Uncommon Hypnosis Master Series

Controlling the body with the mind

I recall as a child being amazed by a TV show that showed a man trained in yoga. This fellow apparently slowed his heartbeat down to two beats a minute. Then I read about adepts who had trained themselves to bleed at will through one skin puncture then (alternately) another. And men who developed such mental control over their bodies that they could remain buried in earth for days, even weeks at a time.

Now we could argue there's limited practical use for that kind of thing - at least I hope there is! But it's true to say that every great sports hero and survivor of great catastrophes has also had the experience of gaining mental mastery over their own physical processes.

Your imagination is a powerful tool, because all fields of activity, all endeavours and projects, begin their stirrings of life within the imagination. Whenever you use your imagination you enter a kind of hypnotic trance state. The more involved you are in your imaginative experience, the deeper the trance. In fact, when you dream at night you're totally absorbed in the contents of the imaginative story that is your dream. So night time dreaming is an extremely hypnotic experience. If you want to know how powerful your imagination is, think about how real some of your dreams feel.

But your imagination also directly influences every stirring of every molecule in your body. What you imagine can have an immediate effect on your body. If you imagine something in the future that makes you nervous, your body reacts instantly by raising your blood pressure, increasing your breathing and pulse rates and giving you feelings of butterflies in your stomach. And all this from a split second of imagination.

Interestingly, when you raise your blood pressure through imagining something scary, you are doing precisely what the mystic yogi does - albeit in a less controlled way! It's quite a realization to know that you already control your body's responses through the power of your mind - and you've been doing that all your life!

Now let's try something...

Just for a moment now, briefly imagine in your mind's eye a shiny yellow lemon. Notice the texture of its skin, the way it can feel waxy in your hand... and just imagine what it's like to cut that lemon in half - just slicing through - the sensation as the knife goes through the lemon... and now... how your mouth feels when you take that lemon and squeeze a few drops of lemon juice onto your tongue...

Now the chances are that you can produce salivation in your mouth just by reading the above paragraph and vividly imagining it. And if you can't, try it again at a time when you can concentrate better. Your mind and body are intimately linked - pain control, physical
strength and even complete switching off of physical sensation can all be achieved through skilled use of hypnosis.

A good way to use the imagination for a physical change that you want is to use symbols, imagery or metaphors. One man I helped with pain management after a horrific accident said that he saw the pain in his mind as a candle flame which merged into the far distance as his pain receded, making him feel more comfortable.

Hypnosis has also been used for curing warts. Now you may be thinking - how the heck can that work? But once you understand that warts are highly susceptible to changes in blood flow, and you realise that blood flow can be modified hypnotically, you begin to see the way forward. We have cured many warts with hypnosis - things aren't always so strange as they initially seem!

Any sports person who wants to get to the top of their game needs to work physically and hypnotically. At the top levels, if you don't strongly imagine what you want then you are at a serious disadvantage. Powerfully imagining doing something before you actually do it not only sets the blueprint in your mind to achieve, but also prepares your nervous system for the physical patterns that will be mobilized by the activity itself. For example, just imagining lifting weights before doing so can increase the blood supply to the muscles, preparing them for work and helping them develop more effectively. Going to the gym reluctantly is quite the opposite of this!

Arnold Schwarzenegger sculpted his body in his mind through hypnotic visualization before producing the results for real. He also strongly visualized success in other areas in his life before achieving his goals in reality.

The late hypnotic genius Milton Erickson suffered from severe polio twice in his life, but thanks to his practised hypnotic ability managed to control much of the pain and discomfort. There is even a report that one night with friends he visited a Mexican restaurant and challenged the chef to make the hottest possible chili sauce. After speedy hypnotic preparation Erickson put the hot sauce into his mouth as he calmly smiled at the amazed chef. He kept it there for some seconds before swallowing it down. Now there was a guy who knew how to use his mind-body connection.

Sprinters imagining being pulled forward by giant magnets; golfers imagining their golf ball has a built-in hole-seeking device; people seeing their pain as a colour which becomes paler and so diminishes their pain... what we imagine affects all areas of life. And there is no better way to gain mastery over your own physical processes than though hypnotic trance. The more you develop your hypnotic ability the more control you have.

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So nowadays if I see a yogi perform some incredible physical feat I'm still impressed - but at least I know how he does it.

Mark Tyrrell

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