

### **What Is Hypnosis?**

Hypnosis is a self-induced, alerted state of consciousness created through intense, focused relaxation. This altered state accesses the unconscious mind. Everyone experiences this self-induced state every day whenever they become lost in thought or daydream and find themselves temporarily oblivious to the world around them. This natural hypnotic state is absolutely necessary for the body and is used regularly to download and upload data to and from the unconscious mind. It is a highly creative, healing state.

### **What Is Hypnotherapy?**

Hypnotherapy is the art of helping an individual to harnesses the power of the altered state of consciousness known as hypnosis to help them accomplish a goal. Which is another way of saying that hypnotherapy uses hypnosis to align a person with the wisdom of their higher mind and with the vast learnings, of their unconscious mind to creatively approach the problems of living.

### **What Are The Principles of Hypnotherapy?**

Hypnotherapy is based on the principle that the unconscious and higher minds hold the key to change and healing. It holds that we participate in the healing of mind, body and spirit first by believing that it will occur; Second, by expecting that it will occur; And, third, by letting go and allowing it to occur automatically without our interference. It is rooted in this mind/body approach to health and wholeness and holds that we can harness the power of the unconscious and higher minds through the practice of positive intention; positive imagery; and focused relaxation.

### **The Three Minds**

In practicing the art of hypnotherapy it is common to presuppose the existence of three minds: the **conscious mind**, the **unconscious mind** and the **higher mind**. The therapeutic goal in hypnotherapy is for an individual to experience alignment of purpose of all three minds. When this occurs the "flow" and ease of life increases and happiness and fulfillment occur without effort no matter what the circumstances.

### **The Role Of The Conscious Mind**

The very nature of consciousness is to be separate and have a special identity. Therefore one can say that the first function of the conscious mind is to separate or differentiate. The conscious mind fulfills this function to *separate* through the faculty of perception or the five senses.

Since the function of the conscious mind is to *separate* the level of thinking it uses follows suit. In this regard its level of thinking is to separate or take things apart and analyze them. It likes to sort, pigeonhole, and judge everything it perceives. To classify information it compares past ideas to new ideas, eliminates what doesn't fit in and draws conclusions in a step-by-step logical pattern. It uses language-oriented, linear approaches to evaluate data and set up problems. Its convergent, exacting approach is always seeking to answer the question *why?* To sustain its separateness it competes, makes comparisons and seeks to control, dominate and prove that its conclusions are right.

Since the conscious mind's scope of awareness is oriented solely to the present moment it's thinking capacity is limited. In fact, people who study such things tell us that the conscious mind can handle no more than seven, plus or minus two chunks

of information at once. Anything more than that puts it into overload. This explains why we feel flustered and impotent when we attempt to juggle too many things at once.

We use this level of thinking to establish goals and choose the problems we want to solve. It is important to realize that these problems always involve *filling a lack, warding off a danger, or managing a sense of unworthiness.*

### **The Role Of The Unconscious Mind**

Instead of seeking to differentiate or separate the unconscious mind seeks to synthesize or bring together what the conscious mind took apart. Thus, in the positive sense, it is the seat of creativity and of all healing. Instead of being analytical and logical it is ingenious and imaginative. It's thinking goes outside the realm of what *is* and into the realm of what *could be*. Unlike the conscious mind's level of thinking that is always asking *why* the unconscious mind asks *what if*. It uses non-verbal, intuitive, holistic processes such as imagination, dreaming and the mind's eye to solve problems. It works spontaneously and effortlessly to expedite and carry out the directives received from the conscious mind regarding the goals it wants fulfilled or the problems it wants resolved.

Since the unconscious mind has access to information beyond the present moment its scope of awareness surpasses that of the conscious mind. It can process an unlimited amount of information simultaneously without ever going into overload. Even right now as you consciously decide to read this information it is your unconscious mind that actually does the reading as it processes thousands of other pieces of information at the same time. For example, it is hearing all the noises around you as you read and interpreting them based on the past data it has stored. Its feeling, smelling, and seeing information and interpreting whatever it perceives. It's blinking your eyes, digesting your food, breathing you, etc. etc. all at the same time. The scope and capacity of the unconscious mind is vast and unlimited.

Because of its unlimited capacity you can think of it as the storehouse for everything you've learned and the repository for all your beliefs about your identity, the world around, and what you think is possible. Until it's instructed otherwise its automatic responses remain true to its past habits of beliefs and thinking. Whether these past habits and beliefs are limiting or not it keeps running them until instructed otherwise.

The unforced, organic style of the thinking of the unconscious mind functions to solve the problems set up by the conscious mind or to carry out its directives. It favors directives that are vivid, clear, specific, often repeated, delivered with strong emotion and positively expressed. In this regard one can understand how fear, anger, guilt and other oft repeated negative emotions can hold sway over us unconsciously. The unconscious mind is also attracted to directives that speak in its imaginative, holistic style such as stories, pictures, melodies and rhythmic patterns. This explains why its so much easier for us to learn the alphabet when it is attached to a melody, or why we remember pictures and stories more than we remember the analytical data perused by our conscious mind.

The unconscious mind is also very simple and direct. It cannot follow negative instructions such as *do not do this* or *I don't want that* because negativity exists only in the realm of language. To give it negative instructions such as *don't eat fat* is to force it to picture eating fat.

Because its thinking does not require conscious awareness and because it can handle a million things at once you can think of it as being in charge of all automatic habits of mind and body. Everything such as metabolizing food, circulating the blood, breathing, healing, etc. or anything first learned at the conscious level and then turned over to it such as walking, talking, seeing, hearing, driving a car, riding a bicycle, playing the piano, dancing or throwing a ball. These are all habits effortlessly run by the unconscious. In all endeavors the unconscious mind takes its *direction* from the conscious mind but it takes its *guidance* from the higher mind.

### **The Role Of The Higher Mind**

The first function of the higher mind is to guide the conscious mind back to wholeness. Like the unconscious mind, the higher mind doesn't analyze or judge. It seeks to harmonize and bring things together in perfect order. Its scope of awareness is infinite. Because its awareness is infinite it has the highest and fullest perspective of life. You can think of the higher mind as the part of you that functions to lift you above the battleground of your problems into a realm where they no longer affect you. In fact the higher mind does not even see problems. It sees only opportunity. This is why, to the higher mind everything is as it should be. It accepts all. It flourishes on and offers joy, peace, and unconditional love.

Consider the nature of the higher mind as being unobtrusive and subtle. It never forces itself nor interferes with the conscious mind's free will. It communicates to us through the unconscious mind such as through dreams, intuitions and bodily sensations. Its communication is often described as *the still small voice within* that we sense or hear when the conscious mind is uncluttered and the body is at rest. It's the part of us that knows the truth and contains the miraculous power to transcend all problems.

When all is said and done, both the conscious and unconscious minds must have access to the higher mind in order to solve problems. The higher mind rises above the awareness and levels of thinking of both the conscious and unconscious minds. When we are disconnected from our higher mind we are unplugged from our miraculous power and our true eternal Selves. This causes us to remain prisoners of the constant analyzing and judging of the conscious mind and victims of our unconscious habits. When this occurs we feel *stuck* inside our problems.

### **The Role Of The Clinical Hypnotherapist**

The clinical hypnotherapist creates an environment in which the client can experience a state of focused, relaxation (hypnosis) where they can create and send a detailed, vivid, emotionally appealing therapeutic image regarding what they want to accomplish to their unconscious and higher mind to carry.

This type of imagery uses the very same imaginative processes the client used to hypnotize themselves into their problem to now hypnotize themselves out of it. Imagination, therefore, is the engine of creativity for changing behavior, not the will. Which is another way of saying, the visible comes out of the invisible not the other way around. The hypnotherapist's role is to create an environment of trust that harnesses the power of the imagination.

### **The Role Of The Client**

Faith is the primary ingredient of any and all healing. For hypnotherapy to be of benefit the client must have faith in the process and expect it to have a positive result. As is the case with all therapeutic relationships healing the person receiving the treatment must feel safe and have complete trust in the therapist. This means that they must have a high regard for the integrity and expertise of the therapist and a deep belief that the therapist is genuinely interested in their well-being. When these conditions occur, the client will be able to relax and let go enough to experience hypnosis.