

hypnotism

All in the mind

We're all aware of hypnotists who can play tricks on your mind, but did you know there's another kind of hypnotism? Clinical hypnosis can harness the power of your unconscious to help you overcome all sorts of problems and issues...

When most people think of hypnotists, they think of fun stage acts where the hypnotist turns you into a chicken or makes you think you've won the lottery.

Either that, or they think of Paul McKenna. A well-known TV and stage hypnotist, Paul has also built a career out of another branch of hypnotism, called clinical hypnosis or hypnotherapy.

Qualified hypnotherapists use hypnotism to help you overcome a range of problems, from weight issues to giving up cigarettes, anxiety and self-confidence, and on to more serious things such as dealing with abuse and facing up to a terminal illness.

Unlike TV's *Little Britain* hypnotist, Kenny 'Look into my eyes. The eyes. Not around the eyes' Craig (left), therapists are a different kettle of fish.

Dr Avy Joseph is a London-based cognitive

CASE STUDY

David Fry had a hypnotherapy session to help him quit smoking...

"Being hypnotised wasn't at all like I imagined it would be. I sat in a chair in warm, pleasant surroundings, while the hypnotherapist, a man, asked me questions about my life, my motivation and why I wanted to stop smoking.

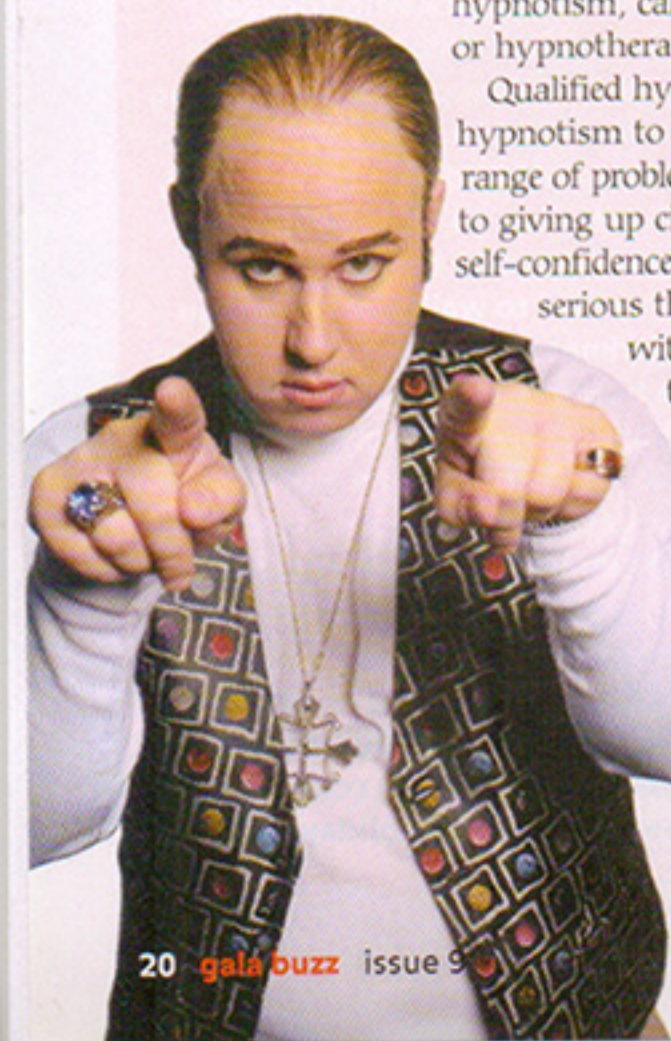
"His voice was actually quite calm and relaxing anyway but, when he asked me to close my eyes, it became more relaxing still. I certainly wasn't aware that I was being hypnotised and I remember almost everything he said. I also remember thinking, 'I could open my eyes anytime I want to. Anytime I want.' But I couldn't really be

bothered to open them at all. I was just too comfortable and relaxed.

"While I was in a trance, he used words, phrases and situations that had evolved out of our conversation. At no point did I feel worried, or lost, or not in control. I finally opened my eyes when the therapist began counting me out of the trance.

"It was a very comfortable and relaxing experience and I left feeling very positive and happy. It's been more than a year now, and I still haven't had a cigarette."

I certainly wasn't aware that I was being hypnotised and I remember almost everything he said



PHOTOGRAPHS: CORBIS, GETTY IMAGES, ZEFA, BBC

and behavioural psychotherapist, as well as a hypnotherapist. He describes hypnotherapy as a form of psychotherapy that is performed in a state of hypnosis, or trance.

"A trance is an altered state of consciousness, like daydreaming or falling asleep," he says.

There are three trance states, light, medium and deep, and most people can achieve at least one of these levels to a degree. And Dr Joseph gets all sorts of people coming to see him.



"I get visits from people who want to be rid of unwelcome habits, such as nail biting or smoking," he says. "As well as people with more challenging emotional problems. The wonderful thing is that it happens in a way that appears almost effortless," says Dr Joseph.

"Not that the patient doesn't have to make any effort at all. Hypnotherapy is not a magic wand that can cure all ills. For it to work, you have to want to change and you have to follow up a session with any tasks that the therapist asks you to undertake. But, when used in this way, hypnotherapy can be a powerful force for positive change."

Dr A Joseph, Msc, FBSCH, can be contacted on 020 8674 1233. To find a qualified hypnotherapist in your area, call the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis (BSCH) on 020 7402 9037. A qualified hypnotherapist will always ask if you are on any medication, seeking psychiatric help and for your GP's details.

Let us know

Have you ever been hypnotised, either by a stage hypnotist or during therapy? If so, we want to hear from you. Send your stories to, Hypnotic Gala, 15 Prescott Place, London SW4 6BS.

Five, four, three, two...

There are five stages to a hypnotherapy session...

1 Introduction

The bit where you meet your therapist and get them to answer any questions you may have, while they find out what you want.

2 Induction

The means of inducing the trance, so just close your eyes and relax.

3 Deepener

This is where the therapist puts you into a deep trance, ready to receive your therapy.

4 Suggestion

This is the therapy part, the bit where you receive all the suggestions that will help you achieve your goal.

5 Awakening

The part where you are counted out of trance, from one to 10, and woken up, feeling refreshed and relaxed.



Hypnosis FAQs

An expert answers some key questions...

What is hypnosis?

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, which isn't as scary as it sounds. Daydreaming is a form of hypnosis, as are those moments just before you fall asleep and just after you wake up. Anyone who has lost track of time, or not heard their name being called because they were concentrating hard on some task, was in an altered state of consciousness.

Will I be asleep?

No. You will be in a deep state of relaxation, but your mind will be alert. You will be able to hear everything that the hypnotherapist says to you, and you will also be aware of any other noises and sounds both inside and outside the room.

Will I lose control?

No. You are in control of your own body and mind at all times. A hypnotist cannot get you to do anything you do not want to do. If you panic and want to wake up, you will wake up. All a hypnotherapist does is enable you to accomplish a goal you already wish to achieve.



Almost available to all...

90% of all people can go into a **LIGHT** trance state

70-90% of those people will be able to go into a **MEDIUM** trance state

10-15% of those people will be able to go into a **DEEP** trance state