

SHAME

Shame – an interesting concept, an artificial emotion. Ordinarily we need a full set of emotions to be fully Human, but shame is created, it is not natural, we are not born with it, often confused with guilt

GUILT: I did something bad – addresses a behavior, blameworthiness, feeling of responsibility for Offense conscience

SHAME: I am bad – attacks my personhood, my core, I feel exposed, naked, vulnerable, painful sense Of having done something wrong, disgrace, dishonor

(Grace = virtue bestowed by God, help given man by God)

Dis-grace = out of favor of God

(Honor = respect, integrity)

Dis-honor = without respect or integrity

Very strong concepts. Not born with shame, it is given to us starting in childhood.

Attack on personhood – not addressing behavior

Destroys self-esteem

Instill the idea of “badness” in a child and it is a set up for conduct problems, later SA, criminal behaviors, And suicide

CHILDREN: Given to children, comes from the outside, parents, teachers, neighbors, relatives, coaches, clergy

ADULTS: Carried shame – because of our parents or their behaviors, ethnic, financial, job, unemployed, Single mother, physical appearance, addiction, MH issue, physical illness

MISTAKES: we make mistakes, we are not mistakes

Mis-take as in movies

Address behavior, not person

SHAME: out of control, paralyzed, flawed/failure/loser, message is we must be perfect

-prevents trust or intimacy, keeps secrets, never reveal inner self or feelings, “if you only knew the real me...”

-focus on “other” esteem rather than self-esteem

GUILT: healthy emotion, we need a mechanism to alert us when we make a mistake or violate our own moral values, something that says “I did something wrong” = emotion of guilt

COMBATING SHAME: be honest, tell the truth, the power of shame lies in secrecy, accept yourself, forgive yourself and others for being fallible human beings, it is OK not to be perfect, use positive affirmations, “I am OK just how I am”, “I am – powerful, loveable, worthwhile, capable, attractive, etc.

Your first relationship is with yourself, learn to accept, love, trust and accept yourself, your humanness, mistakes and weaknesses as well as strengths. Be gentle to yourself, be your own best friend. Be respectful fo yourself, don’t beat yourself up!!

Identify personal weaknesses, talk to other people, (support groups), take responsibility for your actions and words, stick with the “winners” avoid people who try to humiliate, shame or guilt trip you, embrace your shadows, replace self-criticism with affirmation and compassion, have patience with yourself

Nurture your inner child

Work to resolve your old baggage from your childhood – often the roots of your shame

Process unresolved issues

Seek counseling if you need help with these issues

Claim your uniqueness as well as your commonness