

A personalised
induction will always
be more effective

[Literature](#)



“ The real vehicle for change is the induction which produces, or causes, an hypnotic state. ” (Hadley and Staudacher, page 23, 2001) The role of the induction is a vital one, its purpose being to achieve mental focus and absorption that makes therapeutic suggestion more effective. It is essential therefore that such an intrinsic component of hypnosis is undertaken in the most optimum way. In order to fully explore the essay title, it is necessary to consider the make-up, function and application of personalised and generic inductions, their advantages and disadvantages.

The scope for the hypnotherapist which personalised inductions provide is vast, with techniques, observations and methods available to enhance its application. It is stated by Karle and Boys (page 8, 1987) that “ Truly professional practice is characterized by the creation of a unique and original approach to each new patient, even though this will always be based upon and informed by validated theoretical models and principles. ” There are many reasons for personalising inductions and each is essentially encompassing human beings’ individuality at its core.

Our uniqueness means that each client will be coming from a different background, education, belief-system, with specific life experiences, views and thoughts. The hypnotherapist becomes aware of likes and dislikes and any blocks a client may have with certain imagery such as a phobia of lifts which if used as part of the induction could prove to have a negative impact. There may for example be two clients with presenting issues of insomnia; both of whom detail difficulty or inability to fall asleep.

While they may initially display the same problem, there will be different life triggers and physiological and/or psychological reasons for them. One client may be suffering from a core issue of bereavement while the other suffers from stress and anxiety. Tailoring the induction to the specific needs of the client is therefore essential. Personalisation can reduce inappropriate wording especially for clients from specific religious or cultural backgrounds and also enable the hypnotherapist to become aware of particular patterns of speech, language or nuances used by the client which can be utilised to provide an effective induction.

Importantly, it also enables the client to feel heard, for some, perhaps for the first time in their lives. They feel that the hypnotherapist is interested in them for who they are rather than merely as a means of financial gain. In essence, personalising inductions is an efficient and effective means of directing the content, tone, imagery and language of the induction to the core aspects which are likely to produce a deep trance. The process of personalisation incorporates techniques which are used to determine and then implement the optimum tailor-made induction for each client; the aim being to facilitate paramount hypnotic success.

If a hypnotist insists on using just a single technique, he will sometimes fail, because not everyone is susceptible to the same technique. He has to be flexible. " (Waterfield, page 28, 2004) The two principle aspects which enable the inductions to become personalised are the modalities and the induction style used. In hypnotherapy the modalities represent the types of physiological sensations humans employ to interpret and experience the

world around them; namely kinesthetic, visual and auditory and to a lesser extent, olfactory and gustatory. As humans we tend to think in terms of feelings, images and sounds.

While there is a level of overlap between the modalities, many people have a dominant preference for one specific modality. By being aware of the client's primary modality and the corresponding vocabulary, it enhances the personalisation of the induction because the hypnotherapist is acknowledging and utilising the client's primary method of how they think about the world in terms of the three main modalities. A kinesthetic person will think in terms of feelings and will often be intuitive of other's feelings. They tend to use language such as 'feel', 'rough' and 'smooth'.

A deeper tone of voice with deep breathing from the abdomen together with relaxed muscles and rounded shoulders would also be characteristic. A visual person will tend to use words such as 'I see', 'looks' and 'show' and talk about colours, shapes and sizes. They will 'see' their journey as if watching it on a TV screen. Speech will generally be faster with more shallow breathing and they may not demonstrate the same physical relaxation as kinesthetic people. Those more auditory in nature will think more in terms of sounds or language, employing words such as 'hear', 'listen' and 'sound'.

Their breathing is often even and they may mimic phone holding by tilting their head to one side. Eye positions also give an indication of modality, for example a visual person may focus ahead without looking at things, or their eyes will move to the upper right or left. In auditory people the eyes will tend to move to the left or right and kinesthetic people will often look down to the

right. It must be acknowledged that there is no absolute means of determining a person's modality and style preferences, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, a newly qualified hypnotherapist may not have the confidence or experience to fully assess such aspects. The client may be nervous on their first visit and may also dress, behave or act in a certain way until such a time that they feel more at ease and can trust the hypnotherapist, thereby displaying a truer 'picture' of themselves and enabling the hypnotherapist to gain a more accurate view of their client in terms of modality and style preference. It is for this reason that compounding is so important in the induction. Compounding incorporates all of the modalities so as to give a more rounded and realistic induction.

The second aspect involved in personalising inductions is the styles used. The permissive and authoritarian styles can enhance the process as most clients will respond to and indeed prefer one style or the other. One technique can also be more effective over the other when focusing on different issues. A key figure in the development of these two approaches was Sandor Ferenczi (1873-1933). An often controversial figure, initially lined closely to Freud, he moved towards his therapy being more empathic, with a more active role on the part of the therapist, in contrast to Freud's practice.

He coined the terms 'maternal' and 'paternal'; maternal implying a more nurturing and soft approach and paternal being more authoritative and commanding. Some clients will prefer and indeed be more at ease with viewing the hypnotherapist as a person of authority. Authoritarian inductions

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are generally more direct, logical and less 'flowing'. "(Speak firmly.) You will listen to my voice and my voice will help you to relax very deeply. I want you to relax deeply. As you relax deeper and deeper you will respond to the suggestion I give you.... " (Hadley and Staudacher, page 27, 2001).

Dave Elman was a highly skilled hypnotist who used the power of imagination and pretense to enter a trance rapidly, favouring the authoritative method. In contrast, permissive inductions would typically be used on clients accustomed to being the deciding factor in their own lives. It is also characteristically used when working with children. " Inductions described are permissive and encourage children's active involvement, participation and mastery; authoritarian methods are not recommended with children. " (Heap, page 167, 2010) The tone, language and emphasis is on creating an empathic, equal and nurturing process. (Softly spoken.)

As you listen to my voice let it help you to relax. As you relax deeper and deeper just imagine yourself in a peaceful place. It may be by the ocean or in the mountains.... " (Hadley and Staudacher, page 27, 2001) A pioneer in the development and implementation of hypnosis, Milton Erickson's approach was pretty revolutionary during his time, (1901-1980) and indeed maintains an intrinsic position in today's hypnotherapy methods. His approach emphasized the co-operative relationship between client and hypnotherapist, acknowledging that each person is unique, using permissive and usually indirect techniques.

I try to tailor my therapy to the individual patient.... " (Rosen, page 157, 1991). Indirect techniques do not contain a specific instruction to do

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something. They employ more 'roundabout' accommodating wording which give the client the ability to accept suggestions they are comfortable with; there is no sense of pressure or expectation. " A patient who has been struggling for years within a guilt-ridden, narrow view of life may be presented through these tales with Erickson's permissive, life-celebrating philosophy. " (Rosen, page 29, 1991).

The preceding discussion may pose the question of whether there is a place for generic inductions in hypnosis, however, no conclusion can be drawn without looking at the role and application of this induction method. Generic inductions are typically used for group sessions where it would not be possible to personalise them. For example, a stop smoking group or perhaps a self esteem workshop. Such groups would also provide group support, the possibility of friendships and shared experiences so in a sense, the group element, incorporating a generic induction would be positive and worthwhile.

This aspect leads to the relevant issue of affordability. The generic induction, whether it is listened to in a group setting or via a purchased cd or download, provides accessibility of hypnosis to those who cannot afford one-to-one therapy and as such has an important role as well as enabling a wider audience to experience and learn about hypnosis. While a generic hypnosis cd is cheap, relative to its potential benefit, it cannot be overlooked however, that a person may display more commitment and will-power when they have to pay more for it and have set a higher value on their wellbeing.

With regards to generic cds, Heap (page 38, 2010) states that " There is a larger literature on the treatment of insomnia, and one form of treatment

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consists of teaching the patient self-hypnosis and supplying a tape which ends by inducing natural sleep. It needs to be stated that commercial tapes that are supposed to do this are of doubtful value, for what suits one patient does not suit another. Each tape should be tailored to the patient's individual requirements, and supply the imagery appropriate for the person concerned. A generic induction will be quicker and involve less preparation time for a hypnotherapist. It also allows for the therapist's confidence to grow and many fledgling hypnotherapist's would struggle when first seeing clients if they were unable to use generic inductions in their entirety or in part, as they begin their hypnotherapy journey. Karle and Boys (page 31, 1987) state that " Many people taking their first steps in hypnotherapy find themselves stuck for words at some crucial point or fear that they will ' dry up'.

It is perfectly satisfactory and practical to use a prepared script, reading from a paper on the desk or on one's knee, and many practitioners began in this way, the authors included. With practice and experience and, above all, confidence a more flexible and creative approach becomes possible, enabling the practitioner to adapt the induction both to the personality and temperament of the patient and to the progress being made, thereby achieving a higher ' success rate' than is likely with a standard patter.

Hence a hypnotherapist may utilise a generic induction initially and gradually move towards a personalised one. In order for hypnosis to be attainable by as many people seeking to improve their lives as possible, it cannot be denied that both types of induction have their place. For hypnosis to encompass the various economic, personal, technological and differing

therapeutic applications, it has to render itself pliable to enable hypnotherapists to utilise whichever means of induction serves their client(s) and themselves, as long as this is done with integrity at its core.

However, taking on board the relevant examples cited previously, there is no doubt that a personalised induction will invariably be more thorough, specific, positive and effective. For a client to feel understood, listened to, respected for his/her personal values and beliefs and to have trust and confidence in their hypnotherapist is invaluable. A hypnotherapist who is consciously providing a bespoke, intuitive and thorough hypnotic service for their client will consistently create a more successful therapeutic practice, incorporating humans' uniqueness at its heart.