

***"Shame is the warm feeling that washes over us,
making us feel small, flawed, and never good enough."
-Brene Brown***

Letting go of shame is one of those things that takes a little doing. What I've recognized in my life, right up into my 50s, is that my life wasn't just touched by shame, it was based on shame.

My childhood was filled with it.
My young adult years were filled with it.
My middle years were filled with it.

I stayed busy focusing on my weight and the way I looked to keep from having to deal with the shame.

The Carousel of Crazy's purpose in my life was to keep my focus off the shame and onto the size of my butt.

I felt inadequate, stupid, and not enough.

The only power I felt in my life was from the shame.

When anything good happened, I felt I just got lucky. I never considered that I may have earned it, that I actually had the talent and ability to accomplish it, or that it was (looking back) part of setting me up to live out my purpose and to help others.

I was nearly paralyzed by shame - and the reasons why aren't nearly as important as the reason why I made a decision to let it go.

And when I say "made a decision to let go of shame," that doesn't mean it was as simple as ripping off a bandaid.

There was (and is) a process, and I'm going to run through it, but first...

Shame is a sense of self that we picked up along the way

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- Trauma
- Childhood shame is passed along just like DNA
- Religion
- Bullying

Conversely, researchers have linked a lot of different types of depression with shame. In fact, 108 studies involving over 22,000 people confirm this!

Guilt and shame, though LINKED, are different.

Guilt is "because of" an action, while shame is "how" we view ourselves.

For example, think about being late.

Guilt says, "I feel bad for inconveniencing my co-workers."

Shame says, "I'm such a loser! Why can't I get my act together?"

As Brene Brown said, *"The difference between shame and guilt is the difference between 'I am bad' and 'I did something bad.'"*

Guilt is painful, but shame can be debilitating. Guilt can trigger shame, and shame can trigger guilt.

We have ways to deal with guilt more than shame...confession, anyone?

Shame has staying power - we can't apologize for something we've done (that's how we handle guilt) because shame is self-based.

So let's go back to shame. How do we let go of it?

There are three things: Release, Replace, and Repeat.

1. To Release, we need to be aware of how some of our negative self-talk is shame-based.

2. The Replace part is the SECRET: The shame is a lie, so replace it with self-worth!

I'm enough.

I'm here on purpose and for purpose.

I am FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY made. (This doesn't scream shame, it screams WORTH!)

3. Keep on Repeating! It's a short hop from "that was stupid" to "I am stupid," and vice versa. Words carry weight.

Let's stop reinforcing shame and practice the 3 R's!