The Placebo Effect = The Perception Effect = Hypnosis!

The placebo effect should be a major topic of study in medical school. I believe that medical education should train doctors to recognize the power of our internal resources. Doctors should not dismiss the power of the mind as something inferior to the power of chemicals and the scalpel.

--Bruce H. Lipton, Ph.D.

The placebo effect should be the subject of major, funded research efforts. If medical researchers could figure out how to leverage the placebo effect, they would hand doctors an efficient, energy-based, side effect-free tool to treat disease. Energy healers say they already have such tools, but I am a scientist, and I believe the more we know about the science of the placebo, the better we’ll be able to use it in clinical settings.

--Bruce H. Lipton, Ph.D.

I explain to my clients that “the issue is in the tissue, and the tissue tells me the issue”. This is, in essence, what my practice is based upon: interpreting your body’s messages. The body manifests the unconscious patterns, those stored in your subconscious mind that are not acknowledged or identified by your conscious mind. If you are aware of these patterns, then you are often DEALING with them, attempting to resolve or shift your thoughts and your behavior. When you are consciously aware of your issues, your body doesn’t have to get your attention.
The mind uses the body as a last resort, and usually begins in subtle forms of contact. When those subtle forms of contact are ignored or covered up (often with medication) then the body gets a little more insistent: “louder” or in the wonderful words of my nephew years ago: “hurtier and hurtier”. I refer to this as “cascading” and often by the time a client walks through my door they have tried everything and been everywhere else to get some relief or at least some answers.

It makes wonderful sense to me as a hypnoterapist that if you talk yourself INTO a condition, you can talk yourself OUT of a condition. Listening to your body and its messages is the first step. Interpreting the message, and believing that you have the power within your own mind and body to shift your condition is the next step to health and well-being.

I am reading a wonderful book entitled The Biology of Belief by Dr. Bruce Lipton. He is a stem cell biologist from the University of Wisconsin’s School of Medicine and also performed his pioneering studies at Stanford University. As a former academic myself, I honor his candor and his research concerning the intellectual consciousness of our own cells.

Dr. Lipton refers to thoughts as “mind energy” and explains that thoughts directly influence how the physical brain controls the body’s physiology. In his book he states that “energy is a more effective means of affecting matter than chemicals.” He even cites examples, and I have examples and successes from my own practice…yet I also have some that are “not so successful”. Why would I admit to that? Because for one, it is true, and perhaps more importantly it is important to look into the clients and cases that do not have the success they thought they might. The word that is key here is “BELIEF”.

Years ago while working at the clinic I co-founded, Integrated Health Concepts, it was naïve of me to present to a client an affirmation that corresponded with their “tissue issue” and ask them to repeat it over and over again for thirty days. After all, it takes thirty days to make or break a habit. Or so I was told, yet understanding the scripting behind the habit/pattern/behavior and then using hypnosis to communicate to the subconscious mind is where the shifts often occur. The limiting beliefs, or negative scripting is communicated by the body through the “tissue issue” which is why I say that the tissue tells me the issue. Being a medical intuitive is more about understanding the body’s messages and interpreting those messages for my client.

After becoming certified in hypnosis in order to understand the body/mind connections more clearly, I was amazed to realize the subconscious mind is the one that runs the show. When we fail at something, or our body becomes increasingly ill, or we
continue to lack in money or opportunities, we believe completely (and I was in that group as well) that it is our conscious mind and our conscious statements that drive this victim status.

The messages programmed into your subconscious mind, can sabotage your healing progress every time. Our subconscious mind influences and shapes our experiences. According to Dr. Lipton, “Our lives are essentially a printout of our subconscious programs, behaviors that were fundamentally acquired from others (our parents, family, and community) before we were six years old. As psychologists recognize, a majority of these developmental programs are limiting and disempowering.”

Another interesting note is that the brain’s developmental stage for babies from birth to two years old is often the frequency known as delta waves, with periodic shifts to theta waves. Then between ages two to six the frequency is more often in the theta wave state. So it makes sense that parental “programming” and overall environmental programming will take place before the age of six. I often use the phrase “etching a brain groove” which my kids now don’t even understand! I use the reference to a phonograph record (a what?!) but in essence that is what is taking place.

Guess what hypnosis does? It puts your brain into that same theta frequency so that you are in a more suggestible state. It is a far more programmable state and we are designed that way SO as children we can absorb large volumes of information. My daughter Sarah was speaking fluent Polish at age three after only three or four weeks living in Warsaw, Poland. Her brother Samuel took a little longer to learn it, as he was five years old. It took him about seven or eight weeks to learn. I struggled with it for an entire semester and then one day it all came together.

I bet you never thought that learning another language involves hypnosis? There is the conscious act of learning grammar and memorizing, yet the art of conversation is more about your subconscious mind accessing the stored information and allowing you flow. In fact, I remember my Spanish high school teacher saying that when you dream in the language you know you have learned it completely. I never made the connection with dreaming the language and subconscious/hypnosis until now.

Why do some people have miraculous recoveries, overnight success, or spontaneous remissions and others have little if any results, or worse, a healing crisis? It is about belief, and the placebo effect has been powerful in treating many diseases, including depression, asthma, Parkinson’s, and many others.
In my field of hypnotherapy, there is an innovative treatment for obesity: The Virtual Gastric Band, which uses the power of your subconscious mind to believe you have had the actual surgery and you feel fuller quicker. It has a success rate higher than the actual surgery, which wouldn’t surprise me because most reputable hypnotherapists will spend time helping you understand the emotional basis of your obesity before the procedure is even presented. This is a wonderful example of how the placebo effect is being used in the field of hypnosis.

Again, it is about your belief in the process, and trusting your hypnotist in helping you achieve your goals. But the Placebo Effect may have another factor involved: your doctor. I often explain to clients that the two most influential people regarding your scripting (your “brain grooves”) and your behavior/well-being are 1: Your mother, and 2: your doctor, with father and minister (priest) coming in close after that. Why? it is a belief that what is being said by someone you trust completely will make a difference. Hypnosis is successful with individuals that believe hypnosis will work and they trust the hypnotherapist. That is why referrals are so powerful for me, you have heard from another that is worked for them, so there is a basis for your trust and belief in the process.

There is also a wonderful article by MSNBC on the Placebo Effect: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14309026/ns/health-mental_health/t/placebos-power-goes-beyond-mind/#.TmZ4k5i8eMI

Understanding more about the Placebo Effect will help us understand why “just” positive thinking and affirmations alone do not have the success rate many would like to claim. Rather it is about belief in the possibility of spontaneous remission, the belief in virtual surgery, and the belief in the body’s ability to heal without lengthy procedures and debilitating therapies.

If one person can be healed in a miraculous manner there is no reason to believe your body will not work in the same way. It is about bypassing the conscious mind that logically says it cannot be done, and suggest to the subconscious mind that the body is healthy, happy, well AND can return to its optimum health beginning at any moment.

Science may disregard spontaneous remissions and miraculous healings as misdiagnosis. They do occur and can occur more often if we begin looking into the “exceptions” as potential research rather than anomalies. And in this research, I know hypnosis will be right there as “the new medicine”.

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2 ibid p 98