

## A better me through self-hypnosis

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How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb??Only one, but the bulb has to really want to change!

Joking aside, if you think about this, it's a fundamental truth about human nature and yes, change.

We all have the power, determination, strength and intelligence to strive, achieve and work towards our goals. Sure, some are harder than others, and some may seem impossible.

But there's no magic solution to any of our woes or ailments. There are no quick fixes to any of our self-esteem or body issues. There's no pill to make us better people.

While consumers spend billions annually on self-help tutorials, weight loss programs, elixirs and exercise equipment, we are in charge of our own destiny. We are the key in the ignition to jump-start ourselves on a new and improved road.

None of the above will work on their own, without our consent, will power and commitment. We are in charge.

As I?sat in a comfy livingroom chair, listening to Lawrence Raifman's voice, I allowed myself to drift into a relaxed state. Hypnosis, he explained, is really ?self-hypnosis.??Nothing happens without our consent and acceptance.

I?wasn't asleep. I?wasn't being controlled, nor did I see things. I?was simply deeply relaxed, soaking it all in, listening to the words of encouragement. My brain has to take this new data and work with it. My brain has to be retrained how to eat better, exercise, understand when I'm full and when I'm bored. My brain has the power to change my habits and we have to work together to achieve my goals.

It's not magic, or supernatural. In fact, it's very natural.

Any new course of action requires repetition to establish new neural links in our massive brains. The more often we exercise, eat better meals and make better choices, these become imprinted in our neural pathways until they become our new routine.

It's a little bit of science, but mostly God-given free will.

Like that light bulb, I?have to want to change.

And I?have to make a concerted effort. I?have to want it.

I'm open to anything and I wanted to give hypnosis a legitimate shot. I'm still ?a work in progress??with a couple sessions still to go. Part of the program involves listening daily to a recording and practising some time-honoured ?golden rules for success.?

To make everyone's weight loss a success, there are some tidbits that may help.

It's suggested that you buy something new for yourself ? an article of clothing that you WILL?fit into this summer. Hang it prominently so you see it every morning.

Everyone should eat slowly and consciously. I've always been a fast eater but I?have no idea why. Perhaps in my previous life food was scarce! It's recommended you put your fork down between mouthfuls. Don't eat in front of the TV ? you won't know exactly how much you're consuming.

It takes roughly 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you're full. Once you begin feeling full, stop.

As noted in many programs, eat three smaller meals a day and try to balance out the proteins, carbs and veggies. A nutritionist will tell you to pile on the veggies, lessen the carbs and eat just one smaller protein.

If you decrease your intake noticeably, make sure you take a multi-vitamin so you're getting the essential nutrients. I take a multi, garlic and Omega 3.

We all know that drinking more water is beneficial. Some of us don't mind, while others just don't care for H<sub>2</sub>O. I've been a pop drinker for most of my life and while I drink zero calorie soda, I'm consuming way too much artificial sweetener. I tell my wife that at least my body will be well preserved for future archeologists!

Exercise is also vital. We all know this. Doing it and sticking to it is another matter.

I'd suggest taking a 30-minute walk with the dog or that special someone. Granted, our winter weather hasn't been very cooperative in that regard. But that's a good routine to get into. If you want to step it up, that's great.

When you're feeling hungry, the best strategy is to wait it out. It will disappear in a few minutes. Drink water and keep busy.

Other things that I've learned are to stick to natural foods ? those made by Mother Nature. Avoid processed food, refined sugars and white breads.

None of this is revolutionary. If you start reading labels you'll be shocked at how much sugar and how many carbs are in average, everyday foods.

I admire those who never have to worry about their weight and can eat anything they want. I really enjoy food, and one of my bucket list undertakings is to eat my way across Europe!

For now, I'll just concentrate on myself and getting my mind and body in harmony.