

## Inside Shame Transformation



with Caryn Scotto d' Luzia

*Editor's Note: The 'client' in this blog represents a collage of stories and experiences to represent the writer's perspective. This is not one real person.*

Her cheeks were beet red and her blonde wig hung down in front of her face hiding much of her eyes from my view.

"What's happening for you?" I asked.

Her fist came up in front of her mouth as though she contemplated putting it in her mouth.

"I don't know what you are going through, but I can only imagine you must feel very naked. Can I place a respectful shroud around you in whatever way feels honoring?" I asked.

She nodded and tears began to trickle from her cheek down over her pale knuckles, between her closed lips and down her chin.

"I understand as a family unit it is also your disgrace and your loss of purity, but it is NOT your responsibility," I say.

She tilts her head toward me, her eyes still cast down. "It is my responsibility. It is my duty as his wife and I failed."

"If a man is provided good healthy food at every meal, prepared wholesomely and with love, and for some reason inside of him he sneaks out and eats bacon, who is responsible?"

She cracks a bitter smile. Sighs. "What if my food wasn't so healthy? Wholesome enough? What if that's why?" she replied lifting her head in defiance.

"A carrot is only as wholesome as the soil it grows in and the waters it absorbs and the quality of the light and air it is exchanging to grow," I say.

She laughs bitterly again, "You know if you were born a man, you would be a good Rabbi."

A Rabbi was given my name and contact info from a colleague who knew I worked with refugees on shame resolution with people from cultures and religions all over the world. I was respected by the United Nations to show dignity to people and not press a secular agenda. That led the Rabbi to contact me. I was spending three months back East shepherding my elderly mother through her first knee replacement surgery. I said I was only there for a short time, but I would see what I could do.

Sarah came to see me based on the Rabbi's recommendations. She was racked with guilt and shame because her husband was addicted to having sex with prostitutes. She had tried for a number of years to help him and finally she contracted an STD. The Rabbi suggested the husband was unfit to be a husband and that he move out of the house until he was able to be a proper husband again. When her husband left, Sarah became so depressed she locked herself in her room while their eight children fended for themselves. The Rabbi went to see Sarah regularly and talked to her about the healing God would make happen for her and her husband. How her husband would eventually return a new man if she prayed and took care of her family. He also told Sarah her husband's leaving was *not* her fault. She could not accept that. When she came to me she was mostly numb. My first question to her was about what she delighted in when she was a little child of wonder. She spoke to me vaguely of small birds. How she watched the little birds in the sunlight from the back porch.

"I don't think I would have the patience to be a Rabbi," I said.

"I am the one losing my patience. What are we doing? This is a waste." She said.

"Would you like to try something?"

"No! Absolutely not." She turned her back to me in the chair.

I went out on a limb.

"So, you want to pretend you are grieving while you secretly remain angry with God?" I asked.

"How dare you!" She said with her back to me. "I am not pretending. You don't know what it is like. What I have been through. How I have no way to face God like this."

"You're right. I don't know. Could you face God like Chagall's white dove?" I asked. "Have you seen it? Chagall's huge white dove of purity that looms over the Holocaust littered earth?"

She gestured me to stop, lifting her arm in the air. "Jews were innocent. Why should I go to God hiding the shame of a Nazi?"

"So you are not as bad as a Nazi and not as good as a human woman...." I said trailing off. "What about a bird? Can you go to God as a bird?" I asked.

"Not a big white bird. A small chirping brown summer bird, a yard bird from my mother's house." Her voice trailed off quietly.

Her back was still to me, but I could feel her spirit awakening for the first time since I met her.

"Yes, and will God allow that?" I asked.

She nodded.

"And can God see you in the light or shadow?" I continued.

"It is a gray day." She responded almost as if she were now bored.

"What does God want from you so as to see you bathing in sunlight. In the clear waters of a bird bath, once cleaned, ready to emerge as a woman again?"

She sighed a heavy sigh. Looked down at her hands. Shook her head.

"You don't have to tell me if it is private," I assured her.

She was silent for another full 60 seconds.

"I see the red sea crashing back together from both sides, killing my husband and all his prostitutes as they try to get through."

"How does that feel?"

She took a deep breath. The first real breath of settling since I met her.

"Feels like God's will."

"How does that feel inside to you?" I asked.

"Yeah." She nodded sitting up tall in her chair and pushing her hair out of her face, then turning around to see me.

Instead of looking distant or vacant she looked present and grounded.

"Is it OK to let God's will work through you to do this work together," I asked.

"Yes." She nodded a weak, vulnerable smile, but there was no bitterness, no shame in it.

We worked together for five sessions, always working through God's will, what it showed her. This brought changes in her breathing patterns, her body, her spirit, and her thoughts. She began feeling that what had happened in her family was not her fault, rather a test of her faith from God. She became more and more able to pray and take care of her family. She still suffered deep grief, humiliation and sadness, but her relationship to it was different. There was more acceptance, self-forgiveness and inner peace.

I can't stress a vital principle of AST Model of Holistic Shame Resolution work: wade into the waters of your client, co-create with them and allow them to guide your guidance.

**Caryn Scotto d' Luzia** is an innovative somatic facilitator, educator and trainer. She is developer of AST Model of Holistic Shame Resolution®, a neuro-biologically principled, neuro-relationally based approach that specializes in chronic shame relief, building shame and inner critic resilience, transforming shame-based early trauma, facilitating shame-based relational 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*, *Detaching from Shame as a Practice Toward Greater Compassion and Peace*, *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, coaches, and community leaders how to facilitate shame resolution and cultivate acceptance, worth, empowerment and belonging.

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 reviews 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 a Post Advanced

Instructor for Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, 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.