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"Helping others help themselves in mind, body, spirit, and emotion."

You Can Stop Smoking

Hypnosis Works and It Lasts

This brochure is presented for the information of the general public to discuss the applications of hypnosis for dealing with such matters as habit control, stress, excessive eating, smoking, fears, motivation, self-confidence, concentration, learning enhancement, sleeplessness, goal-setting, relationships and other areas which lead to unhappiness, dysfunction or difficulty in achieving personal goals.

For most people, the absolute worst way to attempt to deal with a smoking habit is through the use of willpower. Like moods and emotions, willpower fluctuates. One day it is strong. The next day may be a down day, and willpower fades. It is usually neither consistent nor effective.

Among stop-smoking procedures there are countless methods, programs, substitute products, pills, chewing gums, self-help tapes and books, etc. Many are designed to help build up the personal power to resist or overcome the addiction. Hypnosis does not work at achieving the strength to resist. It is designed to eliminate the desire. Instead of giving up something the person enjoys (a sacrifice), the individual's goal is to be rid of something that isn't wanted — a much more agreeable position psychologically.

REASONS FOR SMOKING

There are two principle reasons for smoking: Identification, and Replacement. Identification is the situation in which the smoker indulges in the habit because others whom he admires do so — parents, peers, entertainment or sports figures, etc. Identification smoking is the most common and the easiest to eliminate.

Replacement smoking occurs when smoking is used to replace some deficit in life — lack of companionship, love, acceptance, self-esteem, security, independence, etc. — or to replace some pre-existing habit such as overeating, reaction to anxiety or boredom, etc. Replacement smokers often derive sensual gratification from smoking — they enjoy touching or feeling the cigarettes, tapping the pack, seeing the flame of a lighter or the curling of rising smoke, or the smell of the burning tobacco. Often the lighting of the cigarette (or cigar or pipe) in itself becomes a ritual. Replacement smoking is quite often a true and severe addiction.

THE NATURE OF SMOKING

Since smoking is both physical and mental, success in a stop-smoking effort must change not only the mental attitude, but the physical reaction. Through hypnosis it is possible to change the taste of a cigarette from pleasurable to unpleasurable. When this is accomplished problems often related to the cessation of smoking tend to be avoided. Castor oil (or other bad tasting medicine) may serve as an example. When a person gives up the ingestion of castor oil there are no withdrawal symptoms, and there is no need to compensate for the lack of the medicine through overeating, sucking hard candies, etc.

In some cases a gradual reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked proves successful. Of the many procedures available the hypnotist will select that which is most appropriate for the individual client. In some cases, effective cessation of smoking can be achieved in a single session. In other cases, three, four or five sessions may be required. Individual sessions have the advantage of being adjustable to deal with the causes of the habit, the gratifications provided, the characteristics of the clients and similar matters not fitting group work.

It is important to determine just what personal need is satisfied by smoking. Some smokers seek to fill a need to nurture themselves — lessen loneliness or get a “pick-up” at the start of or during the day. Others feel smoking will relieve stress or provide moments of relaxation. Still more feel cigarette smoking makes social contacts more comfortable. The problem is that a habit adopted to meet a special need often proves destructive, eliminating the need by destroying the smoker.

The risks entailed in smoking have been stressed and analyzed for years. The aversion techniques of psychotherapy, when utilized in hypnotic applications, can produce dramatic results. Data on why, when and where smoking is indulged can reveal information helpful in planning stop-smoking therapy.

VISUALIZATION

One of the most powerful attributes of the human psyche is the visualization ability. Many hypnotists, working with many types of problems, program clients to accept the belief that “What the mind can conceive, you can achieve!” This concept is common in fields of meditation, positive thinking, spiritual faith and others.

Hypnosis can help develop and focus the powers of visualization. And since visualization is frequently undeveloped in clients, and since it can be learned, hypnotism can serve as a teaching modality.

In stop-smoking programs the ability to visualize one’s self as a non-smoker, free from past effects of the habit, filled with new health, energy and vitality, is a major asset. Visualization enables the client to picture in the mind cigarettes as unappealing, bad tasting, foul smelling and otherwise revolting. Likewise it is possible to picture and otherwise sense clean breath, healthy appearance, sensitive tastes.

Through visualization a smoker can perceive himself/herself as looking healthier, more active, in better physical condition, with easier breathing, stronger lungs and similar advantages. Through hypnosis senses of sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste can all be enhanced and used to modify reactions as necessary to achieve goals.

Once a smoker has achieved success in a stop-smoking program it is necessary to reinforce the programming that led to the cessation of the practice. Smoking habits are acquired over a long period of time. Even though the smoker may have ceased smoking, the habit is likely to still be active. But like most activities, if not used, it tends to fade and disappear. The hypnotist will take measures to reinforce the programming during the period (perhaps a couple of months) required for the habit to weaken, providing a CD to maintain success until the habit itself is gone.



Member

The National Guild of Hypnotists was founded in 1951 and is the oldest and largest organization of its kind. Professional membership in the NGH signifies that an individual possesses specific qualifications, agrees to abide by a strict code of ethics, and will pursue continuing-education studies for annual recertification. Medical or psychological referrals may be required for certain conditions.

This brochure was researched by the NGH educational faculty and is distributed as a public information service by its members.