

## **UNDERSTANDING HYPNOSIS**

### **What It Is and How It Works**

Hypnosis and its uses in the practice of hypnotherapy is rapidly emerging as a highly effective science in solving the problems of people. It can be very beneficial in many cases as a therapy in itself. It is a valuable adjunct in psychotherapy and psychiatry. Yet it is probably the lowest risk procedure available from the standpoint of contraindications.

Yet few therapeutic procedures are less understood or more plagued by misconceptions and misunderstandings. Before considering what hypnosis is, it would be appropriate to establish what it is not!

Most hypnotherapists, on interviewing a new client/patient, will ask such client what he or she thinks hypnosis is. Replies range from sleep, to unconsciousness, to surrender of mental powers and control, to magic, to voodoo. All are in error.

Hypnosis cannot be sleep. In most cases the subject is fully aware of communication and is able to respond on request either verbally or by signal. Neither is unconsciousness involved. A subject asked to make a specific movement will comply with the request unless it is objectionable, in which case there will be a refusal.

There is no surrender of mind or control. A person who does not want to be hypnotized cannot be hypnotized or be induced to do or say anything which violates personal standards of behavior or integrity. There is neither magic nor voodoo involved. Any hypnotherapist can explain the actions or behaviors seen in stage, film or television shows, where the subject seems to follow directions mindlessly.

Actually, hypnosis is better described than

defined. It is often considered an altered state of consciousness featuring "selective perception," a process in which the subject (who is in control) chooses to see only what is relevant to his task, blocking out everything else. Hypnosis involves guided concentration. The guidance, however, may be provided by a qualified practitioner, or in the case of self-hypnosis, by the individual subject. Self-hypnosis, which can be taught by a properly certified hypnotherapist and learned by virtually any client, can provide the recipient with a lifetime of benefit.

### **Where Did Hypnosis Originate?**

The basics of hypnosis go back to ancient times. Those who have read Jean Auel's memorable book, "Clan Of The Cave Bear," will remember accounts of magic, hearings, inherited memories and revelations performed or created by the "Mogurs" and "medicine women" of prehistoric clans. Hypnosis. In the early centuries of our own land, the medicine men of Indian tribes performed seeming miracles. Hypnosis. Wider, non-secret usage began in the 1700's in several forms under different names.

There were periods of progress and periods of stagnation in the development of modern hypnosis. Medical interest and acceptance expanded following World War II when the use of hypnotherapy proved especially helpful to surviving battlefield casualties suffering from shock, injury, battle fatigue and various psychological disorders. As understanding increased hypnosis began to be recognized as an important adjunct to counseling psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and also medical fields including neurology, obstetrics, emergency medicine, burn therapy and others. Hypnosis is finding increasing

usage in dentistry and other areas where pain control is important. All humans (and possibly several animals) have two distinct minds -- the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind is vastly larger and more powerful than the conscious mind, yet it is the least understood and used by mankind. Actually, the great "unconscious" mind has two functional elements, the subconscious and the superconscious, the former the storehouse of memory, the latter dealing with the spiritual.

### **How Does It Work?**

The subconscious mind receives and retains, neither accepting nor rejecting, all the messages we receive from our backgrounds, whether genetic, social, religious or experiential, plus all the conflicts (little or big) that enter our lives daily. When for whatever reason the conscious mind (which deals with everyday living, logic, reason, etc.) becomes overloaded, the subconscious prepares us for what is considered appropriate action (usually fight or flight). However the subconscious mind does not analyze, as does the conscious mind, but accepts all messages in the literal sense.

Hypnosis is a means of communication between the conscious mind and the subconscious mind. Many problems, habits, stresses, anxieties, attitudes or apparent deficiencies can be traced to interpretations by the subconscious mind, which when understood by the conscious mind, can reduce or resolve specific problems.

The subconscious is also the seat of all memory. Traumatic events can be buried or suppressed in the subconscious. A ma-

Major benefit of hypnotherapy is its ability to uncover and bring into the light of understanding the buried information or experience which may be the cause of a troublesome disorder.

### What You Will Experience

Your first visit with your hypnotherapist will, primarily, be exploratory. You will learn about hypnotism and become comfortable with it. Your hypnotherapist will discuss your interests and your desires to determine if hypnotherapy can accomplish what you want to achieve.

If you both feel that it will be worthwhile to proceed, your hypnotherapist may give you some small tests to determine your type of suggestibility, your ability to relax, your skills at visualization -- procedures which help your therapist adapt to you as an individual so as to design programming personalized for you which will be acceptable to your subconscious, retained and acted upon in manner leading to full achievement of your personal goals.

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.



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## What It Is and How It Works

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.

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