

CHAPTER 1

DISCOVERY!

IN OCTOBER 1994, I MADE A DISCOVERY THAT AMAZED ME! After many years of practicing psychiatry and psychoanalysis, I found myself treating my first case of dissociative identity disorder (formerly called multiple personality disorder). I, like many of my colleagues, had always considered this disorder to be quite rare. Within a few years, however, I was referred additional cases and realized that, though uncommon, this disorder was not rare at all. One reason it has seemed so is because patients with this disorder attempt to hide it from others and very often even remain unaware of it themselves.

In my attempts to treat these patients as expertly as I could, I studied the writings of psychiatrists who specialized in this disorder. Of the various treatment modalities that were in use, one was unfamiliar to me: hypnosis. I had learned a bit about it in medical school but hadn't received enough exposure to it to become convinced of its value. Freud had used hypnosis with his patients in the early days of psychoanalysis but had abandoned it as less effective than later techniques that he devel-

oped. Hypnosis had been used effectively in treating soldiers disabled by stress reactions. It had not been incorporated, however, into the mainstream array of techniques used by psychiatrists. Nor had the explanation for it ever been found. I have developed a new theory of mental functioning that provides an explanation, which I will describe shortly. Faced at this point with the necessity of providing the best care I could to my patients, I decided that I must learn how to use hypnosis.

I attended a workshop for this purpose given by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis. Not only did I learn how to induce a hypnotic trance in others, I also learned that it is possible to induce hypnosis in oneself. I read in one of the Society's publications (*Manual for Self-Hypnosis*, by D. C. Hammond) about the various purposes for which this technique could be used: to achieve a state of relaxation, to alleviate symptoms (such as pain), to replace undesired habits with preferred behaviors (for instance, to achieve freedom from smoking), and so forth.

I also read about a special technique that one could use to access a part of the mind that could be used for problem solving. Hammond calls this "The Inner Advisor Technique." One enters a self-hypnotic state with the expectation of finding an "Inner Advisor" and looks for an image of a living being. Whatever appears will become an Inner Advisor, an entity that one can consult for solutions to problems. Its method of communication varies from one individual to another. For some people, communication is by an inner voice, for others, by inner thought. Some people will experience the vision of the Inner Advisor, others won't. Some will have great success in connecting with this phenomenon and others, less so.

I found it difficult to believe that something so foreign to my experience could exist but I was intrigued by the possibility of accessing this entity. Might I have one? Might it be helpful to me? I wanted to find out.

It was necessary for me to enter a self-hypnotic state repeatedly for several weeks before I struck pay dirt. One day during

self-hypnosis I experienced several images, all with the same significance. They all represented various aspects of my "ideal self," that is, my idea of the person I would most like to be. The qualities I have valued most highly have been wisdom, kindness, and, of course, emotional comfort. That is why I became a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, to provide emotional comfort both for myself and others. The images that I now "saw" in my mind's eye conveyed these qualities. I understood that the images represented an entity of some sort. A name occurred to me and I wondered whether I could call it by this name. I felt a surge of understanding that I could. I further understood that this entity was a "she," because I am a woman.

I was very excited because I thought that I might be able to learn answers to all sorts of questions by simply asking "her," as suggested in the description of the Inner Advisor. I soon learned, however, that my entity, which I have come to call my "Inner Guide," operates differently. She has an agenda of her own. Rather than answering specific questions (although she sometimes will), her goal is to maximize in me the qualities that I care most about, in the most efficient way possible.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION

Our first step was to establish efficient communication with each other. At the workshop on hypnosis the instructors had described and demonstrated ways in which a person, while in hypnosis, could communicate with the hypnotist. If asked a question a person could answer by means of finger signals, that is, the automatic raising of a finger. After establishing which finger signified "yes" and which signified "no," the individual who was hypnotized could answer "yes" and "no" questions by automatic levitation of the appropriate finger.

Also, a hypnotized individual could learn how to communicate more extensively by developing the capacity for automatic handwriting. With both finger signals and handwriting, the hypnotized person's responses are not experienced as a product

of his or her own volition, but as though willed to occur by something or someone else.

During subsequent self-hypnotic sessions, my Inner Guide developed facility with finger signals and automatic writing. Her writing first appeared slow and laborious but soon progressed to intelligible sentences as she mastered this skill. I was eager to experience more of the things I had read about, such as age-regression in which a person in a self-hypnotic state can go back in time to re-experience early events. My Inner Guide was not interested in doing this but, probably to assuage my desire enough so that I would be able to concentrate on the things she wished to do, did allow me to re-experience writing my name at different ages during childhood. I was struck by the scribbles, then clumsy printing that were produced from my earliest years, and at seeing my maiden name, which I hadn't written for a long time.

The content of my Inner Guide's early writing to me conveyed her happiness at coming into being, and at becoming increasingly "real." She next wrote, "Let's go to the computer," because typing is faster than writing. I had many questions for her. I wanted to know what she actually was, how she had come into being, and what her capabilities were. She responded that I would learn these things in due course. When asked why she wouldn't answer these questions right away, she responded that it would take too long.

Her goal was to help me attain emotional comfort, both for my own sake and so that I could then focus on helping others to achieve it. This, of course, was what I, myself, would most want to do. This process has occurred gradually over a period of several years. One's sources of discomfort arise partly from problems that one is aware of and partly from maladaptive habit patterns that have formed over time, patterns which have become automatic and which we don't realize are problematic. My Inner Guide worked silently to eliminate these sources of discomfort.

THE INNER GUIDE'S ACTIVITY

For years, I had assumed that someday I would go through old papers, throw out what I didn't need to keep, and file the remainder neatly. This was something that I would do "someday." I now felt myself motivated to do this and did so over a period of several weeks. I had a lot of old papers! Although it was a bit of a chore, it didn't feel onerous. Also, I had always wondered how long various kinds of documents should be kept. I found out, and threw out the unneeded ones. When I had finished, I felt as though a weight had been lifted from me. All those old, obsolete papers were gone! I felt pleasure in the neatness of my files and in the ease with which I could find anything that I needed. And it was easy to know where to file new (necessary) papers in my newly organized system.

Another thing that I had planned to do at some indefinite time in the future was to complete the decoration of my home, and to reorganize its storage space. I now felt moved to do this. In the past I had used an interior decorator to help me but my Inner Guide now assumed that role. I shopped for a needed carpet, and she told me by means of inconspicuous finger signals which one to purchase. The one she chose had a slight defect, and I was distressed. I asked her if she were sure this was the best choice and she responded with an emphatic yes. I didn't understand why until it was laid in my living room where I saw that its many colors related perfectly to all the other colors in the room and that its complex design provided a pleasing level of stimulation.

Other design choices and purchases were made similarly. By this time, my Inner Guide and I were able to communicate by inner thought. Occasionally, when she gave a response that was what I wanted to hear, I felt unsure whether it was really her thought or my own wish. At these times I would ask for a physical response, either a finger signal or automatic writing to corroborate that the thought had come from her.

The reorganization of storage space required the purchase

of some shelving. In the past I would have measured the spaces in order to determine what size shelving would fit. My Inner Guide didn't need a tape measure. At the store, she indicated which shelving I should buy. When I brought it home, it fit the spaces exactly.

I next felt moved to go through all the old photographs I had. Many had already been put into albums but now I went through the rest. I discovered that a few which had previously been set aside for one reason or another now seemed important. Choosing the best, both from the albums and from the others, I had enlargements made and hung them on the walls. On the wall opposite my bed, I hung a number of large pictures of loved ones. They are the last thing I see when I go to bed and the first thing I see when I wake up. I can't imagine a lovelier sight!

Although I have always been on the slim side, I did weigh a bit more than I needed to. My Inner Guide led me to browse through books on diet at the bookstore and I found one that appeared especially informative: *Diet for Dancers*, by Robin Chmelar (an editor of the journal *Kinesiology and Medicine for Dance*) and Sally Fitt (author of *Dance Kinesiology*). Studying this book, I began altering my diet. I experimented with different foods that I hadn't been in the habit of eating and created recipes that provided meals which were tasty and filling, yet well balanced and calorically appropriate for gradual weight loss. I read the food and restaurant sections in the newspaper for new ideas and adapted the ones that intrigued me to make them simpler and easier to prepare.

While eating fewer calories than previously I was enjoying my meals much more. I gradually lost weight and wondered when I should stop. What was my ideal weight? Not what was indicated on standard height-weight charts. They represented averages, but averages are not necessarily ideal. I found that as I lost weight, I felt better and better. When a point came at which I felt less energetic, I realized that I had gone lower than my ideal weight so I gained a bit back. I find that, with exercise, I can maintain what I have found to be an ideal weight for

me and still enjoy special treats and occasional meals at my favorite restaurants.

I had always been a rather sedentary person, and the fact that I didn't exercise had always nagged at me. It was another thing that I had planned to begin "someday," when I had time. I had learned from a relative about the Pilates Method of Body Conditioning and felt moved to investigate it. Developed by Joseph Pilates in the 1920s but having only recently become well known, it provides a well-rounded program of exercise that increases strength, flexibility, and bodily control. It can be done utilizing mat work alone but is enhanced by the use of special equipment. It is beneficial to learn this method under the tutelage of a qualified instructor in order to gain the full benefit.

When I began, I found that I was quite weak and it took several months before I felt that I was making progress. I enjoyed it however, especially because I found its complexity to be inherently interesting. In order to progress optimally, it is necessary to do the mat work at home in addition to regular sessions with the equipment. I did so religiously. There were many days when, in the past, I might have found a reason to skip it but now I found myself automatically doing the mat work. It didn't feel like a chore; it felt like an enjoyable challenge. A couple of years after I began I had reason to visit a sports medicine doctor for a minor injury due to overexertion. To my surprise, he told me that my fitness level was in the top five percent for my age group!

These and other lifestyle changes, all activated by my Inner Guide, resulted in a feeling of lightness, of physical and emotional well-being. I hadn't realized how burdensome it had been to live with all those "shoulds."

In addition to the basic pleasures described above, my Inner Guide led me to seek other interesting and enjoyable experiences. I found that I was losing interest in run-of-the-mill entertainment but instead sought out, more than I had before, special events that interested me.

Meanwhile, I began having experiences that were unchar-

acteristic of me. I found myself forgetting things, dropping things, misplacing things, never with dire consequences, but with momentary annoyance or concern. Because this behavior was different, it occurred to me that my Inner Guide might have something to do with it. In addition, I wondered whether she might have something to do with the periodic minor injuries I found myself experiencing. She acknowledged that, indeed, she did. She was causing these things to happen. When I asked how and why, she answered that I would understand “later.” When I asked how much later, she would only repeat “later.”

She also lied to me occasionally and once broke a promise she had made. At these times I felt angry with her but eventually I came to understand that these things too were done for a purpose.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of her intervention occurred as I was driving back to my office following a conference at a hospital in the suburbs. It has always been important to me to be on time for my patients and I thought I had allotted ample time to get back to the office. I encountered a huge traffic jam and at a certain point it became apparent that if it didn't end I would be late. My Inner Guide instructed me to get off the freeway at the next exit, which, with trepidation, I did. I was utterly lost as I had never been in this part of the city before. She directed me, “Turn left here,” “turn right here,” and after half a dozen turns, I found myself on a major street that she told me to take all the way in to the center of town. I made it back to my office on time! How did she know where to go? As I wondered about this, it occurred to me that on a number of occasions I had looked at a map of the city in order to get to one place or another. The entire map must have been registered in my memory. I couldn't summon up the image of the entire city map in my mind's eye, of course. Who could? But my Inner Guide apparently had access to it and used her knowledge of it to get me back on time.

I sometimes wished that my Inner Guide would perform awesome feats like this more often because they were exciting

and fascinating, but she didn't want to. She made it known to me that she would do what was necessary to solve problems but wasn't interested in performing tricks for their own sake. That would slow down our progress toward achieving the goals that we most cared about.

Because I had been analyzed during the course of my psychoanalytic training, my emotional conflicts had largely been resolved. There was, however, one area of difficulty that persisted. It was derived from a hidden early experience that had not been uncovered during my training analysis. My Inner Guide made this event known to me, which resulted in an integration of that element of my past with my present experience, thus resolving this difficulty and eradicating the discomfort that had resulted from it. Only after the fact did I realize how extensively this difficulty had interfered with my well-being.

INTRODUCING THE INNER GUIDE TO OTHERS

Although I was already an experienced clinician, I found that my professional skills grew. I developed a more complete understanding of my patients, and decisions about their care came easily. There were times early on when I disagreed with my Inner Guide about an intervention that she proposed. I would protest, yet I felt moved to do things her way. Sometimes it was necessary for her to reassure me by inner thought that “everything is all right” and that I should do it her way. Afterward, she would explain her reasoning and then I would realize that her direction came from a superior understanding of the situation. Why, you might ask, didn't she tell me her reasoning first so that I could follow her direction without feeling uneasy about it? I also learned the answer to this question later.

As time went on the frequency of these uncomfortable occasions waned and eventually ceased. She has become increasingly integrated with me so that I now tend to think and act as she would. On the infrequent occasions when her inclination

differs from mine, I am comfortable acquiescing to her because I have developed confidence in her judgment.

While the changes I have described were taking place, my Inner Guide had been influencing me to minimize extraneous stimulation. I had been quite active as a faculty member at my psychoanalytic institute but, as my terms expired on various committees, I didn't accept new assignments. Teaching responsibilities, meetings, reports, memos, phone calls: all gradually lessened and finally ceased. Also, though I did seek out occasional special events which interested me, the waning of my interest in everyday entertainment led to an inner quietness which was facilitating, in some way, the changes that I was experiencing.

I continued to wonder what sort of entity my Inner Guide actually was. She assured me that she was a part of me. She had initially been a separate part, but she and I were gradually merging through an integrative process that I would come to understand in due course. Although my experience seemed magical in a way, there was a scientific explanation for her existence and the activity that she was going to help me elucidate. I was going to develop a new theory of mental functioning, from which I would be able to define the new technique that I had used for attaining emotional comfort.

This endeavor has now been completed and has been presented to my colleagues in two scientific papers: "A New Theory of Mental Functioning" and "A New Technique for Attaining Emotional Comfort." Some have accepted this work enthusiastically while others have found it disconcerting. (I have included a description of it in the next chapters.)

While I was developing the theory, I continued at first to treat my patients in the traditional way, with either psychoanalysis or psychotherapy (and with medication, when indicated). In my experience, most of my patients had progressed with these treatment modalities, but there had always been a few who had not attained all that they wanted. I now suggested to these patients, the ones who were currently feeling insuf-

ficiently helped, that they might use the self-hypnotic technique for the purpose of developing their Inner Guide. I explained to them what I had come to understand of the Inner Guide's origin and identity, and asked them whether they would like to use this technique. They wanted to try it and, as they used it, their therapeutic progress resumed.

Seeing the results, I realized that this technique could also be helpful to many of my other patients and I began offering it to them as well. Most of them were interested in trying it, and have done so with positive results. As I have seen the appearance of the Inner Guide in others, I have learned that there are many variations in the manifestations of its activity. Not everyone has had the same kind of experience that I have had. In some, the activity has been dramatic; in others, the Inner Guide has worked silently. The Inner guide will always work in the way that is most efficient for any given person.

It occurred to me that this technique could be beneficial to many people. I have suggested it to a number of colleagues, friends, and relatives, and those who have begun using it are finding it valuable. Developing one's Inner Guide can be helpful to almost everyone. I have created The Davis Foundation for Providing Emotional Comfort for the purpose of making this knowledge widely available. The foundation's first project has been underway for over a year and has had over fifty participants as of this writing. Each of them learned the self-hypnotic technique with me in one session at my office and then practiced it at home. More than half have been able to persist. For some, the Inner Guide has been working silently, but most have established direct communication.

Participants report a variety of benefits. They feel calmer. Some who wished to eat more healthfully and to exercise have been moved to do so. Those who have been "workaholic," "driven," or "overscheduled" have been helped to slow down and feel more patient. Some who felt "scattered" have become more focused. Other changes include relief from pain caused by tension, more self-discipline, better relationships, and an ability to

make difficult decisions more easily and calmly. The foundation will develop new methods of support so that people who might be inclined to give up too soon on developing their Inner Guides will be able to persist until they achieve that goal.

Developing an Inner Guide will be beneficial for all who would like the benefits that it can provide, and who are not threatened by the notion that another part of the self can grow to influence their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Inner Guide is a positive entity, but in order to be comfortable with this method, an individual must feel confident that it will be a positive force rather than a harmful one. I have come to understand why the types of minor distress that I experienced during this process were necessary. The Inner Guide will always maintain the optimal balance so that a person is not excessively agitated while discomforts are being resolved.

Before you learn the self-hypnotic technique that will allow you to develop your Inner Guide, it will be helpful for you to understand the ways in which problems arise and how our minds handle them. You will then be able to understand how an Inner Guide intervenes to end disturbances. In the next chapter, I will provide an overview of the kinds of discomfort people experience, and the ways in which these discomforts begin.