**Excavation Exercise: Take a Deep-SEA Dive (Instructions)**

*“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**: **s**ituation, **e**motion, and **a**we-inspired action. 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 awe-inspired action* 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 **awe-inspired action** 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. **Awe-Inspired Action**: 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 the awe-inspired action, 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 (Worksheet)**

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 …….* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**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…….* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Awe-Inspired Action**: Think of what might have felt better instead of the above behavior.

*It would mean a lot to me if……

**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 abused accomplished adventuresome

alert alone angry annoyed

anxious appreciated artistic ashamed

atheletic awkward babied beautiful

betrayed bored brave broke

calm captive centered challenged

clumsy cluttered commanded confused

connected content courageous curious

depleted depressed directed disconnected

dislike DISMISSED disorganized dissatisfied

drained edgy elated embarrassed

empty energetic engaged Enthusiastic

excited excluded fabulous flattered

forgetful frustrated fulfilled full

funny GASLIGHTED happy helpful helpless horrified humiliated hurt included inconvenienced interested involved irritated Insignifigant invisible isolated knowledgable lazy lethargic lightheaded

lonely loved miserable misunderstood

mortified needed needy negative

nervous offended organized out-of-control overwhelmed owned patient peaceful

pensive pitiful playful pleased

poor positive praised prepared

Present pressured pretty proud

pushed put-upon railroaded relaxed

restless rich romantic rushed

sabotaged sad satisfied scared

scolded shaky shocked sick

silly skinny smothered spectacular

stressed strong surprised sweet

talented tall thirsty thoughtful

tired tongue-tied trusting ugly

unaccepted unappreciated underutilized ungrateful

unhappy unliked unloved unprepared

used useless

Others:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Excavation Exercise: Take a Deep-SEA Dive (Other Thoughts)**

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Use this page to write more about your experience with this exercise. I suggest using this process often. Anytime you are triggered and feeling emotional, take 5-10 minutes at some point in your day to write about it using the **Deep-SEA Dive** method. If you feel you have more to say, write it here.

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