

LIFTING LIMITS:

Develop Conscious Habits
Using the Subconscious Mind

ARTICLE SUZANNE MYHRE JOHNSON

Understanding Hypnotherapy Means
Unlocking the Power of the Brain to
Help Achieve a Better Quality of Life

CYNTHIA CROSSMAN HAS ALWAYS THRIVED ON HELPING OTHERS ACHIEVE A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE, AND SPENT MANY YEARS TEACHING YOGA MEDITATION. When she moved to Bend in 2015, Cynthia found a new calling as a hypnotherapist. "I saw the need for this in our community," she says, "and it's an exciting, innovative field." She trained with a hypnotherapist in Portland and was certified in 2017 through the Banyan Hypnosis Center.

Here, Cynthia shares insights on both old misconceptions and new applications of hypnotherapy.

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ABOUT HYPNOSIS?

First, let's clarify what hypnosis is NOT: it's not entertainment and it's not mind control. To be hypnotized, a person must want this on some level. I can't hypnotize someone against their will. During hypnosis, you are not asleep or unconscious. You actually are in a heightened state of awareness, but deeply relaxed. Hypnosis works with the subconscious mind, which is the database of our lives. The subconscious keeps all our experiences, thoughts, feelings, and habits in its library. We can access the subconscious through hypnosis to change thought patterns that cause problems for us.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW HYPNOSIS WORKS IN THE BRAIN?

The conscious mind is very protective. Without it, we'd be overwhelmed by too many options and stimuli. But the conscious mind dislikes change, so we need to access the subconscious mind to form new, positive habits. Negative habits, like smoking, often simply settle in over time. We reset those desires through positive suggestions during hypnosis, such as, "I feel great being a non-smoker." Sometimes, we need to resolve problems based in childhood experiences. Maybe a person is numbing feelings from past trauma. Through hypnosis we can go back to that time and reset the reaction to the experience, choosing a more positive path. The adult self can talk to the child self and reinforce the idea that it's going to be okay. Hypnotherapy does not focus on reliving trauma—it's more about understanding the event from an adult perspective and sharing that with the child self.

YOU'VE HELPED PEOPLE WITH EXTREME WEIGHT LOSS. CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT PROCESS?

Virtual gastric bypass is a wonderful option for those who need to lose a significant amount of weight. Often their doctor has recommended surgical gastric bypass, which reduces the actual stomach volume. Virtual gastric bypass, through hypnosis, causes a person to *believe* their stomach is smaller. They eat smaller portions and feel satisfied with less food. During hypnosis, we first explore the person's relationship with food—especially emotional eating. We have a positive conversation to realign these habits. Our second session involves visualizing the gastric bypass procedure, from arriving at the doctor's office to the placement of a band around their stomach. It's an alternative to surgery that is non-invasive, with no risk of infection or other complications.

CAN HYPNOTHERAPY REDUCE CHRONIC PAIN?

Acute pain tells us when something is harming us. But chronic pain, such as back pain which affects millions of people, can mean the nerves and brain are set in a pattern that no longer serves us. Sometimes anxiety from expecting discomfort is enough to trigger a desire for medication. We can disrupt that cycle and reduce the use of medication working in partnership with the client's doctor.

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