

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of August 24, 2005

Dear Reader,

In addition to ending discomforts and solving problems, our Inner Guides enable us to become more creative. How does this happen?

Every stimulus causes a disequilibrium, or disturbance, in the mind that the mental apparatus deals with by matching it with the best available solution. A *true solution* is one that completely ends the disturbance. When no true solution is available the mind chooses a *partial solution*: one that will decrease the disturbance though it can't completely end it. Once a solution has been matched with a stimulus it becomes locked in and is automatically matched with that stimulus each time it recurs, causing a habit pattern to form.

Many habits are useful because they underlie our skills. Life would be impossibly effortful if we hadn't developed habits of eating, dressing, walking, reading, and writing. These habit patterns have developed from true solutions. But the habits that develop from partial solutions, while adaptive when they originate, can create difficulty later on. A child who responds to feelings of loneliness by eating will become overweight. One who has been betrayed may subsequently mistrust even those who could be helpful. A young person who responds to parental pressure by rebelling may generalize this habit pattern and respond to all requirements and expectations with rebellion, often subtly expressed.

Because a partial solution doesn't fully end a disequilibrium, the disturbance, though lessened, continues. The loneliness, the pain of betrayal, and the discomfort of being pressured have not been completely eliminated. They contribute to the person's ongoing tension level. Some negative stimuli become internalized, creating an additional source of discomfort. The person who feels parental pressure may begin to pressure himself, creating a further source of disequilibrium.

These problems hamper creativity in two ways. First, the unresolved disequilibriations cause "mental static" that clouds the thinking process. The mental apparatus registers all stimuli and matches them with the best available solutions. But the stimulus that is most disequilibrating at any given moment is the one that enters awareness. As the unresolved problems from the past continue to create distress, they, with their partial solutions and with the intensifications and elaborations of those partial solutions, monopolize awareness. The lonely woman continues to feel lonely. She thinks about food and she also feels distress that she is overweight. The man who was betrayed maintains vigilance regarding others. Can he trust them? The person who expects pressure from others, and who has internalized that pressure, is focused on dealing with it. These unresolved problems, filling awareness, diminish the opportunity for new ideas to do so.



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Unresolved problems also impede creativity by interfering with a person's capacity to seek new experience. Because every partial solution loses its efficacy with repetition, it must be elaborated and/or intensified to maintain its usefulness. This narrows a person's experience. The woman who is overweight focuses on one weight loss program after another. The man who is vigilant becomes watchful in more and more situations. The person who has internalized pressure becomes driven. These people are less open to new experience than those who have resolved their problems.

New experiences foster creativity because they provide *complex stimuli*. A complex stimulus is one that signifies two contradictory meanings simultaneously, causing a pause between stimulus and response that allows a new response to be matched. Whenever you are confronted with something new, there is a moment during which you think of the previous stimulus as well as the new one, because the previous experience is anticipated. If, while walking, you come upon sidewalk repairs that force you to alter your usual route, there is a moment during which your mind perceives both the usual path and the new one. This occurs very rapidly out of awareness but creates a brief pause before you take the detour. The sidewalk repairs constitute a complex stimulus.

Creativity occurs when the mental apparatus, as it searches for the best response to a stimulus, matches a previously unrelated idea. But it can only do so in the presence of a complex stimulus. The more often you encounter complex stimuli, the more readily you will match your problems with creative solutions. As you continue practicing self-hypnosis your Inner Guide will solve your chronic disturbances and you will be increasingly interested in seeking the new.

There are many sources of new experience. One that I can recommend is "The Futurist" (information at www.wfs.org), a magazine that presents new ideas for ways of living in and solving the problems of the future. Do you find this interesting? If not, your chronic disequilibrations are hampering you. But with the help of your Inner Guide they will be resolved and you will become increasingly interested in the new. And as you do, your creativity will flower.

QUESTION:

In self-hypnosis as it is typically practiced, after entering the self-hypnotic state a person can then "deepen" the state by imagining going down an elevator or stairs. Won't it help to do this as we practice self-hypnosis for the purpose of facilitating our Inner Guides' work?

ANSWER:

No, it is not necessary. The moment you enter the self-hypnotic state your Inner Guide becomes dominant and can do its work no matter what you choose to think about or experience.

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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