

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of July 14, 2004

Dear Reader,

A new participant in the project, who learned self-hypnosis one month ago, has written that her Inner Guide has made her more aware of her tendency to be self-critical. She has realized that she hears her critical father's voice in her mind whenever she makes a mistake, no matter how trivial. This has dampened the pleasure that she would otherwise have felt in her life. Why does such a habit pattern form?

She describes experiencing her father's criticism from as far back as she can remember. When a young child is criticized by a parent, there are various ways that she may respond. She may feel anxious or depressed, she may fight the criticism by rebelling, or she may identify with the criticism and become self-critical. The mind responds to a disequilibrating stimulus by matching it with the best available solution, the solution that will most diminish the disturbance. For this young girl, agreeing with her father's criticism most effectively blunted the pain of his attacks and identification with her aggressor became a habit pattern. An identification is formed when the mental apparatus combines two pathways: a perception of a characteristic of another with a sense of its own identity.

Her self-criticism was a *partial solution*. It diminished the disturbance but didn't end it. A *true solution* would have occurred for the little girl only if her father had stopped criticizing her. Once she reached adulthood and attained independence a new true solution became available: the knowledge that he was wrong to be so critical and that he did this because of problems of his own. But she was unable to use this new solution because the old one was locked in.

Whenever the mind matches a disturbance with a solution, whether true, partial, or false, that solution becomes locked-in. A partial or false solution can be replaced with a better one only under certain conditions. A complex stimulus must occur in conjunction with the stimulus and its locked-in response and it must occur repeatedly until the novelty of the new solution wanes sufficiently so that it can enter awareness. These conditions occasionally occur spontaneously, but can be produced systematically by an Inner Guide.

The self-critical woman has reported that she experienced a distressing intensification of the self-criticism after beginning self-hypnosis but she understands that her Inner Guide has caused this in order to bring this habit pattern and its origins to her attention. She knows that this is the first step on the way to becoming free of this uncomfortable habit pattern. We thank her for sharing her experience with us.

The Davis Foundation has begun a second project. I have met with an eating disorders group and have taught them about the Inner Guide and self-hypnosis.



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When asked how they thought they could help themselves as a group to persist in doing self-hypnosis long enough to achieve results, they came up with a great idea. They are establishing a website for themselves that they will use to record and monitor their practice of self-hypnosis and give each other online encouragement as needed. With this project we will learn how self-hypnosis can help with eating disorders and how the group structure can assist participants in maintaining their practice of self-hypnosis.

QUESTION:

Can two people's Inner Guides communicate with each other?

ANSWER:

Yes, they can and do. When an Inner Guide has been sufficiently developed, it can cause a person to say or do something that the person wouldn't have thought to say or do himself. This action may have significance for and be understood by another person's Inner Guide. For example a young woman had developed a habit pattern of overworking, so much so that she frequently became ill. Her mother worried about her daughter, but her suggestions to work less hard went nowhere because the habit pattern was locked in. And the daughter didn't feel that she was overworking. She thought that this was the way life is. Both women began self-hypnosis. By and by, during a visit to her mother's house, the young woman's Inner Guide caused her to set the table for dinner very slowly. Her mother noticed this and thought it unusual but took no further note of it. The night after her daughter left, her mother found herself staring at her place setting. She understood that this had some significance, and she asked her Inner Guide what it was. Her Inner Guide explained to her, by inner thought, that her daughter's Inner Guide was well aware that she was overextending herself and that this habit pattern would soon be changed. The mother felt greatly relieved, and grateful toward her daughter's Inner Guide for letting her know.

QUESTION:

Does an Inner Guide work with dreams?

ANSWER:

Dreams are nocturnal flashbacks. They occur in response to complex stimuli that have not been dealt with during the day. An Inner Guide can't create a dream, but a dream may result from a complex stimulus that an Inner Guide has provided during the day for the purpose of changing a maladaptive habit pattern.

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

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