

Schadenfreude

The Mystery of Shameful Joy - by Sgt. Steve

SCHADENFREUDE

(noun, German): The experience of pleasure, joy, or self-satisfaction that comes from learning of or witnessing the troubles, failures, pain, suffering, or humiliation of another.

If you work in a law enforcement agency, you have seen this. It's that giddy conversation when another LEO screws up. It's that secret feeling of happiness you experience when your mouth is saying, "That's too bad."

Why do people supposedly on the same team experience joy when other team members fail?

THE LIZARD-BRAIN LOGIC

When someone is knocked down a peg, they become less competition. The primitive logic is simply: **"If they lose, I win."** This is why haters hate. It's not so much that they are against you, but more that they are for themselves.

Just in case you are wondering, no, you are not a bad person because you occasionally feel schadenfreude. However, you are making a common error in judgment. **If they lose, then I win** is only true if you are playing checkers. Life is much more complex.

Just like a rising tide lifts all ships, a sinking tide lowers them all.

"That which is not good for the bee-hive cannot be good for the bees."

— Marcus Aurelius

The Pivot: This person is a member of your tribe. They might back you up in a fight. Under those conditions, you win if they are strong.

Finally, consider that psychologists report that individuals with lower self-esteem tend to experience schadenfreude more frequently. Confident people don't see everyone as a threat.

"All cruelty springs from weakness."

— SENECA

**Amor Fati,
Sgt. Steve**