



Intensive

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Shame as a Doorway II:
The Cost of Shame

SHAME AS A DOORWAY II: The Cost of Shame

Ultimately shame is an archetypical condition for all humanity. This is expressed in the Christian tradition as the original sin; the first sin. It is in fact the only sin, self-forgetfulness. The one true ignorance. It is a sin against our self, our original purity and innocence. Yet it is not our fault. It is the price we all pay for being self-awareness.

Awakening allows us to wake up from this ignorance and recover our original nature, at least briefly. This allows us to perceive the costs of living in this condition of shame. This is the doorway to healing ourselves by meeting the role shame has played in our lives.

Shame is a powerful structure that shapes the very foundation of our ego identity. The ego itself is the activity of avoiding feeling shame or the compensating activity it creates. Shame distorts all aspects of our existence. People would rather die than experience shame. Many kill themselves, slowly or quickly for this reason. It sucks all joy and happiness out of life. Yet shame or blame, its companion, are not our fault. We were born free of shame or the need to blame. We were taught to experience these things by our parents, by others around us, by our tradition, our religion or our culture.

We have all lost access to our being and the natural self-respect that comes with that. And then we blame ourselves for this, feeding our shame with guilt and self-blame. Yet shame is a doorway, a transition zone between ego and being, between that which can be shamed and that which cannot. In the being there is no such thing as shame, or the need for blame or guilt. These things have no reality for one in the being. The being needs no justification or explanation. It is whole and complete within itself.

The being is the source all that is positive in our lives. It lifts the consciousness out of its shamed-based reality and gives hope, joy, aliveness, a natural sense of self-respect. It allows us to stand in our own truth. It is not dependent on what others think or say or even if they like us or not. In the being we are free and independent. All things the ego itself longs for - its lost self, the being.

Just knowing this can let you see a way to convert shame into self-respect, blame into forgiveness and compassion. The secret of going beyond shame is that instead of running from it we learn, bit by bit, to welcome it.

When we quit running from or avoiding shame it dissolves the ego structures that keep it in place. We become humble rather than diminished. And the experience of humility is the experience of being itself – a doorway to awe and wonder.

Shame then becomes a means that takes us beyond a life of misery and suffering into a life of wonder, awe and discovery. Learning to be with the experience of shame coverts ego into being, into a life worth living.

WORKSHEET

Self-inquiry is one way of penetrating into the underling structures that arise from shame that still shape our reality. Here is a series of questions to contemplate on.

1. What role does shame play or has played in your life?
2. Pick a specific situation recent or past. What is happening or has happened?
3. How does this impact you or how did this impact you?
 - a. What is the mental position or point of view you have about this?
 - b. What are your feelings telling you about this right now?
 - c. What is your body telling you right now about this?

4. What negativity are you assigning to yourself, others or to outside causes?

What position have you taken about this (such as anger, grief, overwhelm, anguish, etc.)?

5. How are you using shame to avoid or control your life? (Review attached addendum).
6. Are you able to be with this issue as it is? If not:
 - What is your investment or what position do you have or are you taking?
 - What do you feel is lacking or needed?
 - What are willing to do or to have happen to change?
 - What can you let go of or surrender at this moment?
7. Is there still an issue?

ADDENDUM: The Desire to Feel Shame

The following material was shared with us from someone with much experience with shame. The focus here is on our addiction to shame and how our ego is interested and uses shame to hold it in place. See which of these is true for you:

- With shame I can continue to be a victim
- With shame I am can remain helpless
- With shame I can blame and criticize others, keeping them small
- With shame I need to know the truth or risk love
- With shame I can live in the FOG; fear, obligation and guilt.
- I come from a long line of family shame so I don't have to change
- I embrace shame because I was taught to
- I embrace shame because I am not worthy to exist
- I embrace shame because it lets me know I exist
- I embrace shame because then I don't have to grow up
- I embrace shame so I don't have to experience rejection
- I feel shame to avoid being seen
- I feel shame to justify staying small and being right about it
- I feel shame so I can hide and not take responsibility for my life
- I use my shame to control and manipulate others, to get what I want
- Shaming is the easiest way to smear someone's name
- Shame allows me not to change
- Shame keeps me safe
- I am a sinner so I am supposed to feel shame
- It keeps me small
- It keeps me safe
- It keeps me hidden
- It's a powerful cloak that protects me
- It's all I have known
- It validates my feelings of failure
- It provides an excuse for not trying
- When I hide in shame, I don't have to look at the truth or live in the truth
- I embrace shame so an "other" can provide and protect me
- I embrace shame because I won't have to take responsibility for my actions
- Shame creates my "story" and explains my existence so I can feel okay
- I deserve to feel shame because I'm a sinner