

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of August 11, 2004

Dear Reader,

One source of discomfort is hypersensitivity. Why are some people exquisitely sensitive to criticisms or insults while others are not so negatively impacted?

If a young child is subject to a criticism that is too painful to bear, the mental apparatus matches it with a *false solution*. In one arm of the double pathway the child experiences either amnesia of the episode or denial of its significance. In the other arm, the pain continues full force as long as the unbearable stimulus continues. Subsequently, that pathway will be re-stimulated each time a related stimulus occurs.

A little girl who adored her father overheard him say, on the birth of a male sibling, "At last, what I really wanted, a boy!" She was devastated. She felt that she had been judged defective and unacceptable because of her sex. This knowledge was unbearable, and her mind matched the stimulus with a false solution: amnesia for the event. From that time forward, each time she was criticized or corrected, the associatively related pain of her father's overwhelming criticism was re-evoked, and it augmented her discomfort. She tried her best to be "perfect" in order to avoid criticism. Both the fear of potential criticism and the efforts that she took to forestall it elevated her baseline level of stress but, because she had become accustomed to it, she experienced it as a given. She began self-hypnosis and her Inner Guide made the early event known to her. She was then able to integrate it with her current experience and her hypersensitivity to criticism waned.

Another manifestation of sensitivity is the excessive irritation one may feel when certain minor events occur: the "pet peeve." A man was greatly annoyed each time a driver behind him would immediately honk at him when the light turned green, or a driver in front of him would fail to signal when making a left turn. These minor irritations caused an exaggerated response because they were associatively related to a reservoir of rage that had been created when he was young. He had had his mother all to himself while his father was away in military service. When his father returned and his parents resumed the close relationship from which he was excluded, his anger was unbearable. His mind matched this stimulus with a false solution: denial of its impact on him. In one arm of the double pathway he welcomed his father back while in the other arm, out of awareness, the rage continued.

Why do some minor annoyances become pet peeves whereas others do not? Those that do are associatively related to the past trauma. The driver who honked was reminiscent of the father whose return commanded, "Get out of my way," and the thoughtlessness of the driver who didn't signal was related to his father's inconsideration of his feelings. An Inner Guide can cause the resolution of these



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problems as well. It determines the origins, accesses true solutions, and brings them into awareness.

In each of the situations described above, the sensitivity results from evocation of a split-off emotion. The woman's split-off hurt was profound and it distorted her subsequent experience. The man's sequestered anger caused a heightened irritability in various situations.

There is another type of sensitivity with a different origin that appears to be genetic. Some infants are highly excitable while others are placid, and these characteristics persist as they develop. The excitable infants become highly sensitive in later years whereas the placid ones remain mellow. Those who are sensitive usually don't realize that they are different than others, and others tend not to understand either. They view sensitive people as "overreacting." An Inner Guide can help these people, too. Because of their sensitivity they tend to experience more events as overwhelming and therefore they generate more false solutions. They develop more pathways that, out of awareness, form reservoirs of intense feeling that are evoked by contemporaneous stimuli. An Inner Guide can integrate these split-off pathways, ending the exaggerated painful responses to current stimuli. It can also lead these individuals to fashion the most comfortable environments for themselves, environments in which unnecessary stimuli are diminished or eliminated.

QUESTION:

I got busy and stopped doing self-hypnosis. I am beginning again, but will I be starting from scratch because of having stopped?

ANSWER:

No. The work that your Inner Guide has already done will not be lost. When you are busier than usual or when some unexpected event disrupts your routine it is understandable that your practice of self-hypnosis may be temporarily interrupted. It is important to resume when things settle down because your Inner Guide needs time in self-hypnosis to solve 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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