

Loving Your Shadow to Enlightenment

What is the Shadow

Our shadow self, which was first coined by psychoanalyst Carl Jung and is our unconscious part of our personality, is made up of the parts of us that we deem to be unacceptable. This can include things like sadness, rage, frustration, laziness and selfishness. Many of us don't even realise that we have a shadow side because we don't want to accept that we are not perfect and so we feel ashamed. Because we have not yet done the inner work, instead we project our shadow side onto other people and we start to believe that it is not us that has the problem, but it is someone else.

This is when projection comes into the mix. When it comes to our shadow, you may find an unacceptable attribute in somebody else and start blaming them for how things are turning out in your life.

The shadow is the part of us that is disconnected and unfelt and it is that which has been rejected since childhood.

Importance of Shadow Work

In order to be a fully integrated human, we need to fully see and accept both the dark and the light sides of ourselves. This is why we also need to accept that shadow part of ourself. Even the shadow part of us has an important part to play in our lives. It is these shadows which teach us lessons about ourselves. For instance when we experience the shadow of anger or frustration, it may cause us to create boundaries and when we experience guilt or shame it may cause us to practice self forgiveness and self-love.

The shadow gives us gifts like boundary setting, personal power, as well as emotional fluency. On top of that, knowing our shadow can improve our relationships because when we accept, love and understand ourselves, we are then more able to do the same for everyone else.

Through shadow work, you are able to examine your childhood and behaviors, so that you can understand the reason why we do the things we do, we can remove destructive cultural and religious programming, we can heal trauma, we can identify and dismantle toxic patterns and coping strategies, we can learn more helpful ways of dealing with stress, we can return to our natural state of peace and tranquillity and we can begin to live intentionally.

When you start benefiting from the shadow work you have done you will become more emotionally mature, you will know yourself on an even deeper level and you will have increased life satisfaction.

Repressing or Suppressing the Shadow Side

Many people try to suppress their shadow as it is hard to accept that we are not perfect. However, if you start to deny or repress the shadow side of ourself, it does not disappear and instead it grows in power, causing us even more and more difficulties. The shadow is not something that we just get rid of because it is that which makes us unique and what happens to you right now is greatly influenced by your shadow. The whole purpose of shadow integration is to make the subconscious conscious and the unacceptable, acceptable. This means that when you are doing shadow work, you must observe and not judge it otherwise you are right back where you started.

When you suppress your shadow you are not whole and therefore you may find yourself manifesting a whole host of different ways:

- You may become confused about who you are and what you want out of life;
- You may begin to talk negatively about yourself;
- You may experience mental health issues, like depression and anxiety;
- You may become a people pleaser and mask your true self in an effort to make other people happy;
- You may go against your own values and make decisions that don't necessarily resonate with you;
- You may begin to feel numb or disconnected from others or from society;
- You may find it difficult to live in the present moment or to feel your emotions. This can cause you to engage in high risk activities in an effort to begin to feel something;
- You may have anger issues and have emotional outbursts, therefore causing issues in relationships.

The Ego Versus the Shadow

So our shadow side may seem like we are talking about the ego. Therefore, we thought it would be a good idea to explain the difference between the two. Although the ego has gotten a bad rap it is absolutely necessary for our existence on this earth and for our state of consciousness. The ego takes that information which has been taken from your unconscious and brings it to consciousness so it is able to offer direction and stability to our daily life. By doing this, the ego allows us to remain safe and grounded and to give us the drive to make these plans and execute them. Unfortunately the ego can become very rigid and inflexible, keeping us within our comfort zones and not allowing us to move outside of it.

There is a very deep connection between the ego and the shadow because what the ego rejects moves into or removes in the darkness of the shadow. The shadow's function is to temporarily obscure that which you don't want to accept as being a part of you or that which is too painful to acknowledge. The shadow challenges the ego by bringing up that which the ego is uncomfortable with and then the ego learns to relate to these shadows in a healthy way.

The ego's main function is to ask questions such as "Who am I" and "How do I fit into this world"? To get the answer to these questions, it will take all of your current beliefs and previous experiences and create your life based around that and this becomes your new identity. Think of it like this – Have you ever said something like "I am a mother" or "I am sick". Anything that follows a term such as "I am" is the identity that your ego has given you. Unfortunately as the ego is completely unaware about anything outside of its current awareness, it forgets about the truth of who you really are, about that which your higher self sees. Being in the conscious state only blocks us from receiving the impulses and messages from source, or what we know downloads. So, as the ego's function is to tend to the vital psychological and emotional needs of an individual, it will push anything that does not fulfil the purpose of the ego into the shadow.

As time is limited with this workshop, we will not go into the ego any more, but in our three hour workshop the ego will most definitely be elaborated on as it does play an important part when it comes to shadow integration.

Signs Your Shadow Self May Be Taking The Reigns

The first thing you need to do before you even begin to integrate them is to figure out what your shadows are. Really get to know your shadows as being a part of you and appreciate you for the learning they bring you.

Sign #1 – Judgement – What is the reason that we judge somebody else? We do it because we are wanting to prove that we are better than somebody else on some level, but it is important to understand that is merely an illusion because we are all one and there is nobody better than anyone else. When you begin to judge somebody, figure out what you are actually judging them for, because the one thing that you don't like about that person or you are judging them for is one aspect of yourself that you are yet to integrate. For instance, if you are judging somebody else for being lazy then in actual fact the reason you judge that person is because deep down you wish that you weren't so busy all the time and you could go with the flow like that person. Use every single judgement as an opportunity to begin to learn about yourself. In the situation just given, by recognising this you can begin the integration process and start to allocate more times that you are not so stressed and you can just go with the flow.

Sign #2 – Avoiding Responsibility – This is one of the most powerful signs that indicate you have not integrated your shadow and your shadow has taken the reigns. We have all known somebody that plays the victim every chance they get. They don't take responsibility for who they are or what happens to them and they blame everybody else for everything. Well if that is you then the good news is that you are able to move out of this victim mode by starting to take responsibility for yourself and recognise that you can't control what other people do or how other people feel about you but you sure can take control of how you respond to something happening. Remember that no matter what happens , you always have yourself to rely on and that you are never alone. Start to find your purpose in life so that you have something to strive for and no longer do you play the victim because you have finally powered up.

Understand that your shadow self will try to make you believe that the problems in your life are caused by everybody else but as I just explained you need to take responsibility for where you are and how you got there. When we avoid taking responsibility our shadow self is taking control and we have lost our power.

In this situation we may blame somebody else for us having no money in an attempt to hide our shadow of overspending or having a lack mindset. In this situation, recognising our shadow of blame will alert us to the fact that we need to reassess our finances and take responsibility for it.

Sign #3 – Projection - When you are avoiding responsibilities you will start projecting your problems onto somebody else and this is a surefire way of discovering your shadow self. For instance, let's say you criticize somebody else for their appearance when in actual fact it has nothing to do with their appearance and actually has to do with the negative self image you have of yourself. In order to deflect how you feel about yourself (your shadow) you put the attention onto somebody else.

Once you look at how you project towards others you can begin to piece those shadow parts of yourself that are causing you to act like that. In the situation above, you can now begin to integrate your shadow to work on the self-love and self-worth you have with yourself and perhaps find a way to become more accepting of your appearance.

Sign #4 – You are Triggered – Have you ever been triggered by something and you have absolutely no idea why. Well, the reason we are triggered is because we are feeling something that we have been repressing for so long. Although uncomfortable, triggers are a great opportunity to learn more about yourself and to grow. It allows you to dig into the past and find out what happened that triggered you.

Sign #5 – You aren't setting Boundaries – If you are allowing other people to walk over you, then unfortunately your shadow self is taking the reigns. If somebody has done something wrong against you and you still haven't set boundaries (as is the case with co-dependency and narcissistic abuse), then this is something that you need to work on. If you went to our boundaries workshop you would have learnt how you can begin to do this. If not, you can still go and register for the replay by going to <https://www.universalconsciousnessworkshops.com/hbsfe>.

Techniques to Identify Your Shadow

Our purpose with shadow work is to shine a light of love and compassion on our shadow so that we may transform or evolve any dysfunctional aspects and transmute/transform them into healthy, functional and empowering traits.

Step #1 – Journaling

Active journaling is an awesome way of getting to know your shadow. By using different prompts you will trigger your subconscious mind to bring out pieces of your shadow so that you may start the integration process. In our 3 hour workshop on Integrating the Shadow and Healing the Inner Child you will be actively starting to journal using a variety of shadow work prompts and begin the healing process.

Step #2 – Assessment

In order to identify your shadow (aside from seeing if any of the signs given are relevant to you), assessing your good qualities and then also assessing the opposite of those qualities may bring some shadows to the light. For instance, one of your good qualities could be that you are hard working and a hustler but once you assess it you realise that one of your shadow qualities may be that you don't feel like you are worthy of taking some quiet time for yourself without disappointing somebody else.

Step #3 – Meditation

For those that know Eleni and I also know that we are big proponents of meditation. Meditation can not only help to reduce stress, regulate mood and cultivate the overseeing mind but it can also help awaken you to the deeper processes that may be happening. As our meditation deepens, our attention starts to dive into the subconscious. The conscious mind will become less busy and you will start to acknowledge that which is hidden deeper in your mind, including your shadows. Doing this you will start to bring difficult emotions, hidden traumas, negative thought patterns, shame, guilt, regret, anger and any other shadows to the surface which you have been repressing for so long.

In our 3 hour upcoming workshop (which you can get for only \$47 for the next 48 hours) you will not only learn more about the shadow, the ego and integrating the shadow, but you will also learn about healing the inner child and then healing your chakras to bring about total transformational healing. You will find the link and coupon code to this workshop inside your membership area.