

The Hypnosis Question and Answer Series

What is Hypnosis?

What is hypnosis? The word hypnosis has become a catch-all for a lot of different things. Television, movies and even the news media call all sorts of things hypnosis. This causes a lot of confusion. When you stop to think about it, a person on a stage in Las Vegas clucking like a chicken, a performer laying on a bed of nails in a circus and teenagers in a movie with an ouija board don't have much in common with a person trying to kick the smoking habit or even each other, but at times it is all called hypnosis.

Fortunately, years ago the government came up with a definition for both hypnosis and hypnotherapist and since they worked with the leading authorities in the field at the time they did a better job than the government sometimes does. If we use those definitions it will clear up a lot of confusion.

Hypnosis defined by the United States government is:

The bypass of the critical factor of the conscious mind and the establishment of acceptable selective thinking.

The U.S. (Department of Labor) Directory of Occupational Titles (D.O.T. 079.157.010) supplies the following definition for hypnotherapist:

"Hypnotherapist – Induces hypnotic state in client to increase motivation or alter behavior pattern through hypnosis. Consults with client to determine the nature of problem. Prepares client to enter hypnotic states by explaining how hypnosis works and what client will experience. Tests subject to determine degrees of physical and emotional suggestibility. Induces hypnotic state in client using individualized methods and techniques of hypnosis based on interpretation of test results and analysis of client's problem. May train client in self-hypnosis conditioning."

So what does this all mean? Hypnosis is a way for you to get around any mental blocks you have when trying to change your life and your behavior so you can selectively change your thinking from habitual thinking and action to more desirable thinking and action. You may decide you don't want to eat yourself into a heart attack or smoke yourself into lung cancer, but you may have a problem with your old habitual thinking and habitual action. Hypnosis simply is a way to establish a new way of thinking and acting while increasing motivation. No chickens or clucking required.

You can offer people an expensive dinner in Las Vegas to come up on stage and you can make it a competition to see who can act the most outrageous to win prizes. You can make a special bed of nails that spreads your weight over so many dull nails that none of them press hard enough to puncture your skin in a circus show. You can also get a group of teenagers together on a dark night and they can scare themselves, especially in a movie, but none of this is really what the government defines as hypnosis or hypnotherapy.

Hypnosis is a tool you can use to help you make the changes in your life that you want to make and make those change more quickly than many other methods. It is a way to increase and maintain motivation to reach a goal. Not as entertaining as in the movies, but a very helpful method to achieve your goals and make positive changes in your life.

Hypnotists unless also medical doctors do not diagnosis or treat illnesses, but may work under the direction of a medical doctor as an adjunct or supplement to treatment at the doctor's direction.

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