



Life-Enhancing Hypnosis

Empowering people to achieve optimal mental, physical and emotional well-being.

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UNDERSTANDING HYPNOSIS

This Hypno-Healthgram discusses the application of hypnosis available for dealing with such issues as habit control, stress, excessive eating, smoking, fears, motivation, self-confidence, concentration, learning enhancement, attitude modification, pain management, insomnia, goal-setting, relationships and other areas which lead to unhappiness, dysfunction or difficulty in achieving personal goals.

What It Is and How It Works

Hypnosis is not mind control, magic, unconsciousness or sleep. It is a relaxed state of heightened suggestibility during which a person is receptive to “acceptable” suggestions. It is a process that frees us from analytical, unbending thinking (conscious mind) and lets us use creative and imaginative resources (subconscious mind). Hypnosis is a tool used by trained hypnotists to stimulate the body’s healing powers, resulting in self-healing and self-improvement.

Hypnosis is a natural experience that happens to most people every day. We easily go into spontaneous states of hypnosis while absorbed in doing something such as driving, working, reading or watching television. While in hypnosis, a person’s body becomes as deeply relaxed as it is during sleep, but one’s senses remain awake and alert. The person is always in control during hypnosis and will only say or do what she/he would say or do in the conscious state. And the person will return to full consciousness whenever he/she wants or feels the need to. Self-hypnosis, which can be taught to virtually any client, can provide the recipient with a lifetime of benefits.

A Brief History of Hypnosis

Early people books depict mogurs, shamans, medicine men and women, and healers using chanting, drumming, singing, shouting, and “magic”, to inspire confidence and create

expectations, while simultaneously mesmerizing and hypnotizing. Egyptian art shows brain surgery: a triangular cut into the skull to access the brain, being performed routinely. Cultural anthropologists say there was no anesthesia or sterile practices available.

Greek doctors used certain magic processes similar to modern mesmerists. Plato said: “The cure of the part should not be attempted without treatment of the whole. No attempt should be made to cure the body without the soul. Let no one persuade you to cure the head until he has first given you his soul to be cured, for this is the great error of our day, that physicians first separate the soul from the body.” Hippocrates said: “The affections suffered by the body, the soul sees quite well with shut eyes.”

Romans breathed on diseased parts, or allayed pain by stroking of the hands and sending patients into long, refreshing sleeps for the recovery of health. The effects produced were identical in character to mesmeric phenomena of today. Healing by the laying on of hands was common among Jews in Biblical times. Some Native American tribes, particularly the Hopi, developed skilled medical practices. They performed complex surgery without pain, through mind alteration.

The beginnings of Modern Hypnotism started with Anton Mesmer, a young French doctor, in 1775. Called animal magnetism, mesmerism was a system of healing that believed a disturbance of equilibrium of a “universal fluid” caused disease. Magnetic readjustment of the invisible fluid cured the disease. The process involved a large metal tub partially filled with iron filings and bottles submerged in water. Magnets hung overhead, while metal rods extended from the tub and the afflicted grasped them while gentle background music played. Mesmer or one of his students would enter and say: “be healed” – resulting in anything from mild euphoria to extreme convulsions. When symptoms were gone (one to three hours), illness or complaint was also gone. Mesmer cured headaches, paralysis, infections, insanity, blindness, lameness, tumors and gout. Traditional doctors called it a hoax and trickery. A group commissioned by Louis XVI (which included Ben Franklin) decided that “imagination is everything, magnetism is nothing.”

In 1839, James Baird, a British doctor intrigued by stage experiments, magnetized his wife and servants and did several years of experiments. He realized it was not the power of the magnetism that produced the sleep-like state, but something within the subject. He called it Hypnosis, from the Greek word hypnos, meaning sleep. In 1850, James Esdaile, a Scottish surgeon practicing in India, performed over 2,000 surgeries, including 300 major operations using only hypnosis (no anesthesia, antibiotics or antiseptic practices).

Freud popularized the verbal suggestive form of hypnosis and used it extensively in dream interpretation and the treatment of neurosis. Later, he felt the hypnotist left himself open to personal attachment by the subject and said hypnosis was useless. By the 1920s, there was a self-improvement movement and a Frenchman named Emil Coue started the auto-suggestion

technique, saying that each individual could condition or program himself through daily repetition.

From 1920 – 1950, hypnosis was largely used as a theatrical performance. In 1951 Bernard Gindes, MD, wrote *New Concepts of Hypnosis* and demonstrated how effective hypnosis could be in the treatment of physical symptoms.

Since Milton Erikson, MD, introduced indirect techniques of hypnosis in the 1960s and 1970s, hypnosis has been sensationalized in books, movies and on stage and TV, making it difficult to understand clearly. However, research attesting to the healing power of hypnosis has helped it become better understood and used increasingly more in medical settings.

How Does It Work?

The subconscious mind takes in and stores all the messages we receive in our lives, whether genetic, social, religious, or experiential. It does not analyze, as does the conscious mind, but accepts all messages in the literal sense. When asked in hypnosis, the subconscious mind will make available all aspects of habits, behaviors, perceptions, attitudes and responses that may have contributed to dis-comfort or dis-ease in people. By disconnecting those “roots of the problems”, people are able to then replace them with positive perceptions of the way they want to be. The repetition of those positive programs enables them to become the new habits in the subconscious mind.

What You Will Experience

In an initial session, a hypnotist will discuss the presenting issue(s) with a client, probably ask for information about the “growing up” years, explain hypnosis and how the process will unfold, possibly teach how to enter the self-hypnotic state, and begin gathering information that will be helpful in understanding, resolving and replacing the original concern(s) with a new, positive program. A variety of techniques will be used in future sessions to enable the person to achieve her/his goals. Reinforcement techniques saturate the mind with the new program so it becomes the new habit.

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Hugh Sadler, M.Ed., BCCH
Board Certified Consulting Hypnotist

Offices:

222 Auburn Street ~ Suite 102
Portland, Maine 04013

Phone: 207 773 5200 E-mail: sadler@hypno-health.net
Website: www.hypno-health.net

Remember: *Hypnosis can be done in the office, by phone and via Skype.*