

**Shrink Rap Radio #419**  
**Internal Family Systems Therapy with Dr. Jay Earley**

**Now here's your host, Dr. Dave:**

My guest today is

Jay Earley, Ph.D. Psychotherapist, Group Leader, Author, Teacher, and Theorist; specializing in Internal Family Systems Therapy.

For more information about Dr. Earley, Please see our Show Notes for this episode at [ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://ShrinkRapRadio.com).

Now, here's the interview:

**Dr. Dave**

Dr. Jay Earley, welcome to ShrinkRapRadio.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Thank you, I'm glad to be here.

**Dr. Dave**

Well I'm very pleased to have you on the show and I noted with some interest that you've got two Ph.D.s and that's kind of fascinating in itself; maybe you can give us a bit of what your educational and spiritual journey has been like.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Sure, well, my original Ph.D. was in Computer Science and I taught at UC Berkeley for 6 years and then decided that even though I enjoyed doing it, it didn't feel like my life purpose. I was at that point in therapy myself and got really interested in Psychology and so I went back and got a Ph.D. in Psychology and became a Psychologist/Psychotherapist which I've been doing for about 40 years.

**Dr. Dave**

oh wow

That's a lot of time, so when you went to Seabrook; that wasn't 40 years ago was it? or was it...

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

I think it was.

**Dr. Dave**

omg, you must've been one of the early graduates then.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

yeah, I wasn't a real 'early', but yeah, I was.

That's right I was already practicing a little bit when I started at Seabrook, but yeah, it was basically... by the time I finished, it was probably less than 40 years ago.

**Dr. Dave**

And you've got your Computer Science Ph.D. from Carnegie-Mellon which is one of the most prestigious places to do that kind of study.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Right and I was one of the first Ph.D.s in Computer Science in the country; that was one of the first programs.

**Dr. Dave**

wow

That's really impressive and something that we'll get into towards the end of the interview is that I have the impression that you've created a Psychotherapy App. Do I have that right?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

I'm pretty close. It's an Application; it's actually a Web Application. The reason I wouldn't call it an App is that it doesn't really work all that well on Smartphones; it hasn't been optimized for that small screen, but on a tablet or on a computer, it's an application where you can go in... it's really the first of its kind, where you can go into deep psychological work on issues and work on changing your behavior.

**Dr. Dave**

wow

We are definitely going to want to hear more about that.

Now among other things and we already can see that there are a lot of other things that you've been involved with, but you've been involved with an approach known as Internal Family Systems Therapy and we'll go into greater detail as we go along but for now, you can give us just a top-level definition of what Family System Therapy is.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

First of all, it's actually a form of individual therapy; the name is a little confusing.

It's INTERNAL Family System Therapy, which means it works with the/our subpersonalities. When we say a part of me really feels like eating a lot and a part of me is trying to lose weight; those are 'subpersonalities' and we all probably, have heard of the "Inner Child" from the 80's.. This was an early version of working with subpersonalities. IFS was developed by Richard Schwartz and he has developed a very sophisticated, inclusive method of working with subpersonalities that I have found to be extremely powerful and also very user-friendly so it makes it easy for people to not only make a lot of progress when they are in IFS therapy, but also to do it on their own.

**Dr. Dave**

okay now you mentioned Richard Schwartz as the originator and I'm wondering what else you can tell us about the origins or the history of IFS therapy, because quite frankly, I was surprised that I hadn't heard of it. How long has it been around?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

It's been around for 25 or 30 years, but it's only in the last decade that it started to become more widespread and popular. At this point, there are training programs in IFS in many cities in the country... Europe too, but it's only the last 20 years that it really started to grow and become known, but anyway, in terms of the origins of it, Richard Schwartz was originally a Family Therapist and was pretty deeply involved in that and actually wrote one of the big text books in the field and then he ran into situations where doing all the right family therapy things didn't really solve people's problems. Especially when

he was working with a lot of people with Bulimia and he started inquiring more into what was going on internally with these people, not just within their Family systems, and discovered, as many people have, that we have parts inside us and that you can actually talk to the parts and they will talk back to you and form relationships with them and so on. In addition, Dick, and he was not the first one to discover this. This is in Jung's work and it's in voice dialogue and psychosynthesis.

**Dr. Dave**

Dick's an also Eric Berne? and Transactional Analysis and Gestalt Therapy and so I was kind of even nlp? talks a lot about your parts and talking to your parts and so on, so... I was interested that the concept has been used by so many different approaches.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

The thing that they discovered why he called it IFS Therapy is that we don't just have parts but the parts are related to each other in a system like some parts protect us against other parts, some parts are fighting other parts, some parts are allied with other parts and so on, so there's really a system inside us of these different parts and Dick even realized that some of the principles that he knew from Family Therapy could be adapted to working with our Internal Parts. There's a lot more to IFS than that, but that's the origins of why he called it that.

**Dr. Dave**

Can you tell us about the basic assumptions of the approach?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

OK, well, the most basic assumption is multiplicity; that we are not a single personality the way we generally think we are. We actually are made up of many different parts with some having... maybe I should say more about what examples of parts ... One of the famous parts is the 'inner critic'; the part that judges us harshly.

**Dr. Dave**

I think we all recognize that one.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Then there's the famous 'inner child', but it's actually, there's not just one inner child, there are many different child parts that we all have and many of them are pushed out of consciousness, so Dick actually called them 'exiles' because they're actually exiled mostly from consciousness, every once in a while they break through, but the 'exiles' carry pain from childhood, pain or even trauma in some cases and those certain parts carry that pain and because of that they are exiled from the system because our systems are set up to get us away from pain if possible and that's one of the things that makes other forms of therapy, we had defenses and IFS calls defenses 'protectors' or they're also called 'managers' and 'firefighters' which are two kinds of 'protectors'.

**Dr. Dave**

What's the difference between 'managers' and 'firefighters'?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

First of all, I jumped the gun, let me explain the difference between 'protector' and 'exile'. An 'exile' is a child part that carries pain from the past and a 'protector' is a part that tries to arrange your psyche through defenses or your life through the way you behave in such a way that you will never have to feel the pain of your exiles or in some cases, the 'protector's trying to protect 'exiles' from being hurt or from

dangers that they imagine are in your life now or often they go back to childhood. That's the main distinction in IFS between 'protectors' and 'exiles' so you generally work with the 'protectors' first' who will kind of be the equivalent of what I thought of defenses, in other forms of Therapy.

**Dr. Dave**

They always say, don't attack the defenses, so it sounds like you're making friends with the protectors initially.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Exactly and that's one of the things that so the other big concept in IFS is the self, and Dick as he was working with his clients, every once in a while, he would say; what part is there now? and the client would say: it always moves me when I talk about it, this isn't a part, this is ME; this is my real self and Dick realized that when they were in that place, they were in a place of compassion, and caring, and connectedness, and not only with other people, but with their parts. So Dick began to realize that the way to do the work was not just for therapists to work with the parts, but in actuality, to have to help the clients to come into self and the clients actually work with their parts as 'self' and that's one of the things that makes IFS so easy to adapt for Self Therapy as well as for normal Therapists.

**Dr. Dave**

Now do you know if Dick was influenced at all by Jung, because it sounds like the Capital S 'Self' plays such a big role in Jungian Psychology?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Dick meant something different than Jung did by 'Self'. I don't think he was influenced all that much by Jung, in fact, even though clearly, his work is related to Gestalt and Jung and Psychosynthesis and so on it seems like it mostly, he read up on that stuff. But as he was developing it, it was really just coming out of his work with his own clients and his interactions with their parts.

**Dr. Dave**

How did you first become aware of this work?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

In 2002, a friend of mine who had trained with Dick or done some workshops with him told me about it and said it was really interesting stuff. You should try or check it out and I did. It looked fascinating and I got his books and I read and I just was so taken by the power of it. BTW, one thing I should say is the thing that makes it so powerful is that the parts are like little people inside of us and you can actually talk to them and get to know them and find out how they feel and develop trusting relationships with them and it gives you much greater power to actually work with the different psychological constructs that we all have in our psyches rather than just treating them as objects, sort of to be dealt with or whatever; you can actually talk to them and work with them so it gives a lot greater power in terms of working with the psyche.

**Dr. Dave**

...and of course another system that comes to mind is 'psychodrama' and both Gestalt and 'psychodrama' have that concept of actually being able to talk to and dialogue with different internal parts.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Right, so it's been around a long time and exactly as you're saying, a lot of different systems and there

are a lot of current systems I keep hearing about. Somebody has a little therapy here that works with parts and so it's getting around this concept of multiplicity.

**Dr. Dave**

It also puts me in mind of emerging knowledge about the brain; where I think we're beginning to understand that there are different semi-autonomous systems in the brain. Maybe someday this'll map to that or that will map to this.

One of the things I read as I was preparing for the interview; I went on line and tried to see what I could find out about this is that all the parts are viewed as positive, but that you talk about some parts being too extreme. Can you say something about that?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Yes, I wouldn't quite say that the parts are viewed as positive exactly. What's recognized is that they all have a positive intent. Some of the parts actually are quite negative for us, when in fact, the parts we end up working with in therapy are causing us a lot of pain or difficulty relating to people or whatever so that the parts' impact on us can be quite negative, even though they are attempting to do something positive for us. So let me give you an example of that.

**Dr. Dave**

Good

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Let's say you have a part that's procrastinating... that makes you procrastinate. This is actually an interesting one because most people, when they procrastinate, they're usually just aware of: "oh, I need to do this." So there's a part of them that knows they need to do something and wants to do it. What they're not aware of is that usually there's another part of them that doesn't want to do it and often that part is unconscious and prevents them from getting things done or doing things well or moving ahead with their life and so on so often it's a big issue for people and the procrastinating part is a protector almost always and as people go inside and get to know their procrastinating part and say "well, what are you afraid would happen if you let me do this task?" often this part will say "I'm afraid that you'll fail... or people will laugh at you or people will judge you and you'll feel terrible or you'll put it out in the world and you'll be attacked somehow." The part is trying to protect you. Of course, it's doing it in an ineffective, unconscious way, as these problematic parts do, but their 'heart' is in the right place and one of the more powerful parts of IFS is that you don't have to fight with your parts; you don't have to get rid of them, you don't have to judge them or get angry with them as we usually do, but instead you can actually get to know them and find out what their positive intent is and make a connection with them and develop a trusting relationship with them and that sort of sets the groundwork for the further steps of actually healing and transforming the parts.

**Dr. Dave**

Now, you did talk about 'exiles' and 'managers' and you mentioned in passing 'firefighters'. Can you tell us about the 'firefighter' part.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

There are 'exiles' and 'protectors'. protectors come in two flavors; Managers and Firefighters. Managers try to proactively, no, they do two things, and I should probably give some more examples. Managers, one of the things they try to do, is to arrange things in your psyche so that you don't feel the pain of your exiles so many people have an intellectual manager that puts them into their head and away from their feelings so they don't feel the pain of their exiles. Then there are managers that try to

arrange the way you relate to people so that somebody may have the 'People-Pleasing' manager that tries to get them to please people because they're afraid that if they don't they'll get attacked or abandoned or something. Other people have an opposite reaction. Maybe they have a 'Controlling' manager that tries to be in control in most situations in life because that manager is afraid of what will happen if you're not in control. Basically, there are managers that just shut you down, so that you can't feel anything, because that keeps you away from the pain of your exiles. Managers proactively try to arrange your psyche and your life and your relationships in such away that the pain of your exiles doesn't come up. Of course, sometimes, that doesn't work; something will happen to trigger the pain of the exile. Let's say somebody judges you and that triggers the pain of an exile that was judged a lot as a child and that pain starts to come up. Sometimes a firefighter will jump in and try to distract you or get rid of that pain in an impulsive, in the moment way, where managers try to arrange things proactively so that the pain won't come up. Firefighters get triggered when the pain is starting to come up. If somebody judges me I might have an angry firefighter that would react with anger as the way of keeping me from feeling the pain of being judged. That's an example. Another example of firefighters is 'drink'; if I'm upset about something, I'll go get drunk or if I'm an eater, I'll go eat a whole cake or something like that. Firefighters are parts that get triggered in the moment to distract you or dull you or take you away from pain and you may not have even realized that the pain is starting to come up. The Firefighter can come in that quickly. It is coming up, so all you know is your anger. All you know is I gotta have a drink or whatever it might be. You may not even realize that that was a defense to a pain that was going to arise.

**Dr. Dave**

How would you characterize the goals of IFS Therapy?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

I think you could describe it in two ways; one is that the goal is to (remember I talked about the 'self'; the 'self' is who you really are when you are not taken over by problematic parts. The managers the firefighters, the exiles, then you are just naturally the self and you can relate to people and be curious and passionate and you're fairly grounded you basically have your natural good qualities available to you. You can even think of the self as your spiritual center.) One goal is to have the self be basically to live your life as much as possible as the self so that is where you come from and your parts are not taking over. The way to do that is one at a time, you work with your problematic parts and you basically through IFS (I'll tell you more about how this happens) but through IFS you heal and transform these problematic parts so that they can have their natural healthy functions. For example, your procrastinating part's natural function might just be to relax and have fun, but instead it gets to the point of "I don't want to do that" instead of getting to things that need to have done. Once you've healed your parts; they can resume their natural healthy roles. The same with your Exiles; the parts that are in pain, that pain can be healed and the technical term for this is 'unburdened'; to release the pain, so the exile is no longer carrying the pain from childhood and can resume it's natural healthy function which might be curiosity or playfulness or joy or whatever. I have a feeling I didn't answer the question.

**Dr. Dave**

We were talking about the goals of IFS; you implied there would be more.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

So the Second Goal is to transform/heal/unburden your parts so they are functioning from their natural, healthy places and in the process of that, develop a trusting relationship between the parts themselves so

that the parts will trust the self and allow the self to be. Then the ideal situation is when you're mostly in self and the self just naturally calls on your healthy parts so that if you need a part because you want to be intimate with your wife, a part comes in for that, if you have creative parts that are needed at a certain point, that comes in, if you need an assertive part, that can come in, so basically you want a bunch of healthy parts that are led by the self.

**Dr. Dave**

That explains something for me because I went to the IFS website and I believe its called the Self-Leadership Institute. An interesting notion; the self-leadership. We think of leading others, but the way that you just put that, as you're talking about that goal, the self, this core self, or a higher self as a leader of the parts give it more of a context that makes sense of it.

An interesting thing about this, I gather, is that it can be used either with families, which has the word family therapy in it, or with individuals. You've mostly focused on the individual approach so far. How would it be used in a Family context?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

I can't comment a lot on that because I don't work with families.

**Dr. Dave**

OK

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

It's used a lot in couples therapy. I don't really work with couples anymore either, but I used to so I know how it's used with couples.

**Dr. Dave**

OK, that'll do.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

One way to think of it is that couples are generally in therapy because they're having fights. They're having a lot of difficulty. One thing you can do with a couple is sit down and ask questions and analyze what happens in a fight between any two people.... Even argument or anything because what generally happens is somebody will say something or do something that is coming from one of their protectors, be it judgmental, or angry, or withdrawing, or whatever it might be and that will trigger an exile in their partner. If they're judgmental, they'll trigger an exile in their partner that was judged in their childhood. If they're angry, they'll trigger an exile that's afraid of anger, or if they're withdrawn, they'll trigger an exile that was abandoned, or if they cried as a child, and so on... One partner will say something that will trigger one of the other partner's exiles. Then the other partner will have a protector come out to protect that exile and they'll respond from that protector, they'll get angry or they'll get judgmental or they'll pull away or they'll become a pleaser, or they'll get passive-aggressive or whatever it might be and that then tends to trigger an exile in the first person, and then they'll have a protector come out so then you end up with protector wars. Without usually, either person being aware that their exiles are being triggered and that's why their... Usually most people are not even aware of how they are responding. All they are aware of is that my partner is being terrible to me. What is actually going on is that they are not being so great themselves because their protectors are triggered to protect their exiles and the same thing is going on in the partner. You can sit down with a couple in couples therapy and analyze these sequences (transactions) as they might start to happen in a session. Then you can identify what parts are involved, then you can actually work with one of the people doing

some individual IFS work in the Couples session in order to identify, to work with the protector or get in touch with the exile and maybe heal the exile, which tends to give the partner of that person a lot more compassion and empathy for where they are coming from.

**Dr. Dave**

If there's more you want to say go ahead...

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

No, that's it.

**Dr. Dave**

My intern, Eric, has a question...

**Eric**

Hi Jay, I'm wondering whether these parts are considered archetypal, in their basic patterns; are these parts common to everybody?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

They are both common to everybody and they are unique.

In fact, I have developed something called the "Pattern System" which is basically a way of understanding various types of parts that people can have, and so you can think of that... They're not exactly archetypes in the Jungian sense, but similar. There are categories of parts; like some of the ones I've mentioned, controlling, people-pleasing, intellectual, or passive-aggressive, or dependent, or anyway, you can go on and on... there's probably 50 or 60 types of patterns.

I got off track, did I answer your question?

**Eric**

yes, thank you thank you!

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

The other thing I wanted to say is however, each part is unique, you can't just put a part in a category and think you know it. When you do IFS, you don't just identify, oh this is the pleaser part or this is the controlling part and think you know it. NO, each part is absolutely unique and you must go in and get to know each part and talk to it and find out what its job is and what it does and how it feels and it's a crucial part of IFS. Some people in IFS world like the pattern system because they think it implies you can put parts in boxes and not realize the uniqueness. People know that's not the case.

**Eric**

Have you used IFS with young children?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

No, I don't work with kids, but there are IFS therapists that do, it can actually be pretty effective with children.

**Dr. Dave**

I have the impression that IFS also lends itself to self-help; do I have that right?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**



Yes

**Dr. Dave**

I think you said something vindicating that early on. How does that work?  
What is it about it that lends itself to that?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

In order to get there, let me explain more about how the process works through the self. Basically what happens is that if you're working on your self using IFS, you'll choose, with your therapist's guidance, if you have a therapist, you'll choose a part that you want to work on and the first thing you'll do is go through a couple of steps of the IFS process to either make sure that you are in self or to get into self with respect to that part which means that the part hasn't taken over and that you are open to getting to know it and that you are not trying to get rid of it or judge it or not be angry at it. You get into self and then you get to know the part and I'll assume it's a protector since that's usually where you start. You get to know what the positive intent is and you develop a trusting relationship with it from self. So that what I'm leading to here, is that in IFS the self is the agent of healing and therapy. It's not the therapist. The therapist is more of a coach for the client, in terms of helping them to get into self and to stay in self and know what the steps of the process are and things like that. Of course with some clients, the therapist has to become the self, in this system for a while, but generally, once the client develops the ability to get into self at least in a section, they become the healer for their own parts and therefore, I can talk more about how that actually happens with the exiles, but basically that's why IFS lends itself to self therapy so well because the self is the healer. Therefore it's much more possible, if you're able to conduct your own IFS session, know the steps, and know how to stay in self, then you can do your own work and heal your own parts.

**Dr. Dave**

I believe there are self help books written from this perspective and in fact, I think YOU have written one or more?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Yes, the main book I've written on IFS is called "Self Therapy" and it has, of course, it has double meaning, self therapy in that you can do your own therapy and self therapy; therapy that comes from the self. That book is actually a manual for doing IFS and even though it's written for the general public, it teaches people how to do IFS on their own. It's also a manual a lot of IFS therapists use to learn IFS and to know the steps themselves.

**Dr. Dave**

How fascinating and have you ever gotten feedback from clients who took themselves through it on their own?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Yes, that's been very interesting because I should say the origin of this book is that many years ago, I started teaching courses to people in how to use IFS to work on your self. I've been doing that for years. I was happy to discover that, at least within the context of the course, people would pair up with each other and do IFS peer counselling with each other for homework and really they got a lot out of it, so I actually have two courses. I took the two courses together and put them together and wrote Self Therapy and I didn't know how well people would do just on their own but I've gotten a lot of e-mails from a lot of people over the years, the book's been out four or five years, telling me how much they'd gotten out of it and how much IFS had changed their lives and some people can really do it on their

own. I've also gotten many e-mails and phone calls from people who started doing IFS using Self Therapy and felt like it was a great method and felt like they couldn't do it on their own or they couldn't go as far as they wanted to on their own and so they would call me to see if they could work with me or if they could refer them to somebody. Many people can do it on their own and many people need more help.

**Dr. Dave**

OK

That's got to be very gratifying to you that it's been as successful as it's been.

Recapping the IFS part of our discussion here, what do you see as the strengths of the IFS model?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

One of the strengths that I haven't mentioned...

There's actually two big ones:

First of all, the way it deals with defenses, (which is another name for protectors) is the idea that you don't try to work with an exile until you've gotten permission from the protector that's protecting that exile. That's where a lot of therapies get into trouble; they try to just and barge in and work with people's young pain and they keep getting tossed out by the protectors. but with IFS, you go in and you get to know the protector and develop a trusting relationship with it and then ask permission to work with the exile. That makes the whole thing work more smoothly.

The other thing is that IFS has a very well-defined, sophisticated method for healing exiles. After you get to know the protector, find out what exiles they're protecting, get permission, then you go in, from self, the client does, with a therapist's guidance, and works with the exile, gets to know it, finds... asks the exile to show it where it got the pain or the trauma, What happened in childhood and you witness that from self, and then there's a re-parenting step, where in self, you actually go in and give the exile a new experience that changes the way things are laid down in the Psyche. This has now been confirmed by some of the research on memory reconsolidation and that's how re-parenting works is through memory reconsolidation. You can give the exile a different experience. Often through re-parenting from the self or through imagining the situation coming out differently and that is actually part of the healing process. There are couple of more steps to the healing process, too, but there's a well-defined process to actually heal an exile of whatever pain it's carrying.

**Dr. Dave**

Would you have a new patient or client... wondering, how much time is spent didactically, giving this vocabulary and explaining concepts and so on...

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

That varies a lot from therapist to therapist. I tend to.. Well, these days, I get a lot of people who have already read my book. Even if they haven't, I generally recommend that they read my book, so I like them to know the concepts and I'll occasionally spend a little time in sessions, doing a little Psychological Education. It's not necessary, some IFS therapists with certain clients, some therapists, you can do IFS without explaining anything except parts. The rest of the concepts do not have to be explained to somebody. You can just do the work.

**Dr. Dave**

That makes sense to me.

Earlier you mentioned something you developed called the "Pattern System".

Maybe you can tell us a bit more about that, it's relationship to IFS, Is it an elaboration of IFS or is it something different?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

It's different, but it's a natural complement to IFS. Basically the Pattern System is, it's not a method or therapy or change, but it becomes that in Self Therapy Journey, but mostly it's not, it's a way of understanding the Psyche and the Personality and someone's Psychology and so it basically covers the content, the Psychological content of the Psyche and the Personality, whereas IFS provides a very powerful process for healing. Pattern System is the content; IFS provides the process. They are a perfect complement in that sense. I developed the Pattern System, I actually was working on it before I even found IFS, but it just became such a natural integration with IFS that my further development of the Pattern System over the past twelve years has been in synch with IFS. As an example, my wife and I did a study of "Inner Critics" because it's such a crucial issue for so many people. We identified seven primary types of Inner Critics and each of those correspond to a pattern in the Pattern System. There's a Task Master, there's the Perfectionist, there's the Inner Controller, there's the Underminer, the Guilt-Tripper, and so on... Each of those is a particular type of Inner Critic and each of those parts corresponds to a pattern in the Pattern System. The Pattern System also contains healthy capacities, so for each pattern, there is a corresponding healthy capacity or maybe more than one, but usually there is one primary one that transforms that pattern. For example, if you have a people-pleasing pattern, the healthy capacity that transforms it is assertiveness. If you have an Inner Critic pattern that makes you feel bad about yourself, the healthy capacity that transforms it is self-esteem. There is even more interesting... there are a bunch of different dimensions in the pattern system. Each dimension has at least two patterns and at least two healthy capacities that are in interesting relationship with each other. It shows where patterns tend to be in conflict with each other, which is another concept with IFS called "Polarization". I don't want to go into too much detail with the Pattern System, but it basically is a way of not only talking about the different types of patterns and healthy capacities, but also showing how they're related to each other in various dimensions.

**Dr. Dave**

At the top of the interview, you mentioned that there is a Web Application or a website that you've been working on, so tell us about that.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

That's called Self Therapy Journey and it's based on both IFS and the Pattern System and you can go on there and you can treat it, it doesn't actually act like a therapist; it doesn't pretend to have a conversation with a therapist, but it allows you to do the deep therapeutic transformational work that you do in therapy and it actually uses IFS. Basically, the way it works is that you go in... Most people start out by taking one of our two main quizzes. You can take a quiz which will help you to identify what patterns you have that you might want to work on and then you can choose one of those patterns. So let's say to continue my example, you took a quiz and scored high on Procrastination and you said: "Yeah, that's really a big issue for me" Then you can decide that you want to work on that. That's one of the patterns, so you would start on Procrastination pattern, and by the way, the healthy natural capacity that transforms it is work confidence and so you would use self therapy journey to explore your procrastination pattern to discover more about how you procrastinate, when you procrastinate, what triggers it, what thoughts do you have, what feelings do you have and then how you do this therapy, is that there are checklists for all these things and you check off which of those apply to you and you can add your own and you could also take notes and do a lot of journalling, but then there's a point where you can actually... there's a recorded, guided fantasy that takes you through doing the first half of the ... session on a procrastination protector and takes you through the steps of getting to know that protector

and finding out its' positive intent and developing a trusting relationship with it. That's all Stage One; there's actually five stages in Self Therapy Journey. Stage Two corresponds to working with exiles; which in the Pattern System are called "Wounds". There are different categories of exiles. There's the Attack Wound, if you would. The Deficiency Wound, if you were made to feel worthless. The Abandonment Wound, Betrayal Wound, Rejection Wound, and so on... There are a bunch of types of wounds. In Stage Two, you can go in and explore one of the wounds that's underlying your procrastination pattern and there are ways to discover, in Self Therapy Journey what those wounds are and learn a lot about that particular exile and there's another guided fantasy for taking you through the second half of the IFS session in terms of healing the exile. Then there's further stages where you actually get to know the healthy capacities; work confidence and then there's the whole big thing of helping people to develop a practice they can do in their life, where they practice living from healthy capacity rather than from a Pattern.

**Dr. Dave**

I don't know how long this site has been up.  
Have you gotten any feedback yet?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Yes, it's been up for about 7 months.  
We did a couple of years of testing before that so it's been tested on a lot of people and many of them, especially the ones that stuck with it, were able to really make significant changes that they wanted to make so I was very happy. It's a little bit easier way of getting into IFS than just reading my book: Self Therapy because you're guided into doing the IFS work through the guided meditations.

**Dr. Dave**

Are there any fees involved?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

Yes, it's very inexpensive; just \$25 a month and people can also try it out for two weeks free; a 14 day trial.

**Dr. Dave**

Maybe paying **something** helps them to commit and stick with it, because I would see that as the real challenge. That's probably my own parts speaking there...

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

You're absolutely right and I encourage people... Most people really prefer just being completely alone; I encourage people, get a friend or a buddy to either be with them when they're doing it, or talk to them afterwards. In addition to just that natural human support that we all need, or that many of us need when we're doing inner work, it also helps people be accountable and say OK, I'm going to do a session and I'll talk to you after that or when they're doing homework practice, if they have a buddy, they can help them to actually do the practice to know that they talk to their buddy. For people that want it, we also have an on-line community that people can belong to and find their 'buddy', if they don't have the friends to do the work.

**Dr. Dave**

You mentioned that it's not a program that people can actually dialog with, but Carnegie-Mellon, where you got that PhD so long ago, has one of the leading places for Artificial Intelligence. Is there any part of you that would like to down the line become an interactive speaking part?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

I've actually thought of that. First of all, there's actually another step that I've thought about which is, over the years, I can imagine myself gradually automating more and more of the Therapy process. Of course it could never take the place of the good therapist because the therapeutic relationship is such an important part of therapy and having an expert there. I do imagine myself eventually, if I live long enough, moving into some of the Artificial Intelligence; that would be fun to play with.

**Dr. Dave**

Yes, it would be.

This has been delightful, as we wind down, is there anything else you'd like our listeners to know?

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

No, one of the things that I'm having fun doing lately is Webinars, so I do Webinars in Self Therapy Journey and I also do Webinars on specific psychological issues like one on Depression, one on People-Pleasing, one on Procrastination and so on. I invite people; join my e-mail lists. Webinars are free; just call in and watch me talk about some of these different patterns from the Pattern System and IFS and Self Therapy Journey.

**Dr. Dave**

You can give your URL here if you'd like to...

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

It's **SelfTherapy.com**.

Also, the other thing I want to say is that we don't just have these two quizzes; we have about 7 or 8 other quizzes and I'm developing more all of the time. The Pattern System lends itself well to quizzes. If you like to learn about your psychology by taking quizzes, come to our site too!

**Dr. Dave**

OK!

It's been fun talking to you Dr. Jay Earley.

Thanks for being my guest today on **Shrink Rap Radio**.

**Dr. Jay Earley, Ph.D.**

and thank YOU, David, I really enjoyed having this conversation with you. You were really good at bringing me out.