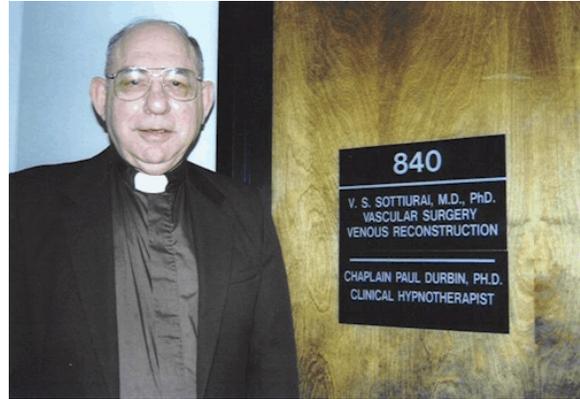


For Those Who Doubt the Value of Hypnosis

by Chaplain Paul G. Durbin



"Hypnosis just can't be as helpful as you suggest. It is just too easy. Perhaps you have heard people make statements like this concerning hypnosis. For those who doubt the value of hypnosis, I'd like to tell you this Biblical story found in II Kings 5:1-15 concerning Naaman the leper. Now this story has little to do with hypnosis...or does it? It does have something to do with belief and exception.

If Naaman were to live in our day, he would wear the Medal of Honor and would probably be the Chairman of the Military Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was a proud and successful man had many servants. Among those servants was a young captive taken in battle with Israel. She was the maid of Naaman's wife. When it was discovered that Naaman had leprosy, she told her mistress of the Prophet Elisha in her home country of Israel. The maid was certain that Elisha could work a miracle and restore Naaman's health.

Following the advice of his wife's maid, Naaman set out for Israel with an official letter from the King of Syria and gold worth about \$80,000 at today's rate. When he arrived at Elisha's house, Elisha sent a messenger out to greet him. The messenger said to Naaman, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be cleaned."

Naaman was angry because Elisha did not come out to meet him and perform some spectacular act to restore his health. Instead, a Messenger tells him to go wash in the Jordan River. Naaman probably thought to himself, "what a waste of time. We have better rivers in Syria than the Jordan and our rivers cannot heal." Naaman left Elisha's house in anger, but his servant said, "If the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" How about following his suggestion that you wash and be healed?"

In order for healing to take place, Naaman had to change his belief system and his expectation. If Naaman could muster enough faith to believe, perhaps change would be possible. In truth, when Naaman went to the Jordan and bathed seven times he was healed.

Those who have trouble believing that hypnosis can be helpful need to be reminded of the power of one's belief system. Believe it work, expect it to work, visualize it working, and practice it working. Only as Naaman could believe, expect, visualize, and actually go to the Jordan and wash seven times could he be healed.

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By using hypnosis, imagery and healing stories, we can make changes in our lives even as Naaman did in his. **IMAGERY:** The use of imagery with suggestions intensifies the suggestion and makes it more effective. Jonathan Edwards said, "The ideas and images in men's mind are the invisible powers that constantly govern them." [John Roger Martin, Success Through Self-Hypnosis,, p72] St. Paul wrote, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." [Galatians 6:7 KJV] This says to me that what is sown by the conscious mind through thoughts and images into the subconscious mind tends to become a reality. Mental images give the subconscious mind a model to work toward. The wise old man of Proverbs once wrote, "Whatever a person thinketh his heart so is he." (Proverbs 23:7) Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." and "Imagination is your preview of coming events." One of the characteristics of the subconscious mind is that which is expected, good or bad, tends to be realized. The most effective imaging is that which communicates with the subconscious "in the heart". The mental picture you hold of yourself is what directs and controls you. You can use your imagination to improve you or destroy you.

As one images in his mind, he plants seeds into the subconscious. If those images are repeated often enough, one begins to reap what is sown. How does a tiny seed grow? First, it is sown in ground that may be dry or wet, rocky or sandy, barren or fertile. As the life forces begin to come alive in that seed, it must break through that protective shell that surrounds it. As life within the seed becomes stronger, the seed germinates and works its way upward through the soil and finally it breaks through into the air. Then it must triumph over hot sunlight, drenching rains, and heavy winds to grow into the strong productive plant it was intended to be. The seed of belief, faith, and hope can be planted in the soil of our subconscious and when those images are repeated, the seed germinates and begins to grow. Let it grow so you can become the person you can be.

In the play, "South Pacific" is the words from a song, which says, "You've got to have a dream if you want a dream to come true." Anotal France said, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan, but also believe." Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." The words of the 1940's song, "You have to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative and don't mess with the Mister In-between" is good advice.

The subconscious mind seeks to meet your deepest needs, expectations, wishes, and desires but does not always do it the way you want it done. A very important point to remember is that the subconscious can not tell the difference between a wish and a fear. The subconscious interprets a fear as a wish. Fear (negative expectation) is our greatest enemy. Faith (positive expectation) is our greatest ally. Jesus in Mark 11:14 seems to be saying that imagery with prayer cause the prayer to be more effective. "Therefore I say unto you that anything whatsoever you desire, when you pray, believe ye have received it and you shall have it."

Until there is an image in the mind, there can be no reality. All great inventions began with a thought in the mind. The inventor was able to visualize the invention before he could bring it to reality. The same is true of great music, great writing, and great living. If you want to change your life, your lifestyle, your habits, you must change the image that your mind holds. When working with a person for weight control, I have the person imagine or visualize themselves the size they want to be as if they were that size and to imagine stepping on the scale and weighing their desired weight. I request that they do this each night just before going to sleep and each morning just after they wake up from sleep.

I should point out that imagery and daydreaming are different from one another. Imagery motivates one to accomplish that which is visualized. The daydreamer is satisfied with the dream and is not motivated to accomplish the goal. Imagery is not wishful thinking but hopeful expectation of what is desired with the motivation to believe it to reality.

The author of Proverbs 29:18 [KJV] wrote that where there is no vision, the people perish. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote that imagination and visualization are not magic wands, but they are important tools for the "life more abundant." Imaging is a kind of mental engineering that works best when supported by religious faith, backed by prayer. [Norman Vincent Peale, Positive Imaging, p1]

For those who doubt the power of hypnosis, just remember: expect what you want to happen, believe that it can happen, practice it happening in your imagination and work for its reality. You will be amazingly surprised at the results.

Biography of Paul G. Durbin, President of the Board of Directors of the International Medical and Dental Association

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