

IS DAVID STILL THE SAME??

What is it about success that makes some people so suspicious of it?

The same goes for money.

Everybody likes the 'guy next door' who is struggling to make ends meet. He may be poor, he may be a failure, but folks are ready to agree that he's a nice guy all the same.

But have you ever noticed what happens if that guy suddenly hits the big-time, if Ernie picks his premium bond, or if his great aunt Matilda leaves him a small fortune?

CELEBRATION

You'd expect all these folks who've always liked him so much to hit a high in celebration of his good luck, wouldn't you? Okay . . . Some of them might well be genuinely pleased. But then there are the others . . .

Some of them snatch every chance to bask in reflected glory. They take a sort of pride in the fact that they knew him when he was down — even if they never did anything to give him a helping hand up!

And then there are the ones who take the attitude: "Oh, dear, what a shame . . . It's bound to go to his head, and he was always such a nice guy . . ."

They assume that success and money must automatically change a person for the

worse.

Could they be right? Take David, for instance . . .

You could almost use him as the model of 'How to become a superstar in three easy lessons!' Of course, it's not as simple as that — but it was certainly as fast!

At the age of nineteen, David was transformed from a hard-up, out-of-work actor to the greatest teenage superstar the world had ever known. There he was, offered an instant switch from the world of coke to the world of champagne.

And it's a well known fact that champagne goes to everyone's head!

Of course, that didn't bother David's fans — and he already had a strong following. But there was the inevitable chorus of comments like:

"He's far too young to cope with success at that age", or "Oh, yes, it's fine now, but it can't last".

I asked David how he felt when he heard comments like that:

"Well," he began, "I always tried to ignore them, right from the start.

"But it was kinda tough at first, when I wasn't really sure what was happening myself. And in a way, I guess they were right . . . It was all a bit big for me. But I don't figure that it worked on me the way some folk seemed to fear — or hope!"

So how did it work on David?

"I reckon everyone expected my head to swell and things," he continued. "But that was the last way it was

likely to go . . . You see, my self-confidence has always been a kind of funny animal!"

I asked him to try and explain: "Well, right down inside of myself," he went on, "I've always known that I had some talent, but I've never felt sure that other folks ought to recognise it. I've sometimes even had doubts inside myself."

I must have looked puzzled, because he added:

COMPULSION

"It's a feeling that only an actor could understand, I guess . . . You see, you've got this compulsion to act and one half of you knows that you can play that part better than anyone you know . . .

"But the other half is scared to death that you're going to funk the whole thing. So all the time you've got this kind of fear working against your self-confidence as an artist."

I felt that I could almost understand the feeling he was getting at, as I watched him tentatively searching for words to put his meaning across. But I found it difficult to believe that David still felt that kind of fear and insecurity, when he had millions of fans all over the world who were constantly putting his fear at rest!

"Oh, sure, that's wonderful!" he smiled, "it's out of this world to know that you're playing to people who love you . . . But that doesn't make me feel any surer of my own performance!

"In fact, it makes things even worse, because I can't help

