

## **They Won Again: Did Healthy Shame Contribute to the Golden State Warriors' Success?**

By Sheila Rubin, MA, LMFT, RDT/BCT

Although I must admit I was never a basketball fan until a few years ago, I did watch the Golden State Warriors win the NBA championship yesterday for the second time in three years! When my husband first told me about an amazing 3-point shooter by the name of Stephen Curry, I immediately noticed Curry's smaller physique and graceful, dancer-like movements that allowed him to navigate his way through members of the other team in a very different kind of way. As my husband explained the game to me, I began to see the advantage of Curry's 3-point shots from far across the court, compared to the 2-point shots that most players compete for. I was impressed by the teamwork and spirit of cooperation by the Warriors, who live up to their motto of "Strength in Numbers."

Last year I read an article about Stephen Curry who shared about his father, a basketball star who also served as his mentor, and how he told him that because he was a smaller weight and size, he must excel at shooting baskets, otherwise no coach would even give him a second look. Curry spent the next few years slowly developing, working and finding his own way to shoot baskets. I believe this is a good example of growth coming from healthy shame. He had a choice: He could give up, and let his size keep him from succeeding, or he could step up and work hard to find his own journey as a player. Thankfully, he used the inspiration from his father to find something in himself to improve his skills on the court. He never gave up, and instead of feeling sorry for himself, he found his own path to shooting and winning. That same article also featured another amazing shooter, Draymond Green, who went through a time where he could have given up, but did not. Instead of getting stuck in a place of shame, he focused on what he could accomplish. Both of those men choose to overcome obstacles and find success on the court.

Is there a new paradigm for masculinity? Have those two award-winning players, part of an amazing team, found a way to work together to show everyone that you don't need to be "overly muscled" and play "hero ball," which usually leaves the other team members behind? They work as a team in a collective, cooperative way, and are encouraged by Coach Steve Kerr to play to their own strengths. *And it works!*

I found myself watching and enjoying the entire series! And as I observed other teams starting to make 3-point shots, I realized Stephen Curry had demonstrated it was possible. He was comparable to the guy who broke the 4-minute mile, which inspired others to do the same. I feel as if I am watching a new spirit of cooperation filled with endless possibilities from this Oakland-based team that is changing basketball throughout the United States.

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