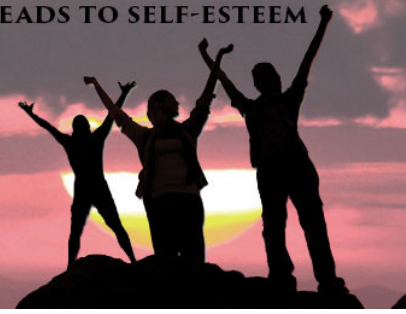


FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOU

THE JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY
THAT LEADS TO SELF-ESTEEM



Module 3 – Worksheet 6

The Shadow

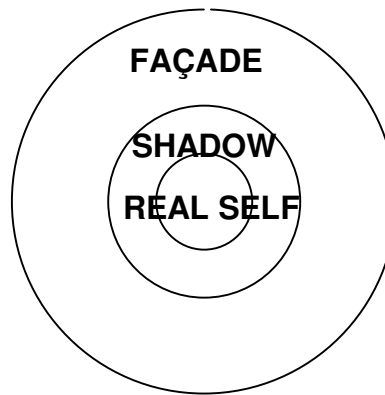
One of the key elements in creating positive self-esteem is the development of acceptance and compassion for all aspects of your personality. Not merely for the part of yourself that is "the good little girl or boy," the part who follows all the "shoulds," but also for the aspects of your personality that you may want to hide, even from yourself.

It might help if we look at your personality as a series of circles, one inside the other.

Your **Façade**

Your **Shadow**

Your **Real Self**



The outermost circle is your **Facade**. This is the part of yourself that you choose to share with the world most of the time. This is the nice, polite, attractive, intelligent, cooperative part. It is also the part you want to believe is the total you, since it gains you the most love, acceptance, and positive feedback from others. It is the part of yourself you use to gain a sense of worth. Fortunately it is only one aspect of the person you really are.

The middle circle is what we call **The Shadow**. This is a concept taken from the work of psychologist Carl Jung, and refers to the hidden and repressed aspects of your personality. This includes all the negative conclusions you drew about yourself during childhood, all the unpleasant feelings and thoughts that go against your "shoulds" and label you as incompetent, unlovable, and worthless.

You may fear that this Shadow aspect defines who you really are, and live in terror of yourself or others seeing through your Facade to these dark, black, embarrassing, evil feelings. However, it is important to understand that The Shadow is as essential to who you are as your Facade is, and that it is not your identity! The Shadow does not define who you are, just as your Facade does not, but is only a part of the incredible whole.

As long as you are afraid to confront this unpleasant aspect of your personality, this fear will control you. You will spend a lot of time, energy, and money trying to ignore or deny part of your being. It's exhausting! However, when you finally allow yourself to get in touch with EVERY part of your personality, you will find it incredibly freeing. Once you confront your darkest fears about yourself, those fears will lose their power and you will be well along the road to complete self-acceptance, compassion, and acknowledgment of your Real Self.

The innermost circle represents **Your Real Self**, and is the combination of all parts of your personality: the positive and negative, good and evil, gifts and talents and all aspects that go into making the unique human being you are. Once you recognize your Real Self you will no longer feel the need to maintain a Facade or believe other people's "shoulds" or deny your Shadow. With the knowledge of, and acceptance and compassion for your total self, you will at last be able to relax and enjoy all parts of yourself.

Exercise: My Shadow

The following exercise is designed to help you get in touch with The Shadow aspect of your personality. It involves examination of the unlovable, worthless, ugly, stupid person you may have been taught to believe you really are. This is the part of you that is unpleasant to think about or even acknowledge exists, but is definitely an important aspect of the total you.

Do this exercise when you **are not** feeling wonderful! Write your most secret feelings and fears about yourself. Talk about parts of your personality you are most afraid others will see and therefore reject you. Give your Shadow physical characteristics (i.e. it's a black, slimy mass that throbs with negativity). Also include feelings of being inadequate, violent, selfish, stupid, revengeful, guilty, greedy, etc. Give it a name. Be as honest as you can be. This is for your eyes only.

My Shadow is...

Remember, the goal of this exercise is to diminish the power of The Shadow by accepting its existence and becoming familiar with its scariest parts. Now that you no longer have to run from it, you can develop compassion for this part of you and take back control.

Reflections on The Shadow

- Through your Facade you present to the world what you want to believe about yourself.
- To achieve positive self-esteem it is necessary to accept and feel compassion for all aspects of yourself.
- Your shadow is the part of yourself you'd like to ignore and hide from the world.
- The Shadow is not your identity; it does not define who are.
- If you acknowledge and confront your Shadow you can learn to accept and have compassion for this part of you.
- Your real self is a combination of all parts of your personality.