



THE HYPNOSIS EXAMINER

Health & Wellness, Unlimited

"Establishing Clarity, Harmony and Balance in Your Life"

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FEATURE

HYPNOSIS vs. THERAPY

Most of us who practice hypnosis as a healing intervention are well aware that hypnotherapy is used to treat many of the same conditions that are addressed in conventional mental health therapy or counseling.

The application of hypnosis to a variety of emotional problems and problematic behaviors is nothing new. Indeed, Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, made liberal use of hypnosis in his early practice. As noted in "Freud and Hypnosis: A Re-evaluation" (*International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1972), "Freud worked intensively with hypnosis in the pre-psychoanalytic period and clearly developed considerable skill and understanding of the nature of hypnosis and the dynamics of the hypnotic relationship."

Freud later stopped utilizing hypnosis, and some psychoanalysts today tend to regard it as nothing more than an outdated concept of merely historical interest. "Hypnosis, however, continues to provide a fertile field for research," notes author Leon Chertok (*Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, Vol. 165(2), Aug 1977, 99-109) in his article, "Freud and Hypnosis: An Epistemological Appraisal."

The popularity of hypnosis as a therapeutic modality has waxed and waned since the time of Mesmer—as has the popularity of traditional psychoanalysis since Freud—but there continues to be interest in the possible uses, both individual and additive, of hypnosis and present popular therapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). A 2005 Study, "The Additive Benefit of Hypnosis and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy in

Treating Acute Stress Disorder" (*Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 2005, Vol. 73, No. 2, 334–340), assigned civilian trauma survivors who met criteria for acute stress disorder (ASD) randomly to six sessions of CBT, CBT combined with hypnosis (CBT-hypnosis), or supportive counseling (SC). The research found that combined CBT-hypnosis treatments resulted in greater reduction in re-experiencing symptoms at post-treatment than CBT alone. "These findings suggest that hypnosis may have use in facilitating the treatment effects of CBT for posttraumatic stress," the study concludes.

Comparing the Modalities

Interestingly, the study cited above did not have an experimental condition in which hypnosis alone was utilized, but the fact that hypnosis did enhance treatment effects for what is today the most popular therapeutic modality is significant. So just what is it that hypnosis can bring to the table that CBT alone cannot?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that modern hypnosis actively seeks to engage the cooperation of the unconscious mind in the healing process. This emphasis on the unconscious as both the cause and the cure for a variety of life problems is ironically psychodynamic, given the abandonment of hypnosis by the psychoanalytic community. While traditional hypnosis has tended to focus on behaviors themselves, newer methods emphasize the role of early trauma in shaping unconscious processes, leading to later undesirable behavior. Indeed, hypnotherapy interventions such as Parts Therapy (*as taught and practiced by Dr. Jaime Feldman*) utilize a willing unconscious mind to find the source of a trauma, to deal with the problem at the source, and to allow the inner child (*in most cases*) to realize that it is loved and that forgiveness

Hypnosis vs. Therapy (cont.)

is needed in order to move past the trauma and the undesirable behaviors it has produced. Hypnosis provides quick and effective access to the unconscious mind, and is in many ways the “royal road to the unconscious”—as Freud once characterized the dream state. For these reasons, hypnosis should appeal to modern psychodynamically-oriented therapists (*for whom the defenses and other actions of the unconscious mind are important*), although such professionals are not as numerous as they once were.

CBT is much more concerned with the conscious mind. It is described as “an action-oriented form of psychosocial therapy that assumes that maladaptive, or faulty, thinking patterns cause maladaptive behavior and ‘negative’ emotions. (*Maladaptive behavior is behavior that is counter-productive or interferes with everyday living.*) The treatment focuses on changing an individual's thoughts (cognitive patterns) in order to change his or her behavior and emotional state” (*thefreedictionary.com*). CBT practitioners spend much of their time trying to help clients realize that their thought processes are irrational or counterproductive, or both. The key, however, is that these conversations take place with the client’s conscious mind.

Another benefit of hypnosis versus CBT is that hypnotic interventions typically involve much less time (*and client expense*) than today’s therapies. Hypnosis programs may involve as few as one or as many as eight sessions. CBT, while it is more economical than psychodynamic treatments, will often involve at least 12 sessions, and in some cases will continue for months, or even years. Today’s insurer-driven health care climate and spiraling health care costs are increasingly pushing therapists toward “short-term” therapies that involve lower payouts for insurance companies. Whether health insurance is involved or not, however, hypnosis—with its emphasis on quick resolution of underlying trauma and helpful suggestions for future growth—is actually the ultimate short-term therapy.

Which Way to Go?

Therapists and their clients today are faced with choices when it comes to hypnosis or some other current therapeutic modality. Hypnosis has some obvious advantages over CBT, for example, but it is

also less likely to be covered by health insurance, thus money may be an issue for clients who can recover at least part of their treatment costs. On the other hand, hypnosis sessions are often less expensive than therapy sessions—especially if the therapist is highly experienced—and it almost always requires fewer treatment sessions.

We should always remember, however, that different individuals will respond differently to any treatment offered. Some clients will respond well to hypnosis’ simple appeal to the subconscious mind, but others may prefer the more studied, conscious approach offered by CBT. Both modalities have been shown to be effective in treating a variety of conditions. If a hypnosis client seems especially resistant or uncooperative with the hypnosis process, my best course—in the client’s best interest—may be to recommend standard mental health counseling. And, for therapists, you would do well to consider that hypnosis may have efficacy where clients are likewise resistant or showing no progress in standard therapy.

Finally, as the study cited earlier demonstrates, it is clear that hypnosis can work well in tandem with CBT and, presumably, other therapeutic modalities. It is not uncommon for my therapist colleagues to ask me to see their clients for weight loss or smoking cessation, for example, when such issues interfere with the clients’ ability to make progress in their therapy.

In an ideal world, perhaps hypnotists and therapists will someday collaborate on treatments of the type suggested in the study. This does not have to be an either/or choice. We would all do well to remember that our number one priority must be to serve the best interests of our clients.



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A FEAR OF SUCCESS?



Have you ever heard of such a thing? A “fear” of success? Isn’t that ridiculous? Nobody wants to fail . . . do they? Everyone wants to be successful at something . . . don’t they?

Most people strive to achieve a respectable level of success in their lives, however, there are also a number of people who (*subconsciously*) actually avoid being successful. This “self-sabotaging attitude” can be just as paralyzing as a fear of failure.

Success does not necessarily mean acquiring “financial independence.” Success means achieving your goal(s) whether they are graduating from high school, getting a raise at work, making the team, being independent or whatever you have set your sights on to achieve.

This means that there is a measure of change that must accompany your new direction. Change can be intimidating and challenging making life difficult and doubtful. It can cause you to expose your weaknesses and force you to face and deal with your flaws. That can be threatening. It can cause you to think that you aren’t smart enough or good enough or not have what it takes to rise to the challenges.

When some people are confronted with these “changes” associated with success, they may feel threatened and develop a “fear of success” thus their subconscious may then develop a self-sabotaging attitude, behavior or subpersonality to protect them.

SELF-SABOTAGE



Self-sabotage is the term used to describe the things that people do or say to destroy the success

or happiness that they are experiencing or could experience. This happens when the success or happiness is above the level that the subconscious believes it is worthy of. This belief creates self-sabotaging attitudes and behaviors. The most common areas of self-sabotage are in relationships, money, career and health.

There are commonly two ways in which self-sabotage can manifest:

First is when a person reaches some level of success and no matter what they do, they cannot seem to achieve anything more, i.e. feeling stuck in a dead-end job.

Second is when a person achieves their desired level of success and within a short period of time loses it, i.e., winning the lottery and becoming totally broke shortly after.

Some indications of self-sabotage would be staying out all night, drinking too much coffee so you can’t sleep or staying up late doing “fussy stuff” before a job interview early the next morning. Procrastination instead of taking care of business can be an indication of self-sabotage. All talk and no action, negative or pessimistic thoughts and behaviors can also indicate self-sabotage as well as thinking of all the things that could possibly go wrong instead of focusing on the positive outcome of a direction.

So what could be the benefit of a self-sabotaging attitude or behavior? It offers an escape hatch or a way out. It provides an excuse for not achieving your goal. It allows you to remain in a safe and familiar place without challenges or change.

These subconscious beliefs are often the result of a childhood experience. Parents, teachers and authoritative figures in a child’s life may say or do things unintentionally or intentionally that create negative experiences, such as make statements like, “you never do things the right way,” “you’ll never amount to much in life,” “why can’t you be like your sister?” or “you always get failing grades.” Growing up hearing clichés like “the grass is always greener on the other side” or “the harder you try to get ahead, the more you get behind” can also create subconscious beliefs of self-sabotage.

No matter what the scenario of self-sabotage, these attitudes of destruction have been created in the subconscious mind and unless corrected will continue to reside there and prohibit success.

The good news is that hypnosis is an effective means of eliminating self-sabotaging attitudes.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the readers and subscribers of this newsletter in our first year of publication.

I hope that you have received an introductory level of education in the field of hypnosis. It was the goal of this newsletter to introduce this topic to our readership in a user-friendly format to begin peeling the layers off this often controversial field of study.

I hope to appeal to the professional, paraprofessional and especially layperson and the general public audiences. As a hypnotherapist, I feel the need to drastically reduce the clutter of compounded myths by presenting factual information and directing readers to reliable resources in their education about hypnosis.

Simplicity has always been the path to comprehension and comprehension leads to an educational level that produces effective decision-making skills, therefore, this newsletter will serve as one vehicle for educating the public about facts by beginning with presenting simple concepts that will lead to understanding the more complex information in regard to hypnosis.

The newsletter editions are written in the same fashion, from simplistic progressively toward more complex concepts and information. It is my hope that this "library" of information will be collected and/or referenced by readers as a reliable source of accurate information for continued growth in the comprehension of hypnosis and its benefits.

It is also the goal that this newsletter will stimulate the submission of articles from professional and paraprofessional hypnotherapists who wish to assist in the dissemination of accurate information to the public as well as stimulate questions from "any" readers seeking answers about hypnosis.

Articles and questions for future editions of the newsletter should be sent to: tophypno@aol.com and write in the Subject line of your email: "The Hypnosis Examiner Q/A"

As we embark on the final month of 2012, I look forward to bringing next year's editions to you filled with more helpful information and hearing from you . . . our readers.

The Editor

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"HOLIDAY SPECIAL"

IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT
YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION



ARE YOU GOING TO ATTEMPT THE SAME RESOLUTIONS THAT YOU
TRIED LAST YEAR BUT DID NOT SUCCEED IN ACHIEVING?

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