

HEALING THE SHAME THAT BINDS YOU

A VISUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the work of John Bradshaw

1. THE SOURCE

Shame is often learned in childhood when:

- We are abused, neglected or emotionally abandoned
- We are criticized, humiliated or blamed
- Our feelings are dismissed or punished
- Love is conditional
- We live in a home with addiction, chaos or secrets
- We are held to impossible standards



The child learns:
 "Something is wrong with me."
 "I'm not enough."
 "I must hide who I really am."

2. THE CORE WOUND

Toxic Shame is the belief that there is something wrong with us as a person.



It operates at the **identity** level: not just what I did, but **who** I believe I am.

3. SURVIVAL ADAPTATIONS

To protect ourselves from shame, we create a **FALSE SELF**.

We wear masks and develop roles to avoid feeling exposed or rejected.



Common Masks:

- Perfectionist
- People Pleaser
- Caretaker
- Controller
- Achiever
- Addict / Escapist
- Pleaser / Peacemaker
- Numb / Shut Down

These adaptations may have helped us survive, but they keep us disconnected from our true selves.

4. THE SHAME CYCLE



5. HOW SHAME SHOWS UP IN ADULT LIFE

- Addictions & compulsions (alcohol, drugs, sex, food, work, etc.)
- Perfectionism & chronic self-criticism
- People-pleasing & fear of saying no
- Anger, rage, or emotional reactivity
- Isolation, secrecy & difficulty with intimacy
- Low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, emptiness
- Difficulty setting boundaries & asserting needs

6. THE COST

Living from shame leads to:

- Disconnected relationships
- Living in secrecy and isolation
- Loss of authentic self
- Emotional, spiritual and physical exhaustion
- A sense of meaninglessness and emptiness

We were never meant to live like this.

7. THE PATH TO HEALING

Healing happens in relationship, through truth, and by reconnecting with our true selves.



THE TRANSFORMATION

From Shame: "I am flawed and unworthy." → **To Wholeness:** "I am imperfect, but I am worthy of love and belonging."

Not perfection. Connection. Not hiding. Authenticity. Not shame. Self-acceptance. Not isolation. Belonging.

The antidote to shame is connection. The soil for healing is compassion. The fruit is freedom.

