

THE  
DAVIS FOUNDATION  
FOR PROVIDING  
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of November 2, 2005

Dear Reader,

Some of you have established a solid routine for doing self-hypnosis. Even if the time varies from day to day, and occasional lapses occur, you do continue with your practice. Others have difficulty. Some never establish a routine while others do but stop after a few weeks or months. Some stop before getting any positive results, discouraged by a lack of evidence of their Inner Guides' activity. And some fall away from the practice even though they are happy to have experienced significant gains.

It is a law of nature that unrewarded activity becomes extinguished. It is understandable that a person who perceives no results after a few weeks or even several months may stop. But why do people who have achieved results sometimes stop?

Every stimulus causes a disequilibrium that is registered by the mental apparatus, which matches it with the best possible solution. If a *true solution* is available, one that ends the disturbance completely, it will be chosen. If there is no true solution at that time, a *partial solution*, one that partially lessens the disturbance, will be chosen.

If there are no true or partial solutions, the mental apparatus will create a double pathway: in one arm, the disturbance will continue at full strength, while in the other, a *false solution* will be experienced. This mental split is known as dissociation. A false solution may be simply an unawareness of the disturbance or it may take the form of a delusion or hallucination. It may also be chosen when a perception is so overstimulating that partial solutions are insufficient to diminish it to a bearable level.

False solutions are employed in many instances of early childhood trauma. When a child is being sexually abused there is no true solution. There is no escape, the abuse is occurring. Partial solutions, such as thinking that the act will soon be over, are not sufficient to decrease the disturbance to a bearable level. The false solution of unawareness is chosen. Sometimes a hallucination is matched, as well. I know a person who "saw" a beautiful flower during each experience of abuse.

False solutions are adaptive at the moment. But the terror and pain that are felt in the other pathway form a reservoir that causes difficulties from that time forward, as stimuli that are associatively related to the trauma evoke exaggerated responses of pain and fear from the reservoir.

After a danger has passed, the false solution continues (amnesia, or perhaps a memory of a flower) because it has been locked in, as all solutions are. But the original trauma may surface under certain conditions. First, a spontaneously occurring *complex stimulus* can allow the false solution to be unlocked and replaced with a true solution (the danger is past). Second, the distress of remembering the trauma may become less disequilibrating than its deleterious after-effects. The initial remembering of a



The Davis Foundation for  
Providing Emotional Comfort  
30 North Michigan Avenue  
Suite 1125  
Chicago, IL 60602

Tel: (312) 230-0114  
Fax: (312) 230-0168  
[www.davis-foundation.org](http://www.davis-foundation.org)  
[info@davis-foundation.org](mailto:info@davis-foundation.org)

trauma occurs as a flashback, during which the individual is actually re-living, rather than just remembering, the trauma. It is very distressing. But because flashbacks usually occur bit by bit, rather than in their entirety, they are often tolerable.

The girl who remembered only the image of a flower may, as a woman, begin to experience flashbacks. Although disturbing, they have become less so than the ongoing distress of generalized anxiety coming from the reservoir of pain and fear.

But thoughts and feelings that are overwhelmingly positive are also handled by the mental apparatus with false solutions. Wonderful news is often met with initial denial, "I can't believe it!" And many of those who begin self-hypnosis are not aware of the full extent of the benefits it can provide. They are so overstimulated by the immensity of the positive changes that will occur that they can't think about it. The mental apparatus matches the overstimulation with the false solutions of unawareness or denial. Thus, some who have achieved certain gains and are happy with them may think that they have reached an end-point. Their practice of self-hypnosis may decrease and perhaps end altogether.

But the benefits of doing self-hypnosis will continue indefinitely because the Inner Guide solves new problems that arise, continues to monitor our health, protects us from various dangers, and most importantly, enhances our creativity.

*QUESTION:*

When I try to do self-hypnosis I don't feel any different than I always do and I'm not sure whether my eyes are closing spontaneously or whether I'm just closing them myself. How can I tell whether I'm in the self-hypnotic state?

*ANSWER:*

You entered the self-hypnotic state successfully when you first learned it, and you felt relaxed at that time. That relaxation may have been your Inner Guide's signal to you that he had come into existence and would work on your behalf to solve problems and end discomfort. A number of people find that they have a special experience of some kind the first time they do self-hypnosis, but thereafter nothing special happens for a while.

When your eyes feel like closing, you can close them. That feeling indicates that it is time for them to close. Some people expect a dramatic spontaneous closing but it is usually a subtler occurrence. Most people feel at least a little relaxed while in self-hypnosis. If you notice this, you will know that you are in the state. If you continue to feel no difference, rest assured that you do know how to do self-hypnosis because you did it correctly the first time.

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](mailto:info@davis-foundation.org). If you would like to be anonymous, just let me know.

Cordially,

*Judith M. Davis*

Volume 3 Number 22

© 2005 The Davis Foundation for Providing Emotional Comfort. All rights reserved