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Readers about Arienne Klijn and previous publications

I have now interwoven Arienne's insights into my personal and professional life. One of the best choices in my life.

– *Janneke van Olphen*

Arienne Klijn explains very clearly how different parts of yourself can have their say and along the way you get a lot more insight into and understanding of your own behaviour.

Everyone should read this book.

– *Anna van der Vaart*

She provides insight and handles to grab myself, so that I can regain my balance.

– *Nicoline Kortbeek*

With her help I created more balance in my inner family. As a result, I now have a more pleasant and less stressed life and I perform my work even better and more efficiently.

– *Dyana Loehr-van Dijk*

For work and private I have received very valuable tips from her.

– *Philine van Heek*

If you want to get straight to the point, I can wholeheartedly recommend reading her book.

– *John van den Enden*

Foreword

More than thirty years ago I was fortunate to find teachers from different spiritual traditions who initiated me and shared their wisdom with me. Then I was apprenticed to a shaman who, among other things, helped me to get to know myself in terms of my inner man, woman, boy and girl. Native Americans call these your shields.

My teachers also sent me to study psychology at a Dutch university to respect and understand my Western scientific roots, and said I would learn to integrate the wisdoms of psychology and spirituality. They told me one day people would feel free to use all their talents, regardless of gender and cultural norms in societies, and that my work would help people find their path and be true to themselves and their communities.

I loved reading about Jungian archetypes, discovered the power of bodywork, had over a 100 sessions of therapy myself, graduated and became a therapist.

Then I went on to study family therapy. There I learned how to help families resolve their conflicts and how to work together in the best possible way. A few years later I was inspired to combine the shields and family therapy and so my model “The Shields of Your Inner Family” was born. It teaches you to employ your feminine and masculine powers, the childlike aspects as well as the mature aspects. Regardless of your physical body, sexual preferences or conditioning. Thus being free to use the creativity associated with the 'androgynous mind'.

Since then my colleagues and I have worked with thousands of people using this integrated wisdom. Time and again, students tell me that the Shields of Your Inner Family is an inspiring and lighthearted way to better understand yourself and others and promote growth and personal leadership. I wrote this book to give as many people as possible the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the model. I hope and trust it will challenge and inspire you to act in accordance with your inner wisdom, strength and joy.

Please find more information on www.innerfamily.com.
You will also find a test on this website that gives you more insight into your own inner family.

Are you looking forward to meeting your inner family members?
Then start reading this book now, because in it you can read how you can get to know them well. May they bring you joy!

Arienne Klijn

Introduction

This book is going to change your life! It teaches you to look at yourself and others in a new way and thus get the best out of every situation, be it work, love or friendships. Thanks to the method I present here, you will be better able to understand yourself and others. That is wonderful, because understanding what happens during that quarrel with your partner or that conflict at work will give you a certain peace of mind. Then you can learn to actively apply the method in this book if you want to change something about a situation or a relationship. By gaining insight into why you and the others react the way they do, you can better redirect your own behavior and that of those others. For example, if you have to have a difficult conversation with your boss, have problems with a stubborn colleague, your partner is looking for a fight again or your children are annoying.

This book gives you the tools to always make the most of yourself and the situation. As a result, you will feel more peace, self-confidence and balance, and you will enjoy life more. And the same applies to this book: practice makes perfect. The more you use this method, the easier it will be. Therefore, see it as an investment in your future.

You can use this book as your lifestyle coach, teaching you how to look at yourself and others differently and how to apply that knowledge.

This way you don't have to feel like a plaything for others, but you become the director of your own life.

This book was written by a psychologist, but you certainly don't have to be a psychologist to read and understand it. It is intended for anyone who wants to live freely and joyfully.

How is this book structured?

This book has four chapters. In chapter 1 I broadly explain the method that is used. The basis of this: we all have an 'inner family' that determines our behavior. In Chapter 2, you get to know the members of your inner family: your inner man, woman, boy, and girl. I also explain what they stand for and how you can reinforce them, so that you can behave more consciously. In Chapter 3, I explain how to become the director of your inner family so that you can always respond appropriately to situations. And chapter 4 focuses on the other: why do your boss, your partner and your children react this way, and how can you influence their behavior? The book contains recognizable practical examples, questionnaires and assignments, so that you can immediately apply the knowledge.

This book is ready to change your life. What are you waiting for?

1 You and your inner family

You are (even) smarter than you think!

This book offers you an easy and fun method to gain more insight into your own talents and to be able to apply them better. As a result, you can act smarter and more effectively in many situations and achieve what you have in mind. Admit it: there are many situations at work or in your private life in which you can appear smarter, more confident and more efficient. For example, if your mother-in-law invites you for Christmas again and you really don't want to go. Or if you've been way too unkind to your partner for the umpteenth time.

The strategies I offer are simple to apply. They make it easier for you to explain to others what you mean and what you want to achieve. As a result, you have a greater chance that those others will cooperate in realizing the goals you set. But how does that work?

In this book you will meet four 'persons' who together represent all your talents, needs, values and motivations: your inner family. These talents, needs, values and motivations can be divided into four groups. Each group is typified by a 'family member': a girl, a boy, a woman and a man.

The girl represents your feelings; she is your vulnerable, soft side. The boy represents your willpower, your energy and your inspiration. The woman stands for your realism and taking good care of yourself and others based on self-esteem. The man represents your ability to think clearly and your decisive power. Everyone has these four sides, styles or roles: you always have four options for approaching a situation.

The four members of your inner family each have their own typical behavior – behavior that, when added together, typifies you. They are not *stereotypes*, but *archetypes*, which means that all people have these four sides in them and they represent so much more than the stereotypical exaggeration. But in one person, for example, the girl has a stronger presence, in another the inner man is dominant – in every conceivable mixture of traits and skills that are typical for your inner girl or man.

The four roles are archetypal. The man is strong, the woman takes care of the children, the boy is playful and mischievous and the girl is sweet and sensitive. How those four interact with each other, how the mutual ties are within your inner family, depends on your conscious and unconscious choices. This book offers you the opportunity to change the relationships in your inner family so that you will get the best out of yourself in every situation. That is, in any given situation, you can bring out one of the four members of your inner family, as the situation demands. This way you can ensure that you achieve the best, for yourself and for others.

The culture of the Native Americans also recognizes this distinction in four elements that make up every human being: the man, the woman, the boy and the girl that they call 'shields'. In every situation you can choose which shield you put forward and with that, which side of yourself you want to show the other(s). You can train that ability to alternate your shields, called "dancing with your shields". By dancing beautifully and powerfully with your shields, you can do what is best for everyone involved in any situation. I will therefore use the term 'shield' regularly in this book.

Exercise

This book teaches you to better apply your talents. Before you can apply the information in this book, it is important that you know what you are good at. So think about your talents. What talents do you have? Write them down below. If you find that difficult, ask a family member, friend or colleague what they think your talents are.

My talents

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- etc.
-

Get the most out of yourself

As with any family, the members of your inner family have ties to each other. You can learn to understand how the members of your inner family interact with each other, and how that works in others. This gives you more insight into your own behavior and that of the people around you, and you can change that behavior more easily to get the best out of yourself. In order to get a better sense of your inner family, in the overview below you will find the most important talents of the boy, the girl, the man and the woman.

YOU and YOUR INNER FAMILY

Boy	Original Playful Adventurous Free Inspired Energetic
Girl	Seeking connection Sensitive Vulnerable Trusting Open, receptive Kind and (for)giving
Man	Decisive Strong Clear Result-oriented Analytical Focused and committed
Woman	Realistic Wise Nurturing Practical Accepting Compassionate

Exercise

- Do you see talents of yourself that you had not noted in the previous exercise, add your talents there.
- Then write down your most important talents on the next page and note the corresponding inner family member behind it.

.....

my talents

Inner family member

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

etc.

c) To what extent do you see all four inner relatives in yourself?

Most of your time you act unconsciously. You make choices based on ingrained behavioral patterns and/or acquired habits. That makes choosing new ways to deal with certain situations quite a challenge. But you need that behavioral change to get more out of life!

Conscious behavior takes time and energy, because you have to be constantly on the lookout. After all, you have to tell yourself over and over again what to do and what not to do. If you don't, you'll fall back into old habits before you know it, such as being late, eating too much, being too demanding of your partner, being intimidated by your boss, and so on.

Your brain can process images and metaphores more easily than words. By imagining each of your inner family members rather

than describing their talents in words, it becomes easier to choose a particular behavior in a given situation that belongs to one of those inner family members. For example an image of an 'archetypical masculine attitude' instead of 'someone who acts decisively, is ambitious and goal-oriented, brings focus and perseveres until the goal is achieved'.

In this book you will learn that certain behaviors don't work in certain situations, while other behaviors do. For example, if someone behaves like a hysterical little girl, it is not wise to counteract with typical masculine behavior because it will likely backfire – in such a case the more compassionate feminine style will be more effective. Anyone who gains insight into which combinations work well makes it a lot easier for themselves and others. And the nice thing about the method in this book is that it comes naturally at some point. Whoever recognizes the four archetypes in himself and in others at a given moment without having to think first, can deal with them better. This way you can always get more out of situations.

Coach Yourself

The core of the method in this book is the idea that you have a family inside just like the families you saw growing up. That makes everything that happens in your inner family so recognizable: after all, you see (or saw) it around you every day. Some talents are innate and you can hardly change them or not at all. If you're very precise – like your mother for example – it's hard to let that go completely. What this method is all about is learning to emphasize or suppress certain talents in certain situations. It takes patience, and it won't always go well right away. It does not matter: by trial and error you can become wise. This book will support you on your journey.

.....

In addition, it is good to know that your inner children are your nature, and you cannot change them. But you can empower, strengthen, build and develop your inner adults. And you have the rest of your life for that.

People around you are (or have been) important in the development of your talents: your parents, relatives, friends, teachers, neighbors, sports trainers and so on. Sometimes thanks to them you have developed talents that you are proud of. Perhaps your parents' upbringing has made you a real go-getter, a quality that you can use to your advantage. But you undoubtedly also have talents that you are a lot less happy with. For example, that you say yes way too quickly, when you would like to shout No! Or maybe your inner man is a real tyrant at times, which you later regret. This book aims to help you do something about it.

You can think of yourself as your own (shields)coach, or your inner family therapist. And in that role you can change your own behavior a lot by curbing certain characteristics in certain situations or by allowing them to come to the fore. In such a situation, anyone who wants to say no more often should give the strong man in himself space. You will be rewarded for it: imagine Christmas without your mother-in-law! Whoever wants to comfort and console someone has to put the strong man in the background for a while and let the caring woman come to the fore. Everyone benefits from this: you, your family members, your friends, your colleagues.

Exercise

As you have read, you are at the helm when it comes to desired behavioral change in yourself. Give a number of examples (column 1) of situations in which you showed a certain behavior that made you think 'hmmm, I should have done that differently'. then write down exactly which behavior you exhibited (column 2) and which behavior would have been more effective (column 3).

What was going on? (situation)	What did you do? (behavior)	What behavior would have been more effective?
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
etc.		

The combinations of shields

Just like in a real family there are members in your inner family who have a special connection with each other. In the case of your inner relatives, this can turn out well, but also very negatively. In this book I describe different combinations of two shields. They can form a strong alliance in your inner family, at the expense of the other shields. The combinations I describe are common. If you learn to recognize them, in yourself and in others, you can deal with them more easily. And that in turn helps you to make the best of certain situations.

You are the director of your inner family

As we have seen, you must coach and direct the four members of your inner family – your shields – in every situation to get the best out of yourself. I call that coaching and *directing* (your behavior). You decide which of them can step forward when and who should stay in the background when.

If someone hurts you for example, you as coach and director of your inner family decide whether the angry strong man in you comes to the fore, or the sad and hurt inner girl. And if your partner has a toothache, you can choose the strong, problem-solving man or the comforting woman to act.

Taking control of yourself feels a lot better than being a plaything. No director has complete control over his actors, but by actively directing you will find that you get a lot more done in life.

Directing and staying authentic and natural

You often hear people say: 'I really want to be myself.' Or: 'How fake is he or she behaving, I wish they would just be themselves for once.' Which member of that person's inner family would they be talking about?

Being authentic, original and spontaneous belongs to the domain of the boy we all are, regardless of our (physical) gender. Vulnerability and showing your feelings, on the other hand, are part of the girl. Being yourself means as much as possible to bring out the boy and girl you have in you. Obviously, that's just a sensible attitude in situations where being vulnerable can't hurt you. For example, someone who shows his inner vulnerable girl to his aggressive boss does not always do himself a good service.

Exercise

Look back at the previous exercise, in which you described which behavior you exhibited and which behavior would have been better. Now try to translate that behavior to your inner family. Who came first and who could you have benefitted from?

What was it about? (situation)	Who was in charge? (boy, girl, man, woman)	Who would have been a better fit? (boy, girl, man, woman)
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
etc.		

The aim of this book is to get the best out of yourself by teaching yourself *to direct with authenticity*. That means: taking control of your behavior without compromising your nature. You can enhance many of the talents you possess or learn new ones. Once you've done that, you'll get to the stage where you need to try out new behaviors for the first time. To give an example: you can be very insecure and teach yourself to become very self-confident. If people don't know you like that, they might call that behavior fake. You shouldn't care about that. You and no one else decide how you want to be. In this you are limited by your nature, or in other words by the talents of your inner children. But within those limits, a lot is possible, and it's up to you to discover your limits.

By looking at yourself this way, you never have to feel like you're being fake, or hiding behind a mask.

It's good to think of your inner family as a team. If you have a problem, it is a problem for all members of your inner family and each member has their own responsibility. The more efficiently they work together to solve a problem, the better. Because they all suffer if they don't!