

# Shame, Dignity, and Emotional Boundaries

## Quick recap

The meeting began with updates from participants about their professional and personal achievements, including Gary's client progress and Dana's modeling success. Annie led discussions on emotional management and boundary-setting, exploring concepts like overwhelm, shame, and the importance of maintaining personal dignity in relationships. The group engaged in exercises and conversations about transforming shame experiences and developing healthier communication patterns, with participants sharing personal insights about the role of shame in human behavior and survival instincts.

## Summary

### ADHD Insights and Success Stories

Gary shared his progress of having over 100 active clients, primarily high-functioning ADHD individuals, which provides him with diverse learning opportunities. Annie suggested that Gary's unique position could lead to a book compiling the top ADHD hacks, and Gary agreed to use AI tools to assist in curating and writing the book. Dana announced her success in selling a \$12,000 project and getting signed to a modeling agency, while Annie discussed the distinction between shame and guilt, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and responding to internal and external voices in a constructive manner.

### Managing Emotional Overwhelm

Annie discussed the concept of overwhelm, explaining that it occurs when people take on others' feelings, creating a double bind between their own and external thoughts. She emphasized that individuals are responsible for their own feelings and described techniques for managing overwhelming emotions, including using a metaphorical "bulletproof plexiglass" boundary to protect oneself from absorbing others' feelings. Annie also highlighted the importance of allowing feelings to return to their original owner and addressed the transition period where setting boundaries may feel mean or unloving, but is ultimately healthy and necessary for personal well-being.

### Emotional Boundaries and Growth

Annie shared her personal journey of learning to let others have their feelings without trying to fix or rescue them, recognizing that this approach promotes emotional development and self-regulation. She emphasized the importance of distinguishing between one's own and

others' feelings, and described techniques for managing overwhelming emotions by acknowledging and releasing external energies. Dana asked about handling unresolved feelings from the past, and Annie advised completing or releasing them to restore personal integrity, using a process of enmeshing breaths and intention-setting.

### **Family Safety and Boundaries**

Dana discussed her challenges with her sister, who makes her feel unsafe during visits and criticizes her. Annie advised Dana to prioritize her own safety and well-being, suggesting she might not need to visit in October and could see her nieces another time. Annie emphasized the importance of communicating Dana's nervous system responses and making decisions based on what feels right for her.

### **Conservation of Dignity in Reporting**

Annie discussed the importance of not micromanaging others' interpretations of events and emphasized the role of accurate reporting from personal experience. She explained that feelings deserve dignity and are a sophisticated aspect of human development, comparing them to advanced technology. Annie introduced the concept of the "law of conservation of dignity," suggesting that human beings are born with inherent dignity that cannot be created or destroyed.

### **Dignity in Relationships**

Annie discussed the concept of dignity and its erosion within relationships, particularly focusing on how individuals unconsciously attempt to restore their own dignity by eroding others' dignity. She emphasized that true dignity is an "inside job" and shared techniques for maintaining and restoring dignity in oneself and others, including the practice of imagining how one would want to be treated in similar situations. Annie also introduced the concepts of "WTF" (making someone wrong) and "MLK" (inviting someone to their greatness) as tools for addressing conflicts and maintaining dignity in interactions.

### **Compassion for Past Selves**

Annie discussed the concept of viewing past selves with compassion and understanding, emphasizing that past actions were taken with the best available knowledge and resources. She highlighted the futility of dwelling on past mistakes and suggested focusing on future actions instead. Annie also explored the nature of shame, explaining that it is socially constructed and can only be healed through open and honest relationships. She concluded by suggesting that shame, like a seatbelt, keeps individuals stuck in place until it is acknowledged and addressed.

### **Understanding and Transforming Shame**

Annie led a discussion on shame, introducing an exercise where participants explored past experiences of being shamed, shaming others, and self-shaming. The exercise aimed to help participants understand and transform their relationships by reversing the shame experience and considering alternative ways to communicate. Alex shared personal insights about shame, noting how it can serve as a reminder of being alive and highlighting the connection between shame and survival instincts. Annie emphasized the importance of becoming conscious of shame and its impact, both in oneself and in others, to foster more responsible and aware behavior.