

THE SHAME DYNAMIC IN RELATIONSHIPS: FOR TEENS (AND THEIR PARENTS)

A Teen's Guide For
Understanding Shame, its
Influence on Relationships &
How to Overcome it

Inside:

- Checklists
- Journal Prompts
- Enneagram Overview
- Links
- Coupon Code
- Actionable Steps
- Tips For Parents
- Infographic to Transform Shame

**AMANDA
WHITE**

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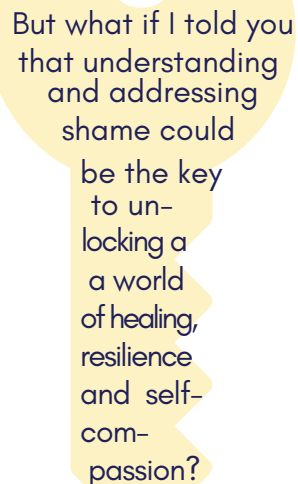
INITIATING
CONVERSATIONS WITH
PARENTS



INTRODUCTION

Shame—a word that carries immense weight and yet remains shrouded in silence.

It's a universal emotion that knows no boundaries, touching the lives of people from all walks of life, regardless of age, gender, or background. For teenagers navigating the tumultuous waters of adolescence, shame can be an ever-present companion, casting shadows of doubt and insecurity over your sense of self-worth and belonging.



But what if I told you that understanding and addressing shame could be the key to unlocking a world of healing, resilience and self-compassion?

Welcome to "The Shame Dynamic." In these pages, we embark on a journey of exploration and discovery—a journey that invites you to confront the shadows of shame and emerge into the light of self-awareness and empowerment.

Throughout this book, we'll delve into the depths of shame as a universal emotion, examining its roots, its impact, and its deceptive presence in our daily lives. But more importantly, we'll equip you with the tools, insights, and strategies you need to navigate the maze of shame and emerge stronger, more resilient, and more

compassionate than ever before.

As we journey together through these pages, you'll discover practical guidance and actionable steps to help you break free from the grip of shame and embrace the fullness of who you are. Whether you're grappling with body image struggles, social pressures, or family dynamics, this book is here to remind you that you are not alone. You are worthy. You are enough. And with courage, compassion, and the support of others, you can rise above shame and step into the bright future that awaits you. Let's embark on this journey together, and let's break free from shame, once and for all.

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C H A P T E R

01



UNDERSTANDING SHAME

Shame is a powerful and widespread emotion that can have profound effects on the mental, emotional, and social well-being of all people. The purpose of shame is actually to protect us by giving us feedback that our behavior may interfere with building social connections. But shame is harmful when it becomes **a deep-seated belief that one is fundamentally flawed or unworthy of love and belonging.** When teens experience shame, it can lead to feelings of **inadequacy, self-doubt, and isolation, impacting their self-esteem, relationships, and overall sense of identity.** From fears of rejection in social situations to doubts about your abilities and worthiness, shame can manifest

in a myriad of ways, shaping your perception of yourself and the world around you.

In exploring the origins of shame, we turn to the biblical story of the fall of humanity in the book of Genesis. When God created Adam and Eve they are described as naked and **not ashamed.** It symbolizes a state of **innocence, purity, and intimacy in their relationship with each other and with God.**

Before their disobedience, Adam and Eve were fully transparent and vulnerable with each other, experiencing no sense of shame or insecurity in their nakedness.

Their physical nakedness mirrored their emotional and spiritual openness, as they lived in perfect harmony with God and



each other.

This state of **being "not ashamed" suggests a profound sense of acceptance, trust, and wholeness in their relationship with God and with themselves. It represents a state of innocence and purity before sin entered the world, marking a time of unbroken fellowship and intimacy with God.** And then when they sinned they hid from God and made clothes of fig leaves to cover their shame. (Just like we have our own ineffective and sometimes harmful ways of dealing with our shame.)

But God did not abandon them in their shame. He was there with them in their shame, calling them to Himself. He made a sacrifice of an animal, the first death, to provide clothing for them and to restore the relationship. **This points us to how Jesus seeks us out and was sacrificed to bring us near and restore our**

relationship with him. While this biblical account may seem distant to teenagers, its relevance lies in its portrayal of shame as a universal human experience—a burden that we all carry in some form or another.

Shame transcends time, culture, and individual circumstances. Whether it's the shame of not measuring up to societal expectations, the shame of making mistakes, or the shame of being different, teenagers encounter shame in various aspects of their lives. **It can show up in the form of negative self-talk, perfectionism, comparison with others, or avoiding situations that trigger feelings of vulnerability.** Understanding shame as a universal experience allows you to recognize that you are not alone in your struggles and that **healing and growth are possible through empathy, self-awareness, and connection with others.**

C H A P T E R

02



IDENTIFYING SHAME TRIGGERS FOR TEENS

Shame has a stealthy way of creeping into various aspects of teenagers' lives, casting shadows over your sense of self-worth and identity. Common shame triggers for adolescents often stem from deeply personal and sensitive areas, shaping their perceptions of themselves and others. **Body image** stands as a prominent trigger, as you navigate the pressures of societal standards and comparisons to idealized images. **Academic performance** can also be a significant source of shame, as students face the relentless pursuit of perfection and fear of failure in the academic arena. Moreover, **social interactions**, including peer relationships and

romantic endeavors, can evoke feelings of shame when faced with rejection, exclusion, or ridicule.

Additionally, **family dynamics**, such as conflicts with parents or siblings, can exacerbate feelings of shame, as you grapple with the complexities of familial expectations and dynamics.

To empower you in identifying your unique shame triggers and patterns, self-assessment exercises and reflection prompts serve as invaluable tools. Through introspection and honest reflection, you can begin to unravel the tangled web of shame that may be woven into your life. Self-assessment

exercises may include journaling prompts, guided meditations, or creative expression activities to help you explore your thoughts, emotions, and experiences surrounding shame triggers.

Reflection prompts encourage you to examine specific situations or interactions that elicit feelings of shame,

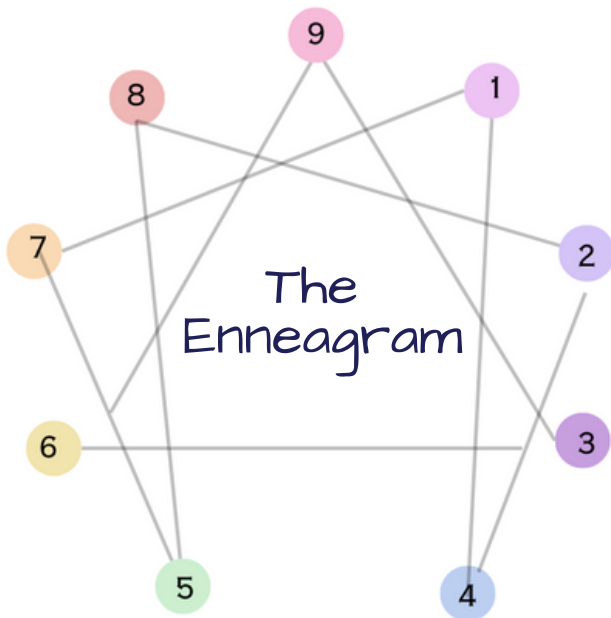
identifying recurring patterns and themes. **By shining a light on shame triggers, you can gain clarity and insight into the underlying beliefs and emotions driving your experiences of shame, paving the way for healing and growth.**

My Shame Triggers

- My Body/Appearance
- Disappointing Parents
- Failures/Mistakes/Flaws
- Social Status/Interactions
- Romantic Endeavors
- Family Dynamics
- Personal Identity
- Financial Struggles
- Mental Health
- _____

C H A P T E R

03



INTRO TO THE ENNEAGRAM

The Enneagram personality system is a profound and dynamic framework for **understanding human personality and behavior**. It identifies **nine distinct personality types, each with its own core motivations, fears, desires, and coping mechanisms**.

The Enneagram emphasizes that individuals are shaped by a combination of ingrained personality traits and life experiences, leading to the development of unique patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

For teens struggling with shame, the Enneagram offers valuable insights and tools for self-discovery and healing. By identifying your Enneagram type, you can gain a deeper understanding of your core fears and defense mechanisms, **shedding light on the underlying causes of your shame**.

Armed with this self-awareness, you can begin to unravel the patterns of thought and behavior that contribute to your feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness.

Moreover, the Enneagram provides a roadmap for growth

and transformation, offering specific strategies and practices tailored to each Enneagram type. **You can learn to cultivate self-compassion, embrace vulnerability, and develop healthier coping mechanisms for managing their shame.**

Additionally, the Enneagram fosters empathy and understanding, allowing you to recognize that you are **not alone in your struggles** and that

others may be experiencing similar challenges.

Overall, the Enneagram empowers teens to navigate their journey of self-discovery with compassion, courage, and resilience. **By leveraging the wisdom of the Enneagram, teens can transcend their shame, embrace their authentic selves, and cultivate deeper connections with themselves and others.**

Find out about the 9 Types @

<https://ensightenneagramcoaching.com/all-about-the-9-types>

Discover Your Type

Take the assessment @

<https://assessment.yourenneagramcoach.com/>

Grab 15% off and courses/products from
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C H A P T E R

04



GUT TRIAD

The Instinctive Center

EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE
Anger

COMMON DESIRE
Justice



HEART TRIAD

The Feeling Center

EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE
Shame

COMMON DESIRE
Significant Identity



HEAD TRIAD

The Thinking Center

EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE
Anxiety

COMMON DESIRE
Security

THE ENNEAGRAM CENTERS OF INTELLIGENCE

In diving into the deep world of the Enneagram, we discover a framework that not only shines a light on our personalities but also **provides deep insights into our emotional health**. The **centers of intelligence reflect how individuals engage with spiritual truths and navigate their relationship with God**.

The Heart Center (Types 2, 3, and 4) emphasizes emotional connection and the pursuit of love and authenticity in spiritual expression, while the Head Center (Types 5, 6, and 7) focuses on intellectual understanding, seeking wisdom and insight to deepen their faith. Lastly, the Body Center (Types 8, 9, and 1) focus on putting their beliefs into action in their everyday lives, living out their

faith through practical deeds and ethical choices.

Understanding shame is particularly noticeable within the Heart Triad, where emotions are at the forefront, influencing the way one sees themselves and their interactions with others.

First let's look at the Heart Center and how each type struggles with shame. **Type 2**, the Helper, often struggles with shame stemming from a deep-seated **fear of being unloved or unworthy**. Their tendency to prioritize the needs of others over their own needs can lead to feelings of resentment and overlooking their own needs, as they seek praise from others to soothe their inner sense of not being good enough.

Type 3, the Achiever, may

struggle with shame in relation to their failures (real or imagined) or inability to meet their own or others' expectations. Their drive for success and recognition can be a double-edged sword, as they may **fear being exposed as fakes or falling short of their high goals.**

Type 4, the Individualist, experiences shame through a lens of identity and being true to themselves, or authenticity. Their deep emotional sensitivity and longing for uniqueness can lead to feelings of shame for **not measuring up to how they wish they were or the world's standards of beauty and success.** For those of us in the HeadCenter (Types 5, 6, and 7), shame often shows up as a fear of inadequacy or failure.

Type 5 individuals may feel shame when they **think they lack ability, skill or appear uninformed.** They may withdraw from social interactions and intellectual pursuits to avoid exposing what they believe are their shortcomings to others.

Type 6 teens may experience shame when they **feel uncertain or anxious about their decisions or beliefs.** They may second-guess themselves and seek reassurance from others to alleviate their feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt.

Type 7 teens may not seem to feel shame or admit they feel shame as they try to avoid negative emotions. They prefer to distract themselves with excitement and new experiences. But they may feel shame for **being unreliable or not able to do and experience all that they want to.**

On the other hand, teens in the Body Center (Types 8, 9, and 1) may experience shame as a sense of moral or ethical failure, driving us to seek perfection or control in our actions and relationships.

Type 8s may experience shame when they perceive themselves as being weak or vulnerable. They may feel ashamed of **needing help or support from others,** as it contradicts their self-image of strength and independence.

Type 9s may feel shame when they think they have **caused conflict or disruption in their relationships.** They may avoid confrontation and suppress their own needs to maintain harmony, leading to feelings of inadequacy or self-blame.

Type 1 teens may experience shame when they **fail to meet their own high standards** or when they see themselves as making mistakes. They may feel a deep sense of guilt or self-criticism when they fall short of what they think is right.

Shame Triggers for Each Type

Type 1 (The Perfectionist):

- Feeling like they've made a mistake or fallen short of their own high standards or ideals.
- Being criticized or corrected by others for not meeting expectations.
- Not being able to fulfill their responsibilities or obligations.

Type 2 (The Helper):

- Feeling unappreciated or taken for granted by others.
- Not receiving the level of attention, affection, or acknowledgment they desire.
- Fearing rejection or abandonment if they are not able to meet others' needs.

Type 3 (The Achiever):

- Failing to achieve their goals or meet expectations, whether self-imposed or external.
- Being perceived as incompetent or unsuccessful by others.
- Feeling like they have to hide their vulnerabilities or failures to maintain their image of success.

Type 4 (The Individualist):

- Feeling misunderstood or unseen for their unique qualities and emotions.
- Comparing themselves to others and feeling like they don't measure up.
- Not being able to express themselves authentically or creatively.

Type 5 (The Investigator):

- Feeling incompetent or uninformed in a particular area of expertise.
- Being put on the spot or forced to engage in social interactions they find uncomfortable.
- Feeling overwhelmed by too much external stimulation or demands on their time and energy.

Type 6 (The Loyalist):

- Feeling uncertain or insecure about their decisions or beliefs.
- Being betrayed or abandoned by someone they trusted.
- Feeling like they're not able to protect themselves or their loved ones from harm.

Type 7 (The Enthusiast):

- Feeling restricted or limited in their options or opportunities for fun and excitement.
- Being confronted with negative emotions or difficult situations they'd rather avoid.
- Feeling like they're missing out on something better or more enjoyable elsewhere.

Type 8 (The Challenger):

- Feeling vulnerable or weak in a situation where they're expected to be strong and assertive.
- Being taken advantage of or exploited by others.
- Feeling like they're not able to protect themselves or those they care about from harm or injustice.

Type 9 (The Peacemaker):

- Feeling overlooked or ignored in conflicts or disagreements.
- Being criticized for not taking a stand or asserting themselves more assertively.
- Feeling like they're not able to maintain harmony or peace in their relationships or environment.

C H A P T E R

05



SHAME IN YOUR LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Shame has a sneaky way of soaking into every aspect of our lives, from our thoughts and behaviors to our interactions with others. You might notice shame showing up as **constant self-criticism, feelings of unworthiness, or a reluctance to take risks or pursue your passions**. It can also manifest as **perfectionism, people-pleasing, or numbing behaviors like overeating or excessive screen time**.

By recognizing these patterns, you can begin to untangle shame's hold on your life and reclaim your sense of worth and agency.

Our relationships can be both a source of joy and a breeding ground for shame. You might find yourself **hiding parts of yourself from others, fearing rejection or judgment if they were to see the "real" you**. Shame can also fuel conflicts and misunderstandings, as it

distorts our perceptions of ourselves and others. **By exploring how shame shows up in your relationships, you can cultivate greater empathy, vulnerability, and authenticity in your connections with others.**

Why is it important to shine a light on shame? Because **awareness** is the first step toward **freedom**. When we

acknowledge and name our shame, **we strip it of its power to control us**. We can begin to challenge the negative beliefs and narratives that shame feeds us and replace them with **compassion, self-acceptance, and resilience**. To help you on your journey, here's a checklist to help you recognize when shame is at play in your life and relationships:

Do you often feel unworthy or inadequate, no matter what you accomplish?

Do you find yourself hiding parts of yourself from others, fearing rejection or judgment?

Do you struggle to set boundaries or assert your needs in relationships?

Do you engage in behaviors like perfectionism, people-pleasing, or self-sabotage to avoid feeling shame?

Do you notice a pattern of self-criticism or harsh judgment when you make mistakes or fall short of your expectations?

C H A P T E R

06



HEALING FROM SHAME

Welcome to a chapter dedicated to **breaking free from the shackles of shame and stepping into a life of healing and wholeness.** Together, let us embark on a path of self-discovery, compassion, and transformation as we reclaim our inherent worthiness and embrace the fullness of who we are meant to be.

One of the most powerful antidotes to shame is self-compassion—the practice of treating ourselves with kindness, empathy, and understanding, especially in moments of struggle or failure. Reminding ourselves that shame is an emotion and is our brain's way of warning us about a threat of disconnection can help us separate the feeling of shame from our identity. Be curious about the emotions

accompanying your feelings of shame in a way that is compassionate to yourself.

Drawing upon biblical principles of **grace and forgiveness**, we can extend ourselves the same compassion and grace that God offers us, **embracing our imperfections and celebrating our inherent worthiness as beloved children of God—truly believing we are forgiven and accepted.**

By understanding our Enneagram type and how it influences our relationship with shame, we can gain invaluable **self-awareness and compassion, paving the way for healing and transformation.**

Combatting shame requires courage, resilience, and a willingness to challenge negative beliefs and narratives about ourselves.

COUNTERACTING NEGATIVE MESSAGES

When our inner critic amplifies our feelings of shame, it's important to respond with self-compassion and understanding. Here are some things we can tell ourselves to counteract the negative messages:

- "I am not defined by my mistakes or shortcomings."
- "It's okay to make mistakes; they are opportunities for growth and learning."
- "I am worthy of love and acceptance, regardless of my perceived flaws."
- "I choose to focus on my strengths and accomplishments."
- "I am deserving of kindness and understanding, both from others and myself."
- "I refuse to let shame control me; I am in control of my own narrative."
- "I am human, and it's natural to experience a range of emotions, including shame."
- "I am capable of forgiving myself and moving forward with grace and resilience."
- "I choose to practice self-compassion and treat myself with the same kindness I would offer to a loved one."
- "I am enough, just as I am, and I deserve to live a life free from the burden of shame."

Ways to Combat Shame

- Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes and experiences challenges. Replace self-criticism with self-compassionate language and affirmations.
- Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and notice when shame arises. Identify the triggers and patterns that contribute to feelings of shame, allowing you to address them more effectively.
- Challenge the negative beliefs and narratives that contribute to feelings of shame. Question whether these beliefs are based on reality or distorted perceptions, and replace them with more balanced and empowering thoughts.
- Embrace vulnerability by sharing your struggles and insecurities with trusted friends, family members, or mentors. Opening up to others can help you feel less isolated and ashamed, fostering connection and support.
- Establish boundaries in your relationships and interactions to protect yourself from situations or people that trigger feelings of shame. Prioritize your own needs and well-being, and communicate assertively with others about your boundaries.
- Reach out for support from trusted adults, such as parents, teachers, or counselors, who can provide guidance, encouragement, and resources for healing from shame. Consider joining support groups or seeking therapy if you need additional support.
- Take care of your physical, emotional, and mental well-being by engaging in activities that nourish and replenish you. Practice mindfulness, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, and engage in hobbies and interests that bring you joy and fulfillment.
- Recognize that perfection is unattainable and that mistakes are a natural part of growth and learning. Embrace imperfection and celebrate your progress and efforts rather than focusing solely on outcomes.
- Focus on the positive aspects of your life and cultivate gratitude for the blessings and opportunities you have. Gratitude can help shift your perspective away from feelings of shame and towards feelings of appreciation and abundance.
- Forgive yourself for past mistakes and shortcomings, recognizing that you are human and deserving of compassion and forgiveness. Let go of resentment and self-blame, and focus on moving forward with grace and acceptance.

Journaling can be a powerful tool for those dealing with shame as it provides **a safe and private space to explore and process your thoughts, emotions, and experiences.** By journaling, you can gain clarity and insight into the root causes of your shame, identify negative beliefs or thoughts, and challenge untrue perceptions about yourself. Journaling also allows for self-expression and self-compassion, as you can write openly and honestly without fear of judgment or criticism. You can also **cultivate self-awareness, self-acceptance, and resilience, which enables healing and growth on your journey to overcoming shame.**

Journal Prompts

1. Reflect on a recent experience that triggered feelings of shame. What thoughts, emotions, or behaviors did you notice? How did you cope with these feelings?
2. Write a letter to yourself expressing compassion and understanding for any mistakes or shortcomings you've experienced. What would you say to yourself if you were offering comfort and support to a friend in a similar situation?
3. Identify a negative belief or narrative about yourself that contributes to feelings of shame. Where did this belief come from? Is it based on reality or distorted perceptions?
4. Consider a time when you felt proud of yourself or accomplished. What strengths or qualities did you demonstrate in that moment? How can you draw upon these strengths to navigate feelings of shame in the future?
5. Explore the role of vulnerability in your life. Are there areas where you struggle to be open and authentic with others? How might embracing vulnerability or weakness help you heal from shame and foster deeper connections with others?
6. Think about a person in your life whom you trust and admire. What qualities do they possess that you admire? How can you cultivate similar qualities within yourself to build resilience and self-confidence?
7. Imagine a future version of yourself who has overcome feelings of shame and embraced their true worth and potential. What steps can you take today to move closer to that vision of yourself?
8. Consider the expectations and standards you place on yourself. Are these expectations realistic and attainable, or do they contribute to feelings of inadequacy and shame? How can you adjust your expectations to be more compassionate and realistic?
9. Reflect on a time when you received support or encouragement from someone you trust. How did their support impact your feelings of shame? How can you seek out similar sources of support in your life?
10. Imagine yourself as a compassionate observer, separate from your thoughts and emotions. What advice or guidance would you offer yourself in moments of shame and self-doubt? How can you practice self-compassion and self-care in these moments?

C H A P T E R

07



INITIATING CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

Initiating conversations with parents about sensitive topics like shame and emotional struggles can feel scary and awkward, but it's an essential step toward healing and growth. In this chapter, we'll explore practical strategies for you to initiate these conversations with confidence and compassion, as well as tips for parents to create a safe and supportive environment for open dialogue.

Initiating Conversations: Guidance for Teens

1. Choose the right time and place: Find a quiet, private space where you and your parent can talk without distractions or interruptions.
2. Express your feelings: Use "I" statements to communicate your emotions and experiences without placing blame or judgment.
3. Be honest and authentic: Share your thoughts and concerns openly, even if they feel uncomfortable or vulnerable.
4. Listen actively: Give your parent the opportunity to share their perspective and respond with empathy and understanding.
5. Set boundaries: Clearly communicate your needs and boundaries in the conversation, and be prepared to respect your parent's boundaries as well.

For Parents:

Creating a Supportive Environment:

1. Practice active listening: Give your teen your full attention, and validate their feelings and experiences without judgment or criticism.
2. Offer empathy and support: Express your love and support for your child, and reassure them that it's okay to feel and express their emotions.
3. Avoid minimizing or dismissing their feelings: Take your teen's concerns seriously, and avoid brushing them off or downplaying their significance.
4. Encourage open communication: Create a safe and non-judgmental space for your teen to express themselves openly, and be receptive to their thoughts and feelings.
5. Seek professional support if needed: If your teen is struggling with shame or emotional issues, consider seeking therapy, counseling, or support groups to provide additional support and guidance.

HOW TO TRANSFORM SHAME WITH SELF-COMPASSION



STEP 1 UNDERSTAND "THE NATURE OF SHAME"

Shame is normal. Shame is the brain's way of dealing with the threat of disconnection.



STEP 2 LABEL SHAME

Label shame for what it is: an emotion. Giving it a name helps you get some distance between you and the emotion.



STEP 3 REPLACE JUDGMENT WITH CURIOSITY

Try to hold your experience of shame with curiosity rather than judgment. Curiosity about your emotions can help you shift into a more caring and understanding perspective.



STEP 4 ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR INNER CRITIC

It's helpful to be aware that your inner critic often likes to amplify your shame. Remind your inner critic that you are a work in progress, trying to navigate the best you can.



STEP 5 PRACTICE WHAT IS HELPFUL, NOT HARMFUL

Try to speak to yourself like you would a friend. Can you ask yourself what actions would be helpful for recovering from this experience, rather than actions that might perpetuate it? If you are working on correcting an action, can you offer yourself constructive correction rather than shaming self-attack?



Are you struggling with feelings of shame and strained relationships? As a faith-based Enneagram coach, I'm here to offer guidance and support on your journey towards healing and connection. Together, we'll explore how your Enneagram types influence your experiences of shame and relationships, and we'll work towards fostering compassion, understanding, and growth. Reach out to me today to take the next step towards a more fulfilling and harmonious family dynamic.

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or send a message from my website
EnsigntEnneagramCoaching.com