

≈ HYPNOTHERAPY ≈

## Tapping in to Our Intuitive Wisdom

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Hypnosis is a naturally induced trance state, which bypasses the rational mind and opens the subconscious to receive suggestions. While in this state it is possible to hear and record messages both from the hypnotist and from the person's own intuitive wisdom.

Origins • Hypnosis, or altered state

awareness, can be traced back to the earliest human cultures where shamans used dance, drumming and chanting to evoke a trance state. In 1773, Franz Anton Mesmer introduced hypnosis to the modern world using magnetic passes over the body to induce a trance state. James Esdail, a British surgeon in the late 1800's, performed 3000 operations, 300 of them major, using only hypnosis as anesthesia (documented in *Hypnosis in Medicine and Surgery*). Interestingly, because physicians in those days did not wash their hands before surgery, there was a 50% post-operative mortality rate. Using hypnosis as the only anesthesia, Esdail's mortality rate dropped to 5%. Somehow, the hypnosis appeared to also boost the patient's natural immunity.

In the 1890's, Freud was inspired by a doctor named Breuer, one of the best medical hypnotists of his time, to incorporate hypnotherapy into his practice. However, Freud himself had little or no skill with hypnosis and believed all his subjects needed to attain a deep trance. When he failed to induce this state in the majority of his patients, he decided it was not a useful tool and thus blocked the acceptance of hypnosis for fifty years.

Finally in 1955 the British Medical Association adopted a resolution approving the use of hypnosis and urging doctors to develop this skill. The American Medical Association followed suit in a similar resolution in 1958. Despite these recommendations, very few medical schools teach hypnotherapy. Since the late sixties a few schools have begun to offer these courses at a post graduate level.

**Research and Misperceptions** • Extensive scientific research over the years has supported the effectiveness of hypnotherapy. It can be used to stop habits such as smoking, overeating and other addictions, to eliminate fears of flying, public speaking, or other phobias, and to develop strengths such as sports performance. It is effective at reducing pain, depression, and insomnia, as well as digestive disorders, asthma, allergies, and skin problems. It has gained respect in the medical establishment even though it has not been incorporated in to the mainstream of Western medicine.

There are a number of misconceptions about hypnosis; the most common being that the person is unconscious during the session. In fact, he or she is as aware as one might be in any naturally induced trance state, such as daydreaming or losing oneself in a good book or movie. Another misunderstanding is that the client can be controlled by the hypnotist. In reality, the client maintains a parallel track awareness throughout. Part of the consciousness is deeply engrossed in the inner movie, and the other part is aware of the therapy office and the presence of the therapist. Hypnosis cannot cause someone to do something they don't want to do or that goes against their moral code.

**Variations** • In hypnotherapy there are two quite different approaches: programming and deprogramming. Programming works well only if there is an empty space in which to receive it. In other words, if there are deep beliefs running contrary to the input, they will prevent the new material from taking root. If, after attempts at programming, repeated affirmations or guided imagery, a person still has not succeeded in changing their behavior, it is a good indicator of the need for deprogramming or de-hypnosis. This is done in a process called age regression, where the person is guided to the root cause of the limiting belief or negative self-image that is stopping the new positives from taking hold. As every good gardener knows, seeds have a better chance to grow if you weed the garden first.

Once that experience is healed, the belief can be changed and brought into present awareness. Then the affirmations and imagery can find a permanent and welcome place in the person's psyche.

The principle behind all of this is that our beliefs directly impact our actions. Belief in limitation itself limits performance.

Simply put, if you believe you can't you can't. If you believe you can, you can!

What is less simple is that many of our beliefs are buried deep in our subconscious and therefore we are not always aware of what we believe beneath the surface of our daily thoughts. It is the job of the skilled hypnotherapist to help a person penetrate these layers to get to their deeper beliefs. Then, once those are revealed, it is much easier to transform them into a new and more positive direction.

Whether you are an Olympic swimmer, ball player, smoker, weight watcher, suffering a chronic illness, or just trying to improve your golf game, hypnosis can help you let go of worn out beliefs and replace them with new and positive directions and attitudes. Then you can truly express your talent and be all that you were meant to be.

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✦ *Lorraine Bennington* ✦

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*Lorraine Bennington I first came to Maui in 1971 and spent six months here. When I returned to Canada, it was with a clear intent to return and spend a large part of my life on this beautiful island. It took over twenty years for this to materialize, but in the meantime I studied with Dr. Serge King on Kauai and visited the other islands regularly. In 1993 my family and I moved full time to Kauai and then in 1997 to Maui. My spiritual journey has included visiting India, following a guru, living in an ashram and years of meditating two or more hours daily. Being a mother has been the most invaluable part of my spiritual path, as my two children are my light and my greatest teachers! I did my formal psychology training at McGill University, in Montreal, and received an M.Ed. in Counseling in 1979. In the early 70's I began my practice of hypnosis, primarily doing age regression and re-dreaming, which involves guiding people into trance to reenter their dream state and change dream outcomes. I have been blessed to study hypnosis with many great teachers. Over time, I have evolved my own style, which leads people to the root cause of whatever is stopping them from living their full life potential. People's higher selves are invited to participate in sessions. Lorraine Bennington M.Ed. (Counseling) has a hypnotherapy practice in Makawao, Maui. She can be reached at 808.573.3383 or at [content@maui.net](mailto:content@maui.net).*

