

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Shyness is a widespread problem. Our modern lifestyle fosters shyness over interaction. We are increasingly surrounded by machines and immersed in the online, impersonal world. For anyone living under the dark spell of shyness, it's a deep issue.

Shyness originates in the psyche, and though the pharmaceutical companies would like for you to believe that you can just pop a pill and banish your timidness, true change must come from within. Perhaps you have tried these pharmaceutical 'band-aids,' or perhaps, like most who suffer from shyness, you don't even consider it fixable. It's just part of your nature, right? "*I was just created that way,*" you say.

But shyness is curable. You were not born that way. Somewhere along the way, you nurtured shyness within yourself, possibly without knowing. Perhaps others labeled you as shy and you bought into that assessment. However it came about, you do have the power to reverse your timidness and find confidence in your dealings with others.

The shyness affliction comes in many shades, but if you are the type of loner who feels awkward while interacting with new people and who avoids unknown social situations at all cost, then this book will help you - if you choose to allow it. Anxiety may be a part of your internal constitution right now, but people change. You can change too. What is more, you can design your change. You can choose how far you take the process, and progress at a pace that is comfortable for you. You don't need to become a total badass overnight.

This book is designed to help you, a shy person, develop the regular practice of meeting and talking to strangers. People who are already confident in new social situations do not need my advice; they already know the benefits of this confidence. By practicing this discipline, you too will come to know the benefits as you expand your circle of interaction and influence.

First of all, talking to strangers will impact your internal world. Our actions determine our state of mind and our attitudes. Currently, part of your definition of yourself is "I'm a shy person." Imagine how your life will change when you see an internal shift to "I'm confident while dealing with other people."

Tiny changes in your behavior, in your interactions and relationships, will fuel big change. "*Dripping water hollows out stone, not through force but through persistence.*" The same goes with changing your attitude. Grandiose actions are not required. You do not need to give a speech to the masses tomorrow; you only need consistency.

The change in you will inspire changes in others. It's unavoidable. We are all connected. Your success and example will change others. Your success will lead you to new people and influence them. The lives of people you don't even know yet will be touched. Your influence will spread like ripples on a pond. I have seen it firsthand, and you will too.

This change is enough to shake the world, and we don't have to start a political movement to drive this change. Collective change in many individuals is a powerful force, but collective change in many always springs from internal change in one. Recall John Lennon's song "Imagine."

"Imagine all the people,
sharing all the world...
You may say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only one.
I hope some day you'll join us,
and the world will live as one."

That's the influence of one individual at work. It starts from a single person and spreads through society, changing the hearts of individuals one by one. All that's needed to realize John's vision is a change in a single human and then the next and the next and the next, until "all the people" share similar values.

I don't preach any philosophy or religion. It's all about your personal impact on global society, impact that is held back only by your clinging to shyness.

The influence and interaction game is an inside-out kind of thing. You can't impose on others what or how to think. But, you can share your opinion not just with your words, but also (more importantly) through your deeds. That's how it works. People admired by society at large - Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Stephen R. Covey - to name a few - acted on that principle. They all were great influencers, people who left indelible marks on the progress of human society.

There are others who have different opinions. They prefer to manipulate, browbeat and deceive in order to influence people. They try to convince the world that their approach is quicker, easier and more effective. Many prominent politicians fall in this category.

At the core of every upheaval, there is a person who started it. Just one person. The world needs YOU, your unique voice and your interaction with other people, so you can influence your community, your country, our world.

This book is about gaining confidence by overcoming your shyness. It means building your mindset and attitudes through internal change, not by mastering tricks of manipulation. Manipulation and deceit will be unveiled in time; a change of mindset will serve you for a lifetime and have effects that ripple through our world long after you are gone.