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## Hypnosis: Nature's Swiss Army Knife

by

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With its myriad attachments and implements the Swiss Army Knife is truly a nifty device, allowing allows us to easily accomplish numerous tasks, from filing nails to opening a bottle of wine. If only there was such a tool to help us transcend the bigger issues we face in life; you know, the “stuff” like negative habits, feelings, behaviors and physical conditions that hold so many of us back. Well there is, and it's called hypnosis, a naturally-occurring state of consciousness that in clinical applications (hypnotherapy) is safe, painless, powerful, and profoundly effective in facilitating behavioral, emotional and or physical change—like a “Swiss Army Knife” for the mind.

## A Long History of Healing

The recorded use of hypnosis as a tool for transformation and healing dates back more than 7000 years. Through the millennia hypnotherapy has ebbed and flowed in popularity, sometimes flourishing, sometimes almost disappearing, but always surviving— across cultures, geographies, technologies, and time itself—and for a very simple reason: it works!

Today, hypnotherapy is once again resurgent. Researchers and practitioners worldwide are uncovering the scientific basis through which the brain creates and benefits from hypnotic trance, thus taking hypnosis and hypnotherapy out of the realm of the esoteric and metaphysical and into the mainstream of modern healthcare and wellness.

## Shattering the Myths

Notwithstanding the new science, however, for many “hypnosis” still evokes images of piercing eyes, swinging watches, goofy stage-show shenanigans, bad plot-lines in bad movies or even worse, the specter of losing control and being programmed to act against one’s will, getting stuck in some zombie-like netherworld, or even being possessed by Satan himself.

Fortunately, these notions—all archaic and absolute nonsense—are rapidly succumbing to the cold, hard logic of modern science. It is FACT that no one can enter hypnosis against their will, and they CANNOT lose control of their mind or get stuck or be possessed, PERIOD! Ironically, the seminal purpose of hypnotherapy is to help clients *increase* control over both their mind and body, and thus by extension, their lives.

## We Are All Hypnotized Every Day

Most people are surprised to learn that virtually all of us experience hypnosis all by ourselves every day of our lives. Anytime you’re engrossed in a good book, “zone-out” or daydream, find yourself pulling into your driveway but don’t remember the

getting there, or through watching a movie or TV show you're laughing, crying, feeling excited or happy, sad or terrified, you are in fact in hypnosis; you are hypnotized!

Of course, there *appears* to be a big difference between our blubbing when ET goes home or zoning out on the freeway and transcending a life-limiting issue. But it's just that—*appearance*. Since hypnosis is merely a state of consciousness that can happen automatically or induced on purpose through a guide (hypnotist) or on one's own (self-hypnosis), like the Swiss Army Knife, its effect is all about how it's applied.

#### Try a Little Self Hypnosis Right Now!

Sit comfortably in a place— indoors or outside—without distractions or disturbance. Close your eyes and relax them completely; let the lids feel so heavy that they cannot open. Now, do the same with your jaw; let it droop as if the bones and muscles are jelly. Good. Breathe slowly and gently and relax your neck and shoulders, then arms and hands, torso, hips, upper and lower legs, and feet. Refocus attention on your eyes, let them look up toward the inside your forehead; breathe in and as you release it silently say, “now totally relaxed, deep sleep,” You are in light hypnosis—nothing more to it. To come out, count out loud, “1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eyes open, wide awake.” You're back. Congratulations, you just hypnotized yourself.

#### Deep Sleep! How it Works

Entering hypnosis involves both the conscious-cognitive and the subconscious-automatic parts of the mind engaging and creating a neurological “bypass” to homeostasis, our inborn and sometimes tenacious resistance to change and the unfamiliar. We thus enter a state of altered but cognizant consciousness almost identical to meditation—highly focused, open, and wonderfully receptive to new thoughts, ideas, behaviors and feelings both emotional and physical as long as they are in line with our desires.

With homeostasis essentially “turned off,” the conscious and subconscious minds conduct what might be likened to a neurological summit meeting—a new “policy” is suggested, negotiated and ratified, and then with appropriate reinforcement, usually multiple sessions combined with simple, daily exercises, the brain essentially reprograms itself. In essence, we purposefully exploit and manipulate both neural plasticity—our brain’s ability to rewire itself—and the power and potential of the mind/body dynamic. Yes, we *can* teach old dogs new tricks!

#### Almost Limitless Applications

The potential applications for clinical hypnosis are extensive. Just a partial list includes:

- Overcoming unwanted and/or unhealthy habits, behaviors and emotions
- Conquering fears and phobias
- Creating or increasing self-confidence and self-esteem
- Improving focus, concentration and performance in sports, school, or at work
- Natural analgesia and anesthesia for medical/dental conditions and chronic pain
- Minimizing tissue damage, blood loss and accelerating healing from dental and surgical procedures
- Easing the side-effects of chemo and radiation therapy
- Managing (sometimes eliminating) many traditionally difficult-to-treat ailments like migraine, IBS, immune disorders, asthma, allergies, sexual dysfunction, and many more

#### No Silver Bullet

Naturally, like any tool or technique—however versatile—there are limits to the efficacy of hypnotherapy. It is not a panacea—some people and conditions do not respond—and it is certainly not magic, although it sometime works so quickly it may feel that way. Success requires genuine desire, willingness to experience induced hypnosis, belief in a positive outcome, and commitment to the therapeutic process.

Of course, to the millions who do benefit, these requirements seem a small price to pay for such a potentially wonderful result—living life the way they want to rather than the way they thought they were stuck with. It is a delicious way to feel, and something we all deserve to experience.

The End



John McGrail, PhD

John McGrail, PhD is a renowned clinical hypnotherapist, self improvement expert, and sought after spiritual teacher who has become one of our country's leading media experts and public speakers relating to personal growth and successful life transformation. His new book, "*The Synthesis Effect: Your Path to Personal Power and Transformation*," (Career Press, 2012) shares his unique therapeutic and teaching approach that has helped thousands of clients and students in his clinical practice and self-improvement seminars permanently change and empower their lives. His websites are [www.drjohmcgrail.com](http://www.drjohmcgrail.com) and [www.hypnotherapylosangeles.com](http://www.hypnotherapylosangeles.com).