

The Hypnosis Question and Answer Series

Can I be hypnotized against my will?

The short answer is no, but you might want to know more about how this all works than just no. You see all sorts of things in the movies and on television so don't blame yourself if you thought a hypnotist could take over your will and command you. The truth is that the hypnotist doesn't hypnotize you at all. The hypnotist is a like a coach telling you what to do so you can hypnotize yourself. If you don't do it then it doesn't get done.

Suppose a hypnotist tells you to lay back in your chair and take a deep breath and instead you stand up and jump on one foot. How much mysterious power does the hypnotist have over you so far? The exact amount would be zero. The hypnotist in a certain way guides you and trains you to enter your own hypnotic state. The state isn't the hypnotist's state, it is yours. You are in control of all of this. That is why it is called hypnotic suggestions, not hypnotic commands or orders. One of the most common problems a hypnotist has when trying to help someone is they reject the hypnotic suggestion, even when in hypnosis. Wouldn't this be easy if I could just flip a switch and you would obey my commands? If you could do that hypnotists would already rule the world and you wouldn't be reading this, I am telling you it doesn't happen. You have to work with the hypnotist. I hope I didn't ruin the movie for you.

Thinking you could be guided and trained into the state of hypnosis against your will is a little like thinking you could be taught how to play chess against your will. Hypnosis is more natural and not as hard as playing chess, but both require conscious concentration and a little focus to learn. It is a lot like learning to hit a baseball. We have coaches for that too.

I know there are stories in the news where people were supposedly hypnotized and robbed a bank or store, but what you don't see is later they were found to have some of the money and were found to be accomplices to the supposed hypnotists. That part usually doesn't make the front page. Most of these stories don't have a hypnotist at all. The whole story is usually a weak legal defense and it doesn't hold up in court. No prosecuting attorney would let "the hypnotist made me do it" defense make it to the jury.

"Come on now Mr. Hypnotist, tell me the truth, can people really influence you and make you change your mind and act against your will?" Yes, if you are married you know that too, but it isn't hypnosis.

Unless they are also medical doctors hypnotist do not diagnosis or treat illnesses, but they may work at the direction of a medical doctor as an adjunct or supplement to treatment at the direction of the doctor.

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