

Foundations for Integrating Hypnosis into Your Therapies for Treating Anxiety, Depression, and Pain

with  
**Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.**  
 Webinar Section 6 of 12



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What Does Hypnosis Add to the Therapy Context?

- 1) Hypnosis **amplifies aspects of personal experience** and may make it easier to recognize how the patient's patterns of perception, thinking, interpersonal relating, etc., are contributing to distressing states;
- 2) hypnotic suggestion is an effective method of achieving **pattern interruption**;
- 3) hypnosis **stimulates experiential learning**;
- 4) hypnosis helps **organize and contextualize** desired responses;
- 5) it **encourages and models flexibility** in perceptions and self-relations; and,
- 6) it helps **create focus**

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Conventional wisdom is often contradictory



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So, Which is it?

- Look before you leap... BUT,  
He who hesitates is lost.
- Do unto others as you would have others do unto you... BUT  
Nice guys finish last.
- Winners never quit... BUT  
Quit while you're ahead.
- If at first you don't succeed try, try again... BUT  
Don't beat your head against a stone wall.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder...BUT  
Out of sight, out of mind.
- You're never too old to learn...BUT  
You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

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The goal is to help the client identify *personal* and *situational factors* that suggest doing *this* not *that*, and then help that awareness become reflexive for the person, perhaps using hypnosis for this reason

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Discrimination Strategy Defined

A discrimination strategy is an ability to *reliably* and *skillfully* distinguish between two or more available stimuli or options in a specific context

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### Think of the Places You Rely on Making Meaningful Distinctions in Therapy

- **Differential diagnosis** (e.g., is it dementia or depression in this elderly patient?)
- **Hypnotic responsiveness** (HH, moderate or LH?)
- Is this a **true or false** memory?
- Is this the **better therapy** approach or is that better?
- Are these **research data** valid to inform me or not?
- Can you **effectively treat** this person or not?
- Should you **recommend medication** or not?

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### Think of the Places You Rely on Making Meaningful Distinctions in Life

- Is this love or lust?
- Is this person showing genuine or merely polite interest?
- Is it better to live here or somewhere else?
- Is it better to eat this or that?
- Is this a better use of my money or is that better?
- Is this really true or merely what I prefer to believe?

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### Criteria of Distinction

Your criteria of distinction determine what, out of a wide range of possibilities, you will focus on and respond to

Most of the problems we treat come about directly as a result of the client **employing criteria that are ineffective** and thereby give rise to their problems

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### Barriers to Developing Effective Discriminations

- Global (over-general) thinking
- Low tolerance for ambiguity (jump to conclusions)
- A personal value system that precludes considering alternatives
- Rigidity (tenacious holding on to a perspective even when self-limiting)
- Narrow, limited range of experience
- Gullibility, naiveté

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### The Discriminating Therapist: Asking "How" Questions, Making Distinctions, and Finding Direction in Therapy



by  
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With a Foreword by Diane Yapko, MA  
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### Asking HOW Questions

- The "experiential deficit" emerges through questioning when a person presents misinformation they sincerely believe, answers with irrelevant information, or when they simply don't know how to answer the question
- The "I don't know" response highlights an area where they need help, i.e., a structure that helps them approach the problem more realistically, skillfully, knowledgeably

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### Making Discriminations; How Do You Distinguish...

- When to “hold on” from when to “let go?”
- What you are and are not in control of?
- What you are and are not responsible for?
- When you can and cannot “trust your guts?”
- Realistic from unrealistic expectations?
- What is personal from what affects you personally?
- When to accept a personal limitation from when to strive to transcend it?

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### Types of Discriminations (by diagnosis)

- Controllability (anxiety, depression)
- Responsibility (depression, guilt)
- Locus of control (depression, anxiety)
- Real vs. imagined threat (anxiety, paranoia)
- Real vs. imagined rejection (social anxiety, depression)

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Which problems are *event-driven*  
and which are *process-driven*?

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Thanks for your kind attention!

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Consider the Role of  
Compartmentalization in Different Therapies

Detach from:

- the pain in order to manage it
- the emotion and be more rational
- the past and be more present
- the fear and do it anyways
- situational triggers and react differently
- the wish and be more accepting
- the inner critic and be more compassionate

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