Hypnosis for Beginners:

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Introduction

Chapter 1: Simple connections.

In this chapter some simple practical examples are given which allow the reader to explore in person and with others some of the obvious things about the way in which the mind and body work. In particular attention is a drawn to the way in which activity in one part or subsystem of the brain can lead quite naturally, but usually in a little time, to activity in another part. But the speed and quality of the response varies from person to person.

These results are related to "tests of hypnotisability" and to "hypnotic inductions": which are ways in which they have been regarded in the past.

Chapter 2: Switching off systems.

In which we explore various ways in which muscular relaxation can be induced. The main systems used to do this include the verbal, visual, emotional, musical and humorous.

We end with a sample compound induction script.

Chapter 3: The visual imagination

We explore the visual imagination, which is enormously rich and varied. This is a tool much used in hypnosis and so it is valuable to explore its natural processes in many people, including yourself.

You may agree that one of the main functions you have when helping another to explore his or her imagination is in helping **to maintain focus, primarily by asking questions**.

The question of what kind of meaning such an exploration gives is left open. There are a wide variety of interpretation schemes which you will find: I simply urge you to keep at least TWO such possibilities in mind so that you are less likely to jump to unjustifiable conclusions. Sometimes the asking of questions will help to resolve a conflict between two interpretations.

The material you find is seldom strange ***by the standard of dreams.***

Chapter 4: Directing and Controlling the Imagination

The visual imagination can not only be used for exploration, it can be guided and directed. This chapter provides exercises to develop this ability.

The specifics used are to imagine a place, then a strange element in it, then a changed, floating viewpoint, then a floating journey. Next the ability to change images is used to change a small memory;

then developed to see if a completely different life can be pictured.

This chapter should teach you how much can be done with the imagination in many people without **any** "induction" or other hypnotic techniques.

Chapter 5: Exploring "Inductions"

In this chapter for the first time we will meet some processes which have been passed down the years as being ways of producing some dramatic changes in the functioning of people. These are what have been called "hypnotic inductions". We start with a close look at an induction used by James Braid, the father of hypnotism. Then some others, again from well-known names in the history of our subject, are given more briefly for you to try.

The question of whether as a result of such inductions a given person will respond more readily to suggestions is one that you can explore practically.

Some reasons are given why such inductions may have been more successful in the past, and need modifying for the present day.

Chapter 6: Posthypnotic suggestions

Posthypnotic suggestions are a large part of what people regard as typical of hypnosis. We start by comparing it with the common phenomenon of social compliance: the fact that people quite normally will do what another asks them to do. A description of a subject (Nobel Prizewinner Richard Feynman) is used to illustrate what it feels like to carry out a post hypnotic suggestion. Both phenomena are based on establishing a causal connection between two subsystems of the brain.

Some exercises are suggested for you to find out how easy it is under ordinary conditions to establish such a causal connection between two subsystems of the brain, so that you can (as in the previous chapter) later compare the ease of doing the same after a preliminary induction.

In fact the usual word to describe the creation of a causal link between two systems is **learning**! And you are asked to consider the conditions under which learning is most likely to happen well. I suggest that a **focussed attention** is generally best.

However this matter is complicated by the fact that the brain consists of very many subsystems and we may consider each to be capable of independent attention, or arousal. To explore this exercises are given aiming at maintaining the attention of just one subsystem (in this case that connected to fingers) while conscious attention subsides.

Chapter 7: Resistance and Rapport

We focus on high-order mental systems: those which determine whether to accept or reject statements made by another. The ability to reduce the resistance and increase rapport is an important part of hypnosis. This highly practical chapter gives exercises which take the form of two-person games which may be used to increase your skills in this way. We run through making impersonal statements; statements about yourself and then personal statements about another person: all in an everyday setting. Then, in a more "hypnotic" setting, we practise making every statement of an induction totally acceptable and then a series of personal suggestions acceptable.

The question of the difference between the system of active resistance and active rapport is discussed. No specific exercises are given for building up the latter: though you can find out by asking a few extra questions after the previous exercises how well you are doing. It is suggested that high levels of rapport depend on being good at hypnosis, on being honest to yourself, but on top of that there seem to be some innate characteristics that will make rapport between yourself and certain other people arise naturally.

Chapter 8: Bringing it all together

The main lessons are summarised. And then the rest of the chapter is directed at giving you a variety of goals - changes that you might make in a subject - in order to practice and expand on what you have learned. Many of these are accompanied by hints on how to go about them. The advantages of writing out scripts for yourself at this stage are presented.

Home

Hypnotherapy for Beginners : Chapter 1

In which we explore some basic facts about the way in which the brain and body work. Specifically we see how words and images can activate other systems in the brain which relate to feelings, muscles, senses, sense of balance etc. These are compared with "tests of hypnotisability" and "hypnotic inductions"

ENTERTAINMENT hypnotists love to make hypnosis look dark and mysterious and complicated. They love to pretend that they have special powers that no-one else possesses.

I love to make things bright and clear and open, and I do not claim any special powers.

In this first chapter I am going to ask you to try out various things and to think about them. These things are simple and everyday, and will turn out to be not at all mysterious, and yet they are a foundation on which much of hypnosis is built.

Words can trigger pictures in your mind.

This must seem a pretty obvious fact. You need only think of reading a novel and remember the pictures that come to mind as you do so to realise the obvious truth of this. But it is still worth doing a little exercise on it, as follows.

First just think to yourself, "I am on holiday." STOP NOW; did you see a picture of it in your mind? People vary, but it is unlikely, in the very short time I allowed you, that you saw anything very clearly.

Now allow yourself more TIME. Think, "I am on holiday." Pause. "It is my favourite kind of place." Pause. "The weather is just how I like it." Pause. "I am wearing my favourite clothes." Pause. "I am doing my very favourite thing." Pause. "I am on holiday!"

In all probability that extra time was repaid by a very much more vivid picture or pictures in the mind. But it is best, especially if you are a student of hypnosis, to get someone else to do the same thing, perhaps with you saying the words: "Picture *yourself* on holiday." Pause. "It is *your* favourite kind of weather." etc.

In this way you will discover for yourself the fact that people can have quite different degrees of clarity of picture, and the pictures themselves can be quite different. I, for example, usually manage only rather washed out images.

The conclusions I would expect you to be able to agree with, after some experience, are the following simple ones.

1) Words can lead to pictures in the mind.

2) It takes a little time for them to arise.

3) The time taken and their nature varies from person to person.

As a next little exercise explore the extent to which **words can directly affect muscles** without going via the usual volitional process of willing an action.

Hold your arms straight ahead of you with the palms facing each other and a couple of centimeters apart. Look at the gap and say "Close... Close... Close..." repeatedly at a comfortable speed.

A typical result is that over a period of a minute or so the hands **do** move together until they touch. To check this try it on other people (for students it is essential that you do). In that case *you* can speak the words as you both watch the hands.

In this way you will discover that there is again a range of responses. An average closure time is a couple of minutes. In some people it will happen in seconds. In others nothing seems to happen before you run out of patience. Occasionally someone will resist and there will develop a trembling in the arms as one set of muscles acts to pull the hands together and another acts to separate them. Another rarer response is for the hands to fly apart. But in each case you or your friends should find a strange feeling of things happening which are not willed.

The conclusions I would expect you to be able to agree with are the following simple ones.

1) Words can lead directly to muscular action.

2) It takes a little time for this to happen.

3) The time taken and the nature varies from person to person.

4) It makes little difference **who** is saying the words.

As a third example you might see how **words can lead to activity in the sense of touch**. In particular they can make an itch arise.

All you do is to repeat to yourself. "There is something itchy on my nose." Pause. "There is something itchy on my nose." Pause, and repeat for up to a couple of minutes. Then repeat the same thing with others, with either the person or you saying the words. The most likely result is for an itch to be reported and perhaps scratched within that time, but again you should find considerable variation. The time taken will vary from seconds to longer than the time allowed. Some people will find an irresistible urge to scratch because the feeling is so intense. For others it will be quite mild. Oddly enough in some people the itch may arise somewhere other than the nose. But as a result of these experiences I expect that you will be able to agree with the simple observations:

1) Words can lead directly to sensory impressions.

2) It takes a little time for this to happen.

3) The time taken and their nature varies from person to person.

4) It makes little difference **who** is saying the words.

In the above three examples we have started with words. Now move on to see the effect of mental pictures. Here is a way of seeing if **a picture can lead directly to a muscular action**. Let your hand rest

freely on a surface such as table, chair-arm or your leg. Picture a thread tied to the end of your index finger. Picture the other end of the thread being held by someone you like, whose hand is about a metre above yours. They are trying to lift your finger without you feeling the thread at all. Keep the picture in your mind for a few minutes, closing your eyes if it helps you to picture things.

A typical response is for nothing to happen for a while, and then the finger starts to twitch slightly and then slowly to lift up into the air. (This type of response is sometimes called "finger levitation" in books on hypnosis.)

Again students especially should try this out on others in various ways. You can ask them to repeat it as you have done it. Or you can be the "friend" lifting the finger by means of an imaginary thread which you are holding. You can expect to find that the time taken varies, and the nature of the movement can also vary from very jerky to very smooth. In some cases there may be a sideways movement rather than a vertical one. At the end of a series of such trials you can decide if you agree that:

1) Mental pictures can lead directly to muscular activity.

2) It takes a little time for this to happen.

3) The time taken and the nature varies from person to person.

Now how about seeing if **pictures can give rise to feelings**. When you consider the billions of dollars made by a film industry whose main purpose is to create images that will arouse emotions of a variety of kinds, it should not be very surprising that this can happen. But it is as well to try something on the following lines to explore the ways in which internally generated mental images can do the same thing.

The simple approach is to picture a person or situation that normally arouse strong feelings in you. The person could perhaps be someone that you hate or love or fear. The situation could perhaps be one that you find erotic or embarrassing or exciting or frightening. In any case after you have decided on ONE (do not jump about) keep the picture or pictures of your chosen topic in front of your mind for a minute or two. As usual students should also get a number of other people to do the same exercise.

The normal reaction is for a quickening of the breath and an increase in heart rate and adrenaline production together with the particular sensations associated with the particular emotion that you have chosen. You are likely to find that different people respond in a range of ways. In some there is only a very slight effect. In others it can be quite dramatic and rapid. The scenes chosen will of course also be very different.

At the end of this you should have been able to confirm for yourself that:

1) Mental pictures can lead directly to emotional activity.

2) It takes a little time for this to happen.

3) The time taken and their nature varies from person to person.

Now we might try the effect of a picture on a sense: perhaps asking if **a mental image can affect the sense of balance**. The following is one possible way. Think of a situation in which you are rocking or swinging, such as in a small boat, a hammock, a swing, a rocking chair, a rocking horse and so on. Sit comfortably upright and picture the chosen situation for a few minutes (closed eyes should make this

easier). Notice any sensations of movement. You can try a similar thing on others. You should not be surprised by now to find people responding differently. Some will not only feel themselves moving but you will also see their bodies move. At the other extreme some will report nothing. Again check to see if your experiences confirm the ideas that:

1) Mental pictures can stimulate activity in the sense of balance.

2) It takes a little time for this to happen.

3) The time taken and their nature varies from person to person.

At this stage **the pattern** should be quite clear. It amounts simply to this. Activity in one part of the brain (verbal, visual in the examples we have done) can lead to activity in other parts (in the above examples: visual, emotional, nerves leading to muscles, from the senses). The speed and nature of the connection varies from person to person.

As a final explicit example here I would like you to explore the following connection. It leads from the kinaesthetic sense (a sense of position and movement - of arm in this case) to the involuntary activation of some arm muscles.

Simply get your friend to close his or her eyes. (So that they cannot *see* what is happening, and so vision should not be involved.) Then without saying anything (so that words are not involved), simply lift up one arm slowly and lightly by the wrist until it is being held in space. You then gently move it up and down very slightly and lightly, so that the arm is given quite strong sense that it somehow "should" be in that position.

You should find that over a minute or so the arm starts to feel lighter and lighter as its own muscles take over the job of keeping it floating in the air. Eventually you should be able to leave it there and it should remain there with no effort or complaint from your friend for some considerable time.

Expect, as always, the usual finding that the effect happens, takes time and varies from peron to person.

If you would like to experiment with other connections then note that for some people the following are easy connections, and we can expect that they are possible in most of us, though with more or less ease.

A musical sound can activate a picture. A taste can activate a picture or a word. A number can link to a colour. A colour can link to a feeling. A feeling (e.g. of fear) can activate the digestive system and lead to nausea. A touch (as of an animals fur) can arouse a feeling of pleasure or of fear (in different people). The total list is very long, depending on how finely we discriminate the different mental systems. For example vision can be subdivided broadly into perception of shape, of colour, of movement, and some people (painters?) will find it easier to trigger off a perception of colour than of speed while for others (racing drivers?) it will be the reverse. But each of these divisions can be subdivided. For example the part of the visual system that deals with shapes can distinguish the shape of a dog from that of a cat. There are people for whom one of these shapes links to the emotion of fear while the other links to the emotion of love.

THE KEY FEATURES THAT IT SEEMS TO ME COMES OUT OF THESE SIMPLE EXAMPLES IS THAT THE HUMAN BRAIN IS VERY COMPLICATED, WITH MANY PARTS OR SUBSYSTEMS. FURTHERMORE EACH OF THESE IS POTENTIALLY ABLE TO AFFECT OR ACTIVATE THE OTHERS. BUT EACH INDIVIDUAL PERSON HAS THE

SUBSYSTEMS CONNECTED IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT WAY.

What is the use of considering the simple examples above?

It is twofold. The first is that it gets us into a way of thinking that is very valuable when it comes to analysing and solving a person's problems. A phobia, for example, can be understood as the existence in a particular person of a connection between the picture or idea of something and the emotional system of fear. If the idea becomes active in the mind then it activates the fear. Notice that as in the above examples we would not expect the link to be the same for everyone: people vary tremendously. In order to do anything about this it is best to start with a clear idea of what exactly the nature of the connection is.

As another example of a similar thing, think of the way in which in some people it is possible using hypnotic techniques to help them to overcome an unwanted habit of smoking by connecting the thought or smell or taste of tobacco smoke with the activation of the nausea response. "The very sight or smell of a cigarette will make you sick." This can be made so clear and strong in some people that it is more than enough to ensure that they stop smoking. It should be clear that the creation of such a connection is very similar to the sort of thing that you have already explored in this section.

You might perhaps say to a friend who smokes. "Experience as clearly as possible the most significant aspect of smoking to you." (For some it would be a picture, for others a taste or a smell, or the sense of holding one in fingers or mouth, or of the feeling in throat, or lungs or body.) "Then just notice if this leads to a sensation of nausea." You then need only say enough to keep their minds on the possible association for a minute or two. Then, as in the other little things we have done, you will find some smokers experiencing a strong feeling of nausea, others a mild one and others none at all in the time. With the first class of people the experience can be strong enough to significantly reduce their desire to smoke even if they do not stop. Although we will later find ways of intensifying this sort of thing, you should by now see something of the value of starting with the simple approach of this chapter.

I said that there are two reasons for looking at these simple phenomena. The second is that they, or things like them, appear in older books on hypnosis in one of a number of guises. The two chief ones are as parts of an "Induction Procedure" or as "Tests of Hypnotisability".

I will discuss these different ways of looking at them so that you may compare those views with what I am terming the Morganic approach.

It can be helpful to know that in the past there were two schools of thought about hypnotic phenomena which were labeled "State" and "Trait". Those who belonged to the State school maintained that hypnosis was a "state" that people could be "put into". I suppose that they thought of it as being like a "state of sleep" or a "state of fear". This approach naturally encouraged you to think of what the hypnotist had to do in order to put someone into that state. And each hypnotist or hypnotherapist had his (or, very rarely, her) own procedure, which consisted of stringing together a number of steps each of which was an item of the kind mentioned above, or of a slightly different class that we will meet in the next chapter.

A hypnotist might start by using words to act directly on the muscles of clasped hands to make them lock together. He might follow this up by getting someone to stand vertically and then acting on the sense of balance to make them feel that they were falling, while simultaneously using words to activate all the muscles of the body to make it rigid. He would then catch them and lower them, rigid, to the floor. Further steps were taken of a similar kind. The cumulative effect would be to create and enhance the idea in the mind of the "subject" that they would do whatever he said. This then made it possible for the

hypnotist to suggest increasingly amusing responses. (It is perhaps worth noticing that he would never, however, have the power that the army sergeant achieves over months of training: HE can use one word to get a man to walk forward into a hail of death-dealing bullets.)

Opposed to the State theorists were the Trait theorists who said that far from it being the case that power lay in the hypnotist, all that was happening was that a natural capacity or trait in the subject was involved. On this view hypnotisability is something like introversion, or IQ, or musical ability: it is something that pertains to an individual, and can be measured by various tests. And what are those tests? Well, they turned out to be the same sort of thing that we have seen above. A typical Test would consist of a short sequence of items of this kind, and a scoring method: "Score 1 if the hand move significantly together within 2 minutes." People who collected a high score on such a test were regarded as being very hypnotisable. Those with a low score were regarded as being poorly hypnotisable. If you are interested in more detail you can find an example of such a test given in Chapter 8 of The Principles.

Entertainment hypnotists, a band not renowned for their interest in theory, acted as if they came from both camps. In the earlier steps of their acts they would use one item - usually the one of forcing hands to stay clasped - to select from the audience those who they could expect to make the best subjects. Implicitly this is saying, "I can't do anything without a good subject." But then they proceed as if, "This is all my doing. I am putting you into a state of hypnosis through my power."

In recent decades the State vs. Trait argument has died down, with neither side having won a victory. Most practising hypnotherapists would accept that there is some truth on both sides and get on with their main job of helping people.

You can now compare the two ideas above with my pragmatic view that it is totally normal for the many subsystems of the brain and nervous system to be interconnected in different ways and at different times. If you want to say that that it is a trait of a given person that a particular pair of subsystems interact in a particular way, then I would largely agree. You will have observed some of this. I would, however, argue that since it is possible to learn to alter the nature of the connections, the trait cannot be regarded as fixed.

If on the other hand you want to call what happens when a particular collection of subsystems is active "an hypnotic state" then I would not mind, though I would simply note that it has proved impossible to find ONE such collection, so that you have simply found one of many possible "hypnotic states". In practice I avoid the use of the word "state" myself because of this vagueness, preferring to be more precise and instead to describe what is happening in a particular person at a particular time by as detailed a list as possible of what systems are active and inactive, and how they are interconnected.

There IS a family resemblance in what is going on in the minds of people who are regarded as being "hypnotised" and that is characterised by the fact that most of the systems that deal with the outside world are inactive and that there is a tight focus on those internal systems that remain active. However this is a broad generalisation not a precise definition. Within this broad generalisation you can have people who are in fact aware of intense internal pictures, perhaps of the past, or of a part of their body (one client of mine saw himself walking through his soot-caked lungs), or of certain sensations, or of feelings, or of the absence of sensations, or of floating, or of nothing except my voice, or of scents, or of a dead relative and so on. The brain waves of such people will be quite different; their experiences will be quite different; their internal chemistry will be quite different. There is too little that they have in common to make is very useful to use just the one word to describe them.

Nevertheless the generalisation that they all tend to have a focused or limited awareness compared with normal, outward oriented functioning makes a useful step towards the matter of the next chapter. You have probably already noticed in the above experiences that they are most effective if the mind is focused. If there are no distracting thoughts. If there is nothing else distracting happening. In other words it is best if there is no other mental activity. If other mental and physical activity is switched down or off.

In the next chapter we will be exploring in the same practical way examples of this to complete our survey of the elementary building blocks of the practice of hypnosis: the fact that changes in the activity in one subsystem can lead not only to an increase in the activity of another, but also to a decrease.

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Hypnotherapy for Beginners:

Chapter 2

Switching off the muscular system.

In which we explore various ways in which muscular relaxation can be induced. The main systems used to do this include the verbal, visual, emotional, musical and humorous.

We end with a sample compound induction script.

In the previous chapter we looked at ways in which activity in various parts of the brain could be switched on which were sometimes obvious and at other times rather unfamiliar.

In this chapter we will be exploring this area of how to **switch off** a system. In particular we will look at **reducing the activity of the muscular system and its related nervous system**.

There is one very important fact about muscle tissue that is worth bearing in mind in this context. It has no direct Off switch! ANY electrical message, whether delivered via the nerves or via wires switches a muscle On: it makes it contract. There is no electrical signal that can direct a muscle to *expand*. That is the reason why throughout the body muscles occur in pairs. You have one muscle to curl a finger and another to straighten it. You have one muscle to bend the knee and another to straighten it. When you are walking your body runs through a sequence of first tensing one muscle of a pair and then the other. The one that is NOT being tensed gets stretched by the action of the other. Then the action is reversed.

Incidentally much chronic or long lasting muscular pain is a result of a pair of muscles being SIMULTANEOUSLY active or tense. They are each pulling against the other, but nothing is moving. This can often be seen in "stressed" people, in which there are two mental systems also fighting against each other.

If you have clearly in mind this basic physiological fact that ALL electrical activity reaching the muscles cause them to contract then it will make clearer the basic notion that you cannot ORDER a system to switch off, but that if you stop it being activated then it will slowly subside into a resting or nearly inactive condition.

The first exercise in this chapter is something that might be familiar to you. It is a relaxation technique that is sometimes called "progressive relaxation". Something similar can be met in ante-natal clinics; stress-relief courses and so on. But it is also a common starting point for many hypnotists. The simple idea is that you pay attention to a particular muscle or muscle group and think "relax", NOT in a spirit of "For heaven sake, RELAX! I tell you. RELAX!!" but rather of, "I am asking nothing of you now and so you can stop doing anything, you can go to sleep." Alternatively you can use the word "sleep" rather than "relax". It is not that YOU are going to sleep but that a group of muscles are going to sleep.

(A very common misconception about hypnosis is that it feels like going totally asleep. Some people are disappointed if they do not feel that they have lost consciousness.)

You can proceed like this. Sit or lie comfortably. Let your mind rest on your right hand. Think "sleep" or "rest" or "relax" or some other word that you find particularly appropriate. Then repeat it with pauses, just as we have done for other things in Chapter 1. If you are working on yourself you will of course be continuously aware of progress. If you are working on another it is helpful to ask every so often, "How is it going?" so that you know what progress is being made.

Continue for a few minutes. At the end of that time you should find that your hand does indeed feel very relaxed, and far more relaxed than when you started. Again it is essential for students and useful for others to try the same thing with friends, both with them saying their chosen word and with you doing it for them.

And you should find the pattern of responses that should have arisen so often that I will call it the Standard Finding: there IS a response; it takes time and it varies from person to person. There is no magic in this. It is simple and natural.

Note that although we have focused attention on the hand, what has primarily stopped happening is the activity in the nerves leading towards the muscles of the hand. And this has resulted in a drop in the activity of the muscles themselves because they have stopped receiving "contract" messages.

Once you have demonstrated for yourself the ability to switch off all right-hand related activity you can proceed to some other group of muscles such as the left hand and repeat the process, with yourself and with others. And you will not be surprised by the Standard Finding: that these muscles too will slowly get less and less tense, less and less active. You may also notice the now familiar variations between people. In some, for example, the process is accompanied by a series of small twitches. In others there may be feelings of heaviness or lightness or warmth or cold or tingling and so on which accompany the process.

Beyond that you can continue to pay attention successively to all other major muscle groups, relaxing each in turn in the same way. As far as I know there is no magic about what order you do this in. Some people like to start with the feet, then calves, then thighs, then lower body, then back, then chest, then shoulders, then upper arms, then lower arms, then hands, then neck, then face and then scalp. Others will reverse it. But I have often jumped about with just the same effect. When working with others I will ask how things are progressing and if any particular group of muscles feels tense. That group will then get more attention, coming back to it repeatedly in between relaxing other, easier groups.

Neither does there seem to be some magical pattern of words which are automatically better than any other for a given person. But if you have experienced hypnotherapy or progressive relaxation you will generally have found that far more complex patterns of words are used than I have presented above. We might find something like, "And as you relax, every nerve, every muscle, every organ is entering a state of bliss, of total peace." Or they might be like: "You are sinking deeper and deeper, deeper and deeper into a state of total relaxation, total peace. And as you relax you will feel SO secure, SO safe, SO contented, that you will feel able to relax deeper and deeper." What is the function of such sentences?

I would like you to observe that what is really happening here is **that words are being used to arouse certain feelings**: feelings of peace, safely, contentment and so on. This is a perfectly good procedure. We have seen in Chapter 1 that words can activate feelings. IF **the feelings activated have the effect of reducing activity in the nerves leading to the muscles** then this will naturally speed the relaxation up.

But for students particularly it is very useful to be aware of what you are trying to do with a particular

person. By all means use emotional, poetic language, but do so *knowing that you are using it for a specific purpose.*

Another kind of approach that you will find mixed in with some relaxation procedures is something like this. "Picture yourself lying on golden sands." Pause. "The sun is shining warmly and you feel totally relaxed." Pause. "You are on holiday and all tension is going from your body." and so on.

It should be fairly clear that what is happening here is an attempt to activate certain pictures in the mind: pictures of being on holiday, in this case. IF it is the case that those pictures are associated with being relaxed then this can be worth doing. We are then **using pictures to inactivate the muscles**, in a way similar (but opposite) to what has been done in Chapter 1.

However students, in particular, should note exactly what they are trying to do. In particular you should be asking yourself, "Do I KNOW that these pictures lead to relaxation?" This can actually be very important! There are some people who HATE lying on the beach in the sun. All the suggested picture will then do is to activate a great desire to move away and muscular tension will result because one part of the mind will be saying in effect "get up and out of here" and starts to contract the muscles that will get you up, while another is saying, "no, you are supposed to stay here" and will be starting to tense opposing muscles to keep you in place. Such opposing muscular tensions is a classic symptom of stress.

Explore these three avenues for yourself.

I will suppose that you have first tried the direct path from words to muscular system as described above. Ideally you should try the two other approaches on other days. If you run them one after another then you will start the second on a person who is already uncommonly relaxed from the first, and so you will not be comparing like with like.

You can then try to use words purely to arouse certain pictures which are associated with relaxation. The broad pattern is the same whether you are trying things on yourself or on others. First of all we need to know a situation that you or they find relaxing. This might be anything. Common scenes include the beach, a cozy fireside, a woodland dell, a garden, a childhood bedroom, sitting with a pet, lolling in a bath and lying in bed, but it could be anything.

Then you arouse these pictures in your mind or the other's mind, perhaps by gently repeating certain key words. But since we are interested in how much effect the pictures alone are having on the relaxation try to avoid words such as "relaxed", "calm", "sleep" and so on that might have a direct effect. Continue for about the same length of time that you used for the direct relaxation by means of simple words and directed attention. And again feel free if you are working with another to ask for progress reports so that you know what is going on. Finally at the end ask for some measure of how relaxed the person feels. Then see if any clear pattern emerges FOR A GIVEN INDIVIDUAL. You may discover that one of the two approaches tends to give the better result for one person and the other for another. For, as always, people vary, and *we have no way of knowing without trying.*

Here is an example or two of such an approach.

"You have told me that you find the idea of a fireside relaxing. So just close your eyes and start to picture it. See the flames. Is the fire wood or coal?"

"Wood" (*This is only one possible answer, of course. If another is given then the details of what follows*

will also change.)

*"*See the wood crackling. See the glowing of the wood. And perhaps you can now also see the fireplace." (Pause.) "And any ornaments on it." (Pause.) "Tell me about what you see."

"It is an old-fashioned fireplace. There is a clock. And candlesticks. And some brass things. The mantle is wood."

"That sounds very nice. I wonder if there are candles in the candlesticks, and what is the lighting like in the room? Look around and see."

"There are some candles above the fire. Nothing else."

"And how are you sitting?"

"I am curled up in a chair in front of the fire."

"Look at the chair. Is it old or new?"

"It is old and very soft. There is a cat on it with me."

"That is fine. so just go on for as long as you like, just sitting curled up with the cat. Watching the the flames." (Pause.) "The fire." (Pause) "The clock" (Pause.) "The candles' flames." (Pause) "For as long as you like."

The client may continue to enjoy the scene for a long time - I have known one to remain for up to an hour!

The purpose of the above is very clear. It is designed to arouse in the mind a very clear *picture* of being in a certain place. In the context of this chapter the place is chosen because it is supposed to be associated with relaxation for the given person. But in this case we have avoided any words which directly suggest emotions, or sensations, or muscular tone in an attempt to explore the effect of images alone, as far as that is possible. Only at the end you can ask, "And how relaxed are your muscles now?" to see the extent to which the images reduced muscular activity.

In the context of hypnosis the word SCRIPT (cf Glossary) is used for something like the above. However it is worth emphasising that in what I have presented the scene is PRECISELY TAILORED to the tastes of the client by means of the question and answer format. This tends to make it far more effective than if the client is merely placed in a setting that the *hypnotist* finds relaxing, for obvious reasons. As a simple example the hypnotist might like cats and introduce one into the script but the subject have a phobia about them. One might like small cosy rooms and another find them claustrophobic and so on.

On another day you might try an approach in which you attempt purely to activate appropriate *emotions* and see how effective they are in altering muscle tone.

The approach, at it simplest, is to sit or lie with eyes closed, and with an intention NOT to dwell on any pictures that come to mind. Instead you will be repeating to yourself "I **feel** wonderful." Pause. "I **feel** calm." Pause. "I **feel** happy." and repeat ad lib. The idea being to see if you can work solely on arousing the feelings and then see how effective they are for you in switching off muscle tone. And of course students should attempt the same on a number of other people. As a model to start with you might try something on these lines.

"Now just close your eyes and tell me how you **feel** - and by this I mean things like stressed or contented, anxious or calm and so on. This time we will not be bothering about physical sensations. Just focus on any feeling that would stop you from being relaxed. So how would you describe your present feelings in that light?"

"Nervous. Worried."

"OK. Now we are just going to emphasise the opposites to those. What would you say the opposite to 'nervous' is? Calm? Contented? Anything else?"

"Calm would be fine."

"Right. We will just keep your mind on the simple idea of being calm then." (Pause.) "Calmer and calmer." (Pause.) "Calmer and calmer" (Pause.) "Don't hurry or worry. Just keep the idea of calmness pure and simple grow." (Pause.) "Calmer and calmer." (And continue on these lines for a few minutes or more.) "Now how do you feel?"

"Calmer."

"But you could be calmer still?"

"Yes, a bit, I think."

"We can come back to that then. But first are there any other feelings?"

"I am still worried."

"What would be the opposite to that?"

(Pause) "Confident?"

"Right. Then we will emphasise a feeling of confidence for a while. There is no need to force it, or even to believe it. As you will have seen with some of the earlier exercises, there need be no effort involved. Just focus on the thought of confidence." (Pause.) "Just feeling more and more confident." (Pause.) "A pure feeling of confidence just washing away the feeling of worry." (Pause.) "Confidence." (And again this can be continued for a few minutes, slowly, with no hurry.)

This type of process, which will be different for each person, can obviously be continued until we find that in response to questions about feelings the answer is in all ways conducive to relaxation.

Again you will then be able to form an idea of the extent, with a give person, this simple procedure leads first of all to feelings which could go with relaxation and secondly how well they act to trigger off relaxation.

As a result of the three different approaches you will then have an idea of the relative value and consequences of the three basic approaches: direct on the muscular system, via the imaginative system or via the emotional system.

If you are doing this work on yourself then you will thereby have developed some potentially very useful self-knowledge.

If you are a student of hypnotherapy you will have already have learned something of great importance:

some of the reasons WHY certain things appear in inductions, and therefore a far greater ability to create inductions for yourself which will be far more tailor-made to a given client.

The other valuable habit that should arise out of this groundwork is that of ASKING THE CLIENT WHAT THEY ARE THINKING/FEELING. This is something that we will return to many times. For reasons which probably stem from the old authoritarian - "you will do what I say" - ideas of hypnosis, older books tend to assume that the hypnotist is doing all the talking and the client should NOT be encouraged to say anything. There are times when, for particular reasons, this might be true, but for a far greater part of the time the value of knowing what is happening is enormously more important. In the above exercises, in which we are making no pretence that anyone is "hypnotised" and so can comment freely on what is happening, the habit of listening should be encouraged.

Once your mind starts to move in the Morganic way, of looking at the systems that you are deliberately activating to get the required response, you should feel motivated to explore other avenues. Here are some suggestions.

We have used the verbal system, but what about the musical subsystem of the auditory system of the brain? For many people the activation of this system by a particular kind of music leads to a relaxing effect. Note that the music might well not be a gentle flute. There are people who find a heavy drum-beat relaxing.

And what about the olfactory system - smell? For some people the activation of this system by certain smells can lead to relaxation: a fact used in aromatherapy.

And what about the sensory system? The touch of a human hand can in some people lead to relaxation. Aromatherapy again seems to make use of this connection, as do some other physical therapies. But why not generalise this? Just holding a hand might produce this effect. Are there some particular alternative touches - such as pet fur, or the touch of a furry toy - which would, in a particular person, lead to a relaxation of the muscular system?

And what about that somewhat higher system of mirth? I have sometimes had the most wonderful relaxing effect on people by activating a very strong sense of amusement leading to laughter.

And what about the sensation of rocking? Or of being in water? And ... see if anything else comes to mind.

"BUT" you might be saying, "I cannot provide all those things!" Do you expect me to provide a hundred kinds of music; to train in aromatherapy and fill my room with its scents, to have a rocking chair, furry toys and so on all to hand?"

And the answer is, "You can always conjure them up! IF they are significant triggers of relaxation in a person then there is a very good chance indeed that you can activate the appropriate system by the techniques we learned in Chapter 1. If someone responds to the touch of a pet, for example, then there is every chance that you can evoke the response via words or pictures, and you should have seen that rocking can be evoked with no expense other than a few minutes of time."

That is the wonderful economy of hypnotic techniques. **Students of healing in cash-poor economies note especially can note that they need no High Tech and expensive technology, and yet are wonderfully precise: we can pinpoint very particular parts of a person's mind and body and affect**

them in a way that NO surgeon, NO drugs can begin to match. The techniques of hypnotherapy are powerful, precise, and capable of being developed far further than they have to date once their true nature is understood.

Here are some more sample scripts which focus on activating one particular subsystem of the brain with a view to using it as a means of relaxing everything else.

"I would like you to think about a piece of music that you have have found very peaceful and relaxing."

"Perhaps *The Magic Flute?*" (If the answer is anything like "I can't" or "I don't have much time for music" then it is probably not worth bothering with this exercise. As I keep on emphasising, people's minds are very different. Some are well-stocked with music and some are nearly empty. You work with what is there, and do NOT suppose that everyone is identical.)

"Fine. Now just spend a few minutes starting to call that music to mind. I do not want my voice to interfere with it, and so perhaps you could very gently move a finger in time with the music when you can hear it. Just tell me when you are starting to hear it."

"It is starting now."

"Fine. Just listen." Pause. "Just listen." Pause .... and repeat this phrase softly every ten seconds or so, but always keeping time with the music so as not to jar - you can tell the time from the finger movement, of course. After a few minutes you can interrupt and say,

"Very good. How clear was the music? And how do you feel? *Has* the music helped you to relax?"

"It was a bit faint to start with but got clearer. Yes, I DO feel more relaxed."

On the other hand you might find in a particular person that one or other or both of the music and relaxation was weak.

Here is another script, working on the sense of humour.

"I would like you, with closed eyes, to start to remember amusing things. For example, do you have a favourite comedian? "

"Yes. Charlie Chaplain."

"You must have seen one of his old silent movies. I wonder if you can remember one or two scenes from his best films?"

In cases where this works you then simply wait until one or two scenes are recalled, usually with smiles or laughter. You need only give a little verbal encouragement. Then after a few minutes you can ask about relaxation.

"There is nothing like laughter to relieve tensions, is there? How relaxed do you feel now?"

For an example of how humour can be used more extensively in therapy see the article. Mr Bean - Therapist

You might try the two approaches above on a few people to gain some experience of how they work, and should find the usual Standard Finding. If you have the time and inclination you might then work out for

yourself how you might try out other approaches outlined above: scents, sensations of rocking in a swing? or boat?, touch - of fur? water? hand? and so on.

At this stage you may be thinking that this is all far too complicated. Why is there not some one simple way of doing hypnosis? There are two ways of answering this. The first is to say that you CAN use one simple approach on everyone to relax them. Some hypnotists and hypnotherapists do just that. They have their fixed scripts and they fit people to their scripts. At times this works beautifully. But at other times it fails totally.

The second way of replying is that when you are faced with a *particular person*, you will not be using everything that you have learned, only a part, which simplifies things. Some quite simple questions will serve to give you a very good idea what approaches are likely to be most effective and you can then improvise a script based on what you have heard.

For example suppose someone loves boats and music, hates animals and has no sense of smell or humour then you can at once eliminate any references to scents or smells from your relaxation script but might go a long way with activating a sense of the rocking of a boat and some favourite music. Likewise if someone is mad about cats, but has no visual imagination or interest in much else then you would naturally start a script on the lines of thinking simply of sitting with a cat or two on the lap and feeling them purring and going to sleep. This will tend to produce the desired response in the subject.

So in short the approach that you are learning here gives you FLEXIBILITY, it enables you to PERSONALISE your approach and it helps you to UNDERSTAND what you are doing when you use a given script.

The scripts that we have used above can be called **simple scripts** because they focus tightly on using one specific system to produce a required change. By contrast most scripts that you will find in other books are **compound** or **complex scripts**, which is to say that they aim to produce a specific change by using a variety of different systems.

As a final exercise I would like you to read the following **compound** script which is designed to relax. Each paragraph is based primarily on one particular system, though to make it more like those you will find elsewhere I will in each case introduce three words or phrases that could activate other systems. You should not find it too hard to identify, for each paragraph, the dominant system being worked on, and also the three exceptions. The answers, as I see them, can be found at the end of the chapter, after the summary.

1. *(Primary mode: simple verbal suggestion of relaxation.)* Now you are going to discover that you can relax. (Pause.) All you need to do is to listen to me and you will relax. (Pause.) Listen to my voice, it is relaxing. (Pause.) My voice will gradually make you more and more relaxed and peaceful. (Pause.) Your muscles will respond without you having to do anything. (Pause.) Just listen to my relaxing voice. (Pause.) You will feel quite happy. (Pause.) More and more relaxed and calm. (Pause.) It will be better than being on holiday in the most luxurious resort. (Pause.) Because you will be totally relaxed and at peace. (Pause.) All tension will go. (Pause.) Your muscles will relax and be at rest. (Pause.) And your skin will relax until it is as smooth as silk. (Pause.) Relaxed, restful and at peace.

2. (*Primary mode: activation of visual system with imagery of relaxing scene.)* Next I would like you to imagine yourself lying in a boat which is drifting peacefully on a river. (Pause.) You are lying on soft cushions. (Pause.) The sky is blue with perhaps a few small white clouds. (Pause.) Someone else is

taking care of the steering. (Pause.) On either side you can see green fields with a few bushes (Pause.) And perhaps a few cows or sheep. (Pause.) You are able to relax completely as you drift along. (Pause.) There are some rushes waving gently beside the water's edge. (Pause.) And you will feel the boat is rocking gently with them. (Pause.) A little ahead there are a few ducks drifting along as well. (Pause.) And you might just see a few lazy trout deep in the river.

3. *(Primary mode; sensory systems.)*You can trail your hand in the cool water. (Pause.) The water caresses your skin. (Pause.) It slides like silk giving a wonderful cool, clean feeling. (Pause.) You can see the little ripples your hand makes as it trails alongside. (Pause.) And the touch of the water is matched by a gentle caress of a breeze on your brow. (Pause.) The whole day is so relaxing. (Pause.). The very sunshine warms you deeply. (Pause.) You can feel the warmth sinking into your whole body. (Pause.) And the rocking of the boat lulls you into a deeper and deeper peace. (Pause.) You can hear the gentle lapping of the waves on the side of the boat. (Pause.) And feel their gentle touch on your hand (Pause.)

4. *(Primary mode: activate emotions of peace and relaxation.)* The boat ride is now drifting under the branches of overhanging trees. (Pause.) And they are giving you a deep sense of inner peace. (Pause.) The trees and river together make you feel safe and cared for. (Pause.) Feelings of love of nature are growing deep within you. (Pause.) There is a growing peace. A growing happiness. (Pause.) The trees are murmuring of peace. (Pause.) You can feel the water washing away all stains, all pains. (Pause.) You can feel an inner peace, and inner joy. (Pause.) With every minute feelings of greater and greater inner goodness, peace, love and joy are filling you. (Pause.) You are reaching the Deep Centre of All good feelings.

My father-in-Law, Stanley Yates, who was a hypnotherapist before me, used a script rather like the above for nearly all his clients. He also had the advantage of one of those deep, warm, brown and velvet voices that enhanced the effect of all he said. And he seemed to get very good results with many clients by using this approach to start each session. If you are a beginner there is a lot to be said for working with a few simple scripts like this as a foundation. Because we have touched most of the bases - we have used four of the most likely systems to encourage the switching off of the muscular system - we are almost certain to have achieved our end. But as you become more experienced and professional you should acquire more flexibility and the ability to tune your approach more precisely to each client. (There could be the occasional person who has a fear of water, suffers from hay-fever in the country, has a strong dislike of the word "peace" or just feels very uncomfortable with closed eyes in public!)

A simple way to speed up relaxation.

In the above we have seen various *direct* ways of producing a relaxed, switched off state. If you are dealing with a very anxious person there is a good chance that they will not work, and even for an average person they can take some time.

It is therefore often an excellent idea, if you are doing hypnosis proper, to prepare the ground by means of a simple and obvious step first.

To see why it works you need only recall that the times when it is most easy to let your muscles relax is when they are *demanding* it: after exhausting exercise. So you can try out the following on yourself or a friend.

Start by sitting comfortably then raise your legs and arms to a horizontal position and hold them there *for as long as you can*.

After a while you should notice that the breathing will increase to cope with the demands the muscles are making, and the heart rate will also. The muscles start to feel tired, then more tired, and then perhaps to shake, and finally they are let go and the legs or arms are let fall. The exercise can be continued until both sets of limbs fall.

Then, with no further effort or suggestion or action they limbs will automatically become very relaxed simply from fatigue.

If you *then* use any of the above schemes to enhance relaxation you should find that they will work much more quickly and effectively.

FOR A FINAL EXERCISE it is worth sitting down and taking a theme of your own and writing down a compound script that you feel comfortable with. Then try it out on a few other people and ask for their comments and responses.

Summary

In this section we have laid a foundation for one of the most useful starting points in hypnosis: how to induce complete muscular relaxation. You will have explored the process of inactivating the muscular system via the verbal, visual, emotional, musical, humorous systems, and perhaps some others. Consequently you should be aware of the fact that using the systems approach you will be able to tailor your approach to each particular person.

In addition you have seen how a compound script can be put together, and have perhaps written one of your own.

Analysis of the compound script.

1. Primarily this paragraph is verbal. We are using just simple words such as "relaxed", "peace", and "rest". The departures from this are a) the use of the word "happy" which is more clearly designed to activate an emotion b) "holiday in the most luxurious resort" which is likely to conjure up an image or memory and c) "smooth as silk" which could arouse the tactile system.

2. Primarily this paragraph aims at activating strong visual images of the boat journey. The main exceptions are the words a) "lying on *soft* cushions" which are more likely to arouse a sensation than a picture b) "relax completely" is a verbal rather than visual cue, c) "feel the boat *rocking*" evokes a sensory rather than a visual response.

3. This primarily aims at activating the sense of touch, loosely including sensations of heat and motion. If you decided (correctly) that sensations of touch, temperature and orientation (rocking) are really different systems, then award yourself extra points! The main exceptional phrases are a) "*See* the ripples" which is likely to arouse the visual system, b) "day is so relaxing" is purely verbal c) "*hear* the gentle lapping" should arouse the auditory system.

4. This paragraph is aimed at evoking a certain class of feelings. The sentences that stand out are a) the scene of the boat drifting under branches, which is visual, b) the word "murmuring" suggests an auditory stimulus and c) "*feel* the water washing..." may arouse the sensory system rather than the emotional one directly.

Hypnotherapy for Beginners:

Chapter 3

Exploring the Imagination

We explore the visual imagination, which is enormously rich and varied. This is a tool much used in hypnosis and so it is valuable to explore its natural processes in many people, including yourself.

You may agree that one of the main functions you have when helping another to explore his or her imagination is in helping ***to maintain focus, primarily by asking questions****.*

The question of what kind of meaning such an exploration gives is left open. There are a wide variety of interpretation schemes which you will find: I simply urge you to keep at least TWO such possibilities in mind so that you are less likely to jump to unjustifiable conclusions. Sometimes the asking of questions will help to resolve a conflict between two interpretations.

The material you find is seldom strange ***by the standard of dreams.***

In this chapter I will be asking you to explore another aspect of the way in which the mind works. This aspect is one that is of value and importance in many aspects of hypnotherapy and psychotherapy. **It is the amazing richness of the visual imagination in most people.**

As in the previous chapters we will be exploring what can happen "cold" - without any inductions or anything that looks like "hypnosis".

All I will be asking you to do is to work with a number of people on the lines that will be indicated. If anything unusual happens it is merely that it is unusual in the sense that it is unusual *to you*: something that you have not explored before.

The starting point in all cases is simply, "Sit (or lie) comfortably and close your eyes."

There are a number of approaches that can be taken then. To give you an idea of what we are aiming at I will give an example of the *sort* of thing that can happen: but each person is different and the example is not one that will be repeated exactly by anyone.

In the following dialogue Y stands for You and F stands for Friend.

Y. "I want you just to imagine that you are walking along some path. It could be anywhere, real or imaginary. All I want you to do is to be aware of your feet and a small amount of path around them. Just let me know when the picture becomes clearish."

F. (After about a minute.) "I am on a sandy beach. Nothing on my feet. My feet are small."

Y. "Fine. Is there anyone else around?"

F. (Pause.) "No, not near anyway."

Y. "Tell me more about the beach."

F. "It is enormous. Flat and open. The sea is out."

Y. "And how do you feel?"

F. "Alone."

Y. "How old are you?

F. "I seem to be about 10."

Y. "Any idea why you are here alone?"

F. (Pauses.) "No."

Y. "Why not walk to where you feel like going?"

F. "OK."

Y. "So which way *are* you going?"

F. "There is a cave over there."

Y. "That sounds good. Tell me when you get there, unless something stops you."

F. (After a delay but less of a delay than it would take in real time to walk to the cave.) "Right. I am at the cave now."

Y. "Have you been there before?"

F. "I am not sure."

Y. "Do you want to go in?"

F. "Yes, I think so."

Y. "What can you see?"

F. "A fire."

Y. "Is there anyone there?"

F. "Yes. An old woman."

Y. "Do you like her?"

F. "Yes."

Y. "Is she saying anything to you?"

F. "She wants me to sit by her."

Y. "That's fine. Why not sit by here and I will be quiet for a bit to leave you two together. Just tell me afterwards what happened."

Or you could ask for pictures of imaginary creatures: unicorns and fairies, wizards and witches, spirits of plant and tree, extra-terrestrials and their space craft, and so on.

Or you could play with size, as Swift did in Gulliver's Travels, and direct the imagination to see things from the viewpoint of a giant or a fairy.

You should find Standard Response on all these things: some people will manage them all with surprising ease; and others will manage only a few, with difficulty; and in most cases it will take time and patience for the pictures to emerge.

Summary

You should have found the extent to which the imagination can be directed with surprising ease and flexibility in many people.

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Hypnosis for Beginners:

Chapter 5

Exploring "Inductions"

In this chapter for the first time we will meet some processes which have been passed down the years as being ways of producing some dramatic changes in the functioning of people. These are what have been called "hypnotic inductions". We start with a close look at an induction used by James Braid, the father of hypnotism. Then some others, again from well-known names in the history of our subject, are given more briefly for you to try.

The question of whether as a result of such inductions a given person will respond more readily to suggestions is one that you can explore practically.

Some reasons are given why such inductions may have been more successful in the past, and need modifying for the present day.

So far some readers may be rather surprised that we have not yet done anything like an "induction", with the possible exception of the relaxation process of Chapter 2.

The reason for this is my declared aim to make hypnosis as *understandable* as possible, rather than as magical and *mysterious* as possible. The more you understand of the way in which the mind works under more or less normal conditions the better the foundation you will have for understanding how it will work under more extreme conditions.

But in this chapter I would like to introduce you to some "classical" approaches. The earlier practice that you have done on exploring various simple phenomena will help you to do these with rather more confidence and to understand better what the inductions are doing. In particular you will have seen in previous chapters how quite simple suggestions can lead to appropriate changes.

There are a few themes running through these approaches, some of which have evolved from certain mesmeric practices, which seem to have been copied and adapted slightly from person to person after James Braid first differentiated hypnotism from mesmerism in the middle of the nineteenth century.

These themes are:

1. Eye fixation
2. Eye closure
3. Suggestion
4. Arm catalepsy
5. Sleep or total relaxation

As a starting point I would like you to try Braid's method out on some friends. This is what he did, with his own words in italics. I have appended comments and explanations in between the parts of this approach, to relate it to what has gone before.

TAKE ANY bright object (I generally use my lancet case) between the thumb and fore and middle finger of the left hand; hold it from about eight to fifteen inches from the eyes, at such a position above the forehead as may be necessary to produce the greatest possible strain upon the eyes and eyelids, and enable the patient to maintain a steady fixed stare at the object.

Feel free to use any object. You will see here a foreshadowing of the bright shiny swinging watch that people often associate with hypnosis. Some hypnotists just use their fingers. Others have specially made objects; bright torches, "hypnodiscs" - with swirling patterns on them, and so on. I have used a bright metal marble, an old bright cuff-link and a metal pendulum at times. Since it is a simple fact that the unusual holds the attention that bit better than the familiar you might like to exercise your imagination to finding something **different**.

The patient must be made to understand that he is to keep the eyes steadily fixed on the object, and the mind riveted on the idea of the object.

That is to say that the hypnotist will normally **say** clearly and definitely something like, "Now keep your eyes fixed on **this**. Let your mind be blank except for **this**." The effect aimed at is to switch off every other activity in the brain except that part which is aware of the object. In other words Braid is doing what you will have found yourself doing in earlier sessions: keeping the patient's mind fixed on one thing or idea for some period of time.

It will be observed, that owing to the consensual adjustment of the eyes, the pupils will be at first contracted: they will shortly begin to dilate.

Look out for this and see if you notice it. I cannot say that I have seen it happen always. Most other hypnotists make no reference to this.

After they have done so to a considerable extent, and have assumed a wavy motion, if the fore and middle fingers of the right hand, extended a little separated, are carried from the object towards the eyes, most probably the eyes will close involuntarily, with a vibratory motion.

What is being activated here is an instinctive response designed to protect the invaluable eyes. It seems to me to be activated most powerfully by a *rapid* movement towards the eyes. Normally you would have no need to override it consciously, but if you experiment on yourself a bit you should find that with a little effort of will you *can* indeed prevent it happening. Braid sadly gives no indication of the *speed* with which he advances his right fingers. You might like to try out various speeds for yourself.

Notice that there will be something of a conflict between the one system of the mind which is the instinctive closure response and another which is the part attempting to obey the previous direction to keep the object in view. I suggest that it is the struggle between these two that leads to the vibration that Braid observed.

You might compare the vibration that arises if you lock your hands firmly together and then pull your arms apart: the two arms are two systems fighting against each other. After a little while a vibration typically sets in.

*If this is not the case, or the patient allows the **eyeballs to move**, desire him to begin anew, giving him to understand that he is to allow the eyelids to close when the fingers are again carried towards the eyes, but that the **eyeballs must be kept fixed in the same position**, and the **mind riveted to the one idea of the object held above the eyes**. It will generally be found, that the eyelids close with a **vibratory** motion, or become spasmodically closed.*

Braid also experienced an aspect of our Standard Finding: that people vary, and some take longer to respond than others. In that case he simply makes sure that the subject has a clearer idea of what he expects to happen and repeats the exercise. In effect he is using a verbal directive to achieve a certain response of the eye muscles; a phenomenon we have seen in action for other muscles in Chapter 1.

> *After ten or fifteen seconds have elapsed, by gently elevating the arms and legs, it will be found that the patient has a disposition to retain them in the situation in which they have been placed, if* ***he is intensely affected.***

This phenomenon sometimes goes by the name of limb catalepsy. We have already met it in Chapter 1, where you should have found that with some people it can be produced with no preamble as a result of kinaesthetic cues.

> *If this is not the case, in a soft tone of voice desire him to retain the limbs in the extended position, and thus the pulse will speedily become greatly accelerated, and the limbs, in process of time, will become quite rigid and involuntarily fixed.*

What this tells us is that in some people the connection between the kinaesthetic sense and the muscles is NOT enough for the one to activate the other. In those cases Braid fell back onto a verbal instruction, and would generally find that that would work. If you find that even *that* does not work you could make another attempt via the *visual* system and get the friend to *picture* the arm as being as rigid as if it had a steel bar inside it or a plaster cast outside it.

My experience is that in general the arm does *not* usually become involuntarily fixed unless the idea is somehow given that it should be. In Braid's case the idea has first been given kinaesthetically. If that did not work he augmented it with verbal instructions. You can see for yourself what happens when you try things out!

The reason that the pulse becomes accelerated is the same as the reason it becomes accelerated in any other exercise: and the above lifting of the arm **does** exercise the muscles, even if the effort is not voluntary. You should compare the effect with that described at the end of Chapter 2 where we simply asked for voluntary tension of legs and arms and then noticed increased heart and breathing rates. Likewise there will be an increased adrenaline (epinephrine) production in both.

> *It will also be found, that all the organs of special sense, excepting sight, including heat and cold, and muscular motion, or resistance, and certain mental faculties, are at* ***first*** *prodigiously* ***exalted****, such as happens with regard to the primary effects of opium, wine, and spirits.*

I cannot say that I have noticed this as strongly as Braid does; neither is this effect commonly reported by others. My analysis of it, however, is simply this. The increased adrenaline (epinephrine) production tends to amplify *any* activity of the nervous system. In the condition that Braid has achieved in his patient this nervous activity is broadly switched off. But if he activates a particular system, as for example by testing sensitivity to cold, then we can expect that part of the nervous system to be amplified very strongly.

> *After a certain point, however, this exaltation of function is followed by a state of depression, far greater than the torpor of* ***natural*** *sleep.*

It is not clear how long the period of time is before that "certain point". But the effect is essentially parallel to the phenomenon we saw in Chapter 2 in which a period of *high* muscular activity is followed

inevitably by a period of *low*. This pattern is paralleled by related activity of the adrenal cortex and a period of *high* activity and copious adrenaline production tends automatically to be followed by a rebound period of very *low* activity. For a more detailed discussion of such rebound effects see Chapter 16 of The Principles.

In conclusion then it should be clear that Braid has strung together a few simple connections such as you have explored in the first Chapter, and ended up with a subject with eyes closed and most systems very inactive.

For your convenience here is the whole thing in one place:

> TAKE ANY bright object (I generally use my lancet case) between the thumb and fore and middle finger of the left hand; hold it from about eight to fifteen inches from the eyes, at such a position above the forehead as may be necessary to produce the greatest possible strain upon the eyes and eyelids, and enable the patient to maintain a steady fixed stare at the object. The patient must be made to understand that he is to keep the eyes steadily fixed on the object, and the mind riveted on the idea of the object. It will be observed, that owing to the consensual adjustment of the eyes, the pupils will be at first contracted: they will shortly begin to dilate, and after they have done so to a considerable extent, and have assumed a wavy motion, if the fore and middle fingers of the right hand, extended a little separated, are carried from the object towards the eyes, most probably the eyes will close involuntarily, with a vibratory motion. If this is not the case, or the patient allows the *eyeballs to move*, desire him to begin anew, giving him to understand that he is to allow the eyelids to close when the fingers are again carried towards the eyes, but that the *eyeballs must be kept fixed in the same position*, and the *mind riveted to the one idea of the object held above the eyes*. It will generally be found, that the eyelids close with a *vibratory* motion, or become spasmodically closed. After ten or fifteen seconds have elapsed, by gently elevating the arms and legs, it will be found that the patient has a disposition to retain them in the situation in which they have been placed, if *he is intensely affected*. If this is not the case, in a soft tone of voice desire him to retain the limbs in the extended position, and thus the pulse will speedily become greatly accelerated, and the limbs, in process of time, will become quite rigid and involuntarily fixed. It will also be found, that all the organs of special sense, excepting sight, including heat and cold, and muscular motion, or resistance, and certain mental faculties, are at *first* prodigiously *exalted*, such as happens with regard to the primary effects of opium, wine, and spirits. After a certain point, however, this exaltation of function is followed by a state of depression, far greater than the torpor of *natural* sleep.

Next you might like to try a simple approach based on the work of Liébeault (1823-1904) In the form below I am quoting from the book by Alexander Cannon that you will find elsewhere on this site: The Science of Hypnosis

LIÉBEAULT'S METHOD (as used by Alexander Cannon)

> (i) *I sit my patient in an armchair.*
>
> *(ii) And tell the patient: "Make your mind as blank as possible. Think of nothing at all."*
>
> *(iii) "Fix your eyes on this" (pointing to some object anywhere in the room). (*Notice that he does not share with Braid the idea that it should be close and high.)
>
> *(iv) I suggest that: "Your eyelids are getting heavy; the eyelids will soon close; your vision is*

getting dim and misty; your arms and legs are getting heavy; numbness is creeping over your limbs; my voice is becoming muffled to you; you are getting more and more sleepy; you now cannot keep your eyes open." (Here the patient closes the eyes almost automatically, or the eyes are closed by me.) The patient is indeed asleep.

(v) About two minutes of this talk about sleep usually produces an hypnotic effect on a new patient; and on subsequent visits even less time is required.

You could try this on a number of your friends to compare results, and see if, as many hypnotists are in their books, Cannon is being a bit optimistic in suggesting that two minutes can be expected to be enough and that, by implication, this is enough for *everyone*. Cannon belonged to a generation that did not bother to *ask* patients or subjects afterwards how they felt.

You will probably notice that in the middle of all those suggestions there are directions to different systems: the muscles of the eyelids; eyesight itself; the muscles of the legs and arms; the sensory nerves from the limbs; the sense of hearing; and finally sleepiness - a general switching down of cortical activity.

Now ask yourself: "Is there any difference between what has been achieved by the above and, for example, just asking the subject to relax and close his or her eyes?"

Clearly the hypnotist thinks that there *IS.*

But what difference is he expecting? It takes little familiarity with hypnosis to find an answer on the lines, "The subject is now more suggestible; he/she will now do what the hypnotist says without question; and so on." Or, to put it another way, *the voice of the hypnotist should now be able to activate (or inactivate) all manner of mental and physical subsystems of the subject quickly and easily.*

So this is what you should look for.

You should already in Chapter 1 have discovered something of the way in which a particular friend's mind works, and how readily a set of words can activate such things as muscles, images and so on. The *presumption* is that after an induction such as the two above the friend will now respond *more readily and in more ways* to your voice. *But is it true?* This is what you should now explore. I anticipate that the result will be our old Standard Finding. In this case the Finding will be that such preliminary inductions *do* make your friends respond more readily and in more ways; but that as usual it will usually *take time* for them to do so, and that the results will vary from person to person, and in particular in *some* persons the induction, even if it leads to closed eyes, will not change their responsiveness in any way that you can see.

So to be more precise what you should be doing is:

1) Deciding which one or more responses you are going to work with. E.g. Do you want to use words to induce limb movement or rigidity, or a sensory response such as an itch or other feeling, or a smell of something, or a taste or a visualisation of a person or place, or something else?

2) Discover the ease with which this can be evoke by simply asking the person briefly to relax and close the eyes and then suggesting the effect for a few minutes. Note the results obtained: How readily did the reaction happen? How long did it take?

3) *At another time* run through any induction you are exploring and then suggest the *same* effect. Note again the readiness with which the response happened and how long it took.

4) Compare the two results.

NOTE: This is NOT intended to provide you with a rigorous scientific demonstration of the power of an induction: there are too many uncontrolled factors. However the more you try such things the more you should get a good estimation of what can and can not be achieved by a given "induction".

The sort of things that you are likely to find include the following.

The people who quickly respond to the induction by eye closure etc, are *also* those that you will have previously established as producing rapid changes in other mental systems in response to verbal input. To put it in older language: the people who respond well to inductions are the most suggestible in any case. Consequently you might well consider whether, if you wanted a given response, you might do just as well by using the time taken for an induction and use it for simply suggesting the response itself for that much longer.

You might like also to see if the following conclusion matches your experince. When people *do* report that the effect of the induction was to make them feel totally focussed on your voice - there seems no competing mental activity, and in particular that there was no inner voice saying things like "I don't believe you. I don't like this." - then they also report and show a crisper and stronger response to your suggestions.

With those ideas in mind you might now like to compare the effect of a third classical induction, again drawn from Cannon, which runs as follows:

ERSKINE'S METHOD

> *(i) The patient sits in an easy chair and relaxes.*
>
> *(ii) Say: "Look at me!" (The hypnotist looks into the left eye of the patient for about a minute.)*
>
> *(iii) Say: "Now close your eyes each time I count: when I have counted up to ten, you will not be able to open your eyes.""*
>
> *(iv) If this suggestion works, the hypnotist now commands: "You are fast asleep, fast asleep!"*
>
> *(v) Suggestions are now made.*
>
> *(vi) The patient is awakened by the hypnotist "snapping" his fingers.*
>
> *(vii) Should (iii) not be effective and the patient can open his eyes, the hypnotist now commands: "You are glued to the seat and you cannot get up." This suggestion is usually effective and the patient is so surprised that the mind at once passes into the psychic state, however light a hypnosis it may be.*

Of course you can vary this a bit. For example you might like not to be limited to the number ten, but instead just say. "Close your eyes. I am going to count. As I count then with each number I want you to **open** your eyes briefly. But as the numbers get bigger you will find your eyes getting heavier and heavier, until at some point you will **not** be able to open them." With an occasional person whose mind is very active I have adapted this further and said. "Now I want you to open your eyes when in my counting I reach a **prime** number, but keep them closed on the rest. You will find your eyes getting heavier and heavier and after a certain point be impossible to open." (My aim has been to ensure that there is little

room for any *other*, potentially distracting thoughts, in the person's mind.)

As above it would be best to have previously thought of a response you want to test with; try it out from cold; run the above induction another time and then test for the response again. Finally see if the induction has made any difference.

If you want to try out some ideas from other classical inductions you will find some in Cannon's book.

Comments on such classical inductions

My suspicion is that methods like these, which are direct and authoritative, were more acceptable and may have been more effective in earlier generations. Remember that in those days doctors, especially Harley Street physicians like Dr. Cannon, were perceived in any case as having great authority. You did not *argue* with them! You did what they said without question. Consequently even if you felt that it was ridiculous when he said that you were asleep you would not dream of telling him so. But by the same token you would accept any suggestions that he made without criticism so that it would be easy to achieve one of the goals of hypnosis: which is to change systems of thought such as "I am very ill and going to get worse" to "I have been ill and am going to get better".

We know today from the extensive literature on the placebo effect that if a patient and his doctor both believe that a certain treatment will provide a cure then an enormously diverse range of conditions DO in fact improve, even if the treatment has NO medical value. This is simply to say that it is a proven fact that procedures which strongly change the patient's idea of himself from "ill" to "recovering" can, in many cases, be effective.

Another factor that is relevant if you discover that you do not find that the above "inductions" are as universally successful as the accounts suggest is the following. Many of those earlier workers, such as Dr. Liébeault, worked very much in public. He, in fact, charged the local peasants nothing for his treatment - and therefore had a very full surgery. Among the crowds there would every time be some who were very responsive and would do what he expected of them perfectly. (Just as in shows of entertainment hypnosis there are perhaps a dozen in the audience who make outstanding subjects for those purposes.) Now the very fact of seeing someone respond in a certain way tends automatically to make others copy, naturally and instinctively. There will be others who may only be acting what they see around them because they also hope to gain from the treatment: but these also add to the general confidence in the Great Doctor's power. But all in all the crowd effect will enhance the chance of everyone responding to a greater extent than they would individually.

Incidentally this is one advantage of learning hypnosis at a good training school: you will usually be learning in groups.

Let us finally add the fact that medicine in the last century had so little in the way of effective remedies and so many outright poisons in the pharmacopoeia, that NO treatment would often have been safer than any that could be prescribed, and the combination of no treatment and a strong belief in recovery would have won hands down over most treatments of the time for most conditions!

Nowadays inductions tend to be more relaxed and less authoritative in a therapeutic context, though stage hypnosis continues to be relatively forceful and authoritative. We will explore more modern approaches in a later chapter. But in the mean time you might like to compare the effect of one of these classical inductions with the relaxation technique that was presented in Chapter 2, or one that you improvised

yourself at the time.

If you are working with the same friend as subject you will find it interesting to ask them *how they felt* as a result of a relaxation approach and a more forceful approach; and in addition see which approach seemed to produce the greater intensification of response to whatever test you applied. (E.g. the use of words to induce limb movement or rigidity etc.) It will not be surprising if you find that results vary from person to person!

Summary

You should have now tried out some classical inductions; seen that they rely on mechanisms that you have explored in earlier chapters; and seen that their effect is on the whole to get the subject's eyes closed and mind attending to nothing but the hypnotist's voice. You should also have noticed that in general it is then easier to produce the kind of phenomena that you met in earlier chapters. You should also have compared the results with that of a relaxation technique.

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Hypnotherapy for Beginners:

Chapter 6

Posthypnotic suggestions

Posthypnotic suggestions are a large part of what people regard as typical of hypnosis. We start by comparing it with the common phenomenon of social compliance: the fact that people quite normally will do what another asks them to do. A description of a subject (Nobel Prizewinner Richard Feynman) is used to illustrate what it feels like to carry out a post hypnotic suggestion. Both phenomena are based on establishing a causal connection between two subsystems of the brain.

Some exercises are suggested for you to find out how easy it is under ordinary conditions to establish such a causal connection between two subsystems of the brain, so that you can (as in the previous chapter) later compare the ease of doing the same after a preliminary induction.

In fact the usual word to describe the creation of a causal link between two systems is ***learning****! And you are asked to consider the conditions under which learning is most likely to happen well. I suggest that a* ***focussed attention*** *is generally best.*

However this matter is complicated by the fact that the brain consists of very many subsystems and we may consider each to be capable of independent attention, or arousal. To explore this, a exercises are given aiming at maintaining the attention of just one subsystem (in this case that connected to fingers) while conscious attention subsides.

In this chapter we will be discussing, and you will be exploring, phenomena that are usually termed "posthypnotic suggestions". You will probably know the sort of thing. The hypnotist has told the subject that at any time a whistle blows he will stand to attention. Five minutes later the hypnotist blows and the subject stands to attention involuntarily.

As usual I believe that in order to understand what is going on it is best to look at such things in a broader context first.

Let us suppose that you are in someone else's room. They leave for a few minutes, saying to you as they leave, "If the phone rings could you answer it for me, please?" As it happens the phone *does* ring before they are back. *What happens next?*

I think that it is almost certain that, in the absence of a strong reason not to, you will naturally pick up the phone and answer, as had been suggested to you. It is possible that you would spend the interval thinking about answering the phone. It is also possible that your mind had drifted onto something else, such as reading a book, or watching TV, and when you answered the phone you did so automatically, without particular conscious thought.

Now that little scenario is so normal that it totally unremarkable. But compare it with the following.

A hypnotist takes a subject though an induction routine such as those we met in the previous chapter. The

hypnotist then says in solemn tones, "Now when the phone rings you will answer it." He then snaps his fingers and says, "You are wide awake now, wide awake!" A few minutes later the phone rings near the subject. *What happens next?*

In the vast majority of cases the subject will simply respond to the cue of a ringing phone and go and pick it up and answer it. It would turn out that some would do so rather automatically, without much thought, while others would report being aware that they had been told to pick up the phone and perhaps thinking about it quite a lot. *Is there really much difference between these two cases?*

The obvious answer is that there seems very little, other than the extra drama involved in the one case.

The point of this observation is that for most people it is in fact enough to ask them to do a simple thing in response to a given cue, and they will then generally do that thing unquestioningly when the cue is presented. This may be termed *social compliance*.

Let us look at this in a slightly deeper way. There is a subsystem of the brain which is capable of recognising the cue (part of the auditory system). There is another which is capable of performing the action of answering the phone (insofar as this is a largely automatic action it is the part known as the cerebellum). In both of the above cases the words of one person *have been enough to establish a direct connection between those two subsystems in the mind of the other, so that in future the activation of the cue leads directly to an activation of the response.*

My purpose in citing these two examples is *not* to say that hypnosis is *nothing but* social compliance (there *are* people who have taken this position, cf. Spanos (1986)) but rather to help you to understand hypnotic phenomena the better by relating them to similar everyday experiences, rather as has been done by our Chapter 1.

When Nobel prizewinning physicist Richard Feynman was at graduate school he volunteered to be hypnotised. I am going to quote a bit from his book *Surely you're joking Mr. Feynman!* (Vintage 1992) so that we can have a firsthand account of what it feels like to carry out a posthypnotic suggestion.

> "He [a hypnotist] started to work on me and soon I got into a position where he said, 'You can't open your eyes.'
>
> "I said to myself, 'I bet I *could* open my eyes, but I don't want to disturb the situation: Let's see how much further it goes.' It was an interesting situation. You're only slightly fogged out, and although you've lost a little bit, you're pretty sure you could open your eyes. But of course, you're not opening your eyes, so in a sense you can't do it.
>
> "He went through a lot of stuff and decided that I was pretty good.
>
> "When the real demonstration came he walked on stage and he hypnotized us in front of the whole Princeton Graduate College. This time the effect was stronger; I guess I had learned how to become hypnotized. The hypnotist made various demonstrations, having me do things I couldn't normally do, and at the end he said that after I came out of hypnosis, instead of returning to my seat directly, which was the natural way to go, I would walk all the way around the room and go to my seat from the back.
>
> "All through the demonstration I was vaguely aware of what was going on, and cooperating with the things the hypnotist said, but this time I decided, 'Damn it, enough is enough! I'm gonna go

straight to my seat.'

"When it was time to get up and go off the stage, I started to walk straight to my seat. But then an annoying feeling came over me: I felt so uncomfortable that I couldn't continue. I walked all the way around the hall."

There are a number of things that come out of this account.

One is, of course, that at NO time was Feynman *unconscious* of what was going on: though he clearly was not in quite a normal state of mind, but rather "fogged out". (You will find that there is a very common misconception that hypnosis involves a total loss of awareness of proceedings.)

The second is that subjectively the thought in his mind was that he was *choosing* to comply with what the hypnotist suggested.

But the third thing - and the thing that impressed him and is one of the things we associate with hypnosis - is the fact that when there became an issue of *conflict* - when he consciously willed something at variance to what had been suggested - then he found his body doing something against his conscious will.

Now as a result of your experiments in earlier chapters this doing of something against the will should not seem *too* strange a phenomenon. You should have found, for example, that if the *idea* of outstretched hands moving together is presented firmly for some length of time, then they *will* do so, even against a conscious struggle to prevent it happening. Or that if the *idea* of there being something irritating on the face is presented then the skin will itch even if you know rationally that there is nothing to cause it.

Furthermore you will probably be quite familiar with times when you have carried out some form of action in response to a cue (such as lighting a cigarette, having a drink, flirting with someone, hitting someone) when there was a conscious awareness saying "I should not be doing this!") So there is nothing all that strange about some subsystems of the brain taking action despite a higher system saying "no".

So now you that you have a context within which to think about what is happening, perhaps you would like to experiment a bit with the kind of suggestions that Feynman was affected by.

If you want to try things out on yourself you might like to think of some simple action that you will do on some cue, such as the phone ringing. For example you might decide that you will scratch your nose when the phone rings (which is the example I will work through below), or you might decide that when someone comes into the room you will feel like first turning your back on them: in other words you choose some cue (preferably one over which you have no control) and some response (which is a bit unusual).

Remembering what you learned about more obvious effects in Chapter 1 you will see the sense of **spending a couple of minutes** linking the cue system in your brain and response system in your brain.

Working purely with words. You might say over and over to yourself, slowly and deliberately, "when the phone rings I will scratch my nose" - or whatever other plan you have. **Working with pictures**. You might spend the time *picturing* the phone, and yourself scratching your nose before picking it up.

More dramatically you could spend the time imagining that there is in fact some strange and alien insect in the phone, and that at some time in the future it will suddenly emerge making a noise remarkably like

that of the phone ringing, and will make a beeline for your nose, into which it will try to burrow! You will naturally want to get rid of it!

Working with sound/sensations. You might spend the time imagining the sound of the phone ringing, and of an itch on your nose.

After having done whichever of these you choose, go on and do something else, reading or working or whatever. When the phone rings you will almost certainly recall that it *is* a cue and you will be able to sense how strong the impulse is to carry out the action. It migh well be that like Feynman you just feel uncomfortable if you do NOT follow up on your own suggestion.

If many people try this then we can predict the Standard Finding: that it will usually require that some time has been spent on the preparation stage, that there will be very many who *are* forced to act in the suggested way, or feel a very strong urge to do so, but that there will be considerable personal variations.

You can try out the same thing on various friends to discover for yourself more about these things. Here you have more control over the cue.

This could be something like a click of the fingers or a repeated tapping of a pen on the table. The response could be something like clearing the throat, scratching the nose or standing up or saying something like "I need a drink".

Working with words. Here you would simply try saying, "Later on you will find that when I tap my pen like *this* (demonstrate), you will clear your throat. You don't have to believe me or please me, but later on when I tap my pen like this you will clear your throat." (Repeat this about three times, slowly and clearly.)

Working with pictures. Here we still have to use *some* words but they are being used to activate pictures. You might like to get your friend to close his or her eyes. Then say, "I would like you to picture this room and us in it. Tell me if you can." (Pause)

Friend. "OK."

You. "Now just picture the situation as it is going to be some time in the future. I am just tapping repeatedly my pen on the table. You are finding it irritating and you are clearing your throat in an irritated way. Can you picture all that?"

F. "Yes."

Y. "Can you picture the whole thing again in slow motion?"

F. (After a bit) "Done it."

Y. "Well done. Now can you fast forward it and see it all at twice natural speed?"

F. "Done it."

Y. "OK, that's fine, you can open your eyes again now."

You can also try whatever combinations of such techniques you choose. But in any case wait at least five minutes until the conversation has drifted quite a way away from that particular association and then try the experiment of tapping your pen repeatedly. Very occasionally you will find someone who

immediately clears their throat. More common is the reaction of the friend who pays a great deal of attention to the tapping of the pen, but who says, "I know you want me to clear my throat. But I am not going to." In that case you keep on tapping your pen, knowing that the seeds of the idea have been sown, and that, as you have found in Chapter 1, it is mostly now a matter of waiting. Within a few minutes you can expect the throat to be cleared, sometimes with some such disclaimer as "Well that had nothing to do with your stupid pen. I was going to clear my throat anyway."

The third class of responses is that the tapping of your pen has NO effect whatsoever: it is as if the friend simply was not listening in the slightest to what you had said, or as if he was totally asleep.

Finally there is a small class of people who *will* respond but will be unaware of having done so and will deny it if challenged. "What? Of *course* I did not clear my throat. *I* should know" This is not very likely to happen when we are making the suggestion in the simple direct ways suggested so far, but it could happen. I was once trying to get a client to stop smoking. He seemed to respond well to most things in the session and so I was very disappointed when he reported the next week that there had been no reduction in his smoking. However I learned later from his wife that in fact he had cut down dramatically! So although I had had a strong effect it seems that a part of his brain was denying it steadfastly.

In summary then you can expect our usual Standard Finding: people DO respond to such suggestions, that it will generally take some time for them to do so and there will be a considerable range of responses, with some failing to do so at all.

Once you have spent some time trying out things like this on a variety of friends and discover the extent to which their responses vary as you keep your approach the same you might like to start to explore the effect of changing your approach.

The idea I am going to ask you to work with is a simple one:

The more of their attention you have the greater the effect.

I am going to motivate this by observing that the true name for what you or your friend are doing is **learning**. The process of creating a cause and effect association between two patterns of activation of the brain is called **learning**. When a child links a picture of an apple with the word "apple" she is **learning**: a certain pattern of activity in the visual cortex associated with an image of an apple leads to the activation of another pattern of activity in the verbal cortex which is connected with the sound "apple"; this may in turn activate a pattern of activity in yet another part of the cortex which regulates the production of sounds and she may *say* "apple".

When a dog is being trained to respond to a whistle we have a similar situation: a cause and effect relationship is being established between the activation of a particular pattern of activity in the auditory system (which recognises a whistle) and another in the motor system (which responds to it). We call this **learning**.

When you learn that the moon is a quarter of a million miles from the earth then you are linking a certain pattern of activity in the mind which corresponds to "quarter of a million miles" and another which corresponds to "the distance of the moon from the earth". Normally the activation of the second pattern will subsequently readily activate the first, but the reverse is not true.

In short, if you think about it, you should find that an enormous part of learning consists of creating just such links. (Can you think of some aspect of learning that is **not** simply forging such links?)

The result of this line of thought is that the implanting of a posthypnotic suggestion or of a "non-hypnotic" suggestion which also links some cue to some response are simply matters of **learning**.

Now ask any teacher, "Which student will learn fastest, most and most securely, the one who is paying attention or the one who is not?" Ask yourself, "Have you found that you learned most when you were paying attention or when you were not?"

I am assuming that in most if not all cases the answer is that learning takes place more quickly, more firmly and most enduringly if there is a focussed attention during the period when the association takes place.

What does this mean in practice? It means that if you are trying to learn something you want a high level of attention to the matter in hand and to have no distractions from other things which, as we have all experienced, tend to reduce attention. This is what I mean by focused attention: there is attention on the matter in hand and no attention on other things.

If you are a student in class and you have a part of your mind attending to the teacher and a part to another pupil - for whatever reason - then your attention is NOT focused on either, though you are attending to both. If you are listening to a person while a part of your mind is thinking of what happened last night or about what might happen tomorrow night, then you are not fully focused on what they are saying and you are likely therefore to forget it more easily.

In short:

Learning tends to happen best when there is focused attention.

So, with that idea in mind, you can try to establish if for a given person you can get a more reliable reaction to a suggestion if you can focus their attention more. There is of course no *one* way of establishing this.

But you might try out something like the following:

You. "I want to see next how far we can steady your mind so that it will concentrate on what I am saying and nothing else. So to begin with sit so that you are not distracted by any physical discomfort or muscular strain. Just tell me when you are *really* fine in that way.

Friend. (after a while) "OK."

Y. "Next we do not want you distracted by anything you are looking at. So could you close your eyes, please?"

F. Closes eyes.

Y. "Now probably there is a lot going on in your mind. So I would like you to spend a minute or two just noticing if there are any preoccupations on your mind at present: any matters that you feel that you must deal with. If so, just mention them."

F. Pause. "Well, I have just remembered a piece of work I have to finish by tomorrow."

Y. "Right. It is good that you have remembered it. If you cannot leave it for five minutes we will stop now. Otherwise you can do it later."

F. "It'll wait."

Y. "OK, anything else on your mind?"

F. "There is a bit of an itch on my leg."

Y. "Just scratch it, then." Pause. "OK, that's fine. Now if anything else comes along to distract you just let me know. But how focused do you feel on my voice: on a scale of 1 to 10?"

F. "About seven I suppose."

Y. "Good. Now listen**. When I later say, 'Sleep' you will have to close your eyes. When I later say, 'Sleep' you will have to close your eyes. When I later say, 'Sleep' you will have to close your eyes.** But for now you can just feel relaxed and invigorated and refreshed and open your eyes again."

When the friend does so you should discuss something else for a while then later say "Sleep" and get an idea of the response. On top of the usual Standard Finding you should find that there tends to be **a correlation between the value given for the degree of focus and the readiness of the response**. To do that you will of course have to try out something like this many times and with many people.

Even so this does not amount to a scientific proof: there are too many variables to control. People are too different and there are too many aspects of mental function that we are unable to monitor or even be aware of.

What it should give you, however, is something to compare with the sort of standard old-school inductions of the last chapter. You will, for example, note that in some there is the instruction to "make your mind as blank as possible", but with no help given to achieve it. After trying something like the above you will probably come to see how seldom this blankness happen just in seconds, and how often it has to be worked at for a few minutes. And you will have a better idea of how easy or hard it is to get the tight focus of attention that both traditional and modern hypnotists and hypnotherapists use.

What does focus of attention mean?

Although I am trying to keep things a simple as possible while we are going though this introduction to hypnosis it is always good to remember that **the brain is FAR** from **simple**. Already you should be beginning to see that it involves **many** subsystems; and that these can be interconnected in **many** ways; and that the systems and their connections vary a lot from person to person.

Now just as you seldom say that "a class of students is paying attention", though you might be able to say that "Dylan and Gwenllian and Siân are paying attention, but Dafydd and Ianto and Angharad are not" (that example is from a *Welsh* school, of course!), just so it is possible to say that subsystems A and B and C of a person's brain are paying attention to you but subsystems E and F and G are not.

As a non-hypnotic example of this we may consider a private in the army. When the Sergeant shouts "Quick march!" then the private will respond directly without needing to pay any *conscious* attention. The appropriate part of the auditory system is readily activated by the sergeant's voice and there is a direct connection between the auditory subsystem and the motor subsystem. Activating the part of the

brain that registers the words "Quick march!" leads directly to activating the nerves that lead to the movements of legs and arms. There is no need to be particularly conscious of it.

Similarly if you are driving your car close behind another and see its brake lights come on, then there should be a quick and immediate connection between that sight and the action of braking. This should NOT require any conscious thought; no verbalization, not even (if the braking is not severe) an interference with whatever else you were thinking about.

In these cases we may say that the appropriate small subsystems of the private's mind had attention focused on the sergeant; and that appropriate parts of the driver's mind have focused attention on driving conditions. But in both cases there is no *conscious* attention.

A possibly more extreme case still is provided by the sleeping mother of a small baby who cannot be woken by loud noises or snoring or even shakings, but will wake up instantly at the slightest unusual sound coming from her baby. In the mother there is a part of the auditory system that can be said to have a very tightly focused awareness of the baby, though the rest of the mind is totally switched off and asleep.

You will probably see the relevance of this to hypnosis. There are times when the methods of hypnosis, acting as they do to activate some subsystems and inactivate most others, will reach a point at which *one* subsystem of the subject's brain is very tightly focussed - strongly responsive - to the voice of the hypnotist, while all others, and that included verbal and conscious thought, may be totally unresponsive and in effect asleep.

The problem with this is that **it is hard to know when this has been achieved**. Very often it is a matter of relying on "the proof of the pudding is in the eating". IF it turns out that your subject reports little or no awareness of the *content* of what you said and yet the response from some subsystem is strong then you can assume that that subsystem *was* in fact attending. If there was NO response as well as little awareness then the most likely reason was that the chosen subsystem was asleep also.

The upshot of this is that when you ask your friend to give an estimate of how focused he or she is on the sound of your voice the resulting answer is at best a rough guide to whether you have a good connection to the system you are aiming at (in the above example it was the sleep centres).

NOTICE. YOU WILL PROBABLY BE FAMILIAR WITH THE IDEA OF "**THE** SUBCONSCIOUS". WHAT I AM URGING YOU TO DO IS TO GET AWAY FROM ANY IDEA THAT IT IS **ONE** THING. THAT IS **FAR** TOO SIMPLE A PICTURE FOR ANYTHING BUT THE SIMPLEST ANALYSIS. THE REALITY IS THAT THERE ARE AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF PROCESSES GOING ON ALL THE TIME OF WHICH YOU MAY BE MORE OR LESS CONSCIOUS AT ANY GIVEN TIME.

With some of these ideas in mind why not see if you can create a more dramatic "posthypnotic suggestion" by first maintaining a very close rapport with a certain subsystem while simultaneously allowing consciousness to subside as far into sleep as possible, and **then** make the suggestion. Your aim is to see how easy it is in a particular person to get the attention of just one subsystem alone. To put it another way you will be trying to teach just that one subsystem while everything else is pretty well switched off.

Here is a possible example.

We will aim at getting two fingers on the left hand to cross in response to the cue word "luck". The following is something of an outline: feel free to take more time and add extra suggestions.

Y. "First tense every muscle in your body as **hard** as you can. **Really** hard. (Pause.) Arms. (Pause.) Fists. (Pause.) Legs. (Pause.) Feet. (Pause.) Jaws. (Pause.) Everything. (Pause.) Do it until every muscle is exhausted ... really **tired**. (Repeat this sort of thing until muscles are beginning to shake.) Now you are getting very **tired**. Soon your muscles will have had enough. (Pause.) When that happens, just **let go** and enjoy feeling totally relaxed. (Pause and then continue in the same vein for the short time it takes for the friend to let go and relax.)

"That's fine! Now you can just let your body **relax**, and **go to sleep.** Totally relax. Deeper and deeper. **Sleep**ier and **sleep**ier. You need think of nothing. Just relax, **sleep**ier and **sleep**ier. (Continue in this vein for a few minutes.)

"Now I just want to talk to the fingers on your left hand. And then only to the index finger and the middle finger. They are going to feel particularly relaxed, and very good. Nothing else matters. Your mind can get **sleep**ier and **sleep**ier, more and more blank. But that index finger is going to start to float gently up into the air. (Pause.) Very gently. (Pause.) Very gently into the air."

You can expect the finger to float within a minute or two with most people, so keep on for that length of time. The moment you see the slightest movement you say:

"There, it is starting to float. It will now continue to float upwards. Gently and easily. While *you* can just relax deeper and deeper, **sleep**ier and **sleep**ier. It is floating nice and easy. Sooo comfortable... soooo peaceful." (Continue until the finger has moved significantly.)

"Now it is going to float down again. Just feel it. It is now just floating down again. It is just like a balloon that can float up and down in the slightest breeze. A beautiful small balloon. (Pause.) Coming down now. (Pause.) That's right. Down and down. (Pause.) And as it does so you feel yourself getting more and more **sleep**y, deeper and deeper. There, it has just come down to earth. But now it is starting to float up again.. gently... easily... up and up... While all the time you are sinking into a deeper and deeper peace, **sleep**ier and **sleep**ier."

"Now this time the finger next to it is joining in, and starting to float up too. (Pause.) They are floating up together. Gently... easily... up into the air *together*. while all the time you are feeling more and more relaxed, **sleep**ier and **sleep**ier."

"Now that the fingers are freely floating they will each go their separate way for a while. They will move apart. Slowly, easily comfortably. They will just move apart. Feel them moving. Like very slowly moving balloons. While all the time you are feeling more and more relaxed, **sleep**ier and s**leep**ier."

You should then simply continue on these lines making suggestions of movements to the fingers so that they move up or down, together or apart, in any pattern that you suggest; **except crossing**. While at the same time you are suggesting sleep and relaxation to the mind. You could, if you chose, start to use some sort of visualisation such as the trip on the boat that we met in an earlier chapter to take the mind further into a relaxed and distant state. Your goal is, in effect, to train the fingers (or rather the mental subsystem that controls them) to attend to your instructions while the remainder of the friend's mind is getting as sleepy or distant as you can manage. You have a constant measure of how well the finger system is attending because you can see them move. You have less of an idea of how the rest of the person's brain

is functioning, but you should at least see a total absence of any small movements of body or face, including the absence of the swallowing reflex. But you **will** be able to ask at the end for a subjective assessment of how much conscious attention was paid to the words regarding the fingers.

Finally, when you feel as satisfied as you can be that the fingers are paying attention while the rest of the mind is drifting or asleep you come to the key suggestion.

"Your fingers will now just rest peacefully, doing nothing, feeling good. These two fingers are used for many things. But they have one special thing that they do together and that is to cross to give good **luck**. So in future whenever I talk about **luck** they will cross, easily and naturally, and you will feel good. In future, whenever I talk about **luck** they will cross, easily and naturally, and you will feel good. In future, whenever I talk about **luck** they will cross, easily and naturally, and you will feel good."

"You can still feel wonderfully relaxed and sleepy. Deeper and deeper. Your fingers will now float gently down to earth and sleep for a while. Down and down. Sleepier and sleepier. And all the time you can feel wonderfully relaxed."

This can be continued for a while and then say, "That's fine. Now you can come back to normal, feeling very refreshed, as if you have had a wonderful, long, deep sleep. More and more awake now. More and more alert. Open your eyes now. Wide awake and alert. Feeling fine!"

Then, of course, you wait some minutes into a conversation before bringing the word "luck" into it and discover if it has any effect. What you might *hope* for is that the response will happen *without the friend being aware of it at all, or have any recollection of it having been suggested*. And you will probably feel that this is something *like* what you expect hypnosis to do.

In that case you will have shown clearly that it is possible for *one* subsystem of the mind to remember something while another has no recollection of it. There are plenty of cases in the annals of hypnosis of this happening.

But if you think about it you may well find examples in your own experience of a very similar phenomenon. The commonest might be the case in which, on meeting a person for the second time you can clearly picture where you first met them (visual recall) but be unable to remember their name (no verbal recall). Or you might ask yourself which shoe you put on first. There is usually no recall of this fact at a conscious or conceptual level. There is more often a visual recall: you can picture what happens. But most often the memory is only at a muscular or motor level: you can remember mainly by doing it or feeling what it is like to do it. In these simple examples you see that a *part* of the brain has remembered something that another part has not.

In the above example of implanting a posthypnotic suggestion, assuming that things have gone as planned (and they will with at least *some* of the people you try with) you can say that you have shown that it is possible for one subsystem of the mind to pay attention and to learn without the conscious mind being attentive at all. Or you can say that you have established a close *rapport* between yourself and one subsystem of another. Or you can say that you have simply trained the fingers to respond to your voice in a way not unlike the way you might train a dog. Or you can say that you have implanted a posthypnotic suggestion.

Summary

You should now have a good idea of how post-hypnotic suggestions work. You are simply creating a learned link between a system that can recognise the cue and another that will give the desired response. This can be done in simple cases without any hypnotic techniques. It can be done while there is full focused conscious attention to creating the link. Finally, and perhaps most dramatically, it can be done by simply achieving a strongly focused attention of the relevant subsystems, while the remainder of the brain is effectively asleep or in any case paying little or no attention.

Finally

I asked, above, the question: "Can you think of some aspect of learning that is **not** simply forging such links?"

My suggested answer to this is as follows. I regard the forging of links as being *associative* learning. We are *associating* one thing with another. We have two existing processes in existing systems and we create a simple associative link between them.

It seems to me that it is useful to think of another kind of learning as *generalising*. This arises when we are doing more than forging links between existing systems but creating something at a higher level. As an example a child might start by associating two dogs with two apples, but with no idea of "twoness". There comes a point, however at which the idea of twoness arises, almost magically, from the process of associating more and more groups of two things. And in most people it is usually enough to give them a few examples of something and they seem to leap to a generalisation; an understanding of what the things have in common.

On the whole the lower animals, and lower systems in the brain learn primarily in the associative mode. Humankind, and the more intelligent the person, the more this is so, seems also to learn by generalising, or abstracting.

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Hypnotherapy for Beginners:

Chapter 7

Resistance and Rapport

We focus on high-order mental systems: those which determine whether to accept or reject statements made by another. The ability to reduce the resistance and increase rapport is an important part of hypnosis. This highly practical chapter gives exercises which take the form of two-person games which may be used to increase your skills in this way. We run through making impersonal statements; statements about yourself and then personal statements about another person: all in an everyday setting. Then, in a more "hypnotic" setting, we practise making every statement of an induction totally acceptable and then a series of personal suggestions acceptable.

The question of the difference between the system of active resistance and active rapport is discussed. No specific exercises are given for building up the latter: though you can find out by asking a few extra questions after the previous exercises how well you are doing. It is suggested that high levels of rapport depend on being good at hypnosis, on being honest to yourself, but on top of that there seem to be some innate characteristics that will make rapport between yourself and certain other people arise naturally.

This chapter is focussed primarily on one particular system which exists in most people: that which enables them to resist or reject suggestions or orders that others give them. You should be aware of activity of this system in yourself whenever someone tries to sell you something you do not want; or persuade you of something that you disagree with, or asks you to do something that you do not want to.

This is a fairly high level system, and includes component parts from many subsystems. There may well be a verbal response "No", which may or may not be expressed. William James - "The Father of Psychology" - remarked of consenting or negating "the opening and closing of the glottis play a great part in these operations, and. less distinctly, the movements of the soft palate etc., shutting off the posterior nares from the mouth." (*Principles of Psychology Vol I, Chapter X)* I find that when I am feeling resistant to what I am hearing then at times most of my muscles become tense, my gaze becomes averted and my tone flat. Each person doubtless has his or her own pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviour which are activated by the thought of resisting some influence and a contrary pattern which exists in the absence of resistance.

I have used the word "resistance" but "rejection", "refusal", "nonacceptance", "defensiveness" and so on may be used instead.

Images of resistance are a closing of doors, a putting on of armour, a taking up of arms, a donning of a mask, a stiffening of the sinews, of entering a shell and so on.

Fundamentally you are going to have a hard time changing anything about anybody if they are actively resisting. You may have tried arguing with someone to try to change their minds. The primary effect of this is only to activate still further thoughts and feelings of resistance. And so usually you will only succeed in making the other more, not less, in rapport with you. And even on those occasions when you

seem to win the day, "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still", and you are unlikely to have made a deep or permanent change.

Now hypnosis is about changing things - quickly and without force - and so the ability to reduce the activity of the system of resistance is a major aspect of hypnosis. As long as it is active then you will not get much further.

The opposite of resistance may be called "obedience" if the emphasis is on obeying what another wants or "rapport" if it means being at one with someone else; in harmony with them and hence being happy to go along with whatever they want. Ideally I would like one word to cover BOTH of these meanings, but I have not found one. In the field of hypnosis the phrase *en rapport* has traditionally been used for the close relationship between hypnotist and subject which can develop to the point where the latter happily and willingly goes along with the suggestions of the former, and in this context it has always had the meaning of obedience or compliance as well. For this reason I will use the word "rapport" here as a convenient opposite to "resistance".

As usual let us look first at an everyday situation in which the balance between resistance and rapport is central. Consider the salesman or saleswoman with a customer. In any handbook on selling you will see the advice, "Always aim to get 'yes' for an answer." We may put this the other way around: once the customer has started saying 'no' then there is a good chance that the sale is lost. Consequently a good salesman will have a ready flow of statements that are likely to get a 'yes' response. "You will not want to waste money." "The cheapest is not always best." "It is best to go for what *you* will be happy with." Such sentences as those are almost guaranteed to get a 'yes' response. And with each 'yes' there is a chance that the customer will relax a little of the initial resistance.

If, on the other hand, the salesman jumps in with something like, "You must buy *this* one," there is far too great a chance of a "No, I *won't*" response, activating the resistance system of thoughts, feelings and behaviours rather more.

In addition of course the good salesman is always on the alert for even small signs of a decrease in resistance or an increase in rapport or enthusiasm. A slight smile or frown are quite good enough indicators of a growing 'yes' or 'no' response. A slight loosening or tightening of the muscles, or a slight changing in breathing or tone of voice are all noticed and assessed as to whether they indicate a greater 'yes' or 'no' response.

And finally, of course, the salesman uses such signs as feedback to enable him or her to subtly change path in such a way as to increase the 'yes' and decrease the 'no' responses: to activate rapport and inactivate resistance.

If you are going to going in for hypnosis or hypnotherapy you will need to develop similar skills.

So this chapter contains some simple exercises, which you can do in the spirit of games that you should play as many times as possible with as varied a range of friends as possible. .

The first game is an everyday one that you could play anywhere - train, pub or elsewhere. The game is to try to make a many statements of a general **non-personal** nature that you can get the friend to assent to. The friend replies with merely a simple "yes" or "no" or a nod and shake of the head.

Here are some examples:

"The weather is certainly fine/cold/hot today."

"I suppose we have been sitting here for twenty minutes or thereabouts now."

"One of those light bulbs over there has gone out."

You see the idea: you are making statements, typically about present facts, that the other person cannot really disagree with. You should find that it will not take much practice before you get the hang of this. You can regard yourself as having "passed" when you can regularly come out with ten such statements which get the assent of the person you are with.

If you are in public then you might prefer to make the game two-handed, in which you and your friend make statements turn and turn about.

Incidentally you will find that a lot of the social conversation that takes place when two relative strangers meet in a public place is of this nature (in England at least!) It reduces the level of defensiveness if we talk about things that we can agree on; which is why the weather is such a great asset to the English!

As a second exercise see how many statements about **yourself** you can make without getting a negative response from the friend. Here he or she is unlikely often to *disagree* with something you say about yourself, but ask them to indicate every time you say something about yourself that arouses some dislike or negative reaction as well as simple disagreement.

As examples of statements that will almost certainly meet assent:

> "I am feeling rather hot/cold today."
>
> "I DO wish that lecturers would speak up."
>
> "This is a new pair of jeans I am wearing."

By contrast the following might arouse some resistance:

> "My car is the best there is."
>
> "I feel I am God's gift to women."
>
> "God, I am so hung over, and I'm going to throw up at any moment."

On the whole though, you should not find it hard to make pretty acceptable statements about yourself and manage the "pass" standard of ten acceptable statements out of ten quite easily. The main reason I am suggesting that exercise is to contrast the results with the next, in which you are making statements **about the other person**.

You will probably find that it is much harder to pass this test (a regular ten acceptable statements in a row). Again the friend is to signal (with a 'no' or shake of head) not only a disagreement with what you have said but also a negative response such as is induced if he or she feels that you are insincere. A positive response should also be signaled appropriately. If there is neither response - the friend is balanced in his or her reaction - you do not count that statement.

By this stage you should be aware that that you can tell a great deal more from the friend's response than *simply* 'yes' or 'no'. You can assess the tone of voice or the speed and size of head movement and perhaps other body language quite enough to be able to think to yourself that the response was one of enthusiastic

yes, definite yes, mild yes, reluctant yes, undecided, reluctant no, mild no, definite no or emphatic no - giving you a nine point scale. The purpose of being aware of this is to *guide* you *away* from the more negative topics of conversation and *towards* the safer ones.

Here is a example of what might happen.

"Your name is Mary" (Definite yes)

"That is a nice outfit you are wearing today." (Mild yes)

"You are looking quite relaxed." (Reluctant yes)

"I bet that you are glad that I am the one who is doing this, not you." (Emphatic yes)

"So you are *not* looking forward to your turn." (Definite yes)

"Friendship is more important to you than money." (Definite yes)

"You would like to be more assertive." (No response)

"Everyone thinks that you are great." (Definite no)

"You have lots of friends." (Reluctant yes)

"But you would like to have more." (Definite yes)

That scored nine positives and one negative out of the ten statements that got a response, and one null response. As you play this game with others you will find that some will play very "safe" at first with statements like "Your name is..." "Your eyes are blue" or "You are wearing shoes, I see". But after a while this phase should wear off and they should move into more natural areas of conversation.

I would expect that with a given person you will find it much harder to reach the pass standard in talking about *them* than when you were about yourself or impersonal things. The reason for this is that a person's resistance system is naturally far more alert to personal criticism or attack than to impersonal statements, and so you are much more likely to activate it. But you should also find that it is easier to pass with some people than others. At one extreme are those people (beloved of salesmen) who will generally accept most things that you say without question. At the other there are those who are going to disagree with almost anything that you say to them about themselves on principle.

The intelligent reader will realise by now that these games are not only fun and educational but a wonderful way of increasing your social skills in dealing with people in everyday situations. (Who wants to spend time with or work with someone who has NO ability to conduct a conversation without forever treading on people's toes?) Incidentally you now have an excuse for going up to someone at a party or gathering and saying, "I am on a course where I am supposed to ask people for their reactions to ten statements. Would you like to help? You will just have to indicate yes or no to what I say." (You will have rehearsed a few beforehand of course.) No student who has reached a good level in these games while at college need feel that those years were wasted! They will serve him or her better in life than any merely academic knowledge.

But we now pass from those everyday applications of those skills to a similar use in a hypnotic context. And so the next exercises are for students of hypnosis, working in pairs, and not in a public place.

I would like you to start by considering the following, which is typical of what a modern hypnotist may say as part of an "induction". .

"When you feel ready I would like you to look up at a spot on the ceiling." (Pause and wait until this happens.)

"As you fix your eyes and mind on that spot, I will encourage your body to relax." (Pause.)

"Your legs can start to feel relaxed." (Pause. It is possible to see slight movements as the big muscles let go which makes the next statement possible.)

"They are feeling slowly more relaxed." (Pause.)

"And all the time you are keeping your eyes fixed." (Pause.)

"Now I would like to encourage your arms to relax." (Pause.)

"They will slowly relax more and more." (Pause.)

"And your eyes are starting to blink." (This remark has come at this point because blinking **has** started. Pause.)

"And water a little." (Watering has also been seen. Pause.)

"Next I would like to encourage your breathing to relax a little more." (Pause.)

"It is becoming deeper and slower." (This also has been observed before being mentioned. Pause.)

"Your eyes are now getting tired." (This is obvious from the way the eyelids had started drooping. Pause.)

"They will reach a point when they will want to close of their own accord." (Pause.)

"But meanwhile you are keeping them fixed, even though it is a bit hard."

Given that this hypnotist is working well, sensitive to any of the small cues from the subject, then there will be NO resistance to any of these statements. If you think that looks easy then consider the following script followed by a beginner, who has got everything just wrong enough for every sentence to jar. I have indicated something of what might be going on inside the subject.

"Just fix your eyes on that spot on the ceiling." (Subject is irritated because it is not clear what spot is meant, and the tone is too peremptory.)

"Your eyes will stay looking at that while I make your body relax." (Subject hasn't even decided on a spot yet, and does not like the word 'make')

"Your legs are relaxed." (Subject thinks, "No, they are not!")

"They are very heavy and relaxed." (Subject thinks, "How dare he draw attention to the fatness of my legs. And they are miles away from relaxing. And why is he **rushing** so?")

"And all the time you are unable to move your eyes." (Subject tries to move them, finds it easy and thinks "That was rubbish! He is clearly no good.")

"Now your arms are wonderfully relaxed and sleepy. They are feeling heavy." (Subject thinks: "So my **arms** are fat too! And I have never felt less sleepy or more silly.")

"Your eyes will now blink." (Subject thinks: "Not if I can do anything about it!")

"And tears will come to your eyes." (Subject. "How dare he try to humiliate me like that.")

and so on.

These examples should make it clear that a crude application of the ideas in a script can arouse disastrous resistance, as an initial resistance steadily builds and builds, whereas a skilled application of very similar ideas will lead to greater rapport as every single statement is accepted.

So how can you learn this skill? Mainly, as with all skills, by **doing it**! I suggest the following exercise, to be done as usual with one student playing the part of the hypnotist while another student or friend is the subject. The rules are easy. To keep things simple the subject is instructed to move one finger (or shake the head) if the "hypnotist" has said anything with which he or she disagrees or feels unhappy about or is simply not true, and moves a finger on the other hand (or nods the head) if he or she agrees or is happy with a statement. To start with it is enough to work with ten to twenty sentences. You pass when you can consistently run through a form of induction with a range of people with NO signals that indicate that you have aroused resistance, and ideally a YES signal to each. (There are some things you can say which will arouse neither response.)

Here is a short example from real life of how someone with little experience proceeded. After each statement there is a 'yes' or 'no' to tell you what the "subject" indicated by fingers. You will see how the beginner was able to retrieve mistakes.

"You are relaxing." (No)

"You are not relaxing yet." (Yes)

"But you will relax." (Neither response.)

"You are lying comfortably." (Yes)

"Good. You are getting more and more comfortable." (Yes)

"You are now relaxed." (No)

"You are partly relaxed." (Yes)

"You are getting more relaxed." (Yes)

"Now picture yourself on a sea shore. You can enjoy relaxing on the beach." (No)

With a little practice you should, as mentioned above, be able to judge the *quality* of a 'yes' or 'no' response which will guide you further. Students vary: but I would suggest that the two most common mistakes that you will make at first are to go too fast and to be paying more attention to the idea of the script than to the person you are working with.

What sentences should you choose? You might work with something on the lines indicated above; or from one of the other induction processes you have met in earlier chapters, or something you have found

elsewhere, or something out of your own head.

Perhaps you could start with a simple relaxation script from the end of Chapter 2 or one of the more formal inductions from Chapter 5

Feedback loops

After you have done these exercises quite a lot you will be able to see the sense of what I am going to say next.

Every time you have got a positive response you have reduced the activity of the resistance system of the mind. But the less active it is the easier it is to get the *next* statement past the resistance. And the very fact that then there has been *another* 'yes' response lulls the subject still further into acceptance. And so you are actually involved in a feedback loop, in which you are aiming gradually to decrease any resistance. Ultimately you should be able to see that by working in this way you can reach a stage at which nearly *anything* will be accepted. And this, of course, is one aspect of hypnosis as popularly understood.

That is one reason why you have "passed" once you can get 10 or so statements in a row accepted: once you have got that far it can be expected to get easier and easier.

(You will read more about such feedback loops in Chapter 13 of *The Principles of Hypnotherapy*.)

As a final exercise, which takes you a step further towards the hypno*therapy* side of things I would like you to see how far you can go down the following path with your friend. The idea here is to see how many **positive** statements about the friend you can get a positive response to. The basic approach is pretty much as above. The friend can be sat comfortably, with eyes closed, and can signal acceptance or rejection of any of your statements with a finger or nod of the head or any other simple, prearranged, means. The game here is to see how far you can get in making positive statements about them. This can be quite hard at times because most of us have learned a resistance to accepting good statements about ourselves! Why? Because we have learned that flattery is often used simply as a means to get something out of us. Here are a couple of examples of the thing I mean.

"You are a *good* boy." (Pause) "So you won't mind letting your brother play with your new toy." "Your new dress looks beautiful." (Pause) "How about coming back to my place tonight."

Because adults have learned to suspect and resist flattery you will find some resistance to even positive statements. For example, if you simply say, "You are the most beautiful girl in the world" or "you are the cleverest man I know" the response will commonly be "no".

Here is an invented, but realistic, example of what might happen. Notice that this exercise is most interesting when you already know a fair amount about the person.

> "You have taken care with your hair this morning." (Yes)
>
> "It is beautiful hair." (Definite no)
>
> "You have made the best of your hair." (Slow yes)
>
> "It certainly looks good to me." (Slow yes)

"Another good thing about you is your sense of humour." (Yes)

"Everyone looks more attractive when they are smiling or laughing." (Yes)

"And that is one reason why you look so attractive." (Slow yes)

"Your attractive personality shows in your eyes and face." (Slow yes)

"And will give a *lasting* attractiveness." (Slow yes)

"Which is much better than a quick bloom that is soon spoiled by sullen looks." (Yes)

You should see that the kind of skill that is involved here is similar to those you have been learning above. If you come on to do hypnotherapy then you will see that many problems involve something similar. You may be asked to improve someone's self-confidence, in which case you are aiming at getting them to accept a far more positive ideas about themselves than they come with; or you may be asked to remove a fear of some thing, in which case you are aiming at getting them to accept, against all the evidence, that they are NOT afraid of that thing; or you may be asked to stop them smoking in which case you usually have somehow to get acceptance of the proposition "you will never smoke again". In these and many other cases it is not going to be enough simply to state the new proposition. You have to work systematically to reduce or overcome defences, and increase the feelings of confidence in you.

If you want further exercises on these lines I would suggest the following. Having run though some such exercise as the last to give you an idea of how easy it is to get a certain class of suggestions accepted, do something similar **after** having first run through an hypnotic induction. Hypnotists *suppose* that the induction makes a difference; that it automatically makes the resistance lower; that it automatically makes the subject more "suggestible", or ready to accept statements. Why not get an idea of how true this is? Perhaps it is more true in some people than others? Perhaps it makes little difference as long as you have the skill to make suggestions that build up on a stairway of "yes" responses? Perhaps it does not matter whether you get the early "yes" steps on things like eye closure and relaxation or on statements about the person's feelings, attitude or nature?

I do not want you to have beliefs about hypnotic phenomena based simply on what I, or anyone else, *says.* You have a mind and eyes of your own. Explore! Experience! Discriminate! Decide!

Why resistance *and* rapport?

In the above I have been somewhat casual about whether to regard rapport and resistance as being different aspects of one system or as two different systems. For practical purposes at this level the question is not very important.

However it is a good principle to always look out for *pairs* of opposing organic systems. You might see that there is only need to develop an active system of resistance if there is also an active system of rapport. A child that never had any desire or motive to respond to another person would not need to develop any system later on to defend itself against being improperly influenced.

But here I would simply like you to think about the fact that it is possible not merely to reduce defensiveness in a person but to build up a strong desire to please and to cooperate: something I am calling rapport in this chapter. You can see this naturally in many children who are actively motivated to please and learn from and respond to and trust and copy a parent or admired elder. We can see it

naturally in someone who is falling in love: there is a very strong tendency to find everything about the loved one not merely acceptable but admirable. Film stars, singers and other "charismatic" people seem naturally to evoke similar feelings in millions. Advertisers attempt to use this by using such people to promote their goods. If your sporting hero says, "buy these shoes" then you will accept the statement, which you would reject if the marketing manager spoke directly.

If you are fortunate enough already to have the sort of personality that evokes this kind of response from a wide range of people then you have an asset which will make certain aspects of hypnosis and hypnotherapy much easier. The question that then arises is, "To what extent can you learn to evoke such responses?"

I don't know. But here are a few thoughts on the subject.

First of all, it is hard to please everybody. The more appeal you have to those who respond well to a dominating personality the less appeal you will have to those who hate it and respond only to a cooperative approach. The more appeal you have for those who like to be told simple, dogmatic truths the less you will have for those who prefer a detailed, complete understanding.

My second point is that the best way to evoke feelings of trust is to be trustworthy and honest in all you say and do.

The conclusions I draw from these premises are first that it is better to make the best of who you are rather than to try to act like someone else, and second that you should, as a therapist, be prepared to accept that another therapist will do better with many clients simply because their natural style is more acceptable to them, though of course there are other clients that you will be better able to help.

(Just as this book will be *the best* for *some* students, while other students will find other books better.)

If you want to gauge how you are doing on the rapport front then I would suggest that after doing any of the above exercises you ask a few questions of your partner such as:

"To what extent did you feel like giving a more positive response than was quite truthful?" "Was this to try to please me?"
"How would you describe your overall assessment of the way in which I was asking questions: warm? friendly? likable? neutral? cold? manipulative? dominating? other?"

The other very important factor in rapport is whether the subject has confidence in what you are doing at the time. And the most important way of improving this is simply through your becoming better at it. And that comes best through practice. And that is why this book is so oriented towards practice.

So in *that* sense everything you have done is a means to achieving some positive rapport with a subject.

Summary

You should now be far more aware of the existence of a resistive system in most people you meet and the importance in inactivating it if you want to change their minds on anything. Argument tends to activate even higher levels of resistance which you will find very hard to break, but the skills that this chapter encourages you to practise will enable you to lower resistance in others with gentle words. If, beyond that, you can activate positive feelings of rapport towards yourself you will have learned some skills which are very valuable in hypnosis.

Hypnotherapy for Beginners:

Chapter 8

Bringing it all together

The main lessons are summarised. And then the rest of the chapter is directed at giving you a variety of goals - changes that you might make in a subject - in order to practice and expand on what you have learned. Many of these are accompanied by hints on how to go about them. The advantages of writing out scripts for yourself at this stage are presented.

You should have discovered for yourself the following things, others.

1) It is possible to alter the *way* in which the brain and nervous system functions *among* temporarily, by deft use of the way one system of the brain can act on others to made them more or less active.

2) If you can inactivate - "switch off", "put to sleep" - a lot of the normally active systems then it is easier to change the way in which the remainder, which remain active, act. And you will have found different ways of achieving this focussing.

3) People respond differently, because of the fact that the natural operations of their brains are different.

4) Changes usually **take time.**

5) The visual imagination is a particularly useful system to *activate* both for exploring the depths of someone's mind but also for making changes to other parts.

6) One system that it is very important that you *inactivate* is that of *resistance*, otherwise you will find it hard to even get started.

If you have absorbed all these and especially if you have practised extensively, then you will have obtained a very good grounding in what hypnosis is all about.

In this chapter I am going to present you with a large number of simple goals from which to choose some on which to test out your skills. I am not going to be giving detailed scripts for you to use. The trouble with fixed scripts is that they either work or they don't, and you therefore have very limited scope for flexible adaptation or indeed of understanding what is good or bad about them.

It is FAR better if you write your own scripts. This is a very good way of seeing that you **really** understand what you are doing.

I would suggest that to design a script you work in the following way. Start in reverse.

3) Write down the goal you have chosen and what system of brain or body it is centred on.

2) Write down those other systems - imagination? verbal direction? sensation? - that you might actively use to act on that goal system.

1) Write down briefly the way in which you like to *start* - after reading this brief book you are likely to choose between a relaxation approach as in Chapter 2 or an eye-closure and fixation approach as in Chapter 5.

You now have a framework on which to construct your script. You have a starting point and a finishing point and a choice of intermediate steps. You can then write down a draft of your entire script in the proper order.

1) Your starting script - which will take perhaps five to ten minutes to read depending on your approach.

2) Then move on smoothly from there onto activating the one or more intermediate systems that you will be using.

3) Finally write down how that or those will work on the goal system.

Example: Suppose we want to produce an involuntary smile.

3) Goal: activation of the "smile" muscles of the face.

2) Intermediate systems:

a) Sense of those facial muscles.

and/or b) Visual imagination: to see a smiling face, aiming to arouse the imitative system that even a small baby has. (This is a two system process.)

and/or c) Emotional system: see if we can activate a feeling of amusement.

1) Starting point: a relaxation approach.

We could then start to write down a **draft script**.

Draft Script 1) The relaxation script can be based on Chapter 2, but because of our intermediate goals we would include rather more about sensations of relaxation and peace *in the face*, as opposed to other parts of the body, than we would for other goals. If we are using simple verbal direction to aid the relaxation then we will be using words like *happy* rather more than we would for other goals, because of 2c). And if we are using the visual imagination to aid the relaxation process we would be more likely to include in it images of smiling faces because of 2b). (Say 5 minutes' worth of ideas).

Draft Script 2) It is then easy to move smoothly into phase 2) in which you are working in a more specific way with the intermediate systems.

Examples of phrases you might use for goal of an involuntary smile in this phase are: "You may well sense that part of your face around your mouth and eyes beginning to move" or, "You can picture clearly in your mind's eye the face of someone smiling at you. Notice what happens to the mouth... and the eyes..." or "And you might be able to remember the feeling you get inside when you feel really happy. There can be a glow right down in the centre of your being."

At the same time you can also begin to prepare the way a little more explicitly for the final goal by introducing ideas like "so often *it is impossible to prevent yourself smiling* when something really nice or really amusing happens". (Some 5 minutes' worth of ideas.)

Draft Script 3) Finally you can write down some further script that should ideally be spoken *after* you have already seen the first signs of the desired response in phase 2). The script might contain things like: "Now your face is already beginning to smile. And it will go on getting happier and happier. The desire to smile and the feeling of smiling will become irresistible." (Jot down a few minutes script: a lot of this can be repeated over and over in the final form.)

Now as you write down your draft script you should find yourself wondering about what exactly is going on in the subject's head. In the above example you should realise that to begin with you have no idea what sort of things make this particular person smile. *You* might well enjoy a particularly normal or sophisticated form of humour, but there is no reason why the subject should be enlightened enough to share this! So why not find out what makes this person amused? Of course, if you know the person well, or have been observing carefully, then you may already know what things a smile to the face, but if not you can always **ask**. For example, "What are your favourite comedy shows in TV?" can give you a good idea.

Furthermore you may have had trouble deciding what intermediate systems to use. You could of course use as many as possible, or you might like to do a little preliminary enquiry to find out what is likely to be best with a given person. If you find that someone has a very poor visual imagination then you might well be advised NOT to bother to introduce visual imagery into your script, for example.

You can divide your questions into those that you could ask *before* starting and those that you plan to ask *during* the session. The answers to the first will be used to modify the draft script so that it fits the known personality of the subject better. The answers to the second will lead to your putting questions into your script so that you can KNOW how things are going.

Such answers can be verbal or non-verbal. You should already be used to using a nod or shake of head or the movement of a finger to signal yes or no answers, and so you can easily insert into your script things like, "Signal if there any tension left in your legs." "Let me know if you can picture that clearly." "Nod your head if you are feeling amused by that picture" and so on.

With these ideas of *personalising* the script you could then write down a final form, complete with details that relate only to that *particular* goal, that *particular* subject and with questions that determine how you will proceed bearing in mind the *particular* responses you get.

Thus for example you might have written a short paragraph of script on making a leg feel so relaxed that it cannot be moved. You could then write in:

> "I would now like you to test how well we are doing. Could you just try to lift your leg a little?" IF the leg moves say, "Yes, *some* progress, but I think we can do better than that" and repeat the paragraph again, while if it does NOT move then say, "That's very good. We will now move on to the other leg." (or whatever your next paragraph deals with).

I hope that this example of the involuntary smile makes the process of composing effective approaches far more understandable and efficient.

Please note that I am NOT saying that the use of ONE standard induction followed by a direct suggestion does not work. By now you will know enough to see that for *some* people it will be enough just to look at them and say, over and over, "You are going to smile!" (particularly if they can see the smile on your face, which will tend to activate the imitative system). Consequently we can expect that even more

people will respond *after any* reasonably effective introduction that reduces resistance, increases focus and decreases distracting mental activity. So for many people you CAN use the same ONE standard induction followed by a simple suggestion and it WILL work.

The point however is that in hypnotherapy we need to produce the *maximum* effect in the *greatest number* of people, and I expect that you will find that tuning an approach to the goal in this systematic way greatly enhances your effectiveness. But you need not take my word for it: indeed you **should** not take my word for it. Just because I feel that *I* have got better results in this way does not mean that *you* will also. Feel free to try other ways as well!

Now some will feel that writing out scripts in this way is rather cumbersome, and of course it does take time, and of course I do NOT write them out myself! But that is because through experience I, like many other professionals, am *thinking* in the way I have outlined. As I am going through the process of asking a client questions about themselves and their problems I am consciously drafting possible approaches in my mind and looking for the kind of information I will need to optimise my approach. (I particularly enjoy the challenge of weaving a script which might link together two or more different problems and two or three key interests or characteristics of the client into one harmonious whole!) Also I will automatically be looking for feedback (slight physical signs such as almost imperceptible facial movements) and asking direct and indirect questions during the hypnotic process itself to verify that things are going pretty much as I expect and modify things if they are not.

So I do not expect you to write down scripts forever, but merely suggest that when you are learning it is both a useful way to get your thoughts into order and to aid your memory when it comes to the actual process itself. It is rather like giving a speech. If you have not had much practice then it is almost essential to write it down at first, but as you get more and more experienced you need to refer to your written speech less and less and need to write down less and less until in the end you can talk without any notes at all.

IMPORTANT PRELIMINARY

Next, before you start I would emphasise that you should ALWAYS say to your subject before you start that if they feel AT ALL UNCOMFORTABLE then they should stop and come back to normal.

The reason for this is that many people get very anxious when they feel that they are losing control or that something strange is happening to them: both of which are quite common characteristics of hypnotic phenomena. Another (rare) possibility is that you may accidentally inactivate an inhibiting system - one that has been very active keeping something else under control - and the controlled system may spontaneously start to act quite dramatically. Since at this stage you will not have the expertise to cope with such reactions it is better to let things go no further with that person, and instead practice with someone else. If, at the slightest sign of distress, they do not spontaneously return to normal you should say something like, "Now, **remember what I said**. You are feeling uncomfortable and so you are now going to come back to normal. Just come back to normal,. The feelings will fade. Come back to normal. The feelings will fade....."

I once saw an example of a spontaneous release happen in a display of "entertainment" or "stage" hypnosis: one woman started to weep dramatically for no obvious reason. The hypnotist did not have any attention to spare for her and just let her get on with it. As far as I know this did not do her any harm, but

I felt uneasy about it.

If you are working under supervision - **and I very much recommend that you do if at all possible** - then the above rule may be relaxed a little, but I still think that it is a good one, and I always put in this preliminary instruction whenever I am doing hypnosis.

POSSIBLE GOALS.

Now I will give you a range of ideas to choose from for your continuing practice. Many of these are phenomena that are mentioned often in books on hypnosis, sometimes as parts of an initial induction, sometimes as "deepening techniques", sometimes as "tests of hypnotisability". Others of the phenomena I will mention have, as far as I know, never been attempted before! (Such as the involuntary smile.) That is not to say that they are particularly difficult, it is just that the systems approach to hypnosis in this course naturally suggests an enormous variety of different systems of the mind and body that can be changed, whereas in the absence of such a framework there is a tendency simply to repeat what has been learned from others.

What **all** the suggested goals have in common is that they involve changing the behaviour of some system or other of the mind or body. By now you should have learned that they all follow the pattern of being achievable, but usually only in time and with different ease in different people.

Involuntary movement of muscles.

You have already seen how easy it is to get a *finger* to move. It is usually quite easy to extend this and to get the *hand* and then the *arm* to lift into the air and perhaps rise as high as the face. Or even high into the air.

Hint: in many schools you have to hold your hand up to get the teacher's attention. You may be able to use the imagination to take your friend back to a memory of such a time and then suggest that he or she knows the answer to the teacher's question and the arm will lift to signal this.

For a more dynamic effect you can often get the arms to produce an involuntary rolling movement in which the hands rotate about each other in front of the subject in small circles, without any conscious effort and indeed (in time) with it being impossible for the subject to stop them..

Hint: with such physical responses it can often help *first* for you to move the limb(s) in the way in which you later want it (them) to move spontaneously. By so doing you are activating that part of the brain which monitors and "remembers" muscular movement (the cerebellum), which is therefore already primed with what is required, without it having to receive too much direction from another system.

If your subject is sitting comfortably then you could aim to get a *leg to rise*, and perhaps then let this lead to a *regular rising and falling or even stamping* of the feet on the ground, by analogy with the arm rolling above.

Or you could suggest movement of the *neck* muscles, perhaps aiming at a particular movement of the head to right, left, up or down. (This can be a useful preamble if you want the head to indicate 'yes' or 'no' responses with nods and shakes.)

Or there are the *eye* muscles: again you could try to achieve an involuntary movement of the eyes to right or left, up or down.

Or you can suggest movement of the *jaw* muscles. Your goal might be an involuntary opening and closing of the mouth

You may also note that the *tongue* is a muscle and, although this may be more difficult since you will have to inactivate that system which is alert to looking foolish, you might well be able to get the tongue to stick out.

The *facial* muscles are used to form expressions such as the *smile* we have mentioned above, but also *frowns* , looks of *surprise*, and so on.

As a general rule, although it may take quite a lot of time to get the first system to produce a change on the suggested lines, you can expect that subsequent changes will come about more and more quickly.

Rigidity of muscles (catatonia)

In rather a different vein you may aim not for a comparatively mild activation of a group of muscles to produce a movement but for *total rigidity* (catatonia) of a set of muscles, to the point where the subject is unable to release them. Stage hypnotists often use a form of this as a test. They ask everyone in the audience to clasp their hands together firmly, then suggest that they will be unable to unclasp them. Those that can't do so are rather more likely to respond to other suggestions.

You might make the *hands* lock rigidly, or make the *fingers* of a hand so rigid that they will not bend, an *arm* totally rigid to that it cannot be unstraightened, or the *back* muscles so that it is impossible to bend, or the *neck* muscles so that it is impossible to turn the head, or the *leg* muscles so that it is impossible to bend them, or the *jaw* muscles so that the mouth cannot be opened and so on. In each case you are strongly activating the muscles, but *in*activating the conscious pathways of control of those muscles.

Hint: here the common practice is first to direct the muscles *consciously* to tense as hard as possible. For example, "Please hold your arm out straight as a rod. Hold it VERY straight. It will now become like a steel rod. As rigid as a rod. As rigid as a rod. It will feel so inflexible that it will soon be impossible to bend it. As rigid as a rod. As rigid as a rod. You can begin to feel that the elbow joint just will not work. Rigid as a rod." You will see that in this the hypnotist gets the subject to do the harder work: of getting the muscles activated to their limit, while most of the suggestions are aiming at implanting the idea that it is impossible to bend the arm.

Total inactivity (atonia).

At the other extreme you can aim at *total inactivity* of the muscles combined with the impossibility of voluntary motion. This goes well with a relaxation approach. You aim to make it impossible for the subject to be able to use a given muscle or set of muscles. A simple example that you have met previously is involved in eye closure: you are making the *muscles that lift the eyelids* feel so tired that it becomes possible for the subject to lift them to keep the eyes open. In the same area you could aim instead for full eye fixation: making the *muscles that control the movement of the eyeballs* totally inactive and make their conscious control impossible. The subject may well then look a little like the popular cartoon representation of a hypnotised person: staring fixedly forward. You may combine this with an inactivation of the blinking reflex so that the gaze is steady *and* unblinking.

But you can get the same effect - of relaxation combined with loss of conscious control - in any other muscle or group of muscles so that it becomes impossible for example to *lift a leg*, or *move an arm* or

even a *finger*, to be unable to close an open *mouth*, or turn the *head*. In each case you are inactivating the muscles and also the conscious pathways of control of those muscles.

Hint. Here it is common practice to build up the effect stage by stage, starting with those movements that come least easily, and *giving little time for the action to be attempted*. Suppose, for example, you have a subject with a hand laid flat and relaxed on the knee and say, "Now your fingers are going to become more and more relaxed. As they do so they will become harder and harder to move. At this very moment your fingers are so relaxed that you will find it hard to move just one of them. (*Speaking quickly*) Just *try* to lift the ring finger on your left hand: No! **you can't**! Now *try* the middle finger on the right! No! **You can't**! And all the fingers are the same, and so are your feet: more and more relaxed."

Now in fact it is NOT that easy, even if you are on the ball, to switch attention to rather an unusual action: moving only a ring finger, and getting it to move in a second. And the hypnotist is taking advantage of that, by swiftly moving on to another muscle. Now after a few steps like that he will be managing nicely to reduce any resistance because the evidence of the subject's own experience *seems* to show that what the hypnotist says is true: and that the muscles cannot actual be moved. After that it gets easier and easier to make the subject believe that there is no way in which he or she CAN move.

Building up from simple muscular systems to act on higher order systems.

Automatic writing

All the above are working with rather lower level aspects of the muscular system. But you can use these as a foundation on which to build up to higher level systems. As an example of this you might set the goal of *automatic writing* in which you will build on the fact that you can get a finger to make small involuntary movements up to the point at which it is, equally involuntarily, forming entire sentences on paper.

In doing this I would like you to remember that you have already done something like this with the easier visual system: you have encouraged the spontaneous emergence of seemingly meaningful scenarios which were not consciously determined. The only difference here is that the output is to the hand and not to the visual pathways in the brain.

Hint: You should again aim to build up to this in stages. First get *some* finger movement, as you have done before. Then let the subject be in a comfortable position and holding a pencil or pen on some paper, then you can suggest that the pen will move randomly - perhaps smoothly and perhaps jerkily; then, once this is happening, you build up to suggesting that it will create doodles. (Reflect that most of us will make doodles with no conscious input when we are listening on the phone. So this is no great thing.) Then, when the doodles are being produced smoothly you can suggest that some of the doodles look like an "e" or an "l" and suggest the formation of simple words - "eel" for example. Then you can suggest that other words will come, i.e. you are starting to activate that part of the brain that is involved in the production of *words*. Then, when a few random words are coming quite easily you aim to activate a higher part still of the verbal system and suggest that whole sentences will now come. The result, although a lot slower and less informative than the equivalent production of stories by the visual system, has a kind of dramatic quality since *everyone* can see the result.

Notice the feedback loop involved in which you are patiently using a small involuntary change in one part of the system to build up to expectation of an involuntary change in a related system, a change which therefore is more likely to arise, and then is in turn used to build up the expectation of change in yet

another related system, and so on. In general you should allow more time for all this, as you work from system to system. But of course, as always, the changes will come more quickly in some people than others, and you may be lucky enough to come across some people who can go almost at once to full automatic writing.

Involuntary activation of the vocal system

At the lowest level of the vocal system we simply have the muscles controlling the *vocal chords.* Why not see if you can produce an involuntary activation of these?

Hint: Focus attention on breathing; then on the sound of the out breath, then suggest a slight sighing might develop, then increase its intensity - probably some sound like "aah". (A feedback loop, as usual, in which a slight change leads to expectation of a greater change which leads to more change, and so on.)

Once you have achieved this (which is the equivalent of an involuntary movement of a finger) you might start to look for the involuntary activation of the *verbal* system.

Hint: Start with the simple sound that you have obtained. And then suggest that there will be some involuntary motion of the lips or tongue which will change the sound. (You might then get a "ma" or "aa-oo-aa".) Then after a while you might introduce something like the following into your script, "Now that your mouth can form all sort of sounds, it can also form words. I wonder what words will come? Do not control them. Just let a word come with each breath." And in this way you can gradually get the sounds to form words.

The formation of sentences and verbalising of meaning involves a higher order system again, but you might like to aim for that. It is the verbal equivalent of the creativity of the visual imagination that you have already explored. Or it is the equivalent of automatic writing, as above. You might just say, "Now those words are the building blocks of phrases. Just let them come more and more freely. There will be no meaning at first, but they will gradually, *of their own accord*, start to come together to make more and more sense. You can listen to them with interest, as if someone else is talking. Do not try to change them yourself, though."

Occasionally these methods of opening up channels of communication which are not under conscious control will give access to some high level system in the mind which has not been in communication with the conscious centres for some reason. This can be of great importance in a therapeutic context, but you would be best to avoid such things if you are not working under supervision.

Sensory systems

At the lowest level you will be simply aiming to increase or decrease the activity of the wide range of sensory systems that the body is provided with. (Try to forget the phrase "the *five* senses" - it involves only a rough categorisation)

You have already done this at a simple level: you have for example aroused a sensation of *touch* - of a slight tickle, when there is nothing there, and in relaxing a hand or arm you will probably have reached a point where it is unable to feel whatever it is that it is resting on. In that way you will have on the one hand made the system so inactive that it is signalling nothing, or so active that it is signalling something that is not really there.

Here are just a few ideas of other goals you might have, working simply with the palm or back of a hand,

with the eyes closed. Aim at getting the subject to feel the sensation *of something moving* on the hand. Then of *fur* or *silk* or *leather* or *paper* or *metal*. Then of a *glove* on the hand. Then *heat* or *cold*. Then *pain* or *numbness*. Strictly speaking the sensors from touch are different from those for temperature and those for pain, so you are really working with three distinct senses here, united by all relating to the hand.

Hint: A good starting point for the above is to suggest (as usual taking time), "Now in a while I am going to draw a thin thread over your hand. Just signal *when* you can feel it." (You will not actually draw a thread over the hand: the subject will be imagining it.)

Note that you are not then leaving the subject the question of *whether* or not there is a sensation, but only *when* it will appear. It will therefore be *expected*. And the expectation is always fertile ground in which the sensation itself will grow.

This principle is used quite often in hypnosis. (As it is in selling! Don't ask the customer, "Do you want to buy this or not?" but always "Would you prefer the economical model or the one with all the extras?" or "Will you be paying today or on credit?" - you don't want the customer to be wondering *whether* he will buy, only *which* or *when* or *how*.)

Once you have achieved the sensation of the thread it is that much easier to build up to the other materials. Once these sensations have been noticed you can move quite easily from a feeling of wool or leather to a glove of the same material. Once you have got the sensation of metal you can start to work on the idea that the metal is *hot* or *cold*. It has been recorded in some people that a redness will develop in the place that you suggest the heat to be. To produce the feeling of cold it might work better with some to go for the idea that there is *ice* on the hand. *Pain* can be imagined if you suggest that a needle will be used, but touch only with something like a pencil. If the person is expecting the needle then the message from the nerves will be interpreted by higher centres as the touch of a needle. And the thing can work the other way. If a light touch is firmly expected then even if you pinch quite hard it will only be felt as a light touch.

NB However, I do not recommend aiming at inducing unpleasant experiences of any kind. The reason from your own point of view is that it will tend to produce a more and more unwilling attitude on the part of your friend who is acting the subject.

Notice that whatever is being "sensed" in the above instances is in fact an hallucination, meaning something that appears in the mind as a sensation of a real thing but is only a real sensation.

Of course those same senses can be activated and altered in any other part of the body in rather similar ways. As an opposite to the imaginary glove on the hand you might like to try to produce the sensation of a *naked foot* in one that in fact is safely in a shoe.

Hint: a visualisation involving being on the beach might help here, with suggestions of a slight breeze.

You might see if the suggestion of some material being drawn over or placed on the *forehead* is more or less readily felt than on the hands.

In a pet lover you might well find it easy to get a very strong sense of *a pet lying in the lap*: this will include feelings of pressure, or warmth and (if it is a cat purring) even a slight vibration.

For *all-body sensations* you may already have discovered that it is not hard in many people to evoke the feeling of *warmth* that lying in the sun commonly produces. You could also try the feeling of *warmth*

plus gentle pressure that lying in bed will bring, or the feeling of *water flowing* all over you that swimming will bring.

Taste and smell

These two senses are closely related, so that in fact much of what we think of as taste is really sensed by the nose. You may try to get your friend either to smell or taste something that is not there, or to alter or ignore a smell or taste that *is*.

Taste receptors basically can distinguish sweet, sour, salty and bitter. All flavours that are not a combination of these have at least some smell component. (Think about how impoverished taste seems to become when a heavy cold blocks out any contribution from the nose.)

Smell

An imaginary smell.

Hint: It may be enough to insert into a script something like the following. (*Sniff as if smelling something*) "Can you smell that? What is it?"

In that way you are making it easier than if you suggest a specific smell. Specific smells that you *might* aim for are those of *baking* or *coffee* on the pleasant side and perhaps *antiseptic* on the unpleasant side. But **hint** it will be easiest to evoke something that you have found beforehand to be a smell that the subject reacts to strongly in everyday life.

In order to change a real smell you will need something like a *scent* or a *flower* or some drink available. You might aim at the goal of getting the smells to seem like some other smell that you suggest, or of no smell at all.

Hyperacuity of smell. It will be interesting to find out whether you can enable your friend to detect scents with a greater acuity than under normal conditions. (Very useful in a wine-taster!) It is, for example, not too hard under normal conditions to recognise blindfold who out of a group of people has handled a book simply by sniffing at it and then at their hands. The interest is to arrange the test in such a way that under ordinary conditions a person finds it hard to tell who has handles a book but that after you have used your hypnotic script they can tell much more easily. THEN you will know that you have accomplished something!

Taste

You might start by cutting a piece of potato and ask if your friend can guess, by tasting it, if it is an eating apple or a cooking apple.

If you can make *pure water taste sweet* then you have created a hallucination in the taste receptors.

If you can make *lemon juice taste like water* then you have inactivated the effect of the sour receptors.

Hint: when you are starting it will help if the water comes out of a bottle which is labelled for a sweet drink and the lemon juice out of a water bottle. Not *every* person can be expected to produce sensory distortions easily.

Hint: it will in general also help if, as usual, you work up to the stronger tastes, and start with the milder

ones

Hearing

You may well have found friends in whom it is easy to arouse a sense of hearing something that is not there. You might, for example, have encouraged them to visualise a scene with which the sound of voices or birds is naturally associated and can be heard by them. Even without visualisation it is possible with some people to get them to hear the (apparent) sound of distant music or traffic or voices by direct suggestion. Try, for example, holding your head as if you are listening to a distant faint sound and ask, "Can you hear that faint music? Where is it coming from?"

You can also make your goal the opposite one: of getting the subject NOT to hear a sound that actually IS there. On the whole you can expect to find this harder, for the following reason. If you *name* the thing that is not to be heard then that in itself rather predisposes the brain to listen out for it first in order to ignore it. Possible examples are the sound of a clock ticking, or traffic noise (if present).

Hints: (1) The first method is therefore to narrow down the aural attention by emphasising what the friend *should* listen to: for example the sound of your voice. The phrase, "But you will always be aware of the sound of my voice" is quite a common one in hypnotic scripts. You need only change this, after a while, to "But you will **only** be aware of the sound of my voice."

(2) However under some conditions you might start by getting an exaggerated attention paid to the specific sound that you want ignored. Since it is in fact very hard to maintain such an exaggerated attention for all that long, it then becomes possible to suggest that it will become less and less interesting and finally be ignored.

You might also set yourself the goal of making one sound be taken for another. Thus there might be some background noise of a fan or motor and you could suggest that there is in fact a musical rhythm in it. Or you might have a recording of "white noise" - simply mushy sound - or the sound of waves and suggest that it is a result of recording a voice under difficult conditions but that if the subject listens carefully he or she will hear some of the words.

Visual system

You will have seen how easy it can be to alter the content of the visual system when the eyes are closed. You might try to achieve positive and negative visual hallucinations *with the eyes open*. As examples of positive hallucinations you might try to create a script which will include the suggestion of something like, "When you open your eyes you will notice that while they were closed I have placed a book on my desk. I think you will find the title interesting, and I would like you to read it out."

As an example of a negative hallucination (failing to see something that IS there) you might say, "While your eyes are closed I am removing and hiding your gloves/books/wallet. It might be some time before you can figure out where it has gone."

Hint(1): It will be an idea to have practiced other forms of posthypnotic suggestion first (Chapter 6)

Hint(2): These are likely to work better if you "dress up" the suggestion a bit. In both of the above cases you will notice that the mind of the subject has been focussed on some issue *other* than the appearance or nonappearance of some object. In the first case the question is what is the title of the book, and in the latter on where has the object gone to.

With some, of course, this will not be necessary and it is comparatively easy to produce hallucinations by straightforward suggestion.

As a rather amusing or embarrassing example of how strong an effect expectation can have on what one sees, the following happened to me when I was a student. I had been going out with one girl; then we split up for a while. At about that point in time she told me she was NOT going to a certain party. I went, found another girl to take an interest in, and spend the whole evening in very close proximity to her. It turned out later that the first girl had changed her mind, DID come to the party, and was in the same room as us for most of the time. But I did not notice her at all. I did not expect to see her, therefore for me she was not there. Needless to say she was pretty indignant when she told me about it later!

This shows that negative hallucinations do NOT necessarily require active hypnotic techniques.

Orientation

The sense of orientation can be affected like any other. It is usually quite simple to suggest to a friend with closed eyes that they are very slowly rotating to and fro, or rocking backwards and forwards.

Hint: If straightforward suggestion does not work then you might use ideas and/or pictures which suggest that the chair is a swivel chair or a rocking chair

If the friend has been on a roller coaster then you might well be able to get them vividly to experience the accelerations that *that* involves. But riding a horse, driving a car fast and so on can produce similar feelings.

You might also try to induce the feeling of falling.

(Many people *dream* of falling and it may well be because at a certain point when waking up higher centres of the brain are awake but the nerves connecting with the ears (which signal accelerations and gravity) are *not* yet awake, and so are sending no messages. No messages normally means that you are falling freely, and so the brain will interpret the situation in that way.)

You should of course first check that the fear of falling does not have the proportions of a panic for your friend otherwise problems will arise. And again you might well start with some small examples like the feeling of jumping down a few steps, and only afterwards move on the prolonged feelings of falling - if your subject has been parachuting it should be quite easy since you are then only activating a memory.

Other Goals

The above list is far from complete. Perhaps you could use your imagination to think of other variations on what I have listed.

Autonomous systems

However there are many essential systems of the brain, nervous system and body that I have NOT suggested that you attempt to affect. The digestive system is an example of this. The reason is simple. Since, we presume, any such system is working *normally* in your friend, the only thing that you would be able to achieve is to get it to work **abnormally**. Hypno*therapy*, which you have not learned anything about on this course, is concerned with precisely the opposite state of affairs. A client comes for treatment precisely because some system is working *abnormally* and hypnotic techniques are used to get

it to work **normally** again.

It seems to me to be good practice NOT to mess about with vital automatic processes in systems that are working well already and so I would strongly advise that you do NOT attempt to change them.

You may have noticed that most of the things I **have** suggested you try to change also involve some form of **abnormal** activity of some system or other. However the systems I have chosen are ones that are quite accessible to consciousness, which will soon correct any changes you have made if it needs to.

NOTE ALSO that I have also not included some of the more amusing hypnotic effects produced by stage hypnotists. The reason is that I am uneasy about the use of hypnosis under those conditions. It is one thing to attempt some of the comparatively straightforward simple examples above in order to increase your understanding of what happens in hypnosis *preferably under supervision*. It is quite another for you to attempt something that may require a **substantial** alteration to quite fundamental systems in someone's mind such as the total elimination of a sense of humour or normal inhibitions or of self-consciousness.

I would also suggest that you read my short article in which I point out that in some fundamental ways in which hypno*therapy*, although based on an understanding of hypnotic processes is very often acting more like *de*hypnosis than hypnosis!

Thus no client will ever come to you asking for his elbow to be made incapable of bending. But you *might* get someone with snooker elbow (US read as pool), in which he is unable to release a bent elbow to take a shot. If you have learned how to make an arm unbendable then you have insight into how to do the reverse that he wants. You will never get anyone wanting you to make him grind his teeth involuntarily, though you have now learned how to do so. But there are some people who suffer from this condition (often in their sleep) - it is called bruxism) - and need the abnormality removed. The work you have done will at least give you some insight into the nature of the problem and of methods for affecting it.

Conclusions

In this short practical course you should have gained quite a lot of practical understanding of how to change the activity of a wide range of internal systems of the human being. This should be more than just having learned a cookery-book list of recipes, but be an *understanding* which means knowing *why* you are doing something, *what* should happen and *how* to adapt your approach if it does not happen.

When you have got that far you are in a good position to move on to use this understanding to help people in whom some system or other is NOT acting as it should.

This involves understanding yet more - some of which you will find here in The Principles of Hypnotherapy

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