

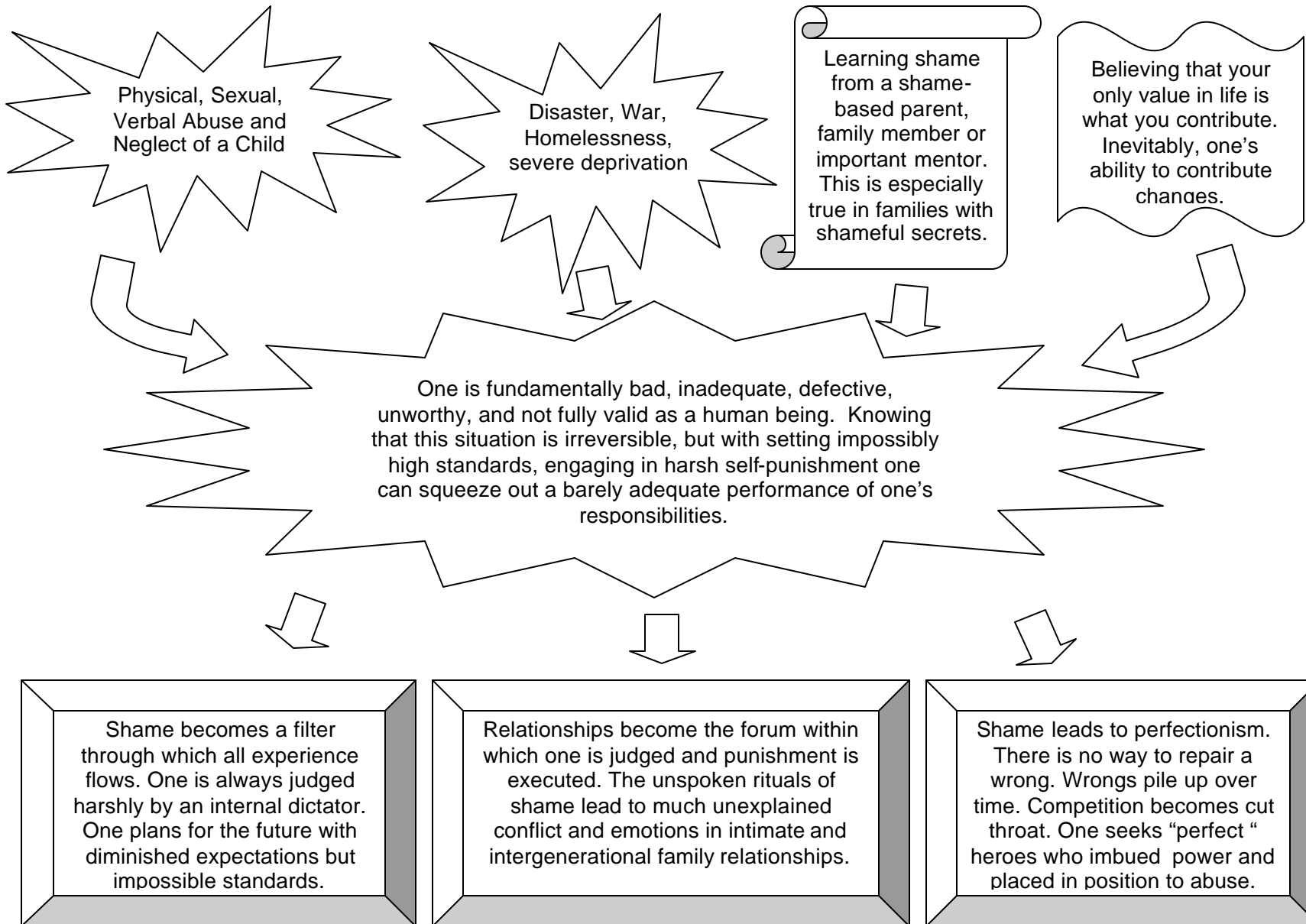
## Shame Questionnaire

*Check off each situation that applies to you. Answer quickly, don't think too much of each question.*

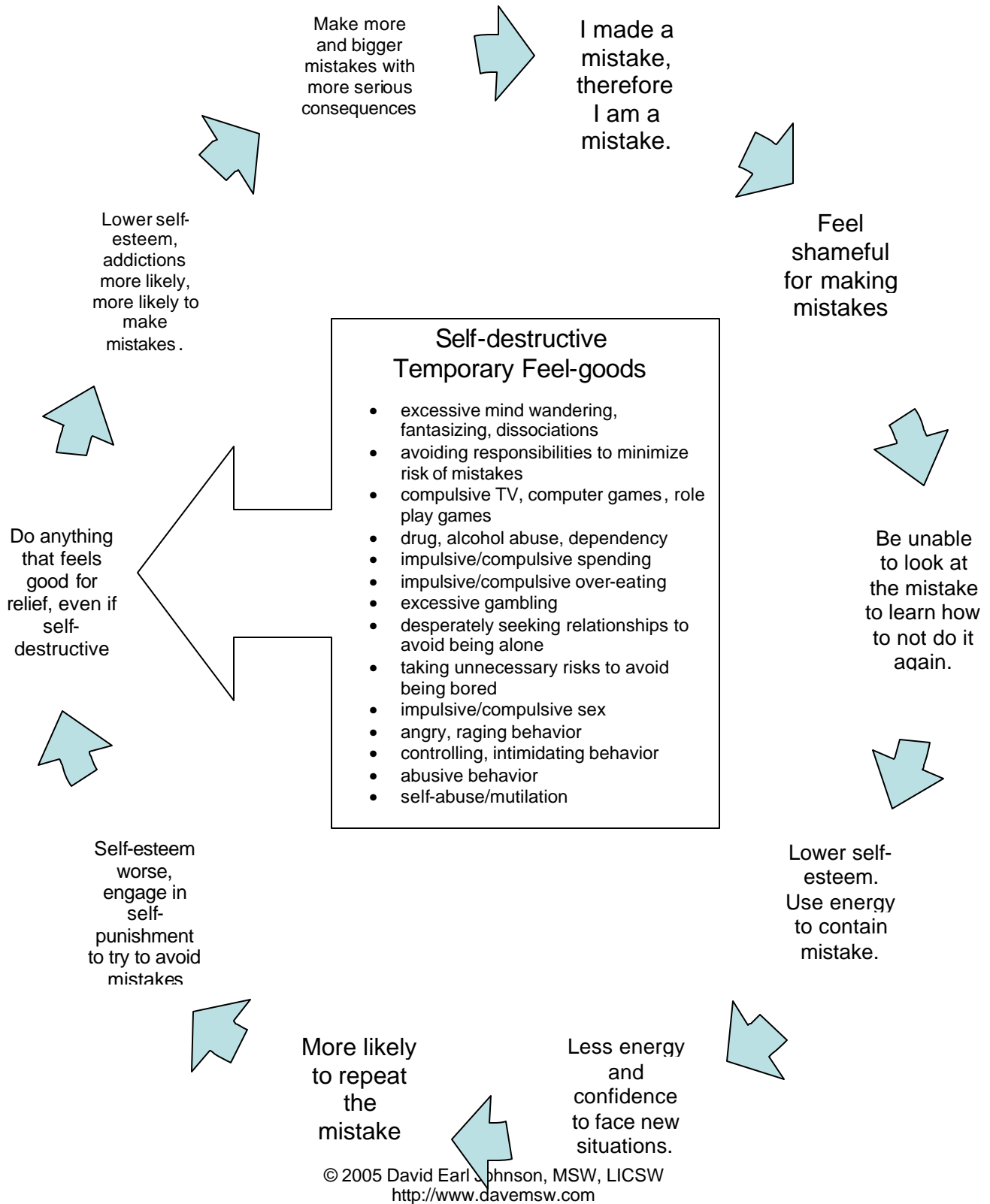
- I sometimes lay awake at night going over conversations I've had with people.
- I tend to fear and/or worry how others may respond to my feelings, thoughts or wants.
- I think my spouse's and children's behavior and dress are a reflection on me.
- I judge everything I think, say or do harshly as never "good enough".
- I often disappoint myself.
- I sometimes hear myself calling myself stupid, dumb, lazy, irresponsible, selfish.
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise or gifts.
- I feel uncomfortable when someone compliments me.
- I have a hard time asking for help.
- I do not like to be dependent on others.
- I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings, and behaviors over my own.
- I do not perceive myself as particularly lovable or worthwhile.
- I feel guilty about spending money on myself, taking time for myself.
- I feel guilty if I'm not available to help.
- I feel guilty when I say "no" to some one.
- It makes me feel good to help others.
- I really hate the way I look.
- When something goes wrong or there's a problem my first thought is, "what did I do wrong?"
- I tend to assess and scrutinize my behavior carefully.
- I tend to say "I'm sorry" a great deal.
- I often feel like a fraud, like someone will figure out that I am incompetent.
- I don't like to make a fool of myself. I fear looking foolish.
- I feel terrible if someone disapproves of me, disagrees with me.
- I worry a great deal about what people think.
- I try very hard not to do things wrong to avoid being blamed or criticized.
- I often find myself saying, "I don't care what they think."
- Sometimes I feel like an imposter.

- ÿ I get a lot of praise and affirmation but people don't really know me.
- ÿ I believe there is a right way and a wrong way to do things.
- ÿ If you are going to do something you should do it the right way or not bother.
- ÿ People often disappoint me.
- ÿ I sometimes feel confused about who is to blame in a situation.
- ÿ I get sad when no one seems to notice or appreciate how much I do.
- ÿ All I ever wanted in life is to be loved.
- ÿ If I think about it, I achieve a lot during the day, but I never feel as if I have done enough.
- ÿ I sometimes lay awake at night worrying about what needs to be done.
- ÿ I sometimes find myself worrying about the silliest things.
- ÿ I get upset when I make a mistake.
- ÿ Any kind of personal failure is the worst thing I can think of.
- ÿ It is hard for me to follow through and finish tasks.
- ÿ I have difficulty making decisions.
- ÿ I don't celebrate the conclusion of one project before starting another.
- ÿ I sometimes find myself comparing myself to others and coming up short or feeling inadequate.
- ÿ I worry a lot about why I haven't done better.
- ÿ I can't seem to relax. I feel guilty when I relax. I don't have much time to relax.
- ÿ I prefer to do things myself then I know they will be done right.
- ÿ If I don't take care of a problem at work, no one else will.
- ÿ I often find myself giving until it hurts and then feeling guilty when I feel resentful about it.
- ÿ I often feel that I give too much and people take advantage.
- ÿ If I can't be productive, I feel useless and unworthy.
- ÿ I feel like I put up with too much from other people.
- ÿ What I want is unimportant.
- ÿ I wouldn't dream of inconveniencing another person, no matter what it takes.
- ÿ If I hurt someone, even by accident, I am devastated and feel unworthy of the air I breathe.
- ÿ I try very hard to live my life for other people.

## What Causes Shame?



# The Cycle of Shame



# Recovery from Shame

## Target for change: Abusive self-talk

- Forbid self-torture, self-abuse, self-punishment!
- You cannot prevent a thought or a feeling from occurring, but you can replace it.
- Shame brainwashes your self-esteem.
- You are reprogramming your self-concept.
- Make a list of positive affirmations – things that make you feel good about who you are.

## Target for change: Emotional memories

- Recall the oldest childhood shameful memories.
- Recognize you were not responsible as a child.
- Likely, your parent/caregiver was responsible.
- You can quickly permanently change your memory by activating anger at those responsible.
- Blaming those responsible lets you off your own hook of self-blame.
- You don't have to change your behavior towards your parents or caregivers.

## Target for change: Problem solving

- Praise yourself for recognizing your mistake.
- Encourage yourself to review your actions.
- Gently but persistently encourage yourself to make needed changes.
- Recognize your courage and maturity for recognizing the need to change.
- Heap on the self-praise! You are making up for past abuse.
- Examine intense rage and lack of self-concern. Shame may lie deep beneath.

## Target for change: Self-esteem, self-concept

- Nurture yourself like a loving mother would.
- Love yourself, put yourself first in your life.
- There are no unacceptable feelings or thoughts. Feelings do not determine our behavior.
- There is no such thing as an unforgivable behavior. Forgive yourself first. You get to decide when and if you forgive others. Without self-forgiveness, there can be no change. You need all the energy you have to make changes.

## Target for change: Perfectionism

- Perfection is impossible.
- You are only as good as you are capable; we all have limits.
- Limits are good. Some things are over our heads. It's good to recognize that and let go.
- You don't have to take it all on by yourself, you can ask for help.
- Consciously lower your standards for yourself especially, but also for others.
- Recognize that when others haven't met your standards, you may have blamed yourself in the past.

## Target for change: Coping with emotions

- DO NOT numb your feelings. Don't shame yourself for feelings or try to reason them away. Feelings don't have to make sense. You need your feelings to make decisions. Make judgments on who to trust.
- Feelings will not harm you permanently; they are an important part of the healing process.
- What you do to escape your feelings will inevitably be self-destructive
- Treat emotions like a large wave
  - Bend your knees,
  - Let the wave wash over you,
  - Then let it go.
  - Repeat as needed

### **Target for change: Use emotions to enhance your judgment**

- Review what might have happened to elicit the feeling. The answer maybe one issue, or more likely it will be two or more issues to deal with separately.
- If you can't pinpoint the problem issue, file it away. Something may occur later to help you answer the question.
- If you feel something, assume it's important.
- Sit with that feeling, don't move to change or avoid it.
- Observe the thoughts that come to attempt to make sense of the feeling.
  - Let the intuitive solution slowly emerge from the feelings and thoughts as they interact.
  - This could take days or even weeks. Remember, it's important, don't rush it.
  - You will be tempted with simple comfortable explanations that are not true. Be suspicious of any idea that includes the words "always" or "never".
  - Don't let your hurry or fear of what you find to keep you from the truth.
  - If you can see the triggering event for the feelings, address it as the problem the emotion warned you about. You will uncover the underlying problem even if you start on something else.
  - Work at the problem one step at a time.
  - The benefit of any goal is not the achievement as much as it is what you learn along the way.
  - Consider your options carefully. If you have a good idea, look again, you may find a better one.
  - When you feel ready to decide, choose the best option, from both an emotional and a rational point of view.
  - Try out your idea. Be ready to change to another option if it proves wrong or a poor fit.
- The accuracy of your choice is dependent on your self-knowledge and full access to feelings. At first it may feel like you are more often wrong than right. Be patient with your learning.
- Judgment takes time and experience to develop. Avoid taking major risks based on developing judgment. Ask for help from someone you know you can trust.

### **Target for change: Relationships**

- Recognize that shame is learned.
- Identify the sources of shame in your life, often the people who are most important to you
  - Write a letter to the people who taught you shame to focus your feelings on those who provoked them.
  - Don't send this letter. You don't want to purge your feelings on people with whom you may want a relationship.
  - If necessary, find a diplomatic way to clear the air between you. You may need help to do this.
- Return your conflict with shame to relationships where it belongs. Recognize shame as inhibiting appropriate risk taking in trusting relationships.
- Look for shame impeding sharing, trust, making you defensive and on-guard.
- Decrease your tolerance for discomfort.
- Business relationships are often seen as reflected on an accounting ledger, debit vs. credit, in pocket vs. out of pocket.
  - Keep your social relationships on the credit side.
  - Give only when it feels good, and never expect anything in return.
  - People who wish to exploit you, will go away.
  - Trustworthy people will be generous out of appreciation, not out of obligation.
  - You will be rewarded with many loyal friends.

## A Shame-based Person's Bill of Rights

You have the right...

- To say no;
- To not tolerate disrespect, and say so;
- To not be sorry;
- To be without self-doubt;
- To have limits and limitations;
- To have a punishment and blame free life;
- To not fear power in yourself or others;
- To be who you are without comparing yourself to others;
- To be less than perfect;
- To privacy;
- To speak up, or not;
- To change situations to meet your needs, even if it imposes on others;
- To praise yourself without fear of conceit;
- To be angry;
- To feel overwhelmed;
- To recognize feelings of vulnerability as a form of strength;
- To give only when it feels good

# Waves of Emotion

