

The shame of failure

Paola Bortini

MINDFUL
compassionate
EDUCATION

Paola Bortini

I am a practitioner and trainer with extensive international experience working alongside families, children, and professionals in contexts of vulnerability and care.

My work bridges neuroscience, emotional regulation, and trauma-informed approaches to support both those in need and those who support them.

Drawing from years of direct practice and reflective supervision with parents, educators, and social workers, I bring a compassionate, practical lens to the challenges of professional caregiving.

My focus is on promoting resilience, preventing empathy fatigue, and cultivating self-compassion as a core competence for sustainable, heart-centered work.

Sociologist, certified teacher in Mindful Self-Compassion by the University of San Diego, School of Medicine, and in Mindful Compassionate Parenting and Mindful Compassionate Education.

Why it is so difficult to accept failure?



The myth of perfection

W I N N E R





Being loved
is a primary
need

Shame vs Guilt

***“How do we know when we are
feeling shame?”***

“How do we know when we are feeling shame?”

**(looking away, hanging your head, fidgeting,
blushing, biting your lips, faking a smile, laughing
tensely, getting angry, feeling confused, mumbling,
talking too much or going silent, or spacing out)**

***“How does shame
make you feel? ”***

***“How does shame make you
feel?”***

**(foolish, dumb, silly, stupid, helpless, weak, inept,
dependent, small, inferior, unworthy, unlovable,
shy, vulnerable, uncomfortable, or embarrassed)**

Three Paradoxes of Shame

**Seen through the eyes of compassion
and defined by Chris Germer**

**Shame feels *blameworthy*, but
it is an *innocent* emotion that
calls for kindness.**

**We wake up every morning with the wish to be loved and
go through the entire day with the wish, although we may
never realize or admit it.**

**Shame feels *isolating*,
but it is a *universal* emotion**

we are not alone when we feel shame

Shame feels *permanent* and *all-encompassing*

shame is a burden carried by only *part* of ourselves for a *limited* period of time, not a permanent characteristic of who we are. It is *transitory*, like all emotions.

“When we take a moment to regulate ourselves, we are not stepping away from the work—we are preparing ourselves to do it well.”