

GOD, I HAVE A QUESTION...OR TWO

QUESTION ONE

WHY GUILT?

Remember to be skeptical the next time you feel guilty.

Ask your guilt questions:

Is it trying to teach you something rational and helpful about your behavior, or is it just an emotional, irrational response to a situation?

The answer to that question will be your first step to helping you better cope with guilt in the future.

THE TASK:

We must be able to identify the kind of guilt we are suffering from and then we can at least have a chance of achieving a measure of release from the bonds of the past.

GUILT CONFINES US TO THE PAST, CONTAMINATES THE PRESENT, AND CONSUMES THE FUTURE.



GOD, I HAVE A QUESTION...OR TWO

Guilt is one of those emotions that we feel is telling us something important. Be aware that not every emotion, and certainly not every guilty feeling, is a rational one that has a purpose. We all make mistakes and many of us make choices in our lives that can make us feel guilty later on when we finally realize our misstep.



MANY OF OUR LIVES ARE GOVERNED BY GUILT—AND THE MORE RELIGIOUS WE ARE, THE MORE THIS CAN BE TRUE.

GETTING STARTED

Guilt and its handmaiden, shame, can paralyze—or thankfully, catalyze one into action.

Begin your time by using the following questions and activities to start thinking:

1. Think about a time when you experienced a deep sense of guilt—because of something you did, something you heard, or something you experienced. What happened? What did “guilt” feel like?

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2. How can I know the difference between true guilt and false guilt?

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REFLECT

When we sense our questions teaching us or drawing our attention to something, it's important to stop and reflect on what they might be trying to tell us. Use the following questions and big quote to guide your thoughts about the teaching and stories you just experienced.

BIG QUOTE:

"Most of us are conditioned to be nice rather than real, accommodating rather than authentic, adaptive rather than assertive." —Dr. James Hollis

Imagine a twelve-step program for "recovering nice persons," where one describes how they were reflexively nice during the past week and lived to regret it; or, when deciding not to be nice, how guilty one felt. "Hi, I'm Randy, and I was too nice this week."

This false guilt reflects a lack of permission to be ourselves. In such moments of guilt, we should ask the question, "What am I defending myself against?" Usually the matter will boil down to the fear that someone else might not be happy with our decisions. Pleasing others cannot be at the top of our life agenda. Would you call yourself a people pleaser? How has this hindered you from being yourself?

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RESPOND

Now that you have spent some time reflecting on the importance of asking the right questions, let's consider how you will apply the wisdom you have learned from the video and your reflection time. Then think about practical steps to take in the coming week to live out what you have learned.



APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

How do I determine what is real guilt?

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Is there a crucial difference between serving others and pleasing others?

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What is the most obvious reason to feel guilty?

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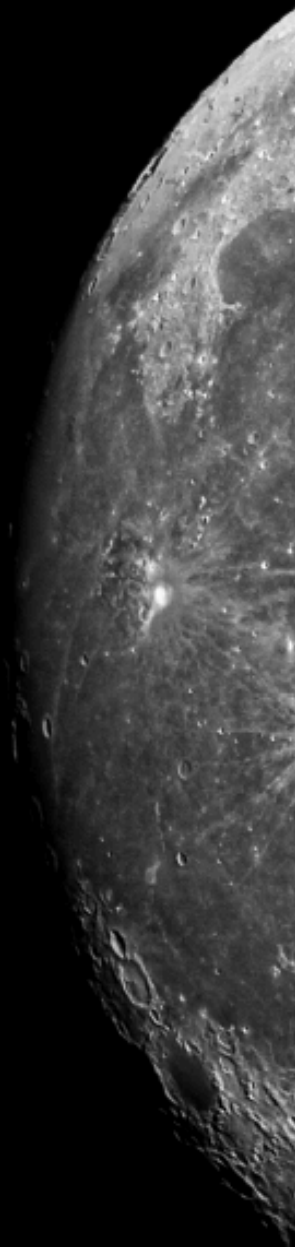
How can a proper understanding of true and false guilt lead me to freedom?

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Can you list the 3 "R's" of appropriate acknowledgement of guilt?

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NONE OF US CAN AFFORD
THE CASUAL COMFORT
OF INNOCENCE.





DAILY READINGS

Ask honest questions of yourself, others, and of God.

READINGS

Day 1.

READ "5 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH GUILT"

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2007/11/27/5-tips-for-dealing-with-guilt>

QUESTION:

How can we help combat our guilty feelings, and accept them when they're important, but let them go more easily when they're not?

Day 2.

READ "GUILT AND REGRET"

http://www.psychologicalselfhelp.org/Chapter6/chap6_132.html

QUESTION:

Why does unhealthy guilt not allow for mistakes? Why do we often expect too much from ourselves and others?

Day 3.

READ "THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GUILT"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201208/the-definitive-guide-guilt>

QUESTION:

What are the five causes of guilt?



Use these daily readings to go deeper into this week's question. Each day read the information given. Take your time. Ask honest questions of yourself. Listen and respond as you meditate on the new thoughts. Once the study has ended, you may want to continue this habit of reading, questioning, and reflecting. You may want to work your way through more books that you come across on your own, reading just a few pages a day as you have in this Daily Readings section.

READINGS

Day 4.

READ "THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GUILT AND SHAME"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/shame/201305/the-difference-between-guilt-and-shame>

QUESTION:

What is the important distinction between guilt and shame?

Day 5.

READ "GUILT ISN'T ALL BAD"

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/do-the-right-thing/201309/guilt-isn-t-all-bad>

QUESTION:

How can guilt help us act in prosocial ways that can be constructive, healthy, and community building?

Day 6.

SUMMARY:

Use the following space to write any further thoughts that are in your heart and mind about the questions you have asked in this session and during your reading times this week. You may also want to write down observations or questions that you'd like to keep close as you continue.

SUGGESTED READING

[THE ART OF FORGIVING](#) LEWIS SMEDES

[THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUE SELF](#) DR. JAMES MASTERSON

[A RENAISSANCE REDNECK IN A MEGA-CHURCH PULPIT \(A MEMOIR\)](#) RANDY ELROD

[SWAMPLANDS OF THE SOUL](#) DR. JAMES HOLLIS

[THE LOST ART OF LISTENING](#) MICHAEL NICHOLS, PHD

[FALLING UPWARD](#) FATHER RICHARD ROHR

[THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES](#) JOSEPH CAMPBELL

[HUMAN UNIVERSALS](#) DONALD BROWN

[BEAUTY](#) JOHN O'DONOHUE

[A PRAYER JOURNAL](#) FLANNERY O'CONNOR

[WALKING ON WATER](#) MADELINE L'ENGLE

[THE COMPLETE ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE](#) ED. DONALD FRAME

[BROTHERS KARAMAZOV](#) FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

[WAR AND PEACE](#) LEO TOLSTOY

[THE LADY WITH THE DOG AND OTHER STORIES](#) ANTON CHEKOV

[STRANGERS TO OURSELVES](#) TIMOTHY WILSON

[DARING GREATLY](#) BRENE BROWN

[THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE](#) THOMAS MERTON

[THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY](#) OSCAR WILDE

[HERETICS AND HEROES](#) THOMAS CAHILL

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RANDY ELROD lives to encourage others to discover who they really are.

He revels in the sensory overload of climbing America's highest mountains and once navigated the Uganik River with only a tent and raft in grizzly country for a week in the wilderness of Kodiak Island, Alaska. He has completed twenty-four full marathons (yes, 26.2 miles each).

He has also written six books, two of which landed on the Amazon.com bestseller list. You can find out more about them at his official [Amazon author page](#). His best-selling memoir: *A Renaissance Redneck In A Mega-Church Pulpit* released February 5, 2014. You can buy it [HERE](#).

A dreamer, artist, writer, mentor, and teacher, he enjoys traveling the world, and the culinary arts. He loves reading and his favorite authors include Ayn Rand, Frederick Buechner, Madeline L'Engle, and David McCullough.

For the last fifteen years, he has gathered global early adopters and creatives together at the annual [re:Create Conference](#) in Nashville, TN, USA.

Each year in July and October, he gathers eight men over age 38 for [re:Quest \(Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life\)](#), a two-day adventure and secret rite of passage high in the Sangre de Cristo mountains in Angel Fire, NM and the Smoky mountains of Tennessee.

He does a very limited number of one-on-one mentoring days in person or via Skype on various topics. For details email [HERE](#). Be sure to follow him on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), and [Instagram](#). He writes words of encouragement each week at [randyelrod.com](#).

