

HEROIC

Self-Care



DISCLAIMER

HEROIC SELF CARE

I am not a mental health professional. These are strategies I have developed over years of reading a variety of books on the topics by experts in the field, as well as working with my personal therapist. They are highly personalized, and may not apply to each individual. However, I offer them up as an example of one way to approach mental health struggles through a fantasy/gaming lens. It makes me feel more like a high fantasy hero in a D&D game, facing terrifying monsters using magic powers and mighty weapons while supported by a heroic party of champions; and less like a pitiful, pathetic human struggling alone with adulthood and the pressures of every day life. If this system resonates at all with you, please feel free to use it and adapt it as you wish. I encourage you to consult mental health professionals and/or do your own reading and research from reputable sources in developing or adapting your own system. Please refer to my final page in this series for a list of sources I used in developing this system, as well as the geeky properties I borrowed from.

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FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

SPELL SLOTS

A geeky reflavoring of Christine Miserandino's Spoon Theory, where Neurodivergent and those with chronic illness only have a certain amount of "spoons" (or energy) every day to handle tasks that most would find typical. This is comparable to Spell Slots in the 5th edition of the game Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), where spellcasters only have certain amount of slots to cast spells every day, before they are drained of magical energy and need a Long Rest before regaining them.

CANTRIPS

In D&D, there are also Cantrips, which are spells that take no spell slots to cast. They are often simple spells, having no large effect, but they can be quite useful in the right situations. In Heroic Self Care, Cantrips refer to tasks you can do that take hardly any energy to do that can help out you in a more manageable space. For example: just brushing your teeth instead of focusing on the more involved task of a whole shower, putting on a favorite playlist to help you get through a rough time, or using a stim toy to help you ground.

PARTY OF CHAMPIONS/SECURE BASE

Archetypal personas within oneself used to help you survive and thrive through difficult encounters in life. More in-depth descriptions in future slides.

FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

TRIBE/SUPPORT SYSTEM

The people in your life outside of yourself that you love and/or trust. These could be family members, close friends, therapists, counselors, religious leaders. People who are willing to do emotional labor for you (be sure to ask for consent if it's an appropriate time to do so). Depending on the relationship, they may also ask you to do emotional labor for them.

STIMULI THRESHOLD

How much stimuli is needed to feel satisfied; or how much stimuli once can take before becoming overwhelmed. Some need more stimuli to begin to feel comfortable, but that same amount of stimulation could easily overwhelm others.

PAINT PALATE

An illustration I use to describe how people express their emotions. Everyone expresses in a different way. Some express boldly (like a painting made with paint from a palate of bold colors) others express more quietly (like a painting made with paint from a palate of pastel colors). That doesn't necessarily mean that they feel emotions more or less intensely within themselves.

PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

HEROIC SELF CARE

Sides of myself or “internal personas” that I identify to share in my emotions and help me fight my battles. These “best versions of self” create a secure base of internal support from where I can establish healthy boundaries, compartmentalize, and love myself, thus having a foundation of emotional energy to then turn that love outward to others.

These archetypes are characterizations of the different “hats I wear” in life. Their use helps me access true parts of myself that may be more appropriate for different situations, rather than “faking it,” or pretending to be someone that I’m not. Like how the Crystal Gems come together to form Obsidian in Steven Universe, these different personas come together to form me - compete and whole. The representation of them in their individual forms are to help me identify aspects of my personality, and are healthily integrated within my personality, rather than dissociative.



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE AUDACIOUS

(Bard)



gregarious • bold • daring • unafraid
inspirational • social • confident • expressive
performer • captivating • figurehead
taking up space • leader • public speaker
#extra • arresting • a bit intimidating

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE IDEALIST

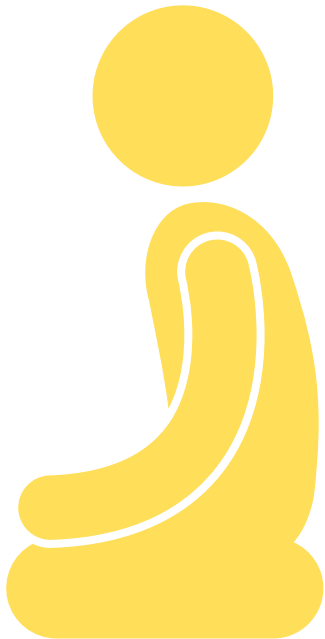
(Paladin)



passionate • idealistic
emotional • visionary
social justice warrior
focused on the big-picture

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	

PARTY OF CHAMPIONS
THE CONTENT
(Druid/Monk)



chill • relaxed • introverted
casual • re-charging • low-intensity
laid back • going with the flow

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE PRODUCTIVE

(Fighter)



goal-oriented • task-managing
motivated • planning • mentally active
physically active • high-energy
hyper-focus • high stamina

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE ENRAPTURED

(Sorcerer/Wizard)



intense • inspired • spellbound • dreamer
artistic • passionate • emotional • enamored
captivated • infatuated • adventurous
explorative • discovery • curious • fascinated
hyper-fixate • geeky • squee
Desiring emotional connection, shared
experience, love, a “dancing partner”

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE COMPASSIONATE

(Cleric)



mindful of self & others • considerate • aware
sensitive • supportive • patient • flexible
positive • comforting • friendly
balancing self-care with care of others
healthy boundaries

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

THE GOTH

(Warlock)



dark • intense • artistic • magical • powerful
arresting • masculine • positive shadow
Can be both passive & withdrawing and
confident & assertive

•Bright or Dark?	•Assertive or Receptive?
•Extroverted or Introverted?	•High Intensity or Low Intensity?
•Theoretical or Practical?	•Big-Picture Focused, Detail Focused, or Individual Focused?
•Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	



PARTY OF CHAMPIONS

	Bright or Dark?	Extroverted or Introverted?	Theoretical or Practical?	Emotional, Cerebral, or Physical?	Assertive or Receptive?	High or Low Intensity?	Big-Picture, Detail, or Individual Focused?
AUDACIOUS	Bright	Extroverted	Practical	All Three	Assertive	High	Balanced
IDEALIST	Bright & Dark	Extroverted	Theoretical	Emotional	Assertive	High	Big-Picture
CONTENT	Balanced	Introverted	Practical	Cerebral	Receptive	Low	Individual
PRODUCTIVE	Bright	Introverted	Practical	Cerebral & Physical	Assertive	High	Details
ENRAPTURED	Bright & Dark	Both/Either	Theoretical	All Three	Both/Either	High	All Three
COMPASSIONATE	Balanced	Balanced	Practical	Emotional & Cerebral	Balanced	Low	Individual
GOTH	Dark	Both/Either	Theoretical	Emotional & Physical	Both/Either	High	Big-Picture & Detail

LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

HEROIC SELF CARE

“Encounters” I face on my journey as a hero. Yes, they can be challenging. Yes, they can injure me. But just like D&D encounters, not all need be defeated through combat. Think creatively and use all the skills on your character sheet to defeat the threat. Not all are monsters. And remember, successfully surviving encounters leads to leveling up.

VALIDATION SEEKER

IMPOSTOR PARASITE

MADDENING

COMPARING DIMINISHER

BOGGART

ANXIETY DEMON

DEPRESSION DEMENTOR

SCARCITY PROJECTION

TIME BOMB

BLEEDER

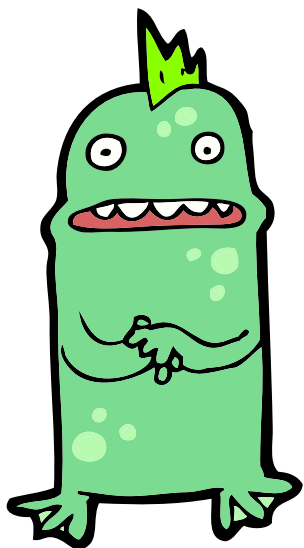
MULTITASKER

ERASER & EXPLOSION

PERFECTION DOPPELGÄNGER

SHAME SPIRAL

THE VALIDATION SEEKER



Needs validation & approval from peers/those I admire in order to feel safe. Without approval, I feel unwanted/unworthy, and the Imposter sneaks in. To counter this pain, I can turn to resentment.

Healthily Combated by: remembering they too are human, and may be preoccupied with other things, or insecure themselves. Have compassion for yourself and for them. Know your value. Listen. Is there somewhere you need to grow? Are these people worthy teachers?



THE IMPOSTOR PARASITE



A parasite attached to the shoulder, whispering convincing lies into the ear: “You’re not worthy, not special, everyone’s just being polite, you’re an inconvenience.” Will evolve into two sub-forms and grow to devour the entire head if not countered.

Healthily Combated by: drowning out its whispers with louder affirmations of self worth. Look to your past accomplishments, friends & loved ones, your own worth as a human.

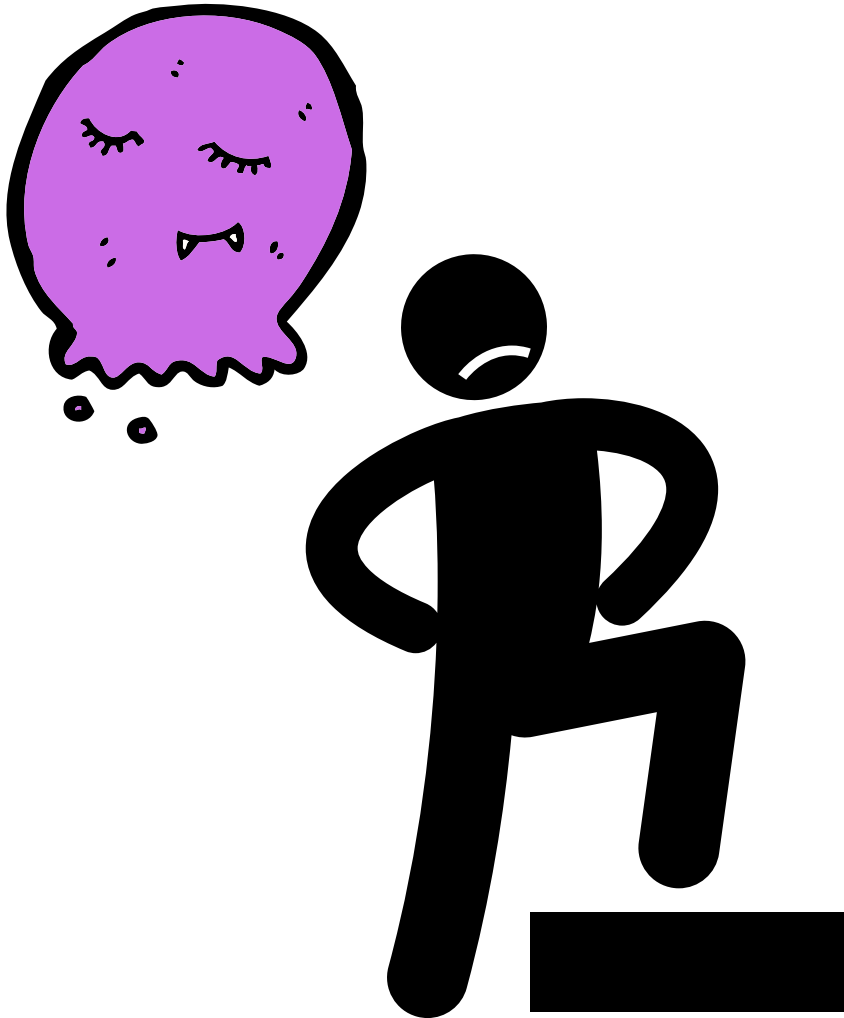


LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE MADDENING

(a high-level Imposter that suggests that you're alone because you're more special than others)

The lies of the Maddening flanks the Diminisher at the opposite side of the spectrum (yep, that means that they attack with advantage, damnit. Keep your defenses up!!)



Once you affirm that you are loved, supported, and appreciated, the Imposter evolves and mutates, whispering that you may be loved for your gifts, but that no one else experiences them at your level; leaving you alone. Often experienced by the Neurodivergent, when noticing that they experience the world in a far different way than the Neurotypical population around them.

Healthily Combated by: sharing with the Party of Champions & a wider audience. Appreciate others where they're at. Celebrating the unique individuality that everyone brings to the world, including yourself. Appreciating that if everyone were the same, the world would be boring. You bring your own spice to the world. It is appreciated by others. But if everyone had the same spice as you, the flavor would be too overpowering. Delight in the variety of the whole buffet.

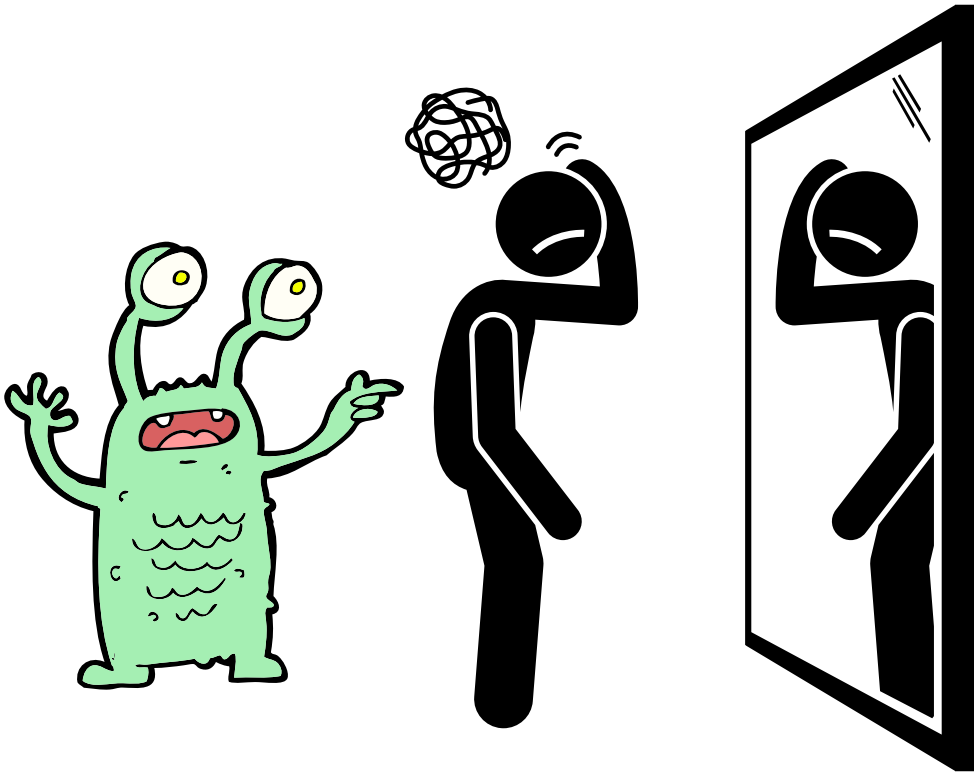


LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE COMPARING DIMINISHER

(a high-level Impostor that suggests that you're alone because you're not special enough)

The lies of the Diminisher flanks the Maddening at the opposite side of the spectrum
(yep, that means that they attack with advantage, damnit. Keep your defenses up!!)



The Imposter evolves and mutates, lying that you don't belong because you don't appear broken enough, or appear to have not suffered as much as others. "Others have it worse. Your privilege in one area disqualifies you from feeling worthy of support in ANY area."

Healthily Combated by: trusting yourself, seeking out community, your support system, your tribe. Mindfulness, balance. Being aware of your privilege where you DO have it, & using it for good, creating a support space for others with less privilege to speak on their own experiences - but also recognizing the places where you lack privilege, and acknowledging the validity of the struggle you face in that area of life; then seeking out places of support, and trusting that community to support you. Taking up space, sharing your story. Even as you do your best to persevere and overcome your struggles, knowing that your story is a blessing to others who may also struggle, and you are not weak or immature when expressing your struggles or seeking help; no matter how much better you think you have it than others.

LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE BOGGART



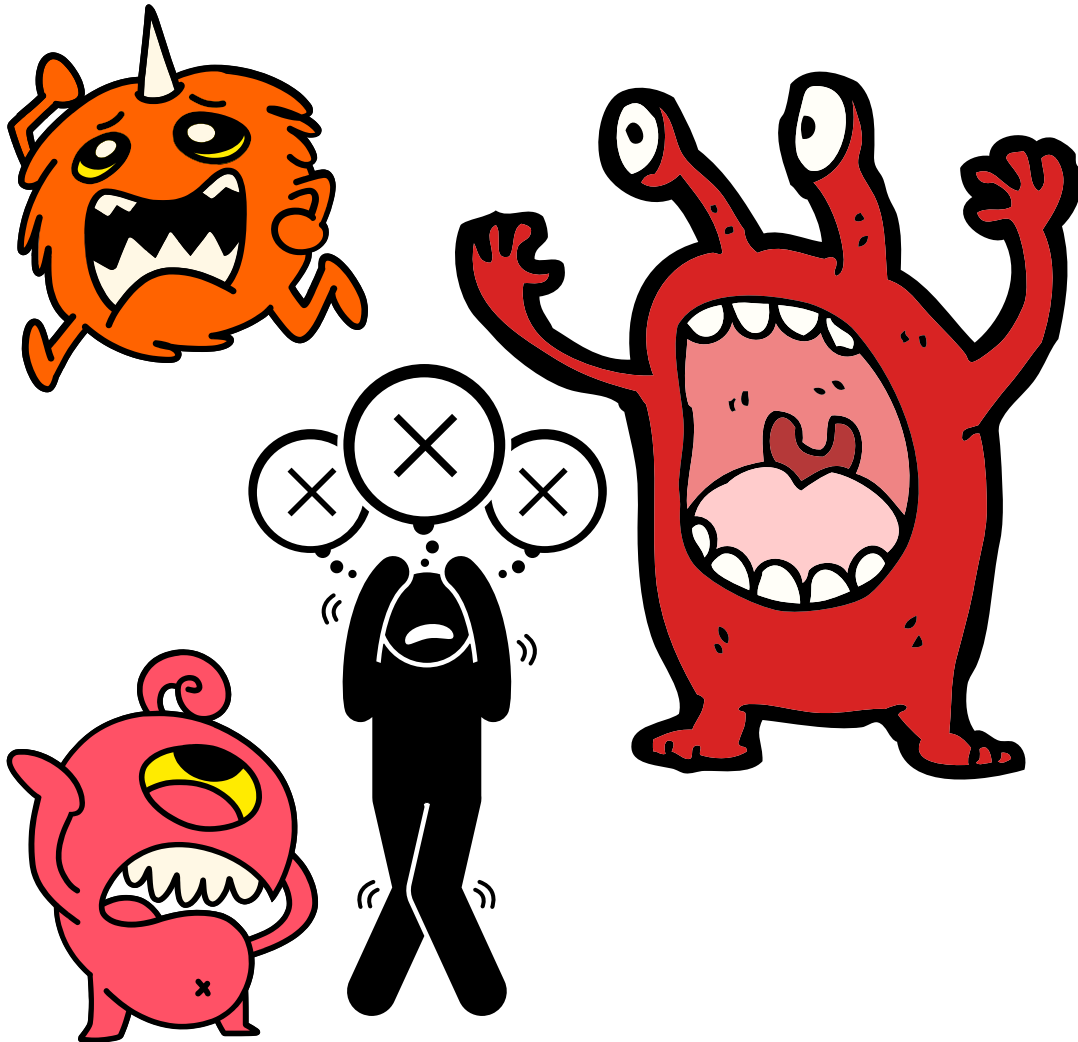
Irrational fears, blown way out of proportion

Healthily Combated by: acknowledging the fear as real and valid, but recognizing the source of the fear as ridiculous (“riddikulus!”), & naming it as such. Remembering your power.

LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE ANXIETY DEMONS

(a beast involuntarily summoned by you when there's too much of a challenge)



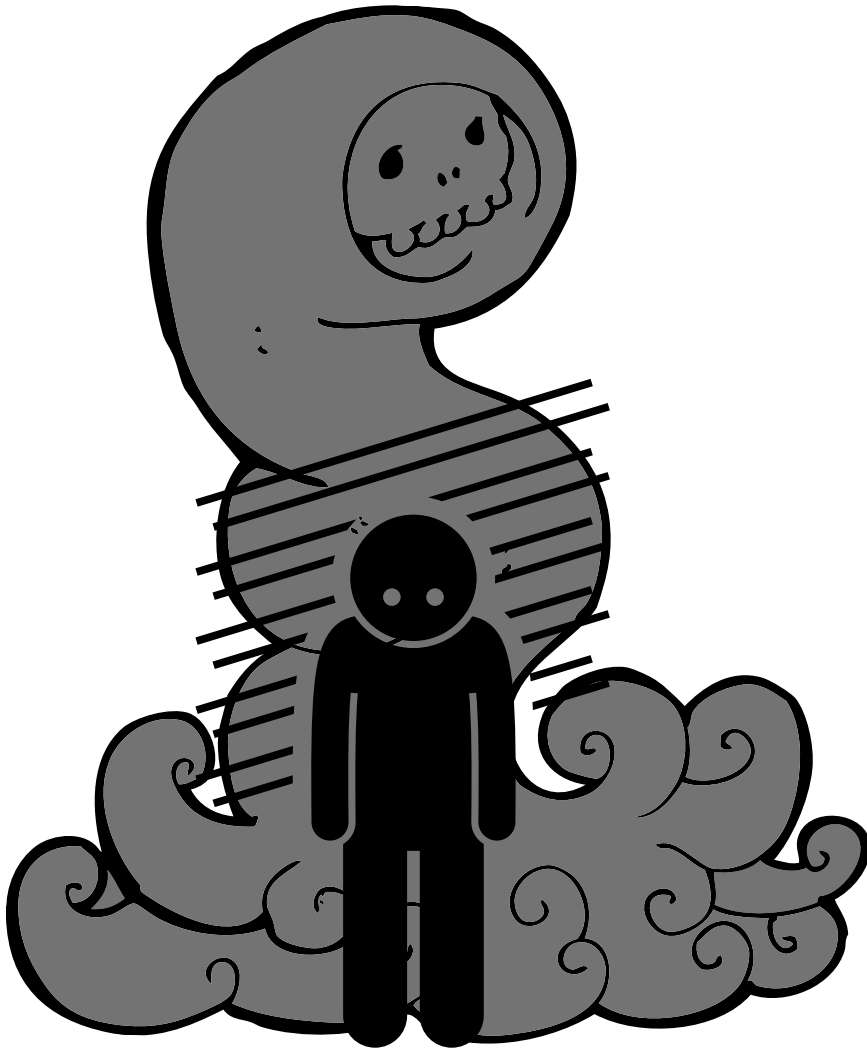
Summoned when in combat with a challenge that were not prepared for. Actions: Fight, Fly, Freeze, or Fawn. Makes disorienting, bright lights & white noise. If the challenge is only a Boggart, it will turn on you overwhelmingly.

Healthily Combated by: awareness of the source of the threat. Is the threat legitimate? Or is the source of fear irrational? Take time to ground. Breathe, stim. Seek out support or remove yourself from the situation if necessary and possible.

LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE DEPRESSION DEMENTOR

(a beast involuntarily summoned by you when there's not enough of a challenge or connection)

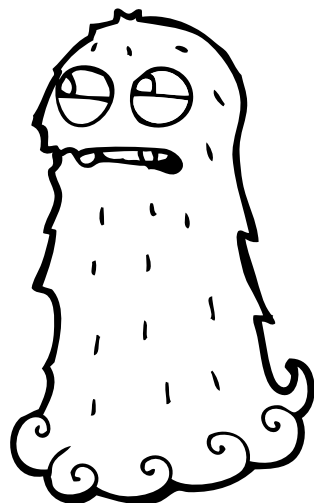


Summoned when there's a lack of an exciting challenge in your journey. When the gifts & skills on your character sheet aren't used, when the encounters presented are way below your level and aren't challenging or helping to "level you up." Also possible if there's not enough of a connection with others. Over an extended period of time without a suitable challenge or connection, loneliness and/or ennui sets in, and the Depression Dementor manifests from the cloud of funk that has gathered.

Healthily Combated by: reach out to your tribe. Communicating needs, finishing appropriate outlets to experience, express, create at your level.

THE SCARCITY PROJECTION

When there's not enough stimuli to reach the needed sensory threshold in the present moment, I panic, believing that I'll never have enough, or never have an appropriate outlet for emotional expression.



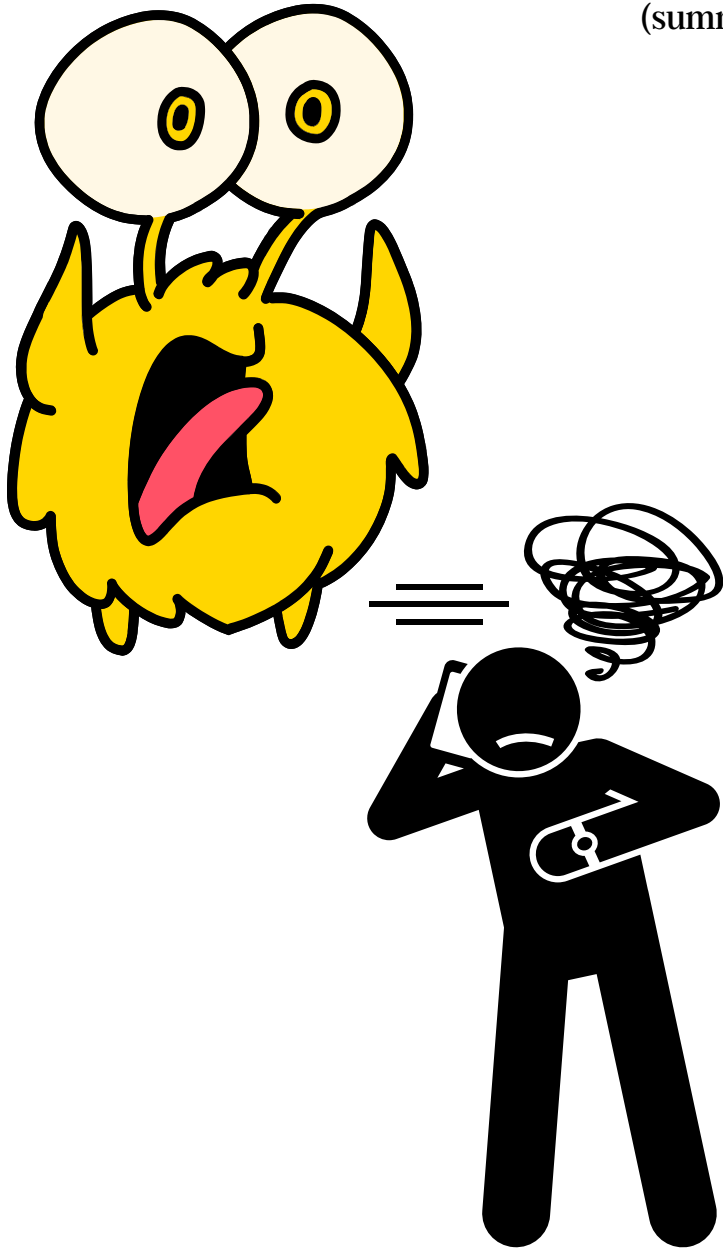
Healthily Combated by: awareness of the situation, trust in your own beautiful palate and threshold, trusting your support system, trusting that there will be more outlets in the future, seeking out those outlets. Persevering through the period of scarcity, knowing it will end. Coping in healthy small ways until it is appropriate to engage fully.



LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE TIME BOMB

(summons the Bleeder & the Multitasker)



Makes you think you have no time in the future, that you must address this idea/issue/feeling NOW; that you will not be able to remember or pick it up again in the future. Causes unhealthy levels of hyper-fixation. (Often attacks the Neurodivergent).

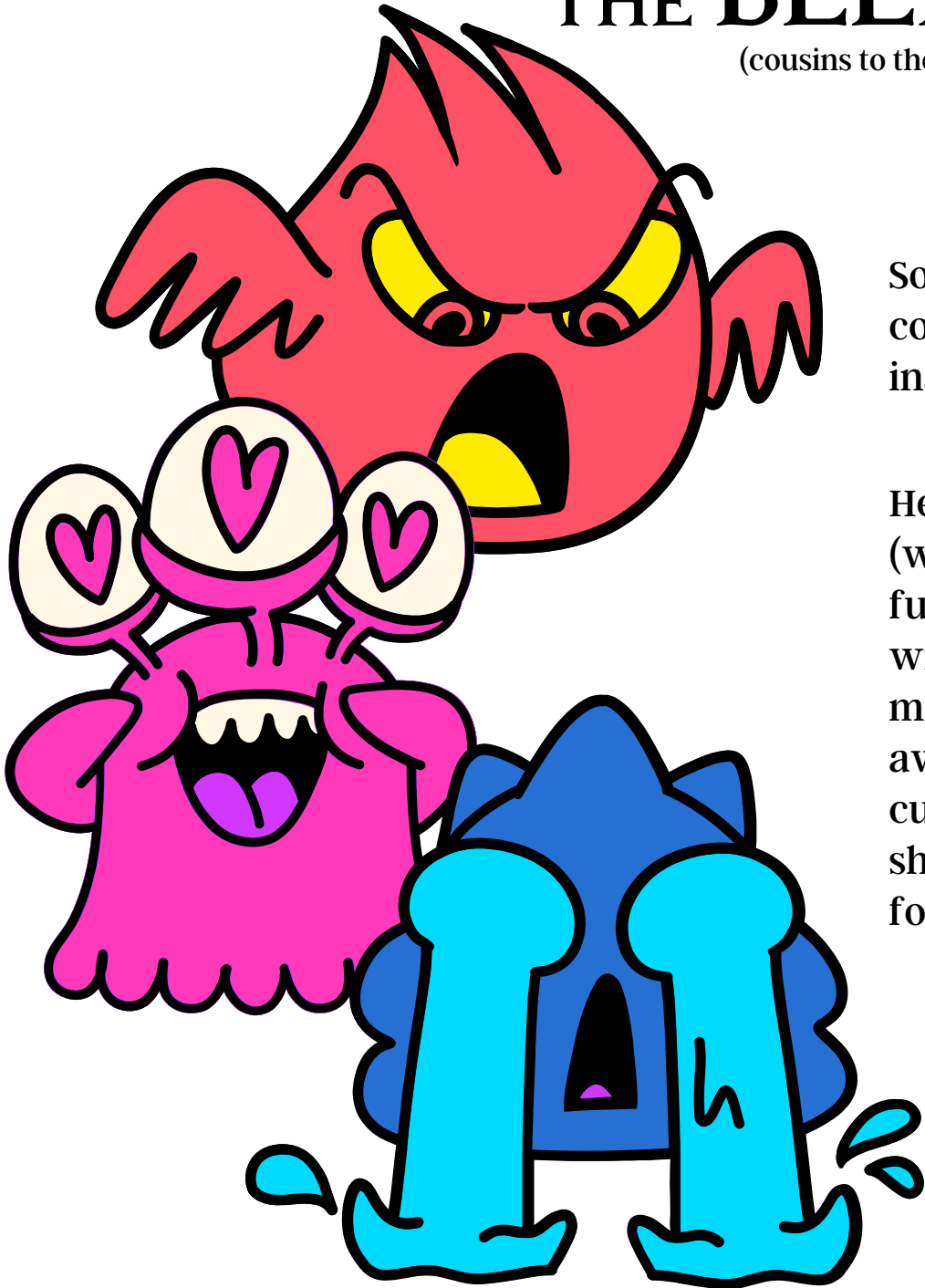
Healthily Combatted by: trusting your future self, writing it down & using systems of organization. outlets to experience, express, create at your level.



LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE BLEEDERS

(cousins to the Multitasker)



So obsessed with own emotions, can't compartmentalize, & "bleed" all over inappropriate situations.

Healthily Combatted by: compartmentalization (with the promise of a healthy moment in the future to unpack), acceptance of emotions without judgement, awareness of low-level, mid-level, & high-level spells, logical awareness of the physical symptoms of the current emotions, and letting them pass, sharing them with the Enraptured, compassion for self, and for those around me.



LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE MULTITASKER

(cousin to the Bleeder)



Hyper-focused on everything at once rather than one thing at a time. So focused/fascinated by enjoyable tasks, to-do lists, games, songs in the head; that I can't focus on the situation at hand.

Healthily Combated by: redirecting energy to healthy use of stim toys (appropriate for the situation; silent & low-distraction choices always at hand), grounding, deep breaths, taking notes for later, patience, trusting future self.

THE ERASER & THE EXPLOSION



Afraid of my own power & others' reactions to it, I shrink, depriving myself of authentic expression. Too much of this over an extended period of time breeds the Depression Dementor to the point where I eventually explode, splattering my own palate all over everyone else without warning to them. At this point, not only am I suffering, but I too have become something that could be perceived as a monster by others.

Healthily Combated by: healthy balance, using the unique palate of your own self-expression without fear or shame, but also appreciating others' colors on their palates, and letting them shine too.

THE PERFECTION DOPPELGÄNGER



An illusion that tricks you into thinking that you must always match the expectations and standards of a neurotypical society. “Be the perfect, appropriate woman. Play small, don’t make waves. Don’t make others uncomfortable.” Looks like you, but plastic, inflexible, inhuman, with a painted smile.

Healthily Combatted by: taking up SPACE in your beautiful uniqueness. Knowing that the world doesn’t just tolerate you, but NEEDS and appreciates your unique gifts. It is hungry for you and what you can share. Knowing that what you have to contribute is more special than you can ever recognize.



LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

THE SHAME SPIRAL



A tornado born of one hot pressure system & one cold pressure system (where self-care needs conflict with the needs of others that you care for).

Healthily Combated by: calling it for what it is (born of love). Communication & trust. Slow the spiral down by breathing or other calming tactics until it is possible to separate them into their separate elements. From there, they can be dealt with individually with understanding, or fixing them into something stable.

LEGION OF THE CHALLENGER

NOTES

Just like a good game of D&D (or another TTRPG), the journey isn't satisfying without challenging encounters. It is healthy to recognize the threatening nature of them & to react emotionally to them. But also remember that taking a moment to "browse your character sheet" for the skills & spells you've learned and then using them to combat the encounter can be exciting and even fun.

Keep in mind that encounters are only beneficial when it is challenging enough to be interesting, but you are also well enough to play. If your hit points are low, if you are out of spell slots (spoons/energy), you suffer from too many temporary negative status effects, if you have a point or two of exhaustion, or if the challenge is way above your current level, you may need to seek out help from others to join your party, take a round to heal, use a "coffee scroll," or even disengage from the encounter all together and take a short or long rest until you are ready to engage in appropriately-leveled encounters again.



SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

HEROIC SELF CARE

Ways to combat challenging emotions and stimuli; comparing the “low level skills” (more immediate, potentially less healthy responses) with “mid level skills” (healthier responses to practice as your “level up”), and “high level skills” (more healthy, integrated responses, potentially requiring much practice of mindfulness and repetition of the skills until they are more easily accessed in the heat of a challenge).

A reminder that every emotion we feel - both the pleasant ones and the challenging ones - are a response to an outer stimuli. The emotion itself isn't inherently bad. However, some reactions can be more helpful than others. Understanding why the emotion manifests can be helpful in removing the feeling of shame that can easily breed. It also helps in knowing which reactions (skills) will be more helpful.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS NOTES

*Remember Steven Universe “Here Comes a Thought.” You may think that this situation is the end of the world, “but it’s not, but it’s not, but it’s not, but it’s not, but it’s not.” Take a moment to breathe & check your “character sheet” for the new skills you’ve learned before automatically resorting to the low level skills that may no longer be as beneficial as they once were. Don’t judge yourself for having used these lower level skills. They once helped you stay alive in the threat of the moment, and they may have been the only skills you were aware of at the time. But now, you have leveled up, and the challenges you face may be greater. They may need more time and mindfulness to defeat. And you’ve learned so many new skills that are even more powerful than what you’ve used before! Take the time to remember what they are before you instantly jump back to the old ones. But forgive yourself when you do. In the middle of a stressful encounter, it’s easy to revert back to the comfortable. Forgive yourself, and on your next turn, take time to review your new options.

**I borrow different skills from D&D and other geeky properties in my self-care system. Some of them I equate to “lower level skills” because they are easier for me to access in the middle of a stressful situation. This doesn’t mean that these skills are low level within their source of origin themselves, or that the classes or characters that use them are negative or immature.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: ANGER/RAGE/FURY

STIMULI: When my rights have been violated, my needs have been denied, I haven't been firm on my boundaries, or have otherwise been taken advantage of. Also can be righteously angry on behalf of others. (Do they require me fighting on their behalf? Or are they capable?)

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE: **I WOULD LIKE TO RAGE/FIREBALL**
Massive damage can cause friendly fire, burn bridges, harm innocents. Lash out blindly without awareness. Letting hate flow through me, giving my power away to them. End up drained and exhausted.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE: **PALADIN'S SMITE**
Paladins can add extra damage (smite) AFTER hitting. But it takes a spell slot (spoons/energy) to use. So yes, go ahead and get angry. Lash out & attack. But before you go too crazy, take a moment to decide if it's worth it to you to spend the emotional energy, possibly opening up a new can of worms in order to add some extra smite damage to the encounter.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE: **PATIENT DEFENSE**
Know my limits & my boundaries. Re-establish if necessary. Do I need to communicate? Or just let the feeling pass? What can I control? What can't I?

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: FRUSTRATION/IRRITATION

STIMULI: When expectations have not been met, when I am misunderstood or feel unappreciated for my unique and valid way of doing things. (Why am I threatened? Is it real or imaginary? Did I project this?)

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE: **VISCOUS MOCKERY**
Arrogance, pretentiousness, dismissive, judgey, rude, no patience.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE: **CUTTING WORDS**
Deflate the effect of the irritation a bit. Yes, the situation may still irritate you, and rightfully so. But you can lessen the effect they have on you a bit, enough to survive the encounter.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE: **DEFLECT MISSILES**
Not worth my energy. Away they go. Why do they annoy me? Where are they coming from? Do they require my approval? Are they worthy of my patience? Can it be ignored? Or must it be addressed? Discontinue unfruitful patterns & relationships. Communicate needs clearly. Seek out other outlets for satisfaction. Show compassion.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: ANXIETY/UNCERTAINTY

STIMULI: When unprepared for an unexpected challenge that is too much to handle, we summon the Anxiety Demon that lashes out in a Flurry of Blows.

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE: **FLURRY OF BLOWS**
We join the demon in Flurries of Blows against the threat. We freak out, fight, fly, freeze, or fawn. This energy helps us defeat a legitimate threat, but if the threat is only a Boggart, the Demon turns on the party & we get caught up in a Flurry of Blows spiral.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE: **STILLNESS OF MIND**
Ground. Breathe. Don't rashly summon the beast without first determining whether the threat is severe or just a Boggart (which can be easily defeated with the "Riddiculus" spell.) Before you summon, be still. Only true threats require the summoned demon's help.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE: **TRUE SIGHT**
Use your senses to decipher if this is truly a threat or not. Evaluate why this is a situation that calls for anxiety. Sometimes this takes preparation and meditation over time.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: FEAR/PANIC/SCARCITY

STIMULI: Feeling alone, misunderstood, unseen, no one to share in my joy or talent, lack of time to do everything I desire and need. Because I don't have it all right now, I fear I never will. I begin to panic and fight for it.

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE: **CONCEAL, DON'T FEEL - PANIC STORM**
Afraid of my own power and others' reactions to it, I shrink & erase myself, depriving myself of my own healing authentic expression. Desperate and starving, I panic & lash out with expression, splattering my own "paint set" all over everyone else's art.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE: **LET IT GO**
Know what to hold on to, & what to let go. It's easy to succumb to the fear of missing out (FOMO), this isn't the only opportunity you're going to get. There will be other opportunities. There may be some rare times in your life when you get only one shot, but most of the time, there will be more opportunities. Sometimes, you need to create your own opportunities, just like Elsa needed to step away for a moment, let it go, and then created her own castle.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE: **SHOW YOURSELF**
Trust your future self, trust your Party of Champions, trust your beloved tribe. Trust that you are loved. Know that you might not get what you need from others Right Now, but you WILL find it somewhere, and you always have yourself as a secure base.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: **SADNESS/GRIEF**

STIMULI: Loss of something or someone precious

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE:

ROMULAN EXTREME

Unhealthy lack of compartmentalization. Feel it and express it all right now, regardless of responsibilities, heedless of the appropriateness of the situation. Putting the responsibility to feel the emotion with me upon others. Expect others to do emotional labor for me without consent.

VULCAN EXTREME

Unhealthy compartmentalization. Feelings are uncomfortable. So don't express them. Hold them in.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE:

HOLODECK

Until the appropriate time to fully unload your emotions with your tribe, find an appropriate way to at least temporarily release the pressure. Journal, find a place to yell, listen to music, distract yourself with a story or something pleasurable for a short time. Careful, don't take a long trip to Risa. Escapism (unhealthy addictions, overworking, delving into fandom for too long, etc) is soothing in the moment, but won't help in the long run.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE:

QOWAT MILAT - ABSOLUTE CANDOR

Set aside appropriate time and space to grieve and feel it fully. Ask others if they are ready for emotional labor. Express it at a pace and in a way that feels right for you, but do express it all. Get to the source. Feel it. Let it out. Hold nothing back with absolute honesty.



SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: **NUMBNESS/DEPRESSION**

STIMULI: Not enough challenging stimuli, and/or lack of connection with loved ones. Loneliness. (This does not refer to the long term disorder of diagnosed clinical depression. This is the short term emotional condition that everyone can go through, including but not limited to those clinically diagnosed)

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE: **TINY HUT**
Stay in my safe tiny hut. If I leave it, my safe space will go away. Seeking short-term sources of happiness within this bubble, without challenging yourself to find deep, fulfilling, and lasting sources of real joy. Having a tiny hut to escape to can be good and necessary for a time. But it is not meant to stay in for an extended period.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE: **MESSAGE/SENDING**
Seek connection. Reach out to friends. No, you don't bother them. They love you. And if they can't respond right now, they will when they can. And if they don't, it's not personal against you. They may be in the middle of a circumstance that prevents them from responding right away. Or they could be going through their own difficult emotion or mental situation at the moment. Reach out to more than one person. Send memes. Chat. Hang out. Play a game. Watch a movie. Have a deep conversation. Any of these are better than staying in your tiny hut for too long with only your own negative thoughts spiral to accompany you.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE: **FIND THE PATH**
Seek out your quest! Possibly join an external party of like-minded friends or colleagues, and get excited about doing something that challenges your mind and creativity! Step out of that hut and do something you love with someone you love.

SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS

EMOTION: JOY

STIMULI: Presence of someone or something beloved & enjoyable (including concepts and information)

LOW LEVEL RESPONSE:

HIDEOUS LAUGHTER
In the excitement of joy, getting carried away and splashing the beautiful colors of your paint palate (the way you express) all over everyone else's own paintings, covering them up.

BLINDNESS/DEAFNESS, SILENCE
After realizing that your "laughter" has been perceived as "hideous" in others' ears, you shut up & blind/deafen yourself to the whole conversation to protect yourself, thinking that expressing your joy is ALWAYS perceived as "hideous" by others, and that your way of expressing joy or excitement is wrong.

MID LEVEL RESPONSE:

SUBTLE SPELL
You don't always have to use both verbal AND somatic components. Sometimes your expression can be just as effective and satisfying to you and others while also being a bit more subtle. You can show excitement without speaking volumes about the topic. Or you can talk, but you can use your awareness to not be so exuberant that you offend those around you. Of course, be yourself. But be your BEST self. Everyone gets to have fun. That includes them and you.

HIGH LEVEL RESPONSE:

BARDIC INSPIRATION
Be so completely yourself that everyone else feels safe to be themselves too. Don't splash your joyful colors inconsiderately! Yes, joyfully express your own colors, but celebrate the colors of others too! Shine away, but use it to lift others up, not to cover them up.

MOST POWERFUL SPELLS, SKILLS, & ARMS FOR ALMOST ANY SITUATION

- Patience with self, with others, & with the situation as it slowly progresses.
- Forgiveness of self & loved ones.
- Trust of self and loved ones.
- Aid/Guidance: Ask your tribe for help. Let them offer you the help action.
- Message: Honest, gentle communication with loved ones (trusting, expressing needs, listening)
- Bardic Inspiration: playlists, affirmations, quotes. Look to your secure base.
- Boundaries: What others think of me is none of my business. “Thank you for your words. I’ll consider them.” “You have no power over me.”
- Use your Cantrips. What do you love to do; something that comes so easily and naturally to you that it takes almost no effort to do? Something that gives you an instant little boost to help you through it? For me, it’s music. Have a reminder list of the cantrips at your disposal.
- True Sight: Awareness of the existence, names, and truth behind each challenging encounter, their sources, the Party of Champions within me, my external support system, and the skills in my character sheet. The low level spells do have their place. Forgive yourself for using Magic Missile again. But learn to use your higher ones.

A SHORT LIST OF SOME GEEKY AFFIRMATIONS

- CHRONICLES of NARNIA: Courage, Dear Heart.
- HARRY POTTER: Don't let the muggles get you down.
- STAR WARS: Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter.
- STAR WARS: The greatest teacher failure is.
- HOW to TRAIN your DRAGON: What you're searching for isn't out there. It's in here.
- AGENT CARTER (MARVEL): I know my value. Anyone else's opinion doesn't really matter.
- GAME of THRONES/SONG of ICE & FIRE: I am the Blood of the Dragon. I can make a hat.
- GAME of THRONES/SONG of ICE & FIRE: Nasty little shits aren't worth crying over.
- LABYRINTH: My will is as strong as yours, and my kingdom is as great. You have no power over me.
- WHO: You know, nine hundred years of time and space and I've never met anybody who wasn't important before.
- WHO: Every life is a pile of good things and bad things. The good things don't always soften the bad things, but vice versa, the bad things don't always spoil the good things and make them unimportant.
- What are some of your favorite geeky quotes & affirmations?

SOURCES

GEEKY PROPERTIES BORROWED FROM

Dungeons & Dragons

Harry Potter

Star Wars

Star Trek

Steven Universe

Disney

The intellectual properties of the above belong to the creators. I borrow from them and use them in my own way. The adaptations I make to apply them to my personal mental health strategies are not necessarily the views of the original creators of these intellectual properties. My adaptations and applications are intended for personal use, and are to be shared with those who may benefit, free of charge, with no funds exchanged.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- By Brené Brown - Daring Greatly, The Gifts of Imperfection, Braving the Wilderness
- By Carol S Pearson - Persephone Rising, Awakening the Heroes Within
- By Caroline Myss - Sacred Contracts
- By Julia Cameron - The Artist's Way
- By Dr. Harry Barry - Emotional Resilience
- By Imi Lo - Emotional Sensitivity and Intensity
- By Jennifer Cook O'Toole - Autism in Heels
- By Jenna Nerenberg - Divergent Mind
- positivepsychology.com/emotion-wheel