



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

Today's Topic: Your Inner Voice Part 2

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Your Inner Voice Part 2

Last week we discussed how Ego and Spirit demand our attention as we learn to navigate the human condition and live a spiritual life.

Today I want to touch on a destructive emotion that is a senseless, hurtful, attitude that maligns everyone. Anyone venture a guess of what I'm referring to?

SHAME

Your Inner Voice Part 2

Having feelings of shame is often confused with having feelings of guilt. However they are not the same. The dictionary defines guilt as: *A feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong, etc., whether real or imagined*; and shame as: *the painful feeling arising from the consciousness of something dishonorable, improper, ridiculous, etc., done by oneself or another.*

The recent honor killing of a baby and the suicide of the father who helped hide the deed.

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What are your thoughts about shame? After all, we have all experienced it on some level in our lives. When was the first time you remember having the feelings of shame, what was going on and who was attacking your sense of self?

Senseless
Hurtful
Attitudes
Malign
Everyone

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Why is shame such a destructive attitude of being? And if it is so destructive, why do we continue to use it on ourselves and others? How did shame become a part of the human condition? How can we stop it, heal it?

Rick Hanson, Ph.D. shares insights about the development of shame in his article [From Shame to Self-Worth: Development of Shame Spectrum Feelings in Childhood](#)

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Dr. Hanson writes:

"Shame is a very primal emotion, one that has a lot of traction in the mind. As we grow up, from infants to adults, shame elaborates many nuances, like the branches and twigs growing from a single trunk.

Let's consider four common sources of shame spectrum feelings.

1) First, consider a young child who is continually signaling her state of being and her needs.

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Maybe her caregivers respond routinely with attunement, empathy, and skillful responsiveness: this sends messages, associated with positive feelings, of existing for and mattering to her caregivers, of being inside the circle.

2) Or maybe her caregivers ignore her signals, or continually misinterpret them, or simply have a kind of dismissive tone – “I’ll put up with you if you don’t ask too much of me” – or even punish her for expressing her needs at all: this sends messages,...

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...associated with negative feelings, of not mattering (and sometimes not even existing), of being outside the circle. As many such experiences get layered on top of each other, there is a growing sense of being unwanted, of lacking value.

3) In the extreme, in cases of severe neglect and abuse, there can be a global sense of worthlessness.

4) More commonly, a kind of bargain is struck, in which the child learns that as long as she walks inside certain lines – and inhibits certain forms of...

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...expressing her true self (her true needs, her true feelings, her true perceptions of her world) – then the supply train keeps coming and all is well. But step outside those lines and wham, it’s the chilly exile or the hot attack.”

Anyone who has been hurt or maligned by toxic shame since childhood can break free from it. Today’s Daily Word affirmation of, “I image new and positive possibilities for my life,” can be a great start.

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And every time we feel shame trying to take over our emotional state of mind, we can affirm: “My heart-centered belief in my oneness that my life will grow and expand in beautiful ways,” can go a long way in boosting our sense of self-worth and loving connection with God.

The “c” word can act like cancer to destroy our self-esteem and self-worth. Think about it for a moment. How did you feel being criticized for something you did as a young child?

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Dr. Hanson goes on to explain that researchers such as John Gottman have found that disdain is typically the most corrosive element in a relationship. Be very careful with it. It’s especially insidious when we feel it is justified, as with others in the political world that we disagree with. Or those in our everyday life who will roll their eyes with the thought, “You’ve got to be kidding!”

In turn, those criticisms of the individual overall are very easy to internalize, and “You’re so stupid” becomes “I’m so stupid.” The contempt of others becomes hatred of the self.

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Besides the affirmations of “I image new and positive possibilities for my life,” and “My heart-centered belief in my oneness that my life will grow and expand in beautiful ways,” the following exercise by Dr. Hanson can be very freeing and healing of your inner child:

1. The presence of caring in me recognizes the presence of caring in you.
2. The presence of happiness in me recognizes the presence of happiness in you.

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3. The presence of a loving being in the wilderness with me recognizes the presence of a loving being in the wilderness with you.
4. The presence of being silly in me recognizes the presence of being silly in you.
5. The presence of strength in me recognizes the presence of strength in you.
6. It's okay to name good qualities in yourself or the other person without false modesty or fears of flattery. These are facts, not compliments.

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**Guilt is just as powerful,
but its influence is positive,
while shame's is destructive.
Shame erodes our courage
and fuels disengagement.
— Brene Brown**

So remember this:

*Shame says that
because I am
flawed, I am
unacceptable. God
says, because you're
my beloved you are
cherished above all
else.*