



# *SHAME*



Where is the shame message coming from?



**I made you a cookie...**



**but I ate it.**



# Prominent Researchers on Shame

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- Erikson's Theory. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt.
- Healing the Shame that Binds You. John Bradshaw. Health Communication, Inc. Deerfield Beach, FL. 1988.
- Letting Go of Shame: How Shame Affects Your Life (1996, Hazelden Foundation), Ronald and Patricia Potter-Efron. Audiotape version available.
- The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-based Syndromes (1996, Springer). Gershen Kaufman.
- Shame: Spiritual Suicide (1995, Waterford Publications), Vicki Underland-Rasow.
- Shame: The Power of Caring (1992, Schenkman Books), Gershen Kaufman.
- Shame The Exposed Self. Michael Lewis. The Free Press, 1992.
- Trainee Disclosure in Psychotherapy Supervision: The impact of Shame P603, David B Yourman.

# Defining Shame Vs. Guilt

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- Fossum and Mason, in their book Facing Shame, state “while guilt is a painful feeling of regret and responsibility for one’s actions, shame is a painful feeling about oneself as a person.
- Bradshaw states
  1. **“Guilt** is feeling bad about something I’ve done. (It sets limits.)”
  2. **“Shame** is feeling bad about who I am. It is a deep-seated feeling that something is fundamentally wrong with me. Shame affects our sense of identity and personhood at the deepest level. It also causes doubts about our lovability and capability. If you have ashame-based identity you don’t feel worthy. Other shame statements include: I am not good enough. Something about me is lacking. I am not like the others. They have something I do not have. I am incomplete. I am inadequate. Self, rejects self.

# Where is the message coming from?

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- Recognize Feelings of Shame
- Family Origins
- Spiritual? From the Bible.
- Self. Self-talk.
- What happens with the message of shame?
- History of Abuse or Trauma and Shame.
- Treatment.
- “Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to.”

--Mark Twain

# Recognizing Feelings of Shame

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- Identify that feelings of shame exist.
- Shame is a master emotion that represses early childhood emotions not allowed such as depression, grief, anger, sadness, hurt, remorse, and loneliness.
- Shame tells you to work your way to acceptability
- Shame tells you to apologize for hurting
- Shame defies emotional closeness to people
- Shame breeds codependent relationships
- Harmful Hiding or Masks.
- Role in family dynamic.

# Recognizing Feelings of Shame

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- **Signs of shame in a person:**

- Shutting down

- Controlling others (not knowing how to control yourself)

- Rigidity

- Depression

- Rage

- Numbness.

# Message Comes From: Family origins of shame

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- Story of Fariquah
- Children should be seen and not heard
- You ate all that what a pig
- Sex is sinful.
- You cost the family too much
- I can't believe you just said that
- Looking at the hidden messages in self-talk

# Message comes From:

## Origins of shame from the bible

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- Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
- Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the Garden.
- But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” Genesis 3:7-10

# Message Comes From: Self Talk

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- Consider Sally, “I can’t go to church. I’m not yet Christian enough to walk through the doors.”
- Or Rob, “I’ll go to the gym after I lose 20 pounds. Then I’ll fit in better.”
- Reflecting on the hidden messages. “You’re not, I’m not, he/she’s not... good enough”

# What happens with the message: Who says?

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- Shame exists in everyday life. It influences our interpersonal relationships and affects how we think and behave. Feelings of shame come through self-reflection. It is when one compares an action they have taken against some standard, either one's own or someone else's. It is a very powerful master emotion that deserves study. Shame, guilt and pride are secondary emotions to primary emotions like joy, sadness, anger, disgust, interest, and fear. Secondary emotions begin in the subconscious. To experience shame depends on whether or not one focuses attention on their emotional state. Prolonged feelings of shame may turn into humiliation, depression, and rage

# What happens with the message: Be a blank Screen

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■ To disclose

■ Or not to disclose

- **A contributing factor to shame is nondisclosure. Because shame is an affect that often provokes a desire to hide oneself, it follows individuals may be less than forthcoming. Especially, if they perceive they will not be looked upon favorably for the disclosure. It is Importance to build rapport and ask the hard questions for the omitted information. Be a blank screen and note defensiveness.**

# What happens with the Message: The Affect Theory

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- The affect theory states that shame is one of nine inherent human affects that taken together form the core system of human motivation. (Trainee Disclosure in Psychotherapy Supervision: The impact of Shame P 603, David B Yourman) According to this theory, the affects turn a person's conscious attention to matters requiring action (e.g. a predator attacking), allowing one to discriminate among the vast quantity of sensory data that may be bombarding an individual. These nine affects are thought to be "hard wired" and universal.

## **Negative**

Distress

Anger

Fear

Shame

Disgust

Dismell

## **Positive**

Interest

Enjoyment

## **Neutral**

Surprise

# What Happens with the Message: Codependence

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- Dealing with toxic shame and codependence in relationships. Intimacy requires us to be vulnerable. To have healthy conflict, engage fair fighting rules, use patience, and be an independent individual.
  - Attachment
  - Control
  - Enmeshment

# What Happens with the Message: What will people think?

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- **Shame often causes a rupture in communications between two people, where the shamed individual still yearns for a return to an affectively positive interaction (Tomkins, 1963). When the desire for reparation and return to grace cease to exist, shame will be replaced by a different affect, such as disgust or anger. In other words, one must care about the other's evaluation to be shamed by it.**

# Toxic Shame: Abuse/Trauma

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- Toxic shame often induces what is known as complex trauma in children who cannot cope with toxic shaming as it occurs and who dissociate the shame until it is possible to cope with.

# Toxic Shame: Abuse/Trauma

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- Examples of individual's facing trauma or rape, abuse, neglect, or failing to protect against these types of incidents can cause tremendous guilt.

# Toxic Shame: Abuse/Trauma

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- What behaviors may indicate shame? More often than not, shame is shown more by parts of the body than through facial expression. When one exhibits a slumping posture, lowering of the eyes, nervous movements of the body, hunching of head, shrugging shoulders together or blushing exhibit a strong desire for concealment. Shameful feelings might arise when one measures Self's actions vs. self standards. Shame says stop. It is about self. Not action. While guilt says "stop you are violating a rule or standard" and is designed to pay attention and revise actions.

# Erikson's Theory:

## Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

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- As a defense to shame, the coping strategy becomes “it is not me that this sexual abuse is happening to (has happened to), it is someone else.” Men more typically cope with prolonged shame with rage, while women may deal with prolonged shame with depression. Healing your memories and changing your self-image.

# Treatment

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- Never shame a person feeling shame: Shame only begins to heal when it is exposed within a safe environment.
- Regularly attend to the patient/professional relationship. Trust and rapport (Erikson's first stage.)
- Listen and observe carefully to the same that has been hidden bypassed or defended.
- Link patients shame to deficiency messages.
- Be patient, shame heals slowly. Help patients move away from self judgment to self-acceptance.

## Treatment:

### How's your Self Esteem? Great!

- Can it be that shame. is merely a fear of exposure? The fear someone or something has power over us? Is it a fear of falling short? Fear is based on ignorance or misunderstanding. When dealing with patients, one fear to bring to consciousness is **“I’m afraid of me.”** How you think of me effects, how I view myself. Rather than I view myself as an intelligent smart human being regardless of your opinion. **I am a victim and undeserving verses despite having been a victim I am confident and persevering.** How we deal with shame. Confronting and changing your inner voice. Self-esteem and beginning to put the pieces back together with affirmations, recognizing strengths, and forgiveness of self.

# Treatment:

## Changing Self Talk and Affirmations

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- Daily work with Affirmations that replace the messages one says to self, heard directly from others, or heard in conversation between 2 or more individuals.
- 1<sup>st</sup> person I am perfectly acceptable right now just the way I am.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> person You are perfectly acceptable right now just the way I am. .
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person He/She is perfectly acceptable right now just the way you, I, he/she is...
- I am a unique and special person
- You are a unique and special person
- She/He is a unique and special person
- Writing out the message or playing it back on tape.
- Using stop techniques to stop these messages.
- Using the 3 c's. Catch it, check it, change it.
- Combining Emotions and logic to use the wise mind. (DBT)
- How is it helpful to buy into this message?
- Creating awareness of the feeling/message

# Treatment: Self Esteem

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- Identify personal strengths
- Identify Values
- Identify goals
- Identify successes
- Recognize ability to make decisions
- Identify safe people and support systems

# Treatment: Process Groups/Journaling on Codependence

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- How do you experience and show shame in codependency, or your life?  
What messages were you given in childhood that made you feel shamed, worthless?  
Shame blocks true access to other feelings?  
What feelings do you hide?
- Shame tells a person it is not OK to express his true feelings as they are not worthy. If you expect to be treated with respect and not abused then you need to admit you are worthy of it. Others will treat you the way you present yourself to them in close relationships.
- This does not mean you are responsible for their actions, it means you are responsible to tell people how you feel about their actions and set boundaries that you will not let be violated. Even in public if you are short changed at a store, it is your responsibility to ask for the money back.
- Guilt is when you feel bad about your behavior and then instead of staying in the guilt, you can make amends if possible and change the behavior.
- How do you experience guilt in codependency, or your life?  
List two things you have done over the last month that make you feel guilty?  
What or how have you changed your behavior since then?

# Treatment:

## Getting to the heart of the matter

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- What's the emotion beneath the shame

Our feelings are felt and presented as a state of being; for example with the statement "I am sad" there is an awareness of the feeling. At times one may be unaware of a feeling. It is possible to have an emotional state yet be unaware of that state. Consider reflexively reacting to a near collision in an automobile, it may take minutes once cleared of the accident to realize that the experience manifested feelings of fear. Getting past the denial or to the realization of the shame or guilt will require rapport and listening.

# Treatment: Reframing

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- Erickson identified one of the early stages of development as autonomy vs. shame and doubt. Self-talk which is shameful hampers an individual's autonomy and independence. These negative inner dialogues must be reframed. Shame may haunt an individual after a traumatic event. It impairs the healing and recovery process causing victims of trauma to stay frozen. Shame impairs self-esteem. "Shame is about who or what I am, about my being that something is wrong with me." Multiple personality disorders (MPD) are directly related to early intense shame experiences.

# Treatment: Support Systems

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- Reevaluating and ferreting out support systems. Who is the Critical person or voice. Setting boundaries with external influences.

# Treatment:

## Forgiveness of Self and others

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- Forgiveness is the willful giving up of resentment in the face of another's (or your) considerable injustice and responding with beneficence (being kind or doing good; charitable act or generous gift) to the offender even though that offender has no right to the forgiver's moral goodness. It is an act freely chosen by the forgiver.
- 5 common mistakes in the forgiving process
  1. Forgiving somebody is excusing them.
  2. Forgiving is the same as tolerance
  3. People expect instant results.
  4. You have to run to the person and tell them.
  5. You've got to go back to the same relationship

## Treatment:

# Forgiveness of Self and others

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- Self Forgiving is accepting yourself as a human who has faults and makes mistakes. Letting go of self anger for your past failures, errors, and mistakes.
- Write a healing letter of self forgiveness. I forgive myself for \_\_\_\_, I have set myself free. Destroy the letter.
- Use the Self Forgiveness Mirror script.

# Treatment

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- Mirror work
- Concrete objects for grounding. Example: a heart shaped box that the patient can feed.
- Drawing
- Metaphors
- What's important to the patient? Culture?  
Inner child work?

# Shame Campaign

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- A shame campaign is a tactic in which particular individuals are singled out because their behavior or suspected crimes, often by marking them publicly, such as Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Who can you think of recently that has underwent the shame campaign?

# References

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- Healing the Shame That Binds You. John Bradshaw. Health Communication, Inc. Deerfield Beach, FL. 1988.
- Shame The Exposed Self. Michael Lewis. The Free Press. 1992.
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# Contributing Editor:

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