

# HYPNOSIS AND HYPNOTIC REGRESSION

(from *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, Harvest House, 1996)

## INFO AT A GLANCE

**Description.** Hypnosis is a deliberately induced condition of deep mental relaxation, passivity, or trance, in which a person becomes highly suggestible and flexible within a state of consciousness capable of dramatic manipulation. Hypnosis in therapy seeks to deal with current problems by employing hypnotic states or information to change behavior. Hypnotic regression in psychotherapy usually takes a person back into the past or childhood to buried memories. In order to uncover and resolve hidden conflicts. In New Age and occult applications hypnosis and hypnotic regression are used for a wide variety of psychic purposes, including developing “human potential” and uncovering “past lives” for “therapeutic” and occult purposes.

**Founder.** Unknown. The practice can be traced to antiquity. The noted hypnotist and psychic Anton Mesmer (1754-1815), from whom we derive the term “mesmerism,” is often considered the “father” of modern hypnosis.

**How does it claim to work?** The exact process by which hypnosis works is unknown; however, widespread claims are made for its application to medicine, psychotherapy, education, and many other fields. Self-help promoters make claim that it can be used to treat or cure an endless variety of physical ailments and personal problems (from allergies and low self-esteem, to smoking, cancer, obesity, and guilt), and that its application to personal growth, learning abilities, human potentialism, and self-transformation is endless.

**Scientific evaluation.** Scientific research has been conducted, and much information about hypnotic trance and susceptibility to it is available; nevertheless, a generally accepted scientific theory about it is still lacking.

**Examples of occult potential.** Hypnosis is a unique altered state of consciousness that can be used for a large variety of occult pursuits, including psychic development, spirit contact, automatic writing, astral travel, past-life (reincarnation) regression or “therapy,” and many others.

**Major Problems.** Releasing one’s mind to the suggestions and control of another; possible uncertainties as to the nature and long-term implication of the hypnotic state.

**Biblical/Christian evaluation.** Hypnosis may be related to the biblically forbidden practice of “charming” or “enchancing”; to the extent this relationship holds true, the practice should be rejected. The Christian is to be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit; to permit one’s mind to be controlled by another person is, in the least, a questionable practice. Clearly, it is forbidden for a Christian to permit his mind to be influenced by spirit entities as occurs in certain occult applications of hypnosis.

**Potential dangers.** Occult influences, unexpected problems arising from the trance state, abuse by the hypnotist.