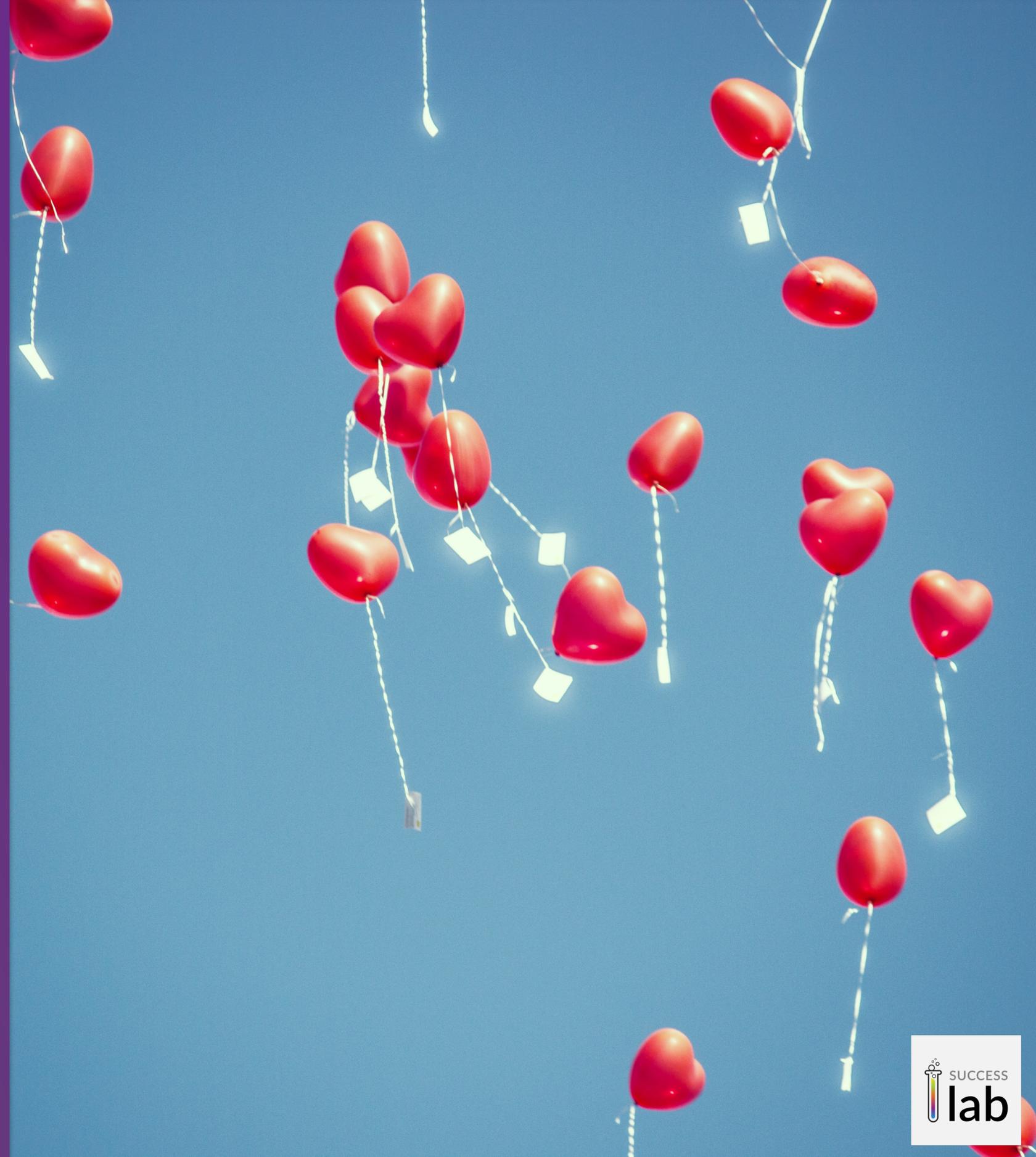


# THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE IN SHAME



# The Difference Between Shame & Guilt

Both are moods rather than emotions.

When we feel guilt we feel badly about something we did or neglected to do.

When we feel shame we feel badly about who we are.

When we feel guilty we need to learn that it is okay to make mistakes.

When we feel shame we need to learn that it is okay to be who we are.

# The Spiritual Message In Shame

Shame creates an unrealistic measure of self-worth, since you create a point of **separation** between who you think you should be and **who you actually are**.

This creates the basis for shame since you feel unworthy of measuring up to the image perpetuated in the mind.

# The Spiritual Message In Shame

The accumulation of shame can lead to depression, anxiety, powerlessness, frustration, feelings of suicide, guilt, humiliation, stigma, dishonour...

*The spiritual message contained within shame:*

**Your authentic self does not, should not, or could not actually exist.**

# The Spiritual Message In Shame



There are several messages conveyed through shame.

None of them are obvious or spelt out - they are inferred.

This means everyone has a differing version of a similar concept.

The following are the top four.

# Shame Conveys:

You are fundamentally flawed.

There is something unfixable about you.

This 'fault' is undefined and therefore a permanent defect.

This 'problem' needs to be kept secret.

# Shame Conveys:

You are not worthy of belonging with us.

You are not really one of us.

You don't belong here.

We tolerate your presence.

# Shame Conveys:

You must hide your fault at all costs.

If the 'skeleton in your closet' is discovered you'll be judged, publicly humiliated and irrevocably rejected..

If you don't acknowledge the skeleton - maybe it doesn't exist.

Above all - act like you're OK - even though we know you aren't.

# Shame Conveys:

You are alone.

Without us you will not survive.

You have to put up with our bad behaviour.

You have no rights.

You should have no expectations.

You are unworthy.

# Shame Conveys:

You are powerless.

We will crush any uprising you manage.

We will take whatever steps we deem necessary to control you.

Your opinions and interests are irrelevant.

You will do what we tell you.

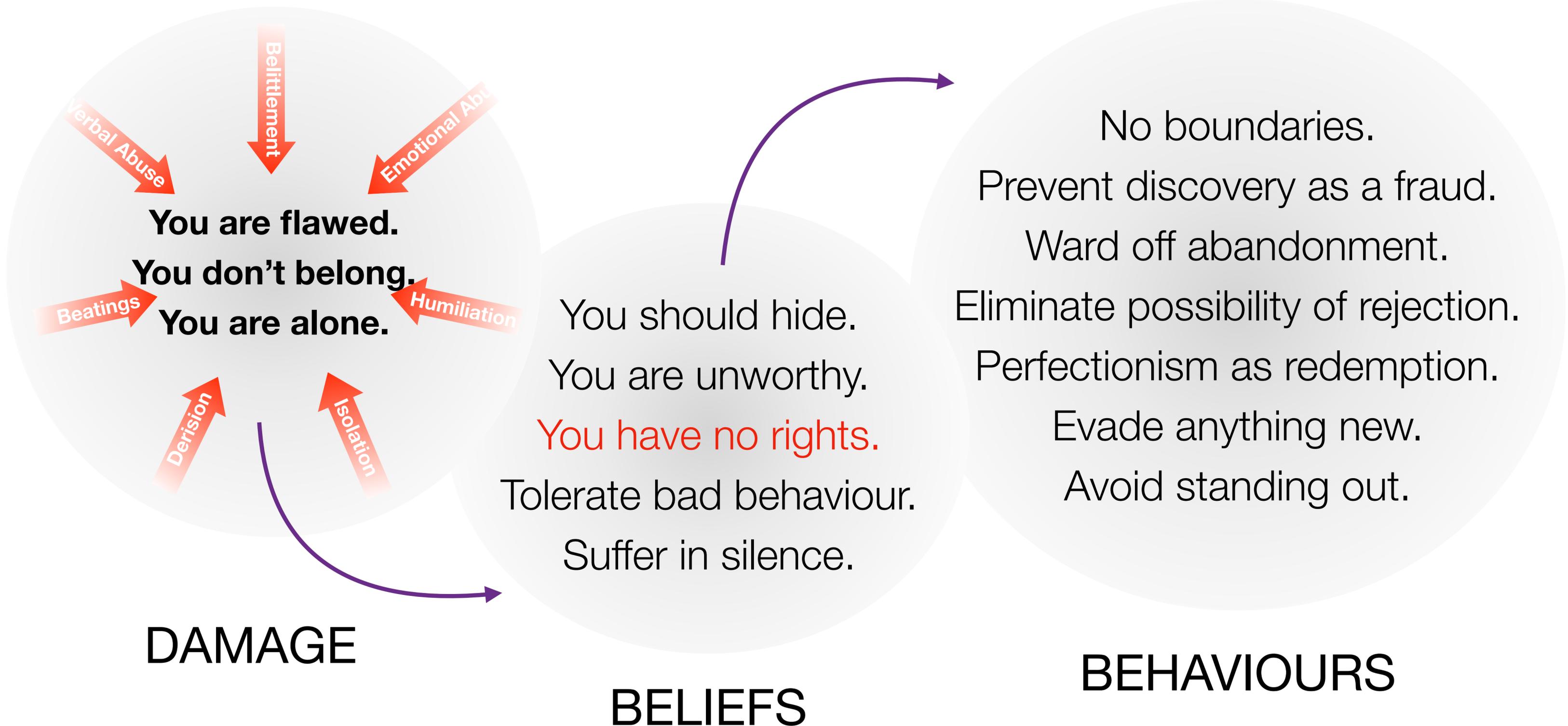
You don't get a say in what happens.



Empathy is  
one antidote  
to shame.

*~ Brene Brown*

# The Shame Sequence



Mature guilt lets you know what is unacceptable, and offers you opportunity to do something about it.

Shame, on the other hand comes to you as a feeling so deep and so incapable of your getting a grasp on it that it seems there is nothing you can do.

# Understanding Shame

The More Severe The Shaming The Greater The Toxicity.

Physical violence, public humiliation and all forms of abuse vary greatly in their intensity.

This is difficult to understand because your worst is 10 out of 10 until you experience even worse or meet someone who has...

The higher the intensity of the shaming mechanism - the more the shame becomes toxic to the recipient.

This makes it practically speaking - unmanageable.

# Understanding Shame

The Greater The Toxicity, The More Extreme The Behaviour.

Shame is normally deeply buried.

Therefore its effects are equally as difficult to identify.

Anger outburst over 'integrity', sadness over trivial loss, anxiety about what others might think of us, fear of rejection overruling reason...

Essentially - all resources will be deployed towards preventing any 'negative' that would ignite the (already) smouldering flames.

Behaviours become compulsive and extreme.

# Understanding Shame

## Shame Must Be 'Handed Back.'

Anger is not just understandable - it's to be expected.

At some stage we must express our outrage.

We must do this fully, in safe circumstances where we will be supported to 'stand up on our hind legs' and roar like a bear!

Until we risk the vulnerability of expressing what has been buried for years - we are trapped by our own fear of it.

Every fear that shame has created will surface.

# Understanding Shame

Handing Back, Reclaims Personal Power.

Getting angry confronts shame.

You don't have the right to be angry!

We actually fear the world will end if the anger arises.

Most people never recover from shaming because they truly believe they have no right - that it was all their fault.

Eventually - we realise it was all stories.



With everything that has happened to you, you can either feel sorry for yourself or treat what has happened as a gift. Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle to keep you from growing. You get to choose.

~ *Wayne Dyer*

# Healing Shame: Handing Shame Back

Nothing was ever your fault.

It was more likely your family's inability to cope.

Speak,

Write,

Paint,

Rage...



The healing is in the safe expression of the feeling.

Proceed until you are 'empty'.

# Healing Shame: Step Into Your Shame

Shame is not shameful.

You open pathways and free others when you openly share.

Share your shame.

Over time you recognise the story component.

Most importantly you release others  
who have been shamed.

Sharing is an act of courage - a strength  
the shamed believe they don't possess.

# Healing Shame: Create Your World

The success or failure of your journey to heal your shame will be crucially influenced by your ability to surround yourself with those who think you are loveable, who support you, who back you up in the way you lead your life.

People who can convey to you that they are there for you even when they don't like your behaviour - and towards whom you can healthily reciprocate.

# Healing Shame: Find The Learning

There is a gift buried under the stress,  
terror, tension and torment.

What has the shame come to teach you?

Until you find the benefit you are trapped  
in your interpretation.

Your villain is actually your saviour.

# Healing Shame: Identify Uncomfortable Emotions

That we can't sit with - owns us and our behaviour because we will ALWAYS move to rid ourselves of the disconcerting feeling.

1. What don't you like feeling?
2. How do you make that feeling go away?
3. Who do you make yourself responsible for?
4. What do you automatically make yourself responsible for?
5. What blame do you automatically assume?

# Healing Shame: Challenge Negative Judgements

Is what someone else says about you true?

What beliefs have you formed  
that may not be true?

Could anybody really know you?

# Healing Shame: Develop Shame Resilience

1. Recognising our physical symptoms of shame and our shame triggers.
2. Practicing critical awareness of the forces that drive shame, and our reaction to them. Often these are messages that come from our culture are about who we should and shouldn't be.
3. Reaching out to others who have earned the right to hear our shame stories.
4. Speaking shame. Call this naming the demon. It means that instead of shutting down or acting out, we express how we feel and ask for what we need.

1. Regular anger sessions to 'hand the shame back.'
2. Step into shame by sharing it - bring light to your darkness!
3. Create warm, loving, supportive, relationships.
4. Find the gift in your baggage.
5. Identify your uncomfortable emotions and develop 'literacy.'
6. Challenge negative judgements of yourself - especially the self generated ones.
7. Develop shame resilience.
8. Work towards gratitude and forgiveness.

# Assignments

<b>1</b>	Identify your primary 'shamers' and the methods they used to shame you.
<b>2</b>	What shame do you need to hand back? How will you do that?
<b>3</b>	What beliefs about yourself do you need to change? When will you do that? (Set a meeting with yourself now)