

Malek's Law: Any simple idea will be
worded in the most complicated way

101 things
I wish I'd
known when
I started using
hypnosis

Dabney Ewin

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The history of hypnosis is littered with stories of the downfall of practitioners who were lured into grandiosity by the siren song of cures that border on the miraculous. I dedicate this composition to my wise and precious wife, Marilyn, who has been my anchor to keep my feet on the ground while my head was in the sky.

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66. “Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious”

“Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious”
(Freud 1900).

I perceive imagination (*daydreams*) as key to hypnosis and would rewrite it as “*Hypnosis* is the royal road to the unconscious.” Freud started with hypnosis but gave it up early in his career. He apparently was not good at inductions and was dissatisfied with his results using only direct suggestions (Kline 1966).

67. First three years of life

The importance of the first three years of life in personality development is well documented.

Regressions to preverbal memories are of inestimable value in hypnoanalysis. Even though it is rarely possible to validate what the patient expresses, it is therapeutic to treat it as real (Thing 64) because it comes from the patient. If the patient believes that it's true, it *is* true for him/her, and reframing an early trauma (real or imagined) is often curative.

Childish reasoning thinks like the rooster Chanticleer. He noted that the sun rose after he crowed, and concluded that it rose *because* he crowed.

68. Anamnesis

Anamnesis is the correct word for what we call *history*.

Mnesia is memory; amnesia is no (verbal or explicit) memory. Anamnesis is what the patient did not forget or repress, so it's all the patient can give us from *explicit* memory. The verbal "history" contains Freudian slips, non-responsive answers to questions, sighs, volunteered negatives, and gratuitous or qualifying clauses that come from *implicit* memory, and guide us to the subconscious mind set. What is repressed is seminal in psychosomatic medicine, so we must *listen in literal*.

We learned from the polygraph (lie detector) that a sigh negates what was just said. A volunteered negative expresses what the patient is guarding against, so a volunteered "It's not caused by fear" means that it *is* caused by fear. When I ask a pre-op patient "How do you feel about this operation?" and get "OK (pause), I guess," the qualifying "I guess" tells me he subconsciously lied, saying "OK," then felt guilty for lying and added "I guess" to clear his conscience. I need to find out what reservations he has about the procedure before I operate.

69. Self-analysis using pendulum or ideomotor signals

Nobody taught me that I could analyze my own symptoms by using self-hypnosis and setting up ideomotor finger signals or by using a Chevreul pendulum in the waking state. It works well for me to analyze my own dreams at the time I become aware of the dream. What is the affect – fear, anger, love, guilt, sadness, etc.? What happened yesterday to trigger it? Who is in it – me, spouse, parent, sibling, God, enemy, etc.? Does it refer back to something in my past? If so, before 30, or 20, or 10, or 5, etc.? Would it be all right to bring it up to a conscious level? And “Voila!” there it is. All of these need to be “yes” or “no” questions.

Triggers for dreams are interesting. I recall an awful nightmare I had, in which there were six bodies laid out and I stabbed each of them in the heart. I woke up horrified, then used the above technique to interpret the dream. It turned out that in the course of my surgical career I had had six cardiac arrests, with varying outcomes, but always of deep concern to me at the time. I learned whatever lesson there was to learn from each, and did not think about them

consciously. I wondered what had triggered this dream, which occurred while I was on my vacation. What came up was that I was at a friend's home and had stumbled upon a book of stories I had enjoyed as a child. The author was Bret *Harte*. Words activate old memories, functioning like search words to Google the subconscious.

70. Self-regression

Part of self-analysis includes age regression. I was able to validate a self-regression to the fourteenth day of my life from the microfilm records of the hospital where I was born. I reported it in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* (Ewin 1994).

71. The symptom is a solution

One of Milton Erickson's most profound observations!

We all know that halitosis is better than no breath at all.

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, the little crippled boy was being hounded by the bullies and felt terrified and helpless, with no solution. Jenny shouted “Run, Forrest, run.” He did, and escaped, and from then on he had a “solution” that was really a disabling symptom – whenever he was stressed, he would run – finally all the way across the United States.

72. Target organ

A chain is as weak as its weakest link, and a body under stress gets symptoms first in its target organ (weakest link).

We experience our emotions in our bodies. Over and over again I have done regressions to the *first time* the problem occurred, and found that the target organ was selected when a highly emotional incident occurred, associated with a trauma or illness involving that organ. Even when the careful medical evaluation is normal, recurring headaches may occur under stress in a patient whose introduction to life was the painful head squeezing of a forceps delivery, or a recurring cough in a survivor of childhood whooping cough, or diarrhea in a survivor of typhoid fever.

73. Trance logic

With ordinary (left brain) logic turned off, the hypnotized mind is open to uncritically accepting clearly irrational and paradoxical situations or statements.

In New Orleans during the big drive against illiteracy, the advertising companies got some of the federal money and we had large billboards saying “Learn to Read.” Louisiana advertises itself as a “Dream State.”

74. Pygmy in the land of giants

This analogy was used by William J. Bryan, Jr., MD to describe the dilemma of an abused child.

A pygmy in the land of giants has to believe that the giants know where they're stepping or go crazy, being constantly alert to protect himself. Some abused children do go crazy but those who don't tend to grow up subconsciously believing "there must be something wrong with me" or the giants (who know what they're doing) wouldn't have treated me that way.

It's imagined guilt and in trance it can be treated by calling on reality testing to recognize that the adults were sick, not the child, and it has to be left behind. When we change an idea, we change an illness.

About the author

Dabney M. Ewin, MD, FACS, ABMH is a board certified surgeon and occupational medical specialist. Early in his career he was plant physician for the Kaiser Aluminum plant in New Orleans, and started using hypnosis for some badly burned patients. He became interested in psychosomatic medicine, developed a private hypnosis practice, and began teaching hypnosis at Tulane University Medical School in 1970, and at Louisiana State University Medical School in 1980.

Dr. Ewin is a life member of the American Medical Association, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and former speaker of the House of Delegates of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. He is a past president of both the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH) and the American Board of Medical Hypnosis. He is a Fellow and past secretary of the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH) and a member of the International Society of Hypnosis (ISH). He has received the Milton Erickson Award of ASCH, the Roy Dorcas Award of SCEH, and the Pierre Janet Award of ISH. He has published numerous articles on hypnosis and is co-author of the book *Ideomotor Signals for Rapid Hypnoanalysis: A How-to Manual*.

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101 simple but immensely powerful ideas
that Dabney Erwin MD wished he had known about
when he first starting practising hypnosis.

A wise little book by the sparkling brilliance of Dabney Erwin MD is a guilty pleasure that belongs on the bookshelf of all in therapeutic hypnosis.

Ernest Rossi PhD, author of *A Dialogue with Our Genes*

This cogent, concise resource is a gift of shared wisdom from an evolved master to assist the next generations of clinicians in mastering the art of hypnosis.

Linda Thomson PhD, APRN, ABMH

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Terri Bodell FNACHP, Deputy Chair, National Association of Counsellors, Hypnotherapists and Psychotherapists

This book is up there with the best of them in terms of succinct, wise, inspired insight and I recommend it for any therapist

Tom Barber MA, Course Director,
Contemporary College of Therapeutic Studies

101 nuggets of hypnosis wisdom from decades of practicing medicine... Dabney is an outstanding educator... , I heartily recommend this book and know that 'a little Dabney'll do you'.

Julie H. Linden, PhD, Past President American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and President-Elect of The International Society of Hypnosis

One of the most important books that I have seen added to the list of books on hypnosis...unique in its approach. This book is a triumph and I wholeheartedly recommend it to you.

David C Slater, Hypnotherapy Association

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