

## **THE 'IS IT POSSIBLE' PROTOCOL (Clarke & Jackson 1983)**

A graded difficulty scale useful for assessing clients' capacity to engage in hypnotic phenomena relevant to pain control, providing useful information on what the client is able to experience in different sensory modalities that can later be utilised for pain control.

### **RELAXATION BY SENSORY AWARENESS**

Just sit comfortably in the chair and pay attention to what I am going to be saying to you. I am going to ask you a series of questions. Each question could be answered by 'yes' or 'no' but you will not have to say 'yes' or 'no' out loud, or perhaps even to yourself.

You can let your answer to the question be whatever your internal response is. Just let yourself respond internally to whatever the particular question is, there is no right or wrong way to respond. I will ask you afterwards how you felt, and what you noticed as we went along. Are you ready? Any questions? Remember, you don't have to answer out loud to make any 'yes' or 'no' signs as we go along.

(Allow 5-second pauses between each question)

Is it possible for you to allow your eyes to close?

If they are not yet closed you may close them now.

Is it possible for you to be aware of the area of your back that is in maximum contact with the back of the chair (or with the bed)?

Is it possible for you to think of the chair (bed) as strong and let it support you?

Is it possible to feel the floor beneath your feet?

Is it possible to be aware of all the sounds you can hear?

Is it possible to feel the coolness of air in your nose and throat as you inhale?

Is it possible to notice the settling down of your chest and upper body as you exhale?

Is it possible to notice any changes in temperature of any part of your body as you relax?

Is it possible to feel yourself floating as if in a cloud?

Or are you feeling too heavy for that?

Is it possible to notice a warm, heavy feeling in your arm and hands?

Is it possible to feel any tingling in your hands ... or feet?

Is it possible to be aware of the space within your mouth?

And can you be aware of the position of your tongue inside your mouth?

Is it possible to notice patterns of light and movement behind your closed eyelids?

Is it possible to feel your face getting very soft?

Is it possible to hear the sound of music in your mind?

Is it possible to imagine a beautiful colour in the eye of your mind?

Is it possible to imagine the smell and taste of a food which you like?

Is it possible to imagine yourself in a peaceful, relaxing place? To look all around in this place and notice details of what you can see, or touch, or hear? (longer pause)

Is it possible to be aware again of your body in the chair (bed) ... your feet on the floor ... the sounds you can hear?

And is it possible to bring yourself back slowly to being awake and alert? You can open your eyes, and then take a few more moments to give yourself time to feel completely awake, alert and refreshed, wide awake and comfortable.

Inquiry follows, regarding:

- ... What was noticed

- ... What was felt

- ... Which questions were easiest to respond to

- ... Which questions were least comfortable or natural to respond to

- ... An estimate of how much time elapsed during the exercise

Clarke JC, Jackson J A (1983) Hypnosis and behaviour therapy: The treatment of anxiety and phobias. Springer, New York

In Heap M and Aravind KK (2002) Hartland's Medical and Dental Hypnosis  
Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. p 352

Presented in pain context by Margolin, C., Byrne, B. & Holst-Goltra, P. (1992) Hypnosis for Pain Control Workshop at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Hypnosis, Jerusalem.