



All Hypnosis is Self-Hypnosis

Most definitions of hypnosis include the application of an *altered state of mind*, or trance. Trance is a naturally occurring state that everyone goes in and out all day as opposed to typical active forms of thinking associated with Beta brain waves. We are in an altered just before and after sleep, when we daydream, when we drive a car to a destination and don't remember the details of how we got there because our thoughts were on something else, when we are fully involved in the story of a book, movie or TV, when we are intensely emotional, when we are in a fight or flight response, when we play sports, when we meditate and so on. These are all forms of trance.

Hypnotists induce trance in a number of different ways. One of the most common is progressive relaxation for therapeutic purposes. However hypnosis can also be done in an alert state, for example when performed for entertainment purposes on stage. Some types of trance induction are conversational using stories or metaphors, some use physical catalepsy of a limb or eye muscles and others use guided imagery, to name a few of the methods.

A common denominator of the different inductions of trance is focused attention that bypasses what is called the *Critical Faculty*. The critical faculty is like a non-physical dividing line between the conscious, analytical mind and the subconscious and unconscious minds. Because the critical faculty acts as a filter that sorts out what it considers to be irrelevant to the person, we are able to access deeper parts of the mind where important, but possibly unconscious, emotions, beliefs and memories are stored.

Everyone can be hypnotized so long as they are willing to be hypnotized and if they have trust and rapport with the hypnotist. Everyone can also do self-

hypnosis, which is important because repetition of thoughts are essential to change long-standing habits, reactions, emotions, feelings and beliefs. This is why most hypnotherapists teach self-hypnosis during the first session.

Stress is a way of life in most of the industrialized world, which can be significantly relieved with self-hypnosis. Self-hypnosis feels like a meditative state but is performed using imagery and intention for some type of self-healing. Usually hypnotherapists teach people how to relax deeply and go to a special place during the first session. From the special place, other types of intentions can be processed. Each session with the hypnotherapist demonstrates how to process the changes you want, that you can continue later at home for repetition. So in hypnotherapy, similar to physical therapy, what you learn and practice at home gives added long term benefit. If you already have a meditative practice and know how to *“go inside”* it is very easy to learn.