



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Looking Back ...



Campbellville's five Scout-Guide groups converged in February, 1972 to participate in the Thinking Day parade which wound up Scout-Guide Week across Canada. Representing their groups were Cub Allan Marryatt, Brookville Brownie Debra Day, Guide Phyllis Freeman, Campbellville Brownie Kathy Dennis and Scout Randy Bell.

It's okay if you're a little shy

Your child doesn't cozy up to visitors. In fact, he avoids them. He doesn't like large groups and doesn't join in activities with other children.

As parents, we worry about shyness, and wonder why our child is so afraid or inhibited.

We worry that he or she may be missing out on a lot of friendships and experiences.

Shyness begins as discomfort in social situations but it can turn into something more.

It can become obsessive behaviour, if children are so afraid of interacting that they miss out on things others routinely enjoy.

Consequently, it is important to know the difference between shyness that is normal and that which causes unhappiness and could destroy self-esteem.

The major component of shyness is self-consciousness. Most shy people feel that others are evaluating them.

Moreover, they feel that they don't measure up, that they say the wrong things or are unattractive.

Shy people experience a variety of symptoms.

Physical ones include blushing, a pounding heart, shaking hands, sweating.

Behavioural symptoms that may be exhibited are avoiding eye contact, reluctance to interact, inaccurate and negative perceptions.

Perhaps the first sign that shyness is becoming a problem is if a child becomes self-conscious about it.

The child may begin to ask things like, "Why can't I think of anything to say?"

The child will likely blame himself for the shortcoming. Shy people, as their own worst critics, rate themselves lower in every sector, from intelligence to attractiveness.

Unfortunately, the shyness makes their symptoms worse and they often become more socially awkward.

So, they try and fade into the woodwork, and are then perceived as less interesting and intelligent than they really are. It turns others off.

It's no surprise that studies have found shy people to be more lonely than their more assertive counterparts. That doesn't mean they



Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

don't make friends, however. They tend to make friends more slowly and lean more on one friend.

As a result, their expectations can become unrealistic. They put too much weight on a relationship, and are devastated whenever that friend disappoints.

It's not that shy people don't want to interact with others, they just think they can't do it well. This can be a problem throughout life unless it is dealt with early.

Shy people tend to restrict their career choices to those requiring few inter-personal skills.

They don't even consider areas where they show academic strength if such careers would require a good deal of social interaction.

They're also more likely to refuse promotions, because upward moves tend to increase their responsibilities in terms of

dealing with other people.

Since shy people are very worried about the judgments of others, they will avoid putting themselves at risk of criticism.

An important series of studies at the University of British Columbia found that while strangers initially found shy people less intelligent, more timid, anxious and withdrawn, that view was erased once people became better acquainted. It is important to recognize that shyness is not a disability as long as it does not become an obsession. Research on spouses of shy people find that the spouse is attracted to the shy person's positive aspects, including modesty, sensitivity, discretion and even temper.

"It is important to recognize that shyness is not a disability as long as it does not become an obsession."

DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

I haven't got time for e-mail

Have you gotten any e-mail lately?

I get it but I don't send it. At least, I don't personally send it, but hubby sits me down at the computer and says 'write.' I ramble away, wrap it up and say, "I'm done, you can send it now."

I am really digging in my heels where e-mail is concerned — and the internet for that matter, too. I don't even know whether e-mail and the internet are separate entities, or whether you need the internet to get e-mail.

The truth is I'm afraid. I don't want to get so engrossed in screen watching that I lose touch with reality. Am I being over-anxious? Is it possible that actually learning this new technology won't enslave me? I don't want to spend hours surfing the net and communication by e-mail. I barely have enough time in the day to read, eat, sleep shop and talk to friends.

Hubby got on board the e-mail express last spring and since our eldest son has started at university, the two of them have been e-mailing one another on a regular basis.

The last time I recall hubby ever writing anything of a social nature was in 1970, when he scripted romantic letters to me and penned a few poems. And here he is today, whipping off e-mail to our son, his aunt in western Ontario, my aunt in British Columbia and my cousin in California.

Where did all this verbosity come from? I have always been the one to write letters to everyone, including his mother. All he has added are hasty one-liners scribbled at the end.



On the Homefront

with ESTHER CALDWELL

Last weekend he shamed me into e-mailing our son, whom hubby reckoned would like to hear from his mom. Well, once I got rolling, my missive ended up being three pages long. Is that an acceptable length for e-mail? Or is it too long? I don't know e-mail etiquette, although I have heard that there are a few rules.

Our son, for instance, chastised hubby once. "What's been taking you so long to answer your e-mail? Good mail practices include checking e-mail at a bare minimum once per day and answering the mail within a day or two." So there.

It is amazing to receive an e-mail from our son, when he spent time in Fredericton and Milan, he never wrote us.

Instead he phoned, an expensive alternative. Since he has embraced e-mail he has not only saved us money — we are seeing anew side of him. The kid is witty and his teenage surliness, which we suffered through at home on a daily basis, does not reveal itself.

Oh sure, he can be demanding, telling us to send him this and that. On the other hand, hand can also be amusing and revealing.

Here's one on food at his university residence: "I have to say the food today (Thursday) was much better than on Monday. Mood does influence food somewhat, but the food on Monday was crappy. I personally believe that Monday and Friday are the most important days of the week to have good food since no one really remembers the middle of the week, or, especially the weekends."

And on life beyond his studies: "I have been neglecting for the past few weeks to tell you that I have a girlfriend."



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by
Steve
Nease