

## Inside Shame Transformation



with Caryn Scotto d' Luzia, MA, SEP, Developer of AST Model of Holistic Shame Resolution®

### Why Naming Shame is NOT Always the Path to its Resolution

"So what does that yuckiness feel like after you've relieved yourself by watching porn and your wife calls you to the dinner table to eat with her and your kids?"

My client grabs his head with his hands as his chin sinks into his chest. He remains silent.

"I'm sorry it feels that bad."

He sighs.

"The thing is I'm not really a screw up. It's this one area." He shakes his head.

"I feel compassion that you are dealing with this at all. I also know it is completely possible to break this cycle."

"You know. I know that you're the shame queen." He said exasperated.

"Shame resolution." I add.

"Whatever." He smirked.

"Well, you wouldn't be getting your money's worth if I didn't make that important distinction."

"Ok, but I am not having shame! I am not ashamed. I don't think porn is bad. I wanna get that straight." His hands were balled up in front of him as he sat on the

edge of his chair. "I just wanna be able to pick and choose if I am gonna watch porn. Not feel like some maniac whose gonna explode if my kid wants to tell me about school and I feel like I need a porn release first. My son is only gonna be 10 once in his life. Porn's gonna survive climate change." He said sticking out his chin.

I nodded. "Just like I want to make sure you know there is a difference between shame and shame resolution, you want to make sure I know this is about choice for you, not shame."

"Exactly." He said falling back in his chair like he had just gotten something important off his chest.

This exchange between myself and one of my clients offers a perfect example of a basic principle at the heart of AST Model of Holistic Shame Resolution® : don't get ahead of your clients; don't be the first to name shame unless or until they are naming it themselves. This flouts a very popular notion of 'name the shame', 'throw a spotlight on shame to heal it', 'name it to tame it' and so on.

What I've experienced with hundreds of clients is that naming shame can be essential and liberating *when it is the client who is naming his or her own experience*. When that initial naming is reflected back by the facilitator it can be even further empowering.

But the key here is the client naming his or her own shame. This is experienced differently than the word, label, diagnosis or even experience coming from the outside. Even if you are not carrying judgement, society is. Shame is a loaded term.

In my experience, as with the client I recounted above, the shame aspect of someone's wounding may not be apparent to them. (In fact, AST Model is built on 14 Paradigm Shifts and Shift #1 states that shame is often disguised in our societies as monkey mind, failure, not good enough, compulsivity, inner critic, addiction, depression, neediness or selflessness.)

Working with many cultures around the world, where verbalizing one's thoughts is less important or even shameful than it is in the West, has taught me that naming shame is not always crucial to its resolution. In fact, it is not even one of the 10 Milestones of shame transformation according to AST Model®. In reality there are some cultures and religions that feel very threatened by the idea of removing shame. How do I work in these contexts?

Simple.

I think of shame and discuss it from a neurobiological perspective. I call it the grand marshal of all inhibitory processes. From this perspective, if health,

wellbeing, peace, goodness, light or life is being inhibited most people around the world agree they would like to shift that for themselves or someone else. If you have a sadist on your hands, however, you have bigger problems than simply shame resolution.

In the case of my client, when we went on to feel in his body how his right to choose was inhibited by some neuro-chemical looping process, he felt more empowered "to take back control of his life" from this "lame, ongoing programing". He experienced his work as his adult taking back his life for both his child self and his own child's sake. From this place we teased out what he had been feeling powerless about in his life that triggered his childhood powerless (those early inhibition patterns in his body that thwarted, it turned out, the healthy expression of his pubescence.) He discovered and repaired all this while never mentioning the word: shame. He went on to take back his life with the help of 20 AST Model sessions, a 12 step program, weekly yoga, and taking some tantric sexuality workshops with his wife. If I had not given him the space and ability to own and name his own process, I am doubtful he would have continued to work with me or gotten his life back.

My best advice: let the client be your guide where naming shame is concerned.



**Caryn Scotto d' Luzia** is an innovative somatic facilitator, educator and trainer. She is developer of AST Model of Holistic Shame Resolution®, a neurobiologically-principled, attachment based approach that specializes in chronic shame relief, building shame and inner critic resilience, healing shame-based early trauma, facilitating shame-based attachment re-patterning, and supporting life-affirming authentic self-expression and empowerment.

She is the author of the following ebooks and articles, *Alchemy of Shame Transformation for Therapists and Healing Professionals (AST)*, *The 5 Step Journey to Healing Social Phobia*, *The Yin/Yang of Abandonment Recovery*, and *Wound & Essence: A Call and Response Approach to Transformation*. She is leading a shame-free living movement and training therapists, healers, and community leaders how

to facilitate shame resolution and cultivate acceptance, connection, belonging, worth and well-being.

Caryn works face-to-face with people around the world on Skype, and in-person in the California's Bay Area and New York City where she sees adult clients. She offers phone case consults to therapists, healers, and coaches as well as teaches neurobiological principles through webinars online. On a wider scale, she collaborates with UN affiliated NGOs and Governments to heal collective trauma and post conflict PTSD. She is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner and SETI adjunct faculty member, a member of the UN NGO Committee on Mental Health, USABP presenter, and speaker at the United Nations on the issue of resolving shame in women and girls around the world.