



# INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

## Week 39 Transcript: Shadow Self

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This week, we continue our process of integrating our whole selves by taking a look at our Shadow Self. In Psychology, there are varied philosophies on what Shadow is and things quickly get very complex and extremely complicated.

So, for the purposes of our learning we will use this term loosely and conceptually, referring to the disintegrated parts of our identity - those aspects of who we are that are unconscious, unacknowledged and unacceptable to us.

When we learned about each layer of our identity, we discovered that there are disintegrated parts in every layer - things we are unaware of, traits we have not acknowledged and characteristics of who we are we've judged and therefore rejected or abandoned.

The integration process requires we get really honest with ourselves and become conscious of what we are hiding in Shadow.

Our Shadow Self holds all of our disowned traits. We attempt to reject our unsavory characteristics so we can project the fantasy of who we want others to believe we are, but it causes our identity to fragment.

Through this disjointed expression of ourselves we experience a loss of identity or a sense of feeling unseen and unknown from others, and possibly even from ourselves.

We don't just disown the parts of ourselves we don't like. We can also refuse to acknowledge traits within ourselves that feel threatening to others; like beauty, intellect or self-assuredness, for example.

In my 20's, I lost multiple friendships with women who became jealous of me. When they explained why, it was very confusing because they basically were jealous of me just being myself.

Because who I was caused people to not want to be around me, I believed there must be something bad about the impact I have when I'm free to just be me.



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In the pain and loss of connection, I chose to play small in order to reduce the probability of experiencing rejection again. Positive characteristics of who I am were buried very deeply in my Shadow, and in my process of becoming whole needed to be retrieved, as well.

We see this time and time again in children who are told they're too playful, too exuberant, too expressive, or if a parent is in competition with their accomplishments or appearance. These unique and valuable traits get swallowed into Shadow in order to stay in connection with the family.

Two other ways to explore Shadow are to notice what bothers us in others AND what we admire in others. For example, if laziness in others is what really bothers us, there is a good chance we are working really hard to project to the world how disciplined and hard-working we are to cover up our own inadequacies.

What we can't be with controls us. This is why we must embrace self-acceptance. If we can allow for the annoying imperfections in ourselves, we can tolerate the things we find irritating in others.

It can also be what we admire in others and find ourselves becoming envious of that points to what is in Shadow. Often, the trait we appreciate in others may be a quality we've never fully owned within ourselves. This is why we must embrace our brilliance and do the deep work of discovering our Original Identity.

When we disown any of these traits, whether we've judged them as positive or negative, they don't go away. We just hide them in Shadow where they unconsciously dictate our actions and inactions, influencing every choice we make.

Our Shadow Self is a mixture of dark and light; dullness and brilliance. We can't separate them. The Shadow isn't evil, it is simply the parts of ourselves we have rejected and denied.



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It feels safer to cover them up or to pretend. But, the more we dismiss the things we are hiding, the deeper our disconnection. In order to express the fullness of who we were created to be, we must identify and welcome our Shadow with acceptance and compassion.

Our typical stance to our Shadow Self is to push against it. To lock it in the basement, speak harshly to it and hustle to overcompensate for it. Carl Jung said: “what you resist persists”.

Trying to tie up and gag that version of ourselves only makes it react more strongly. Integrating our Shadowy parts is how these characteristics lose their power over us. Shadow must be discovered, integrated and embodied into our conscious life for us to become whole.

Welcoming all of us is how we become our Whole Self. Embracing, and transforming, our Shadow self into all of who we are unleashes our creativity to the fullest expression. Integration is a process of reclamation.

Let’s courageously restore these lost parts of who we are and embrace the fullness of our identity. Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.