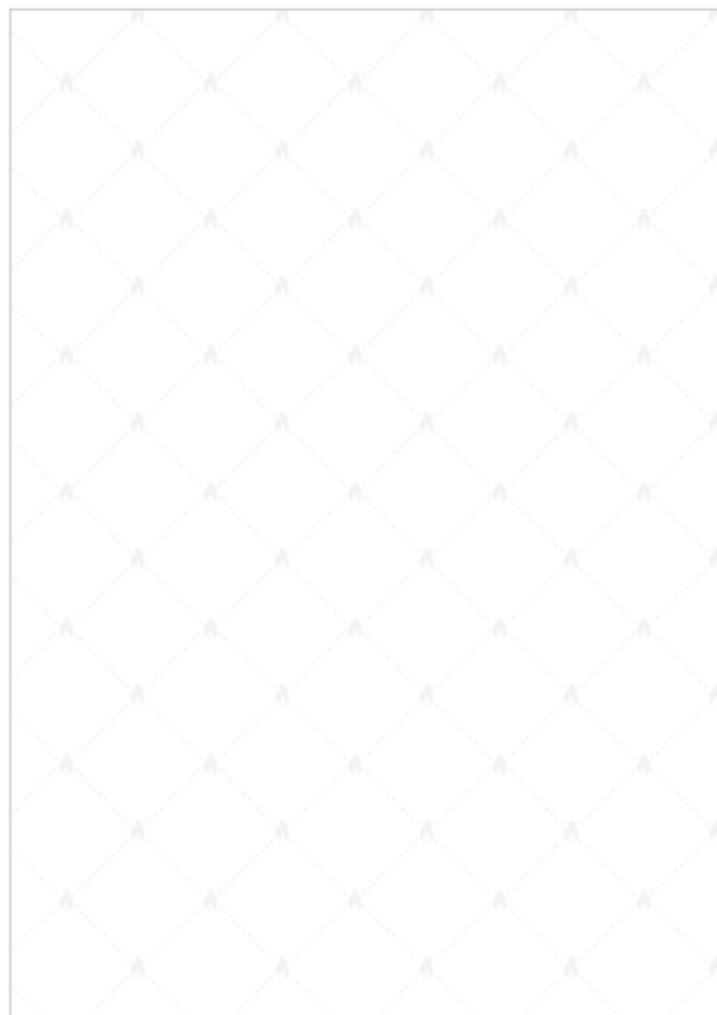


SORTING THROUGH SHAME: YOU CAN CHOOSE
TO NO LONGER MAKE SHAME A PART OF YOU
AND STILL RETAIN YOURSELF.



*You can let go of the shaming, blaming, and the burden that comes with it.
And, you can still be yourself.*



SORTING THROUGH BLAME, EXCUSES, DEFENDING, AND JUSTIFICATIONS

Breakups can be packed with stories of blame, making excuses, defensiveness, and justifications. I like to call them Blame & Company.

If something happens, it might be ok to blame others, make excuses, get defensive, and justify actions in the immediate aftermath of the event. It's a natural reaction for even the most mindful person. It's what you do in the moments and days and years afterwards that defines you and sets you up for a more permanent breakup with Blame & Co.

Getting caught up in the energies of Blame & Co can mean that eventually you do not own your whole self—the stories of Blame & Co start to own a part of you. And, if that happens, you will be unable to move forward because you're investing your energy and your power in being stuck. Blame & Co have to get worked out of the system.

Here's the deal: Blame & Co are ways to hide the truth from you. Every time you use them, you move closer to confusion and away from discovering the truth about the relationship. And, where there is no truth, there is no relief from the relationship. The tendency to blame and make excuses can be an easy habit rather than a conscious choice about how to respond to the present moment.

This habit can keep you stuck in the past, preventing you from seeing the role you might have played in a situation.

The real story is not how you were wronged, or that your boyfriend wasn't forthcoming, or that he was manipulative. The real story is about this moment—

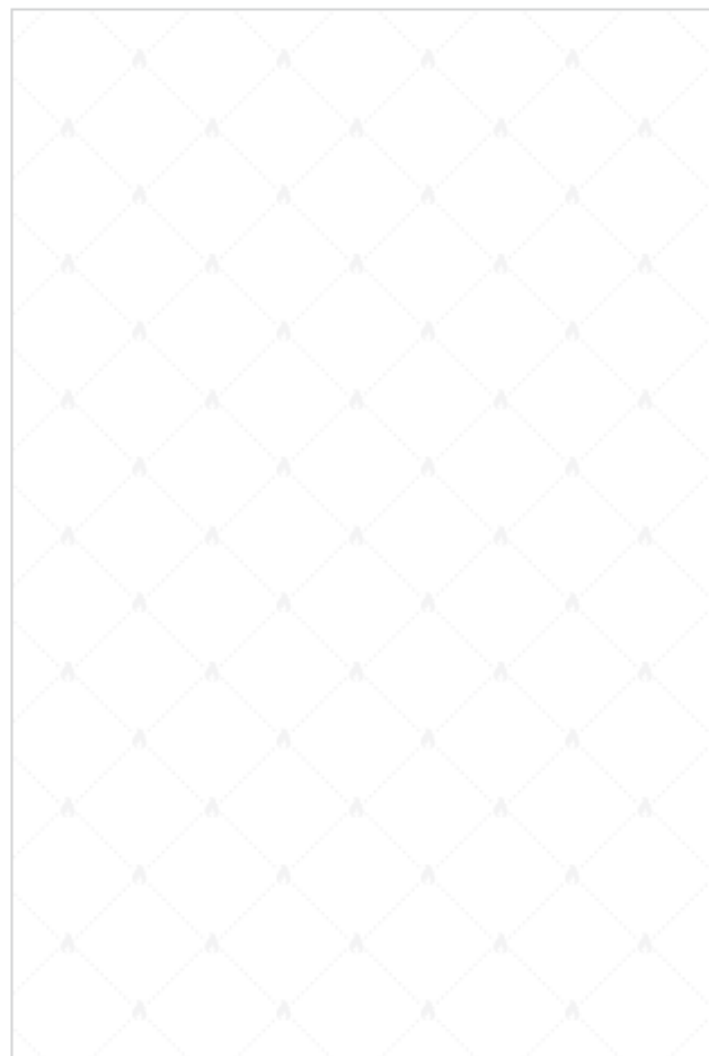
The real story is about this moment—what you choose to do after the loss.

what you choose to do after the loss. Dr. Neil Farber, author of *The Blame Game*, says that when you take a critical look at what transpired, including your role, it helps you avoid

similar occurrences in the future. He says taking the time to make an honest assessment allows you to move from a negative perspective and closer to neutral ground.

On the journal pages that follow, breakup with Blame & Co by recognizing your role in the relationship. If you feel that you had no choice when your relationship moved into the friend zone or ended completely, you can journal and explore why. Imagine what would happen if you stopped needing to defend and justify. Explore those experiences with Blame & Co, dump it into your journal, breathe deeply, and be done with it.

LETTING GO OF BLAME & CO. WILL MOVE YOU FORWARD



If you stay in the blaming, you will not go anywhere / If you stay in making excuses, you will not go anywhere / If you stay in justification, you will not go anywhere / If you stay in defending yourself, you will not go anywhere

-The Mary Group