

Dealing With Shyness

Do you feel uncomfortable with people who are not close friends?

What is Shyness?

To be shy is to be bashful, easily frightened, modest, and distrustful. Shyness is **caused by fear** of not being liked, loved, and respected. Shy people act as if they believe that their very existence depends on being accepted by other people.

Adults may prefer shyness in children, believing “silence is golden,” “children should be seen and not heard,” or valuing “obedience to authority”. However, shy behavior in adults can be troublesome. Shy people **give up control** to others. They react when they need to reflect, acquiesce when they need to make choices, and pause when they need to take action.

When choosing to do shyness, one surrenders to the **illusion of security**. But in so doing s/he breaks the human connection. Shy people give up the joy of the process of relating to others because they are **overly concerned with the outcome** of the interaction. They suffer a lot of anxiety.

*Statistics: 40% of all people report feeling shy most of the time.
80% report feeling shy occasionally.
Very few report never being shy.*

What to do about it?

Realize that shyness is more than a personal problem, it's a **societal problem**. It's a by-product of a society that places too much emphasis on competition and ties self-worth to performance.

Change your attitude - Acknowledge that some people won't like you; some people won't like anyone. If you happen upon some people who don't like you, you will “go with” the process and learn something more about yourself.

Learn and practice **relaxation exercises**. Relaxation exercises reduce your stress level and improve your concentration.

Build your **self-confidence**.

- a. Change negative thinking patterns. Do a realistic assessment of your strengths and weaknesses.
- b. Visualize a sanctuary. Let your imagination create an image of a place that feels safe and comfortable. It can be a place where you have actually been or a place you've only dreamed about.
- c. Enjoy the safety of the sanctuary and then mentally carry the sense of safety with you.

Other Sources

<http://www.shyness.com>

<http://www.shakeyourshyness.com>

To talk with a Bucks Student Planning Counselor, call 215.968.8189 or email counseling@bucks.edu to schedule an appointment. It's free and confidential.