

THE POSTURE of Shame & Pride

Life's emotional experiences create, form, and shape. Our somatic architecture is a blend of our beliefs, survival strategies, and the fear of our feelings. We interact with the world and create relationships through our embodied shape. And as we reach out to others for contact, love, and intimacy, we make and create relationships that may serve to reinforce or compensate for our individual shapes.

The experience and sensations of primal shame often create a compromised posture: a curled spine, round shoulders a lowering of your head, and avoidance of eye contact with others, often with a horrible feeling in the pit of your stomach. Some individuals may overcompensate for their shame by taking on a more prideful identity, so the posture of shame isn't evident. Instead of caving in, a person may have an energetically armored chest, appearing to thrust forward. Both postures indicate inner shame.

01

Notice how you're sitting right now. How would you describe your shoulders? Soft, hunched, rounded, pulled-back, tense, attached to your neck, relaxed?

02

How would you describe your spine? Rounded, straight, collapsed, upright, braced and compressed in the lower back?

03

Is your chest area sunken in, puffed-out, braced? (This can cover up feelings of helplessness and vulnerability, or indicate a need to protect oneself.)

04

How would you describe your overall posture? Collapsed, hunched, closed, upright, rigid, jaw lifted, relaxed, open, a mix of tense and loose?

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05

Do you ever feel like you try to make yourself smaller or less visible?

Totally

Maybe Sometimes

No, not me.

06

If you do try to make yourself smaller or less visible, what feelings make you want to do so? For example, feeling shy, unlovable, unworthy, embarrassed, or lacking self-esteem?

07

Can you describe the sensations you feel when you experience shame? For example, a sinking stomach, nausea, constriction in the chest, dread?

08

Describe how you feel exploring your posture and experience of shame? Draw attention to any shifts in your body, breathing, emotions, and mind.
