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Hypnotic Language Patterns

Nominalisations

Sometimes known as 'politician words', these are words without any specific meaning.

To understand words such as 'peace', 'relaxation' and 'calmness' you have to 'go inwards' to see what they mean to you. This is in contrast to a word such as 'brick' for example. Using these words in hypnosis causes the subject to narrow their focus of attention, and to focus inwardly.

As with other hypnotic language patterns, it is extremely useful to know about nominalisations for everyday life. You will notice people using them when they want to confuse others or when they themselves are confused.

This often happens when people have emotional problems and they resort to words such as 'depression' or 'self confidence' to describe what is actually a complex set of specifics. This can be useful descriptively, but not if you want to actually tackle the problem.

Negative Self Hypnosis

Words such as 'depression', 'anxiety' and 'worry' are also nominalisations. That's why we steer away from words such as this in hypnosis. Instead of 'when you feel anxious', you can say 'when you felt less comfortable'.

Peppering your self hypnosis with positive nominalisations will make for a more hypnotic experience.

Note: It is important to use positive nominalisations during hypnosis, rather than 'the absence of negatives'. For example "A pleasant memory can come to mind" rather than "No nasty memories can come to mind". To know what to stay away from, we have to think of that thing first.

Of all hypnotic language patterns, nominalisations are one of the most important to learn about.

Embedded Commands

Rather than be too directive when doing hypnosis, this hypnotic language pattern allows us to be more subtle in imparting instructions. If I want someone to listen carefully, for example, I could say: "Listen carefully", or I could say "When people listen carefully, they tend to remember much more."

By doing this, I have not only given the instruction 'listen carefully', but also put it within a context that gives a compelling reason to do so. The embedded command (listen carefully) is also said
slightly differently to the rest of the sentence to 'mark it out' so that the unconscious mind is more likely to pick it up.

You will hear some people argue that directive commands are just as effective as embedded or indirect commands, and they often back this up with some poorly performed research.

The fact is, if direct commands were more effective, advertisers wouldn't bother with all their expensive, careful emotion-eliciting pieces. They would simply say "Buy Brand X"!

When looking for hypnotic language patterns, advertising is a good place to start, as they have a financial bottom line to meet. That means they have to use stuff that works!

**Illusory Choice**

When we use self hypnosis, we want to restrict the attention to one particular area of experience. We don't want the subject's attention wandering off all over the place. A neat way of doing this is to give the illusion of choice in our hypnotic language. (Remember: it is just as important to do this with self hypnosis as when hypnotising others.)

An example would be "You can go just as relaxed, calm or peaceful as you wish". You get the feeling that you have a choice, but all those choices are pleasant.

**Presuppositions**

'People mostly do what you expect them to do'. A famous, and controversial statement perhaps, but nonetheless instructive, particularly when doing hypnosis.

For example, if I want someone to relax more, I could say "Try to relax a little more", or I could say "As you relax a little more, notice how your hands feel". I am presupposing that they are going to relax - it simply isn't in question.

Of all hypnotic language patterns, presuppositions are probably the most important for ensuring you get the response you need.

**Adjunctive Suggestions**

To make a suggestion more likely to be accepted, you can tag it onto the end of a 'truism', or something that is undoubtedly true. Suggestions are in bold.

So, for example: "You can sit in that chair and **begin to relax.**"

"You can listen to my voice and **notice how much more comfortable you are beginning to feel.**"

"You can wake up tomorrow and just **be aware of a gentle sense of confidence.**"

**Confusional Language**

When using hypnosis, we primarily want people to stop thinking so much (conscious mind) and go with the flow a little more.

Some people find this difficult and so it can be useful to use slightly confusing language to 'trip up' the conscious.
For example, “you can relax more now to my words or to the spaces between the words if you prefer to be more comfortable or just relaxed and at peace.. of mind can come easily and quickly taking the weight (wait) off your shoulders...”

**Analogy, Metaphor and Stories**

The unconscious mind seems to work more with patterns than details and so this sort of language can be very useful in communicating ideas to the unconscious mind.

For example, if I want to convey an idea about running smoothly and powerfully to an athlete, I could say "Imagine what it would be like to be running smoothly and powerfully". Alternatively, I could use metaphor and say, "Imagine what it would be like to be a cheetah coming out of the blocks, your muscles working in perfect harmony."

This is a simple example, but metaphor can be used in many ways, including full stories that can serve to 'lay down patterns' for the unconscious to follow later.

Learning about hypnotic language patterns can add grace, subtlety and effectiveness to your communication. Whether you want to do self hypnosis, sales or presenting, knowing about hypnotic language patterns will help you communicate powerfully and persuasively.

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