

Dear Reader,

Over the past decades, various theories of child rearing have been prevalent at different times, and have ranged from the very strict to the very permissive. Each undoubtedly originated as a response to a disequilibrating stimulus; for instance, the past injunction to feed a baby at strict four-hour intervals was an attempt to prevent diarrhea, which was prevalent at that time. Currently, conflicting advice is available, and it includes not only the recommendations of various experts, but also suggestions to ignore them all. What is a parent to do?

The purpose of any approach, presumably, is to raise an individual who will be competent, of good character and, hopefully, emotionally comfortable. Some experts seem to have focused more on character, others more on happiness. Of course it would be best for an individual to achieve all of these goals. An adult can do so by developing his or her Inner Guide, but a small child is too young to do that. How can infants and young children be helped?

As we know, infants experience many discomforts, some obvious, others mystifying. We do the best we can to maintain their optimal stimulus level as we tend to their physical needs, attempt to soothe them when they are upset, and provide them with stimulation as we interact with them. We must also allow them to experience frustration, in reasonable doses, so that they will develop the capacity to delay gratification without becoming unduly disequilibrated.

The difficulties in knowing what to do for them and when (and what not to do and when) arise from interferences in our empathy due to the mental static generated by our own disequilibrations. For instance, a parent who is anxious about aspects of her own life may be too preoccupied to attend to the baby's feelings; or, on the other hand, may over-react if the baby's distress stimulates her own reservoir of anxiety. A parent who has been frustrated in his own desires may attempt to fulfill them vicariously through his child, but in so doing, will be inflicting noxious intrusions that interfere with optimal development. Some parents who have been deprived themselves, or who have difficulties with aggression, may be overly permissive. Their children will suffer from a lack of needed structure, and will have difficulties in understanding boundaries.

Children will identify with the people in their environment who offer the best solutions for disequilibrations. To the extent that parents are hampered by non-optimal solutions to their own problems, they will, of course, not be able to offer the best example. For instance, the parent who wants his child to live out his own ambitions is also failing to set an example of a person who is happily fulfilling his own desires. A parent who is free of maladaptive solutions to problems will set an ideal example for his child.

(Why do children of the same parents turn out so differently? It is partly a matter of genetics: children who are more sensitive will need different solutions than those who are less so. But more importantly, each child has a different milieu, such as his place in the sibling order, and different experiences to respond to.)

Those who have developed their Inner Guides will be able to live their lives most comfortably, and provide the best example for their children. Also, having minimized the mental static that comes from unresolved problems, they will be exquisitely attuned to their children's needs for gratification, frustration, and protection from excess over- and understimulation. They will also feel the greatest delight in their children's personalities and development!

If you have begun self-hypnosis but have not yet converted all of your maladaptive responses to healthy ones, and have not yet achieved all of the comfort that you ultimately will, you can turn to your Inner Guide for the best advice on how to respond to your children. Your Inner Guide is fully attuned to their needs, and will know how you may best handle the various problems that arise. For those of you whose Inner Guides have chosen to work silently for the time being, you may find yourself feeling a strong impetus to respond to your child in a certain way. That impetus may be a manifestation of the Inner Guide.

QUESTION:

When I communicate with my Inner Guide by inner thought, how can I tell whether what I hear is what she's saying, or just my own thought telling me what I want to hear?

ANSWER:

Sometimes the inner thought is very obviously the Inner Guide's because it is something that you would never have thought of yourself. It will surprise you. However, there are times when you may be unsure. At times, when your Inner Guide knows that you are uncertain, she may think her thought very forcefully. If she doesn't, you can ask her, using finger signals, whether the thought was hers. Her response through finger signals is more definitive, because it involves a sensation: the feeling of having your finger move spontaneously.

Reminder: If your Inner Guide wishes to, she can engage in communication with you by means of finger signals. To establish their meanings, you can ask her to indicate which finger signifies "yes," which signifies "no," and which signifies "I don't know" or "I don't want to say right now."

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 10

©2003 The Davis Foundation for Providing Emotional Comfort. All rights reserved.

30 North Michigan Avenue • Suite 1125 • Chicago IL 60602 • Tel: (312) 230-0114 • (312) 230-0168
www.davis-foundation.org • info@davis-foundation.org