



Paradigm Transformation

By Amy Hale

Identifying Toxic Emotions

1. Do you see yourself as someone who is "guarded"; someone who keeps yourself at a safe distance from others? Do you have a persona that "protects" you – such as self-sufficient, intimidating, or superior?
2. Within ten minutes of meeting you, do people usually know about the worst thing that ever happened to you?
3. Are the painful things that happened to you in the past your reason for why you don't have what you want in your life now? And do they keep you from opening to intimacy with others?
4. In the privacy of your own heart and mind – despite what you try to project to the outer world - do you believe that things won't get better for you?
5. Do you worry and ruminate over (or obsess over) what might happen in the future? Do your fears limit what you are able to experience with others – whether it be on the level of emotional intimacy or actually doing things together in the outer world?
6. Is there someone in your life whom you openly criticize and berate? Do you say things to a loved one that are harsh and judgmental? If so, what are some of the specific things you say to him or her? Also, do you find that you silently say these same kinds of belittling things to yourself?
7. Do you have frequent eruptions of anger – large or small? Do you find yourself yelling at other drivers while you're driving, picking fights or being "short" with your partner or children, speaking condescendingly to customer service people, or seething at a co-worker who gets under your skin (and then speaking disparagingly about that person to others)?

8. Do you harbor thoughts and feelings of distrust in your partner, looking for evidence that you are being lied to?

9. Do you find yourself frequently disagreeing or arguing differing opinions with friends, co-workers, and family members?

10. Do you often find yourself comparing yourself to other people and coming out on top?

11. Do you actively look for ways to hurt someone in your life? Do you do things with the intention of sparking jealousy, envy, shame, self-doubt, or fear inside of that person?

12. Do you find that no matter how much time, attention, or affection your partner gives you that it never feels like enough?

13. Do you feel emotionally and mentally weighed down with responsibilities and frustrated or angry that you can't quite fulfill them?

14. Do you use drugs, alcohol, or food to mask any unwelcome emotions? If so, what is the first emotion or feeling that comes to mind?

15. Do you work long hours, shop, watch TV, or surf the Internet to avoid certain feelings? If so, what is the first emotion or feeling that comes to mind?

16. What do you most want people to think about you? And out of the list of eleven toxic emotions, which one is closest to being the negative opposite of that which you want people to think about you?

17. Which of the questions above triggers an emotional hot button for you? Which one makes you cringe or irritates you the most?