

# Why Do I Keep Doing This!!?

End Bad Habits, Negativity and  
Stress with Self-Hypnosis and NLP



Judith E. Pearson, PhD

Includes Free  
Audio CD

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**Crown House Publishing Limited**

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[www.crownhousepublishing.com](http://www.crownhousepublishing.com)

First published by

Crown House Publishing Ltd  
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK  
**www.crownhouse.co.uk**

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC  
6 Trowbridge Drive, Suite 5, Bethel, CT 06801-2858, USA  
**www.crownhousepublishing.com**

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First printed 2011

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*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN

978-184590732-7 (print)

978-184590789-1 (mobi)

978-184590790-7 (epub)

LCCN 2011938905

Printed and bound in the UK by  
Gomer Press, Llandysul, Ceredigion

**Also by Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D.**

*The Weight, Hypnotherapy and You Weight Reduction Program: An NLP and  
Hypnotherapy Practitioner's Manual*

# Disclaimer

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The methods described in this book and accompanying CD are intended for use by adults and may not be suitable for children. The methods may also be inappropriate for people who experience hallucinations, delusions, psychotic episodes, or paranoia.

## Author's note

Wherever I have mentioned experiences or conversations with clients in this book, I have changed the names and consequential details to protect privacy. Some cases are represented as composites rather than the experience of any one individual.

In deference to gender equality in language, I use the pronouns “he” and “she” interchangeably in this book when giving examples and instructions for specific strategies and processes. I ask that readers understand that I am in no way stereotyping one gender over another in my choice of pronoun. In applying instructions in the text to themselves, readers should simply substitute the pronoun of their choice.

## **About the CD that accompanies this book**

The audio CD accompanying this book provides a guided introduction to the experience of hypnosis. The CD contains two tracks, approximately 4 minutes and 37 minutes long, respectively. Track 1 gives general guidelines for listening to the CD. Track 2 is a guided hypnosis session developed to help the listener acquire familiarity with the hypnosis process.

Track 2 teaches the induction/deepening methods found in Chapter 5: Eye Roll, Arm Drop, Counting, Eye Closure, Staircase, and Progressive Relaxation. In the Staircase induction, the listener imagines walking down a staircase onto a beach, and walking along the beach, seeing the sand, water, birds, and sky. Listeners with an aversion to staircases or to beach scenes are advised to forego listening to the CD. A brief, generic mental rehearsal follows the induction/deepening portion. The track concludes with suggestions for future success with self-hypnosis and a reorientation, with which the listener can return to full alertness.

# Foreword

Last night I finished reading Judy Pearson's *Why Do I Keep Doing This!?!?*, retired for the evening and slept very deeply. In my sleep I drifted and dreamed, and in the seemingly disconnected dream fragments a wise woman healer appeared amidst the saguaro cacti and blowing dust (I live in Tucson, Arizona after all!), and then the rain began, life-sustaining rain in the parched desert. Down from the mountains rushed the water, converging in the dry river beds, and throughout the land the shallow roots drank and drank. The healer gazed upon it all and smiled.

I have amnesia for the remainder of the dream but I can't help but remember the varied contents of Judy's book, which is nothing less than a remarkable achievement. If a person curious about hypnosis and self-improvement were to seek answers from only one source, it should be this book, which asks all the right questions and provides full and complete answers for one seeking solutions.

The companion CD nicely rounds out the total package and makes possible a post-hypnotic suggestion often uttered by the famous Dr. Milton Erickson, "My voice will go with you."

Now, learning self-hypnosis is not a magic bullet for, say, alcohol dependence or severe depression. With these and other common clinical disorders the author provides clear and careful explanations of other things the person should consider in addition to learning self-hypnosis. Judy, a seasoned practitioner who knows what she's talking about, makes it clear that some people may require additional psychotherapy and/or clinical hypnosis from a licensed mental health professional. I customarily tell my students, "If they show up and walk through the door, they're obviously interested, and the difficult part is out of the way." Kind reader, you have picked up this book and read up to this point, so you have taken that initial important step. You have entered the room.

The solution to your problem or my problem lies in the unconscious mind, and rest assured, Judy considered the unconscious mind in devising her

## FOREWORD

techniques in this book. The solid writing and copy-editing make this a well-organized book that is easy to read and apply to your personal situation. Hypnotic content in a book allows you to discover and grow long after you've read it. It reminds me of the painter, Ted DeGrazia, who painted those pictures of the little Indians with no faces. When he put the final touches on a painting he said, "This painting is complete but it is never finished."

George Gafner, MSW, LCSW  
Author, *Techniques of Hypnotic Induction*  
Tucson, Arizona

# Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the staff at Crown House Publishing for their help in bringing this book to publication. First, many thanks to the Mark Tracten, the U.S. distributor who alerted me in 2009 that Crown House was open to a proposal for a new book on self-hypnosis. Mark works diligently for Crown House authors in the U.S., not only marketing our books, but serving as a sounding board and as our “ear to the ground” in the publishing world.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to David Bowman for accepting my book proposal. Through his expert advice and marketing savvy, I simplified and improved on my original concept. I am grateful to David and his associates for their forbearance and patience with my delays in submitting the drafts, due to the demands of my busy work schedule. Additionally, no author could ask for better guidance than that I received from Beverley Randell who gently guided me through the details of copy-edits and permissions.

It was my good fortune to work with Cory Foley-Marsello, the audio technician at Bias Studios in Springfield, Virginia who applied his talented expertise in recording and editing the audio CD that accompanies this book. He is a paragon of patience, who gave meticulous attention to every detail of the project.

My appreciation goes to George Gafner, an established author, psychologist, and hypnotherapist who graciously agreed, without hesitation, to write the foreword. I also extend thanks to Bob Bodenhamer, D. Min. for his straightforward advice concerning the length of the first draft. Both of these fine authors shared their own publishing experiences and gave me encouragement.

Lastly, I thank my husband, John, for his unflagging confidence in my writing abilities and for his continuing optimism throughout the production of this book. As an author with a full-time practice, my biggest problem was finding sufficient blocks of time to capture ideas on a computer screen and

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

let my thoughts flow freely, without interruption or distraction. John, an author himself, understood this. He demonstrated unparalleled devotion by taking over several household duties, allowing more time for me to hunker down over the keyboard. Such a sweetheart of a guy!

I am grateful to the following authors who gave permission to quote from and/or adapt material from their publications:

L. Michael Hall, Ph.D. who gave permission to adapt the Neuro-Semantics Meta No/Meta Yes pattern and the Neuro-Semantics Mind-to-Muscle pattern from *Secrets of Personal Mastery*, Bancyfelin, Wales: Crown House Publishing Ltd., 2000; and the NLP Self-esteem Pattern from the *Accessing Personal Genius Training Manual*, Clifton, Colorado: Neuro-Semantics Publications, 2000.

Steve Andreas who gave permission to adapt The NLP Slender Eating Strategy and the NLP Responding to Criticism pattern from *Heart of the Mind*, Boulder, Colorado: Real People Press, 1989.

Carol Goldsmith who gave permission to quote from *The Book of Carols*, Haverford, Pennsylvania: Infinity Publishing, 2003.

Robert Dilts who gave permission to adapt *The Walking Belief Change Pattern* from an audio-recording by the same name, by Robert McDonald, Boulder, Colorado: NLP Comprehensive, 1979.

Nick Kemp who gave permission to adapt a submodalities pattern for negative inner dialog, from an electronic newsletter issued by Steve Andreas, 2008.

Jon Connelly, Ph.D. who granted permission to paraphrase a metaphor from his Rapid Trauma Resolution Training Program, conducted at the Institute for Rapid Resolution Therapy, in Tampa, Florida, 2006.

Rue Ann Hass who granted permission to adapt What is Your Soul Dream? from an article by the same name in *Anchor Point* magazine, Boulder, Colorado, 2003.

Ron Klein, who granted permission to paraphrase a quote from his Ericksonian Hypnosis and Brief, Outcome-Oriented Psychotherapy training courses at the American Hypnosis Training Academy.

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you to define the underlying, unconscious motives that often support unwanted behaviors. The other, Meta-NO/Meta-YES, teaches you to say “NO” to a habit or addiction and “YES” to new, replacement behaviors and rewards. First, however, in the sections that follow, you can assess your readiness for change, followed by a reminder that replacing habits and addictions with new behaviors often ensures success.

## Assess Your Level of Readiness

The first step in eliminating deeply entrenched habits and addictions is to decide whether you are really ready to do so. In 1979, James Prochaska, a psychologist, developed the Transtheoretical Model of Change showing that people overcome habits and addictions with varying degrees of readiness and often with ambivalence.<sup>23</sup> His model describes the six stages of readiness that lead to lasting behavioral change. Each step is described below, with tips on how to advance to the next stage. Read through these paragraphs and decide what stage best describes your situation. Then you’ll know just how ready you are to release your habit or addiction and what to do next.

1. **Pre-contemplation:** People in pre-contemplation don’t intend to take action in the next six months. They may deny that a problem exists, even when others see it clearly. They may attend a therapeutic program at another’s insistence, but do not participate wholeheartedly. They lack information about their problem and make no attempt to learn about it. They may resist change because they believe they cannot be helped.

To advance to the next stage, admit you have a problem. Acknowledge that the methods you’ve tried, in order to accommodate the problem, control it, hide it, and live with it, aren’t working.

2. **Contemplation:** People in contemplation intend to take action within six months. They acknowledge the problem and think seriously about solving it. They want to understand it. Other priorities may prevent them from seeking help.

To advance to the next stage, obtain information about the problem and methods of treatment. Get information on how others have

successfully released the habit or addiction. Resolve other priorities that may interfere with a sincere commitment to behavioral change. Confront any ambivalence and work through it, possibly with the help of a therapist or life coach.

3. **Preparation:** Individuals in this stage intend to take action within the next 30 days and have taken some initial steps. They are developing a plan and making preparation.

To advance to the next stage, finalize your plan with scheduled milestones. Set concrete goals for observable, verifiable change. Visualize what you'll do differently when you are free of the habit or addiction.

4. **Action:** People in this stage have overtly modified their behavior. Friends and family may notice and give support.

In this stage, congratulate yourself that you have taken action. The challenge now is to maintain the change. Remember: new behaviors may seem awkward at first, but will gradually become more comfortable and familiar. Bear with the awkwardness. Enlist support from others. Join a support group. Hire a therapist or life coach. Ask her to monitor your progress and hold you accountable for it. She will help you work through the rough spots and surmount unanticipated obstacles.

5. **Maintenance:** People in this stage have maintained behavioral change for more than six months. This is the time to consolidate gains and focus on preventing relapse. Especially with addictions, relapse is the rule rather than the exception.

To make lasting change, develop a plan for relapse prevention. Identify likely relapse triggers and develop coping strategies that incorporate new responses. Continue to use your support structure, even when it seems you don't need it. If you relapse, don't give up or consider yourself a failure. Relapse contains useful information on how to improve your efforts. Revise, regroup, and start over.

6. **Termination:** Individuals in this stage believe the unwanted behavior will never return and have no fear of relapse.

Eliminating habits and addictions requires that you identify the triggers and circumstances that activated unwanted behaviors. Some you'll want to avoid altogether from now on. For other triggers and circumstances that are unavoidable, decide on new responses and coping mechanisms. For help with coping skills, see Chapter 16.

If negative emotions have triggered your habit or addiction, develop the capacity to perceive negative emotions without the need to act on them. Change begins when you realize that not every thought is a valid thought: it isn't necessary to act on every urge. Relabel intrusive, unwanted thoughts and urges so that they mean something else. A compulsive eater, for example, might relabel thoughts about food as signaling a need for rest or comfort.

## **Develop New Habits to Replace Old Ones**

When you eliminate one behavior, it may be helpful to replace it with another. You might, for example, have a cup of decaffeinated coffee after supper instead of having dessert. You might want to start manicuring your nails instead of chewing on them. You might want to go to bed on time instead of staying awake to play computer games.

If you have trouble staying with a new behavior, listen carefully to the disparaging thoughts that block motivation, and override them with encouraging self-talk. If the new behavior is a complex one, such as learning a new skill, gradual immersion may be the key to success. In this way, incremental progress allows you to learn as you go along. Starting small often carries less risk of major mistakes and discouragement; you get the reinforcement of small successes, instead of massive failures. Success in almost any major endeavor is achievable in small, doable steps. For more ways to improve motivation, see Chapter 11.

Use self-hypnosis to mentally rehearse new behaviors and to visualize positive outcomes and rewards. Mental rehearsal programs new neurological connections through mental "practice." You can also visualize a role model (i.e., a wisdom figure) carrying out the new behavior and then coaching you on how to do it and stay with it.

## Self-Hypnosis: NLP Six-Step Reframing

NLP supports two principles when it comes to eliminating unwanted habits and addictions:

- All behaviors, even problematic ones, are based on underlying positive intentions, usually having to do with satisfying basic needs, such as safety, security, comfort, protection, love, and self-esteem. These positive intentions often lie outside of conscious awareness. Through self-hypnosis, we can access this unconscious material to increase self-understanding and “negotiate” solutions with the unconscious mind.
- Most problematic behaviors originally develop in an attempt to solve a problem. When such behaviors have outlived their usefulness, they can be reprogrammed through new strategies. Habits and addictions are usually behaviors that seemed useful in the beginning, but eventually became a nuisance, having outlived any usefulness.

Bandler and Grinder developed the NLP Six-Step Reframe, based on these two principles, for eliminating unwanted habits and addictions.<sup>24</sup> This pattern is called a “reframe” because it changes the framework with which you think about a problem behavior. It is based on the idea that habits and addictions represent a “part” of the mind that is trying to satisfy a positive intention. However, the “part” has run amuck, generating behavior that is no longer wanted. The idea behind the Six-Step Reframe is to negotiate with the “part” to satisfy the positive intention in another way.

Here is an overview. Visualize the part. Ask the part for its positive intention. Explain to the part that, while the intention is positive and helpful, the resulting behavior is not. Ask the part to access your creativity to find other ways to accomplish the positive intention. Remember, the object is *not* to think of ways to combat urges and cravings. The object is to think of new ways to satisfy the *positive intention*.

This process relies on internal representations: imagery and dialog. You’ll converse with your unconscious mind. Approach this process in a playful,

spontaneous way, realizing that there are no right or wrong answers. Additionally, I caution you that you must be friendly and kind toward the part. I've had numerous clients approach this exercise with the idea of "punishing" or "getting even" with a part. I assure you that such an attitude just will not work. Your unconscious mind will not cooperate.

The crux of this NLP strategy lies in Step 2 – determining the positive intention. Get this step right and the rest of the steps flow smoothly. Sometimes the positive intention is initially expressed as a *hurtful* intention. The hurtful intention might be something like "to punish you" or "to make you ashamed." If you encounter a hurtful intention, ask again, "What is the positive intention of *that* (i.e., to punish you, make you ashamed). Eventually you'll discover a positive intention.

If the positive intention is vague, ask for more detail. For example, if the positive intention is "Protection," ask "Protection from what?" If the positive intention is "To prevent bad things," ask "What bad things?" This clarification will help with the remaining steps. Here are the steps for the NLP Six-Step Reframe:

1. Go into trance with an induction method of your choice. Visualize the part of yourself that promotes your habit or addiction. See it as a metaphoric image. If you aren't sure what to visualize, ask your unconscious mind to present an image.
2. Welcome that part of yourself and thank it for being available. Ask, "What is the positive intention of this habit (or addiction)?" The answer will emerge intuitively. Keep your mind open and curious as you wait patiently for the answer. Ask for clarification as needed.

Contemplate the answer. It might be what you expected, or not. It might give an insight into past influences. Self-understanding is a byproduct of this process. Appreciate how your unconscious mind has been trying to work all this out, behind the scenes of your awareness.

3. Appreciate the positive intention. Realize that this part has worked long and hard to satisfy the positive intention, but usually not succeeding. Why? Because the habit or addiction chosen to meet the

Judith Pearson's insightful, helpful, well-written book is the best self-help book I have read in years. ... I'm keeping it at my bedside to dip into when I need to remember how to be my own best self.

**Shelle Rose Charvet, author of *Words That Change Minds***

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## Why do people find it so difficult to change unwanted habits and behaviours?

You can come up with all sorts of explanations, ranging from childhood trauma to genetics to personality types, but what it really boils down to is the fact that most people simply aren't skilled at managing their minds. When you try to break a habit your brain sends out signals of alarm and discomfort. To get past this, you must put your "logical brain" in charge. This can be achieved using self-hypnosis and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

This book will help you to:

- End bad habits
  - Cure addictions
  - Get fit
  - Lose weight
  - Stop smoking
  - Feel more confident and motivated
  - Sleep better
  - ... and much more.
- 

*Why Do I Keep Doing This!?!?* stands way above most self-help books as well as books about self-hypnosis.

**C. Roy Hunter, PhD, FAPHP, author of several hypnosis texts, including *The Art of Hypnosis***

*Why Do I Keep Doing This!?!?* is in a different league altogether and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to a client ... in fact, I've already recommended it to my wife.

**Nick Jenkins, cognitive hypnotherapist**

This is a really informative back to basics book about self-hypnosis, which could be read by anyone interested in learning more about this particular skill.

**Karen Moxom, Managing Director, Association for NLP**

Serves as a good introduction to hypnosis and NLP for those wanting to explore how these tools can be considered in relation to changing unhelpful behaviours.

**Nick Kemp, creator of *Provocative Change Works***

Offers a "buffet" of food for the "emotionally hungry" person.

**Bobby G. Bodenhamer, DMin, *Patterns for Renewing Your Mind International***

---



**Judith Pearson** holds a PhD in counseling and has published over 100 articles on NLP, hypnotherapy and self-help and is the author of *The Weight Hypnotherapy and YOU Weight Reduction Program* ISBN 978-184590031-1.

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ISBN 978-184590732-7



9 781845 907327