

The Repair Room

Shadow work isn't only asking who hurt you. Sometimes it's asking who you hurt.

This is the rarest kind of inner work, because it's the least flattering. Every room in this house will hold you kindly — including this one — but this one also asks you to hold still while you look at something you did. Take it slowly. Being able to do this at all is already integrity. About fifteen minutes.

ONE

What happened?

The events, as the other person might describe them — not your version with the reasons attached. Just what they experienced.

TWO

What part was mine?

Not all of it has to be yours. But some of it is, or you wouldn't be in this room. Name your share plainly, without the word "but."

THREE

What am I tempted to justify?

The explanations are already forming — you were tired, they started it, anyone would have. Write the justifications down so they're out of your hands. They can be true and still not be the point.

FOUR

Impact, not intention

You know what you meant. This question is about what landed. Have you actually acknowledged — to yourself first — what it may have cost them, separate from what you intended?

FIVE

Is an apology appropriate — and is anything repairable?

Sometimes the answer is a real apology. Sometimes it's changed behavior with no announcement. Sometimes the damage wants a concrete repair — returned trust earned slowly, a debt made good, a correction told to the people who heard the original version.

SIX · THE HONEST GATE

Would contacting them help them — or relieve you?

This is the question that separates repair from performance. If reaching out would reopen their wound, violate their distance, or mainly lighten your conscience, then the apology may need to exist without being delivered — and there's a room for exactly that: The Unsent Apology.

If contact is right, keep it simple when you make it: what you did, what it may have cost them, what you'll do differently — and no "I'm sorry you felt." If you want to pressure-test the wording first, Before You Send It is down the hall.

IF IT STIRRED SOMETHING UP

Coming back down

Breathe in through your nose for four, out through your mouth for eight — longer out than in — for a few minutes. Then name five things you can see, four you can hear, three you can touch. Stirred-up feelings after writing like this are common and tend to pass; if they don't, that's information that this deserves more support than a page can give.

If you're in crisis or thinking about harming yourself, please don't work through it alone here. In the US, call or text 988 (the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), or chat at 988lifeline.org — available 24/7. Outside the US, findahelpline.com lists helplines around the world.

A BLESSING ON THIS WORK

This work is a gift. Share it freely with anyone who needs it — print it, copy it, pass it on whole. It is not for sale, by us or by anyone, and it shouldn't be changed. Above all, keep the crisis lines and the words about seeking professional help exactly as they are — for someone, those may be the lines that matter most. It exists to help people heal, and to raise the vibration of the world. That will never cost anything here.

— Aether & Root · aetherandroot.com/inner-work