



Coming Out of Shame: Transforming Gay and Lesbian Lives

Gershon Kaufman Ph.D., Lev Raphael Ph.D.

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Most gay men and lesbians grow up learning that to be gay is to be sick, to be unnatural, to be a sinner. By adolescence, such negative attitudes have produced and reinforced a single, powerful emotion: shame, the feeling that you're inferior and judged as "bad," for what you are—gay.

In *Coming out of Shame* Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael expose the role shame has come to play in gay and lesbian lives. Rarely discussed but vastly important, shame powerfully shapes each individual's development of self-esteem, identity, and intimacy—three areas in which gay men and lesbians have been extremely vulnerable to the crippling effects of shame. Tracing the historical and cultural sources of gay shame, Kaufman and Raphael reveal how gay men and lesbians have internalized shame, resulting in self-loathing and destructive behaviors.

The hallmark of shame is silence, and by breaking the silence around the dynamics of gay shame, Kaufman and Raphael offer a way to "come out" of shame and begin the journey toward wholeness and self-acceptance. Filled with the experiences of those struggling to overcome shame, *Coming Out of Shame* includes strategies for:

- Storing self-esteem
- Creating a positive gay identity
- Healing scenes of shame
- Developing partnerships in intimacy

Self-affirming and inspirational, *Coming Out of Shame* guides the transformation of gay shame into gay pride and empowers gay men and lesbians as no other book has done.

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Katherine Holt:

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Ashley Robinette:

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