



Introduction to Trance and Hypnosis

The practice of promoting healing or positive development in any way is known as hypnotherapy. Hypnotherapy aims to re-program patterns of behaviour within the mind, which previously enabled irrational fears, phobias, negative thoughts and suppressed emotions.

As the body is relaxed in the trance-like state of hypnosis, breathing becomes slower and deeper, the pulse rate drops and the metabolic rate falls. Similar changes along nervous pathways and hormonal channels enable the sensation of pain to become less acute, and the awareness of unpleasant symptoms, such as nausea or indigestion, to be alleviated.

How does it work?

Hypnosis is thought to work by altering our state of consciousness in such a way that the analytical left-hand side of the brain is turned off, while the non-analytical right-hand side is made more alert. The conscious control of the mind is inhibited, and the unconscious mind awoken. Since the unconscious mind is a deeper-seated, more instinctive force than the conscious mind, this is the part which has to change for the patient's behaviour and physical state to alter.

For example, a patient who consciously wants to overcome their fear of spiders may try everything they consciously can to do it, but will still fail as long as their unconscious mind retains the original terror. Progress can only be made by reprogramming the unconscious mind so that deep-seated beliefs and memories are abolished or altered.

What form might the treatment take?

The technique does **not** involve the patient being put into a deep sleep, and the patient cannot be made to do anything they would not ordinarily do. They remain fully aware of their surroundings and situation, and are not

vulnerable to every given command of the therapist. The important thing is that the patient wants to change some behavioural habit or addiction and is highly motivated to do so. They have to want the treatment to work and must establish a good clinical rapport with the therapist in order for it to do so.

Patients can also learn the technique of self-hypnosis which can be practiced at home, to reinforce the usefulness of formal sessions with the therapist. This can help counter distress and anxiety-related conditions.

What problems can be treated by hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy can be applied to many psychological, emotional and physical problems. It is used to relieve pain in surgery and dentistry and has proved to be of benefit in obstetrics. It can shorten the delivery stage of labour and reduce the need for painkillers. It can ease the suffering of the disabled and those facing terminal illness, and it has been shown to help people to overcome addictions such as smoking and alcoholism, and to help with bulimia. Children are generally easy to hypnotize and can be helped with bedwetting and chronic asthma, and teenagers can overcome stammering or blushing problems.

Phobias of all kinds lend themselves well to hypnotherapy, and anyone suffering from panic attacks or obsessional compulsive behaviour, and stress-related problems like insomnia, may benefit. Conditions exacerbated by tension, such as irritable bowel syndrome, psoriasis and eczema, and excessive sweating, respond well, and even tinnitus and clicky jaws (temporo-mandibular joint dysfunction) can be treated by these techniques.

Many people find that the experience of hypnosis or trance is very calming, pleasant and rejuvenative. Somehow the changes start taking place easily and effortlessly -- even with issues that have been problems for a long time.