

Triggering Feelings Of Shame & Guilt

Description

Psychology Of Guilt Trips And Shaming Others

Guilt and shame are [different things](#). Shame is more focused on a deeply held belief that we aren't worthwhile or valuable as a person. Guilt on the other hand is focused more on a specific situation. It is a feeling we get when we go against something we believe or value. Regret often is paired with guilt.

Guilt can be healthy if it spurs you to grow or develop. On the other hand, shame is usually a belief that the person is fundamentally flawed, so it doesn't have a positive aspect.

[Guilt](#) is typically split into three sections, reactive, anticipatory, and existential guilt. Reactive is in response to violating your own standards. Anticipatory is when you think about violating standards. Existential is when you realize how your well being effects others. These feelings of guilt can be leveraged to get people to act. See here for more on how advertising gets people to do things with [guilt](#). Basically the advertisements make the person feel guilt by reminding them of how they fall short and then give them a way to eliminate the guilt through purchasing.

A [study](#) found that **the true trigger of shame is social**. "The true trigger of shame is the prospect or actuality of being devalued by others." When people were excluded from the group, shame increased. This happened regardless of the person's actual contribution to the group, high or low. Thus we conclude that shame, and to some extension guilt, can be triggered by pointing out situations that make a person fear exclusion.

Shame And Guilt Triggers

[Guilt](#) is triggered in four ways. A **statement of fact** that brings up a difficult truth like "millions died from starvation last night." A **statement of action** that tells a person that their action or lack of action caused something negative to happen. A **suggestion** which says you should act a certain way to avoid something negative because there is no excuse. Finally, a **question** that asks about your action, thoughts, or feelings.

Shame is triggered when we are reminded how our actions or lack of actions might separate us in some way from the in group.

Examples of what might make someone feel guilt or shame:

- Social mistakes or blunders.
- Abuse of any type.
- Being overly critical, rude, or harsh.
- Not helping someone who is struggling.
- Making a mistake or showing an imperfection.

- Having more than others.
- Having less than others.
- Being different in some way.
- Being physically or mentally unhealthy.
- Seeing police officers.
- Failing at a test or task.
- Being late.
- Breaking a commitment.
- Not standing up for oneself.
- Being disorderly.

One Post Has [12 Categories](#) Of Shame:

1. Social Status
 1. Money and work. Being criticized, getting fired.
 2. Stereotyped or labeled. Fear of judgement or being ignored.
2. Relationships
 1. Motherhood or fatherhood. Fear of being unprepared.
 2. Parenting. Afraid of not being good at it.
 3. Family. Fear of loss.
 4. Surviving trauma. Not being safe or being powerless.
 5. Religion. Not being a good enough person.
3. Body Image and Health
 1. Mental and physical health. Not having a good enough body, brain.
 2. Addiction. Not feeling happy enough.
 3. Sex. Fear of being ugly or unwanted.
 4. Aging. Fear of being ignored because of losing looks or brain.
 5. Appearance or body Image. Not having the right makeup or dress.

How To Guilt Trip Someone

The key to guilt tripping someone is to use statements or questions to remind them of how their actions make them fall short of their values. Juxtapose the person's actual actions with the consequence of them not staying in line with how they should behave. Do this with statements or questions.

1. Learn about their values.
2. Find ways their current behavior doesn't line up with their values.
3. Remind them with questions or statements. Use one of the 4 guilt triggers listed above.
(Statement of fact, statement of action, suggestion, or a question.)

How To Shame Someone

The key to shaming someone is to socially devalue them in a way that they care about. For example if the culture they are in values honesty, shame them for an act of dishonesty. The potency of this shaming is also directly related to whether the person themselves values honesty. Thus, shaming someone has 3 general steps.

1. Figure out the values of the society and the individual. How do they overlap?
2. Find situations where someone has acted counter to those values. Ask them about past feelings of shame or things they wish they had done better.
3. Remind the person of how they fell short. Do this by directly stating it as a fact, or indirectly bringing up similar situations so that they remember. You might do this by bringing up a topic where one person of the group has failed to keep that value while the others strongly believe that value is important.

How To Let Go Of Guilt And Shame

There are a few things you can do to combat feelings of guilt or shame. First, reach out to a friend or therapist and talk about the feelings. What caused it? How did it start and spread? Practice awareness of the actual feeling of shame or guilt as well as the situation that made you feel that way. Stop allowing yourself to act in that way or stop putting yourself into situations like that. Understanding and recognizing the process of guilt and shame help to eliminate or minimize its effect.

Don't expect yourself to be perfect. You can't change the past but you can change future actions.

Consider whether the person that brought up the feelings of guilt and shame are doing it to be manipulative. Was it an accident or has it happened frequently. Have you asked them to stop and they haven't? Study the sections above to learn how manipulative shaming or guilt tripping work.

In the long run, the most useful way to deal with guilt or shame is to simply use it as fuel to improve. Negative feelings are created by the brain to call attention to something or to motivate us to change. Look at the situation that caused your guilt or shame as an opportunity to improve.

See this article for [how](#).

Category

1. Manipulation
2. Personal Development
3. Social Warfare

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