

Spirit Level Success™ System - Six Secrets of Self-Esteem

Secret #2 SPIRIT – Week 4

S.H.I.N.E.™ - Emotions (part 1)

The **E** in **S.H.I.N.E.™** stands for **Emotions**. There is no such thing as a good or bad emotion. All your emotions are valid because they let you know something is happening, and they have meaning which it is important to pay attention to. Every emotion deserves to be felt, and expressed appropriately. Your emotions are the way in which your heart, soul and spirit let you know how things are, without the need for any words.

Emotions will always typically fall into one of four categories (and there is a massive range of variations within each category) – happiness, sadness, anger, fear. So for instance, if you feel frustrated, this would fall into the range of anger-based emotions. If you feel euphoric, this would fall into the range of happiness-based emotions and so on.

The meaning you place upon your emotions and the extent to which they impact on you is a choice that you can make at any point. So for some emotions that you enjoy experiencing, you can choose to feel them more often and more intensely. And for others, you can choose to let them go more often.

Children go through their early years being exposed to the values, beliefs, behaviours and boundaries of all the parent-figures around them. These might be actual parents, teachers, older siblings, older children at school, wider family members, in fact anyone at all whom the child will have regarded as having some kind of authority over them.

They introject aspects of those other personalities, almost like bringing a piece of each parent-figure along for the ride into adulthood. As well as all their internal reactions to their childhood experiences. And even if we assume that those parent-figures were doing the best they could with the resources they had available at the time, sometimes they may have got it wrong. Sometimes, they may have said something or behaved in a certain way that was more about expressing their tiredness or frustration, than keeping your emotional wellbeing fully at the centre of their attention.

And what I have learned over the years is that sometimes children will internalise their experiences a certain way for good reason. Other times, other factors play a part and they internalise an experience in a way that with reflection and further investigation, might not seem to make obviously logical sense and wasn't the most helpful at the time.

There are certain emotions that you can experience as an adult which behave like a shadow or a contamination from your childhood experiences, and one

of those emotions is shame. Shame is an emotion that can cripple and overwhelm you.

Can you recall any experience in your early years when you experienced a real sense of shame?

It would likely have been at a time where you felt judged by someone you cared about. For me, it involved persistent bed-wetting. And even though I can look back now with a belief that my parents were doing their best, I can still recall the pain and humiliation every time I woke up with wet sheets, knowing what the reaction was going to be.

Think back to that specific experience where you remember feeling shame. How old were you?

Did you notice any bodily reaction to being asked these questions? Did you have any internal reaction when you recalled the earlier situation? (sometimes it can feel like you've gone right back there);

Who was involved?

What were the circumstances?

What was said to you or what behaviour did you have directed towards you that led you to feel a sense of shame?

Shame is an emotion that can stop you in your tracks.

Remember that at the time, you were much younger, and you didn't have the tools, capabilities, knowledge and resources available to you that you have now as an adult. Your ability to problem-solve or rationalise will have been much less advanced compared to you now as an adult. You probably had much less bargaining power as a child than the other person did as an adult or parent-figure, so the way they acted towards you will have held a heavier weight than your reaction towards them. You wouldn't have had the personal insights at the time to know that they had no real control over you or your spirit, compared to what you have over yourself. So you probably didn't have any other coping mechanism available to you then, than to feel a sense of shame.

Right now, today, you are fully entitled to feel proud of yourself for how you managed in very difficult circumstances.

This is really, really important because with the benefit of hindsight you can see that if you had known then what you know now, you could have already let the situation go. You could have realised that you were doing your best with the resources you had available and so your shame was a misplaced emotional response, that you can now let go of. Now you are older and wiser, and you have different insights.

And the same goes for guilt, which is closely connected to shame. Does feeling 'guilty' for no apparent reason resonate with you? In what circumstances and with whom do you have a tendency to feel 'guilty'?

When did it last happen?

Guilt is a waste of energy. It doesn't serve you, and it doesn't help anyone else. Experiencing guilt is like throwing your intrinsic wealth away.

Guilt is the product of your own internal dialogue – your thoughts, what you say to yourself. No-one can make you feel anything without your permission. No matter what you did or didn't say or do – you never have to feel guilty. Instead, explore the situation with curiosity and a desire to learn how to do things differently next time. Investing your energy in taking responsibility for yourself and your thoughts, feelings, behaviours and decisions is by far the best way to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) the risk of experiencing any sense of guilt.

What kind of words did you say to yourself at the time in the example above?

What kind of words *could* you have said to yourself instead if you had demonstrated some self-compassion?

And what *could* the outcome have been for you instead of feeling shame?

Although it may not always feel like it – you always have a choice of how to respond to whatever life throws at you.

It is really important that you take time during this week to repeat the work covered so far in this Secret.

Value yourself enough and really connect with your motivation, so you can prioritise this and spend *sufficient* time on it, ensuring you make a meaningful emotional connection with each step you take.

This is your time now, and you matter.