

SHEN Therapy Now

Emotional Health, Recovery & Empowerment ~ Living Fully
Present in Body, Mind & Soul

Waiting In The Wings: SHEN Therapy & Our Emotional Drama

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Basic to SHEN Therapy is the fairly radical understanding that the prime mover in human experience is not the brain and its five hardwired physical senses. It is, rather, one's ever-shifting emotional states. Certainly sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch help to keep us aware of our physical and social surroundings, but what the brain does with that information and how the individual responds appears to be completely unique to that person and utterly dependent upon their prevailing emotional filters.

Even the assumed solid cornerstones of what it means to be human – our sustaining rational logic, reason and mental clarity, even the certainties of 'right' and 'wrong' are themselves all dependent on whatever emotional state is dominant.

You can easily prove this to yourself: Just think back to your own experience of being angry, really angry at someone close to you. How could they have done or said that terribly hurtful thing? And, so, as a result, you felt perfectly justified in forcefully saying and doing whatever was needed to defend yourself, reclaim your honor, and set the record straight. At the time, your responses felt so justified, so right, so absolutely rational, so completely logical.

Yet, later, upon reflection – and with a horribly uncomfortable grip of sorrow and shame – you privately asked yourself, *"How could I have possibly said that to this person I really care about? I didn't really mean to say all those terrible things! What came over me?"* Clearly, for most of us, logic, reason and rationale are about as solid as a jiggling bowl of gelatin dessert, responding in-kind to whatever emotional forces strike the bowl.



Yes, our minds are truly amazing. We have often been told that our brains are, in very fact, computers of the highest order and complexity. But, remember – a computer is hardware and can't do anything by itself. It's job is simply to

store, access and manipulate bits of information as dictated by whatever software program is active. Different programs demand, and get different information streams, and we end up with perfectly logical program-specific results.

Likewise, at all times, day and night, our brains are tasked with the incredible job of sorting through and accessing all the information necessary to logically justify and make sense of whatever emotional 'software' state is most dominant.

Our long-held emotional baggage is jam-packed with highly charged hurts, fears, shames and sadnesses which, when triggered jump to center stage, demanding our full attention. Most often we try to avoid the pain by shoving it down and stuffing it back into the baggage just below the surface... until the next time it gets triggered by someone or something once again striking our jiggling bowl of gelatinous insecurity.



The good news is that this condition of feeling trapped in an emotional recycling bin does not have to be a 'life sentence.' What if it were an option to not instinctively shove back down and stuff our painful emotions? Could it be that in some therapeutic manner we might allow difficult emotional material to completely take center stage where we can fully experience what we have so unsuccessfully been trying to avoid, and, therefore, be done with it? Can you imagine what life would be like without those weighty limitations we drag around?

Stretching the theater analogy just a bit further, SHEN Therapy is the experienced stage manager that carefully brings the painful emotion to center stage, allows the audience observer to safely, yet completely experience the rich fullness being offered, and then, as the stage manager ushers the now completed emotion out of the theater, the once difficult material begins to dissipate and disappear, never to return in quite the same way.

So, again, what would life be like if you were free from what you've kept alive and well all these years by continuously stuffing it back into the old baggage you're so afraid to let go of? We can begin answering that by asking one other simple question...

What truly is the goal of SHEN Therapy? As I see it, and have said before, it's the rich satisfaction of living each moment free from past hurts, and future fears, responding fully to what is actually happening now, and living in personal integrity without the crippling distortions of old emotional filters...

That is the singular goal of SHEN Therapy: Each of us, becoming fully available, to ourselves, and to those we love.