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CHAPTER 1

THE MAGNIFICENT MIND-BODY CONNECTION



Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

WILLIAM JAMES

Once upon a time it was believed that the mind and the body were distinct and separate from each other. The seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes is credited with proclaiming this distinction. But he later said that it was spoken only out of his love of the Church and that he did not want to intrude on *matters of the heart*, for at that time they were considered to be the Church's domain. However, science and research have repeatedly shown that mind and body are not two distinctly separate entities, but that they are intricately connected. Mind and body cannot exist without the presence of each other. One of the most important features of the mind-body connection is that they are in constant communication, each influencing the other. You might think of your mind and body as always speaking to each other. This is the mind-body connection. Every thought and idea in your mind has an effect on your body, and every sensation in your body has an effect on your mind.

Thought alone
can completely
change the body.
Our mind literally
creates our body.

CANDACE PERT, PH.D.,
from *What the Bleep
Do We Know!?*

This book is about how your mind can influence your body for the better, to help you achieve the weight you were meant to have through the practice of self-hypnosis. Before jumping into the actual methods that will lead you to your perfect body weight, we would like to talk about hypnosis, its origins, and what it actually is in order to separate some fact from fiction. We would also like to introduce what we believe is at the heart of the concept of hypnosis—the mind-body connection. Understanding this intimate communication within your body will help you use self-hypnosis to ultimately achieve your perfect weight.

It is important to understand that thoughts are things. You cannot see them, but you know you have them. You may not feel every thought, but if you had biofeedback sensors attached to your body, you would see the instantaneous changes in your body created by your thoughts, positively or negatively. For example, if you were to think of someone who makes you angry, you would see immediate changes in heart function, blood vessel dilation or constriction, changes within your nervous system, and muscle tension. All these physical changes would happen because of a single thought. What this tells us is that your thoughts and ideas are chemically transmitted to the rest of your body, such that your body is “thinking” the same thing you are putting in your mind, but in your body’s own way, with its own physiological responses. Sometimes you are aware of your body’s response to what you think. Most of the time you are not aware that it is sharing the experience of your thoughts. The manner in which your body responds to the experience is based upon many factors, including your personality, past experiences, and learned patterns of response. With the repetition of these patterns, your body becomes programmed to perform in a certain way. It learns or becomes conditioned to that response pattern. The good news is that

anything that your body has learned can be unlearned by creating a different response. Self-hypnosis is a very powerful and effective tool to help you unlearn old patterns and replace them with more desirable patterns.

*You never can tell what your thoughts will do
In bringing you hate or love,
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the Universe,
Each thing must create its kind,
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.*

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, "YOU CAN NEVER TELL"

Just as your thoughts influence your body, your body influences your thoughts. There are times when you feel a sensation in your body, such as hunger or thirst, that causes you to feel an emotion or think a thought or have an idea in mind. If your mouth feels dry, you probably have a thought to drink water. But sometimes there is confusion—for example, when a feeling of being emotionally hurt might be confused with a sensation of “I need to eat” or “I want to eat.” These are some of the dynamics that we will be exploring and addressing within *The Self-Hypnosis Diet*.

Adopt the idea of having a “mind-body,” which is the exquisite connection that mind and body share. Think of your subconscious mind as the “mind of your body,” your “mind-body.” Instead of thinking that mind and body are distinct, use the terms “mind-body,” “mind of your body,” and “subconscious mind” as all representing the same thing. We will be using these terms interchangeably, but all three represent the same concept.

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

The complex of intricate interactions and responses among mental, emotional, and physical aspects of one's mind and body. It refers to the functional dualism that mind and body are intricately connected in a web of constant interaction such that the idea of “mind” and “body” may be viewed as “mind-body.”

Medical/clinical hypnosis is performed exclusively for the benefit of an individual seeking help from a qualified professional trained in medicine, psychology, dentistry, social work, or nursing.

All hypnosis is self-hypnosis. Whether you are using a therapist, a CD, tape, or DVD, or are working by yourself, you are in control of letting yourself go into trance, to experience hypnosis.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS . . .

My food choices are so much healthier, I don't even want or desire foods that are not nourishing or beneficial. My energy level has increased, and I'm walking at least one mile a day. I have always believed there was a mind-body connection, and *The Self-Hypnosis Diet* CDs have made me more of a believer. I don't even have to consciously think about what I should be eating or doing; it just comes naturally. These CDs have made a difference in my life.

JONATHAN

What Hypnosis Is

Self-hypnosis is a very effective way for you to talk directly to the mind of your body (the subconscious mind or mind-body). It provides you with a way to remove any obstacles and confusion within the dialogue of your mind-body, so that mind-body is sharing exactly what you want in a way that creates your healthy weight and healthy lifestyle. Before we go any further, we would like you to complete a short mental exercise that will help you begin learning about the power and the simplicity of self-hypnosis. Below are ten “true or false” statements about hypnosis. Read the statements and wonder, guess, or decide “true or false” according to what you *currently believe* about hypnosis.

What Do You Now Believe about Hypnosis?

1. Hypnosis is complicated and takes many sessions and much instruction.
2. To experience hypnosis, you must be hypnotized by someone who knows how to do it to you.

3. When experiencing a hypnotic trance, one loses consciousness.
4. The subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined.
5. Hypnosis can make you do things that are against your will or violate your values.
6. Most people go into trance every day.
7. All hypnosis is self-hypnosis.
8. Hypnosis can help your body heal wounds faster.
9. Your body has a language of its own.
10. You can use hypnosis to influence your physical responses like digestion, breathing, etc.
11. Stage hypnosis is the same as medical hypnosis.
12. Sometimes you are not even aware that you are already in a trance.
13. Hypnosis is a purely mental or psychological phenomenon—it is “all in the mind.”
14. There are some people who cannot be hypnotized.
15. With hypnosis you can give messages to your body, and your body can give messages to you.
16. There are thousands of published research studies and articles that demonstrate the benefits and effectiveness of hypnosis.

Reading these statements is an important step. It primes your conscious mind to be on the alert for the answers throughout these pages and your experience with the audio CD. (If you can't wait, the answers are in Appendix A.)

It is important to answer thoroughly any questions you may have about hypnosis. The reason for this is simple. To be able to “let go” of any hesitations and experience hypnosis, you must feel safe and comfortable within yourself when using the techniques presented on the CD portion of *The Self-Hypnosis Diet*. The more you know about hypnosis, the more comfortable and confident you will feel using it.

BELIEF BOOSTER

The purpose of hypnosis as a therapeutic technique is to help you understand and gain more control over your behavior, emotions or physical well-being.

THE MAYO CLINIC, December 2003

Hypnosis Defined

Below is the formal definition of hypnosis from a major professional association, as well as Dr. G.'s own definition. You will see that they speak about it in a similar fashion.

American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH)

Hypnosis is a state of inner absorption, concentration, and focused attention. It is like using a magnifying glass to focus the rays of the sun and make them more powerful. Similarly, when our minds are concentrated and focused, we are able to use our minds more powerfully. Because hypnosis allows people to use more of their potential, learning self-hypnosis is the ultimate act of self-control.

Dr. Steven Gurgevich's Definition

Hypnosis is a system or collection of methods that enable mind and body to share information more effectively. One of those methods is called trance. It is a process of creating an inner-self experience of focused consciousness that enables your mind and body to accept and share your intentions, beliefs, and expectations as true. The focused intention of your consciousness magnifies your power of belief (and the capacity of your belief) to cause your subconscious mind to accept and act upon intention.

Applications of Hypnosis

Studies show that hypnosis is an effective tool for accessing the mind-body connection. *The Self-Hypnosis Diet* will show you how to use self-hypnosis and access your mind-body connection for successful weight loss.

BELIEF BOOSTER

Hypnosis can actually help you lose weight.

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL PSYCHOTHERAPIST JEAN FAIN,

O: The Oprah Magazine, August 2004

Clinical and medical applications of hypnosis are plentiful. As many of our clients have done, you may use hypnosis to:

- change habits and behaviors such as smoking, nail biting, or hair pulling
- treat anxiety disorders or phobias, like the fear of flying or fear of heights
- uncover subconscious emotional conflicts or dynamics that underlie a variety of symptoms
- relieve pain
- provide anesthesia during surgery
- help wounds heal faster
- heal skin conditions
- heal irritable bowel syndrome
- provide relief for allergies
- promote the healing of asthma
- suppress or enhance the immune system
- address countless other applications, including expediting weight loss

Not only are these methods useful with adults, but children can benefit greatly, and there are limitless pediatric applications. This

TRANCE

A conscious state of focused attention and absorption in one's ideas, thoughts, and images, with a narrowing of awareness to other stimuli, which enhances the acceptance of suggestion and the response by the subconscious mind.

TRANCEWORK

The activity of using hypnotic trance to achieve a benefit or therapeutic outcome.

HYPNOTHERAPY

Hypnosis used within psychotherapy or medical interventions.

**HYPNOTIC
SUGGESTION**
A statement
offered during
trance that
either directly or
indirectly conveys
the message of
what you want
your subconscious
to act upon or
bring about.

is due, in part, to the fact that children are outstanding hypnotic subjects. They are wonderfully imaginative and have a great ability to pretend. When we work with children, we do not use the terms “hypnosis” or “trance.” Instead we call it “imaginative medicine,” and they are asked to simply “pretend.” The myriad applications for pediatric hypnosis include enuresis (bedwetting), thumb sucking, nail biting, hair pulling, low self-esteem, anxiety, pain control, bleeding control for hemophiliacs, nausea, ease of emergency room procedures, preoperative comfort, induction of anesthesia, postoperative comfort, and grief and mourning.

Let us just say that hypnosis is a collection of methods that allow your mind-body to share information more effectively. More specifically, hypnosis is a way for you to provide your mind-body with suggestions, thoughts, ideas, and images that effectively remove any obstacles to weight loss and enhance or maintain your perfect weight.

BELIEF BOOSTER

Imagine that when you eat, you feel satisfied sooner and therefore lose weight more rapidly. Imagine that the pain after heart-bypass or dental surgery feels merely like mild pressure. Imagine that your skin rash is clearing up. Recent clinical studies suggest that hypnosis . . . can indeed help motivated people accomplish those health goals.

CONSUMER REPORTS ON HEALTH, February 2004

Trance and Daydreaming

Everyday experiences of trance are common. When you are staring out a window, your eyes are open. They are recording light and shape and color. The rods and cones in your eyes are responding, and the optic nerve carries the information to your brain. You

are staring off into space. You are technically “seeing,” but you are not necessarily “looking” at what you are seeing. This is an example of an everyday experience of trance.

You can also stare with your ears. Eardrums are tympanic. They are like the heads on drums. They move with the changes in air pressure (sound waves). When you are staring with your ears, you are technically “hearing” because your eardrum is moving, and the tiny bones in the ear carry the message along the nerve pathways to the brain, but you are not “listening.” You can be “seeing” but not “looking.” You can be “hearing” but not “listening.” You are more absorbed in yourself, in your thoughts and ideas, than in the environment outside of you. This state of focused concentration, which is just like a daydream, is an everyday or natural hypnotic trance.

Another example of an everyday trance might include being so absorbed in a book that you are not paying much attention to what is going on around you. Or you can be absorbed in a movie, and sometime during that movie, you might actually get excited or frightened or emotionally involved in the experience of what you are seeing and hearing. In these times of being so absorbed in your experience of daydreaming, reading, watching a movie, or listening to music, your thoughts—and the feelings created by your thoughts—become “real,” or seem to be at the time. When this happens, your mind-body or subconscious cannot tell the difference. Your heart rate may speed up or slow down, muscles may tighten or relax, and you might become hungry, thirsty, or nauseous. In other words, your mind and body share the experience so well together that it becomes a very real physical experience. Those are everyday trances. As you can see, there is no going out, there is no going under. At all times, you are in control, and you are aware that you are in control. If you think of a hypnotic trance in the same way as a daydream, you will have a better feel for just what it is and what it is not.

What Hypnosis Is *Not*

LAY HYPNOSIS
Lay hypnosis
is practiced by
individuals who
have studied
hypnosis or
attended hypnosis
training but
do not have a
professional
background in the
healing arts.

The word “hypnosis” may conjure up misconceptions that leave a bad taste in our mouths. This is due mostly to the advent of stage hypnotists (see definition of stage hypnosis on page 11). One misconception about hypnosis is that it is “done to” someone or that a person “gets hypnotized.” This is totally false. No one hypnotizes another person. A good therapist or clinician only facilitates helping people learn to do this, much as they would learn to do meditation.

Loss of consciousness is another misconception. You do not lose consciousness when “in trance” during hypnosis. At all times you are fully aware of where you are and what you are doing. The hypnotic trance itself is similar to what you experience when you are in a daydream, when you are wonderfully absorbed in your own thoughts and ideas.

Another misconception about hypnosis is the surrendering of your will. At all times you are in control and will not do anything against your will or your best interest. This includes revealing secrets or embarrassing yourself. You will not do anything in trance that you would not do in a regular waking state.

Some people have the false idea that they may not be able to come out of trance. But everyone comes out of trance because they put themselves into it. Hypnosis can naturally lead to falling asleep, which is a way of coming out of trance, because sleep is not hypnosis. The difference between sleep and hypnosis is that during sleep you are not conscious. A hypnotic trance is a waking state in which you are absorbed in your own thoughts and ideas so thoroughly that you are ignoring the stimuli from the environment around you or within you.

Remember, with hypnosis you are in control of choosing what you want your mind-body to share. You can choose what and how to respond. A part of your body may itch, but you can