

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of December 14, 2005

Dear Reader,

As people grow older, they often worry about losing their faculties. In addition to the seemingly inevitable decline in physical strength and speed, many also find that they are forgetting things more frequently. More often than not, people attribute this problem to mental deterioration and sometimes wonder whether they are getting Alzheimer's Disease or some other form of senile dementia. Health professionals recommend exercising one's mind with various mental challenges in order to stave off decline.

Although some people do become afflicted with physiological problems, lapses in memory are caused more often by the mental static that accumulates over time as chronic disequibrations increase. How does this occur?

The mental apparatus registers all stimuli and matches these disequibrations with the best available solutions. For many stimuli, *true solutions* are available and as they are matched the disequibrations end. Hunger is matched with the presence of food, fatigue with the opportunity for sleep or rest, and physical stimulation with the availability of movement.

But disequibrations for which there are no immediate true solutions will be matched with *partial solutions*. When a parent is depressed, anxious, angry, or preoccupied, receptiveness to a child's needs is impaired and the parent's response may be faulty. A child who doesn't receive needed praise, encouragement, or love will feel abandoned. His mind will match this distress with the best available partial solution. He may feel depressed (feelings are one kind of partial solution), eat in an attempt to soothe himself (because food is associatively related to the parent), or seek distraction by immersing himself in computer games.

A child who doesn't receive appropriate limit setting will also feel neglected. Limit setting is necessary not only to socialize children but also to protect them from uncomfortable overstimulation. A child who is allowed to eat too much candy will get a stomachache. One who is permitted to rampage through a toy store will rev herself up into an uncomfortable tizzy. In the moment, she will experience the disequibration of overstimulation. But as she develops, she will also suffer from a deficit in self-discipline that will result in impaired functioning and social opprobrium. She, too, will use partial solutions to diminish these disequibrations. She may blame others for her failures, cheat to hide her deficiencies, or distract herself with compulsive shopping.

Because partial solutions become locked in, people persist in using them even when true solutions later become available. The man who felt abandoned as a boy now has the capability of finding someone to love him. The woman's true solution would be to accept her deficiencies and work to eliminate them. But because their partial



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solutions have evolved into complex networks over time, many *complex stimuli* would be necessary to undo all of their branches.

Because a partial solution's capacity to decrease distress wanes with repetition, it must become more intense and/or more elaborated in order to maintain its function. And because a partial solution is, itself, disequilibrating a vicious cycle develops. Hence disequilibrium increases over time.

At any given moment, the stimulus that is most disequilibrating enters awareness. With time, its stimulatory capacity wanes and a new stimulus that is stronger supercedes it. The repetitive and escalating stimuli of partial solutions can monopolize awareness so that memory is hampered. The most obvious expression of this is preoccupation. The man who overeats may be so intent on buying his groceries that he forgets whether he turned off the stove. The woman who is focused on blaming someone can't remember where she parked her car.

But chronic disequilibrium also tampers with memory by forming associative links that are faulty. The depressed man can't remember the name of the woman he met earlier in the week. Was it Victoria or Veronica? His mother's name was Veronica and that name is associatively related to the yearning underlying his depression. The blaming woman forgets her dental appointment. The anticipated discomfort is associatively related to other discomforts that she has avoided because of her lack of self-discipline.

As chronic disequilibrium intensifies over time it increasingly interferes with memory as one grows older. And as the networks of associations expand, they will require more numerous complex stimuli to unlock their many branches. Complex stimuli occur spontaneously, but only an Inner Guide can create them with the necessary frequency and specificity. Our Inner Guides, by solving our disequilibrations, are also preserving and improving our memories.

QUESTION:

Is the guide like an alternate personality which is intentionally created?

ANSWER:

Yes. People with Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly called Multiple Personality Disorder) create alternate personalities (called "alters") with the same mental mechanism, but for a very different reason. Their alters arise at moments of extreme trauma as *false solutions* to an overwhelming disequilibrium.

Through a peculiarity of the way the mind works, if we wish for something within the mind, it is created as a false solution that then becomes a true solution because it has solved the disequilibrium caused by the wish. An Inner Guide comes into being by this mechanism. It originates not from trauma but simply because we wish for it. And unlike the DID's alters, our Inner Guides will do only good.

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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