

Hypnotic Weight Control

Published by James Malone at Smashwords

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Important note: the suggestions in this book are not meant to diagnose or prescribe for any physical or emotional illness. You encouraged to seek out qualified medical advice before making any significant changes in your eating or exercise behaviors

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Introduction

Hypnotic Weight Loss contains proven tips and strategies that I have encountered since becoming a Certified Hypnotist in 1995.

With the ever rising percentage of overweight and obese Americans and related health problems, interest in developing a healthier lifestyle.

This is not a book on diet and exercise. Usually my clients are every bit as knowledgeable as I am or more so on those topics.

Rather I encounter people who will say, "I know what to do, I just can't get myself to do it." And this is where the services of a mind coach like a hypnotist come into play.

Human consciousness is comprised of numerous levels. Specific eating and exercise plans are in the realm of the conscious mind. "X percentage of people who carry out behavior Y can expect result Z" as evidenced (hopefully) by some sort of solid research,

Human motivation is far more fickle and nuanced and personal. Maybe the saying, "if its such a good idea why are I doing it?" sounds familiar to you.

The subconscious or unconscious is defined as the part of the mind that is not normally in conscious awareness or control, It carries out the myriad habitual functions that would overwhelm you if you had to attend to them consciously.

Although you need habits to function in this world, you should also be able to change them if it suits you. Yet habits since they are integral to survival and usually resist change even when they are harmful. Its just the nature of the beast so to speak

In the coming sections you will be encountering some tips, tricks and hacks that will enable you to move past ruts in your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. And do not discount a recommendation just because its seems too simple to be significant. Small actions can have great significance when carried out over time-the magnificent stalagmites and stalactites you find in some deep caverns were created by countless single water drops.

Getting There

Every journey needs a starting point and a destination as well as some sort of plan or map on how you are going to get there. What you are being invited to do now is an assessment process that will super-charge and fine tune your motivation. And please don't make the mistake of simply of just reading through this section. The act of actually writing things down intensifies the effect on both the conscious and subconscious levels of mind.

Give yourself at least an hour to begin the process. Get a notebook or start a file in your computer which will be referred to as your Success Journal and record your current weight.

If you are a female, take a tape measure and measure your hips at their widest point. If you are a male measure your waist at its thickest point, usually slightly below the belly button. These are the primary fat storage points for the respective genders and will provide an additional measurement of your progress in the future. Record these numbers too.

It is recommended that you record your weight and waist or hip measurement on the same day/time each week to minimize the normal and insignificant fluctuations in weight most of us will have over the course of a day.

You will also benefit from making some comments about the week's progress and writing down which behavior/attitude you are going to focus on along with an autosuggestion you will use to reinforce your efforts-more on that in a later section.

If being overweight has been a long term problem for you, this weekly measurement process probably should be continued for the rest of your life.

Next you need define three things a) why is your current situation unacceptable to you and b) how did you arrive at this place and c) where would you like to be, which includes long and short term goals..

Using your Success Journal, write down why your current weight is a problem for you. In this description honestly state the impact that this situation has on you in the areas of Physical, Emotional, Social, Career, the Future and Other. Below are some examples.

Physical: health problems related to excess weight, lack of energy or mobility, etc.

Emotional: self-consciousness, anger at self for allowing this to happen, frustration.

Social: feel that people judge you negatively, unwilling to wear a bathing suit.

Career: lack confidence during job interviews, won't speak up at meetings.

The Future: what do you believe will happen if you allow things to stay the same or even get worse?

Other: anything that doesn't fit into the other categories.

Now take a good hard look at your list and ask if you are willing to let things stay the same or get even worse. No? Good, then move on to the next step.

You may have heard the term of "owning your situation.." What this means is accepting

full responsibility for where you are and where you are going. It may be true that the mistreatment of others influenced the unhealthy choices you made that led to you being overweight. Perhaps your family culture didn't value healthy eating or exercise. However, no one else can lose the weight for you. Fair? Probably not, but you just have to get over that one.

The next step might be described as reversed engineering. This is where you examine a finished product and figure out how it was made, in this case how did you become overweight? Consider the areas of Eating, Activity, Stress and Thoughts. Below are some examples, write them down in your Success Journal

Eating Habits: (note which ones apply)

Having portions that are too large.

Snacking, especially when not actually hungry.

Eating too many processed or junk/fast foods.

Eating while watching TV or otherwise distracted.

Drinking soda or other sugary beverages.

Excessive alcohol consumption.

Not drinking enough water

Other

Activity (note which ones apply)

Not engaging in formal exercise (health club, dance class, etc)

Avoiding house or yard work.

Sitting for long periods of time.

Having mostly passive recreation-TV, online gaming, etc

Avoiding walking or climbing the stairs whenever possible.

Other

Stress (note which ones apply)

Eating to reduce:

Anger

Boredom

Loneliness

Sadness

Tension

Worry

Not getting enough sleep.

Lacking healthy outlets or interests.

Not making time for your self-always putting others first.

Thoughts

Making excuses for overweight condition.

Self-deception, telling yourself you really aren't too overweight.

Blaming past/other people for your problem and refusing to take action.

Putting off getting started.

Being overly pessimistic/negative about your chances of success.

Being perfectionist: having a lapse and then quitting efforts, figuring "what's the use?" and getting off track for a long period of time.

(A blank success Journal Page has been provided in [Appendix A](#))

The last step is defining what you expect, when you want it by, why you want it, and how you are going to get there. With a bit of imagination you can probably guess that you will reverse what you wrote in the assessment of how being overweight has negatively impacted you and the behaviors and attitudes that led you to that state.

(Before you complete this section you may wish to read the rest of this book and to review the Healthy Weight Planning Sheet in [Appendix B.](#))

First, close your eyes for a moment and picture or imagine that you have reached your ideal size, shape and condition. What does that look, sound or feel like? What are you able to do that you weren't able to do before? This is your power image, make it vivid!

You can follow the following template to create your goal statement or you can come up with your own.

The basic formula "I expect X by (date) because I want (Y). In order to bring this about I agree to make the following changes in my thoughts and behavior (Z)

Example: "By September I expect my body to weigh 180-185 pounds because I want to be healthier, more energetic when playing with my kids and to have greater self-confidence at work. In order to bring this about I agree to make the following changes in my thoughts and behavior:"

I exercise for at least 30 minutes 5 times a week.

I limit my fast food meals to one per week maximum.

I plan and prepare healthy meals on Sunday evening

I accept full responsibility for being overweight and full responsibility for solving it.

I set aside a couple of hours on Sunday afternoon to relax.

Notice that the behaviors you agree to are stated in the present tense and positive as the subconscious mind lives in an eternal present.

You state "I am exercising" rather than "I will exercise" as the latter puts the behavior off to some ill designed future.

You do not want to state "I will not eat fast food every day" as this forces you to think of

engaging in the unwanted behavior.

Think of your success journal as a living and evolving document that you will continually update, reviewing it at least once a week one on “measurement and weigh in” day.

Reading the initial assessment will remind you why you have decided to change, “keeping it green” so to speak. The regular weigh-ins and measurement provide an objective appraisal your progress. Lastly the Goal Statement reminds you of your commitment. You are encouraged to conjure up some healthy rewards too if you have a really good week.

What you will encounter in the following chapters are some of the most powerful recommendations explained in a way that may motivate you to consider them.

Strive to Be Fit

Very often the less than reputable commercial weight loss plans lure customers in with promises that are enticing yet simply not possible. Who wouldn't want to be supermodel thin by doing nothing more than taking two pills a day or rubbing an exotic cream on your buns and thighs? Chances are you have come to realize that such solutions are ineffective and often quite costly!

Would you be surprised to discover that definitive scientific documentation has spelled out what actually works in weight loss? The National Weight Control Registry (NWCR) is a publicly funded program that has surveyed a large number of people who have been successful at losing a significant amount of weight and keeping it off for the long term.

What secrets has the NWCR revealed? These folks eat less, make better food choices and exercise regularly, in other words a healthy lifestyle.

In motivational coaching this is described as having "primary goals" (end result) and "secondary goals," the actions that will bring the primary objective about.

The dilemma faced by an overweight individual could be compared to the person who wishes to become wealthy*. The poor person who wants financial security will not become wealthy just by dreaming about it.

Rather, chances are he or she will have to focus on developing skills and talents people are willing to compensate them for. Then the person has to learn how to manage earnings in an intelligent fashion. All this takes focus and effort.

You are not going to wish the weight off your body either, you are going to have to make the consistent behavioral changes like the people participating in the NWCR did. Which may very well not be that appealing to you. Few people are willing to develop healthier habits just for the sake of doing so. But there is no getting around reaching these secondary goals if you really want to be successful.

This is why it is so important to be clear why you want to reduce your weight-or to achieve any other objective for that matter. It has to seem worth it.

Its sort of like an imagination exercise I once heard about it. Let's pretend you found a fantasy car lot where you could pick out any make, model and color vehicle you wanted, no restrictions whatsoever. Before you left the car lot you had to pay the dealer twenty bucks. No hidden charges or conditions are involved, the car is yours.

Do you really think you would be riding home in your shiny new car saying to yourself, "Gee, this car is great and all, but I really wish I still had that twenty dollar bill."

The point is that the effort you are going to put forth has to seem worth it to you, that what you are going to gain or the negative consequences you will avoid are worth the trade-off.

*Do you think it is a coincidence that weight loss and get-rich quick schemes are two of the most popular offerings on late night infomercials? I don't!

Measuring Progress

During the initial assessment and weekly thereafter you are encouraged to weigh and measure your self as you learned in Getting There section.

As was explained, it is best to do this once a week on the same day/time to minimize the normal fluctuations in weight you may experience during a day. This seems to be a common practice amongst the success stories in the NWCR.

The reason you are asked to weigh and take the hip or waist measurement is that what you are really trying to accomplish is fat loss rather than just weight.

If you begin to exercise you may add some muscular weight (a good thing-more on this later!) and if you use the scale alone it may seem that your progress has stalled when in fact you are doing good. Muscle is three times as dense as fat.

The measurements help give you a more complete picture as those midriff areas tend to be the primary places for fat storage.

Now there are some folks I have encountered who balk at the measurement process and often their rationale is that they are afraid of becoming discouraged if they are not progressing as they believe they should. Here are some thoughts on this:

- There is nothing personal about the numbers you will be recording, the scale and the tape measure could care less about you: they are simply tools that will provide you with objective data.
- This data will help you figure out whether your diet or exercise plan is actually working. Other wise you are flying blind.
- You are still a good person no matter what these instruments report.
- Without this corrective feedback you may be progressing and not realize it.
- Or to the contrary, you may have the “ostrich syndrome” and delude yourself into believing that you are doing better than you actually are.

You don't want to do the opposite extreme either and develop an unhealthy occupation where you weigh yourself several times a day. No meaningful progress or backsliding can occur in a single day.

This kind obsession puts too much attention on the primary goal, instead of on the secondary goals or action steps, which is where your attention needs to be.

Remember: success in weight loss is the result of consistent changes in your thoughts and actions.

One more thing we need to cover in this section is how fast should you expect to reduce by. Most authorities seem to agree that a 1-3 pound reduction per week is safe or 1 percent of your current weight. Faster than that can put an unhealthy strain on your system.

There have been some drastic plans, many of them unhealthy, that purport you can lose a pound or more a day, but you should ask “a pound of what?”

What you are trying to do is shed excess fat from your body. There is a basic dietary

formula that states that if you consume 3,500 calories more than your body's energy needs a pound of fat will be gained. If you burn 3,500 calories more than you have consumed a pound of fat is burned as fuel.

Unless you are a world class athlete, you are not going to create a daily 3,500 calorie deficit.

With the rapid weight loss plans initially you lose some water weight and often lean muscle tissue (a bad thing-more on that later!). Not a very healthy place to be.

Another thing to keep in mind is that age and gender do play a role in how quickly you will progress. Not fair, but you will have to get over that.

Males tend to lose weight faster than women and younger people reduce more easily than older ones. For a 65 year old grandmother to expect that she can drop pounds as quickly as her 18 year old grandson is pure folly.

A hint to keep you encouraged. Never say "I only lost a pound this week." That is actually becomes an accomplishment when you visualize that each pound lost represents four standard sized sticks of butter!

You may also wish to translate your weight loss to percentages towards your primary goal. If you desire to be 30 pounds lighter than what you are starting at, a 3 pound loss means you have accomplished 10 % of your goal. Not shabby at all!

The SECRET to Healthy Eating

It has been said the perception is everything. How often do you eat to alleviate boredom, tension, loneliness and other negative emotional states? Yet unhealthy eating provides a temporary fix at best and creates another problem: being overweight.

The secret to healthy eating is to begin to consider food as the fuel for your body. In physics they speak of kinetic and potential energy. For example, the gasoline in your car's fuel tank is a form of potential energy waiting to be converted to kinetic energy or motion by the engine.

Like a car, you don't want to try and run your body on too much or too little fuel. After you got a full tank of gas at the filling station, you wouldn't think of saying to the attendant "you know what I have some room in the trunk and glove box too, why don't you fill them up as well. You can splash some on the back seats while you are at it."

Although that sounds so ridiculous you would never think of actually doing it, continuing to eat when you already full is like doing the same thing to your body. Show your body the same respect you would give a car.

Assign an Eating Zone

Does the name Pavlov ring a bell? The human mind is very adept at creating subconscious behavior patterns. This can be thought of as an efficiency move, it automates most of our behavior so that we are free to use our mental energy elsewhere. However this can also be problematic.

Couple two behaviors together and one will begin to invariably trigger the other-even if it is not logical or beneficial to do so. Many overweight persons will report that they eat while they are watching TV at night-even though they are not hungry. The stimulus (turning on the TV) triggers the response (reaching for food).

A way to break this pattern up is to assign an **eating zone** in your home-usually the dining room table. If you want something to eat, this is where you will have it. Many people are surprised to discover that the seemingly overpowering craving for potato chips diminishes greatly if they have to get up off the couch to satisfy it.

Agreeing to this simple suggestion has often made a world of positive difference for those who try it out.

Extra credit assignment: Pavlov is the Russian scientist who was the pioneer in studying conditioned responses like we just explored. As you go through your day be on the lookout for other triggers for unhealthy behavior (people, places, things, scents, commercials, signs, etc.) and list them in your Success Journal. If you cannot make arrangements to avoid the strong ones, at least being aware helps.

Thou Shall Not Starve Thyself

Sometimes a person can become so unhappy with what the mirror or scale is telling them that he or she will try to starve the weight off their body A.S.A.P.! Yet this only compounds the problem as it sets into play involuntary physiological and psychological responses to conditions of starvation.

These responses include a lowering of the metabolic rate in order to conserve calories and an anxious preoccupation with obtaining food-which evolved because our ancestors often faced famine conditions.

A public health study observed that teenage girls in a large California school system found that those young women who reported engaging in the most deliberate and rigid weight loss practices were also the most likely to become obese.

The researchers noted that although a family history of obesity may have motivated some of these girls to take extreme measures, that was not the case for most. Quite a few of them should not have been trying to lose weight at all according to accepted height and weight standards.

It was concluded that drastic caloric deprivation increased the likelihood of out of control binge eating, which in turn is a major risk factor in the development of obesity.

The Super Size Conspiracy

Due to an overabundance in food production and subsequently lowered prices, many restaurants offer cheap super-sized portions as a marketing ploy. The effect is that over time you will become conditioned to perceive these over-sized portions as a normal

helping. Then tie this in with the childhood conditioning of having to clean your plate.

This can translate to a whopping amount of excess calories over time if you eat out often.

Although it takes some discipline, a good idea is to decide in advance what part of your meal will be leftovers or thrown out as you don't want them to "*go to waist*."

At fast food restaurants, consider ordering the children's meal-which is what the adult portion used to be! An added bonus with the kid's meal is that you will also get a toy which is often more nutritious than the meal itself!

Although I am not trained as a nutritionist, from what I have learned you may wish to make fast-food places a rare treat rather than a habit. Their meals are chock-filled with *trans fats, high-fructose corn syrup, hydrolyzed vegetable protein* (aka-MSG) and other items that are recent and questionable additions to the food chain. An internet search on these particular three items may be a real eye-opener for you.

*P.S. If you haven't had a chance to see the documentary "**Super- Size Me**" by Morgan Spurlock, be sure you do. A month of fast-food meals transformed this healthy and fit filmmaker into a near medical disaster!*

How Sweet it Isn't?

As was mentioned earlier this is not a book about specific diet or exercise plans; there are scads of info on those topics available and you should confer with your doctor before making any radical lifestyle changes.

With that disclaimer, one dietary change I suggest you look into is either eliminating or sharply reducing the amount of refined sugars and carbohydrates you consume as I have seen this work wonders for people.

These types of foods are relatively new additions to the human food chain, pure sugar was seldom encountered by our ancestors. A 5 pound chunk of venison, which early humans ate a lot of, has less sugar than a single can of cola. Due to this evolutionary heritage our bodies are not designed to handle excessive sugars.

Let's say someone has a can of cola and a donut as a snack. This massive influx of sugar disrupts the hormones in his body that regulate appetite and quite often he is hungry again a short time later. If he consumes more refined carbohydrates or sugars the cycle continues and worsens.

The carbohydrates you do consume should be fiber rich as this slows absorption and is gentler on the body. An important food value is called "net carbs." The equation for this is subtract the grams of fiber from the grams of carbohydrates in a serving size; with a lower total being preferred. These fiber rich foods tend to be the healthier fruits and vegetables.

A book I highly recommend on this subject if you would like to learn more is Living Low Carb by Jonny Bowden.

Water: The Loser's Beverage of Choice

The importance of water in a weight reduction program cannot be stressed strongly enough. Sometimes what is the most simple can often be the most significant. Consider these facts:

- Did you know that water can act as a diuretic? When the body senses a lack of water it acts to retain fluid. By drinking enough water the signal is given that it is OK to release excess body fluid.
- Water is needed in the bodily processes where fat is converted to energy, as well as carrying off fatty particles and other types of metabolic "ash."
- Cool water burns calories as the body must expend energy in order to bring it up to body temperature.
- It is a common mistake to confuse the sensations of thirst with those of hunger.
- A glass of water 10 minutes before a meal will help you feel full with less food.
- Calories from soft drinks are particularly bad offenders; they do nothing to satisfy hunger. Diet sodas should be consumed in moderation too. They are high in sodium and contain phosphoric acid, which stimulates appetite and leaches calcium from your bones.
- Even mild dehydration leads to fatigue, weakness and irritability. Which is not exactly conducive to being motivated to exercise.
- A glass of water with a slice of lemon in it is said to help to detoxify the liver and improve metabolism.
- Water is symbolic of purification. Think of every sip as clearing away unwanted thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

Now don't feel like you have to go overboard and swill gallons of water every day. Build up gradually to a level that you are comfortable with

Get a Move On

The participants in the NWCR almost unanimously report exercising a considerable amount every day. And this makes perfect sense for a number of reasons. Aerobic exercise such as walking, jogging or bike riding burn calories. Resistance training builds lean muscle tissue, which raises your overall metabolic rate.

A pound of muscle burns 35- 50 calories per day at rest, a pound of fat uses only about 1 or 2. So by packing 10 pounds of muscle onto your frame, you would be expending any from 350-500 calories a day more than you are right now.

Exercise, especially when taken outdoors, serves to lower stress. Being more calm and relaxed makes it easier for you to control your eating habits. The type of activity you engage is a personal decision, it has to be something you enjoy or you won't persist.

I have heard many clients say that they have a procrastination problem when it comes to exercise. We can all become quite creative when it comes to making excuses. "*Its too hot/cold,*" "*Its too late/early,*" "*I'm too tired, but I will do twice as much tomorrow.*" What happens is that we develop the habit of not starting. Our habits create our beliefs, eventually we come to believe we will never get on track.

Here is a little trick to get past that mental block. Whenever you catch yourself making an excuse, lower your goal at that moment to something so ridiculously small that you simply couldn't fail at it. We can all make an excuse not to walk 20 miles a day, but what about what walking for 90 seconds? The thing is that once you get moving, you will probably do more, but at the very least you will get into the habit of starting.

As they used to say in physics class “a body in motion tends to stay in motion.” Get a move on my friend!

Sleep, Rest and Stress

If you were to examine the public health statistics concerning the current obesity pandemic and those related to our sleep and rest patterns, you will notice something very interesting.

While we as a nation have gotten fatter, we are also sleeping far less than in years gone by, meaningful leisure time has also decreased. Is there a link?

Addictions counselors use the acronym H.A.L.T. to describe states that should be avoided in order to prevent relapse. They know that when we are *hungry, angry, lonely* or *tired*, it is that much harder to honor the pledge to remain clean and sober.

As mentioned earlier, we shouldn't try to starve our excess weight off since this may trigger out of control binge eating. Being continually tired and stressed is also problematic when it comes to long term weight control.

Excessive stress may send the bio-chemical signal to store fat in the abdominal cavity, which is considered more dangerous to cardiac health than fat stored elsewhere on the body. Distress stimulates the appetite in an unhealthy way, encouraging us to use food as both a tranquilizer and a stimulant, Ongoing fatigue also reduces the motivation to follow through on your commitment to exercise.

As someone who wants to become and remain thin and healthy, make sure you get adequate sleep and rest. Set aside some time each day for some of the simple pleasures in life too. Many people, women in particular, tend to put everyone else's needs ahead of their own and feel guilty when they make themselves a priority.

This is like someone who sets a goal to invest \$200 a month only "*if there is anything left at the end of the month.*" Chances are the investment goal will be met rarely if at all. This is why the automatic deduction plans were invented, the money is routinely withdrawn for the investment plan and the person adjusts to living off the remainder. In the same way, if you intentionally schedule some "*me time*" rest assured all the really important stuff will still get done.

Curious as to how stressed you are? Take the Stress Test in [Appendix C](#).

Should You Diet?

An interesting tidbit has emerged from NWCR statistics that may answer a question many have. That is, "*what diet should I follow?*" Actually the question may be "*should I follow a diet at all?*"

Amongst the NWCR participants it has been noted about half follow a regimented dietary plan and half don't. Does this hint at a psychological difference between the two groups?

It has been my observation that some folks do like the diet plans because it takes the guess work out of what needs to be done. However, there are also people who bristle when put on a diet because they either feel controlled by it and/or it becomes a preoccupation that consumes their every waking thought.

If you fit into the former category, by all means use a balanced dietary plan as a resource. However, if diets haven't worked for you in the past, it is less likely that you failed at the diet than that the diet has failed you. It is possible to lose weight by a general awareness of food quality and quantity instead. As the popular saying goes, "*the true definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.*"

Planning for Slip Ups

Many serial dieters engage in black or white thinking. A slip-up is interpreted as *"this just proves I can't do this, I might as well keep stuffing myself."* This can lead to a period of uncontrolled eating, weight gain and subsequent guilt. And so the cycle continues...

You can liken this to someone who quickly loses his initial \$200 bankroll at the blackjack table and instead of stopping his losses there, goes to the ATM and cleans out the rest of his checking account. You can't take back the initial mistake, but why compound it?

One of the BIGGEST mistakes you can make is to have a lapse on Tuesday and then say "Oh, I will get started again Monday." NO! You get started again NOW.

Getting in shape can be likened to sailing a ship from New York to London. You just don't point your boat towards England and assume you won't have to make adjustments along the way. Of course you would have to account for shifts in tide and wind and you wouldn't take these corrections as proof that you won't finish your journey.

In a similar way, assume that you will slip from time to time and take that as a signal to become more focused and motivated-not to give up. Perhaps you should put the following saying on a post-it note where it will provide a gentle reminder, **"I expect progress-not perfection."**

Virtual Fitness

The reach of the mind can be absolutely amazing, especially when it comes to getting into your ideal size, shape and condition. The following section was a featured article in the Creative Calm Online Newsletter.

Two recent health news stories got me to thinking about how easy it is to underestimate the power of your thoughts.

Researchers at the Carnegie Mellon Institute have found that imagining eating a given foodstuff can actually lower your desire for it in the real world.

Volunteers were asked to visualize eating a quantity of foods like M&M's or cheese cubes. When offered that food afterwards, those who engaged in the visualization ate 50% less than the control group.

It was noted that the imagery practice only affected the desire for the imagined food and that just picturing the food doesn't work as that tends to stimulate desire. You have to imagine actual consumption.

This finding threw a lot of people for a loop, myself included. It seems counterintuitive and many of us who work with unhealthy habits would have wrongly predicted that this imaginary indulgence would have weakened self-control rather than strengthened it.

However, hypnotists have long known that the subconscious mind cannot distinguish between a real and a vividly imagined experience. So you might just want to go ahead and indulge in your "problem foods" in your mind at least, so you that you don't do so in real life.

Which brings us to our next story. In a separate study, chamber maids in a large hotel were divided into two groups. All were asked to complete a health questionnaire inquiring about eating, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption, and then had their weight and vital signs measured.

One group was given information about how many calories were consumed per minute performing their various work tasks and asked to review their efforts daily. The other group acted as a control and received no such instructions.

A month later the researchers returned and re-administered the questionnaires as well as the weight and vital sign measurements. Although no one had altered their lifestyles outside of work, and management attested that the work load has remained constant for both groups, those in the experimental group showed significant weight loss, BMI reduction and lowered blood pressure.

It seem being aware of how active you are invokes the placebo effect and can manifest real physical changes.

With a little imagination and some practice you can easily integrate the findings of these two studies into your health and fitness efforts.

The Power of Suggestion

Hypnosis is synonymous with the Power of Suggestion. As a rule, it is recommended that you have some initial guidance from a certified hypnosis professional in either a private or group session setting to learn how to use self-hypnosis. It steps up the learning curve dramatically as the hypnotic state can be hard to find on your own initially.

However, you may benefit from using autosuggestion if that option is not currently available to you.

What this involves is creating a positive suggestion and mentally repeating on a regular basis. With practice it's as if the subconscious mind absorbs the idea and you begin to act upon it.

Here are some basic guidelines for formulating suggestions that were touched upon in a previous section.

- Make your suggestions positive. State "I enjoy eating healthy foods in the proper amounts" instead of something like "I no longer eat so much junk food." The subconscious mind does not "get" negatives, so the latter suggestion reinforces negative behavior by forcing you to imagine it.

- State your suggestions in the present or progressive tense. Good: "I enjoy regular healthy exercise" or "I am now in the process of becoming thinner and thinner. Not so good: "I will try to exercise more." The subconscious mind is said to live in an eternal present, stating "I will" puts the behavior in some ill-defined future.

- Use positive emotional words, since the subconscious works more on emotion than logic. Examples: Happy, Exuberant, Determined, Peaceful, etc.

- Keep the suggestions simple, it allows them to be more easily absorbed without conscious interference

- Focus on one suggestion at a time. Use the assessments in your Success Journal to determine which behavior or attitude deserves immediate attention. Record the week's main focus and supporting suggestion in your journal.

To see some sample weight loss related suggestions you can use or adapt, go to [Appendix D](#).

To practice autosuggestion, write down your suggestion on a card or piece of paper. Read it before you go to bed at night and silently repeat it to yourself a few more times as you drift off to sleep. Let it be the first thing you read when you get up in the morning too. You are naturally more suggestible as you drift off to sleep at night and when you first wake up-use that time wisely.

You can also put your suggestions on post-it notes in your car or workplace to act as a subliminal reminder. Give each suggestion a week or so of attention before you move onto another one.

This is a magnificent practice to get in since it is a conscious effort to take greater control in your life, which only an elite few do.

Extra Credit Assignment: do you have a picture of yourself at your ideal size, shape and

condition? Make some copies of it and post it on your refrigerator, night stand, or other places where it can act as a kind of subliminal reinforcement.

If you don't have such a picture of your self, or prefer not to do that, there is an alternative. When you think of yourself at your healthy best, what image other than your physical body come to mind>

Some people might think of a sleek animal like a cheetah or a high-end sports car. You can post pictures of that image as your reminder instead.

Expect the Best

It is perfectly understandable when someone has struggled and failed continuously with weight loss for that person to have a pessimistic attitude. Understandable, but not helpful.

There is a definitive link between expectation and what you experience in life. Indeed the famous placebo effect, where a sham treatment such as a sugar pill with no active ingredients creates a real healing effect.

Positive expectation leads to persistence, pessimism often leads to quitting. A story excerpted from my book *Nine Hypnotic Tales* illustrates this idea:

“Imagine a young girl at a circus with her parents marveling at all there is to see and hear under the big top, especially the trained animals. She is most curious as to how the big, strong elephant is kept from running away by a rope tied around its ankle, the other end tied to nothing more than a tent spike. Surely the rope isn’t strong enough to hold back one of the mightiest animals on earth?

Years later she learns that when an elephant like that was quite small, the handlers attach a heavy chain to the animal’s ankle, with the other end locked to a massive tree. The young elephant struggles against the chain, but it is too strong to be broken. After trying for a time with no success, the elephant gives in to frustration and begins to believe that it might as well quit whenever it feels resistance-after all what’s the use?

Yet we know what would happen if the elephant gave 100% effort once again, there is no way a rope and a tent spike could ever hold it back. Is there a chance that you too have failed in the past and have also formed negative beliefs that prevent you from giving the all out effort that would allow you to succeed? Let yourself get excited about your goals and desires again. **EXPECT BETTER!**

One more bonus exercise: take a few moments and recall and write down some of the best moments in your life. It could be an accomplishment other people recognized you for. It could be something more personal and private. Times when you felt smart, loved, admired. If nothing comes to mind, make something up (winning the Super Bowl, making your Oscar award speech) !

Next close your eyes and recall the sights, sounds and feelings of that special time. Make the pictures more vivid, the sounds more vibrant. Smell or taste success. You are happy to be alive! As you recall the feelings rub the thumb and forefinger together on one hand. Now stop and then open and the close your eyes again and repeat the process. Do this a few times. Now with your eyes open test and just rub the thumb and forefinger together and see if the positive feelings return.

You can now use this cue you just installed anytime you need to feel stronger whether its saying no to an unhealthy craving or getting motivated to exercise. If the good feelings don’t come back with the cue practice the imagery exercise until they do. Practice makes perfect!

Appendix A

Feel free to copy or adapt for your purposes

1) Being overweight has created the following problems for me:

Physical:

Emotional:

Social:

Career:

Other:

2) Reverse Engineering: I became overweight through the following behaviors and thoughts:

Eating Habits: (note which ones apply)

Having portions that are too large.

Snacking, especially when not actually hungry.

Eating too many processed or junk/fast foods.

Eating while watching TV or otherwise distracted.

Drinking soda or other sugary beverages.

Excessive alcohol consumption.

Not drinking enough water

Other

Activity (note which ones apply)

Not engaging in formal exercise (health club, dance class, etc)

Avoiding house or yard work.

Sitting for long periods of time.

Having mostly passive recreation-TV, online gaming, etc

Avoiding walking or climbing the stairs whenever possible.

Other

Stress (note which ones apply)

Eating to reduce:

Anger

Boredom

Loneliness

Sadness

Tension

Worry

Regularly not getting enough sleep.

Lacking healthy outlets or interests.

Not making time for your self-always putting others first.

Thoughts (note which ones apply)

Making excuses for the overweight condition.

Self-deception, telling yourself you really aren't too overweight.

Blaming past/other people for your problem and refusing to take action.

Putting off getting started.

Being overly pessimistic/ negative towards being successful.

Being perfectionist: having a lapse and then quitting efforts, figuring "what's the use?" and getting off track for a long period of time.

3) Power Image

The image of myself at my ideal, size, shape and condition:

4) **Statement of intent**: "I expect X because I want Y and I agree to do Z." Write it below

To make your weekly progress sheets for your Success Journal in either your notebook or computer file create a diary following this outline:

Date:

Weight

Waist/Hip Measurement

Comments

Main focus of thought and activity for the coming week

Primary autosuggestion

Appendix B

Place a check next to a specific item if it would be of benefit to you and begin to integrate that behavior into your routine.

- Daily and/or weekly planning of meals and healthy activity times.
- Keeping a food journal for a week or two to increase mindfulness.
- Assigning an eating zone at home and work.
- Eliminating or cutting back on refined sugars/carbs.
- Weighing/measuring yourself once a week, same day/time.
- Translating progress to percentages or “sticks of butter.”
- Having realistic expectations about the time/effort involved.
- Drinking adequate amounts of water.
- Decreasing alcohol intake.
- Getting some type of exercise most days.
- Connecting with other people you can be active with.
- Leaving food on my plate if I am full.
- Going to bed earlier, making proper rest a priority.
- Making time for things you enjoy doing.
- Actively resisting negativity and pessimism.
- Accepting full responsibility for your current situation and its remedy.
- Learning from and then letting go of my mistakes.
- Creating healthy rewards for reaching small and big goals.
- Daily practice of self-hypnosis.

Post this list some place where it will act as a reminder. Hold yourself accountable, yet don't be too hard on yourself; expect progress-not perfection!

Appendix C

How do you know you are STRESSED?!? Circle which ones you notice often in your self.

Physical Symptoms:

Stiff Neck and Shoulders Grinding Teeth Fatigue

Stomach/Digestive Problems Cold Hands/Feet Headaches

Muscle Tension Other? _____

Behavior Symptoms:

Eating Too Much

Drinking Too Much Alcohol

Smoking

Insomnia

Sleeping Too Much

Frequent Accidents

Other? _____

Emotional Symptoms:

Worried

Angry

Sadness

Impatience/Irritability

Does your stress express itself more in your body, behavior or emotions? Self-awareness of your warning signs can enable you to cope better.

Appendix D

Sample Weight Loss Affirmations

Feel free to alter them to fit your needs.

I want to be thin and healthy for life.

I am worthy and deserving of success.

Because I expect success I put forth the necessary effort.

I persist and I succeed.

My motivation and willpower are becoming stronger.

I eat the right foods in the right amounts for my healthy new body.

I hold a pleasant image in my mind of who I am becoming.

I may be tempted to overeat, but I don't have to.

I only eat enough to meet my nutritional needs.

It is okay for me to leave food on my plate.

Water is my drink of choice.

I enjoy becoming more physically active

As a result of my exercise, I am calm, relaxed and have more energy.

I expect progress but not perfection, if and when I make a mistake I easily get back on track and do better the next time.

I am calm and relaxed.

I sleep soundly and restfully through the night and I wake in the morning refreshed.

About the Author:



James Malone has been a Certified Hypnotist since 1995. He has a hypnosis counseling practice Point Pleasant Beach, NJ, where he sees private clients and small groups to help them overcome negative stuck states of thought feeling and behavior.

In addition to his work with clients, he publishes the popular Creative Calm online newsletter, which shares a message of empowerment with a worldwide audience. You can subscribe at his website. He is also the author Nine Hypnotic Tales.

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