

## **HANGUPS, FEARS AND PHOBIAS**

### **You Can Set Yourself Free**

Among the primary reasons why people seek therapy is the need to deal with fear reactions. The range of such problems is extensive -- from simple, annoying "hang-ups", to specific (or non-specific) fears which affect the activities or enjoyment of life, to full-blown phobias which may be a part of serious mental illness.

Under certain circumstances, or in specific situations, virtually all people are subject to a variety of rational or irrational apprehensions. Many of these originate in childhood when undeveloped reasoning ability creates in a young person a natural climate for developing fears of the unknown. Fears can, of course, develop in adulthood through traumatic experience, but most prove to have originated in early, impressionable years.

It is interesting to note that fears seldom travel alone. While one may be dominant and apparent, investigation will usually reveal others which are associated and inter-related.

### **Common Problems**

The usual apprehensions that may exist in relative degrees of severity include flying, high places, rejection, failure (or even success), pain, exposure, poor performance (sports, scholastic, job, theatrical, sexual), death, the unknown, contamination, blood, animals (including spiders, sharks, etc.), water, impending danger, darkness, open spaces, closed spaces, loss of control and many others.

Fears are not necessarily bad. They can be highly valuable if they serve useful purposes, such as creating caution in driving,

locking doors, being prepared for emergencies. But when a fear causes alteration of a normal lifestyle, creating intense and irrational behaviors, becoming a threat to a person's well-being, it merits attention. Frequent occurrence is a strong warning signal that needs to be heeded.

A hang-up becomes a fear when it becomes noticeably disturbing and begins to affect behavior. A fear becomes a phobia when it reaches the point of being triggered by factors which are irrational and may be unknown, and when it is experienced so frequently that it affects an individual's normal activities. Lack of understanding of the repressed conflict which causes the reaction may result in uncontrollable or unreasonable behavior.

Hypnotherapists specializing in such disorders have claimed that the fear itself may not create the phobic reaction. It may well be caused by what the fear represents as an unknown danger.

Fears originating in adulthood may sometimes be caused by chemical problems (hypoglycemic reaction) or by physiological reactions (indigestion assumed to be a heart attack). The duration of the reaction under the triggering circumstances may indicate whether the cause is physiological or psychological. A psychological reaction, since it anticipates the triggering episode, tends to diminish once the situation is actually encountered. Physiological reactions, caused by the event or activity, tend to increase once the triggering situation begins.

A key point is that a phobic person is threatened by something that does not in reality present a life threat. Yet the reaction is the same as it would be in a situation of real danger. The fear generates more fear, and the situation cannot be confronted in a

calm state, so the victim makes every effort to avoid it.

### **The Advantage of Hypnotherapy**

Specific fears often emanate from apprehension of impending danger. Feelings of anxiety and panic tend to manifest into forebodings of approaching disaster, the source of which is not understood. The fear of loss of control is primitive and is likely to be a common element and basic cause in all phobia cases. It is not uncommon in relationship break-ups.

The progressive development of fear and phobic reactions often proceed through four phases: Unrealistic self-statements create a state of alarm; Fear of the fear itself develops; Personal feelings and reason are rejected as the fear escalates; Avoidance begins of any person, place, thing or situation which generates feelings of arousal or anxiety.

In mild cases reprogramming through hypnotherapy can prove effective. Hypnotic suggestion can replace catastrophic thoughts with truthful statements explaining the nature of the symptoms and the realization that the physical sensations can cause no harm. can slow the heartbeat, achieve a sense of balance, generate relaxation through deep breathing, free the throat to swallow, overcome sensations of temperature change and promote clear-headedness.

In more severe cases, symptoms are usually apparent, but true causes likely are unknown. The condition which created the fear is a threat to the victim because it is unresolved. Exposing the cause can diminish the anxiety associated with the fear by taking it out of the unknown so that rational suggestion can be used to alleviate symp-

toms. Some causes apparently producing present symptoms, however, may prove to be of themselves symptoms of yet a deeper cause.

Age regression can be a highly effective technique for uncovering causes. It is one of the most beneficial procedures available in therapeutic arsenals of hypnotherapy and psychotherapy.

Once causal factors are revealed, the hypnotherapeutic technique of circle therapy may be the treatment of choice. This is a well-recognized desensitization procedure to bring the psyche back into balance, eliminating the fears by hypnotic confrontation. The fears are met and faced through the subconscious mind. Repeated confrontation causes deterioration of the fear symptoms and increases the ability to face and deal with past traumatic experiences without apprehension, which the conscious mind then accepts.



Joe Smith is a Board Certified Hypnotherapist and a Certified Hypnosis Instructor, by the National Guild of Hypnotists, the largest and oldest hypnosis organization of its kind. He is certified in Forensic Hypnosis and Complementary Medical Hypnosis. As the founder of MINDGATE, he is dedicated to developing programs and workshops that motivate and help people change unproductive behaviors.

# HANG-UPS, FEARS & PHOBIAS

You Can Set Yourself Free

This brochure is presented for the information of the general public, to discuss the applications of hypnosis available for dealing with such matters as habit control, stress, excessive eating, smoking, fears, motivation, self-confidence, concentration, learning enhancement, attitude modification, pain management, insomnia, goal-setting, relationships and other areas which lead to unhappiness, dysfunction or difficulty in achieving personal goals.

Joseph M. Smith  
MINDGATE  
2317 Elizabeth Avenue  
Temple, PA 19560

(610) 375 - 7533