



Life-Enhancing Hypnosis:

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

Hypno-Healthgram: Issue 55

**May 2015**

**HYPNOSIS FOR SURGERY: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK**

My original Hypnosis for Surgery Hypno-Healthgram (October 2011) gave an overview of the process of preparing for surgery with hypnosis. It covered history, research, and specific examples of Hypno-Health clients who had prepared for surgery and enjoyed enhanced healing afterward. This “in depth look” elaborates on the nuts and bolts of the process, as well as the healing benefits.

I am both the hypnotist and the client in this instance. For the past twenty years, my right shoulder had become increasingly cranky, painful and restricted in its range of movement. Thinking it was just wear and tear from twenty-two years of repetitive movement during an earlier career as a drywall contractor, I put up with it until an x-ray showed end stage osteoarthritis, with no cartilage remaining in the joint. Hoping to avoid surgery, I undertook twenty sessions with a structural integrationist, thirty with an integrative manual therapist (both of whom tried to manually balance and heal my body by eliminating the effects of emotional experiences) and numerous self-hypnotic sessions. But the damage had seemingly reached the point of no return. Surgery became the last resort. Not happy about that, I resolved to approach it as positively and empoweringly as possible.

Two months before the scheduled surgery, I began thinking about what I wanted to accomplish. I believed I could undergo the operation using only hypnosis as anesthesia, but the surgeon felt the possibility of “unexpected happenings” was too risky. General anesthesia ruled. But I still wanted to make the experience as comfortable as possible. So I began thinking specifically about what I wanted to accomplish. I wrote out the results and recorded them onto pre- and post-surgery CDs. Each script was about 6 minutes long and I recorded them five times consecutively onto the CDs. That meant 30 minutes of continuous suggestions virtually every night, as I entered hypnosis just before going to sleep. Because, new habits can take hold permanently in three to four weeks, I began listening to the pre-op one six weeks before the surgery. After four weeks, I added the post-op messages to the original and then had 60 minutes of suggestions nightly. Because there was considerable repetition on the post op CD, I felt listening to it two weeks pre- surgery and four weeks post-surgery would be sufficient. (I also followed a preparing –yourself-for-surgery protocol courtesy of Dr. Sean McCloy, Medical Director of the Integrative Health Center of Maine [where I work]. It recommended taking a variety of natural supplements in various doses before, the day of, and following surgery, as well as applying arnica cream to the wound. I did everything, including rubbing arnica cream on the incision several times each day.)

Here are my Pre-Op suggestions (X 5 on the CD): “I prepare for, embrace, experience and heal from my right shoulder replacement procedure in a completely comfortable, confident, in-control, completely free of discomfort, synchronistic, peaceful, embraced and integrated, happy, healthy and expeditiously healed way, resulting in optimal and maximal flexibility and mobility in my right shoulder. I totally embrace and accept all these thoughts, feelings, suggestions, accomplishments and achievements in all parts of my mind and body. I repeat and reinforce them regularly, consistently and persistently, saturating my mind and body with their messages in personal, positive, powerful and permanent ways, so they create, reinforce, represent, mandate and become my total reality and enable all my mind/body connections and functions to operate at optimal and maximal levels. I enhance all of the above by completely releasing all fear, apprehension and discomfort in medical settings, enabling me to be deeply relaxed, completely comfortable and amazingly peaceful before, especially during and following the operation. I also have in place a protective shield, before, during and after the surgery, that protects me from any negative or uncomfortable comments by any medical personnel.

To be completely free of discomfort, during and following the operation, I imagine myself in the hot-springs bath, very, very deep within the cave and recesses of my subconscious mind. I am so far removed from the reality of the surgery and the speedy healing follow-up, that it’s like I am deeply asleep, perhaps even unconscious, like I have risen above, transcended all aspects of discomfort so thoroughly that I simply am free and oblivious of them, enabling my healing energies to take hold unimpeded. I imagine myself in the hot-springs bath, very, very deep within the cave and recesses of my subconscious mind. I am so far removed from the reality of the surgery and the speedy healing follow-up, that it’s like I am deeply asleep, perhaps even unconscious, like I have risen above, transcended all aspects of discomfort so thoroughly that I simply am free and oblivious of them, enabling my healing energies to take hold unimpeded.

Realizing healing begins with mental, physical and emotional preparations, I benefit from all the pre-op things I have put in place: lymph drainage therapy; my healthy, anti-inflammatory diet; special supplements; peaceful, powerful thoughts and feelings; regular, restful, restorative sleep; the gathering and joining together of the powerful healing powers of my inner guides and healers; universal healing powers; and the powerful energies of all the people in my life.

During and after the procedure I am completely free of infection because my body, mind and immune system are so powerful they create a protective barrier/shield that is completely impervious to infection. That barrier/shield is reinforced by my array of internal guides and healers. To enhance all the above being possible and permanent, I release all impact, both subconscious and conscious, of fearful and unexpected aspects of previous medical experiences and operations on me, from this moment forward, realizing how much more informed, knowledgeable, professionally experienced and expertised, comfortable, confident and prepared I now am. I release all remaining uncomfortable aspects of my time in my mother’s womb, my premature birth and related complications, and my sense of abandonment from my mother dying two days after I was born. I integrate completely and positively the powerful impact of the mid-stream hypnotic adjustments I made during other minor medical procedures and absolutely know I can do the same if I need to in any way, during and following my shoulder surgery. I experience blissful peace.”

Following are my Post-Op suggestions (X 5 on the CD): “As I recover and heal from my right shoulder surgery in a continuing state of blissful peace, I imagine myself in the hot-springs bath, very, very deep within the cave and recesses of my subconscious mind. I am so far removed from the reality of the surgery and the speedy healing follow-up, that it’s like I am deeply asleep, perhaps even unconscious, like I have risen above, transcended all aspects of discomfort so thoroughly that I simply am free and oblivious of them, enabling my healing energies to take hold unimpeded. I imagine myself in the hot-springs bath, very, very deep within the cave and recesses of my subconscious mind. I am so far removed from the reality of the surgery and the speedy healing follow-up, that it’s like I am deeply asleep, perhaps even unconscious, like I have risen above, transcended all aspects of discomfort so thoroughly that I simply am free and oblivious of them, enabling my healing energies to take hold unimpeded.

I heal from my right shoulder replacement procedure in a completely comfortable, confident, in-control, completely free of discomfort, synchronistic, peaceful, embraced and integrated, happy, healthy and expeditiously healed way, resulting in optimal and maximal flexibility and mobility in my right shoulder. I totally embrace and accept all these thoughts, feelings, suggestions, accomplishments and achievements in all parts of my mind and body. I repeat and reinforce them regularly, consistently and persistently, saturating my mind and body with their messages in personal, positive, powerful and permanent ways, so they create, reinforce, represent, mandate and become my total reality and enable all my mind/body connections and functions to operate at optimal and maximal levels. I enhance all of the above by completely releasing all fear, apprehension and discomfort in medical settings, enabling me to be deeply relaxed, completely comfortable and amazingly peaceful during my recovery and healing.

While healing, I continue to benefit from all the pre-op things I had put in place. Those thoughts, feelings, expectations, accomplishments and achievements, as well as additional ones for my happy, healthy, expeditiously-healed recovery, guide me in positive, powerful ways. So I heal in a completely comfortable, confident, in-control, completely free of discomfort, synchronistic, peaceful, embraced and integrated, happy, healthy and expeditiously-healed way, resulting in optimal and maximal flexibility and mobility in my right shoulder. I imagine myself in the hot-springs bath, very, very deep within the cave and recesses of my subconscious mind. I am so far removed from the reality of the surgery and the speedy healing follow-up, that it’s like I am deeply asleep, perhaps even unconscious, like I have risen above, transcended all aspects of discomfort so thoroughly that I simply am free and oblivious of them, enabling my healing energies to take hold unimpeded.

I am completely free of infection because my body, mind and immune system are so powerful they created a protective barrier/shield that is completely impervious to infection. That barrier/shield is reinforced by my array of internal guides and healers.

I am completely free of all possible symptoms from the anesthesia, such as anxiety, memory issues, breathing difficulties, attention/concentration difficulties, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, etc.

Knowing sleep is crucial for recovery, I sleep deeply, fully and completely every night, both in the recliner and in bed, completely free of discomfort (unless my subconscious mind needs to bring something to my attention), experiencing a sense of calm, tranquil, serene and blissful peace, and imagining all energy and healing powers helping my body heal optimally, maximally and quickly. I likewise experience and enjoy the above sleep benefits whenever a nap seems necessary.

To further enhance healing benefits, I exercise regularly, consistently and persistently, to the fullest extent possible, returning to my jogging, elliptical, walking program as well as doing recommended shoulder exercises both at physical therapy and at home.

All during my speedy recovery I experience and enjoy a sense of blissful peace.”

My shoulder replacement surgery began at 7 a.m. on September 25, 2014. Following the 2 ½ hour procedure, I was brought to a private room. Later in the morning, as I returned from the clutches of the anesthesia, I slowly took in my surroundings and then began to check myself out. I was surprised that I seemed to have good strength and movement in my right hand, wrist and forearm (I had wondered otherwise) and could bend my elbow. A bandage covered my upper arm. As I was focusing on those specific things, I had a growing realization that nothing hurt! Not wanting to get too excited, I tried moving my upper arm very slightly – and found the same lack of pain. As the day progressed, whenever a nurse entered the room and asked about my pain and need for meds, I simply said: “I don’t have any pain”. That led to talking about how that was possible and was repeated with each new nurse. I also had several opportunities to walk the corridor with a nurse and each time asked if we could move a little faster, because the elderly shuffle seemed restricting. The next morning a physical therapist showed me some exercises to do at home and said: “Let’s take a walk”. We went down the hallway and started up a flight of stairs. When we got about half way up, he called a halt, said that was enough, and asked what I had been doing for exercise before the surgery! I went home shortly thereafter.

The only matter of some concern was my not being able to urinate enough at one time to “meet the quota”, which translated to “going home”. The night nurse said that we might have to use a catheter in the morning if the volume hadn’t increased. As we talked about that, I said: “why don’t we do that now, just to make sure”. She said: “It could be very painful”. I replied: “Let’s do it”. She suggested: “I’ll get my tools” and I countered with: “I’ll do a little self-hypnosis”. So we had our little midnight procedure. I felt a very slight pressure but absolutely no pain. She was amazed and said she wished everyone who needed a catheter could do self-hypnosis.

My comfortable recovery continued at home. When I began physical therapy two days after the operation and two times a week for the next 18 weeks, then once a week for the final three weeks, my physical therapist often said I was “ahead of the curve”, which reinforced my healing process. Occasionally, when she moved my arm more than it was comfortable with, or I “overdid” a movement at PT or at home, I did feel some discomfort. But those were only occasional happenings that simply were reminders of my limitations at that time. Otherwise, I was completely free of pain, which was in sharp contrast to my hearing another physical therapist saying to a woman who was also recovering from shoulder replacement surgery and had asked about her pain: “You’ll probably have pain for the entire (up-to-six-months) recovery period”.

Another interesting result happened at my 6-week follow-up with the surgeon. He checked my strength and range of movement and simply said: “Have you been putting something on the incision?” I said: “arnica” – and nothing else was said – so I assumed his question had been a compliment (my physical therapist look at it after that and said it was healing much faster than usual).

Six months after the operation, I reflected on all that had happened and felt very good about being pain free and having much better flexibility and range of motion than I’d had for a very long time. The

titanium and cobalt replacement parts are expected to last fifteen years. My shoulder is stronger than it ever was, due to all the specific exercises, and I've had lots of opportunities to shovel snow this past winter. I'm thinking – with some care – why not more than fifteen years? Maybe I'll have a talk with titanium and cobalt...

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