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**NEW!** Fri Apr 17, 2009, 11:09 AM CDT

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Wheaton, IL -

When the pressures of the world close in, you can enlist a nearby ally. Try using hypnosis to tap the power of the subconscious and scale back the stress.

No dangling medallions or sci-fi-esque tools are involved in the process, nor does the hypnotist exert mind control.

"All hypnosis is self-hypnosis," said Gina Orlando, a certified hypnotherapist in Oak Park ([www.ginaorlando.com](http://www.ginaorlando.com)), in describing the state of relaxed concentration. "The person allows themselves to enter a state of trance which is that alpha and theta brain wave state that is familiar to everyone. We pass through those states as we go to sleep each night. The state of hypnosis is a natural mind state in between waking and sleeping. It is a time where your subconscious mind becomes available for new positive suggestions for desired change."

Orlando, whose medical specialty includes anxiety, panic, fears and phobias, said hypnosis is effective because the subconscious mind controls the body's functions.

"It's also the place where your habits and emotions live, and where the invisible walls of resistance can reside," she added, noting hypnosis is applicable to a variety of self-improvement areas.

When Elicia Viola of Glen Ellyn decided to run with husband Mike in their first Chicago Marathon to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, she knew she needed a boost.

"I really wanted to get rid of any blocked areas that have prevented me from being the best I could be," she said, explaining why she turned to hypnosis through The Light Heart Center in Winfield. "I was not a runner before this, so the hypnosis got me in the right mental state, clearing out old programs, replacing them with success-oriented conditioning. The hypnosis helped me to maximize my potential mentally, which translated into enhanced performance physically."

She continues her running, and the couple has raised more than \$20,000 for the society.

"I do still meditate and do guided visualizations and manifestations," Elicia Viola said. "It keeps me centered, focused and joyful."

Orlando uses a biofeedback device to track the shift in her clients from the alert beta state to the alpha or deeper theta state just this side of the delta state of sleep.

She said trance states are common whenever people focus their concentration, whether it be watching a good movie, meditating, praying or being in the zone during physical activity.

She compares the role of the hypnotherapist to that of a well-trained personal coach for clients.

"Because it's a place of habits, (the) subconscious mind can get stuck in a rut," she said. "When it gets stuck like that, the habit gets embedded. (Compare it to) an old LP record with a nick; the needle stays stuck. Hypnosis picks up that needle and puts it in a new groove that the client wants. It's wonderful to see the profound changes that can happen, and sometimes very, very quickly."

Orlando's tools include her trained voice; special background music; and breathing techniques to help clients relax.

They sit in a comfortable recliner and let the words flow, receiving the suggestions. She said many people hear all the words; for others, the words drift away, but the suggestions still get through.

Practice makes it easier to enter a trance state, and it can be done at home by the individual. Quick shortcuts can be used during stressful situations to re-engage the stress-fighting suggestions.

It turns out, you are what you think.

Orlando points out that the subconscious mind acts on all thoughts and images that it is given, adding, "Self-hypnosis is a very valuable tool for everyone to learn. The mind has that capacity to change its mind."

### **Hypnosis joins fight against cancer**

A groundbreaking program to incorporate hypnosis in care for cancer patients was founded at La Grange Memorial Hospital almost 20 years ago, by the Rev. Dr. C. Scot Giles of Wheaton.

"It was the first medically-approved hospital-based program in America that used hypnosis as an integral part of cancer care," said Giles, a board-certified chaplain. "We have tracked all of the people who have gone through the program over a 10-year horizon, and know they are doing better (than) expected to do when compared to the national cancer outcomes database. At this point, the group is full and there is a one-year waiting list."

However, he offers four free programs through the Wellness House in Hinsdale, Wellness Place in Palatine, Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park, and the University of Chicago Medical Center.

This ministry of care is supported by his private practice in Wheaton.

“The work’s been very rewarding,” said Giles, an officer of the National Guild of Hypnotists and author of the curriculum used by the guild to train people to do medical hypnosis in the United States, Great Britain and Canada.

Giles, whose Web site at [www.csgiles.org](http://www.csgiles.org) provides a wealth of information and links to scientific studies, shares recent findings about the nature of cancer.

“What’s been found is that cancer cells have receptor sites for chemicals in the body associated with stress,” he said. “They use those chemicals to fuel a process called angiogenesis (generation of blood vessels that aid growth of a tumor). The stress chemicals in your body are energizing the tumor cells and encouraging tumor proliferation. So by maintaining a state of low stress in the mind, you actually change the physiology of the body and starve the cancer cells of chemicals they need to grow. That seems to be why hypnosis is effective. While it doesn’t kill the cancer, it does inhibit its spread.”

A study from the National Institutes of Health shows psychosocial support of cancer patients makes an enormous difference, he said.

His hypnosis program focuses on symptom management of pain, nausea and lack of appetite; mood management in helping the patient remain relaxed and optimistic; and specific imagery around the cancer itself, to encourage the body’s immune system to fight back.

Giles notes that public acceptance of hypnosis has improved dramatically.

Articles now abound in medical journals showing the effectiveness of hypnosis in health care, he said, adding, “The opinions of the medical community have simply shifted with the research.”

## Hyp history

The Web site at [www.wordinfo.info](http://www.wordinfo.info) tracks the word hypnosis to Dr. James Braid (1795-1860), a Scottish surgeon and hypnotist, who inaugurated modern hypnotic techniques. From the Greek element hypnos, meaning “sleep,” the words hypnosis and hypnosis were coined by Braid in 1842 to describe the new science. When he realized that hypnosis was not really “sleep,” he tried unsuccessfully to change the name to monoideaism (or monoideism), a marked preoccupation with one idea or subject.

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