

When you think of hypnosis, what immediately comes to mind? Do you think of the scary sleep-like trance that is a staple of vampire flicks, the involuntary amnesia of sci-fi and thrillers, or the compulsive antics of comedies?

Ditch the 'Hollywood science', my friend, and welcome to the real world. Hollywood may have done a great job at sensationalising and mystifying hypnosis, but the fact remains that it has completely misrepresented this powerful ancient science and art. Hypnosis does not involve any form of brainwashing, mind control or amnesia.

So what exactly is hypnosis? According to Dr Casey Chua, director of Hypnae Centre, hypnosis is the state between wake and sleep where awareness, focus and suggestibility is heightened. Sounds complicated? Not at all! If a beer advertisement featuring skimpily dressed babes has ever enticed you to pick up your wallet, you understand hypnosis. Indeed, such advertisements work on the principle of hypnosis, making you susceptible to subliminal messages while you are perfectly relaxed.

Hypnosis puts you in this relaxed state, allowing you to communicate with your subconscious mind and making you more responsive to suggestions. This allows the hypnotherapist to rid you of the negative thoughts you've picked up over the years and instil in you a winning belief. Dr Chua debunks common myths and delves deeper in an exclusive interview:

Is it true that hypnotists can force you to do things against your will?

Dr Chua: Many people shudder to think that hypnotism involves a certain amount of brainwashing, but this is absolutely untrue. First off, nobody can be hypnotised against their will. And, if during hypnosis, you don't want to adopt a particular suggestion either due to its lack of relevance or because it goes against your beliefs, you may simply dismiss it. That means, you certainly won't be running around in your undies just because your hypnotist suggests it.

During hypnosis, the conscious mind is completely relaxed. Hypnotherapists call this the 'hypnogogic' state. This is the

Delving deeper

Hypnotherapy doesn't involve sleep, mind control or black magic. Dr Casey Chua dispels some common myths By Annie Tan

most ideal situation for hypnotherapists to bring about positive changes in you. These include eradicating bad habits, overcoming phobia and alleviating pain. Hypnotherapy can also help you manage stress, enhance your memory and achieve peak performance.

Of course, as the saying goes, all hypnosis is self hypnosis. As hypnosis is a cooperative process, you have to be willing to accept the ideas presented during hypnosis for it to work.

Can a hypnotist find out things about me I don't want him to know?

Dr Chua: Hypnosis is not a truth serum so you certainly won't reveal what you don't want to. Hypnotherapists cannot obtain secrets from you against your will. In my 27 years of practice, I have never received phenomenal gifts by way of getting my clients to revealing their PIN numbers.

Some people claim that weak-willed people make the best candidates for hypnotherapists. Is this true?

Dr Chua: To set the record straight, people who seek hypnotherapy often have strong wills. This explains why they refuse to accept their condition and actively seek improvement.

But it must be said that hypnosis really has nothing to do with the will; it depends on the imagination, a faculty that is vastly greater than the will. Therefore bright, imaginative persons make the best candidates.



Will you ever get stuck in a hypnotised state and not be able to gain consciousness?

Dr Chua: Absolutely not. You can get out of hypnosis anytime you wish. Most choose to stay in it because of potential results and also because it is a delightful experience.

If for some reason, your hypnotist disappears and you can no longer hear his voice, you can simply snap out of it and open your eyes. In the event that you hear the fire alarm or smell smoke, you won't be dangerously immobilised either.

Will hypnosis cause you to lose consciousness and suffer from amnesia?

Dr Chua: Very few people go into a deep trance and this only happens after discussion and agreement between the hypnotherapist and the client. And to answer the second part of your questions, most remember everything that has occurred during hypnosis.

Is it true that only a select few can experience hypnosis.

Dr Chua: Not exactly. 90 to 95 per cent of adults can experience hypnosis to some degree. Some just respond more quickly than others.

Only four categories of people don't respond well to hypnosis: those on drugs and alcohol, the mentally challenged, the sceptical, and children or infants below four years of age. This is because these groups of people will not be able to focus on the hypnotherapist.

Some people think that hypnosis is an act against religion. How true is that?

Dr Chua: Hypnosis has nothing to do with religion. Instead, hypnosis taps on the subconscious mind, quite similar to what happens when one is in a meditative state. So you may even find it in line with certain religions. And in fact, the Vatican has approved of hypnosis as an acceptable form of treatment.

What view does conventional and orthodox medicine take of hypnotherapy?

Dr Chua: The medical community, including the British Medical Association and American Medical Association, has accepted hypnosis in a therapeutic environment more than half a century ago.

Today, hypnosis is used in countless dental offices to induce drugless anaesthesia. Hypnosis is also used by many surgeons for all sorts of operations. And naturally, many orthodox psychologists and psychiatrists use hypnosis to help their patients overcome their problems and achieve their personal goals. ♥



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FIRST TESTIMONIAL

"When I first went to Dr Casey, I was extremely unhappy and stressed about a particular health issue. After two sessions with him, I am happy to report that this problem has been solved. The physical discomfort has gone away completely. I feel positive about things now."

I am now able to sleep through the entire night without waking up in the middle of the night and feeling apprehensive. I am also able to relax so I feel better about myself in every way. I am very grateful to Dr Casey for improving my outlook on life, solving a major problem and helping me to be positive."

Rina (Conditions: Sleep Disorder & IBS)

SECOND TESTIMONIAL

"I have been a smoker for about 10 years. For the first five years, I smoked a pack a day. The second five years, I found that I was unable to kick the habit of social smoking."

I went to Dr Casey for help and after two sessions, I no longer craved for cigarettes. Now, even when I go out for a drink, I won't be tempted to have one.

I have always been an 'emotional eater' as well. When things happened, be they good or bad, I would eat. After seeing Dr Casey, I no longer panicked when I was around food or focused on it. The way I eat has changed as well - I eat more slowly and eat less. I am very happy with the results of this treatment."

Ms A Duncan (Conditions: Smoking Addiction and Eating Disorder)

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