

ABSTRACT

Longitudinal studies have shown that shyness can predict important life outcomes in adulthood, such as interpersonal relations, occupational status and psychopathology (Caspi, Elder and Bem, 1988). Such findings present a gloomy prognosis for those affected by shyness, whose personal and professional aspirations are curbed by fear and shame; a reality borne out both in my own experience and that of a significant number of my clients.

The present work uses case study methodology to explore and, where appropriate, challenge perceptions surrounding shyness, with a view to promoting a holistic understanding of the issue it poses for a substantial proportion of the population; equally to afford a voice to shy people whose pervading sense of inferiority inhibits contact, resulting in characteristic reticence that is commonly misinterpreted as rudeness, detachment or unintelligence.

This quest for truth is reflected in my *Rationale*, which presents a Humanistic philosophy and approach to practice that is committed to fostering understanding, realness and acceptance. Likewise in my *Literature Review*, which aims to present an inclusive and unbiased overview of theory and research; in assessing the roles of genetics, neurobiology and relational

environment in personality development, together with shame theory, I seek to maintain an open mind whilst considering the relevance and effectiveness of the Humanistic Integrative approach to counselling and psychotherapy in helping the shy client to live a more fulfilling life. My *Case Study* illustrates both my commitment to this process and the efficacy of the Humanistic Integrative approach in facilitating such empowerment; which finding is similarly reflected in my *Conclusion*.