

## Hypnosis: Mind Control?

So you figured hypnosis is sleep, being gullible, being weak-minded and being controlled by someone else? Well, do reconsider.

So what is hypnosis (if not the above)? Hypnosis is actually a state of increased awareness, focus, concentration, and suggestibility. It's usually a state of relaxation that makes you more open to suggestions and allows you to focus on these suggestions. It's also important to note that relaxation is not always a necessary component for one to be in a hypnotic state. Also, suggestions given are suggestions you "allow" yourself to accept. That means suggestions from others aren't automatically accepted unless you want to (or are acceptable to you).

Some also think that hypnosis is synonymous to being asleep. This is far from being the truth. While an individual in the state of hypnosis may appear to be asleep, he/she remains conscious. The individual hears what is being said (suggested) although he/she may not remember everything that had been said.

Here's a thought for you. Believe it or not, we all experience hypnosis every day. For example, have you ever watched a movie that got you so engrossed that you never noticed someone walk out of the room or walk in? Or have you had tears roll down your face while watching a sad movie? Oh feel your heart pounding during a tense/suspenseful moment in the movie? How about shouting at or somehow cursing the actor/actress in the show? Well, these are all examples of hypnosis at work. We may become so intensely focused on the movie that our body reacts to the images and feels as if we are experiencing what the actors/actresses are experiencing – even though it is just a movie and the characters are merely acting.

Hypnosis is not sleep. It is not being gullible, weak-minded or being controlled by another person. It is merely a state of mind – a different state of consciousness and awareness

In a hypnosis session, you – the subject – are in control. How is that, you ask? Well the fact is that when a suggestion given to you is contrary to your principles and values, you will simply "snap out of it" ("it" being the hypnotic state). For example, if you were told to get-up and go stand on your head in the corner of the room, you will probably not be willing to do that. Because the suggestion is "unacceptable," you will almost certainly reject the suggestion by either coming out of the state of hypnosis or simply by ignoring the suggestion.

### Stage hypnosis vs hypnotherapy

There is a huge difference between stage hypnosis and hypnotherapy. The former is for the purpose of entertainment while the latter is where hypnosis is used to help another with issues/challenges.

A stage hypnotist is a person who uses hypnosis to entertain people – whether it is in a show or on stage. You may have seen (on tv or life) or even participated in these events before where you see participants bark like dogs or quack like a duck etcetera.

On the other hand, a hypnotherapist is one who has been trained to use hypnosis to help others deal with challenges in their lives. Hypnosis can be a very valuable tool in helping deal with issues such as sleep disturbances, improving concentration and memory, overcoming fears and phobias, strengthening one's self confidence and many other issues. Many have also employed this to help them manage their weight and to give up smoking and other addictive habits.

This is just a simple description of what hypnosis really is. Do keep in mind the hypnotherapist does not have control over you. He or she only brings you to a state of heightened relaxation where you are open to suggestions – suggestions that are acceptable to the subject/participant/client.

Next round, we will look at the difference between hypnotherapy and clinical hypnotherapy.