

# SHADOW + LIGHT



## WEEK 3



## JOURNEY TO SELF-MASTERY

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# deconstructing shame: reconstructing the self

Welcome back! This week we begin to turn the traits we find unfavorable, our "shadow parts," into strengths as a way toward self-integration.

Like so many of us, you might feel like you're a complex (and often confusing) mix of emotional states and qualities — and you strongly identify with a handful of these qualities. These qualities become your behaviors, and this molds your self-perception.

People often label themselves, others, groups, whole cultures, and institutions based on only a handful of traits. Certain groups of people are virtuous and "good," while this other group is atrocious and "bad." We also, of course, internalize these generalizations.

But we don't stop there — if we experience an undesirable inner state (sadness when we "should" be feeling happy, let's say) or exhibit an undesirable behavior (anxiety, let's say) we consider ourselves deeply flawed, broken, or bad.

And this is where we stuff all kinds of baggage in our Shadow.

As you begin to pull apart the different layers of yourself, you'll want to consider what is helpful and unhelpful, instead of "good" or "bad."

This is the part in your Shadow Work journey where you will begin to make peace with the pieces of yourself: yes, even the pieces you've formally dismissed, denied, judged, and shamed.

For example, most folks consider selfishness to be an inherently negative trait. However, it can be helpful to be "selfish" when you are feeling burned out and exhausted, and just cannot take on another task. We would ask ourselves to "call upon" selfishness in order to create space for self-care. (Full exercise details on next page.)

## imposter syndrome

Ashley works with so many clients whom are strong, smart women — and yet they often feel like frauds. They believe that if anyone saw their true selves, their hypocrisies would be revealed and they'd be labeled inauthentic (a horrible insult in today's milieu of 'just be authentic' messaging).

But who is that authentic self?

We receive SO many contradicting messages from society, peers, family members, ad campaigns (hence why we examined those messages last week). No wonder we feel like walking contradictions! It's because we ARE walking contradictions!

And you know what?  
That's ok.

As you create your "Call Upon Me When" Deck this week, please remember (and recite) the wise words of Walt Whitman:

*"Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes."*  
~ Walt Whitman

This concept predicates the whole lesson of this week:

that YOU contain all possibilities. You are a field of potential.

You are the universe in microcosm. Every potential for human expression exists within you. Within you are the seeds of great compassion and wisdom and joy, as well as seeds of hate, cruelty, and destruction.

When you begin to acknowledge this wondrous and wild notion, you can begin to TRULY open your mind, heart, and arms to embrace all that you are.

# Call Upon Me When: a deck for integration

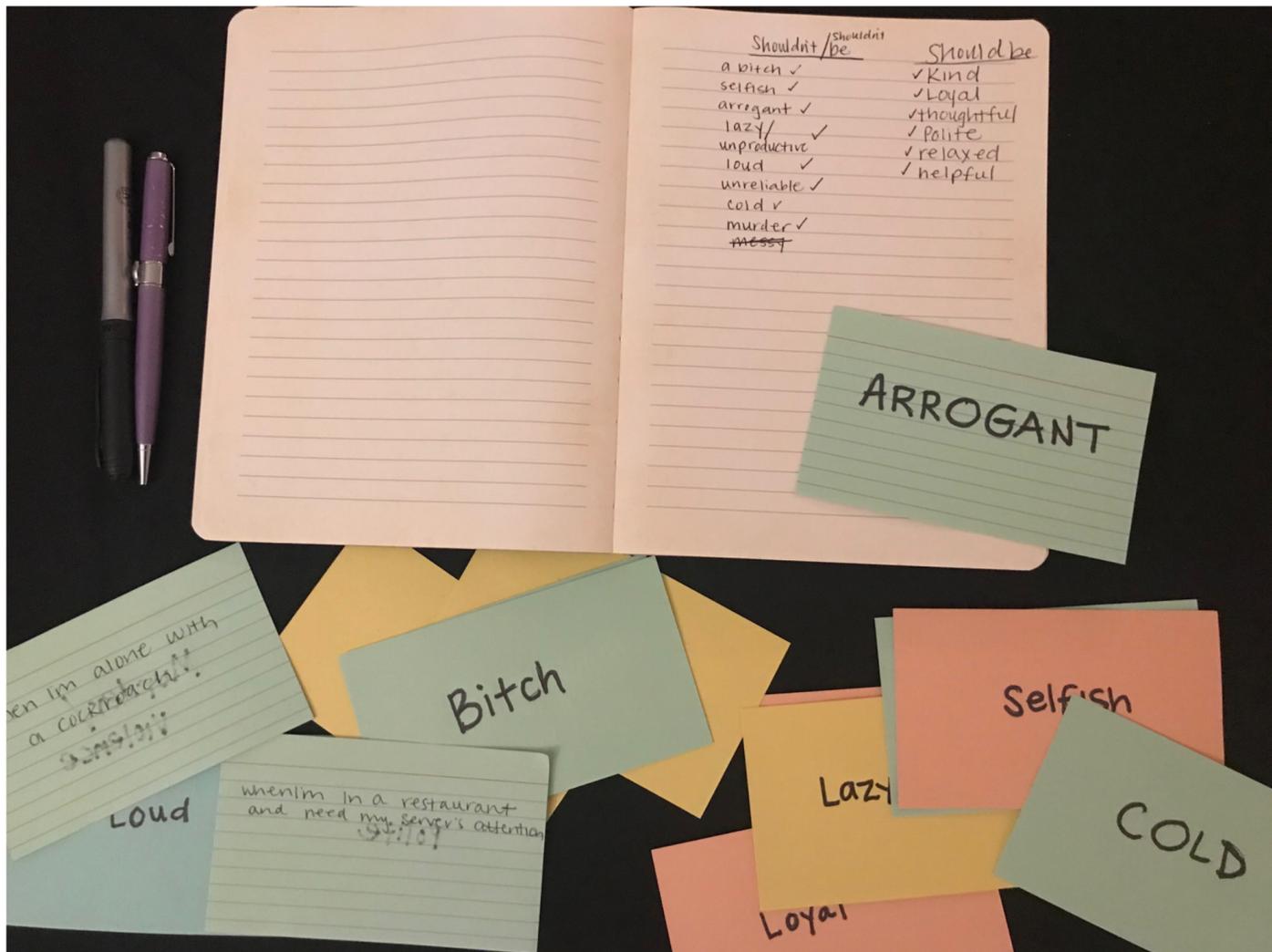
To assemble your Deck, follow the instructions below:

*Step 1: Write out your "should" and "shouldn't" traits- both positive & negative on a piece of paper. Ask yourself, when is this trait helpful? When is this trait unhelpful?*

*Step 2: Write your traits (both "positive" and "negative") on index cards (one trait per card).*

*Step 3: Look at the traits on the cards and ask yourself... "call upon me when..."*

*Step 4: On the other side of the trait card- write a scenario in which it could be helpful to call upon the trait.*



By challenging ourselves to find value in the parts of us we've rejected or shamed, we start to bring them into the light of acceptance- both at conscious and subconscious levels. Remember, all parts of ourselves can be valuable- when in balance (or context). Your deck can grow and change throughout your life, as you continue to build it.

## Bonus Activity

For those who are fans of divination cards ("goddess cards," "Tarot cards," etc.)- try using your own deck to help guide you in times of confusion. If you are struggling with how to proceed in a given situation, shuffle your own deck, close your eyes and pick one. It might bring you clarity with how to proceed.