

SELF-ESTEEM, GUILT AND SHAME (Explicit)

James Edward Rhodes is a concert pianist, author, blogger, advocate, and survivor of child sex abuse. One of his books, *Instrumental: A Memoir of Madness, Medication and Music*, is about the sex abuse he suffered as a child, the repercussions he endures and his music.

His ex-wife sued him to stop the publishing of his book. She felt it would harm their son if he read it. Mr. Rhodes addresses the sexual abuse graphically. All child sex abuse advocates stress ending the silence about child sex abuse as a means of prevention. Mr. Rhodes says, "The more we talk about it, the easier it will be for others to talk about it." The lawsuit went all the way to the Supreme Court and he won. "The Rhodes Case" is now taught in law school.

According to Mr. Rhodes, abuse is an easy word to use instead of digging deeper and coming to terms with what child sex abuse really entails. The word abuse doesn't cover what happened to him. He was repeatedly raped. He now suffers: Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, anorexia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, hypervigilance, dissociation, sexual shame and confusion, hallucinations, institutionalization, suicidal ideation, vigorous self harm (cutting), alcoholism, drug addiction, inability to maintain functional relationships. He's had multiple reparative surgeries for spinal injuries and has scars inside and out.

His story of serial child rape by his gym teacher is extreme and shocking. The suicidal thoughts and self harm are clear indications of low self-esteem. In an interview on PBS he talks about one of the most ghastly aspects of his trauma. **He feels guilt and shame, and thinks he enticed that criminal!** He was 5! How could a 5 year old boy who knows nothing about sex cause a grown man to rape him regularly for five years? That's impossible!

He was a frail, scared little boy who couldn't keep up with the other boys in gym. He was showered with deceitfully kindhearted and exclusive favor and gifts by his teacher. It made him feel special and important. Because of this, he loved his teacher and desired his approval, so he always smiled the cutest and brightest that he could.

This is called grooming by mental health professionals and law enforcement. It is the intentional underhanded manipulation of a minor to create trust and an emotional attachment with the purpose of sexual abuse. It has been found that children who are groomed feel they are to blame for their abuse and have difficulty placing blame on the perpetrator.

Many survivors of child sex abuse speak of this horrendous phenomenon of feeling guilt and shame because they did something bad, or they were less than others, or they asked for it so they got what they deserved. They feel shame they didn't tell, although most are threatened overtly or covertly. Children should **never** feel guilty about sexual assaults. The guilt and shame rests solely on the predator! Now, armed with a clearer, more informed view of child sex crimes let us pray this abhorrent felony and its consequences away as we listen to Mr. Rhodes.

Luke 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.