

Workbook Chapter Six Break The Shame Barrier

Self-Assessment Tools:

Self-Quiz: How To Identify Your Shame-Based Beliefs About Yourself Barry K. Weinhold, Ph.D.

Directions: Place the number in the blank before each item to indicate how frequently you encounter each belief. **Key: 1= Hardly Ever, 2= Sometimes, 3= Usually, 4= Most of the Time.** I suggest you use your intuition in responding to the items. After completion the inventory, determine your total score by adding the numbers you placed before each item. Then look at the interpretation of your total score.

- 1. "I have to be perfect in order to be loved by others."
- 2. "If I reveal who I really am, people will reject me."
- 3. "I never seem to measure up in everything I say or do."
- 4. "I am not smart enough to be successful."
- 5. "I don't think I matter very much to others."
- 6. "I don't seem to do things right."
- 7. "I can't seem to have what I really want out of life."
- 8. "I don't think I am worthy of being loved."
- 9. "I don't think I can make it on my own."
- 10. "People don't seem to value what I say or do."
- 11. "I feel left out of everything."
- 12. "I have trouble trusting others."
- 13. "I feel invisible to others."
- 14. "I feel all alone in the world."
- 15. "To be accepted by others, I have to give up who I am."
- 16. "There must be something fundamentally wrong with me."
- 17. "I will never be good enough at what I want to accomplish."
- 18. "I never seem to finish the things I start."
- 19. "I am not attractive enough to have lasting relationships."
- 20. "I feel I have to monitor what I say around others."
- 21. "I will never be a success no matter how hard I try."
- 22. "I am an accident wait to happen."
- 23. "I have to modify who I am in order to be loved."
- 24. "I will don't have enough money to do everything I want to do."
- 25. "I feel like a worthless human being."
- 26. "I am spiritually inadequate when I compare myself to others I know."
- 27. "If I open my heart, I am going to get hurt."
- 28. "My feelings do not seem important to others."
- 29. "I feel like a failure at everything I try to do."
- 30. "I feel ashamed when people react negatively to what I say or do."

Total Score

Interpretation: Look below at the ranges of scores and what each range might mean. Also look at those items where you marked either a "3" or a "4." These items

are likely the most important to work with as you start a process of changing or transforming your shame-based beliefs.

30 - 45 - Almost no evidence of shame-based beliefs.

46- 60 – Some evidence of shame-based beliefs.

61 - 90 – Ample evidence of shame-based beliefs.

91 + - Considerable evidence of shame-based beliefs

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR SHAME-BASED BELIEFS

Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

Affirmations, plus using a response column, can help you change your shame-based beliefs. Here is how it is done:

1. Draw a vertical line down the middle of a page of paper.
2. Take each shame-based belief that you have identified and rank order them from the strongest to the weakest. Start to work with the weakest one. Write the most powerful affirmation you can think of that negates that shame-based belief. Work with one shame-based belief at a time. On the left side of the page write your affirmation and on the right side of the page write any negating thoughts that surface as you read your affirmation to yourself.
3. For example, write out your affirmation on the left side of the paper such as *"I always measure up in everything I say or do."* Then on the right side of the paper write the original shame-based belief: *"I never seem to measure up in everything I say or do."*
4. Wait for any negating thought to come to the surface into your mind. Write that thought on the right side of the paper. (*"I remember that this was not always true and sometimes I do not feel like I measure up."*)
5. Now write the opposite on the left side of the paper and turn it into an affirmation. (*My memory is not the best judge of my potential. I do measure up in everything I do or say, even though I don't always remember it that way."*)
6. Keep repeating this process until you cannot think of any more negating thoughts to write on the right side of the paper.
7. Use this same process with each of the shame-based beliefs until you have changed all of your shame-based beliefs into affirmations. It may take several times working on this to change all of them. Be patient and persistent.
8. Take the best affirmations you have written and post them where you will see them every day in your home and possible at work. When you see the affirmation, repeat it to yourself three times. Repeat this process for at least 30 days, in order to anchor in the new affirming belief.

Case Example:

Peter is a 33-year-old Dane. Early in our work together, it became apparent that he carried a lot of shame. I asked him to take the Shame-Based-Belief Self-Inventory. He marked a number of shame-based-beliefs with a "3" or a "4." I asked him which of the beliefs that he marked with a "3" or a "4." did he find the most intrusive and caused the most damage in his life. He told me that he identified with many of the beliefs. He got so anxious in social situations that he would lose his voice. He avoided any social situation that he could and if he couldn't, he could not speak.

I decided to try something with Peter. I asked him to close his eyes and see if he could identify what he feels like in situation where he cannot speak. He said, "I feel helpless and hopeless." Then I ask him to open his eyes and tell me where he felt these feelings in his body. He replied, "Here in my chest." Then I asked him to close his eyes again and this time see if he could remember the first time he felt these feelings. Within a very few seconds he said, "I am about three years old and my parents are fighting and there are hitting each other. I am watching and I feel helpless and hopeless."

Peter just identified the cause of his social anxiety. This early unfinished learning experience left a long-term mark on Peter's psyche. I asked him if his parents ever talked to him after their fight and helped him with his feelings. He replied, "No." The other thing he didn't get to do is tell his parents how witnessing that fight had affected him. In other words, he did not have a voice. He couldn't speak.

We then began seeing if there were safe social situation where Peter could practice speaking up for himself. He said that he is not anxious when he is with his wife and that would be a safe place to practice. He also started speaking up in social situations where his wife was present. Interestingly, when he smoked pot, he could control his anxiety and found that he could speak up without a problem. Peter gradually gained more confidence in speaking up in social situation and at work. He Spent many years being quiet, so we both knew this was not going to be a quick recovery. He left therapy and told me he planned to continue to practice getting his voice back in social situations and at work.