

# **A Rose By Any Other Name**

## **My First Lesson In The Power Of Suggestion**

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What's in a name? You know how the old saying goes about a rose by any other name still being a rose, right? For the most part this saying is true, however many years ago, during my initial training in the art and science of hypnosis, I was about to learn yet another life-altering lesson that would leave an impact on the direction of my thought processes and make an impression of colossal magnitude on how I perceived and defined the awesome power of suggestion for the rest of my life.

As I look back, I can remember things from that time and place so vividly. The names and faces of each of my classmates, the décor of the classroom, and even the mannerisms of my instructor as he painstakingly dissected the curriculum one page at a time. Dr. Matthew A. Sportelli was a consummate instructor and unbeknownst to either of us at the time, was soon to become my life-long mentor and I his protégé. His passion for teaching was exhilarating and contagious. Once, during one of those rare moments of isolated heart-to-heart communication, he confessed to me that beyond the monetary gain, his reward as an instructor was the expressions of understanding he gleaned on each of the students' faces as they 'got the big idea'.

One day during a lunch break, I noticed that one of the other students I had befriended was a bit down-in-the-mouth and teary eyed. I wondered to myself what the reason could be for his consistent downtrodden behavior. Especially after just experiencing the empowering segment of class we had just completed. Thus far, I found it to be the most profound and awe-inspiring part of our instruction yet. It covered in depth, the power of suggestion and its impact on the various segments of human engineering in part and as a whole. Perhaps my friend was dealing with some kind of personal challenges in his home life, or maybe he'd been warding off a cold. Maybe it was due to an emotional revelation he experienced during a class exercise. It was definitely possible that any of the hypnosis-related subjects and techniques we covered could have caused an impetuous and unrestrained stir within his emotions. I know that the personal revelations I had been experiencing by the knowledge gained from the class were mind-boggling! In any event, in a caring, yet un-intrusive manner, I took it upon myself to approach my classmate and proceeded to share with him my sensitive perception of his demeanor. I also wanted to let him know that I was available and willing to lend assistance if there was anything I could do to help. It was then that he confided in me that his symptoms had nothing to do with what transpired during class, his home life or the common cold. His symptoms were simply due to an allergy reaction he had to fresh flowers. I immediately made the connection between what he divulged to me and the vase of fresh cut roses that were prominently displayed on our instructors' desk in the front of the classroom. Now I understood the reasoning behind my teary-eyed friend always choosing to take a back row seat in class! He was simply exhibiting the good manners of a gentleman and, not wanting to offend our esteemed instructor, refrained from sharing his flower-related allergy with him.

Soon after my acknowledgement of the circumstances surrounding my classmates' discomfort, I took it upon myself to be the doer-of-good-deeds and share

this bit of information with our instructor. I automatically assumed that for the comfort of my classmate, our instructor would remove the roses from the room altogether. (And you and I both know what it is to assume, right?) He seemed very receptive to my compassionate plea and desire to assist someone in need and expressed an undefinable interest in exactly which student it was that was experiencing the allergic reaction to his vase of roses. Additionally, I could sense an undercurrent behind the smile that had disguised itself as a subtle twinkle in his eyes, and he assured me he would handle the situation appropriately.

I went home that night proud of myself for intervening. I thought all went well until I arrived for the next class and found much to my dismay that the roses had actually been moved closer to my new friend/classmate than before! Surely my instructor must have been the one responsible for this. Besides me, he was the only one who knew anything about my friends' allergy. How could he be so rude? I was confused and angry at his lack of sensitivity. How could this blatant display of disrespect for another human being be coming from a man I had grown to respect and admire? Was this the man who was teaching us to be compassionate healers and sensitive to the needs of our clients? Is this the man that we quoted as saying that every action must first be triggered by a suggestion preceded by an associated thought? Surely there must be some mistake! He wouldn't deliberately want to cause undue duress to another human being! I was aghast! I knew what had to be done and I had to take action. I would wait until the time was right and confront him on this issue.

Needless to say the closer the vase of roses sat to my friend the more teary-eyed he got. In addition to his watery eyes, he soon began to show other signs of his allergy-related symptoms with sniffing, and a runny nose. I knew I had to act quickly. This was certainly going to be a challenge. Just as soon as I could I find a window of opportunity, I would bring this to the attention of my instructor in such a way so as to not show disrespect to him or display my personal distaste in his actions. I desperately wanted to put an end to my friends discomfort as soon as I possibly could without letting him know that I had breached his confidence. And it wouldn't be long before the opportunity presented itself.

Instantly and without warning our instructor, knowing exactly what was happening in the room, (and taking the opportunity to teach us all a valuable lesson in the power of suggestion) looked directly into my eyes and proceeded to make his way over to the vase of roses. Without removing his fixed gaze from mine, he picked up the vase while continuing his lecture, and made his way even closer to my allergy-stricken friend. The closer he got to him with the vase of roses, the more restraint my friend showed in trying to contain his allergic reaction. I couldn't believe what was happening right before my eyes! Time appeared to have stood still for what seemed like an eternity, but in reality was only a few seconds. The moment culminated as my instructor placed the vase of roses directly in front of my friend, and almost simultaneously my classmate let out a series of sneezes the sent the whole room into a dither. It was at this exact moment that I learned the true power of suggestion. You see... we soon learned that the roses in the vase were silk and the reaction he had to the roses was purely formulated in his mind and acted upon within his own belief system, to manifest the physical symptoms commonly associated with allergies. The implied thought/suggestion that the roses were real and relating the 'fresh roses'

thoughts/suggestions to his past accounts of what transpired when he was near or around a flower of any sort caused the body to produce the phantom symptoms of an allergic reaction to the simple yet elegant beauty of a silk rose.