**How The Shadow Is Formed**

When it comes to your shadow—no one wants to unpack and explore it. Yet, there is an immense feeling of relief and gratitude when you do. Then, why are so many people reluctant to go there? In my experience, I have found the number one reason is fear. The fear of discovering that all the things you don’t like about other people, really resides within you and your subconscious.

Maybe you’ve reacted badly to a person or situation and wondered, “What the heck just happened? Why did I just do that?” What happened was, a shadow aspect, or a belief, was activated in your subconscious. In other words, it was triggered. And often, when you hear it was one of your shadow aspects, you first want to deny it. Besides fear, there are other things we may find in our shadow, such as our anger, our shame, our grief, our judgment and criticism of others, our saboteur, or our wounded child.

**Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of others. ~ Carl Jung**

Whatever it is we are keeping in the dark doesn’t go away just because we don’t see it, hear it, or feel it. Actually, the more we deny or push it down, the stronger it becomes, weaving its way into our everyday life.

**Looking Inside to Your Shadow**

The nine incomplete sentences in the slide that follow are from ***Bringing Your Shadow Out of the Dark*, by Robert Augustus Masters, Ph.D**. You want to complete the sentences without thinking. Don't worry about copying the entire sentence as there is a form for you to download in the next lecture. You'll have extra time here to say them out loud and then immediately write down your answer. At a later date or time, revisit your responses and add anything else that comes to you.

**Looking Inside to Your Shadow**

Something in me I often feel an aversion for is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The emotion I’m least comfortable expressing is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What I have a hard time admitting in an argument is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What I’m most hesitant to express in a relationship is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What I least want others to know about me is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I don’t like admitting that I am \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When I feel shame, what I usually do is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What I most readily judge others for is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I tend to give my power away when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Your responses point to things that are probably in your shadow, whether partially or fully. What matters here is that you’re turning toward your shadow, accessing some curiosity about what may be in it. Looking inside is a process of ongoing discovery; treat it as such.

[**Shadow Work**](https://gowithinspiritualcoaching.com/shadow-work/)**and Reactivity**

Much, if not all, of our shadow was indoctrinated when we were small. Our parents told us how to act, how to feel, what was right or wrong; our behavior was conditioned or programmed into what our parents thought was an acceptable form. Then our siblings, grandparents, teachers, and religious leaders layered conditions on us. These conditions became our beliefs.

We all have beliefs, but most of us don’t know them very well. And our shadow is packed with beliefs we haven’t examined, faced, or even brought into our consciousness. When you react negatively to something, there’s a belief you need to explore. **Reactivity is the knee-jerk dramatization of activated shadow material.** Some people think that if they think positive thoughts and use affirmations, they’ll change.

***They may, but not for long.***

Your conditioning will always come back up, like an unwanted weed. One way of getting a handle on your reactivity is to admit to yourself you’re reactive.

**Pause a moment.**

When you take time and step back from whatever it is that activated you, you begin to create space for the reactive you instead of continuing to identify with it. In a way, you are creating space for yourself as intervening in your reactivity. As a result, you can acknowledge the shadow self and begin learning how to work with it.

**It begins with awareness; then, the work follows.**

This is the end of the lecture. After you print out the Shadow Work Form and finish the quiz on what you've learned, you'll hear an important message from me. I can't wait to meet you there!

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