



Be With the One Who Holds

Words and ways for being with the part of you that takes over when it all kicks off.

You already know this move. This deck only changes who you're kneeling beside.



What a part is

A part is a piece of you that took a job a long time ago, usually in a hard season, and has never once been told it can rest. Psyches organize this way. It is structure, not woo.

Every part took its job for a reason. The part that handles your child's meltdown is usually much younger than you are, and it is doing its best with the training it got.



What a pattern is

Under pressure, something older than the moment activates. Before you've chosen anything, your body has already begun organizing itself toward the pattern: gathering, tightening, speeding up, slipping away. The pattern is your part, doing its job.

The pattern was built as protection and it is intelligent. Your body organizes toward it the way it organizes toward a decision: early, and underneath words. Naming yours is the beginning of choice, and the naming starts in the body, in the feel of the organizing itself.



You are not the part

A part can take over, but it is not the whole of you. Someone in you notices the pattern activating. That noticing one is you.

You already know this move. It is the same one from the kitchen floor: not ending the storm, making sure no one is alone inside it. This deck only changes who you're kneeling beside.



How to use this deck

If you've taken the quiz, start with your pattern's chapter. Read it in the quiet after a storm, not the middle of one; mid-storm, one remembered line is plenty. People are blends, so visit the other chapters too. Yours is just the one that activates first.

Each chapter is the same small arc: questions for finding the part in your body, what it's protecting, words for being with it, one shift, and the moment to reach for a person instead. Relief and a tool. Nothing here asks you to dig.



The Fixer

You move to end the distress.





THE FIXER

Where the Fixer lives in your body

ASK

When it begins, what moves first? The hands, the feet, the lean of you toward the problem? Is it tension, or is it speed? Where does the urgency gather, and what does it feel like in the half-second before you're already across the room? And before you've decided anything, where in you has the fixing already begun?

The part doesn't take over all at once. The body organizes toward the pattern first, and the organizing is where the choice lives. Only you can map yours.



THE FIXER

What the Fixer is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I can stop it, everyone is safe.
Somewhere, big feelings were
emergencies, and this part appointed itself
the one who ends them.

The Fixer is not shallow and it is not impatient. It is a part of you that loves people by solving them, because once, solving was the only safety on offer.



THE FIXER

Words for being with the Fixer

SAY, TO THE PART

silently

“I know. You want it to stop so everyone’s okay. We don’t have to fix this one. I’m staying with you while it’s loud.”

The same words that work on the kitchen floor work here. You’re not ending the part’s urgency. You’re making sure it isn’t alone inside it.



THE FIXER

The one shift

TRY

When you feel the organizing begin, the hands starting to move, pause for three seconds. Not to stop the fixing, just to make it a choice. Presence first, solution second, exactly as you would for them.

The shift is not from fixing to never fixing. It is from autopilot to choosing. A chosen fix is fine. An unchosen one costs you both.



THE FIXER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

the solving never switches off, not solving something feels like a danger, or not being able to fix feels like failure. Also reach when the not doing feels like the definition of unsafety.

A card can slow the choicelessness. If impotence creates fear for your part, or if stillness itself feels unsafe, your part is working far too hard alone, and it deserves more company than a card can be.



The Bracer

You hold it together by clenching.





THE BRACER

Where the Bracer lives in your body

ASK

What stops moving first? Where does the holding begin: the jaw, the shoulders, the breath going high and staying there? Is it more like tightening, or more like turning to stone? From the inside, what tells you the difference between solid and braced? And in the moment before the clench fully arrives, what is your body already doing?

The Bracer organizes by subtraction, so the questions are about stillness: what it stops is the announcement. Solid and braced look similar from the outside. Your jaw knows the difference.



THE BRACER

What the Bracer is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I just hold on, we'll survive this. This part built the line out of your own body because, for a long while, nobody else was holding it with you.

The Bracer is the strength you're known for. It is also the loneliest job in the house. It has carried a lot, mostly without witnesses.



THE BRACER

Words for being with the Bracer

SAY, TO THE PART

silently

“I feel you holding us together. You’ve done it alone for so long. You don’t have to drop anything. I’m holding too now.”

The Bracer hears “let go” as a threat, so don’t say it. Company changes the load without asking the part to put anything down.



THE BRACER

The one shift

TRY

One long out-breath, offered to the part rather than aimed at it. Soften one notch and no further. The line still holds, it just costs less.

Steady is not the same as stiff. The brace softening one notch is not the line breaking. It is the line becoming one you can hold for years.



THE BRACER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

the brace never comes off, even after the storm has passed. When your body aches in the same places every night, or you cannot remember your last unclenched hour.

Steadiness built on clenching sends its bill to the body. If the bill is arriving every night, that is not a discipline problem. The holding needs more hands than yours.



The Merger

You go down with them.





THE MERGER

Where the Merger lives in your body

ASK

Where does their feeling enter you: the chest, the throat, behind the eyes? Does it arrive as movement, as a wave, or as the ground tilting toward them? How can you tell a feeling that grew in you from one that arrived full size, with no warm-up? And in the moment before you go in after them, what does your body do: reach, soften, dissolve?

The Merger organizes toward joining, so the questions that find it are questions of ownership: what is mine, what arrived, and when. Timing is the surest clue you have.



THE MERGER

What the Merger is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I feel it all with you, you are never alone, and even if it's overwhelming I can be involved so there are no surprises. This part would rather go under beside them than risk either being alone, or being swept away in a storm they couldn't see.

That is love with the boundary missing. The empathy is real and enormous, but it is not compassion - it is fear. The part never learned that near enough and inside are different places, and that drowning wasn't a prerequisite for company.



THE MERGER

Words for being with the Merger

SAY, TO THE PART

silently

“I know. You can’t bear them being alone in it. They’re not alone, we’re right here. We can stay this close without going in.”

The part needs the same promise the child does: closeness that doesn’t require anyone to drown. Two can stand at the edge of one storm.



THE MERGER

The one shift

TRY

A hand on your own chest before you reach for them. One question, gently: is this mine? Then keep one foot on your own ground whilst you stay close to theirs.

The hand on your chest is not a technique. It is you keeping the part company in real time. Their feeling stays real, and it also stays theirs.



THE MERGER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

you can't find your own ground for days after a storm, or you stopped being able to tell your feelings from theirs long before the storm arrived.

Borrowed feelings that never go home are heavy. If most of what you carry began as someone else's, you deserve a person who asks how you are and means only you.



The Vanisher

You check out to get through.





THE VANISHER

Where the Vanisher lives in your body

ASK

What goes missing first: sound, color, the feel of your own hands? Is the leaving more like fog arriving, or like glass sliding between you and the room? Where do you go, and what is it like there? And the first moment of coming back: what tells you that you were gone?

You may only get answers afterwards, and afterwards counts. The Vanisher organizes out of sight, so the noticing that you were gone is not failure. It is the part's door, opening.



THE VANISHER

What the Vanisher is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I don't feel it, it can't knock me over. This part carried you through things that were genuinely too much, and it has never once asked for thanks.

Going away is the oldest protection there is. It is a real tool, not a failing. A part this loyal deserves gratitude before it ever gets a request.



THE VANISHER

Words for being with the Vanisher

SAY, TO THE PART

when you notice you're back

“You took me somewhere quieter because it was too much. Thank you. We’re back now, and nothing here needs us gone.”

You can't reason with the Vanisher mid-vanish, and you don't need to. The being-with happens at the return. Make the return a kind place to land.



THE VANISHER

The one shift

TRY

Don't haul yourself back. Stay as far away as you need and put one warm thing in: your feet on the floor, a hand on the counter, one true sentence said out loud.

Checked out as far as you need, present as far as you can. The same mercy you give your flattest days with the kids, given to the part that makes the flatness.



THE VANISHER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

the gone is most of your days, you lose stretches of time, or you watch your life from behind the glass more often than you live inside it.

A part that still works this hard is still protecting you from something it considers too much. Whatever it is, you don't have to meet it alone. Please don't, actually.



The Controller

You manage the variables so the storm never comes.





THE CONTROLLER

Where the Controller lives in your body

ASK

Where does the scanning live: in the eyes, behind them, in a mind moving faster than the room? Does your body ever fully land in a chair? When something unplanned appears, what happens first: tension, motion, a breath that stops? And from the inside, can you feel the difference between resting and waiting?

The Controller organizes earliest of the six, before any storm exists. The clue is not a feeling but a posture toward the future, and only you can catch yours at it.



THE CONTROLLER

What the Controller is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I control everything, nobody has to fall apart. And if it's all mine to control, when it goes wrong it's all my fault; this way, nobody else has enough power over me to hurt me. Somewhere this part decided that falling apart, or being unable to grip it all together by itself, were things that must never happen, and it has been paying the premiums ever since.

Look at how much has held because of this part. It is genuinely capable. It is also exhausted, because prevention is a job with no finish line.



THE CONTROLLER

Words for being with the Controller

SAY, TO THE PART

silently

“You work so hard so nothing breaks. So much has held because of you. We can let this one arrive. We know how to be inside a storm now.”

The part doesn't trust that storms are survivable, because it has spent years making sure that theory never got tested. Being with it means letting it watch a small one go fine.



THE CONTROLLER

The one shift

TRY

Let one small storm arrive on purpose, and treat the part's panic as the thing you're staying for. The storm is your child's. The panic is yours to be with.

You were never going to control every system, and the part can't hear that as words. It can only learn it by living through a storm with company. Start small, and stay for it.



THE CONTROLLER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

the planning never rests, sleep is lost to rehearsals of tomorrow, or the vigilance keeps humming on the good days, when nothing at all is wrong.

Vigilance that can't stand down is not a personality. It is a part that has been on duty far too long. Help it hand the worrying to a person whose job that actually is.



The Enforcer

You end it by becoming the bigger force.





THE ENFORCER

Where the Enforcer lives in your body

ASK

Where does the heat start: the chest, the face, the hands? Is the surge a movement rising, or a pressure building? What does your voice do in the seconds before it sharpens: can you feel it gathering? And in the moment before it takes over, what does your body become: bigger, faster, harder?

The surge organizes itself a few seconds before it leads. Those seconds are small, but they are real, and everything in this chapter lives inside them.



THE ENFORCER

What the Enforcer is protecting

IT LEARNED

If I become bigger than the storm, it ends and we're both safe. Often this part learned its move by standing on the receiving end of it. Its bigness is a power move borne out of a childhood itself of powerlessness. It learned to fear the loudest voice in the room - then, it became it.

The anger is real and it is information, not evidence that you're a bad mother. Of all six parts, this one carries the most shame, which means it is the most alone.



THE ENFORCER

Words for being with the Enforcer

SAY, TO THE PART

silently

“You rise because it’s the only way you know to make everyone safe. I’m not ashamed of you. We can feel all of this and aim it nowhere.”

Being with this part is not approving of what it does. Shame isolates it, and an isolated part grips harder. Company is what loosens the grip.



THE ENFORCER

The one shift

TRY

Feel it coming, say “I need a minute,” and let the surge move away from their body. Then come back twice: repair with the part, then with your child.

The surge is inevitable. The aim is the only part that is a choice. And what you do with the guilt afterwards is the inward repair: point it at the behavior, never at the part, and never at the whole of you.



THE ENFORCER

When this needs a person, not a card

REACH FOR SUPPORT WHEN

the surge keeps landing on them despite the minute and the distance, when anyone in the house has started flinching, or when the guilt is the loudest thing in your week.

This is the one chapter where reaching for a person protects everyone at once. It is not an admission. It is the strongest version of the move this part has been trying to make all along: making everybody safe.



None of these parts is wrong. Every one of them kept you and your kids okay. They will all activate again, on the good days and the wrecked ones, because that is what protection does. The practice was never to be rid of yours. It is turning toward it, the same direction you have been learning to turn all along. A mother who can be with her own parts is already doing the thing every card in this family teaches. The turning is what they feel.





The same practice, facing the other way.

“50 Ways to Be With” holds the other half: being with your child inside the storm. The two are one craft - the same staying, the same company, two directions. And if you haven't met your pattern yet, the quiz at themothercraft.com/quiz will name it.





A NOTE ON WHAT THIS IS

These cards are tools for being with hard moments, not a cure and not a substitute for medical or mental-health care. They offer relief and a way to stay close to yourself, never a fix or a guarantee. Parts carry real history. If one of yours is holding something heavy, these cards can keep you company alongside real support, never instead of it.

ON OUR USE OF AI

At Mothercraft, we utilize AI to ensure quantity and ease of our output whilst we focus on the more important things: raising our children. What this looks like in practice, for the most part, is that AI is given the role of structuring and running first drafts of our ideas. From there, every word is reviewed - and often highly edited and expanded upon - by a real human with the lived experience of mothering. This is the best compromise we've found for ensuring genuine output, whilst empowering us to be where we personally most want to: with our babies.

Modern neuroscience, ancient wisdom: one craft.

