

THE USE OF HYPNOSIS FOR PAIN CONTROL AND HEALING:
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There are two general classifications of pain: acute and chronic. Acute pain is associated with the sudden onset of pain such as a broken arm, a cut finger, a burn on the hand and is generally more intense than chronic pain. Chronic pain is usually of an ongoing nature such as back pain, arthritis, and intensity may vary. The experience of pain is a combination of the type of pain, tension, fear, and anxiety. Often tension, fear and anxiety can intensify the experience of pain. Pain causes tension and tightening up of the affected area of the body. Our normal response to pain is to resist the pain by tightening up even more and becoming more tense. This increases the severity of the pain experience.

By relaxation of the body there is a natural reduction of pain. By proper suggestion in the hypnotic state, the experience of pain can be reduced or eliminated for periods of time. I teach the client self hypnosis and imagery so that the client can use it when needed. To explain my use of hypnosis for pain management and to enhance healing, I would like to share with you two case histories.

My mother was in a hospital in Shreveport, La. for the removal of a cancerous growth on her jaw. She had surgery and had returned to her room. I stayed with her from about three in the afternoon until about ten the next morning. The nurses were very responsive to my mother's calls for the longest that she had to wait for a nurse to come was about three minutes. I consider that excellent response time. The first thing that each nurse and her doctor said when they came into the room for whatever reason was, "Mrs. Durbin are you hurting?" Until about nine that night my mother had not needed anything for pain and I wondered, "Would she have needed any pain medication at nine, had the question been different." What if the nurses and doctor had said something like, "Mrs. Durbin, are you comfortable?" "Mrs. Durbin, how are you feeling?" Instead the suggestion that they were reinforcing with each visit was that my mother should be experiencing pain.

During that same hospital stay, the IV in my mother's left hand needed changing to the right hand. The nurse who came to make the change said, "Mrs. Durbin I wish I had an anesthetic to give you so that this would not be so painful." I said, "Oh you can give her an anesthetic." She responded, "No, no, I would get in trouble for I do not have a doctor's order for an anesthetic." I replied, "Just watch and see." I took my mother's hand and said, "Mother Look at me while the nurse works on your other hand. In a moment, the nurse will apply an antiseptic swab to your other hand. You feel the cold antiseptic as it is applied. The cold antiseptic causes a numbing effect so that you feel only pressure." As I talked to my mother, the nurse completed her mission of inserting the IV. When I stopped talking, my mother turned her head toward the nurse and said, "When are you going to begin?" The nurse looked surprised and said, "Mrs. Durbin, I have already put the IV in your hand and I am now putting the tape on to hold it in place." I said, "I told you that you could administer an anesthetic without a doctor's prescription." No formal hypnotic induction was used, but my mother was able to go through what could have been a painful experience with feeling only pressure. (In the words of Judy Hamilton)

In early April 1997, I was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in the left kidney. This took me totally by surprise as I had gone to the doctor for a totally different reason. During testing for the other problem, this tumor showed up. The doctor said that the only treatment for this was

removal of the kidney. Surgery was scheduled for two weeks away. I was very distraught and despondent at this point as it came on so suddenly. I knew I needed a boost. Being a Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist with a Bachelors in Hypnotherapy, I know that the mind is a powerful tool. I tried self hypnosis, but wasn't very successful. At this time, I also called upon Chaplain Paul Durbin. He had previously worked with me to successfully stop smoking. I trust him implicitly. I got a referral from my doctor, who was a little apprehensive and said he had never given a referral for hypnosis before. Paul and I scheduled a session and he taped the session for me. He included in the suggestions for Pre-Op and suggestions for healing. He told me to listen to the tape for the week that I had before the surgery was to take place and then for a time afterward for healing.

I had surgery Thursday morning. By that evening I was awake and alert. The next morning I was sitting in a chair and by Friday afternoon I was walking the hall of the hospital. The surgeon was amazed at the progress, mobility and recuperation that was taking place. He even stopped Paul in the parking lot of the hospital and told him how amazed he was. The nurses said how great I was doing and one other doctor that stopped in said she thought I was a pre-op patient instead of a post-op patient until she saw the bandages. The wound stayed dry and clean with no infection and no blood was administered to me during or after surgery. The pain medication that was allowed me was used minimally for a couple of days and it was discontinued. I was released from the hospital on the following Tuesday, 5 days later which was sooner than expected and I continued to heal beautifully each day with little discomfort. The Pathologist report revealed that all the cancer was contained within the kidney and no follow up treatment was needed. I had a lot of people praying for me and I know God responded with the help of the doctor, Chaplain Paul G. Durbin, other friends and myself. I know hypnosis as an adjunct to medical help is an invaluable "tool" in the process of surgery and healing and many other areas of life. I know the power of suggestion has helped me trough this so successfully. My husband of course, I thank, for standing by me, and for the love, help and support he has given me throughout this period. P.S. Judy wrote a letter to Mr. Fred Young, Jr. President and CEO of Pendleton Memorial Methodist Hospital and my immediate supervisor contain much of the information written above. She concluded the letter, "I know that GOD and the Surgeon played a most important role in all of this. But, I also know that the mind is a powerful tool. I feel that you have an invaluable person in Chaplain Paul Durbin on your staff. I feel that the hypnosis sessions had a lot to do with the ease with which I pulled through all this. I just wanted to let you know that I think that Paul Durbin is an asset to your hospital as Chaplain and Hypnotherapist.

Mr Young's answer, "Thank you for your letter of May 2, 1997, I am glad to hear that you're progressing well. I too continue to be impressed with the wonderful work that Chaplain Durbin does in the area of hypnosis. Our medical community continues to partner with him on many occasions for these type of services and we continue to experience the things that you described in your letter. Thank you again for taking the time to write, and for making Methodist your hospital. Sincerely, Fred Young, President.

The suggestions I used with Judy before surgery were:

Pre and Post Operation Suggestion: At night, you relax and sleep soundly. You feel relaxed and comfortable in every way for your surgery . . . Imagine your body limp and relaxed. The more relaxed you are the better you are prepared for surgery.

You know you're being closely observed by skilled doctors and you can safely relax The anesthesia is administered carefully and safely. The more relaxed you are, the less amount of

anesthesia you need for the surgery and this is good for you . . . The operation is performed skillfully.

The body's protective system remains active and can keep the wound dry, clean, free of infection, minimize bleeding, reduce discomfort and promote healing. By letting your body flow along with the surgery, you are working in cooperation with the surgeon. Now focus on the way your body is to behave after surgery. When you awaken after surgery, you awaken peacefully as though awakening from a long, peaceful, healthy restoring sleep.

When you come out of the anesthesia, focus on alerting your defense system to promote healing. Your natural body processes are keeping the wound dry, clean, free of infection, minimize bleeding and reduce discomfort. You have prompt and regular bowel movements and prompt and regular urination. You first awaken in the Recovery Room. Concentrate on a rapid return to normal functioning, to a stable and comfortable blood pressure. Imagine getting back to a healthy, happy lifestyle as your body heals. You feel yourself getting hungry, feeling thirsty, going to the toilet.

Think about getting back to a healthy lifestyle as your body heals. Thus far you've thought about the way your body is to behave during your stay in the hospital. Now I want you to think about the most important behavior. I want you to imagine the things you do, without discomfort or worry, once you've recovered. I want you to imagine yourself doing the things you're eager to do. That's the reason you've come for surgery. You've come to repair a part of your body that is troubling you so you can do the things you want to do, without fear and concern.

Before you come out of trance, let's take the time to review your exercise. The first step focuses on the way your body is to behave during surgery; the second, on the way your body is to behave after surgery. Before surgery, you do both steps. After surgery, you do only the second step. In the first step, you think about the way your body is to behave during surgery. It is to be relaxed and limp, except for the defense system. That system is alert in order to keep the wound dry, clean, and free of infection, and to minimize bleeding and reduce discomfort. Although the anesthesiologist provides whatever amount of anesthesia your body requires, you can make it easier by letting your body know the way to behave; help it flow along with the surgery so you and the surgeon work together to cure your illness.

The second step focuses on recovery. Your defense system is alert to keep the wound dry, clean and free of infection, and to minimize bleeding and reduce discomfort as the healing takes place. Imagine yourself as you regain all normal functioning your blood pressure rapidly stabilizes and returns to normal. You feel your appetite return. You get thirsty. You sense yourself going to the toilet. You feel eager to move around. Each time before you come out of trance think about the future the real reason for going through surgery. Imagine yourself doing things that you want to do once surgery is over and you have recovered. As you rest peacefully and calmly, you know God constantly watches over you and you are able to place your trust in His infinite goodness.

Now, you are ready to sleep, you sleep soundly and sleep well and wake up sound in body, sound in mind, sound in spirit, and sound in health. You progressively improve, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Day by day in every way, you are getting better and better, healthier and healthier, stronger and stronger. When you have finished practicing self hypnosis, you bring yourself out of trance by saying "at the count of three, come out of this hypnotic state, progressively improving. One, two, three . . . Now you may come out of hypnosis

and either go into a natural, normal sleep or be wide awake at the count of three. One, healing properly; two, healthier and healthier, three.

Relaxation, imagery and hypnosis tends to decrease fear and bring about an attitudinal change. Hypnosis can effect physical changes, enhancing the person's own immune system, decreasing tension and stress, and provides the patient with hopeful expectation. These methods along with traditional medical treatment and faith in the God who cares can help in healing. Even for those illnesses and injuries which cannot be healed, these methods bring about an improved quality of life.

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