

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**



[illegible]

Shame vs Guilt

[illegible]

***“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.”