

TECHNOLOGY FEEDBACK IN HYPNOTHERAPY

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Abstract

Psychological illnesses can sometimes be difficult to be eliminated. Creativity and innovation can help in discovering a new path in treating such illnesses. Jacob Raju, a well known hypnotherapist, describes the novel method he introduced into therapeutic hypnotherapy in healing a patient who is an expert in computer application. Patient's own expertise, technology feedback, is applied into the healing process as therapeutic suggestion.

Key Words: Kinesthetic, auditory, trigger, technology feedback, software titles like coral draw, enthalpy.

We all think. Without thinking we cannot do anything. That means behind every response and behaviour of ours, there is a thought. Visual people think in images. They play and replay those images or video clips in their mind. Auditory people think in words and sentences which they keep repeating to themselves. Kinesthetic people feel their thoughts and they continue to be with that feeling.

In all the three above categories, people continue with the same thought. That is how they reinforce the thoughts, whether positive or

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negative. The more you retrieve the same thoughts the stronger they grow. If we understand how our mind processes the information bytes received by the five senses, organises them, interprets and codes them before storing them for future use, we can decode and re-code them the way we want it. This is what hypnotherapy can do for us.

The inputs from the five senses are processed by the brain and the output of that process is communicated to us as thoughts. A complete thought will have three components: *a visual image, auditory sound and an accompanying feeling*. A complete thought gets burned into our memory like the images and words are burned into a CD. Once a thought reaches our mind it will produce a subconscious response (a trigger); and our mind will not rest until we act on it. The same repeated thoughts will produce a habitual response or an attitude and accordingly we get our results. Most of our actions are subconsciously formed responses to our thoughts.

To get positive results we need to create positive thoughts. This is where therapy comes into the picture. What a therapist actually should do in a therapy session is to get the client access the unwanted thoughts and then change them exactly the way s/he wants them. This is what we call a hypnotic suggestion, which is nothing but a *complete, positive thought with image, words and good feeling*. The therapist can, then, sink it deeper into the client's subconscious mind by repeating it.

Objectives of a therapy session

For me a therapy session has two major objectives: first is to overcome the subconscious resistance of the clients. This is done by removing their limiting beliefs. The second objective is to install the outcome they want. To achieve both these objectives I, sometimes, turn to science and technology. The greatest challenge for a therapist is the formidable barriers erected by the mind. They come from the subconscious mind of the client as high negativity, low suggestibility and rational or superstitious beliefs.

Technology feedback

Human technology is the creation of the mind. What would happen if we apply the same back to the mind? Our subconscious mind, more than anything else, understands the efficacy and

effectiveness of modern technology, and will use them to initiate and sustain personal change, if we know how to guide it.

I have successfully used Adobe Photoshop, 3DSMAX and Coral Draw and other such software to edit mental images of a negative experience, however traumatic it was. I have helped the clients, who are predominantly auditory, to create in their imagination a 'Dolby Sound Filter' to remove the unwanted voices and useless self-talks from their head. I have a long list of scientific concepts that I have used in therapy like enthalpy* and atomisation of elements, effect of centrifugal and centripetal spin, sound frequencies, secretion of endorphins in the brain cells, and so on.

I ask my clients what technology or skills they are familiar with, that they use in their work. As their mind is convinced of the results they get using those skills and technology, I tell them to apply the same to their own mind to get the outcome they want. Very often it works because the mind is easily convinced of the efficacy of it.

Some Conspicuous examples

People with visual preference

When you think about an apple fruit, there will be an image of apple in your mind. What will happen to that mental image if you photoshop it? – Make it elongated to about 6-8 inches, then change its colour into green? It is no more an apple now. It has turned into a cucumber or some green gourd. What would happen if we photoshop it again and change the colour into purple? It may become a brinjal. So when we photoshop our mental images, and change the size, shape and colour, the words change in our mind, and the feeling they bring also changes.

1. I had a IX standard student who came to me for therapy, because he gets single digit marks in Kannada and Hindi, while he scores in 80s and 90s in other subjects. Maths was his favorite subject. Whenever he thinks about studying maths, he would get a mental image of him sitting at the table with his note book open, holding a pencil in his hand and focused on the problem to be solved. "It is interesting" he, then, says in his mind. I asked him: "When you think of studying Kannada what picture comes to your mind? He said: The angry face of

my Kannada Teacher. I hate her. With further probing I understood that his Kannada teacher was wearing a grey sari in his mind's image.

The boy did not like grey colour. His favourite colour was bright pink. As he knew how to use Adobe Photoshop software, I asked him to photoshop that mental image of the Kannada Teacher and change the colour of her sari into bright pink, the exact shade he liked. When he did that she looked OK in his mind. But still he did not like her, because she had 'an angry face'. So I asked him to photoshop her face, too, the way he wanted her to look. When he did that, the mental picture of the Kannada Teacher was smiling at him. He liked that. I made him photoshop all the mental images he had of her in different contexts, like, when she was distributing the answer paper where he got only seven marks, when he was asked to recite a Kannada poem which he could not do and felt humiliated, and so on. In all those situations the Kannada teacher was wearing a grey sari. This is what I call the coding of the sub-conscious mind. At the end of this de-coding and re-coding process the boy's feeling towards Kannada language and the teacher changed; and he said he could think of studying Kannada now. I told him to repeat this exercise everytime before he started studying Kannada.

2. One day a young lady came to me for therapy. *She was engaged to a guy whom she loved very much. The only problem was that whenever they met, he would soon start talking about his former girl friends. It made her angry and upset. As the days passed she grew very much concerned about their relationship and did not know what to do.*

I asked her to think about one of her visits to him when she felt 'angry and upset' and describe the image she saw in her mind. She said: "I am standing in a corner, sad and upset while he is singing, dancing and enjoying in the company of other girls". I asked her what colour she was wearing when she felt 'sad and upset' with him. She said: "I am wearing a dirty brown dress". As her favorite colour was 'bright red' I asked her to change, in her imagination, the colour of her dress into 'bright red', and the exact shade she liked. When she did

that, she was no more sad or upset. Instead, she felt happy and relaxed and could not see the other girls in her mind's picture at all. I repeated the same exercise with her in other similar situations with her fiancé and she felt relieved.

She, then, told me that she had another problem: When she comes back home from work she feels 'exhausted and tired' and would 'lie down with a head ache', unable to do any other work. I asked her to think about that situation again and describe the colour of her dress in her mental picture, when she was lying down at home 'exhausted and tired' after work. "I am wearing a brown T-shirt" she said. When she changed the brown T-shirt into a bright red T-shirt in her mind, she felt different and no more lying in the bed. She was sitting up and feeling energetic. With the bright red colour filling her subconscious mind, she could not be dull, exhausted or tired.

3. A Business woman aged 55 used to run a photo studio for a few years in her younger days. Her husband was a senior government official. Though very short in stature, he was of a very dominating character. After his retirement his wife found it especially difficult to handle his dictatorial ways. When I asked her about the details of the images in her mind of those situations, she found to her surprise that in her mental image he was taller though in real life she was taller than him. His image was also more focused and more prominent than that of her - the subconscious coding of her feeling of helplessness. As she had photography background, I asked her to change that coding by developing her mental image into an equally tall, focused and prominent person. When this was done, she felt that she could manage the situation. We changed many similar situations and she was confident to face his imposing temper. I asked her to keep repeating the exercise whenever she felt diffident in front of him.

After four days, she rang me up in the morning. She narrated to me the whole story of what had happened the previous night: After dinner she and her daughter were discussing the renovation of their bath rooms, the type of tiles and fittings they wanted, and so on. During that time the man came in. After listening to them for a while, he said in his usual

authoritative tone what he wanted; that's all and nothing else. To this, his wife replied: "We have been discussing it for some time now and this is what we want." Without responding to this reaction of his wife, he quickly retreated into his bed room, swallowed a few sleeping pills and went to bed. The next morning she was explaining to me how sad she felt for her husband, seeing him so down and miserable, and decided not to continue with the exercise I gave her. She thinks she is strong enough to manage her feelings and that she does not want to hurt his ego any more.

I have used similar methods to remove exam fear, hurt feelings, panic attacks and traumatic experiences of people who habitually organise and process the information visually.

People with auditory preference

I have helped some clients who were with auditory preference. They were asked to create in their imagination a 'Dolby Sound Filter' to remove all the unwanted sounds and useless self-talk. Another quality of sound is that it has frequency range: below and beyond certain frequencies we cannot hear. What will happen if we mute the voices in our head? What will happen if we jam those voices with different frequencies? It is worth experimenting.

4. Sometime back a software engineer came to me. He did not like his job. He had tried to commit suicide three times. During the description of his problems he was repeatedly saying 'life is not worth living'. If someone repeats endlessly in his mind 'life is not worth living', what is he supposed to do? He will try to put an end to it. That's exactly what he was trying to do.

So I asked him to close his eyes and repeat in his mind 'Life is not worth living' and, then, mute the voice in his imagination. For some people it works; but it did not work for him. So I told him to repeat the same sentence faster and louder in his mind. When he reached the maximum speed and volume, I told him to set another volume and speed control in his imagination and continue to be faster and louder. After a while, he opened his eyes and said: "Finally, I told myself to shut

up". That's when the voice in his head was thrown beyond the frequency range where he could not hear anything. I had to work with many other such statements that he used to repeat subconsciously in his mind, before I concluded the session.

5. A second year engineering student was brought to me by his uncle. He had to keep washing because he was not feeling clean. When he used the toilet he would remain there and keep on washing for about 30 to 45 minutes. Still he wouldn't feel clean. He sometimes missed his classes because of it.

The uncle with whom he was staying was facing two problems: first, they were staying in an area where they had water problem. As the young man was spending 30 to 45 minutes washing himself in the bath room he was wasting lots of water. Second, once he got into the bathroom, for the next 30 to 45 minutes nobody could use it. So I asked him: How do you stop after 45 minutes of washing? He told me: "Then I say to myself: 'that's enough.'" This was the strategy of his mind: If he says 'that's enough', he can stop. As long as he continues to say, 'I am not clean' he will have to keep washing. Then I asked him: close your eyes and imagine and say in your mind 'that's enough' after five times of washing. After a while he opened his eyes and said: If I say 'that's enough' after washing only five times, still I can stop. The rest of the therapy time I was working with him to mute the words 'I am not clean' with: 'that's enough and I am clean', repeating the exercise several times. I concluded the session by instructing him to repeat the exercise whenever he got the urge to wash more than five times.

6. A divorcee in her early forties once called me for a therapy session. She was in love with another man, who was divorced from his wife. According to her, he gives her everything that she did not get from her former husband. Only one problem: He wanted the passwords of her e-mail and Face Book accounts. She had no problem with that, provided he, too, shared the same. Once he got her passwords, he seemed to be reluctant to share his.

Finally, when she managed to get them, she understood the reason for his reluctance. He had the passwords of several other ladies and he would log-on to their social media accounts to peep into their transactions. She loved him so much and 'she could not live without him'. At the same time the new information made her concerned about the future of their relationship.

As she was a very auditory person, I asked her to repeat the words, 'I cannot live without him' several times in her mind with a smile. She did this exercise thinking about all the negative interactions she had with him. A smile can change our internal energy dynamics and change our perception. When we smile, the endorphins secreted by the neurons in our brain will wash away other neural secretions which are responsible for our negativity, making us more positive and objective. After about thirty minutes of this exercise with intermittent breaks, she told me: "Actually, sir, I cannot live with him".

Then she wanted me to meet him also. I agreed. After about a week she rang me up and said that he refused to meet me. "And finally, I told him that I had nothing to do with him. Now I am at peace.

People with kinesthetic preference

Kinesthetic people may have difficulty to visualise; they may not be able to hear any words in their mind. They are mostly people who think and feel their way through their bodily experience, ideas and things.

6. I had a client *who was working in a defense sensitive department in England. His job was to extract information from the discarded hard discs and search for incriminating information of their users. I tried to help him with many techniques which I knew. Nothing seemed to work for him. Whatever was deleted he would immediately retrieve. Finally I asked him: "How do you permanently delete some files from your computer?" He smiled and told me that we could not permanently delete any information from a computer; we only sever the link between the monitor and the hard disc. The*

information will still be there on the hard disc. I was very curious: "Suppose you have some information in the computer of your department and you want to delete it, what will you do?" He told me that there was very powerful software with which we could overwrite the hard disc several times and the information will be lost. I asked him to use that powerful software in his imagination and overwrite all the mental files he wanted to delete. And he did!

7. A few weeks later a software engineer also could overwrite his mental files. I was curious to know how he overwrote there. He explained: "I put all my unwanted negative experiences into one imaginary hard disc and with powerful software I began to overwrite there. As I continued the overwriting, I could 'feel' that the hard disc was getting ground into a paste. And I knew that the hard disc would not retain any more information".

8. Another guy used centrifugal spin to throw out his negative thoughts. In centrifugal spin, the particles and substances at the center move outward when rotated. In centripetal spin the particles move towards the center when rotated at the optimum speed. He could 'feel' all his negativity in front of him like they were in an open box. When he started to rotate the box centrifugally at high speed he could 'feel' the negative thoughts were thrown out into the atmosphere where they all got burned. He then used centripetal spin to bring into the box whatever good thoughts he wanted.

Everything may not work for everybody. You have to experiment and see what works for a particular person. Use your creativity, and the science and technology your client is familiar with. This works especially with people who are rational, less suggestible and prone to look for hard facts. It's a question of convincing their mind with the scientific truths which they will anyway believe in.

*Enthalpy: The term represents the internal energy of a thermodynamic system and describes the energy transfer in many chemical, biological and physical reactions.