

A GROUNDBREAKING THERAPY THAT FOSTERS HEALING AND CONNECTION WITH SELF, GOD, AND OTHERS: INTERVIEW WITH JENNA RIEMERSMA

Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of FlyingFreeNow.com, and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 209 of the Flying Free Podcast. Today I am excited to have a conversation with Jenna... Is it Riemersma? I always do this in every interview. I forget to ask the person how to say their last name. How do you say it?

JENNA: Well, I could have a nice last name like Smith or Jones, but no, I have to have Riemersma, which makes it really hard.

NATALIE: Riemersma. So the emphasis on the "Rie?" Riemersma.

JENNA: Correct.

NATALIE: Okay. Well, I don't think anybody I've ever interviewed has a nice, easy name. They've always got an interesting name. Jenna is a Harvard educated innovator and therapist. She's also founded and is currently the clinical director of the Atlanta Center for Relational Healing. And the reason she's here today is because she wrote this amazing book called "Altogether You," which I bought, devoured, and loved so much that I ended up giving copies to everyone on my team this past Christmas.

It's actually March right now when this is going to air. It will be the end of February or the beginning of March. So I heard about her book when I bumped into an interview on YouTube she had with Richard Schwartz, which she had a couple of years ago. And I just found it a month ago. But he is the founder of Internal Family Systems Theory, or IFS for short. And those of you who have been following me for a while know how much I love IFS, and I refer to it often on this podcast and in my program.

So when I heard this interview, I was literally jumping out of my seat with excitement, because Jenna brings her Christian faith into IFS and has a way of integrating the two that is so extraordinary and helpful for those of us who have a Christian worldview and who are actually maybe needing to heal from some of the destructive teachings that we find in today's version of Christianity as we know it in the twenty-first century. So she just makes all the pieces come together, which is why I wanted to introduce her to you and have this conversation. So welcome to the Flying Free podcast, Jenna.

JENNA: Thank you, Natalie. It's so good to be with you.

NATALIE: So I am really anxious to dig into how healing IFS can be for Christian women who have really been traumatized by emotional and spiritual abuse in their homes, but also in their churches, to the point where they feel really disconnected, not only from themselves, but also from God. But before we get to that part of the conversation, can you just give us a brief overview of what Internal Family Systems is, how it came about, and even how it's progressed over the last three decades to where it is today? Because I feel like it's exponentially exploding in the last few years. So can you talk about that a little?

JENNA: It is. It's very exciting to be a part of, and most people who learn about this way of understanding ourselves are like me. The minute we heard it, our lives completely changed. I know that was true for me. I can kind of mark a dividing line in my life before IFS and after.

NATALIE: Wow.

JENNA: And it literally changed everything for me. It gave me a lens to understand my faith journey and the struggles that I was having in a much more concrete and compassionate way. And it changed how I do my clinical work. It changed my personal life. It has changed everything. So IFS was more discovered than developed, I would say, by Dr. Richard Schwartz about forty years ago, who's now just a dear friend and a mentor of mine. And he discovered it because he was finding that the interventions he was using with his clients who had at the time eating disorders, self-harming behavior, were not effective even though they were the best that the field had to offer at the time. And he was very frustrated that they weren't making better progress.

And so he set aside all of his training, all of the things he thought were correct, and he just started to get really curious about his client's experience, and he would ask them. And what he found was that they would all describe parts of themselves that were at war. And it turned out that those parts of themselves that were at war really were creating almost all of their suffering and all of their symptoms. And it began there and developed over forty years into a complete model of understanding human behavior and spirituality and trauma and healing.

And the basic assumptions of the model are that we all have a core essence, which IFS calls "Self" with a capital "S." And right away that makes it hard for people of faith to connect to, because in many faith communities, the word "Self" has a lot of negative implications. We hear "Self" and we think fleshly, sinful, narcissistic. And in IFS, "Self"

means just our authentic Self, who we truly are. And in Christendom, we tend to refer to that as the God-image within us. It's who we truly are. It's the core essence of the Divine within every human being — how we are made in the image of God. And as a result of that being the image of God inside of us, it cannot be broken. Say that one more time: As a result of that being the image of the very divine within us, it cannot be broken no matter how much trauma we have endured, no matter how much trauma we have perpetrated, no matter what our life experience. We have a fundamentally positive, healing, loving, Divine essence within ourselves at all times.

And we have many different parts, and each of those parts are created to bring our uniqueness to our system. We're all unique individuals with unique personalities, unique temperaments, and we have many different parts, and they make up who we truly are. And all parts of us — this is another wild premise of IFS — all parts of us are good. But what happens is we experience painful things in life, like abuse or trauma or neglect or gaslighting or whatever it might be, and those good parts of us become burdened or covered over with a burden, which Christendom would refer to as “sin” — things being the way that they shouldn't be in a perfect world — and in IFS we refer to as “burdens.”

And those burdens distort the beautiful image of who those parts are, and they begin to get triggered and take over. And just kind of the same way that clouds take over the sun, the sun is still there — our core, Divine essence is still there — but we lose access to it because it's covered over by a burdened part that's gotten triggered. And then we do and say things that that part wants us to do and say, and then when the part steps back we think, “Oh my goodness, why did I do and say that? This feels crazy.”

And so what we discover is that understanding those simple principles that we all have this core, Divine essence, the God-image within us, and we all have many different parts that get burdened with trauma or sin, as we like to call it in Christendom, and the God-image, the Divine within us, has the power to unburden those parts and restore them to their fundamentally positive qualities, oh my goodness. This is a game changer.

And that may sound a little confusing, but we all naturally speak in parts language anyway. Like, “A part of me wants to eat all the Oreos, and another part of me would like to fit into my jeans.” And those two parts have completely different objectives, goals, and they're at war within me. And I think we can all relate to that.

NATALIE: Yes. That is one of the things I loved about your book was that you were able to take that idea of Self, because I was immersed in Christian thinking my whole life, and that was a huge hangup for me with IFS. I kind of had to skirt around that a little

bit, or I wasn't really sure how to integrate that idea, and your book brought all of that together for me. It made sense to me. And you did explain it from a biblical perspective, too, so I just want all of you listening to know she does bring the Bible into what she teaches, and she shows how the Bible actually teaches IFS in many ways. I'm wondering, can you even give some examples from the Bible where you can see parts at work? Do you know any off the top of your head, or no?

JENNA: Oh, absolutely. My favorite comedy sketch in the Bible is Paul who says, "Oh, why do I do the things that I do? One part of me wants to do this and another part of me wants to do that, and oh my goodness, what a wretched man am I." And it just cracks me up, because even Paul had many different parts. And he's doing the things that he doesn't want to do and he is struggling with the parts that are at war inside of him. And I don't know about you, but that's a pretty common experience for me and most of the people that I work with.

I work with a lot of, for example, betrayed partners who are struggling with betrayal trauma. And it's very common for a client to say to me, "I think I'm going crazy. One part of me just wants to leave him and divorce him and can't believe he would do this to me and the children, and another part of me is terrified to walk away and just wants to get close with him or be sexual with him so he won't leave." And those are wildly different parts that are at war trying to help, and obscuring that access to the Self or the God-image within that actually is the place that holds our deep wisdom and our deep spiritual connection to the Divine.

So it's really beautiful. And you're right, the Bible does teach IFS, which was amazing to me. And when I looked at the Bible through this lens, I saw that IFS was everywhere in scripture. And I do break that down in the book quite a bit and really explain Christian theology through an IFS lens. The burdens of our parts are what carry the fundamental depravity of man. That sin nature is carried by our parts, not by our core Self.

NATALIE: Yes. The takeaway for me was that God is always... You know, when the Bible says nothing can separate you from the love of God: nothing. And when you think of that, He is embedded in the core of your being, that makes sense, then. And even if you can't feel Him, just to know that He's there embedded in the core of your being is comforting. And then also just to know that you're not crazy, that all of those conflicting thoughts and ideas, that's actually really normal and it's okay to feel like that. It's normal. I just think IFS has been a game changer for me, too.

So I was telling my daughter, I have this teenage daughter who is struggling, and I was trying to explain IFS to her, and I came up with this idea of a bus. I was like, "It's like

you're driving a bus and you're in the driver's seat, and then you've got the managers on one side." I thought, "There's two sides of a bus, right?" "So the managers are on one side and then the protector parts are on the other side, and they're all kind of shouting in, like, big food fight on the bus. And so to understand where they're all coming from, you want to listen to just one at a time. So it's like inviting one part up at a time to come to the front of the bus and tell you what their thought is.

And their thought is like they're holding up a sign, and they so emphatically believe this thing that they're holding up on their sign and our job is to not go, 'Oh my word. I can't believe...' In fact, if you're thinking, 'Oh my word — I can't believe you're having that thought,' that's because there's two different parts coming up to the front of the bus and they're having an argument in front of you. And you know that you're really ready to hear them from your core when you just look at that little part and you just love it and you understand it and you have compassion and whatever."

So I was explaining this to my daughter, and then I actually talked to my people. In fact, I did a podcast episode for those of you who are listening and you don't know what I'm saying. If you go to Episode 197, it's called "The Story About Your Family on the Bus." And I kind of explain this concept. But I'm just wondering for people who don't know what I'm talking about or haven't listened to that episode, can you tell us what the main parts are and explain their roles in our lives?

JENNA: Yes, absolutely. So when parts become burdened, they take on the qualities of those burdens, and there's three main types of burdened parts. One is called our exiles, and that's because those are parts that the other parts try to exile in our system. They are the vulnerable parts that carry all of our pain, all of our trauma messages. So things like shame, fear, sadness, loneliness, brokenness — those are the feelings and the messages of our exiles. They're very painful when they get triggered. Then we have two types of protector parts. One type is proactive, and those are called managers. The other type is reactive, and those are called firefighters. The job of both the managers and the firefighters is to help us not feel the pain of the exiles.

The managers do it proactively, so they try to prevent the exiles from getting triggered. So they do all the shiny things that look really good on the outside, like people-pleasing, control, spiritualizing, performing, doing things perfectly. They kind of control and manage our lives so that we never get triggered and feel the shame, the loneliness, the rejection, the brokenness. But because they're doing that out of a burdened role, they will always fail, and when they do, our exiles will get triggered. So we won't do it perfectly, we won't please whoever it is, and all of a sudden our exile gets triggered.

We feel shame or rejection or not good enough, and that immediately triggers the reactive team, the firefighters, who jump in with much less socially acceptable roles. They are all the things that come into my office. So these are things like alcohol addiction, sexual addiction, gambling, eating disorders, cutting, suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, dissociation. They immediately jump in when the exile feelings get triggered to try to shut that down.

And they're called firefighters because they operate inside of us very much in the same way that real life firefighters do in the outside world. We might have this gorgeous, big, multimillion dollar home with a priceless concert piano and a beautiful oil painting, but if that house catches on fire, the firefighters don't think a thing about the priceless oil painting or the grand piano. They come in with a firehose, and they will do whatever it takes to put out the fire. And it may destroy all the beautiful things around it, but the firefighters aren't concerned about that. Their one and only job is to put out the fire.

And the same thing is true for the parts of us that jump in reactively to put out the flame, the fire of those painful exile feelings. The only thing they're thinking about is making the shame or the loneliness or the rejection or the brokenness go away in that moment. And they always make it better in the short run and make it worse in the long run. So yeah, if I'm feeling a little bit lonely or socially awkward and I take a drink, maybe I can talk a little more comfortably to the people around me, and then another one and another one, and pretty soon, that drinking firefighter has gone from making it feel better to making it feel a whole lot worse.

And so they're well-intentioned parts, which means they're trying to help us not feel pain in the only way that they know how, but they're making it worse 100% of the time. And that's true, interestingly, of both our manager parts and our firefighters. The shiny parts that are very socially acceptable are also making our pain worse in the long run — it's just a little less obvious — and so are the firefighters. It's very important to say this doesn't make their behavior okay. Their behavior is absolutely not okay. What IFS helps us to do is understand what is driving the behavior so that it can heal the access to the God-image inside of us.

And that's key, because it's common for partners who are in painful or abusive relationships to say, "But don't you care about me? What were you thinking? Don't you care about our relationship or don't you love me?" And the answer to that is, well, the person may very well, in their core self, love the partner very much. The firefighter is not thinking about that priceless person on the other side of the relationship. The firefighter is thinking about putting out the shame, the trauma burden, inside of the individual, and that's the only thing the firefighter is thinking about. So it also helps to

create a lot more empowerment on the side of the partners' in understanding this is not about you. It's not about you or anything you've done wrong or anything that's broken in you. This is about your partner's trauma. And it also helps partners to set and hold the right, healthy boundaries for themselves.

NATALIE: Okay, so my listeners are mostly Christian women who are living in emotionally and spiritually destructive marriages. The spiritual part comes in because they're being manipulated with the Bible. They're being told that "I can control you because God says this, or God says that." So the spiritual abuse component is there. So what do you think is helpful to know about our parts as a person who's in the middle of the kind of daily challenges that these women are facing on a regular basis?

JENNA: That's such a wonderful question, and I think it is one of the most significant benefits that IFS gives us if we are experiencing spiritual or emotional abuse, and that is the understanding of the difference between the true God-image inside of us that always is filled with the eight C qualities. So one of the premises of IFS is that Self always has the eight C qualities: calm, clear-minded, courageous, connected, curious, confident, creative, and compassionate.

And that is the place where we are truly connected to the Divine within us that connects us to the Divine outside of us. That is a very different thing than a spiritualizing part that is burdened with the job of using spiritual language to try to help an individual avoid pain. Another way to describe that is spiritual bypass or spiritual abuse, depending on how it's being used.

So there's a huge difference, because the God-image in someone is always going to respect and honor the person that is across from them. The same way that people experience Jesus, that is going to be the same experience that you have when you're sitting across from someone who is in their God-image. You're going to feel the sense of connection, of compassion, of curiosity. "Tell me what it's like for you. Help me understand your experience." That is a pretty good indicator that you're sitting across from someone who is in their God-image, their authentic connection to the Divine.

A part that is burdened using God-language to try to manipulate, shame, control, persuade, manage — that is a burdened part, and we are not going to feel the eight "C" qualities when we're across from that kind of an energy. We're going to feel things like shame, like self-doubt, like questioning: "Maybe I'm the crazy one. Maybe I shouldn't have that feeling." We're going to feel invalidated. We're going to have a sense that we're not allowed to use our voice.

It is the exact opposite experience than that which we have when we're across from someone's authentic, Divine Self. And that is really important, because when we are being spiritually manipulated or spiritually abused or emotionally abused, a hallmark of that experience is self-doubt. And we start wondering if we're the problem. "Maybe I shouldn't think that way. Maybe I shouldn't feel this way. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe my perspective is incorrect." That is not the response that we will feel internally when we're across from someone's God-image.

NATALIE: I'm so glad you're saying this. It's so important to know this.

JENNA: So we can really trust that inner truth meter, that what we are feeling inside is a pretty good indicator of what the other person is bringing into the relationship. And if someone is bringing a spiritualizing part, we do not need to listen to that. It may be using God language as its disguise, as its burden, and it may be saying things that sound biblical or quoting scripture or a variety of things, but if it is being used to manipulate us, silence us, subject us, demand things of us to go against or oppress our feelings, our will, or our authentic self, then it's a good indicator that we are sitting across from a part that is using Christendom or God language or religion in a way that our God-image is not intending it to be, that God would not intend us to be listening to. It's a very good indicator.

NATALIE: Yeah. So I hope everyone caught that, because that really is kind of the key, I think, to unhooking from those Christian words that people use. Because a lot of people will come into our forum and they'll say, "Well, this Christian counselor said this, or this pastor said this, or this women's director leader said this, or my husband said this," and it will be Christian words or Bible verses, and that shame is just immediately there, and they'll second guess everything that they've maybe already made a decision about. And now all of a sudden they're wondering, "Well, maybe I made the wrong decision. Maybe there's something inherently wrong with me. Maybe I need to listen to this. Because they're using a Bible verse, I should probably listen to what they're saying and give them credibility."

And I think that giving people credibility just because they're using religious words — you just explained why you don't have to do that. Religious words and Bible verses are not credible when they're coming from that energy of this other person's spiritualizing part. Which, I loved in your book, too, how you put the perfect word to that part. And we all have that. All of us who are Christians, we all have that spiritualizing part inside of us. We do it to ourselves, we do it to other people, even if we don't say it out loud to people. That spiritualizing part has always got opinions. That's such an incredible insight, I think, that can really help us a lot with unhooking.

Okay, so many of the women that I work with, of course, are going to wonder also, “Where in the world is God? Because I've got this mess in my marriage, I'm so confused, I don't know who I am anymore, and I don't even know if God sees me, understands what's going on, if He even loves me.” So we kind of touched on this earlier when we talked about the God-image inside of us, but talk about that a little bit more. How do you answer that question using IFS, and how do we tap into that?

JENNA: I love that, because so much, at least of my own faith experience and upbringing, taught me... There was this cognitive dissonance, because I was told one thing, but what was communicated in reality was the complete opposite. I was told that God is always with me and that nothing I can do can make God love me any more, any less, and that I was emblazoned in the palm of His hand and chosen before the beginning of time. But the reality that I experienced from my faith community sometimes was, “Well, God's kind of over there. And here's this big old, honking, really stinky mess of sin. And then here's me over here on the other side of that mess of sin. And it's kind of my job to quit adding to that mess and scoop it away as much as I can to get on scrunched over there closer to God so I can kind of get under the shadow of His wings and hope He didn't notice that whole big, stinking mess of sin that, unfortunately, I keep piling onto.”

And it was this incredible Catch 22 where I'm told one thing, but what's the lived reality is something very different. And in either event, the idea is God's over there, and who I am is not tolerable to Him, or barely tolerable. He's kind of got a paperclip on His nose, like, “Oh,” and holding me at arm's distance. You know, “I'll put up with you just because Jesus died for you, but you really are a horrible, awful thing.”

And what comes up in you is this idea of shame. What comes up when we hear that kind of teaching, that there's this separation — God cannot be in the presence of sin. Which kind of cracks me up when you think about the fact that Satan was walking around in the throne room in the pages of scripture, but you hear this speeching that God can't be present with sin, but we're fundamentally sinful. So there's this disconnect there: “Well, then how can God tolerate me?” And that compounds the shame that we often feel when we are survivors of trauma.

The difference with IFS is that we understand that the biblical teaching that, “I will never leave you or forsake you. You can go to the highest heights and the depths of the sea and the north and the south, and nothing can separate you from my love,” and the reason is because God says, “I'm right here. I'm inside of you. I cannot leave you or forsake you because I am you. I'm in there with you. I'm imbued at your very core, so there is no part of you, there is nothing you can feel or do that will be distant from me,

because I'm right here always embodying calm, curiousness, connection, creativity, curiosity for all parts of you. Even the parts that are doing and feeling and saying really hard, wonky things." Because God feels love and compassion toward all parts of us no matter what they're doing or feeling, and is able to heal them when they are stuck in unfortunate roles because of trauma that are trying to help but making things worse.

NATALIE: That's beautiful. Okay, so, my last question is this: In the second half of your book, which I love because you talk about using IFS to relate more effectively to your own Self, which is important, but also to other people and to God, can you give us a couple of important takeaways from that section of the book that maybe people can take with them that will help them move the dial in their life as they're trying to recover and heal from emotional and spiritual trauma and abuse?

JENNA: Yeah, I'd love to. I'm wondering if I can maybe give, I'm just thinking off the top of my head, one example that would incorporate all three of those just for the sake of time?

NATALIE: Yeah, that sounds great.

JENNA: So a common one that I encounter with clients, if I'm working with a woman who is in an abusive relationship or a partnership or a relationship or marriage where she's been betrayed or abused or gaslit, and there's this deep confusion about, "Who am I really? What do I really think and want? And then what is really the most effective way for me to relate to this person who's been harmful to me but whom I also love, and then how do I accurately hear from God about that?" So it kind of hits all three of those.

And most people come in deeply conflicted and confused because there are many different parts of them, and every one of those parts has a different concern. One part maybe genuinely loves the person and does not want to give up that relationship. Another part may have abandonment trauma from early life experiences. Perhaps mom and dad were divorced when they were at a young age, and there's an abandonment trauma that would get activated if they lost this primary relationship now. Maybe another part is concerned about financial solvency. Another part may have worries about the children and education. Another part may be infuriated by the betrayal or the abuse and want to get out from under there. Another part may want revenge. Another part may think about self-harming. Another part may think about having their own affair or escalating and becoming abusive in their own way. So someone may come in with fifteen or twenty different parts of themselves all activated.

And what tends to happen is that one of those parts will take over for a period of time

and try to make a decision for the entire inner family. And because it's a burdened part and not the core Self, that decision is not going to withstand because other parts object to that. It's not the right decision for the whole team. So typically a person will come in and say, "Well, I just need to leave him. He looked at pornography again or he slept with a prostitute again. I need to divorce. I'm going to divorce. That's my boundary." And the reality is that is the desired choice for one part of the system, but not all of them. It's not taking into account this person maybe doesn't have a job and doesn't have a way of supporting themselves or whatever it might be. The abandonment trigger part may not be on board with that. And so it kicks off this huge warring battle.

And what happens is then we don't know who we are or how to relate to ourselves when we don't understand this concept of parts. When we understand that our core Self can welcome all of those parts and hear from them, help them to heal, and then make those wise choices about what is the wise way to interact with the abusive partner, everything becomes much more clear.

And so what I like to say is we need to move toward before we turn toward. And what I mean by that is our core Self moves toward all parts of us with curiosity and compassion and love. The part that is afraid of abandonment, the part that is feeling hateful, the part that wants to leave, the part that wants to stay — the Divine within us will move toward all of those parts with open arms and say, "Tell me all about your perspective. I want to hear. What are you afraid would happen if this wasn't the choice?" So there's this deep welling of compassion. Once we have related to our own parts by moving toward them with that curiosity and compassion of the Divine essence within us and our parts feel seen and understood, they calm down and they step back. They kind of begin to give a little space, just like when the clouds part and the sun spontaneously emerges.

That's exactly the experience that those qualities of Self or of the Divine within us, the fruits of the spirit, if you will, they spontaneously burst forth when all of our parts feel heard and appreciated. And when we are then in that space of being what we would say in Christendom as "led by the Spirit," or in IFS we say, "in a place of self-leadership," meaning Self with a capital "S," authentic Self or the God-image, then we have the discernment to observe wisely the other person's behavior and whether or not we are simply having a miscommunication or we're sitting across from someone who's abusive or we're dealing with someone with a personality disorder.

Only our Self has the wisdom and the discernment to accurately observe. Our parts do not observe accurately — they observe through a trauma lens. And so only Self can wisely observe and then wisely make a decision about the appropriate way to turn

toward the other person. And that's either going to be, if an apology is needed, if there are amends needed on our side — “I'm sorry I spoke sharply. Would you please forgive me? Could we try that conversation again,” or “Your behavior is repeatedly harming me, and I wish you well, but I'm not able to remain in this relationship,” — anywhere on that spectrum, Self and only Self is able to wisely make that assessment.

And then set — and here's key — set and hold a healthy boundary. Only Self can hold the boundary because it's not coming from a part. Parts will throw out what they think is a boundary, which is usually more like a threat or a manipulation or an attempt to change someone else's behavior, and then another part doesn't like it and it's not held. And that results in disempowerment and teaching the other person to ignore what we're saying.

Self doesn't do that. Self wisely observes accurately and then makes a wise boundary and follows through. And so it not only helps us relate to our own Selves effectively and compassionately, it helps us to relate to someone else from a wise and Divinely-led place. It also helps us to connect to the larger Divine outside of us, because this inner God-image is like a portal. It's that portal from which we make this external, Divine-access connection.

And we all kind of know the difference. If you've ever had like a mountaintop experience, you've been on a retreat or in a worship setting or in a prayer time, and there's this wordless, embodied communion with God where you just feel a wash with love and you just feel this deep somatic connection to the Divine, that's the God-image.

The spiritualizer parts are the “good,” “have to,” “jump through the hoops,” “need to obey,” “I should submit,” “I need to get up and have a quiet time,” “I must be more...” those are our spiritualizing parts, and they wind up just causing us to feel exhausted most of the time and abandoned. We're like, “Where is God? I've been doing all these right things, and I'm so angry and I'm so exhausted,” and it's because the spiritualizing part is trying to do it for us, and it's obscuring our access to the Divine connection that is always there inside of us. So in just that one example, we can see how IFS helps us to relate much more effectively and compassionately — internally, externally, and then vertically with the larger Divine.

NATALIE: Yes. So basically what you're saying is when you heal that family on your bus, from that place, you'll be able to make healthy choices for your life and for your relationships. So it really does start within, which also, I think, gives so much hope and power, because a lot of times we feel like the people outside of us and our circumstances are controlling our lives and we're just being whipped around by

everything outside of us, when really the power is really inside of us. It's always been there all along. We just have to learn how to get to know ourselves and all those parts and that God-image inside of us. And then from that place we'll be able to move forward.

Okay, I want people to be able to find you when this interview is over. I know for sure I've looked at your website, and I've actually tried some of your, I think it's called... Is it called "Toward You," or what is it called? Your meditations? I can't remember now.

JENNA: "Move Toward."

NATALIE: "Move Toward," yeah. So on her website, she's got resources that you can access, and one of them is... They're meditations where you actually help people to kind of connect with different parts inside of them. And they're really helpful. They're amazing. As you can tell, she's got a great voice to listen to, so I encourage you to explore her website for sure. But also, why don't you tell them what your website is? It's just your name, isn't it?

JENNA: Well, my name is hard to spell. So they can go to mometoward.com and that'll get you to the website. mometoward.com.

NATALIE: Okay, mometoward.com. Well, that's easy. mometoward.com. And then her book is called "Altogether You." You can get it on Amazon in Audible, Kindle, paperback. We are going to actually be going through her book in both Flying Higher and Flying Free in March of 2023. So we're going to read it together, we're going to have discussions about it, and just before we got on here, she agreed to come in and do an author Q&A with us at one point. So if you are in Flying Free or Flying Higher, you can access that.

If you're not, you can find out more about how to get in for that March study by going to joinflyingfree.com. And if you're a divorced Christian woman, you can go to joinflyinghigher.com to find out how to join that group for divorced Christian women. So is there anything else? Is there any other way they can connect with you? Do you have any social media? Are you on Instagram and all that?

JENNA: So a part of me that was burdened, a burdened part of me, had a lot of "should" messages that I should be on social media and I should make myself do all of that. And I tried for a period of time. My team said, "Oh, don't worry about it. We'll do it. You don't have to do it." It is not who I am. That was not a decision from my core, essential Self. It was not a place that felt right for me to be, although I'm so glad that others are

on there. I know it's a wonderful resource. So I do have Instagram and I do have Facebook, but they're not active. People are welcome to go look at those, but it's not my jam, so I got off of those.

I am on Insight Timer. If people like to do free meditations, they can look me up on Insight Timer: Jenna Riemersma. And mometoward.com are great ways to find me and in your upcoming book study. I look forward to being a part of being with all of those amazing women.

NATALIE: Yeah. I bet you if you do a search on YouTube, you guys, you can also find any other interviews. I think you've done some other things that are on YouTube too. So if you feel like you just can't get enough of Jenna, she's out there. All you have to do is google it. All right. Thank you so much. This was a great conversation. I think your book is a really important book, not just for people that are in my demographic as far as Christian women who are in emotionally and spiritually abusive relationships, but all Christians, I think, would greatly benefit from your book. And I hope IFS just changes the world. I think it's going to. So thank you so much, Jenna.

JENNA: Thank you. I do as well. Thank you. It's been great to be with you.

NATALIE: And for those of you who are listening, thank you so much for joining us today. Until next time, fly free.