

The Hypnosis Examiner



NEW BEGINNINGS!

Spring and "springtime" refer to the season and also to ideas of rebirth, rejuvenation, renewal, resurrection and regrowth.

The earth awakens its dormant treasures and new plant growth begins to "spring forth," giving the season its name. Snow, if a normal part of winter, begins to melt and streams swell with runoff. Frosts, if a normal part of winter, become less severe. In climates that have no snow and rare frosts, the air and ground temperatures increase more rapidly. Many flowering plants bloom this time of year, in a long succession sometimes beginning when snow is still on the ground, continuing into early summer.

And this is only what happens around us during this time of year.

Ever ponder what significant changes take place within us during spring? Is there a correlation between our surroundings and our minds?

Think about it! What new changes will you experience?

-The Editor

Feature Article:

“HYPNOTIC LANGUAGE”



By definition, hypnotic language is designed to produce a hypnotic trance. Since trance is simply a highly focused state of attention, hypnotic language is language which focuses the attention and turns it inwards.

Interest in hypnotic language patterns has grown alongside interest in the work of Milton H. Erickson, who pioneered the "indirect" approach to hypnosis. Before Erickson, subjects were basically told what to do, "you are feeling sleepy". While this works for some people, Erickson realized that the majority of us dislike being told what to do and will tend to resist any suggestions that are made to us in this way.

In addition, the internal, imaginative reality of the listener is unlikely to match what is being said to them if the suggestions are too specific. A hypnotist might tell you that you're relaxing on a beautiful beach with golden sand but perhaps the beach in your imagination is a shingle beach or perhaps you got lost on a beach as a child and have hated beaches ever since. In which case, the discrepancy between what's being said and what's going on inside your head will disrupt the hypnotic trance and any useful suggestions the hypnotist might make will be lost, ignored or refused.

Indirect language patterns get around this in two ways. First by structuring language in such a way that your attention is focused and turned inwards where it will search for meaning. The Ericksonian equivalent of "you are feeling sleepy" would be something like "and perhaps as you sit there, listening to me here, you might begin to notice a pleasant feeling of drowsiness."

Nobody can argue with a statement like that! (See "Language" page 3)

METAPHORS:

How and Why They Work

In our Vol. 3 No 2 April 2014 issue of T.H.E., we featured the article “Metaphors: Are They Helpful or Harmful?” This article will examine how metaphors can be helpful and why.

In Ericksonian hypnosis and in NLP, we often use metaphor to help people change. Now, there’s evidence that helps clarify how this works.

We all enjoy a good story, whether it's a novel, a movie, or simply something one of our friends is explaining to us. But why do we feel so much more engaged when we hear a narrative about events?

It's in fact quite simple. If we listen to a powerpoint presentation with boring bullet points, a certain part in the brain gets activated. Scientists call this Broca's area and Wernicke's area. Overall, it hits our language processing parts in the brain where we decode words into meaning. And that's it, nothing else happens.

When we are being told a story, things change dramatically. Not only are the language processing parts in our brain activated but any other area in our brain that we would use when experiencing the events of the story are activated as well.

If someone tells us about how delicious certain foods were, our sensory cortex lights up. If it's about motion, our motor cortex gets active. A story can put your whole brain to work.

When we tell stories to others that have really helped us shape our thinking and way of life, we can have the same effect on them

too. The brains of the person telling a story and listening to it can synchronize. Anything you've experienced, you can get others to experience the same. Or at least, get their brain areas that you've activated that way, active, too.

Now all this is interesting. We know that we can activate our brains better if we listen to stories. The still unanswered question is: Why is that? Why does the format of a story where events unfold one after the other, have such a profound impact on our learning?

The simple answer is this: We are wired that way. A story, if broken down into the simplest form, is a connection of cause and effect. That is exactly how we think. We think in narratives all day long no matter if it is about buying groceries, whether we think about work or our spouse at home. We make up (*short*) stories in our heads for every action and conversation.

Now, whenever we hear a story, we want to relate it to one of our existing experiences. That's why metaphors work so well with us. While we are busy searching for a similar experience in our brains, we activate a part called insula which helps us relate to that same experience of pain, joy, or disgust.

When we think of stories, it is often easy to convince ourselves that they have to be complex and detailed to be interesting. The truth is however, that the simpler a story, the more likely it will stick. Using simple language as well as low complexity is the best way to activate the brain regions that make us truly relate to the happenings of a story.

This is important because when we're helping someone get over a fear or change a habit, we are essentially looking for resources they have. A person who has a fear of public speaking has the ability to feel calm in some situation. They just need to activate it when they're speaking in public. A person who wants to stop smoking has the ability to drop habits. Maybe they sucked their thumb as a child but stopped it at some point. They just need to activate that resource in the context of smoking.

In other words, our job is to find the client's existing resources, strengthen them and apply them to the client's current situation. We don't “fix” people. We just help them apply what they already know.

We use a story (*or several*) to access and activate the resources a client needs and we attach them to the context in which they need them. How does this work? Well, when someone tells us a story, we search for parallels to that story in our personal experience. If you're engaged in the story deeply, you and the storyteller will even go through the same emotions!

Put one way, a story is a way to activate parts in the brain so that a listener turns the story into their own ideas and experiences.

So, when you make the story parallel to the problem the client comes to see you for and you provide a solution in the story. The story's solution activates the resources in the client that they need.



LANGUAGE *(from front page)*

At no point are you told that you're experiencing something or commanded to do something - "you might notice something, or you might not." The only way to find out is to turn your attention inwards to see what feelings you do notice which, of course, is inherently trance inducing.

Second, indirect hypnotic language is permissive which means that you are given maximum freedom to interpret what is being said to you in a way that makes sense to you personally. So the Ericksonian



equivalent of "you can imagine relaxing on a beautiful golden beach" might be "now there will have been a time and a place in your life where you've felt perfectly relaxed and perfectly at ease. And I wonder if you're able to get a sense of that right now?"

As before, at no point are you directly instructed to experience something specific inside your imagination. The speaker has made a fairly safe assumption, "you will have felt perfectly relaxed at some point in your life, even if it was only for five minutes fifteen years ago." By setting up a general outline of a "time and a place" when this has happened, you're left to fill in

the details by yourself. Attention is focused inwards as you sort through your experience to find a memory of a time when you did feel perfectly relaxed. By remembering that time, of course, you also relive the feelings you had at that time reproducing that sense of relaxation in the present moment.

There are a number of tools of the trade that hypnotists use to produce this permissive, attention-focusing effect together with specific language patterns. Examples include the "yes set", a series of statements which you

can't help but agree with since they are self-evidently true, so that you're more likely to agree with whatever comes next. An example might be "so you've come here this morning and you're sitting in that chair now

listening to the sound of my voice and already beginning to get a sense of how deeply you can relax here today."

Closely related to that are the use of truisms, aspects of behavior or experience which cannot reasonably be denied. "You already know how to relax, don't you?" That "don't you?" at the end is another favorite hypnotic language pattern, a "tag question" which tends to make any statement before it less direct and easier to accept. And it does, doesn't it?

Similarly, suggestions are more likely to be accepted if they're added to a truism even if

the two things don't necessarily follow "And because you already know how to relax, you can relax even deeper here today as you listen to the sound of my voice."

Hypnotists also offer illusory choice or use double binds to achieve desired outcomes. "Will you relax now or in a minute?" presupposes that you will relax, the only question being one of time. They also use nominalization. They are words that have no intrinsic meaning in themselves and are open to individual interpretation i.e., relaxation, calm, tranquility, safe, secure, pleasant which mean different things to different people. Again, the mind naturally turns inwards when it hears words like these to attach individual meaning to them which produces a trance.

These techniques and others like them are designed to create the trance state which makes the unconscious mind more readily available to receive new information. Hypnotic language also involves delivering that information in a form which the unconscious mind is more likely to accept. Deliberate confusion and ambiguity, metaphors, puns, analogies, stories and such are all ways of smuggling the message in past the conscious mind which tends to be more critical and analytical.

Finally, it's worth bearing in mind that politicians, advertisers and salespeople are all well aware of hypnotic language patterns. As such, a basic familiarity with those patterns can help you to defend yourself against those who don't necessarily have your best interests at heart.

DEPRESSION

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad. Feeling depressed can be a normal reaction to loss, life's struggles or an injured self-esteem but these feelings are usually short-lived and pass within a couple of days. When you have depression, it interferes with daily life and causes pain for both you and those who care about you. But when feelings of intense sadness including feeling helpless, hopeless, and worthless last for many days to weeks and keep you from functioning normally, your depression may be something more than sadness. It may very well be clinical depression, a treatable medical condition.

Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. The majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment. Medications, psychotherapies and other methods can effectively treat people with depression.

According to the DSM-5, a manual used to diagnose mental disorders, depression occurs when you have at least five of the following symptoms at the same time:

- A depressed mood during most of the day, particularly in the morning
- Fatigue or loss of energy almost every day
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt almost every day
- Impaired concentration, indecisiveness
- Insomnia (*inability to sleep*) or hypersomnia (*excessive sleeping*) almost every day
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities nearly every day
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide (not just fearing death)
- A sense of restlessness or being slowed down
- Significant weight loss or weight gain

A key sign of depression is either depressed mood or loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. For a diagnosis of depression, these signs should be present most of the day either daily or nearly daily for at least two weeks. In addition, the depressive symptoms need to cause clinically significant distress or impairment. They cannot be due to the direct effects of a substance, for example, a drug or medication. Nor can they be the result of a medical condition such as hypothyroidism.

It is estimated that by the year 2020, major depression will be second only to ischemic heart

disease in terms of the leading causes of disability in the world. People with depression sometimes fail to realize (*or accept*) that there is a physical cause to their depressed moods. As a result, they may search endlessly for external causes.

In the U.S., about 14.8 million adults suffer from major depression, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The suicide risk in people with this type of depression is the highest rate for any psychiatric condition. For people between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death. Unfortunately, most people with clinical depression never seek treatment. Left undiagnosed and untreated, depression can worsen lasting for years and causing untold suffering and possibly suicide.

There are a number of different types of depression including:

- Major depression
- Chronic depression (*dysthymia*)
- Bipolar depression
- Seasonal depression (*SAD or seasonal affective disorder*)
- Psychotic depression
- Postpartum depression
- Substance-induced mood disorder (*SIMD*)

Other types of depression that can occur include:

- Double depression - a condition that happens when a person with chronic depression (*dysthymia*) experiences an episode of major depression.
- Secondary depression - a depression that develops after the development of a medical condition such as hypothyroidism, stroke, Parkinson's disease, or AIDS or after a psychiatric problem such as schizophrenia, panic disorder or bulimia.
- Treatment-resistant depression - a condition that doesn't respond to treatment with antidepressants and may be longstanding or chronic. For chronic treatment-resistant depression, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is sometimes the treatment of choice depending on the nature and severity of symptoms.
- Masked depression - a depression that is hidden behind physical complaints for which no organic cause can be found.

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression, seek care from your health care provider.

WONDERS OF THE HUMAN MIND: MEMORY

Memory is our ability to encode, store, retain and subsequently recall information and past experiences in the human brain. It can be thought of in general terms as the use of past experience to affect or influence current behavior.

Memory is the sum total of what we remember and gives us the capability to learn and adapt from previous experiences as well as to build relationships. It is the ability to remember past experiences and the power or process of recalling to mind previously learned facts, experiences, impressions, skills and habits. It is the store of things learned and retained from our activity or experience as evidenced by modification of structure or behavior or by recall and recognition.

At its simplest, in more physiological or neurological terms, memory is a set of encoded neural connections in the brain. It is the re-creation or reconstruction of past experiences by the synchronous firing of neurons that were involved in the original experience. As we will see, because of the way in which memory is encoded, it is perhaps better thought of as a kind of collage or jigsaw puzzle, rather than in the traditional manner as a collection of recordings, pictures or video clips stored as discrete wholes. Our memories are not stored in our brains like books on library shelves but are *a c t u a l l y o n - t h e - f l y* reconstructions from elements

scattered throughout various areas of our brains.

Recent studies suggest that repeated bouts of jet lag may cause harm to the temporal lobe, an area of the brain important to memory, causing it to shrink in size and compromising performance on spatial memory tests.

It is thought that stress hormones, such as cortisol, released by the body during times of stress (*such as the sleep disturbance, general stress and fatigue caused by long flights*) are responsible for this impairment of memory and other mental skills.

Memory is related to but distinct from learning which is the process by which we acquire knowledge of the world and modify our subsequent behavior. During learning, neurons that fire together to produce a particular experience are altered so that they have a tendency to fire together again. For example, we learn a new language by studying it but we then speak it by using our memory to retrieve the words that we have learned. Thus, memory depends on learning because it lets us store and retrieve learned information. Learning also depends to some extent on memory, in that the knowledge stored in our memory provides the framework to which new knowledge is linked by association and inference. This ability of humans to call on past memories in order to imagine the future and to plan future courses of action is a hugely advantageous attribute in our survival and development as a species.

Since the development of the computer in the 1940s, memory

is also used to describe the capacity of a computer to store information subject to recall as well as the physical components of the computer in which such information is stored. Although there are indeed some parallels between the memory of a computer and the memory of a human being, there are also some fundamental and crucial differences principally that the human brain is organized as a distributed network in which each brain cell makes thousands of connections rather than as an addressable collection of discrete files.

The sociological concept of collective memory plays an essential role in the establishment of human societies. Every social group perpetuates itself through the knowledge that it transmits down the generations either through oral tradition or through writing. The invention of writing made it possible for the first time for human beings to preserve precise records of their knowledge outside of their brains. Writing, audiovisual media and computer records can be considered a kind of external memory for humans.



DOES HYPNOSIS IMPROVE MEMORY?

Did you ever hide something important - not to lose it, just to forget where you hid it? Well, could using hypnosis help you recall the location of that item? The power of hypnosis can certainly increase focus but, how could it help you remember? The answer to that question rests in the mechanisms of memory, hypnosis and the skill of the hypnotist.

The research literature is full of studies that document the power of hypnosis to enhance memory. Most studies are laboratory based experiments that usually show a significant increase in the recall of hypnotized subjects as compared to normal controls. Articles about psychology are full of stories of people who recover lost things or recall memories that presumably were lost.

The key to understanding the ability of hypnosis to improve memory is found in how our memory works in the first place. Memory is actually a complicated system that remains not fully understood. There are the very short term memories (*like recalling a phone number*) which last a few seconds. The long term memory works in a two stage process. First, you store the experience somewhere in you mind and secondly, we have to recall that memory. Problems may occur in either system: the storage or retrieval. Remember hypnosis is a trance that focuses attention on a limited area, can slow down thinking, heighten the imagination, and prevent distractions. Hypnosis, if used by a skilled practitioner, can help focus attention on either part of the memory system, how the information was stored or how to recall it.

Did you forget something? The first question is what and how were you trying to store that information? What cognitive mode were you using (*visual, auditory, written, sensory, etc*)? What was the context of the situation? What were any associations about the information? For example, a woman wanted to hide the combination to her safe where nobody would find it. She wrote it down on a small white piece of paper and taped to a file called "home equipment" and stored it in her file cabinet under "valuables." After returning from a long trip, she could not remember the combination. She also could not remember where she hid the instructions. When she went to see a hypnotherapist, he helped her enter a light trance where she could still speak with him and they went over her actions and decisions about storing the combination. Eventually, she was able to retrace her steps and remembered exactly where the paper was hidden.

This kind of memory retrieval was accomplished by helping the subject focus on the experience and sequence of details increasing the vividness of each memory until all the information was recalled. Police have used hypnotists to help witnesses recall details of crime scenes. This has actually led to the thorny issue of false memories and many states have even created laws regarding how hypnosis is used in legal matters. It is possible for an unethical hypnotist to insert fabricated memories into an unsuspecting person, however this does not happen spontaneously. Therapists routinely use regression (*taking the subject back in time to early memories*) to help resolve conflicts or traumatic memories.

There is no question that hypnosis has the power to enhance memories by improving the mechanisms by which we create and retrieve them. This is partly based on the subject's suggestibility or persuasiveness which can be used to encourage deeper probing until recall is successful. If you forgot something, first try to reconstruct the memory best you can. If you really cannot recall the information, give a call to a qualified hypnotherapist and they should be able to help you remember.

(See more page 7, "Improve Memory?")



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IMPROVE MEMORY?

(from page 6)

The power of hypnosis is ultimately in the workings of the human mind. Trance allows deeper access to parts of the subconscious or unconscious mind that are normally outside our ordinary wakeful consciousness. The trance gives us uncontested permission to snoop around the inner labyrinth of the mind. You actually never know what you may come across. In general, we usually do not have bizarre hidden memories but, there are many things we would never remember if we did not make an extra special effort to recall it. When it is really important, do not underestimate what hypnosis can do for you.



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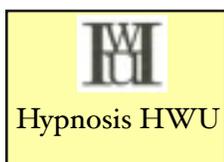
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MEDICAL HYPNOSIS:

A Partner in Health Care



Currently, up to 90% of doctor visits are stress related.

As the medical field becomes more complex and specialized, people are searching for a way to support their own health, to reduce stress and pain and to lower their need for external

interventions. Patients are looking for alternatives that will develop their own inner resources and to help them enhance their natural ability to reduce pain and illness and to improve their health.

Medical hypnotherapy is a growing field that is applicable in many areas of health care.

There are several benefits to the medical scenario that hypnosis will provide:

*Doctors and medical staff will have available a highly trained hypnotherapist upon whom they can call to work in close harmony.

*The hospital will benefit from a shorter patient stays because of the patient's

increased response to getting well quicker which will decrease cost of hospital operation and aid in short-term care.

*The patient will have an opportunity to learn how to control his/her mind with the assistance of an empathetic and skilled hypnotherapist;

*The family of the patient will have an opportunity to become a partner effecting change through group and/or private sessions;

*The community-at-large will benefit as each person becomes able to produce positive reactions through the use of self-hypnosis.

Medicine & hypnosis - partners in health care!

STRESS OR ANXIETY?

In our modern society, every aspect of life seems to have become very complicated. With these complications, we face tremendous psychological stresses and anxiety. Some people have had times in their lives when things were just simpler and people felt as if they were dealing with less stress. Today we all seem to be living in complicated societies where nothing is simple and straightforward. In addition, stress and anxiety tend to lead to health problems and society's number one nemesis, heart disease. Stress and anxiety are two different disorders that affect pretty much every human being.



Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or "stressor"



Anxiety is stress that continues after the stressor is gone

Stress can be triggered by work issues, family problems, general frustration, going through a divorce, time management challenges, economic issues and more. While stress is normal and part of everyday life, if left untreated, it can become detrimental to one's health and lead to anxiety. So you see, stress has to be addressed both from the person's orientation towards situations in one's life as well as addressing the propensity to finding oneself in situations which bring on overwhelming reactions. Perhaps just the admission that one has a Type A personality is a red flag for the person to recognize that work must be done to relieve the stress in their lives. Anxiety is a condition that is often triggered if stress is left untreated. Therefore, it's absolutely imperative, that one effectively strive to manage their stress.

Symptoms of stress are feeling tired, lethargy, frustration, anger. Nevertheless, stress symptoms are mild and tend to go away with a little rest and relaxation. On the other hand, symptoms of anxiety can be more complicated. Symptoms of anxiety include a constant fear of facing challenges, feelings of fear that doesn't seem to have an origin, you feel

your heart racing, feeling that your body is going into overdrive and you can't control it and you might just have a heart attack. One of the most common symptoms is feeling a tightness in the chest which feels like a heart attack but is usually a group of overly tensed muscles attached to the back of the breastbone. These are some key symptoms to keep in mind and controlling them is essential for one's overall health.

You can treat stress by many natural techniques such as yoga, getting a massage, aroma therapy, camping out in the woods, curling up with your pet or kids, self help books, getting out of town, turning off the Blackberry, not undertaking stressful jobs, relaxing more, taking a vacation regularly and the like. On the other hand, anxiety treatment tends to be a bit more complicated and may require medications and the help of a professional psychological consultant.

Stress seems to grow in stages. The first stage is the "alarm" stage. The second is the "resistance" stage. The third and final stage is the "exhaustion" stage.

While anxiety doesn't have stages, it can take many different forms and types. These forms include: Test and performance anxiety, stranger and social anxiety, trait anxiety and finally, choice or decision anxiety. Only your psychologist can help you understand and can accurately determine the type or level of anxiety or stage you are going through.

Life today, as we know has become extremely complicated then it use to be, therefore, we now face tremendous stress in our daily lives. Nevertheless, stress is normal but shouldn't be allowed to progress into anxiety. In review:

- Triggers of stress can be found in our daily lives, such as family stress, work stress, traffic stress, some people are more prone to stress than others and some people tend to live a non stressful life, naturally.
- Symptoms of stress include: exhaustion, irritability, inability to concentrate, headaches and rapid heart beat. Symptoms of anxiety include: fatigue, nausea, chest pains, stomach pains, etc.
- Stress can be treated using natural techniques which can be surprisingly quite effective. Anxiety on the other hand needs to be treated by a professional medical practitioner.
- Stress tends to progress in stages while anxiety tends to have many different forms and must be diagnosed by a professional.



VERMINOPHOBIA

Verminophobia is the fear of germs and affects millions of people every day. But what are the causes of verminophobia and what are the symptoms and treatments for the fear of germs?

For many people, germs are just a fact of life, something that is easily dealt with when we wash our hands. For others, germs represent an ever present threat and simply being around coughing or sneezing people is enough to cause extreme anxiety. These people have verminophobia, also known as the fear of germs. Verminophobia is a common specific phobia that is characterized by extreme anxiety and panicked thoughts about germs. For many verminophobes, even using public transportation or restrooms can cause severe anxiety.

As with many other anxiety and panic disorders, it is important to understand the causes, symptoms and treatments of verminophobia in order to help those affected by the fear of germs.

Like many other specific phobias, verminophobia is typically caused by a past traumatic event experienced by the individual. For example, a verminophobe may have had a serious infectious illness when he or she was younger or a friend or family member may have had a severe virus during the person's childhood. Other causes may be overexposure to media portraying epidemic-like illness such as the global coverage of swine flu.

People with verminophobia experience a variety of symptoms in line with other specific phobias, with one big difference; many verminophobes develop obsessive-compulsive disorder or already have symptoms of OCD. In addition, many of the symptoms of verminophobia are unpredictable in onset, primarily because exposure to overt thoughts or contact with germs is difficult to foresee.

As with many other specific phobias, the symptoms of verminophobia tend to increase in severity without treatment. Fortunately, there are several possible treatments for those with the fear of germs.

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T.H.E. Editor

3rd Year of Publication



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