

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.

Ever ponder what significant changes take place within us during spring?

Think about it! What new changes do you think you'll experience?

-The Editor



Feature Article:

"OUR DREAMS"



Freud said that whether we intend it or not, we're all poets. That's because on most nights, we dream. And dreams are lot like poetry, in that in both, we express our internal life in similar ways. We conjure images; we combine incongruent elements to evoke emotion in a more efficient way than wordier descriptions can; and we use unconscious and tangential associations rather than logic to tell a story.

Freud essentially called dreams those poems we tell ourselves at night in order to experience our unconscious wishes as real. Dreams allow us to be what we cannot be, and to say what we do not say, in our more repressed daily lives. For instance, if you dream about burning your workplace down, it's probably because you want to dominate the workplace but are too nervous to admit that aggressive drive when you're awake and trying to be nice to the people who might give you a raise.

Freud certainly had a catchy theory about dreams, but it was also limited. For him, every single dream was the picture of an unconscious wish. But people who have had boring dreams or nightmares might feel something missing from that formulation. In turn, recent theorists have tried to give a more accurate account of why we dream. In the following list are some of the current theories on why, at night, our brains tell strange stories that feel a lot like literature. Do any of these theories resonate with you, or do you have your own belief about why we dream?

Here are five (5) theories on why we dream:

1. We dream to practice responses to threatening situations. *(see page 2)*

DREAMS *(continued)*

Ever notice that most dreams have a blood-surgency urgency to them? In dreams, we often find ourselves naked in public, or being chased, or fighting an enemy, or sinking in quicksand. Antti Revonsuo, a Finnish cognitive scientist, has shown that our amygdala (*the fight-or-flight piece of the brain*) fires more than normal when we're in REM sleep (*the time in sleep when we dream*). In REM sleep, the brain fires in similar ways as it does when it's specifically threatened for survival. In addition to that, the part of the brain that practices motor activity (running, punching) fires increasingly during REM sleep, even though the limbs are still. In other words, Revonsuo and other evolutionary theorists argue that in dreams, we are actually rehearsing fight-and-flight responses, even though the legs and arms are not actually moving. They say that dreams are an evolutionary adaptation: We dream in order to rehearse behaviors of self-defense in the safety of nighttime isolation. In turn, get better at fight-or-flight in the real world.

2. Dreams Create Wisdom

If we remembered every image of our waking lives, it would clog our brains. So, dreams sort through memories, to determine which ones to retain and which to lose. Matt Wilson, at MIT's Center for Learning and Memory, largely defends this view. He put rats in mazes during the day, and recorded what neurons fired in what patterns as the rats negotiated the maze. When he watched the rats enter REM sleep, he saw that the same neuron patterns fired that had fired at choice turning points in the maze. In other words, he saw that the rats were dreaming of important junctures in their day. He argues that sleep is the process through which we separate the memories worth encoding in long-term memory from those worth losing. Sleep turns a flood of daily information into what we call wisdom: the stuff that makes us smart for when we come across future decisions.

3. Dreaming is Like Defragmenting Your Hard Drive

Francis Crick (*who co-discovered the structure of DNA*) and Graeme Mitchison put forth a famously controversial theory about dreams in 1983 when they wrote that "we dream in order to forget." They meant that the brain is like a machine that gets in the groove of connecting its data in certain ways (obsessing or defending or retaining), and that those thinking pathways might not be the most useful for us. But, when we sleep, the brain fires much more randomly. And it is this random scouring for new connections that allows us to loosen certain pathways and create

new, potentially useful, ones. Dreaming is a shuffling of old connections that allows us to keep the important connections and erase the inefficient links. A good analogy here is the defragmentation of a computer's hard drive: Dreams are a reordering of connections to streamline the system.

4. Dreams Are Like Psychotherapy

But what about the emotion in dreams? Aren't dreams principally the place to confront difficult and surprising emotions and sit with those emotions in a new way? Ernest Hartmann, a doctor at Tufts, focuses on the emotional learning that happens in dreams. He has developed the theory that dreaming puts our difficult emotions into pictures. In dreams, we deal with emotional content in a safe place, making connections that we would not make if left to our more critical or defensive brains. In this sense, dreaming is like therapy on the couch: We think through emotional stuff in a less rational and defensive frame of mind. Through that process, we come to accept truths we might otherwise repress. Dreams are our nightly psychotherapy.

5. The Absence of Theory

Of course, others argue that dreams have no meaning at all, that they are the random firings of a brain that doesn't happen to be conscious at that time. The mind is still "functioning" insofar as it's producing images but there's no conscious sense behind the film. Perhaps it's only consciousness itself that wants to see some deep meaning in our brains at all times.

Dreams are one of life's most fascinating and intriguing mysteries. Humanity has had a love affair with trying to figure out our dreams.

The first recorded mention of the idea was by Zhuangzi, and it is also discussed in Hinduism, which makes extensive use of the argument in its writings. It was formally introduced to Western philosophy by Descartes in the 17th century in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Stimulus, usually an auditory one, becomes a part of a dream, eventually then awakening the dreamer.

In Chinese history, people wrote of two vital aspects of the soul of which one is freed from the body during slumber to journey in a dream realm, while the other remained in the body, although this belief and dream interpretation had been questioned since early times, such as by the philosopher Wang Chong. The Indian text *Upanishads*, written between 900 and 500 BC, emphasize two meanings of dreams. The first says that dreams are merely expressions of inner desires. The second is the belief of the soul leaving the body and being guided until awakened.

DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

Compared with most animals, we humans engage in a host of behaviors that are destructive to our own kind and to ourselves. We lie, cheat and steal, carve ornamentations into our own bodies, stress out and kill ourselves, and of course kill others. Science has provided much insight into why an intelligent species seems so nasty, spiteful, self-destructive and hurtful.

Here are 10 of the most destructive human behaviors:

Lie - Nobody knows for sure why humans lie so much, but studies find that it's common, and that it's often tied to deep psychological factors.

"It's tied in with self-esteem," says University of Massachusetts psychologist Robert Feldman. "We find that as soon as people feel that their self-esteem is threatened, they immediately begin to lie at higher levels."

Feldman has conducted studies in which people lie frequently, with 60 percent lying at least once during a 10-minute conversation.

And lying is not easy. One study concluded that lying takes 30 percent longer than telling the truth.

Recent studies have found that people lie in workplace e-mail more than they did with old-fashioned writing.

It's a whole other matter whether people really mean to lie in many instances. Figuring that out requires coming up with a complicated definition of lying.

"Certain conditions have to be in place for a statement to rise to the level of a lie," explains philosophy professor James E. Mahon of Washington and Lee University. "First, a person must make a statement and must believe that the statement is false. Second, the person making the statement must intend for the audience to believe that the statement is true. Anything else falls outside the definition of lying that I have defended."

Animals are also known to be capable of deception, and even robots have learned to lie, in an experiment where they were rewarded or punished depending on performance in a competition with other robots.

Crave Violence - Violence is found throughout recorded human history, leading some researchers to conclude that we crave it, that it's in our genes and affects reward centers in our brains. However, going back millions of years, evidence suggests our ancient

human ancestors were more peace-loving than people today, though there are signs of cannibalism among the earliest pre-history humans.

A study in 2008 concluded that humans seem to crave violence just like they do sex, food, or drugs. The study, reported in the journal *Psychopharmacology*, found that in mice, clusters of brain cells involved in other rewards are also behind their craving for violence. The researchers think the finding applies to human brains.

"Aggression occurs among virtually all vertebrates and is necessary to get and keep important resources such as mates, territory and food," said study team member Craig Kennedy, professor of special education and pediatrics at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. "We have found that the reward pathway in the brain becomes engaged in response to an aggressive event and that dopamine is involved."

Many researchers believe violence in humans is an evolved tendency that helped with survival.

"Aggressive behavior has evolved in species in which it increases an individual's survival or reproduction, and this depends on the specific environmental, social, reproductive, and historical circumstances of a species. Humans certainly rank among the most violent of species," says biologist David Carrier of the University of Utah.

Steal - Theft can be motivated by need. But for kleptomaniacs, stealing can be motivated by the sheer thrill of it. One study of 43,000 people found 11 percent admitted to having shoplifted at least once.

"These are people who steal even though they can easily afford not to," says Jon E. Grant of the University of Minnesota School of Medicine.

In a study in 2009, participants either took a placebo or the drug naltrexone — known to curb addictive tendencies toward alcohol, drugs and gambling. Naltrexone blocks the effects of substances called endogenous opiates that the researchers suspect are released during stealing and which trigger the sense of pleasure in the brain.

The drug reduced the urges to steal and stealing behavior, Grant and colleagues wrote in the journal *Biological Psychiatry*.

Theft may be in our genes. After all, even monkeys do it. Capuchin monkeys use predator alarm calls to warn fellow monkeys to scatter and avoid threats. But some will make fake calls, and then steal food left by those that scattered. *(next page)*

BEHAVIORS *(continued)*

Cheat - Few human traits are more fascinating. While most people would say honesty is a virtue, nearly one in five Americans think cheating on taxes is morally acceptable or is not a moral issue, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center. About 10 percent are equally ambivalent about cheating on a spouse.

People who espouse high moral standards are among the worst cheaters, studies have shown. The worst cheaters tend to be those with high morals who also, in some twisted way, consider cheating to be an ethically justifiable behavior in certain situations.

Cheating on spouses by celebrities and politicians thought to be moral leaders has become rampant. The behavior has a simple explanation, experts say: Guys are wired to want sex, a lot, and are more likely than gals to cheat. The behavior may be particularly likely for men with power.

"People don't necessarily practice what they preach," says Lawrence Josephs, a clinical psychologist at Adelphi University in New York. "It's not clear to what extent people's ethical values are actually running what they do or don't do."

Cling to Bad Habits - Perhaps everything else on this list would be far less problematic if we were not such creatures of habit. In fact, studies have found that even when the risks of a particular bad habit are well-known, people find it hard to quit.

"It's not because they haven't gotten the information that these are big risks," says Cindy Jardine of the University of Alberta. "We tend to sort of live for now and into the limited future — not the long term."

Jardine, who has studied why people cling to bad habits, cites these reasons:

- Innate human defiance
- Need for social acceptance
- Inability to truly understand the nature of risk
- Individualistic view of the world and the ability to rationalize unhealthy habits
- Genetic predisposition to addiction

People tend to justify bad habits, she says, by noting exceptions to known statistics, such as: "It hasn't hurt me yet," or, "My grandmother smoked all her life and lived to be 90."

Bully - Studies have found that half or more of grade-school children experience bullying. A European study in 2009 found that children who bully at school are likely to also bully their siblings at home. That led a researcher involved in the study to speculate that bullying behavior often starts at home.

"It is not possible to tell from our study which behavior comes first, but it is likely that if children behave in a certain way at home, bullying a sibling for

instance, if this behavior goes unchecked they may take this behavior into school," said Ersilia Menesini of the Universita' degli Studi di Firenze, Italy.

But bullying is not just child's play. One study found that almost 30 percent of U.S. office workers experience bullying by bosses or coworkers, from withholding of information critical to getting the job done to insulting rumors and other purposeful humiliation. And once it starts, it tends to get worse.

"Bullying, by definition, is escalatory. This is one of the reasons it's so difficult to prevent it, because it usually starts in really small ways," says Sarah Tracy, director of the Project for Wellness and Work-Life at Arizona State University.

Experts say to combat workplace bullies, respond rationally, specifically, and consistently.

Why do we do it? To gain status and power, psychologists say. And for some, it may be hard to resist the behavior. Researchers have seen bullying behavior in monkeys and speculate that the behavior may stretch way back in our evolutionary tree.

Nip, Tuck, Plump & Tattoo Our Bodies - By 2015, 17 percent of U.S. residents will be getting cosmetic procedures, the industry predicts. Some would call it self-edification, of course, or art, or a way to kill time or perhaps rebel against authority. But in general, and given that people have died from cosmetic surgery procedures, what makes so many people so intent on artificially remaking themselves?

First, it's worth noting that while options at the body shop have never been more varied, the practice is ancient, often tied to cults and religions or power and status, and in fact much of the modern nip, tuck, paint, poke and plump procedures are benign compared with some ancient practices. People have reshaped their heads, elongated their necks, stretched their ears and lips, painted their bodies or affixed permanent jewelry for thousands of years.

Perhaps the strongest motivations nowadays are to be beautiful, however one might define that, or simply to fit in with a particular group.

The lure of beauty can't be denied as a prime motivator to nip and tuck. Studies have shown that shoppers buy more from attractive salespeople; attractive people capture our attention more quickly than others; and skinny people have an easier time getting hired and promoted.

"There's this idea that if you look better you'll be happier. You'll feel better about yourself," says psychologist Diana Zuckerman, president of the National Research Center for Women & Families. "And logically that makes so much sense, because we live in a society where people *(more on page 5)*

BEHAVIORS *(continued)*

care what you like.”

A sign of the times, as Baby Boomer age: While cosmetic surgery sales sagged during the recession, wrinkle-blasting laser treatments have skyrocketed.

Stress Out - Stress can be deadly, raising the risk for heart problems and even cancer. Stress can lead to depression, which can lead to suicide — yet another destructive behavior that’s uniquely human *(and glaringly not on this list)*.

But exactly why we stress is difficult to pin down. These truths will resonate with many, however: The modern workplace is a source of significant stress for many people, as are children.

More than 600 million people around the world put in 48-hour-plus workweeks, according to the International Labor Organization. And advances in technology — smartphones and broadband Internet — mean a blurring of the lines between work and free time. About half of Americans bring work home, according to a recent study.

The stress of being a parent while also working is borne out by a 2007 study that found older people feel less stress.

"Many older workers are empty-nesters," says researcher Gwenith Fisher, an organizational psychologist at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (ISR). "They don't have the same work-personal conflicts that younger and middle-aged workers deal with, juggling responsibilities to children along with their jobs and their personal needs."

Health experts suggest exercise and adequate sleep are two of the best ways to battle stress.

Gamble - Gambling, too, seems to be in our genes and hard-wired into our brains, which might explain why such a potentially ruinous behavior is so common.

Even monkeys gamble. A study that measured monkeys' desire to gamble for juice rewards found that even as potential rewards diminished, the primates acted irrationally and gambled for the chance to get a wee bit more.

A study published in the journal *Neuron* last year found that almost winning activates win-related circuitry within the brain and enhances the motivation to gamble. "Gamblers often interpret near-misses as special events, which encourage them to continue to gamble," said Luke Clark of the University of Cambridge. "Our findings show that the brain responds to near-misses as if a win has been

delivered, even though the result is technically a loss."

Other studies have also shown that losing causes gamblers to get carried away. When people plan in advance how much to gamble, they're coldly rational, a study last year found. But if they lose, rationality goes out the window, and they change the game plan and bet even more.

Gossip - We humans are evolutionarily set up to judge and talk about others, no matter how hurtful it might be, researchers say.

Here's how Oxford primatologist Robin Dunbar sees it: Baboons groom each other to keep social ties strong. But we humans are more evolved, so we use gossip as social glue. Both are learned behaviors.

Gossip establishes group boundaries and boosts self-esteem, studies have found.

In many instances, the goal of gossip is not truth or accuracy. What matters is the bond that gossiping can forge, often at the expense of a third party.

"When two people share a dislike of another person, it (*gossip*) brings them closer," says Jennifer Bosson, a professor of psychology at the University of South Florida.



The Therapist's Corner:
**THE HYPNOTIC ART OF
 CONFUSION**

Using confusion for hypnosis may sound like a strange idea – even a confusing one! But the notion of purposefully and knowingly using confusion as a tool to elicit hypnotic responses from the unconscious mind has a good pedigree.

No less an authority than Dr Milton Erickson, perhaps the greatest hypnotist who ever lived, believed that few things could capture the attention so well as confusion. And he was right. Think about it for a moment. If someone whose opinion you respect usually makes sense when they're talking, then you'll pay attention to them. When on occasion they seem to be saying something important to you, but the meaning isn't immediately clear, you'll assume you need to pay more attention in order to grasp what they are saying.

And if a point is not logically clear, you'll focus more and more of your attention in the hope of understanding it eventually. And remember, focusing the attention is a key component of hypnosis.

We are all dependent on our ability to decipher meaning from what happens to us and from what people say. When people are confused, their awareness turns inwards in a search for understanding – or escape. It's ironic in a way that so many people work on their communication in an attempt to make it more clear, yet the best hypnotists work on making (*at least some of*) their communication more confusing.

If you look at people when they are confused, you'll see they are highly focused. And strong focus is akin to hypnotic trance. When you can't quite figure something out, but it seems really important that you do figure it out, you have an activated expectation. Focus and expectation are at the heart of the confusional technique.

But why should being confused make you more suggestible?

Being confused is like drowning in a sea of communication. You will grab onto anything that will keep you afloat. Any words or phrases that you can make sense of in the maelstrom are likely to affect you more strongly than usual – so if these words can be interpreted as suggestions, this is probably how you will respond to them. This is a rule of human nature. If something is scarce we value it more highly and when we get it, we grab hold of it and we use it. When water is scarce it becomes more valuable to us and we don't waste a drop when we get it. It's the same with clear meaning if it suddenly becomes scarce. Consider the confusion elicited when a stage show hypnotist tips back a subject unexpectedly. Confusion is followed by clarity when the unequivocal command to 'sleep' is uttered.

We like puzzles and riddles because we expect clarity to eventually emerge from the confusion. People watch and read mystery thrillers for the same reason. This confusion as entertainment is an excellent tool for locking people's attention. But how do we apply confusion verbally?

Well, the first thing to remember is that most of your communication, at least before you move into your trance work, should be clear and sensible. If you rave like the mad hatter in Alice in Wonderland, your subject will conclude, with good reason, that they are dealing with a lunatic. They won't expect what you say to make sense.

For hypnotic rapport to become established you must appear rational and sensible most of the time. Then when you do become confusing they will work harder at focusing because they will logically assume it's them missing some meaning that ought to be clear, and if they focus hard enough they will get it. Confusion as a technique should be used wisely and sparingly. You wouldn't want to become known as 'that person who just talks gibberish!' (*more next page*)



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CONFUSION *(Continued)*

The second thing I want you to remember is that your confusional language should make sense on some level. So if I say to you: 'Now the part of you that is apart from the part listening to my voice... can just begin to relax...', I have done two things.

I have used a confusing sentence followed by a very clear suggestion. You might not respond to a single clear suggestion following confusion, but if I am beginning to use more of these types of sentences in my communication, your unconscious mind is basically getting the suggestion pattern of relaxing, while your conscious mind is tied up with trying to fathom out what on earth I said.

But in fact that apparently confusing sentence does make sense. It's only confusing because you don't have time to deconstruct it. Consider it again: 'Now the part of you that is apart from the part listening to my voice...' If we think about this, its full meaning is: 'the part of you that is not listening to my voice right now but paying attention to other things beyond your conscious awareness' – basically it's just a description of the unconscious mind.

So if I said 'Your unconscious mind... can begin to relax...' this would have the same meaning. But it just wouldn't be as effective. So your confusing hypnotic communication shouldn't just be gibberish. It should make sense if the listener had time to fathom it out.

Certain stock phrases are very attention grabbing. If you can use an attention grabbing phrase followed by con-fusional communication, your subject will be even more focused on trying to fathom what you mean because they have tagged it as important because of the way you started it up.

So if you start by using a phrase like 'I really want your opinion about this!' then that's pretty compelling. Or if you said, 'I am really puzzled over some-thing about you!' – that will get anyone's attention! Think what it feels like when someone comes over and whispers in your ear. It's so attention focus-ing. You don't have to go that far, but lowering and hushing your voice sends the message 'what I am about to say is very important, so listen up!'

The placebo expectation is fulfilled with the completion of the cure or pain relief.

When we do hypnotic psychotherapy with a client we have to remember that the conscious mind will often get in the way. Many people are critical of everything. They have developed the critical art of logic and reason to such a point that they can't help but try to dislodge any suggestion presented to them, using logic. Of course, they are not really helping themselves by this approach, but a therapist has to work with it.

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By giving the hungry logical conscious mind something meaty to chew on, you can go about working with their unconscious mind – which isn't beset by the misapplied rationality of logical pedantry.

I might say to someone, 'And perhaps you are beginning to wonder about what it is you'll be wondering about when you begin to wander into hypnosis...' This sentence encourages the person to begin to introspect. It does make sense and basically means 'You might consider what it is you'll be thinking about when you become hypnotized...'

But because it is more confusingly presented, it slows down the interrupting logic of the person. Their conscious thought processes get tied up trying to make out what it means, leaving their unconscious mind free to actually respond to your suggestions. In that sentence I also used the homonyms 'wonder' and 'wander' to enhance the confusion – both meanings being apt for the purpose.

Here's the sentence again: "and perhaps you are beginning to wonder about what it is you'll be wondering about when you begin to wander into hypnosis." By saying something in such an unfamiliar way (*who ever heard of anybody "wandering" into hypnosis?*), (see page 8)

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MORE CONFUSION *(continued)*

we also begin to break down constraining and mechanical mental sets.

Much human language is clichéd and repetitive. Predictable and unsurprising uses of language make our perception limited and repetitious too, and freshness can be lost. When you say something familiar in a very unfamiliar way you are helping the person see with fresh eyes again.

We are taught to always be as clear as possible with people in the modern world of communication and this is well and good. But expert use of confusion can actually aid and increase understanding in the right circumstances. People take things on board better when they feel they have worked for it. Confusion before clarity gives people the sense they have worked for the idea you eventually make clear to them and are therefore more likely to make it their own.

Talking about familiar things in unfamiliar terms is another way of using confusion and breaking people out, at least momentarily, from their habitual limiting thought patterns. If I talk to a smoker about their ‘self harming’ rather than their ‘smoking’ it may be confusing for them until they suddenly realize I

mean their smoking. I might talk to someone wishing to lose weight about their need to ‘gain slim-ness’. We are so used to considering ‘losing’ something as a negative thing – even if it’s losing weight – that by talking in terms of ‘getting more slimness’ we apply a freshness, even if it is slightly confusing.

Milton Erickson stated, “Defined simply, a confusion technique is based upon a presentation to the subjects of a series of seemingly but only loosely related ideas actually based upon a significant thread of continuity not readily recognized, leading to an increasing divergence of associations, interspersed with an emphasis on the obvious, all of which preclude subjects from developing any one train of association, yet stirs them increasingly to need to do something until they are ready to accept the first clear-cut definitive suggestion offered.”

There are three keys to a good confusion technique:

- *Confusion focuses attention and that encourages hypnotic response;

- *Do not use gibberish but make sense if you had time to fathom its meaning;

- *If someone is confused, when they do get clarity, they’ll cling onto it and make use of it.



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What is the difference between a psychiatrist and a psychologist?

If you say to a psychiatrist "I hate my mother," he will ask "Why do you say that?" while a psychologist will say, "Thank you for sharing that with us."



PYROPHOBIA

Pyrophobia is an irrational fear of fire, beyond what is considered normal. This phobia is ancient and primordial, perhaps since mankind's discovery of fire.

The most common cause of pyrophobia is that fire poses a potential danger, such as house fire, wildfire, and getting caught on fire. Some people who are intensely pyrophobic cannot even get close to or tolerate even a small controlled fire, such as fireplace, bonfire or lit candle. In many cases a bad childhood experience with fire may have triggered the condition.

If a pyrophobe sees fire, the person may sweat and suffer dizziness or upset stomach. A person with severe pyrophobia who sees fire may panic and experience fast breathing, irregular heartbeat, shortness of breath, nausea, dry mouth, dread, feeling trapped, and may tremble or faint.

Exposure therapy is the most common way to treat pyrophobia. This method involves showing patients fires in order of increasing size, from a lit cigarette up to a stove or grill flame.

Another method of treatment is talk therapy, in which a patient tells a therapist about the cause of this fear. This can calm the patient to make them less afraid of controlled fire.

People can relieve pyrophobia by interacting with other pyrophobes to share their experiences that caused fear. Alternatively, pyrophobia can be treated using hypnosis.

Medication can also be used to treat pyrophobic people, although since it has side effects, the method is not highly recommended.

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