The Person Who Had Feelings

Once there was a very small person who had feelings. They had many feelings and got them every day. Their family liked them when they showed their feelings, so… they started wearing them on their sleeve. One day one of the parents said they did not like to see the small person’s FEAR feeling anymore. The small person tried to pull it off. The parent said they would give the small person some TOUGH to cover their FEAR. It was very hard to cover the FEAR with TOUGH so the other parent and grandparents helped. It took many days.

“Now you look wonderful” the parents said when it was done. “We’ve covered some of your feelings with TOUGH. You will grow into a good strong person.”

When the small person was a little older they found a friend. The friend also wore their feelings on their sleeve. One day the friend said “my parents want me to cover up my LONELY feelings and I will be different from now on.” And they were! The small person decided to cover their LONELY feelings too and they got ANGER from another adult. The small person put the big patches of ANGER on top of their LONELY. It was hard work trying to cover the LONELY feelings.

One day when the small person went to school some of their LONELY feelings started to show. SO… the teacher kept them later and gave them some GUILT to cover the LONELY feelings. Sometimes at night when they were alone the small person would look at their feelings. They would pull off the TOUGH and ANGER to look at their LONELY and FEAR. Then they would have to take a long time putting the TOUGH, ANGER and GUILT on again.

One night they noticed their LONELY and FEAR were growing and beginning to stick out around the patches. The small person had to go out to find some more ANGER to cover the LONELY and got all the TOUGH their parents could spare to cover their FEAR.

This small person grew bigger and was very popular. Everyone said that this person could hide their feelings well. One day the person’s parents said they had a PROUD feeling because the person had so much TOUGH. But the person could not find anywhere to put the PROUD feeling because the TOUGH was getting so big. The person had trouble finding any room on their sleeve for any other feelings. The TOUGH and the ANGER were all that showed.

Then one day they met another person and became friends. They thought that they were a lot alike because they both had only TOUGH and ANGRY feelings showing. But one day the friend told the person a secret. “I’m not really like you… my TOUGH and ANGRY are really only patches to hide my FEAR and LONELY.” The friend then pulled back the edge of their TOUGH and showed the person FEAR. Just for a second

The person sat quiet and did not speak. Then carefully they pulled back a little edge of their TOUGH and showed their FEAR. The friend saw the LONELY underneath. Then the friend gently reached out and touched the person’s FEAR and then the LONELY… The friend’s touch was like magic. A feeling of ACCEPTANCE appeared on the person’s sleeves, and the TOUGH and ANGER were smaller. Then the person knew that whenever someone gave them ACCEPTANCE they would need less TOUGH and then there would be more room to show their REAL feelings whatever they were.... HAPPY...... LONELY...... PROUD...... SAD....... LOVING.......STRONG....... GOOD....... WARM...... HURT....... FEAR.........

**Reflection**

What do you feel in response to this story?

What do you think in response to this story?

“This wonderful story was found by chance and appears to be based on one originally written by Barbara Dunlap Van Kirk in 1975. We have taken out all gender references so the story relates to all people.”

<https://www.protectivebehaviours.org/protective-behaviours-resources-training-room/stories/99-the-person-who-had-feelings>