

Body shame is a darkness that most women have experienced at some point in their lives. We are shamed for our weight, our boobs, our lack of boobs, our sexuality, our hair color, and even our skin color. We are told things like "You have a pretty face, it's too bad about the body!", or "Great body, but you'd look even better with a bag over your head."

We've all been there...

A lot of us have been violated, touched, stared at, and had inappropriate things said to us, at any age.

We have survived the crucible of body shame, but not without the remnants taking up residence in our own heads. We've created beliefs that protect us and keep us safe. Our feelings lead to behaviors that try to "cover up" in every way possible. In *Body Clutter*, I wrote about having a fleshy shield at my heaviest weight.

We've felt depressed, out of control, and hopeless in a dressing room, trying to find something that looks good, only to be repulsed by the reflection in the mirror. The more we focus on shame, the more shame gets delivered and the worse we feel about ourselves. (Thanks, reticular activating system!)

Body shame goes beyond feeling bad, it is something that we dwell upon. We need to differentiate between guilt and shame. Guilt is over something we've done (like eating ice cream), whereas shame is who we think we are inside. They are vastly different from each other.

Guilt is easily correctible by simply doing the right thing. You can usually fix it by apologizing, mending the situation, starting over, or doing things differently in the future. Shame, however, goes inwards. It berates us and makes us feel hopeless.

Today, I want you to remember that you are here for a divine purpose. I want you to separate the experience from the shame, and let the shame drift away.

Here are 5 steps to help you do that:

1. Remember, the skin you are in houses all of who you are. If you asked your Beautiful Self to enlighten you, she would tell you how remarkable you are - you have legs that have bounced babies to sleep, arms that have held scared, elderly parents and made them feel safe, lips that have sung lullabies and spoken kind words, and eyes that have beheld such wonder and beauty. You come in a wrapper - a skin suit- that can always become healthier and stronger with good choices, because loving yourself is enough!

2. Create Body Positive Affirmations and remember who you are-

- I AM the daughter of The King.
- I AM loved exactly the way I am right now.
- I AM beautiful- heart, mind, body, and soul.

3. Shift the 🤡. We all start out doing the right things- we do our affirmations and start to make progress, and then BOOM- back to square one. Allow for this and just start over, patiently and lovingly. Cheer yourself on like you're watching your toddler learn to walk - in wonderment. You're not gross- you may not feel uber-confident right away, but be okay with that and love yourself anyway!

4. Compliment others! Weirdly, this support boomerangs back and elevates the conversation. Your brain becomes attuned to the things that are right, giving you an opportunity to get into the community and out of your head.

5. Judgement of any kind keeps you in a prison of shame. It's deflection, one-upsmanship and an unwillingness to work on your own stuff. Resist the urge to do this. When you judge another, you don't define them, you define yourself!

We all have stories of how we arrived at this awful place of body shame. The experience file is most useful, and so is invoking your beautiful self to be just that - beautiful, loving, accepting (beyond forgiving), and wise.

This is only a start, but start! Journal, pray, meditate, support, believe, and ask for help when you need it. Remember, light diminishes darkness, and only you have the power to flick on the switch.