HER ALCHEMY COACHING • REFLECTION SERIES

SHAME: WHEN THE STORY TURNS AGAINST US

Moving from self-condemnation toward curiosity

Shame can turn an experience, mistake, need, or struggle into a conclusion about who we are: “I am not enough,” “I am too much,” or “There is something wrong with me.” Shame often pulls us toward hiding, withdrawal, defensiveness, or disconnection. The goal is not to shame ourselves for having shame - it is to notice the story it is telling.

NOTICE THE PATTERN

SHAME SOUNDS LIKE...

“I am the problem.”
“If people really knew me, they would leave.”
“I should be better than this.”

GUILT CAN SOUND LIKE...

“I did something I regret.”
“I want to repair what I can.”
“My behavior is not the whole of who I am.”

WHAT SHAME CAN DO

Invite hiding, silence, perfectionism, people-pleasing, numbing, defensiveness, or pushing others away.

A DIFFERENT RESPONSE

Name what you feel. Separate behavior from identity. Ask what needs repair - and what needs compassion.

You can take responsibility without turning yourself into the punishment. Accountability asks, “What do I want to do differently?” Shame insists, “This is simply who I am.”

PAUSE + REFLECT

- What am I afraid this experience says about me?
- Whose voice does this judgment sound like?
- What would accountability look like without self-attack?
- What becomes possible when I meet myself with honesty and compassion?

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