

GUILT AND SHAME

The Problem

At some time during our lives we came to realize that the hurts, habits and hang-ups of the past were affecting our present. The guilt and shame from the past leaves us feeling inadequate and some how unworthy of being loved. As a result of the lies, we have learned to lie in order to cover up who we believe we really are, and we act in ways that either prove or disprove our shame.

Shame = Incompetent, not good enough, damaged goods, dirty, stupid, ugly, worthless, bad, disgusting, weak, unworthy, undeserving, inadequate, etc.

Disprove it

Driven to success
Need for control
Good two shoes
Perfectionism
Responsible

Prove It

Substance Abuse
Addictions
Compulsions
Promiscuity
Breaking the law

The Solution

We are ready to work the 12 Steps of recovery and are committed to learn where our guilt and shame comes from. We are ready to accept responsibility for our own actions and cease taking responsibility for the actions of others. When we make Jesus Christ the Lord of our life and abide by His steps, we heal from our hurts, habits and hang-ups and start living the abundant life God has planned for us.

We are willing to move toward truth, even if it is upsetting, and to look back in order to gain a new perspective from which we can move forward to a better life. We are willing to reexamine our beliefs about ourselves, our way of life, and our relationships to make changes that can give us emotional freedom.*

We acknowledge that our group provides a safe place to share our feelings of shame, and guilt, our hurt, anger, anxiety and frustration, as well as our happiness and victory. We are willing to face these feelings and work through them in our group. We respect each and every woman in the group and we are willing to do our part to ensure that it is a safe place to share and grow.

We are willing to seek a closer relationship with God. We will continue to seek a daily quiet time with God and trust that He can and will renew our minds. By doing all this, we will learn more and more about our heavenly Father's character, His grace, His promises, and His love.

*Paragraph taken from *The Emotional Freedom Workbook* by S. Arterburn & C. Neal

Healthy Shame

1-You see wrong behavior from separate from “who you are.” You may do something bad, but you don’t take that as evidence that you are essentially a bad person.

2-You see normal lapses, errors and failures as part of being human. They may act as catalysts, prompting you to make changes toward a more positive direction in life, but they do not overwhelm you.

3-You separate bad experiences from “who you are.” Something bad may happen to you or you may be treated abusively, but you don’t assume you deserve such treatment.

4-You see avoidance of shame-producing behavior as a way to protect yourself from pain and destruction.

5-You see “breaking the rules”-violation of your boundaries-as a problem that needs to be corrected to reduce the discomfort of the shame you experience.

6-You see your life as valuable, and shame as something built into your being to protect the sanctity of your life.

7-You trust that shame is a temporary feeling of discomfort, which will dissipate when you move away from “breaking the rules.”

8-You try to live within the boundaries of socially acceptable behavior and take steps to fit into society. You act in ways that protect your privacy, and you practice discretion in your relationships.

*From *Paragraph taken from *The Emotional Freedom Workbook* by S. Arterburn & C. Neal

Unhealthy Shame

1-You see wrong behavior or failings as a reflection of “who you are:-your true identity. When you do something bad or make a mistake, you see that as evidence that you are flawed.

2-You see normal lapses, errors and failings as the revelation of your true nature, which is flawed, rather than being as part of being human. You may feel overwhelmed when you experience such a lapse because you think it reveals that something is terribly wrong with you.

3-You accept part of the blame when others violate you. You see yourself as someone who deserves to be abused or treated poorly.

4-You see avoidance of shame-producing behavior or lifestyle as futile since you believe the behavior or lifestyle is the natural result of being the “kind of person” you consider yourself to be.

5-Whenever you experience a normal human failing, make an honest mistake, suffer a disappointment, violate your moral standards, or have your boundaries violated by others, it may trigger a downward spiral of depression or addictive behavior.

6-You regard trying to change your life for the better as living a lie or being hypocritical. You believe that your steps in a positive direction are phony, and you negate them instead of viewing them as evidence that you can change.

7-You may appear to others to be utterly shameless in some or all areas of your life. When you shut down the influence of healthy shame, you lose your strength of boundaries. You may eventually be worn down to the point that you give in to your overwhelming shame and act out in ways that show no sense of healthy shame and no awareness of legitimate moral guilt.