

## **Shameful Admission or Sincere Apology?**

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Introduction: This paper is based on the presentation from the IIRP Vancouver conference, 2004 entitled: **Shameful Admission or Sincere Apology?** It is meant to suggest, to give an opportunity to reflect and think. It is not an academic paper. If you wish to contact the presenter you may do so at [jrpenni@ptd.net](mailto:jrpenni@ptd.net).

What motivated me to address the topic “**Shameful Admission or Sincere Apology?**” is my continued interest in examining the influence of shame in our relationships, both with our selves and others. Many who write about shame comment on what a difficult and painful emotional experience shame can be. Yet, our experience of shame is rich with self-insight and although a very rough ride at times, one well worth taking. It also occurred to me that apology and our shame experience are inexorably linked. Aaron Lazare, a Boston, psychiatrist, points out that “To honestly admit what we did and that our story about our self is flawed...[may] stir a profound experience of shame.” He also says that apology “subjects us to the emotional stress of shame”. Moreover, commitment is necessary because apology forces us to work on the relationship at hand *and* on our self -development. This could be a huge arduous, unwieldy task or a challenge that yields more of what we want and need in the world: generosity, kindness, and wisdom rather than greed, hate, and delusion.

The “field-work” that provided me with opportunity to crystallize an observation was within the criminal justice system running anger management programs for inmates. I noticed that there were basically two primary attitudes that inmates brought to the anger management class. One was an attitude of willingness for self-discovery. This group of inmates had a kind of grounded curiosity toward their part in the scheme of things. They seemed to be able to tap into a place within themselves that enabled them to act differently in the world. They were willing to be open and share about them selves with honesty and acceptance.

The other attitude was bitter, arrogant (often disguised), cocky, or withdrawn. These inmates seemed to take an emotional stance of protection. Their shields were always up and a game was always being played. Unlike the other inmates, their way of being in the world meant a stance of emotional defensiveness. Additional observation brought me to recognize that the defensive inmates were constantly somewhere in the Compass of Shame (page 312 in “Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self”). This handy configuration developed by psychiatrist, Donald Nathanson illustrates the defensive behaviors and mental mechanisms we use to avoid acknowledging our shame. (This will be explored in greater detail later.) This group of inmates were attacking others, attacking themselves, hiding and withdrawing from others, or hiding from themselves.

Working and listening to the inmates it occurred to me that if people are in the world one way when avoiding shame, how are they when *not* avoiding shame? And, if the defensive behaviors are arrested, what new behaviors take their place? How did one

group of inmates seem to know how to be different? What had they learned? What were they willing to do that the others did not do? What are the alternatives to be different in relationships with others and my self when I choose not to avoid shame? And, just exactly what is acknowledging shame? How is avoiding our shame, acknowledging our shame and apology tied together?

Perhaps the first concept that needs to be defined before attempting to answer the above inquiry is what I mean by shame. For the purposes of this essay, shame is a condition or perception of self that sees the self as flawed. It is the sense of having lost dignity and worth while simultaneously feeling that this flawed self has been exposed to others, whether it is close family members, other inmates, our parents, teachers, friends or significant others. To quote Silvan Tomkins “....shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul....he feels himself naked, defeated, alienated, lacking in dignity or worth.”(p.145 Pride and Shame, Nathanson)

Our reactive responses to avoid shame can cause damage to our selves and others. These are not only behaviors but also perceptions of how we view our selves and those we relate with. Often these defensive behaviors disrupt our social bonds. We become socially aggressive and antagonistic or alienated, shut down, and isolated. Neither of these tacks supports the solidarity of a society or the possibility of having wholesome individuals capable of worthiness living in that society. Sociologist, Dr. Thomas Scheff recognizes unacknowledged shame as a social, interactive force capable of causing an unending cycle of disrespect and anger. Scheff suggests that when our shame goes unacknowledged we become separated from others and identification with the other person becomes difficult. The other person is experienced as the source of the hurt and only the part that the other plays in the interaction can be seen. Scheff theorizes “the repression of shame and the bondlessness that is its cause and effect can give rise to primary deviance in the form of mental illness, murder, or suicide.” (p. 135 “Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts” 1991 Thomas J. Scheff and Suzanne M. Retzinger) Scheff’s contribution to the role of unacknowledged shame is in destructive conflict on an interpersonal and society level. I will return later to discuss Scheff’s understanding of acknowledged shame.

A more bio-psycho-social theory that has a lot to say about shame is the developmental affect theory of emotion formulated by psychologist-philosopher Silvan Tomkins. Incorporating physiology, psychology, and social meaning into a theory makes it very inclusive, but also complex. What Tomkins brings to restorative practices is the recognition of the power of emotion as it comes through the face and therefore witnessed in conferences. Affect is a contagion: meaning that we resonate with others as we see emotion on the face. Tomkins refers to this as affective resonance. As we work in conference circles we move from negative affect to positive affect and participants resonate with the affects that are demonstrated. Affect theory says that as humans we strive for maximizing positive affect. So in a conference we *may* see movement from negative affect (disgust at seeing or hearing X) then to shame (embarrassed to admit Y), to neutral (startle – surprised that someone said Z), to positive affect (we are now truly interested in what is transpiring) and hopefully to enjoyment (boy that felt good and now

I feel re-connected). Tomkins theory delineates shame as one of nine innate affects, i.e. we are born with a shame response. Tomkins continues by noting that innate shame affect is triggered by partial interruption of our positive affects. That is if interest or joy is impeded, shame affect is activated. This is how innate shame functions. A common example cited is our exuberant waving to a familiar, friendly face, only to discover, to our embarrassment, that it is a stranger.

Scripts are another important developmental angle of affect theory. Tomkins use of the word *script* is similar to writers of screenplays and theatrical plays. Scripts are the rules created for behavior. As humans begin to develop from infancy, scripts are written into our “being” from our living experiences. Scripts govern the ways we manage the innate affects of anger, disgust, dissmissal, fear, startle, distress, shame, interest, and joy. Scripts are so complex and pervasive in our lives that seldom do adults operate from purely innate affect. To quote psychiatrist Donald Nathanson on page 307 of his book *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the birth of the Self*:

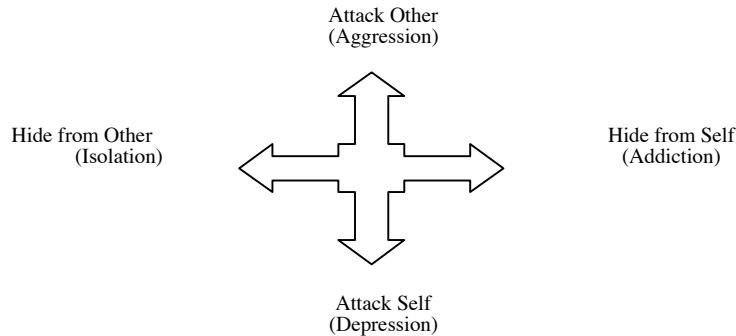
“It appears most likely that similar situations are grouped and stored as a bundle, and that a current experience of affect is compared with the bundles themselves. The existence of such bundles, which Tomkins call scripts, allows us to bypass the full review that would be required by their absence. Such a script involves both a compression and a condensation of all previous episodes, summated as an experiential pattern....”

To tie this concept into shame, Nathanson says that shame scripts are like “an integrated circuit from which all relevant prior shame experiences can be revived”. When we are operating from the Compass of Shame we are behaviors are based on *learned* scripts. We are not responding with innate affect. The uncomfortable feeling of unworth and sense of being flawed and exposed is often quickly bypassed by a myriad of reactive rationalizations, excuses, arguments, deceipts, ruses, and wiles. We build a mighty defense toward the perceived “inner torment” of shame.

Let us take a look at the four quadrants of the Compass of Shame. As was discussed earlier when shame hits we feel flawed, a loss of dignity and worth, and often exposed. Nathanson’s Compass of Shame examines styles or tactics that we engage in to avoid that painful shame feeling. Everyone that I have introduced to this compass configuration has identified times when they have used these defensive behaviors. Sometimes they are necessary. The problems arise when we become so entrenched in the compass that the quality of our life is lessened. Nathanson’s version of the compass found in his book on “Shame and Pride” is a huge gift toward understanding how we prefer to defend ourselves from shame. However, I like using a version of this compass developed by Dr. Tony Webb of Australia. It is a bit more specific and the quadrants more distinct from each other. The names of the east- west quadrants emerged from a group of men mandated to attend anger management. It is fortunate for us that we get to benefit from their insight into them selves. Moreover, Dr. Webb has assigned a social component for each pole, indicating how that quadrant can manifest in the social context. Dr. Webb also labels the vertical axis of the compass aggression and the horizontal axis alienation.

These labels will become more apparent as we detail the behaviors and attitudes of each quadrant on the compass.

The four major patterns of defensive scripts according to Dr. Tony Webb's version of the Compass of Shame are diagrammed below.



The north quadrant of the compass of shame is Attack Other. It manifests socially as aggression. War, gangs, bullying, sarcasm, clicks, social arrogance, and blaming is a short list of behaviors that describe this quadrant. The objective in this quadrant is to reduce the other person(s) and to have power over others. We desire to be seen as big, strong and in control.

Directly opposite, in the south quadrant is Attack Self. This is manifested socially as depression. It is the belief that we deserve contempt and we put ourselves down before others get around to it. Here we give our power away and disregard our worth. We take the stance that we are less than others. We avoid the chance that others really do see us with disgust because we furnish that idea for them first.

On the west quadrant we have what Dr. Tony Webb calls Hide from Other. This manifests socially as isolation. We escape and hide to flee from being exposed (this can be used positively because it gives us time to re-group). We believe hiding protects us from feeling small and weak. In the Hide from Other quadrant we perceive our selves as less than others.

On the opposite side we have Hide from Self. This manifests socially as addiction (mild or severe). Our objective is to protect from awareness any possible defect. (Both our own awareness and others.) We use deception and denial to insure we are seen as big and strong. Again, as in Attack Other, we want to present ourselves bigger than others.

Although all of these quadrants are a part of life at anyone time in any given situation it has been my observation that reacting to shame and continued, habitual behavior manifesting in the Compass of Shame is a poor quality way to live. It does not encourage or foster connection with others. There is usually only disrespect for others and our selves. To quote Donald Nathanson: "No matter what is revealed by the moment of shame, no matter what defect or incompetence is detected, it [can] become the stimulus to

some form of work on the self.” P. 329 “Shame and Pride”. These habitual defenses keep us from developing self-acceptance. If I cannot accept myself as I truly exist in this world (flaws and all) how can I accept others? We might favor one quadrant over another depending on the circumstances, or perhaps we manage our shame affect by moving around the compass in the course of an experience. All the time escaping the shame experience that will bring us to learn about our selves and move us toward self-acceptance. I strongly believe that the more self-acceptance we have the more “other-acceptance” we will have.

I would like to return to more discussion on the processes of restorative practices and through a short analysis illustrate how some of the behaviors of the compass of shame can play out when we look at those participating in conference. Before doing I would like to suggest that the reader take a few minutes to do the Matching Exercise on the Compass of Shame in Addendum A at the essay.

In considering the entire gamut of affect theory and the Compass of Shame within the context of restorative practices, I was curious what positive affect is interrupted during a conference when the offender exhibits shame affect (remember innate shame affect is triggered by the interruption or impediment of the positive affects interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy). One response from a professional who use restorative practices with sex offenders was that the offender comes into the conference with “a sense of being a good person”. They see themselves as decent people who have been forced, manipulated, or seduced into doing something bad. This professional said that it is the sense of being a good person that is interrupted and triggers the display of shame affect. I disagree and suggest another possibility.

I suggest what might have been interrupted (and perhaps a better word is challenged) is the offender’s defenses and means of avoiding shame. He has avoided his shame through scripts that land him in the Compass of Shame, probably developed overtime from childhood. Below is a chart outlining the analysis.

<u>Analysis by professional</u>	<u>Translation</u>	<u>Where is the offender on the compass?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have sense of being a ‘good person’</li> <li>• See themselves as decent people</li> <li>• Forced</li> <li>• Manipulated</li> <li>• Seduced</li> <li>...into doing something bad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrogance</li> <li>• Deception</li> <li>• Denial</li> <li>• Gives power away</li> <li>• Belittles himself</li> <li>• Helpless; at mercy of others</li> <li>• Abdicates Responsibility</li> </ul>	<p>Mostly Hide from Self, some Attack Other</p> <p>Attack Self and Hide from Other</p> <p>(Check the description in Addendum B Ways of Avoiding Shame)</p>

I do not doubt that there is potential movement towards positive affect in restorative practices. However, I will play the devil's advocate here, as I question whether the movement through innate affect is sequential with a steady, straight escalation toward positive affect. I also fervently believe that there is a great deal else going on that has to do with challenging people's *scripts*. We must be reminded that adults (including teens!) operate primarily from scripts, and innate affect is rare, although possible. I suspect that many of the scripts upon entering a conference are the defensive scripts used to avoid shame. At this time the suggested analysis here is mostly theoretical and is an attempt to provide a different look at such scenarios. The defensive scripts from the Compass of Shame are so powerful, habitual and pervasive in our lives that I think it is a disservice to skip over their potential relevance in restorative practices.

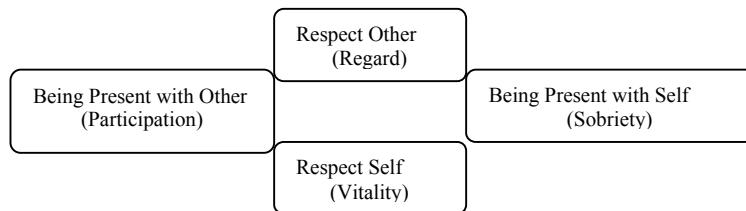
To summarize so far, what we are considering here is that those that enter into a conference bring with them defensive, habitual scripts. The conference however, because of its safe space allows individuals to challenge some (or parts) of these scripts. As participants move away from their script it allows for affect resonance and the group moves toward positive affects. An apology may ensue however, it is my contention that sincere apology is not a part of a defensive script in the Compass of Shame. There must be some movement toward acknowledging shame to get to a sincere apology. And if folks begin to acknowledge their shame they will no longer be able to stick to their habitual defensive script, i.e. they must move out of the Compass of Shame, and end defending against painful shame feelings. This is what I believe I saw in the inmates in anger management class. Their behavior came from a different framework than the Compass of Shame. They had broken the habitual processes of going automatically into the defensive behaviors. And, they had learned, somehow, somewhere how to begin to acknowledge their shame. In the particular jail I was working in there were many programs, including an entire floor dedicated to working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Gradually I began to see that those inmates that had embraced this recovery program wholeheartedly were the group that had created a new set of behaviors from which to operate from. 12 Step Programs are not the "magic bullet", but they do employ many of the principles from restorative practices, such as providing a safe place to express our feelings, the opportunity to be really heard, and witnessed by others who are their for support.

The next question is, just what is acknowledged shame? Sociologist, Thomas Scheff says, "feelings are acknowledged". And, that the interactant drops the anger and defensiveness and moves into speaking respectfully with an 'honorable' manner. (Notice how closely this parallels what occurs in conference. However, Scheff's take on acknowledged shame still leaves me wanting. There seems to be a flying leap made from all the defensive behaviors found in the compass (blame, power over others, disregard of our own worth, fleeing into isolation, denial and deception) to merely speaking with a nicer tone that then magically heals the disrupted bond with others.

Basically, as Nathanson points out on page 308 in "Shame and Pride", in our shame experience we can either employ defense or acceptance. As I see it, the defensive behaviors in the compass fall into two categories. If we are in Attack Other or Hide from

Self we see our selves as bigger than others. If we are in Attack Self or Hide from Other we see our selves as less than others. We cling to these “postures” or “attitudes” for dear life as if we are going to drown. (That is how pervasive our scripts are.) Or to use another image borrowed from the Wizard of Oz, we truly believe that if we are splashed with the water of our own shame we will melt like the wicked witch. But there is another place, another attitude that we can learn and that is to be “right-sized”. To quote Pia Mellody, a professional in addiction and recovery processes: “When you can feel your own shame....it keeps you the size you really are.” (“The Intimacy Factor: The Ground Rules for Overcoming the Obstacles to Truth, Respect, and Lasting Love” P.136).

And, so here I believe is the key process of acknowledged shame that will get us on the path to expressing ourselves differently in our interactions. I see acknowledged shame as maintaining a perspective of our selves as “right-sized”. This means we are not bigger than others, nor are we less than others. Being Right-Sized takes us out of the Compass of Shame. And, just as in the Compass of Shame, Being Right-Sized has sets of behaviors and manifests itself socially. The four quadrants of Being Right-Sized are named primarily to indicate actions or behaviors that cultivate connection with others and connection with our selves, whereas the Compass of Shame indicates processes and behaviors that severe, disrupt, disregard, avoid, or side step connection with self and others. The four quadrants of Being Right-Sized are diagrammed below:



The social aspect of Respect Other is Regard. Here we let go of the illusion of power and control over others. We become open to acceptance, tolerance and compassion for others’ situations and views. We are willing to set aside our cherished beliefs and ideals and listen to the other side for a while. We let go of believing we have to always be right.

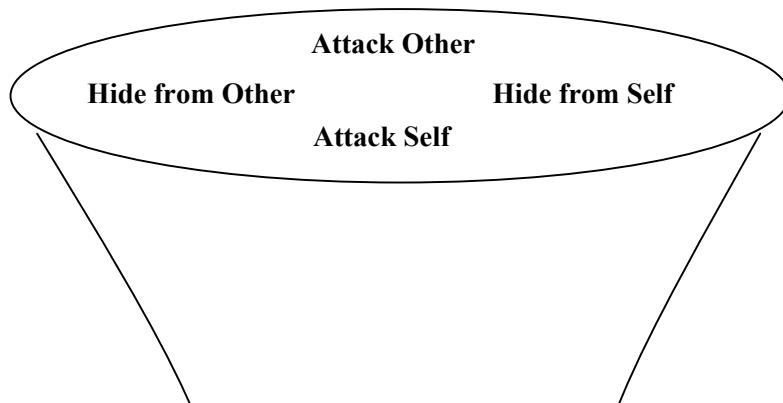
Opposite Respect Other, we have Respect Self where the social expression is Vitality. We treat our selves with value. We are aware of our own power and worth. Here we establish good boundaries with others and are no longer enmeshed. We work at gaining a sense of intrinsic worth. We know our limitations and we know our strengths in any given circumstance.

Alternatively on the horizontal axis we have Being Present with Other and Being Present with Self. The social manifestation of Being Present with Other is participation. Here we risk exposure and take our chances with attempts to connect with others. We believe that our involvement in the family, our work, our church, our 12 Step Program, our participation in a conference has merit. It is here that the willingness to participate in a

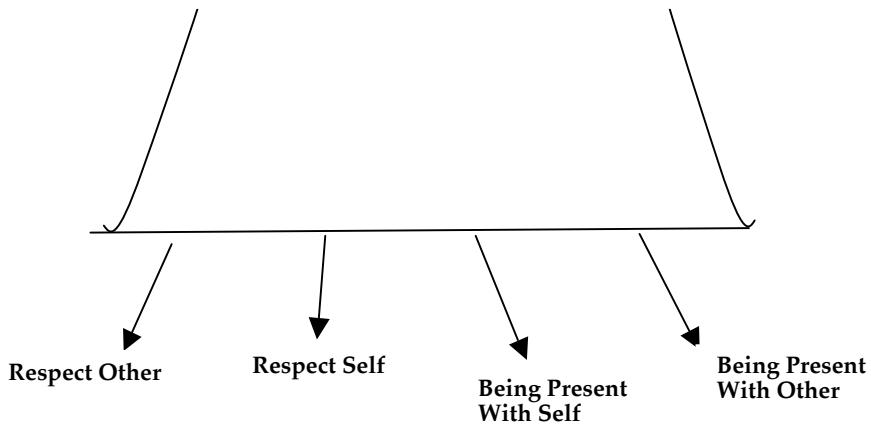
conference begins the movement out of isolation and therefore out of the Compass of Shame.

The east quadrant is Being Present with Self. When we are in addiction of any kind we keep an emotional and mental distance from our selves. We are numbed out, stoned, buzzed, spacey, or irrelevant; we are anything but emotionally present and therefore “sober”. The social aspect of Being Present with Self is sobriety, but the use of this term here is very broad. It means that we see what is around us and within us as it really is. We use nothing to alter our consciousness and stay in the present as much as possible. We engage in a realistic self-examination to maintain our authenticity, realizing when we grab on to any addiction. This means that we become conscious of our actions and willing to look at our intentions that drive them. Self-examination is not done to beat ourselves up but to cultivate the habit of curiosity about ourselves so that we gain emotional resiliency. We do not live on automatic. Our interactions become forthright and if they are not we are aware of it and do something about it to rectify “sour” situations.

It is my fervent belief that sincere ‘restorative’ apology cannot be made from the Compass of Shame. A true apology will include at the very least, the beginnings of acknowledged shame. Acknowledged shame is about self-acceptance, not avoidance. Sincere apology is about abiding and not disguising, passing over or distancing ourselves. I also believe that affective resonance with others is very difficult if not impossible when we are operating in the Compass of Shame. I believe that there is a certain amount of humility that one must tap into before being able to resonate with others in a conference. There is little, if no humility present if we are standing in the Compass of Shame. Our purpose for being there is to be bigger than, or smaller than others. If we speak with humility we are honest and assess our selves and our part in the scheme of things. Therefore, we become more right-sized. Below is a diagram in the shape of a funnel. We are always free to go back and engage with our defensive scripts, and perhaps sometimes we need to, however, if we want to open connection with others, heal our social bonds that have been disrupted, then we need to go through the process of acknowledging our shame. It means we begin to see our selves as “right-sized”, not bigger than, not less than others. In sincere apology we acknowledge our shame and move out of the Compass of Shame to become right-sized.



In this narrow part of the funnel are any opportunities to shift us out of the Compass of Shame: any experience where we get a chance to peak out from behind our defensive mental mechanisms and have a glimmer of our right-sized self. Often if we are in community we can be encouraged or we get an extra push from others' perspectives of us that help us accept ourselves as we really are. Opportunities for changes in perspective include: Any kind of bottom that we hit, workshops, 12 Step Programs, an encounter a judge or policeman, jail, anger management class, family conferences, any restorative practice or conference, a friend, a parent. And I would like to add Eastern practices such as meditation and yoga. Although meditation and yoga is solitary, through continued practice, it can bring new perspectives because these practices work with the mind and therefore our perceptions.



In light of the information presented above, let us look at an apology made between an offender and the person who was harmed. I will compare the apology process as seen by a professional mediator with an analysis employing movement out of the Compass of Shame into Being Right-Sized.

The story:

George was shot, point-blank, by 21 year-old Wally during a robbery. Wally is serving 12-25 years. George has recovered physically, but has suffered emotionally and mentally since the incident.

George has had years of fear and powerlessness. The quality of his life has disintegrated. He is no longer working. George sees Wally as a monster and fantasizes that Wally is horribly powerful. He suffers from nightmares, insomnia, and shakes. George decides that the only possible way to reverse and change his life is to confront Wally. Once he does, the first thing he asks is “Can you tell me, *please*, why you shot me?” George expresses his angst to Wally about whether he will always be like this. Upon hearing Wally’s response George says that he had waited 11 years to hear the apology and says that he recognized Wally’s loss and pain. He tells Wally that it takes a lot to admit wrong and as he extends his hand to Wally he says the handshake is a gesture of healing for both of them. He says to Wally that he is glad Wally is sorry.

Wally responds to George’s questions by saying that he is sorry for his actions and sorry for George’s pain. He says he is glad to say or do anything that would help. Then he mentions that he too has had a lot of pain because of the stupid things he did. Wally closes by thanking George for coming to see him that day and for facing him after what he did to him.

One professional’s analysis of the above goes like this:

The analysis begins when Wally makes the apology. The mediation professional says that Wally, the wrong-doer is “brought-low”. There is no analysis of George until his contact with Wally. George is seen as “raised up and empowered” by Wally’s apology. The whole interaction is power-balancing --- an exchange of shame and power. When Wally thanks George for facing him after what he did, the mediator says that Wally has reciprocated and validated George as a man.

My analysis using the Compass of Shame and going through the funnel to Being Right-Sized looks like this:

It begins with assessing where George is in the Compass of Shame. George is one down, not in touch with his personal power and in a strong place of helplessness. His life is ruled by fear and helplessness. In a sense he has given his power away to his fears. This is the Attack Self quadrant. The nightmares, shakes, and insomnia could be a result of the repression of acknowledging and dealing with the fear. If this is so then George’s physical symptoms place him in the Hide from Self quadrant. Because of the isolation created by not working, George is also in Hide from Other. He has been silent, quietly carrying around his feelings.

Then the first shift into Being Right-Sized occurs. George’s decision to confront Wally is huge because it moves George into Being Present with Other and towards Respect Self. Being Present with Other is about participation and risking exposure and both of these

occur in George's effort to see Wally. Somewhere George sees that confronting Wally will have merit for his well-being. George begins to respect himself by becoming aware of his own power. The action of going to see Wally brings some self-value. George begins to regain worth by deciding to act on something he has begun to believe would restore his troubled existence. Wally does not give him this worth; it is George giving it to himself. To conclude the analysis we see George having elements of Attack Other (in his head) by seeing Wally as a horribly powerful monster. So George shifts from Attack Other to Respect Other during the exchange with Wally by acknowledging that Wally too has experienced pain in his life. In the course of the encounter George gains a great deal of Respect Self. George moves into Respect Other as he is open to accepting Wally's apology.

I categorized Wally's apology as lame because it does not have enough Being Present with Self. He does make an *attempt* to be somewhat forthright which is an aspect of Being Present with Self. However, the apology does move Wally into Being Present with Other because by speaking about the common pain with George he has risked exposure and connection. Respect Other is also apparent in the apology as Wally lets go of the illusion of power over George. Wally also moves from Hide from Other and Hide from Self into Respect Other and Respect Self in his reciprocation and acknowledgement of his and George's pain. The mediator says that Wally was "brought low" during his apology. I do not agree with this. I believe that what really transpired was he dropped his defenses and moved into Being Right-Sized. If he were "brought low" he would still be in the Compass of Shame, down in Attack Self, groveling.

To conclude, there is an important quality of power here that I disagree with mentioned by the mediator. I do not agree with the analysis that there has been an exchange of shame and power. The mediator believes that each man had a kind of power over each other. I believe that at anytime we have "power over" someone we are back in quadrant of Attack Other where we want to be bigger than, stronger than, and in control of the other person.

In my estimation an exchange of shame and power would require that George shame Wally to regain his power and George has not done that. George, as stated above, gains his power by moving out of the Compass of Shame and into Being Right-Sized. On the same account Wally shifts out of the Compass of Shame into Being Right-Sized. In regard to power in this interaction I believe that both men have tapped into their personal power through being able to acknowledge their shame, i.e. they were both willing to show "the size they really are" to each other, to openly speak about what was really occurring in their lives as a result of these incidents. This is the process of acknowledged shame. It is both internal and external and it gets these men out of the Compass of Shame and into the arena of their humanity to come to Being Right-Sized with each other as they become right-sized with them selves. Part of the process of acknowledging shame is to tap into our personal rightful power. This is not used to wield it over someone else, but to empower us in the interaction so that we may hear difficult things that are said and speak difficult things for us to say. For me, this is what is meant by acknowledging shame. When we are right-sized with each other power is shared. These

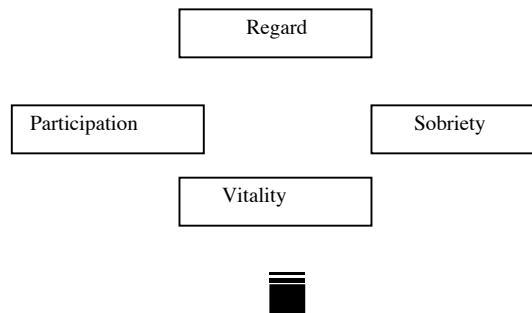
men ended up working together when Wally was released. I do not see the possibility of that happening without mutual respect, which requires that power be shared.

It must be remembered that the analysis of George and Wally in light of the Compass of Shame and Being Right-Sized is just that, an analysis. What it does is give us a chance to apply the Compass of Shame and Being-Right Sized. It is done as an illustration of these models and concepts, in addition to shedding some light on how people are one way in the world while in the Compass of Shame and another way when Being Right-Sized.

In conclusion, in sincere apology we acknowledge our shame and move out of the Compass of Shame to become “right-sized”. This is what I saw when working with the inmates. Those that had begun to move out of the Compass of Shame had more regard for others, participated, listened, and maintained sobriety by continued self-examination. They were more forthright and vital. They were mentally alert, sat purposefully in their chairs, and engaged in the exercises willingly. Even though they were incarcerated they treated themselves with respect and dignity. Some were even able to start building true worth because they were away from neighborhoods and gangs that constantly required they put on a front never getting a chance to be “the size they really are”.

There is one more configuration we could use that pulls together the social aspects of being-right sized. Below is a diagram of what I call “Collective Humility”. This is along the lines of what David Moore, another professional in restorative practices, terms Collective Vulnerability. But when we are vulnerable we are open to attack. I prefer to use Collective Humility. Here our power is equalized. We see each other as humans with both good and not so good capacities. We are honest with our selves and others, and assess our selves and our part in the scheme of things. Only then we can make a sincere apology that will begin to restore our relationships. As indicated in the quote below by C.S. Lewis acknowledging our shame is not an easy choice but definitely worth the effort.

### **Collective Humility**



Sincere and Restorative Apology

“Don’t you remember on earth? There were things too hot to touch with your finger, but you could drink them. Shame is like that. If you will accept it, if you will drink the cup to the bottom you will find it very nourishing: but try to do anything else with it and it will scald.”

C.S. Lewis

“The Great Divorce”

p. 61 and 62

## **ADDENDUM A**

**Matching Exercise. Directions:** Choosing from the list below, label each column with one of the four ways we avoid shame. There is one choice for each column.

Choices:

- I. Hide from Other**
- II. Attack Self**
- III. Hide from Self**
- IV. Attack Other**

<b>Column A</b>	<b>Column B</b>	<b>Column C</b>	<b>Column D</b>
<b>1. You are absolutely right and the other person is wrong.</b>	<b>1. Being obsessed about wearing all the new styles.</b>	<b>1. Making sure to never make anyone mad.</b>	<b>1. Not participating when given the chance.</b>
<b>2. Sarcasm; being glib</b>	<b>2. Considering doing something very risky.</b>	<b>2. Very critical self-talk.</b>	<b>2. Walking out.</b>
<b>3. I must stand up for myself by pointing something out about you.</b>	<b>3. Staying very, very busy.</b>	<b>3. Overly apologetic; groveling.</b>	<b>3. Becoming silent.</b>

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Answers:

A: Attack Other
B: Hide from Self
C: Attack Self
D: Hide from Other

## **ADDENDUM B**

### **Ways of Avoiding Shame**

#### **Attack Other**

- *Social Aspect: Aggression*
- Our objective is to reduce the other; to have power over
- We want to be seen as big, strong and in control

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#### **Attack Self**

- *Social Aspect: Depression*
- We believe we deserve contempt; we put ourselves down before others can
- We give our power away and disregard our worth

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#### **Hide from Other**

- *Social Aspect: Isolation*
- We escape and hide to flee from being exposed (time to re-group)
- We believe hiding protects us from feeling small and weak

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#### **Hide from Self**

- *Social Aspect: Addictions*
- Our objective is to protect from awareness any possible defect
- We use deception and denial to insure we are seen as big and strong

### **Being Right-Sized**

#### **Respect Other**

- *Social Aspect: Regard*
- We let go of the illusion of power and control
- We are open to acceptance, tolerance and compassion for others' situations/views

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#### **Respect Self**

- *Social Aspect: Vitality*
- We treat ourselves with value
- We are aware of our own power and worth

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#### **Being Present with Other**

- *Social Aspect: Participation*
- We risk exposure and connection
- We believe that our involvement has merit

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#### **Being Present with Self**

- *Social Aspect: Sobriety*
- We engage in realistic self-examination to maintain authenticity
- Our interactions are forthright

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