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## The shame-a-thon must end

By Jeff Brown  
*author*

Lately, I have been having conversations with people who have read Soulshaping. The theme that emerges most often in these talks is that of shame. Something about the depth of self-admission in the book seems to trigger it. Some celebrate that self-revealing. Some are uncomfortable with it. Some are reminded of their own shame and want to head for the hills.

When I wrote Soulshaping, my shame was never very far away, diminishing my writing, listening in for that moment when I imagined myself relevant. If I kept myself small, it stayed asleep. But if I imagined myself worthwhile, the shame-a-thon began. There were times when I wanted to stop writing, stop the self-revealing, stop!

But I worked with it, talked to it, negotiated. Another voice inside told me to push on through: "Your call is to self-reveal and give others permission to do the same. Push on through. Tell the bloody truth." For a brief period, the shame-a-thon went quiet.

It began to re-surface when Soulshaping was released. Just when you think the monster has died, he shows up on your doorstep begging to see you. I would feel uncomfortable going places where I knew someone had read it. Yoga class felt strange. My favorite restaurant, too. The inner voice was consistent: "They know everything about you. You've humiliated yourself. Hide your face in shame..."

And so I did. For three long weeks. But then something happened. My soul's voice rose to the rafters of consciousness to remind me that self-revealing (soul-revealing) was at the heart of my journey. It was essential to my own healing and my contribution to the world. And it reminded me that writing the book was only one step in my journey. It didn't end there. The next step was bringing the message of self-admission into the world, warts and all. For this moment at least, my face is exposed.

If there is anything that can prevent us from excavating and honoring our callings, it is our own shame. With our light hid under a bushel of shame, it is very difficult to imagine our highest possibilities. If we think we are worthless, how can we spot the God-self that lives inside of us? How can we know our inherent magnificence?

Unfortunately we often don't know how much shame we carry. Some of us have no idea it is in there because it is all we have ever known. Some of us are simply too ashamed

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to face our shame. When we look in the mirror, we don't see the soul's light shining through. Distorted by misidentification and the messages of others, we see someone else's idea of who we are.

Shame is rooted in the shame pit of generations before, perpetuating the self-hatred of the collective unconsciousness, still lodged in dark energies and imaginings. It is deep in us, deep in the messaging many of us received from our parents, deep in the culture at large.

There is no simple answer to the shame-a-thon. The one thing I am certain of is that we have to get to know it. We have to track it, understand its insidious impact on our inner life. What is the shape of my shame? How deep does it go? How does it talk to me? How does it hold me back? How can I move forward despite it? How can I love myself in its presence?

We also have to talk about our shame and bring it into the light. We have to create shame pow-wows where everyone sits around and talks about their shame. We have to share those things that we are ashamed of with each other, thereby freeing ourselves and giving others permission to be liberated as well. Every week, make a point of sharing something you are ashamed of with someone else you trust. If you doubt your sexual prowess, express that. If you despise parts of your body, bring that out into the open. If you doubt your ability to achieve your goals, just admit it. Every deep dark secret you hide is fundamentally human. How can it be any other way?

Self-admission is the first step on the road to self-acceptance. Your shame has nothing to say about who you really are, never did, never will. In truth, you don't need anyone else's permission to be here. God gave you all the permission you need.

**Jeff Brown**, a former criminal lawyer and psychotherapist, is the author of the new autobiography "*Soulshaping: A Journey of Self-Creation*", recently published by North Atlantic Books.

BY JEFF BROWN | JUNE 10, 2010; 10:07 AM ET

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Mr. Hats off to you.. I am good friends with Mr. Brown, and I can assure you that he is not bald, although he does have a bald spot at the rear of his head, due to wearing far too many hats (he was warned by his Grandmother, but he just likes hats). If he were bald, I can assure you he would proudly make it known. Perhaps the real issue is why you are ashamed of your baldness. Projecting your issue onto Mr. Brown will not ease you of that.

POSTED BY: [SALTOFTHEEARTH2](#) | JUNE 20, 2010 10:52 PM  
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With all due respect Mr. Brown. With all of the great work you do and the messages you are sharing, with all your talk about shame and self revealing, please help me out here. I have never ever seen a picture or u-tube video or shared photo of you without a hat on or the top of your head cut off in a picture. I too am a balding middle aged man and I need my esteemed mentor role models to pave the way in "revealing" with out shame not only our inner being but that which I too carry shame around. My bald head.

I appreciate all that you do.  
"Hats off to you" or so they say.

POSTED BY: [NEB261](#) | JUNE 19, 2010 10:48 AM

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The process of transparency is both an intimate, spiritual and political concern that effects personal relationships, families, organizations, community and social systems in general. It is a much needed overhaul that I hope to see trickle up.

As a clinical psychotherapist (and as a person in general) I couldn't agree more with Brown.

I'm convinced that when we support the responsible exposure of shame there is hope to authentically resolve genuine challenges of all kinds fostering solid growth and meaningful change. Relevant article for us no matter our religious orientation or political perspective.

POSTED BY: [DEBBIEDEVINEMFT](#) | JUNE 11, 2010 9:53 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

The feeling of "shame" is a very good moral and ethical chance to actually listen and handle the message of it. I admire the work that Jeff Brown has done as I have read his book and participate in comments about processing on his Face Book wall. Acceptance, self-revelation and admission, and God-self are deeply felt by necessity. What I love the most about his presence is the sense of a conversation between two people. As I tune in, I feel he is tuning in. Having someone listening to your process is such a gift !

POSTED BY: [GINGERINGALLS](#) | JUNE 10, 2010 9:31 PM  
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I read Jeff Brown on Good Morning America weekly inspiration for the first time some months ago, and then bought his book. His Soulshaping Dictionary and related model of Grounded Spirituality is accesible genius and incorporates all aspects of the human experience- emotions, practicality, mysticism- in one model that he calls enrealment. What is rare about him is how well he understand the dark and shadowy elements of our lives and he doesn't shy away and pretend they are not spiritual. He reminds me of Oprah in his humanness and love for the human experience. Congratulations to the Post for recognizing his voice.

POSTED BY: [SALTOFTHEEARTH2](#) | JUNE 10, 2010 6:38 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

these words can offer more than years of therapy. the compassion and self exposure, the 'we are all in it together'-ness of it...very healing. i am so happy that this is on such a widespread network as the post! this is the stuff that can heal humanity and thus the planet. love.

POSTED BY: [OCEANBIRTH](#) | JUNE 10, 2010 4:13 PM  
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Jeff, once again a great applicable article that facilitates grounded spirituality through the authentication of the human experience. Thank you

POSTED BY: [MACHELLE20](#) | JUNE 10, 2010 2:56 PM  
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