

**Excavation Exercise:
Finding Treasure in the Rubble**
(page one-EXPLANATION)
©Patti Ashley, Ph.D., LPC*

"In the rubble of devastation and disaster are buried hidden treasures. When you look in the ashes, look well." Deepak Chopra, *The Way of the Wizard*

Searching for the underlying feelings associated with an event can sometimes be a difficult task. Identifying feeling words besides angry, frustrated or sad may require some excavation. Many of us were not raised in families where the free expression of feelings was the norm, and additionally have been taught to hide our feelings. *Stop crying, don't be angry, etc.*

When we are in a situation that brings up intense emotions, we typically use old coping patterns that may or may not be helpful. This exercise helps you get to the heart of the matter to identify the deeper feelings you are experiencing, and further gain clarity about what it is that you truly desire.

There lies the treasure! Remnants of your **Authentic Self** hidden in the rubble.

In order to excavate the deeper feelings associated with an event or situation, I recommend a journal exercise using *I-statements* as a way to dig through the rubble. *I-statements* have been used as a basic communication tool for years. However, using them with another person when in conflict typically doesn't help solve the problem. There may be too much unidentified emotion that prevents each individual from having a rational conversation about the problem.

And people oftentimes don't use them correctly. For example: *"I feel you don't care about me"* instead of saying something like *"I feel abandoned and unloved."* Other challenges might come from the receiver. For instance, if the person listening isn't able to tolerate and hold space for the sender the process is counter-productive.

This exercise is designed for YOU. First and foremost is the excavation of the parts of yourself that you may have hidden away long ago. Secondly, this exercise might be used to repair the situation with the other, only when appropriate.

*Permission to reproduce with the agreement that you cite the source, Patti Ashley, Ph.D.

**Excavation Exercise:
Finding Treasure in the Rubble**
(page two-INSTRUCTIONS)
©Patti Ashley, Ph.D., LPC*

Here are some things to remember when journaling and searching in the rubble:

I-statements have three parts: *the behavior, the feeling and the action.*

Behavior: Define the other person's behavior in observable, repeatable and countable terms. Not something like "When you are grumpy."

When you...

Feeling: Search for the underlying feeling associated with the behavior. Use the feeling words chart if helpful. Try to find other feeling words besides angry, frustrated and/or sad. They are certainly appropriate, however there is usually more underneath the more easily recognized feelings.

I feel...

Action: Think of what might have felt better instead of the above behavior. Engage the other person in conversation to help identify the alternative options (if ready to share with your partner/other.)

It would mean a lot to me if...

Example of a clear "I" statement might be: *When you come home late from work without calling to let me know, I feel abandoned and unloved. It would mean a lot to me if you could give me an idea of when to expect you to arrive home.*

**Excavation Exercise:
Finding Treasure in the Rubble**

(page three-WORKSHEET)

©Patti Ashley, Ph.D., LPC*

Behavior: Define the other person's behavior in observable, repeatable and countable terms. Not something like "When you are grumpy."

When you.....

Feeling: Search for the underlying feeling associated with the behavior. Use the **feeling words sheet (page four)** if helpful. Try to find other feeling words besides angry, frustrated and/or sad. They are certainly appropriate; however, there is usually more underneath those more easily recognized feelings.

I feel.....

Action: Think of what might have felt better instead of the above behavior. Engage the other person in conversation to help identify the alternative options (if ready to share with your partner/other.)

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

**Excavation Exercise:
Finding Treasure in the Rubble**
(page four-**FEELING WORDS**)

©Patti Ashley, Ph.D., LPC*

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

*Permission to reproduce with the agreement that you cite the source, Patti Ashley, Ph.D.

