

## **WHAT HYPNOSIS REALLY IS AND WHY HYPNOTHERAPY WORKS FASTER THAN TRADITIONAL COUNSELLING AND CBT**

Because of misconceptions surrounding hypnosis, largely based on old films and stage shows, it remains a mystery to most people, layman and professional alike. However, we now have a better understanding of what it is, why it works and how it can help a wide variety of psychological, emotional and even physical disorders.

Perhaps the first way to understand hypnosis better is by stating what it is not. Hypnosis is *not* an unconscious state, nobody 'goes under', you are definitely not asleep, you are not under the hypnotist's control (although stage hypnosis often looks as if you are) and it's not a truth serum; you won't spill the beans and let out all your secrets!

**Hypnosis is a natural, everyday state of focused attention.** Anytime we become absorbed in whatever we are doing we are in a trance state.

Examples include:

- Driving and reaching your destination with little, if any, recollection of the journey because you were lost in your thoughts
- Watching a good movie and becoming engrossed in the action/story
- Reading a good book or website
- Concentrating - such as when you perform a hobby or work at your job
- Listening to music
- Daydreaming – staring off into space
- Playing a musical instrument
- Playing computer games
- Listening to a good speaker or storyteller
- Dreaming at night (the deepest trance state there is)
- A sudden shock, such as a loud noise, which immediately focuses our attention

During hypnosis (or trance) your perception of time is often distorted. You become dissociated so that it feels like your mind is elsewhere (as in daydreaming) even though you know you are right where you are. It's like a state of parallel awareness. There is often a profound feeling of relaxation (though you don't have to relax to experience trance; anger, anxiety and depression are trance states – states of 'locked' attention).

**So, what's really going on in hypnosis and how is it going to be beneficial to me?**

Hypnosis allows us to access nature's optimal learning state – the REM state (Rapid Eye Movement, that we all experience when we dream at night). The only difference between hypnosis and dreaming is that in hypnosis you are *not* asleep. It's in this state that instinctive patterns are laid down in the unconscious mind. Such patterns were laid down in

REM sleep whilst you were still in the womb. Other patterns were added through your own learning experiences as you grew up. And throughout life, everything you ever learned was done in a hypnotic/REM state (when your attention was 'locked'). **The more emotion associated to the learning as it happened, the more powerful it becomes.** Powerful emotional experiences are trance states and the meaning we attach to them as they happen can affect us for years! This is why trauma can affect people years after the original event and cause phobic/panic attacks even today. It's as if the brain is locked into a stuck response based on old information about something that happened years before.

And this is why traditional counselling and CBT often take far longer than necessary to help people make changes. Indeed, some forms of therapy, such as those where you get asked to keep recalling the past, looking for a cause or meaning to the problem often makes things worse. The last thing someone with anxiety or depression should do is to go on long wallows through their past. This only stimulates the templates of anxiety and depression, adding fuel to the fire, as it were. And you often cannot just talk or think your way out of a problem; you have to work with the part of the mind that's controlling it, namely the unconscious mind. Anyone who has suffered from phobias or panic attacks knows how difficult it is to talk themselves out of it. The fight or flight response kicks in before we have conscious awareness of what's happening. This is the most fundamental flaw with CBT. You can't change the way you feel by changing your thoughts when the fight or flight response has already kicked in. **Emotion comes before thinking.** *Behind every thought there is an emotion which is associated to an unconscious pattern that has been triggered by something.* Hypnosis enables us to work on the unconscious level and make adjustments to the templates that are causing the problem.

Thus, it is by accessing the REM state and using the imagination that new patterns can be laid down. This, in turn helps to change your perceptions and expectations, so that you respond differently in situations that have been causing you a problem. In other words, in the hypnotic state, where you can vividly imagine making successful changes, your unconscious mind assumes it is real. (The unconscious doesn't know the difference between reality and anything that is vividly imagined). So, if you vividly imagine being relaxed at, say, a test or examination or flying to your holiday in the Bahamas your unconscious assumes you are really in the situation, feeling all those good feelings instead of the old fears. And guess what happens when you are actually taking the test or flying for real? A new pattern gets triggered! The unconscious says, "Ah, we've been here before (in my hypnosis session) and it's okay...I can relax in this situation."

And it's in this way that the REM/hypnotic state can be used to good effect with psychological, emotional and even physical problems (knowing that the mind effects the body).

During your hypnotherapy sessions I will use hypnosis to access unconscious resources (that often get forgotten or overlooked when we are beset by worries and problems) and then

update or replace old programs and patterns in your mind that no longer serve you. In the trance state, traumas can finally be resolved, habits can be overcome, fears and phobias conquered, depression lifted, confidence and self-esteem boosted, performance improved, pain relieved and so much more. Imagine how good that will make you feel!

**Call me now to ask any questions or book your first session**

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