



August 17, 2006

Finding empowerment in letting go

Byline: Carrie White

"**Hypnosis** is a 100 percent consensual state. The client is always in charge," says Polly Humphreys, certified hypnotist and founder of Alternative Wellness and Beyond in High Point.

Still I was nervous about being "put under." Intrigued by Humphrey's comprehensive Web site about the benefits of **hypnosis** for all types of problems and people, I decided to use **hypnosis** to dispel my writer's block, primarily the result of a pervasive sense of anxiety that I (and, indeed, much of contemporary society) experience. I may seem like a got-it-all-together modern woman, but I often feel like a got-nothing-together modern woman.

Last year, thanks to a Fulbright scholarship, I taught at the University of Matej Bel in Slovakia, and I spent much of this year writing about my experiences there. Recently, I became "stuck" and couldn't bring myself even to edit what I'd already written. As Humphreys says, "Sheer willpower often doesn't work. Our inner cheerleader gets tired really fast, and then we revert to bad habits. **Hypnosis** bypasses the block -- the root cause --and allows full access to the subconscious mind, your true power source."

Humphreys has helped people quit smoking, lose weight and overcome phobias for the past five years, but when I met her, I wondered how anyone could ever relax into a trance around someone so vibrantly energetic. Her enthusiasm is the key to her 90 percent success rate.

"This isn't work; I believe it's my calling," she says. "A hypnotist cannot make anyone do anything that is against his morals. A client must want to change for the change to occur. This isn't therapy. I help clients gain access to the subconscious mind and then identify, understand and release the root cause of the problem."

Many issues are dealt with in three to five sessions. She even has regulars who come in for semiannual "tune-ups."

All clients complete an extensive personal history form, so Humphreys already knew about me when I showed up for my first appointment. After a brief introduction, during

which I learned about the procedure -- namely, that I would be completely safe -- we started.

Going under happened quickly. Seated in a heavenly chair, draped with a chenille throw, I began to grow sleepy. Humphreys waved her hand in front of my face three times and snapped her fingers, and I was gone -- not asleep exactly. I could have opened my eyes at any moment, but I was so relaxed that I didn't want to.

I was directed to visualize a safe, relaxing place (I picked the dog park), and my conscious mind was put on hold. Humphreys tapped into my subconscious via a series of questions, most of which I vaguely remember having to do with the source of my writer's block. Curiously, I could begin to see the block; it took on an actual, human shape and spoke to me. I responded, and prompted by Humphreys, I was able eventually to understand the fear behind the block and to expel it while still in a deep hypnotic state.

I think I fell asleep for a few minutes at the end, but when she said, "As I count to five, your eyes will become increasingly lighter," my eyes popped right open at "five." Although the whole experience felt like 15 minutes, nearly two hours had passed.

When I awoke, I felt odd, in an altered state, and I was slightly embarrassed for being so vulnerable. I felt 50 pounds lighter and five inches taller as if I were floating. I was anxiety-free and seemed strangely protected, almost charmed in a sense. I felt safe, at peace and at home in myself. It was a wonderful feeling, but it didn't last forever.

Since the session, I can't stop writing -- e-mails, grocery lists, checks. My fingers have been flying. Most importantly, I have resumed working on my book, but don't line up at Barnes & Noble just yet for a copy. It'll take awhile.

"Only you can transform yourself," Humphreys says. "I help you see that you can become whatever you want to be."

I can see myself as a wildly successful author. I just hope there's a publisher with that same vision.

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CAPTION(S):

Polly Humphreys (left) puts Carrie White in touch with her inner writer's block -- and the power to overcome it.

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