

Self-Hypnosis, the Link to the Mind!

By Larry Garrett

The need to know hypnosis well is imperative to achieve the success that we fantasize. The success is there; we just need the right combination to enter into this new world for easy success. With the knowledge or skill to apply self-hypnosis properly, goals become reality.

How did self-hypnosis start? Emile Coue' would look in the mirror and say, "Every day in every way, I am getting better and better." He is the founder of self-hypnosis, then called auto-suggestion. Since then, many have experimented and found different ways to apply or use self-hypnosis. Most of these methods work well, with a different level of success for different individuals. I believe that anyone can learn self-hypnosis and have ultimate success toward achieving their goals. Similar to any other form of training, practice is the key!

The quickest way to understand self-hypnosis is to view it as training requiring the logical mind and the emotional mind to cooperate with each other. The objective and the subjective combined! A good example of this is learning to ride a bike. To learn to ride a bike, you would first learn how to sit on the seat, hold the handlebars and then push on the pedals. This is the logical part. You would then need to learn balance to keep from falling. This is the subjective part. In learning self-hypnosis, you must learn a technique to achieve the relaxation that is needed. You then learn the experience of change that is occurring within you. This becomes the personal skill of achievement. You must learn about yourself from within. A favorite phrase of mine is "Until we have a stomachache, we didn't know we had a stomach." The message is to know that you have a stomach before it aches and it will never hurt again. If you learn about yourself from within, you will always know the ability of self-control. When the mind is in balance, everything operates in harmony.

Self-hypnosis is the direct link to the mind, both consciously and subconsciously. Self-hypnosis gives the mind a message that is far stronger than most other communications. When we use self-hypnosis, it becomes a clear channel for all information to be heard and usually accepted by the subconscious mind because of the calmness of this type of communication.

Much like riding a bike, there are many things that you need to learn quickly and well. Not all of the techniques work for all students. Many manuals or books on self-hypnosis will give instructions with a meaningful interpretation but are not always easy to follow. Many authors will use a language that is very conscious or rational. "Cigarettes are bad for you!" (Not to the subconscious mind.) "They will smell and taste terrible." (Stale cigarettes are better than none.) "Losing weight will make you feel better." (Food makes me feel better.) "The food will taste terrible." (Stale crackers are better than nothing.) "You will have no fears." (Fears protect you.) "You will feel confident." (Confidence might create expectations.) These are well meaning instructions but, as you can see by the comments, the subconscious mind has a whole different view. The interpretation is usually very left hemisphere or logical. The words can almost be academic. Often these suggestions are very positive, forceful and repetitive. This information can be very accurate if we were going to communicate to the conscious mind, but lacks great strength when speaking to the subconscious mind.

The conscious mind uses a different language than the subconscious mind. A good example would be trying to use a document on your computer that was written for one program and attempting to open it with another program. The second program would have difficulty in opening the document. When using words that are mostly left hemisphere or logical, the subconscious mind has difficulty in understanding. If you were to tell the subconscious mind while under hypnosis that you would feel better losing weight or quitting smoking, these suggestions would often be rejected by the subconscious mind. Why else would we have so many intelligent people not be able to control themselves? We must also understand that the subconscious mind might have a very strong and positive reason for the inappropriate behavior or habit. Inappropriate to the logical mind, that is! If the behavior or habit is of an emotional nature, it creates strength far greater than you can imagine. A great phrase is, "When the emotions and logic are in conflict, the emotions will always win."

The reason the subconscious mind would reject the suggestions or instructions can be that the subconscious mind has been told somewhere along life that eating or smoking is good. It was told this message in a very subjective way. Maybe eating was a message of love, well being, protection, or health. Maybe smoking was a message of relaxation, confidence, or strength. When these messages were learned, they were told to the subconscious mind in the language that it understands the best. It was taught or instructed by words that implied a feeling or picture, not just words of thought, but words of meaning. Look at the messengers that gave us these messages, our parents, teachers, and peers. They wouldn't lie to us. These messages carry a power with them because of their origin and the time in our life that we received them. Words of thought are words that the mind interprets as logical instructions that "should" be good for us. Words of thought seldom have any emotional or personal meaning to them.

"Should" is always an imposition to the subconscious mind. If you want to see an example of resistance by the subconscious mind, you need only to tell yourself or have someone else tell you that you "should" do something. "You should quit smoking" or "You should eat healthier." This type of instruction, to the subconscious mind, is like oil and water, maybe worse. It is a direct imposition to the instructions that were learned many years ago when the habits started. You can almost feel a physical resistance when someone tells you that you "should" do something. Of course, I am speaking of habits such as eating or smoking, but we can interpret this to any activity that we find uncomfortable to our logical mind. Health worries, emotions, addictions, strength, intelligence, love, knowledge, relationships and many more conflicts between the logical and the emotional mind are examples of how the subconscious mind will resist an instruction or message that it has not been programmed to accept. What we know comes from the logic and what we feel comes from the emotions. Usually, what we feel rules our lives!

We can change our life by learning the language that the subconscious mind uses to hold on to these old messages and re-educating it. Try to view an experience that the subconscious mind has. It might be a message that was, at one time, a positive (or perceived as a positive). After many years, an old habit forms a path in the brain that you follow with ease when you feel a discomfort in life. A physical change in the brain and body will often create another resistance to change. The brain will find the easiest path (or way out) by reaching for an old message that says, "This will make you feel better." Habits that are not good for us, relationships that are uncomfortable, and fears that cripple us are good examples of how the subconscious mind will look

for an easy way out. Is it not true that you are protected from what you fear by having an uncomfortable feeling and thus you stay away from it?

The trigger for the subconscious mind is the feeling of stress. Stress is a poison to the mind and body. "Fight or flight" is active in the experience of stress. This means, kill or run. Neither is possible, in most cases, so the mind reaches for what will be comforting. Food, cigarettes, love, weakness, and disease... all feel better when we are under stress. As you can see, it becomes difficult to tell the subconscious mind that it is wrong to eat too much, smoke, or love the wrong person. It has learned that any of these will feel safe. Safe is the key to the subconscious mind's existence. When I first learned about hypnosis, one of my instructors made this profound statement: "The subconscious mind is there for one purpose, to keep us safe." This statement can be used in many areas of life that we would like to change. When a smoker or an over-eater cannot have their choice of habit, they will often become anxious. When you are standing on a corner waiting for a bus in a strange neighborhood, you may experience that same anxious feeling. When you are in a relationship and it is threatened, you feel anxious. When you are ill, rather than learning to relax, you begin to feel anxious as if you can assist your healing by worrying or becoming nervous about your outcome. Another program you may have is the need to worry to make things become okay. It is difficult for many people to not worry because it feels as though you are not doing anything if you don't worry. All of these are great examples of how the subconscious mind would have a tendency to resist any logical or conscious suggestions. The power is incredible.

How does Self-Hypnosis get into the subconscious mind?

The subconscious mind has many openings that allow access or communication. There are access points with pictures, feelings, smells and thoughts. The greatest success that I have experienced is by intent. Intent seems to be the spark of energy that precedes emotions, pictures or thoughts. It seems to be the spark that accomplishes all. The process is first we have intent, then an emotion, then a thought and then an action. We often hear that thoughts are things. They are! How did we get those thoughts? Why are we not able to follow all of our thoughts toward success? How do we get negative thoughts that sabotage our success?

If you were to imagine the subconscious mind as though it had a door on it, and occasionally it opened to allow access, then you would need to know how to open this door and when it is open. We have begun to discuss how to open it, but how do you know that it is open and is allowing information to enter? Can you tell after you have done self-hypnosis that it had opened and accepted the instructions or suggestions? If yes, will it be strong enough to wipe out all of the other messages that have entered into the subconscious mind since we were born? That is when many of your inappropriate suggestions began, when you were born.

The day you came home from the hospital is the day that you began to be programmed. If you are male, you probably were put into a crib with a blue blanket and a ball. If you are female, maybe you were put in a crib with a pink blanket with a doll. From that moment on, you were told who you are, how you should act, and what to do to be comfortable. The bio-computer within you began to be programmed. This is what you are attempting to change now. The many messages that have been told to you were good then but are not necessarily good for you at the

present. Is it good to eat to feel better now that you have become overweight? Is still true that we should not speak to strangers? This would be so challenging if you chose a career in sales. It is not good for you to allow old messages that no longer fit your needs to stay lodged in your mind. It is time to clean it out!

How can you clean out your mind?

“What a shower is to the body, self-hypnosis is to the mind.” The mind needs to be cleaned as the body does. When is the last time that you cleaned out all of your old thoughts that seem to contaminate your mind? Most of us have never learned how to clean out our thoughts. In fact, we have been conditioned to keep everything in our minds forever. We have been taught that it is a misfortune to forget something so we try to never forget anything. Can you imagine your mind continually attempting to keep everything in it, stored for a later use? We even learn to keep bad stuff in our memory. It is a conditioning that seems to imply that if you remember bad stuff, it will never happen again. It will protect you in some way if you always remember. At times, an uncomfortable memory is much deeper and not easily recalled on a conscious level, but it is strong. Often, it is even stronger than if you can easily recall the memory. The mind becomes overwhelmed with so much thinking and then you lose the ability to control your life. The ability to control yourself, your mind, your actions, words and habits becomes more difficult with additional activity in your mind. This is called “Over-reactivity of the mind.” The mind becomes overwhelmed and you continually think and lose the ability to think of what you want. Instead, you begin to think of what you have been conditioned to think. Our conditioning becomes automatic, especially when under stress. With so many thoughts, we become stressed! We become what we think about all day long. What do you think about all day long? Do you think good thoughts? Do you think about your habit all the time? The mind does what it is used to doing and believes that to be true or easier. The values or rules of the subconscious mind are different than those of the conscious mind. The subconscious mind believes what we think about the most is true. It has more strength. The conscious mind uses a little more logic in this process. The conscious mind says that is logical or appropriate is right or true. There is one challenge with this statement. When the emotional and the logical mind are in conflict, the emotional or subconscious mind will always win.

This becomes the main reason to learn self-hypnosis. It provides for the best communications to the subconscious mind. Once you learn to communicate with the subconscious mind, you can rule the universe of your mind. Anything and everything is possible when you learn the skill of communicating to the subconscious mind. You need only to ask yourself what is your mind capable of. If anything is a possibility, it becomes easy to understand that life can improve and change. I might sound like a Ford dealer selling Fords as I imply self-hypnosis is so great. It is great as a tool to create the change you want, but it is not the only tool. Obviously meditation, biofeedback, prayer, yoga and many more skills of the mind are good. Self-hypnosis, based on my experience and knowledge, is more appropriate because it allows us the ability to change quickly and very precisely. We are a society of speed and accuracy.

Intent is a magical quality of the mind that will almost immediately create a change. Intent is so subtle and yet so strong. It is less than a thought but greater than a story. Intent, when understood, can create miracles. Once the mind has begun intent, the wheels have begun to turn and

the journey is underway. Usually it is difficult to stop once in motion. Learning the skills of intent would be similar to balancing a bike. It just happens once you learn it, without thought, just an action. A thought is not always strong enough to achieve your goals. At times, with just a thought, you could spend many years wanting to accomplish a goal. Have you ever had a friend that speaks for years about something that they are going to do and others just do it without even a mention? Once you realize that you are sure you want something, without reservation or fear, you need only to express this intent to your subconscious mind and it is under way.

Now for the technique to open the door to the subconscious mind!

There are as many techniques to reach the subconscious mind as there are people on this earth. It is a very unique quality inside of you that determines the best method for you. If you took an art class, a good instructor would lead you to your own unique skill. Allow me to teach you a technique that will assist you in finding the method that will work best for you. Then you can find your own unique method that best serves your needs.

There is a great phrase that says, “All hypnosis is self-hypnosis.” Even in traditional hypnosis, the hypnotist is using a technique they feel would be best for you. It is up to you to allow the hypnosis to take hold. I have often thought that the best hypnotist is you, as you know how and what your mind is feeling at that moment of hypnosis. The skill will be for you to achieve the hypnotic state and then to know what to do with it once you have achieved it. The art student will learn a style that works for them and then decide what they will create. Self-hypnosis is a self-creation! I have attempted many techniques and believe that, initially, none work as well as a progressive relaxation. The theory of hypnosis is to quiet the mind or to focus the thoughts to a specific direction. A progressive relaxation technique will quiet and focus the mind well.

Many instructors will suggest how to give yourself suggestions when you are doing self-hypnosis. Often the instructions are to word your instructions positively, repetitively, and strongly. Often, once you have entered into self-hypnosis, your mind will feel altered or spacey and it might become difficult to recall what your instructions were to be. I would like to suggest a different approach. Before you do anything, think of your goal or the wall that is in the way of your goal. Feel intent as though you have already achieved your goal. Now, follow the instructions that I am about to teach you. To better understand intent, imagine yourself when you have used intent. Almost always, when you have used intent, you have achieved your goal. Let’s use the example of looking for a new home. You might be visiting a potential living space and, in your mind, you begin to create the way you would layout your furniture. As you begin to layout the entire living space, you have created intent. You now have intent to purchase or rent. Most likely when you have reached this position, you have decided that it is the home for you. That is the power of intent. At times, without knowing it, intent can be formed and the wheels begin to turn and we have a new aspect of our life without ever knowing how we reached that level. Positive or negative, intent will create what we have put out.

Time to do the self-hypnosis!

Prepare yourself as though you were going to practice your art class. Choose a time that will be free from distractions. Unplug your phone or turn it off. Choose a time when others are not around. Self-hypnosis is a very personal and intimate experience. It can be weakened or vio-

lated by the smallest of distractions. I have heard feedback from many that said someone walking in the room or the slamming of a door would create anger within them. The experience that you are attempting to create is an experience of oneness. The relationship becomes very profound with you. At that moment, you want no one or nothing to interfere with your journey. The quest is to be free from all thoughts, feelings or emotions. There will be an open feeling without question as you learn to achieve this state of mind. It will feel most likely like nothing, but everything. It will feel light as well as heavy; it will be quiet as well as active. There will be a definite separation of mind. The conscious and the subconscious are usually together in thought. They separate usually only when there is a level of stress. That is when and why a habit will exist so easy when stress occurs. The door that I spoke of earlier will then open and allow old messages to come out to the surface. When you are using self-hypnosis, you will experience this door opening to allow the entry to change or re-educate the subconscious mind.

After you have prepared for your journey into the subconscious mind and removed all distractions, lie on your back in a comfortable position. You might choose your bed, the floor, an easy chair, or the couch. Elevate your head a little, maybe with a double pillow, almost in a position to read. Close your eyes as to reduce any conscious distractions. The goal is to focus and reduce the activity in your conscious mind. A few slow deep breaths might be appropriate. These deep breaths will allow you to begin to calm. Deep breathing will always calm you as it slows down your system. After you have taken a few deep breaths, it would be positive to take an inventory of yourself and your state of mind. Are you physically comfortable? If not, readjust yourself until you are. Are you beginning to quiet your thoughts? If not, resolve whatever is in your mind to attempt to quiet it. Quiet all thoughts becomes the key. This is difficult for many people, but it becomes easier with practice.

As you lie back and have taken inventory, it becomes time to leave the logical mind behind for a little while. You have installed your intent, taken a deep breath and now it is time to shut down your system. You can begin by letting your body fall into place. This could be much like floating in water. You just let go and your body will know what to do. Of course, if you are usually active in mind or body, it may seem difficult at first but it can get much easier as you practice. I am sure that the first time you got on a bike, you wobbled or possibly even fell a few times before you understood balance. As difficult as it would be to explain balance, it would seem that difficult to explain this altered state that we are speaking of. It will be similar to balancing the bike, once you have experienced even a small sample of it, you begin to add to it and, in a very short amount of time, you perfect the balance of mind.

An excellent technique that seldom fails is to focus on different parts of your body in this manner: Begin by thinking of your feet for a moment. How often do we really think of our feet? Seldom, unless they hurt. Learn about your feet. Allow your mind to scan your feet and know them well. Now that you have done this scanning, gently tighten up your feet, first toes, then and the arches and now create awareness to your feet being tight. This is a representation of a challenge in your life, habits, emotions etc. As you have begun to create this awareness to your feet being tight, begin in a very slow gentle way allowing them to relax or release. The skill is to allow this relaxation to occur as slow as possible. The skill of releasing the tightness slowly is to become aware of the release of the wall or habit that exists within your mind. Often we want something that we don't like gone immediately. It just doesn't happen that way. It is deep and

has been with you a very long time. It will not release quickly. The representation of the feet relaxing slowly will allow you to learn patience in change. The mind is very resistant to change yet if you are gentle, it will cooperate. While you are beginning this technique of progressively relaxing your body, it is a great time to re-establish your intent. You can do this with a picture or a feeling of accomplishment or just a strong thought. I have often used an experience as though I have already accomplished this goal. It is much easier to do with the subconscious mind, as it is often resistant to anything that it has never done before. This is especially true if it has a message that this habit or behavior is very important to have (such as a fear). When you have relaxed your feet as I have instructed, you might do another inventory again. Are they relaxing? Did you relax very slowly? Do your feet feel different? Do you feel your feet at all? This last question is a very important one, as eventually, when you learn this skill well, you will have no physical feelings in your body. Your mind learns with practice to release all feelings both mentally and physically. This will be the availability to open the door to create changes. With an absence of feelings, you will be able to accomplish most any goal, as there will very few or no thoughts that will resist or create conflict. At this time, if your feet don't feel relaxed enough, do it one more time for practice and this time, attempt to release the tightness in your feet slower with great attention placed on the procedure.

Now it is time to move to the rest of your body. This is the why it is called a progressive relaxation. You are progressively relaxing each part of your body until you have completely relaxed and very little activity is occurring in your body or your mind. The mind will eventually stop most activity because the process of relaxing progressively will also cause the mind to begin to accentuate focusing. That was our goal if you recall, quieting and focusing. Both will occur as you begin to relax each part of your body.

You can become creative with this process. You can move from relaxing your feet to your lower legs in a very similar manner. You could tighten up your calves, hold them tight for a moment or so and then with the same attention as you placed on your feet, and release your lower leg muscles very slowly. Each time, you must be very aware of this relaxation or release of the body parts. Move up each part of your body in this manner until you have created the skill of just releasing each body part without the tightening. You might almost view this as the balance of a bike with the tightening representing training wheels. Most likely you might fall asleep during this process. This is very natural and quite permissible, as you have already begun the process of change with the intent in the beginning of the self-hypnosis. I had mentioned earlier that many instructors would suggest giving suggestions at this time. Two issues exist which make this difficult. One is that you become very spacey and the other issue is that you might fall asleep. When you begin with positive intents and thoughts, they will follow your movement of consciousness change and apply themselves as needed.

Remember to be creative, much like the art class or riding the bike. As you progressively relax each part of your body, you will want to learn as much as you can about the changes that are occurring. The more that you learn, like any other skill, the easier your accomplishments will be. It is beneficial that you learn about each part of your body as you relax it. You might learn that you have tightness in your hips or your chest. Maybe you will learn to release backaches or abdominal discomforts. Anything is possible once you learn about who you are and how you feel. By practicing this technique, you will create knowledge that will heighten your lifestyle and life.

The more that you learn in this manner, the more control that you will have over health, habits and actions that you no longer wish to have in your life.

You can move slowly up each part of your body and reach your head area. If you do this without falling asleep, you can learn much about your thinking, as you will begin to focus on your head as though you are focusing on your thinking. Not that they are one in the same, but we often imagine our thoughts to be in our head. For an individual that grinds their teeth or has frequent headaches, this will be an important time to become aware of tension stored in your head and you can skillfully learn to remove or reduce that tension. The sky is the limit with these techniques.

After you have finished the process that I have described, you have many options. You can allow yourself to drift off into a natural sleep. This is an excellent way of falling asleep, as it is a quiet way of falling asleep. Often many individuals fall asleep with activity in their mind. This is not conducive to good sleep as it can influence the way that you awaken. When you practice this technique, you will begin to fall asleep at peace and when you awaken, you will feel a very positive energy of body and mind. You can also have a great experience while you are relaxing in this manner. Maybe like flying a kite, you may drift around your consciousness. You will have many thoughts swimming in your head at times. It is very exciting to learn these thoughts and understand why they are there. Remember that you are opening the door of your subconscious mind and there is much activity inside that compartment. As the door opens, there will be a lot of images that will be free-associating inside of you. As minor as these thoughts may seem, they all have a very strong meaning. Learn about them and you will often find that they are the keys to unlocking another door toward your success.

Still another experience that you might have could be that you will begin to just lull in a space of consciousness much like taking a bath. You can just float without any thoughts. You will just feel as though you are cleansing. As I had mentioned earlier, you need to clean your mind occasionally and this is the method to accomplish this. Just allow yourself to lull in this space of consciousness as it is much like mediation. Nothing really happens, but much is happening. At this time, you are creating great healing factors. You are healing your body by relaxing with such profoundness. You are healing your mind by allowing it to be free from thoughts or stress. At this level of consciousness, you are creating strength in many areas, including the ability to concentrate, focus, and comprehend. The mind seldom has the ability to have such strength. We seldom learn that these options are available to us.

In conclusion, you can then either drift off as I had suggested or you can conclude the experience with some positive thoughts of well being and reinforcements of the intents or thoughts that you had in the beginning. The more often that you practice this, the easier it will become for you to accomplish greater goals. Almost anything that you can imagine is waiting for you to tap into. If you think it, you can have it.