



COURSE MATERIAL FOR THE CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST PROGRAM

162 - Stress

Stress is taught all through the ANHI Hypnotherapy Course. Stress is related to almost every problem, in one way or another, and, as a hypnotherapist, you will work with stress and blocking to stress more than any other problem. Much of what is said here has been said in Visualization but is worth mentioning again.

- All **emotions** are accompanied by physiological changes: fear, by palpitation of the heart; anger, by increased heart activity, elevation of blood pressure, and changes in carbohydrate metabolism; despair, by sighing.
- All these physiological phenomena are the result of complex muscular interactions under the influence of nervous impulses, carried to the expressive muscles of the face and to the diaphragm in laughter, to the heart in fear, and to the adrenal glands and to the vascular system in rage.
- Just as we have all experienced fear and excitement, we have also experienced feelings of **relaxation**.
- This includes a slowing of our heartbeat and breathing, and a lack of tension in the skeletal muscles.
- **Dr. Herbert Benson**, of the Harvard Medical School, has taught people to relax by concentrating on a constant stimulus such as an object, a sound, or a phrase that was repeated again and again.
- Dr. Benson found that after twelve minutes of relaxation, the subjects' oxygen consumption decreased by an average of 13% (from their control values), their carbon dioxide production decreased by 12%, and their respiration decreased from sixteen to eleven breaths per minute.
- Dr. Benson named these physiological changes the **relaxation response**.
- In other studies, Dr. Benson found that decreased blood lactate (a waste product of metabolism), relatively low blood pressure, slightly increased forearm blood flow, decreased heart rates, and intensification of Alpha brain waves accompanied the relaxation response.



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- Researchers found that it could cause changes in blood sugar, white blood cell counts, blood pressure, heart and breathing rates, thyroid secretion, and brain wave patterns.
- Relaxation exercises affect the body by causing the **hypothalamus** to moderate the autonomic nervous system, normalizing and bringing about healing physiological changes.
- A particular exercise may affect a specific organ or physiological process.
- Most people do not realize how little control they have over their own thoughts.
- **Hypnotherapy is a wonderful way to take control of our thoughts**
- Each image a person chooses to concentrate upon has a specific effect that is inseparable from the nature of the object-image.
- These specific effects of the image will affect a person's body, his state of mind, and his environment.
- Our bodies react to mental images in ways that are similar to how they react to images from the external world.
- The American physiologist, Edmund Jacobson, conducted studies which show that when a person imagines running small, but measurable, amounts of contraction actually take place in the muscles associated with running.

The same neurological pathways are excited by imagined running as by actual running.

- There are also pathways between the autonomic nervous system, and the pituitary and adrenal cortex.
- The pituitary gland secretes hormones which regulate the rate of secretion of other glands; especially the thyroid, sex, and adrenal gland.
- The adrenal glands secrete steroids, which regulate metabolic processes, and epinephrine, which causes the "fight or flight" reaction.
- Through these pathways, an image held in the mind can literally affect every cell in the body.
- So when an image or thought is held in the mind, there is neuronal activity in both hemispheres of the brain.



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- Nerve fibers lead from the cerebral hemisphere to the hypothalamus, which has connections with the autonomic nervous system and the pituitary gland.
- When a person holds a strong fearful image in his mind's eye, his body responds via the autonomic nervous system. How does it respond? (With a feeling of "butterflies in the stomach," a quickened pulse, elevated blood pressure, sweating, goosebumps, and dryness of the mouth.)
- Mental images influence people's moods and the events in their life. Holding positive images tends to transform people's lives positively.
- If a person is constantly thinking about something negative in their past, that also will affect them.
- If the image a person holds in his mind manifests itself in the outer world, then each person is a creator and visualizing is the mechanism of his creation.
- Thus visualization becomes reality, and reality, as a person generally thinks of it, is a reflection of his internal images.
- Science and metaphysics are beginning to agree - each person has the power to create and change the world.