

# HYPNOSIS

ATTRACTING YOUR SUCCESS

Mind Control, Self Hypnosis and NLP



VICTORIA PRICE

# **Hypnosis**

*ATTRACTING YOUR SUCCESS- MIND CONTROL,  
SELF-HYPNOSIS AND NLP*

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## Introduction

The modern world is full of pressure. As we seek to lead happy, fulfilled lives, we run up against frustration and stress.

There don't seem to be enough hours in the day to do all the things we wish we could. We lead stressful lives and with our busy schedules, have little time to address our inner lives. Many of us never manage to reach our full potential, either because we don't have the time to do so, or because we're too busy to notice the opportunities that present us with the hope of personal growth.

The world is full of promises about increasing our memory and intellectual power and reducing stress, but many of these are ineffective, or only temporarily helpful.

Leaving problems like stress, lack of concentration and motivation unattended can affect our performance, as well as our physical strength and immunity, in the long run. One of the most underrated types of treatment for stress, memory failure and reduced concentration is hypnotherapy.

Hypnotherapy (hypnotism) has many benefits. It is widely used in several fields like medicine, the military and of course, psychological therapy. It is a type of auto suggestive science with which we can maximize our concentration and focus.

Over the years, the understanding of hypnotism as a therapeutic tool has evolved, and people are now much more open to using it as a treatment. For a long time, people believed that hypnotism was an abstract concept that didn't work. Over time, though, these attitudes are being challenged, as our understanding of the subconscious and its role in governing our behaviors is enhanced. In essence, the history of hypnosis is a history of our ability to perceive the truth about how our minds work and to work from those perceptions. As our perception and scientific understanding have grown, so has our ability to utilize the gifts of the hypnotic process.

There is some skepticism in the medical community and also a number of provisos that should be heeded with regard to the use of hypnosis. Some of these include side effects like undue sleepiness following therapy, additional anxiety, headaches and even the generation of false memories.

The last side effect may be particularly true of those undergoing regressive therapy for the treatment of damage caused by childhood abuse. As with any course of psychotherapy or medical treatment, choosing the right practitioner is paramount and care should be taken to ensure that you're working with a trained, licensed professional. If attempting

self-hypnosis, it's always advisable to seek consultation prior, to ensure that your methodology is sound and effective.

Hypnosis can help you transform your life and reach your fullest life potential. It can also help you address old wounds and ongoing behaviors which are holding you back in life. In this book we'll delve deeply into the science of hypnotism.

Each chapter is written in a structured manner to guide you through the nuances of hypnosis. In this book, you will discover the benefits of hypnosis, as well as its various types, applications and methods.

The history of hypnosis and the modern practice of hypnotherapy is diverse and incredibly rich.

I hope to offer you a look into this history and the many applications for its benefits. You'll meet historical figures like the improbable Abbe Faria and the brilliant Milton Erickson. Combat veterans and psychologists. Hucksters and geniuses. I believe you'll find the study of hypnosis to be a rich field of promise and hope for many challenges and modern ailments, as well as highly entertaining.

Read on and discover how hypnosis can help you move a step closer to your goals. I want to thank you for purchasing this book and hope you find it helpful.



# CHAPTER1 - THE HISTORY OF HYPNOSIS

Like the unconscious act of breathing, the hypnotic state has always been part of the human experience. The thing is, we haven't always known how to induce it, maintain it, or use it to heal, help and enhance our lives. In fact, it's really only since the 19th Century that hypnosis has been pursued as a science and a therapeutic tool for the treatment of mental health challenges, as well as physical ailments.

Forms of hypnotism can be seen dotting the pages of recorded history, but their presence is generally in the form of divine intervention, practiced with the aid of an intermediary. Shamans and priestesses, ritual and magic, checker the past of hypnosis, from the pages of the ancient Vedic texts to the papyri of pharaonic Egypt. Even today, the modern attitude toward hypnosis tends to be that of "hocus pocus"; a contemporary reflection of long ago practices which were not scientifically or empirically-based, but firmly rooted in the world of mysticism.

In ancient India, the first recorded instance of hypnosis dates back 3,000 years. Sleep temples were dedicated to the extraction of dreams, said to be sent to believers by the gods. Temple clergy were engaged in ritual practices which were believed to induce a state in which believers could receive divine messages and directives. But these rituals didn't make any distinction between the trance state and actual sleep. That didn't happen until 1017 CE, with the publication of *The Book of Healing*, by Persian physician Avicenna Ibn Sina. Ibn Sina referred to the induced trance state (hypnosis) as "al wahm al-amil", meaning the ability of a subject of hypnosis being able to willingly accept induction ("going under").

Over the ages, hypnosis has appeared in a variety of incarnations, as people sought to understand the apparent connection between hypnosis and the healing process. From Paracelsus (who believed that magnets or "lodestones" passed

over the body were the key), to Father Maximilian Hell (who added steel plates to Paracelsus's equation), a wide array of practitioners sought in vain. That's until a student of Father Hell's, a certain Franz Anton Mesmer, began asking the right questions.

## **Stage hypnosis**

Stage hypnosis, as practiced in the 18th and 19th centuries (and even today, in some entertainment settings) is probably the root of many peoples' suspicion of the hypnosis. While some practitioners (LaFontaine, for example, mentioned below), believed their stage acts were contributing to the clinical development of hypnosis as a medical treatment, others believed that "the show was the thing", As Shakespeare wrote.

As an entertainment, stage hypnosis was extraordinarily popular and continues to be, with varying levels of rigor applied by stage hypnotists. Some of these have been known to place "ringers" in their audiences, who stand in for legitimate audience members, performing pre-arranged "tricks" for the sake of entertainment and to enhance the performer's reputation. Ringers and stooges (discussed below) also serve the purpose of establishing legitimacy, thus increasing suggestibility in audience members.

Performers like these depended on three key ingredients in order to hoodwink their fans (who perhaps were completely fine with being hoodwinked, for a good night out). The first of these was social pressure. In a group setting, people tend to be much more willing to "go along to get along". Nobody wants to be the spoilsport who lets on that he or she hasn't actually been hypnotized. So audience participants in public hypnosis events tend to feign a trance state in order not to spoil the fun. The same effect can be found in numerous settings in which people are willing to safeguard secrecy to prevent inciting the anger of those who believe what they're hearing/seeing.

The second ingredient was the careful selection of audience members to be called to stage to be hypnotized. By asking the audience to follow a suggestion, hypnotists, in concert with assistants observing the audience, could identify those most prone to suggestion and also the most extroverted (and thus entertaining) people present.

Finally, deception played an important part in the spectacle of hypnosis as entertainment, with many performers employing drama and simple magic tricks to dazzle their audiences. Often, deception would involve the performer whispering to participants, once on stage and in the full glare of the footlights, to “pretend”, or to “play the game”. This strategy would offer the audience member, already identified as suggestible and readily compliant, no way out. In for a penny and thus, in for a pound, the hapless participant would be left with the choice of either playing along or running everyone’s night out. Not unlike the use of “ringers”, “stooges” were employed by performers to follow them from town to town and act as the first audience members on stage. This practice served the purpose of establishing validity and ensured that other audience members would follow suit, as well as undergirding the performer’s “street cred”.

Stage hypnotists also modelled a cult of personality, portraying themselves as possessing charismatic gifts which made it possible for them to create puppets of other people, once hypnotized. As we’ll see later on in this book, though, that’s not the aim of hypnosis, nor its reality. In truth, hypnosis is only guided by the hypnotist. The stage hypnotist of the entertainment’s heyday is, in fact, the locus classicus of the term “Svengali effect”. With the hypnotist cast in the role of mysterious and all powerful puppet master, audience members would be seen to have lost control of their wills, in confrontation of the overwhelming charisma of the hypnotist. As we’ll see a little later on, these practices were so widespread in the United Kingdom, that legislation was required to curtail them, which led to the Hypnotism Act of 1952.

Throughout the 20th Century and to the present day, stage hypnosis continues to attract enthusiastic audiences. One of the best known stage hypnotists is the Amazing Kreskin, who has been vocal in his opposition to the unscrupulous practices of some of his fellows, particularly the use of ringers and stooges. Kreskin, however, is also remembered for his prediction of a mass UFO sighting over Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2002. Naturally, this didn't come to pass, but hundreds of UFO enthusiasts camped out in anticipation of the non-event, nonetheless. Kreskin's subsequent media release claimed that the entire affair had been a stunt to prove the power of suggestion in the post-9/11 world. But it seemed he'd been planning to stage such an event since 1973. At that time, he claimed the power of suggestion could "make people see flying saucers". So, despite his apparent distaste for ringers and stooges, it seems this well-known hypnotist's self-perception also erred on the side of "Svengali".

Many hypnotists of the period, though, were skilled in the craft and were genuinely able to induce "trance states" for the entertainment of their audiences. As we'll read shortly, James Braid was inspired to establish his own school of thought around the practice of hypnosis because of a stage hypnosis show he'd attended. Despite some of the practices inherent, then, it's clear that behind the "roar of the grease paint, the smell of the crowd" there lay a solid basis for what was to become a viable and scientifically-supported clinical discipline.

## **Mesmer**

If you've ever wondered where the term "mesmerize" came from, look no further. This Austrian physician is considered to be the father of the western understanding of hypnosis and it's from his name the term derives.

Mesmer's study of hypnosis began in 1770, when he started to research what he referred to as "animal magnetism". This was also referred to as "mesmerism", a term which endures to this day.

Magnetism, in general, had been studied as early as Paracelsus, but with (perhaps unsurprisingly) mixed results. It seems that early adherents of magnetism had associated this energetic reality with the cosmos, the pull of the planets in their heavenly rotations and the concurrent effect of minerals on the human body. But Mesmer saw magnetism in an entirely different light. He posited that this energetic force was present only in the human/animal world.

The term “animal” in the phrase “animal magnetism”, doesn’t have the sexual connotation, in Mesmer’s usage, that we often associate with it today. Rather, Mesmer used the word “animal” to refer to the Latin animus, which literally means “breath”. The term is a direct offshoot of the Creation narrative in Genesis, in which divine breath animates the human proto-type and which, in other forms, animates all living creatures. In modern Latin-based languages, the word animus is still extant. In Italian, for example, anima means “soul”. And so it seems that Mesmer drew a direct line from the magnetic energy to the soul in all living creatures, particularly the human soul.

But Mesmer’s methodologies were called into question by the medical community of his day and ultimately, he died in obscurity, despite the fact that his defense of mesmerism employed what is most probably the first experiment involving the use of a placebo as a control against its efficacy. Banished from France, after being found guilty by an examining committee of propagating false medical practices, Mesmer was to die in obscurity.

### **Abbe Faria**

Following Mesmer is an unlikely figure in the scientific development of hypnosis. Jose Custodio de Faria was a 18th Century monk from Goa, India. He represents a departure from Mesmer’s ideas and actively rejected the concept of “animal magnetism”. Rather, Faria stated that hypnosis could be achieved by the power of suggestion. This is, in fact, the modern understanding of hypnosis. Perhaps reaching back through India’s long relationship with the hypnotic state,

Abbe Faria brought the oriental concept of the practice to Paris, in the early part of the 19th Century, where he became known as Abbe Faria.

Faria also developed the idea of auto-suggestion, claiming that it was a powerful tool. It might well be wondered what role his discoveries took in the French Revolution, as Abbe Faria famously led a group of insurgents into its fiery belly. With him was another of Mesmer's disciples, Marquis Chastenot de Puysegur.

Abbe Faria's research into the claims of mesmerism saw him conducting experiments on as many as 5,000 people. His research led him to reframe Mesmer's conclusions and establish the term "lucid sleep" as the first description of what was later to become known as hypnosis. His research also caused Faria to conclude that the process of hypnosis is driven by the activity of the subject and rooted in the imagination of the same.

Faria was soon to become a cause celebre among those curious of Paris. His "séances" featured the use of suggestion, auto-suggestion and post-hypnotic suggestion. He pursued these public events for the sake of research, but it's undeniable that his audiences were both fascinated and amused. Abbe Faria was, in fact, the first hypnotist to take to the stage. But it wasn't long before the world caught up with this unusual and pioneering monk.

The Catholic clergy began to denounce his work as emanating from "the Devil". The public denunciations led to a decline in public interest and the eventual retreat of Faria to cloistered religious life. It was at this time he was to write his famous work, *On the Cause of Lucid Sleep*. Published in 1819, the book refutes Mesmer's concept of animal magnetism and stands as the first published work to identify the power of suggestion and the willingness of the subject to submit to it, as the basis of what we now understand as hypnosis. Faria was to die the year his pioneering work was published.

## **James Braid**

The 19th Century Scottish surgeon and scientist, James Braid, is considered to be the first practicing hypnotherapist. Braid rejected the popular assertion that hypnosis was a kind of “cure all” for all manner of physical and psychological illnesses. Instead, he regarded the modern day multi-disciplinarian approach as the most effective means of curing illness, as it took into account individual patient needs.

First encountering the idea of magnetism at a public demonstration by Charles LaFontaine, Braid became convinced of the principles on display, following three visits to LaFontaine’s demonstrations. He was then to launch his own investigation into the phenomenon. His first departure from LaFontaine’s claims was to declare magnetism as invalid as a primary source of the observed phenomena. Much like Faria, he further claimed that the hypnotic effect did not arise from any action on the part of those practicing magnetism, but rather from the subject and the subject alone.

Braid’s first experiments were pursued to confirm his assertion – that the efficacy of hypnosis is determined by the subject and not the hypnotist, and that the hypnotist acts only as a guide in the process. He further confirmed this assertion through self-hypnosis. His research proved that hypnosis was not dependent on any exceptional quality on the part of the hypnotist, but rather the subconscious approval of the subject to undergo the process. At the time he made these assertions, practitioners like LaFontaine were claiming special powers and extraordinary charisma on their parts as the reason for the effectiveness of their hypnotic adventures. Braid proved this not to be the case, thus blowing the pseudo-scientific lid off the hypnosis of his day.

Not unlike Abbe Faria, when news of Braid’s research reached the ears of religious zealots, he was denounced from the pulpit. Hugh M’Neile delivered a lengthy sermon accusing both LaFontaine and Braid of “satanic agency”. The

sermon led Braid to reach out to the controversial minister and invite him to one of his lectures. To this invitation, M'Neile's response was to have the entire contents of his pulpit polemic against mesmerism published in Liverpool paper. Braid responded with a pamphlet of his own. This pamphlet now stands as a rare and eloquent defense of hypnosis.

### **Liebeault (The Nancy School)**

Ambrose-Auguste Liebeault advanced the theories of Abbe Faria, stating that hypnosis was a natural state brought about by suggestion. Strongly influenced by the work of James Braid, Liebeault continued in his tradition of hypnosis as a therapeutic tool. A very famous visitor to the Nancy School was Sigmund Freud, who was later to explore some of the claims of hypnosis, while never actually arriving at an affirmation of it as a therapy. Emile Coue was to study there extensively and is the next historical figure in our chronology of the development of hypnosis.

### **Emile Coue**

In this student of Liebeault's Nancy School, we see the evolution of hypnosis from its consignment to the fringes of the scientific world, to taking its place as a facet of psychotherapy. Emile Coue developed the idea of "optimistic" auto-suggestion, treating many people using this method and quite successfully, without charging for his services.

You'll have heard the phrase: "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better". This was the cornerstone of Coue's method and served as a foundational auto-suggestive tool for his patients. Coue prescribed that these words be said at regular intervals throughout the day, as many as twenty times per day to obtain the full effect of the affirmative statement. He also believed that it was most important to repeat these words at the beginning and also at the end of each day. In a manner of speaking, it's a psychoanalytic "Shema Israel" for those seeking



to better themselves.

Coue believed that his patients had the power of healing within themselves and that the root of that self-healing power was a strong conscious will. He firmly believed, however, that subconscious knowledge could be employed through acts of imagination on the part of his patients. He thought of himself as more a guide, than a healer, believing that auto-suggestion could actually alter the fabric of our respective realities.

Through his explorations of hypnosis as a therapeutic tool, Coue confirmed the growing suspicion among practitioners of the time, that no one could be hypnotized without their consent and co-operation. Like Braid, he insisted that hypnosis was entirely dependent on the subject and not the practitioner. He also believed that patients, by conscientiously replacing their negative thinking around illness with positive thinking and repetitive auto-suggestion, were the authors of their own healing (so long as that healing was within reason and did not extend to limbs growing back, or other farfetched hope for outcomes).

At the root of Coue's assertions was the belief that, for the method of auto-suggestion to work, the patient had to be invested in what was being suggested, through the active application of the will. For example, a lingering belief on the part of the patient that healing would never occur could block progress. Believing ardently that healing would occur cleared the way for the efficacy of auto-suggestion. The imaginative power of the patient was the key to the success of Coue's method.

The contemporary author, Cyrus Henry Brooks wrote that Coue enjoyed a rate of success for healing his patients of no less than 93%. He further claimed that the small percentage of patients frustrated by Coue's methods suffered from an inability to fully embrace it.

## **Hypnosis in War Time**

### ***World War I***

In their book, *Shell Shock and its Lessons*, Professors Grafton Elliott Smith and Tom Hatherly Pear, wrote of their experience in treating men traumatized by life in the trenches during World War I. Written in 1917, there was not yet a clinical definition for what we today know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but these doctors were already treating it with hypnosis and seeing encouraging results.

In a lecture at Manchester University, Dr. Pear related that research that had taken place since the publication of his co-authored book had revealed that treatment of shell shock by hypnosis could fully restore those traumatized by war, curing them fully of the neuroses arising, citing several cases he'd treated.

In a February, 1920 issue of the *British Medical Journal*, Dr. William Brown expanded on this theme, writing that the dissociation of mental functions due to shell shock could be fully restored by the use of hypnosis. Citing walking, speaking, and even limb paralysis, Dr. Brown wrote that hypnosis, by recalling in the mind of the patient the circumstances under which the faculty had been lost, it might be fully regained through the agency of hypnotherapy.

One particular case, Dr. Brown writes, convinced him that in calling up the memory of the injury, the patient was enabled to make contact with the emotions around it and thus, be freed of the infirmity. A soldier at Ypres had been left with a severe tremor in one of his hands, after having been blown up on the front line. Under hypnosis, he was taken back to the scene of the injury and walked through the chain of events. After he'd been walked through the incident under hypnosis, he awoke to find that his hand no longer trembled. He further discovered that he was able to shave himself for the first time since the day of the bombing.

By placing his patients under hypnosis and returning them to the scene of their trauma and moreover, asking them to relive it, Dr. Brown found that the site of the complaint was, more often than not, the emotion surrounding the incident. By unlocking that repressed emotion under hypnosis, Dr. Brown was able to return his patients to health and free them from the neurotic manifestation of the trauma they'd suffered.

But hypnosis was, at the time, still viewed with a certain amount of suspicion (and superstition). Religious institutions, particularly, viewed hypnosis as an inappropriate plumbing of the psyche better left to communion with the Almighty, through prayer. Sadly, the result of traditional attitudes concerning hypnosis cost many war veterans mightily. Their suffering stands as a testament against anti-scientific attitudes toward alternative therapies.

### ***World War II – A Sailor's Story***

The story of Pat Meyers, a veteran of World War II is a stunning example. Meyers was in the Navy, stationed in the South Pacific. Like many combat veterans, he remembers little of those times, having blocked much of the experience out. One incident that stands out, though, is the suicide plane that hit his ship while he was on sick leave. Several of his brothers-in-arms perished that day, but Meyers was on shore, recovering from an illness.

The guilt he felt was crushing, as one of those killed had been standing in for him. He believed that the life of the man sacrificed should have rightfully been his own. Obsessed by the thought, Meyers began to descend into a life long battle with mental illness.

At the war's end, he returned home, but was never right in his own skin. He drank, but this provided no relief. Unable to sleep, he did his best to hide his inner turmoil, refusing to discuss what had happened out there on the ocean with anyone. And so, looking for a way to conquer the demons which had followed

him from the waters of the South Pacific, he constructed a fortress in which he might conceal his symptoms. He turned to intense work as a salesman.

But even his work couldn't hide the symptoms of his illness. His family came to fear his outbursts, which were sudden. He was unpredictable, given to punching holes in walls and violent fits of temper. Restless, as though running from the impact of that suicide plane, he dragged his family across the USA, from place to place. They were never anywhere long enough to put down roots. Meyers couldn't name what was wrong, but his family knew it was there, lurking just under his turbulent surface.

When he finally retired, the pressure which had built up inside him for four decades finally became too much. He was committed to a psychiatric hospital and began to understand just how ill he'd become. Following that first commitment, Meyer was to be committed five more times and for fifteen years, was treated for depression, enduring shock therapy, the administration of pharmaceutical drugs and attending group counselling sessions. Numerous times he contemplated suicide, indulging in reckless behavior he hoped would end his suffering, once and for all.

Finally, a doctor at the Veteran's Administration recommended that he try hypnosis. That's when Meyers began investigating the possibility that hypnosis might help him get to the bottom of what was making him ill. He found the book, *Self-Hypnosis for a Better Life*. Authored by William Hewitt, Meyers found within the book's pages what he'd been looking for. He began to follow some of Hewitt's recommendations. He learned to rid his mind of negativity and to transport himself to pleasant places (like the beach) where he could focus on what was beautiful in life.

It was not long after starting his journey toward wellness, with the help of Hewitt's book, that he found he longer was forced to turn away from television shows about WWII, or leave conversations which discussed it. He was suddenly

rid of the demons that had chased him from the South Pacific and across the United States for four decades of his life.

Today, Meyers says he wishes he'd known about the healing powers of hypnosis sooner. That knowledge might have spared him and those he loves a life time of suffering and institutionalization. His answer to that deficit of care is to share what he knows with others, taking great pains to look for and reach out to other veterans suffering the effects of war trauma.

## **Hypnosis goes mainstream**

### ***Clark Hull***

Hull's 1933 book *Hypnosis and Sensibility* is considered to be the genesis of the modern study of hypnosis. It was his extensive research, as laid out on this book, which finally put to bed the belief that hypnosis was just another sleep stage. Hull's work also debunked the claims of stage hypnotists and their insistence that traditional hypnosis could lead to increased capacity in any number of human functions. While Hull agreed that hypnosis had some applications to healing, he put to bed the hucksterism until then, associated with the science of hypnosis. This represents a legitimization of hypnosis as a medical therapy and its entry into the mainstream of society.

### ***Early approval in the medical community***

It wasn't until 1952 that the British Hypnotism Act legislated to regulate the indiscriminate use of hypnosis as a public entertainment. This put its practitioners on notice that their claims of miracle cures would no longer be tolerated. This, in turn, led to another important milestone in the history of hypnosis, which was approval by the British Medical Association of 1955. The BMA approved the use of hypnosis for the treatment of neuroses, as well as its use as an analgesic during childbirth and for the management of other types of pain. Concurrently, the British Medical Association mandated the study of

hypnosis as part of doctor training and certification.

Developments in England were closely followed by approval on the part of the American Medical Association, in 1958, for the use of hypnosis in a variety of treatments. The AMA was somewhat more cautious in its approval, though, pointing to various aspects of hypnosis that were, in the Association's estimation, to be approached with caution. Only two years later, the American Psychological Association endorsed the practice of hypnosis as a branch discipline of Psychology.

Then, in 1961, André Weitzenhoffer and Ernest Hilgard developed the Stanford Scales. This tool allowed clinicians to measure patient susceptibility to hypnosis. The scales were broken down by demographic markers, including age and gender.

### ***Milton Erickson***

One of modern hypnosis's most prominent contributors is Erickson, who is the father of Ericksonian Hypnosis and also the founder of the American Society for Clinical Hypnosis. He is remembered for his sterling contributions to the understanding of the subconscious mind as the source of solutions to waking dilemmas and the root of healing for psychological and psychiatric neuroses.

Milton Erickson is notable for many reasons, but some of these are the challenges he overcame to become such a formidable contributor to the practice of modern day hypnosis, as well as a variety of therapeutic models in psychology and psychotherapy. Erickson was born both color blind and dyslexic. He was also afflicted with paralyzing polio. It was this condition which led him to his first auto-hypnotic experience, as a boy.

On what was to be his last night on earth (according to the doctors he'd overheard telling her mother he would be dead by morning), Erickson resolved to see his final sunset. As he gazed out the window at the sky, lit up by the sun's

final, fading glory, he became aware that in doing so, he'd blocked out the tree in the yard. He knew it was there. He just chose to see the sunset unobstructed by the tree.

After this experience, Erickson lost consciousness for three full days. When he awoke from his coma, he became aware of his diminished ability to communicate, which impressed upon him the importance of being able to communicate without words. He began observing the behavior of his large family, noting that what was said was not always what was meant. Without the ability to speak or move, his powers of observation became extraordinarily keen and these extended to his observation of a baby sister, just learning to crawl. As he watched her, willing herself to use her body to move around, he began to wonder if he couldn't will himself to do the same.

Erickson began to spend his days practicing a new form of entertainment – visualization. He drew on his memories of life before being stricken with polio; how it felt to be able to move around at will. Painstakingly, he visualized himself doing so again, by applying his muscle memory to his will. He also used auto-suggestion to convince himself that he would soon be able to move and speak. Slowly, he began to regain motor ability in more and more parts of his body. Finally, he was able to move his arms and to speak.

But he wasn't done. Erickson's goal was to gain full function and so, he embarked on a punishing canoe trip. He posited that his ability to row a canoe would eventually result in his ability to walk. He was right. Following his ordeal, he was able to stand and eventually, to walk with the assistance of a cane. The canoe trip was to be the basis of the therapeutic method of using physical ordeals to overcome psychological challenges.

Later in his life, he began to experience the consequences of his forceful re-awakening of his once paralyzed muscles. Once again, though, he was able to overcome his incapacity by using self-hypnosis. Following his recovery,

Erickson was sadly confined to a wheelchair, suffering from residual pain. He controlled his pain by using the techniques he'd learned in his earlier experiences. These experiences and Erickson's consistent challenges to them led to the establishment of Ericksonian Hypnosis.

It was in 1973 that Erickson's work in the hypnosis community was to come to wider clinical attention, with the publication of Jay Haley's book, *Uncommon Therapy*. His work became a cornerstone of modern psychotherapeutic and psychological practice. A little boy who'd been subject to multiple life challenges not only overcame those challenges, but wove them into a unique and incredibly valuable tool for clinicians all over the world. Through almost insurmountable circumstances of adversity, Erickson's legacy grew directly from his encounter against odds that might defeat lesser people.

## **Hypnotherapy in the contemporary context**

### ***Renaissance in the UAE***

The 21st Century is seeing a renaissance in the use of hypnosis as a therapeutic tool. Recently, the United Arab Emirates has been pioneering a variety of applications, providing new validity and currency to hypnotherapy.

The Sheikh Khalifa Medical City (SKMC) is an initiative of the UAE government. It is now putting into practice the use of hypnotherapy to treat everything from cigarette smoking to clinical obesity. Nasser Al Reyemi is the resident hypnotist. He relates that he sees at least ten patients every week for a variety of complaints.

Al Reyemi sees hypnosis as a different form of "talk therapy", but with strikingly similar aims. As a complementary therapy to other medical treatments, he claims that hypnotherapy can see measurable results in patients in only twenty minutes.



Dr. Al Reyemi doesn't stop at the hypnosis session, though, he assigns his patients work to do off site and says that he's been successful in helping people with addictions, depression and a number of mental health challenges. He blames historical suspicion about hypnotherapy on its sporadic use as a clinically valid treatment option, as well as skepticism in the medical community. But his work makes abundantly clear that hypnosis is a professionally valid alternative, as well as a complement to other, more traditional therapies.

### ***Mesothelioma***

A form of cancer usually arising from exposure to asbestos, Mesothelioma patients are finding new hope in hypnotherapy and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP, which we'll discuss later on).

Because of the invasive and often unpleasant nature of cancer treatments, hypnotherapy can provide patients with a form of support not generally considered in traditional medicine. The calming effect of the therapy can also provide patients with an important tool in pain management, as the disease and its treatment progresses.

Hypnotherapy can also put patients and their families at peace with the probability of early death usually associated with the disease. The natural hypnotic state allows patients access to their subconscious and thus, a means of apprehending the beauty of life. This is a gateway to understanding the nature of life as transitory, with death being a normal part of it. It's also a way for patients to make peace with what's happening to their bodies, as mesothelioma is known to lead to body dysmorphia, putting patients at odds with their physical beings.

### ***A quitter's story***

51 year-old Ramzi Abdalbaki had smoked cigarettes for three decades when he decided it was time to join the ranks of the legions of people leaving the habit behind. Over the many years he'd smoked, Abdalbaki had tried to call it a day

numerous times. But stress and a busy life always found him lighting up again. Most days, he would puff his way through a packet of 20 cigarettes. When the stress levels in his life got the better of him, though, he would often smoke up to two packets.

Finally, lamenting his inability to quit, Abdalbaki decided on a last ditch method – hypnotherapy. He approached the therapy with a great deal of trepidation and suspicion. Having tried pretty well everything else, though and genuinely wanting to stop smoking, he finally managed to talk himself into it.

After only one session, he was able to quit. But hypnotherapy isn't magic. Hypnotherapy works primarily because of the patient's willingness to address the problem the therapy is sought to either mitigate or eliminate. So the primary mover in the process is the patient. It's essential that patients genuinely and wholeheartedly want to leave the smoking habit behind, forever.

Three years after undergoing hypnotherapy, Abdalbaki has, to date, never smoked another cigarette. Healthy and regularly attending a gym to work out, he's never looked back. In only one hypnotherapy session, his life changed for the better. Best of all? He's lost more than thirty pounds (and people say you gain weight when you quit).

### ***Lifted out of depression***

Steven Billing had been struggling with the damage depression was inflicting on his life for years. A recent break up had again plunged this mid-50s man into the deep valley depression sufferers often traverse in the course of their struggle with the disease.

Finally, Billing decided to try hypnotherapy. He wanted his life back and the downward spiral of clinical depression was ruining any chance of that happening. Within five sessions with a licensed practitioner, Billing began to see the light at the end of the tunnel he'd been in for far too long. Using the

classical method of asking Billing to visualize going ever downward in an elevator, his therapist was able to get Billing to a place of calmly discussing the nature of his illness and how he could more effectively manage it.

A primary victim of Billing's illness was his relationships, especially with his romantic partners. His illness had made him clingy and terrified of abandonment. He is now happy with himself and so, much less prone to the type of insecurity which repeatedly led to his relationships being ruined by it. Enabled to see the source of his relationship problems, he's no longer likely to plummet into the depths of depression over a breakup, but to see it for the life experience it is.

Steven Billing is happy now and pursuing his creative dreams as a playwright. But his temperament made him uniquely suited to hypnotherapy as a way to address depression. His ability to be absorbed by pursuits like reading and an additional ability to visualize desired courses of action and outcomes are attributes that pointed toward successful treatment.

### **Modern hypnotherapy and PTSD**

We've read in this section about the early understanding of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as "shell shock", in the wake of the First World War. We've also read the story of the WWII sailor who was able to heal himself of war time trauma by using self-hypnosis, after decades of suffering. But how is hypnotherapy in the modern world helping those traumatized by war and other forms of violence?

### **Some facts about PTSD**

PTSD was first recognized as a treatable anxiety disorder in 1980. It was added by the American Psychiatric Association to its manual of mental disorders, even though there was some controversy surrounding its diagnosis. Some in the clinical community even resisted naming PTSD as a disorder.

One of the most important diagnostic criteria for medical professionals is the presence of a traumatic event, triggering the syndrome. Not an inherent psychological reality for any given patient, PTSD arises when catastrophic trauma is experienced, thus changing the quality of the patient's life and the ability to function normally.

Trauma is the key word in understanding the nature of PTSD and this effect may be experienced in numerous ways. As an event which causes PTSD, the trauma must be seen to have resulted in sustained dysfunction in the person suffering the trauma for no less than one month and is characterized by some or all of the following symptoms:

- A sustained inability to concentrate for any length of time and memory loss.
- Irrational fears and jumpiness.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Anxiety.
- Chronic pain.
- Irritability and outbursts.
- Having the same nightmares/dreams repeatedly.
- Flashbacks to the trauma.
- Lack of self-regulation; out-of-proportion reactivity
- Phobias (fear of particular objects, situations, people, animals).

War veterans are those most commonly associated with PTSD, but the syndrome can manifest in people who have experienced trauma resulting from a wide variety of violent acts, including terrorism of all kinds, as well as bombings,

serial bullying, rape, stalking, home invasion, robbery, kidnapping, natural disasters or other civil upheaval.

PTSD victims often respond to triggers which return them to the site of the traumatic event by eliciting a psychological identification, or parallel. A combat veteran may respond to a sudden, loud noise by feeling as though suddenly returned to the battlefield. A rape victim may over react to being approached by a man in certain situations, because the appearance or behavior of the man reminds her of the attacker. A victim of bullying may see the threat of being bullied again in events in the workplace, or in something a colleague has said that's triggered a memory of the previous bullying. Triggers can be many different things, depending on the nature of the original trauma, but the effect is that the PTSD sufferer will feel as though they've returned to the incident and that it's occurring again.

The disorder can manifest itself in numerous ways, including substance abuse, inability to work (resulting in eventual job loss) self-harm and domestic abuse and violence. Soldiers returning from both Gulf Wars have displayed an overwhelming tendency to domestic violence, to the point of family murder-suicides, vehicular mayhem and extreme social dysfunction. The effects of the disorder are debilitating and isolating and, left untreated, can result in years of mental illness for those who suffer from it.

In the USA alone, it's estimated that more than seven and a half million people suffer from PTSD. Those who experience mass violence (as in combat, terrorist attacks, or sustained, genocidal actions) suffer from the disorder at a rate of 67%, much higher than the rate of those who live through natural disasters. Women have a greater tendency to suffer from PTSD than men do (at a rate almost double that of men), and children may also experience the disorder. While many who experience trauma are able to recover over time and return to normal life, those who suffer from PTSD require clinical intervention in order to function as

they did prior to the traumatic incident.

### ***Hypnotherapy as a proven treatment for PTSD***

As the storehouse of the non-rational mind, the subconscious holds the key to our emotions and responses to the world around us. In the PTSD sufferer, the subconscious mind begins to invade the conscious mind's function, resulting in dysfunction. Memories and the sensations associated with them (particularly fear) bubble up to the surface, interrupting the normal conduct of life. Hypnotherapeutic treatment of PTSD seeks to build a bridge between the subconscious and conscious mind, in order to assist patients suffering with the disorder to acknowledge the trauma's presence in their lives. In doing this, the patient will be more readily able to return to normal function, having put the subconscious back in its rightful place.

A 1990 study, conducted by J. Clin Psychiatry points to the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in the treatment of PTSD. The study found a distinct similarity between the hypnotic state and the disorder's symptoms, particularly those concerning the immediacy of the traumatic even in the victim's mind (reliving the event). Building on the findings of two earlier studies, in which Vietnam veterans were proven to be much more susceptible to the hypnotic state, it was further found that those suffering abuse in childhood were similarly susceptible. The dissociative state found in both groups led research to conclude that hypnotherapeutic intervention was especially useful as a treatment option.

Hypnotic therapy offers PTSD sufferers access to memories they have no control over in the conscious state, despite their immediacy and manifestation as symptoms of the disorder. The clinical application of the therapy permits the controlled release of memories associated with the traumatic event, allowing patients to deconstruct their conscious, ongoing neuroses associated with it and gain mastery over them. The therapy seeks to connect the traumatic event to the ability of the patient to embrace it as part of the past and a story which has

occurred and thus, belongs there. This assists patients with gaining the ability to maintain the memory as history and not present reality. PTSD patients may also be given the tools for effective self-hypnosis, permitting them to gain control of their own therapy and return to a sense of control of their lives in doing so.

### ***Rape victims and hypnotherapy***

Globally, almost 50% of women and girls under the age of 18 will experience sexual assault. In a survey conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, 53% of school-aged girls reported that they had endured some form of sexual harassment. While rape happens to men and boys, too, it is almost always perpetrated by men. Sexual violence is endemic in almost every society in the world, including the United States.

Rape victims suffer disproportionately from PTSD, at a rate of one in two (50%). Regardless, many women are reluctant to report sexual attacks, due to societal attitudes about sexual violence. This is true of both male and female victims. Shame is a strong motivator in failure to report, as well as victim doubt about the nature of the assault and whether the victim “deserved” to be attacked. Societal attitudes about violence of this nature continue to inhibit the ability of rape victims to recover from their trauma and to reconcile themselves to the event itself as a circumstance beyond their control.

But as with other PTSD sufferers, rape victims can benefit from hypnotherapy by gaining access to repressed memories of the event, as well as connecting the trauma to ongoing symptomatic manifestations. A challenge with the success of hypnotherapy for victims of rape is the level of susceptibility in patients, due to the lack of trust (particularly trust in male clinicians) required to undergo hypnosis. Victims seeking hypnotherapy to address the impact of PTSD on their lives should seek a licensed practitioner with strong recommendations in the professional and patient community, for this reason. Taking the time to find a professional who the patient feels can be completely trusted and building that

trust through the clinical relationship, is key to the success of this therapeutic model in rape victims, in particular.

### ***Regression therapy for childhood abuse***

People who have experienced trauma in childhood (sexual abuse, physical abuse, natural disasters, communal violence) often grow into adulthood carrying with them a variety of repressed memories which rise to the surface in neuroses, acting out and other forms of mental disturbance. The aim of regression therapy is to gain access to these repressed memories and unlock their content. Engaging in this therapeutic option can help victims of childhood trauma regain control of their lives and emotions.

One of the most widespread criticisms of this form of therapy is that unlocking painful memories can lead to temporarily increased dysfunction in patients, causing disruption in family life (where a family member is the perpetrator) and in other relationships, including those at work. But for the victim, this form of therapy can also be intensely liberating. It is known to have led to the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against children, also. At the same time, the possibility of “false memories” (also called pseudo memories) is a danger which must be closely monitored by the clinical professional in play, as these can lead to unfair accusations, prosecution and even wrongful imprisonment.

Under this therapy, patients are hypnotized in order to help them relive traumatic events and re-experience the emotions accompanying them. Some of these may be extreme rage and intense sadness. In reliving the emotion, the adult is given access to their childhood emotional landscape via the memories being relived in hypnotherapeutic regression therapy. In returning them, diachronically, to the age at which the trauma occurred, the patient is invited to re-enter the world of the trauma and to finally gain control over its emotional and physical content, leading to liberation from adult symptoms.



One of the most prevalent resulting adult psychological illnesses is Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), particularly in women. By returning women who suffer from this illness to its psychogenesis (illness's origin), hypnotherapy can provide relief. But what about when regression therapy goes terribly wrong? Dr. Linda Baird's work in the field of BPD's psychogenesis has yielded some interesting results, for example, BPD sufferers were found to have suffered from a deficit of attachment to parental figures in childhood. But regression therapy for these cases has shown mixed results, some of them disastrous and tragic. The same is true of attachment therapy for children who experience neglect and abuse, as detailed in the following account of a therapeutic encounter which ended in the death of the child.

### ***Regression therapy case study – Candace Newmaker***

The tragic case of Candace Newmaker was widely reported and has a heavy impact on the reputation of regression therapy, particularly the branch known as “rebirthing”. This girl was born into a life of neglect and abuse. As a result, she and her brother were taken into custody by government authorities and the rights of her parents terminated. She was then adopted.

Over the first two years of her life with the adoptive mother, Candace's behavior was (understandably) difficult and at times, even violent. These problems gradually grew worse, encompassing violent acts against household pets and pyromania. The adoptive mother decided that she and Candace would participate in an intensive course of therapy which included the controversial “rebirthing” methodology. As part of the therapy, Candace was wrapped in a heavy blanket (simulating the pre-natal environment, intended to regress her to the time just before her birth and encourage her to be “re-born” and “attach” to the adoptive mother).

Despite the child's pleading, she was kept inside the blanket for 70 minutes, resulting in her inability to receive sufficient oxygen for brain function. She was

rescued by paramedics, following a call to emergency services. Unfortunately, she entered a vegetative state once in hospital and was declared brain dead by way of asphyxiation. Those involved, including the adoptive mother, were later charged with negligence and child abuse, resulting in death.

As the result of the Candace Newmark case, the state in which the incident occurred passed Candace's Law, outlawing attachment therapy and rebirthing therapy. Federal legislation from both the US House of Representatives and Senate followed, to curtail the practice of this radical and dangerous therapy.

But regression therapy in other forms can be highly successful for children who experience trauma and become developmentally arrested at the age the trauma occurred. A traumatic incident (abandonment, physical or sexual abuse, natural disaster, war) can cause children to be delayed indefinitely, until intervention is pursued. One of these interventions is age regression therapy.

## ***Age regression therapy***

Trauma can severely curtail a child's development, particularly in terms of necessary emotional facility. A ten-year-old child, for example, due to a trauma experienced in early childhood, may fail to develop a conscience (usually developed by age eight). The ramifications are obvious, as it's the conscience which prevents us from engaging in hurtful behavior. Lack of a conscience is often associated with sociopathic or psychopathic behavior. While children may not be diagnosed with either of these pathologies, it's notable that failing to detect this deficit in childhood can lead to the modelling of the socially corrosive and destructive symptoms generally associated with them.

Abuse in early childhood may preclude the development of a conscience in order to accommodate survival. In an abusive situation, in which a child has been mistreated by adult caregivers, the message received in the undeveloped mind of a child is that this mistreatment represents normalcy. Abuse involving neglect may force some children living in these conditions to pursue behaviors deemed unacceptable in normal family situations (lying, stealing) in order to go on living. Without reliable models of what differentiates normal life from abusive life, children can be rendered unable to develop an understanding of what it means to live within normal social parameters.

Violent behavior, an inability to relate to other children, a preoccupation with fire and other pathological symptoms may indicate a child who has been abused and requires intervention. Children like these can genuinely benefit from therapies which employ regression to the age at which the trauma was experienced, under the care of a licensed professional. As we've seen the case of Candace Newmark, it's essential that clinicians be thoroughly vetted and credentialed through reliable professional associations. In the field of regression therapy, the life of a child is at stake and so these measures are absolutely essential.

For adults, regression therapy can lead to remission of neurotic symptoms arising from childhood abuse, whether partially or entirely. As is the case with PTSD sufferers, the resolution of trauma may include additional self-therapy for the maintenance of symptom mitigation. This may include the practice of auto-suggestion and self-hypnosis. Therapies like these can allow the victim to make peace with the world and live a life free of anxiety, fear and dysfunction.

## ***Criticism***

The 2010 book, *Miscarriage of Memory* (Bourgoyne, et al), details some of the challenges of pseudo memory in the conduct of regression therapy. Seeking help for adult psychological complaints, patients may approach clinicians who hold to a genuine belief that the problem lies in the distant past – in childhood. In pursuing regression therapy, there is sometimes a tendency on the part of well-meaning practitioners to pursue suggestion somewhat too emphatically, giving rise to memories which are not based in actual history. By implanting the suggestion of a repressed abusive memory, clinicians may unwittingly trigger compliance in the subject, in the place of genuinely repressed memories of actual life events.

Often these memories can involve extremely strange imagery, including sexual perversion and even ritual abuse. The quality of the memories involved can be transitory and fragmented, without chronological references to ground them in fact, or historical perspective. Nonetheless, memories which arise from clinician suggestion are too often used as the basis to arrive at conclusions which have the power to ruin lives. They can lead to inappropriate police intervention and even court action.

The British False Memory Society (responsible for the publication of the book mentioned above) is dedicated to the eradication of the potentially harmless impact of pseudo memories encountered in the course of regression therapy and attendant memory retrieval. Identified in the 1980s as having the potential to lead to false prosecution and ruined family relationships, false memory is now being addressed in the British court system. Experimental psychologists are sharing their expertise in the matter and ensuring that the function of memory is well-understood by court authorities in order to avoid wrongful prosecutions. Instilling the importance of a scientific approach to the validation of memories extracted in regression therapy, leading to the involvement of authorities, has

had an impact on the admissibility of evidence resulting from them.

Dr. Donald Thomson's story is a cautionary one. An Australian psychologist, he was dismayed to find himself named as the primary suspect in a rape case. Fortuitously, at the time of the attack, Dr. Thomson was participating in a live broadcast being viewed by thousands of people. Ultimately, this factor proved his innocence. The rape victim admitted that her memory had confused Dr. Thomson with her attacker, due to her viewing the emission immediately prior to the attack. But cases like Dr. Thomson's are not unusual. Of the thousands of cases the British False Memory Society has documented, 672 have led to police intervention and court action.

While the jury is still out on regression therapy, it appears to be a hung jury, with both sides appealing to science in support of their respective positions. With the tragedy of false prosecution and even the death of children in therapy, it's crucial that range of regression therapies, and rebirthing and attachment therapy in particular, be examined as fully as possible and that practitioners who are accredited be actively sought out, should the therapy be pursued. While regressive therapy is known to have been of help to some, it's undeniable that it's controversial for good reason and should be approached with great caution.

### ***Trauma Tapping Technique – Rwandan genocide***

In 1994, Rwanda was to be torn apart by an organized, genocidal action which took place over the course of only one hundred days. In the course of those one hundred days, between 800,000 to one million Rwandans were systematically slaughtered in unparalleled acts of human violence. Men, women and children were mercilessly targeted by militias armed primarily with machetes. Many were hacked to death, placing victims at arm's length with their attackers.

Those who survived the horrors of the Rwandan genocide were left with psychological wounds that may never be completely healed. Feelings of guilt at

having been spared, coupled with the mayhem witnessed as they watched families, neighbors and friends murdered, have left people completely lost to the conduct of normal life even to this day, more than two decades later. The perpetrators of the genocide (mostly young men from the countryside, untrained in combat, except the use of the machetes they were issued by the Hutu militias) are also afflicted with PTSD, including feelings of extreme guilt in confrontation of the acts they committed under the influence of extreme communal war psychosis.

Among survivors, it's estimated that at least 20% of the adult population of contemporary Rwanda is afflicted with PTSD. On the anniversary of the genocide, walk in clinics are inundated with previously undiagnosed cases, every year, as people all over the country experience flashbacks to those one hundred days in 1994. Before the genocide, there were no words extant in the Kinyarwandan language to describe mental illness. Since then, a new word has arisen to describe the anxiety suffered today by so many survivors – ihahamuka – “breathless, frequent fear”.

In response to what can only be described as a national mental health crisis, the Peaceful Heart Network is taking action to treat as many survivors as possible, using the hypnotherapy technique Trauma Tapping. The Network is diffusing the technique (which can be learned, according to their literature, in the space of only an hour) by teaching it to people in conflict areas, including Rwanda, where there are only two psychiatrists in the entire country. (The reader should be aware that Rwanda has a population of eight million.)

The Trauma Tapping Technique (TTT) employs hypnosis as a means of bringing forth the memories associated with PTSD and replacing them with thoughts which allow the sufferer to function more normally and come to terms with the trauma they've experienced. The technique works by flooding the amygdala (the portion of the brain which serves as its “fear center”) with two types of

sensory information. One of these is the memory of the traumatic event. As this is achieved, the action of tapping is used to compete with the memory of the traumatic event, thus overwhelming and eventually, replacing it, by virtue of association. Concurrent with the tapping on forehead, torso and often, other parts of the body, is the repetition of a suggestive phrase or sentence. This is keyed to the trauma experienced by each individual victim. TTT may be used as either a form of hypnotherapy or auto-suggestive self-hypnosis and has shown remarkable results for PTSD sufferers, using either application. Research into the treatment continues, but it has been used successfully in Rwanda and the war torn Congo, where rape is used as a weapon of war. It has also proven effective in treating PTSD in American soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

### ***Trauma Tapping – Emotional Freedom Technique***

EFT is a technique which combines hypnosis with several other techniques, including TTT and restructuring the patient's understanding and absorption of the trauma. Suggestive phrases are repeated (almost like mantras) to affirm the patient's sense of self-worth and acceptance. While the mechanism which causes EFT to be successful as a complementary therapy is still under research, there are several theories concerning its apparent effectiveness.

The most compelling reason is the use of the tapping action, applied to a variety of pressure points on the body. Researchers are beginning to understand that tapping these points, while gaining access (in the other sense of "tapping", *i.e.* tapping a well – in this case, the subconscious) to the details of a traumatic experience, sends a very clear message to the fear center of the brain (the amygdala). That message amounts to deactivation of the trauma's subconscious signals and how they're received. The effect is an almost simultaneous decrease in the experience of recurring fear, due to reliving traumatic, or even emotionally difficult events.

EFT calls on patients to self-direct the therapy, with the aid of a clinical



professional. Largely dependent on auto-suggestion, its use of hypnosis has been somewhat controversial, but as a complementary therapy, it's gaining respect in wider clinical circles and the research community investigating the scientific bases for its claims. Not only for those suffering from PTSD, EFT is a tool which can be used by those facing the emotional challenges of daily life. For example, more than three million Americans report suffering from panic attacks.

### ***EFT and rapid relief of panic attacks***

A panic attack can strike at any moment. In a world filled with unpredictability and uncertainty, they've become a fact of modern life. The sudden, overwhelming sensation of paralyzing fear experienced by panic attack sufferers can be immobilizing and have a devastating impact on the lives of those who suffer from them.

Many people experience panic attacks without knowing what to call them. Some of the most common symptoms include the following:

- Irrational fear that you'll lose control or somehow embarrass yourself.
- Feeling sudden heat or cold (chills).
- Labored breathing.
- Sensations of numbness or tingling in the extremities.
- Dizziness (especially coupled with nausea).
- Sudden pain in the chest.
- An overwhelming sensation of impending doom and powerlessness.
- Increased heart rate or sudden palpitations.

Panic attacks tend not to follow any particular pattern. Even the most seemingly

mundane activities can lead to one. A common denominator, however, is a recent loss. This might be the loss of a job, a romantic relationship, or the death of a loved one. Repressed emotions are the most common cause of panic attacks. By internalizing emotions around life's losses, we can actually make ourselves anxious and eventually, ill. In essence, we channel the emotions we're not acknowledging into unfocused anxiety.

### ***Self-Administration of EFT***

Your body has a number of energy points. By tapping or briefly administering pressure to each of these (for about three seconds on each point), you can begin the process of EFT self-administration. The energy points are as follows:

- Directly beneath your collarbone.
- Beneath your lower lip.
- Beneath your eye, just about the cheek bone.
- The outer corner of your eye, just outside the socket.
- Beneath your nose.
- The side of your body, four inches below the armpit.

Continue the EFT procedure by placing either one hand (or both, if preferred) on the side(s) of your body and face (you can alternate between the two areas). Before you do so, tap your hand on its side, beneath your pinky finger (on the part where it's at its fleshiest). As you do so, concentrate on the emotion which you believe is triggering your attacks, drawing on the recent loss at their root. Focus intently on that emotion. Next, tap on the energy points again, as well as the sides of your face and body, as you recall in detail the emotion which is causing the episodic panic attacks you're suffering from.

This process should be repeated until you feel the emotion associated with the

event identified as the cause of your attacks begin to subside. By bringing the emotion forward, you are defusing its power and accepting it as a past event which you've survived. This is a key thought. The day you're truly able to tell yourself (honestly), that the event is behind, has no more power over you, and that you're ready to get on with your life, you will have taken control of the anxiety which is causing you to suffer from panic attacks.

EFT can be used to get to the source of any emotional malaise and help you gain control over it and its impact on your life. By recalling damaging or negative emotions, you will eventually be able to free yourself from them and return to normal function, free of the emotional baggage causing you anxiety and resulting disruption in your life.

### ***Treating the symptoms of menopause with hypnotherapy***

Every day, women all over the world suffer with the symptoms of menopause. Every woman manifests these symptoms in varying degrees and symptomatic combinations, with some women reporting completely asymptomatic experiences of menopause, save for the cessation of their monthly cycles.

Hypnotherapy has been proven to ease menopausal symptoms, particularly, the dreaded and much-maligned "hot flash" and the extremely uncomfortable and unpleasant "night sweats". While a lot of women turn to traditional hormone replacement therapy as a means of controlling the hormonal changes involved in the change of life, some turn to other therapies. These include herbal remedies like black cohosh and evening primrose oil. Hypnotherapy, though, is proving to be a reliable alternative for many women, providing symptomatic relief in only a matter of months.

At the end of 2015, the North American Menopause Society, issued its findings concerning the use of hypnotherapy in the treatment of menopausal symptoms. While the panel charged with the study pursued by NAMS found that 75% of

women didn't feel fully informed about the use of herbal supplements, there was evidence to suggest that hypnotherapy was a safe, reliable non-hormonal treatment. In randomized testing, it was found that hypnosis was one of two therapies found to most reliably address hot flashes (together with cognitive behavioral therapy).

The identification of hypnotherapy as an effective way for women to cope with some of the symptoms associated with the hormonal changes in their bodies during menopause represents a significant step forward in understanding. Social and psychological factors have made this normal life transition a time of trepidation and fear for many women. Implicit in the cessation of the monthly cycle is the societal intimation that women have somehow outlived their "usefulness". But the truth about menopause is that it can be a time of great freedom for women, who in middle age are coming into their most powerful years.

The psychological basis of hypnotherapy acknowledges the transitional nature of menopause, de-clinicalizing it and also, to a degree, removing the stigma traditionally associated with it. Menopause is a phase of life experienced by all women and signals a new way of being female. Their child-bearing years behind them and children having grown by this point (for the most part), women can emerge from menopause with a sense of adventure, instead of a sense of having no purpose, or a reduced value in the eyes of the world. Hypnosis can help millions of women embrace menopause as the liberating event it truly is, by managing some of the anxiety around symptomatic manifestations like hot flashes.

### ***Afghanistan/Iraq war veterans***

In recent years, it's become increasingly apparent that veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are returning home damaged in much more than body. While knowledge of the traumatic effects of warfare on those sent by our nations to

wage it have been known for some time, it's only recently that PTSD has been acknowledged as an integral cost of war. In the United Kingdom alone, medical health professionals have seen a dramatic increase in referrals for PTSD treatment over the past year. These have increased by more than 25%.

Statistical data shows that it can take a combat veteran as long as 13 years to seek help for PTSD, depression, or other psychological problems associated with having been exposed to the violence of war. But hypnotherapy is increasingly entering the clinical lexicon as an alternative therapy and is offering hope for many who suffer in the wake of their time on the Field of Mars. With as many as 600,000 returning veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq suffering from PTSD, the national health crisis among this group is evident. This is a reality in all the nations implicated in these wars.

But the use of hypnotherapy and NLP (neuro-linguistic programming, which we'll talk about in more detail later in this book), is offering veterans new hope of living normal lives. Using a combination of these complementary therapeutic models, combat veterans are able to return to site of their trauma and with the help of a clinical professional, look it and deconstruct the emotions in play, at a distance which is safe and professionally guided. The aim is to not only neutralize the subconscious trauma, but to redeem it by using it as a learning experience from which the patient can gain new wisdom and life perspective.

Violent traumatic events are relived by PTSD sufferers, almost as though their subconscious minds are bidding them to enter into the original experience in a new and more constructive way. By using NLP and hypnotherapy in concert, sufferers can not only learn important life lessons from the experience, cleansing it of its negative effect on their lives and those of their loved ones, but apply that learning to future traumatic events.

### ***Case study – returning vet undergoes treatment***

Dr. Kelly Gerling is a hypnotherapy practitioner in the Seattle area. He offers the case of a returning veteran seeking help for managing his PTSD symptoms. On revolving back to the real world, “Gary” (pseudonym) encountered a great deal of difficulty adjusting to civilian life and turned to the services offered by Dr. Gerling for relief from his discomfort with this no-longer-familiar reality.

Gary related to Dr. Gerling that he felt alone most of the time, even though surrounded by a network of support in family and friends. He described an ever-present fear, while out in public, that led him to be constantly on the lookout for threats, preventing him from enjoying even a day out. Gary also found that his mental equilibrium was constantly under threat from the incursion of unwelcome memories of the violence he’d witnessed as a combat soldier. He related that this effect was not only present in his waking life, but dominated his dreams and nightmares. His nightmares were often vivid re-enactments of what he’d seen and been part of on the front lines.

Combat veteran Gary was also profoundly impaired in his social interactions, describing a numbing effect when engaged with those around him, particularly when engaged in conversations about contentious subjects. His relationships were suffering, particularly in his family. Disagreements and arguments (a frequent and normal feature of family life) were either avoided by him, due to his fear of erupting, or met with disproportionate outbursts. Gary also found that forming new friendships was difficult, especially if the people he met were not, themselves, veterans of war. Attending all the foregoing was an overwhelming sense of guilt about acts he’d committed in the theatre of war that he felt, in retrospect, had been immoral.

In the course of therapy, it was discovered by Dr. Gerling that Gary had witnessed several of his comrades-in-arms killed. It was agreed that the incident would be explored, but using the controlled setting of hypnotherapy. Dr. Gerling then explained that his project was not to magically “cure” Gary of

PTSD, but rather to render the trauma he'd suffered endurable and redeem it through deriving life lessons. In this way, the former combatant might be enabled to make some sense of the trauma and to experience it as a past event which was now a part of life he'd learned from.

Gerling further explained that Gary would be able to regain control of relationships and improve their quality, due to a reduction in the hypervigilance (looking for danger at every turn and in every situation) he'd been prone to, as well as the numbing and outbursts he'd been experiencing. He further reassured him that the nightmares he'd been having would be transformed into something less negative; more like the rewind of an experience that he could begin to understand in a more revelatory light. Dr. Gerling finally made it clear to Gary that while he couldn't guarantee a complete recovery, he could guarantee a diminishment in the manifestation of his symptoms and that, perhaps, with time and diligence on his part, that the more damaging effects of PTSD would at least be fully under control. Gary's ability to recognize triggers and behaviors would enable him to view them from a standpoint of being in charge of them and not vice versa.

In describing the treatment to Gary, Dr. Gerling stated that a change in perspective would occur, directed through the use of hypnotherapy, with Gary entering into a trancelike state that would provide the doctor with access to his subconscious. He also told Gary, that while he'd be there to direct the course of the hypnosis, Gary would be the sole "driver" of the therapy and its process. Ensuring that Gary understood his role as a guide, Dr. Gerling assured his patient that hypnotherapy would allow him to call up the traumatic imagery from a different perspective. Finally, Dr. Gerling said that Gary would be enabled to move beyond the event's psychic hold on him and, as a result, be able to see his future life with renewed optimism.

Gary would, in fact, be enabled to see the traumatic experiences that had led to

his PTSD from a third-person perspective, as a dispassionate observer, uninvolved in the action and only passively observing it.

Dr. Gerling then guided Gary through a visualization exercise in which he was parachuting. From the first person perspective, Gary imagined himself about to jump from airplane. He described the sensation as “frightening”. Gary was then asked to visualize himself from the perspective of someone observing him about to jump, from the ground below. The shift in perspective was profound for Gary and he was able to ascertain that the perspective of third person observation was not invested in the action being observed. This is a key element of the third person methodology in play in this version of hypnotherapy. When the patient is able to see his actions through the lens of an observer, all personal overlays and psychological detritus attending are swept away, leaving only the raw action.

Gary was then asked to move to the second stage of the visualization process. Dr. Gerling asked that he picture himself seated in a movie theatre, where he would view the events that had led to his PTSD from a safe and uninvolved distance. Key to the visualization was the idea that he was watching the past unfold – that it was past and not present and that it had occurred in another place; a place he was no longer part of. Detachment, in this form of visualization creates a safe space for the patient to review events for what they were, and not through the lens of guilt and other emotions.

In visualizing the primary event (in which his friends had been killed and Gary had been sent into the killing field to recover their remains), Gary began to enter fully into the scene he was viewing, prompting Dr. Gerling to ask him to hit “pause”. Gary was then asked how he might reduce the imagery’s intensity. He then elected to view the “movie” in black and white and further, in a blurry format in which the imagery might present itself less clearly, permitting him to review it less emotionally. With these adjustments, Gary was able to review the imagery with greatly increased comfort and with much less emotional



investment.

Upon opening his eyes, after viewing the traumatic scene at length and in detail, Gary described his comfort with confronting the event which had been impacting his life so negatively for so long. Dr. Gerling then asked Gary to picture himself in the final frame of the chain of events which had unfolded in the movie. When asked what he believed the character in the film (Gary) needed, he responded:

“For someone to help and pay attention to what I’m going through”.

Gary was then directed to enter into the action, as though it were a three-dimensional stage play. Dr. Gerling directed him to move into the action by going into the movie (as a three-dimensional reality) and sitting down next to himself. He was directed, further, to ask the kind of questions he believed he needed to be asked to arrive at an understanding of how the emotions around the trauma had been affecting him. As Gary listened to himself, a young man who’d just collected the broken pieces of his dead friends from the dust of a distant battlefield, he felt a wave of compassion and love for him and began to cry. He later related to Dr. Gerling that he had cried with his younger self, there in the theater of battle, as re-created in hypnotherapy.

Gary’s tears amounted to profound and enduring healing. Over time, Gary and Dr. Gerling worked through other events Gary had experienced in this time as a soldier, moving from one to the next, using the same techniques. In addition, Dr. Gerling provided Gary with an audio recording to take home and use prior to going to sleep. Gary was also instructed in a technique to help him guide his subconscious mind in dreams, based on his clinical experiences of visualization.

Now that we’ve reviewed the history and some modern applications of hypnosis and hypnotherapy, let’s find out more about how it works and introduce ourselves to the science and practice of hypnosis.

## **CHAPTER 2 - HYPNOSIS AND MIND CONTROL: AN INTRODUCTION**

Let's start out with a discussion of what hypnosis is. Hypnosis is the science of manipulating the mind, with not only the express participation of the person being hypnotized, but leadership of the process. As discussed in the section on stage hypnosis and elsewhere in this book, hypnosis is not dependent on any special charisma on the part of the hypnotist.

The hypnotist acts as a guide, with the person who has been induced into a trance state, driving the process. Hypnosis, when broken down into simple terms, is a state of induced trance that is different from natural sleep. In the state of hypnosis, the patient or subject is made to focus completely on a single object, emotion, or problem at the expense of other factors in the waking world. In other words, the person is solely focused on that one idea or object that is the center of the hypnosis. Hence, the physical and mental faculties of the person function with respect to that one idea for as long as they are under hypnosis. Essentially, in hypnosis, the focus of the person is increased, but the other facets of the mind are dulled. It is an effective way to rule out distractions.

There are usually two people involved in a hypnosis session: the hypnotist and the patient being hypnotized. The role of the hypnotist in a hypnosis session is to guide the patient into a hypnotic sleep and then also guide their perception of the objects and ideas in their minds. The hypnotist will guide the subject through all the senses, from touch to smell. Anything the subject smells or feels or hears is part of the hypnotist's efforts to guide the subject to a particular idea or object.

Self-hypnosis (or auto-hypnosis) is also a form of hypnosis, which involves only the subject. The subject will have to guide his or her own mind to the object or idea of focus or interest. We will discuss this form of hypnotism in detail, further on in the book.

Hypnotism basically grants you access to your subconscious and unconscious mind. Now you may wonder what the big deal about the subconscious mind is and why it makes a difference whether we have access to it or not. Our subconscious mind is the storehouse of everything we have ever seen, felt or done in our lives. For example, consider a skill you need to learn, such as driving a car. The first few times you drive a care, you will be focused only on driving and will not be able to focus on any conversation in the car. That's because your subconscious mind hasn't had time to store the skill. After some time and practice, driving will come naturally to you. Why?

Because the information you've gathered from your experience of driving will have been stored in your subconscious.

That means your subconscious is now in the driver's seat.

You use the information stored in the subconscious mind to drive while your conscious mind focuses on the conversation in the car.

The subconscious mind is the one that is responsible for the feelings and emotions you experience when you encounter a new situation. For example, if you were to audition for a talent competition, all the fear and anxiety you fear is from your subconscious mind that has stored the feelings and associated it with events that could possibly humiliate you. The unconscious mind controls all our involuntary actions such as breathing. It essentially works from the moment we are brought into this world to the moment we leave it.

The conscious mind, on the other hand, is responsible for all the logic and reasoning we do. The conscious mind accounts for only 10-12% of our mental capacity. The remainder is the work of our entire subconscious and unconscious mind. The conscious mind is the one you use to confront problems, arrive at solutions and work with on a daily basis. It is home to the working memory; the memory we need to function on a daily basis. It controls our logical, analytical skills and voluntary body actions.

Now that we have discussed the differences between our subconscious, unconscious and conscious mind, you should know that hypnotism isn't just to reach your subconscious mind. It signifies a state of midway consciousness where the mind is more susceptible to suggestion. There are two theories about what happens after hypnosis takes place. One theory, known as the altered state theory, suggests that once a person has been hypnotized, a trance state sets in. It states that this trance state is your sleeping consciousness. The second theory (non-state) posits that when a person is under hypnosis, the role they perceive for themselves is in play. It claims that it is more like an active role-playing state of mind, in which the person assumes that they possess all the ideal characteristics desired, when reality challenges that role.

### **Altered state theory of hypnosis**

The altered state theory of hypnosis is not the modern understanding of what occurs in the hypnotic "state" and derives, originally from mesmerism. Mesmerism's premise was the hypnotist placed the person being hypnotized into a state that differed radically from consciousness, allowing the subject to become more prone to suggestion. Extensive research into the effect on the subject of hypnosis has revealed that this hypothesis is invalid, which has led to greater understanding, particularly with regard to hypnotherapy and its effectiveness for many people suffering the effects of depression, PTSD and stress.

### **Non-state theory of hypnosis**

This is the modern understanding of hypnosis. In this understanding, the state of mind isn't so much altered as opened, through invitation and encouragement on the part of the practitioner.

This opening allows greater receptivity in the subject. By allowing for enhanced imagination, suggestion is absorbed differently, through either verbal or non-

verbal direction. This permits the subject to more readily receive helpful information, capable of encouraging a shift in perspective. This shift can be responsible for remediation of existing problems, as we've seen in the case study of the returning combat veteran, Gary, earlier in this book. Dr. Gerling, by directing Gary to look at the traumatic events he'd experienced on the battlefield as an observer and then to enter into the action to address his historical self, guided him toward viewing these events with greater equanimity.

In this way, Gary was able to manage his PTSD more effectively and lead a life less ruled by its deleterious effects.

The distinction between these two theories represents a dividing line between earlier interpretations of hypnosis and its means of function and the modern one.

While this earlier understanding may have been in need of greater development, the findings of early hypnosis experts like James Braid are of foundational importance to the modern interpretation of its processes. Like the theories of Freud, no longer as clinically important to the practice of psychiatry as they once were, the altered state theory still served to provide a functional framework for further development.

At this point, it's important that I clarify certain terms used in this book. Words like "trance", for example serve the purpose of reader accessibility. It's a commonly understood word to explain how the mind responds to hypnosis. That is not to say, however, that anything about the mind actually changes. It is the same mind, consisting of the same functions and matter. It is merely

opened to work of the hypnotic suggestion in a way that allows for perspective to be guided toward change.

### **Hypnotherapy and its benefits**

As we've discussed earlier, hypnosis is frequently used as a form of therapy. In many cases it is used as a form of stress relief. Hypnotherapy, as the clinical practice is known, is frequently practiced to achieve a state of relaxation. It is also extensively used to treat psychological, emotional and even physical

ailments. Disorders treated by hypnotherapy range from stress to obsessive-compulsive disorder. The extent to which hypnotherapy works depends on the willingness of the individual to undergo hypnosis and the extent of the disorder. If a person is forcibly made to attend a hypnosis session, it is most likely to prove fruitless because their mind will not cooperate with the practitioner. For some people, with an increasing number of sessions, the mind might eventually cooperate and allow itself to be guided by the hypnotist.

But some people are unresponsive to hypnosis, due to inability to extend trust.

We've discussed some of the ways hypnosis and hypnotherapy have been developed over time to help with psychological challenges. But there are many practical benefits related to its practice, which we'll now review.

### ***Stress relief***

Hypnotherapy is useful in reducing stress levels.

Most of us are constantly stressed in our busy lives. It's now known that stress can negatively affect our physical health and so people are turning to alternative therapies like hypnotherapy for help. Hypnotherapy is one of the many ways you can reduce the effects of stress on your health. By encouraging your body and mind to relax, hypnotherapy can provide not only means of resting, but also (with the suggestive guidance of the hypnotherapist), assist you in coping more effectively with it.

We'll talk about self-hypnosis more in a little while, but guided imagery and visualization form part of it and in terms of stress relief, this aspect of self-hypnosis can be a welcome part of a stressful day.

### ***Depression and anxiety***

People suffering from anxiety and depression often find that prescription medicine is not enough to alleviate their symptoms. Many of these people resort to hypnotherapy. Hypnotherapy allows people to deal with the triggers of their

depression and eliminate them, one by one. Ongoing treatment with hypnotherapy can lead to a significant reduction in symptoms and help those struggling with these disorders to lead more fulfilling lives.

Many cancer patients and PTSD sufferers may struggle with anxiety and depression and with more doctors turning to complementary medicine as a support to the traditional approach, hypnotherapy is helping many who suffer needlessly.

### ***Addiction recovery***

People fall victim to various addictions due to their environments, their upbringing and genetic pre-disposition. This makes some people more prone to the enticement of gambling, drugs and alcohol, as well as addictions to food and sex. There are various hypnotherapy methods in use which are very helpful for people seeking to overcome addiction. These methods allow addicted people to regain control over their thoughts in order to leave addiction and live full, healthy lives.

While this is not suggested as a panacea to the pressing problem of addiction, it is known to work in some cases.

Its use as a complementary therapy for those undergoing addiction treatment is gaining currency in the therapeutic community.

Addicted people are often burdened with negative self-image problems that 12 Step programs fail to address. In fact, groups like AA, which force people to stand in front of a group and proclaim their addiction as an immutable life reality may exacerbate the merry-go-round effect experienced by many addicts. By working with the neural pathways of the brain, a skilled hypnotherapist can help patients get off the merry-go-around. By guiding their

patients through fundamental changes in their self-perception; moving them away from a negative self-image toward a positive one, hypnotherapists are treating many addicted people and helping to free them from the grip of addiction

healing many addicted people and helping to free them from the grip of addiction.

### ***Pain relief***

Arthritis and migraines are diseases that cause a lot of pain. Painkillers are the most common treatment for these maladies.

However, when drugs fail, hypnotherapy is a viable option. Hypnotherapy, with its ability to suggest to your mind that the pain is manageable, is an effective way to reduce the pain, in some cases.

Of particular interest to women is the effect of hypnosis on the process of childbirth.

In the psychoprophylactic method, doctors discuss the impending labor with pregnant women, in concert with hypnosis.

The effective to cocoon the mind from the pain of giving birth. Women able to self-hypnotize during labor, also report that pain is minimized, while not entirely eliminated.

### ***Relaxation***

Relaxation is a way to heal both the mind and the body. Relaxation is necessary for us to calm down and think clearly. People who are calm and relaxed generally don't get irritated or offended quickly. A relaxed person is also less prone to various lifestyle diseases such as heart attacks and other cardiovascular diseases. You can achieve a state of relaxation during hypnosis sessions and also, use self-hypnosis as a way of maintaining greater composure in situations of stress and pressure. Hypnosis can have lasting effects and greatly enhance general wellbeing, in this instance.

### ***Weight loss***

Hypnotherapy is often used as a component of a weight loss program. Weight loss is not as easy as just implementing a diet.



Some people are overweight because they overeat due to a psychological condition that gives them the urge to eat.

Others are overweight due to glandular problems and heredity.

Hypnotherapy can help people get their weight problems in perspective and learn to cope with them more effectively. Most people who follow a weight loss program also have self-image problems that can be mitigated or even cured with hypnotherapy. As is the case with

addiction, changing foundational beliefs about people's self-image is key to helping them lose excess weight. In cases in which weight has been gained as a means of fortifying the self against the world, underlying issues may be in play (sexual abuse is only one), which can be uncovered and addressed through hypnotherapy.

### ***Sleep disorders***

Sleep disorders range from insomnia to night terrors. These disorders affect hundreds of people, which result in many people suffering sleepless nights. Lack of sleep is a stressor to the body. The body clock becomes muddled and this can have a serious impact on the systems that make the body work, wreaking health havoc. Some people put on weight if they don't sleep properly, while others lose a lot of weight. Some even get various diseases as a result of this lack of sleep. Sleeping pills and other medications have their own deleterious effects on the body. Sleeping disorders are mostly psychological disorders; hence they need some amount of psychological treatment along with the physical one. Hypnosis can play a role in treatment for sleep disorders, because it allows patients to achieve a state wherein their minds are in a less active state.

This is particularly helpful for people suffering from sleep disruption as a symptom of PTSD.

### ***Changes in behavior***

Hypnosis can be used to provoke behavioral changes (as is the case with some

people who have addiction issues). People with anger management issues can use hypnosis as a method to control their impulses. Hypnosis gives people a way to regain control over their lives and to mitigate the effects of explosive outbursts that sometimes accompany a deficit of anger management skills.

### ***Recover repressed memories***

Repressed memories exist as the result of years of abuse as a child. To protect ourselves from these memories, we bury them deep in our subconsciousness. While there is great controversy around the hypothesis, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that human beings are capable of withholding information from the consciousness mind as a type of prophylactic against the emotional upheaval associated with past traumatic events. (See section on regression therapy).

Hypnotherapy can be used to retrieve these memories so that we can understand the abuse we've suffered and how it has impacted our lives, as adults. It can also be used to recover the happy memories that might have been erased due to an accident or a fall, as well as the life skills, speech and motor skills that may be lost to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Besides these benefits, hypnotherapy allows people to enjoy happier lives by improving their overall attitudes. When a person undergoes hypnosis sessions, they tend to be calmer and more confident.

Their relaxed mind frame makes them attractive people to be around. Hypnosis also allows them to have clear minds, which enables them to be more creative and successful in their professional lives, as well. Hypnotherapy is often used as a path to success. Rather than directly leading people to success, it shows them the path they should take to achieve it. If a lack of self confidence is the only thing stopping someone from becoming successful in life, then hypnotherapy can help them regain their self-confidence, so they can then take control of their lives and live more fully.

## CHAPTER 3 - TYPES OF HYPNOTISM

Now that we have discussed the basics of hypnosis, let's learn about the various techniques involved in the hypnosis process.

### **Arm Drop**

The arm drop method is a means of induction (of the hypnotic state) that involves a connection between the subject or patient and the hypnotist (as is required in all hypnosis). The effect of this method is based on the subject's control over his arm.

To start the process, the subject is made to lift the arm above the head. The subject's arm shouldn't be resting on any other part of the body and should be free to be brought down easily. Once this aspect is in place, the hypnotist can begin talking to the subject in order to induce the trance state. During the process, the hypnotist will make suggestions, making sure that the arm is positioned according to the criteria stated above. The hypnotist will then ask the subject to focus on a particular finger on his hand. The hypnotist will then whisper suggestions to the subject, insisting that only the finger in question be the focus of all thoughts (and not the whispers). As the subject continues to focus only on the finger, the sensation of the other fingers becoming heavier will set in. Soon the arm will begin to drop. This is because the subject has been so focused on the finger in play, that other parts of the hand and arm have been removed from the thought process. Once the arm is completely relaxed, the hypnotist is assured that the subject is fully hypnotized.

When you look at the method from the subject's perspective, you will find it intriguing. Imagine yourself in the position of the subject. As long as you keep focusing on the finger, your elevated arm feels heavier. Also, you will hear the

hypnotist suggesting things like ‘Now your arm is slowly dropping down’. In most cases, the suggestion the hypnotist makes about the arm dropping down is after the hypnotist actually sees the arm lowering, rather than in anticipation that it will do so. So while the subject might feel as though the arm is lowering because the hypnotist is instructing the subject to do so, that’s not generally the case.

### **Arm levitation**

This method relies not just on the concentration of the subject, but also the way the hypnotist provides suggestions. After the hypnotist asks the subject to be seated comfortably, the process of suggestion will begin. Suggestions should, ideally, include statements like, “As I count backwards from 10, you will feel a mild tingling go along your left arm. This will travel through your body. Your fingers will become fidgety and restless, but once you let go, you will feel free. At this time, your arm will rise above you. It will rise only when you allow it to, and not when you are conscious of what is happening, or if you try to take control. This will happen only when you surrender all your control.”

The one thing the hypnotist should never forget is that the subject has to willingly follow their suggestions. They can never force the subject to accept their suggestions. The hypnotist should only move on to the next stage of the process after making sure that the subject willingly agrees with all the previous suggestions. Even though speed is essential in this method; it is not a good thing if the hypnotist forces a subject to accept a suggestion. Should this happen, the session beyond that point will bear little fruit and may even be deleterious to the subject.

### **Association**

The association method of hypnotism is one of the most widely used methods in the practice. This method relies on the belief of the subject. The subject and

hypnotist need to understand each other, both at a conscious and subconscious level. The heart of this method is in how the subject follows the suggestions given by the hypnotist. If the subject resists the hypnotist at any point during the session, the chances of that session being useful are very low. It's therefore very important that a bond exists between the hypnotist and the subject and the basis of that bond is complete trust on the part of the subject. The hypnotist needs to have a subtle presence in the subject's subconscious, because an overbearing presence might cause the subject to resist. This means the hypnotist can only offer suggestions but cannot force the subject to do or feel anything. It's imperative that the subject understand that this is the intention of the hypnotist and that understanding is rooted in trust.

The role of a hypnotist is to bring forth their subjects' old, troublesome memories and slowly unravel them. During the course of many sessions, a hypnotist can slowly guide the subject towards taking something positive and useful from the troublesome memory or memories. For the hypnotist to know exactly what the subject wants from an emotion or situation, they gain access to the subconscious mind of the subject and then assist in guiding the subject toward the information being sought in hypnosis.

The hypnotist will first encourage the subject to become comfortable. The subject is then instructed about what they shouldn't do during a session, so there's no mystery as to what they might expect. The hypnotist will start the session only when convinced that the subject is prepared to be opened to the suggestions which will be presented as a means of getting to the heart of the matter at hand.

The hypnotist will then talk the subject through the induction stage (in which hypnosis is achieved). The suggestion that the subject is now ready to talk about the issue the hypnotist's services have sought to address will be offered. The subject will be asked not to resist entering into hypnosis via the methods in play. Using gentle but firm words, the hypnotist encourages the subject to drop over

the edge, into the hypnotic zone in which the hypnotist may begin to direct the process. When the subject finally starts breathing in a slow and easy manner, the hypnotist knows that the subject has been successfully placed under hypnosis. After this stage, the hypnotist is there just to guide the subject on their path to achieve the desired goal of hypnosis. A hypnotherapist's goal is to support and guide the subject, but never push them in an undesired direction.

## **Braidism**

James Braid's eye fixation technique, otherwise known as Braidism, is also commonly used by hypnotists across the world.

Braidism makes use of a shiny object that is held between the thumb, forefinger and middle finger. The hypnotist then holds the object approximately 8 to 10

inches away from the subject's eyes. The subject is instructed to focus solely on the object. Prior to starting, it is vital that the hypnotist explains to the subject why his or her cooperation is essential in this method. He or she needs to understand that the method will work only when focus on the shiny object in the hypnotist's hand is maintained.

Once the subject is engrossed by the object, the hypnotist looks out for certain cues in their expressions. Once the hypnotist sees that the subject's pupils are dilating, the object will be removed and the hypnotist will bend down so that the eyes of both parties are level. The subject will then involuntarily blink. This indicates that the subject has entered the sleeping state of hypnosis.

There is a possibility that this method will fail because of the subject's lack of concentration. Since the method relies heavily on the subject concentrating on the shiny object, if they lose their focus, the whole session will be disrupted. When the subject loses focus, it's up to the hypnotist to make them understand how vital concentration is. Only if the subject understands the magnitude of the process, will they be able to fully focus on the object. However, in most cases, the subject enters the trance state without any problems.

## ***Misdirection***

Misdirection is commonly referred to as reverse psychology. Consider a child who never listens to you. If you say “yes”, the child says “no” and vice versa. Now imagine someone whose subconscious is refusing to cooperate with a hypnosis session. The subject might be willing to undergo hypnosis, but their subconscious resists any attempts the hypnotist makes to induce the trance state. The misdirection method is commonly used to help individuals whose subconscious resists the process.

True to the colloquial name of reverse psychology in the misdirection method, the hypnotist strives to convince the subject to forget they’re undergoing hypnosis and to catch them off guard, once they believe this is the case. If this proves to be difficult, the hypnotist will try to make the subject forget about hypnotism, entirely.

This method involves a lot of communication between the hypnotist and the subject. The hypnotist tries to keep the subject busy by asking various questions. Most of the questions will concern the subject’s imagination. For example, the hypnotist or hypnotherapist will ask the subject to imagine themselves swimming in the ocean, or climbing a mountain, or relaxing on a beach. Then the subject will be asked to describe the images that came to mind, in detail. For example, if subject imagines climbing a mountain, the hypnotist will ask if there were any alpine flowers on the way, or if the subject was climbing alone. The hypnotist might further focus the subject by asking the color of the flowers seen, or if a staff was used in the climb. The purpose of this is to get the subject’s mind as far away from hypnotism as possible. The more questions the hypnotist asks, the further away the subject’s mind goes. If visualizing something seen every day, like a home or office setting, the hypnotist can ask extremely detailed questions. That’s because every day scenes are well known to the subject, so common details like color of the walls or the sofa, would be too well known to be employed as distractions from the hypnotic state. To ensure the subject’s mind is preoccupied, the hypnotist might ask more detailed questions, like where

there was wallpaper or paneling, or if there was a stapler on the corner of the subject's desk. Once the hypnotist is sure that the subject is fully occupied, the next stage of hypnosis can be approached.

At this stage, the hypnotist will ask the subject to roll the eyes and look into the darkness inside their forehead, between the eyes. This is to help the subject concentrate. If the subject is finding concentration difficult, the hypnotist might gently tap the forehead so that the subject is automatically compelled to focus on the point of the tap. Now the hypnotist will tell the subject to try to open their eyes without losing focus on the darkness inside their foreheads.

However, the subject may find this difficult to do. The harder the subject seeks try to open the eyes, the more difficult it becomes. It may as though the eyelids have been glued shut. Once the hypnotist feels that the subject is giving it their maximum effort, the subject will be asked to relax, completely and to feel the tension leaving them.

The suggestion to the subject is that the body should be completely limp. The subject will be told to try and focus on their breathing and the flow of blood through their veins. At this point, the subject will enter a trance state.

## **Relaxation**

The relaxation technique is another common method of hypnotic induction. This method has almost no prerequisites. All it requires is that the hypnotist be able to build confidence in the subject's mind. To build confidence, the suggestions (and the way they're put forward) are of utmost importance. Hence, the hypnotist should ensure a soothing and persuasive tone is employed to put the subject into a hypnotic state. Being dominant and forceful will get the hypnotist nowhere, since it will most likely cause the subject to reject suggestions. This is an essential point, because the hypnotist needs to be able to gently breach the barriers around the subject's mind, in order to get to the bottom of the subject's problem. If the subject's problem is a lack of creativity, then he or she will



obviously feel insecure about that and will try to shield that insecurity from the world. It is the job of the hypnotist to isolate this insecurity and transform it into a positive quality. For this to happen, the subject must trust the hypnotist.

Hypnotists use a gentle yet firm tone during the induction stage, because they need to guide the subject without causing the mind to reject the hypnotist's suggestions. If the tone is dominant and forceful, the mind could block the hypnotist and the session would be a waste of time for both parties involved. The hypnotist will soothingly talk to the subject and induce a return to happy memories.

This will allow the subject to relax. As the hypnotist delves more deeply into the subject's happier memories, the subject will slowly surrender to the subconscious. When complete relaxation has been achieved, the hypnotist will ask the subject to focus on regular breathing and the blood flowing through the blood vessels.

There are two ways in which the hypnotist may choose to continue the process. One technique is the passive one, in which the subject is a passive onlooker. The role of the subject is to watch and agree to whatever the hypnotist says. All the work is done by the hypnotist. In the other technique, the subject is an active participant. He works alongside the hypnotist to achieve his end goal. The hypnotist suggests something to the subject requiring mutual involvement. For example, the hypnotist will tell the subject that a state of complete relaxation has been reached. Then the hypnotist will raise the subject's arm and suggest that the entire weight of the arm is in the fingers. The hypnotist will next drop the subject's arm while suggesting that the arm is now relaxed.

The subject will then be asked to visualize relaxation spreading to every part of the body. Then the hypnotist will do the same with the other arm. Moving from one side to the other, the hypnotist will continue to do this until the trance state has been fully achieved. The two methods described above can be used together in a single session. The first technique can be used to help the subject relax while the second technique can be used to induce the hypnotic trance.

## **Staircase**

Hypnotism is a branch of psychological science that bridges the physical photoreceptors with imaginary ones. The imaginary photoreceptors are the ones that guide our imagination and thoughts. Hypnosis leans towards the imaginary and fantasy aspect of our minds, more than toward the actual physical aspect. The staircase method utilizes the tendency toward the mind's imaginative aspects to help induce a hypnotic state in a subject.

In this method, as with almost all hypnosis methods, complete concentration and no external distractions are essential. The hypnotist asks the subject to calm down and become relaxed by asking that the subject close the eyes and clear the mind of all extraneous thoughts. The hypnotist will instruct the subject to count backwards (from 100, perhaps) while imagine climbing down a flight of stairs. As the subject reaches zero, the subject is asked to imagine falling onto a bed or into a pool of water.

Then the subject is asked to visualize sinking into the pool or bed. This is a symbolic representation of the subject's mind. When the subject is in a relaxed state, the top of the staircase symbolizes the uppermost part of the mind that is the shallowest. The process of climbing down symbolizes the process of delving deeper into the mind, while the end of the staircase symbolizes the innermost sanctum of the subject's mind. The subject is said to be in a state of complete hypnosis once having fallen into the bed or pool, thus symbolically submerged in the subconscious mind.

## CHAPTER 4 - SELF-HYPNOSIS

Self-hypnosis is an act of self-control and is used to more effectively administer one's thoughts, desires and cravings. It is generally considered to be much more difficult than hypnosis and requires a lot more discipline and practice. Self-hypnosis is a useful tool when it comes to controlling negative emotions surrounding certain events and situations, by channeling these in the right direction, toward a more positive outlook. We've seen in the example of Gary (our PTSD

combat veteran), it's possible to take a very traumatic event and learn from it by approaching it from another perspective.

This methodology is applicable to self-hypnosis, also and can address everything from stress, to poor concentration, to difficulty sleeping. Self-hypnosis can be a useless life support if you're able to muster the type of discipline required to employ it and thus, benefit from it.

### **Self-hypnosis for success**

Self-hypnosis is a means of addressing the function of your mind by opening your consciousness to alternative ways of looking at a wide array of problems, challenges and events. The unconscious mind works on its own. It doesn't suddenly decide you're going to stop breathing or stop your heart from beating. The subconscious doesn't work that way. It is programmed to be continually in service filing away information you don't need at the moment, sorting through memories, processing subtext and meaning and maintain all the functions of your body.

Self-hypnosis can allow you to access the vast potential your unconscious mind is the key to. Practicing it can will help you program your mind to make almost

anything easy, whether it's quitting a bad habit, improved performance at work, or feeling more confident in your interactions with others. It can help overcome creative blocks, stage fright, and fear and even help you lose weight. Basically, self-hypnosis can be used to successfully overcome any challenges you face.

Self-hypnosis can help you overcome mental blocks that stand in the way of achieving all you're hoping to. All the blocks you experience are only in your conscious mind and its interpretation of the way you perceive yourself. That self-perception can be the result of any number of factors, including allowing others to decide, on your behalf, what you're capable of.

Self-hypnosis can teach you how to overcome mental blocks in the conscious mind in order to change foundational beliefs and self-assertions which are holding you back in life. Your unconscious mind is always successful at whatever it is programmed to do. So if you program it to do what you desire then you will be successful in fulfilling that desire. When there is dust falling in your eyes, it is your conscious mind that makes you curious as to what is falling but it is the unconscious mind that immediately closes your eyes and protects them from the dust. The conscious mind is the one that causes problems while the unconscious mind is your brain's workhorse, making sure you don't spend the rest of your day attempting to flush grit from your eyes. By opening yourself to your subconscious, you can build a bridge to your conscious mind, in order to channel all your creative, intuitive and adventurous thoughts and actions to fruition. By doing this, you'll rediscover yourself and what you're capable of. Self-hypnosis will allow you to take control of your life and let you live the life you want, by helping you overcome yourself. You are the biggest obstacle in your path. By accessing your subconscious you can, in essence, get out of your own way.

Success isn't always about money and prestige. For some people, making it through a day without giving in to depression, temperamental outbursts or other conflicts, is success. For others, it is gaining the recognition they feel they deserve. Most of these things require a certain level of confidence and the belief that it's possible to reach the goals you've set for yourself. For people who doubt themselves, self-hypnosis is a useful tool for discovering the self-confidence

they didn't believe they'd ever have.

Self-hypnosis gives you permission to give yourself the gift of confidence, and to believe you can achieve your life goals and dreams. By changing the way you talk to yourself about your abilities and potential; by re-programming a negative self-image to make it a positive one, you can unlock skills and aptitudes you may never have believed you possessed. Opening yourself to the subconscious truth about who you are and what you're capable of is the key to living a more fulfilled life.

### **How self-hypnosis works**

Everything you think, feel, act and speak is stored in the subconscious. Amongst these feelings and thoughts are all the negative beliefs you have about yourself. How you initially feel about a situation largely affects how you react to a similar situation or emotion in the future. Self-hypnosis is a way of re-calibrating your emotional responses in order to prevent them from interfering with your life, by addressing your triggers and helping you learn from previous situations. We choose our responses and while many won't believe this is true, it's entirely in our power to select a response to situations which trigger us to model anger, fear, resentment and jealousy.

These negative emotions can manifest in undesirable behavior that reflects poorly on us and can impact our success in all areas of our lives. Getting to the bottom of them is one self-hypnosis can be your best friend.

You can take control of not only your responses to situations you find trigger unacceptable behavior, you can also take control of your way of understanding yourself as a person. At the root of everything you say and do is the way you see yourself. Do you like yourself? Do you believe in yourself? You may believe you do, but is that an honest answer to those questions? In truth, most human beings are plagued with doubt and in some cases, that doubt can be debilitating and prevent us from being all we can be.

A classical self-hypnosis session has three parts. These parts should be pursued in the order described, if the session is to be effective. As with any procedure, it is better to familiarize yourself with these stages before attempting the actual process. The first stage involves preparation for a self-hypnosis session, while the second stage is about the actual hypnosis.

Finally, the third part is about precautions to be taken and how to end a session.

### **Part 1 - Preparation**

The start of a session should be simple. This will ensure you don't deviate from your intentions concerning the hoped for outcome of pursuing self-hypnosis. A complicated start will only make things confusing and you may get in your own way by wasting time on an unproductive session. The preparation for a self-hypnosis session involves several factors which should be addressed before the second stage can be started. Let's have a look at these factors in detail.

## ***Place***

Self-hypnosis is usually performed inside a closed room. The place you choose is important, because it sets the tone. The kind of environment you're in just before inducing self-hypnosis will have an effect on your thoughts. You should be alone in the room and it should be in a place with minimal noise and little possibility of disruption. People talking or even walking around can be disturbing to a hypnosis session. Ensure that the room is comfortable; not too cold or too hot. It is also shown that softer lighting is helpful and makes for an effective self-hypnosis environment.

## ***Temperature***

As mentioned earlier, the temperature in the room is crucial. A very hot room will make you sweat and you'll feel uncomfortable. Besides this, there is also the chance of you becoming dehydrated because of excessive sweating. A cold room, on the other hand, will affect the blood flow in your body and might distract you from the hypnosis session. So it's better to choose a comfortable temperature that is neither too hot nor too cold. If you plan on being seated for a long period of time during the session, this factor is very important.



## ***Clothing***

Avoid tight-fitting clothing. It can distract you from the session, because it can become uncomfortable when seated for long periods. Loose, simple clothes are preferred. Sweats or loose shorts are the ideal clothes to wear for a self-hypnosis session.

## ***Solitude***

The biggest threat to a self-hypnosis session is disturbance and distraction from outside sources. Before starting a session, make sure all phones are off, doors are locked, windows closed and alarm clocks turned off.

If possible, even tell the people who live with you to be extremely quiet or choose a time when they are not around or will not disturb you. Never start a session if you expect to get an important call. Finish the call and all other work before starting the session. This session is for you. Nobody else should be allowed to disturb it.

## ***Posture***

Posture is also an important aspect of hypnosis. How you sit is just as important as where you sit. Choose your favorite chair or the most comfortable chair in the room for your session. Ensure you sit straight, with legs and arms uncrossed and relaxed. Slouching or leaning to the side is not an ideal position, mainly because it could affect your back due to the duration of the session.

## ***An agenda***

Always have an agenda for a session. Never start a session with the thought that you will just ‘wing’ it. Self-hypnosis is a methodical procedure.

This means you need to have a plan of action before you start. The agenda can be as small as you like. For some people, it could be a relaxation method. For others, it could be to deal with an emotional situation, or other challenge. Unless you decide on a particular agenda to work on, your mind won’t be able to fully focus. Why are you doing this? Answer the question fully and then decide who you intend to respond to the reason for pursuing a self-hypnosis session.

Here are some possible objectives for a self-hypnosis session: Ø

### Getting

rid of bad habits. Whether that’s excessive drinking, a drug habit, or overeating, hypnosis can be successfully used to help rid yourself of these habits.

Ø

### An

increase in brain function is a common reason for people to start using self-hypnosis as a life practice. The brain is an organ that can be trained to perform as you want it to. If you train it to think quickly and logically, it will. Self-hypnosis can help you gain control over the way your brain processes and retains information.

Ø

### Mental

peace is something everybody craves in today’s world. Most people have such busy lives they rarely find peace. Self-hypnosis allows them to achieve a state of peace. As with meditation, the effects of self-hypnosis walk with practitioners even when not in mid-session.

As said earlier, the idea is to get to the heart of what’s bothering you and

experience mitigation.

The first stage of self-hypnosis is about preparing yourself physically and mentally. This stage is of utmost importance. Take the time to ensure that you've taken steps to create the right conditions for successful self-hypnosis, by addressing the facets listed above. Every strong structure needs a strong foundation. This first stage is the foundation of a well-structured self-hypnosis session. Now that we've set the scene and made sure we're comfortable, in a quiet setting where we've reduced the likelihood of being disturbed, or disrupted, let's talk about the self-hypnosis session, itself.

## **Part 2 - Induction**

This stage of the session deals with the actual beginning of self-hypnosis and how important it is that induction is achieved slowly and deliberately. An abrupt introduction to the session can prevent its ultimate success, so it's of paramount importance that you take special note of the following information.

*Close your eyes Closing your eyes has a calming effect and tends to slow the world around you down. Closing your eyes is symbolic of shutting out the world, because our eyes are what we use to see and connect with it, before any other sense. Closing your eyes helps to reduce the visual distractions presented by your physical setting. Nearly 50% of distractions can be eliminated just by closing your eyes. This also helps you reduce light inflow.*

*Shutting down your thoughts This is the most crucial part of the session. When you start a session, it is essential that you don't allow any stray thoughts to throw you off the intended course of your self-hypnosis session. They pose a distraction that will cause you to wander from the purpose of the session. However, it isn't easy to keep the mind completely clear of thoughts. When you first start self-hypnosis, you'll find half a dozen thoughts just waltzing in and out of your mind. What's for dinner? Did I leave the iron plugged in? Don't*

***be disheartened. It takes practice to completely eradicate competing thoughts.***

Keep practicing and you will eventually master the tendency to stray from your purpose. Once you have successfully removed all stray thoughts, you can move on to the next step in your session.

## ***Impartiality***

The most effective way to manage stray thoughts you're unable to remove from your consciousness is to cast yourself as a passive observer, or uninvolved onlooker, rather than a participant. Be aware of your thoughts, but don't attach any value or significance to them.

They're just your mind working, as it always does. Basically, you need to stand by and watch the thoughts flow, rather than mentally comment or otherwise react to them, or become annoyed by them. For example, if your favorite food is the thought flowing through your mind, just let it go. Don't let it affect you. Also, eat before a session to prevent thoughts of food from crossing your mind. It's also advisable to drink enough water to be properly hydrated, but not enough to need to break off a session to visit the washroom. Impartiality with respect to your thoughts is an effective way to prevent them from distracting you.

***Identify tension spots Your body holds tension in various places which need to be relaxed before you start yourself-hypnosis process. Identify each of these spots on your body. To do this, you need to feel the different tensions in each body part separately. Start from your toes and move upwards slowly, towards your head. Focus on each part keenly, until you feel the tension going away.***

Visualizing the tension leaving your body is a good way to relax. Imagining the path it follows, as it leaves, will help you connect to the tension and release it. The release of tension should be slow and not rushed, as hurrying defeats the purpose of the exercise.

## ***Breathing***

The way you breathe is an integral part of a self-hypnosis session.

Breathing can help you slow down and relax, so that you can start your session in a frame of mind conducive to the process. (Slow, deep breathing is also beneficial to your health, as a side note).

As you breathe, your lungs expand (inhalation) and contract (exhalation). Be

aware of these movements. Visualize the breath flowing into and out of your lungs. This slow breathing will help your mind to slow down and focus. As you inhale, you can visualize positive energy entering your body.

As you exhale, you can visualize the negative energy being released with the exhaled breath. You can use your imagination to visualize the energy entering and leaving your body, picturing it as a substance and providing inhalations and exhalations with their own colors, to reflect their respective qualities as either positive or negative.

Any device you choose to use in order to better visualize as an accompaniment to deep, mindful breathing, is yours and yours alone, so choose something that works for you.



## ***Imagination***

Hypnosis relies on your imagination in order to get to you to a place in which your mind is relaxed and focused. Now that your imagination is flowing, it's time for you to let go completely. Try to imagine that you are at the top of your favorite mountain and there is nothing below you. Now imagine that you have the gift of flying, but haven't used it before. Take a few steps toward the edge and then just let go. Imagine yourself falling down and as you fall, feel yourself gliding and eventually, flying. This is the start of your freedom from the mental exhaustions of life. Make your imagination as vivid as possible. The more detailed it is, the easier it will be for your mind to believe it.

### ***Delve deeper***

Now that you have taken the leap of faith, it is time for you to delve more deeply into your mind. Now that you are flying, imagine a lake you saw from the mountain you stood at the top of, or a green meadow. See it growing larger, as you draw nearer. Note the sun lighting up the water and grasses growing on its banks. Feel the wind rushing past you and the floating sensation of flying. Paint the scene as you fly, making it as real as though you were watching it unfold before your open eyes. You should be able to control your flying – the altitude and speed. Gravity doesn't matter anymore. You are in control of everything.

## ***Statements***

This is the stage of self-hypnosis where you actually start working towards your goal. Pick a statement that leads you toward your goal for the session. For example, if your goal is greater success at work, then your statement could be something like “Need to think outside the box”. Or “I must perform better at work”. Keep the statements simple and definitive. Don’t let them sound like a question, like, “Should I perform better?” or “Maybe I should perform better”. Statements/questions like these give your mind the freedom to wander away from your focus, throwing your goal into question. Even the way you say it can make a difference. If your statement is firm and unequivocal, then your mind will accept it as fact.

Once you reach the point at which you feel that you are floating, try saying the statement in a loop for a minute or two. Repeat the sentence slowly 5 times a minute, with gaps between each repetition. Then, slowly increase the frequency to say it 10 times a minute, and then 15, until you reach 30 repetitions per minute.

## **Part 3 - Enhancement**

Self-hypnosis will work only if you have the willpower to continue practicing it for a long period of time. Self-hypnosis also requires additional lifestyle changes in order to enhance its effects. For example, waking up every morning and repeating to yourself the goals you want to achieve in self-hypnosis will go a long way toward helping with the actual self-hypnosis process. Like any method, you need to stop giving in to the urges that compelled you to try self-hypnosis in the first place. For example, if you are using hypnosis to quit smoking, then you need to be able to abstain from smoking no matter how tempting it is. If that means using nicotine patches, e-cigarettes, gum or other smoking cessation aids, then do it. The same applies to other behaviors, responses or challenges you’re trying to address with hypnosis. Be true to your goal and endeavor to be more

aware of the places that need improvement.

Post-self-hypnosis session, make sure you uphold and honor the statements you made while under hypnosis. Visualize yourself achieving your ultimate goal and use that vision as your motivator for those occasions on which you feel tempted to slip back into the habit, or behavior you're trying to break.

### ***Tips for a better a self-hypnosis session***

While performing self-hypnosis, it is essential to be able to make connections that you can work on after the session. Following are a few tips to make your hypnosis session even more effective.

## ***Anchor points***

Anchor points are spots on your body, chosen by you, to help trigger relaxation. While creating an anchor point, think of something or someone that induces a sense of calm.

Then, imagine that you are in that place/doing that activity/seeing that scene, or with that person. Focus on the sense of calm this visualization engenders in you and touch a point of your choosing as the anchor point. As you touch the point, reinforce that sense of calm by repeating to yourself that you are now completely relaxed. This anchor point should be in a place on your body which is easily accessible to you. The back of the neck would be a bad place for an anchor point, as it's less accessible and requires more movement to reach than say, the palm of your hand.

When starting a session, close your eyes and touch the anchor point. Slowly and deliberately count backwards from ten. Similarly, when ending a session, count backwards and open your eyes.

***Focus on a point*** *If you find it difficult to clear your mind of stray thoughts, you can choose a point on a blank wall and focus your attention on it. This might be an imperfection in the wall's surface or even a nail. Ensure that you devote your undivided attention to it and you will find that stray thoughts will become easier to banish, freeing you for self-hypnosis.*

***Try to mend your relationship with your trigger*** *If you are trying to achieve success, a trigger might be the fear of not meeting your own expectations or goals. During a session, try to change your perceptions about events which have led you to be fearful about your own capacity to achieve your goals. Try to condition your mind to look at negative events as opportunities for you to learn. The idea is to take your "fear"*

trigger and transform it into a learning tool.

By owning the negativity of events which have impacted your self-confidence,

you can become much stronger and more defined in your sense of self.

# CHAPTER 5 - NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP)

## **NLP – an overview**

1970 saw the development of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) by John Grinder and Richard Bandler.

The three most important facets of human experience are summed up in the name itself. Our neurological functions, our ability to communicate using spoken and written language and programming – education, learning, systems of social organization – are the things that set the human animal apart.

Our bodies are equipped with incredibly complex neurological pathways that govern how our bodies work. As speaking beings, we are able to engage in intricate communication with others. The models we create, from education to engineering, to community are a hallmark and perhaps a summation of the other two facets of the name of this school of practice. NLP is an effort to deconstruct and understand the dynamics which exist between the brain and the language we use. In so understanding, we're enabled to reconstruct those dynamics in ways that more readily serve people.

So, what does NLP strive to achieve? It is a proven fact that we don't utilize our brains to their fullest potentials. In fact, it's verifiably true that most of us use only about 10% of the brain's incredible capacity. NLP can help you increase your brain's overall function and thus, your effectiveness in life, especially at work. With the help of NLP, you can either strive to excel at a given field or achieve holistic development. But NLP is also being used by hypnotherapists to treat a number of disorders, both psychological and physical. Essentially, NLP posits that through the agency of "modelling" (taking on the traits observed in exemplary people), we can, ourselves, be exemplary.

NLP depends somewhat on individual intelligent quotient and utilizes this foundation to motivate people to achieve greater command of their potential. More often than not, we tend to think one thing and act in a completely different manner, which is often due to the disruption between our thoughts and actions. NLP helps to reduce this dissonance between our thought processes and our actions and produces greater harmony between what we know/think and what we do. It also helps to stabilize the thought process and helps us to make more fully-considered decisions, even in the heat of the moment. In other words, it helps us to see the big picture, by expanding our ability to collate the vast variety of data that presents itself in the decision-making process thereby adding enhanced perspective. NLP seeks to help us more effectively manage all the incoming information we use to arrive at decision.

### **Parameters**

NLP is currently being applied in different fields such as psychology, sales, healthcare and the business world. The application of NLP in any field is driven by the following parameters.



## ***Neurological***

Our nervous system has two important parts, namely the peripheral nervous system (which is responsible for our reflexes) and the central nervous system (rational forethought accompanying actions). The way the central nervous system helps us react to a variety of situations entirely depends on our perception. NLP works to alter our perceptions in such a way that it helps people learn to model more appropriate, constructive responses, because of fundamental changes in the way we see things and understand them.

## *Linguistic*

Language can often be a barrier to expressing our thoughts. Since our decisions are predominantly based on our internal dialogue, it is important that we communicate them properly and in a concise fashion, once they issue into the world. Clear and concise communication will not only eliminate confusion but also help us achieve excellence.

NLP seeks to help us re-organize our internal dialogue, flowing out of an altered perspective and interpretative framework.

## ***Programming***

NLP is achieved through the synchronization of language and our thought processes. An organized mind is important for making the right decisions and acting on them. Programming our mind will help us delineate emotions while making decisions prevents irrationality, impulsivity and misunderstandings which can be engendered by poorly-thought out, emotional response.

## **Levels of the mind**

This is the final parameter in NLP. The three levels in our mind, namely the unconscious (responsible for intuition), subconscious (consists of accessible but not obvious information) and conscious (state of awareness), are responsible for the functioning of our minds. NLP aims at accessing the information stored in our unconscious mind, as a result of past experiences, and making it available for interpretation by the conscious mind. This access permits us a greater scope of action and expertise, as we're able to "get at" information why might not normally be conscious of possessing.

## **How does it work?**

NLP works based on modalities that are representations of our different experiences. These modalities can further be divided into submodalities (perceptions arising from our senses of taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight). NLP strives to achieve the desired action by altering these submodalities. These changes alter the original experience and replace it. Our actions are thus modified based on the altered experience.

Let's take a look at the different steps involved in NLP: Ø

### **Learn**

to analyze your behavior. Since NLP aims to modify your thoughts and actions, it is important that you are aware of your actions first. Observe how you react to different situations and make note of them. By constant observation, you will be

different situations and make note of them. By constant observation, you will be able to identify the pattern in your actions, thereby helping you arrive at submodalities.

Ø

Once

you have been able to interpret your reactions to different situations, what needs to be done next is to identify how these can be changed for achieving success and a more effective interface with others. For this step, you will have to observe how other people react to the same situations. Compare your reactions with the others' and analyze. Note areas of improvement.

Ø

Having

analyzed your actions and identified areas of improvement, you need to now implement this knowledge toward changing your behavior. Arrive at a list of goals associated with the desired change in behavior. Having these goals in place will provide a sense of direction and will help in programming your mind.

Ø

Now

that you have your list of goals, the next item on the agenda is coming up with an action plan. Formulate a plan based on your observations about your behavior. These observations are what make your plan unique. No two plans are the same because people seldom behave in precisely the same manner. Make sure that your plan incorporates the areas of improvement you've made note of.

Ø

Once

you start implementing the NLP plan, keep track of your progress. Observe how you have improved in terms of each submodality. Do not lose hope if you don't achieve the desired results in the first phase of implementation, for very few

people manage to succeed in the first phase.

Make note of your failures as well as your successes. This will help you identify further weaknesses associated with your behavior, which did not surface during your preliminary observation stage. Keep trying and refining your plan, based on what may not have worked for you in the first phase of implementation. Do not forget to congratulate yourself for the small successes you may achieve during the implementation stage. This attitude will help you stay motivated in implementing the plan in the long term.

Ø

The

final step in NLP is the formulation of a plan, which should not be too rigid to implement, so that you can change it according to what you're learning. To come up with a plan, it is important that you don't have rigid expectations regarding its implementation. Since it is not possible for us to foresee all possible delays or obstacles, there needs to be some amount of flexibility in your plan. Think of ways you can make your existing plan flexible and fluid, to accommodate changes you may need to make. The idea is to make your plan work at all times. You may be required to add new steps to your existing plan to achieve this. Try not to over-complicated your plan by adding additional steps. You could end up making it difficult to implement. Each step in the plan needs your time and energy, so be aware of this while planning.

For NLP to be effective, you should be willing to look at your perceptions and responses honestly and systematically, as well as hold them up against exemplary examples of similar perceptive-responsive models. In learning to master your own perceptions and the response that arrive from them, you can become much more effective in engaging other people and prevent emotional interpolation that can be damaging to your relationships and other people's perceptions of you. By deconstructing your thought and emotional processes and re-programming the way you choose your words and actions, you'll find that you will be soon be modelling the kind of behavior that sets you apart as exemplary. It's important that you be committed to the process and willing to

take the time to make it work for you.

## CONCLUSION

I would like to express my gratitude and to thank you for purchasing this book. As you can now see, hypnotism is a somewhat underrated science which has numerous benefits in many disciplines, from psychology, to pain management and stress reduction, to working life. Like every other science, it's important to know that hypnotism can also have several harmful side effects if not performed properly, as discussed at the beginning of this book. Ideally, seek out trained clinical professions to counsel you in the sue of hypnosis, to undergo a professional course of hypnotherapy. There are practitioners working with false credentials who can do more harm than good, so be sure to check accreditation. Be sure the practitioners you consider are trained.

Seek referrals and recommendations.

This is especially important concerning therapeutic interventions for children. In the case of regression therapy, serious consideration should be given, weighing both the urgency of the intervention and the efficacy of the proposed therapy.

Regardless of contemporary skepticism, hypnosis has come a long way since the days of Mesmer and the clinical understanding of its function has been developed to make of it a complementary therapy many professionals call on to treat a wide array of disorders.

From the altered state theory of hypnosis, science has now come to better understand the manner in which hypnosis works with the human mind. Once considered to be a form of sleep in which people were put under the spell of charismatic stage hypnotists, it is now a certifiably effective treatment.

Thousands. all over the world. are being helbed through the therapeutic

application of hypnosis, from returning combat veterans, to victims of childhood abuse, war and rape.

The application of hypnosis and hypnotherapy offers hope for millions who suffer from stress and hypervigilance. The therapy's ability to train the mind to relax and to respond differently to life's challenges has proven enormously valuable in areas of everyday life, like work and relationships. Further hypnosis can help so many reprogram their responses to find greater success in all areas of their lives. The science and practice of hypnosis has grown from being a vaudeville act to being a form of complementary medicine which is expanding its influence, everywhere.

With greater understanding has come a wealth of therapeutic applications and this can only be good news for many in need of its benefits.

I hope you've found this book to be informative and that it has clarified any questions you may have had about the subject. Always remember to maintain certain boundaries. Don't cross personal barriers for the sake of hypnosis. Be transparent and open about this science and when performing it, ensure you know what you're doing. Just like any other science, it is important to exercise caution and to consult a professional to ensure that what your doing is as effective and as safe as possible. The information in this book is intended to be informative, but it is by no means definitive. It's counselled that you seek out knowledgeable people in your community and call on their expertise. Good luck!



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