

THE MIRROR IMAGE

by Robert F. Otto, C.Ht.

I was at the end of another group session for weight loss and barely had enough time to bid farewell to the last of the group and catch my breath before being approached by a beautiful young woman in her early thirties. She had been patiently waiting outside of my meeting room, waiting for the room to clear before making her entrance. Her image looked strikingly familiar yet I couldn't put a finger on where I had seen her before. It didn't take long before I recognized who she was and her reason for wanting to share a few words with me.



"Mr. Otto, may I have a moment of your time?" she asked in a calm and unobtrusive manner. "Absolutely." I replied, curious as to where this conversation would lead. "Do you remember me?" she asked and continued on before I had a chance to answer. "My name is Mary Lou and I was a participant in one of your weight loss sessions a few months ago." "You might remember me when I tell you what miraculous events have happened in my life since our last encounter."

Before I continue on with Mary Lou's story, I should give you a foundation for the mindset that Mary Lou left with the evening she attended her initial session. My philosophy for a good weight loss session has always been to positively exercise both the conscious and subconscious mind for success. In most cases using hypnosis for behavior modification, it is my belief that only a very light state of hypnosis is needed for complete and profound results. I realize this is not the belief of every practicing therapist, and it is not my intent to discredit or argue with those that have other theories on the subject. But when a continuous stream of results comes back with an affirmative response, it is not up to me to question the approach or re-create the wheel. I know what has worked for me in the past and by sharing this story it is my desire that perhaps some of you will have gained some additional insight for future encounters with your own clients wishing to lose some unwanted weight. We are in the profession of helping others and what might work well with one client may not work as well with another. Having alternative approaches to weight loss should be a consideration for all of us.

During the course of my pre talk for weight loss I remind my clients that it takes just as much effort for them to remain in a body they say they don't want or to alter their thinking process to one of a new thin, slim, trim body. The subconscious mind doesn't care what is implanted into its fertile soil and will act out accordingly with just as much effort! The agenda here is to change the thought processes both consciously and subconsciously. Thereby uniting both minds on the same wavelength for positive results in weight loss. I also explain to my group that their weight loss programming during the hypnotic segment that evening will consist of losing four ounces each day. To put it simply, success breeds success. By this I mean that it is far more conceivable to the

client to lose four ounces a day then to program to lose ten pounds in a month! Blatantly speaking, they could easily lose four ounces by simply emptying their bladder a few extra times during the course of a day. And for most clients the thought of losing ten pounds in a month would put them in a tailspin of negativity because of their past history in previous, unsuccessful weight loss programs. Unbeknown to them, the approach is different but the results are virtually the same! Additionally, it is by far a healthier means to weight loss. By the client successfully losing a mere four ounces in a day, encourages them to continue on to lose another four ounces, and another, and another, and so on. Thus concluding my theory on 'success breeding success'.

I also ask my clients to often and daily look at themselves in front of a full-length mirror and learn to consciously compliment their self-image. And as we all know, anything done consciously for twenty-one consecutive days becomes a subconsciously acting habit, concept or pattern without our approval or acknowledgement. (I tell them thirty days to be on the safe side.) This brings me back to Mary Lou's story and the wonderful results she achieved using the previously discussed approach to weight loss.

The evening Mary Lou first attended my workshop she was bold enough to raise her hand during our discussion on consciously complimenting your self-image in front of a mirror. "Mr. Otto." she spoke out, "I can't compliment myself in front of a mirror. I weigh in excess of four hundred pounds! How could I possibly compliment a body that looks like this?" My immediate response to her was that she would always remain in excess of four hundred pounds if she didn't learn to compliment herself! "Run past the mirror if necessary, until the new idea of complimenting yourself is accepted by you both consciously and subconsciously." "I have one other problem," she said without blinking an eye. "I can't run either. Remember that I weigh in excess of four hundred pounds!" I could easily see that Mary Lou had the intention to lose weight, but her approach was all wrong. "Then slide across the front of the mirror!" I instructed. "I want you to do whatever is necessary, from this day forward to begin to compliment yourself."

After the session had ended I asked Mary Lou to stay behind for a few additional moments in order for me to give her an extra 'shot in the arm'. Because she was a good hypnotic subject and had the desire to lose weight, giving her some additional attention was exactly what she needed to start the snowball rolling down from the top of a mountain the size of Mt. Everest nonstop until it perpetuated into a boulder at the bottom. (She also had a hidden motivational agenda of which she did not divulge to me until our second meeting.)

"I just want you to know that since the last time we were together I've lost more than half of myself! I came to thank you for being the catalyst to my happiness and success. That night several months ago when I attended your class I was unhappy, desperate, and emotionally unstable." she said as the stream of tears erupted from the emotions welling inside her. "You gave me the motivation and encouragement to believe in myself and my abilities. I was the person who weighed in excess of four hundred pounds. Since that time I've lost 235 pounds and I'm proud to show you the clothes I wore that evening." At that, she ripped open a bag she was holding over her shoulder and

quickly pulled out a pair of elastic-waisted stretch pants that were so large I couldn't begin to guess the size. "This is what I was wearing the evening I attended your seminar." She said proudly. "You have no idea the impact you had on me. That night, I attended your session in desperation because my husband had just finished telling me that our marriage was over and he was leaving me. He told me how unhealthy and unattractive I had allowed myself to become and how ashamed he was to be seen with me in public. Accusing me that because of my unhealthy habits, my children were becoming mirror images of myself. I felt like my whole world was crumbling in around me. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I even considered taking my own life that night. Instead the universe guided me to your class. I listened that night with not only an open mind, but with an open heart, and the results speak for themselves. I can never thank you enough for opening my mind to the marvelous process of hypnosis. You literally saved my life.

I would very much like to come back and show others what results can be achieved if they would just allow you to do your work and follow through with the instructions you provide."

As promised Mary Lou attended my next scheduled seminar in that area. When called upon she proudly took her place in front of the new group and began to tell her story. Needless to say my work for that evening was a 'cake walk'. Was it mass hypnosis? Perhaps. Do you think I needed to 'convince' anyone in the group about the effectiveness of hypnosis? Not! Do you think after listening to Mary Lou's story anyone in the group needed to achieve a somnambulistic state of hypnosis to be successful for weight loss? Absolutely not!

In retrospect, I would like to say that the ripple effect of our work to those we come in contact with goes much further than any of us can imagine. As hypnotherapists we cannot take credit for the ripples in the water, but we can take credit for throwing the pebble and allowing it to vibrate through the universe to whoever is in need. Casting out good vibrations has a boomerang effect and will come back to us tenfold.