

THE
DAVIS FOUNDATION
FOR PROVIDING
EMOTIONAL COMFORT

Letter of April 18, 2007

Dear Reader,

There has been a recent brouhaha in the media regarding a hurtful remark that Don Imus, a shock jock, made about a women's college basketball team, which culminated in the cancellation of his TV and radio shows. Reaction to this has been varied. Some feel that the cancellations are too drastic a response and opine that political correctness may cast a chill on free speech. Others are gratified that one source of distasteful remarks has been silenced.

Distasteful remarks on the air have become common and as they have many people have come to think of them as a given. Yet internal discussions at the TV stations revealed that numbers of employees disliked these comments and would prefer that the stations not air them. And others, when prompted to reflect on them, realized that these remarks are not appropriate. Some authors who have benefited from exposure on these shows have now wondered in print about their culpability in acquiescing to this culture.

Why do shock jocks appeal to some? When a stimulus is registered the mental apparatus matches it with the best available solution. When a *true solution* is not available a *partial* or *false solution* will be matched. A stimulus that conveys a threat will usually be matched with either fight or flight, which may be true solutions if they end the disequilibrium. But a young child's resources are very limited. He can't outrun or successfully attack an adult or older child. His mental apparatus must match one or more partial solutions. These include feelings of fear and anger, and protest or submission. If the threat is intolerably great he will *dissociate* and match a false solution such as denial, depersonalization, or amnesia.

The solutions that are matched become locked-in habit patterns and when new threats occur they are automatically matched again. Because the disequilibrium is not fully ended they form a reservoir of fear and anger. Some of it may remain out of awareness while some may form an ongoing background feeling that the individual experiences as a given. If he has been chronically abused many stimuli that have been associatively related to the abuse will also evoke anger and it may become his predominant feeling.

As a child grows he finds that he can discharge his anger by hurting others verbally or physically. The more often he is stimulated by threats or associatively related perceptions the more often he will respond with aggression and hostility. One way in which he can do this is through vicarious participation in the abuse of victims by others. He is primed to be part of an enthusiastic audience for a shock jock. The more abuse he participates in the more his associatively related pathways increase.



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And because the stimuli caused by this activity decrease as their novelty wanes he seeks ever more prolonged and intense exposure.

Although anger serves as a partial solution to a disequilibrium it is also a stimulus, itself, and an unpleasant one. Thus those who tune in to shock jocks never attain relief and in fact become increasingly uncomfortable. And out of awareness they know that they are being hurtful to others even if only through vicarious participation. This creates additional distress.

For some the airwaves cease to provide an adequate partial solution and they must match more intense ones. For them the vicious cycle may culminate in acts of violence.

What about the shock jock himself? And what about those who don't need this kind of stimulation but tolerate it? The knowledge that they are harming others, whether directly or by condoning this kind of speech, creates disequilibria for them that must be matched with whatever partial solutions best diminish it.

The true solution would be to put an end to these hurtful comments. The women on the basketball team found true solutions for their discomfort by protesting the comments, thus invalidating them, and by being instrumental in moving people to think about this issue and make positive changes.

Those of us who, by practicing self-hypnosis regularly, are enabling our Inner Guides to solve our disequilibria will find ourselves losing whatever feelings of hostility we may have experienced in the past. We will feel lighter, freer, and much more comfortable.

QUESTION:

I feel that I have reached a state of peace. Is there any reason why I need to continue doing self-hypnosis?

ANSWER:

Yes indeed! There are always new problems that appear. Your Inner Guide will need trance time in order to solve them for you. She will also be able to enhance your creativity, monitor your health, and heighten your pleasure in all that you do.

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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