

Dear Reader,

Many people experience work blocks of various kinds. One that has been given a name is “writer’s block,” but this kind of inhibition can occur in any endeavor. Just the other day, an acquaintance told me that something seemed to hold her back when she swung her golf club. She was distressed because she felt that she could play much better than, in fact, she did. The “holding back” occurred more often than not, and on every kind of stroke, from a drive to a putt. I sometimes experience something similar when I do Pilates exercises. Some days I just can’t seem to do an exercise as well as I know that I can; it feels as though something is holding me back. You may have had similar experiences. What causes these inhibitions?

Freud postulated that an inhibition is a compromise between an unconscious wish and a prohibition. If a wish represents something forbidden, it must remain unconscious, yet it nevertheless needs to be expressed in some way. It is therefore allowed partial expression, but because it is forbidden, it is blocked from full expression by the “ego,” a part of the mind that operates in the unconscious to manage incompatible elements. For example, if my acquaintance unconsciously equates excelling at golf with surpassing and defeating her mother, and if the notion of defeating her mother is generated by hostility, she can play golf (a disguised expression of the wish) as much as she wishes, but will always be hampered by her block. She can practice, read golf instruction books, attend golf clinics and hire coaches, but she will continue to pull her swing, because the idea of excelling has been linked with the forbidden wish.

There are many causes of inhibitions, because there are many wishes that feel forbidden. Certain sexual and aggressive wishes, desires for independence or autonomy that may imply abandoning someone, strivings for success that may result in the failure of others, all have the potential of becoming blocked. Much of the distress that people suffer occurs because of inhibitions.

The new theory of mental functioning that I have developed provides a different explanation of inhibitions. Because forbidden wishes are disequilibrating, the mental apparatus, which seeks to maintain an optimal stimulus level, matches them with partial solutions in order to decrease the disturbance. The pulled golf swing is a partial solution.

There is an additional, very common cause of inhibition: overstimulation. If something, even if positive, is very overstimulating, it must also remain out of awareness. This is one reason why we develop our talents and skills gradually. It would be too overstimulating to become excellent at something suddenly.

Your Inner Guide will solve whatever inhibitions you may have by matching the disequilibrations with the best possible solutions. For a golfer who is blocked because she equates success with doing in her mother, the true solution is that this is not true. She can golf to her heart’s content and her mother will be just fine. Her Inner Guide has the ability to break the inaccurate link and access the true solution. Because the true solution will be very overstimulating at first, the Inner Guide will work to make it less so. Gradually, the golfer will find herself playing better and better.

But what of my occasional blocks when doing Pilates? My inhibitions have long since been solved by my Inner Guide. Why should I have these experiences now? An Inner Guide not only solves inhibitions, it sometimes causes temporary blocks, because that is an excellent way to provide the minor disequilibrations that promote further development. These disequilibrations produce the conditions under which the Inner Guide can break old mental links and form new ones. This generates creativity.

If you experience occasional *temporary* blocks, know that your Inner Guide is the cause, and that this is a necessary inconvenience along the way to achieving maximum emotional comfort and the full development of your creativity.

QUESTION:

When I do self-hypnosis, it's really uncomfortable because I can go into the state easily enough, but then it's very hard to keep trying to keep my mind empty of thoughts. Is there some way to deal with this?

ANSWER:

You don't need to keep your mind empty of thoughts. As you focus on the spot on the wall, there will come a moment when your eyes will spontaneously want to close. Just let them close. At that moment, you have entered the self-hypnotic state. You will then resume thinking your usual thoughts. Simultaneously, out of awareness, your Inner Guide will be activated. The only difference you will feel is that your body will be more relaxed. During this state, you are free to think and feel whatever you want to. You can either let your thoughts wander, or concentrate on a specific train of thought. You may even get some work done during this time, thinking of solutions to various problems!

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,

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