

Road to Addiction through Shame and Guilt

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Unless we are unlucky as in Foetal Drug or alcohol syndrome most of us would say we do not have the predetermined disposition of the condition of addiction, although some would argue that biologically some are more susceptible. One of the common factors of addiction is trauma and trauma is the release of cortisol, the fight flight or freeze chemical that gets us ready for imminent danger. When Bowlby talks about the secure base being a place, we can feel the security from our trauma, and security being one of the ingredients for the stable growth of mind and brain function, we can see a link forming. I would also notice factors contributing to this affliction, would be the adaptation from the freer self, toward an adapted self within this unsafe environment, which is normally a natural transition if the climate is positive.

When we talk about adaptation within our imposed environment this can result in loss of a sense of self, which then would make way for the false identity of who we should or shouldn't be and if we cannot live up to these ideals set by our care givers, this then can be the onset of shame and guilt. It is said by many, guilt is what I have done, and shame is who I am, are they inextricably linked, or can they be disentangled, like some would suggest. Whatever the thinking behind these powerful debilitating feelings they will need to be negotiated in finding ones-self and that is the key to turning around addiction, because I believe the true self is the part of us that wants better. It makes sense then that trauma, shame and guilt which can be parental or societal pressures for some, is the road to addiction and the brains lack of ability to form itself and leave tiny pockets of malfunction within its biological makeup.

Many of my client group discuss the guilt from their religious backgrounds, what we do with this guilt could that turn it into shame, self-defeating debilitating esteem diminishing shame, are we born with this or is it imposed. If we learn this, then surely knowing what is learned can be unlearned. We know through the use of scanning and neuroscience the pathways can be reconfigured. Then the key surely must be in letting the guilt and shame go back to where it belongs to the society and the adaptive forces in which it came. I hear in my practice by so many, I feel like there is something missing, a hole inside and usually they point to there Torso area, I would argue that knowing the ingredient for fully functioning growth were denied to these people to varying degrees, would it not make sense the malnutrition to the brain would leave the tiny pockets that have been found in scanning, and they feel like they are in the stomach viscerally.

Again, we know this can be turned around by the security of a person's surroundings, the secure base being rein-acted, the carers caring, the family environment of let's say Rehabilitation. What does society do more in its war on drugs, put our less fortunate in Prison and re-enforce the environment that they were born into. Rehabilitation in real terms is a fraction of the cost. To quote Jimmy Carter the ex-president of the US. "The measure of society is found in how they treat their weakest and most helpless citizens".

By whom have achieved this turnaround, often the biggest and greatest challenge faced by the unfortunate addicted soul, but be done it can, they do need the support of the society that they were born into.

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