



Beating the barriers to making life changes

We often know that we want to change something in our life and may even have attempted to do so, but sometimes those wanted changes are so difficult to achieve. It is not logic we should use to make a life change but the emotional power of the unconscious mind.

Before attempting to make specific changes in your life with hypnosis it would be most useful to talk about how that subconscious (sometimes termed unconscious) part of mind may be directly addressed.

As children, (typically up to the age of 7 years or so) we took on ideas from our parents and other trusted adults. We were told that sky was blue, that grass was green and that Policemen could be trusted. We were told that fire was hot and snow was cold and we took those ideas on as literal truth.

As we got older, we began to test some of those ideas, we checked with friends about the colour of the sky and they seemed to agree it was blue. We checked to see if the fire really was hot and got burned in the process. In these ways we had a model of the world confirmed and constructed.

Some of those beliefs were absolutely correct, we tested the ideas and had them confirmed by outside sources. So we went on to uncritically accept everything our parents told us until the point where we developed what many call the, Conscious Critical Faculty (CCF).

The CCF

The CCF (Conscious Critical Faculty) is a kind of mental filter system that only allows in new ideas that fit with our now, well defined world model, typically the CCF is well formed by the time a person reaches about seven years of age.

You might like to think of it as being like a child's shape sorter with square, round and triangular holes. A new idea will only be accepted if you happen to have the right idea shaped hole in the CCF.

But what if not everything our parents told us was absolutely correct? What if, you took on an idea whilst at that uncritical age, that was just plain wrong?

What might some of those ideas be?

- That spiders can hurt you
- That snakes are in some way evil

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- That Policemen are to be feared
- That sex is dirty
- That men / woman are not to be trusted
- And potentially many, many more ideas

Later in life we may find that we have an apparently irrational fear of spiders, a phobia. We know at a conscious level that in most countries, spiders simply cannot hurt us and that any fear is completely irrational, but we can still be frozen with fear when seeing even the smallest eight legged creature.

Trying to change this irrational belief at a conscious level is almost always doomed to fail. The belief is held behind that 'screen' of the CCF and conscious attempts to change the belief will be blocked out

How do we get past the Conscious Critical Faculty?

There are a number of ways that new information can be pushed past the CCF.

They include:

- Repetition
- Shock
- High emotion
- Hypnosis (in the broadest sense)

Repetition

Most of us are familiar with the repetition as a means of taking on new ideas. Very likely you experienced this during your school years, learning your times tables or facts by rote, parrot fashion. That knowledge is likely to still be with you today, no matter what your age.

Affirmations use the power of repetition in a powerful constructive way.

Shock

It struck me a long time ago that the kind of un-questioning acceptance of suggestion following a shock that one experiences in, for example, a traffic accident is very similar to the hypnotic state.

I had an opportunity to check this again a few years ago when I had not one but two serving police officers attend a training course that I was giving. They were learning to become hypnotherapists and I put this 'shock' idea to them. Both agreed, that having seen both the hypnotic state and the real life shock following a trauma, they were similar in that the person involved was generally willing to accept simple direct suggestions without questions.

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In a practical sense it is useful to think about this when you find a person who has recently suffered a trauma. Their mind will tend to operate on a very literal level and that person will be accepting of direct suggestion. If that suggestion is “oh that looks really bad, I expect that hurts doesn't it?” then of course they will immediately become extremely aware of the pain!

High Emotion

When we are in a state of high emotion, the cortex, the outer reasoning part of mind almost goes into a ‘shut-down’. If you have ever had the experience of being in an extreme rage or tried to reason with someone else in a rage, you will know that the capability to have reasonable conversation is just about zero. When we are in a state of high emotion, the barrier that is the CCF is pushed aside, so that ideas we normally filter out before saying them, are un-interrupted and ideas can also be accepted without that same conscious intervention.

Hypnosis

The hypnotic state can happen through a variety of means including watching television and film or listening to music. That chilled out feeling of only paying attention to one thing and going with plot line is just another form of hypnosis.

The hypnotic response may be induced by reading a book or by listening to a therapist. By extension, listening to a therapist might mean listening to a recording by a therapist or even listening to a recording of your own voice; acting as your own therapist.

One of the most powerful ways to induce hypnosis is through the use of television. The ability of television to induce a hypnotic state helps to explain how effective on-screen advertising can be. Most people are completely unaware of just how much this affects their own life.

We can all use the power of hypnosis

As we can see there are many ways to bypass the Conscious Critical Faculty and install new life enhancing ideas, not all of them being traditional hypnosis. It is useful to recognise that all of us have been in a hypnotic state before although we may not have recognised it as such.

I hope you can begin to recognise that hypnosis is a naturally occurring state that we can use for our benefit

John C Burns is a personal change specialist who uses hypnosis and other techniques to help clients break through old limiting barriers to progress. He also runs the personal development web site <http://www.gift4life.com> from where you can get a free hypnosis MP3 download.

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