

SHIELDS UP!

The Shields Up! Exercise will help you avoid negative energy projected by others so that you will receive only the positive information you need from them. This works well for supervisors, coaches, relatives, and even spouses!



- A. Assume a comfortable Position
 1. Close eyes (initially)
- B. Hold dominant hand up in front of you
 1. Palm out
- C. Take a deep inhalation
- D. As you exhale imagine a force field coming from your hand
 1. It encapsulates your body like a protective bubble
 2. It allows penetration of only "positive" energy, suggestions, etc.
- E. Once engaged
 1. The shield will stay up as long as necessary

Like all stress management techniques, to become competent with the Shields Up! exercise you must practice it when you don't need it. That way you'll be good at it when you do need it.

After you become competent with the Shields Up! exercise, you may engage it at any time without any preparation. You may easily change the Anchor from an outstretched palm to a simple motion of your finger or a snap of your fingers. Be creative!

The excerpt below explains how the Shield's Up! Exercise was created and how you can best use it. It is from Develop the Winner's Mentality (pp. 229-232), Reese (2005). Philadelphia: Xlibris.

**DEVELOP THE WINNER'S MENTALITY:
5 ESSENTIAL MENTAL SKILLS FOR ENDURING SUCCESS**

SHIELDS UP

I didn't build my steel curtain consciously, and you probably didn't either. For me, it simply developed over time as a means to protect myself from the distasteful side of the NFL. It was only when I began my journey into the learning of this technology presented to you in this book that I even realized I had a steel curtain. For those of you who want to learn to protect yourself from unwanted negativity or an undesirable emotion, I have invented a powerful tool that empowers you and gives you more control than a steel curtain. It's called the Shields Up! technology. I came up with the Shields Up! concept while working with a high school track star, I'll call her Penny. She had just moved to Long Island the year before I started working with her. In an effort to make friends at her new school, someone suggested she try out for track. Penny had never competed, much less run on a team; so, she did it completely on a lark. It turns out she was a phenom. In her first year, she set league, county, region and even state

records. The next year, with expectations running high, she started off like gangbusters, but then suffered a foot injury.

Penny was really going in the tank because of the injury. It wasn't bad enough to keep her from running, but it was keeping her from winning every race, and she wasn't handling losing very well. By the time she came to see me, her grades had begun to drop, and she was becoming more and more withdrawn. We worked for about four weeks, and she began to run with her old confidence and began to enjoy running again. She still wasn't winning every race, but she was handling it much better. By the spring track season, she was back to her old form, burning up the league. I tell you this part of her story so that you understand that when she came to me the next year, we already had a great rapport.

I QUIT!

The following fall, I received a phone call from Penny's mother. Penny was planning to quit track but her parents had convinced her not to quit until she talked to me. Beyond that, I had no information as to why she wanted to quit. When Penny showed up the next day, I saw that a young woman was beginning to take the place of the skinny little girl I had worked with the year before. She had grown taller and was slender as opposed to skinny, and she now had a smile that revealed no braces. I also noticed the confident way she came up the sidewalk—she had the fluid grace of a self-assured athlete. As it turns out, there was still a little girl inside. Penny wanted to quit her track team and throw away a sure scholarship to the college of her choosing because the coach "yells at my friend!" I asked her to repeat this three times, in greater detail each time so that I could comprehend exactly what the underlying problem really was. Penny said, "I'm going to quit because the coach yells at my best friend!" Oh yes, and "It's not fair! It's not fair because she yells at her, and she never yells at me!"

STAR TREK

I asked Penny if she was familiar with Star Trek and Star Wars. She said she had seen the movies. So, I asked her if she was familiar with the concept of the Starship Enterprise putting up its "shield" to protect it from enemy fire. She said she was, and I proceeded. I asked her if she would be interested in being able to put up a shield like that to protect her from the negativity of the coach, while allowing good information and positive coaching points to come through the shield. In other words, the coach could yell and scream, but it couldn't hurt her, and she would get the necessary information she needed. She reminded me that it was her friend who was getting yelled at and that she would like to do it only if she could teach it to her friend. We agreed.

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I instructed Penny to hold her hand out in front of her with her arm outstretched and fingers pointing to the sky. Once that was done, she was to say her new key phrase, "Shields up!" and imagine a field of energy emerging from her fingers and encompassing her like a big bubble. The bubble would make any negative words or emotions bounce off of it and only let in the positive information. Penny, and her friend, could not be hurt by words as long as their shields were up. We practiced the technique until she felt comfortable that she could teach it to her friend. I mentioned to her that the first several times she did it, a few negative things might get through, but suggested that each time she activated her shield it would become more powerful until nothing could penetrate it—unless she allowed it in.

SHE'S GREAT, BUT . . .

Penny's mom called me the next week to cancel the appointment because Penny had a track meet. She reported that she was doing great, loved track, and was doing better than ever. She couldn't thank me enough. She told me that Penny was now getting along much better at school and at home. Almost as an aside she mentioned, "it's the weirdest thing though, every time we have a conversation she sticks out her hand in front of her!" I stifled a laugh and asked her to have Penny call me when she came home.

BE SUBTLE

When Penny called, she was extremely excited—and it wasn't because she had just won another track meet. She gave me a blow by blow of how she taught her friend—and now everyone on the track team—the technique. She wasn't sure if the coach had quit yelling as much, but no one cared anymore. I told her about what her mother had said and asked her if she were using the Shields up! technique at home. She said an enthusiastic "YES!" and that is was great. She wasn't nearly as "torqued" at her parents as often as before. She reasoned that, like her coach, her parents really wanted the best for her, so she would keep out their negativity and let in the positive. I suggested that, since she had obviously mastered the technique, maybe she could activate it a little more subtlety. Instead of by sticking her hand out in front of her, she now just lifts her index finger a fraction and the shield is up. Shields up! is a simple yet powerful technique that I teach most of my clients. It can be used in almost any situation, especially one that you anticipate to be negative. Try it, but remember to be subtle—an outstretched hand in their face puts off most people.