

Shadow

Work

the work of seeing and integrating
your hidden and denied self



Shadow Work

There are many ways to do shadow work--the work of seeing and integrating your hidden and denied self. For example, your subconscious appears in images and stories as you sleep; paying attention to your dreams can give you insight into shadow. One of the easiest ways to discover your shadow is to observe your negative reactions to others and what pushes your buttons. Most often, what annoys you in someone else is a trait in yourself that you haven't acknowledged.

Byron Katie has a simple process to help you own your judgments and turn your focus to the plank in your own eye. The following is adapted from Katie's Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet and Four Questions.

Recall a stressful situation that is still fresh in your mind. Return to that time and place in your imagination.

Name your frustration, fear, or disappointment, and the object of this feeling in a simple statement. For example: *I am angry with John because he never listens to me.*

Now ask yourself four questions with an open heart, waiting for your truest answer to arise:

1. Is it true? (Yes or no. If no, move to 3.)
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true?
3. How do you react, and what happens when you believe this thought?
4. Who would you be without the thought?

Turn the thought around in three ways: putting yourself in the other's place, putting the other person in your place, and stating the exact opposite.

- *I am angry with myself because I never listen to me.*
- *John is angry with me because I never listen to him.*
- *John does listen to me.*

Find ways in which each "turnaround" is true in this situation.

This practice brings your nebulous shadow into focus, giving you something tangible to embrace. Do this necessary work all your life and you'll discover more and more freedom and greater capacity to love self and others.

Gateway to Silence

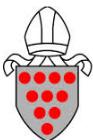
Help me see as You see.

Richard Rohr OFM

Contemplative Prayer

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DEEPLY ROOTED IN PRAYER