

INTELLIGENCE, RELAXATION, HYPNOTISM. (WEEK 13)

Intelligence

The assessment of human abilities dates back nearly 4000 years when China used written tests to rate applicants for civil service. Two-thousand years later, during the Hans Dynasty, civil service type exams were used in the areas of law, military, agriculture, and geography. In the early 1800s British diplomats observed the Chinese assessments and modified them for use in Britain and eventually the United States for use in civil service placement.

Sir Francis Galton is a key figure in modern intelligence testing. As the first cousin of Charles Darwin, he attempted to apply Darwin's evolutionary theory to the study of human abilities. He postulate that intelligence was quantifiable and normally distributed. In other words, he believed that we could assign a score to intelligence where the majority of people fall in the average range and the percentage of the population decreases the farther from the middle their score gets.

The first workable intelligence test was developed by French psychologist Alfred Binet. He and his partner, Theodore Simon, were commissioned by the French government to improve the teaching methods for developmentally disabled children. They believed that intelligence was the key to effective teaching, and developed a strategy whereby a mental age (MA) was determined and divided by the child's chronological age (CA). This formula, stated as "MA/CA X 100."

Another theorist, Raymond Cattell, described intelligence as having two distinct factors. The first he called **Crystallized Intelligence**, representing acquired knowledge, and second, **Fluid Intelligence**, or our ability to use this knowledge.

Sternberg (1988) argued that there are a number of ways to demonstrate intelligence or adaptive functioning. He proposed a model of intelligence referred to as the triarchic theory. According to this model there are three types of intelligence: (1) analytical, or the ability to solve a problem by looking at its components; (2) creative, the ability o use new or ingenious ways to solve problems; and (3) practical, referring to street smarts or common sense. While most IQ tests measure only analytical intelligence, they fail to include practical intelligence which is the most understandable to most of us (Sternberg et al., 1995)

Intelligence is not something we can see or hear, or taste. We can see the results of intelligence...sometimes. Many argue that quantifying intelligence correctly is impossible and all that modern IQ tests do is test our knowledge and abilities. While it is true that a

person can learn to improve his or her score, this can only occur if correct responses are taught to the person, which is highly unethical. We have also found that our individual IQ score remains quite consistent as we get older. Some argue, however, that modern IQ tests are prejudiced against certain ethnicities and cultures and tend to result in higher scores for others. Where this leaves us, however, is uncertain. As of today, these IQ tests are the best we have in our attempt to quantify the construct known as intelligence.

Relaxation and Hypnosis

Many internal and external factors affect how we think, feel, and behave. Although alcohol and drugs have been studied in great detail and have been shown to have both positive and negative effects on our state of mind, they will not be discussed in this section. For more information about these, follow the link above.

In this section, we are going to focus primarily on the internal factors that influence our state of mind, particularly relaxation and hypnosis. These two terms are not foreign to most of us, but they can be highly misunderstood. Let's explore the concept of relaxation first.

Relaxation

When studied in psychology, relaxation refers to a focusing on the mind and a relaxing of the body's muscles. Research has shown that being too tense and/or living with too much stress has a significant negative impact on our lives. It can lead to physical illnesses such as high blood pressure, ulcers, fatigue, and headaches and many psychological issues, including inappropriate or misdirected emotions, confusion, difficulty concentrating, and burn-out. People utilize relaxation, in combination with stress management, to improve their quality of life, reduce the physical components of stress, and improve their psychological functioning.

There are different forms of relaxation, including breathing exercises, deep muscle relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, imagery, meditation, and yoga. Although each of these has different components, the main goal in each is to relax the body's muscles and focus the mind. Since the body and the mind cannot be separated, most agree that both of these components must be present for any relaxation technique to work.

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is very similar to relaxation in that the same two components of physical and mental must be addressed together. Most professionals agree that hypnosis is a very deep state of relaxation where your mind is more focused and the connection between your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are more clear. Hypnosis is not magical; it can not cause you to do anything against your judgment or ethical beliefs; it can not make you 'cluck like a chicken.' What it can do it help you to focus on specific areas of your life with more clarity and teach you how to do this in a positive manner.

A **hypnotherapist** is typically a licensed professional who uses hypnosis as part of a treatment regimen for certain psychological disorders. It is rarely used as the primary treatment, but instead is most beneficial when used with relaxation and talk-therapy for a more rounded therapeutic approach. A **hypnotist** is a non-clinical term usually referring to an unlicensed individual who perform various forms of hypnosis for entertainment purposes. The two are quite different, the former is therapeutic and the latter is not designed to be so.

Most people are able to be hypnotized, although many factors play a role in your individual susceptibility. These factors include your belief in hypnosis, your trust for the therapist, your sense of safety, ability to concentrate and focus your mind, and the absence of external factors such as noise, uncomfortable temperature, and physical comfort. The key to successful hypnosis is your ability to focus on your body and mind and to trust and believe in your therapist. Without these hypnosis will not work, at least not to the fullest therapeutic value.