



The Inner Rebel Worksheet

This worksheet is a tool that you can use for meeting, understanding, and caring for the inner rebel and feelings of resistance, fear, and stuckness that can arise when you want to grow or explore new aspects of your being.

There's also an audio version of this worksheet available if you'd like to be guided through it. You can have a printed version handy for writing notes and describing your experience as you listen to the audio.

May this worksheet be a help to you as you acquaint yourself with the tender underbelly of the inner rebel, and may it nourish peace, compassion, and confidence in relating to all the parts of your inner life.

In warmth and care,
Karly Randolph Pitman

The glory of our inner landscape

We are all filled with a giant, glorious, messy, wondrous, and wild inner cosmos: a mix of feelings, needs, selves, and parts. These various parts imbue our days with richness, depth and meaning. They embed us into the marrow of our human lives, with the 10,000 joys and 10,000 sorrows we all share.

It's a rich and rapturous ecosystem, our own inner ecology, with much variety of species, flora and fauna, and weather systems.

These different parts can evoke such a mix of emotions in us! I know there are some parts of myself that I find really difficult to make room for and embrace.

These various parts can work in harmony towards a common purpose. And these parts can also want seemingly opposing and even contradictory things.

For example, one part of our inner ecology may want growth or change. And another part of ourselves may feel hesitant, frightened, angry, or resistant.

When these two needs clash, conflict can ensue.

The constriction of the heart

When we feel caught between seemingly opposing needs, and we feel the tension of this inner conflict, we often constrict. We tighten our hearts and clamp down.

We may feel alarmed, like something's wrong – or that something's wrong with us. We may worry that we won't get what we need. We may feel frightened that we'll make a mistake, or that we'll make a wrong choice, or that we'll stay permanently stuck, in conflict.

We may feel frustrated or impatient – a feeling of, “Why is this happening now?”

We may feel frantic, feeling driven to work really hard to resolve this inner conflict as quickly as possible so we can 'get rid of' this inner dynamic.

Ouch! Painful.

Trying to effect change

A part of us that wants to move forward may step up to the plate. It rolls up its sleeves and says, in so many words: “Okay, okay – since you all obviously can't figure this out, *I'm* going to take charge here!”

And it tries to steer the ship. It may respond to your resistant parts with a variety of strategies:

- persuasion and reason (here's why this is good for you)
- rewards (if you do this, I'll give you XYZ)
- demands
- force/overpowering our resistance (forcing ourselves to just 'do what we should be doing')

Most of the time, these strategies don't work – and even if they do work, they often feel off. They exact a painful cost, including the pain of feeling like we're steamrolling over our tenderness, and our hearts. The cost is often relationship.

They hurt, primarily, because they aren't coming from a place of connection, attunement, or compassion. They're often driven from a place of separation and powerlessness – which is why we feel so frantic, frightened, or frustrated.

They're 'top down,' coming from a detached, disconnected, mechanistic, mental space – a sense of, “Well, if you'd just do A, B, C everything would be fine already!”

The 'second arrow' – when control strategies don't work

When these strategies don't work, we may feel other emotions and inner responses. The two most common are some form of frustration or collapse. Frustration can arise as criticism, judgment, self attack, and blame (“It's all your fault that I'm stuck.”)

Collapse is an energy of giving up in resignation, hopelessness, and helplessness (“Why bother!” Or “It's hopeless – I'll never change.”)

Ouch – these feelings are an additional layer of hurt on top of the original hurt – what Buddhists call the 'second arrow.' Here's a summary of this beautiful teaching: we often can't control the first arrow – how we get triggered. But when we add blame and judgment onto our pain, we've shot ourselves with a second arrow – a double ouch.

What helps? A different approach

There's a different way of approaching your inner rebel – and all the conflicting emotions, reactions, thoughts, and sensations that arise when you feel scared, overpowered, hesitant, or unsure.

This approach is based on relationship, what you may call 'being with.' When we're in relationship, we're in our hearts – and we can approach the inner rebel with compassion and warmth.

In the heart, there's room. You recognize that you're feeling triggered, and you accept that you're feeling this way right now. You soften the desire to make these feelings go away or to 'fix them' and offer presence – permission and space to be there.

Rather than a fight or flight response to your inner rebel, this response is based in 'attend and befriend.'

Then you move to connect. You move towards the parts of you that feel afraid and resistant, and you gently inquire: “Oh, sweetheart, can you tell me what's going on?”

When you emotionally connect with the parts of yourself that are activated and agitated, a few things can happen:

- the inner rebel and other parts of you that feel scared, overpowered, or resistant have room to be expressed, and room to move. They can change!
- opportunities for healing arise as these 'outcast' energies and emotions arise to the surface, are

- seen and heard, and integrate into your being
- feelings of anxiety and frustration about your inner rebel soften – you feel less afraid and more calm and relaxed when this part shows up
- you tap into your natural self leadership and power – power that's based on relationship, not force
- and you foster greater intimacy, tenderness, and compassion with your own being

It's a relationship, not a formula

It's important, when connecting with the inner rebel – or any part of ourselves – that our approach carries reverence and respect. If we approach ourselves with an attitude of, “Well, I'll be with you and listen to you, but *only* if you go away,” on some level, we'll feel it – and we'll resist. It dams the flow and movement of the healing process.

It may sound counterintuitive, but it helps to set aside any expectation or demand that this part of us change. The healing arises partly by allowing it to be, in this moment.

Relating to our inner rebel is a relationship, and not a formula. As we spend time relating to ourselves in this way, over time, we can learn to trust the relationship, and the process. What feels uncomfortable or skeptical – like surrendering expectations of fixing – becomes more trustworthy through our direct experience.

Allowing the healing to unfold

In many ways, we're handing over the healing to something bigger than ourselves. Our job is to be willing to be open, and to be willing to feel, and to be willing to relate. Our job is to be present. But we're not 'doing' the healing or creating it. We're not 'making something happen.'

It's something that's moving through us.

Through this space of stillness, presence, and relationship new energies, movement, and healing can arise.

In the next section, I'm going to walk you through a process of how to do this, so you can experience this for yourself. You'll see blank spaces where you can answer questions and take down notes about what you observe and experience.

You can use these prompts as many times as you need when your inner rebel gets triggered.

Befriending the inner rebel exercise:

1. Take some time to settle into a comfortable position. You may find it helpful to take a few deep breaths and close your eyes.

Bring to mind a situation where you've recently experienced your inner rebel. Pick a situation that feels workable – don't pick a situation where there's trauma or very strong intensity, as that won't serve you in this exercise. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is moderate and 10 is very intense, pick something that's in the range of 4 or 5.

My situation or experience:

2. As you're feeling into this situation, soften. There's so much room for this part of you and for all your feelings and experiences. See if you can allow this part of you to be here without any expectation of changing it. As you're reflecting upon your inner rebel, see if you can identify the emotions and reactions that arise. Where do you feel the inner rebel in your body? What emotions, thoughts, and feelings arise?
3. As you're connecting with this part of you, come closer. See if you can touch the vulnerability that lies underneath these reactions and emotions. What's underneath?
4. What is your vulnerability needing and longing for?

5. Nurture and care for your vulnerability. If you need holding, offer yourself holding. If you need to grieve, offer space to feel the grief and sadness. If you're longing for compassion, offer yourself compassion. When offering care for our vulnerability, I find it helpful to put my hand on my heart, or to hold myself physically. You can also reach out for care from a friend or loved one. Give yourself as many rounds of nurturing as you need.

What's shifted or moved?

6. Now reconnect with the inner rebel. How is it feeling now?

The wise response

You may need to go through several rounds of this process, as there may be multiple layers of reactions, feelings and needs.

7. After going through this process, you can check in with yourself to see – what responses or wise actions are arising now? What next step would you like to take towards this situation? You can write down your inspirations below.

You may find that after connecting with the inner rebel and connecting with your vulnerability that you feel softer, more present, and more open. You may feel more grounded, empowered, or centered. You may notice that new responses or insights arise – responses that you couldn't see or recognize when you were feeling so caught in the inner rebel. New pathways have opened up!

How you can use this worksheet

This worksheet can support you as you journey through the process of connecting with and caring for your inner rebel.

It can be done as a reflection – when you're not in the thick of a reaction to your inner rebel. And it can also be really helpful to do when you're feeling activated – when your inner rebel is speaking loud and clear – because it's more alive and real.

Your experiences will vary

Note bene – please don't judge how 'well' you do in this process. It's important we don't turn this process into dogma, a prescription, or a mandate as it can morph into a form of inner tyranny. Ouch!

You will experience times when you'll feel like you're connecting really beautifully with your inner rebel, and the process may even seem a bit mystical, full of presence and connection. You may feel fully alive, radiant, and courageous. Wonderful!

And other times, your experience with this process may feel flat, 'down,' or like nothing's happening. Equally ok!

That may be a time to gently set this process aside and offer yourself another form of self care – maybe you go on a bike ride, call up a friend, watch a movie, read a book, make a pot of soup, or dig in your garden. Often something physical helps to move the energy, whether it's chopping vegetables, weeding the flower bed, or swinging on the swings at the park with children.

All experiences belong

I invite you to trust the process, and not to rank or judge one experience over the other or how well you're doing or 'healing.'

Growth, maturation, healing, and our own evolution are something that moves through us, and it has its own timing, and its own pace. In the same way that nature has its cycles and seasons of growth, so do we. Some days you may feel inspired in your connection with your inner rebel, and you'll be able to respond with presence and wisdom. Yes – that can feel really good.

And those days when it feels like your inner rebel has taken over, and you feel discouraged, fallow, or frustrated? Those experiences are an equally valid and important part of the growth process.

Just as our earth includes both rain forests and deserts, oceans and land, your own landscape will include all varieties of experience. They all belong, just like all your parts belong.