

My Child is Not Shy

Do they ever hold back?

I cannot tell you the number of times I have heard a young mother say to me **“Sensei, Bella is not shy....once she gets to know you she is not shy at all!”**

I have to just smile and nod because this is what shyness is – that initial reaction or holding back!

We see so many shy children today. Is it more common and prevalent in today’s world? I think both pushing kids too hard too young (making them perfectionists) and “over-parenting” (helicopter parents) may be contributing factors.

Working with children with shyness is near and dear to my heart – because I was shy growing up! I did not realize until just recently how much it effected my life. But I now see that it held me back and was a self-limiting factor in almost everything I did.

Were you shy as a child? Are you still a little shy now? Besides meeting people or trying new things here is what it did to me – it caused me to live in the dreaded **“grey zone”**!

The grey zone is that place in the middle. You know it - wanting to lay low, not stick out, stay safe, not take any risks. I, like many, was trapped in a box and never really realized it. Instead of excelling I had to stay average and fit in. If you want to know the truth just replace the word “mediocre” for the word average. I was set on a track to live a mediocre life. This now drives me absolutely crazy!

Here is another amazing revelation that took me 50 years of realize – like many, others saw me as a successful high achiever. I graduated from the Naval Academy, had a successful career in the Navy and corporate world, a wonderful family yet I know, looking back, I always stopped short of my full potential. So even if you have a seemingly successful and high achieving child, is shyness keeping them in that safe “grey zone”? That grey zone of “this is good enough” and I do not want to extend any further so I stay safe. Just imagine if you could free them from that powerful invisible box.

I tell you my story only to make it real for you or hopefully help you see it in your child (or even yourself). Even high achievers are affected by shyness. And, definitely if you have a young child you could significantly change the course of their life now. So do you see the signs of shyness in your child? Meeting people, separation anxiety, shying away from hard or new things, giving up or quitting too easily or quickly, inability to speak up or raise their hand? Taking the safer easier way? Living in the GREY ZONE?!

Okay so what can you do as a parent? The way to get your child out of their box is to form a simple powerful “habit”. This is the habit of constantly confronting and conquering/powering through their fears because that is all shyness is – a form of fear. Here is the key to any fear – **every time you encounter a fear and power through it YOU get stronger but.....every time you hesitate, hold back or step back your FEAR gets stronger!**

I love this quote from Eleanor Roosevelt -

“Do one thing every day that scares you!”