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Nathanson, D. L. (1992). *Shame and Pride: Affect, sex, and the birth of the self*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

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Shame, the most common of unpleasant experiences, is also the least discussed. Donald Nathanson, noted psychiatrist and lecturer, introduces the reader to a new language of shame and to the idea that it exists as the inherent, internally programmed, innate attenuator circuit for the positive affects. Shame has many faces, all of which are presented in a comprehensive, readable manner. Though shame and its opposite, pride, are the author's focus, the book is really a study of human development in terms of the affect system. Nathanson takes the reader on a revolutionary journey, both looking back at the roots of thought in historical psychoanalytic theory and gently nudging the adventurer toward a way out of psychoanalytic terminology. In his promotion of a holistic approach to therapy his point is made clear. It is time to bury the dinosaurs. Health and unhealth are reframed in the context of a theory of development that pays tribute to the role of affect.

The book is organized into five sections totalling thirty-one chapters, each systematically contributing to a new understanding of development of the self. Nathanson assembles the data which shows how the child's growing self-concept becomes intimately linked with the affect of shame and the emotion of pride. In section one, the nature of affect, itself, is presented. Nathanson asks the reader to learn about the cast of eight basic affects, interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, fear-terror, distress-anguish, anger-rage, dissmell and disgust, before comprehending shame, the ninth and most recent affect to develop through the process of evolution. In a skillful merger of art and science, Nathanson's picture of the affect system takes into account learning from physiologists and biochemists and integrates all known systems of psychology and psychotherapy. The affect theory of Silvan Tomkins provides a foundation from which Nathanson moves as he makes additions and negotiates the forty-year-old theory that he describes as having been ahead of its time.

Section two is about the vectors of development; systems that change as we mature and that become involved in the complex world of shame and pride. Relevant to this discussion are size and shape, dexterity and skill and dependence/independence. Shame and development of the self is the central theme of the six chapters which comprise this part of the text.

The third section moves the reader from self to other, though there is no suggestion that other is insignificant in the formation of self. We see how shame affect is triggered in the context of social relationships and learn a new theory of love and sexuality which is based on the affect system. In the tradition of all that has gone before in the book, Nathanson is brilliantly thorough in his discussion of self in relation to other. Major theories about connectedness are considered before he makes explicit his postulation of the existence of a built-in pathway for "resonance" with another. Gender

differences are sensitively presented as are the alternative couplings of homosexuality. The emotions of love, the origins of the emotions and the interplay of biography and biology are carefully laid out in a manner that is accessible to all who are interested in love and sexuality.

The first three sections complete the survey of a full range of situations in which an individual is likely to experience shame affect. Everything described forms the memory bank to which we turn anytime shame-humiliation is triggered.

Shame, though having its rightful place as a modulator of affective communication, is not always accepted by the self. Nathanson refers to four defensive scripts most frequently employed in an attempt to feel different. The "compass of shame" includes withdrawal, attack other, attack self and avoidance. In section four we see what happens as we try to respond to the combination of triggering source, physiological affect mechanisms and the host of memories laid down by our life experience of shame affect. Humour enters both in Nathanson's style of presentation and also as the means by which we learn to laugh at ourselves thus accepting the lessons to be taught by shame.

The final section is a sobering one as Nathanson takes us to the outer reaches of affect itself. This is an examination of what happens when any agent is pushed beyond reasonable limits. He asks the question, what is it like to exist in an atmosphere contaminated by shame, and the answers he provides turn our attention to a world of anger, violence and abuse. He indicates that western society is experiencing a time of excess and chronic shame, in a striving to reach unreachable goals. The book ends with our hope for the future and a belief that the pendulum of social change will move in a direction of humanism and spirituality. In the final pages of the book can be heard a plea for revision of methods and approaches to psychotherapy in the context of a new understanding of affect.

*Shame and pride: Affect, sex and the birth of the self*, is an impressive achievement and a benchmark in the literature of human development. Its blend of experiential stories and analogies from the world of physics and chemistry, as well as its use of examples from art, poetry, theatre and real life drama, make accessible its intensely complex and revolutionary content. This book is not to be mistaken for a casual read on a Sunday afternoon. Attentiveness and a studious attitude are prerequisites to the rich experience that will accompany the reading of its pages. Dedicated students of the human sciences and most specifically, psychotherapists and researchers, will find this book rich in theoretical and practical content as well as ripe with new directions for future research and treatment.