

My Inner child

Eric Berne, the man behind Transactional Analysis or TA theory places a major emphasis on the “child ego state,” which refers to the spontaneous natural child we all once were. TA also describes the ways that the natural child adapted to the pressures and stresses of early family life.

Our Inner child is also that part of us that houses our blocked emotional energy. In order to reconnect with our inner child, we have to go back and re-experience any emotions that were blocked.

Carl Jung called the natural child the “wonder child”—our innate potential for exploration, awe and creative being.

Alice Miller a famous psychotherapist wrote about her own inner child in *Pictures of a Childhood*: “I could not bring myself to ... leave the child alone.... I made a decision that was to change my life profoundly: to let the child lead me.”

Psychotherapist John Bradshaw said, “I made the decision to reclaim and champion my inner child. I found him frightened to the point of terror. At first he did not trust me and would not go with me. Only by persisting in my efforts to talk to him and insisting that I would not leave him did I begin to gain his trust”

Infancy (first year of life)

Feeling the feelings

If you have a picture of yourself as an infant, take a long look at it. If you don't have a picture, find an infant and spend some time watching them. Either way, notice the infant's life energy. Here is a perfectly innocent, wonderful child who just wants the opportunity to live out their own destiny.

Debriefing

The first step in reclaiming your inner child or in this case your inner infant is a process called debriefing.

I recommend that you get all the information you can about your family system. What was going on when you were born?

What kind of families did your mother and father come from?

Was your mom and/or dad an adult child of an alcoholic?

It is a good idea if you can to write out this information as accurately as you can for each stage of development—in this case, infancy.

WRITING LETTERS

Imagine that you, a wise gentle and loving old wizard or a wise gentle and loving mother, want to adopt a child. Imagine that the child you want to adopt is *you as a baby*. Further, imagine that you need to write this infant child a letter. The letter need not be long, maybe just a paragraph or two. Tell your wonderful inner infant that you love them and are so glad that they are a girl or boy. Tell them that you *want* them and will give them the time they need to grow and develop. Assure them that you know what they need from you, that you will give it to them, and that you will work hard to see them as the precious and wonderfully unique person they are. When you have finished your letter, read it aloud very slowly and notice how you're feeling.

The following is the letter I wrote.

Dear Little John,

I'm so glad you were born. I love you and want you to always be with me. I'm very glad you are a boy, and I want to help you grow up. I want a chance to show you how much you matter to me.

Love,

Big John

Letter from Your Inner Infant

Now, although you might think it very strange, I want you to write yourself a letter *from* your inner infant. *Write it with your non-dominant hand*. If you are right-handed, that means using your left-hand. (This technique calls on the non-dominant side of your brain, bypassing the more controlling, logical side. It makes it easier to get in touch with the feelings of your inner child.) Of course, I know that infants can't write! But if an infant could write, they probably wouldn't write much—probably just a short paragraph. Here is how my letter looked:

Dear Big Johnny,

I want you to come and get me, I want to matter to someone. I don't want to be alone. Love from your little Johnny