

A person is captured in mid-air, jumping with their arms and legs spread wide. They are silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky where the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The person's hair is blowing in the wind. The overall mood is one of freedom and joy.

AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK

Safe In My Skin

HEALING SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT,
AND GUILT AS AN ADULT BABY

ROSALIE BENT

*Safe in My Skin:
Healing Shame, Embarrassment, and Guilt as an Adult Baby*

Safe In My Skin

by
Rosalie Bent

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Introduction

In our social media feeds, we tell everyone how proud and happy we are to be ABDL, to be wearing and using diapers, showing off our prettiest baby clothes and perhaps sharing photos of our cribs and nurseries. But behind the smiles and happiness lies the more routine reality that we live as adult babies in crushing secrecy. We hide it from friends, family and even spouses. We do so because we are more than aware that reactions to adult babies tend to be overwhelmingly negative, even from people who love us. It's not fair or even reasonable, of course, but life is never that simple.

For the vast majority of adult babies, embarrassment is the big fear we face, that if we are caught out, we will be deeply embarrassed by it. And that is not unfair, as we *would* in fact be embarrassed. And underlying that fear of embarrassment is the shame of what we are feeling and what we are doing. Once again, that is not a fair thing to do, but our emotions don't always react logically... if ever. And then there is the guilt of doing things in secret and hiding them from those we love and life.

Shame, embarrassment and guilt are a potent force for a lifetime of emotional damage and baggage. We can't alter society's perceptions of adult babies, at least not in the short term, but we can control how we respond to the strictures that are in place in our lives. We need to be emotionally healthy, and that is what this book is about. Health. Emotional health, which, as we all know, also leads to physical health.

Chapter 1: Understanding Shame, Embarrassment, and Guilt

Come here, little one. Sit down and rest. I know you've been carrying something heavy for a long time, and you may not even have known how heavy it was until now. You've come to this chapter because something inside you longs to feel safe, not just in your blankie or your bottle or your routine, but in your whole self. That's an important thing to want, and I want you to know, right from the start, that there's nothing wrong with you for feeling the way you do.

Many adult babies and littles carry feelings that are hard to name but even harder to sit with. Sometimes, when you're curled up on the floor with your stuffie or babbling to yourself in baby talk, something sharp creeps in behind the calm. Maybe it's a flush in your cheeks, a twisting in your tummy, or even a sinking feeling you can't explain. You might not know the words for it right away, but it's probably shame. Or embarrassment. Or guilt. These three feelings, so tangled and so familiar, often walk beside you like unwanted shadows. And the truth is, they're some of the most common companions on this journey of growing down.

Let's start with the deepest one: **shame**. Shame isn't just about something you did. That's simplistic. It's usually about who you believe you are. It's a feeling that creeps into the corners of your heart and says that you're wrong somehow, that your needs are strange, that if someone really saw the little you inside, they'd walk away. Shame doesn't shout. It doesn't announce itself with facts. It just

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leaves you cold, like something precious inside you is somehow too silly to be loved. Shame is felt in the pit of your stomach.

For many of us, shame began early. Maybe it started with being told to stop crying when you needed to cry. Or with feeling like you were too sensitive, too needy, too emotional, too silly. Maybe it was in the way grown-ups looked at you when you wet the bed, or the teasing you got when you still played with dolls long after others had moved on. No one saw what was going on with you, and you probably didn't either. These tiny moments built up over time until your inner being—your most vulnerable feelings—learned to hide. That's what shame does even as young children. It teaches us to cover ourselves, not because we want to, but because we've learned it might hurt not to. Hiding emotionally from others is unhealthy. It is one thing to hide personal secrets from others. It is another thing altogether to hide our true selves and identity. The former is simply wisdom; the latter is pain and anguish.

Embarrassment, though, is different. It doesn't live as deeply as shame. It arrives in sudden little flashes, like when someone walks in and sees you with your pacifier in, or when you catch your reflection in your baby dress and suddenly feel unsure about what you are doing as if the 'big' you sees the 'little' you and you feel embarrassed at what you see. Embarrassment is the red-tinged flutter of being seen, the sense that someone caught you in a moment that was supposed to be private. It makes you squirm, but it doesn't mean you believe you're bad. It just means you feel awkward, exposed. And that's okay. Everyone feels that way sometimes. It's a part of life.

The world is built to favour control, independence, and performance. When you step outside that and choose the gentleness of babyhood, when you let yourself regress, let yourself be small, helpless, and cared for, it can feel like you're doing something naughty or silly. But you're not. You're just letting yourself be real in a way many people are too scared to try. That's not shameful. That's

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brave. But it is still an issue when we cannot easily put our inner identity into our ‘safe space’. We tend instead to put that hidden away.

And then, there’s **guilt**. Guilt is quieter still, but it presses down in its own way. Guilt often comes after a moment of peace, after you’ve let yourself be little and safe, and then a voice arrives in your head saying, *I shouldn’t have done that*. You might feel guilty for taking time away from others. You might feel like you’re asking too much from a partner or hiding too much from your family. Maybe you feel like you’re deceiving the world by pretending to be an adult when you know deep down, you’re still a baby to a significant degree. And that weight of feeling like you’re wronging someone, even if you aren’t, can be hard to carry.

But here’s the truth I want to speak to you, and I want you to listen closely now. Feeling safe, little, and loved is not something you have to apologise for. Being cared for, or wanting to be, is not a crime. And needing regression, needing structure, needing diapers or dummies or a gentle voice—none of that makes you guilty. It just makes you a human being with unique and precious needs. Guilt only belongs where true harm has happened, and that’s not what this is. What you’re doing, the way you’re living, is about comfort and healing, not harm.

Now, imagine this with me for a moment. Imagine you have a diaper bag—not just for things like wipes and toys, but for your feelings. Inside it, there are three heavy objects. The first is a cold, flat stone that presses deep into your tummy. That’s shame. It tells you you’re not okay. The second is a hot little coal that burns your hands the moment you’re seen. That’s embarrassment. And the third is a big, heavy book, filled with all the “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts” you’ve collected over the years. That’s guilt.

What if we could slowly, gently take those out of the bag together? We won’t throw them away just yet, as some feelings take time to say goodbye to. But maybe we can give the stone to someone who understands. Maybe we can cool the coal in a bowl of water and

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place it beside you without fear. And maybe we can close the big book for now and set it on a shelf, where it doesn't need to be read today. You're allowed to carry less with you on your journey through life.

This chapter isn't about fixing you, because you are not broken. This is about understanding the extra weight you've been made to carry, and learning over time to put some of it down. Shame, embarrassment, and guilt are not signs of failure. They're signs that you've been made to feel like something special inside you wasn't welcome in the world. But it *is* welcome. It's welcome here. It's welcome with me. And most of all, it's welcome in **you**.

So, the next time you feel that sting of embarrassment or that pang of guilt or that deep sadness of shame, I want you to remember this: you are not alone, and in fact, vast numbers of people, including adult babies, walk this safe path with you. These feelings are part of your story, but they are not the *whole* story. You are allowed to be a baby. You are allowed to want baby things. You are allowed to feel small, and sweet, and needy, and none of that makes you wrong.

When you're ready, we'll move on to where this shame came from and why so many of us were taught to carry it. But for now, curl up and take a comfy seat. Take your pacifier or your plushie, or your thumb. Let your breathing slow. You've done enough. You *are* enough.

You're not bad. You're just baby. And you are loved. And from now on, we repeat those three phrases as often as we need to feel better.

You're not bad. You're just a baby. You are loved.
You're not bad. You're just a baby. You are loved.
You're not bad. You're just a baby. You are loved.

Chapter 2: The Shame We Inherited

Come and join me here. This chapter may feel a little tender because we're going to look back, just a little bit, not to hurt you, but to understand. So much of the shame you feel now didn't begin with you. It was passed down, spoken in tones you barely remember, sewn into the stitching of your childhood without you even noticing. And if you're like many adult babies, that shame feels older than you are, probably because it is. It is way older than you.

We're going to gently explore where it came from, how it took root, and how we can start to tell it, sensitively but firmly, *"You don't belong here anymore. Go away."*

You see, shame isn't something we're born with. No baby has it. Picture an actual infant lying on a soft blanket, waving their arms and babbling to themselves. They don't care if someone sees them. They don't wonder if their pacifier is silly. They don't worry that their wet nappy is something to be ashamed of. All they know is what they feel, whatever it is at the moment, and whether they are safe or not. Safety is their prime concern (and food!).

But over time, children are taught to separate what is "okay" from what is "too much." They learn to hide parts of themselves that adults find confusing, inconvenient, or embarrassing. You may not remember every moment, but I suspect you were taught these rules too, perhaps sensitively and appropriately, or perhaps harshly. Don't cry. Don't talk like that. Big boys don't do that. You're too old for that now. Don't be a baby. Sound familiar?

Maybe you remember the first time you were scolded for needing comfort in a "babyish" way. Maybe you were teased by siblings, or classmates, or even adults who didn't know how to