

YOU HAVE TO FEEL IT TO HEAL IT

Emotional Healing & Shadow Work

You don't have to be perfectly healed to help others. You just have to be willing to keep healing too.

Healing Hearts Medium
Created by Theresa

Emotional Healing & Shadow Work • Resource #01

A Note From Theresa

One of the things I've learned through doing healing and spiritual work is that **you cannot continually help other people heal while refusing to look at what needs healing inside of you.**

That doesn't mean you have to be completely healed before you can help someone else. I don't even know that there is such a thing as being completely healed.

We're human. Life continues to happen. Old wounds can surface. New ones appear. Grief comes. Relationships change. Things trigger us that we thought we had already worked through.

But we have to be willing to look.

Because when you're constantly giving to other people while pushing your own emotions down, eventually it will drain you.

You can meditate. You can ground. You can protect your energy. You can raise your vibration. Those things are incredibly important to me.

But sometimes what you're feeling isn't someone else's energy.

Sometimes it's yours.

And instead of trying to clear it away, protect yourself from it, or spiritually rise above it, maybe you need to sit with it and ask:

- Why does this hurt?
- Why did that trigger me?
- What am I still carrying?
- What do I need that I haven't been giving myself?

That is where inner healing begins.

You have to feel it to heal it.

Not all at once. Not by forcing yourself to relive painful experiences. And not without professional support when that's what you need.

But we can't heal what we spend our lives pretending isn't there.

And if you feel called to do healing work for other people, I believe doing your own inner work is part of honoring that calling.

You don't have to be perfectly healed to help others. You just have to be willing to keep healing too.

With love,
Theresa
Healing Hearts Medium

When I Stopped Doing and Started Feeling

For most of my life, **staying busy was how I got through things.**

There was trauma from my childhood, painful things that were said to me, and choices I made as an adult - including staying in a marriage for 30 years when I was not happy.

If I kept moving, kept doing, kept helping, and kept pushing through the next obstacle, I didn't have to spend very much time sitting with what I was feeling.

I became very good at doing. I had to learn how to feel.

One day I realized I needed to start feeling instead of doing. Around that time, I was introduced to shadow work.

I had no idea what it was. I ordered a book and began working through it. As I did, I started to see how much old pain I had been holding inside without really releasing it.

Here I was trying to help everybody else - through readings and in everyday life - while there were still parts of myself I had spent years shoving down because I didn't want to deal with them.

Reaching into those shadows brought up things said to me as a child that had hurt deeply. It made me look at why I had stayed in a relationship far longer than I was happy. It made me recognize how often I pushed myself through every obstacle instead of giving myself grace.

I wasn't doing this work so I could live in the past. I was doing it because I didn't want the past quietly running my present anymore.

What Changed When I Began to Understand Myself

When I started to understand a little more about **why I did the things I did and why I said the things I said**, something began to change.

I started forgiving myself.

I stopped judging myself so harshly. I began criticizing myself less.

And underneath all of that old pain, I started seeing things in myself that had always been there: **joy, warmth, love, and kindness.**

Those parts of me hadn't disappeared. They had simply been covered by years of ridicule, old wounds, and things I hadn't wanted to feel.

When something has been pushed into the shadows for a long time, sometimes we almost forget it is there.

When I brought those things into the light, I could no longer ignore them - but they also didn't feel quite as scary anymore.

1. What Shadow Work Means Here

For this guide, shadow work simply means becoming curious about the parts of yourself you tend to avoid, hide, judge, or push down.

It is not about deciding that every problem in your life comes from childhood. It is not about forcing memories to surface. And it is not about blaming yourself.

It can be as simple as noticing a strong reaction and asking, **"What is underneath this?"**

2. Staying Busy Can Become Avoidance

Being productive is not a problem. Helping people is not a problem. Being strong is not a problem.

But sometimes constant doing gives us very little room to notice what is happening inside.

- Do I become uncomfortable when life gets quiet?
- Am I always solving someone else's problem?
- Do I keep myself busy when an emotion starts surfacing?
- Do I feel guilty when I rest?
- Am I pushing through something that actually needs my attention?

These questions are invitations, not accusations.

3. When Helping Everyone Else Becomes a Hiding Place

Helping others can be beautiful and meaningful. It is a huge part of my own work.

But if you are always the helper, healer, empath, caregiver, listener, or strong one, ask yourself whether there is room for **you** too.

Giving from a place of constant depletion can eventually leave you exhausted.

Inner healing is not selfish. It helps you recognize what is yours before you continually pour yourself into everyone else.

4. What If the Energy Is Mine?

In intuitive and empath work, we often ask: *"Is this mine, or am I picking up someone else's energy?"*

That is a useful question.

But there is another question that matters just as much:

"What if it IS mine?"

If the feeling belongs to you, it may not need to be cleared away. It may need to be acknowledged, understood, expressed, or supported.

5. Bring It to the Surface

This is something I practice very differently now.

If I'm having an issue with someone, I try to bring it to the surface instead of putting it away and letting it sit there.

If someone hurts my feelings, I would rather communicate that than carry it for years and eventually say, *"This is something I've been holding in for too long."*

I no longer want to keep everything in the shadows and have it haunting me later.

That doesn't mean reacting impulsively to every emotion. Sometimes the healthiest choice is to pause, regulate yourself, decide what you actually need, and then communicate.

6. Feel It Without Becoming Consumed by It

Feeling an emotion does not mean feeding it forever.

- Name what you are feeling.

- Notice where you feel it in your body.
- Give yourself permission to feel it without judging it.
- Ask what may have triggered it.
- Decide whether you need rest, a boundary, a conversation, journaling, movement, or support.
- Allow the emotion to change at its own pace.

You can acknowledge a feeling without letting it make every decision for you.

7. From Self-Criticism to Self-Understanding

One of the most healing changes for me was replacing some of my judgment with curiosity.

Instead of only asking, “*Why did I do that?*” with criticism, I began asking it because I genuinely wanted to understand myself.

Understanding does not mean excusing behavior that hurt you or someone else. It gives you information you can use to make different choices.

Sometimes self-forgiveness begins when judgment makes room for understanding.

8. Give Yourself the Grace You Give Everyone Else

Many people who naturally care for others offer tremendous compassion outward and very little inward.

Try asking yourself: *Would I speak to someone I love the way I am speaking to myself right now?*

Grace does not mean avoiding accountability. It means allowing yourself to be human while you learn.

9. Gentle Shadow-Work Prompts

What emotion do I tend to avoid the most?

What keeps triggering me lately?

When I feel hurt, what do I usually do with that feeling?

Where in my life am I constantly 'doing' so I don't have to feel?

What old criticism about myself am I still carrying?

What do I understand about myself now that I didn't understand years ago?

What would giving myself grace look like today?

10. Before You Go Deeper

You do not have to uncover everything at once.

If an exercise begins to feel overwhelming, stop. Ground yourself. Return to something familiar and supportive.

Some experiences - especially significant trauma - are better explored with a qualified mental-health professional who can provide appropriate support.

Going slowly is still healing work.

11. A Simple 'Bring It to Light' Practice

- Pause before pushing the feeling away.
- Name it: "I feel hurt," "I feel angry," "I feel afraid," or whatever is true.
- Ask: "What happened right before this feeling appeared?"
- Ask: "Does this remind me of an older pattern or experience?"
- Ask: "What do I need right now?"
- Choose one healthy action rather than automatically returning to distraction.
- Revisit it later if you need more time.

12. Healing Is Not Perfection

Doing inner work does not mean you will never be triggered again.

You may revisit the same issue at different stages of life and understand it differently each time.

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is awareness, compassion, choice, and a willingness to keep meeting yourself honestly.

A Final Thought From Theresa

For years, pushing through was how I survived.

But eventually I realized that strength wasn't only about how much I could carry.

Sometimes strength meant becoming still enough to look at what I had been carrying.

As I understood myself better, I began forgiving myself. I saw the warmth, love, kindness, and joy that had always been there beneath the things I had pushed down.

Now, when something hurts, I don't want to hide it away for decades. I want to understand it, deal with what needs to be dealt with, communicate when I need to, and give myself grace.

You have to feel it to heal it - but you do not have to feel it all at once, and you do not have to do it alone.

**With love,
Theresa
Healing Hearts Medium**

Continue Exploring

The You Have to Feel It to Heal It section of the Healing Hearts Medium Resource Library will include additional resources on triggers, self-forgiveness, emotional patterns, boundaries, and inner healing.

This guide reflects Theresa's personal experience and spiritual perspective. It is for education and personal reflection and is not a substitute for professional mental-health or trauma care.