THE FOUR CORNERSTONES OF SUCCESSFUL HYPNOTHERAPY:
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This article discusses four important hypnotic objectives, which provide a blueprint for increasing the probability of client success. I consider these four therapeutic objectives the four cornerstones of successful hypnotherapy, especially where subconscious blocks are present, because effective results often require fulfilling all four objectives.

OVERVIEW: With a little research on the internet, you can find thousands of scripts containing suggestion and imagery to help clients with myriads of various goals. Numerous script books are offered for sale at virtually every major hypnosis convention. How effective are these scripts?

Certainly suggestion and imagery have proven their ability to help some of the people some of the time. Thousands of hypnotists purchase and use these various hypnotic script books, and/or write their own scripts. The downside of relying on suggestion and imagery is when either the hypnotist or the client expects the scripts to be sufficient by themselves. They can help some of the people some of the time, but I believe that a competent hypnotherapist can help most of the people most of the time. **We can accomplish this by building the therapeutic approach on a foundation of four primary hypnotherapy objectives:**

Suggestion and imagery
Discover the cause
Release
Subconscious relearning

Charles Tebbetts referred to these objectives as four main therapeutic steps to facilitate change (helping a client remove problems), and he described them in the very first chapter of *Miracles on Demand* (2nd Edition). I discussed them in the 2nd chapter of the first two versions of *The Art of Hypnotherapy*. That chapter section was entitled: "The Four Hypnotherapeutic Steps to Facilitate Change."I expanded on in *Hypnosis for Inner Conflict Resolution* (Crown House Publishing, 2005). Building your hypnotism practice on a solid foundation with these cornerstones will increase the probability of client success.

Now let's explore each one of these objectives.

1. Post-hypnotic Suggestion and Imagery: With a strong motivating desire to change, post-hypnotic suggestion (direct or indirect) may be sufficient for some of the clients some of the time. This is because emotion is the motivating power (or energy) of the inner mind. Howe er, without a strong emotional desire to accept the suggestions the subconscious may easily block hypnotic suggestions and/or affirmations. This is what Charles Tebbetts called band-aid therapy, because often the improvement is only temporary. Our 19th Century pioneers of hypnosis called it prestige suggestion.

That being said, my first session normally begins with suggestion and imagery. Even when I believe there is a high probability of subconscious blocks, I begin the first session with suggestion and imagery in order to enhance the client's desire to achieve the desired goal. For example, positive feelings associated with the fulfillment of a desired goal can be induced in hypnosis by progressing a person forward in time in the imagination. This session is designed to increase the motivating desire through emotion; but an emotional desire to retain a problem often necessitates the next three hypnotherapeutic steps. When the other three steps are used. the first step becomes the last step, emphasizing step #4.

After employing the next three steps at a subsequent session, I return to this first step. In other words, when any subconscious resistance (or blocks) are discovered and removed, we can employ suggestion and imagery technique to help a client achieve the desired goal(s). This enhance subconscious relearning, which is the fourth step. ow let' discuss Steps 2, 3 and 4.

2. Discovering the Cause: If subconscious resistance exists, there is a reason, whether from the past or the present, and we must somehow discover the core cause.

Note that I use the word "discover" rather than diagnose. First, a hypnotherapist does NOT diagnose unless licensed to do so. Second, when facilitating client-centered hypnosis my approach is based on the concept that the client's inner mind can reveal the core cause of a problem when we employ appropriate hypnotic techniques.

If we take it upon ourselves to form our own opinions as to the causes of our clients' problems, our preconceived opinions could easily result in inappropriate leading which may take the client down the wrong path. (This is therapy-directed trance work, which often leads to wrong conclusions.) Yet I've been surprised at the number of times over the years that I've heard another practitioner make comments such as: "You have an influencing entity hindering your progress ... " etc.

Instead of using trance to project our opinions (OR the client's conscious opinions) about the cause of the problem, we need to enable the subconscious to discover the core cause. This is a KEY ISSUE that separates us from mental health counselors who are licensed to diagnose.

Many hypnotic techniques may help uncover the cause(s) of resistance to overcoming a problem, whether the cause lies in the client's past or in the present. Sometimes the subconscious can discover and release a cause without emotional discharges, such as with an overweight client of mine whose subconscious indicated that she would keep snacking until she started creating some "fun time" for herself. She had to make an agreement with herself in order to be released from the problem.

Although certain hypnotherapy techniques may sometimes gain release without the client ever consciously knowing the cause(s), Tebbetts taught that if the problem (or symptoms) resulted from a childhood perception of a past event, we should guide the client back to the past in his (or her) imagination. This is called a hypnotic regression. Recall of the event(s) during hypnosis can provoke the emotions associated with the event(s) and bring them into awareness, resulting in an emotional discharge. Once the emotional energy comes into awareness, it can be redirected and/or released in a positive way. However, the NGH Code of Ethics prohibits any hypnotist from employing hypnotic regression unless he/she is trained in regression.

Parts therapy is another advanced hypnotic technique that a trained facilitator may employ to discover the cause(s) of a problem, especially when a client has inner conflicts. If the cause is an unresolved issue from the client's present, then the client may have to make some decisions at a conscious level. Sometimes the hypnotherapist may need to refer that client to cognitive

counseling or other professional help. As an experienced trainer in parts therapy, I urge you to wait until you receive competent training in parts therapy before employing that technique.

Numerous hypnosis professionals employ finger response questions (also called ideomotor responding) to uncover core causes of problems. I do likewise when uncertain of whether to employ regression or parts therapy.

3. Release: After the relationship of the symptom to the cause(s) is established emotionally as well as intellectually, we may use one or more hypnotherapy techniques to facilitate forgiveness and/or release from the cause(s) of a problem.

If the cause(s) resulted from perceptions of past events, not only does this involve forgiving (without condoning), or at least releasing others who might have victimized the client, it also includes forgiving one's self for participating and/or carrying grudges, etc. If we hold a grudge against someone who hurt us, we are the ones in bondage to the gru4ge. We can still protect ourselves without staying angry. whether the client's memories are real memories, false perceptions, or a combination of both, the client can still release them during hypnosis in a therapeutic way without the necessity of "confronting" another relative for what might not have been an accurate perception in the first place.

Numerous techniques can be used to facilitate release, including (but not limited to) regression therapy and parts therapy. EFT can be used for release ... but I still recommend that we confirm that the subconscious has released the core cause and not just the symptom. Many therapists employ techniques that "release" the client; but if the symptom is released while the cause remains, the subconscious is fully capable of buying back the former symptom (or another symptom that might be worse than the original one).

If you use a "quickie" phobia release, do your client a service by asking for confirmation that the subconscious or inner mind has discovered and released the core cause of the problem. My own preference is to use regression to discover and release the ISE (initial sensitizing event).

4. Subconscious relearning: We may choose from among numerous client-centered techniques in order to facilitate adult understanding at a subconscious level, where it gets results. The goal is to help a client create a more mature understanding (or new perception) of the problem, including its cause(s) and solution(s). Sometimes it is sufficient simply to have the subconscious re-learn; however, the client-centered techniques taught by Tebbetts often result in total conscious recall of the entire hypnotic process.

Note that many qualified and trained counselors employ hypnosis to discover causes; but instead of completing the vital third and fourth hypnotherapeutic steps with a client in hypnosis, they often try to deal with those causes at a conscious level - and sometimes needlessly keep clients in therapy for months or years.

Each of these four hypnotherapy objectives serves as a stepping-stone towards the next step. Although the first step may be sufficient for some of the people some of the time, if the problem remains, consider the accomplishment of ALL FOUR steps as your prime hypnotherapeutic goal.

After accomplishing the third objective, I often ask a client to verbalize his or her own relearning. Then I paraphrase their words back in the form of suggestions and imagery, in order to accomplish subconscious relearning (or reprogramming) objective. I then return to the first objective, because suggestions and imagery enhance subconscious relearning; but they become much more powerful once the subconscious has discovered and released the cause(s) ofa problem.

As you learn other hypnotic techniques from various places, consider how each technique you learn can help accomplish one or more of these four steps. In my opinion, all hypnotic techniques should accomplish one or more of these four very important objectives. I suggest that you memorize them and make them an integral part of your therapy.

Additional Comments: The numbers of various hypnotic techniques keep growing as new ones are invented and old ones are updated or modified. While it is not necessary to know every technique ever invented, the competent master of the art of hypnotherapy should have width and depth of training, as there is NO technique that is effective enough to work for all the people all the time.

My students learn to evaluate the efficacy of any hypnotic technique by discerning which of the four hypnotherapy objectives it may accomplish. This provides a solid foundation for practicing diversified client-centered hypnosis and obtaining results without the necessity of asking my opinion regarding someone else's technique. If said technique works without risk to the client, use it; but learn to understand which objective(s) the technique accomplishes.

While hypnotists using their pet programs do help some of the people some of the time, their success rates are often overstated. I wish that they would call themselves "hypnotists" rather than hypnotherapists (as the NGH recommends), and refer resistant clients to those who are trained in client-centered hypnosis. As I have stated many times in public and in print, the competent hypnotherapist can help most of the people most of the time by practicing diversified client-centered hypnosis.

Additionally, an understanding of the four hypnotherapy objectives will give the hypnotherapist a way of evaluating the efficacy of any hypnotic technique simply by determining which of the four hypnotherapy objectives that technique will accomplish when employed. Some technicians claim to teach a technique that is "so effective" that you do not need other techniques. That is an immediate red flag to me! A technique for releasing may have only temporary results if the core cause remains in the subconscious. Likewise, discovering the core cause of a problem will not be sufficient unless that cause is properly released at a subconscious level, with subconscious relearning following said release.

Some years ago, a major business decided to send a top manager to Sydney, Australia. He had a severe fear of flying, and saw a hypnotist who employed an NLP technique combined with hypnosis for releasing phobias. He enjoyed a calm outbound flight to Sydney; but the core cause was never covered and remained rooted in his subconscious. By the time he returned from Australia to the USA, his subconscious bought back the fear of flying, and he experienced 17 of most terrifying hours of his life ... and told me that he almost suffered a heart attack from the stress of the flight.

It is quite possible for these popular techniques to be adequate with some of the people some of the time because all four hypnotherapy objectives are accomplished spontaneously by the inner mind. Here is my professional opinion: let's accomplish these hypnotherapy objectives on purpose. Why leave them to chance?

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If any hypnotic technique works without risk to the client, use it; but learn to understand which objective(s) the technique accomplishes. A technique that accomplishes release and relearning may be combined with another technique used to discover the cause of a problem, etc. Likewise, a technique that uncovers the cause and facilitates release must be combined with a technique for subconscious relearning ... and the session must be concluded with suggestion and imagery. Skipping any of these four hypnotherapy objectives reduces the probability of lasting results. Successful accomplishment of all four steps increases the probability of client success! These four hypnotherapy objectives are the cornerstones on the foundation of client centered hypnosis.

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