

Assembling the Parts of a Bicycle
Do-it-yourself Hypnosis
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A century ago, doctors and other practitioners mistakenly believed that hypnosis (then called Mesmerism from its founder, Dr. Mesmer) was external---influenced by someone or something outside the self. Misconceptions linger and perpetrate misunderstandings. Some people still are fearful because they believe that they are yielding control to another person. Such fear becomes a stumbling block to growth and fulfillment.

Hypnosis, a self-induced altered state of consciousness, is 100% safe and natural. It is a level of mind which most people attain quite easily. The focus of attention is experienced, unintentionally, by almost everybody. With time and practice, almost anybody can learn to use it, with intent, to improve any general area of daily life.

Hypnotists occasionally hear such comments as, "I tried hypnosis once but it didn't work" and "Hypnosis doesn't work for me." Some people, a little more ready to accept it add, "What can I do differently?" Although many people wonder whether they can be hypnotized either by self or by another person, most people experience hypnosis without realizing it.

At first, for some people, do-it-yourself hypnosis is difficult. Learning self-hypnosis/hypnosis without assistance is similar to assembling the parts of a bicycle while trying to follow the printed instructions. Perhaps you have struggled with such a task and you are aware of how challenging it can be. Some people assemble a bicycle easily; others assemble it while reading, re-reading, and analyzing the instructions; others struggle awhile and then hand over the task to a teenager who, most likely, will do it easily; and another group of people will look at the multiple parts, recognize the complications and ramifications, and seek the help of a professional person.

Similar to learning self-hypnosis: some people get written materials and try to follow any outlined method. Some of those people follow a good technique well; others follow it poorly and then wonder why it is not working for them; others decide to have a personal session with a professional hypnotist; and others recognize the need to take a professional course.

Why is do-it-yourself hypnosis difficult for you? Here are some questions for you to consider.

1. Have you determined your preferred learning style?

Each person responds and learns in a unique way. Although groups of people might have much in common, each person is a little different from everyone else. In general, there are three major types of learners: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In addition, there are various combinations of all three.

If you have strong visual skills, then, you tend to learn best by seeing. You can look at the diagram and visualize how the parts of the bicycle fit together. In self-hypnosis, creative visualization (imagination) is one of the primary building blocks in making changes in life. If you are a visual learner, then, you tend to imagine something before you begin to create it in the physical world; it is in your mind before it becomes a physical reality. When you imagine yourself as doing poorly, you do poorly; when you imagine yourself, realistically, as doing well, you do well. Constructive imagination is used extensively in hypnosis because it makes a powerful contribution to success. If you are a visual learner, you, probably, use such words as: imagine, look, see, visualize, and other words related to visual skills.

If you are an auditory learner, then, you tend to learn best by listening to information. You respond to the spoken word. You probably like music and you hear songs reverberating in your mind. Auditory learners do well in making their own cassette tapes or CDs for self-hypnosis sessions. Auditory learners, often, can repeat entire conversations and they can be wonderful storytellers.

If you are a kinesthetic learner, then, you tend to learn best by doing---by taking a physically (as well as a mentally) active role in learning. Perhaps some people have shown you pictures or have given you demonstrations and others have explained information to you; however, you learned much better when you started practicing the new learning immediately. You will do very well with self-hypnosis when you practice it. The emotion involved in the motion increases the learning. Kinesthetic learners often report movement or subtle vibrations in their bodies while they are experiencing self-hypnosis. From the beginning of time, people have been learning by practicing behavior which they observe in others. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, however, that John Dewey, through his philosophy of pragmatism, brought learning-by-doing to our attention.

Become aware of how you learn and then adapt your efforts to match your uniqueness. By adapting your self-hypnosis sessions to your learning mode(s), you will find that you are becoming more productive. Even though you might be visual or auditory to a strong degree, some kinesthetic practice tends to improve your ability in any learning.

2. Are your expectations realistic?

Perhaps you are not quite sure about the process of the trance state. Some people have unwarranted expectations and misconceptions.

a. If you are a beginner, then, you might need to know how self-hypnosis (and hypnosis) works. Self-hypnosis requires you to give yourself permission to make the changes which you want. Self-hypnosis is not imposed from the outside (as in the administration of medication, for example), it is a skill which you develop from within yourself. Perhaps you assume that hypnosis is imposed by a hypnotist. No so. Many years ago, Dr. Milton H. Erickson showed that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. At the unconscious level of your mind, even though not consciously, you must give consent; otherwise, it does not happen. Similar to eating food, it is something that you do; nobody can do it for you. Another person can set a comfortable environment but you have to do the work yourself.

In the early years of formal hypnosis, there was strong use of mystery and control. During the vaudeville era, there was an appearance of strong control by the hypnotist. Even then, the volunteers had to agree to become hypnotized and to be a part of the show. Nowadays, there is increased knowledge and understanding regarding how one enters an altered state of consciousness. Hypnosis has become demystified. In essence, in order to enter a state of hypnosis/self-hypnosis, the responsibility rests with you. You have to want it to the extent that you will do the work yourself and not look to someone or something external to do it for you. Another person (even through a tape or a CD) can set a comfortable atmosphere but you have to do the work. Remember: nobody else can do it for you; you do it yourself.

b. Perhaps you expect to be out-of-touch with your senses. Actually, the senses are more acute when you are in an altered state of consciousness (hypnosis) than when you are in the beta (usually called waking) state. Your focus on your presenting issue (goal) is so strong that, although you hear, smell, touch, and/or see everything in your immediate environment, you remain on task. Even a short while ago---and, perhaps, remnants still exist---people who reported hearing such sounds as traffic noises and the ringing of the telephones from nearby rooms believed that, because they were able to hear those sounds, they were not hypnotized.

c. Perhaps, because of your familiarity with stage hypnosis, you expect to be asleep. Not so. Working on an issue in a session requires relaxed energy. The term hypnosis is derived from the Greek *hypnos* which means sleep. In the mid nineteenth century in Great Britain, James Braid, an eye doctor, discovered that he could induce a sleep-like condition which he termed hypnosis. Over the many years, there has been a gradual shift from magnetism (Dr. Mesmer), to sleep (Dr. Braid), to suggestion, to altered states of perception/consciousness or extended consciousness.

3. Do you get adequate rest before you begin the session?

In most instances, you will not feel sleepy or tired unless you grace the stage of a hypnotist who makes that suggestion. In general, you are likely to feel relaxed and to be ready to move into the deeper areas of perception--to go to the inner mind. A feeling of tiredness is one of the most common detriments to relaxing with self-hypnosis and it is one of the easiest to correct. If you schedule a session to begin at the end of a workday, perhaps you will feel tired and you would rather sleep. If so, then, sleep; do your hypnosis work later. Get plenty of sleep before beginning the hypnosis session and you will be successful. In the past, hypnosis has been associated inaccurately with sleep and tiredness. In reality, the senses are alert and the mind is aware. Schedule your hypnosis sessions when you are at your most alert time of the day.

4. Have you learned to experience first and to analyze later?

Perhaps you believe that you have to analyze and to interpret each detail as it happens. Although it is possible to work in that way (alternating in and out of hypnosis), most people tend to get better results when they gather the experience(s) first and leave the analysis until after the trance (inner work) part of the session.]First, gather the parts which have to be assembled. Even after gathering all of the parts, you still might need help with analyzing how they fit into a unified whole.

When you are immersed in the inner journey, you are using, primarily, the right hemisphere of your brain. When you are analyzing, you are using, mostly, the left hemisphere. The shift to the left hemisphere for analysis brings a break in creativity and memory, a break in the session. If you focus on questions and doubts, then, you might get stuck at the first portal and you might prevent yourself from entering into your inner realms and gaining a deeper experience.

At first, self-hypnosis might seem difficult to learn because you are trying to do two things at the same time. Asking yourself, "Am I hypnotized yet?" is similar to the comical question, "Are we there yet?" As long as the mind is focused upon analysis, you are neglecting the creativity and the accomplishment. Learn to appreciate the creativity and to wait until the next part of the session to examine the mileposts. Hypnosis is an inner journey--a journey within; experience the journey wholeheartedly. When you look for markers along the path, you tend to slow your progress because you are stopping to evaluate your gain. In most areas of life, periodic evaluations are mandatory. In the hypnosis session, the periodic evaluation comes at the end of the inner work and is processed at the conscious level for conscious awareness.

In the relaxed/trance state, although the analytical part of the mind is passive, the creative part is very active. Most people report that, in hypnosis, the mind is clearer and more aware than during everyday levels of activity. While joyfully experiencing the journey, the mind reaches higher levels of creativity and wisdom. Enjoy the experiences and study them later.

5. Are you aware that the process of hypnosis is safe and beneficial?

Some people have fears which hinder progress in establishing rapport in a session. You must have good rapport with the hypnotist and you must be at ease with the concept of hypnosis. Fear can sabotage good intentions. One of the main fears is that of loss of control. In general, most hypnotists will

assure you that it is the client who is in control---all the way. The hypnotist is a guide, a facilitator, who sets a comfortable atmosphere for the work. In modern hypnosis, the client is given choices and has input into procedure. The "Now I want you to..." days have gone.

Another fear, from the past, is the fear of remaining hypnotized for an indeterminate length of time after the session with the hypnotist has been completed. In order for hypnosis to continue, it has to be deepened and reinforced. There must be trance maintenance; otherwise, either you will go into a natural sleep, if you are tired, and you will awaken refreshed or you will return to the beta state immediately.

A third fear is related to ego-dystonic people who fear that hidden feelings might surface and would be discussed. Those people are unprepared to work with buried thoughts and feelings; they would rather not know whether negative contents exist in the subconscious mind. Hypnosis is not a truth serum; it does not compel people to reveal their secrets. In hypnosis, you have a choice regarding the information you reveal verbally. Your professional hypnotist will reassure you that, at all times, you control that which you want to discuss. Some hypnotists facilitate a silent regression in which the experiencing and the processing happen inwardly. Hypnosis is a relaxed state of being. It is 100% natural and beneficial. Much good work can be accomplished. So let go and let it happen.

Hypnosis, which, in therapeutic situations, always is self-hypnosis, is recognized as one of the modern miracles. New applications are being developed and researched constantly. Classes and courses are being taught throughout the world., Hypnosis allows you to increase the use of your mind's potential. It can help you to improve every area of human development, especially in expanding your awareness of new dimensions of genius and creativity. Although, over the years, it has been used, mainly, reactively for habit control, stress management, etc., its use has become extended to encourage creative development and spiritual healing with a focus upon building a better life and a better future for all. Hypnosis is evolving as the premier profession dedicated to holistic healing---healing the whole person. Self-hypnosis or altered states of consciousness or extended consciousness can help you to heal your life at all levels---spiritual, emotional, mental, social, physical, and even financial. It can be used to help you to work with virtually any project. Hypnosis makes the work of self improvement creative and enjoyable.

When you use extended consciousness wisely, you can expand your awareness of your capabilities, your stored potential. The human mind always will have a new frontier because the horizon recedes as we approach it---humanity constantly extends its vision. Knowledgeable, trained, experienced hypnotists can show you how they have learned to make better use of the mind but you cannot buy it from them; you have to develop it for yourself... and after you have assembled the bicycle properly, you will have a free, easy, and enthusiastic ride with perfect balance and a joy for living.

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