

# Healing Shame.

**Until you make the unconscious conscious it will rule your life and you will call it fate - Carl Jung**

This quote by Carl Jung speaks to the idea that our unconscious thoughts, desires, and beliefs influence our behavior and experiences, often without our conscious awareness. Jung believed that by bringing the unconscious into conscious awareness through practices like introspection, therapy, or self-reflection, we gain greater insight and control over our lives.

Until we become aware of the dysfunctional shame and guilt that is driving our beliefs, thoughts, and emotions, they will continue to have a powerful influence over our lives. Dysfunctional shame triggers our nervous system into sympathetic activation or dorsal vagal shutdown. Embracing healthy shame and guilt is a key part of healing your nervous system.



# What's Going on.

## Why do we carry this gut wrenching shame?

Dysfunctional shame and guilt often originate from early childhood experiences, traumatic events, social and cultural influences, perfectionistic tendencies, and a lack of emotional support. Parents shame the child and refrain from doing the repair that is important to protect the connection. Criticism, rejection, or punishment during formative years can instill beliefs about unworthiness, while traumatic events can distort perceptions of responsibility and self-worth. Societal norms and peer pressure further shape our experiences, influencing feelings of inadequacy or wrongdoing.

Healing shames involves recognising and normalising that you have needs like everyone else. Instead of suppressing your desires, thoughts, opinions and feelings hoping that they will go away, become an advocate for them so your body starts to trust you again and you can become carefree and relaxed in relationship to others.

### Dysfunctional Shame & Guilt

- Chronic feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness, or self-blame.
- Avoidance, isolation, or self-destructive behaviors.
- Unrealistic standards and perfectionistic tendencies.
- Hinders personal growth and stifles self-expression and authenticity.
- Difficulty to seeking help or support from others.
- Cycles of shame and guilt, without resolution.
- Distorted beliefs about one's worthiness or value.

### Functional Shame & Guilt

- Supports self-awareness and reflection on personal values and principles.
- Motivates constructive behavior change and efforts to make amends.
- Leads to empathy and consideration for others' feelings and perspectives.
- Encourages accountability and taking responsibility for one's actions.
- Facilitates healthy communication and resolution of conflicts, leading to trust.
- Contributes to personal growth, resilience, and emotional maturity.
- Is adaptive and serves as a valuable moral compass in decision-making.
- Supports a balanced sense of self-worth and self-compassion.



# What to do.

*Release Shame*  
**TO RECLAIM**  
**PLEASURE**

## Healing Dysfunctional Shame is a Journey:

- Start by recognizing and acknowledging the presence of dysfunctional shame and guilt in your life. Reflect on past experiences and patterns of thinking and behavior that contribute to these emotions.
- Identify and challenge negative or unrealistic beliefs about yourself, your worth, and your actions. Practice self-compassion.
- Allow yourself to experience and express emotions associated with shame and guilt, such as sadness, regret, or disappointment.
- Practice forgiveness. Recognize that everyone makes mistakes and that growth and learning are inherent parts of the human experience.
- Reframe mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth rather than sources of shame or failure, focus on what you can learn from your experiences.
- Adjust unrealistic standards and expectations for yourself. Recognize that perfection is unattainable and that it's okay to be imperfect. Celebrate your progress and efforts rather than fixating on outcomes.
- With every decision, ask yourself if it is dysfunctional shame & guilt leading the way and reconnect to your body's wisdom telling you what is a yes and a no
- Remember that there is nothing wrong with you, you have just become overly self-conscious with any sense of disapproval or humiliation.



**Your NO to someone else  
is saying YES to yourself.**



# Support Others.

## Re-establishing the Relationship with Others

Just like you, others are carrying dysfunctional shame. Some are caught up in attacking others to avoid the feelings of shame, and some are caught up in a withdrawal reaction, afraid to engage. When you realize that people are in this space, you can support them.

When we become more aware of shame in ourselves and others, we can pay attention to the moments we unintentionally shame others, and relax when we recognize that we are on the receiving end.

Do I need to feel shame and guilt for what the person is shaming me for right now? And do I need to take action and adjust my behavior or choices? And, can I speak in a way that I am not using the shame that leaves others feeling wrong?

People who are in shame are frozen, and can't access higher levels of thinking because the limbic brain takes over. And that makes it hard to communicate and relate. It contributes to anxiety, depression, narcissism, violence, and disordered eating, and leaves people in desperate need of love, warmth, and compassion.

Dysfunctional shame and guilt make people feel powerless and self-critical. Shame governs all our other emotions, and we can get so ashamed of our emotions that we repress them all together. When shame binds with our emotions (joy, pleasure, sadness, grief, anger, etc.) they cannot complete their cycle and get stuck in our nervous system rather than move through us.

To heal, we must inform ourselves and others its safe to feel.



# Journal Prompts.

## Shadow work journal prompts focusing on shame and guilt

- Reflect on the parts of you that hold feelings of shame and guilt. How do these parts typically show up? What are they telling you about you?
- Which experiences or events from your past contributed to these emotions? How did your younger parts perceive these experiences?
- How do they feel about carrying the burden of shame and guilt? Can you listen to the stories these feelings hold with an open heart and without judgment?
- Imagine what it would feel like to release the weight of shame and guilt. How would you respond to the possibility of accepting all parts of you?
- What do the parts of you that carry this burden need to feel heard and validated? Can you offer them reassurance and support?
- How can you extend kindness and understanding to these vulnerable aspects of yourself? What steps can you take to promote harmony and balance within yourself?
- Reflect on the wisdom and insights that these parts of shame and guilt hold. How have these emotions served as teachers in your life, guiding you toward greater self-awareness and growth?



*Approach these prompts with kindness and patience. Shadowwork is a deep and intense journey, and it's important to be gentle.*



# Self Reflect.

Shame and guilt both stem from feelings of wrongdoing, but they differ in focus and impact: guilt is attributed to remorse over specific actions, while shame revolves around a sense of inherent inadequacy, potentially leading to self-rejection. Constructive shame drives self-reflection and growth, and helps you to take responsibility and make amends.

## **How do you typically respond when someone offers you a compliment? Can you graciously accept it?**

- It makes me uncomfortable, I freeze or I feel like an imposter.
- I tend to downplay the compliment or deflect it.
- I genuinely appreciate compliments and acknowledge them with gratitude.

\*Solution: Continue embracing compliments with openness and appreciation. Accepting praise is a positive exchange that benefits both you and the giver.

## **When you make a mistake, what is your usual reaction?**

- I may engage in self-blame and fear judgment from others or I freeze.
- I might try to minimize the mistake or shift responsibility elsewhere.
- I acknowledge the error, take responsibility, and focus on finding a solution.

\*Solution: Practice self-compassion and recognize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and growth. Focus on problem-solving rather than dwelling on blame.

## **In the face of criticism or insults, how do you typically respond?**

- *I may internalize the criticism and experience self-doubt.*
- *I might withdraw or become defensive in response.*
- *I maintain perspective, assess the validity of the criticism, and respond with composure.*

\*Solution: Stay open to feedback and try to approach criticism with curiosity rather than defensiveness. Seek clarification if needed and use criticism as an opportunity for self-reflection and improvement.

Healing shame is a journey, if you want to learn more, check out the nervous system regulation course [here](#) or join our online group coaching [membership](#).

Thank you for taking the time to read and self-reflect, your healing supports everyone around you.

