



COURSE MATERIAL FOR THE CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST PROGRAM

171 - Memory, Brain Function, and Regression

Children and False Memories

- Most children readily accept a world of fantasy, participate in it, and are wide open to misconceptions. The Medical and Care professionals must be especially careful when working with children because they are so easily led.
- If a child tells you they know the difference between a lie and the truth that may be correct. It only means they know the difference in the words. What is a lie or the truth to a child? Remember that the critical mind has not developed yet and they are unable to filter out fact and fantasy, so a lie may be truth to them. Their mind will accept a fabrication as truth just as easily as it will the truth.
- The child's brain can still be influenced on a massive scale because critical mind is just forming. It is very vulnerable and accepts information without a filter. Therefore, they may base information on emotion or influences and not fact, and it is often very different from the perception of the parent or the reality of the situation. However, fact or fiction drops down into the subconscious mind and they accept it as truth. This alone, makes the child very vulnerable to misinformation.
- A child can only see things as a child mixed in with their emotion and when the child grows up, they will continue to see it through the eyes of the child. Over time memories weaken, and change. A secondary gain will add to the misinformation.
- Many clients will go back to a memory as a child and act like a child as they talk about the event. You might tell them they no longer see the event through the eyes of a child but, as the adult they have become.
- Explain the event from the standpoint of logic and reason and understanding of the adult. Explain that they cannot go back and change anything. It is what it is.
- How you deal with it will depend on what the memory is. If it is something that will add value to their life, there is no problem.



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- When an individual talks about a negative memory repeatedly the association becomes stronger and stronger as they reinforce it. Thought upon thought, fused with emotions may become very disturbing, as it grows larger and stronger.
- False memories become a belief and those beliefs become memories.
- Here again I cannot stress enough how careful we need to be when we ask someone to go back into the past. We must never ask leading questions in the hypnotic state.
- I love the metaphor that Dr. Elizabeth Loftus gave in the book *The Myth of Repressed Memory*, "Think of your mind as a bowl filled with clear water. Now imagine each memory as a teaspoon of milk stirred into the water. Every adult mind holds thousands of these murky memories. Who dare to disentangle the water from the milk?"
- Loftus, as well as, other researchers has demonstrated the power of suggestion in subjects not hypnotized. We now know from research that memories can be changed, new information can mix in with the old, and totally new memories can be implanted.
- When the mind holds an image or thought, there is neuronal activity in both hemispheres of the brain, which has connections with the autonomic nervous system. Our thoughts and images spill over into every area of our life.