

## Week 10 Practice

The final barrier between you and your truest self is your shame.

It is your original wound and it gives rise to most of the pain you have already begun to face. As you face that pain, and it begins to quiet—perhaps for the first time in your life—you will begin to hear more clearly the voice of shame beneath all of it. This voice has been instigating your fear for a very long time.

Whether we realize it or not, most of us look at life through the lens of story. And deep down, many of us believe our story is pretty much over. We have life-yet-to-live, but we feel the writing is already on the wall. The truth is, however, that everything which comes before the facing of our shame is merely backstory. It's prologue. It's setup. This week, we want to cultivate the experience of this truth by engaging in an exercise. This is how I present the exercise to my therapy clients:

1. *Imagine your life as a movie.*
2. *Imagine the painful experiences in your life as the brief, early scenes of the movie, developing the character for the audience, showing the viewers what must be overcome and how the character must change in order to do so.*
3. *Imagine your character's decision to begin facing their shame and embracing their truest self as a pivotal point in the plot, a turning point for your character.*
4. *In your favorite kind of movie—the kind that inspires you—what would your character do next? What must they overcome? How would they do it? How would you want the character to be shaped and formed in the process?*
5. *Write out a movie proposal, using your experiences as the plot development and yourself as the main character. Make the script as detailed as you would like, but write a coherent story about how your character overcomes what you have been through.*

Sometimes, when we are close to our shame, it's hard to step outside of it and imagine a different story for ourselves. But by casting ourselves as a character in our own story, we may experience a more objective reaction to our circumstances, and we may be inspired to become the kind of character we would love and cheer for. The bottom-line of the exercise is this: in a good movie, all the junk that brought you to this moment would happen quickly in the opening scenes.

Today would be the *beginning* of an inspiring movie, not the end of it.