

Guilt: I made a mistake

Shame: I am a mistake. I'm a bad person. I should hide myself.

Regret: I wish I had done things differently, now that I know differently.

I feel shame, guilt or regret

**Shame shows up in our:**

- Mind:** "I'm worthless. I'm bad. I'm never good enough. I'm a failure. I'm a loser. I'm broken or defective. It's all my fault."
- Body:** Slumped posture, downward gaze, turning away, withdrawing, hiding, shrinking, freezing
- Actions:** Giving up, people pleasing, poor boundaries, perfectionism, isolation, self-sabotage

THE QUESTION: Did I do something wrong?

No

Yes

**Clarify**  
Did I actually do something wrong?  
(Victims frequently blame themselves for trauma falsely)

Three common ways victims blame themselves

- 1. They take full responsibility for every situation** "It's my fault my parents got divorced" "It's my fault my brother died".
- 2. They believe they should have seen it coming:** "I should have known that it would rain on my wedding day."
- 3. Or they make it about their own personal deficiencies:** "I'm just so \_\_\_\_" (lazy, stupid, inconsiderate, idiotic, clumsy). It can be surprisingly easy to fill in that blank.

THE CHOICE

Face it

Hide



"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that"  
-Martin Luther King Jr.

**How to Gain more Clarity:**

Be really honest about responsibility.

Write it down (Sheet of Paper Exercise)

Ask: "Would I treat a friend this way? Would I blame them for what happened?"

Example- the man who raped Thordis she reached out to him, he faced up to it, and used his experience to teach others.

You steal something from someone- true guilt, you make repairs.

Soccer player who messes up, and raises their hand to their teammates. You repair connection through owning it.

**Making repairs:**

1. Take accountability: "I made a mistake"
2. Empathize: "That must have hurt/scared/inconvenienced you."
3. Listen: (How did that hurt you?)
4. Make repairs: **What can I do to make it right**
5. Learn from the experience
6. Try not to do it again (learn the skills, build the resources, to not do it again)

**Blame yourself**  
Label yourself as broken  
Make yourself small  
Blame others  
Make excuses (Everyone else is doing it)  
Seek any form of emotional numbing.  
Substance use, distraction, giving up on self- (well, there's no hope for me, so I'll just do all the awful stuff I can)

Actually, I did nothing wrong. I'm not guilty. I have nothing to be ashamed of.

Fuel a cycle of healing, reparation, and compassion. Treat self and others with love. Receive love and support from people who truly know you and you know them.  
(I personally believe there's a natural force of grace, light and healing)

Perpetuate the cycle of ruining your life and spreading hurt.

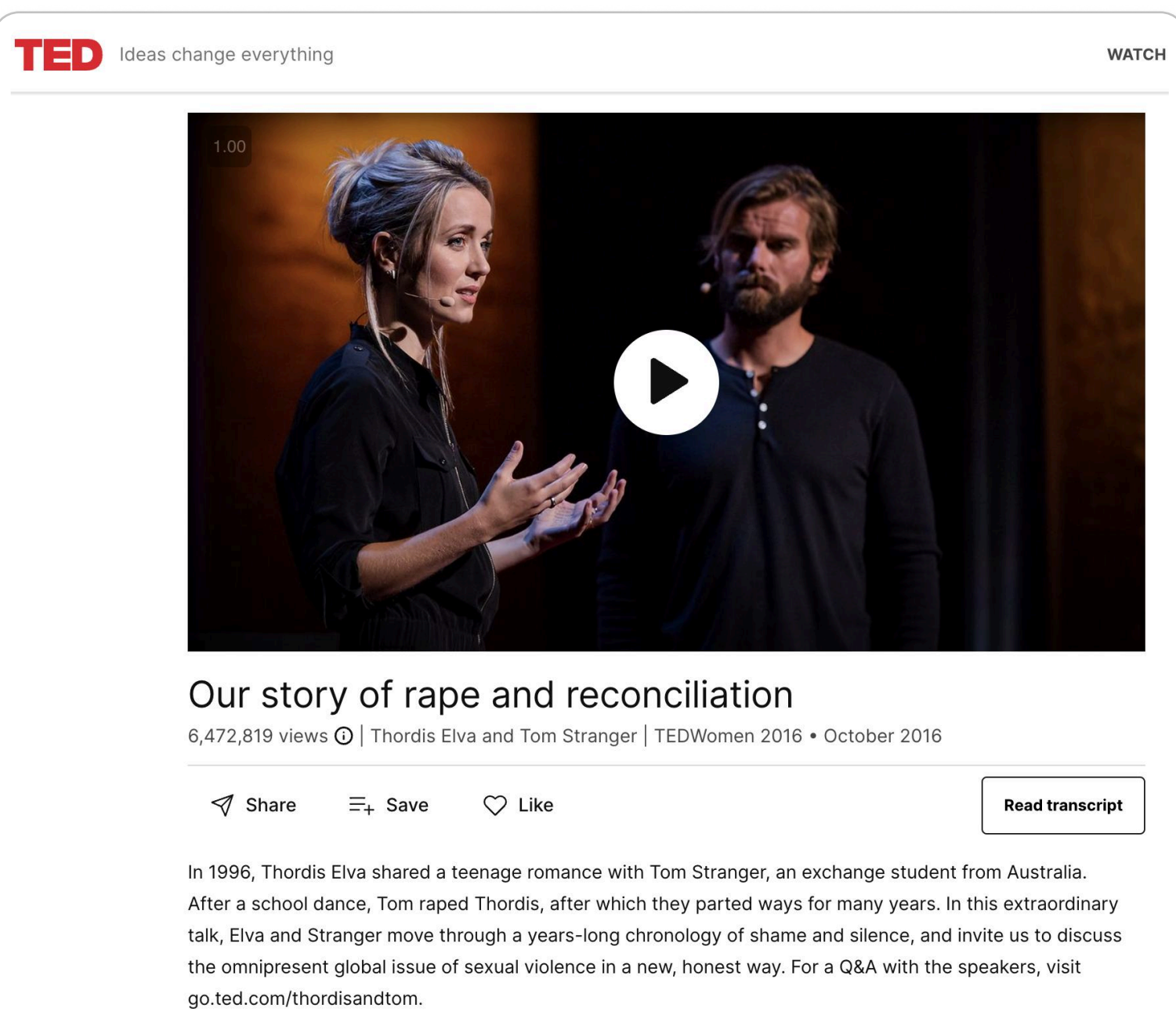
Abusers - blame the victim, hide their crimes, make excuses, attempt to justify their actions, or even worse - kill themselves. This helps no one.

What do we do with Regret? Especially when things happened so long ago?  
(same steps as making repairs, but this time it might focus more on sharing your story, attempting to help others prevent your mistakes, and practice compassion)

**Clear Conscience, Self-Worth, Connection**

- Mind:** I am worthy of love and support. My life has purpose and meaning. I'm here to learn and grow, not to be perfect. When I make mistakes I do my best to make repairs.
- Body:** upright posture, open chest, open curious face, look people in the eyes
- Action:** Keep trying, keep learning, take appropriate risks, believe in and act towards success, learning, progress. **Connecting with others.**

What if they - Admitted their wrongdoing (that would fuel healing)  
Apologized for the hurt they caused (that would fuel healing on both sides)  
Asked how they could make it right (pay for therapy and related costs, that would fuel healing)  
Learn how to prevent it in the future (ie don't drink and drive)  
Taught others through public speaking or support groups (fueled positive change in the community)



Holistic Psychologist post example:  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/DDp7yxYT56B/?img\\_index=10...](https://www.instagram.com/p/DDp7yxYT56B/?img_index=10...)