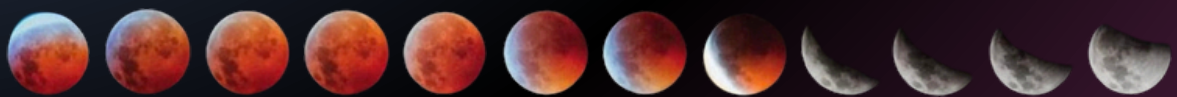


SHADOW WORK



A GUIDE TO EXPLORE YOUR
HIDDEN SELF

**Your shadow is not a dark force within
you wishing to cause you harm.**

**It is the culmination of unconscious
trauma, emotions and fears collected
throughout lifetimes.**

**It's a reflection of your negative
thinking mind & the ego**

**Your greatest teacher is the parts
of yourself that you deem
unworthy to love**

**There is no part of you worth being ashamed
of, no matter how dark you think that part is.**

**What you dislike is a product of your
environment, but it is all an extension of the
same energy.**

Note: If you are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, flashbacks, extreme hyper vigilance, panic disorder, disassociation or severe depression, it is recommended to work with a licensed trauma-informed professional before engaging in shadow work to decrease risk of re-traumatization.

SHADOW WORK
MEANS EMBRACING
THE PARTS OF
OURSELVES THAT
WE HIDE AND
DISLIKE



SHADOW WORK CHEAT SHEET

Acknowledge It

Tune into felt-sense to notice emerging thoughts and feelings without judgment.

Welcome It

Take 3 deep breaths and with each say, "I am welcoming this part of myself."

Get To Know It

Give it a name.
Learn where it came from and how it has been helping you.

Show Appreciation

Take 3 deep breaths and with each say, "I am thankful for this part of myself."

Move Forward

Repeat out loud, "I did not have a choice in the past but I now have choice in how I live my life and respond to the world around me."

A man is walking a tightrope that divides the image vertically. To the left of the rope is a bright blue sky with soft, white clouds. To the right is a dark, starry night sky. The man is seen from behind, walking away from the viewer towards the right. He is shirtless, muscular, and wearing a simple, light-colored loincloth. His arms are outstretched to the sides, balancing on the rope. The rope itself is a thick, brown, textured cord.

YOU ARE
THE LIGHT

BUT THE
SHADOW IS A
NECESSARY
STEP TO WORK
THROUGH IN
YOUR PATH

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SHADOW

Journal:

- When you think about your goal, what fears, limiting beliefs, core wounds or blocks come up for you?
- In what ways do you feel undeserving, unprepared or not good enough?

Tap Into Felt Sense

Take time to notice how your shadow appears in your daily interactions. Which types of people and circumstances trigger strong emotional reactions and what are the contexts surrounding these experiences?

Bring your awareness inside your body and connect to your felt sense. The autonomic nervous system communicates through bodily sensations, which lie behind thoughts and feelings. It is through felt sense that you can listen to what the subconscious mind has to say.

Note which sensations, thoughts and feelings arise naturally. Slow down to enter a neutral observer state to witness without judgment. Release any attachments to the story and allow the sensations to change naturally, without needing to change or make sense of them.

Pause to allow for deep body listening with neutrality and equanimity as you track these changes from one moment to the next.

WELCOME YOUR SHADOW

Name your shadow.

By giving a name to this energy, you are locking it into tangible existence, defining it to exist and negating it from anything else it could be.



Slow Down

Take 3 deep breaths:

Inhale and silently to yourself say,
"I am breathing in (shadow name)."

Exhale and silently to yourself say,
"I am breathing out (shadow name)."



Identify Your Resources

A resource is anything or anyone that helps you maintain balance and your sense of self (feeling of who you are) in face of disruption or stress.

Bringing to mind your resources helps you to self-regulate and handle own states of arousal and difficult emotions.

Inner Resources

- A good sense of humor
- Ability to make friends
- Likable personality traits and positive self talk
- Soothing movements
- Natural gifts or talents
- A strong connection to one's spiritual centre - a feeling of wholeness and faith
- Mindfulness, breath work and self-awareness practices

Outer Resources

- Family, friends and safe communities and support groups
- Hobbies, self-care practices and enjoyable activities
- A therapist, counselor or coach
- A teacher, mentor or guide
- Nature or physical environments that feel safe and nurturing
- Books and self help resources
- Pets or animals
- Stress relief tools

Visualize Your Shadow

Imagine your shadow outside of yourself. It could appear as a symbol, a monster, a person, a past version of yourself or anything that helps give you a sense of physical presence. Bringing to mind your resources helps you to self-regulate and handle own states of arousal and difficult emotions.



Welcome Your Shadow

Let your shadow know you have created a safe, inclusive space for it. This might involve setting up a serene environment with candles or flowers, or surrounding yourself with your most cherished possessions, demonstrating your willingness to share yourself fully.

UNDERSTAND YOUR SHADOW

Learn Where It Came From

Consider these journaling prompts:

Origins of Your Shadow: Reflect on the first time you encountered shame, judgment, or rejection related to your goal. What specific events or experiences come to mind?

Context of Protection: What began to happen in those moments that led you to create protective mechanisms? How did these experiences shape your view of yourself and your capabilities?

Settling or Diminishing: In what ways did you feel the need to settle or diminish yourself to fit into the world around you? What beliefs or narratives did you adopt as a result?

Patterns of Emergence: In what contexts has your shadow reappeared throughout your life? Are there recurring themes or situations that trigger these feelings?

Carrying Through Life: How have these protective strategies served you over the years? In what ways have they supported you, and how might they be limiting you now?

Curiosity and Compassion: Approach this exploration with curiosity and compassion. What insights can you gather about your journey and the ways you've learned to navigate the world?

Use the journaling prompts provided on the next pages for deeper exploration

CHILDHOOD

- How was your relationship with your parents/caregivers?
- Did they show you compassion and forgiveness as a child?
- Bring to mind a time you can remember feeling wronged as a child - how did they react?
 - How did they react to failure?
- Reflect on their morals and values - what were you brought up to value in your family?
 - How are your own values different from theirs?
- In what ways are you like them? What parts do you see in yourself?
 - When did this become apparent and how does it make you feel?
- What toxic traits have you noticed in your parents? In what ways do you hope you are not like them?
 - What family patterns do you fear you are repeating?
- How does thinking about yourself as a child make you feel?
- If you could speak to your child self now, what would you say?
- What is one question you had as a child that never really got answered?
- How would you describe your life now to your child self? What parts would you emphasize and what parts would you leave out?
- What were your hobbies when you were younger?

VALUES & BELIEFS

- What are your core values as a human being? What's important to you?
- What are you morally passionate about?
- What's the meaning of life, to you?
- What does love mean to you?
 - What are your limiting beliefs about love and how do you overcome them?
- What does success mean to you?
 - What are your limiting beliefs about success and how do you overcome them?
 - What are your limiting beliefs about money and how do you overcome them?
 - What are your limiting beliefs about stability and how do you overcome them?
- Is there a link between how you approach love and how you approach money?
- How do you fill your time when you're bored?
 - How would you LIKE to fill your time when you're bored
- What gives you enjoyment? List at least 5 things
- What are some ways you can bring activities you enjoyed as a child into adulthood?
- Who were your heroes growing up? What did you admire about them?
- What is your biggest obstacle to finding the happiness you crave?

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

- How were you taught to deal with emotions as a child?
 - A teenager? A young adult?
- How did you actually process your emotions as a child?
 - A teenager? A young adult?
- What is one way you used to self-soothe when you were growing up?
- Are you more prone to fighting, flying, freezing or fawning? Why do you think this might be?
- What was the last argument you had about? How did you react? How do you feel about it now? Was it resolved?
- What triggers you? Can you identify your main triggers?
- How do you react when you're angry? Does this reaction reflect the way you saw others react to anger growing up?
- How do you feel about confrontation? Why do you think this is?
- When Was The Last Time I Felt Defensive And Who Or What Caused That Feeling?
- When you feel emotional pain, how do you deal with it? How do you make it go away? How do you feel about this?
- Do you often experience physical reactions to emotional stress? If so, write about these.
- What emotions do you tend to avoid? How do you avoid them?
- What negative emotions are you actually quite comfortable sitting with? Why might this be?
- Is there anything you are currently in denial about or are avoiding?
- If I told you to sit with your feelings instead of avoiding or numbing them, how would this make you feel?
- What is one regret you have? Why is it a regret? How do you feel about it?
- When is the last time you admitted you were wrong? How did it feel? How did it play out?
- Recall a time you made a mistake and needed forgiveness. How did it play out?
- Do you often find yourself overthinking things you've said or how you've acted? What usually triggers this?
- Have you ever found yourself manipulating others to protect yourself? When did this start and how does this make you feel?
- Do you ever find yourself acting 'out of character'? When does this tend to occur the most?
- What tends to trigger envy within you? Why do you think this is?

ATTACHMENT & BOUNDARIES

- What is your attachment style in relationships? How do you think this formed?
 - Do you struggle to form healthy attachments within your relationships? If so, why?
- What relationship patterns have followed you throughout your life? What situations or types of people do you find yourself re-experiencing?
- What are your boundaries with friends?
 - With family?
 - With your partner or someone you are dating?
- How do you enforce your boundaries?
 - How could you better enforce your boundaries?
- When was the last time I overstepped someone else's boundaries?
- How often do you spend time alone?
- What is your ideal day spent by yourself?
- What is your ideal day spent with someone else?
- What is your ideal day with both alone and social time?

SELF COMPASSION

- Do you struggle with showing yourself self-compassion? How does this make you feel?
- When was the last time you celebrated yourself for your accomplishments?
- When was the last time you gave yourself grace and forgiveness for a mistake? What was the mistake?
- When are you hardest on yourself? Where do you think this stems from?
 - In which parts do you feel reluctant to be kind to yourself?
- Describe a time when someone else showed you compassion. Why, and how did that feel?
- Describe a time you showed someone else compassion. Why, and how did that feel?

RELATIONSHIPS

- In what situations do you feel less than others? Why do you feel this way?
 - Equal to others? Why?
 - Better than others? Why?
- What was the last time someone pointed out ways in which you could improve? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
- What are your preconceptions about femininity? What do you think this is? Where do you think this came from?
- What are your preconceptions about masculinity? What do you think this is? Where do you think this came from?
- What are three traits in others that you dislike?
- Do you have a tendency to project traits you don't like onto others because you potentially possess them yourself? If so, which traits and why do you think this is?
- What's one trait that you see in other people that you wish you had and why?
- What is something that you've always wanted to confront someone about, but didn't? Why didn't you confront them? How do you feel about that now?
- Recall a time someone you trusted betrayed you. How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now?
- If you could speak to that person now, what would you say to them?
- Describe a time you felt let down by someone you looked up to?
- Recall someone you've never forgiven. What did they do? Why do you still hold a grudge? Do you want to forgive them today?
- Have you opened up to someone and felt rejected? What did you share?
- Have you opened up to someone and felt accepted? What did you share?
- When was the last time I felt heartbroken personally? How did it feel? What was my immediate reaction? How did I self-soothe?
- When was the last time I felt heartbroken professionally? How did it feel? What was my immediate reaction? How did I self-soothe?
- When was the last time I was heart broken by a friend? How did it feel? What was my immediate reaction? How did I self-soothe?
- How are friend break ups different from romantic breakups? How are they the same?

PERCEPTION

- What is the ugliest part of yourself? Physically and personality wise?
- What past version of yourself do you hope no one ever sees?
- What has been your biggest personal failure and why?
 - How do you perceive failure? How does it make you feel?
- What events in life have hurt you the most? What reminds you of these times? What parts of you remain there?
- What losses have defined your life? How would it feel to let that loss go?
- What success have you let define your life? How would it feel to let that success go?
- What is the biggest lie you've ever told someone else? How did it make you feel to tell it? What were the ramifications of this lie?
- What's one lie you tell yourself consistently? Why do you tell it?
- Recall a time you put yourself under unnecessary pressure - why do you think you did this?
- What situations make you feel less than or not good enough? Why do you think this?
- What are your toxic traits? How do they present themselves?
- In what ways do you self sabotage?
- What are your self destructive behaviors? What benefit do they give you?
- What aspects of yourself would you like to improve? Why? How do you plan to do this?
- When I think about the past, how does it make me feel? Excited? Nostalgic? Regretful? Fearful?
- When I think about the future, how does it make me feel? Nervous? Excited? Apathetic?
- Which Dreams Of Mine Feel Possible And Which Feel Impossible?
- What Would A Life Of Self-acceptance Feel And Look Like For Me? What would need to happen for this to occur?

EMBRACE YOUR SHADOW

Feel It To Heal it

Consider, what has your body had to do in order to survive and protect itself? What has your mind had to do to survive and feel safe?

The shadow has been essential in helping you survive physically or emotionally. It has stepped in during moments of vulnerability and distress. It has shielded you from emotional turmoil, allowing you to navigate life's challenges with a protective layer of defense mechanisms, often hidden from conscious awareness. This part of you, forged through pain and fear, has guided your responses, teaching you to be cautious, to adapt, and to persevere when faced with adversity.



By recognizing the vital role your shadow has played in your journey, you can honor the strength it has provided, acknowledging that while it has often kept you safe, it also holds the key to unlocking a deeper understanding of yourself.

By transforming your relationship to your shadow, it shifts from a mere survival tool into a valuable source of wisdom and strength. By acknowledging and appreciating the lessons it offers, you open the door to authentic growth and healing, allowing the shadow to guide you toward deeper self-awareness and resilience.

Decide How To Move Forward

Ask yourself, "Can I heal from this and help heal the world from it?"

Repeat out loud, "I did not have choice in the past but now I have choice in how I live my life and respond to the world around me."

