

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of April 7, 2004

Dear Reader,

I am often asked, “What is the difference between self-hypnosis and meditation?” They are actually the same phenomenon, although the specific type of self-hypnosis that I advocate involves a crucial difference.

When one wishes for something, wishing alone usually doesn’t make it happen. But if one wishes for something to develop in the mind, it does come into existence. How can this be?

The mind contains a *scanning function* that surveys the environment for stimuli, which cause disequilibrations. One can imagine it operating like a radar screen. A *matching function* matches each stimulus to the solution that will best end the disturbance. If a *true solution* is available, the disequilibrium ends. If not, a *partial solution* is accessed that will diminish the disequilibrium. If no true or partial solutions are available, the matching function will choose a *false solution*. This does not end or diminish the disturbance, but creates a second mental pathway alongside the first: a double pathway. In one arm, the disturbance continues unabated out of awareness while the false solution in the other arm occupies our awareness.

An example: A man feels pain in his chest and is afraid that he is having a heart attack. When he remembers that he overexerted earlier in the day and realizes that he has strained a muscle, he relaxes. That knowledge provides a true solution for his fear. If there is no such explanation, he goes to the Emergency Room. The knowledge that he will soon be seen by a doctor constitutes a partial solution. He is still afraid, but less so because he knows that help is near. If, in the Emergency Room, he suffers a cardiac arrest and is resuscitated, he may have a “near death” experience during which he seems to be looking down from above at someone else having a cardiac arrest. This is a false solution, a hallucination, which is occurring in one arm of the double pathway. In the other arm, out of awareness, he is feeling great fear. While the false solution protects him from awareness of this extreme disequilibrium, it certainly does not solve the problem that is causing the fear. He is, indeed, undergoing cardiac arrest and wishing otherwise will not change that.

If one wishes for something within the mind, the situation is different. When you wished for an Inner Guide there was no true solution because you were wishing that something that was not part of your identity, something “not you,” would be present within you. There was also no partial solution because the wish was for something all-or-none. Therefore, a false solution occurred: a new mental pathway originated in which your sense of identity was denied. Your Inner Guide was born as a false solution. But because this pathway was now present in your mind, it ended the disequilibrium caused by not having it. It became a true solution.



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People do self-hypnosis for many reasons: some want to rid themselves of unhealthy habits, others want to prevent discomfort during painful procedures, many want to access a feeling of calm or peace. Their minds access false solutions and create entities that will provide what is wished for. Although the wish leading to the creation may occur at any time, self-hypnosis is necessary in order for the creation to become dominant and exert its effects.

Entering a self-hypnotic state is accomplished by diminishing as much as possible all stimuli except one: the wish to strengthen whatever internal entity one has wished for. Tuning out other stimuli can be accomplished by focusing on one thing, such as a spot on the wall, until it, too, loses its stimulatory capacity.

Similarly, entering a meditative state is typically achieved by focusing on one's breathing. This diminishes other stimuli just as focusing on a spot on the wall does, and allows the wished for experience to be provided by a mental pathway that has come into existence for this purpose. Those who meditate may wish for peace, relaxation, advice, changes in their attitudes, and many other things. If they succeed in entering a meditative (self-hypnotic) state, they often get what they wish for during that experience.

When one wishes for an Inner Guide, that is, an entity composed of three things: the pathway of all past experiences of restored comfort, the wish to help, and a sense of its own identity, one gets a new friend who will work continuously to resolve problems, end all chronic discomforts, and handle new disequilibrations expeditiously. It needs only that we do self-hypnosis regularly so that its results can enter our awareness.

QUESTION:

Does my Inner Guide's wisdom include knowledge beyond what is in my own mind?

ANSWER:

No. Your Inner Guide derives all its knowledge from your memory. It is not a spiritual entity.

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