



Tool Transcript

Shame & Guilt

September 24, 2015

In this call we explore the world of shame and guilt and how and what they are trying to teach us. We learn Jayson's powerful perspective on both and how this perspective can help heal and support you.

Welcome to the Roots Community Call, September 24th, my eighth year anniversary today, kapow!

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Today we're going to talk about shame and guilt. Two things (you could call them emotions) two experiences that cause people a lot of suffering. Just notice what happens to you, okay? I'm going to say these words, so close your eyes. Just take a breathe. Shame. Shame. Shame. Just kind of notice your experience

when I say that. Okay, take another big breathe. Guilt. Guilt. Guilt. Just notice the impact hearing those words, just what it is for your personally.

So, shame and guilt are part of the human condition and have been going on for a really long time. When you say the word shame you might picture a dog with a tail between it's legs. You might picture yourself in an embarrassing moment in your life. And, when you hear the word guilt, you might think of religion or sinning or doing something bad in someone else's eyes and you're quietly feelings guilty about it - who knows. We all feel these. We all feel shame and guilt. Probably for the rest of our lives we'll feel shame and guilt and I'm personally a yes to that because they are useful feedback mechanisms. Like any human emotion, these are just feedback mechanisms to get us back in our integrity.

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So, let's look at what they are, let's talk about shame first. Feel free to type in your definition of shame here. If you got a definition of shame and guilt, just type it in. I'm just curious what we have here, especially if you haven't heard me talk about it before, some of you have. Okay, any guesses? So, shame is the assumption that you caused more harm than pleasure to yourself in the past. The assumption that you caused more pain than pleasure to yourself. You're going to want to write that down. Shame is the assumption that you caused more pain than pleasure to yourself. Just chew on that for a minute.

So, one you says, 'Shame equals, I am wrong,' that's a really common translation of shame. I did something wrong, therefore I'm wrong. And if we look at the definition that I gave you; it's the assumption that you did something that caused more pain than pleasure to yourself. If you're living in a moralistic world you might

judge it as wrong, 'you did something wrong or bad' and you're perceiving it as more hurtful than helpful to someone, so you feel shame. This is really important because people will run shame their whole lives. They will try to run from it but they'll end up running it in their energy their whole lives because their perception is skewed. Remember, every human experience has two sides; a high side, a low side or you could call it benefits and drawbacks, pros and cons.

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So, pick something that you feel shame about from your past, could be anything: college, adolescence, something you did in your marriage, something you did to someone, something you did to yourself. We'll stick to something we did to ourselves. Something you did to yourself where you felt shame. You were surfing porn when no one was looking. You lost your erection. You gave a public talk and you felt like you didn't nail it at the speech or you spoke to someone and you felt like in your eyes you blew it. You got up in fifth grade and they called on you and you couldn't speak, so you felt shame. Someone caught you doing something when you were doing a secret thing when you were in private. It conjures up shame, right?

What is shame trying to do for us there? If shame is on our side and shame is not the enemy but shame is on our side, what's shame trying to do? Shame is helping us see in the moment, it's a feeling and felt experience when we perceive what we did caused more harm than good to ourselves; more pleasure than pain to ourselves. We hurt ourselves. So, shame helps us feel the impact of that and then go, 'no, that's not accurate.' What's accurate? Okay, what I did in fifth grade was embarrassing yes, some kids laughed and I just shut down and how did it

help them? How did it help me? How did it serve in that moment? Well, other people felt smarter. Well, I learned that, if I'm going to get up in front of the class again for show and tell, I have to be more prepared. Shame helps us course correct. When we try to be someone we're not and we lose, we'll feel shame about it.

8:16

Last night, I was doing some work on myself. That's what I do when I get some nights to myself, I just dive into this kind of stuff and I work on myself. I was working on myself and I remembered a time where I lost a tennis match to a guy that I was way better than; this was about eighth grade, somewhere in middle school. And, my Dad really wanted me to be a good tennis player and I had all the athletic abilities to be a great tennis player, to be a Andre Aggasi or whoever and I didn't value tennis. It wasn't in my POS. I didn't care about it and I was mostly doing it for him, right. So, I would lose to people that I was better than, why? And, I would feel shame about it, why? Because I wasn't doing what I wanted to do, what I valued, what I cared about was friendships. I cared about relationships. I cared about connection. I would rather be with a friend talking all day about real stuff than playing tennis.

So, I will lose, not only to see if Dad will still love me but I will lose because I'm going to lose at anything, that isn't my highest value thing. I'm going to lose. So, shame helps me see that it's supposed to feel bad when I'm not being myself; when I'm not being who I am in my heart. It's supposed to feel bad. Shame is useful. Do you see that? Really useful.

10:02

Okay, guilt. Guilt is the assumption that you caused more pain than pleasure to someone else. So, we could pick anyone of those examples and if we assume that we hurt someone more than we helped them, then we are going to feel guilt about it. Man, do people run a lot of guilt. In their marriages, they have a hard time being themselves and they keep perceiving that they are hurting their spouse. Or the parent who stares at their phone, might feel guilty if their kids see them staring at their phone because the parent usually has a rule, 'Hey, no phones. No technology. I don't want you on a screen all of the time.' So a parent might shame you for that and get upset with you and then the kid feels guilt about it because they are subordinating to the parents way and who they are.*If they're being themselves and they give themselves permission to be themselves, it would be fine to be on the phone all day if they would give themselves permission to do that.

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When we subordinate to other people and try to be someone else, someone we are not - that feels shameful to us. Then if we're trying to be someone else for someone else and we don't really want to be, we're going to feel guilt about that. So, again, guilt is designed to get us back into our integrity also. Shame and guilt are really helpful. Guilt often comes from perceiving that you're breaking a rule from an outside authority and you feel guilt. Especially if they did a good job selling you on what happens to you if you don't follow the rules, like religion, then you will feel guilt and you'll feel bad, to get back in line. 'Oh, I don't want to feel guilty so I better keep adhering to the rules.' Oh, guilt is such a stinky one. Isn't

that brutal to think that I would just continue to feel guilty my whole life unless I follow the rules? Wow, that's a heavy load. A lot of people are living that paradigm, day in and day out and there's a lot of fear of what's going to happen if they step outside the lines.

12:36

So, the way to work with that - pick something that you feel guilty about, where you perceive that you hurt someone more than you helped them. Let's say, you broke someone's heart, you ended the relationship. You have to see how ending the relationship helped them as much as it hurt them and until you see that, you will feel guilty. If someone broke up with you and you perceive that that hurt you more than it helped you, you'll feel shame. There is something wrong with me. I did something wrong. I'm bad. These really young statements; really wounded, victim statements, 'I'm bad', 'I'm wrong', that's what you'll see, that's the story you will tell yourself. So, to get out of that game, you need to see shame as your ally, helping you come back home to who you are and helping you see the whole picture which is, 'Okay, that hurt me, when they broke up with me but how did it help me?' Well, I got my shit together. I stopped taking them for granted. I got a job and actually started contributing something to the world. It motivated me to not get dumped again. Or, I went into hiding and I got really into books and I became a really good reader. I started doing research. Or, it made me study relationship stuff, I got really motivated. So, can you see how shame and guilt are our friends, our allies?

14:23

So, here's what people do when people feel shame and guilt based on something that they did in the past to themselves or someone else or they perceived that they did more harm than good, what do they do? They compensate. How do they compensate? They do altruistic hacks. They act nice, do nice, be nice. They do philanthropy. They do charity. They do lots of things to compensate for feeling guilty. 'I feel bad, so I'm going to go do something good', 'I feel ashamed, so I'm going to go help someone else'. Which, on one level is actually fine, there is no problem there. That you could say, is it's own balance. I do something that I believe hurt someone, now I'm going to help someone to compensate. The only challenge with that is, it's not sustainable and it's very draining over time.

We see this a lot in activism; activism usually is lead by people who have a really big wound around something their having an activism thing about. And, that's fine, they're like fighting the cause, it's awesome and, if they cleared the issue and got rid of their guilt about it or their shame about it, they probably wouldn't be doing the activism thing anymore or they would be doing it in a more sustainable way that didn't kill them and try to run them dry because again, we recapitulate our injuries as a way to try to heal them. That's the intelligence of the human system.

16:12

Shame and guilt come in to help us also heal the system; heal ourselves. But because most of us don't have the proper framework, we get stuck in feeling guilty the rest of our lives and then acting nice on top of it or feeling ashamed and trying really hard to over-compensate and not letting anybody see that we actually feel really ashamed inside. You all know that, right? I played that game

in myself. It doesn't feel great. Now-a-days, I'm really about, how do I clear this shame? How do I clear the guilt? The basic instructions here and if you take my courses you get a further in-depth instruction, but the basic one here is, if you feel guilty about something because you perceive that you caused more harm than good to someone else, you stack up benefits to them for how it helped them as much as it hurt them. Same thing with shame, if you feel shame about something in the past that you did to yourself or someone did to you and you perceive that it caused you more pain than pleasure, you need to stack up the benefits until you see that it helped you as much as it hurt you. That's it.

17:36

Pause.

17:53

So, Sarah, if you broke your hand punching a wall and you feel, I'm guessing shame about that because you did that to yourself; then you would stack up benefits to that, right? Okay, I broke my hand, that hurt, how else did that hurt me? Well, I had to go to the hospital, I had to spend all of this money, yep. Now, how did it help you? Well, I learned to probably never do that again and I haven't done it since. I learned about the medical system and health care. I learned about health insurance. I learned that it got me connection actually. It got me closer to Bob who I was kind of at odds with and then once Bob saw that my hand was broken, he reached out to me and then we had this cool connection and we got a lot of time together. So, see where I'm going? You start to see how you breaking your hand was hurtful and it was helpful and then the shame is

gone. It disappears. If it doesn't go away, that's because you are still in a lopsided perception.

19:01