

## Excavation Exercise: Take a Deep-SEA Dive

*"True wisdom is like an ocean; the deeper you go the greater the treasures you'll find."*

Matshona Dhliwayo

Many of us were raised in families where the free expression of feelings was not the norm. We were taught things such as *stop crying, don't be angry, just get over it, etc.* As a result, when something triggers us, it can be difficult to uncover the true feelings associated with that event. This exercise helps you get to the heart of the matter and **excavate** the deep feelings you are experiencing to **see** clearly what it is you truly desire.

In order to excavate the deeper feelings associated with an event, I recommend taking a deep dive into the **SEA**: situation, emotion, and aspiration. The next time you are feeling stressed or emotional about something that is happening, take a minute to write about *the situation, the emotion and the aspiration* related to it.

The **SEA** format helps you to **see** some of the lost and forgotten parts of yourself, and bring them to the surface. It is designed to help you excavate the treasure buried deep in your heart. It is a self-awareness exercise that only secondarily may be used to actually repair the situation with the other. The repair with the other may or may not come at a later time, and is not the intention of this exercise. This is for YOU to find YOU! Give yourself permission to dig deep to find what your heart truly desires. Remnants of your authentic self are hidden in the rubble. Here lies the treasure!

In the **SEA** we define the **situation** in observable, repeatable and countable terms; search for the underlying **emotions**; and then think of what might have felt better instead and what your true **aspiration** is in this situation. Here is an example of the three parts of the **SEA**:

**1) Situation:** Define what happened in observable, repeatable and countable terms, such as *when you yelled at me for not taking out the garbage*. Do not write something vague and undefinable like, *when you are grumpy*.

**2) Emotion:** Search for the underlying emotions associated with the behavior, using the *Feeling Words* handout on the next page if you need it. Try to find words besides *angry*, *frustrated*, or *sad*. Although these are certainly appropriate, there are usually deeper feelings underneath, such as *attacked*, *unloved*, and *unappreciated*.

**3) Aspiration:** Think of what might have felt better instead, and what you truly desire. Write about it as such- *it would mean a lot to me if we could negotiate household chores without yelling and arguing*.

This written excavation exercise might look like something this-- ***When*** you yell at me for not taking out the garbage, ***I feel*** attacked and unloved. ***It would mean a lot to me if*** we could negotiate household chores without yelling or arguing so much.

Each time you recognize a deeper feeling and an aspiration, you discover what you have hidden away. For instance in the above example the feeling of being *attacked and unloved* may be something that had happened before that wasn't identified as such, until diving into the feeling word sheet in the **SEA**. The aspiration may have been hidden because it didn't feel obtainable. Even though it may be out of reach, it is important to allow yourself to **SEE** it.

Bringing the hidden treasure to the surface and seeing the parts of yourself you previously denied helps set the stage for transformation and change. Be patient with the process. Simply observe the gems you are excavating for now. Breathe into what it is you truly desire, knowing that it is okay to be YOU!

### Excavation Exercise: Your Deep-SEA Dive

You can make copies of this worksheet use when you want to excavate your feelings and desires, or you can write the exercise in your journal when something emotional comes up.

**Situation:** Define the situation in observable, repeatable and countable terms.

*When .....*

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**Emotions:** Search for the underlying feelings associated with the behavior. Use the **feeling words sheet** if helpful. Try to find other feeling words besides angry, frustrated and/or sad.

Even though they are certainly appropriate, there are usually deeper feelings underneath those more easily recognized ones.

*I feel.....*

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**Aspiration:** Think of what might have felt better instead of the above behavior.

*It would mean a lot to me if.....*

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## Excavation Exercise: The Deep-SEA Dive (Feeling Sheet)

Angry, sad and frustrated are easier to identify emotions. Look at this list to dig a little deeper for what might other feelings might be below the surface.

ABANDONED	ELATED	NERVOUS	SURPRISED
ABUSED	EMBARRASSED	OFFENDED	SWEET
ACCOMPLISHED	EMPTY	ORGANIZED	TALENTED
ADVENTURESOME	ENERGETIC	OUT-OF-CONTROL	TALL
ALERT	ENGAGED	OVERWHELMED	THIRSTY
ALONE	ENTHUSIASTIC	OWNED	THOUGHTFUL
ANGRY	EXCITED	PATIENT	TIRED
ANNOYED	EXCLUDED	PEACEFUL	TONGUE-TIED
ANXIOUS	FABULOUS	PENSIVE	TRUSTING
APPRECIATED	FLATTERED	PITIFUL	UGLY
ARTISTIC	FORGETFUL	PLAYFUL	UNACCEPTED
ASHAMED	FRUSTRATED	PLEASED	UNAPPRECIATED
ATHELETIC	FULFILLED	POOR	UNDERUTILIZED
AWKWARD	FULL	POSITIVE	UNGRATEFUL
BABIED	FUNNY	PRAISED	UNHAPPY
BEAUTIFUL	GASLIGHTED	PREPARED	UNLIKED
BETRAYED	HAPPY	PRESENT	UNLOVED
BORED	HELPFUL	PRESSURED	UNPREPARED
BRAVE	HELPLESS	PRETTY	USED
BROKE	HORRIFIED	PROUD	USELESS
CALM	HUMILIATED	PUSHED	
CAPTIVE	HURT	PUT-UPON	OTHERS:
CENTERED	INCLUDED	RAILROADED	
CHALLENGED	INCONVENIENCED	RELAXED	
CLUMSY	INTERESTED	RESTLESS	
CLUTTERED	INVOLVED	RICH	
COMMANDED	IRRITATED	ROMANTIC	
CONFUSED	INSIGNIFIGANT	RUSHED	
CONNECTED	INVISIBLE	SABOTAGED	
CONTENT	ISOLATED	SAD	
COURAGEOUS	KNOWLEDGABLE	SATISFIED	
CURIOUS	LAZY	SCARED	
DEPLETED	LETHARGIC	SCOLDED	
DEPRESSED	LIGHTHEADED	SHAKY	
DIRECTED	LONELY	SHOCKED	
DISCONNECTED	LOVED	SICK	
DISLIKE	MISERABLE	SILLY	
DISMISSED	MISUNDERSTOOD	SKINNY	
DISORGANIZED	MORTIFIED	SMOTHERED	
DISSATISFIED	NEEDED	SPECTACULAR	
DRAINED	NEEDY	STRESSED	
EDGY	NEGATIVE	STRONG	

