

# Guilt and shame essay



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Feeling guilty for events which are out of our control is often unproductive and detrimental. Richard Ruberiest suggests that religious identity plays a special in both the expression of conflict and its resolution. Although shame is an emotion that is closely related to guilt, it is important to understand the differences. Shame can be defined as “ a painful emotion caused by conscious news of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.

“[3] Others have distinguished between the two by indicating that “ We feel guilty for what we do. We feel shame for what we Shame is o often a much trotter and more profound emotion than guilt. Shame is when we feel aids pointed about something inside of us, our basic nature. “[5] Both shame and guilt can have in tensile implications for our perceptions of self and our behavior toward other people , particularly in situations of conflict. Reactions to Guilt and Shame Because of the differences between shame and guilt (who I am versus what did), people respond to each emotion differently.

Guilt, because it emphasizes what some one did wrong, tends to elicit more constructive responses, particularly responses which seek to mend the image done.

Guilt is tied to beliefs about what is right and wrong, moral and immoral. When we violate one of these moral guidelines, it causes us to feel guilty over our AC actions and seek to fix what we have done (see cognitive dissonance). As a result, guilt is an IM portent tool in maintaining standards of right and wrong in individuals and society as a wool e. As such, guilt can often be used as a tool to overcome conflict Shame, on the other hand, emphasizes what is wrong with ourselves.

It has a much more inward focus, and as such, leads shameful parties to feel poorly about themselves

ivies, rather than simply the actions they have taken. The result is often an irritating behavior avoiding others, hiding your face, removing yourself from social situations. The reform, shame can be problematic, as it is often less constructive than guilt. In fact, shame can lead to withdrawal from social situations and a subsequent defensive, aggressive, and retaliatory behavior, which only exacerbates conflict, rather than alleviating it. [6]

Shame can also lead to other types of behavior, many of which serve little or no constructive role.

People cope with shame in many ways.

However, few get at the actual source of the emotion. The following is a list of common Sanhedrin behaviors: Attacking or striking out at other people. In an attempt to feel better about the Eire shame, people will oftentimes strike out at others in the hopes that they will be lifted up by bringing others down. While this behavior may produce shorter relief from shame, in the long term shame is only strengthened in both parties and nothing is done to get at the root of the problem.

Seeking power and perfection. Others attempt to overcome their shame by preventing the possibility of future shame. One way in which they do this is by aiming for perfection a process that inevitably fails and causes more problems. Another manner in which people cope is by seeking power, which makes them feel more valuable. Diverting blame.

By blaming our faults or problems on others, we can avoid guilt and shame. However, like the previous responses, doing this fails to get at the core problems and as a result, fails to achieve its purpose.

Being overly nice or clarifications. People sometimes compensate for feelings of shame or unworthiness by attempting to be exceptionally nice to others.

By pleasing everyone else, we hope to prove our worth. However, this inevitably involves covering up our true feelings, which is, once again, self-defensive. Withdrawal. By withdrawing from the real world, we can essentially numb ourselves to the feelings of guilt and shame so that we are no longer upset by these sorts of things.

Again, nothing has been done to address the core issues of the problem. [CA] While each of these actions may provide temporary relief, the long term effects are often negative, and the result is the passing on of guilt or shame to others. [8] The Role of Guilt and Shame in Conflict As illustrated previously, guilt and shame can play important roles in both the creation and alleviation of conflict. In particular, shame can be an important factor in the development of conflicts.

The nature of shame and the resulting tendencies to withdraw and lash out defensively can lead to escalation of an already tense situation.

This can result in a cycle of conflict; as one party lashes out at the other, both sides view themselves less positively, increasing shame all around. This in turn results in continued aggressive behavior. Take, for instance, a

situation of ethnic conflict, particularly where the members of one side have been treated like lesser human beings because of their ethnic identity.

The resulting shame over who they are leads to retaliatory behavior and aggressive actions.

In a situation of divorce where one or both parties have been shamed for various reasons, the resulting responses can only enhance the negative aspects of what is already an unpleasant experience. Although shame often leads to negative behavior, guilt can cause positive and constructive changes in the way people act. Guy Burgess refers to "guilt inhabitation," the effect of forcing people to recognize the contradictions between what they say and what they do.

Martin Luther King and other nonviolent civil rights leaders embroiled the white's guilt, when they made clear the discrepancy between white American's professed beliefs in freedom and equality and the way African Americans were treated in this country.

[9] Once the collective guilt became strong enough, racial segregation became illegal in the U. S. , and remedies, such as affirmative action, were implemented to try to make amends. Using guilt as an influence tool can be very helpful, but must be used with caution. Guilt can be used to influence people to do both good and bad positive and negative.

As with any tool, it is important that it is used appropriately and responsibly. Guilt is also useful in preventing conflict in the first place. We all have a moral code, or an idea of what we think is right and wrong. Whenever we

consider doing some hind in contrast with this moral code, our guilt will often kick in and prevent us from doing so before we ever act. As Bandmaster, Stillwell, and Heather indicate, “ guilt directly contribute s to good relationships by promoting behaviors that benefit relationships.

.. ” We treat p people in accordance with our moral codes because we don’t want to feel guilty.