

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of July 12, 2006

Dear Reader,

Why, when we practice self-hypnosis, are some problems solved quickly while others take longer? And why might a certain problem be quickly solved for one person while that same problem might persist much longer for another person?

An Inner Guide solves a problem using four steps. The first two, identifying a problem's origin and accessing a *true solution* for it, occur within the first moments of an Inner Guide's existence. The third and fourth steps take longer. An Inner Guide must create a *complex stimulus* to unlock a maladaptive stimulus-response pattern allowing a new response, a true solution, to replace it. Then an Inner Guide must repeat the new solution until its novelty wanes sufficiently so that it can enter awareness.

Why do we develop maladaptive habit patterns? When the mental apparatus registers a stimulus the matching function selects the best solution that is available at that moment. That solution becomes locked in as the response in the stimulus-response sequence. Henceforth whenever the stimulus recurs the same response will be matched.

Many habit patterns are established very early in life at a time when a young individual's options are very limited. The best response at an early age is often not a true solution but a *partial solution*: one that diminishes discomfort without ending it completely. A young child who is emotionally abandoned by her mother may turn to food because it is associatively related to the mother. Although it provides some soothing it doesn't solve the problem. She still feels abandoned. Or a child may respond to abandonment with anger and strike out at others. Or try to be very good in hopes of pleasing the mother. As a child develops, new choices are potentially available but the original partial solution is locked in.

A partial solution may become generalized and used in many different situations. These stimulus-response sequences also become locked in. A child may eat, or strike out, or try to please another whenever tension occurs. When such a network of associatively related stimulus-response sequences has developed, an Inner Guide must unlock each one. This is why we may need to experience a particular complex stimulus, or closely related complex stimuli, many times. The fourth step, bringing a new solution into awareness, also takes time.

How can we know whether a particular problem can be solved sooner rather than later? A partial solution that has been established early in life has had more time to accumulate associatively related stimulus-response sequences. Overeating, which often begins early, is more difficult to change than smoking, which begins later. And a partial solution that has become a generalized response to stress, as overeating is apt to do, is harder to alter than a circumscribed solution to a specific problem, such as a phobia.



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In recent Letters I have suggested picking a small problem to solve at the same time that your Inner Guide is working on all problems. If you wish for help with a particular problem you will create a new mental pathway that will work to solve that specific problem. You may also find that you can establish communication with that new entity even if you can't yet with your Inner Guide. In the last Letter I suggested working on becoming more organized by creating an Organizer mental pathway. As you find yourself becoming optimally organized you can choose a different small problem to work on in the same way.

How will you know which of your problems best lend themselves to early results? Not those that are longstanding or those that result from generalization of a partial solution. Pick a problem that has arisen recently for which you want an answer. Perhaps a new situation has arisen at work or with a family member or friend. Have you recently been given an increased workload, new responsibilities, a new boss, or a new co-worker? Has a family member or friend become ill, experienced a personal setback, or revealed a character flaw that you hadn't been aware of before? Simply wish for a new mental pathway that can help you with this problem. Then, as you do self-hypnosis, see whether you can establish communication with this entity by finger signals, automatic handwriting, or inner thought. Because of the discrete nature of the problem and your wish for its solution, you may experience early results. Meanwhile, every time you do self-hypnosis, your Inner Guide is working on all of your other problems.

QUESTION:

When doing self-hypnosis and thinking about changes I want to make, is it better to concentrate on the difficult or should I also address the minutiae of every day?

ANSWER:

If you wish for an inner entity to solve one or another type of small problem that occurs during the day, that entity may be able to provide early results and it may also be more readily able to communicate with you by finger signals, automatic handwriting, or inner thought. While this entity is not your Inner Guide, interacting with it may help sustain your motivation to do self-hypnosis so that your Inner Guide, which is working silently every time you do self-hypnosis, has the necessary trance time to solve all problems.

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