Clinical Exchange: A Forum for Members to Ask Questions of Clinical Relevance

“What is mutual hypnosis and its benefits or risks?”

Mutual hypnosis is a technique I developed in the 1960s to explore some of the phenomena of deep hypnosis. I was inspired by some of Milton Erickson's early work. In its original form, mutual hypnosis involved selecting two people who were both good hypnotic subjects and were trained as hypnotists. I had several sessions with each of the participants separately, hypnotizing them, assessing susceptibility, and teaching a self-report depth scale procedure, the Extended North Carolina Scale (Tart, 1972). These sessions also served to establish rapport with me as hypnotist, and included suggestions that they would always be in rapport with me in future hypnosis sessions, even if someone else induced the hypnosis. This is an important safety procedure.

Finally, the two participants worked together. I had A hypnotize B until self-reports indicated a moderate trance depth had been reached. Then B, while hypnotized, hypnotized A, who then deepened B's state, who then deepened A's state, etc. The imagery of the induction suggestions used by the participants spontaneously led to vivid inner "journeys" which were highly synchronized because of their verbal interactions with and suggestions to each other while in hypnosis.

Several sessions in this mutual hypnosis mode produced far greater trance depths than either had experienced in individual sessions with me, and also produced phenomena of a psychedelic-like quality. The mutual hypnosis also markedly altered the participants' ordinary social relationship, leading to feelings of great intimacy as a result of sharing profound and unusual inner experiences. They felt that their experiences were not "just" subjective but touched some deeper reality. This apparent "reality" of what was supposed to be only "subjective" was disturbing to one of the participants. The unexpected intimacy was also disturbing to significant others in the participants' lives. More details are available in the original report (Tart, 1967) or in the more conveniently available monograph, Altered States of Consciousness: Research and Application (Tart, 1972).
to your home or office; or, you may purchase them, whatever means of ticketing you choose, the special ASCH registration is made through your special United 800 availability. Fares are guaranteed at time of ticket purchase.

I Congress on Hypnosis and Medicine to, Canada 1985

The organizers of the 10th Congress have informed us that they have 600 plus registrants as of this writing and look toward many more. You will want to join your colleagues for this outstanding international event.

The scientific program will be available in April, tours of the city are arranged and all registrants will be receiving information soon.

The ASCH will be sponsoring a Membership Luncheon on Wednesday, August 14, and the 10th Congress Registrar will be selling tickets for that function. Members are encouraged to attend, non-members are welcomed.

Finally, remember the U.S. Dollar is enjoying an excellent rate of exchange, so Americans can take advantage of the fine shopping in the city, as well as cost of hotels at Canadian prices.

Register now!

Announcement

The American Board of Medical Hypnosis wishes to announce its new slate of officers serving a two-year term. President, Charles B. Mutter, M.D.; Vice President, Edward O. Hunt, M.D.; and Secretary-Treasurer, Thurman Mott, Jr., M.D. The American Board of Medical Hypnosis will be conducting examinations for certification for physicians in Toronto, Canada, at the ISH meeting August 10-14, 1985. Applications should be submitted three months prior to examination. Any request for information should be sent to Thurman Mott, Jr., M.D., Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

Seattle Revisited

We will be returning to Seattle, Washington for our 28th Annual Workshops and Scientific Program. The Westin Hotel will again be our host. You may remember it as the Washington Plaza Hotel.

We are looking forward to outstanding Workshops co-chaired by Daniel Kohen, M.D., and Carol Herbert, M.D., and a fine new Scientific Program co-chaired by Roger Klauer, M.D., and Candace Erickson, M.D.

Abstracts are being accepted now for decision and assignment as well as probable publication in either the American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis or a special collection of abstracts from the 28th Annual Scientific Program. You may obtain an abstract form and instructions by contacting the National Office.

It is not too early to consider air reservations to take advantage of special air fares. Please look for the information on air fares in this issue.

28th Annual Meeting of ASCH:
Sunday, March 16, 1986 - 8:00 P.M.
Registration begins

Monday-Wednesday
March 17-19, 1986
Annual Workshops

Thursday-Saturday
March 20-22, 1986
Annual Scientific Program

Friday, March 21, 1986
Annual Awards Banquet

Mutual hypnosis is not a well-understood clinical technique, so I can only recommend it in an investigative context with skilled therapeutic backup available to work with possible untoward consequences. I can see it leading to powerful, shared delusions, as well as personal growth, if not used properly. When we have considerably more understanding of it, mutual hypnosis will be a powerful therapeutic and growth tool.

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