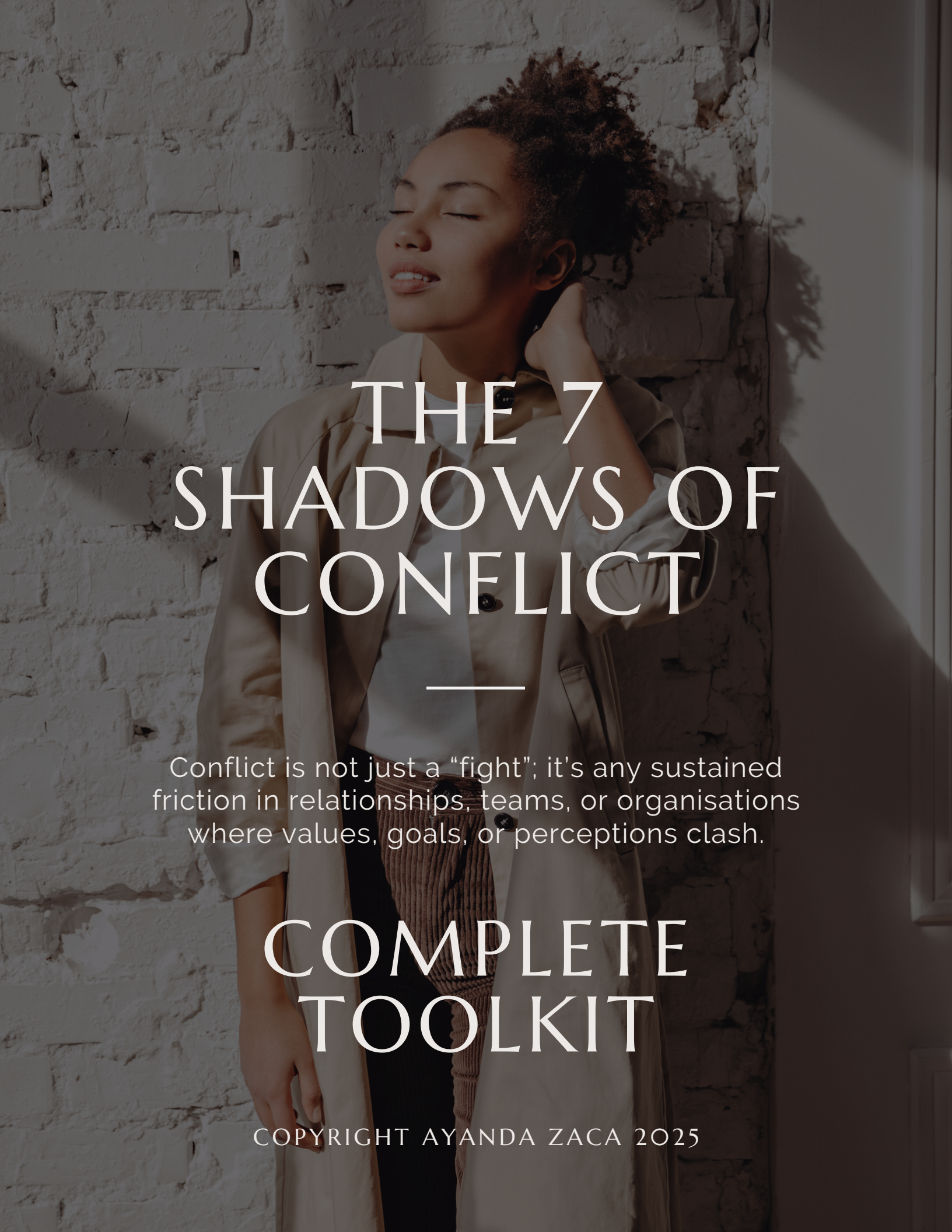




THE 7 SHADOWS OF CONFLICT

Conflict is not just a “fight”; it’s any sustained friction in relationships, teams, or organisations where values, goals, or perceptions clash.

COMPLETE TOOLKIT

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FOR THOSE
WHO WANT
LESS STRESS,
MORE PEACE,
AND BETTER
RELATIONSHIPS
IN EVERYDAY
LIFE.



THE 7 SHADOWS OF CONFLICT- SELF ASSESSMENT

“EVERY SHADOW DESTROYS TRUST.
EVERY LIGHT RESTORES TRUST.”



ABOUT THE SELF ASSESSMENT

This assessment helps you reflect on your conflict behaviours through the 7 Shadows of Conflict™ and their constructive Light alternatives.

Your scores will give you a Shadow Subscore, a Light Subscore, and an integrated Shadow–Light Index™ (SLI).

The aim is not judgment, but awareness and direction – moving step-by-step from Shadow to Light.

A QUICK WORD ABOUT THE SHADOWS

Stress as a source of conflict

In South Africa (and elsewhere), workplace tensions are rising — not only because of economic pressure and organisational change, but also because employees are carrying higher emotional loads than ever before.

When stress levels rise, so does the likelihood of conflict — whether it's expressed openly or in subtle, destructive ways. At home and work.

Stress → Emotional Reactivity → Conflict

Elevated stress and undiagnosed mental health issues often lower resilience and heighten emotional responses—leading to disagreements, miscommunications, and escalated interpersonal conflict.

Stigma → Poor Disclosure → Misinterpretation

When employees hesitate to disclose mental health challenges, their behaviour may be misinterpreted as disengagement or poor performance—sparking conflict instead of compassion.

Leadership Gaps → Conflict Amplification

Supervisors unprepared for mental health issues can struggle to de-escalate situations or accommodate needs, resulting in unresolved tensions and damaged relationships.

Organisational Risk:

Unaddressed mental health and conflict issues can lead to increased absenteeism, turnover, and performance decline—undermining morale and productivity.

Link to the 7 Shadows of Conflict

High stress and low resilience tend to push people into Shadow behaviours more quickly.

- The 7 Shadows of Conflict provides **non-clinical, non-judgemental language** for identifying negative and destructive patterns and moving to healthier alternatives.
- It is equipping individual and leaders to spot patterns of destructive conflict, regardless of the cause, and respond with skill.



- It is not diagnosing or treating mental health issues.
- It gives a shared language for identifying patterns.
- It focuses on observable behaviour, not personal labels.
- It moves the conversation toward constructive, trust-building alternatives.
- It builds emotional intelligence, encourages constructive alternatives, and fits conflict scenarios seamlessly.

“We're here to build conflict awareness and resolution skills that will serve in all high-pressure situations — including when stress, burnout, or personal challenges are affecting behaviour.”

THE 7 SHADOWS EXPLAINED

The Core 4Ds – Common but Destructive Behaviors

Shadow	How it Shows Up	Why It's Harmful	Healthy Alternative
Deny	"That's not true." / Ignoring emotions or facts.	Invalidates the other person's reality; creates confusion and resentment.	Acknowledge facts and feelings, even if you disagree.
Deflect	"It's not my fault, it's yours."	Escalates conflict; avoids responsibility.	Own your part and focus on the shared solution.
Diminish	"You're overreacting."	Shames the other person; lowers self-worth.	Validate the experience before responding.
Distance	Walking away, going silent, or disengaging.	Breaks connection and trust.	Stay present and communicate boundaries constructively.

THE 7 SHADOWS EXPLAINED

The Toxic 3Ds – Deeply Harmful Behaviour Traits

Shadow	How it Shows Up	Why It's Harmful	Healthy Alternative
Discredit	Spreading doubt about someone's credibility.	Damages reputation; breeds distrust.	Address issues directly with respect.
Dismiss	Ignoring or refusing to engage in discussion.	Creates emotional abandonment.	Be willing to listen and respond.
Deceive	Withholding or twisting information.	Creates betrayal and insecurity.	Practise honesty and transparency.



THE SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT

This assessment helps you reflect on your conflict behaviours through the 7 Shadows of Conflict™ and their constructive Light alternatives. Your scores will give you a Shadow Sub-score, a Light Sub-score, and an integrated Shadow-Light Index™ (SLI). The aim is not judgment, but awareness and direction – moving step-by-step from Shadow to Light.

INSTRUCTIONS

**Read each statement and rate how true it feels for you.
Use a scale of 1–5.**

**1 = Never true,
2 = Rarely true,
3 = Sometimes true,
4 = Often true,
5 = Always true**

Answer honestly – this is for your growth.

**There are 70 questions:
35 measure Shadow tendencies,
35 measure Light tendencies.**

**At the end, you'll calculate your scores and interpret them
using the scoring guide.**

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
01	When mistakes happen, I tend to downplay or ignore them.	☐
02	I sometimes avoid admitting when I've been wrong.	☐
03	I find it easier to move past problems without addressing them directly.	☐
04	I tend to justify my actions instead of acknowledging a fault.	☐
05	I often leave issues unresolved, hoping they fade with time.	☐
06	I sometimes shift attention away from my role in a problem.	☐
07	When challenged, I redirect the focus to another person or factor.	☐
08	I tend to explain things in a way that minimises my responsibility.	☐
09	I occasionally protect myself by changing the subject during conflict.	☐
10	I am more comfortable pointing to external causes than reflecting inward.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
11	I occasionally make light of other people's concerns.	☐
12	When someone shares a struggle, I might suggest they're overreacting.	☐
13	I tend to think some issues are "not a big deal."	☐
14	I may overlook the seriousness of someone's feelings or complaints.	☐
15	I sometimes minimise the impact of conflict situations.	☐
16	I prefer to withdraw from difficult conversations.	☐
17	I avoid emotional topics or conflict by becoming quiet.	☐
18	I sometimes cut myself off from people when things get tense.	☐
19	When I feel uncomfortable, I retreat rather than engage.	☐
20	I tend to put space between myself and others during tension.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
21	I occasionally question the credibility of people I disagree with.	☐
22	In conflict, I sometimes highlight someone's weaknesses to prove a point.	☐
23	I may use sarcasm or criticism to gain an advantage.	☐
24	I have undermined another person's ideas instead of addressing them fairly.	☐
25	I sometimes struggle to give full respect to those I oppose.	☐
26	I sometimes overlook perspectives that differ from my own.	☐
27	I tend to end conversations when I don't value the input.	☐
28	I may tune out when I feel the other person is "wrong."	☐
9	I've brushed aside someone's concerns without fully considering them.	☐
30	I find myself impatient when listening to others' problems.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
31	I sometimes withhold details that could change how others see me.	☐
32	I may choose not to share uncomfortable truths.	☐
33	I occasionally bend facts to make myself look better.	☐
34	I avoid full transparency when I think it might cause conflict.	☐
35	I may shape a story differently depending on who I'm speaking to.	☐

SCORING GUIDE

Step 1 – Calculate Shadow Sub-score

Shadows Sub-score (Q1–35): Add all responses. Range = 35–175.

Divide the total by 5 to get an easy-to-read average out of 35.

YOUR SHADOW SUB-SCORE ____/35

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (LIGHTS)

		SCORE 1-5
01	I take responsibility when I've made a mistake.	☐
02	I am willing to acknowledge my weaknesses openly.	☐
03	I admit faults even if it's uncomfortable.	☐
04	I value honesty over saving face.	☐
05	I believe acknowledging mistakes builds trust.	☐
06	I hold myself accountable in difficult situations.	☐
07	I focus on my role before pointing to others.	☐
08	I take initiative to resolve problems I'm part of.	☐
09	I own my contribution to misunderstandings.	☐
10	I believe leadership means being answerable for outcomes.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (LIGHTS)

		SCORE 1-5
11	I acknowledge others' feelings as real and important.	☐
12	I make space for others to share openly.	☐
13	I affirm the value of someone's experience even if I disagree.	☐
14	I show empathy by recognising struggles without judgement.	☐
15	I treat every concern raised as worthy of respect.	☐
16	I stay present in conversations even when they're difficult.	☐
17	I build bridges rather than walls during conflict.	☐
18	I lean into hard discussions rather than withdrawing.	☐
19	I seek understanding before disengaging.	☐
20	I prioritise relationships over avoidance.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (LIGHTS)

		SCORE 1-5
21	I show respect even when disagreeing strongly.	☐
22	I avoid undermining others to win an argument.	☐
23	I acknowledge the strengths of people I differ with.	☐
24	I separate the person from the issue during disagreements.	☐
25	I strive to treat every voice with dignity.	☐
26	I actively listen when others share their views.	☐
27	I ask questions to understand perspectives that differ from mine.	☐
28	I take time to consider others' input seriously.	☐
9	I stay engaged even if I don't initially agree.	☐
30	I believe dialogue is key to resolving tensions.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
31	I share information openly with others.	☐
32	I am consistent in what I say across different audiences.	☐
33	I value honesty over protecting my image.	☐
34	I share relevant details even when it feels risky.	☐
35	I believe transparency strengthens trust in relationships.	☐

SCORING GUIDE

Step 2 – Calculate Light Sub-score

Lights Sub-score (Q36–70): Add all responses. Range = 35–175.

Divide the total by 5 to get an easy-to-read average out of 35.

YOUR LIGHT SUB-SCORE ____/35

Step 3 – Calculate Integrated SLI -score

Integrated Shadow–Light Index (SLI) Score

SLI Score = Light Score (/35) – Shadow Score (/35)

YOUR INTEGRATED SLI SCORE ____/70

FINAL STEP – INTERPRETATION

Zone	Score Range	Label	Interpretation
Zone 1	0–5	Deep Shadow Zone	Frequent reliance on shadow behaviours; trust often damaged, relationships strained. High urgency for awareness and change.
Zone 2	6–11	Shadow-Leaning Zone	Shadows appear regularly; light responses are rare. Conflict handling may feel defensive or avoidant.
Zone 3	12–17	Mixed Zone	A tug-of-war between shadows and lights. Sometimes constructive, sometimes destructive. Consistency is the growth need.
Zone 4	18–23	Light-Leaning Zone	Light behaviours show up more often than shadows, but pressure can still pull responses back into shadow.
Zone 5	24–29	Emerging Light Zone	Predominantly constructive responses. Trust-building habits are forming but not yet fully embedded.
Zone 6	30–35	Consistent Light Zone	Strong, reliable use of light alternatives. Conflict becomes a catalyst for trust, growth, and collaboration.

CONFLICT DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

Mental health challenges are becoming a leading driver of interpersonal tension in the workplace, making conflict literacy + mental health awareness a critical leadership skill.

- **Pause before response** – reduce emotional escalation.
- **Use person-first language** – “I’ve noticed you’ve seemed under strain” vs. “You’re being difficult.”
- **Ask, don’t assume** – “Is something making this harder for you right now?”
- **Agree on micro-steps** – avoid overwhelming someone in distress.
- **Set healthy boundaries** – empathy doesn’t mean tolerating harmful behaviour.

THE SHADOW- LIGHT ACTION PLAN™

TURNING AWARENESS
INTO LASTING CHANGE

STEP 1: REVIEW SCORES

SHADOW SCORE: _____/35

LIGHT SCORE: _____/35

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX (SLI): _____/70

What this tells me is...

(Tick the one that feels most true.)

- ☐ My default tendency is more in the shadows.
- ☐ My default tendency is leaning toward the light.
- ☐ I fluctuate between the two.

STEP 2: EXPLORE THE SHADOWS

The shadow with the highest personal score is...

This shadow usually shows up in my relationships in this way...

ACTION PLAN

This shadow usually shows up in my work life in this way...

Awareness of Use: When I notice others using this shadow on me, "I sometimes feel..."

Awareness of Use: The shadow I identify most easily in others is...

Awareness of Use: The shadow I am most reactive to in others is...

ACTION PLAN

Awareness of Impact: When I use my top shadow, others may feel ...

Awareness of Impact: When others use their shadows I often feel...

Awareness of Impact: When I use this shadow, others may feel ...

STEP 3: REPLACEMENT STRATEGY (SHADOW-TO-LIGHT METHOD)

For your top shadow, write how you will apply the 4 steps:

1. **Spot It** – How will I notice when this shadow is showing up?

2. **Pause** – What will you do to create space before reacting?

3. **Replace** – What specific light behaviour will you use instead?

4. **Reflect** – How will you review and refine your response afterward?

STEP 4: 30-DAY FOCUS COMMITMENT

MY LIGHT
PRACTICE
FOR THE
NEXT 30
DAYS IS:

ONE DAILY
REMINDER
(WORD,
SYMBOL,
OR
PHRASE):

MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER TO
HELP ME SEE THIS PLAN THROUGH IS...

PARTNER NAME:

GET IT HERE

READY TO DIG EVEN DEEPER FOR HIGH- PERFORMANCE?

Congratulations!!

You have identified your Shadows and Light tendencies, and now know your Shadow-Light Index™.

Hard-wire the change through your 30-day focus plan.

Now, let's get proactive

Turn these insights into consistent behaviour and discover **The 4-Sight Method** to proactively manage conflict.

Step into a 6-session coaching sprint (virtual).

Consider 1-1 Coaching

6×60min Session @ R9,900 incl. Vat
Limited to 4 seats monthly.

STEP 5: FINAL STEPS

- Share your SLI and Action Plan with:
 - Team □ Mentor □ Manager
- Re-take the SLI in 30 days to track progress.
- Apply the same method to other shadows gradually.
- Consider taking the SLI with your work team or family.
Available on request.





STEP OUT
OF THE
SHADOWS
AND INTO
THE LIGHT