

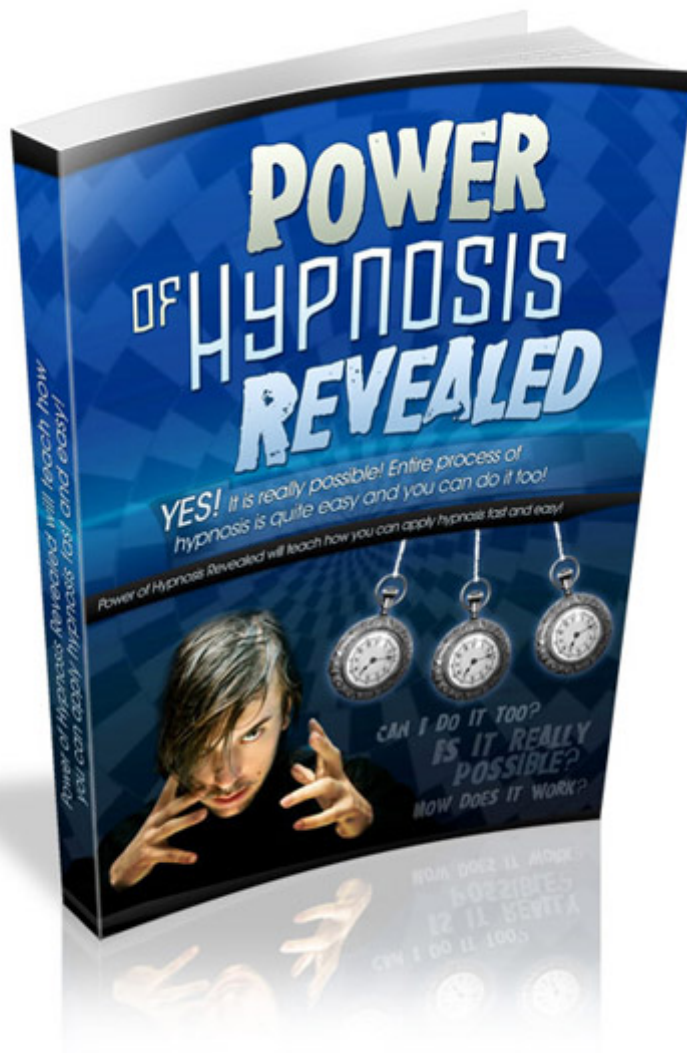


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I. Introduction

Why would anyone want to read a book about hypnosis?

I've always wondered that too. There are thousands of studies about this phenomenon and the brilliant minds of those who are trying to fully understand it still have not come with a clear answer about hypnosis. Truth be told, the brain is the most complex organ ever created by nature. Since we like to think of ourselves as superior living beings, we humans have always had this never-ending curiosity about the things we can not fully explain.

What is hypnosis? Who used it first and how? What can I do with it? Can it help me? Can I rule the world? So on and so forth.

This book is not going to help you work on an evil master plan to rule the world with the use of hypnosis, but it will clearly give you an idea of how things are. It will take you on a journey back in time to the origins of hypnosis; show you what it used to be and how it has evolved; put you in the shoes of a hypnotizer and then sit you down on the hypnotized person's chair; show you its benefits and many applications, and sum it all up in a decent conclusion.

So if you really want to know all these things, carry on with your reading activity.

1 ■ What is hypnosis?

The word “hypnosis” comes from the Greek “hypnos”, which means “sleep”. This does not mean that every time you fall asleep you hypnotize yourself, but indeed, it has something to do with a state of somnolence.

Hypnosis is, in fact, more similar to a controlled trance-like condition, often induced by a therapist, but it can also be self dictated. People under hypnosis may look similar to somnambulists; they all do things while being asleep and never remember them after waking up. While under hypnosis, individuals’ receptivity to suggestions is high and that helps them recover repressed memories, or eliminate bad habits (smoking, excessive drinking, kleptomania etc.) and certain other disorders (anxiety, claustrophobia, panic attacks and so on). They also become more vulnerable, which has lead to setting certain ethic principles regarding the usage of hypnosis. Manipulating someone by hypnotizing them is, therefore, forbidden!

In our lifetime, we experience hypnotism as a general state of “nervous sleep” or relaxation induced by mental focus. It is NOT a

form of unconsciousness, but a wakeful state of concentration and high suggestibility, in association with minimized peripheral awareness. Hard to imagine when that happens? Here is a good example: daydreaming! We think of one thing and we exclude all other factors. Other times, we read a book we turn the page and completely forget what we have just read. Drivers also have their share of hypnotic moments while driving without being able to remember the road.

Hypnosis is priceless when it comes to its multiple uses in psychotherapy, medicine and even in sports and military practice. If we talk about influencing a mass of people, it has its applications in advertising, propaganda and manipulation. You've often heard about "hypnotizing commercials" or the "hypnotic speeches" of certain dictators and other totalitarian rulers. There is no magic trick involved, no paranormal activity either; it's all about the power to control the mind by making the subject readily accept suggestions.

To have a clearer view of how that can even be possible without any voodoo mumbo jumbo, we should take a closer look at where and how it all began.

2 ■ Back to “black” – the origins of hypnosis

Hypnosis had existed ever since man had become aware of himself as a social creature. Every civilization has its healers, witch doctors, and shamans, and such who had performed trancelike rituals for various purposes.

Back in the days when the Greek worshiper Aesculapius, the god of medicine, priests reassured the believers that gods would speak to them in their sleep and thus proceeded with putting the individuals into a trance. The Ancient Egypt’s hieroglyphic fragments also thrive with examples of “deep sleep” used by the Oracle at Delphi. The chant of “OM” along with other mantras in Hindus Vedic times produced the same trance to Indian believers. The Christian healers, also known as “God’s men” and numerous witch doctors of various religious sects used to induce hypnotic trance in the mass praying sessions (references can be found in the Bible as well).

In many such religious rituals the use of herbal psychotropic drugs for a psychedelic experience of the believer was not a secret.

Once upon a time, let’s say in the XVIIIth century, there was a healer called Franz Anton Mesmer who had a bizarre interest in

the connection between astrology and medicine. He had used magnets on patient's bodies in his rituals of curing them from various diseases. The patients often had spasmodic muscular contractions and then faint, but the diseases would always go away. Despite the occult interpretations, Mesmer had a strong belief that his "miracles" had a physical explanation and had used terms like "gravity" and "magnetism" to explain his theory, and is considered to be the precursor of hypnotic suggestion.

By the mid 1800s, the Marquis de Puysegur explained that Mesmer's magnetism and its effect on the human body fluids was in fact electric and present not only in man, but in all living creatures including insects and plants. To prove so, he conducted healing sessions in nature.

Another physician, John Elliotson had performed painless surgeries on 1,834 patients using the hypnotic trance as the only anesthetic. At the same time, James Esdaile had performed complicated surgical interventions like limb amputations using the same method.

The first man who made the transition from magnetism to modern therapeutic hypnosis was James Braid, a brilliant surgeon from Manchester. In 1843, Braid thought of using the word "hypnotism" as an abbreviated version of "neuro-hypnotism". That had marked the creation of hypnosis as a distinct concept.

Neuro hypnotism referred to a curious condition of the nervous system that was induced by an abstract and fixed attention of the mind and eyes on an object of a non-exciting nature. The power of the mind focusing on a single idea or object becomes so great that it can render the individual insensitive to other stimulations and leads to a progressive form of relaxation called “nervous sleep”.

The French neurologist Jean M. Charcot (1825-1893) argued that hypnosis was just a state of hysteria. He too had brought new approach in Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism by identifying three different stages of a trance:

- a) lethargy
- b) catalepsy
- c) somnambulism

Frenchman Pierre Janet (1845-1947) was a neuro-psychologist discovered hypnosis's relaxing effects and proved to be one of the few who had continued to be interested in hypnosis during the rage of the psychoanalysts.

Russian psychologist Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936) had a major contribution in developing the Stimulus Response Theory. He trained dogs to salivate after hearing the sound of a bell that announced food and was awarded winner of the Nobel Prize for psychology in 1904 for his work on the digestive secretion

process. Although it notes not have much to do with hypnosis, Pavlov's concept of the conditioned reflex has great importance in linking behaviors, especially in NLP.

The discoverer of the Laws of Suggestion, Emile Coue (1857-1926) used to encourage his patients to repeat to themselves for about twenty to thirty times per evening that they would be getting better as days go by. Positive suggestions also worked when prescribing medication to his patients and later on abandoned hypnosis in favor of suggestion.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) did a parallel study with Charcot. Unlike Charcot, Freud left hypnosis out of his therapy sessions because he considered he could not be able to hypnotize his patients to a satisfying level and that the cure that hypnosis offered was temporary. He had a more paternal manner of treating his patients; however, they would often go into a trance when he put his hand on their head signifying Dominant Doctor – obedient patient roles.

Former student, friend and colleague to Freud, Carl Jung (1875-1961) brought the collective unconscious and archetypes in the attention of the scientific society. He believed in encouraging patients to make use of their active imagination in order to replace old memories. He did not use hypnosis in an active

manner and preferred the term of “inner guide”, yet much of his research is a true goldmine to healers and various hypnotists.

Milton Erickson (1932-1974) also referred to as the “fatherly” figure of modern hypnosis discovered new methods of hypnosis that avoid the conscious mind by combining non verbal with verbal hypnosis techniques. He is also a precursor of Bandler and Grinder’s NLP. Medical hypnotherapy was “born” in 1935, when Erickson had started using hypnosis on groups of patients applying techniques like indirect hypnosis, metaphor and induction.

II. The art of hypnosis

1 . The hypnotizer: a behavioral “wizard”

After having read so many names of so many brainiacs, you probably think that it takes a lot of science to get into someone's mind. That is partially true, but there are other qualities that a hypnotizer possesses. Take Hitler for instance: he was no scientist, but he had a frantic effect on the masses. His “fellow” evil mastermind, Saddam, had the same qualities.

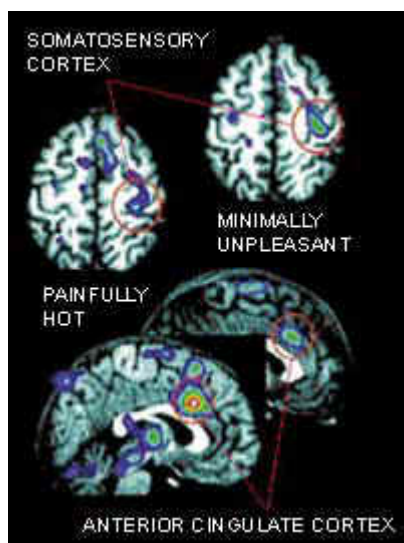
Then what does it take to be a hypnotizer and how does that affect people?

Through the history of mankind, many people had seen a rather mystical approach to hypnosis. It's not a “Master and Slave” mind game despite all the myths and erroneous theories.

To understand what it takes for a hypnotizer to succeed in getting someone hypnotized and what his real purpose is, we first need to take a look at how the human mind makes its connections.

Every functional human brain possesses two hemispheres: the left one, which is analytical, and the right one, which is sensorial. Everything that we do is commanded by the two hemispheres. In 1998 Henry Szechtman along with his co-workers, conducted an experiment on the human brain under hypnosis; he has also measured the chemical modifications in the brain using PET (positron emission tomography). Results were remarkable: the active regions of the brain when the hypnotized subject asked to have an auditory hallucination are different than the cerebral areas that are active during a real auditory stimulation.

The right anterior cingulate cortex seemed to be active at the same time when the subjects were hallucinating; they were fully



awake and hearing the same sound they have hallucinated in reality. However, when awake and asked to imagine the auditory sound, the subjects no longer had brain activity in the right anterior cingulate cortex. This proves that the hypnotist can “trick” the brain into registering hallucinated stimuli as real. This also works when inducing a sensorial hallucination. In the image above, a PET scan shows the brain activity of a subject while, under hypnosis, his hand was put into painfully hot water and he was given the idea that his sensation is going to be painfully hot (as shown in the top left scan) and then slightly unpleasant (shown in the right). The anterior cingulate

cortex, responsible for the suffering aspect, was not that active as if it had been under normal circumstances, dictating to the body that the pain was minimal.

Therefore, there are many ways in which a hypnotherapist can influence their patients, from inducing or wiping out memories to the manipulation of the body's entire sensorial activity. Just about any hospital and clinic has its hypnotherapists. They co-operate with their patients and their doctors to establish the goals that the patient wishes to achieve by undertaking hypnosis sessions. At times, the hypnotherapist would first recommend seeing a doctor before even starting to work for their clients. Making an appointment with a wealthy and famous hypnotherapist does not necessarily ensure the elimination of a patient's problem.

Therefore, do not exclude the help of a young practitioner who has a well appointed, decent, secure and clean private office. He might treat you with less arrogance and more interest in your problem. In fact, obtaining a practitioner license has absolutely nothing to do with the practitioner's competences.

Besides hypnotherapists with a diploma, there are a few other people who can hypnotize.

Here are a few clear examples:

- A trainer makes use of guided imagery to help his students develop fast reading skills, rapid comprehension skills, increase their power to memorize new information and control exam anxiety.
- A clergyman hypnotizes his auditorium while preaching, and in pastoral counseling.
- A dentist reduces his patient's fears replacing it with confidence and calmness.
- Professional sports practitioners use self-hypnosis in finding motivation and enhancing performance.
- The Advertiser makes use of hypnosis to have more creative and innovative ideas for his work.
- The C.E.O. of a company hypnotizes to increase sales motivation and to reduce stress.
- The Criminal Investigator hypnotizes to extract information from traumatized witnesses or victims.
- The Health Care Professional assists his patients in strengthening their immune systems and accelerating healing processes.

Basically, hypnosis has its use anywhere there is social involvement and on anyone who is working on self motivation. Erickson once said: "Learning by experience is much more

educational than learning consciously. Learning experimentally is the most important thing.”

1 . 1 Hypnosis in therapy

In Hypnotherapy, the patient is induced into a state of trance – altered consciousness – and deep relaxation in order to improve the hypnotherapist’s capacity to access the patient’s specific memories, thoughts and emotions.

Amongst its many purposes, hypnosis plays a role in re-programming certain behavioral patterns to bypass phobias, suppressed emotions, negative thoughts, aggressiveness, irrational fears, anxiety and other such disturbing characteristics.

The conscious mind works like a filter of information can only perceive one in every million data accumulated by the subconscious in every second. Therefore, it is perfectly plausible to acknowledge that the world is pretty much different than how we perceive it. Surprisingly, for hypnosis to take its turn, the conscious mind must “shut up” and clear the way to the root of the problem. The patient’s deeply relaxed state also makes him more vulnerable and suggestible. However, this does not mean that they can be forced to do things against their will that contradict their morality and ethics; neither can they do things to

harm themselves. They have full control of themselves and the whole procedure is harmless.

There is no need for drug use in hypnotic therapy sessions, despite the fact that people respond to hypnosis in different ways - from instant results to the necessity of several other sessions. Even the slowest response to hypnosis is quicker than therapy by approach and discussions. More importantly, hypnosis brings out the strength that has always been inside of us in a latent state. The patient will also be able to easily jump from negative thoughts to feelings of forgiveness or altruism by treating addictive and abusive behavior.

As previously shown in an example, hypnosis can reduce and even cease pain – both physical and mental.

1 . 2 The right French key for the mind. How to

hypnotize

There are several techniques that therapists prefer using when it comes to hypnoses. There is no particular order or preference of these techniques; none has so far been proved to be better than another. The therapist uses one or several techniques in a single session by his own choice or by a preferred and discussed method

with the patient before starting the session. Mutual understanding is a must!

Probably the most common technique, even Hollywood producers have heard of, is “**Regression Therapy**”. The hypnotherapist moves back and forth in the patient’s memories, and does not necessarily has anything to do with believing in past life experience. Some people explain past life experience as a metaphor that the conscious mind uses to find logical explanations for what is going on in the patient’s life.

It is not a good way to lead suggestions since it is highly inappropriate because of the subject’s right to choose whether they wish to recall certain aspects or not. A therapist will make use of this technique in case he needs a rational explanation for his patient’s current behavior by understanding what had happened in the patient’s past.

Cellular Release Therapy is the next step of several talk sessions with no particular results. It brings out some pretty bad demons from the patient’s subject, but without putting him or her in a situation where he or her needs to re-experience the trauma. By using this technique in one session, the therapist will be able to bring out and then clear out a single behavioral aberration, addictions, patterns of relationships, core beliefs and so on. He seeks to disconnect in the subconscious mind all the reactive

patterns, emotions, thoughts and habits resulted from a traumatizing event while inducing other behavioral patterns or reactions to replace the old ones.

Etheric Plane Communication – this is also the “relationship fixer” whether the bad memories of the patient are connected to an ex lover, or to somebody else – dead or alive. The patient is allowed to say just about anything about that person, all the dirty little secrets that they have kept buried in their subconscious mind and free their subconscious from these thoughts and feelings.

Core Transformation is generally put into practice when the subjects wish to achieve their goals. It works fine when fighting bad habits, addictions, phobias or when people wish to stick to a certain diet or life regime that includes a certain sleep program, physical exercise, specific alimentation etc.

Spirit release is the case of helping someone who is having difficulties dealing with the energy of a deceased person. Some people who have passed away do not follow the normal hereafter course and put “strings” on a living person’s energy system. The living person then begins to have an awkward behavior and develops an addiction to the memory of the deceased one. There’s no need for ghost busters, though! The therapist uses this

gentle technique to restore his patient's peace of mind and lightheartedness.

A therapist's doorstep is crossed by all kinds of people. Not all of them are haunted by ghosts or are willing to keep a diet. Some have more life threatening problems such as drug addictions.

Remote Healing Sessions is the therapeutic hypnosis solution for that matter, and it takes two therapists to do it: one is the "facilitator" and the other one plays the part of the "surrogate". The surrogate asks for the patient's permission to work for their benefit. If the subject does not grant that, the session ends right there, right then. Nonetheless, if the patient agrees, all the above techniques can be used to his healing.

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) – the famous technique everyone is writing books about! To make it work, individuals need to use both conscious and unconscious mind. Reality is not necessarily the truth, but what the person perceives. Self perceptions of life are based on the unique neurology of an individual, who has the ability to modify that perception in his own benefit. Unlike the other techniques, when used in psychotherapy, this technique is focused on the person's present and future rather than the past. The therapist puts the subject in a deep relaxation state and opens both conscious and

unconscious mind to suggestions and then makes use of the unconscious mind's ability to "program" the subject's behavior.

So the next time someone tells you "It's all in your mind!" make sure you believe there is a possibility of that statement to be true.

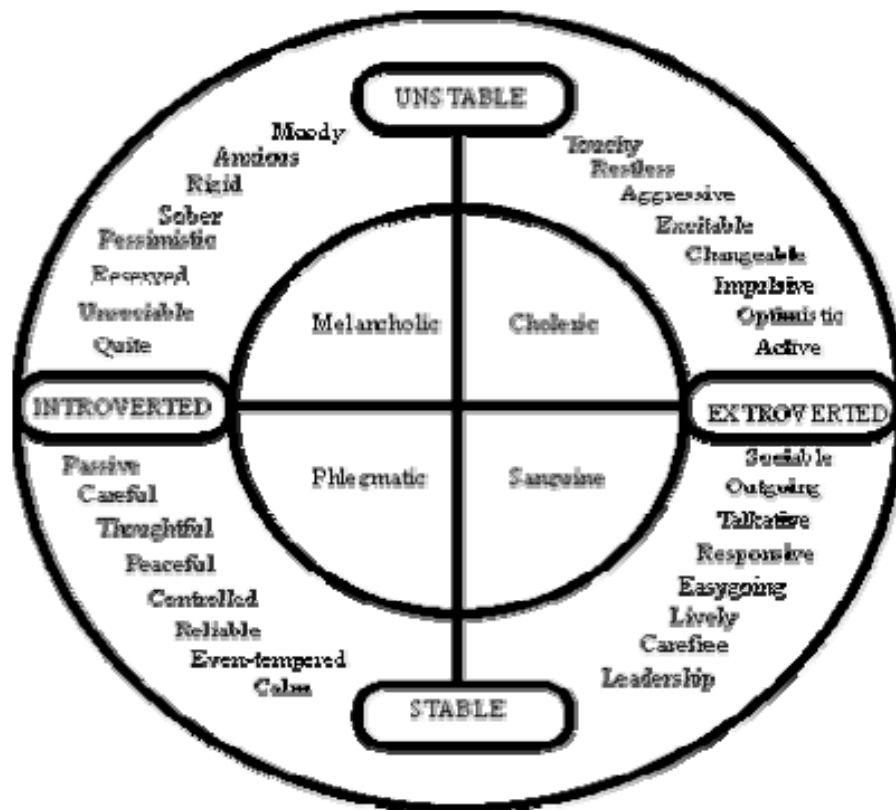
2 . The hypnotized: what's behind door number 1?

Hypnosis is really harmless and ANYONE can experience it. There are no known side effects besides the ones that are depicted by Hollywood, which we all know has a habit of blowing things out of proportion.

However, there are certain people who are more predisposed to hypnosis than others. That has raised a huge question mark over the heads of the scientists. Also, some techniques may work on certain individuals and the same techniques may be absolutely useless on other individuals as well as in the possibility of being hypnotized by certain hypnotists and not entering into a hypnotic state with the same techniques but being applied by other hypnotists. The reasons for that may be conscious or unconscious: the patient may feel at ease with a certain hypnotizer, but totally insecure in the presence of another.

Unconscious discomfort such as the hypnotist's resemblance to the patient's mother or father, a dominant attitude, the hypnotizer's smoking habits when dealing with non-smoking patients, his clothing style, his beard etc etc also weight heavily in the balance of a patient's hypnotisability.

There is a rumor that people with an extroverted personality are easier to hypnotize than the introverts, but there is no scientific proof for that yet, and whether an individual is an introvert or an extrovert makes no point in self hypnosis. Besides Jung's rough categorization of individuals into introverts (shy, self motivated, self reliable, driven by inner feelings) and extroverts (sociable, more co-operant, dominated by feelings and emotions driven from the exterior), there are a lot of people that don't seem to fit precisely into any category, hence other subdivisions of these categories have been introduced. The image below shows them to you.



Source: H. J. Eysenck, *Mind and Neurosis*

In 1961, Furneau and Gibson have proven that individuals who are “stable extraverts” and “neurotic introverts” are more susceptible to hypnosis. These two categories are as opposite to each other as they can get. There is still a catch: a person can change, and therefore position themselves in different points of the circle of personalities. Then again, there is also the curious case of those who can induce hypnosis on themselves, but cannot be hypnotized by others. It’s is all a matter of trust and belief, which normally takes time, extra sessions and more money.

That proves the fact that one's personality is not as important as the individual's personal experience and flexibility that make him or her more or less predisposed to hypnosis. Context is, therefore, more important than general aspects.

2 . 1 Self hypnosis

Some people are better off without a therapist when it comes to using hypnosis to achieve their goals. As previously mentioned, hypnosis does not work on certain individuals unless it is self-induced, which comes with certain advantages and some downfalls as well.

Self hypnosis is certainly not as deep as hypnosis by a therapist, but that remains a necessary condition to keep you in charge of your mind and body. The good part is that you are the only one in control and there is no possible chance of an abuse. The downfall is that you may not really proceed to real hypnosis, but a mere state of relaxation (a chill person is not necessarily under hypnosis).

There are not that many requirements to precede self hypnosis: a quiet place in the home, the right light, knowing to count down from 100 to 1 in a totally relaxed state of mind or using your

thoughts to generate a relaxing image or sound; anything that can make you rid your mind of any kind of anxiety, stress or fear. It may be a bit hard to keep your thoughts from running wild into your mind in the beginning; don't panic – it happens to all of us and it usually takes some practice to be able to select and control all your thoughts. Focus on a single thing suitable for you to relax. Only in a complete state of relaxation and comfort you may start saying motivational, reinforcing phrases to yourself on a repetitive frequency. Repeat them as many times you feel like (some people have better results if they write down these phrases before commencing the hypnosis session). This is when your unconscious mind is processing the information without the awareness of the conscious mind. In other words, you are transferring data directly to the left side of the brain, bypassing the right side of the brain that acts like a filter and blocks certain psychosomatic modifications. Once completed this process, it is time for you to exit your trance mode. The comeback must be gradual; take your time to wake up.

Taking into consideration each person's ability to relax, the process can have various durations from individual to individual and even from one individual's self hypnosis session to another.

The list below includes the disorders that hypnosis and self-hypnosis can help you overcome:

Smoking habits

Drug addiction

Cancer

Obesity

Poor mental focus

Stress

Trauma

Low self esteem

Excessive anger

Allergies

Pre and post surgical anxiety

Phobias

Anxiety

Chronic pain

Lack of motivation

Insomnia

Relationship patterns

Infertility

2 . 2 . Children – handle with care!

Since birth, humans learn through sensorial perceptions and their minds are like sponges absorbing information. While children have the ability to perceive more information than adults and know no boundaries to their imagination, getting them into a state of hypnosis is fairly easy. There are less years of reinforcing hindrances and trust can be gained faster.

Mesmer was the first therapist to note pediatric hypnosis; that had happened in 1779, when he used hypnosis to help a child with visual problems.

Currently, hypnotherapy is mostly practiced to teach children how to self-hypnotize so they can control physical symptoms, bad habits, fears and many other conditions. The child is induced into a state similar to daydreaming or fantasy and easily enters deep hypnosis, in which his or her suggestibility predisposition is higher than in an adult person's case. The therapist's most common suggestion is that the body is like a computer that the child is able to control or he can make the child with chronic pain remember happy times when he/she was feeling well.

The therapist will always need parental advisory when working with children under the age of eighteen. Once having discussed

with the parent(S) about the child's problem and the method that is going to be applied, therapy can begin. The infant's problems can vary from behavioral issues to chronic conditions. There are numerous examples of cases in which hypnotherapy has been more effective than medication.

In a same way as for adults, pediatric hypnotherapy can help infants to raise their self confidence; a shy child will always have trouble integrating in a group, while a self confident child will find it easy to socialize and find his place. Hypnotherapy opens the door to self esteem and necessary confidence to get over life's obstacles. Fearful, anxious children can have a huge benefit from pediatric hypnotherapy.

Hypnosis helps children to increase their capacity to accumulate information and remember things. They may not all become straight A students, but a clear improvement on that matter will surely be noticed. Stress and anxiety are eliminated from the equation and the child will furthermore be able to concentrate on his or her study. They will also feel more motivated and confident.

Other beneficial effects of hypnosis on children are that they can discover hidden talents, release the will to develop those talents and proceed to achieving goals in a more organized way.

It's ridiculous to even mention it, but children's problems should be treated with as much seriousness and respect as adults'. Whatever the problem, it has had a serious impact on the child, which negatively influences his/her behavior. Effective hypnotherapy on children has a lot to do with conferring a child as much importance as in the case of a mature patient. Good communication must be enhanced both with the infant and with the parent.

***III.* Mass hypnosis: advertising and propaganda**

There is no place free from commercials: television, Internet, radio, the streets, the parks, even the toilets of public places like pubs and clubs are bombarded by countless brands who advertise themselves.

Advertising messages have become so strong that the brand itself has become a strong impersonated entity. We do not buy products for their real qualities any longer; we buy them because we are familiar to the brand that we like.

We are so annoyed and overfed with commercials that we sometimes refuse to watch them anywhere we go, but we start to wonder what is going on with a certain brand if it no longer communicates as intensely as it used to be if we no longer see any advertising from it for a few weeks/months. The irony here is that the brand has taken its place in our subconscious mind and it generates the suggestion to seek for it and buy it.

The mind works by associating things whether they are sensorial or cognitive stimuli. Hypnosis also works by association.

Therefore, a hypnotic advertisement will tell you something like “If you buy this product/service, you will be happy and satisfied”. That is what slogans and logos are a brand’s “heart and mind”.

In order to make its way to the buyer's subconscious mind and to induce buying, a brand will ALWAYS use positive suggestions. It will make use of strong messages, shocking images, symbols, suggestive sounds and just about anything that the consumer can associate to an existing need and wish to procure the advertised product or benefit from the promoted services. Non-governmental organizations use the same techniques in fund raising or awareness campaigns. Images are not the only "tools" that advertising and propaganda use to get to their target population. Sounds, colors, even smells are brought in the discussion. The list of symbols is as interesting as it is long and various, but it does not make the subject of this book, although I can't help myself from giving you a few quick examples:

Symbol	Association
Lightning	Speed, power, manhood
Water drops	Freshness, purity, chilly sensation, naturalness
Lion	Power, confidence, reliability
Cat	Elegance, femininity, moodiness
Doctor	Warrant specialist, hygiene, exigency
Baby animal	Often associated with the need of protection awakened by maternal feelings;

	compassion; pity (especially if the animal is shown to be suffering)
Child	maternal feelings: care, responsibility, frailness, need of protection;
Feather	Lightness, purity (if it is white), delicacy
Homeless man	Poverty, illness, mercy
Sun	warmth, optimism, vacation
Red	Passion, heat, lust, blood, violence
Black	Elegance, night, mystery, death, classic line
White	Purity, virginity, innocence, cleanness, mourning (in Japan)
Pink	Childhood, femininity, innocence
Blue	Freedom, cold, masculinity, daydreaming, immensity, sadness

The stronger the message, the longer it lasts in the consumer's mind, the more time it can suggest the desired action.

Television and the influentially growing Internet, take people on an emotional journey, modifying their perception of reality. They are both very good channels for advertising and propaganda. We often hear from TV producers, clichés like “if that is what the public asks for, then that is what the public gets”. There’s nothing more wrong than that! The public only gets what is being served. Violence, sex, shocking behavior, they all have an immediate and huge impact on the consumer’s mind. Therefore, more violence, sex and extreme models are given to the public. There’s never a saturation limit, as nature takes its course and replaces old consumers with new ones in the life cycle of generations.

While watching TV or staring in front of a computer, people are prone to hypnosis: the computer or TV is a fix point that captures the individual's attention and the advertiser or propagandist can efficiently generate suggestive messages. People get into a state of self hypnosis, although it's hard to say that viewing a single commercial once can do much about the buying process induction. That is why advertising never ceases to bombard our lives: it needs to be present everywhere at any time.

Propaganda makes use of the exact same principle: the more present the message is in a person's mind, the bigger the chances of achieving its goal.

Unlike advertising, propaganda is considered to be illicit and anyone who makes use of it has to (or should) face the rigors of

the law. Even so, propaganda is used by every political formation in electoral campaigns but let's not get into that.

Advertising also has its legal limitations, yet the messages have become more and more subtle and effective.

IV. **Bring out the Zen! Hypnosis and inner balance**

Hypnosis shares the same area with meditation in the human mind. As chaotic as it may seem, our mind is a very complex and organized place.

Both meditation and hypnosis imply concentration and a sort of trancelike state of mind. Through meditation, a person can empty her mind by eliminating the daily thoughts that flood our existence. To benefit from meditation's calm and serenity results takes time, practice, patience and perseverance. Meditation is like a work-out exercise for the human mind and it has long term effects of overcoming negative aspects of life.

Hypnosis is more rapid than other classical therapy in modifying behavior to the desired "shape". Like meditation, it provides long lasting and - in some cases - permanent behavioral changes for the better. Asthmatic patients, sufferers of chronic pain, pregnant women, people who have suffered post traumatic shocks, but also "Regular Joes" who wish to improve the quality of their lives can benefit from meditation and hypnosis. They can all restore their inner balance regardless of their past, illnesses or trauma.

The power of hypnosis is as high as the power of our own minds, which is indeed an amazing thing. We are born with an adaptable, intelligent and powerful mind, which we learn how to use as we develop as individuals. However, hypnosis is not a must. We can train ourselves to become highly self motivated and achieve our goals as if under hypnosis; this calls for a strong power of will and determination.

V. Prognosis for the future

We have seen where it came from, we now understand where it stands, but where will hypnosis be in the future and what has hypnotherapy reserved for us and our (future) children? It is hard to say for sure, but so far one thing is clear: hypnotherapy is beginning to be treated with an equal interest like all the branches of medicine as it has come a long way from being regarded as a doubtful way of treating patients with Placebo powers of the mind. Formal education of self hypnosis and hypnosis should also be given more interest with a nondenominational religious perspective.

As mankind digs deeper with research on noninvasive CNS (Central Nervous System) techniques that allow visualization, hypnosis may no longer be such a great enigma. Harder to understand would probably be the differences of manifestation in the hypnotic stages. As an example of the previous statement, I shall take passive hypnosis, in which the therapist gradually slows down the subjects – here we can expect interpretations of their states to be different than in active hypnosis, when the subject is awake and task oriented. Research on the confusing thalamic projections, the frontal lobes' activity, the limbic system's response to hypnosis and on the activation of the reticular system

have so far been insufficient in order to explain how hypnosis really functions inside the brain.

There are theories that still sustain Charcot's idea according to which hypnosis may be rooted to psychological disturbances and Pavlov's opinions about functional alterations of the cortex and about the mechanical energy involved in the activity of the psychic. Some scientists also agree to the fact the right hemisphere of the brain is more involved and "Affected" by the hypnotic phenomena, while other brilliant minds have been astonished by the anatomical and behavioral capacities as definite indicators of hypnotic trance.

Since the early research of Freud and Breuer, hypnosis has proven to be an important tool in understanding catharsis, repression, psychogenic amnesia, conversion as well as many other unconscious activities of the mind. Recently, hypnosis has been used in experimental investigations of conflict states, dream interpretation and in therapeutic imagery. Most likely, hypnosis will become an important link between different therapies, as well as hypnobeavioral study has already been included in aversion, systematic desensitization, imagery techniques, assertiveness training or flood.

Having the privileged status of facilitator in the communication between mind and body, hypnosis will furthermore play an

important part in the holistic care of patients; this is also a strong reason to explain the creation of psychoneuroimmunology – a scientific discipline of the interactive connection mental and neurophysiologic functions and the immune system.

Researchers continue to analyze the role of hypnosis and hypnotherapy in education, physical rehabilitation, anger management, asthma, chronic pain, sexual malfunction and pregnancy. Even space has no longer become a boundary: there is continuous research on how hypnosis can solve the problems of astronauts in space missions. The numerous applications of hypnosis have, thus, made of hypnotherapy become the career of the 21st century.

VI. **Conclusions**

Hypnosis may be a useful tool for many of our problems, but it does definitely not hold the key to all of them. It has come a long way since ritual trance, to spectacular magic “tricks”, to a respectable day job and it still has a long way to go.

One major drawback regarding hypnosis is its mystical background and not sufficient information about how it really makes the connections in the brain. However, research is been done and the future of hypnosis and hypnotherapy looks bright.

We encounter hypnosis on our daily basis: as we drive the car, watch television, surf the internet, mow the lawn or have a quiet, relaxing picnic in the park. Then we meet charismatic people capable to persuade us into doing just about anything. We even choose the products and services that we need according to hypnotic messages of the advertising mirage. We give our votes to politicians that use propagandistic techniques to win the elections. We say “yes” to the love of your lives in front of the altar. We listen to the music of our favorite band and wave our hands at them when ask us to at every concert, we follow the football ball and scream with the crowd on the stadium; we enhance things we have been taught in school as automatic

behavioral models. The human mind can be the perfect tool to obtain the wanted results for ourselves, for a specific individual (I am mostly referring at leaders of opinion) or for a certain organization. The way we choose to use hypnosis lies in our own hands.

Despite all the myths and Hollywood literature, hypnosis is a completely harmless practice. An individual under hypnosis will never proceed on doing something that is against his will and contradicts his moral beliefs or jeopardizes his physical integrity. Trust in the hypnotherapist can be an issue due to conscious or unconscious reasons, but the importance of purchasing hypnosis under professional supervision is highly indicated. Communication with the therapist is important in establishing the purpose of the hypnosis sessions.

Self hypnosis can be taught as well. It usually takes several attempts to actually succeed with the induction techniques, yet it is a good way to contribute in our well being.

There are a few basic rules of hypnosis that need to be taken into consideration. If these rules are respected, then hypnosis can only be beneficial and it will improve the general aspects of life such as physical and mental well being, the ability to focus on a goal and pursue it, control over chronic pain, improved self esteem and confidence, control over vices and many other things.