



- the podcast -

GUILTY AS CHARGED

We all suffer with guilt from time to time. It's normal. It's even necessary and healthy, in some ways. Positive guilt can keep us on the straight and narrow.

But do you recognize when your guilt is unhealthy? Do you know when your guilt is unrealistic and do you know how to reign it in? If you are suffering from it - I would bet the answer to that question is a solid "No". So, we are going to share with you some thought processes that help set us free. And this is something we go back to when we struggle.

I know it is uncomfortable - and feel free to burn this sheet if you want to once the exercise is over - but first things first - List out what you are guilty over. I know it's uncomfortable. But just like in your finances - if you don't know what you are dealing with - you can't make the best choices!

1 List out who you are. ie: (mom, employee, wife, chef, circus leader - the main adjectives that describe you:



2 Now, with those as prompts - list out things you feel guilty about - and anything else that comes to mind.

3 Now, write down how living with guilt makes you feel. List mental and physical symptoms.





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Now, for each item you listed. We are gonna work through it. And see if it helps you - or hurts you. I am going to give you an example below. (This example is totally fictitious and doesn't reflect our opinions-just to give you an idea of what it may look like.)

1. I feel guilty because I can't afford to take my kid(s) on summer vacation trips.
2. *What deep belief/standard is making me feel this way?* I feel like to be a successful parent, you should make enough money to afford nice trips. My parents always took me on summer vacations and it is some of my favorite memories.
3. *What part of me makes me feel guilty?* I feel like a failure in a way. Maybe if I got a different degree. Or was braver. Or was still married.
4. *Did I actually hurt another person?* I mean, No? Maybe? I don't know. I don't think the kids are hurt, because they haven't experienced it.
5. *Have I apologized?* No. But they are old enough where I could tell them I feel guilty - and apologize because I don't feel like it's enough.
6. *Have I done all I can do as of right now? Remembering, you can't change the past?* Yes. I apologized. I am working as hard as I can. I could be better with my money, though. So maybe I could work on that.
7. *What's my conclusion?* I can't go back to school and be a Doctor over night, but I can work on saving money. I can tell my kids I wish I could take them on vacations - and I can work to save up for one nice one - even if it takes me five years. So I got a plan/ so now I have to let the guilt go.

Now what happens if you apologize to your kids, and they say - "You are right - you are failure as a parent and I deserve a vacation!" (One, that's bratty. So work on that, LOL!) But, here is the thing. You can apologize, but that doesn't mean that the offender has to accept it. Maybe, you drank your money away - or had a drug problem. Maybe they are hurt from that. If that is the case, have you handled that part - because that might be what they need an apology for. But you can't change the past. You can only change in the future. And you move forward, free of guilt. Why? Because you are doing a disservice to everyone - if you hold on to your guilt in such an unhealthy way that you struggle with it.

- 1 Name the Guilt. _____
- 2 What deep belief/standard is making me feel this way? _____

- 3 What part of me makes me feel guilty? _____

- 4 Did I actually hurt another person? _____

- 5 Have I done all that I can do? _____

- 6 What's My Conclusion? _____

So the point of this exercise? We all make mistakes. We all hurt people. We all experience guilt. We also can't change the past. All we can do is move forward. If you need to apologize and make amends, do so. You won't feel relief until you do. If the person has passed on - or you can't for some reason - write a letter of apology and burn it. But get it off your chest. And move forward, and try to never make that mistake again. And give grace. To yourself, and others. We are all doing the best we can.

