

## 261: Shame and Shoulds



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With Your Host

**Jen Riday**

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## 261: Shame and Shoulds

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 261. We're talking about taking those shame-filled skeletons in the closet moments in your life, experiences, and times and turning them into something beautiful. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Hi my friends, it's Jen and I'm so honored and happy that you're here because we're talking about shame today. Shame is the lowest vibration emotion, the most uncomfortable emotion. And it's also a dream stealing emotion. What do I mean by that? Dream stealing emotions have no purpose. They keep us stuck in a state of inaction. And that prevents us from actually getting a new result, so it's a dream stealer. Other dream stealers include overwhelm, worry, confusion, doubt. Well, we're talking about shame today.

And before we go any further why not think about the things in your life that you're ashamed about. Maybe it's a nasty divorce you have gone through or are going through. Maybe it's the fact that you're divorcing at all. Maybe it's the fact that you didn't marry well. Maybe it's the fact that you've yelled at your kids, my hand is raised.

Maybe it's the fact that you haven't been Maria from The Sound of Music. And even though that is an unrealistic expectation of yourself, those of us who struggle with a bit of perfectionism, we can still feel shame for these unrealistic expectations established by ourselves and by society. So in the end I want you to think about the fact that shame is built on shoulds.

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

So whatever you're thinking about that you're ashamed of, maybe it's a marriage where you fight too much and you worry you've traumatized your kids. Maybe it's something you did that you've never told anyone that you're horrified that you did but it's a deep dark secret you've carried with you. Whatever it is, let's just take a deep collective breath, imagining all these amazing vibrant happy sisters out there and our sisterhood of this Vibrant Happy Women world and hold some space for each other.

And just send out that love and that permission to let go of the shame, to recognize that we're not alone in our struggles, in our moments of not doing what we should do, whether that's a realistic expectation or not. And that we're together today listening to this podcast, whether you're listening at the same time as everyone else or not, just collectively across time listening to this episode together in the energy of letting go of those shoulds.

Shoulds can be paralyzing, whether it's the values your parents tried to distill in you in your childhood. My parents values were you should work hard, you should be honest. But they left out a lot of the other values I wanted in my life like fun and adventure. And so I had to get to a place where I ditched their shoulds and figured out my own. And that is really the essence of letting go of shame is to speak your truth, to live your truth.

So whatever you're ashamed of, let's pause for a moment and set it to the side then think about what shoulds are in place, making you even feel shame in the first place. Maybe you have the belief that people should not get divorced. You should not get divorced once, you should definitely not get divorced twice or more. These are huge pressure filled social obligations or social norms that almost everyone believes.

And what pain, if you've been divorced, what pain are you causing yourself by choosing to let that belief be true for you? And how would you feel differently if you let another truth be true for you? Maybe we should, maybe

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

an alternative belief you can experiment with, by the way you choose the beliefs that help you feel the way you want to feel because when we feel good we take positive action and we make the world better. So why not choose your beliefs?

So back to the divorce example, maybe you choose to believe that you should be on a path with someone for as long as it serves you and then when it no longer serves you that it is correct to end that path and go on a different path. What if it's as simple as choosing a path? I personally believe in a god, a higher power that wants me to be happy, that wants you to be happy and not just happy, to use your talents, and gifts, and experiences in a way that feels aligned, and alive, and vibrant, in a way that allows you to contribute.

When we're contributing, when we're using our gifts and talents and living authentically we feel alive. And in contrast when we're feeling dark, and miserable, and sad, and alone, often those are an intuitive thought trying to tell us we need to make a change. So what if making a change such as a divorce, or changing a circumstance with a child that needs to move out, or a relationship that needs to end with an extended family, what if you choose to believe that you're just starting a new path? And it's a path that's going to serve you and allow you to better serve the world.

The fact is we can't be in everyone's lives all the time and be our truly aligned and authentic selves. As we progress, as we grow, we're going to naturally seek out others who are raising their vibration, raising their level of alignment, up-leveling their lives and how they show up, and think, and feel. And it's okay to move on in that way.

Other examples, mom guilt, let's go to mom guilt. My hand is raised. Thinking about the times you have felt like you're not good enough as a mom. Maybe you've had someone tell you you're not good enough. Maybe one of your kids has told you. And ouch, I want to acknowledge the pain of

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

that especially if it's another adult that has told you that. Ouch. But here's the thing, that's just another person telling you how you should be doing it. And what if your version of good mom is unique, and different, and beautiful?

What if your version of being a good mom means you're following your truth, you're living your truth. You're doing what helps you feel alive. I always say that we have these emotions and feelings because they're an inner compass. They show us where to go. When we feel icky, when we feel awful we're not heading in the right direction. When we feel vibrant, and alive, and passionate, and emotionally juicy, that's that inner compass saying, "Yes, keep going here, this is the way."

So as a mom what if your version of good mom is when you're doing exactly those things that help you feel alive and useful, like you're contributing and making a difference and your kids get to watch? My mom does what she loves. That means I get to grow up and do what I love. There could be no better gift. This is why so many times I have talked about self-love on this podcast, because when you love yourself you can stop listening to those shoulds.

All those external voices of what it looks like to be a good mom, what it means to be a good woman, what it means to be a good wife. All of these prescriptions keep us stuck on a path that was defined by someone else, oftentimes defined by people that aren't even moms or women, patriarchy. But what would it look like if each of us started to live true to ourselves and listen to that inner GPS?

When you love yourself and listen to those feelings inside of you, those feelings that give you that compass, it becomes way easier to ditch the shoulds and to do what feels right for you. Maybe it means you work. Maybe it means you start a hobby. Maybe it means you change careers. Maybe it means you end a relationship. Maybe it means you ask your 18

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

year old to move out on the day he turns 18. My hand is raised. Whatever it means, it's your path.

And what would it look like if each of us as women could do just a little bit more to trust that every other woman out there is doing the absolute best she can? And when she makes a choice to not only honor her decision but to praise her for standing true, standing true to herself and listening to her heart, even if you wouldn't make the same decision, to honor her ability to choose above what 'should' be happening. I think it would be a beautiful liberating world.

And as I've been contemplating this, you might like this. I've been thinking one of the things that for me would make me a good mom in my opinion, in my definition, and think all of us would have liked our own mothers to do is something I'm going to try harder to help my kids do. And that is this, to help my children become the fullest expression of themselves.

If my goal as a mom is to help them become the fullest expression of themselves, maybe it means my daughter's going to be an artist and she might not make a lot of money. Or maybe it means my son is going to be a day trader through the stock market, which he is already doing. But what is the fullest expression of themselves? It necessitates that we, number one, recognize that only they can know what the fullest expression of themselves really is. It's not going to come from us. We don't know better.

Number two, to teach our kids to listen to their inner compass, and that requires that we teach them to hold space for themselves, a beautiful concept. In this overly busy world, at least the pre Covid world of go, go, go and do, do, do, I feel like listening to our own hearts, our own souls, finding the fullest expression of ourselves was perhaps challenging.

But that is one of the most beautiful gifts of coronavirus, the slowing down, hopefully, if you didn't spend all your time numbing with social media or

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

Netflix. And I did my share of that. But hopefully you were able to create some spaces where you just listened and asked yourself, how would I like life to be after coronavirus is done? What would I like to be different? Am I in the career I'd like to be in? Am I making the difference I would like to make?

The question becomes the same not just for your kids but for you, what is the fullest expression of yourself? And how are you going to find out? Now, we talk a lot in the self-help world and on this podcast about self-care, doing the things that help you get a hit of dopamine, feel good to start your day. Maybe it's journaling, exercise, drinking water. And I'm a huge proponent. But lately I've been thinking about this, that true self-care is not just doing things, but it's getting to know yourself, listening, holding space for yourself.

So perhaps instead of doing self-care in the mornings, what if you engage in holding space for yourself, pulling out that journal and writing, meditating and listening to what's in your heart, what's on your soul, teaching your kids to do the same. I feel like this quiet reflective ability is the space where we let go of the shoulds. Because that inner voice becomes so strong in ourselves when we hold space for ourselves that the shoulds fall away because you know exactly what you're meant to be doing, what is the fullest expression of yourself.

When you've really tapped in you know exactly when a certain relationship needs to end and you need to move on. Or when you need to do something different with one of your kids, or you need to show up and help a neighbor in a different way, or whatever it is. That intuitive inner compass and voice is so powerful for getting out of shame.

So my challenge to you is to think about this, what is the fullest expression of yourself? Who are you? What do you love? What makes your soul sing inside? Do you love helping other people? Do you love listening? Have you

## 261: Shame and Shoulds

always dreamed of being a nurse or a doctor? Have you always thought about being a coach or a therapist? Which was my dream, here I am, also I love that I get to help other women become coaches through the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification. By the way, the next session starts in April. That might be a path for you to explore for yourself.

But what is the fullest expression of you? And what might happen if you not only live your fullest expression, incidentally dropping away all the shoulds in the process? You become a radiant, amazing human being, I'll tell you that. But your kids also watch and it gives them permission to become the fullest expression of themselves, as souls, as humans, as people, as beings, I believe eternal beings.

So hold space for yourself, hold space for your kids, let yourself and your kids ditch the shoulds and be the fullest expression of yourselves, it's a beautiful thing. I'm working on it myself every day. I recently went to a hotel for three days. I forgot what I was missing during the pandemic. It was heaven. Heaven, heaven, heaven, heaven, heaven, I can't even tell you. I didn't even really leave the hotel room except to grab a couple of meals. And I slept and I journaled, and I prayed, and I meditated, and I cried, and I released.

And when I created that space to feel and think, and listen, my next steps became so much more clear. The shoulds are irrelevant when you know deep in your core what your next step is.

So for any of you struggling with shame from a past decision, a current experience, something you did wrong as a mom or a wife, or a person, or that you failed at something, what if all of that was there to just help you discover and learn more about the fullest expression of yourself? All of it builds; all of it is a teachable moment for you. And accept it as such and then you don't need the shame or the shoulds.



## 261: Shame and Shoulds

My friends I love you. I know each of you is a beautiful soul with lives you're meant to touch, differences you're meant to make in this world and know that about yourselves, trust that, be that, allow that. Ditch those shoulds, you've got this my friends. I'll see you again soon. Until then, make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

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