

Preface

Words of Welcome and a Plan of Action

From Bernie Carducci:

As a shy teenager, I began reading about shyness in college in an attempt to do something about it for myself. My initial interest in shyness for purely personal reasons has turned into a professional pursuit for the past 25 years. In my pursuit to understand the nature and dynamics of shyness, one of the most fascinating aspects of shyness I found is its pervasiveness. More specifically, my research over the years in the study of shyness, along with the research of others, indicates that approximately 40 percent of the general population describes itself as shy, and about 95 percent of the overall population reports to know firsthand what it means to be shy in some situations or at some point in their lives. So chances are pretty good that either you are shy or you know individuals who are or have been shy.

Another critical aspect of shyness is the pain and difficulty it can cause you and other shy individuals in those areas of their lives that are central to a sense of happiness, such as establishing friendships and intimate relationships, pursuing educational and career opportunities, and fostering personal and family relationships over a lifetime. Through talking with teens and adults, I have become convinced that adolescence is a crucial time for learning to deal with shyness. So many adults identify adolescence as the time when they felt defeated by their shyness and developed habits that followed them as adults. As one college senior told me after a workshop, "If I could have just learned some of these skills early in high school, maybe I wouldn't still think of those years as the worst of my life."

Although shy individuals are perceived as passive and withdrawn, my research indicates that many shy teens try to take action to deal with their shyness. However, a characteristic feature of much of the action they take is that it is based on an incomplete understanding of what shyness is and how it works and, as a result, how it tends to work against the best interests of these shy teens. Performing such ineffective actions can produce less than satisfying results, which leads to a sense of frustration and hopelessness. Again, I have no doubt that you have probably tried many solutions to deal with your shyness that have left you feeling less than satisfied and a little more than frustrated, which is probably why you decided to utilize *The Shyness Workbook for Teens*.

Much of the information presented in *The Shyness Workbook for Teens* is based on my other books on the subject of shyness, including *Shyness: A Bold New Approach* (HarperCollins, 2000); *The Shyness Breakthrough* (Rodale, 2003); *The Shyness Workbook: 30 Days to Dealing Effectively with Shyness* (Research Press, 2005); and *The Pocket Guide to Making Successful Small Talk: How to Talk to Anyone Anytime Anywhere About Anything* (Pocket Guide Publishing, 1999b). Even though *The Shyness Workbook for Teens* is designed to help you and other shy teens understand and respond more successfully to your shyness, you may find it helpful to expand your knowledge of shyness gained through *The Shyness Workbook for Teens* by reading any of these other books cited here.



From Teesue Fields:

Before coming to the university to teach, I worked as a psychologist, trying to help children and adolescents feel more comfortable in their worlds. I was always drawn to those whose shyness made it hard for them to overcome other problems. I think this is because I was shy, particularly from middle school through college. I was comfortable in small groups, or when I knew people really well, or when I had a clear role to play (like ushering at a play). I could talk to people individually, but felt very uncomfortable at parties or dances, especially when I didn't know many people. My best strategy was to pick somebody who looked even more shy and uncomfortable than I did and then talk to him or her. I did not get a better understanding of myself until I was in graduate school in psychology and was trying to learn how to help other people. Although I feel I am now more "successfully shy," I still have to be aware of my shyness and find strategies to deal with it, especially in new situations.

As a university teacher, I encounter shy students in every class, and I can see the problems their shyness causes them, even though they might have good academic skills. As the mother of two sons, I am also aware of how hard it is for one to help teens deal with their shyness, even when one is around those teens every day. When counseling teens, it is obvious that shyness has a very negative effect on how comfortable teens feel in school. We know that students who do not have friends and do not participate in school activities are much more likely to drop out of school. And one of the reasons that teens fail to make friends or participate in school activities is their shyness.



From Bernie and Teesue:

The Shyness Workbook for Teens can be used by you and other shy teens to learn more about shyness and to discover ways to deal with shyness. It can also be used by school counselors, psychologists, and therapists who are working with shy teens. The information and activities in this workbook have been designed to speak specifically to shy teens in an effort to help them become “successfully shy.”

Successfully shy teens learn to control their shyness instead of letting their shyness control them. To help you and other shy teens become successfully shy, *The Shyness Workbook for Teens* contains a series of 30 separate daily units designed to provide the type of information that will make it possible for you to respond more effectively to your shyness. Each daily unit contains four elements. The first is titled “What You Need to Know” and includes some core information about a particular area of shyness. The next element—“Your Turn”—contains a variety of self-directed activities and self-scoring quizzes and inventories to help you examine your own shyness. The third element is a feature titled “Voices.” The “voices” are composites of interviews and surveys with shy teens intended to help you see that you are not alone in your struggle with shyness. Finally, these three elements lead into a “Journal” activity that asks you to think about what you have learned and apply it to your own life.

The workbook is divided into three parts. “Part I: Meet Your Shy Self” is an introduction to shyness that will help you explore and examine the nature of your own shyness. “Part II: What’s Going On? The Underlying Dynamics of Shyness” is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of shyness. “Part III: Strategies for Successfully Shy Teens” presents a number of different strategies that will help you to control your shyness instead of letting your shyness control you. The epilogue, “Living the Successfully Shy Life,” is a wrap-up that includes a plan for developing your next steps that go beyond this workbook and into your life as a “successfully shy teen.” It is important to start at the beginning so that you have a clear understanding of what your particular shyness is like and how it affects you because shyness is different for each person. By the time you have worked through all the units, you should have in mind a clear plan for becoming “successfully shy.”

As you begin your journey, please do not be shy about contacting us. We welcome your comments and look forward to

hearing from you regarding your progress. We can be reached by e-mail at shydoc@carducci.com or by sending a letter to us at the following address:

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Again, we look forward to hearing from you.

Bernie Carducci and Teesue Fields