

Shadow work- bullet points

- **Tread carefully**

The root cause of whatever has been hidden may not be resolved. There was a reason, a benefit, as to why this self-limiting belief was bought in or memory hidden. So, if it feels wrong, or overly difficult, pause and check in with if now really is the right time for the work.

- **It isn't easy**

You are trying to untangle something you- or your client- put in place to preserve their safety. The querent in this case is both the victim of the issue, but also the person who put the issue in place. It is very rare to reveal the shadow work in the first spread, or often the first reading.

- **No harm, no shame, no blame, no guilt.**

I think this must be the mantra in your head- no harm caused by me. This means if trauma memories are shared, or dark emotions uncovered, you have a duty of care to not trigger shame or guilt in your client.

I have heard about rape, consensual incest, parents feeling no love to their young children, suicide attempts, assisted suicide attempts, and numerous complications around gender and sexual identity.

Calm face, deep breath, no reaction that could insight shame, blame, or guilt.

Seek personal guidance afterwards if this has triggered you.

- **The reader sets the pace**

If at any point you don't feel you can hold a safe space (for you or the querent), gently stop. Subtly adjust the focus of the reading- and if need be, suggest the querent reach out to a different therapist.

And if you are reading for yourself and feel unsafe- pause, reflect, reach out to someone else if needed.

Some years ago, I was aware I was repressing memories from my marriage leading to a state of dissociation. I asked a good friend to lift the veil to these memories whilst shamanically rooting me in my body. He expressed concern about my mental health, I made it clear I wasn't asking. He was right- it was very hard to adjust to the sudden onslaught of memories I wasn't ready to face.

- **Know when to stop**

Shadow work comes in layers, you need to adjust to one set of memories, adapt to one set of self-limiting beliefs, before moving deeper towards the root cause.

You may come across people (like me) who ask, or even demand, that you rip the band-aid off and deal with all the pain in one go.

If you do- and trigger a trauma response- it is your duty to support the querent through the harm that YOU have caused. (My friend in the above example- even though it was my responsibility in asking- stayed with me for over 12 hours until he felt I was emotionally stable)

Maybe you have the skill, time, and resources to take someone to the root and bring them out again in one go. I don't- I have kids to care for, a house to run, and I need to work with multiple clients to pay my bills.

So, know when you have uncovered enough to be worked with, rather than just aiming for the root cause regardless of whether this can be integrated at this point.

- **Useful tools**

I think it's helpful to have some useful tools to suggest to clients depending on their journey. I often get this intuitively during a reading.

I remember working with one client and "swimming" just popped into my mind as I looked at the 2 of swords as an advice card. "Perhaps a physical meditation to calm the mind might help, like swimming". Even as I said it I was questioning myself- I usually suggest walking in nature or yoga. His face lit up- turn out he was a competitive swimmer in his youth and missed the feeling of total focus.

These might be simple like journaling, breath work, crystals, meditation.

They could include book recommendations, meditation apps, or to seek the advice of a local health food shop.

These might be tools you already use and have some expertise on- or that you are signposting a client to.

I do think it's important to be clear if this is coming from intuition (as in the case of the swimming) or just your general experience.

- **If you don't know, offer a follow up email/text.**

It's OK not to know, don't be pulled into thinking you need to have all the answers right now. If you feel you would like to recommend a book, podcast or the like- but can't think of the right one, let the querent know you will contact them with recommendations.

Obviously good boundaries are important- which is why email might be the best way to handle this- you're not opening an ongoing chat, simply finishing the session with well researched advice.