

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

LETTER OF JANUARY 29, 2003

Dear Reader,

Beginning with this issue, we are able to bring the Letter to you online. We will continue to publish the paper version as well, for those who are not online or who prefer to receive a hard copy.

TIP FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT PRESENTLY ONLINE:

Laura Vanags, President of AWAMS, our web site host, tells me that those without Internet accounts can sign up for a free, confidential e-mail account at www.hotmail.com, at a library or university (or on any available computer). The only caveat is that you must access your account at least once a week, or it will be cancelled.

The Internet is an amazing phenomenon, and it has the potential to provide great benefits to society. It is sometimes viewed with mixed feelings, however. I have seen “computer widows,” women whose husbands have become so absorbed with the Internet that they neglect their off-line life; and many students use their laptops to entertain themselves during lectures, to their professors’ dismay.

Why do some people use the Internet excessively? We are most comfortable when we are receiving positively toned stimuli at an optimal level, and we will do what we can to maintain that situation. One feature of Internet use is that the viewer can control his or her input of stimuli. The student who is understimulated by a lecture can increase her stimulus level by surfing the web. A man who finds his life uncomfortable may turn to the Internet, where he can summon up the stimuli of his choice. In each instance, the person is turning to a *partial solution* for a discomfort, or disequilibrium.

Why might a student be understimulated by a lecture, and how might she find a *true solution* for this disequilibrium? If the fault lies with the lecturer, she could make attempts to change that, by complaining to the appropriate authority. This would also be a *partial solution* because the resolution would not be immediately forthcoming; but because it would be a more productive behavior, it would constitute a positive stimulus and diminish the disequilibrium. If she has a learning problem, she could get additional help (a *partial solution*), or drop the course (if appropriate, a *true solution*).

A man who turns to the Internet to escape the disequilibria of his off-line life will tend to use it more and more. Why? Because as he becomes accustomed to it, it loses its novelty, and the level of stimulation it provides therefore decreases. In order to maintain an optimal stimulus level, he must intensify his use of it. This is true of any *partial solution*.

Either it must be used increasingly, or additional solutions must also be employed.

Once misuse of the Internet has begun, it becomes a *habit pattern* that, as is true of all *habit patterns*, can only be changed under certain conditions. Those who develop their Inner Guide will find that all of their maladaptive *habit patterns* gradually disappear, to be replaced with *true solutions*.

But what if a person doesn't welcome a *true solution*? What if the student would rather surf the net than get tutoring or therapy? What if the "computer widow's" husband would rather remain immersed online than face the difficulties in his marriage?

QUESTION:

Reader L. M. asks, "Does the Inner Guide ever explain itself and/or does the Inner Guide take over so that it doesn't allow you to have conflicting thoughts?"

An Inner Guide knows what is best for a person, because it has access to everything the individual is aware of plus all the mental contents, memories and subliminal perceptions, that are out of awareness. As it works to integrate its knowledge with the individual's identity, the individual gradually comes to think more and more as the Inner Guide does, and to trust it more and more; but until the process is complete, the individual may continue to think and act in ways that are not optimal. For some people, the Inner Guide works silently. For others, it communicates with finger signals, automatic writing, or inner thought. When this is the case, it may indeed communicate an opinion

with which a person disagrees, as, with your example, "This isn't the right person for you to marry." You can ask the Inner Guide for its reasoning, and if you disagree, you may marry the person anyway (and be sorry later). The Inner Guide will not force itself on you. If enough integration has occurred, you will find yourself seeing the situation as your Inner Guide does. Another example: An overweight man sees a box of candy, knows he shouldn't eat it, but wants to anyway. When sufficient integration with his Inner Guide has occurred, he will find himself refraining, and not really minding that he isn't having any. Until that time, he will continue to indulge.

When an Inner Guide does give its reasoning for a decision, it is usually very interesting, because it tends to be something that you would never think of yourself!

I welcome your questions and comments, and will publish as many of them as possible. I look forward to hearing from you, either by post or at info@davis-foundation.org. If you would like to be anonymous, just let me know.

Cordially,

Judith M Davis

Volume 1 Number 3

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