

Can Shame Predict Whether a Released Felon Will Reoffend?

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The linguistic distinction between guilt and shame is often blurred. Some of the definitions that Merriam-Webster offers are nearly identical. Guilt is “a bad feeling caused by knowing or thinking that you have done something bad or wrong,” while shame is “a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.”

In their unending preoccupation with darkness, psychological researchers prefer to parse the details. “Shame and guilt are both self-conscious emotions that arise from self-relevant failures and transgressions, but they differ in their object of evaluation,” a new paper in *Psychological Science* declares. “Feelings of shame involve a painful focus on the self—‘I am a bad person’—whereas feelings of guilt involve a focus on a specific behavior—‘I did a bad thing.’”

Read the whole story: [Pacific Standard](#)