

SHADOW + LIGHT



WEEK 6



JOURNEY TO SELF-MASTERY

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Deconstructing Shame

Set Down Your Armor, My Friend.



According to Brené Brown (my shero!) **shame is "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging – something we've experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection."**

This week we're diving even deeper into your Shadow and the root causes of your suffering.

You're likely carrying energetic armor to protect the delicate, tender, vulnerable spaces within you that are held by shame. This armor might manifest as defense mechanisms, judgments, aggression, or physical symptoms (no wonder we're so tired and drained!). As we dismantle shame, we set our armor down.

Through this journey so far, you've opened your closets and pulled out some skeletons — and there, hiding in the deeper shadows, you can often find shame. These are where our "not enoughs" live: **not smart enough, not attractive enough, not young enough, not successful enough...**

Shame & fear are homies. I believe shame often drives our unconscious fears, which drive our behaviors, endless thought patterns, and feelings. For example, I have a **deep-rooted fear of not being successful enough**. Now, I know from creating my own "Call Upon Me When" Deck that I can re-frame this energy (because as we covered in Week 4, all emotions are energy) to a certain degree: I can value my motivation to create, to improve myself, to set goals. However, accepting all my fears will not get to the root of why they exist in the first place. **By uprooting your fears, you can transmute them.**

So we must go deeper. Ask your heart: Why are you so restless?

In my case, why do I feel like my accomplishments aren't good enough to sustain a lasting sense of contentment and well-being? The answer here is two-fold:

1) The Yoga Sutras and The Bhagavad Gita (two seminal books in the yoga tradition) teach that attachment to results only leads to suffering. All of life is ephemeral, ever-changing, and impermanent. If you measure your life by "success" (however you define that: money in the bank, followers on Instagram, copies of books sold, etc.) then you will inevitably allow your sense of self worth to be determined by the shifting winds of circumstance. **The good news:** yoga and many other wisdom traditions teach us that you can attain a lasting sense of inner peace throughout the changing conditions of your life (more on this in Week 8).

2) My fear of not being successful is rooted in my deeper fear of being mediocre. In her book *Daring Greatly*, Brené Brown says this is a "fear of never feeling extraordinary enough to be noticed, to be lovable, to belong, or to cultivate a sense of purpose." 1

Deconstructing Shame Cont'd

Brene Brown clearly illuminates the difference between guilt & shame:

Guilt = I did something bad.

Shame = I am bad.

Ok, so you get that shame is bad. *Now what do you do about it?*

According to Brown's research, you cultivate what she calls Shame Resilience:

"Shame derives its power from being unspeakable.

That's why it loves perfectionists — it's so easy to keep us quiet.

If we cultivate enough awareness about shame to name it and speak to it,
we've basically cut it off at the knees.

Shame hates having words wrapped around it.

If we begin to speak shame, it begins to wither.

Just the way exposure to light was deadly for the gremlins,
story and language bring light to shame and destroy it."

...which is exactly what we're focusing on this week.

Last week you wrote love letters to a Shadow Aspect you're working to transmute: by creating language and story around shame, you dissolve it as Brown says.

Whereas the past weeks you've worked with words, this week you'll be working with visual media, which is particularly helpful in bridging lines of communication between your conscious and unconscious mind.



Your inner sense of who you are — your ego — is essentially a collaged rendering of your past emotions, thoughts, and conditioned experiences.

The ego is a complex construct of your mind.

When you externalize these elements that make up your story — your light as well as your dark amidst the whole beautiful mess — you can create space between your identification with your story and the deeper Self that abides beneath (the difference between the mental chatter and the witness mind).

We'll dive deeper into this concept in our last session in Week 8, which ultimately taps into the heart of the Samkhya Yoga Philosophy.

(How's that for a promo?)

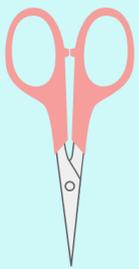
Deconstructing Shame: Flash Collage

Have you ever made a paper collage before? You may have cut up old magazines and made collage images in your youth, maybe in art class, or during summer camp. But did you know that **collage is a therapeutic technique used in counseling as a tool for self-insight?**

This week we will be using a technique Ashley calls "flash collage."

The purpose of this collage is to help us visualize the parts of us that we deem shameful, as an external representation of our inner world.

Step 1: gather scissors, a camera/phone, magazines, a folder and a timer.



Step 2: find a quiet space to be with yourself, free from distraction.

Step 3: set a timer for 30 minutes, and center yourself. Begin flipping through your magazine(s) and tearing out any images that call out to you. Do not over-think them, just cut them out if they call to you. You will pair down your selections later.

Step 4: when your alarm goes off, stop pulling images from the magazine(s). Instead, look through the pieces that are within your pile, and make any final cuts to them.

Step 5: place the magazine images in collage format, so that they're draped on one another, and make one big image- your shame self.

Step 6: Take a photo of your shame collage. Save it, you'll need it in the future.

Step 7: Gather your collage images and put them into a folder for safe keeping. You'll need them for a future assignment in week 7!

Bonus Activity:

Journal about this experience:

What did it feel like to select the images?

Did anything surprise you?

How did you feel in your body when you looked at your final collage?

Vulnerability points: Post the image of your flash collage to the Facebook group!