

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of December 13, 2006

Dear Reader,

One current fashion for women is the gigantic (and gigantically priced) handbag. It is so large that it gets caught in revolving doors and it is so heavy that some users are compelled to consult physical therapists for treatment of their resulting shoulder injuries. This must-have item apparently confers elevated status on women who move in certain social circles. Even more injurious are certain types of high-heeled shoes, some of whose wearers have had foot surgery to better fit into them! Whether seeking visibility, beauty, or simply a wish to be part of the group, these women value styles so highly that they lose perspective on what is reasonable. Why does this happen?

The most important function of a parent is to understand and respond to the child's needs. Sometimes these are for love or gratification of certain wishes, at other times for limit setting or optimal frustration. Because no parent is perfect there will inevitably be times that a child experiences the results of lack of parental empathy. The mental apparatus matches this discomfort with a *partial* or *false solution*. When love and attention are lacking the child may turn to food, with which it is associatively related, express anger, feel depressed, or turn to various distractions. When a parent doesn't provide needed limits the child will become overstimulated and work to dissipate the excess, usually by hyperactivity.

Children must learn to tolerate frustration so that, as they develop, they will become able to delay gratification when that is necessary to attain their goals. The empathic parent will understand the importance of this experience and will sense how to modulate the child's frustrations so that they don't become overwhelming. An individual who has not learned to delay gratification, who has not developed the qualities necessary to fulfill his potential, will experience a chronic disequilibrium because of his arrested development. (Tragically he will unknowingly miss out also on the richness of a well-developed mind.) A child who, on the other hand, has experienced too much frustration will suffer chronic disequilibrium resulting from unmet needs.

Every child grows to adulthood with a variety of chronic disequilibrium for which its mental apparatus must match partial or false solutions. And, because the distress is chronic, these solutions must be maintained. Because they become less effective over time, as their novelty wanes, they must be intensified and/or elaborated to maintain their efficacy.

A girl who has suffered feelings of inadequacy will respond with behaviors that she hopes will demonstrate her worth. They become locked in as habit patterns and persist. They are not *true solutions* because they do not solve the underlying cause of her



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feeling but they diminish her distress. Acquiring popular items is a partial solution. Because her item is associatively related to an identical or similar one owned by a popular girl, it causes her to feel acceptable. And a girl who does feel adequate but who wants more recognition than she gets may also find this partial solution helpful. She will feel important as she displayed her prized item.

As women these individuals will continue their locked-in habit pattern of following fads and trends. And because this partial solution must be intensified and/or elaborated to maintain its efficacy, a trendy item will not remain so for long. Designers must regularly provide new creations and, as they elaborate, they produce designs that are increasingly outlandish. At present gigantic handbags are the vogue. Who knows what will come next?

What of the women who undergo surgery so that they may fit into outlandish shoes? Their focus has become extremely intensified. And in addition to matching this partial solution they have matched a false one as well, because in submitting themselves to surgery they have denied the harm that they are doing to their bodies. The women who sustained shoulder injuries from carrying their huge handbags probably didn't realize that this would happen. But the women who had surgery were aware, on some level, that they were abusing their bodies. Their mental apparatus created a dissociation, a double pathway: in one arm they were aware of the abuse but in the other arm they experienced the false solution of denial.

Those who acquire an Inner Guide, and who practice self-hypnosis regularly to enable it to do its work, will find that their maladaptive habit patterns disappear. Those who love fashion will be able to enjoy it without being compelled to adopt fads for the sake of feeling adequate or belonging.

QUESTION:

Can and will my Inner Guide prod me to do self-hypnosis when I should?

ANSWER:

An Inner Guide doesn't prod. But she may cause you to feel moved to do self-hypnosis. If so it will feel as though it is your idea.

Your Inner Guide can cause you to enter the self-hypnotic state without even realizing it at times when external and internal stimuli are low, as when you are in a quiet place and bored.

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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