

Looking at your shadows

One reason many people don't like to look too closely at themselves is because they inevitably encounter their shadows — pockets of action, speech, and attitudes that aren't always in keeping with their highest views of themselves. Therefore, before you delve too deeply into your shadows, you can first adjust your worldview to the forgiving vision of spirituality.

Understand that in your spiritual journey, even mistakes you've made along the way can be transformed into fuel for the fire of spiritual evolution. (This conversion is even better than recycling!) Once you understand this process, you can wave goodbye to those old staples of guilt and shame, along with their friends by the names of anger, greed, and hatred.

If you have habits and personality traits that you or others have judged harshly through the years, now is the time to begin to look at every aspect of yourself with a more objective, kinder, and knowledgeable eye. Ignoring your bad habits doesn't help, nor does overfocusing on them, such as being filled with shame about past actions or thoughts. In fact, trying too hard to get rid of a habit or trait can backfire because the nature of thoughts is to empower whatever they're directed toward, whether positive or negative (see Chapter 15).

Consider

You can even have gratitude for your shadows. Just consider that all your faults, flaws, and past missteps will give you an even more interesting and inspiring testimonial once you grow beyond them into a more spiritual life.

Don't Forget

You can be sure that if an all-intelligent and all-powerful God gave you and everyone else all these different combinations of personal qualities and histories, it's because you're intended to be different. You're unique, just like everybody else, and you're meant to have all your tendencies, conflicts, and complications, along with all your blessings and great qualities. The spiritual challenge behind being you is to take all that you have and all that you are and to raise it up as a joyful toast to the Divine. With this approach, the darker aspects of your nature are naturally lifted up into the light, and you are less likely to do what is harmful and more drawn to creating what is beneficial.