Hypnotherapy

***Brief Description***

Hypnotherapy helps certain people focus internally. It helps people turn their attention inwardly from their external surroundings in order to engage in self-healing. It has been described as a safe, mental state in which people with psychological problems learn to control disturbing and unwanted memories, behaviors, emotions or specific thoughts. It has been used to help people suffering severe emotional pain revisit circumstances connected with their problem in the past, present or expected in the future. The result of this treatment is often a remarkable and sometimes sustained change in thinking, emotional reaction and/or behavior. More improvement usually occurs with additional sessions or practice. Hypnotherapy is not beneficial to all sufferers, however, and not everyone responds to the same degree to this treatment.

What is Hypnotherapy? Hypnotherapy, which is also known as clinical hypnosis, is a method of treatment and self-treatment that allows a person to enter a state of relaxation in which they feel peaceful and safe. This state of relaxation is a natural condition. It is perhaps best compared to a state between sleeping and waking, the way we are just before we are fully awake in the morning or as we ease into sleep at night. Undoubtedly, you have had this experience at some point in your life. You have very likely been in this state while watching TV for example when you begin to doze off, to a point at which you are not sure whether the sounds you are hearing are from the television, a dream or the environment around you.

The important usefulness of hypnosis has not always been recognized, however. For years (and maybe still) the only use of hypnosis has been hampered by a common misconception that the point of it is to make a hypnotized person look or act silly in order to provide humor and entertainment, as anyone who has seen such a hypnotist show on TV or at a midway can attest. As a result many who could benefit have rejected clinical hypnosis. So, sometimes the path to healing may be blocked by wrong information. When one knows no better, one can fall victim to faulty information about a treatment process or effect. Clinical hypnosis however, is not for amusement. It can be a very powerful form of therapy if done correctly. For example, hypnotherapy is used to deal with a large variety of problems affecting a number of human behaviors, such as, smoking, dieting, and acquiring or improving several types of behavior and skills. Typically, this kind of hypnosis is also used to help a person reduce or get rid of agitation, feelings of stress and anxiety. Although it is best that a trained professional administers it, with guidance individuals can learn to apply its most basic form on themselves, as an appropriate use of self-hypnotherapy.

Entering Self-Hypnotherapy— While getting into a hypnotic state is something that can happen naturally, as described above, learning how to reach this state at the times you choose is both practical and desirable. To enter the state of hypnotherapy, or trance, follow these suggestions but remember this: YOU MAY, AND CAN, DISCONTINUE THIS ACTIVITY AT ANY POINT YOU WISH FOR ANY REASON AT ALL.

***Entering Self-Hypnosis***

Now here are the suggestions to enter self-hypnosis:

* DO NOT DO ANY PART OF SELF-HYPNOSIS UNLESS YOU ARE IN A SAFE PLACE SO AS TO DEVOTE YOUR TOTAL ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING STEPS
* Make yourself comfortable in a place where you will not be disturbed for about 20 minutes
* When you are, focus on a physical object, such as a doorknob, a lamp or even a filled-in zero drawn on paper and fixed on a vertical surface, say on an opposite wall, to help keep your concentration on the task.
* You then begin, taking in slow gentle breaths and breathing out slowly. (Pace how slow by mentally counting one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand during each in-breath; and the same count for the out-breath.) Do each breathe-in, breathe-out set three or four times
* Now as you breathe, hold the in-breath for a few seconds (counting one one-thousand, two one-thousand, in your head), before exhaling by counting one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand.
* Do each set about three or four times and return to breathing normally. As you do…
* Allow your eyes to close and, in your mind, begin to focus on different parts of your body, one by one, mentally telling (influencing or willingly allowing) each of them to relax.
* As you continue to breathe in and out normally, with your eyes closed invite all the major parts of your body to relax – your feet, legs, abdomen, chest, back, neck, face and head. At this point take a deep breath and breathe out slowly.
* Now go in the opposite direction gently telling each part to relax till you get to your feet. Then take a deep breath and breathe out slowly.
* With your eyes still closed, imagine yourself in a peaceful and safe place or doing something pleasant.
* Take a deep breath and allow yourself to enjoy the imagined experience for a few minutes or longer, as you wish.
* After a while, tell yourself it is time to begin to come back to full awareness of the place around you.
* Do this by counting slowly from five, four or three down to zero, to bring yourself gradually to your previous normal state.
* As you do this, listen for familiar sounds and the feel of what you were resting on; then slowly open your eyes. If you are doing this in bed at bedtime you may allow yourself continue on to sleep.
* PLEASE NOTE: Stay in that position for a brief while till you are fully alert before attempting to get up. If you feel wobbly, steady yourself before moving or sit down again. You may feel heavy with your first few steps. These are all normal reactions some people experience after deep relaxation.

***Stick with These Basic Steps unless with a Therapist***

This is the basic run of self-hypnotherapy and I believe that this basic run is sufficient for self-calming and relaxation of physical tension. There’s more to learn, such as dealing with specific issues and when and how to use a “safe place”. Until then however, it is advised, if you intend to deal with specific problems in your life, that a professional person knowledgeable in this area watches your reactions during the imagination portion. The hypnotherapy process is very important at this point, for it is in trusting the power of your safety or confidence that the healing occurs.

Other names, concepts or actions, which describe experiences related to hypnotherapy include:

* Basic relaxation or sometimes, just relaxation – as described above.
* Visualization – occurs during the imaginative part of the process and it is a method by which a person mentally examines a performance goal in detail over and over to learn the steps to achieve it.
* Guided imagery – usually occurs when another person’s voice (but also your own recorded voice) presents all phases of the basic method instead of you mentally telling yourself.
* Positive affirmations – suggestions to oneself, in a relaxed rather than uptight state, of qualities and attributes one wishes to acquire or master, though a person does not need to be in a state of trance to make them.

How therapist-directed hypnotherapy works—the hypnotherapist guides the client into relaxation and further coaches the person to go deeper in the relaxation. Although the individual is in a deep state of physical and mental relaxation, they remain capable of communicating with the therapist. When the sufferer reaches a deep enough level of trance or hypnotic condition, the therapist suggests that the sufferer examine or review the problem that is troubling or upsetting, providing safety anchors to ease the person through difficult reactions. At certain points in the process of the hypnotherapeutic experience, the therapist encourages the patient to take deep breaths in order to go deeper, if required, and be more relaxed, which helps the person to better concentrate on the problem. At the end of the session, the therapist continues to guide the client to return to normal awareness and counts down for a gradual return to an awake and alert state.