



Mountains Into Molehills

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Mountains Into Molehills are a free internet book which aims to build understanding of self and others. It integrates relevant theory with practical step by step guides to coping with stressful situations, and handling difficult situations assertively.

Chapter Twelve - Understanding Hypnotherapy

1. *The Stages of Hypnosis*
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The Stages of Hypnosis

Preparation

The hypnotherapist explains hypnotherapy and answers any questions the client may have. Then the client and hypnotherapist agree what is to be achieved by the treatment and the hypnotherapist decides which type of hypnosis will work best.

Stage One Induction

This comprises a relaxation 'script' and sometimes a further relaxation called a 'deepener'. This prepares for the work with the subconscious mind in Stage Two.

Stage Two

The hypnotherapist uses one of the many scripts at his disposal to introduce helpful suggestions to counter the symptoms of the client or to regress the client to uncover early life events relevant to the clients presenting issues.

There are thousands of published scripts which have been developed and successfully used by hypnotherapy practitioners over recent decades. These cover a very wide range of symptoms.

Stage Three

Re-alerting the client, usually by 'counting out' 1, 2,3,4,5 from trance state to alert state.

Conclusion

The therapist and client discuss how the session was experienced as a basis for planning any future sessions which may be needed.

How Hypnosis Works

Hypnosis is widely used by Healthcare Professionals

- As an adjunct to therapy
- In psychosomatic medicine
- In the treatment of pain
- In medical and surgical procedures
- In midwifery
- In dentistry
- In physical manipulation
- In speech therapy
- In stress management

The first published evidence for the efficacy of hypnosis in dentistry was presented to the French Royal Academy of Medicine by Cloquet in 1837. There is a British Society of Dental and Medical Hypnosis.

Much damage has been done to the public view of hypnosis by stage performers. Who wants to be turned into a chicken?

In fact we cannot be induced to do anything in hypnosis against our will or in conflict with our personal values, morality, and physical safety.

Hypnosis depends totally on the willingness of the client to go along with the suggestions of the hypnotist. Many people are initially concerned about the apparent loss of self control of those taking part in stage shows. However stage shows are nothing like real life hypnotherapy.

In stage shows participants are screened as being highly susceptible people. In accepting the invitation to go on stage they are demonstrating that they wish to be part of the spectacle, that they are 'up for it' whatever happens; and sometimes the people on stage are stooges.

We each experience the hypnotised state in different ways

There is not a specific 'hypnotic sensation' where all hypnotised subjects experience themselves sinking into some dreamlike, detached, trance. On the contrary being under hypnosis might be experienced as one of heightened concentration and clarity where the concentration is on the voice of the hypnotherapist and upon the accompanying thoughts and feelings triggered. Sometimes clients will feel that they were not hypnotised at all! Clients need not try to reach a trance like state, just relax and listen to the hypnotherapist.

Under hypnosis we retain the ability to re-alert spontaneously should anything require our urgent attention, should we be asked to do anything which is at variance with our values

Why Hypnosis Works

The overall purpose of our brain activity is to keep us safe and to keep us fully functioning without bothering us with the millions of details involved in this ceaseless task which includes all of our body functioning.

Our conscious mind may be focussed on reading a book. Out of awareness our brain is monitoring every physical sensation and function in every part of our body. It is also monitoring everything happening around us e.g. the noise downstairs which may be an intruder, the smell of smoke.

For example – you were not conscious of how your right foot is feeling right now until this moment, but your brain was monitoring in case you needed to know, in case you needed to take any action.

For example. - you are not listening for a door banging, but if one did your subconscious will spring you into an appropriate response.

For example - you may not be listening to a conversation between people on the other side of the room, but if they mention your name you will hear it.

You don't ask your unconscious mind to tell you when its time to go to the loo, but it will.

Being a brain at the centre of all this activity, this monitoring, and this data processing must be a bit like us being in a noisy and crowded room at a party.

All that noise! All those different sights and sounds. Having to shout to make ourselves heard.

I imagine that the effect of hypnosis on our brain must be not unlike turning down the volume in the room at the party until there is only one voice to listen to. First the music, then the shouting, and singing, the chink of glasses and plates. Then the sound of conversation. Each sound gradually getting quieter and quieter until there is no sound at all, except for one interesting, reassuring, and voice.

Perfect silence, except for one voice.

Now we can hear ourselves think, choose to focus on the only voice we can hear. It's like being deeply focussed on a film or play; the other senses are still available to us but are temporarily put on standby.

In hypnosis the film or play which holds our total concentration is replaced by total concentration on the voice of the hypnotherapist.

In this state of total concentration conscious thoughts and mental activity are put aside. The subconscious can then be accessed to receive new and helpful thoughts 'Hypnotic Suggestions'.

Repressed memories which are adversely affecting us in the 'here and now' can be accessed and reprocessed so that their influence is reduced or eliminated.

Our Subconscious

Our subconscious holds a comprehensive record of every significant thing that has ever happened to us. Much of the record is not readily available to our conscious mind. Access to our subconscious is impeded by the clutter and noise of our conscious thoughts and our established thought processes.

These established thought processes form a kind of protective shield. This shield works to block new thoughts which challenge our established beliefs about ourselves, others, and the world around us; in other words block out anything which challenges our unique personal 'Map of the World'. After all, an attack on our map of the world is an attack on our perception of reality – something which we humans find scary and difficult to handle. This is why people cling to thoughts and behaviours which are very unhelpful and which they know are very unhelpful.

Hypnotherapy aims to bypass the overly protective outer shield of the conscious mind and work directly with the subconscious.

Hypnotherapists like to think of the conscious mind as a sort of guardian, a watchman, a gatekeeper whose job it is to prevent access to the unconscious. The deep relaxation involved in hypnotherapy induces feelings of trust and safety which persuade this 'guardian' that it's OK to step aside, to allow access to the subconscious for a time.

The subconscious sometimes blocks conscious recall of some events which have been too painful to be accessed by the conscious mind. The deep relaxation of hypnosis offers a safe place for the client to invite his subconscious to release its repressed memories, to lower its protective shield.

Where the memory is so painful that it is still not safe to be admitted into consciousness it may remain impossible to access. Often however, the subconscious gives up its secrets under hypnosis. This allows the previously repressed memories to be processed in a helpful way by the thinking, rational, adult client.

Stress Reduction

Hypnosis is often used simply to achieve deep relaxation in order to lower stress. Its visualisation techniques are very powerful so that you may visit a beautiful garden, a tropical beach, or any place in the world without leaving your chair.

If you have never experienced the deep relaxation of hypnosis you have a real treat waiting.

Reading

Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors	1990	C Corydon Hammond
Healing In Hypnosis – Seminars, Workshops, Lectures, By Milton Erikson	1998	Rossi, Ryan, Sharp [edited by]
Hypnosis In Therapy	1991	HB Gibson & M Heap
Hypnotherapy Scripts	2002	Havens & Walters
NLP at Work	1995	Sue Knight
NLP Workbook	2001	Joseph O'Connor
Therapists Guide To EMDR	2007	Laurel Parnell
Using Your Brain For A Change	1985	Richard Bandler