

Shame Resilience

Based on the work of Brené Brown, Ph.D., LMSW

Connection is the reason we're here, it's what humans thrive on. Shame is what happens when connection goes wrong, when we are made to believe that we are not good enough, that we're not worthy of love and belonging. *This is fundamentally untrue, you are absolutely worthy just as you are, without question.*

Guilt vs. Shame

Guilt tells us we have done something wrong. Shame tells us that we are wrong.

Guilt can be good, it gives us information about our values and how we want to show up in the world.

Shame is toxic, it eats away at us from the inside out and isolates us.

For example: We lose our temper with a child.

- Guilt tells us that we did something wrong. We feel guilty, so we apologize and try to make up for it. Once we feel the wrong has been mended, we can move on and leave it in the past, maybe learning from it to act differently next time.
- Shame tells us that we're a bad parent or caregiver. We feel awful, like they deserve better than us. We may give up and stop trying so hard, because what's the point in trying if we can't live up to our expectations of ourselves?

Expectations vs. Reality

We live in a society that's driven on expectations. Companies make money off of us thinking that we're not enough. We are told that we will feel better if we're skinnier, prettier, and capable of doing a million things at once without breaking a sweat, the ideal of "I don't know what she does it." We're told that if we just buy this or that and work really hard, we'll achieve that ideal. *This just isn't reality.*

Humans are imperfect. We sweat, we mess up, we gain and lose weight unpredictably, beauty ideals change every couple decades. We feel deeply and try really hard, we fail at things that matter to us and we learn from it. We live.

What we see on the media isn't real life. *You have to accept reality before you can change it.* If you're not happy, the answer is more likely inside of you than it is on your newsfeed.

The Opposite of Shame is Vulnerability

When we lay out our shame to someone we trust and they still love us just as much, it heals our shame. We find out that whatever we did doesn't define us and that we *always* have the chance to do better next time.

Vulnerability isn't for everyone. (Telling anyone who will listen about everything we've done isn't vulnerability, it's actually a form of avoiding vulnerability.) Being vulnerable about our darkest shame needs to be reserved for one or two people that we really trust, the people who have stayed with us in hard times and don't use our vulnerability against us. If you don't have someone yet, counselling is a great place to practice vulnerability.

If you share something vulnerable with someone and they make you feel bad, it's going to hurt, but it's also information that they aren't worthy of your trust.

You deserve connection. You deserve to have someone you trust, who sees you as you are and loves you.