.



Introduction to the Inner Child Concept

Ancient Roots:

The idea of the "inner child" is not new—it has deep roots in history, religion, and mythology.

Religious Traditions:

Christianity: Christ's life was threatened as an infant, yet he later taught the importance of “becoming like children”.

Judaism: Moses abandoned in a basket, later becoming a leader.

Hinduism: Krishna survived an attempt on his life as an infant.



Key Question: What does the "childlike" state represent? Peace, play, love, innocence?

Universal Myths of the Vulnerable Child

Mythological Stories:

Zeus: Threatened by his father Chronos.

Romulus and Remus: Abandoned by the river Tiber, later founders of Rome.

Hansel and Gretel: Vulnerable but resourceful children who outwit danger.



Universal Theme:

All humans begin as vulnerable infants.

Through trials, the child's true heroic nature emerges, leading to transformation and salvation.



Inner Child in Modern Psychology

20th Century Breakthroughs:

Carl Jung: The child as a universal archetype, essential for personal transformation.

Eric Berne (1960s): Transactional Analysis—Parent, Child, and Adult voices within us.

1980s Recovery Movement:

Charles Whitfield, John Bradshaw: Effects of dysfunctional families on the inner child.

Current Modalities:

Internal Family Systems Model: “Exiled child” parts, protected by coping mechanisms, show the impact of unmet needs.





Healing the Inner Child

Modern Healing Practices:

Inner child holds suppressed emotions—both joyful and painful.

Healing involves reconnecting with childhood qualities: playfulness, joy, and wonder.

A Holistic Approach:

Healing must be felt and experienced:

Somatically: Through the body.

Emotionally: Releasing feelings.

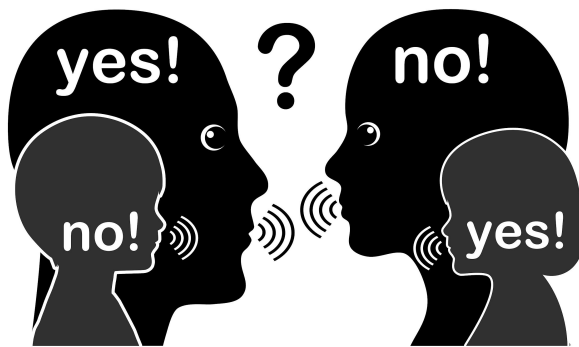
Spiritually: Engaging creativity and presence.

Call to Action:



Embrace the inner child as a living presence for transformation, spontaneity, and creativity.

Signs of disconnection from your inner child:



- **Chronic Anxiety:** Persistent fear linked to unresolved childhood wounds.
- **Emotional Numbness:** Difficulty feeling emotions of joy and love.
- **Over-Responsibility:** Prioritizing duties over self-care and play.
- **Perfectionism:** Seeking flawlessness to mask shame or insecurity.
- **People-Pleasing:** Sacrificing personal needs for approval.

What causes disconnection from our inner child leading to these behaviors?

Emotionally immature and/or overwhelmed parents often struggle to meet their children's emotional needs, causing neglect, invalidation, or inconsistency. Key traits and their impacts include:

1. Self-Centeredness and Egocentrism

Behavior: They prioritize their own needs, feelings, and perspectives over their children's.

Impact on Children:

- Feelings of neglect or being unimportant.
- Difficulty developing a strong sense of self-worth.



2. Emotional Unavailability

Behavior: They are distant, detached, or dismissive of their children's emotions.

Impact on Children:

- Difficulty identifying and expressing emotions.
- A sense of being alone or unsupported in dealing with feelings.



3. Poor Emotional Regulation

Behavior: They have frequent mood swings, are overly reactive, or struggle to manage stress constructively.

Impact on Children:

- Fear of conflict or emotional expression.
- Walking on eggshells to avoid triggering the parent.





4. Lack of Empathy

Behavior: They struggle to understand or validate their child's feelings and experiences.

Impact on Children:

- Difficulty trusting others or feeling understood.
- Developing people-pleasing tendencies to gain approval.

5. Inconsistent Behavior

Behavior: Their actions and reactions are unpredictable, creating an unstable environment.

Impact on Children:

- Anxiety and hypervigilance.
- Struggles with forming secure attachments.

6. Overcontrol or Overprotection

Behavior: They micromanage their child's life or impose rigid expectations.

Impact on Children:

- Stunted independence and decision-making skills.
- A fear of failure or making mistakes.



7. Focus on Appearances

Behavior: They emphasize external achievements, appearances, or what others think, often at the expense of their child's internal well-being.

Impact on Children:

- Pressure to perform and seek external validation.
- Suppression of authentic feelings and desires.





8. Emotional Role Reversal (Parentification)

Behavior: They expect the child to meet their emotional or practical needs, treating them as a peer or caretaker.

Impact on Children:

- Loss of childhood and premature responsibility. Resentment or confusion about boundaries.

9. Avoidance of Conflict

Behavior: They avoid addressing difficult topics, creating an environment of emotional suppression.

Impact on Children:

- Struggles with expressing concerns or standing up for themselves. Fear of confrontation.

10. Failure to Foster Autonomy

Behavior: They discourage exploration and self-expression, often due to fear of losing control.

Impact on Children:

- A lack of confidence in decision-making.
- Difficulty establishing a sense of identity.



Long-Term Effects on Children

Children raised by emotionally immature parents often develop patterns of:

- **Low self-esteem**
- **People-pleasing behaviors**
- **Difficulty setting boundaries**
- **Anxiety or depression**
- **Challenges in forming healthy relationships**

Understanding these patterns can be the first step toward healing and breaking the cycle of emotional immaturity in future generations.



The Healing Journey with the Inner Child



To heal the inner child, we must reparent ourselves by offering the love and care that may have been absent in childhood.

This involves becoming the compassionate, supportive adult our younger selves needed.





Reparenting shifts focus from blaming caregivers to taking responsibility for our emotional well-being, allowing us to heal past wounds and create a safe internal space for growth and thriving.



Key Aspects of Reparenting:

1. **Nurturing:** Provide your inner child with unconditional love, safety, and acceptance.
2. **Guidance:** Offer wisdom and direction to your inner child, helping them make choices that support their emotional well-being.
3. **Protection:** Set boundaries to protect your inner child from harmful situations or relationships.
4. **Playfulness:** Encourage your inner child to engage in creative play, fun, and spontaneity.

Healing the inner child begins with **self-compassion**.

It means treating yourself kindly, acknowledging your pain, feeling your emotions, and reassuring your inner child of their safety and worth.





Healing Inner Child Wounds



Common Inner Child Wounds include:

- **Abandonment:** Feeling emotionally or physically abandoned by caregivers.
- **Rejection:** Experiencing feelings of unworthiness due to being rejected by important figures in your life.
- **Shame:** Carrying the belief that there is something inherently wrong with you, often instilled by critical or shaming parents or authority figures.
- **Neglect:** Feeling unseen or unimportant due to emotional or physical neglect.

Steps to Healing Inner Child Wounds:



Seek Support: Don't hesitate to seek support from a therapist, coach, or support group if needed.

1. **Acknowledge the Wound:** Begin by recognizing the specific wound that is causing pain. You can express an image from the wound allowing yourself to connect more fully with your emotional self.
2. **Offer Reassurance:** Reassure your inner child that they are safe, loved, and valued. You can actually add symbols of nurturance and reassurance to yourself in first image you created.
3. **Release Old Beliefs:** Many inner child wounds are accompanied by limiting beliefs, such as "I am unworthy" or "I am not enough." Through self-compassion and reparenting, work to release these beliefs and replace them with more empowering ones.

Renewing Joy and Creativity



Reclaiming Joy

The inner child thrives on joy and creativity, and nurturing these aspects of yourself can lead to a greater sense of renewal and emotional freedom.

Practices for Cultivating Joy:

- **Engage in Playful Activities:**
Make time for activities that bring you joy, whether it's playing a musical instrument, gardening, or playing with pets.



- **Celebrate Small Victories:**
Acknowledge and celebrate the small steps you take in healing and reconnecting with your inner child. This helps reinforce positive emotional states.
- **Surround Yourself with Positivity:** Create a supportive, positive environment that encourages self-expression and nurtures your inner child's sense of wonder.



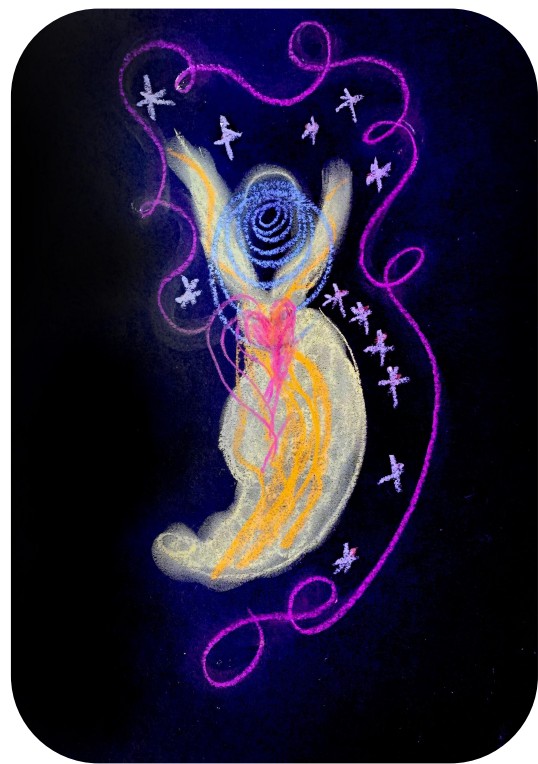


Song - “Portal of Wonder” with visualization

Original composition
by Carrie and Chris Ishee

Creative Expression

allow yourself to express
in an image what came up
from within





Journal

Allow the image to speak to you and receive its message, asking it questions as you go, and noting what came up for you in the process of creating the image.

Movement

Extended Child's Pose



Self Inquiry Prompts

1. What activities made you feel joyful and free as a child?

How can you incorporate these into your life now?

2. What did you long for most as a child that you didn't receive?

How can you provide that for yourself today?

3. What was a favorite memory or magical moment from your childhood?

What feelings did that memory evoke, and how can you invite those feelings into your current life?





4. What were your biggest fears as a child?

How can you reassure your inner child that they are safe now?

5. What words or encouragement did you wish someone had said to you when you were younger?

Can you say those words to yourself now, either aloud or in writing?

6. If your inner child were sitting with you now, what would they ask for?

How can you give that to them in a way that feels nourishing?

7. What creative or playful activities did you love but stopped doing as you grew older?

How can you rekindle those interests in a way that honors your inner child?

8. When did you feel most seen, loved, or appreciated as a child?

How can you recreate or honor that experience in your current relationships?



9. What would your younger self think of the person you are now?

What would you say to them in response?

10. If you could write a letter to your younger self, what would you say?

What would you thank them for? What wisdom would you share?

11. What did you dream of becoming or doing when you grew up?

How does that dream align with who you are now? What parts of it can you still pursue?



What daily practices can I introduce
to strengthen my connection to my
inner child?



**What is the most important takeaway
from this module?**