

Q & A on Hypnotism

Answers by **Michael Glowacki**, CH, Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist
8/15/2005

© 2005 ServAsk™, LLC. All rights reserved.
<http://www.ServAsk.com>

Q: What's the difference between meditation and hypnotism?

I think one of the questions I get the most from people who call is "What is the difference between hypnotism and meditation?" The mental states have very little difference, but the goal, intent and results of each practice are very different. Hypnosis is a natural yet altered state of mind characterized by profound relaxation and resulting in increased emotional, even physical, responsiveness to suggestions. It has been used for thousands of years in many different cultures. People use hypnosis to achieve some particular positive purpose or goal such as eliminating bothersome habits, irrational fears, or controlling pain.

Meditation is usually pursued for relaxation, contemplation, or "enlightenment" (focus on present moment, etc). It sometimes has a spiritual focus. And if you asked a Buddhist, especially a Zen Buddhist, he or she would reply that meditation has no goal whatsoever. One meditates to experience meditation.

Q: What kinds of fears might a person have about visiting with a hypnotist? For example, can you "control" a person, like one might have seen in the movies?

Movies, television and other entertainment have created a lot of misunderstandings of what hypnotism can do. I've had people come into my office expecting me to make them stop smoking. Well, when someone started a bad habit did they take to it instantly? Usually no, they had to repeat the behavior until it became a habit and even addiction. Stopping takes preparation and practice too. Hypnosis doesn't control people nor make them do things against their will or without their knowledge. If it did enable people to control others, all the hypnotists would rule the world and have all the money and material possessions they want. Since they don't rule the world, clearly hypnotists can't control you. In addition, we're ethically bound to use hypnosis for positive purposes.

Another fear people have is that hypnosis is dangerous in some way, either psychologically or physically. Nobody has ever been "stuck" in hypnosis. There is no documented proof in over a hundred years of using hypnosis for medical purposes of any person suffering injury or damage from hypnotic therapy. Stage hypnotists use hypnotic phenomena, misdirection and the exhibitionists' desire to show off in front of an audience to put on an entertaining show. I teach you how to use the power of your mind, how to use hypnosis, and I'm of the firm opinion that until you learn how to harness your subconscious, you're in more danger from others influencing you than if you don't marshal and direct your mind to work in alignment with your goals.

Q: Are there any statistics on the success rate of using a hypnotist to quit smoking, lose weight, etc?

I'm tracking my success rates for common issues such as losing weight, stopping smoking and similar goals for publishing later. Until then I can share that other research and results vary according to the training and ability of the hypnotist and researchers. For losing weight, studies are unclear as there are a variety of hypnosis techniques used and most studies are short term (three to six months). For some of my clients, hypnosis and self-hypnosis combined have been very effective. Hypnosis is not magic. Remember, it's not that someone can hypnotize you and then you don't want to eat anymore. Hypnosis is a tool that can help you change your eating and exercise behavior so that certain patterns become easier to change or stop. For stopping smoking, published research in 48 studies covering 6000 smokers shows hypnosis to be three times more effective than nicotine replacement therapy.

Q: How many visits does it usually take to quit smoking? Lose weight?

Each person is different, so I can predict only generally how many sessions it takes to stop smoking or lose weight. Most people experience results with stopping smoking permanently with between 3 to 6 private sessions. Some people can stop smoking with one session in a group seminar, but most attendees come to me for follow up work and training in self-hypnosis. In order to control your weight, you must learn new behaviors, habits and beliefs so you can keep the excess fat off. This means most people require 6 to 10 sessions, either private or group classes or some combination of the two.

Q: Do you incorporate any type of breathing exercises in your programs?

With all my programs I incorporate breathing exercises and visualizations to increase responsiveness and results. The breathing exercises help relieve tension, fears and pain. The visualizations are customized and designed to match the client's individual goal and situation. Not only do I teach many people how to improve their focus, concentration and ability to visualize, I train all clients how to use self-hypnosis.

Q: What first inspired you to be a hypnotist?

Three things inspired me to become a hypnotist. The first was reading about and practicing self-hypnosis (and a self-taught variation of biofeedback) in order to control and reduce chronic, frequent migraine headache pain. I became so adept at it that I experienced fewer and fewer headaches, and my doctor prescribed less medication. This success prompted me to study hypnotism and hypnotherapy as profession.

The second factor was having studied a discipline related to hypnotherapy and hypnosis called NLP*. I took a couple communications and success seminars based on using NLP techniques and methods. NLP was created based on studying the communication of successful people, such as exceptional therapists and other professional communicators, and teaching other people how to do the same things to achieve similar results. The techniques were eventually generalized so they could be used in every field that requires human interaction. My further study of NLP and hypnotherapy have complimented each other, and all my hypnotherapy training included NLP training.

The third inspiration was a wonderful experience as a camp counselor for children with

developmental disabilities at a church camp. While the details make for another story in itself, I discovered in myself an extraordinary capability and capacity for caring and helping people that impressed and surprised both me and my supervisors.

*NLP is short for neuro-linguistic psychology or neuro-linguistic programming depending on who you ask. It's a little harder to define than hypnosis as it is a newer and diverse field, but "neuro" refers to neurology or nerves, "linguistic" refers to how words and non-verbal communication affect our neurology, while "programming" refers to the thinking processes that "run" on the "hardware" of our brains and neurological system.

Michael Glowacki, CH
Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist

Updated contact info 8/15/06:

<http://CapitalHypnosis.com>

mglowacki@mac.com

© 2005 ServAsk™, LLC. All rights reserved.

<http://www.ServAsk.com>