

Notes for Teleconference on Shame pgl 31

SHAME: a powerful emotion caused by a strong sense of GUILT, creating feelings of embarrassment and unworthiness, leading to stronger judgments around dishonor, condemnation, and disgrace.

‘A shame’ = a great disappointment (= to fail to satisfy the hope, desire or expectation of; to frustrate or thwart.

Shame of the Higher Self: any time we try to hide our real self, or any quality of who we truly are, we become vulnerable to shame.

‘Right shame’ leads to repentance, true self respect, humility

(ref: Spiritual and Emotional Health through Restitution for Real Guilt pgl 109)

“He is so frightened by the possible implications and so eager to be better than he can possibly be at the moment, that he would rather produce much worse guilts that are untrue than accept the tiniest real guilt belonging to the area of the lower self that he is unwilling to accept.”

‘Wrong shame’ leads to guilt complex, sluggishness, lack of self-respect.

Comes from pride and furthers pride; “I should be better than I am”.

Promotes fear; “No one else must know the truth fully”.

Manipulated by self-will, used as a verb;

To cause to feel shame, put to shame

To bring dishonor or disgrace upon

To disgrace by surpassing

To force by making ashamed

(ref: Pride, Self-Will and Fear pgl 30)

This cannot be worked with in the abstract; it occurs in the tiniest details of our lives.

Example; Hot ice cream

Another principle mentioned in this lecture;

The importance of openness with others, specifically as suggested previously (in pgl 27 – Finding Your Faults) around inviting discussion around your faults.

Defusing Shame

1. Ground yourself in who you are today.
 - Sense into your capacity as an adult to deal with a variety of situations well.
 - Sense into your positive intention for self-development.
 - Sense into your higher self, the part of you that can access spirit.
2. Remember your child self as if you stood beside yourself and held your own hand.
 - Allow your intuition to choose the memory.
 - Notice how old you are, how you are dressed, what you look like.
3. Invite your child self to remember a moment that felt shameful.
 - Allow that for the sake of this exercise, it's useful for the example to be a mild one rather than something major. The idea is to learn to work with shame differently than you may have in the past.
 - Every child makes mistakes, misbehaves, tries to get away with something.
 - Every child has upset, disappointed, or angered their parent or guardian.
 - Holding the hand of your adult self, find one of those moments.
4. Allow your child self to fully feel the feelings, knowing that these are only memories.
 - Just notice the feelings.
 - Notice that you are not alone this time.
 - Sense into the who, what, where, when of the feelings of shame.
5. It is possible that some of you have remembered a moment of real shame. For others, it may be a moment where you simply feared it was real. Whether the shame was real or false, now allow your adult to sense what was real in that moment, in that situation, at that time.
7. Notice what your images might have been, expectations that a child might not have been able to meet. What kind of child 'should' you have been? How 'should' you have acted? How 'should' you have been seen or received?
8. If the shame was caused by real guilt, what did you learn? Allow that you may have needed a strong emotional experience of being wrong. See if you can accept yourself as you were -- imperfect, undeveloped, sometimes unaware. Notice what feelings remain.
9. If the shame was false, notice how the strong feelings might have exaggerated the situation and masked other feelings. What can you notice this time that had been hidden? See if you can accept yourself as you were – imperfect, undeveloped, sometimes unaware. Notice what feelings remain.
10. Come back into the present moment. Sense into any feelings which might still be active. Notice any feelings about the memory which may have changed or shifted.

Shame of the Higher Self -- Exercise

1. Sit for a while and meditate / consider your feelings from childhood about being rejected / abandoned / not seen or heard.
2. For each parent, make a list with two columns. In one column, list your loving feelings for this parent. In the other column, list any anger, resentment, or disappointment.
3. Note which parent you felt more rejected by.
4. Which parent did you see as stronger / superior / desirable? Why?
5. Which parent did you see as weaker / inferior / undesirable? Why?
6. What qualities of the stronger parent do you see in yourself? What are your judgments about these qualities?
7. What qualities of the weaker parent do you see in yourself? What are your judgments about these qualities?
8. Allow that feelings which were suppressed may surface. It is useful to go through this exercise several times over a period of weeks, noticing and changes in feelings and interpretations.