

Waking Up to Hypnosis: Change your Mind, Change your Life! -Madonna J Kettler, PhD, LBLt, MHt, CHt, VABt

Long, long ago during the time of Atlantis, people used sleep and dream chambers to practice altered states of consciousness. Not so long ago, the Egyptians regularly practiced similar techniques. Mankind has consistently experimented with different ways to induce trance states in order to achieve altered states of consciousness. One of the first was Paracelsus (1493-1541), who used magnets for healing. Also, in the Fifteenth Century, William Maxwell used magnets for healing as well as imagination and suggestion. He believed that these techniques enhanced the healing process. Maximillian Hell, (1720-1792), an astronomer and Jesuit Priest, healed the sick with metal plates. You may have heard of Franz Mesmer (1734-1850), who believed there was a universal fluid within everyone's body that emanated from the planets and stars. He called this animal magnetism. Mesmer was debunked and died in poverty, yet we still use the term mesmerism to describe an altered state. In the Eighteenth Century the term hypnosis was coined by the person often called the Father of Modern Hypnosis, James Braid (1795-1860). Hypnosis comes from the Greek word "hypnos," which means sleep – which hypnosis is NOT!

Milton Erickson (deceased 1980), talked about hypnosis being a naturally occurring phenomenon. Ericksonian techniques include waking hypnosis, metaphor construction, direct, and indirect suggestion. These methods are still widely used.

The first hypnotists believed eye fixation (tiring of the eyes) was necessary in order to induce an altered state. Today, hypnotists may or may not use this technique in order to achieve a successful trance.

Edgar Cayce (often called the Sleeping Prophet) would enter into a profound trance state and receive information relating to a subject's healing. It is argued whether this was a state of hypnosis, but he certainly used an *applied altered state of consciousness*, which is inclusive of self-hypnosis. With Cayce, the metaphysical or holistically-oriented approach to hypnosis was birthed, including the theory that we bring unconscious memories with us from past lives that can affect our current life.

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness which lies between awake and asleep. It is generally brought about in an individual by the use of a combination of concentration, relaxation, suggestion, and expectation. Watching TV, playing games, praying, and daydreaming, are all altered states of consciousness. Anyone with normal physiological and psychological functioning, therefore having the ability to concentrate and/or relax, can be hypnotized.

From my perspective, the ***clinical*** approach to hypnosis is more mind-centered and typically uses Ericksonian techniques. This approach can promote change related, but not limited to: weight release, stress reduction, pain management, smoking cessation, building self-confidence, fear release, memory retrieval, or depression.

Transpersonal Hypnosis is a practice in which the hypnotist uses a holistically oriented approach. This includes working with the mind, but also the body and spirit of the client. The client's inner and other-dimensional resources are not only recognized but utilized in order to transcend the physical and explore the deeper aspects related to the weight, fear, memory loss, depression, or addiction issues that are challenging them. Transpersonal hypnotherapy assumes there are guides, angels, and/or deceased relatives that work with us on a regular basis in order to achieve our highest good. It sees the client as a spiritual being in a human experience, with that experience now requiring a deeper understanding or healing on some level, in order for that person to evolve mentally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. I was drawn to transpersonal hypnosis because the mind approach had not worked for me.

We cannot be hypnotized if we do not desire to be hypnotized. If we do not want to quit smoking, odds are we will not quit smoking, even with self-hypnosis. Amazingly, however, I have worked with clients that were able to quit even though they said they didn't really WANT to quit! When we intend to affect change in our lives, the hypnosis helps our unconscious, or subconscious will to match our conscious desire in order to achieve a desired outcome. When we listen to positive suggestions often enough, even though we may not consciously believe them at the onset, we train ourselves to change – slowly but surely.

When we see ourselves as spiritual beings FIRST, something happens. We believe we are worthy; we know we have purpose, and we are more able to affect change. These changes occur first within ourselves. I came from a background of seeing my Creator as someone "out there and removed from me." I have learned much by integrating self-hypnosis, healing, meditation, and other spiritually-oriented practices into my life. I know there are absolutely no accidents. We do not make mistakes (!) ... we have different experiences based on the choices we make. Something good comes out of everything. We ALL have purpose. We absolutely are NOT alone. Hypnosis has helped in my evolution and I know it can help in yours, if it feels right for you. I personally have released a lot of excess weight (as well as a TON of emotional baggage!), and now see myself and others as a Divine work in progress.

Some areas that can be enhanced or changed with directive or suggestive hypnosis include addictions, attracting abundance or love, releasing anxiety or depression, relaxed childbirth, dream interpretation, releasing fears and phobias, insomnia, increasing intuitive or psychic abilities, memory retrieval, pain management, stress reduction, self-healing, and smoking cessation. In suggestive hypnosis, a tape is created that the client listens to until the desired outcome has been achieved (usually 28+ days).

When suggestive therapy does not work, or only works to a certain level, a more advanced methodology called non-directive or regression therapy can be utilized. Regression involves taking the client to the source of the issue or block. This can be from their current life or a previous life, so belief systems can come into play. However, I have used regressive therapy with people who do not believe in past lives as they can see the memory as a metaphor instead of an actual past life experience. Does it really matter how the experience is perceived, as long as it heals the issue or releases the block? I don't think so!

Regression work is generally used when there is unexplained pain or illness, relationship issues, or soul purpose definition. With an even more cutting-edge methodology called life-between-lives (LBL) spiritual regression, you may experience what the ancient Tibetans called the *bardo*, or in-between time. Michael Newton's books, *Journey of Souls* and *Destiny of Souls*, tell of his extensive research into this vast, ever evolving realm of the superconscious. In the LBL experience you may meet your soul group, review past lives, discover why you chose your current body and life experiences, receive spiritual and physical healing, and acquire information not accessed through the normal regressive trance state. I believe when in the superconscious realm, we are HOME, and if this information piques your interest, I highly encourage you to read Michael's books.

I hope this information has helped you. If you have other questions about hypnosis or other spiritual topics, please call or email me; perhaps I can help. It's up to you! Are you ready?

My thoughts and gratitude are with each of you. Remember to BE PEACE. Remember who you REALLY are. Know you are not alone. Breathe deeply and fully, as you become more aware of all that is around and within you.