

Auto Symbolism for Weight Loss

I thought those of you who are experienced hypnotherapists would appreciate a different approach to helping a client lose weight and diet more effectively, using auto-symbolism.

My experience suggests that over-eating and overweight are rarely, unless related to medical causes, isolated issues. Usually they are bound up with something else in the client's life. It isn't always necessary for us, as hypnotherapists, to determine the causes of the problem. Indeed, contrary to Freudian folklore, it isn't always necessary for the client to know the reasons. Just as the underlying cause of a phobia is usually not present any more, so the cause of overeating is often no longer present at the time at which you see a client.

You can choose whether or not to do a formal trance induction. For these purposes it isn't strictly necessary, though it may help the client to focus better. I have had equal success with this technique whether or not I did any trance induction first. The method induces its own trance state. Tell the client that - (let me use "her" for shorthand here - it could be "his" or "her") - subconscious is really good at creating an image, a form, a symbol which somehow captures the whole essence of her dietary problem. Tell her that if she simply relaxes and allows her subconscious to play a little, it can create a symbol of form which does exactly that. Tell her to indicate to you when she has that image or symbol in her mind. Assure her that it can be anything at all - it may or may not be something she recognises, it could be of any shape or size, assuming any form it wants. It could be still or moving, two or three dimensional. There may or may not be a sound associated with it. Do everything to help her subconscious to be creative. Usually within seconds your client will have an image in mind.

Now ask her to describe it to you - its shape, size, colour. Ask her to notice if there is any physical feeling associated with it. Notice which elements she particularly focuses on - these will generally be significant in making the change.

Ask her to tell you how she feels as she sees this image. She will more than likely reiterate the thoughts she has about being overweight, heavy and uncomfortable. Let's say that she first tells you that the symbol she sees is a big, green thing. Ask her to study it, and gradually change the colour - she can either change the colour to a different one or simply drain the colour away. Ask her to tell you how she feels now. If colour is the most significant attribute of the symbol for her, then draining or changing the colour will make her feel very different. Reiterate the idea that the image she has created is symbolic of her entire problem and tell her that by changing the image, she can instantly bring positive changes for herself.

Ask her to slowly reduce the size of the image and again ask her how she feels. Even better, ask her which elements of the image she would like to change - she will generally know which she *should* change - and have her do so.

Now get her to shrink the image, drained of colour, so that it is tiny and talk about how by doing so, she is able to reduce her own weight, easily and effortlessly, only in ways that are safe and appropriate, maintaining good health and become more alert to her own fitness as she does so.

Now have her completely destroy the image - tell her that it represents the whole problem that she used to have with excess weight - the causes and the symptoms - and by destroying the unpleasant image, she removes the problem. Have her put the image in a rocket and fire it into space, exploding it into a thousand tiny pieces; have her throw it on a bonfire. Tell her how wonderful she will feel as she watches the image disappear, and as it disappears, so her excess weight will begin to disappear, at a speed appropriate to the maintenance of her good health.

Follow this with many positive suggestions about being attracted to healthier, better food, achieving more balance in her diet, thinking of the bad foods which used to attract her and knowing that that attraction disappeared as the image disappeared, to be replaced by an equal attraction to good, healthy foods. Stress throughout that she will lose weight at a sensible, safe rate, knowing what is truly good for her and attracted always to those foods which are healthy, safe and good. Stress that she will eat *appropriately* - you don't need to define this - she will know what it means. Tell her that as the weight begins to drop away, so she will increasingly be attracted to safe and appropriate forms of exercise which will further assist her in achieving the sensible weight and size for which she strives.

Throughout, talk about any current eating habits in the past tense, and any desired habits in the present tenses - as though they are already happening. "...and on those occasions when you used to eat unhealthy foods, in large quantities, now finding yourself fully satisfied by smaller portions of lovely, healthy food..."

I have had some great results with applications of this technique. I hope you find it useful.