



Shadow Work 101 FAQS

33 QUESTIONS
ANSWERED TO
HELP YOU
OVERCOME THE
FEAR OF STARTING
YOUR JOURNEY

RACHEL D. GARRISON
LIFE COACH AND SHADOW
WORK COACH

WWW.RACHELDGARRISON.COM





Shadow Work

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Meet
Rachel
D.
Garrison

I am an author, blogger, content creator, safe space creator, life coach and what most people would call a shadow work coach. But I like to simply say that I am a healer and your accountability partner helping you on your journey of healing and becoming your most authentic self so that you can have healthier relationships. In my practice, I create a safe space for you to be vulnerable and explore those hidden areas of your life. I cheer you on in your successes and I lovingly challenge you and hold you accountable for your words and actions in order to promote your growth.

I designed this guide to help you understand shadow work so that you can overcome the fear of getting started.

Please feel free to contact me at any time at
www.racheldgarrison.com

Love Always and in All Ways,
Rachel D. Garrison



The Basics

- What is shadow work? How does shadow work help with my spiritual journey? I explain to my clients that shadow work is the basis of the healing journey and is the foundational practice for divination and manifestation. Shadow work is a mindset shift and is the deliberate work to uncover your shadow side and integrate it into your life. Your shadow side includes traumas, reactions; fears, masks, secrets and talents you hide. In addition, anything that we hate about ourselves and have labeled as bad or wrong or unloveable is also a part of the shadow.. Not only do our shadows include things we suppress (consciously choose to hide) but also the things that we repress (unconsciously deny)If you don't do shadow work, your shadow will continue to subconsciously affect your behaviors. Shadow work is a journey of self-exploration, self-acceptance and self-awareness. Although used in the spiritual community, shadow work has its roots in psychology. It is how we begin the process of reprogramming our brains to deal with trauma and manage our triggers and handle life as it happens. When we become more self-aware, we become more aligned in the spiritual realm.
- Is your shadow your dark/evil side? Not necessarily. Our shadows are things that we suppress or repress which could include a number of things including less-than-desirable traits, passions and creativity.



The Basics

- Is it enough to acknowledge the trauma but not fully heal? Acknowledging the trauma is one of the first steps in healing. We have to **EXPOSE/ACKNOWLEDGE** the wound. If you stop there, all you've done is opened a deep wound and allowed it to fester. If you truly want to heal then you shouldn't be satisfied with letting a wound fester.
- How long is it? **FOREVER**. Shadow work is deeper than writing journal prompts. It's a lifestyle and mindset. It is mental work to change how you see yourself, see life and see others.
- Why do people say that shadow work is emotional? Shadow work can bring up intense emotions because you are working with past events, people, things and yourself. You're also addressing actions that you have taken that led to painful experiences. Coming to terms with the truth that you were a part of your own pain can be hurtful. Also, realizing that you hid **BEAUTIFUL** parts of yourself can create some emotions as well. Sometimes shadow work can be so intense that it may cause you to shut down as a defense mechanism. This is also why many people who begin shadow work alone, quit the process.



The Basics

- **Should I do shadow work if I have a mental illness?** Shadow work is not an alternative treatment for mental illness. I advise those with mental illnesses to continue their work with their psychiatrist and/or psychologist. Since shadow work is based in psychology, your mental health professional should be able to help you navigate that space while managing your mental illness. Addressing complex trauma alone can be very toxic to your mental health.
- **Will shadow work help with self love?** ABSOLUTELY! The shadow work journey is the self-love journey. You can't love or appreciate yourself if you don't know or accept yourself (all of yourself).
- **Will shadow work help with manifestation?** Yes. Shadow work helps us to overcome subconscious blocks and acknowledge self-sabotaging behaviors. When we do those things, we get into alignment so that we can manifest the things that we desire. We cannot manifest the life we want until we acknowledge the life we had/have or acknowledge that we have been repressing our emotions. Sometimes, we can repress emotions by practicing toxic positivity ("love and light" 24 hours a day). When we practice constant positive thinking, we repress feelings and create blocks. Shadow work helps you accept and manage all of the feelings rather than hide them so that we can manifest our desires.



The Basics

- I don't need shadow work. What's the next step?**SHADOW WORK!** If you think you don't need shadow work, then you are in denial and it's common. We all have experienced this level of unawareness. Time to expose the shadow of perfection.
- Can you do shadow work while in a relationship? I was wondering if you could or would be like a distraction or prevent you from actually doing the work Believe it or not relationships can be the biggest exercises in shadow work-- if we let them. Being in a relationship can help shed light on our biggest shadows because our partners often mirror things about ourselves. That doesn't mean that you should get into a relationship so that you can start or do shadow work. It just means that relationships won't distract you from shadow work but it can contribute to your shadow work It all depends on your level of maturity--like anything in life.
- Is it safe to do shadow work while expecting ?Yes it is. If you are already comfortable acknowledging and feeling your feelings, then it should be safe to do shadow work while expecting. I have actually worked with expecting mothers who were determined to make a better life for their children rather than bringing their children into knowingly chaotic and traumatic environments.



The Basics

- Do I have to sit in front of a mirror in the dark? NO! There are many shadow work exercises and some include mirrors. However, standing in front of the mirror in the dark is not shadow work. It can be a practice in dark work but it is not a common shadow work practice.



Getting Started

- I have been trying to consciously change my way of thinking and being more positive but I noticed subconsciously I still see the fear or myself finding a shield to put up. While going through shadow work, how can you change your way of thinking subconsciously? You have to acknowledge those thoughts and feelings and explore why they exist. Once you do, you can alter your reaction to those feelings and actions.
- How am I supposed to start my shadow work, if I can't recall my past? You don't have to recall every single event from your past or childhood in order to do shadow work. The most amazing thing about the body and mind is that it stores memories without us being aware of it. As you work through shadow work exercises, memories and feelings will be triggered. So although you may not readily remember your past, your body and subconscious remembers. Tapping into those feelings is what you need.
- How do I get started? Make time for yourself. Self-care is extremely important. You must have that part of your life secured before beginning this journey. Also, create a toolkit of grounding techniques. Shadow work is intense and you'll need those tools. If you are not caring for yourself, shadow work exercises can cause you to spiral emotionally.



Getting Started

- What are grounding techniques? Anxiety (even at the acute level) occurs when your thoughts are trapped in the past or trapped in the future. Grounding is a way to bring yourself into the present. It stops our rapid and incessant thoughts and soothes/calms the mind. You will need grounding techniques to help you center yourself during and after shadow work exercises.
- Do I need a journal? If writing is not your thing, find something that is helpful in processing. If you're an auditory processor, try audio recordings to process your thoughts and feelings. If you're a creative thinker, try art (poetry, visual art, music) to help you process.
- Can I write journal prompts for shadow work? Yes, ONLY if it is accompanied with an explanation of the purpose. Do the prompts help you make sense of what you've written? Do the prompts provide a path that leads you somewhere or are they random prompts? If not, then don't waste your time. Most memes and prompts shared on social media don't provide the proper guidance and can sometimes make you feel just as confused and hurt as when you started. Oftentimes, some people quit before even finishing the prompts because the prompts cause them to open wounds but don't help heal them.



Getting Started

- Journaling everyday everything that makes you mad/irritated in a day , is that a form of shadow work? It can be a good start. Acknowledging your triggers helps create a higher state of self awareness. But don't stop there; that's only A PART of the shadow work journey.
- Is shadow work just journal prompts? No. There are many shadow work practices to help you increase your self-awareness. If you ask questions like “Why am I where I am in life?” or “What's your biggest fears?” but don't build on the answers or give you guidance on how to answer them then, chances are, those prompts may not be digging deep enough.
- Should you start shadow work alone? **ABSOLUTELY NOT.** Can you see that piece of lint in the back of your hair? You need a shadow work coach/mentor/therapist to guide you to get started. You need someone to help you examine parts of yourself you couldn't see or refused to see. They can help connect the dots, process and give you direction on your next steps. You also need support with all the intense emotions that come up. A mentor/coach/therapist can help you overcome the difficulties of the past and reach a position of greater self-confidence and personal power.



Getting Started

- Can I do shadow work with my friends? Sure but make sure that the group has a mentor or that one of the group members is a shadow work veteran who can guide the group. Otherwise, it's just the blind leading the blind, which is something that happens often on social media. The goal is to have support AND guidance.
- I started my shadow work journey but have absolutely no idea what I am doing. I started with a shadow workbook that included using tarot cards but it didn't really help me because I'm still learning how to properly read them. If you aren't currently using a divination tool (and can use it well) do not start with a divination tool. It will only make the initial work more stressful. Pro-tip there are many different masters in divination who can use their gift to help you with shadow work. Utilize one of them until your divination gifts manifest. Now is not the time to try and "learn" divination while trying to start your shadow work journey. Be patient. Divination will come.
- What are the different shadow work practices? Exercises that are good when used in collaboration with a coach/mentor/therapist/guide are journaling, reframing, astrology, numerology, certain mirror exercises, letter writing, music therapy and letter writing.



Going Deeper

- Can you send a list of good prompts? I do shadow work consistently but I feel like I want to dig SUPER deep. I'm trying but it's like I don't know how to push deeper? No. Shadow is very intense and should not be entered into lightly. You need a good foundation/education on the components of shadow work so that you can effectively do your work. I don't give out shadow prompts because it creates the illusion that that's all shadow work is. If you have started shadow work and find that it's not going deep enough, then it's probably because the questions are not deep enough OR they don't instruct you on how to connect the dots.
- Everyone who's posted about doing shadow work has talked about how much they've cried and felt crappy. If I don't have these feelings, am I not going deep enough? Some of the prompts cause bad feelings, but nothing that has made me feel like I really struck a nerve or I can't continue. Either the questions don't dig enough or they aren't helping you connect the dots. It could also mean that you have good self-care practices and grounding techniques that are helping you manage your emotions well.



Going Deeper

- So do I just ask myself hard questions that I don't want to answer and then answer them? And once I answer them, then what? What if I feel worse after answering those questions.?This is why I don't recommend starting shadow work alone. You will be triggered. You will also resist bringing up things that you have consciously suppressed. You will need a mentor to help you navigate the resistance, the triggers and the feelings. Mentors/coaches/therapists can help you to navigate these traumas AND the triggers. So if you've started journal prompts and don't seem to be getting what you need, it's time to reach out for help. In terms of repression, you won't know which questions to ask yourself because you don't consciously know you repressed it. You don't know how to connect the dots because you are so close to the trauma. You need someone who can see it objectively.
- What methods of shadow work will bring forth the most suppressed emotional debris for me to gain clarity and move forward from ?Shadow work is not a race. Don't be in a hurry to clean out many years of pain and emotional wounds. Every step you take on this journey will provide you with clarity and will move you forward. Remember this is a marathon not a sprint.



Going Deeper

- How do you know you were successful? How do you know when you're making progress? There are many signs of progress but when your triggers are less frequent and when your reactions to triggers are different, then you know that you are making progress. There are also some assessments that can help gauge progress.
- Where do I find a shadow work coach? I am a shadow work coach and offer group and one-on-one coaching in shadow work. The group program is a combination of training videos that will be released every other day for 4 weeks on my course platform. There will also be assignments to accompany the videos which I use for coaching. It also includes a 1-on-1 coaching session and the opportunity for further coaching after the program. This program is offered quarterly and includes an application. To get more information, simply reply to one of my recent emails.
- How do we connect with our inner child? Meditation isn't working for me; I can't focus long enough. I associate our inner child with our rawest and innocent emotions, which is different from shadows. Shadows are a part of the inner child but isn't the inner child. In order to connect, you have to shed light on the shadows that are trying to protect it. If sitting in silence doesn't work for you, reply to my latest email to get access to my shadow work playlist and practice to help subdue the shadow and engage the inner child.



Going Deeper

- How can we use this for divination? Once you have a solid understanding of shadow work and it has become instinctual, you should notice that you are more in the flow. Your gifts and divination tools will be made aware to you.
- What is a practical approach to shadow work?
 1. Get a toolkit of grounding techniques that work for you. Practice those until you are comfortable.
 2. Tap into your emotions. Get comfortable with feeling all of your feelings I have a beginner guide for this. Contact me
 3. Join my Shadow Work 4- week group coaching program.
 4. Work one-on-one with me via weekly or bi weekly coaching sessions and get tools, resources, referrals and practices to go deeper.
 5. **MANIFEST THE LIFE YOU WANT!**



Next Steps

Step One

Purchase your
Shadow Work 201
guide and start
those practices to
prepare you for
shadow work

Step Two

Apply to enroll in
the Shadow Work
301 coaching
program that opens
four times a year

Step Three

Work with me to get
one-on-one and/or
group coaching to
support your
journey

Start here

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