

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEVERANCE:

The Divided Self, Compartmentalization, and Grief

A VIEWER'S REFLECTION GUIDE

For older teens and adults.

Use this guide to reflect on the parts of ourselves we wall off, and the slow work of becoming whole again.



1. FOR REFLECTION

Notice your own walls.

- Where in my life do I become a noticeably different person, and what am I keeping out of each room?
- Is there a feeling or loss I tend to send to "work" so I do not have to carry it at home?



2. FOR CONVERSATION

Talk it through with someone you trust.

- Mark severs his grief so he does not have to feel it for eight hours a day. Where in my life have I postponed feeling something rather than working through it?
- Have I ever been in a workplace or group that asked for enthusiasm about things of unclear value? What did that cost me?



3. TRY THIS

A small step toward integration.

- This week, name one feeling you usually avoid and let yourself sit with it for five honest minutes.
- Practice one small moment of full presence, at home or at work, where you bring your whole self instead of a divided one.

DR. Z TAKEAWAY

“Compartmentalization can help us survive what feels unmanageable, but it is not the same as healing. The grief that is walled off does not disappear. It waits for the work we have not yet done with it.”



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Integration is the slow work of becoming whole.