

Changing Pains

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When we encounter the opportunity to assist in the reduction, or elimination of discomfort on any level it is essential to keep in mind the basic understanding that these symptoms have purpose. Refer client to a qualified practitioner to assure proper diagnosis. Then offer assistance in cooperation with the prescribed treatment process. Masking the impact of a symptom may delay timely treatment of injury or illness.

Nature of Pain

Acute: This is usually of short duration, often associated with accident or injury. The cause of this pain is usually understandable and reflects normal functioning of the nervous system.

Chronic: When pain is ongoing, either as a result of ongoing dis-ease, or due to other factors we may consider it to be chronic. Certainly, after a period of six months the discomfort begins to impact life in a manner, which may be considered chronic.

Types of Pain

Psychogenic: This is pain without pathology. Regardless of recognizable physiological cause all pain is real: If it is PERCEIVED it is REAL!

Physiological: This pain is the result of an identified injury or a disease process. We may effectively reduce the interference of this discomfort in our lives while remaining aware of the message to protect the area of discomfort. Body, Mind and Spirit are connected; all that occurs on any level, affects all levels.

Pain and Suffering

Pain is the perception of a signal from the body. This signal is a notification of injury or illness. Pain, in this context, is a good thing. Without this warning system we would not survive. When we begin to react emotionally to the pain we may begin to suffer.

Suffering includes anxiety, frustration, even guilt, and the fear that the pain will continue.

Suffering is reflected in the relationship struggles common with chronic pain conditions.

Suffering is found in the helplessness and depression that often follows seemingly endless doctor visits with no improvement.

Emotional Impact

Illness or injury may limit ability to work or participate in the activities of everyday life.

This may cause frustration, reducing our ability to deal effectively with stresses, resulting in a cycle of distress. Distress causes tension which blocks healing energy.

When healing energy is restricted or blocked, healing takes longer.

How Emotions Feed Back Pain

When the symptoms of disease or injury continue beyond what we consider to be a normal healing period, our energy depletion may cause us to become more sensitive to the discomforts of the process. The pain seems to increase as our energy to resist

decreases. We may awaken with the certainty that we face another day of pain. We may begin to fear sleep: as when we quiet ourselves, we become more aware of discomfort. Loss of sleep reduces our level of energy yet again. These cycles are typical of chronic conditions and are more suspicious in their absence than their presence.

Chronic Identity

We are manifestations of our experiences, beliefs, and perceptions. When our life is impacted by chronic conditions we begin to adapt to the circumstance.

Chronic Identity is the self-image we become as a result of living in chronic circumstance. Remember: we do everything for a reason, even if it is inappropriate. Even if we find the cause and cure of a chronic condition, the client has lived with this condition for years. The issue has influenced every perception, action and reaction. With our assistance, the client now has expanded opportunity to learn more effective methods to continue to adapt. We may encounter patterns, which resist change defensively. As we rediscover methods of dealing with the different aspects, we effect change on many levels.

Habit/Expectation

Part of the adaptation to chronic pain includes the habit of being in pain. The person expects to awaken to pain, decides how long he/she can endure the discomfort in a social or work situation. The pain IS a part of life and as such is considered in all planning.

Secondary Gain

Adaptation occurs as we begin to take advantage of our situation. This may mean that we accept sympathy or assistance from friends. Conversely, we may resent those same friends for their sympathy. If an injury prevents us from working, do we collect insurance money? If we were able to return to work would we lose this income?

Self Image

Do we see ourselves as survivors, or victims? At what point do we begin to see ourselves with this chronic condition as a permanent aspect of who we are and how does that shape that we become?

Anger, Fear, Frustration

These are aspects, which need to be addressed in order to facilitate long-term relief. The fear of our pain and the frustration of dealing with the stresses and the inconveniences resultant to the condition often seem overwhelming. This offers the opportunity to facilitate change through PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT.

Ten Percent Solution

In my experience, people come to a hypnotist for pain management only after several other modalities of treatment have failed. Drug therapy was either ineffective or left the clients feeling too drugged to maintain the life they desire. Physical therapy may have been too painful due to the pain (I have not only heard that one, I have said it!). The clients may simply choose not to be dependent on drugs for an indefinite period. They

come because of the FAILURE of everything else they have tried. When I see clients for pain management I discuss the life adjustments that they have made and how they believe their life will change when they learn to eliminate their discomfort. I ask how they would feel about leaving the office totally free of pain. Everyone says how wonderful that would be and I tell him or her I am sorry, but I can't do that. I explain the difference between pain and discomfort and ask if fifty percent relief would have a positive impact on their life. Yes is the usual answer.

Now, I ask. What if you could have twenty-five percent relief, fifteen, etc.? Help the client understand the improvement they can experience at a level they can undoubtedly achieve. Remember, these people have been to the doctors, they have had physical therapy, they probably know more about their condition than the doctors who FAILED to GIVE them relief. By stating with certainty that we can achieve ten to twenty percent improvement today and by having them be aware of the immediate positive impact that this will have in their life, we create a win-win situation. They can believe ten or twenty percent relief. They understand the immediate benefit. Relaxation and visualization will give them at least ten percent to twenty percent relief, any more than that is a bonus; exceeding expectation rather than failing an expectation of complete relief. With this success, they can believe what you tell them in the future. You become their hero. By turning that response around; reminding them that they are heroes, they did it for themselves, you have given them the one thing they need most-a sense of control in their lives.

Methods

Some hypnotists consider the somnambulistic state the most effective level of hypnosis to work with. Others feel that even in waking state we have the opportunity to assist great change. Utilize your skills and abilities as you encourage your clients to use theirs. Any theory we choose as a method of changing or eliminating a condition or situation, will work wonderfully some of the time and leave opportunity for vast improvement some of the time. The more complicated the theory, the more complicated the solution. Keep it simple.

One very effective method, worthy of consideration: Ask the clients what THEY believe would allow them to improve. Whatever the presenting condition or issue, the client has the key to success within.

Direct Suggestions

This works in most cases although it may not address the cause of the discomfort. By addressing cause we may achieve longer-lasting improvement.

Relaxation

Relaxation lowers blood pressure and allows the entire body to heal more rapidly. Tension cannot exist together with relaxation. The cause of most dis-ease includes tension. Relaxation reminds us of the control we have within our bodies. Utilizing our ability to relax builds self-confidence, improves our immune system and energizes our entire being. Abdominal breathing oxygenates the blood causing the muscles to more easily relax. By instructing clients to breathe in this fashion, then suggesting that they

notice how easily they relax, we utilize physical reaction as a convincer of powerful hypnosis.

Visualization

For the purpose of this presentation, the term visualization refers to any method of perception: sight, sound, taste, smell, feel, however you understand or perceive is exactly correct . . . for you.

Safe Place

Listen to the clients during the pre-talk and ask questions that will assist in creating a wonderful place filled with all the resources the clients will ever want or need. Remind them that everything in their safe place is there with their permission and by their willing choice. By establishing a safe place as a point from which to pursue other work, the clients always have an option of retreat, if for any reason they become uncomfortable during more intense aspects of a session. Through doorways and paths from the safe place, we proceed to regression, or parts work, etc. The following excerpts are to be considered solely as guides. That these or similar scripts have been so effective, for so many, is the result of listening to the client and together crafting the success.

Protective Shield

". . . You may feel this profound relaxation in every muscle, fiber and cell of your body . . . you may begin to notice a glowing healing sensation . . . As you begin to experience this sensation you may notice that you feel this sensation in one area more than another . . . Focus your attention on the area in which you notice this wonderful healing, glowing sensation. It may seem like sunlight, or radiance within you. As you focus upon it realize that it spreads to every muscle, fiber, and cell of your body . . . The more aware you are of the wonderful, glowing, healing radiance within, the more rapidly it begins to flow, easily, naturally, to all the muscles, to every cell and fiber of your being. Now let yourself, allow yourself, to be aware of this glowing, healing energy as it spreads beyond the physical limits of your being and radiates from you, protecting you, and drawing toward you, all the health and joy which is yours and which you so richly deserve."

Discomfort as an Object

". . . See in your mind or imagine, that this discomfort has a size and perhaps a shape. You may see it with a particular color. Perhaps this discomfort has a sound. . . as you begin to see, hear or imagine the discomfort, allow yourself to begin to change the shape. . . As you focus upon the shape and size, notice that it begins to shrink . . . as it shrinks so does the effect that it has had in your life in the past. "By changing the aspects of the object, the client changes the perception of the discomfort. Utilize as many of the senses as comfortable; breathing coolness into it may perhaps cool the burning, fiery pain. In the following examples, using a series of controls to gradually effect the change keeps the concept believable. Remind them to reduce the discomfort until they have improvement, knowing that as they utilize their abilities the improvement increases.

Control Valve

". . . See the discomfort as it flows from the (arm, leg, etc.) And imagine it as a fluid, perhaps like water in a hose and as it flows toward your mind where your awareness of it dwells see a valve, and let yourself, allow yourself, to begin to turn that valve toward the off position. Just as you turn off the hose in the yard, you turn off this discomfort before it interferes with your life."

Light Switch, Circuit Breakers

". . . See in your mind or imagine a switch or a series of switches which control the discomfort and see yourself turning off the switches . . . As you turn them off, notice how wonderful it feels using your abilities to improve your life, easily and naturally." A dimmer switch, or fan-speed controls are other devices, which are familiar. Utilizing the familiar allows the conscious mind to remain without question.

Body as a Robot

". . . Your body feels no discomfort . . . Your body sends messages to your brain and your brain decides what meaning to assign to those messages. Tell your body right now to stop sending messages, which no longer serve you as a warning. The ones you know about and no longer require living safely and in health."

Increase Potential of Medication

". . . and you can see or feel the medication as it enters your system and goes directly to the area in which it is needed instantly having its effect. As you notice this you may wonder if it is because of these suggestions or because of your ability to direct all things in your being . . . It may be one, or the other, or both . . . It doesn't matter . . . As the medication flows directly to the area which needs it and only to that area, allowing all other areas to function even better now as your health improves and the medication has its beneficial effect just exactly as it is supposed to and in exactly the correct manner and location.

Parts therapy

By discussing the inner conflicts and discovering the meaning of the behavior, client may be able to alter behavior. Symptom may have been employed as a form of protection. Realize that it is no longer needed, or alter the method of protection. Weight or size no longer an acceptable measure of strength. Client has intelligence, ability, as strength. Pain may be a form of self-punishment, a reaction to guilt, or even a protection from success.

Regression to cause

By recalling an experience, clients may be able to understand situation differently and create a shift of perception. Past experience may have been traumatic or painful and adaptive behavior protects from re-experiencing similar reaction. If adaptive behavior causes conflict, may be considered to be a symptom. Client will maintain adaptive behavior until convinced that old danger no longer exists, or until he/she learns new protective behavior.

Pre or Post-surgical Hypnosis

Implementing direct suggestion, relaxation and visualization techniques may assist the client to reduce fears, remain calm, focused and centered prior to surgical or dental procedures. Reduction of pre-operative anesthetic required and post-operative analgesics needed result from the use of these powerful methods. Post-surgical recovery and healing are certainly enhanced, allowing the client to resume normal activities quickly. When discussing the efficacy of these methods, realize that while certain positive results are reported, the evidence is primarily anecdotal. Science has yet to understand and consistently reproduce the effects of mind-body healing. While we may be certain of improved health, perception and awareness; we may be most effective by stating these as unlimited potential for success.

Anything we agree upon will work. Listen, use imagination, and succeed!

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