

# SHAME **SORT** EXERCISE

Find out whose shame you're actually carrying. A structured worksheet for sorting shame into what you did, what got handed to you, and what a system never made fair to begin with.

## 01 // WHAT THIS IS

### THREE-CATEGORY SORT

Most shame gets treated as one pile: shameful, not shameful. This worksheet splits it into three ownership categories instead. Shame that's actually yours needs repair. Shame that was handed to you needs to be put down. Shame that comes from an unfair system needs to be named as unfair, not absorbed as a personal failing. Sorting tells you which move actually applies.

## 02 // HOW TO USE IT

- 1. Write down one shame item.** A mistake, a trait, a memory, a reaction people had to you. One item at a time, not the whole backlog.
- 2. Sort it into a column.** Yours: something you actually did and own. Handed to You: a judgment you absorbed from someone else. The System: a rule or expectation that was never fair to begin with.
- 3. Ask what the column asks of you.** Yours might need repair or amends. Handed to You and The System usually don't; they need to be put down, not fixed.
- 4. Repeat as new shame shows up.** This isn't a one-time sort. Shame reclassifies itself as you get more information, so the same item can move columns later.

## 03 // WHEN TO USE IT

### A NOTE BEFORE YOU START

This works best once you can look at a shame item as data instead of a verdict, even briefly. If sorting brings up more than the item itself, like a flood of memory or a sense that the whole pile is unsortable, that's a sign to bring it into a session instead of working through it alone. This supports therapy and personal insight work; it isn't a substitute for working with a licensed clinician.

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# THE WORKSHEET

DATE

SHAME ITEM / THEME

## 01 // SORT THE OWNERSHIP

### Yours

Something you actually did and can take responsibility for.

### Handed to You

A judgment you absorbed from someone else, not evidence of your character.

### The System

A rule or expectation from a family, culture, or institution that was never fair or realistic.

**NOTE:** stay with the facts of the item itself in this section. If you notice yourself already deciding what to do about it, that belongs in the next section. Move it there instead.

**Yours: Repair / Amends**

Once you know which column it's in, you know what it's actually asking of you.