

The Outer Child

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You've met your inner child—now meet your outer child, the self-sabotaging nemesis of your personality—the part that breaks your diet and gets attracted to all the wrong people. Whereas our inner child is all about feelings, our outer child is all about behavior.

Our outer child acts out our inner child's feelings—especially our abandonment feelings—without giving our the adult, a chance to intervene. When we feel hurt, angry, or insecure, our outer child acts out these feelings in ways that sabotage our relationships. Our outer child takes feelings like anger and fear and goes off hell bent, impulsively making matters worse. It's like an annoying, obnoxious older sibling trying to help, but bungling things in an attempt to protect (overprotect) us from abandonment.

Patterns of Our Outer Child

1. Our outer child is a master procrastinator, rationalizer, and avoidant.
2. Our outer child is the impulsive, obstinate, self-centered ten-year old within all of us. Our outer child wants what our outer child wants NOW, and overrules us, the adult, in getting it. Our outer child prefers to binge on candy when we are steadfastly sticking to a diet (or so we thought). Our outer child says yes to a third glass of wine when our adult personality had decided on a two drink maximum. Our outer child thought that meant minimum.

3. Our outer child is born of *unresolved* abandonment. She wreaks havoc in our relationships when she acts out our inner child's primal fear of abandonment. For example, she aims her emotional suction cups at our prospective partners and scares them away.
4. Our outer child fights change—especially change initiated by us, the adult. She balks at doing the right thing and only wants things that are bad for our health, figure, or bank account.
5. Our outer child grabs for immediate gratification that sabotage our long range goals. We decide to pay down our credit cards, but our outer child gets us to buy a shiny new boat. We decide to go on a fitness program, but our outer child gets you us to pay for the annual membership, but prevents us from actually using it.
6. Our outer child is fueled by emotion. Take anger. Our outer child either overreacts or under-reacts to our anger. For example, abandonment survivors tend to be too insecure to risk expressing anger or assertiveness to someone because they fear it might break the connection. Our outer child takes advantage of this fear and gets us to take our anger out on ourselves, damaging our self-esteem. Conversely, our outer child takes our anger out on innocent bystanders and makes us look like a monster.
7. Our outer child is the “yes but” part of of our personality. If we let her, she ties our life up in knots.
8. Our outer child likes to play games, especially in relationships. She wears many disguises including “hard to get” and “Florence Nightingale” She poses as our ally, but is really our gatekeeper. Her covert agenda is to maintain our unhealthy patterns—albeit our most self-defeating ones.

In taking our outer child's inventory, we undertake the first in-depth self-reckoning of our lifetime. As we gain outer child awareness, we own up to character defects most people prefer to deny. We learn how to deal with traits that until now formed an invisible infrastructure of self-sabotage deep within our personality.

By bringing our outer child out of the bunkers and into the daylight, we get to subvert her mission, rather than let it subvert ours.

By deconstructing our outer child defenses, our adult self has the opportunity to guide our behavior, rather than remain driven by our hidden nemesis.

Our outer child is featured in the books: *Taming your Outer Child*; *Journey from Abandonment to Healing*; *Journey from Abandonment to Healing, and Journey from Heartbreak to Connection*. Some find it helpful to attend an abandonment recovery workshop to learn how to effectively target their outer child patterns.