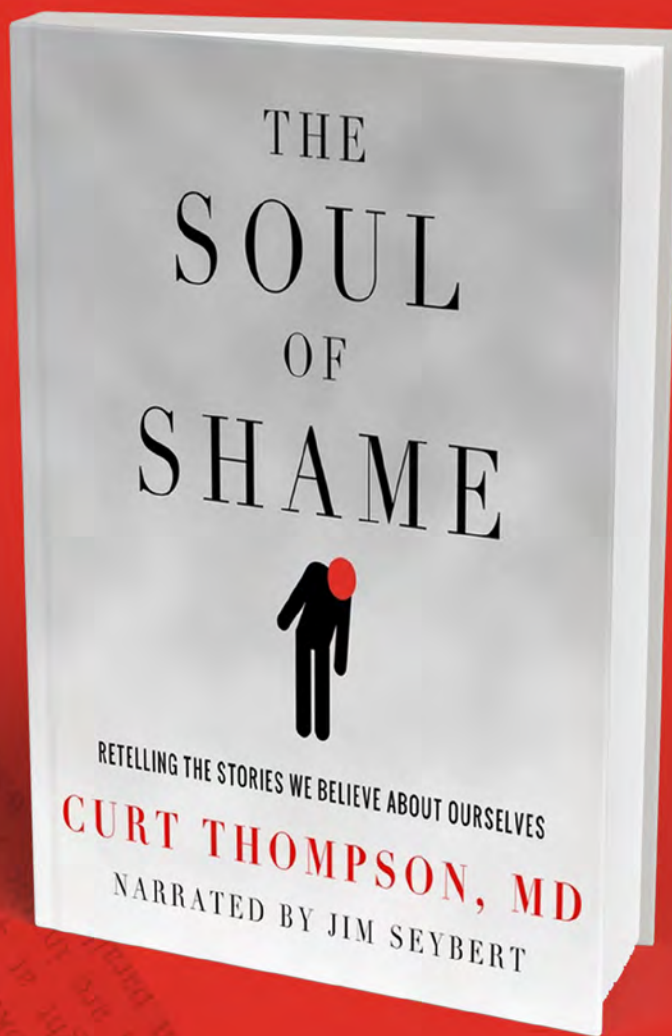


Woman
EVOLVE

BKCLB

MAY 2023

BOOK SUMMARY



THE SOUL OF SHAME
BY CURT THOMPSON, MD

BOOK SUMMARY

The Soul of Shame deals with the study of shame, the brain, and how it affects human relationships. It also looks at this from the narrative of the Bible, God's plan to restore humanity through Jesus to the joy of creative calling. Throughout the book, shame appears in personified form. It is the tool that evil uses to destroy and fragment the human psyche and relationships. From the Garden to the City of God, shame dogs the steps of human beings, those storied-creatures who are always fashioning narratives for themselves. The knowledge of the love of God in Jesus and vulnerability before God and others is the route to the joy of creative calling. The book is worth reading for anyone interested in neurobiology, shame, vulnerability, counseling, and related theological concepts.

Shame explained: It begins with emotional feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. Over time it yields complex neural networks in the brain that continually reinforce themselves in experience. Much of this comes from the quality of early relational attachments. Eventually, shame-filled people build narratives about themselves to explain the feelings of shame, such as, "I never do well. What's wrong with me?" This leads to an attitude of judgment towards self and others and many other destructive behaviors. Shame not only leads to sin, but also hides from knowledge. It refuses to be known and must be dragged into the light. Thompson concedes that he does not mean to talk about the degree to which shame is a good thing or whether society is shame-based. He focuses more on shame as a sense of worthlessness.

Thompson labors to explain precisely how shame affects the mind. The mind, according to IPNB is a "fluid emerging process that is both embodied and relational, whose t is to regulate the flow of energy and information". Shame disintegrates the processes of the mind, leading to chaotic states of thought and problems with relationships. However, this neurological reality yields hope because of neuroplasticity. Shame-filled people can focus on new things and rewire their brain chemistry.

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Thompson elaborates that joyful relationship is the antithesis of shame. Mature, secure attachments cause shame to shrivel. Joy is also the harbinger of secure relationships while shame is the harbinger of abandonment. Thus, shame signals that relationships are in danger. Moreover, everyone must relearn a Biblical view of relationship with God as a delighting and loving Father. It is through a dynamic, vulnerable relationship with God in Christ—something Thompson refers to as “being known”—that shame begins to lose its power. The last three chapters discuss how to uproot shame from communities such as families, schools, and businesses. People need a “great cloud of witnesses,” others who can empathize with them. Through vulnerability, communities defeat shame, leading to more creativity and joy.

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WEEK ONE - CHAPTERS 1-3

- Establishes working definition of shame and what it means for the context of this book's approach
- Contextualizes the concept of shame from an IPNB approach - (interpersonal neurobiological)
- Establishes how shame operates as a disintegrating force in the mind

Week Two - Chapters 4-6

- Discusses the human experience as storytelling creatures, explores the construct of stories in general
- Discusses the biblical narrative, offering the perspective that Christ-followers have based on the space they occupy
- Discusses the implications of shame healing, particularly in the context of relational dynamics
- Shares the healing process of shame in being known, from a biblical notion that begins in the heart of God

Week Three - Chapters 7-8

- Offers a model for how to address shame in concrete ways, using biblical wisdom and New Testament scripture
- Offers discussion on how nurturing communities can incubate shame and reimagining the paradigm

Week Four - Chapter 9

- Discusses the deliverance of shame and what that means in light of God's design for our lives