

# A Shadow Work Guide

*A gentle return to your whole, full, unbounded, real self*

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*[Shadow work prompts at the end]*

## 1. What is Shadow Work & the Shadow Self?

Shadow work is the practice of meeting the parts of yourself you were once taught to hide, suppress, shame. All the parts of you that didn't fit into the mould you were raised in, parts that you learned to minimise or bury to survive in a world that rewards conformity over truth.

Carl Jung called these hidden aspects the 'shadow self.' But the shadow is not an enemy. It was how you learned to survive. Shadow work is about welcoming yourself back in, in fullness and authenticity. Integrating the parts you learned to suppress, in healthy ways.

## 2. How the Shadow Self Forms

The shadow self is shaped not just by insular experience, but by the systems we live within. Pay attention to what was rewarded, versus what was shamed, judged or denied.

- **Family systems** may have rewarded politeness and punished anger, Loved achievement but ignored emotion, or celebrated independence at the cost of tenderness.
- **Capitalism** exalts productivity & constant output. It disconnects us from our natural rhythms like our rest, our slowness, our cyclical nature.
- **Colonialism** taught generations to sever from the body, from the land, from ancestral wisdom. Sensuality, emotion & ritual were rebranded as dangerous or 'uncivilised'
- **Religion**, in many expressions, associated the body with sin and the self with shame, leaving many with religious trauma and much buried in the shadows

- **Heteronormativity** projects shame onto anyone who doesn't fit a very narrow definition of sexuality/gender expression
- **Social 'norms'** taught you who you needed to be to belong and who you had to abandon to survive.

**The result?** Parts of you were exiled. Exile became habit. And the shadow formed as a necessary adaptation.

### 3. Shadow Work & Disconnection from the Body

One of the least recognised forms of shadow & suppression is our disconnection from our bodies. From the rawness of being human. When we split off parts of ourselves, we often split from our bodies too. The body holds memory, grief, longing, intuition, desire. To disconnect from the shadow is often to disconnect from embodiment itself.

Many of us were taught to live in our heads. To mistrust instinct. To override our 'irrational' feelings. We became brilliant thinkers & intellectualisers... but strangers to our breath, our hunger, our yes and our no.

Shadow work is, in part, about coming back into the body. Letting it speak. Letting it shake. Letting it rest. Letting it *want*. The goal isn't to become a perfect embodiment practitioner. It's simply to remember that your body is waiting for you to listen.

### 4. Safety First: Nervous System & Shadow Work

Shadow work can be profound... but also destabilising. Meeting the shadow can stir old wounds, trauma memories or overwhelming feelings. Please don't push through if your body is signalling otherwise.

Some signs you may need to pause:

- You feel dissociated, frozen or flooded
- You struggle to eat, sleep or regulate your emotions afterward
- You feel panicked or detached for long periods of time

Shadow work must be done at the pace of your safety. It's okay to pause. It's okay to return later. Sometimes, shadow work is learning to listen to your "no."

You might also choose to do this work with a therapist, somatic practitioner or someone trained in trauma-informed care. My waiting list is open if you are looking for a more facilitated environment. Go slow. You are worth the gentleness.

## **5. How to Engage in Shadow Work**

There is no one right way. Trust what resonates with your season of life and your capacity. You don't need to be 'deep' to be doing it right. Let it be tender. Let it be real.

### **Journaling**

Writing can become a mirror for the self & soul. Let yourself write messy, honest, unfinished thoughts. Ask your shadow questions. Let it respond. There are some prompts at the end of this document

### **Embodiment**

Breathe, tremble, rest, move, scream into a pillow, sway like the breeze. Reconnect with your primal nature. Your body often knows the story before your mind does.

### **Creative Expression**

Paint your anger. Collage your grief. Make art that doesn't make sense. Creation makes space for what words cannot hold.

### **Reparenting**

Show up for the child & teen in you who needed more tenderness, more protection, more freedom, more acceptance. Let them be messy. Let them be magical

### **Nature Nurture**

You are nature. Seasonal. Cyclical. Messy. Real. Time immersing yourself in nature is a form of shadow work in that it reminds you of your true essence & gives you permission to move with truth. Feet bare on grass, swimming in the sea, dancing under the moon. Come home to yourself here

### **Sexual Healing**

Rebuild a connection with your sexual self, through deep presence, connection, motion. This is not about sex with someone else, but about slowly unshaming your sensuality, your

pleasure, your longing, your creativity. It's about feeling safe and welcome in your body again, listening to what turns you on emotionally, energetically, physically. This work is tender & deeply sacred: a remembering that your sexual energy is not something to be used or hidden - it is part of your life force, your creativity, your truth.

### **Voicework**

Say the unsayable. Speak shame aloud in a mirror. Let your truth move through your throat, even if no one else hears it.

### **Ancestral & Collective Work**

Your shadow may carry what isn't only yours. Some burdens are inherited - through bloodlines, culture, land, legacy. Shadow work can honour your ancestors, your lineage, your community. It can also reckon with the shadows of whiteness, violence, privilege, power and historical trauma. This isn't separate work. It's the same work, on a wider scale.

### **Dreamwork**

Our unconscious often speaks in dreams. You don't need to "decode" them... but just try to notice. What images return? What feelings linger?

## **Shadow Work Prompts**

Choose anything from the list. Let your body settle. Breathe. Write or speak aloud whatever comes. You do not need to answer 'well.' You only need to answer honestly.

You may wish to:

journal with one prompt at a time

speaking your answers aloud

draw or move what arises

simply sit with the question and feel what stirs in your body

### **Identity & Self**

- Who was I before I learned I had to be “good”?
- What part of me feels the hardest to Love right now?
- When do I feel inauthentic? How does that feel in my body?
- What emotions do I suppress to be liked or accepted?
- What makes me cringe & how might that relate to vulnerability or self-judgement?
- How do I define ‘success’ & ‘failure?’ How do I treat myself in each state?

### **Inner Child & Adolescence**

- What was I like as a teenager? And what parts of that version of me have I repressed or disowned?
- How would my child self feel about who I am today?
- Growing up, how was I taught to be “good”? What did I have to abandon to earn Love or approval?
- What protective roles did I learn to play in my family system (e.g. the fixer, the achiever, the rebel)?

### **Emotion & the Nervous System**

- What does my relationship with trust look like -both in myself and in others?
- How do I treat myself when I’m experiencing big feelings? Where did I learn to respond that way?
- What was the first time I experienced betrayal? How did it shape me?
- When something threatens my worldview, how do I react? How does it feel in my body?

### **Relationships & Projection**

- The people who trigger me most are... (List them). What parts of myself might they be activating?
- What traits of my parents or caregivers do I see in myself? How do I feel about those traits?
- What do I envy in others—and what might that be pointing me toward?
- What makes me jealous? How do I respond to jealousy & what does that say about my unmet needs/desires?

### **Reclamation & Wholeness**

- What do I secretly long for, but rarely admit, even to myself?
- If I didn't feel ashamed, what would I allow myself to do, feel, or express?
- What does my anger want to say to me?
- What does wholeness mean to me & what might be in the way?
- What part of me is ready to come home?

## **A Closing Note**

Everything you've hidden was once a form of care, a way to protect what was sacred in a world that couldn't hold it.

And now, slowly, softly, you are ready to reclaim what was never meant to be lost. This is not the work of becoming someone new.

This is the work of coming home to your truth.

**Love, Sasha Blossom**