

OWN 'IT'

To own your 'stuff' takes enormous courage. For many it will involve ending a long career of blaming others and pointing the finger of responsibility elsewhere whilst sitting comfortably on the seat of self-righteousness, wearing the crown of 'not guilty'. Without naming your demons and shortcomings, you can't begin to own your 'stuff'. To own it means facing the truth about your attitude, your approach to life and your actions and taking responsibility for all three.

Through the naming process one learns about one's familial inheritances and how these have shaped the person you are today, and by understanding how your past has defined you, there are many wonderful insights to be had. However, the point of the exercise is not to apportion blame to those who may well have failed you. The real point is to understand how the past has made you the person you are today and to illuminate what you can do to change those things you wish to change.

Life mapping is an excellent tool for helping the individual to begin seeing and naming the anger, fear, pain, hurt, guilt etc. The Hall of Shame, which follows on naturally from that process, begins the journey of owning. It's where the person, probably for the first time, not only sees what the world has done to him or her but can also see his/her negative contributions to the world. Without understanding both sides of this equation the individual is unlikely to be emotionally and psychologically balanced. How can we be balanced if our view of the world is based on the idea that we have played no part in where we stand today? Whenever we stand in the place of victimhood i.e., not taking responsibility for our actions, we deny ourselves the truth and beauty of personhood. Personhood is the recognition that I am the major shareholder in my life and if I do not exercise that authority, I give my power and destiny away. Shame work, for most, is extremely difficult because the ugliness of some of the attitudes and behaviours that are unveiled is such that the individual would rather not take a closer look at the undesirable aspects of the self and that is why owning rarely takes place. If we find it too difficult to look into those dark and less desirable aspects of our being how can we see what's there and what needs to be changed? If you are able to look your shame in the eyes, as difficult as that might be, you can retrieve the power that your shame continually leaches away from you. Your shame is like a parasite. It lives off you the host, persuading you never to truly face it because if you did that would lead to your demise. In fact, the opposite is true and by not facing your shame your demise is almost certainly guaranteed.

So, owning 'it' takes nothing from you, in fact it gives back the power you have long lost. Every time you have concealed, denied or justified some aspect of your behaviour, you have simply strengthened the parasitical power of shame and in turn weakened yourself. Now turn and face your shame, guilt, anger, fear, pain etc., and you will be able to reclaim the power that has been lost. Although this journey can be taken alone, for most the challenge of 'owning' their stuff is best undertaken with another. This is because the mirror of feedback is important in this revelatory process, as some of the challenging and, at times, painful discoveries that will unfold are easier to make sense of with the aid of feedback. However, you need to take this journey with someone who understands the challenges of this courageous undertaking and who can offer the compassion and support required. It is only with the balance of constructive feedback and kindness that you will be able to see yourself clearly. It is our experience that when you have the courage to embrace the whole truth about yourself, rather than disliking yourself even more, you can discover how beautiful you really are, so do not fear what you consider to be ugly about yourself because even that has something really beautiful to offer you.