

Feeling and thought are integrally related, in fact are just the same thing. Emotion is an energy that is almost visible, and the symptoms can be seen very clearly in the body - tears, shaking, butterflies in the tummy etc. Thought is a higher function of survival and not quite as visceral... just energetically a little higher than the dense slowness of emotion. However, shame cannot be separated out from its meaning and the overlay of understanding, interpretation and thought that may be pre-verbal, but is, nonetheless a cognition. Let's look at the core beliefs, related to the core feeling of shame.

Common specific beliefs that express the experience of shame:

I am bad, defective, not good enough, stupid, ugly, garbage, disgusting, flawed, a sinner....

It is my fault. I am to blame if things go wrong. I am wrong if things go wrong.

I'm responsible for making sure things do not go wrong

I'm responsible for other people's feelings and needs. If they have feelings and needs and I do nothing then I am bad, wrong, unloving, selfish, ungrateful, worthless

I'm a failure if other people are unhappy or have a problem. I must do something to not be a failure.

I am a failure

I am therefore worthless and unlovable

I'm only lovable and acceptable if I do everything "good, right, perfect," as decreed by other people. If I am not perfect according to other people's needs and feelings then I am not lovable and have no value

Unless I berate, judge, criticize, drive, force and control myself with shame I will get nothing done

Anything that goes wrong is my fault

Common societal beliefs at this level of functioning are:

All people are basically flawed, defective, sinners - and must work really hard to be good, right and perfect

People deserve to be punished if they do not do what I want or take care of my feelings because it means they are bad and wrong

People are acceptable *only if* they do what is expected of them by others

Consider these beliefs and see who often you still live them. Add your own personalized words to the basic ideas of shame - that you have no value and that it is your fault. It is your work to correct the lies of the false self, with the Truth of your True Self. Read the following little poem (unknown who wrote it) and consider how you make a very big deal out of your shame and how out of perspective it is in relationship to who you really are.

Once in a saintly passion

I cried with humble grief,

“Lord of all sinners,

I surely must be chief.”

Then stopped my guardian angel

And whispered from behind.

“Vanity, my little man.

You’re nothing of the kind.”: