

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of October 20, 2004

Dear Reader,

Election time is near, and both Democrats and Republicans are working hard to get people registered and to the polls. Democrats have paid workers who get 50% of a fee for registering a person and the other 50% only if that person shows up at the polls and actually votes. On ABC's "This Week," George Will lamented the necessity for this kind of activity, saying that people ought to take it upon themselves to register and vote in order to meet their responsibilities as citizens. Why is it that many people don't?

A person responds to whatever stimulus is most disequilibrating at any given moment. Some have great difficulty making ends meet. They may work at two or even three jobs and are chronically exhausted. Their needs for sleep, meals, and respite activities, not to mention the material needs of their families, are more urgent than thoughts of voting for economic policies that they think might ease their distress. If a political worker approaches them with registration papers in hand, this stimulus is much stronger than thoughts of possibly voting because it provides sensation: the physical reality of the political worker. It can constitute the strongest stimulus at that particular moment and evoke the response of completing the offered paperwork. When Election Day arrives, this person may again need the powerful stimulus of the physical presence of the political worker to override the competing stimuli.

Many people are not this financially and physically overburdened yet they, too, neglect to register and vote. Their overriding stimuli come from within. As individuals develop, they experience many stimuli for which there is not an immediate *true solution*. These stimuli are matched with *partial or false solutions*. Because these immediate solutions become locked in, they persist even when better solutions become available. And as they lose their novelty, they must intensify or become elaborated in order to maintain their efficacy in diminishing the disequilibrium.

A girl who was made to feel inferior to her gifted brother during childhood strove to equal his accomplishments by working very hard. This was a partial solution. It diminished her distress because it seemed that she was addressing the problem but it didn't solve the disequilibrium because she couldn't keep up with him. Even if she could have, the pain of not being recognized for her own unique qualities would have continued to cause distress. As she matured, a true solution became available: the knowledge that she was valuable because of her own attributes. But this solution could not be matched with the disequilibrium because the previous solution of working so hard was locked in. And as its novelty diminished, she worked ever harder. She was not able to think about voting because she couldn't take time away from her work.

A man who had been deprived of love and attention by his chronically depressed mother became chronically depressed, himself, as a partial solution to his pain.



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Depression is a partial solution. Even though it is an uncomfortable feeling, it discharges some of the distress caused by a disequilibrium. The true solution, that as an adult he no longer needed a mothering figure but could love and take care of himself, could not be matched with his distress because depression had been locked in. Although he managed to perform adequately at work, he spent his evenings watching TV. He felt too depleted to vote.

A boy who was used as a scapegoat by his parents and considered by them to be a “black sheep” developed a partial solution of rebelling against authority. Over time, as its novelty waned, this solution became increasingly elaborated and the young man, though overtly compliant, subtly rebelled against all types of authority. He could not vote because he felt that the expectation to do so emanated from authority: parents, school, and society.

A woman who had been coddled by her family as a child was unable to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for adult self-sufficiency. She moved from dependence on her parents to dependence on her spouse. Though she appeared to lead an easy and enjoyable life, out of awareness she was disequibrated by the knowledge that she was unskilled, ill informed, and helpless. Her mental apparatus matched this fear with a false solution: denial. A double pathway was formed. Out of awareness, the pathway of fear continued but within awareness she assumed that she was comfortable. She didn’t realize that her needs to smoke and drink were responses to the underlying fear. And she was, of course, totally unaware of her denial of the relevance to her of any issue of importance. She couldn’t be bothered to vote.

All of these people are unfortunate because their chronic disequilibriations result in partial or false solutions that, because they are locked in, do not easily yield to the true solutions that become available. An Inner Guide, by creating the complex stimuli that allow old habit patterns to be replaced by better ones, can solve these disequilibriations. The emotional comfort that ensues allows individuals to realize their full potential and to enjoy exercising their responsibilities.

QUESTION:

How does my spirituality fit with the Inner Guide program?

ANSWER:

Your Inner Guide is simply one of the many mental pathways in your mind. It is not connected with your spiritual life. However, if you would like to think of them as connected, that is fine. It won’t interfere with your Inner Guide’s activity.

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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