Welcome to Week 2

Does Hypnotherapy Work?

Often clients will ask; “Does Hypnotherapy Work”?

For many the proof is in how much better they feel, even after one session. Often they are amazed at the change.

I know that from my own clients. Nearly all leave my therapy room feeling more relaxed, more energised and more focused. Often they will have an insight into problem issues which they face and will be finding ways through those problems.

**What the professor of medicine says**

But some people are a bit more sceptical and like to see hard evidence. Well, the good news is that there is a lot out there and new evidence coming out all the time.

Here is one expert, a professor of medicine at the prestigious American seat of learning, Stanford University.

He is Professor David Spiegel, a long-standing champion of hypnosis as a serious technique to help in many, many clinical and medical conditions. Professor Spiegel has recently won a prestigious award for his research into stress and health.

**Collecting the evidence**

In an interview with *The Stanford Daily,* Professor Spiegel explained that he had stood his ground in the face of scepticism about hypnosis, saying: “There are people who think hypnosis is just a bunch of mumbo-jumbo, and it isn’t. It’s the oldest western conception of psychotherapy. My main way of dealing with it is knowing that to advance medical care you need facts, not opinions. My way of standing up to it is to do the research, publish it in mainstream journals and let people read the work and decide if we have enough evidence to support our claims.”

**A bright future: managing stressors**

Professor Spiegel thinks there is a bright future for hypnosis. He said:

“I would like to see people use it as a regular technique to help them focus better, think better and manage stressors better. I use it as a therapeutic tool, but a lot of what I teach patients virtually anybody can learn. I would love to see it used as a teaching and learning technique that most people know how to do. I think there’s a lot we learn from helping people manage pain and anxiety and focus their attention. I’d like to see it not as just some weird historical footnote but as a standard technique.”

I love Professor Spiegel’s emphasis on ‘anyone can learn’. That is just what I say to my clients. “You will not be here one hour longer than you need to be and I will do everything I can to help you look after yourself,” is my mantra.

And Professor Spiegel is right, it is quite easy! So come along and try if for yourself.

You can read more from Professor Spiegel’s interview at http://www.stanforddaily.com/2014/04/27/professor-of-medicine-spiegel-talks-about-medical-hypnosis-receiving-the-joan-and-stanford-alexander-award/



Visualisation to help anxiety

Lately, I have been talking about helping yourself. So you might like to get a friend to read this to you and notice how much more relaxed you feel afterwards. You can even read it yourself and record it on your phone. Just make the pictures and feelings as real as you can and enjoy it.

“You are walking slowly up the small hill near to your holiday home. You remember all the wonderful peaceful feelings which you have every time you come to this lovely place you recall how happy and contented you feel when you are here. Breathe in the fresh crisp air and enjoy the gentle warm breeze as it blows across your face.

Slowly you stroll on…you feel your muscles gently stretching and you breathe in the fresh crisp air. To your right you can see a green meadow… in the meadow daisies gently blow in the wind and the grass moves as the wind moves across the meadow. . .you can smell their scent and feel the breeze on your face. You turn right and stroll into the meadow feeling the soft grass brushing against your legs. You walk on feeling a gentle warmth from the sun on your face. Your whole body feels relaxed and you breathe in the crisp fresh air …taking deep breaths of the cool cleansing air.

You feel so relaxed, so at peace with your surroundings that you may want to sit down to enjoy the wonderful surroundings. Just ahead of you there is a soft blanket with a jug of cooling water beside it. You sit down on the blanket and enjoy its softness; you take a drink of the cool water. You look around and take in the green meadow, the daisies swaying in the breeze, you look up and the blue sky with small white fluffy clouds moving gently across the sky.

As you sit relaxing, your problems seem a long distance away - you realise that you can control your anxiety and your stress…you realise that you are in control of your problems.

As you sit on your blanket you look up at the sky…look at the horizon beyond the meadow. There you see a black cloud moving across the sky…it is coming towards you moving on the breeze…. As you watch the cloud…moving towards you…you realise that this cloud represents your anxiety, your fear of failing. You watch the cloud and inside it you see all your problems, bundled up inside the cloud…all together in one place.

As this cloud approaches you can see all the bad feelings the anxieties and the fears wrapped up in the cloud….

You now know you are strong enough to make the cloud turn away in another direction. You sit on your blanket feeling strong and positive. Focus on the cloud and force it to turn – as you concentrate on your positive feelings, your new found strength and confidence, the breeze around you begins to blow a little harder. It is moving towards the cloud and taking the cloud away. You continue to enjoy your positive feelings. You continue to focus on the cloud and the breeze blows a little harder…to move the cloud away…across the horizon.

Slowly the cloud moves towards the horizon – you can still see your anxiety and your fears in the cloud but they are becoming more distant…further and further away. As you watch the cloud moves higher and further away and the sun shines more brightly – the cloud begins to disperse – disappearing and leaving the sky a gentle clear blue.

You sit on your blanket and take a sip of the clear cooling water. You realise that you can control your anxieties and have nothing to fear.

Sit quietly and enjoy this feeling of peace and strength.

Soon we will be leaving this place but before we do I want you to take another sip of your special cooling confidence giving water. I want you to enjoy once more the feelings of security and confidence you have gained from knowing that you can disperse the anxiety cloud any time it threatens you.

From now on any time you feel anxiety you will remember this place – you will then take your anxiety and send it up to the black cloud. You will then focus on the cloud and call up a breeze to take the cloud over the horizon – removing your anxieties with it.