

AFTERBURN

By Melanie Beatty

“How could I do it? How could I say it? Even though I meant it, I still feel ashamed, guilty, and afraid.”

This is a common reaction to new, exciting recovery behaviors. Anything to do with owning our power and taking care of ourselves can trigger feelings of shame, guilt, and fear.

We do not have to allow these feelings to control us. They're a backlash. They're after-burn. Let them burn out.

When we start confronting and attacking feelings and messages, we will experience some after-burn. The after-burn is what we allowed to control us all our life—shame and guilt.

Many of us grew up with shame-based messages that it wasn't okay to take care of ourselves, be honest, be direct, and own our power with people. Many of us grew up with messages that it wasn't okay to be who we were and resolve problems in relationships. Many of us grew up with the message that what we want and need isn't okay.

Let it all burn off. We don't have to take after-burn so seriously. We don't let the after-burn convince us that we are wrong and don't have a right to take care of ourselves and set boundaries.

Do we really have the right to take care of ourselves? Do we really have the right to set boundaries? Do we really have the right to be direct and say what we need to say?

You bet we do.

Today, I will let any after-burn which sets in after I practice a new recovery behavior, burn off. I will not take it so seriously. God (or Universe) help me let go of my shame and needless fears about what will happen to me if I really start caring for and loving myself.