

Reality is Plastic!

The Art of Impromptu Hypnosis



Anthony Jacquin

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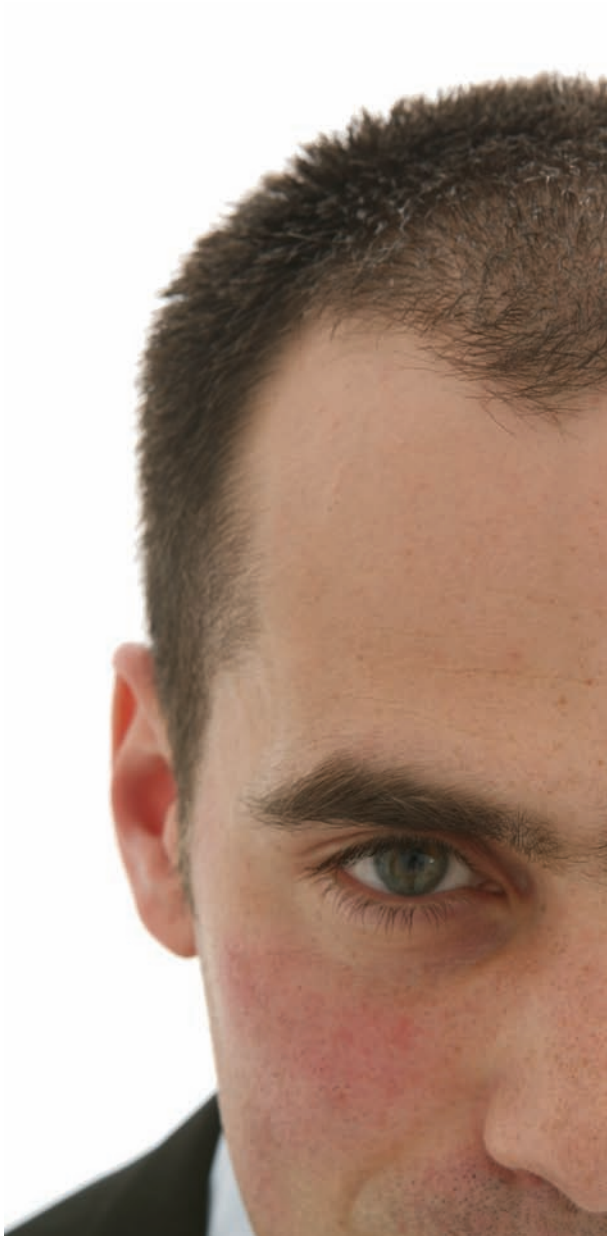
Anthony Jacquin
Room 6-8 St. James St.
Derby,
Derbyshire DE1 1RF
United Kingdom
Email: enquiries@anthonyjacquin.com
Web: www.anthonyjacquin.com

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About Reality is Plastic: The Art of Impromptu Hypnosis

This book is a resource for those professing to be or wishing to become hypnotists. It is not a substitute for hands on training from a professional hypnotist who is accomplished at delivering training. However if you follow the guidelines in this book and have the right attitude, aptitude, as well as enough front, talent and confidence you will hypnotize people.

With this ability comes responsibility. Hypnosis can be used for fun, to create laughter and produce wonderful therapeutic changes in people. It can just as easily result in confusion, fear and unhelpful changes. If you know what you are doing then the chances of causing even temporary distress or upset are extremely small. With this in mind this book closes with information about how to use hypnosis in a way that ensures the wellbeing of all concerned is taken care of. Please read this chapter and use your common sense with regard to health and safety and decent morals and ethics with regard to the direction you apply hypnosis.

Throughout this book and my other training products and courses I offer suggestions for words, phrases and in some cases complete scripts that will be useful to you. However my emphasis when training people is that to be a good hypnotist you must first become The Hypnotist and think of yourself as The Hypnotist. Your attitude, persona and confidence carry more weight than any script or linguistic trick. Where I have offered suggestions for what to say please understand that these are the words I use - they work for me. I have belief in them. In some cases they may seem very brief but I can assure you nothing has been left out. Nothing superfluous added. When hypnotizing I use these words and techniques over and over without a huge amount of variation, just some personalisation depending on whom I am addressing. In that sense they have become my patter or script. Do not feel you must repeat them verbatim - although that is not a bad place to start if you are a complete beginner. Use them as a starting point. The words you use to do your work as The Hypnotist must sound right to you. They must be easily understood and resonate with those you address. You are going to use them to focus the attention of your subject and suggest ideas to them.

Take these ideas and branch off from them. Develop your own style of patter and you will be more effective. Scripts are not spells and should not be read. It is not the words that do the hypnotising, you do. Even if you use the words I use exactly as they are given, ensure that you take ownership of them; rehearse over

and over and over until they become part of you.

A number of conventions have been used to make any scripted portions of the book easier to understand.

- Throughout we will refer to the Hypnotist as ‘The Hypnotist’.
- Throughout we will refer to the person being hypnotized as ‘the subject’.
- General text and any descriptive instructions are written in this plain text. These instructions should NOT be spoken to the subject.
- Any words or instructions that are spoken to the subject are in **bold**.

In hypnosis you are primarily going to use words to influence your subject. So you had better know what you are saying. Aim to become a master of communication. Reflect upon the words you use and their meanings and associations. You should pay attention to how you deliver suggestions and how best to instruct your subject. Learn to use your vocal tone and tempo to communicate your intention clearly and understand when to use silence and emphasis. All of this will help you improve your communication skills generally and help you become an excellent hypnotist. You will swiftly begin to develop your own favoured suggestions and style.

There is nothing wrong with imitating. It is one way of learning. So watch shows and clips of the best hypnotists at work. Read around the subject too. The best hypnotists appear totally confident, expecting nothing less than complete success. They appear knowledgeable and totally certain about what they are doing. Ultimately be yourself – just more so.

1.0 What is Impromptu Hypnosis?

This book is about hypnosis and how to use it effectively. It will teach you what hypnosis is and how to hypnotize both individuals and groups of people any time and anywhere you choose.

This is not a book on stage hypnosis nor is it a book on hypnotherapy or self hypnosis or mentalism. It is not about accelerated learning, covert speed seduction or persuasive sales. It is not about old original hypnosis or new fandangled hypnosis. Many things can be achieved with hypnosis but they are the results of hypnosis – not hypnosis itself. The hypnosis you will learn in this book can be applied in all of the situations above and any other area of your life.

No prior experience of hypnosis is required to understand and apply the knowledge in this book. The techniques are deceptively simple yet incredibly powerful. They are entirely practical and have been road tested over many years with thousands of people in my therapy and entertainment work. When you have mastered them you may well find they are all you need. That said there is always more to learn. So make hypnosis your art form. Be prepared to put in the time and effort required to master your craft.

To bring this approach to hypnotising into a practical context this book is focussed on how to provide impromptu demonstrations of hypnosis that can be applied in any setting. This could be for the purposes of fun, entertainment and laughter. It could be rapid relief from physical and mental pains or for the purposes of hypnotic engineering*. How you apply it is up to you.

*Hypnotic engineering is a term coined by a fellow hypnotist, security expert and friend Kev Sheldrake. It stems from 'social engineering' the practice in the hacking world of getting required physical access to places or information (such as passwords) out of people 'wetware' rather than by using software or hardware. The term is used here in a wider social context and applies to acquiring material goods and services as well as information – engineering people to do what you want them to do.

When you introduce yourself as a Hypnotist, or if people learn that you can hypnotize, very often they will ask if you can hypnotize them. When you say 'yes' they will often ask if you can do it right then. This book is an instructional on how best to make the most of these opportunities. It will also show you how to create a context for hypnosis so you can introduce it to any situation you wish.

Far too many people, who claim to be able to hypnotize well, especially hypnotherapists, do not feel confident to give an impromptu demonstration of hypnosis and will make an excuse regarding why they would rather not hypnotize in a party or other social setting. This has much to do with many training courses for hypnotherapy emphasising the use of long progressive inductions often with a large emphasis on relaxation and little or no cultivation of hypnotic phenomena. It also has something to do with a little bit of fear – principally the fear of failing and looking foolish.

The progressive approach works fine when done well, however it is not the most appropriate induction for impromptu hypnosis or the most effective. If turning down an opportunity to hypnotize is a professional call based on not wishing to appear to take hypnosis anything less than seriously then fair enough. However if it is based on a lack of ideas about how to proceed then this book will address that gap in knowledge.

I got into hypnosis by using it for therapeutic purposes and became a hypnotherapist before I started using it for entertainment. I spend much of my working day as a hypnotherapist using hypnosis to help people change the way they think, feel and respond to things in their life. I specialise in the kind of hypnotherapy that is sometimes described as brief or rapid or solution focussed. This approach to change does not involve counselling or analysis, instead it focuses on changing the mental patterns or programmes a person uses in their daily life. I hugely enjoy this work.

I also love having fun with hypnosis to entertain people. I do traditional stage hypnosis but also perform close up in the same way a strolling magician might entertain at a party or function. My close up performance might be described as a cross between Hypnotism and Mentalism, and creates the impression I can force people to act or respond in certain ways, read their behaviour and predict their actions. I have also done work with various TV companies that required me to use hypnosis with an unsuspecting public on the street and in a variety of public places including shops, restaurants, clubs and places of work.

I use the approach outlined in this book in all of these settings. It fits whether I am in the therapy room showing someone how to overcome a phobia, in a pub ‘sticking’ someone’s feet to the floor or on stage giving a performance. Hypnosis is hypnosis whether it takes place in a therapy room, party or sports field. Understanding that your subject does not have to be sitting in a comfy chair in a therapy room listening to whale music to be hypnotized goes a short way to helping you be good at impromptu hypnosis.

One of the seemingly unanswerable questions in philosophy is ‘Do we all see red the same way?’

Fortunately we do not need to answer that question to be able to hypnotize. However it is useful to proceed with the assumption that our personal perception of reality is just a malleable point of view. All that exists are pseudo events and objects to which we adjust with a false consciousness adapted to see these things as true and real. Hypnosis literally changes our perception of reality, it gives us another false consciousness that we adapt to as being as true and real as the last – in this sense reality is plastic.

Some of my experimental research and performance work has required me to test some common ideas about how best to induce hypnosis and also what you can do with people when they have been hypnotized. Some of that work, although highly questionable from an ethical perspective, offered a great opportunity to test some of the perceived limits of hypnosis. Even as an experienced practitioner of hypnosis and hypnotherapy, I was still surprised to find just how far this relatively well-understood discipline could really be pushed when taken out of the confines of the therapy room or stage performance.

- Is it possible to walk into a shop/office/market, talk to a member of staff for a few minutes and leave with anything you choose without paying?
- Is it possible to pay people with pieces of rubbish instead of cash/card?
- Can you make people treat you like a superstar?
- Can you make people corpse with laughter on command?
- Is it possible to become ‘invisible’?

The answer to all of these questions and many more just like it is yes. The directions this can be taken are endless.

The techniques in this book are simple, direct and can be learnt. They can be applied effectively in a real world setting, well out of the comfort zone of the hypnotherapy room and without the luxury of a stage full of expectant hypnotic subjects. They can be used anywhere the subject can hear you. They are entirely impromptu.

2.0 Hypnosis: No introduction necessary

Whether someone believes in hypnosis or not, whether they have experienced it or not, they are still likely to have a strong personal concept of what hypnosis is and how it typically proceeds. This may be based on something they have read, seen in movies or on T.V shows. They may have first hand experience as a subject or spectator or just be relying on hearsay and urban myth. Even most children by the age of 7 or 8 have a concept of hypnosis.

So before we begin it might be useful to ask yourself a few questions and note what you come up with.

Firstly, what do you think hypnosis is? What images spring to mind when you think of hypnosis, hypnotists and the hypnotized? Which words or phrases would a hypnotist most commonly use? What does it feel like to be hypnotized? How do people act when hypnotized? Do you think you can be hypnotized? Can hypnotists make you do things against your will?

When you have learnt more about hypnosis and accept yourself as The Hypnotist it is likely that your ideas about what hypnosis is and how it can be used will be quite different from the view of the general public. It is wise not to forget what most people believe it to be. Using their mental models of hypnosis is fine - even if they are not that accurate – just as long as their model does not leave them afraid of hypnosis for some reason. If it does then it is useful to remove their fears prior to hypnotising them and this is simple enough to do.

I have asked hundreds of students of hypnosis, thousands of therapy clients and many hypnotists the question, ‘What do you think hypnosis is?’

The answers vary quite dramatically, even amongst hypnotists. However several common themes run throughout the public perception of this art.

Sleep, a relaxed state, swinging watches, stage hypnosis, getting in touch with the subconscious, telling someone what to do, a comfy chair, a slow sleepy or gravely voice, a snap of the fingers and more recently Little Britain and the phrase ‘you’re under’* are common answers when the general public try to give you a sense of what they think hypnosis is all about.

Images of people slumped in a chair with their eyes closed under the mesmerizing gaze and command of the hypnotist might come to mind. A row of empty chairs, ‘sleeping’ subjects, people doing ridiculous things or experiencing amnesia are also relatively common ideas.

Even in our modern rather sceptical society popular belief often still ascribes some significance to the devices and rituals of hypnosis such as making passes with the hands, spinning hypnotic watches, spirals, the hypnotic stare and the authoritarian command. A few years ago my wife gave me a pocket watch on a chain as a present. The first time I got it out to show some friends in a pub they scattered – as if looking at it would immediately put them under.

There are dozens of definitions of hypnosis – some more accurate than others and most quite unsatisfactory. Whatever definition is in vogue does not seem to affect a great deal of change in the actual practical application of hypnosis or the phenomena elicited.

Definitions often describe hypnosis as a ‘state’ of some kind. Just what kind of state however is up for debate. A ‘state like sleep’, ‘a unique or special state’, ‘a trance state’, ‘any altered state’ and of course ‘a relaxed state’. These definitions all have some value but upon examination can all be found to be equally unsatisfactory.

Little Britain is a British comedy show written and starring Matt Lucas and David Williams. It featured a character called Kenny Craig a cliché caricature; he is an obnoxious and charmless hypnotist who uses his powers to get his own way.

Given that we are always in a state of some kind and many studies have found little significant difference between someone in hypnosis and someone in a normal state, critics of these definitions suggest that hypnosis cannot be defined in terms of state. Some go as far to say that because hypnosis cannot be proved to be a unique state hypnosis does not exist. All of that said, with recent advances in brain scanning equipment more evidence is coming forward that there are significant changes in brain function when hypnotized.

Another way to define hypnosis is as a process or an art. Certainly it is possible to be an excellent hypnotist without knowledge of psychology or brain function or state theory. Talent, flair and the pure force of personality will take you far as a hypnotist. So will accepting that hypnosis is really just the artful application of suggestion to someone who is in a focussed state.

Hippolyte Bernheim (1840-1919) the Father of 20th century Hypnosis, famously said,

'It is suggestion that rules hypnotism'
Hippolyte Bernheim (1).

He believed hypnosis was inherently a suggestion based process. It is a useful assumption although difficult to get to grips with scientifically.

Although trance has certainly been used for the purposes of healing and as an aid to creativity for thousands of years we really trace the trance we call hypnosis back to the work of an Austrian physician, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). Mesmer came up with a theory and a way of treating people that helped many to health. His ideas were based almost entirely on untested hypothesis and faulty science, but they led to more accurate ideas about hypnosis in the nineteenth century.

Mesmer believed that among all the fields known to science at that time there was another field, which might be called an animate field or fluid or life force. He defined good health as the free flow of this field or fluid through thousands of channels in our bodies. Illness resulted from obstructions to the free flow of this fluid. Overcoming these obstacles and restoring flow restored health. When nature failed to do this spontaneously, contact with a conductor of 'animal magnetism' was a necessary and sufficient remedy. Mesmer in other words believed that he was a conductor of animal magnetism and that this could influence the flow of the fluid like life

force. Mesmer aimed to aid Nature's effort to heal. He treated patients both individually and in groups. With individuals he would sit in front of his patient with his knees touching the patient's knees, pressing the patient's thumbs in his hands, looking fixedly into the patient's eyes. Mesmer made "passes", moving his hands from patient's shoulders down along their arms. Prior to him it was common practice to do this with magnets. Many patients felt peculiar sensations or had convulsions that were regarded as crises that were supposed to bring about the cure (2).

In the nineteenth century the idea that there was some invisible fluid or influence travelling from the hypnotist to the subject crumbled and eventually hypnosis became viewed by many as something that the subject is responsible for, or more accurately capable of, given the right instruction. This eventually led some to conclude that all hypnosis is self hypnosis. More recently hypnosis has become viewed by many as a peculiarity of the social relationship between the hypnotist and the subject – the hypnotist and the subject ‘playing’ their parts as they believe they should. In other words it is social compliance or role play.

The debate has gone on for decades and will probably continue to do so. For our purposes we will look at the definitions of arguably the most influential hypnotists that walked the planet, James Braid, Milton Erickson and Dave Elman.

James Braid (1795 – 1860) caused a paradigm shift from the mesmerists of the 18th and early 19th century. Braid was a Doctor and after observing a demonstration of mesmerism believed he had figured out why people went into this peculiar state and it had nothing to do with an invisible magnetic fluid. He suggested a physiological basis for hypnosis. It is generally agreed that his initial insightful but inaccurate view was that the mesmerised state (hypnosis) was caused by the tiring of an optic nerve as it became fixated – hence the association with focussing on spinning watches or in his case a silver cigarette case. It seems he missed the fact that his verbal suggestions to his subjects that their eyes would feel tired were also having an effect. Later in his writings he seems to shift emphasis, although does not abandon eye fixation altogether, noting that it is not just the gaze that becomes fixated but the minds eye as well. In other words when hypnotized the mind becomes locked around a single idea.

‘The real origin and essence of the hypnotic condition is the induction of a habit of abstraction or mental concentration, in which, as in reverie or spontaneous abstraction, the powers of the mind are so much engrossed with a single idea or train of thought, as, for the nonce, to render the individual unconscious of, or indifferently conscious to, all other ideas, impressions, or trains of thought.’
James Braid (3).

Note that Braid says hypnosis renders the individual unconscious or indifferently conscious to all other ideas. This is important. When hypnotized

you can still have an experience you can reflect on as you are having it and as far as you are concerned a fully conscious experience. For example if you are hypnotized to believe you cannot remove your hand from your face because it has been glued there, you are still able to reflect on the fact that it is stuck and even wonder why it is stuck. However the only reality you have is that it is stuck nonetheless. If you are hypnotized to believe that beer bottle tops are pound coins then even when pointed out that they are bottle tops you will know without doubt or question that they are not bottle tops they are coins and will accept them as such. You are indifferent to ideas other than the one your mind has locked onto as reality.

The hypnotist directs the subject's perception of reality by locking the mind around ideas.

From the time of Braid right up into the twentieth century hypnosis was typically induced using a direct and authoritarian approach.

In the 20th Century Milton Erickson (1901 – 1980) caused a seismic shift in the way to induce hypnosis, developing a permissive and indirect approach that is very popular with 21st Century Hypnotherapists. By the end of his career he appeared to simply be having conversations with his patients who would go into trance without any mention of the word hypnosis. Of course Erickson knew exactly what he was saying and what he was doing and why it caused hypnosis. His insights with regard to personal change have revolutionised modern therapy. I encourage you to read his work and you will discover many incredible ways you can use hypnosis. He experimented with hypnosis pretty much every day from 1920 to 1980. He covered a lot of ground. Because his permissive approach to hypnosis is so popular, it is often overlooked that Erickson was a master of rapid direct impromptu hypnosis too and would use it just as readily as the more cultivated covert or indirect approach. It is said he used the handshake induction so often that by the end of his career no one actually wanted to shake his hand. Many of his statements have been quoted as his definition of hypnosis – all are worth reading. What follows is just one of them.

'A state of special awareness characterized by receptiveness to ideas.'
Milton Erickson (4).

Two things are worth noting from this succinct definition. He emphasises that the mind becomes receptive to the ideas the hypnotist presents. This can be interpreted as a person becoming more suggestible or more open to the ideas being presented to them when they are hypnotized. The emphasis Erickson places on 'awareness' rather than on being unconscious, inattentive or unaware is also interesting. It is in line with his thinking that hypnosis allows you to deal with the bigger beast in all of us, the subconscious mind or what he called the unconscious mind. When hypnotized, the unconscious seems to assume more responsibility or come to the fore. The unconscious regulates all of your bodily processes, stores and manages your memories, every learning from every experience as well as the mental patterns and templates that allow us to function. This part of the mind is intuitive. It can call up your potentials and instantly change the way you think, feel and

respond. By contrast the conscious mind is limited. It is logical and linear in its approach to problem solving. It is the here and now.

Erickson was not interested in talking to the conscious mind. Neither should you be when you are in the process of hypnotising. Aim to communicate directly with the unconscious.

Finally, consider one of the most well known and quoted definitions from a modern innovator and perhaps the most influential hypnotist of all time, Dave Elman (1900 – 1967).

‘Hypnosis is a state of mind in which the critical faculty of the human is bypassed, and selective thinking established.’

Dave Elman (5).

Elman refers to a state where ‘...the critical faculty of the human is bypassed...’.

So what is the critical faculty? It does not seem to correlate to any physical part of the brain or neurological process. It is more conceptual – think of it as being a filter between the conscious and unconscious minds. It can be thought of as the sense of judgement. It has certain characteristics. It is rational, logical, it is limited and it is typified by inductive thinking – proceeding from certain facts to a logical conclusion.

The critical faculty is the bit of you that thinks it knows what reality is. It thinks it knows hot from cold. It thinks it knows that a mop is not the person you are in love with. It thinks it will hurt if you stick a needle through your arm. It thinks that you could lift your feet up if you wished to. It believes you do know your own name.

Bypassing the critical faculty does not establish hypnosis, but it does represent, as Elman put it, the ‘entering wedge.’

When the critical faculty is bypassed, your sense of judgement, inductive reasoning and logical faculties become suspended or inattentive. How inattentive and for how long they remain suspended is reliant on the attitude of the subject and the ability of the hypnotist. When attitude and ability are both conducive to hypnosis the unconscious mind of your subject becomes dominant and with further direction from the hypnotist selective thinking can be established swiftly. According to Elman, selective thinking is whatever you believe wholeheartedly.

By unconscious mind I mean everything else other than the conscious critical mind – all of your memories, every learning, resource, pattern and template. By selective thinking I mean a style of thinking where inductive reasoning is suspended and the mind becomes locked around an idea. When

this occurs The Hypnotists suggestions will be listened to by the unconscious uncritically. They will be acted upon uncritically.

That does not mean the unconscious cannot refuse to go in your direction, it can. It does not mean the critical faculty will continue to remain bypassed; it can pop back into play. However as The Hypnotist understand and be clear that to all intents and purposes hypnotising someone results in their unquestioning acceptance of the ideas, suggestions and directions delivered by The Hypnotist.

The critical faculty can be bypassed in a variety of ways quite naturally without hypnosis. Experiencing confusion, shock, high emotion, information overload, being drunk or high on drugs, laughter, play and performance are all common instances where a sense of judgement and logic can be temporarily suspended. It is the rabbit in the headlights moment. Whatever follows is generally driven by our unconscious, instinctive, automatic mind. The Hypnotist can create such moments artificially and utilise the result to establish selective thinking. The techniques that follow in section three will show you how to do that.

It is useful to note that in none of these definitions is there any mention of sleep or relaxation. That is because hypnosis is not sleep and does not require even a smidgen of relaxation. What is emphasised is that when hypnotized the subject's attention narrows and becomes fixed around selected ideas or a single idea. Wider environmental stimuli are ignored.

Recently a fresh theory of hypnosis and the mind entranced has emerged from the Human Givens pioneers Jo Griffin and Ivan Tyrell (6). They suggest that hypnosis is the result of accessing the REM state. In the REM state we access the imagination, what they refer to as 'the reality generator', that is responsible for our dreams. One of the functions of dreaming is to discharge unresolved emotional arousal. In another words it allows us to complete emotional ruminations of the day through the metaphoric imagery and connections of our dream. Its other key function is to update our instinctive templates or behavioural and emotional responses. In other words the learning state is also an REM state. Whenever we act without conscious effort we are reliant on pattern matching, going back to an earlier learned response or behaviour that was set in the REM state. So when we act instinctively we are, in effect, acting on a post hypnotic suggestion. In the same way when a hypnotized subject acts on a post hypnotic suggestion

given by the hypnotist they will do so with the same effectiveness, immediacy and instinct they do other unconscious behaviours.

So when we put someone into hypnosis we are simply activating the same processes that the brain activates during dream sleep, including the reality generator - this is what makes it so effective.

For your purposes as The Hypnotist it is useful to keep these definitions in mind. Revisit them in light of your experience. Read the work of those who coined them. However there really is no need to get hung up on exactly what hypnosis is or why it occurs. There is no point being concerned over whether the 'critical faculty' is something we can pin point physically or not. Even less point trying to prove that hypnosis is real.

The mind exists as a model. Hypnosis exists as a phenomenon. We must use a conceptual model to describe how it works. Hypnosis may not have the reality of a house brick but that is of no consequence to you. The fact is you can hold any of the major views about hypnosis and still be a good hypnotist.

For practical purposes as The Hypnotist think of it this way.

'Hypnosis is the art of presenting ideas directly to the receptive unconscious mind.'

Anthony Jacquin

So understand, as The Hypnotist you are presenting ideas and giving directions. You are doing this to your subject's unconscious mind and it is receptive to the directions and ideas you are presenting. Believe, want and expect that it will interpret them and act on them with a genuine unconscious response.

2.1 Being The Hypnotist



To be a great hypnotist it is of key importance that you become The Hypnotist. Not a hypnotist. Not someone who knows a bit about hypnosis but The Hypnotist. You must express absolute confidence, congruence and expertise in your skills, knowledge and abilities. In the beginning this takes a certain amount of front. Pretend and master it. Believe you are the best, believe you are a natural and behave like you are.

Believe your subject is a wonderful hypnotic subject. Want and expect them to go into hypnosis and do what you tell them. It is often said that close friends and family are your worst subjects because they cannot accept you as the hypnotist.

It is sometimes harder for them to enter into that reality than people who do not know you so well. But do not fret; just have a go at hypnotising everyone and anyone who will put up with you, including close friends and family. It may be that a family member or friend is a superb subject and you will have your own hypno monkey for life.

2.2 Setting things up

When you have decided to hypnotize someone or someone asks if you would there are five things it is useful to do.

- Remove fear
- Eliminate misconceptions
- Increase expectancy
- Fire up the imagination
- Take control

When a stage hypnotist works, if they are doing their job properly they will have already fired up their audience imagination and created a great deal of expectation that something is going to happen with the promotion of their show. Amongst their opening patter they typically spend a few minutes going over the reasons why everyone can rest assured they are safe, in the hands of an expert and have reason to feel excited and have fun. The audience should certainly know who is in control.

In a therapy room this is all helped by the advertising, hypnotherapy certificate and the ramble about how the subject remains in control of themselves and aware of everything.

In impromptu hypnosis setting things up needs to be accomplished more swiftly - often in a few sentences. Often in a few seconds.

The easiest approach is to just ignore all of the above and take control. This means rapidly hypnotize the subject in seconds or less, before they have a chance to be afraid. Using a rapid induction such as the Instant Induction, Jacquin Power Induction or Handshake Induction detailed in the Section Four will do that. However if you are not going to do that, a few simple words will help things along.

There is no point getting into a 30 minute explanation of what hypnosis is all about. A few choice words will do it. This is in effect your elevator pitch. Your elevator pitch is what you would say to Bill Gates or Richard Branson in a short ride in a lift. In brief clear terms what you would say to them if you had just a few seconds to sell your idea (7).

With hypnosis you are selling the ideas that you can hypnotize, that your subject can be hypnotized and that there is no need to be concerned as you will look after them. So tell them you are a hypnotist. They will immediately wonder if they could be hypnotized or if you are already hypnotizing them.

Fear of hypnosis takes a few forms. Firstly your subject may fear the unknown. So let them know hypnosis is simply a wonderful state of mind. Let them know it is not sleep and that they will be able to hear you. They may fear that they will immediately reveal some secret information and embarrass or ruin themselves. Assure them they will not. They may fear they will get stuck in a trance or never be the same. Assure them that they cannot get stuck in a trance. Let them know it will be an enjoyable experience. Let them know they will find it interesting and will learn something about themselves. They may fear you – this is not ideal unless they fear you can hypnotize them in a flash.

Taking control does not mean being bossy and pushy but it does require you to become the dominant party. This can be achieved by asking your subject to do something.

Can you just move your chair to one side slightly. Now can you place your feet on the floor, your hands comfortably in your lap and look at me.

If they are standing up, then adjust their position and ask them to put their feet together.

It begins to demonstrate who is in control and you get a chance to see how good the subject is at taking directions. Some of the inductions and Set Pieces in this book are best carried out with the subject starting in a particular physical position and mental state so use this bit of psychological bullying to tidy them up at the same time.

Everything you ask them to do, however small the instruction or request may seem, must be done with one purpose in mind – to get them doing what you want them to. Remember your subject probably does not know how hypnosis proceeds. So give them the comfort of knowing who is in control.

As soon as you have said to someone you are a hypnotist then their expectation that they might get hypnotized and their imagination about what

might happen have already begun to fire up. You should leverage this in your advantage.

Get rid of any of your own fears about whether they will go into hypnosis or not or whether you will look like a fool if they do not. Eliminate your own misconceptions about what kind of subject they might or might not be. Help these processes along by being genuinely imaginative, animated and excited for your subject. Aim to get them fascinated with you, the process of hypnotising and the idea of being hypnotized.

2.3 How to tell if someone is hypnotized

If you only give your subject suggestions to relax then the chances are that neither of you will actually know if they are hypnotized or not. In fact if you ask them afterwards they will probably just say that they felt relaxed but do not think they were hypnotized. This is fine if your mutual goal is to show them how to relax. However I am hoping you will want to take it further than that. Even if you suggest things that draw every type of hypnotic phenomena out of them, they are still likely to say to you they were not hypnotized. This is because there is no such feeling as being hypnotized. Remember, your subject is going to act on your suggestions unconsciously. So as far as they are concerned they are completely normal in every way. So there is no point looking to your subject for verification of whether they are hypnotized.

So how do you tell if someone is hypnotized?

By far the easiest way is to give the subject a suggestion and see if they follow it. Instantly and to the letter would be great. In other words test your work. If they appear to be responding then give another suggestion and so on.

It is also useful to develop an 'eye' for the signs of hypnosis, so you can spot who has gone even before you start giving directions that require an obvious physical or emotional response. Someone can be hypnotized and exhibit none of the following signs but many will do so, so watch out for them. They are useful when you are planning to select one or two participants from a group because you can have an insight into who your best subjects might be.

- Eyelids flickering and fluttering - this is the same REM eye movement observed when someone is dreaming. Often this is quite pronounced in the hypnotized subject and it should be encouraged as you can then suggest it will increase and it does.
- Temperature rise - a change in blood flow can be quite visible in some people, depending on their skin tone. It is a useful sign that their state has changed.

- Eyes rolling back up in the head - if you do not see it happen you may spot the whites of their eyes as their eyelids flicker. Some inductions start with the eyes rolled back up in the head. In this position it is very difficult for the subject to open their eyes.
- Breathing shift – sometimes it speeds up but most often the breathing becomes deeper and very steady, similar to when someone is sleeping peacefully.
- Increased lacrimation – more moisture in and around the eyes. If the eyes are open they may appear glazed.
- Heavy head – with the slightest encouragement, such as gently pushing the head forward, a subjects neck can be relaxed and then it becomes quite difficult to lift the head.

As well as just looking for these signs to assess if your subject is gone, it is also useful to use them to enhance their trance. Inductions can be used that artificially create one of the signs of hypnosis as the method used to hypnotize. You could hypnotize someone by getting them to breathe in for a count of 7 and out for a count of 11, using their count or flow of breath as the focus of attention. You can push your subjects head forward as you say ‘sleep’. You can make the focal point of a fixation induction a point inside the head, with the eyes closed and the eyes rolled back.

You can also link one of these signs to the development of another or the acceleration of hypnotic phenomena. For example if you notice that the subject is exhibiting lots of REM then you can bring this into their awareness and create a link between it and the next thing you want to happen.

As your eyes flicker, your hand is getting lighter and lighter and lifting upward.

Most of these signs will be outside the conscious awareness of your subject until you bring their attention to them. So if you notice them you can suggest that they will occur. For example suggest that the subject will begin to feel warmer or that their eyes will flicker. Then when they notice that they are occurring they attribute that to the influence of The Hypnotist and the phenomena will increase. This is probably because the subject begins auto suggesting ‘I am getting warmer, am I looking warmer, how does he know I

am getting warmer' or 'my eyes are flickering, I can't stop them flickering. I must be hypnotized'. This unconscious panic creates a feedback loop driven by their own internal dialogue. Encourage natural signs of any hypnotic phenomena. Build on them. Develop an eye for them. When you have a group of people and are looking for one of them to work with then use those who exhibit signs of hypnosis and those who look fascinated and keen.



2.4 Hypnotic phenomena.

Once you have someone hypnotized there are a number of phenomena they can experience.

These are:

Catalepsy

Loss of conscious control of the ability to move part of the body. Lack of response to external stimuli and muscle rigidity

Ideomotor Movements

Unconscious movements, like the head nodding, fingers twitching and legs shaking.

Amnesia

Inability to recall information or loss of memory.

Hallucinations of all Senses

Sensing something that is not there or not sensing something that is.

Dissociation

Separation of mind and body.

Hypermnnesia

Improved recall.

Regression

Reversion to earlier or more infantile patterns of behaviour and memory.

Revivification

Recall and re-experience of a past event.

Analgesia

Partial sensory loss.

Anaesthesia

Total sensory loss.

Time Distortion

Contraction and expansion of the perception of time.

Catalepsy is one of the foremost examples of hypnotic phenomena, well documented and used in many ways – a classic in the field. First described by Charcot, in 1882 it is a useful and versatile hypnotic tool (8). If you have put someone in a trance and you reach over and lift up his or her arm, you will probably find it is cataleptic and will just float there – it stays where you put it rather than dropping down as you might expect. It is often combined with surprise or instant inductions of hypnosis and hence looks dramatic. Many of the inductions in this book encourage catalepsy. The key is being able to arrest someone's attention in such a way or for long enough that they forget that arm or hand. They forget how it feels normally and may begin to auto suggest. It is at the very minimum a useful sign that you have induced trance and a useful convincer for the subject that something has occurred. Beyond this it can be used to move to other more advanced hypnotic phenomena and used as a way of encouraging ideomotor communication directly with the unconscious mind and body without the need for verbal responses.

Catalepsy is a physiological condition where balanced tonicity exists between the agonist and antagonist muscles. In plain English that means it stays in a certain position. Muscles that are used to move a body part usually have another 'opposite' that enables you to move it back again. The bicep and tricep on the upper arm for example. When these opposite numbers are balanced the body part does not move. One pair in your body that are working all the time you are awake are in your neck. They are keeping your head up.

When catalepsy is induced in hypnosis and combined with ideomotor movement to make someone lift their arm, the feelings, the kinaesthetics and proprioceptive sense are both quite different from those you experience when you lift your arm voluntarily. Watch someone's arm lift cataleptically and you will see it is a bit like a possessed movement in a horror movie – like a winch is lifting it. "Waxy flexibility" is a great term for describing the feeling and well known psychiatric term for describing catatonia (9). This is also something you can bring to your subjects attention.

You can notice your arm lifting and notice it is moving in kind of jerky reflex movements. That is because your unconscious is lifting your arm. It allows your conscious mind to lift it smoothly but your unconscious moves it in this more reflex like way.

Catatonia is a term for catatonic schizophrenic patients who live in a permanent state of catalepsy – you can move them however you want and they stay in the position you leave them in. Years ago I saw a street performer mimic this condition. He stood on a box that had the words ‘Move me’ written on the front. You put some money down and could move him into any position you wished and he would stay there until someone else came along and moved him. It is quite straightforward to provoke catalepsy in your hypnotized subject. Understand that a hand on the arm of a chair can be cataleptic; it does not need to be floating in the air, just outside of conscious control.

In the therapy room catalepsy can be used as an advanced form of ideomotor signalling - using catalepsy and subsequent movements of the body as a line of communication. An arm may lift higher for a yes signal, perhaps one arm for yes and one arm for no.

Ernst Rossi uses ideomotor signalling as a way of communicating with the subject’s deep unconscious intelligence in the body (10).

For the purposes of impromptu hypnosis become an expert at getting your subject to develop catalepsy. It is useful for many things including:

- Convincing - demonstrate the unconscious is at play – the subject is hypnotized.
- Inducing trance – use it as a Set Piece or the induction itself.
- As a routine – turn them into a coat rack or a statue.
- Communicating - ideomotor signals.
- Leverage - to springboard to other hypnotic phenomena.

When using catalepsy you could either induce trance first and then suggest eye, hand, arm or full body catalepsy or incorporate creating catalepsy as part of the trance induction itself. All of the methods in section three that include catalepsy can be used as a hypnotic induction rather than just The Set Piece. Once your subject has achieved catalepsy they are highly suggestible.

If you have made it impossible for your subject to move their arm then encourage them to try and move it. Encourage them to really try and put all their effort into it. Tell them they can try but their unconscious is a superpower and it is working for them. The realisation that they are clearly

more than they thought they were before they came in to see you is a beautiful one and an experience that will stay with them. At the very least they will have something to say when asked what happened when they went to see the hypnotist. For many it is quite a mind-blowing experience. If they are really getting into it encourage them to open their eyes and look at the part of the body you have made cataleptic. Ask them if it belongs to them. When a subject has their eyes open such a challenge to try and move their arm seems to be made even more potent. Many people will get a little agitated at this point, instruct them to close their eyes, let them know it might feel peculiar but they will enjoy it, and go even deeper as you bomb them with more directions. Their mind is wide open at that point and ready to receive.

Reality is Plastic



Email: enquiries@anthonyjacquin.com

Web: www.anthonyjacquin.com

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