Direct suggestion hypnosis to overcome long-held fears. A case study

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Main content

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Introduction

This paper discusses two clients with different fears resulting in the same type of panic reaction. In both cases their lives were dramatically affected. One client's fear had its origins from childhood. The other client's fear resulted from a more recent incident. In both cases direct suggestion hypnotherapy was applied in a clinical situation to help bring about rapid change. An unusual testing method was applied to both clients after just two sessions of hypnosis. The results confirmed that a definite and positive change had taken place. Fear is an emotion caused by the belief that someone or some situation is dangerous. It is a basic survival mechanism that enables a person to recognise danger. Both clients had suffered severe loss of self-confidence and were highly embarrassed by their fears. Prior to the hypnosis, their fear had stopped them from leading a normal and happy life.

Fears and phobias

Dave Elman (1964), in his classic book "Hypnotherapy", wrote that every phobia can be tracked to its originating source. He stated that "a phobia is an abnormal fear, a dread of any object or action". It could be said that most of us have some fear or phobia. Spiders for example, could bring about feelings ranging from a slight dislike to a panic situation in two different people. Not all fears are harmful. Fear can be useful and beneficial for personal safety (Hadley & Staudacher, 1996).

The word phobia is defined as an irrational fear, the experience of which may produce any simple psychosomatic response (Waxman, 1993). Some of these responses can range from tachycardia or a massive response in which all systems may be involved (sweating with fear, thumping in the chest etc). I have used the word fear rather than phobia in this case study. If a person's life has changed where they are thinking obsessively about fears and adverse physical changes are taking place then they should seek some form of treatment (Waxman, 1993). According to Hadley and Staudacher (1996), the majority of phobias are generated from one of the following five causes:

1. The phobia may be a product of severe stress.
2. The phobia may be a product of a series of experiences occurring over a period of years which have built up into an excess of anxiety.
3. The phobia may be a product of a fear of fear
4. The phobia may have been transmitted by another person.
5. The phobia may be a result of a severe past trauma.

Methods to get rid of phobias are discussed by Hadley and Staudacher (1996). The first is to identify the specific event that caused the fear and sever the emotional ties to it. The next is to confront your fear while experiencing it as a nonthreatening experience. This is the confrontation method. Another is to increase your self-confidence and believe that you can face anything. Finally, they suggest a reprogram of the subconscious, using a positive suggestion in regard to the specific fear.

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5. Is hypnosis simply suggestion? What does this mean? That people in hypnosis will accept suggestions more readily than when not in hypnosis? This theory might hold for stage performances and the like but can hardly apply to surgery. Thousands of hypnotized persons have benefited from operations with no chemical anesthetic. 7. Is hypnosis a form of psychological conditioning? According to this explanation, a person learns through direct experience or through TV or the movies, how to behave 'hypnotized'. Another way to see hypnosis as something learned is to assert that a person becomes conditioned to a word stimulus such as "Relax." A 1973 study – the study that led to that popular myth – found that 41 percent of surveyed adults were afraid of public speaking, compared to just 19 percent who said death. More recently that number has been reiterated. A Gallup Poll conducted in 2000 found 40 percent of people said they feared public speaking. And according to the poll, public speaking was the second most common fear, behind only a fear of snakes. That's right. As such, hypnosis and hypnotherapy are popular tools for helping people overcome their fear of public speaking, because it empowers them to remove those automatic thoughts. How exactly does hypnosis work for people who dread speaking in front of audiences? What does the research say? More obvious hypnotic suggestions are also sometimes given to patients by doctors trained in hypnosis, and for over a century, dentists have used hypnosis to ease discomfort during dental procedures. In addition to using hypnotic techniques themselves, doctors and dentists regularly refer patients to hypnotherapists for help with weight loss, smoking cessation, and overcoming fears about dental and surgical procedures. Hypnotherapy Case Studies. is then able to receive habit-altering messages from the hypnotherapist. Never allow this. When hypnosis works, it works quickly. Long-term, wonderful effects may reveal themselves later, but most of the changes begin to happen within a few weeks. A Fear of Flying. An intertwining of events Click here. A Fear of Flying 2. An unusual twist on regression Click here. Overcoming worrying with hypnotherapy. Click here. Fear of Moths. A client's fear of moths and how it was stopped with hypnosis. Click here. Sea Sickness. How one woman used self-hypnosis to overcome sea sickness. Click here. Fear of Operations.