

## HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND



I love the way hypnosis is portrayed in the movie “Office Space,” not for its accuracy but for showing how profoundly hypnosis can change a person’s life. The hero goes to a hypnotist at his girlfriend’s insistence, in order to develop ambition. After getting the man into a deeply relaxed state, the hypnotist suffers a fatal heart attack, before he can bring his subject out of hypnosis. Thus, the main character goes through the rest of the movie hypnotized, so that he no longer experiences much of the fear and resistance that used to thwart him.

He remains calm, even amused, under circumstances that used to stress him, and he is able to speak his mind without censoring himself. He starts doing exactly what he wants to do most of the time—which is *not* to be ambitious in the corporate world but to choose a completely different career path and a different girlfriend. In short, he becomes more authentically himself, gets empowered, and starts to enjoy his life!

Now, let’s clear up one huge inaccuracy: you CANNOT get “stuck” in hypnosis. In reality, it is a safe, natural state of consciousness like daydreaming. You come out of hypnosis as inevitably as you awaken from sleep. Just as you eventually wake up when you fall asleep, you will eventually come out of hypnosis, even without the cue to do so—and you are hypnotized often during daily life, even with your eyes open, without realizing it. This natural tendency of the mind to go in and out of hypnosis makes self-hypnosis particularly powerful. Many of my

clients learn this technique and use it to great effect. One woman used it to relax during a frightening eye surgery in which she had to be immobilized by drugs but remain mentally alert throughout the procedure.

Another myth about hypnosis is that it's mind control. Just as the character in "Office Space" couldn't be made to fulfill his girlfriend's agenda for him but began to act on his own deeper desires, hypnosis empowers you to achieve the results you want to achieve and which are in keeping with your own deeper values.

Still, the results portrayed in the movie do show the kind of transformation that is possible. Even when clients come for a well-defined goal such as to quit smoking or lose weight, relief from stress often results. For one thing, the first step in a hypnosis session is a relaxing induction! But more than this, changing any habit or behavior involves changing the inner stress responses that usually trigger the behavior. As a result, clients start to feel better in more areas of their lives than just the one that brought them in initially. And they learn skills that they can continue to use for life. As one client put it: "This program was by far the easiest and most effective means to a slimmer me. For the first time, I have been able to completely alter my eating habits without any anger or resentment. Hypnosis has given me an overall feeling of general well-being. Who would have thought you could be more at peace while losing weight!"

Along with meditative exercises and a variety of other techniques, hypnosis can help change perceptions formed in the past to create a new experience in the present.

In these challenging times (and every time has its challenges and gifts), let's remember that stress is not primarily about what is happening *outside* of ourselves; stress results from our *perception* of events and what we *believe* about our ability to deal with them. With hypnosis, inner resources are expanded. With self-hypnosis, clients learn skills to create a lifetime of positive change.



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