

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION

FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of August 23, 2006

Dear Reader,

This past weekend Chicago held its annual Chicago Air and Water Show, attended by over two million people. The climax of the show occurs when a precision flying team of six military pilots flying jet airplanes performs daring maneuvers. The U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds alternate years, and this year we had the Blue Angels. Even if one does not go to the lake to view this spectacle, portions of it are inescapable as the jets fly various formations over the city with earsplitting volume.

Arriving before the weekend of the show, the jets practice on Thursday and Friday. If one were unaware that the weekend of the Air and Water Show was approaching it would become obvious on Thursday, heralded by the familiar roar of the jets. A man I know described a business meeting, on a high floor of a downtown building, which was interrupted as a jet screamed past the large windows sending all the participants to their feet in amazement.

This year a group of anti-war activists at the show staged a silent protest of the Iraq war and of militarism in general. Regardless of how one feels about the war and about the expenditure of resources for a precision flying display one cannot fail to be awed by the spectacle. It expresses an extreme of engineering, speed, noise, endurance, and skill and is overstimulating in a specific, as well as a general, way. It represents the acme of a specific achievement and evokes associatively related aspirations in its viewers; even, out of awareness, in the protesters.

Everyone has aspirations that are rarely completely fulfilled. Some people's wishes are simple yet seemingly unachievable because locked-in habit patterns prevent their attainment. Wishes to lose weight, exercise, stop smoking, become organized, or stop procrastinating can be realized only when *complex stimuli* allow new habit patterns to become locked in. This, we know, will happen when we do self-hypnosis regularly.

Others wish for achievements that, for most, are realistically unattainable. They may hope to become famous movie stars, major league athletes, the president of the United States, or even members of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels. Why do they wish for such things? And are they doomed to be unhappy?

When a stimulus occurs for which there is no *true solution*, a *partial solution* must be matched with it. Some partial solutions are very specific. If a person is hungry and no food is immediately available he may cook a meal, go to a restaurant, or imagine that he is eating. Other partial solutions are general. He may pace to decrease his tension, distract himself by turning to other activities, or tolerate waiting. Or he may turn to a fantasy of greatness imagining himself to be a movie star, athlete, or pilot.



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While such a fantasy first arises as a partial solution to a specific stimulus it can become generalized just as pacing, distraction, and toleration of waiting do and it can then serve to lessen a variety of disequilibrations.

Certain generalized partial solutions become very problematic. A woman who eats to soothe herself when tense for any reason gains excess weight. One who procrastinates in the face of many anxiety-provoking tasks becomes less productive. But some generalized partial solutions are harmless. Pacing, distraction, and tolerating waiting end when a disequilibrium is solved. So, too, may fantasy.

But sometimes fantasy serves, as procrastination may, to avoid addressing difficult tasks that lead to realistic accomplishments. In so doing it creates an additional disequilibrium: that of knowing that it is dysfunctional. Here, again, self-hypnosis will enable a person to overcome the hindrances that stand in the way of success. The use of fantasy as avoidance will then dissipate.

Your Inner Guide will enable you to overcome any obstacles that stand in the way of the realistic achievements that you are capable of, and the gratification that they bring will exceed the pleasure taken in unrealistic fantasies. But beyond that, your Inner Guide will help you to achieve way beyond the capacities that you feel you have now. As it ends all dysfunction and discomfort and enhances your creativity you will soar in your own domain as the jet pilot does in his.

QUESTION:

What causes veterans to develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and flashbacks? Can an Inner Guide help with these?

ANSWER:

When the mental apparatus registers an overwhelmingly intense stimulus (such as a bombardment) a dissociation, or mental split, occurs. A double pathway is created in the mind. In one arm the disequilibrium continues, while in the other arm a false solution is experienced. The false solution may be denial, depersonalization, delusions or hallucinations, amnesia, or loss of awareness (fainting). The false solution does not end or diminish the disequilibrium (which continues unabated in the other arm of the double pathway until the stimulus ends). It just provides an alternate experience. When the disequilibrium caused by maintaining the split is greater than the disturbance caused by ending it, the experience (or aspects of it) will enter awareness. This is a flashback. Flashbacks may be full or partial. For instance a person may fully relive the event, or may simply re-experience a part of it. An Inner Guide can cure Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and flashbacks but it takes 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. If you would like to be anonymous, just let me know.

Cordially,

Judith M. Davis

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