

THE  
DAVIS FOUNDATION  
FOR PROVIDING  
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of October 18, 2006

Dear Reader,

Sharing can be a wonderful behavior when it is performed as a *true solution* to a disequilibrium. But when it occurs as a *partial solution* it is uncomfortable for both giver and recipient. What determines its nature? When is giving experienced as joyful and when does it feel like a duty?

The mental apparatus strives to maintain an optimal stimulus level. It matches each stimulus with a solution. If a hungry person perceives that food is available the knowledge that he can eat is a true solution. If food is not at hand his mental apparatus will match the best available partial solutions. He may go to the grocery store, cook a meal, eat at a restaurant or, if it is not time for a meal, he may fantasize eating or distract himself with other activities.

A partial solution is, itself, a stimulus and as its novelty wanes it becomes less effective. And partial solutions that involve only thinking lose their effectiveness sooner than those that involve acting because actions provide sensations that prolong the reverberations of the stimulus. A fantasy of a wonderful meal will lose its impact much sooner than cooking or turning to distracting activities.

Just as the absence of food when we are hungry is disequilibrating so, too, is excess. The presence of a feast is overstimulating even if we don't overindulge. As we are not motivated to avoid good things or to remove ourselves from them, what partial solutions are available to help us with this kind of disturbance?

When we have a special meal we will feel sensations of pleasure and satiety. We will think about it and remember it. We may talk with others about it. We may plan how to experience it again by visiting the same restaurant or creating it in our own home. These feelings, thoughts, and actions are all partial solutions. Another is sharing. When we perceive that there is more than enough we can handle the overstimulation by giving to others.

Yet some people hoard rather than share even when there is no fear of shortage. They do so because, at an early age, they were deprived in some way and responded by hanging on to what they did receive. As the novelty of this partial solution waned, they found it necessary to seek more and more in order to maintain its efficacy. Although they accumulate goods or experiences their pleasure is contaminated by the underlying distress caused by the original problem, which hasn't been definitively solved by a true solution.

Others do share, but do so with a sense of obligation rather than pleasure. They have been taught that they should share, whether they want to or not, and sharing becomes less disequilibrating than the guilt they would feel if they didn't.



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When we enjoy a positive experience we like it; when we experience it again and again we come to love it, because love is the intensification through repetition of a positive feeling about something or someone. We can come to love many kinds of experiences: dining, various of the arts, hobbies, travel, sports, learning, and working. And when we love something we want to re-experience it. We can become gourmets, collectors, world travelers, amateur athletes, or voracious readers. Some who are viewed as workaholics are simply indulging in their favorite activity.

Can pursuing pleasure become compulsive? No, a compulsion is a locked-in habit pattern that serves as a partial solution for an unpleasant chronic disequilibrium. Hoarding and obligatory sharing can become compulsions if they intensify to maintain their strength as partial solutions. Pursuing a pleasure for the love of it is a response to a pleasant stimulus.

Those who are fortunate enough to have predominantly positive experiences of one sort or another will discharge the overstimulation by sharing if they are not burdened by chronic disequilibria that interfere. As we know, an Inner Guide will provide the *complex stimuli* that are necessary to unlock maladaptive habit patterns and replace them with true solutions. We will be able to embrace a variety of pleasures and, as they become overstimulating, we will joyfully share them with others.

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*QUESTION:*

Can my Inner Guide help me know whether someone I am with truly likes me and has a good opinion of me?

*ANSWER:*

Yes. Your Inner Guide can tell by its subliminal perceptions whether a person you are with is comfortable with you. If someone didn't like you or think well of you he or she would feel uncomfortable being with you.

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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*