



# THE INTERNATIONAL HYPNOSIS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## The Origins of Advanced Neuro-Noetic Hypnosis™

By Tim Brunson, PhD

Religion, self-help theories, and mainstream healing modalities share one common objective. They all seek to alleviate human suffering and move individuals and society toward a more desirable state in which a perception of happiness is achieved. Nevertheless, they differ in their basic approaches. Religion focuses on belief and faith; mainstream healing, on evidence-based scientific research, and self-help, on a combination of both – albeit with a focus on wishful thinking and the charisma of the author or presenter. All claim to be effective. Yet, considering their exclusive characteristics all tend to be rather short-sited and limited in their approaches. In actuality, each of them simultaneously contain partial truths while being devoid of others.

It is odd how an effective theoretical concept originates. Almost a decade ago I was confronted by a series of medical doctors who were fascinated by my abilities as a clinical hypnotherapist. However, as hard-nosed scientists they were accustomed to questioning the validity of any accomplishments or claims that lacked sufficient peer-reviewed literature describing supporting systematic investigations. This led me to quickly discover over 10,000 of such studies, which openly supported the efficacy of hypnosis in medical and mental health interventions. This detection and the ubiquitous lack of hypnosis-related knowledge among clinicians inspired me to create The International Hypnosis Research Institute.

During my review of countless hypnosis studies, I came to several initial conclusions. Here is the most obvious one. The general lack of hypnosis training of the researcher and the poorly designed studies were clearly offset by the existence of favorable results. Therefore, I have been frequently quoted as saying that, “poorly performed hypnosis consistently produces wonderful results.” Of course, this should lead the reader to question what would have happened if those problems did not exist. This is a dilemma that I have sought to rectify.

The second conclusion was even more startling. Study after study confirmed that hypnosis could be used to reduce acute and chronic pain, accelerate healing, address psychosomatic illnesses, successfully intervene with many mental pathologies, and affect somatic processes such as immune systems and wound healing. Nevertheless, what was missing in all of these studies was an etiology – that is, why does hypnosis work. Indeed, thousands of studies pointed in the same direction without any causal explanation. Again, this was a situation that I knew needed to be addressed.

In an eight year period, which began in early 2001, starting with attending conferences that regularly included medical doctors, nurses, and psychologists; I developed an interest in the neurology, mind/body health issues, and even quantum theory – especially the

quantum enigma concept. While I lack any medical credentials and have a very limited formal background in psychology, I developed an intense interest in physiology, neuro-feedback, psychotherapy, physics, and even astrophysics. Of course, meanwhile I persistently sought to develop strong competencies in a variety of direct and indirect hypnosis styles. All the while, I continued seeing clients and patients with whom I could employ my abilities and investigate my theories.

Having finally completed a nearly ten year effort and earning a Doctor of Clinical Hypnotherapy degree in the summer of 2003, it was during the later conversion of that degree into a doctor of philosophy (PhD) in clinical hypnotherapy that I experienced some radical revelations. Over the years I had collected a lot of dots. By connecting them I developed what I interchangeably call the Neurology of Suggestion and Advanced Neuro-Noetic Hypnosis™ (ANNH).

There was a two-fold purpose for developing ANNH. The first was my desire to develop a causal model, which would give a plausible explanation as to why suggestion and imagination are so powerful as tools for human transformation. The second reason was to facilitate the creation of more effective techniques for both change work and healing interventions. My goal was to present a series of extremely effective tools that made both the clinical and self-improvement uses of hypnosis even more potent.

Many can incorrectly assume that all I have done is legitimize classical hypnosis by providing a viable explanation. Unfortunately, that premature conclusion totally misses the value of what I am proposing and regularly teaching to my students. The feedback that I receive both from my clients and patients as well as from the experiences of my students – who are predominantly licensed care-givers – has helped me shape ANNH and strongly vindicated my conclusions.

The difference between ANNH and classical hypnosis – to include both Dave Elman's direct and Dr. Erickson's indirect approaches – is both fundamental and profound. The most significant one is my rejection of the worn out and unscientific concept concerning the existence of a subconscious mind. Conversely, ANNH uses pattern theory and multiple intelligence concepts to explain the phenomena attributed to widely held myths, which are adhered to both with a presumption and a seemingly uncontrollable force of habit. It is through my mental evolution toward a more scientifically sound approach that I was able to begin to fully understanding the power of hypnosis (i.e. increasingly efficient selective thought) and start authoring significantly more effective techniques.

Another significant disparity can be found in the fact that ANNH emanates from a scientific foundation – not blind faith, popular myths, the charisma of various popular gurus, or mindless obsessions with programmed assumptions. The conceptual merging of hypnotherapy and neurology is its cornerstone. There is a tremendous body of knowledge that has emerged during the last few decades concerning how the brain works. In fact, while too much of our brain will remain as uncharted territory for at least the remainder of my lifetime, current neuroimaging techniques already provide a wealth of information concerning the functioning of the brain. ANNH appreciates these findings and seeks to mold the application of hypnotherapy to better fit rapidly evolving information about the mind and brain.

As the brain is initially the predominant organ impacted by a hypnotherapist's skills, it would stand to reason that such a practitioner would desire to understand more about what goes on "under the hood." Regardless, the typical certified clinical hypnotherapist – and similarly the average licensed psychologist, counselor, and psychotherapist – would be challenged should they be asked to discuss any of the brain's major substrates and their functions. When I have endeavored to give even the most basic explanation – especially in a watered-down way – at a workshop or conference, there are always a few who resent my efforts. On the other hand, a professional race car driver appreciates the intri-

cacies of auto mechanics and a pilot understands the basics of aerodynamics. Yet, a certified clinical hypnotherapist, who considers him or herself a professional, is more comfortable with desperately holding on to the subconscious mind myth. In contrast, ANNH holds out the promise of being more effective as it is a system that promises to address the human mind and body by having an appreciation of how they function.

Imagine for a moment a hypnotic script that is designed to illicit a specific response in a part of the brain or address the functioning of a particular organ or system of the body. Furthermore, what if hypnotic talk was designed to function in a manner designed to obtain a faster response from the neural or physiological substrate that is being targeted. For instance, what if a hypnotist, who professes competency in weight reduction, actually knew the role of the brain's insula and even knew how to use suggestion to modify its functioning. Certainly, his or her efforts would be immensely more effective. This is in stark contrast to guided imagery that uses vague parallel communication techniques and trusts in the *wisdom of the subconscious mind* to eventually figure things out. Contrasting classical hypnosis with ANNH is rather like comparing a meandering hiker with a purposeful traveler who possesses both a map and a compass. If you can fathom that analogy, you will begin grasping the difference. Even though the typical certified clinical hypnotherapist most definitely benefits a client or patient, it is my contention that a well-trained ANNH-certified practitioner of hypnotherapy is much more capable and provides a better service.

Over the next several weeks I will publish a series of articles in which I will begin to explain more about the theories and concepts of Advanced Neuro-Noetic Hypnosis™. I will discuss the guiding principles, five core concepts, principles of transformation, and a system for transformation. These in turn support the three goals of enhancing performance and healing the body and mind. Although these articles will not be a substitute for formal ANNH training, they will give the reader a solid understanding that will allow them to appreciate the difference between ANNH and classical hypnosis. More importantly they will come to understand why such an approach at this time is vital should clinical hypnotherapy become considered as a valid field in the arena of the scientifically-based health care professions.