

Village News/Southwest News July 27, 2004

Let Hypnosis Relieve Your Study/Test Stress

By Michael Schuman

The first experience most people have had with hypnosis is what they've seen in the movies or on television. Most of those involve a scenario in which the villain hypnotist hypnotizes some unsuspecting character in order to have him do some terrible something, almost certainly in violation of the law, like in the Manchurian Candidate. The reality is very different. No one can be hypnotized against his will, and no one can be made to do or say anything they are morally opposed to while they are in hypnosis. Certainly many people have seen stage hypnotists get volunteers to bark like dogs or cluck lick chickens. Yes, they were in a light trance. No, they would not have barked or clucked if they didn't want to cooperate and do that for the fun and attention of it.

Unlike in the fictional depictions, the client is not asleep or under some spell. The person is always aware and hears everything they hypnotist says and he can emerge from hypnosis any time he wishes. A person in hypnosis is in deep concentration on a particular subject so they are not asleep. In fact, if they go to sleep they'll miss the benefit of the session. Although hypnosis is a natural state that everyone passes through on his way to sleep and out of sleep, it is not sleep. A hypnotist may tell a client they're getting sleepier and sleepier, but in that context he's really telling the client he's getting more and more relaxed.

With that said, the next question, even before how can it help me or my child with studies, usually is, "can I be hypnotized?" Three are three criteria needed to be hypnotized; first, the client must be able to understand and respond to suggestions; second, they must genuinely want to be hypnotized and, third, they must agree to be hypnotized and to cooperate in the therapy. Most hypnotists are agreed that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. The most the hypnotist can do is 50%; the client must do the other 50%. Assuming the person meets those three criteria, working together the hypnotist counsels and teaches the technique of self-hypnosis, so each person can do it for himself. But that certainly does not negate the role of the trained hypnotist in guiding the client with positive suggestion.

Students, or anyone, can benefit from hypnosis in a number of ways. The whole point of hypnosis is to access the subconscious. The subconscious is the repository of all memory. So just as the hypnotist accesses the subconscious to discover and relieve the causes of all sorts of problems, the student is coached to access his own subconscious to utilize the information he's worked hard to put

there. So the two key ways hypnosis is helpful are to remember information and to reduce stress related to taking tests. The student coached in self-hypnosis is able to focus his concentration and to recall needed information easily. Practicing the techniques gives him confidence which reduces stress. That improves his concentration and learning. And that makes for a successful and happier student. If the student is successful and happy, I trust the parents will be too.

Michael Schuman has an established practice in Frost Bank Building in Bellaire. He can be reached for consultation and appointments by calling (713)662-8511.