REV. CRISS
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RECRUITS

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Building Internal Community

Thanks for Reading

We're very grateful for the opportunity to share our life's work with people and look forward to getting more of it out into the world.

This work is not complete yet. We are working hard to get our knowledge out of our collective and into the external world where others can utilize it.

For additional selves-help and selves-advocacy materials we have created, please see:

https://kinhost.org/Main/BootCamp - for the United Front Boot Camp (selves-help, 2011 30-day blog challenge) — the predecessor to the United Front books.

https://kinhost.org/ManyMinds/HomePage - (2017+) the Many Minds on the Issue podcast, which also has many episodes with selves-help and selves-advocacy content.

If you are interested in assistance implementing these principles for your own collective, please see our website at https://LiberatedLifeCoaching.com where we offer individual and group coaching and we beta test materials like this.

Thank you for your time. If you have any feedback on these materials or any of our offerings, comment on the page, email us or et us know at thecrisses@gmail.com and we will give it thought and consideration.

You may also contact us at 845-820-0262.

Please take good care of yourselves,

The Crisses
Rev. Criss Ittermann

United Front: Recruits

Building Internal Community

Rev. Criss Ittermann

This book is for sale at http://leanpub.com/unitedfrontrecruits

This version was published on 2019-01-18

This is a Leanpub book. Leanpub empowers authors and publishers with the Lean Publishing process. Lean Publishing is the act of publishing an in-progress ebook using lightweight tools and many iterations to get reader feedback, pivot until you have the right book and build traction once you do.

Also By Rev. Criss Ittermann

We really have to take our collective hats off to O. T. Nelson for The Girl Who Owned a City.

You imagined a post-apocalyptic world where only children survived, and showed how they could still thrive. The children in the story take a culture thrown into anarchy and recruit trusted allies, build a fortress, defend from saboteurs and gangs, deal with mutiny and rebellion from within the ranks, and still persevere.

You had no idea you were talking directly to a plural child who had been collectively abused, whose parents had blown themselves out of the ranks of trusted allies and "died" in our hearts, who had no one else to turn to and had to learn to survive in an internal anarchy full of myriad petrified children with limited resources.

Each of us read your book. Over and over our body turned the pages of our care-worn copy, we fell over ourselves to find each other in the dark, and protect each other, and root out our own doubts about whether we could survive in a world with no real parents and no adults we could trust. We built a fortress in our head, pulled everyone inside, and hid in the dark for years until we knew we were strong enough, until we could turn the lights on and throw a party.

So this book is dedicated to you, and your children Todd & Lisa. And to our children and their children… until parents and caregivers stop pushing themselves out of our inner world.

Contents

Oops!!!

Preface: Guilt-Free Learning

Sometimes we have to step out of our shoes of doing this for over 30 years and try to think in your shoes. What would we be thinking when we open this book? When we see things that we could have been doing better all along? When the Crisses present something that seems so logical, it clicks into place, looks so obvious — how could we have missed it?

I might start thinking how much time we wasted screwing things up.

Being plural doesn't come with an instruction booklet. As a matter of fact, any information from so-called credible resources — be it professional papers, TV or news, movies and documentaries, therapists and psychiatrists — all points to this situation as a terrible stigmatizing disorder and how we have to be "fixed" in order to be well and healthy and function in society and hold jobs down or have a lot of friends or be accepted — or even acceptable. Even working towards "functional multiplicity" and not merging is viewed as a barely-acceptable outcome, kinda like you'll be limping along and constantly missing out on something wonderful (being only one person in a body), and you'll still be regarded as less-than anyone else.

It's not on you that you didn't know or realize any of this stuff. If anything, we Crisses will take responsibility for it. We didn't write this book sooner. Maybe we couldn't have, but we'll take the blame. We should have gotten this out in the hands of all those media representatives and therapists, and been louder and shouted from the rooftops how everyone's making a BIG MISTAKE being so hard on people, being down on them, limiting good role-models,

etc. We're working on that. But yeah, it's on us. Then again, we had to figure out how to word it all, put it into writing, sit with the material, test ideas out, build our own confidence, spend a few years helping other people publish books and working as an editor, spend time up to our gills in plurals from all walks of life, and hear all the stories we've heard out in the wild to even get to the point where we could write this. So maybe it's not for us to feel guilty either, even if we're responsible.

It's happening now. And that's perfect.

Please don't feel guilty, and continue to do this work. You have this material in your hands today. It will take time to work through it and do the exercises and it may well take many times reading it before everyone gets on to the same page — or y'all may NEVER all get on to the same page, but let's work on massive improvements regardless. It's ok if there's hold-outs (there are hold-outs in our head even as we write this, and we get on OK for the most part). Every plural group entity is different inside and not everyone is capable of getting on board with agreements or sharing consciousness, or working together with others. Maybe you'll get partway through and then need a break. The book will continue to be there waiting for you to be ready.

We'll make you a deal. Let's not get hard on ourselves — your group or our group. Let's just get some shit done.

Introduction: Welcome Aboard

I'd like to welcome you as guests on my ship, for a time. I'm really glad to meet you all. Every single one of you. I'd shake your hand, or take your coat, but you're only holograms — some human customs just don't work under these circumstances. Let me take you on a brief tour: to the left are the lavatories, which you won't be needing today. This is the bridge, with the great big view screen and the chair, which we call Front, which controls most of our ship's exterior. Here we have a flex-space on either side; these are automatically retrofitted for a variety of needs, sometimes they're meeting rooms, sometimes they're used as a holodeck of sorts, and we have one set-up which is a test kitchen for trying out recipes.

Here, out of the back of the room we have our engineering facilities, memory banks for all the ship's knowledge systems, private quarters for the crew and passengers on the vessel. Between you and me, I think we still have some stowaways, and we make sure to turn off the security of the food replicators so they don't starve, and no one ever goes on to Deck D. This way they have some privacy and a lavatory of their own, just in case they're unable to join us.

Please have a seat here in our meeting room. I'm so happy you took the time to come to visit us. It can get lonely in here, with only about 100 of us on this vast spaceship, it's refreshing to have you all come by. We've been so excited anticipating this precious time for conversation with you.

You're wondering how we do it. How we've been getting on for 32 years as a crew of this vast vessel. Truth to tell, I think it started longer ago than that. Our body is 49, so we must have been living together at least some 42 years or longer. We each did our own

thing, and the lights weren't on, so maybe we'd bump into each other in the halls. A few would meet and have some uneasy truces — children will be children. They played games, sang songs, you know — hung out together. The lights started as a very dim glow maybe when we were 10, we'd hear each other, catch a glimpse.

But I think the story probably goes back further. At some point the lights were on and the kids all got along and worked together. Longer than 42 years ago, for certain. They covered for each other, flew the ship as a team, took turns at Front, pulled off some amazing maneuvers to protect themselves from enemies in Human Space. Many got burned out, many ran off into the halls and hid, from each other and themselves. They started dropping like flies, the poor tykes. It was too much for children to handle. Someone sent out a distress signal. That's when we adults came aboard. But we didn't know a darn thing about flying spaceships, and for a bunch of reasons it took us years to really be able to work out what to do. Those were some very dark years for our ship. Drifting along in space, not sure what was going on, bumping into bad situations, or barely skirting big threats. Nearly out of fuel and supplies, we just made it through.

By 13 the ship's lights started to come back. They were about the light of a candle flame. We were making out shadowy figures, but we didn't know there was any other way for the ship to be — it's all we had ever seen happen. Someone would take the controls, fly the ship for a bit, all sort of haphazard, you know? None of us had the best sense of direction. Sometimes, though, the kids would get out of the way and one of us elders would take over, and set a course on autopilot for a bit, so we made some more progress. So over time, the lights got a bit brighter.

Ship's systems started coming back to full power when we were 16, but our situation outside the ship was deeply perilous. We had gotten "into the weeds" as it were. Basically, we were already fucked. Someone had hooked the ship up with fuel, but it was the wrong fuel. As much as a relief it was being able to communicate

with others on the ship, the ship started breaking apart. We put our trust in the wrong helmsman, and she almost got the whole crew killed, and the ship wrecked. She didn't do it on purpose, she was trying to get us through a wormhole out of the horrible toxic environment the ship was in. But the wormhole wasn't big enough, or maybe it wasn't a wormhole at all. Whatever it was, it wasn't able to get us where she wanted to take us. The ship got damaged and ended up in a repair bay, we had to reassess our entire situation but most of the crew was in the infirmary. In fact for a couple months, the person who betrayed us was the only person left who could fly the ship. Thankfully she didn't try to make an escape for another wormhole.

After this whole big debacle, we started to get our shit together. We had seen what happens if someone flies the ship alone without anyone helping or watching their back. We had enough of that. We quickly went from a crew of 8 and started to onboard new shipmates as crew member, and started to work on how to train officers from our crew, people who could lead and make decisions. We found better and betters ways to fuel our ship, learned the hazards of human space so we could avoid the worst of it, repaired our ship's defense systems and shields, and eventually got to the point where we could actually set a course.

Then we just had to decide where to go.

We've had plenty of bumps along the way, and are constantly upgrading, repairing, training officers, onboarding new crew members, making course corrections and upgrading our navigational systems. But now, we adventure through life.

I know, I know, that kinda tells you "how" we did it — but it doesn't tell you HOW we did it. That's what this book is for.

But of course, our shipmates not new residents. Most of them started "moving in" when we were a very young child, between

ages 3 and 7 years old. It was part of the exodus from our trauma-ravaged planet. We played various roles on the ship, hiding in storage holds, using personal cloaking devices to hide from other ship residents, or using holographic disguises when when interacting with other vessels in Human Space on the viewport so we'd all look like the same person. We got our ship into trouble countless times, and somehow the right person took over as Acting Captain, saving our collective ass several times without most of the ship's residents even being aware of who did it. A number of us got really good at pulling off "being me" — and mind you that "me" is no one in particular — that they even had **me** fooled. There were plenty of hints, some overt, some covert, but it was easier to overlook the hints than to question our ship's operations and our comfortable take on reality.

When we were adrift in the universe for about 15 years, everything changed! I guess we started having some equipment failures — how long could we keep using these devices to hide our activities from each other? We started to notice those sneaky denizens, asking for their names, seeing their faces, and listening to their voices. At first we thought we were communicating with other ships from somewhere else. Like their voices were the results of subspace communications picking up on distant voices. It took about a year for it to sink in that these people, these initial internal voices and faces, were entrenched — they were on board the same vessel (or "shipmates") — and they weren't going anywhere. That we weren't reaching *out* to external entities, we were reaching *in* to internal entities.

I, some value of "I" anyway, made a decision to get along with them. It's like we decided to start all over again, starting at the "Hi, my name is __. Won't you please wipe your feet on the way in." What started with just 2 or 3 people in our head who were in agreement about this new attitude of being polite and exhibiting camaraderie turned into a full-fledged welcome wagon that invited more and more internal entities to show themselves and get welcomed into

the fold. By age 17 we had identified 16 entities, nearly all of these early-emergers agreed to take part in the welcome wagon. Then the number became 24. And it kept growing over time. We even recently decided we'd better do some renovations and make more mental room in our internal landscape imagery, put on some new additions, and make sure we never felt cramped, so that more internals would feel welcome to join us.

Some of our rules were explicit, and we carried out a variety of disciplinary measures with a great deal of compassion for our fellows. We held enormous round-table meetings, elections and votes, etc. and created a modified democracy in our own head. We invited everyone who could to participate in our governance, to become part of our volunteer-run welcome committee, and those in the shadows saw that we were safe, and when they felt ready they came to join us.

After all of that, we did eventually decide to dig around in the mud in our head, and came up with subsystems and more entities until our headcount reached about 73, fragments included. We did all this work with little to no professional help. Most of our work was with self-help and abuse recovery books — the vast majority were tools for singlets. Trauma survivors, seekers of enlightenment, business owners; self-improvement, leadership, time- and money-management, etc. — and coming up with our own tools, maps, paradigms, rules, systems, and governance.

There's still a good number of internal holdouts, those so buried and so hurt and damaged that we decided it might do more harm than good to challenge them to become co-aware. They don't insert their opinions and actions on us, so we simply nurture them where they are and are ready in case they ever change their mind and decide to participate in life. We know they hold the worst of the things we've experienced and "forgotten." And it was our deliberate decision to live as a functional entity and go on without requiring them to participate and without 100% recall of our early childhood.

We've begun to re-think that attitude in light of the work we've been doing on United Front. We still won't require them to participate, or share what they know with us — but after working more and more on these materials, we realized that this was not compassion, but cowardice and convenience speaking. We've changed our collective mind. We've distanced ourselves from our abusers, working hard to create a safer mental and emotional environment so that anyone left can join us, unburden themselves of their secrets, share what they know, and we will deal with it as a group — with all the courage and compassion we can muster. We realized that maybe they don't have to make the self-sacrifice and stay isolated and holding back, that the safer our life is, the stronger we are, the more ready we are to face it, the more likely they will be to be able to join us and come back to the present and enjoy and share our collective life.

The journey to becoming more functional wasn't all roses and happiness; we made plenty mistakes along the way (and obviously still do!). We have taken many paths that wasted time and resources, and discovered many challenging things while "working on our head." In the United Front paradigm, we want to bring you the cream of the crop of our experience, so that you can put it into use as quickly as possible.

Many of us multiples have allowed ourselves the self-image of being broken, of being abused, of being trigger-happy, of being helpless, of being childish, of being in desperate need of being saved.

I am not saying that all of these are untrue. However, our picture of ourselves contributes a great deal to how true these things are. We allow ourselves to be victims. We allow ourselves to be broken. We do have every right to claim the title of abused, or of being victims, or being broken, but how much does that claim really serve us? You are probably a physical adult. You will never be able to do anything to wipe away what happened to you in the past. Your choice is whether you want to live with those experiences as a huge and

overwhelming burden or if you want to process, transform, soothe or dump the burden and get on with life.

I asked you to wipe your feet upon entering. I don't need you to bring your outside mud of the dirty and nasty things you've been through when you enter my home. And you don't need it in your home either. Did you walk through the mud and ice? Yes. Do you need to bring it into the present, into your mind, into your mental home, to muck things up and make a bigger job of cleaning house? No. Absolutely not. Do yourself a favor, and request everyone to wipe their feet before they come into your home too. Our past experiences should not be an excuse to be abusive to others, including the others in our own head.

It's time for a major reset. Yes, you may not have treated each other well in the past, but today it's time to turn over a new leaf, to accept a new attitude and paradigm, and start to rebuild the trust you may have damaged in the past.

Are you ready for a better shared life? Let's begin.

Are you really ready?

Everyone's Run Amok

Space. The final frontier.

These are the voyages of the headspace Enterprise. It's lifetime mission: to try to do something useful and productive with their life.

Only there's a problem. No one is in charge.

In this alternate reality, Scotty is in the holodeck playing billiards, not running the engine room. He doesn't even know he's an engineer.

Spock is suffering the constant effects of [7-year itch] and doesn't realize there's anything more to life than anger and rage.

And Jimmy Kirk is a child who has confined himself to quarters, sucking his thumb and holding on to his security blanket.

There's others, some fighting over the controls, some hiding, etc. No one really seems to be aware of what's going on, how to operate this ship properly, or where to send it. They squabble over food and resources, they don't share information, they sometimes keep to themselves or sneak around doing things.

But one person is fed up with it. Bones, [Dr. name], is actually reasonably good at adulting and aware of the here-and-now, but he's always wanted to be a healer or doctor. He's never navigated a spaceship alone. He's doing his best to set a heading, although he'd really rather be running around helping everyone else — if only he could figure out where they were hiding. Someone has sabotaged the computer so it can't auto-pilot the ship. They're getting nowhere fast.

He knows they're in dire need of some help. So he takes the controls and pulls the spaceship in to the nearest Therapist Office in Human Space.

It takes a while, still struggling with various ordeals in Human Space. In the meantime Bones actually spots some of the stoaways and passengers on board, and to his great relief they occasionally come onto the bridge and speak with the therapist. Bones sometimes takes a nap or goes exploring the ship during the sessions.

Eventually, the therapist makes a declaration: they're running a plural vessel! That's not really how it's worded, but that's the essence of it. This ship, the Enterprise, their shared body, contains many more entites than the average ship.

Bones thought all spaceships had a lot of passengers running amok — but no, turns out that the Enterprise is unusual. That's a big surprise to him.

Then Bones looks at the bright side. If he can get the others to snap out of it — to come to the here & now, and grow up, and take charge with him — he doesn't have to do this alone anymore! He can go study medicine and take care of people on the ship the way he always wanted to, and let someone else take point on running the ship. This is a huge relief for him, so he gets to work.

The therapist hands him *United Front: Recruits*, and he starts doing the exercises in it while still attending therapy sessions in Human Space.

Are you new to this idea? That you're plural, that is. It's okay to be upset, nervous, scared, to feel overwhelmed, to realize there's a lot of work that needs to be done, and to maybe throw a little (hopefully safe or "sane") temper tantrum for a bit. This is a big deal. It's quite reasonable to get emotional about it. In fact — I'd be more worried if you made the transition from thinking you're like

most other people to coming to grips with being multiple without any emotional reaction to it.

At the same time — you're not alone. Inside or out. *You're all in this together.* You have all been through some really tough crap already — together. You just didn't *know* it. Or didn't know that everyone else *wasn't* like that. It may be impossible to see right now, but you and your travelling companions have everything it takes to work this out together and make amazing progress towards a very fulfilling, safe, and dare we say "sane" life. And of course, life (shared or otherwise) doesn't inherently come with an instruction manual.

This is your instruction manual. Feel free to scribble in it, argue in the margins, make comments on our website (Kinhost.org) on related pages and entries, or if you want to email us, we love to hear from people who are using our work (crisses@kinhost.org). Please, come up with a better way of working on your crew than what we suggest in the book. Throw caution to the wind and become an adventurer in your own life. Or read other books that disagree with us, and decide what works best for you and your crew. Then put it to good use!

What does "Internal Anarchy" look like?

Obviously the Enterprise in our story was in a lot of trouble. It looks very very different from what the Enterprise looks like on TV or in the movies. If that's what the human crew and vessel in outer space were dealing with, it would have been a one-episode TV series. They wouldn't have made it. In some ways by being a group entity we're a bit more stubborn (and creative) about survival. But survival isn't always sufficient. Let's work towards comfortable — or even enjoyable.

Internal anarchy is not terribly different from external anarchy. It involves a break-down of culture, control, communication and

resource distribution. Use the following list to see how many "Anarchy Factors" you are experiencing as a group. Tally how many of these statements you agree with.

Control Issues

- Those of us who think we're in charge feel out-of-control.
- We can't make plans or predict what will happen because someone in here will do something that surprises us.
- We need security but can't seem to get it.
- We've made rules about their behavior, but they just won't listen to us.
- We feel like we're always punishing the same people over and over.
- We get to do things that they don't get to do.
- We feel we've tried everything including force, yelling, locking-up those who misbehave to try to control this situation.
- No matter how much we lock them down, they seem to get through and do things anyway.

Resource Issues

- We aren't very productive; we can't seem to accomplish tasks we set out to do.
- We frequently get physically sick, or have flare-ups of physical or physiological issues (like immune issues).
- We often have insomnia and get little sleep.
- One or more member of our collective is harming our body.
- We are unable to hold down a paying job.
- Our income suffers because of our lack of energy, consistency, or concentration.
- We never seem to have enough time in the day to get necessary things done.
- Time-loss is interfering with our collective life.

- Some of us aren't able to do the things we want to because we aren't able to get time in front.
- We don't have enough money for basic necessities (like food or housing).
- We lack adequate healthcare or health coverage, or are unable to seek out adequate healthcare.

Order

- We lack adequate short-term financial security (cash-on-hand for emergencies, easily able to pay bills, someone taking care of the bills for you).
- We do not have long-term financial security (investments, retirement savings, life insurance).
- We don't feel physically safe in our current environment or the places we need to go to take care of ourselves.
- Our emotions are all over the place; we don't feel emotionally safe or stable.
- There are times that we don't feel responsible for our behavior and actions.
- Someone is taking risks that may get everyone hurt or get us time in jail.
- There are times someone fronts without permission i.e. "Stealing Front".
- We don't agree on who should govern us or who is "in charge" of our collective.
- Someone may have made rules, but we didn't all participate in that process.
- Sometimes it just feels like we make up any old rules at any time.
- We never even considered making any agreements.

Culture

- Some of us are treated more favorably or leniently than others.

- A group has more of a say or actively oppress those who they disagree with.
- A few of us seem to be sabotaging others in the collective.
- Sometimes we feel ignored or neglected, almost like others wish we didn't exist.
- We have several groups with a tenuous truce between them.
- Our "leaders" are held to a different standard than the rest of us.
- When we divvy up resources (front time, money, benefits, rewards) a few of us get much more than the rest of us.
- When our "leaders" do something wrong, they get away with it.
- We don't have any "leaders."
- As a group, we're doomed.
- We often contemplate suicide, or engage in self-harm to mitigate the pain of living.
- We're exhausted, at the end of our rope, or unable to take care of ourselves.
- We hate ourselves.
- We're often unmotivated, unable to perform normal tasks, completely out of spoons.
- Some of us are vehemently angry at the way our life is turning out.

These statements were compiled by looking at what defines an anarchy in Human Space (the external world) — how societies degrade and fall apart, and the signs that things are getting worse, that there will be either a revolution or rebellion. We just changed the wordings of relationships, or what the resources are based on being a plural rather than a governemnt or organization. These issues exist in every layer of society. And there's an implied choice. Either the current decaying disorder is overthrown through a more violent method, or an alternative contingent rises in power through popular support and steps into power in a more peaceful

way, basically a peaceful coup. What's clear, though, is either you participate in changing this situation, or you eventually get replaced.

We want everyone to be on board and take the peaceful route. That's why we're trying to set things straight before they roll downhill faster and you lose entire control over the situaion. The more of you who are "all-in" the better — but this process can start from just one of you who is fed up (like Bones). You don't need group agreement to start this project. The methods are peaceful and through self-improvement, compassion, love, and honestly wanting the best for everyone, you can make a difference in your collective life.

We'll be clear — we intend for you to have a revolution — a peaceful coup. Our agenda is not hidden. If you checked more than say half of the above statements, you're either heading towards revolution, rebellion, or a complete descent into chaos. We didn't make up what happens to groups when power imbalances and dissent erode group collaboration and trust: it's like a law of interaction, something that happens over and over again throughout time and history. So if you're part of the "leaders" who have been running this ship into the ground, it's time to wake up and change colors, and if you're not, have a little patience and we'll help you sort out things for the better.

The best thing about this process is there's one clear and ethical way to get it right and have it last: if you're doing it for everyone involved, not for only yourself. If you're tired of a life that's spiraling into chaos, if you're certain you're no better than anyone else in your system, that you all deserve to be equal, and you're ready to change your life — then work this program until you get what you're looking for.

Who Would Follow You?

We've made many mistakes over the years, and if we will try to save you from making mistakes we're aware of, but please know that people have a way of getting very creative when it comes to making mistakes. So while we want to help, we're sure somewhere something will go wrong.

Since no one is perfect, and you and we are no exception, we usually operate based around some pretty rock-solid values and muck along doing our best. There's a few things that are good about being aware that we're not perfect. It keeps us humble. And it means we're always watching ourselves for errors and trying to do our best to fix them as soon as possible.

A side benefit is that we don't expect anyone else to be perfect either. We know people make mistakes. It's whether those mistakes are truly mistakes or are deliberate that gives us pause. If someone is deliberately careless or harmful, then we will not tolerate their presence in our life, and if they're on our ship, then they get watched closely and we work on their self-awareness and their awareness of others. They may not be fully in the here and now, and may be frightened and overreacting to current circumstances because they are caught in mental loops and seeing things that aren't there. The other difference between someone who's a flawed individual verses someone who is a danger to be around is whether someone is trying to correct their mistakes rather than deny them. It's common to go through denial phases, so that's something we work on as a group, to remind each other to remain present to the truth.

All of this in the name of being good role-models for others on our ship. We don't know where everyone is, but we know they're watching us. In some cases, someone has been a stowaway for so long, they need to be really certain that we're safe to be around. That means constant self-control and self-awareness. What am I

doing that might make them distrustful? What am I doing that may make them think I'm dishonest? What can I do that will make me more trustworthy?

They're all watching. All the time. Whether they are co-aware, or not. We have the ultimate authority to answer to. For many external singluar folk, that "authority" is a deity who sees and knows all, or Karma, and the payment can be extracted after this lifetime. In our case, it's a far more clear and persistent watchdog — our shipmates. We don't wait until the afterlife to pay for our transgressions. We will see repercussions of our denial, our mistakes, our dishonesty, our power-grabs, etc. far sooner than singular folk will, sometimes seconds, sometimes minutes, days or months after something happens.

⚠ Trigger/Content Warning: guilt, suicide attempt

We have an example of not knowing for years. We recently (end of April, 2018) brought Tina back from the there & then to the here & now, and she spat at Star. Was very clear she wanted nothing to do with one of our primary ship's caregivers/healers. Why? Because in April 1986, Star tried to enter the wormhole and almost wrecked the whole ship — remember we mentioned that at the start of the book. Well, it was Star at the helm, she literally thought she could get from this world to another one — and in terms of Human Space, what did it look like? It was a suicide attempt. Actually multiple attempts in one day. Tina was still pissed off about it, because for 32 years Star had not yet really felt and acknowledged that she had almost killed all of us. Someone who is a surrogate mother to us almost ended our whole adventure together but hadn't realized that aspect of what they had done or acknowledged it or apologized for it. Star finally started processing that responsibility or guilt this summer. And as a result of facing it, Tina has backed off some from her campaign against Star, though it's not fully resolved yet.

So it's very important to be a good role-model for others. This will be a recurring theme throughout the *United Front* series. We'll help you work on your ethical constitution, to work through challenges of defining who you are and how you interact with others so that you bring your best to the table, and learn to acknowledge your mistakes when you inevitably make some.

The Benefits of Role-Modeling

Role-modeling is the easiest way to balance both integrity and onboarding new people into desirable behavior. Role-modeling is a leadership quality.

The basic question is how do you "make" other people do what you want them to do, without destroying the trust and security of the people involved? So you can't use force. Punishments are ineffectual — they usually have a backlash and create imbalances in power dynamics. You can't manipulate, cajole, lie, etc. These all destroy trust, undermine security. There's no integrity in these methods.

The answer is deceptively simple: you become a leader and you exhibit the behaviors you're seeking from others. You act from personal integrity and reward those who act within their integrity.

This means that any behaviors you want from others you have to be willing and able to adopt yourself and live with yourself. You can't tell others not to lie then lie to someone. You can't tell others that they're only allowed to front at certain times, but be allowed to front any time you want. You can't tell your Littles that they're not allowed to have treats and eat whatever you want any time. You can't blow your budget but expect others to hold to it. You can't get extra privileges or powers because you're you and others aren't.

The best leaders are people just like you and me who exhibit impeccable integrity and role-model the values they invest in. Think about how awful it would be if a wealthy person stood on stage and spoke about the virtues of giving away all your wealth to charity, but they were still being driven around in a limousine, had a private jet and a mansion. That person would not be a leader, in this case, for this topic. A leader is not a hypocrite. A leader is a trailblazer, adopting the principles and tools they encourage for others first, putting themself on the line before expecting the same of others, inconveniencing themself first, sacrificing first, being

their own test subject. A leader doesn't ask something of their followers that they're unwilling to do themself.

Let me help you for a moment: you don't need light and positivity role models. You probably have some of those already, or if that's you you fall into the "role-model" role so easily you don't need this concept spelled out for you.

You need role models of grumpy people getting less grumpy, of out-of-control people getting better control over themself, of angry people getting less angry (as Banner says "I'm always angry!" but even so, Banner is much more in control of his anger than The Hulk is and thus a more respectable role model). You need role models for little changes and big changes. You need, in your system, as many examples of people becoming more self-possessed and self-disciplined as possible. You need role models of littles who are able to say "no" to candy, of gaming addicts able to set aside the video games, of someone with compulsions able to lower their anxiety and let something go. You need internal examples of good parenting and loving discipline, examples of deescalating arguments, of coming to a helpful compromise, of giving each other a hand-up, of having productive meetings, of ending procrastination, of turning a depressive spiral into something more positive and hopeful, and so on.

No matter who you are, inside or out, and what you struggle with — you have the potential to be a role model for someone else. You don't have to overcome the same issue, you don't have to overcome extreme and overwhelming hardship. You can inspire people by reaching down into yourself and finding the strength to get a little better than you were yesterday. And if you have another bad day, and find yourself slipping, that's still a situation you can turn around and become an example of getting up again. Leaders make mistakes. And as part of their integrity, the best leaders admit to their mistakes immediately, make adjustments, and try to get back up on their feet and back into a leadership position, to re-earn the trust of their followers.

Even if you're not intending to become a leader for your ship, these are very valuable lessons in role-modeling and the benefits when you're constantly being scrutinized by others becomes clear. This is the most ethical way to influence the behavior of others. They may not follow you, but if you're following all the agreements of your collaborative, and the benefits of joining it are clear, and everyone who is a member aims to be a good role-model of what's expected in the collaborative — it will become harder to go against the grain, to be deceptive, to violate the agreements. Integrity of both the collaborative itself and the members in it becomes very important when the folk outside of the collaborative are watching your every move, looking for failure, looking for reasons not to trust you, when they're suspicious of your motivations, when they're afraid of coming out into the light and being seen, etc. They need to see that you really mean it, and that it's a better model than whatever it is that they have been doing.

You also benefit directly by being a good role-model for others. When you are integral within yourself, have strong values and principles to follow, your self-esteem increases and you feel more comfortable "in your own skin." You know your own internal compass, and can tell when you're heading in a direction that will help you with your own goals and needs.

Don't Get Dragged In

When your shipmates start to get into the heat of things and they're having fights, it's unfortunately easy to take sides and pick on people and lay blame. Don't fall for that; it's a trap. It's not about right or wrong so much as it's important to break up the fight, find constructive ways to manage the energy involved, and work on getting back to your internal agreements. You may not have any yet, but for now, if folks are going toe-to-toe, or arguing and fighting, find peace somehow in as constructive a way as you can.

One way to diffuse the situation is by being understanding of all

sides, not just one side. Without blame, it can be as easy as Bones saying, "Jimmy, I understand you were hurt when Spock stole your security blanket. Spock, I understand you're afraid of all the germs on Jimmy's blanket and that it might be time for it to be washed." Now what? "Spock, I think it's best if you and Jimmy don't see each other for a while. Could you please go to your quarters for a while, and I'll walk Jimmy to his." Separate them. If Jimmy is more secure with an unwashed blanket, that's Jimmy's problem, and if Spock doesn't want to be exposed to any potential dirt or pathogens on Jimmy's blanket, that's Spock's problem. It's only an issue when they're in the same space, so separate them for now. This isn't jailing them or confining them to quarters. It's just separating them for a bit. Now you can talk to each alone, comfort them, and see whether or not you can get them un-triggered at each other.

Imagine the same scenario if Bones took either side. If Bones demanded Jimmy's blanket for washing, Jimmy would lose trust in Bones. If Bones defended Jimmy's right to his dirty blanket, Spock would be morally offended and triply sulky while he's already triggered by his 7-year itch. The important thing is to keep all the relationships in top shape possible and diffuse the emotional outbursts so that everyone can de-escalate.

Keep in mind that everyone aboard the ship may have PTSD. Emotions can be on a very short fuse, and it's easy to trip on each other's triggers. We talk more about this in {Avoid triggering your headmates link}. So your role is to be more like Bones, to try to head folk off at the pass and not join in.

You may eventually get triggered yourself; you're not perfect. Do your best to recognize it early, and hopefully you have buddies by then who are watching your back and can help when you're triggered — just like Bones helped Spock and Jimmy, maybe you need a time out as well and to go to your quarters to cool off. If you're the only "responsible adult" to front, that may be difficult. You may have to cut the ship's engines, just sit there in the command chair, and take a breather.

Make the climate on the ship more peaceful, infuse your system with calm, relaxation, and a no-tolerance policy for internal fighting. You may not be able to enforce this as policy yet, but keep it in mind as you wind your way through the book. Don't get dragged into fights, time yourself out when needed, and keep separating folk who aren't getting along until they're willing to try harder.

We're all in this together. It's the first "law" of plural systems. We're all on this same ship. Our lives all depend on this ship for life support, and if we're fighting — no matter how big the ship is — we're doing so in a constricted environment and someone (or everyone) is likely to get hurt.

Being Trustworthy

Trust is sometimes a gift, sometimes earned. When you've lost trust or proven yourself to not be trustworthy, it can cause a great deal of issues. There's not many people who are aspiring to be untrustworthy out there, right? When your behavior is erratic, unpredictable, unstable, bullying, or even just self-protecting, or when you're lashing out at people — others become anxious. No one is at their best when anxious.

I can't picture any internal situation that is made better by distrust. Distrust leads to more attempts to control one another, more restrictive rules, withholding privileges, punishments, incarceration, lashing out at others, self-harm as a way to harm the others (including being passive-agressive), etc. Even "good" people may accidentally act as "bad guys" in these ways — with name-calling, bullying, policing, making rules that others don't or can't participate in, creating a caste system or cliques, etc. The oppressed participate by acting out as well. Part of the internal reset and creating a new paradigm is to help get over the past and move into a new future.

Being trustworthy gives people an opportunity to start over, to try again, to rise to a new level of integrity, to collaborate, com-

municate, to help each other get over hard feelings, to restore balance, equality, freedom, to understand and embrace each other's strengths and help shore up each other's weaknesses.

Being trustworthy is something you aspire to. Like everything else in life, you can make mistakes, and need to apologie and make reparations. It's not something that's "one and done" — it's a constant goal and the bar is ever-moving.

To become trustworthy you work on your influence over yourself. You build your own presence of mind (mindfulness), you work on your own character (by way of your personal values, self-confidence, skills-building, taking care of your own needs, and being honest with yourself), and you create your own personal mission and goals so that your desires can be known, so that your motivations, projects, and path are clearer to other people. You really know (and can readily share) what you need to become fulfilled as an individual. You don't have to work on your weaknesses so much as understand, accept, and make adjustments for them. You can focus more on building strengths and desires to have your own personal future path within the larger organization of your shared life.

This is not a time to be self-effacing and give up your personal autonomy "for the good of the collective" — but if you honestly come up short when it comes to a desire to really find and explore yourself, then I suppose that you might turn to your companions and ask for help in defining where you begin and end. Unless you're not ready to explore your personhood. I have to take into account in my own system; a few given the choice to explore themselves have not risen to the occasion.

Once you become trustworthy, then others in the system can choose whether to extend trust to you. But that's not why to do it. You will be so much more comfortable with yourself when you really understand who you are, what you like, your choices, what you wish to pursue, and how to pursue it. You can have your own

values and principles to uphold, and your own personal style and skills to help hold yourself to them. We'll come back to this idea of individual development in the next section.

This all adds up to beefing up one's personal integrity. Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is looking. Note that developing your personal integrity doesn't make you "less you" – it doesn't make Buck less gruff, or Taelee less curt and wild. They retain their individuality, but their personal integrity makes them more solid, more stable if you will, within who they are. They know their strengths and what they bring to the table. They know their weaknesses and when to tap out of a discussion because they aren't going to give effective input in that situation.

For others within our collective, building their integrity helps them present themselves as fully responsible and mature. We know if they take on a task we'd like to delegate, that they're going to get it done. We know they have our back. That they have their personal goals and styles and mission, and there's a time and place where we need them and would love their help with something, and they get to take on their own little projects or collaborate with others in our system on shared projects, and they'll always pull their weight.

Every System is Different — minor coaching plug

System Quick-Start Guide

Communication Techniques

When it comes to being able to have a conversation in your system, any technique that results in being able to hear each other out is better than complete silence between residents.

The following are some possible techniques to help a system build internal communication. Generally speaking, they're listed in an order that is progressive so that systems with very little internal communication can try the first few methods and work their way up through the chain. However it's not necessary to abandon earlier techniques when you find you're able to utilize others. In fact, even though we can talk inside, we still use all of these methods at various times. We use bulletin board methods for brainstorming sessions, we use litmus tests (mentioned earlier in the book) and occasionally utilize the pendulum method because not everyone in our system is equally co-aware, we use journaling, Anything Books, autowriting. We even alternate between the various "talking" methods — playing telephone (talking-through), talking out loud amongst ourselves, and talking inside. Using several methods of communication is necessary because various headmates are at different stages of progress, and it all makes for more lasting memories of events, information, and communications for our entire system.

We have an internal logbook, but we've found that taking notes, for example, which is like the bulletin board method we describe below, helps in an AISOAVV way. Taking physical notes is parallel to writing in our log book, and makes for better recording of events

and information.

We play a little bit of a game of "spot the multiple moment" in our life, and actually kinda look forward to finding entries we don't remember making, seeing our handwriting changes, or watching our hands move to write words we're not thinking up when we autowrite. I suggest you also look at this with curiosity and excitement. You're communicating!!! That's an amazing and wonderful thing. Yeah, sometimes it may be an overwhelming amount of hard evidence and proof, but make it into a game. It's amusing!

Taking Inventory

Being Good Shipmates

Most functional adults have had good role models who taught them how to do chores, who cared whether they were coming or going, who contributed to the household, who set and followed certain rules and guidelines and passed them along about how to navigate in Human Space. However, society is chock full of singlets (and that's the default expectation out there in their world). We don't have good role models for proper and healthy interactions of the internals in a multiple system — basically crews of adventurers and how to be good shipmates. We're not to blame for it.

Studies show that multiples comprise from 1% to 3% of society, which probably includes those not-yet-diagnosed, mis-diagnosed, or who are still functioning as singlets who don't realize they have stoaways onboard, and have not yet had a breakdown of their system into anarchy (and maybe never will). In spite of how prevelent being multiple is, there are no good role models for multiples in books, on TV, in our homes, or in the media. Usually the role models we're handed by the singlet-controlled media and stories are depicted as violating others in Human Space — if not directly, then by our very existence. It's not about having good interactions, and good behavior that singlets can accept or even benefit from or enjoy. So, given no acceptable role models, how *should* our shipmates behave?

We have a basic rule of thumb for you, and we'll say this phrase many times with some different meanings, but here we go: As Inside, So Outside & Vice Versa. In this section what I mean is that you can adapt and modify rules of good behavior for groups of singlets outside your ship as basic rules of good behavior inside

your ship.

That means the "What would The Crisses do?" ruling on internal behavior is: if you wouldn't (or couldn't) do it to your friend or neighbor, you probably shouldn't do it to your headmate or internal companions.

That's your very first lesson in internal rules and politics. It's a lot like the Golden Rule.

Your shipmates may or may not be "part of you" — perspectives amongst multiples vary widely on this — however they *all* deserve to be treated humanely. If they are all part of you (we don't think so, but we're willing to accept your subjective reality), treating them poorly is treating yourself poorly. And you will not be happy and healthy if you treat yourself poorly on any level.

If someone's driving a car, you don't shove them out of the driver's seat and take the steering wheel from them. Aside from downright dangerous, it's also extraordinarily rude and presumptuous. So why would you try that nonsense with your ship? You ask whether you can take a turn driving, or offer to drive, or wait your turn to borrow the car, etc. Shouldn't it be the same way with your ship? And how could you get pushy like that, physically confrontational, angry about it, etc. without it hurting your relationship with that person? Don't expect the people on your ship to be happy with you if you have been pulling that type of behavior.

That's one quick example of how you can use a parallel situation outside of your body to better understand your internal behavior, and what behavioral guidelines to use inside your system. It helps explain how it feels to others in your system, why they may react the way they do, and helps you extrapolate some "polite inner society" guidelines for yourselves.

Hopefully this brief example will help you and your shipmates to start treating each other better. Do your best to really look at what you've been doing and start to make changes that improve your internal culture.

By the way, if you get to feeling guilty about your behavior, remember that your life as a multiple didn't come with an instruction manual or good role models to inform your behavior. Today is a new day, and an apology goes a long way. There's enough nuances to running your life as a spaceship that I filled up this whole book — this is just the start of making changes in your system so that you're all operating your life more smoothly.

All adventurers need guidelines for how to come up with rules and treat each other better. You need time to re-create and repair your internal relationships. We're not going to play the blame game; we're going to have a revolution, change the rules, and do everything in our power to make it fun, adventurous, exciting — and challenging. Don't we all love a good challenge?

Meetings, Redux

I know that Meetings were covered earlier, however we do need to revisit the idea and execution of meetings. What types of things should you put on your agenda? How do you handle problems at meetings? Did you do the exercises? Is it time for more?

Also, if you have been having meetings, things have probably shifted for the better. There are other areas of the book that you may want to revisit, and exercises that follow are linked to other chapters.

Suggested Agendas

- Whether or not to hire (or fire) a therapist. Or alternatively, you could consider (life) coaching or other helpful modalities.
- What to bring up at your next meeting with a therapist, coach, etc.
- Safety – both internal and external issues.
- Internal compliance.

- Implementation intentions.
- Time tracking issues i.e. keeping appointments, time loss.
- Triggers, fronting, depersonalization issues.
- Hiring and Firing and Self-Advocacy[1] - You might have a meeting about issues with your counselor or therapist, and agree on what you will or will not share with someone who is a new member of your team.
- Always Lock the Door When You Leave[2] - Working on safety rules pertaining to the world outside your body.
- Knives Point Down in the Dishwasher[3] - Working on safety rules to modify and monitor internal behavior. You might also refer to That's MY Shampoo![4] on this topic.
- You Can't Make Me![5] and Who Stole My Money?[6] both deal with how to get compliance so that people follow the rules – from inspiring them to follow rules voluntarily to holding meetings to determine disciplinary measures for rules violations.
- You're always making me late![7] deals with avoiding time loss through time tracking, and you might discuss different means of tracking time with your fellow residents at meetings.
- Don't shove me around![8] and Is this a home or a prison?[9] help you deal with the issue of stealing front (ie. "time loss") so you might hold meetings to discuss how you can share time with your other residents.
- Can we talk this over?[10] covers methods of improving internal communication. You might hold meetings to brainstorm new ideas for how to improve communication.

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[1] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/HiringAndFiringAndSelf-advocacy
[2] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/AlwaysLockTheDoorWhenYouLeave
[3] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/KnivesPointDownInTheDishwasher
[4] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/ThatSMyShampoo
[5] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/YouCanTMakeMe
[6] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/WhoStoleMyMoney
[7] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/YoureAlwaysMakingMeLate
[8] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/DontShoveMeAround
[9] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/IsThisAHomeOrAPrison
[10] http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/CanWeTalkThisOver

- We're so glad you could join us![11] addresses how to help get stuck guests to become less stuck so that your other methods of improving internal relationships will help the stuck guest; this can involve some meetings or committee meetings to set up ambassadors to approach the stuck guests.

There's many ways to use meetings, not limited to this list. Eventually internal communication can become so natural that you no longer need to hold formal meetings, and the votes and internal communications "just happen" and there's less rules violations, the rules list is pretty stable, and you have such good relationships and clearly identified goals and roles that you no longer need to monitor everyone's behavior so closely or hold meetings over every little decision. Until you build a solid sense of trust, however, these explicit meetings help you turn the chaos in your system into a more orderly community.

If your system is running this smoothly, there are many other things you can turn your attention and energy to, some of which will be addressed as this boot camp continues.

Seeking Out the Small Voice

Sometimes there are people in a system who lurk and don't participate the way everyone else does. They don't speak up, they don't think their opinion is worth sharing or that anyone is interested in hearing them out.

This person's input is as important as anyone else's. While we want to hear them out, we don't want to frighten them away or make them overly self-conscious at the same time.

Try to find ways to make the person with a small voice heard. Allow them to drop a note into a suggestion box, ask whether they can write it down, maybe they can whisper to someone else,

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[11]http://thecrissinglink.com/Blog/WereSoGladYouCouldJoinUs

but somehow find a way that they can share in the meetings and the governance of your system. Everyone's opinion is valuable and needs to be heard out, even if it's them saying that they love everything about it except the color.

As for the small voice, now I'm talking to you: there may be many reasons you have trouble participating in conversations and meetings. You might not be able to speak up due to abuse and triggers. Many systems end up with mute folk in the system for a variety of reasons. Experiment with other ways of communicating: writing notes, sign language, drawing, cutting words out of papers and magazines, telepathy, mime, song playlists — whatever it takes to get your message out there. It may mean playing 20 questions, or someone else writing words on cards that you can arrange into sentences, etc. — but work with others to make sure you can offer your opinion.

Another possibility is that you aren't sure how to state your opinion in a way that won't hurt anyone's feelings. So here's a little coaching in the sandwich method:

People usually emphasize and remember the first and last thing in a list more than the middle. If you start off with a compliment, give your feedback, and then leave off with something positive it can go a long way towards softening what you disagree with and help folk hear it better. The sandwich technique has a simple formula:

I appreciate this. I have trouble with that. I also appreciate this.

Notice that everything is in "me" language and "you" doesn't come into play so that you avoid any potential for sounding criticizing. So for example: "I love the values of Service and Creativity. I'm really having trouble with the value of Worship. Could we change that to a value of Spirituality? This is amazing work — and I'm excited to be represented."

Of course, it's up to you to find your own voice — no one can make you speak up. But having a good idea of things that can be said in a safer way may help you.

Another helpful technique is the "feedback technique" — I can't claim credit for this one, I learned it through the Manager Tools podcast. This is a way to soften the blow when trying to describe a problem so that it doesn't sound overly criticizing. It's a variation of sandwich technique, with its own formula:

When this thing happens + I react this way. Question about working together to fix it.

Again, avoiding 'you' when possible: "When I hear 'Did you brush your teeth?' I feel little, confused and maybe a little triggered. Can we find another way to ask whether I'm done with my bedtime routine?" That's a real-life example of our partner triggering us, by the way.

So there are ways to approach others that are less likely to create friction, and maybe you'll find that useful and it can help you find your voice — whether you have to write it in notes or type it, sign it in sign language, or whisper it in someone's ear.

Your input is as important as anyone else's and everyone — yourself included — should make sure that you're able to communicate in some way.

It's OK to Have a Party!

When you get to this point in the United Front Boot Camp, you're almost halfway to the end. I think we both have earned a well-deserved break. Keep your agreements, and be respectful, but also just maintain the status quo for just a moment.

When you get this far, you've already made great changes and have improved the relationships you have with others in your head. You might want to take some time just reflecting on the prior steps and exercises, and maybe try a few of them again to see if the results change from this new place.

But when you get this far, don't give up! And make sure you honestly change your relationships with your others because then you have less work to do when you finish all the steps! Good habits are just as hard to break as bad habits, so if you're going to have a habit – make it a good habit!!

The great thing about habits is that they make it so easy to get out of the other end of changes. With habits, you don't I go through this process and then say "I'm done!" and let it all fall apart. If you build habits, you keep at it a little longer until you don't even notice it anymore.

So congratulations on getting this far. Tomorrow we're going to keep on going because like everything in life, if it's worthwhile it's both fun AND challenging!

Christening Your Ship

Unless you want to have your ship called the "Hey You," you probably want to name your ragtag outfit as a whole. While your crew is out exploring the external universe, you might be looking for some time with fellow plurals on the Internet — email lists, in-person at conferences, local meets, support groups, etc. Consider your privacy, safety, and reputation before you join a community; you may want to use an alias — your ship's name or "plural system name" so you do not inadvertently out yourselves on the Internet. We dubbed our ship "The Crisses", but we've also decided to come out of the "storage facility," so you can find us mentioning plural issues as (Rev.) Criss Ittermann, too. Some people take on a second Facebook profile as a plural outfit, and so on. If you choose to do that, look us up and let us know you found us through *United Front*. We can point out some good groups so you can hang with other adventurers.

And as always, be cautious about meeting people in person. If we ever arrange to meet people from the Internet whom we have never

met before, we always meet them in a very public place like a
restaurant. This applies to fellow plurals as well.