



## FACING “THE SHADOW” IN ROCK WORK FACILITATION

### ***What is Shadow?***

***Shadow is “What you cannot or refuse to see about yourself and don’t want others to see.” It can be described as what we “hide, repress or deny.”***

It is the natural expression of our broken humanity – attempting to navigate life as best as we know how (unconsciously). It is our human way to make up for what we think is NOT there – communion with God, connection to love/security/value.

Side Note: Use of the term “shadow:” Jungian roots. I am not endorsing Jung or all that he taught. However, the term shadow can be useful. It helps to explain why people struggle with their own personal growth.

In our broken humanity we are unconscious, self-deceived – not seeing what we reject - that we are human and that we play the role of God in our lives, protecting/defending ourselves, attempting to secure for ourselves what we are missing because we left HOME (the Garden).

Romans 7:15 to 8:2 <sup>15</sup> *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”*

**Shadow/Darkness and the unconscious: Another way of talking about what is in “shadow” in our lives can be expressed in biblical terms: what is in the dark.**

What is in shadow/darkness is unconscious to us.

Jesus saw what was in “darkness” in those who were crucifying him. They did not know.

Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing.”

“Spiritual maturity is to become aware that we are not the persona (mask) we have been presenting to others.” Rohr

### **Sin and Shadow:**

What is in shadow is not necessarily sinful. It is what is expressed because of what is in shadow that may be sinful.

### *Examples:*

- Wounds and hurts from the past which are in shadow are not sinful. However, the defended self/false self in place to protect the wounded/broken self can be sinful.
- Judging others, raging, lust, etc. in place to protect or provide for what is hidden can be sinful.
- Immature behaviors such as withdrawal, passivity, being the expert, etc. are not necessarily sinful.
- “Christians could have done a great service if shadow had been distinguished from sin. Sin and shadow are not the same. Encouraged to avoid the sin – many avoid facing the shadow and we end up sinning even worse.” (R. Rohr *Falling Upward*, p. 312)

### ***How do you know if you are “in shadow” - Living out of your broken/wounded state unconsciously?***

#### *What to watch for:*

- Any idealized role or self-image, (mother, father, minister, doctor, leader, expert, moral believer, ...) The more you are attached to this the more shadow there is. “The more you live out of your shadow self the less capable you are of recognizing it and the more you protect it and project it.” Rohr
- Watch your reactions/overreactions. Strong emotional/mental reactions out of proportion to the moment
- When you are stuck in a pattern of emotions (anger, anxiety, shame, fear, depression, numb...)
- Denials (“I’m not angry.” Yet, the evidence of anger is there, perhaps noticed by others more than by you)
- Self-Judgment
- Irritations - What irritates you about others will be your guide to understanding your own soul.
- Blame/Being the Victim
- Judgmental attitude toward others
- Addictions/Compulsions

### ***Shadow in Rock Work***

To the extent that we are unconscious of what is in “shadow” in our lives our capacity to be present to others will be diminished, whether this is in life in general or in our facilitation of Rock Work. We oftentimes say, “You can’t take someone where you haven’t gone yourself.” For example: It is difficult to lead someone to healing and freedom from their wound around mom or dad if you have yet to address your own wound around mom or dad, if you have one. It is challenging to assist someone to work through their anger and bitterness toward the opposite sex if you remain stuck in your own reactivity toward the opposite sex.

***What's in shadow within you can show up in your facilitation in some of the following ways:***

- Your judgments (attitude toward attendee or yourself)
- Your reactions toward the attendee which may reveal unfinished work in your story, being too closely identified with the attendee and challenged to be objective
- Fears that you bring to your facilitation (performance anxiety, questions of your worth or value,...)
- Transference - seeing other people through the unconscious lens of your own story. You see them and interpret their story/needs through your story and needs.
- Projection – You place onto them what you are not able or do not want to see in yourself. This is expressed through your judgments of them. “She is prideful.” “He is arrogant.”
- Identifying what is in shadow in the attendee
- Pay attention to your own blocks – those things in your life which keep you from living from your true self in Christ – your false selves or unresolved wounds from your story.

## **“The Shadow in me” - Reflections**

1. Reflect on the above description of how you may know if you are in shadow and how shadow may show up in your facilitation and list areas of your life that you are aware which correspond to these expressions of shadow.

Consider bringing to this training any areas that are in shadow or emerging from shadow so that you can receive support in your journey.