

Week 6. THE “I”: MY GIFT AND WORK AS A PARENT

HANDOUT 2: Summary of 3-2-1 Shadow Process



Summary of the 3-2-1 Shadow Process from this week's practice session

To prepare for shadow work:

- Approach shadow work with Compassion, with Openness, with Acceptance, and with Love (C.O.A.L).
- Keep in mind that we all have shadow elements... It is simply part of being human.
- Dancing with the unconscious opens up a realm of life that enables us to live into the whole, generative system that we are.
- Engage in shadow work not just as an intellectual endeavor. The body is a gateway. The emotions we feel offer signs. It is a whole-being process. Regular “inner landscape scanning” can help us notice symptoms of shadow.

How shadow becomes shadow:

One way shadow happens, is when we push an aspect of ourselves, away from ourselves, away from “I” (first person), across our self-boundary to the other “you” (second person), and possibly then even further away from ourselves to an “it, he, she, or they” (third person). F.eg. “He is lazy, she is so jealous, they only care about money... etc.”

As we prepare to do shadow work, it helps to look in 2nd and 3rd persons for clues... who bothers me, who and what do I get triggered by? I might be in a room with 20 people, and only 1 person gets at me. Not because the others are all so wonderfully integrated, which would be nice, but is a rather rare thing, but because only that 1 person hooks into my shadow through their particular way of being.

The first sign of shadow projection appears as a strong emotional reaction to anyone or anything in the environment.

Clues that a reaction might have shadow elements include:

- 1) The reaction seems out of proportion. The charge seems to stick with you or comes back seemingly out of the blue. It feels visceral, impulsive and automatic, more like an unconscious reflex than a conscious, intentional response.
- 2) The reaction is familiar to you. It is something that may be a theme in your life.
- 3) You have an intuitive sense that there is something more to this than meets the eye.
- 4) You have associations or charges that seem somehow unrelated to the specific event, or
- 5) Others are giving you feedback about something you might not see in yourself

Because the nature of shadow is that it is hidden, we need to recognize symptoms and clues, and then “reverse engineer” the movement repressing from “I” (first person) to “You” (second person) to “It” (third person) in order to become aware of the shadow and re-integrate it.

So the **3-2-1 Shadow Process** is in essence, a **reversal of the 1-2-3 repression process!**

3-2-1

To start, think of a person who triggers an emotional reaction in you (positive or negative), who disturbs you, instead of just being informative to you.

Now take some time to write about this person, describe them, what they do, write the story of what they do or who they are that triggers you. Take about 5-10 minutes. And as you do so, notice also what you’re feeling and what you’re sensing in your body... how is the story affecting your five senses, how

are you experiencing this person? Make sure to write this story with a third person perspective, so using the pronouns “she”, “he”, “it” or “they”. For example, “He drives me crazy with his lack of motivation etc”.

3-2-1

Then, move from the third person narrative into a dialogue with this person. This next step is to have an imaginary conversation with this person, speak to “you” the other, so moving to second person. Address that person directly, tell them what it is that triggers you, perhaps ask them questions, listen for what they might say (Don’t worry about whether what they say is actually what they would say, just go with what arises as you write), and go into as much depth and description as you feel necessary. So, for example, “It bothers me so much that you always have to be told and nudged to do something. Why don’t you have any motivation yourself?” Notice as you do this shift from narrative to dialogue, from third person to second person, what an inner shift this is, energetically you’re engaging with that which triggers you more directly, facing into it more fully, opening up to listen to what it might have to say to you in response. You’re stepping into relationship with it. Notice your feelings and the sensations in your body as you do this. Breathe with and through whatever arises. Take about 5-10 minutes for this.

3-2-1

And now we’ll take it a step further, behind the eyes of the other. To write as if you were s/he, in first person, to take that other person’s perspective, shifting from “you” to “I”. This is another major shift, moving energetically from being in relationship with that which triggers you, to *becoming* that which triggers you. If from that first-person perspective that you’re taking on for now, you speak about yourself, it would be in third person, so you’re really stepping into the shoes of the other, and expressing what you think, imagine, intuit, and feel they would say themselves. Write a few paragraphs, beginning with “I”. For example, “When she sees me as unmotivated, what’s really going on for me is...etc”

How did that feel? What happened for you in taking on the perspective of the one you were triggered by? What emerges for you? Feelings? Thoughts? Did you notice that what is triggering you is not just about them – it's something within you?

Gifts of shadow work and next steps.

The journey from 3-2-1 often brings with it an increase in compassion, real compassion, because we understand from the inside out. We gain deeper understanding.

Also, insight into which aspects that we see in the other person are present in us, tucked away or pushed away, and that we could bring back into ourselves, own, and work with.

Like bringing back a long-lost aspect of yourself, once you bring it back, it may well still be very uncomfortable, unfamiliar, and also need growing up in you. By transmuting the retrieved emotion, we shift a step further, from “I” to witnessing from a place of “I AM”. By simply allowing, accepting, breathing being with the emotion, allowing the “river to flow through”, neither indulging nor repressing. Breathing through, inquiring, being curious, and allow that feeling to transmute into the higher liberated energy of that particular emotion.

3-2-1 shadow process with aspects of self.

Another way to engage this 3-2-1 shadow process is to do it with an aspect of yourself that you are aware of and that you know sabotages you... for example your “perfectionistic self” which could be a “never-enough self” or your “self-loathing self” or “putting down self” or “angry self”... any aspect of yourself that you feel could be heard more, integrated more fully. You would follow the same steps as we did, first speaking about that self, then speaking to it, and then speaking as it, all the while paying attention to how you are feeling and sensing in your body. And once you have taken in the “I” perspective, not just cognitively, but also letting that “self” be felt in your whole being, breath and be present with it, allow it to feel heard, and also to be transmuted and released through your love, acceptance, listening, discerning presence.

Thank you.

Before we end this shadow process, I invite you to close your eyes, and to hold all that just passed, your whole experience, any insights that arose, the work you did, to hold it all in the vast Great Source of Love... to rest in that Vast Heart and Vast Mind. Receive a thank you from the universe for the work you do, for the being you are, the care you bring to your life, for your parenting, for every step you take to becoming more of your Self for the benefit of all sentient beings.