

Inside Out 2 Reflective Questions: Tools for Navigating Emotions and Identity



1. **The Downside of Positivity:** At the start of "Inside Out 2," Riley believes "I am a good person," heavily influenced by Joy's positivity. In fact, Joy goes so far as boot out shameful or painful memories. How does Joy's effort to keep Riley happy sometimes cross into denial or toxic positivity? What are the potential consequences of ignoring painful or shameful emotions?
2. **Anxiety's Role in Future Planning:** The movie shows a power struggle between Joy and Anxiety. Anxiety takes charge of guiding Riley's decisions about her future, saying "You aren't what she needs anymore, Joy." When we grow up, do we feel less joy? How does Anxiety's focus on future planning both help and hinder Riley? Reflect on times in your life where anxiety has been both a motivator and a challenge.
3. **The Vault of Secrets:** Joy sends less than great memories to Riley's vault. There Riley stores her embarrassing and shameful secrets and suppresses painful memories to the back of the mind. (Hello cringey "Pouchie"...) Riley's vault of secrets represents how we often hide our most painful memories. How do you see this coping mechanism playing out in real life, and what happens when we finally face these hidden emotions?

4. **Imaginationland: How it Changes from Childhood:** In "Inside Out 2," Imaginationland evolves to include Mount Crushmore (crushes) and gossip. Anxiety puts the "screenwriters" to work anticipating multiple negative scenarios. How does this shift reflect the changing inner world of teenagers and young adults, and how do these changes mirror your own experiences?

5. **Integration of New Emotions:** Joy shares, "I've learned every emotion is good for Riley." As Riley learns to accept emotions like Embarrassment and Envy, how does this contribute to her overall emotional growth? Why is it important to embrace all emotions, even the challenging ones?

6. **Perfectionism and Self-Worth:** Anxiety's struggle with perfectionism is intended to drive improvement. It contrasts sharply with Joy's message of self-acceptance. How do these opposing views shape Riley's self-worth, and how do they resonate with your own experiences? How might these beliefs influence your decisions and emotional responses in everyday situations?

7. **Reflection on Core Beliefs:** Riley as a child believes she is a “good person.” Later, Riley starts to develop a new core belief, “If I’m good at hockey, I’ll make friends.” What core beliefs do you hold about yourself, and how do they impact your actions and emotions? Can you relate to her struggle between “I’m not good enough” and “I’m a good person”? Is there room for both??

8. **Embracing Complexity of Self:** At the end of “Inside Out 2,” Riley not only learns to appreciate the importance of all emotions but adds complexity to her core self. How does this resonate with your experiences of self-acceptance and understanding others’ multifaceted identities?

9. **Reflecting on Faults: Seeing Ourselves in Others:** Joy’s confrontation with Anxiety’s dominance leads her to reflect on her own similar actions. Have you ever seen your own traits reflected in others’ faults or mistakes? How has this realization helped you grow or change? This exchange leads Joy to realize that she, too, cannot control Riley’s identity. Have you ever experienced a situation where someone’s faults or mistakes helped you recognize similar traits or behaviors in yourself? Have you ever tried to shift thoughts about a difficult person or relationship to be a self-lesson, like looking in a mirror?