

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of October 6, 2004

Dear Reader,

A project participant has asked whether it would be possible to form a support group for participants, either in person or by e-mail. She has experienced some positive changes but wishes that things would go faster and she hopes that communicating with others might help.

As you are all aware, change takes time. Once an Inner Guide has been brought into existence, it searches the memory bank for the origins of discomforts and for solutions to them. This action occurs almost instantaneously. Next it must create complex stimuli in order to unlock maladaptive *partial* and *false solutions* to problems and replace them with *true solutions*. The final step, bringing the new solutions into awareness, is what takes the most time. How does this occur?

New information is overstimulating, sometimes so much so that the resulting disequilibrium is overwhelming. The mental apparatus responds by matching it with a false solution: unawareness. Our minds are thus protected from knowledge of something that would overpower our ability to function. But a false solution doesn't diminish the disequilibrium, which persists out of awareness, and when possible it is always preferable for the false solution to be replaced with a partial or true solution. This can occur if the new information loses its novelty through adequate repetition.

We can see this happen in certain situations. A recent winner of a MacArthur "genius" grant initially thought the news was a joke and didn't tell anyone for several hours. His mental apparatus matched the new information with a false solution: "it isn't true." This temporary denial shielded him from the full impact until repetition of the knowledge, out of awareness, diminished its novelty.

The more momentous the change implied by new information, the more overwhelming it is. Replacing a longstanding maladaptive habit pattern with a healthy one will change not only that particular behavior but, because it is associatively connected to other unfortunate habit patterns, will influence them as well.

An overweight woman wishes to diet in order to become healthier and more attractive. In the past she has tried various diets but has always relapsed and regained the lost weight. Dieting had been chosen as the response to the stimulus of her thoughts about her health and appearance. But each time another concern had become more disequilibrating, she had responded to that stimulus with her locked-in habit pattern of overeating in response to stress. If she becomes able to eat healthily and to lose weight gradually but permanently, associatively related behaviors will be affected. She will begin to exercise and to schedule previously put off medical appointments. She will review her wardrobe and buy new clothes to fit her smaller figure. The desire to look



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her best will stimulate her to make her home look its best, too. The desire for neatness will be transferred to her office as well. And she will wish for the quality of her work to match her appearance. Most importantly, the attractiveness she has achieved will be transferred to her personality. She will become a beautiful person.

How often does this happen? The contrast between her present circumstances and the new situation is so immense that it would require a tremendous amount of repetition of the new solution in order to decrease its novelty sufficiently for it to enter awareness. Repetition will occur in response to new stimuli: thoughts about her weight, feelings about it, articles she reads about weight, comments she hears. Each of these stimuli causes a reverberation that prolongs its efficacy. The stronger the stimulus, the longer its reverberation. External stimuli are more powerful because they are augmented by the element of sensation. Although these stimuli occur repeatedly each day, their quantity is usually insufficient to bring the new solution to awareness so that it can be acted on.

An Inner Guide works constantly during waking hours to repeat the new solution but its efficacy is enhanced when one is in the self-hypnotic state. During this time it is dominant and feels real. The element of sensation, its feeling of its own reality, lengthens the perseveration of its repetitions, thus greatly augmenting its efficacy.

Even with the advantage of an Inner Guide your progress can be accelerated if you participate in a support group because interaction with others will provide greater reverberation than you can create by yourself. Anyone who would like to participate in a support group can e-mail me and I will send all the e-mail addresses to each respondent.

QUESTION:

How do I address the impatience I feel with the lack of communication from my Inner Guide?

ANSWER:

You have experienced positive changes but your Inner Guide is doing his work silently because he has determined that he can work more efficiently that way for a while. Perhaps joining the support group will help. There are others whose Inner Guides are working silently. Members of a group, by supplying additional stimulation to each other, will augment the work of their Inner Guides.

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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