

Healthy Minds Hypnosis Canada offers weight loss through suggestion



By Mark Pavilons

The answers to most of our fears and apprehensions rest within us. We all have the power to change our behaviour and a little kick-start if often all we need to help us on the road to success.

For those who have struggled with weight management issues, there's a new tool in the arsenal.

Newmarket's Lawrence Raifman, a retired York region high school teacher, is providing hypnosis to help clients overcome obstacles. Hypnosis has proven successful in everything from stress management to smoking cessation, and now, people can benefit from a tailor-made weight loss strategy.

Raifman, during his almost two decades at King City Secondary School, had students' best interests at heart. He went out of his way to help students and spent the last eight years teaching a program in personalized alternative education. He was fascinated by hypnosis and after delving into the therapeutic uses for it, he was convinced he could help others overcome their problems. As a certified member of the National Guild of Hypnotists, Raifman helps people with ordinary problems, using tailor-made hypnotic techniques.

Raifman said he loves meeting different people and feels "really good when I can help people make a helpful and healthy change in their lives."

Practised hundreds of years, hypnosis boils down to being receptive to positive suggestion. It's really a self-help method of bringing our goals to the forefront of our thoughts and making it happen. It's not a magic bullet, but simply a non-invasive way of accessing our inner strength.

It's viewed as a form of communication with the subconscious mind, a concept presented by the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.

People have been entering hypnotic-type trances for thousands of years and many cultures engaged in forms of meditation. Modern hypnosis started in the late 1700s, popularized by German physician Franz Mesmer.

Raifman took a course in the "Virtual Gastric Band Program," created by UK practitioner Sheila Granger.

This non-surgical technique mimics one of the most common types of weight loss surgery. Gastric banding implanting an adjustable band around the top of the stomach. The band creates a pouch about the size of a golf ball and restricts the amount of food that can be eaten by narrowing the outlet into the stomach.

According to Health Canada, "gastric banding surgery can be an effective way for people to lose weight and improve their health. It is especially effective when patients eat less and change their behaviour around food and exercise."

The agency notes that today, approximately 1 in 4 Canadian adults is obese. Gastric banding is recognized as a viable option, but there are risks to any surgery.

The virtual experience allows you to lose weight without dieting or surgery. It's designed to bring about a permanent in one's eating habits.

Granger noted it's like "flicking a switch in the brain," changing a person's attitude towards food. "It helps them regain control over cravings and bad eating habits."

Raifman said the program involves four sessions. He relaxes clients and walks them through the process, as if they're actually having

gastric banding. It's a "nicely designed program," that allows your body and mind to work together to achieve success. You can continue to eat normally, but in moderation. Every successful weight loss program involves several components. Raifman said his clients boast an 80% success rate. He admits he's not a counsellor or therapist, but he helps people open their minds and be receptive to change. Each session is tailor-made to the client, who has to be committed to making the change. During hypnosis, a person is said to have heightened focus and concentration. Raifman stressed people are not "asleep" during hypnosis and he can't make you do anything you wouldn't do in a waking state. Hollywood and stage performers exaggerate the power of suggestion for theatrics.

"Everyone can be hypnotized if you're open," he said.

Don't be surprised if you emerge from hypnosis feeling like a million bucks!

If you'd like to find out more about the Virtual Gastric Band Program, or other services offered by Raifman, visit www.healthymindshypnosis.ca; call him at 416-809-9754 or email info@healthymindshypnosis.ca