



You are Magnificent, Unleash Your Authentic Self

Overcome Your Binding Shame and Build a Strong Core Self

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Workshop 9

REARENTING

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Overcome Your Binding Shame and Strengthen Your Core Self

Borrowed from: Healing Your Emotional Self by Beverly Engel

*Caregivers shape who we become and
the struggles we face...*

Many people are emotionally abused, neglected or smothered by their caretakers growing up without on one being the wiser. These people don't realize they were abused or neglected, and they suffer in silence without the support they need. They internalize the abuse and manifest self-destructiveness, depression, suicidal thoughts, passivity, withdrawal (avoid social contacts), shyness, low degree of communication with others, aggression, addiction, anxiety, overwhelm, inability to lead the life they desire.

At the core of these symptoms and behaviors is an inadequately developed sense of self and a distorted image of self based on parental negative messages and treatment.

Caregivers inflict "emotional abuse", abandonment and neglect with their less-than-perfect-caregiving (LTPC). Abuse is a very emotionally powerful word. It usually implies intent or even malice, but caregivers, parents, seldom do so intentionally. Most are simply repeating the way they were treated as a child...

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior, occurring on a continuous basis over time. Even the best of caregivers have occasions when they have momentarily lost control and said hurtful things to their children, failed to give them the attention they wanted, or unintentionally scared them by their actions. Every caregiver undoubtedly treats their children in some of these ways from time to time. A little repair goes a long way in these instances.

When this LTPC is ongoing though they attack the child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It affects the child's sense of self where they come to view themselves as unworthy of love and affection.

How it Happens

It happens through the way the caregivers interact with their child and set up their environment.

Emotional Abuse - Includes both acts and omissions by caretakers, including teachers, that cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorder in a child, even though it was unintentional:

Verbally abusing - giving constant criticism, ridiculing, blaming, belittling, insulting, rejecting, inappropriate teasing, flooding with contempt and humiliation

Having unreasonable expectations - placing excessive or unreasonable demands on a child that are beyond their capabilities

Controlling - being overly controlling, restrictive and rigid

Emotionally smothering - being overprotective or unwilling to allow the child to create a separate life from their caregivers

Rejecting or emotionally abandoning - being cold and unresponsive and withholding love

Neglecting – failure to provide basic physical needs like food, water, shelter, attention to hygiene, emotional, social environmental, educational and medical needs, and adequate supervision

Emotionally neglecting - failure to provide the nurturing and positive support necessary for a child's emotional and psychological growth and development. Inattention to a child's need for acknowledgement, affection, and emotional support. Uninterested in a child's feelings, activities and problems.

Psychological Maltreatment - professional term for emotional abuse that is deliberate. It has intent to harm:

Rejecting – refusal to show affection, communicate

Isolating – preventing child from participating in normal opportunities for social interaction

Terrorizing – threatening the child with severe or sinister punishment, or deliberately developing a climate of fear or threat

Ignoring – caregiver is psychologically unavailable to the child and fails to respond to the child’s behavior

Corrupting – caregiver behavior that encourages the child to develop false social values that reinforce antisocial or deviant behavioral patterns, such as aggression, criminal acts or substance abuse.

All of these are shaming experiences... They give the child the message that they are not good enough, bad, unwanted, worthless, ugly, unlovable, etc. Shame is a feeling deep within us of being exposed as unworthy. When we feel shame we want to hide... These caregiving tactics promote a feeling that a child’s very being is wrong – not just their actions...

Becoming Shame-Bound

Sometimes a child has been so severely shamed or experienced so many shame-inducing incidents that they become what is referred to as “shame-bound” or “shame-based” – where shame is the dominant factor in the formation of the person’s personality... These people suffer from extremely low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, and self-hatred. They feel inferior, “bad”, unacceptable, and different from others.

- They tend to defend against any feeling of shame with anger... Whereas most people react with anger whenever they are made to feel humiliated devalued or demeaned, shame-base people tend to be extremely sensitive and defensive. They go into rages when they feel criticized or attacked, which is often. Because they are so critical of themselves, they believe everyone else is critical of them... They defend by attacking...

- Some people fight against shame by striving for perfection. This is a way of compensating for an underlying sense of defectiveness. This quest of course if doomed to fail, as the person suffering from shame already feels inherently not good enough, nothing they do will ever be considered as good enough. Therefore, continuing to expect perfection in our self will cause us to constantly be disappointed and constantly continue to damage our self-esteem.

Caregivers are a Mirror

The caregivers serve as a Mirror for the child to show them who they are... This is how children learn about themselves, literally organize and wire their brain, develop their personality, learn skills, how to manage themselves, about relationships, and about the world. The caregivers have tremendous power and responsibility. They get to shape another human being... This is what actually makes becoming a caregiver/parent so amazing!

The problem is that most people have unaddressed and unhealed childhood trauma that they bring into their caretaking along with their imperfections. This perpetuates the cycle of dysfunction and pain.

- **Mirrors Identity** – creates false identify
- **Mirrors Esteem** – creates low sense of self
- **Mirrors Body Image and Awareness** – creates distorted view and perception of physical appearance (body reflects how we feel about ourselves!)
- **Mirrors Distorted Reality** – creates negative internal judge/critic (warped lens distorts reality)
- **Mirrors Behaviors** – creates poor self management, relating, coping and other behaviors

The Impact

The primary way that children are affected is that their self-image becomes distorted, they lack a strong sense of self, they develop extremely low self-esteem and their emotional development is thwarted. The impact and suffering is at least as much as if they've been physically assaulted...

We are not necessarily in touch with our sense of self until something happens to make us pay attention to it. Criticism and compliments spotlight it. Being self-conscious means that for whatever reason, we have become preoccupied with how we are doing or how we are coming across to other people. As we grow older we become self-conscious and we feed our self-consciousness with a lot of self-deprecating assumptions.

Self-consciousness interferes with our ability to be our authentic self...

Types of Negative Parental Mirrors

Common types of negative parental mirrors:

Neglectful or Inadequate Parent -> I'm Unlovable: When parents are neglectful or do not have time for their children, they send the message that the child is unwanted or unlovable. This style is more about what they didn't do than what they did. They neglect their children because they are simply incapable of being good parents. As person with low self-esteem will feel fearful and inadequate about being a parent and may be so afraid of making mistakes that they don't do much parenting at all.

~This deprivation results in adults that are anxious and insecure, emotionally undeveloped and/or have low self-esteem.

Abandoning or Rejecting Parent -> I'm Worthless: When children are physically or emotionally rejected or abandoned by their parents, the message they receive is that they are worthless. This abandonment can happen physically through death, prolonged illness, or divorce without much contact, or being shipped to boarding school. Or, emotionally, where the parent is emotionally unavailable punishing the child with silence or rejection. These are devastating to the child.

- If parents find parenting too demanding or difficult, they resolve this by abandoning the burden of parenting by leaving their children solely in the care of a nanny or babysitters, sending the off to boarding school, or giving them away...
- Others escape into alcohol, drugs, sleep, television, or books...
- Or, they so tied up with their work or interests that they have no time for their children
- Or even, they don't want to bother with them made clear by their actions – if a child needs help with H.W., help making a decision or addressing a problem the parent responds with some form of dismissal.

~These children tend to suffer from extreme insecurity and feelings of worthlessness.

Smothering, Possessive or Intrusive Parent -> I'm Nothing with out My Parent: When parents are overprotective or emotionally smothering, they send the message that their child is helpless without them. This type smothers with overprotectiveness, guilt, rules, and demands. They emotionally or physically engulf by being controlling, overbearing or simply being ever present. This discourages independence and breeds unhealthy dependence. These parents are:

- Motivated primarily by fear
- Need to control
- Want children to think, feel and do just as they do
- Do not feel separate from their children and therefore don't want them to be independent from them
- Fear being alone and attempt to tie their children to them by making them dependent on them
- See their children as reflections of themselves – narcissistic parents especially do this
- Use their child to satisfy needs that should be satisfied by other adults

~These parents don't allow their children the space to grow and develop their unique personalities. Because they do not allow their children to separate from them, they restrict and limit their children's potential to make something of themselves in the world. They create an attitude of hopelessness and powerlessness for the child.

Overly Controlling or Tyrannical Parent -> I'm Powerless: When parents are overly controlling or tyrannical their parenting is cruel and inflexible. These parents believe strongly in rules and obedience, and that the authority parent should never be questioned. They attempt to dominate their children completely, needing to feel in control over others in order to feel powerful and important. Sometimes this behavior is dictated by perfectionism. These children feel tyrannized by their parents' moods.

~They cause their child to feel powerless.

Perfectionist -> I'm Never Good Enough: When parents are perfectionistic, they give their children the message that they only have value if they meet their parent's expectations – which is rare or never. These parents are often driven by fear of disorder, uncleanliness, or flaws. They tend to put a great value on appearances, status and material possessions, or on what others will think. Many feel strongly that anything short of perfection is failure. Consequently, they are also domineering and tyrannical when it comes to what they expect from their children. The children tend to only receive criticism, demands, and sometimes ridicule. They tend to suffer from:

- A sense that they are valued for what they do instead of for who they are (doing vs being)
- A tendency to be self-critical, neither satisfied with themselves or their performance
- A tendency to doubt themselves and to second guess
- An inability to identify and express their emotions
- Compulsive behaviors – extreme dieting, over exercising, excessive cleaning, etc.
- Depression

~They end up growing up feeling inadequate, incapable, awkward or inept. Their self-esteem tends to be very low, and they have little faith in their own abilities. They are often overwhelmed with anxiety whenever they have to perform in any way and this sets them up for failure.

Hypercritical or Shaming Parent -> I'm Bad or I'm Unacceptable: Sometimes parents deliberately shame their children into minding without realizing the disruptive impact shame can have on their sense of self. Or a parent seems to be ashamed because a child is not adhering to certain social norms or parental expectation, "Stop that, you're embarrassing me in front of everyone" makes the child feel exposed, judged, and ashamed along with carrying the parent's shame!

~Parents can destroy their child's confidence, self-esteem, and self-image. Instead of motivating children, they destroy their ability to succeed, their capacity to change, and ability to self motivate. The message they send to their child is that they are a bad person or unacceptable.

Self-Absorbed or Narcissistic Parent -> I don't Matter: These parents are egocentric – their needs, wants, and beliefs are always more important than their children's (or anyone else's for that matter). They are only interested in what reflects on themselves. For the narcissistic parent this goes a step further – the children as a possession useful to them only if they provide something they need – admiration from others, validation that they are a good parent, or someone who will adore them and put them on a pedestal. They enjoy the power they have and are prone to use it to build up their own shaky egos.
 ~ The message they give their children is that their needs are not important and that they do not matter. The child becomes the carrier of both the parent's rejected imperfections and their grandiose fantasies.

The good news is that it's not too late! You can Reparent yourself...

To develop a strong sense of self we needed to be raised in an environment where positive psychological nourishment was available that included:

- Responses with compassion and empathy
- Perceptions being validated
- Uniqueness being respected

The Reparenting Rx™

Reflecting. unShaming. Connecting.

We can do the equivalent of that for ourselves now! The goal is to develop a stronger sense of self by being our Self, caring for our Self and grounding our Self without Shaming ourselves...

Reflecting:

- ◇ **Face the truth and give back the shame** – place your experience in context, understand what happened, assign the proper blame, share about it...
- ◇ **Express pent-up emotions** – feel your feelings, including righteous anger about it, and express them, release them...
- ◇ **Clean the reflection (shatter your distorted image)** – challenge your views, perceptions, beliefs systems, scripts and values
- ◇ **Quiet and counter your inner critic** – clean your dirty thinking (use the Distorted Cognitions material), integrate a more positive and nurturing voice

unShaming:

- ◇ **Separate from your caregivers** – establish healthy boundaries that honor who you are and protects you from further injury
- ◇ **Address emptiness** – create a habit of feeling your body, your feelings, and your Self
- ◇ **Address loneliness** – establish a connection with your higher Self – you are never alone!
- ◇ **Develop compassion and self-acceptance** – do Inner Child Bonding...
- ◇ **Practice self-care / nurturing (Mother yourself) and self-management (Father yourself)** – establish self-care and nurturing practices with recurring appointments with yourself (and related others), and establish a TimeMap to support you [refer to workshop material on boundary setting]
- ◇ **Engage your Adult Self** – address the business of life and get support as needed

Connecting:

- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your higher Self (God, Universe, etc)** – create a ritual and routine around this
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Self** – make time for You to do things that nurture your Soul, that help you heal and grow, that inspire you, that get your creative juices going, promote the enjoyment of life
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Partner** – set a consistent Couple Time to share, synchronize, get on the same page, address concerns and needs; have consistent Date Nights; address any dynamic issues preventing intimacy, passion and fun
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Children** – have family night, family meetings, family outings and vacations, mommy-child time, daddy-child time, proper structure and supportive routines, be mindful of your parenting tactics and style so you break the Shame cycle..., do repairs frequently, get support as needed
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Family of Origin (FOO) and extended family** – set healthy boundaries (refer to workshop material on boundaries), choose what traditions and rituals to keep, honor and celebrate, give from the heart and as appropriate, help as appropriate, but not at the expense of the relationships above...
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Friends** – support each other and have fun frequently, but not at the expense of the other relationships...
- ◇ **Nurture the connection with your Community and the rest of the World...** – get involved, help, give back, but not at the expense of the other relationships...



Inner Child Bonding Technique

Borrowed from: Inner Bonding by Margaret Paul

When in conflict or triggered bond with your inner child and meet its needs... This creates a secure attachment lacking when growing up...

Your Adult Self has the thoughts and beliefs
Your Inner Child has the feelings and experience

In the moment, or later when processing, you have the option of:

- Protecting / Defending (remaining reactive) or
- Learning / Attending (becoming responsive)

Protecting & Defending – Unloving (Close / Reactive)	Learning & Attending – Loving (Open / Responsive)
Deny, discount, ignore (disconnect from feelings of inner child – unwilling to feel pain)	Recognize (connect with feeling of inner child – willing to feel pain)
Abandon Inner Child - unloving adult (acts as permissive or authoritarian parent with inner child – avoids responsibility for feelings)	Responds with Care - loving adult (takes responsibility; focuses inward, curious, intentional)
Codependent - unloving behavior	Inner bonded (reparented) – loving behavior
Negative consequences	Positive consequences
Within self – dependent, addiction, feelings of low self-worth, shame, powerlessness With others – disconnected, unloving and unloved, isolated, alienated, withdrawn from relationships	Within self – inner bonding, self-worth, sense of inner power, freedom from shame and fear, able to give and receive love and experience joy With others – connection, loving responses, interdependence, closeness, intimacy, deepening of love and caring for each other

Turn inward and connect with your inner Self, your Inner Child. Have a dialogue, check-in as to what is happening for the Child, as you would a real child in need from a loving and caring place... Then appropriately attend to what comes up... Give your Child what it didn't get growing up...

Give your Self exactly what you need!

Do targeted reparenting given the parenting style your received...

Neglectful or Inadequate Parenting, & Abandoning or Rejecting Parenting:

- Pay attention to yourself - don't abandon Your Self
- Allow yourself to feel your pain
- Practically take care of yourself
- Be mindful of how you deprive and indulge yourself – moderate this
- Stop attacking our self with criticism and beating yourself up
- Redirect anger from your self to the less-than-perfect/abusive-caretaking – stop protecting your caregivers!
- Set yourself up to get external validation to help raise self-esteem

Smothering, Possessive or Intrusive Parenting:

- Determine frequency and conditions on how often you wish to see your parent
- Set limits around invasive parent – physical and emotional boundaries
- Figure out your role in continuing boundary violations
- Don't ask for help from smothering parent
- Speak up when boundaries are violated

Controlling or Tyrannical Parenting:

- Quiet your inner critic – enlist the assistance of your higher Self...
- Acknowledge and feel your pain
- Start by telling your story to a compassionate witness...
- Break free from parent's / other's domination – create space, see parents realistically, let go of expectations from them
- Discover own power and take it back – confront your parent's abusive behavior as appropriate (even if only by imagining it) and tell them how you feel
- Create a protector in your mind to help with the above
- Continue to develop self-acceptance and self-love

Perfectionist Parenting, & Hypercritical or Shaming Parenting:

- Differentiate between guilt (about something we did) and shame (about who we are)
- If you tend to self-blame, translate your shame into appropriate placed anger at caregiver and let the shame flow out of you
- If you defend against shame by projecting it on others by raging at them, identify what triggered it, feel the vulnerable feelings underneath, translate them into needs and meet them appropriately

Self-Absorbed or Narcissistic Parenting:

- Create a separate self – separate yourself from your parents, your parent’s opinions of you, and their values, false beliefs, and negative habits
- Mourn the loss of a healthy childhood
- Don’t be afraid to look inside – know your true self!
- Allow yourself to experience life
- Explore your creativity
- Join a support group / community
- Focus on establishing an inner life

Measuring Progress

Borrowed from: *12 Steps to Self-Parenting* by Philip Oliver-Diaz and Patricia O’Gorman

- **Increased Self-Management**
- **Living in the Present**
- **Self-Empowerment (no longer a victim, life is no longer a crisis)**
- **Unconditional Self-Love**
- **Abundance (realization of needs being met)**
- **Spontaneity and allowing intimacy**
- **New Legacies: Creating New Traditions**
- **Owning Spiritual Side (owning our Self in totality)**
- **Making amends to others**
- **Forgiving others (seeing others in their totality)**
- **Making amends to our Inner Child (forgiving our imperfections)**
- **Moving on live life (leaving the shame and the struggle behind)**



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