

Exercise: “Letting Go of Shame”

If you like, you could move directly from the previous exercise into this one. Here are the original instructions for the exercise from our script, which you can adapt freely:

“Imagine that you are sitting beside a powerful river on a beautiful sunny day. You feel safe and contented and strong.

Imagine that sitting with you is a wise and supportive being. Perhaps someone you know personally, perhaps a historical figure, perhaps a guardian angel, etc. Know in your heart that this is a very wise and honest and caring being.

Imagine a small boat tied to the bank of the river, there near you. Imagine an empty and open box in the boat that you can reach easily.

Alright.

Now, continuing to be centered in feelings of worth and well-being, bring to mind lightly something you are ashamed of. Represent it, whatever it is, as a small object on the ground in front of you.

Imagine that the being is telling you, or that you are telling the being, some of the many causes and conditions that led to that thing you are ashamed of. You don’t need the whole story; often a few seconds in your imagination can summarize the heart of the matter.

With that summary of the causes of the shame, see if you can feel a letting go inside.

If you like, in your imagination, bow to the object representing the shame: it exists, it is what it is.

Then put the object in the box, and let it go as much as you can.

Now bring to mind, lightly, something else you are ashamed of. Represent it, whatever it is, as a small object on the ground in front of you.

I’ll be repeating the instructions, and feel free to go at your own pace, slowing down to dwell on certain parts, or speeding up to get through them to additional things you’d like to put in the boat.

[Repeat as many times as you like.]