

## Professional development reports 2018

Fred Wood

### **June 2018 The Mike Mandel Hypnosis Academy (MMHA) 40 hr. certificate course.**

This course was held at the University of Toronto, covering five full days of instruction in, and application of, hypnosis principles and protocols. Attendees came from 16 countries, and several had established clinical or therapeutic hypnosis practices.

The purpose of my attendance was to both broaden my understanding of hypnosis as well as determine the principles and protocols best suited for integration into the *Pursuit of Happiness* curriculum. I was initially overwhelmed with the depth and breadth of information, as well as the specificity of applications, inductions, and protocols. Thus, what began as a five- day course turned in to a summer of practice, while reading and studying broadly about the other hypnosis experts recommended by the instructors and participants in the course. This fall, I have blended my understanding of hypnosis into several areas of the curriculum, both in class lessons and in experiential exercises. Perhaps most notable are the correlations between meditation and hypnosis.

In essence, the ‘power of the mind’ theme that runs through much of my teaching has been greatly enhanced through my own experiential learning, and further developed by studying the adjunct approaches that populate on-line forums and Youtube channels – specifically related to accessing altered states of consciousness in order to better access deep relaxation.

The June MMHA course solidified my understanding of meditation’s physiological benefits by illuminating, through hypnosis instruction, the foundational principles used to access the unconscious mind, and its various avenues towards deep and healing relaxation. In addition, I was introduced to ‘change work’ in which hypnosis is used as a tool to alleviate, and often eradicate, anxiety, phobias, fears, and an almost endless list of possibilities. In many respects, I am still absorbing some of these lessons, and integrating them into my personal and professional life.

### **October, 2018 The Canadian Hypnosis Conference (weekend)**

In this venue, I met several members of the Canadian Hypnosis community and attend workshops on Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), a rebranding of hypnosis practices. Over the weekend, 10 hypnotists lectured on and demonstrated hypnotic techniques, while explaining their experience and understanding of the principles that result in the effectiveness of these techniques. Topics included *quick*

*inductions, anchoring, collapsing anchors*

ADAC (Associate/dissociate/associate/collapse), to name a few.

One technique, known as *Covert Anchoring*, describes the examination of problematic events or triggers. This approach first separates the emotion from the trigger, and then plots the emotion on a graph. The strategy is intended to interrupt the pattern of thought *before the peak* in an attempt to offset the emotion. Interventions that occur *after* the trigger are found to be less effective because the emotion has already been fully realized.

So how does all of this get applied in a classroom? One NLP strategy recommends recognizing the behavior or thought one wants to change – another approach is called being *mindful*; however, mindfulness uses an indirect, non-judgmental philosophy, whereas NLP plots an emotional response to an event and then uses a pattern interrupt – such as visualizing a path through a forest, and then imagining a stop sign or barricade on the path. Using this NLP approach, the path would be imagined using all five senses, in order to sharpen, brighten, and magnify the image. What gets stopped is the emotional state, rather than the trigger, thus effectively discharging emotion for the trigger and rendering it powerless. In addition to this process, we heard from a number of other NLPers/ hypnotists who provided instruction about their techniques.

In the *Pursuit of Happiness* course, I am continually exploring mainstream and alternative methodologies that espouse effective strategies for improved life experience. These strategies can be adopted by students and used without any cost or external social pressure. New this term, experientially, is *mandated* gratitude journals, while meditation remains an option for students, as well as the MUSE headband. Additionally, for students who suffer from anxiety, or have difficulty coping with college life, these approaches often provide relief. I am regularly surprised to learn that teaching the *method of Loci*, or a breathing exercise, has had a greater impact on a student than I ever considered.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend both of these learning opportunities, as these experiences continue to enhance my understanding and teaching of this work. Attending the courses and conferences allows me to become refreshed, invigorated, and renewed when I return to the class. I truly am passionate about the study of well-being and am always happy to discuss the latest reading, conference or protocol. This year, I am really excited about this exploration into hypnosis and the ever-expanding rabbit hole into which I happily descend.

On a final note, my hypnosis instructor has recommended a conference in August, 2019 where the very best practitioners from private enterprise and universities around the world meet to discuss, demonstrate, and deconstruct hypnotic strategies designed to rid people of fears and phobias, bring about profound and positive change, and to give people access to their own resources that reside beyond their conscious awareness. Making this information available to students only adds to the potentially transformative lessons I strive to offer in the *Pursuit of Happiness*.

Thank you again for support this on-going work. I know of no better way to bring authentic and dynamic enthusiasm into the class, than to be always learning and updating my own understanding.