

## The Difference Between Habit and Addiction

President Bush once said we are addicted to oil. Many people say they are addicted to nicotine. In order to quit smoking they chew nicotine gum or apply nicotine patches. Neither work in more than fifteen per cent of cases.

A relatively small percentage of the population is addicted to alcohol. Heavy drinkers just have the habit of drinking a lot every day. Smokers have the habit of putting something in their mouth up to 400 times a day. Americans have the habit of driving wherever and whenever they feel like it in gas guzzling vehicles.

Heroin is addicting. Nicotine is not. Heroin addicts have violent physical reactions when deprived. True alcoholics have severe reactions, too. Heavy drinkers can go without a drink and not react physically. Cigarette smokers do not get sick when they run out of cigarettes. Drivers may complain but don't get sick when forced to stay home.

Recognizing this distinction, we can see where hypnosis can be the perfect cure for any habit we want to change. We develop habits early on to compensate for some perceived lack in our selves or lives. They, and the reasons for them, get buried in our subconscious minds.

I started smoking when I was twenty, a sophomore in college. I thought it helped me go to sleep at night. Actually, I felt so anxious about everything I didn't breathe deeply unless I inhaled smoke. When I finally quit smoking several years later all I needed to do whenever I thought I wanted a cigarette was inhale air deeply. It worked. I was amazed at how easy quitting turned out to be. I thought I was addicted to nicotine.

Hypnosis not only helps us access the subconscious mind, it can re-program our habits. And it can re-program our self-perception. It works for weight loss the same way. Each one of us who is overweight is overweight for our own, often unknown, reasons. Sometimes we think we want to lose weight but our subconscious mind says "no-way". That's why diets fail.

One of my students discovered through hypnosis that she wore her extra pounds to protect her from men "hitting on her". Because she did not know how to respond to flirtation, she wanted to avoid it altogether. Once she released guilt feelings about her past sexual responses to men, she began losing weight without dieting. Now she is at her normal weight and feels, she says, "really light-hearted".

Hypnosis can help us develop new habits, too. If you're in debt and sinking further, you can develop a daily habit of recording your income and expenditures. If you keep losing things you need, like your car keys, you can hypnotize yourself into placing them in one spot every day.

I used to grow mute every time I needed to speak for myself. I could write what I wanted to say, but I couldn't say it. I'd forget it. My mind would go blank. Through self-hypnosis I learned how to talk. Now I have several audio discs I listen to as the mood strikes me. One is called "Break the Habit." Another is "Talking to Win", another, "Peak Performance." I gave that to my 15 year-old grand-daughter before she was scheduled to give a speech to an audience of adults. It worked, she reported. My favorite, though, is just plain relaxing into Alpha waves before using the computer. Everything works much better for me afterward.

Habits are stored in the subconscious mind. Hypnosis lets you talk to your subconscious and eliminate old habits and create new ones. With self-hypnosis it takes about 30 days to re-program your subconscious mind. It's far easier than you'd expect.

So, if you're in the habit of cruising the freeways for Sunday recreation, try skateboarding. The U.S. Surgeon General says cruising is hazardous to your health. (Don't quote me.)

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