Don't Mention What Doesn't Need to Be Mentioned

5 Ways to Make Your Hypnotherapy Suggestions More Effective

Most hypnotherapists are taught to use positive language. We learn to replace suggestions such as *You won't feel anxious* with *You'll feel calm and confident.*

But there's another, more subtle habit that's easy to overlook. Even when we're using positive suggestions, we can still find ourselves referring to the very problems we're helping clients move away from.

For example: *You'll find yourself feeling so much better now that you're free from drinking.*

It's a positive suggestion, but is there any need to mention drinking at all? Why not simply say: *You'll find yourself waking up feeling refreshed, enjoying your mornings and looking forward to the day ahead.*

Language directs attention. And when we're working with hypnosis, it's worth considering whether we're unnecessarily drawing attention back towards problems rather than developing the experiences we want our clients to have.

Here are five ways to make your suggestions more effective.

1. Leave the original problem out of the suggestion

Instead of: *You'll feel so much more confident now that you've overcome your fear of flying.*

Try: *You'll settle comfortably into your seat, looking forward to your journey and everything waiting for you at your destination.*

Once you've established what the client wants to achieve, you don't always need to refer back to what brought them into therapy.

2. Describe the new experience, rather than the absence of the old one

Instead of: *You'll enjoy going out for meals without worrying about your IBS symptoms.*

Try: *You'll enjoy choosing your food, chatting with friends and making the most of your evening.*

Both suggestions are positive in intention, but the second directs attention towards the experience the client wants to enjoy.

3. Be careful when describing progress

Instead of: *Every day, you'll notice that the pain is becoming less and less.*

Try: *Every day, you'll discover more opportunities to move comfortably and enjoy the activities that matter to you.*

Constantly referring to improvements in symptoms can encourage clients to keep checking those symptoms. Where appropriate, focus on what they can do and experience instead.

4. Think beyond the problem when describing the future

Instead of: *Now that you've stopped emotional eating, you'll feel so much more in control.*

Try: *You'll find yourself making choices that feel right for you, enjoying your food and feeling satisfied.*

Think about the life your client wants to lead, rather than continually defining their future in relation to the problem.

5. Ask whether every reference is necessary

Instead of: *You'll sleep peacefully tonight, without lying awake worrying about whether you'll get enough sleep.*

Try: *You'll find yourself allowing your body to naturally settle into its own rhythm.*

When reviewing a script, look beyond obviously negative words such as *don't* and *won't*. Notice where you're mentioning symptoms, habits, fears or difficulties, even within otherwise positive suggestions.

Ask yourself: Does mentioning this add anything useful, or could I leave it out entirely?

Sometimes it's helpful to draw attention to a behavioural change. But much of the time, it's more helpful to question whether there's anything to be gained therapeutically from doing so. Once we've understood the problem, we don't need to keep bringing it into every suggestion.
