

Good Guilt / Bad Guilt

A world without guilt would be a frightening place. Guilt is the internal pause button that encourages us to question our behaviours, feelings, intentions, beliefs, judgements, values and helps us decide whether something is right or wrong.

Guilt can be extremely helpful in keeping us on track as we navigate through life.

On the other hand, guilt can be crippling, leading to shame, self-doubt and depression. It can be a harmful weapon when we use it against ourselves or to control and influence another person.

Use the following questions to help you assess whether your feeling of guilt is helpful or harmful:

- 1 What happened that led to my feeling of guilt or shame?
- 2 What part am I responsible for in this situation?
- 3 What happened that may have contributed to this outcome?
- 4 Who else may have contributed to this outcome?
- 5 How much of the guilt belongs to what happened and/or other people?
- 6 What part of the guilt belongs to me?

Now what will I do with this guilt?

- **Learn** from my mistakes - don't continue to beat myself up.
- **Admit** when I'm wrong and apologize.
- **Avoid** shaming myself. We all make mistakes.
- **Accept** that I can't change what has already happened.
- **Forgive** myself.
- **Decide** what to do differently next time.
- **Give** thanks for the life lesson and move forward.