



Happy to see you here at the
**Women's Value & Empowerment
Roundtable**

A First Step

To overcoming Crippling Emotions
called Guilt, Blame and Shame

-The Gang of Three-

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Dear Woman at the Roundtable-

Taking a First Step

Into a difficult topic is not easy; yet, since most of us have experienced it or still do, let's prepare together, Ok? Hopefully this read will give you an insight to what it is that might 'block' you or makes you feel inadequate and paralyzed. It's ok, believe me. That's why we are here.

Always know what we have experienced as a child, a teenager, young woman or as a mature woman, it IS our experience. In short: we NOW need to learn to deal with *The Gang of Three- Guilt, Blame, Shame*.

And that is what we're doing here. In this short introduction to the experience of guilt, blame and shame we are just getting an overview of where we are at present and where we want to be. So, be kind to yourself and your Soul, keep on reading even if it hits home- the solution and change is not so far off as you might think. Wow- off to the races and 21 days later you'll be the Master of Self!

A Crippling Emotion - called Guilt

The Gang of Three and HOW to overcome it

I. Guilt. Rarely has one small word been so widely misunderstood. Guilt is frequently viewed as a virtue, as a high sense of responsibility and morality.

The truth, however, is that guilt is the greatest destroyer of emotional energy. It leaves you feeling immobilized in the present by something that has already occurred.

Now- don't misunderstand: Human beings need to have a conscience. According to Webster's Third Dictionary a conscience is "the sense of right or wrong within the individual." Without a conscience we would have no sense and feeling about hurting one another, and the world would be less safe.

When your conscience tells you that you have done something wrong, it is important to face it, make amends and learn from your mistake. Staying

consumed with guilt, however, will keep you from moving forward in a positive and productive way.

Myths about Guilt abound. Two of the most common myths are: Guilt is a valuable exercise from which you will learn and grow. Assuming, if you consume yourself with guilt you won't make the same mistake again.

Here are the facts: Reflecting on past behavior and learning from it is instructive. Unending remorse about past mistakes serves no useful purpose. In fact, excessive guilt is one of the biggest destroyers of self-esteem, individuality, creativity and personal development. Self-flagellation about a previous wrong only increases the chance that you will make the same mistake again.

Let me share with you some of the most common 'guilt triggers': Not always being there for your children, family. Not able to say 'no'. Taking well-deserved time for yourself.

Do any of these sound familiar? For many of us, excessive guilt is a bad habit. It is a knee-jerk reaction to situations like those listed above. And our response is so automatic that we feel unable to change it. With hard work and attention, however, one can learn how to avoid falling into that 'guilt trap'.

Stay out of this bottomless pit by implementing the following steps:

1. **Review the action** or event over which you feel guilt. Was the action appropriate or acceptable under the circumstances?
2. **If so, let go of the situation** and refuse to think about it further. Go for a walk, call a friend or become absorbed in something enjoyable. Do anything but rethink the situation.
3. **If your action was inappropriate**, is there something you can do to correct it or to make amends? Now take this step and realize you have done all you can to rectify the situation.

Remember that the past cannot be changed, no matter how you feel about it. Excessive guilt will neither alter the past nor make you a better person. By implementing the above steps, however, you will learn from your mistakes and not be obsessed with Guilt.

A Crippling Emotion- called Blame

The Gang of Three and HOW to overcome it

II. Blame. It is the act of censuring, holding responsible, making negative statements about an individual or group that their action or actions are socially or morally irresponsible.

One of the most destructive human pastimes is playing the blame game. It has been responsible for mass casualties of war, regrettable acts of road rage and on a broad interpersonal level (social, familial and work-related), a considerable amount of human frustration and unhappiness.

The Blame Game is NOT WANTING TO CARRY Responsibility for own actions.

It consists of blaming another person for an action, event or state of affairs thought to be undesirable. The drive shaft of this game is a series of four irrational beliefs:

1. If something has gone wrong (or is not the way it should be), then someone other must be identified and blamed for causing the situation.
2. This person's ill behavior therefore, diminishes the respect she deserves as a person.
3. So, it is only permissible (and only fitting) to treat her in ways she deserves to be treated (see #2) such as ignoring, name-calling, and in extreme cases, physical assault
4. It's best, according to the blame-game, not to accept any significant degree of responsibility for any certain situation (i.e. waking away); otherwise one would admit that one would also diminished as a person; thus, also deserving of the same negative treatment.

We see these beliefs play out quite routinely in the mainstream of life, in family situations, at work and in relationships.

- Someone is late to the family, holiday dinner and is treated by the host as a persona non grata for the remainder of the night—given the cold shoulder, given dirty looks, or even reprimanded before the other guests
- A motorist goes down the wrong way in a parking lot and receives the middle finger from another motorist
- A student fails an exam and subsequently becomes belligerent toward the teacher and makes nasty comments to other students about the teacher
- In a court room setting the woman is 'guilty and blamed' for wearing a short skirt
- A teacher consistently gets poor student evaluations and blames the students for being incompetent and not up to par
- Man beats up his wife, blames her for 'she made him do it'
- A manager does not get the promotion she wanted and blames her boss for being a 'male chauvinist pig'

Clearly, there are cases in which a person is blameworthy for a malfeasance/ill behavior and acknowledging blame does not involve playing the blame game. In such cases there is a constructive way of settling a dispute and need not involve disrespectful treatment of others as does playing the blame game.

Much of this malcontent has to do with the refusal to take personal responsibility. People make mistakes and engage in regrettable actions. But by failing to take personal responsibility the road to constructive change is blocked.

This refusal is piloted by the belief that somehow it is not okay to make mistakes. Better to blame others than to admit culpability. For, making mistakes means being flawed and being flawed means being unworthy of respect.

But what is really flawed is this unrealistic demand for perfection. While people are not perfect they can learn from their mistakes—but only if they admit them and change their behavior in the future.

Unfortunately, the blame game looks outside oneself to cast blame. It is never me in any significant way; it is rather the other guy who is to blame. Blame me? Hell no! No flies on me!

And what shall be one of our First Steps? Being responsible for our own Actions.

A Crippling Emotion- called Shame

The Gang of Three and HOW to overcome it

III. Shame. Shame is not the same as guilt. When we feel guilt, it's about something we did. When we feel shame, it's about who we are.

- When we feel guilty we need to learn that it's OK to make mistakes.
- When we feel shame we need to learn that it's OK to be who we are!

Where shame comes from - Shame comes from being taught that we are worthless or bad or something similar. It comes in childhood from adults who say things like:

"You'll never amount to anything!"

"You are worthless!"

"I wish you were never born!"

"Shame on you!"

It also comes from severe physical discipline since each hit of the hand or fist or belt says to the child:

"You don't matter at all!

Only what you do matters!"

And from... being humiliated for our behavior. It comes from adults who say:

"What would the neighbors think of you if they knew...?"

"You look ridiculous!"

"Don't you have any pride?"

"What's wrong with you anyway!?"

And it comes from being threatened with shaming, or physical discipline, or humiliation. When we are threatened with these things, the psychological message is the same:

"I can and will treat you in any way I want to... You are a worthless weakling at my disposal!"

What happens to people who are shamed?

People who are shamed have to live in the same world as all the rest of us but they have to live in it with the deep-down conviction that they are worthless.

The amount of continuous pressure a deeply shamed person feels is immense. When they are doing well, they think it's only a matter of time before they are discovered as useless. When they make mistakes, they expect a terrifying degree of anger from the people they disappoint.

Like all of us, they have a deep need to be known and to be seen and to be recognized "for who I really am."

But since they actually believe they are worthless, they have a strong need to prove their worthlessness to everyone in their lives and over and over again.

(in adaptation Dr. Elliot Cohen)

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**Tranquility and Stillness is a profound
need of your Soul-**

**Provide it as often as you can
meditate, be still-**

**Listen to your inner Voice
it is truthful**



My dear Student, now it's our turn, right?

Please know that this course will take you through the steps to

- Recognizing your Self-awareness with love, patience and awe!
- Accepting who you are and learning to stand up for yourself
- Releasing all the Unwanted things to live emotionally free
- Reaching your Soul and rebuilding thought and action patterns for a healthy and productive Life
- And yes, it does require a bit of guts because we're taking a good look at Self!
- This course will take you to the place of shedding guilt, blame and shame!
- **I promise- we'll ditch *The Gang of Three!***

Our Action Plan- yours and mine together begins; No stopping now! 😊

Love and Light,

Anke *BuffaloFeather*

Your Instructor