

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of December 28, 2005

Dear Reader,

While many people enjoy the holidays, some find them painful. Those who are lonely feel more so as they see others gathering with their relatives and friends. And people who have problematic connections with certain relatives may feel uncomfortable at the prospect of seeing them again. Also uncertainty over gift giving causes disequilibrium.

Loneliness stems from the early years. It is a *partial solution* (feelings are partial solutions) for experiences of loss or neglect. These experiences constitute long-lasting stimuli. An important loss is very disequilibrating because it causes many changes that reverberate over time. Neglect due to emotional deficiencies of parents tends to be repetitive. The child's response of loneliness therefore becomes a chronic feeling that is magnified by current associatively related stimuli.

Other problematic connections with important figures also arise in childhood. The most important others are the parents. Although most parents try to do their best for their children, their efforts are compromised by their own problems. Any distress they feel is registered by their children but chronic anxiety, depression, or anger constitutes a character trait that is unpleasant to be exposed to.

Parents may cause distress by unwittingly using their children to fulfill their own needs. A mother may transfer dislike of her own parent onto her child and view him as bad. A father may push his child to excel academically or athletically so that he can vicariously experience the achievements as though they were his own. A severely self-critical parent will tend to turn that criticism on her children as well. A parent may prefer one sibling over another causing the favored one to be overstimulated by the attention while her sibling is left to feel unliked and envious.

An older sibling may bully, tease, or put down a younger one. Or, by his own excellence, set an example that his younger siblings can't attain causing them frustration and despair.

All of the discomforts that result from experiencing these situations are registered in the mental apparatus and stored in memory pathways. When a stimulus that is associatively related to a past discomfort occurs in the here-and-now, it is stored in that pathway and matched with the solution that was initially locked in.

Some associations are obvious and easily understood by the person who is affected by them. The sight of seeing others enjoying each others' company is associatively related to a neglected person's yearning for love and causes an exacerbation of his loneliness. He is well aware of this connection. Other associations are less blatant. Contact with an older sibling who bullied in the past will evoke the old partial solution of apprehension even though the relationship has now changed. Some associations



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are hidden. A person may dread seeing a relative without knowing why. This can occur because past experiences, if sufficiently traumatic, are split off creating a *false solution* of amnesia. Reunion with a group of relatives will stimulate the old pathways of distress and evoke uncomfortable feelings: some easily understood and others unclear. Gatherings in which the important figures of the past are no longer present will continue to evoke memories of them with resulting discomfort.

Gift giving is another potential source of distress. Some people worry about whether they have chosen suitable gifts that will be appreciated. And they may have trouble giving to those whom they feel ambivalent toward.

With all of these sources of distress, how is it that any of us can enjoy the holidays? Many people fortunately have predominantly positive memories of the important figures in their past. The strongest stimulus at each moment enters awareness and remains there until a new, stronger stimulus displaces it. If a person's positive memories are more powerful than the negative ones, good feelings will dominate awareness. Your Inner Guide will unlock the partial and false solutions that originated long ago and replace them with *true* solutions that will allow you to fully enjoy the holidays.

QUESTION:

This is a question that I asked. About 50% of our volunteers continue doing self-hypnosis for the full twelve months of their participation in the project. I would like to learn more about the personality traits that enable them to do this. I sent queries to those who have finished successfully and the replies are coming in.

ANSWERS:

Some described themselves as self-disciplined and/or persistent. Others were motivated because they knew they needed it, were convinced of its value, and wanted to help themselves. One said that she likes to do things that are good for her. Another said that he was doing it for his children's sake as well as for himself.

Some found it easy to integrate self-hypnosis into an ongoing routine of meditation. Several were motivated by experiencing early results and/or having early contact with their Inner Guides. Others felt supported by the periodic contact with me, or knew others who had benefited.

Finally, several described having a strong sense of responsibility. They felt that they had made a commitment to the project and felt that it was important to keep their word. I would welcome further comments from those who have not yet replied.

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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