

Lesser Known Uses of Hypnosis - Terry Moore

When you think of hypnosis, many will recall seeing hypnosis performed as entertainment at a night club, bar, or fraternity party. Maybe you saw hypnosis portrayed in a movie, TV show, or cartoon. Still others will know that people often seek hypnosis for weight management, or to stop smoking.

So, you might ask, is that pretty much the list of objectives for the use of hypnosis? Just entertainment and habit control? No this is quite an incomplete list. In clinical practice, hypnosis has the potential of being used to help with a wide range of problems and personal issues. Let's take a look.

Air travel

I think everyone will agree that air travel is a great way to get to a distant business meeting, a way to get a vacation off to a fast start, and a way to get families together at holidays and special celebrations. However, it can be a hassle. And, sometimes it can be downright scary for some travelers.

Once again, hypnosis has the potential of assisting us with being able to fly more comfortably. Dealing with the anticipation of the hassles [going through security, packing bags, tight seating in coach/economy] is the first step. Secondly, we take a look at the actual experience of flight. Many report a fear of losing control, while others note a concern with having no means of exit a kind of claustrophobia. Everyone has his or her own set of concerns occasionally built on the foundation of an actual bad experience of flight that must be understood and respected.

Hypnosis helps with rehearsal and anxiety reduction. It can help us develop the expectancy of a tolerable experience. I was delighted recently to work with a fellow who had a new grandchild in a distant city. He told me that he dearly wanted to visit the new baby, that the drive would be prohibitively long, and that he had never flown without being dead drunk. This was no longer an option, as he had gone through a sobriety program several years ago, and still attends AA. But he wanted to hold that baby in his arms!

And he did. He was elated about the ease of the flight, commenting on the surprise of his wife, noting that he was like a kid with a new bike, seeing how much fun he had looking out the window of the plane, describing the features of the farmland, rivers and cities below. He simply used his motivation and his unconscious mind to alter his anticipation of flight, to increase his ability to remain comfortable, and to help him look forward to meeting his grandbaby nose to nose.

Childbirth

Several years ago, a mom-to-be called the office, asking if I would help her with childbirth preparation. As no one had ever asked me, I was breaking new ground. I told the client that I was a newbie to this area of practice, but that I enjoyed developing new skills. I did some research on strategies, and off we went.

Since that time, I have seen a small number of pregnant women and their partners to help with childbirth preparation. I have to say that this is a joyous part of my practice. Most of the time when I work with people, we end the working relationship and I generally don't hear from them unless they need additional help. In this case, however, I get birth announcements and baby pictures! More rarely, parents bring the new baby to the office that is really special!

The general approach is to help with the overall worries about labor and delivery, with a special focus on being able to modify the sensations of childbirth. Many moms want to minimize the use of pain medications at the time of delivery, feeling that this is better for them and for their babies. Research done in other settings bear out what I hear from my childbirth clients: they feel more in charge, more comfortable, and kept the use of medications to a minimum.

I like to see couples at about the start of the third trimester. The first session is usually between 90 and 119 minutes. We get acquainted, answer questions about hypnosis, and spend the balance of the time in hypnosis. We audio record the hypnosis, and send a CD-R home with the couple, encouraging them to practice as much as needed to build responsiveness and confidence in hypnosis assisting the labor and delivery. I always encourage couples to return for additional coaching, as desired. Most don't! Yet that one extended session seems useful to a wide range of women and their partners. Some hospital based classes in hypnosis meet for five weeks, so we are being pretty efficient.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Irritable Bowel Syndrome [IBS] is sometimes lampooned in popular movies, and other media but to the sufferers of IBS, it's no laughing matter. Hypnosis has been shown in 5 year follow-up studies to be superior in results to medication. Some sufferers will continue to use medication and other medical directives to ease symptoms, but hypnosis will assist you in reducing the pain and other symptoms of IBS.

You can find more information at www.ibshypnosis.com. This site is run by Olafur Palsson, Psy.D., a North Carolina psychologist. He treats hypnosis, trains others, and conducts research in this area. While I have not traveled to see Dr. Palsson for training, he generously responded to my request to find out about his approach. Dr. Palsson's treatment protocol is a seven-session intervention conducted every other week until completion. While I don't have the five-year follow up data like he does, I can say that everyone whom I've seen for this problem reports feeling better, in more control, and

more confident about managing things more successfully in the future. If you are interested, please have your physician or gastroenterologist get in touch with the office so we can coordinate your care.

As always, I welcome your questions about hypnosis, and its use in the service of improved health, better-managed stress, and personal growth. Please give us a call with your inquiries!