

No More Shyness! How to Enhance your Relationships and Social Life



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INTRODUCTION

“Everyone is shy—it is the inborn modesty that makes us able to live in harmony with other creatures and our fellows. Achievement comes not by denying shyness, but, occasionally, by setting it aside and letting pride and perspiration come first.” - Kirkpatrick Sale

You step into the room full of strangers and look around. There’s not a single person that you know there. Your heart starts pounding, your hands begin to sweat, and your mouth goes dry. Just as someone comes up to speak to you, your mind goes completely blank. You barely remember your own name and you’d tell them what it is if only you could speak. You’re blushing so hard, you’re positive you’re as red as a lobster and those butterflies in your stomach are flying in formation.

Sound familiar? Almost everyone, at some point in their lives or another, has experienced these feelings of panic and disorientation. Even folks that seem like the life of the party have had moments like these. It’s a common problem, more common than you might realize.

Fifty percent of the population in the USA say they’re shy and eighty-nine percent of these shy people say they’ve been shy all their lives. Only eleven percent, of the population says they’ve never been shy. The good news is that seventy-eight percent of these shy people believe they can overcome their shyness.

Doctors feel that this shyness is wired right into your nervous system. Your brain is constantly taking in information and processing it; and whenever you think again of an experience you've had, your brain will respond in exactly the same way as when it first happened, reinforcement as it were. Your conscious mind knows the difference, but your subconscious mind just processes the information and stores it with everything else. Social phobia has become the third most prevalent psychiatric disorder.

In this report, we'll discuss the whys and wherefores of shyness. There are ways to overcome this social phobia and we'll discuss how to apply them in your own life. It is possible to feel calm and comfortable in social situations.

"Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to."-Mark Twain

Chapter One

WHAT SHYNESS IS & WHAT IT ISN'T

“Scientists have found the gene for shyness. They would have found it years ago, but it was hiding behind a couple of other genes.” - Jonathan Katz

Shyness is an ever-increasing problem and fostered, many feel, by the technology available nowadays. Online dating, email, and virtual anonymity are realities in today's world. For most of us, these are merely conveniences; but for many, these are simply ways to avoid directly connecting to others. They are literally in hiding from the world. Reaching out and touching someone is terrifying to the seriously shy and socially phobic. There's much less awkwardness when dealing with others via the internet. No one would see them or hear them; they feel safe.

For many, it's only in unfamiliar situations that they show symptoms of shyness. They're perfectly fine in normal situations; they know how to act and what to say. Anything different throws them for a loop and into a panic. A crowded room becomes a scene of terror for the socially phobic.

The problem is they tend to avoid the unfamiliar at all costs. The more they avoid it, the worse the fear becomes. By not allowing themselves to experience something new, they are in fact perpetuating the fear.

Shyness occurs in different degrees, in different people. There are actors who may be bold and outgoing on camera, but become shy and soft-spoken when speaking one-on-one with an interviewer. Some people might be open and

comfortable with their own gender, but become absolutely tongue-tied around the opposite sex. There are others who are happy and outgoing with their friends and family, and clam up anytime strangers enter the picture.

Most people attempt to hide their shyness and many may not even appear to be shy, nervous, or ill at ease. However, attempting to hide the shyness does not lessen the suffering it causes. It's always there, under the surface, no matter how hard they try to hide their misery.

As for what causes shyness, it can vary. One of the hypotheses is that shyness is at least partially genetic. If your parents were shy, there's a great chance you might also be a bit shy. Another is that it has a great deal to do with the environment in which one is raised. If your parents were very strict and unforgiving, it could cause you to be shy, especially around authority figures.

Shyness can develop in a person's life after harsh treatment on the part of teachers or fellow students. You may have been laughed at, ridiculed, or tormented by others. This creates an innate shyness, which is very difficult to rid yourself of later. Each time you find yourself in a similar situation, you may experience the same feelings of anxiety.

Yet another cause of shyness could very well be due to brain chemistry or reactivity, which is your inborn temperament; you may just be more sensitive about your behavior, more easily embarrassed than others may be.

You may possess a faulty idea of who you are; your own self-perceptions can cause you to feel shy in certain circumstances. You may have a problem adapting to new situations, or you may be going through some life transition,

such as a divorce, a new job, new school, or maybe you're recently widowed. All these things can change your life to such a degree that you no longer feel comfortable in certain situations.

Whether it is nature or nurture, shyness evolves as we grow older and have to face new and different circumstances and challenges. Many people go through different phases of shyness and even grow out of it. Unfortunately, others may experience such disappointments and traumas that they just give up hope and withdraw from the world.

Shyness vs. Social Anxiety

Shyness, which starts with self-consciousness, should not be confused with social phobia. Young people may experience shyness, since they are trying to develop their social skills, but it usually dissipates as they mature and grow. It's not so much a matter of overcoming shyness, as it is learning to be more comfortable in social situations.

Shyness is not the same thing as social phobia or social anxiety. Shyness can be dealt with more easily; you can learn how to handle social occasions with grace and dispense with self-consciousness. New situations might cause you to feel a little nervous, until you learn how to handle them. The trick is not to let them control you. Once you get used to something, it ceases to be frightening; it becomes more familiar and you start to feel more comfortable in that situation.

Social phobia tends to influence your entire life. You begin to avoid all social occasions because you don't feel safe or comfortable. Avoidance becomes

a habit that's impossible to break; it builds on itself. Before you know it, you're avoiding everything that frightens you and everything frightens you, so you become totally isolated. It's true that no man (or woman) is an island. We need interaction in this world; we need each other.

Introverts & Extroverts

According to Carl Jung, whether you're an introvert or extrovert depends on your psychic energy. A person whose energy flows outward is an extrovert; if it flows inward, he's an introvert. Modern psychologists consider this whole theory to be obsolete. In this day and age, it's more a matter of feeling energized in particular situations.

One study discovered that introverts have more blood flow in the frontal lobes of their brain and the frontal thalamus. These are areas that deal with internal processing, such as memory and problem solving. Extroverts have more blood flow in anterior cingulate gyrus, temporal lobes and posterior thalamus, which deal with sensory processing, such as listening and watching.

Introverts tend to be completely or at least predominately concerned with their own mental processes. They are generally quiet, laid back, careful and deliberate, and tend to avoid social situations. They are more likely to enjoy activities such as reading, writing, designing, even inventing. The introvert enjoys their own company more than that of others, though they may have a small circle of close friends with whom they interact.

Extroverts are mostly involved with gaining satisfaction from outside themselves. They enjoy interactions with others and are talkative, assertive, and enthusiastic. They like nothing better than getting together with others in large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, and business gatherings. Any high-energy activity with lots of people is right up their alley.

Introverts often appear reserved and thoughtful, and enjoy the company of friends one at a time, as opposed to large groups. They prefer peace and quiet, to concentrate and contemplate on their lives. Unexpected visits are frowned upon; introverts consider this an unwarranted intrusion into their quiet surroundings. They may have difficulty making new business contacts and friends, but they work well when they're alone. Unfortunately, they often appear cold or standoffish to others, making it difficult to get to know them.

Extroverts love business and constant action, and often take the initiative. They make friends easily and adapt to new situations without problems. Comparing opinions with those of others is of great interest to extroverts and indeed, they take an interest in everything around them. Extroverts are thought of as being more warm, gregarious and assertive, real excitement seekers, and are often sought out by others.

It's hard to imagine an extrovert as being shy, but it can happen. Given a new situation and people, they are often a bit shy, until they warm up to the new scenario. Shyness should not be confused with introversion or extroversion. Actually, introverts and extroverts both can be shy. In addition, keep in mind that

all introverts aren't necessarily shy either; they are simply not comfortable being the life of the party.

It should be kept in mind that there is no magic pill to cure shyness, because it's not a disease. It should not be considered a character flaw either. It's not a mental defect, an emotional disorder, and certainly not a neurosis. You can't necessarily talk yourself out of being shy. There are ways to counteract your shyness, which we'll be discussing later in this report, but it will take long-term work to deal with your shyness, since it is tied to your deepest thoughts, emotions, and fears.

Chapter Two ARE YOU SHY?

“Many great ideas have been lost because the people who had them could not stand being laughed at.” - Author Unknown

Psychologist Jonathan Creek of Wellesley College says that “situational shyness, such as feeling shy around a new co-worker or person of the opposite sex to whom we’re attracted to, can help to facilitate cooperative living; it inhibits behaviors that are socially unacceptable.” In this case, shyness can be a good thing; it prevents us from making fools of ourselves, or from hurting others’ feelings.

Some people like to get to know others more by observation than interaction, but they’re happy that way. For the shy person, the desire to interact is at war with their desire to remain isolated. They want to be successful in social situations, but are afraid they simply can’t handle all that entails. They desire acceptance, but at the same time are afraid of being judged by others. This creates such conflict they may become frozen, and unable to move in any direction.

Are you afraid to take a risk? Perhaps you always anticipate the worst and fearing the outcome; you avoid the pain by avoiding the situation altogether. It could be simply fear of the unknown. Sometimes a single bad experience can grow into a habit as you continue to choose to flee or avoid any situation in which you feel uncertain.

Many doctors who work with shy people describe them as being self-centered, more preoccupied with what kind of impression they're making to care about anyone but himself or herself. They are so worried about what others will think of them that they are incapable of concern about the welfare of others.

Those plagued by shyness may be seen as less than friendly by others, maybe a bit standoffish, even cold in some circumstances. It's evident that compared to other people, they are not as assertive, due to their quiet nature in some settings. On the whole, they are certainly not viewed as negatively as they might fear. Because they are shy, they are definitely more sensitive to negative feedback than the average person is. They probably even see themselves in a more negative than positive light.

Because of this worry, their thoughts and strengths are limited to a very small circle of people; they are in fact only limited by their own thoughts and emotions. They constantly think that others are slighting them, insulting them, or attacking them in some way.

The shy person can actually handicap themselves with negative thoughts and wind up using their shyness as a crutch and an excuse for not pursuing more social occasions, "I can't handle these kinds of situations because I'm so shy." Of course the more they tell themselves things like this, the harder it becomes to socialize, make friends, and establish relationships, both personal and professional. It becomes a self-defeating behavior.

This kind of self-defeating behavior leads to more and more avoidance of any or all social encounters, until they become frozen in fear and completely

unable to function in normal social circumstances. They quite literally lose hope in their own ability to function normally in these circumstances, so they quit trying.

Today's modern technology is aiding and abetting many shy people. Thanks to this technology, there is sometimes no need to interact with other humans at all. Everything from bank ATMs to sending text messages on cell phones enables the shy person to avoid interaction with anything but machines. It's less intimidating to send an email than it is to pick up a telephone and speak to a live person. More and more nowadays, it's unnecessary to deal directly with other people. An example of this avoidance is a movie entitled, "The Net," where a young woman deals with others via only her computer; she even orders a pizza and pays for it over the internet.

Another complication to social interaction may be the job itself. As more and more companies downsize, creating more work for fewer employees, the workload produced means less and less time for social interaction. The employees have less free time to spend with family and existing friends, let alone making new friends. Those who have found themselves a victim of downsizing may well experience the depression that goes along with job loss. The worse the depression, the less willing they are to interact with others; soon, they're avoiding all social interaction.

This creates a domino effect, making it that much harder for them to function and find more work. Their self-confidence may be tied up with whatever they do for a living. Losing that job causes a loss of self-esteem that many

people can't handle. They go into seclusion, isolating themselves to their own detriment.

The fact that you've purchased this report means that either you're shy yourself, or you know someone who is shy and you want to help them. It's important to remember that being shy is not the real you; you're so much more than just shy. You are sensitive, caring, and compassionate; so don't allow yourself to be labeled merely shy. Shyness may be limiting your personal freedom, peace of mind, and the ability to express yourself, but is only a part of who you really are.

Rather than dwell on the negative part of being shy, try seeing yourself in a more positive way. Shy people are less likely to gossip or brag; they are generally not overbearing or pushy, and definitely not aggressive or antagonistic. Once the shy person makes a friend, they are very loyal and dependable. They are more discreet than the more outgoing kind of personality. They tend to be much less controlling in most circumstances, and very willing to let others do what they want.

Let's face it, some people are born talkers who can get along with just about anyone and everyone, and some people are not. More evidence is showing shyness to be an inborn trait or distinguishing quality. Shy people have difficulty making conversation and become very nervous when they feel they have to be congenial with strangers; they simply do not know what to say.

So, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the thought of meeting new people make you uneasy?

- Do you find it a struggle to come up with something to say to new acquaintances?
- Do you sometimes become tongue-tied around strangers?
- Do you avoid social gatherings where you're certain to get left on your own?
- Do you have trouble speaking in large groups?
- Do you have trouble making eye contact when meeting someone new?
- Do you find it difficult to make new friends?
- Does talking to a member of the opposite sex make you nervous?
- Is dating nerve wracking to you?
- Are you at a loss for a retort when someone makes a wisecrack at your expense?
- When people take advantage of you, do you find it difficult to be assertive with them?
- Do you have trouble saying no to people?
- Do you fail to take compliments graciously?
- Do you have a tendency to chatter when you're nervous and feel it's better to be silent?

Most shy people wouldn't choose this as a way of living their life; they'd prefer to be more outgoing, to be talkative and comfortable wherever they happen to be. Awkwardness in the company of others is embarrassing and makes them want to run and hide. This is what drives the shy person into

solitude. Unlike the introvert who prefers their solitude, the shy person is forced into it.

You can also determine whether your shyness is a case of nature or nurture. Was either of your parents shy? That would mean your genetic makeup could be the problem. Or were you a happy, outgoing child whose personality was abused by parents or teachers or other students during your growing up years? Either way, you can relearn what you need to become a fully functioning person once again. You needn't live in isolation forever.

Many times some traumatic event can propel you into a shyness you never before experienced. Being physically attacked can cause anyone to become shy and hesitant, fearful of a repeat of the horrible event. Even those who were once outgoing and gregarious can become fearful and untrusting. Some even retire to the supposed safety of their homes, reluctant to emerge unless absolutely required to do so.

Why does your mind continue to hang on to these unpleasant events? That's because your brain, with all the information pouring through it every day, pays particular attention to the experiences that cause the most emotional response. That's why you remember the most emotional times in your life. Your brain actually creates a link between the experience and the emotional response to that experience. From there on, the same stimuli will automatically produce the same emotional response, whether it's painful and unpleasant, or happy and fun.

An example used by scientists is that of Pavlov, who noticed that whenever he fed his dog, the animal began to salivate. He began ringing a bell

each time he fed the dog and noticed that simply ringing the bell caused the dog to salivate, even if no food was forthcoming. This is called conditioning and can happen to any of us.

Through this conditioning, your brain will cause you to seek out experiences that you find pleasurable and avoid those that you find uncomfortable. Your beliefs will then back up this conditioning, reminding you each time you try something new, of past reactions, of consequences of past actions in your life.

You may have certain goals in mind and the determination to try and change your life for the better, but your brain continues to remind you of past experiences and reactions, making it more difficult to try something new. Don't let that stop you; however, a change is not only possible but also desirable if you are to live a life of freedom and peace of mind.

Trouble is, you can be your own worst enemy when it comes to your shyness. You have a tendency to relive any failures and/or rejections, to continue to remind yourself with each new experience. Your self-talk could probably use an adjustment, because any time you beat yourself up over a failure, or tell yourself you'll never be able to handle it or change things, or give in to a pity party, you're setting yourself back once again. Unfortunately, you're reinforcing the problem instead of your own self-esteem, and in the process making things worse for yourself.

Now, before you start beating yourself up, stop and think about it. It's perfectly natural and normal and we all do it, but it's very negative and decidedly

unhealthy for you right now. Starting right this minute, tell yourself to stop dwelling on past events, push them away, and find something to distract yourself.

There may also be people in your life who constantly remind you of your past failures, who always bring up the unpleasant facts and make you feel bad about yourself, when it's not necessary. They may think they're only trying to help you see yourself honestly, but it's not helpful and you may want to avoid them. Constantly reminding you of your shortcomings, especially in social situations, is not helpful and can be harmful.

They may begin by asking you what seems to them to be perfectly harmless questions like, "So, why aren't you dating? Don't people like you? Are you being too shy?" Then they start telling you how you should change. Derisive questions like, "Why don't you do something about your hair? Is that what you're going to wear?" are not helpful and only aid in beating down what little self-esteem you might still possess.

Be honest but positive about yourself. What about you is interesting? And before you say nothing, think about it; everybody has something interesting about himself or herself. Try asking your friends what they like about you. Everyone has something about which he/she is extremely proud - some accomplishment, some skill, or some talent. What's yours?

Then ask yourself honestly, without being self-deprecating, what it is about you that you would want to change. How would you go about changing it?

Take a look at yourself in the mirror. Are you frowning? Are your shoulders drooping? Do you look all hunched over? This is the look of depression and

unhappiness. When you're feeling happy, you'll smile, stand up straight, and look people in the eye.

Try it right now. Stand up straight and tall, smile at yourself in the mirror, and look yourself right in the eye. Tell yourself this is how it needs to be. But be gentle with yourself. Think about the positive steps that you can take to be happy and confident all the time. Instead of reminding yourself of what you aren't, try telling yourself all the good things that you are.

Do this each time you're about to go out and meet new people, go to a party, attend a new class, etc. Build yourself up before you leave; talk to yourself and make sure you believe what you're saying. Watch that self-talk! You wouldn't talk in a mean, uncaring way to a friend, so don't talk to yourself that way either.

You may find it necessary to change your belief system. How you think about your life, determines how you will live your life. Ask yourself what you're really afraid of. Are you afraid of messing up, or being hurt, of being embarrassed or are you afraid of what others might think of you? Unfortunately, these things will happen on occasion. If you are constantly thinking about these kinds of things, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. You will think them into being. It's a well-known fact that you will literally draw to you what you constantly think about. Don't let it be fears and concerns.

You might find that you're overly sensitive and emotional, feeling that others are making fun of you, or being rude and insulting. Do you find yourself feeling irritable towards others, finding fault with everything they do? Do you find

yourself suspicious of others' motives, imagining misdeeds where there really are none? This is indicative of a greater problem and should be explored.

One of the biggest clues to your own shyness might be in demanding perfection from others, when you feel you're not achieving it in yourself. You probably are very demanding of yourself, expecting much more than you can possibly deliver. You possess so much self-doubt, that it literally laps over onto other people.

Shy people find different ways to deal with their problems, none of which work, I might add. They either:

- Become aggressive with everybody to the point of being obnoxious. Here they overcompensate for what they fear will not work and going completely overboard to prove they're not afraid. To quote Shakespeare, they protest too much.
- Become submissive to the point of being taken advantage of at every turn. This usually occurs in the very young, where they are molded by approval or disapproval-of parents, teachers and other authority figures. Too much disapproval and the young person will have self-esteem issues. They can grow up afraid and unprepared to handle the world, possibly even unable to think for themselves. Even making friends becomes difficult.

In the case of the submissive shy person, anger can build within them. They try to block the anger or suppress it, to the detriment of their mental and physical health. This is because the anger that is blocked or suppressed gets turned inward. This anger can then lead to guilt, which in turn leads to self-

loathing. The submissive shy person then becomes afraid that others will learn their secret thoughts and reject them.

- Withdraw from everything, with the intention being to avoid pain and unpleasantness. This is the most serious and potentially harmful of the reactions. Instead of becoming aggressive or submissive, the shy person simply withdraws; they literally shun the world and everyone in it. They never join in anything, but avoid contact, preferring their own solitary company to any group activities. In the worse case, this can become absolute rejection of the world. Paul Gelinus said, "We need the world, people around us, to develop and to maintain our sense of identity. The overly shy person denies himself the source of human growth by not sharing himself with other people."

It's said that "no man is an island." Throughout history, man has needed the cooperation of others to insure survival of the species; humans banded together for the good of all. Man still requires that banding together, but instead of it being a need for survival, it's become a psychological need.

Shy people may claim to be self-sufficient, with no need for others; they tend to be loners, not daring to risk rejection. They must break out of their voluntary isolation, stop the tendency to withdraw, and break the habit of shying away from others. Primitive man feared physical harm and withdrew. Shy people also perceive the world as hostile and threatening, and withdraw out of fear.

- Become quite ill. This can be psychosomatic at first, which can then turn into real physical illness, brought on by stress. In the very young, it can manifest itself as speech impediments such as stuttering, or lisping. There have even been cases of the shy person developing asthma, hay fever, or ulcers.

Experts agree that you can change any aspect of your personality; you just need the right tools. Maybe you've tried to undo the shyness, but to no avail. It's not impossible to change. Every day, what you think changes some part of your world. This report will help you find those tools to change that aspect of your personality. It won't happen overnight, but change is possible. Shy feelings do not have to keep you from pursuing and attaining personal and professional goals.

Aaron Beck, psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School states that shyness is based on fear of being judged negatively, on the belief that it is shameful to appear anxious in front of other people. There is nothing shameful about being shy, it is what it is. It's the fear that makes people want to run and hide.

You may feel it's too hard to step out of your own, shy little world and take the risk of rejection. It might or might not happen, but keeping yourself in isolation will not save you from that rejection and will eventually cost you more of the good things in life. By staying all alone and avoiding others, you're also avoiding those good things that can come your way, like love and joy, success and accomplishment. Just a little courage can begin to change your whole future.

Many well known people have been shy. Abraham Lincoln was shy, yet he became the sixteenth President of the United States and brought USA through a civil war. Theodore Roosevelt was shy, yet led the Rough Riders and became USA's twenty-sixth president. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and became the third President of the United States. Due to his shyness, the only time he ever spoke publicly was at his inauguration. Any other communication was always done in writing.

Many of today's popular celebrities also suffer from shyness, including Brad Pitt, Cher, David Letterman, Kevin Costner, and Tom Cruise. Al Pacino once said, "My first language was shy. It's only by having been thrust into the limelight that I have learned to cope with my shyness." Another big star, Johnny Depp, said, "I'm shy, paranoid, whatever word you want to use. I hate fame. I've done everything I can to avoid it." Even the late Lucille Ball, when asked if she had always been outgoing, replied, "Heavens no, I was shy for several years in my early days in Hollywood until I figured out that no one really gave a damn if I was shy or not, and I got over my shyness."

If you're one of the shy people, you're in good company.

Chapter Three

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SHYNESS

“The shy man does have some slight revenge upon society for the torture it inflicts upon him. He is able, to a certain extent, to communicate his misery. He frightens other people as much as they frighten him. He acts like a damper upon the whole room, and the most jovial spirits become, in his presence, depressed and nervous.” - Jerome K. Jerome

For the non-shy person, functioning in the normal world can be difficult, but they can still get out and about, socialize, meet people, work, and have a life. For the shy person, however, it's more than difficult; it's energy sapping, mind numbing, and nerve wracking on a daily basis. Just getting through an average day is enough to leave them exhausted and trembling.

Shy people date a lot less than the non-shy, and have fewer friends. They are less expressive and verbal; in fact, the less they have to speak, the better they like it. Even a simple conversation creates quite a problem, as you might imagine for the shy person. They're so busy wondering what the other person is thinking of them, that they fail to concentrate on the conversation itself. They are in fact, so busy living in their own heads, trying to be perfect, that they don't learn to express themselves very well. Shy people are self-conscious, sometimes painfully so, and that gets in the way of every interaction in their lives.

Shy individuals have a bad self-image and report more negative thoughts on a daily basis than the non-shy person. Interacting is so difficult and painful for

them, that they tend to avoid any and all social occasions. Unfortunately, that means they are lacking in social skills as well. Social skills are a learned thing and need to be practiced. The more they see themselves as awkward, socially inhibited, unfriendly and even incompetent, the less they want to socialize, the more they avoid any and all social occasions.

Fear of interacting with the opposite sex keeps many shy people from dating. They may see themselves as unattractive and awkward; after all, they don't even know how to talk to the opposite sex. They make up their minds that they're unwanted, undesirable, maybe even unlovable. They expect rejection, and will take themselves out of the game before the supposed rejection can take place.

Anticipating rejection brings about the self-fulfilling prophecy. They expect to be rejected and when no one asks them out, they figure they were right in the first place and that it's just not worth all the effort. The more failure they experience, the less they try, until they are in total seclusion. And all because of what they feared might happen.

Perceived threat is what keeps most shy people out of the running altogether. They become overly sensitive to what others are thinking or saying, and underestimate their own ability to cope with a given social situation. They do, in fact, handicap themselves before anyone has said a word. Then they begin to use their shyness as a crutch and an excuse to avoid further socializing. In an effort to avoid pain and rejection, they take themselves off the market.

While shy people are seen as less friendly and less assertive than others, they really are not seen as negatively as they fear they are. Unfortunately, they do seem to remember the negative feedback longer than the non-shy. They are more anxious about creating good impressions and more fearful of any anticipated rejection.

The Shy Student

In the case of the shy student, because they are so fearful, they miss out on opportunities to further their studies. They fear speaking out in class; even interacting with other students is painful and uncomfortable for them. The shy are less likely to make use of good resources, information, and guidance in their career planning. Without assertive behavior in simple things like job interviews, they come off as less than desirable candidates for the job. This sets up more rejection and failure issues in the shy person's mind.

Misuse of Alcohol

One of the most serious consequences of being shy is the misuse of alcohol, in a misguided attempt to appear more normal in social situations. Some shy people use alcohol to make themselves seem more open, friendly, and uninhibited. This can backfire horribly and leave them feeling even worse than before, and get them into serious trouble. Add to that the guilt they feel for having used something artificial to gain acceptance, and knowing they're not themselves at all.

Health Issues

Another fairly serious consequence to shyness is a greater health risk, due to a lack of emotional support, usually found in good friends and family. The inability to discuss health problems with one's doctor also presents a possible risk. Doctors can't help if they don't know the problems. Shy people also have a harder time obtaining a better job to help pay for quality health care. Not being able to communicate with the potential employer keeps shy people from advancing.

Chronic shyness can keep shy individuals from getting those great jobs, earning those big raises, advancing as they should for a good future. If they have a family to support, this creates a great deal of tension and guilt. They want the best for their family and feel incapable of providing what's needed. Their shyness is impeding their progress and has become a serious handicap.

This impacts their current relationships and possible future relationships. It can even shorten their own lifespan. As stated before, no man (or woman) is an island. Interaction with other human beings is essential for their well-being, not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

According to UCLA scientists, how you react to stress indicates how easily you will either resist or succumb to disease, including serious viruses like HIV. These scientists discovered that the way the immune system works makes shy people more susceptible to infection than their more outgoing counterparts.

Actually, this is not new. Steve Cole, the principal investigator and assistant professor of hematology-oncology at the David Geffen School of Medicine and member of the UCLA AIDS Institute tells us, “Since ancient Greece, physicians noted that the melancholic temperament are more vulnerable to viral infections.” Simply put, the body’s defense mechanisms are impacted by personality, odd as that sounds.

Shyness can cause you to avoid interaction with authority figures. This can be your boss, one of your professors in school, your doctor, the police; anyone with whom you have to deal that wields some kind of power over you, in one form or another. It can be very intimidating.

Public speaking is probably something you want to avoid at all costs; the very idea of standing up in front of even a small group of people has you frozen with fear. Trouble is it may become necessary at one point or another, so you have to find a way to deal with it. Your success may depend upon it.

Sometimes, the simple act of phoning someone you don’t know absolutely terrifies you. You have no idea what to say or how to get across the message you have. In today’s world, it’s impossible to live a normal life without using a telephone at one point or another.

As a human being, in this world today, finding work is necessary for your future success, as well as your continued existence. Everyone needs work of some sort, it’s unavoidable. And dealing with other people is part of that; interaction is an absolute essential ingredient in our lives. That brings us to the inevitable job interview. While it’s fairly nerve wracking to almost anyone looking

for a job, for shy people it's a brick wall. It's an action so terrifying, they will do anything to avoid it; but they can do that for just so long. Eventually, we all have to sit in that interviewee seat and figure out what to say, how to say it, and what not to say, to make that person on the other side of the desk decide to take a chance on us.

According to Dr. Jonathan Cheek, "Underemployment-being stuck in a job that requires less skill or training than you possess-uneasy work relationships and slower advancement mark the careers of shy people." He also points out that the more shy a person is, the less prestigious his last job title tends to be. "Almost every lucrative career requires solid communication skills, an assertive personality, and an astute sense of office politics."

Friendships

Shy people have friends, usually a smaller circle than their non-shy counterparts, but they are capable of making friends. These are people who are perhaps more patient with shy types, more forgiving and tolerant. They understand the needs of shy individuals and help accommodate those needs.

One of the traits of chronically shy people is that they need safe situations and people they feel comfortable with and know extremely well. If one of those safe friends moves away, shy people can feel they've been left high and dry. There's also the panicky feeling of knowing they need to get out and meet new people. They understand the need to interact with others, but it's so intimidating and frightening.

Without the necessary skills, all these things seem impossible to deal with, but as human beings on this planet, learning all we can about dealing with our shyness is essential to our continued well-being, as well as our future success, both personally and professionally.

Being shy is not bad in itself, except where it keeps you from meeting those people you want or doing the things you desire. When it starts to interfere with day-to-day living, it's time to do something about it. Shyness is not horrible. It's the labels that shy people attach to themselves; or worse, it's the labels attached to them by others. Being thought of as humorless, or snobbish, or worse yet, boring, is very damaging to one's self-esteem.

Society as a whole is not going to change to meet your needs, so you have to do the changing. More about that in another chapter.

Chapter Four SHY CHILDREN

"If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy." - Dorothy Law Nolte

The fact is people are not born shy; there really is no shyness gene. It can emerge, however, at about the age of two. That's when children start becoming aware of themselves as distinct from their parents or siblings. They develop a sense of self.

Some babies are just more sensitive than others to different stimuli and can become very distressed whenever they feel overwhelmed. This can happen when there are a lot of unfamiliar people around them, or unfamiliar surroundings or even objects they don't recognize. For many babies, loud noises are shocking enough to make them cry, since they don't understand what the noise is or what it means to them.

Jerome Kagan from Harvard University has research that shows the physiological differences between sociable and shy babies can show up as early as two months. He also discovered that fifteen to twenty percent of newborns will probably be quiet and restrained in unfamiliar situations. Babies show the difference in their heart rates, jerky movements of their arms and legs, and excessive crying. Timid babies also showed more brain wave activity in the right frontal lobe, as opposed to normally reactive children who show more left side activity.

At the root of all shyness is fear and babies are born with only two fears- the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. Every other fear is learned as they grow. Fortunately, anything that can be learned can also be unlearned.

Shyness sometimes starts with the family, resulting in a fear of the parents or fear from a parent. Parents and teachers need to understand too, that children are molded by the approval or disapproval from these authority figures. Too much disapproval and your child could develop self-esteem issues. You certainly don't want your child to grow up afraid and incapable of handling the world. You want them to be able to think for themselves and make good choices. Making them shy through too much disapproval causes difficulties for them in their future dealings with others.

Experts have discovered that children who attend day-care facilities tend to be less shy than those who stay at home. That's because the day-care child is exposed to different experiences with the other children and the day-care staff. This leads to earlier development of communications skills.

Shy children tend to be the targets of bullies at school, due to this highly sensitive nature. They embarrass easily and cry at the drop of a hat. Bullies are drawn to this type and delight in tormenting them.

Philip Zimbardo of Stanford University has come to the conclusion that shy adolescents feel more peer pressure when it comes to drinking and using drugs than their less shy counterparts. They feel a pressure to fit in, to be accepted, and will use anything in their power to achieve that.

As they grow older, the tendency to self-blame and extreme self-consciousness grows as well. This is the beginning of social shyness and avoidance, which if left unchecked, can quickly become social anxiety. Jerome Kagan has research that shows that shyness in adults could often be traced as far back as the age of three. While shyness does not have a biological basis in all people, Kagan's studies show only about one third of these inhibited children seemed to have a genetic predisposition to shyness.

Chapter Five

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

“The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.” - Lady Bird Johnson

As a shy person you know how hard it is to step out of your own, shy, little world and take the risk of rejection, even knowing that it might or might not happen. But in order to live a full, rich life, you must defeat the fear; in effect, you must change your whole attitude.

Up to now, as a shy person, you've experienced frustration, anger, guilt, maybe even a bit of self-loathing, for what you perceived to be a weakness in yourself. That's part of what you must change. Rid yourself of that frustration, anger, guilt, and self-hate. In the long run they are useless emotions and just get in the way of your healing.

You've experienced a certain amount of self-centeredness, thanks to your shyness. Let's face it, you've been too shy even to think of others' feelings. You've had such a preoccupation in your own self-consciousness, there wasn't anything left for others. And the more self-centered you've been, the more intense the shyness you suffered. This is where the change of attitude comes in. It's time to put aside the neurotic self-interest and consider the needs of others.

It's time to move from those withdrawal tendencies and expand your network of human contacts. It's time to 'break the ice' in social situations and make new friends.

So, exactly how do you go about expanding your social network? Making friends is like any other skill; it takes practice. The best way is to start small. Attending a huge social function is not the way to go; that's way too intimidating. You may think you have to go to places like bars to meet someone new. This is not a good idea. You will most likely only meet very troubled people there.

If you're a student, try striking up a conversation with other students in your classes or at the student center. You'll discover there are a lot of people just like you, shy people who just want to make some new friends too.

At work, you can start a conversation with some of your associates. If you've been avoiding that water cooler crowd, maybe it's time to make a change there too. A simple question could start a very interesting discussion and help you get to know your office mates, and more importantly, let them get to know the real you.

Show an interest in your friends and invite them out for a little fun. Talk about what's of interest to them and show them you care. A little research should give you plenty to talk about. Make your home a warm, welcoming place for others and invite friends to visit. Have a little dinner party, but keep the guest list small at first.

The next time you're at a social gathering, seek out other shy persons and try drawing them out, making them feel comfortable. Let them know they are valuable and worthy; show them the kindness you've always sought.

There are opportunities for interpersonal relationships everywhere you look and you can find many ways to help other shy people. You'll discover the

best way to pull yourself out of the trap of shyness is to help someone else with the same problem. Helping others will help you too.

You need to develop some pride in yourself and your accomplishments. When you defeat the fear of disapproval and start to expect more from life, you'll start to feel worthy of recognition and respect.

The shy person desperately needs to be proud of something, but you don't have to be a scientist or an inventor to feel pride in achievement. Doing something well, anything at all, is enough to generate pride. Perhaps you are known as a fine cook, or a graceful dancer, or you might do marvelous work with your hands as an artisan. Any of these things are worthy of recognition and pride.

Whether your shyness has a biological basis or is a learned response, it's still within your ability to change. You're not fated to be always shy and withdrawn. So, the first thing you must learn to do is not to blame yourself, for any perceived weakness or failure. It won't help to wallow in self-pity, nor should you simply blame your parents or upbringing. Shyness is not a result of anything you did as a child. Shyness is just a reaction to new, different situations.

Now let's try a simple exercise. Try visualizing a scary situation, one that you would normally avoid at any cost. Pretend for a moment that a friend has talked you into attending a party where he/she will be the only person there that you know. For the truly shy person, that is pretty scary. Picture it in detail. Your friend walks in with you, introduces you to someone at the door, then wanders away and leaves you on your own with a total stranger.

Do you feel anxious just contemplating the scenario? Now figure out step-by-step exactly what you need to do and say in preparation for that same situation. What would be the appropriate actions you should take? Picture yourself saying and doing all the right things, interacting and feeling comfortable about it. Visualize yourself shaking hands with the strangers at the party and introducing yourself. Someone asks what you do for a living and you answer briefly, succinctly, then turn the question back to them. Most people love to talk about themselves; you just have to give them the chance to open up.

Now imagine how it would go if you were no longer fearful about interacting with others. If you can see yourself doing it comfortably, feeling good about it, you can accomplish it. With the right visualization and preparation, you can handle what would have been an anxiety-provoking scenario.

Part of the reason you feel uncomfortable in social situations, is because you're afraid you won't behave properly or know what to say. Preparation takes all the guesswork out of the equation. It allows you to prepare mentally for the occasion.

Visualization is one of the best ways of overcoming shyness. If you can see yourself doing something, you're half way to actually doing it. Remember, your thoughts are powerful and can create a different world.

Whatever scenario makes you nervous, let your imagination go ahead of you and practice. By the time you actually experience it, it won't feel strange or unfamiliar anymore.

Once you've practiced it in your head for a while, it's time to try it in the real world. Pick something small at first, something as non-threatening as possible. Try a simple conversation with a classmate or work associate. Remember what you've rehearsed and just go for it. If conversation is difficult for you, pick a simple topic, something you know a bit about, so you'll feel more comfortable. Speak slowly and deliberately. Try not to fidget with your hands; and for Heaven's sake, smile at the other person. People always seem less intimidating if you can get them to smile.

If you're worried about messing up and feeling foolish, try a simple conversation with a sales person at a store. The less worried you are about making a good impression, the more likely you are to do well. You may very well never see this person again anyway.

Remember that each success you experience sets the stage for the next encounter, and the next, etc. Each success will make you feel good about yourself and encouraged, so you want to take the next step, try something new. The more often you get out there and experience new situations, the better you'll feel and the more you'll want to get out the next time.

The first time or two you do this you may catch yourself remembering a discouraging event in your past, a time when things didn't go so well for you and you were embarrassed and uncomfortable. That was then; this is now. Discard that discouraging thought, push it to one side, and shut the door on it. This is the new you, so don't let old experiences unduly influence you now.

Allow yourself some time to work on this visualization exercise; it will take some practice and lots of work, but it's well worth it. Don't expect to feel different about everything overnight. Remember, take baby steps and encourage yourself with each step forward.

It's possible to learn how to be a great socializer. The way to do that is to make other people feel comfortable and interesting; and you do that by really listening to them, really being interested in what they have to say. Stop focusing on what you'll say next and just listen to them. That's the key to overcoming shyness; think about someone else instead of yourself. Believe me it really works!

You don't have to try and be the life of the party. Let other people talk and listen to them carefully and they'll think you're great to have around. Ask them a question about themselves and then let them go. Look them in the eye and nod now and then. Whatever you do, don't glance at your watch. That will make them feel like they're keeping you from something else. Be a good listener.

One of the best ways to help you come out of your shell is to help someone else come out of theirs. If you see someone at a gathering that looks miserably shy, walk over, shake their hand, introduce yourself and make him feel comfortable. You'll help him and yourself as well.

Desensitization

Desensitization is a way of reducing or perhaps even eliminating a person's negative reaction to a given circumstance or scenario. This has been

used to treat a great many phobias and is being used to help shy individuals learn to handle whatever social gathering they fear and try to avoid. Pretending a situation doesn't exist is useless, but teaching a shy person how to co-exist with the non-shy population is a great step forward.

The idea here is to bring the shy person gradually into contact with the outside world, in a safe, comfortable non-threatening way. In systematic desensitization, a therapist guides the shy person step-by-step, from simple tasks that have caused him fear and anxiety to larger gatherings. Simply put, by giving him the tools and strategies to handle the situations, and then exposing him gradually to the same situations he's been avoiding so rigorously, the shy person learns to handle even unfamiliar situations. Any fear or phobia is actually based on the person's fear of losing control. The therapist guides the shy person and shows him how to control the situations he fears the most.

Meditation is often used to help the patient remain calm, instead of letting the fear build up until it reaches panic point. For the intensely shy or socially anxious, breathing becomes a problem when feeling upset or threatened. The therapist can teach the shy person helpful breathing exercises to use when he feels these emotions. Visualization can be used along with systematic desensitization to help the shy person learn to control the situations he fears.

Part of the systematic desensitization process is introducing the patient to the feared scenario, a little at a time, and letting him use the tools and strategies he has learned to get through the event. Positive reinforcement is also part of the strategy. They are exposed to the fear and showed that they can get through it

and survive. The therapist points out how well he did, encouraging him to feel more positive about himself. Each exposure to the fear gives the shy person the positive reinforcement to feel encouraged to get through the next time and the next, etc.

Medication

For those with more serious shyness issues, it may be necessary to take medication to alleviate the social anxiety they feel all the time. The most popular antidepressant is Prozac, containing selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. It boosts brain levels of serotonin, which regulates moods. Others on the market right now are Zoloft, Effexor and Paxil. It's strictly up to your doctor when it comes to this kind of therapy. Each person's body chemistry is different and must treat their shyness differently. If you feel your shyness is becoming a hindrance to the daily healthy functioning of your life, talk to your doctor.

Keep in mind that any medication can have side effects such as upset stomach, insomnia, dizziness, drowsiness, headaches, or can even make you more anxious than ever. Medications can work for a while and suddenly stop helping. And there's a limit to how much they can help. Then there's the cost of most medications.

Many have tried meditation, desensitization or visualization and found them sufficient for their needs. Each person must decide for himself and with his doctor the best method of controlling shyness or social anxiety.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming

NLP is a type of self-help technique that can help you change the way you think about things. It was developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder and uses vivid imagery. Using the principle of modeling, it might mean having the shy person watch the outgoing people they admire and observe carefully how they handle social occasions, make conversation, joke and kid around with others, how they smile and use their body language.

Chapter Six

HOW TO BE A GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST IN SPITE OF YOUR SHYNESS

“Good conversation is what makes us interesting. After all, we spend a great deal of our time talking and a great deal of our time listening. Why be bored, why be boring, when you don’t have to be either?” - Edwin Newman

Absolutely everyone has to communicate all the time. There’s no way to avoid it forever. No matter what walk of life you find yourself in, talking to other people is a necessity.

In order to succeed in business and in interpersonal relationships, you must be able to speak with others. Some have no trouble giving presentations at work, yet have great difficulty making small talk at parties. Different situations require different reactions; this is what keeps the shy person out of the game.

In order to get what you want and need in life, in order to negotiate for your benefit or that of others, it’s essential that you be able to communicate, to connect with the world.

Body Language

The first step in this essential communications is your body language. A smile is the opening salvo in this battle to communicate with the world. A smile says, “I’m friendly and I’d love to talk with you.” Add to that friendly smile, a

“hello” and you have the perfect conversation opener. Couple the smile and the hello with a firm handshake and you now have a perfect icebreaker.

Now your stance says a lot about you too. An open stance (arms to your sides) indicates a readiness to communicate. Standing with your arms folded says, “I’m not open to talk, leave me alone.”

Leaning forward slightly, when listening to others speak, shows you’re interested in them and in what they are saying. This will make others more comfortable and inclined to talk with you. Leaning away from the speaker indicates a desire to escape, that you’re basically disinterested in what he has to say.

Of course, be certain you make eye contact. Refusing to look someone in the eye makes you appear disinterested, or even suspiciously sneaky, as if you’re up to something. It’s okay to glance away occasionally while your mind is formulating a reply to a question posed. But be careful not to just stare unblinkingly at the person. That will only make them uncomfortable and want to flee. A fixed stare can make you appear aggressive and challenging and could result in a defensive reaction.

A simple nod of your head while the other person is speaking sends a positive signal too. It says, “I’m listening and I’m interested, please continue.”

Your tone of voice carries a lot of weight too. A friendly tone and the right words will create an impression of friendly openness, a willingness to communicate.

Keep in mind the words of Emily Post who cautions, "Ideal conversation must be an exchange of thought, and not, as many of those who worry most about their shortcomings believe, an eloquent exhibition of wit or oratory." Those who try too hard to be witty or eloquent frequently find themselves alone at parties for no one can bear an obnoxious person for very long.

How to Start a Conversation

Did you know you only have about five seconds to make a first impression? That's how long it takes to introduce yourself and catch the other person's name. And whatever you do, try and catch that name and then use it right away. Dale Carnegie said, "The sweetest sound in any language is a person's name.

The number one reason we forget a person's name seconds after we've been introduced is because we weren't focusing on that moment. We're too busy trying to figure out what to say next or even worrying about what they'll think of us.

As soon as you gain their name, use it immediately. "It's so nice to meet you, John." You can introduce John to a third party. Try to connect the name to something you'll remember later to further imbed the name into your consciousness. Be sure to use his name again when you say goodbye.

To be an excellent conversationalist, you must look outside yourself and focus on the people around you and the events in motion. If all you can think of is whether they like you, what they think of you, and whether they are judging you

and your actions, it's guaranteed to make you feel self-conscious. It's better to look outward and become attuned to what's going on around you. This will enlarge your available topic repertoire as well.

Starting a conversation needn't be terrifying or mind boggling. Try these simple steps to get a conversation going:

- Take the risk and be the first to say hello and introduce yourself. Just take a deep breath and plunge right in. It may seem scary at first, but when you take the chance, you could meet some fascinating people.
- Ask the other person an easy to answer kind of question. You could start with the occasion that finds the two of you in the same place. If it's a party, you probably both know the host or hostess. If it's a charity event, that's the perfect opener; talk about the charity. Obviously you're both there for the same cause, it's an immediate bond.
- Listen carefully to the information being offered freely as they answer your question. Unless you've asked a yes or no question (more about that later), they'll have to offer more of an answer and if you listen carefully, you'll pick up on something you both have in common.
- Ask some more questions based on what they've already revealed. It's called small talk, but it's an important beginning.
- Reveal some information of your own. You may discover some topics in common, giving you even more to talk about. Just remember not to babble on at this point. Let them do the talking, asking pertinent questions or making comments here and there.

- Pay them a compliment, followed by a question. “I love your boots. Where did you find them?” A cardinal rule here though, is never ask them how much they paid, that’s considered rude. Admiration can start a great conversation, but keep it genuine. Insincerity can be spotted a mile away.
- Try a light-hearted observation about the event you’re both attending or the setting. Never make anyone the butt of a joke; again, that would be rude.

Shy people often take a back seat when it comes to starting a conversation, allowing themselves to step into the more passive role; but initiating a conversation needn’t be intimidating. Try making a mental list of comments and questions ahead of time to give you a head start. Being prepared ahead of time will give you the self-confidence you need to make the first conversational move, at whatever event you find yourself.

Practice, practice, practice, starting conversations. The more rehearsal you get, the better responses you’ll get.

Learn the difference between open-ended and closed-ended questions. A closed-ended question will illicit a yes or no, or other very short answer. An open-ended question asks the person for a more detailed answer and actually encourages them to talk.

Some examples would be:

Closed-ended

“So, where are you from?”-This will illicit very little response.

Open-ended

“What brings you to our little town?”-This gives them a chance to open up and tell you more about themselves.

Closed-ended

“What do you do for a living?”-Again, you’ll most likely get a short response to this question.

Open-ended

“What made you choose that as your career?”-Here again, you’ve given them a chance to open up and divulge more about themselves.

Small talk is often very difficult for the shy person, but it can often lead to more interesting topics and a lot of common ground. Once the conversational ball is rolling along, it gets easier; there’s more give and take.

Also difficult for intensely shy people is active listening. For the most part, while others are speaking, shy people are trying to think what they’d like to say next. They’re also wondering what the other person is thinking of them, if they’re making a good impression or worrying that they aren’t. If you’ve asked a question, it’s important that you actually listen to the response. Active listening helps tremendously with the conversation. Failure to focus on what they’re saying can cause your mind to wander. By listening carefully, the other person provides you with information to keep that conversational ball rolling.

Rather than worry what they’ll think about you, keep the words of Judith Martin (Miss Manners) in mind. “Most people are too conscious of their own problems in the matter to hold yours against you. Even if they wanted to give you a black mark, they wouldn’t know next to whose name to put it.”

Discussion Not Arguments!

A difference of opinion doesn't have to escalate into a disagreement. You don't always have to be right. Watch how you couch your words and phrasing. An aggressive attitude will cause the other person to quite literally 'clam up.' It's hard to be open when the other person has become verbally aggressive. The person who feels they must always be right will not find the respect they seek. This is not the way to win friends and influence people. There are plenty of ways to say you don't agree without getting confrontational. You can even agree to disagree on certain subjects.

You don't want to be remembered as the argumentative person that people want to avoid at get-togethers.

The next time you're invited to a party or other gathering, plan ahead and make a list of questions you can ask and topics you can discuss. By eliminating your fear of what to talk about, you're already ahead of the game. Then take that risk, step forward, say hello, introduce yourself and ask a question. If the conversation rolls along well, stay with it. If it dries up, excuse yourself; tell them you enjoyed meeting them and move on to the next conversation.

When it comes to asking questions, don't fire one after another at the person, or you'll begin to sound more like an interrogator than a conversationalist. Ask the question, listen carefully for the answer before asking another question.

Small talk doesn't need to be difficult or boring, nor do you need to get hung up talking about the weather all the time. Small talk is just to loosen things up and make everyone feel a bit more comfortable talking to strangers. If you ask the right questions, you should get the other person to reveal a little about themselves and open up the conversation to some more interesting topics than what the weather is doing and whether or not you need an umbrella in the morning.

It's helpful to use Dale Carnegie's approach to small talk and ask, "Where are you from?" "How do you like it here?" or "Where did you live before this?" It's a good start to get them talking and shows an interest in that other person. In fact, always make the first topic the other person, something about them. If they're new in town, you might offer to show them around, or at least recommend some good shopping locales or restaurants they might like.

The old adage about not discussing politics or religion might still be a good one. You might open up a stimulating topic for discussion or you might just open up a hornet's nest. You'll find there are some folks who just love to argue, especially about politics and religion. Open up this discussion at your own risk. It might be safer to discuss other less tension-filled subjects. Ask about their jobs, hobbies or their children, something they're more likely to be safely passionate about; in other words, discuss friendlier topics.

Remember that first impressions are important and the conversation you begin with can have an impact on any future relationship with that person.

That's the point for all this conversation too. You never know when that next conversation you start could be the beginning of a brand new friendship. You and the other person will find just the right topic for conversation and you're off and running. That topic leads to another and soon the two of you are having a wonderful time discussing things that matter to both of you.

After that comes the excitement. You find out more and more about each other and each of you decides there is definitely something between you that bears a closer look. Congratulations! You've made a new friend. It's still important to show a true, sincere interest in your friend's life; that's what a friend does.

Start small, maybe a lunch or a cup of coffee together. This gives you another opportunity to discuss similar interests and really get to know them. If you're both students, you could arrange to study together; you may even have classes together, another common interest.

If you work together, you might try sharing lunch and a little shopping, or arrange to meet after work and have dinner together or go to the movies. There are many venues for the two of you to get to know one another.

If the person happens to be of the opposite sex, this could even be the start of something romantic. Shy people need love too.

Keep in mind however, that just because you've met someone new and you seem to have much in common, it doesn't necessarily mean that person is going to be a close friend. Most of us have a few friends, but only a handful of truly close friends. By overcoming your shyness to meet new people, you stand a

better chance of making those new friends. The more people you meet, the more chances you have.

As a shy person, you may have the desire to hang on to this new friend for dear life; after all, it's been very difficult for you to meet new people and make new friends. Try not to be too clingy as this could actually scare the new friend away. We all bring a certain amount of emotional baggage into any new relationship, just don't swamp them right away with all your troubles and woes. A true friend helps out others with their troubles too. Be cautious of loading a new friendship up with too much old emotional baggage.

"If you explore beneath shyness or party chit-chat, you can sometimes turn a dull exchange into an intriguing one. I've found this to be particularly true in the case of professors or intellectuals, who are full of fascinating information, but need encouragement before they'll divulge it." - Joyce Carol Oates

CONCLUSION

“Bashfulness, however it may incommode for a moment, scarcely ever produces evils of long continuance; it may flush the cheek, flutter in the heart, deject the eyes, and enchain the tongue, but its mischiefs soon pass off without remembrance. It may sometimes exclude pleasure, but seldom opens any avenue to sorrow or remorse. It is observed somewhere that few have repented of having forborne to speak.” - Samuel Johnson

Remember that your mind is very flexible. It's just that we tend to do things in patterns and forget to take advantage of change. Shy people hang onto their shyness because it's familiar, painful yes, but still familiar. Your thoughts are powerful tools for change; it's just a matter of wanting to very much.

Think of life as a dance; you just need to learn the steps and really hear the music. Shyness doesn't have to control your life, you're in control when it comes to your behavior and your attitude. You know what you want to do and you know how you like to spend your time and with whom. You can't control the thoughts and behavior of others, but you're in charge of yourself.

When it comes to new situations and you've had a chance to do your mental 'rehearsal' it won't take you long to warm up and be sociable. If it's not a scenario you've had a chance to prepare for, take a deep breath, step out, and psychologically feel your way around until you become acclimated and more comfortable.

The shy person has lost a part of his identity and lives in loneliness, and in trying to avoid rejection and pain, has only succeeded in making a prison for himself and erecting a wall between himself and others.

Overcoming shyness is the way to happiness and acceptance, harmony and success. Good luck to you! You can do this.

If you like this ebook, you might want to check out our other ebook at <http://sexlikeapro.blogspot.com>. This ebook, titled Powerful Sex Food and stimulants, can help you re-awaken the teenage sexual beast within you. (Now would be a good time to warn your spouse or significant other.) However, the benefits you'll enjoy is not just limited to the obvious one. The foods and stimulants I list here are good for your overall health as well!

