

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of June 30, 2004

Dear Reader,

What is comfort? It is the state in which we experience an *optimum stimulus level*. We are neither over- nor understimulated, and the stimuli that we experience are positively toned. How can we achieve this state?

From birth onward, we are bombarded with stimuli to which our minds must respond. Each time we experience a novel stimulus, our minds respond with the best possible solution at that moment, and that solution becomes locked in. From then on, each time we receive that stimulus, the locked-in response occurs. If a new and better solution becomes available, we can't take advantage of it unless it occurs under certain specific conditions. Locked-in solutions that are not ideal create ongoing discomfort.

Early in life the responses that are available are often quite limited. A child is dependent on his caretakers to meet his needs and to teach him about life. Whatever imperfections his caretakers have will influence his experience negatively. As nobody is perfect, it is inevitable that children will sometimes be misunderstood and treated in ways that are not helpful. And their caretakers may unwittingly use them to meet their own needs.

The mother of a young girl was very controlling. She was not aware that this was so. This habit pattern was a response to negative stimuli that she experienced early in her own life. As a mother, her tendency to control interfered with her daughter's attempts to achieve autonomy. The girl was too young to understand that she was being harmed, and as a child she needed her mother's approval. She responded to the noxious intrusions by complying: a *partial solution*. It decreased but did not end the disequilibrium. To further cope with the chronic distress she became physically and mentally very active, a distraction that served as another partial solution. These solutions were chosen out of awareness.

As an adult, she came to realize that her mother had been very controlling, and she was able to replace compliance with a new partial solution: rebellion. Instead of having to do everything just so, she now felt that it didn't matter how she did things: any way was O.K. This response, too, was chosen out of awareness and she didn't realize its purpose or even that she was rebelling. Its lessened her discomfort more than compliance had, but it did not end it because it was still a response to the expectation that she should do things just so.

Although she realizes intellectually that she need no longer be affected by her mother's commands, locked-in habit patterns cannot change through awareness alone. A *complex stimulus* must occur in order to unlock a stimulus-response pattern and allow a new solution to be locked in. A complex stimulus provides two contradictory



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messages simultaneously, allowing a pause to occur so that the switch can be made. This happens out of awareness. Once this change has been made, it must be repeated until the novelty wanes sufficiently for it to enter awareness.

The *true solution* for her disequilibrium is the knowledge that it is no longer necessary to respond to her mother's commands at all, either with compliance or rebellion. She can free herself of this expectation, which was originally her mother's but then became internalized. It can now be possible for her to respond to situations freely. In order for her to have switched from compliance to rebellion, a complex stimulus occurred at that time and was repeated frequently enough to allow that change to take place. What is needed now is for another complex stimulus to occur and be repeated so that the partial solution of rebellion can be replaced with the true solution. This would fully solve one source of discomfort.

Other sources undoubtedly exist and can be solved in the same way. If all such sources of disequilibrium were solved, she would no longer need to be continuously active mentally and physically because that distraction would no longer be necessary. She could freely choose when to be active and when to be in repose. And out of awareness, the mental apparatus would regulate her activity and rest such that she would maintain an optimal stimulus level. She would be comfortable.

Complex stimuli can occur spontaneously, as happened with this woman who was able to switch from compliance to rebellion. An Inner Guide causes complex stimuli to occur systematically so that all disequilibrium may be matched with true solutions. It is in this way that an Inner Guide enables one to become fully emotionally comfortable.

QUESTION:

Can my Inner Guide cause me to feel worse?

ANSWER:

Occasionally someone may experience painful feelings while her Inner Guide is working to resolve her problems. If such feelings occur, they are temporary. An Inner Guide is aware of the discomfort that is caused, and will titrate its work so that these feelings are not overwhelming. Do remember that your Inner Guide's mission is to solve all problems and end discomfort.

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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