

The Art of Hypnotic Regression Therapy

A Clinical Guide

C. Roy Hunter, MS, CHt
Bruce Eimer, PhD

"A modern classic in the use of hypnotic regression work. I wish it would have been available earlier on in my career."

Cal Banyan, MA, DNGH, Creator of 5-PATH® Hypnotherapy and 7th Path Self-Hypnosis®

Praise for *The Art of Hypnotic Regression Therapy*

A basic theme for hypnoanalysis is that the client knows what they need, but needs coaching to find it and correct it. Looking beyond activating events or subsequent sensitizing events leads one to the root cause or initial sensitizing events and hence treatment. The psychosomatic problem-solving is artfully described and adjudicated through Roy Hunter's multiple case examples and Bruce Eimer's PTSD and pain patients. Through the techniques that are described in this text, Drs. Hunter and Eimer create and activate the art of hypnosis and couple this with an excellent review of various psychotherapy techniques employed.

Hypnoanalysis is truly more art than science and with the strokes of the pen this solid book teaches us to open a new canvas on which those trained in hypnosis arts can paint.

Joseph F Zastrow MD FAAFP
ASCH President 2012

If you are a therapist reluctant to use regression then read this book as it will encourage you to confidently return to a powerful and misunderstood technique. If you are an experienced regression therapist wondering whether to read this book, do so as it has the potential to open up your perspectives and teach you plenty more.

Peter Mabbutt, CEO/Director of Studies,
London College of Clinical Hypnosis

It is informative, well written with a systematic approach that shows us that, by following the guidelines in this book, Hypnotic Regression Therapy can be a very powerful tool that can be safely used.

Bruni Brewin, President Emeritus,
Australian Hypnotherapists' Association

All clinicians using hypnosis are encouraged to read this work whether as an aide to manage unanticipated spontaneous regressions or as a ready reference for intentionally planned therapy. One's knowledge of clinical hypnosis is incomplete without the foundation of HRT that the authors impart.

Dr. Gabor Filo DDS, DABHD, FASCH,FPFA

Two of hypnotherapy's stellar practitioners, Roy Hunter and Bruce Eimer, have pooled their expertise to produce a book on regression hypnotherapy so comprehensive, it is the only guide to regression hypnosis a hypnotherapist will ever need.

Judith E. Pearson, Ph.D., L.P.C., Hypnotherapist and
NLP Trainer, Motivational Strategies, Inc., Springfield, Virginia

As a hypnoanalyst for many years, I can vouch for the fact that this wonderful book contains every bit of information needed to use regression therapy successfully. Scripts, techniques, "how-to" examples and case studies, along with a defined structure for the therapy, make this the ideal read for the newcomer to regression work, as well as having much of worth to those more experienced. Authors Roy Hunter and Bruce Eimer are experienced and accomplished professional therapists – and it shows.

Terence Watts, MCGI, Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine

This book, meticulous in writing and obviously close to the authors' hearts is an outstanding credit to them. They have shared generously their wealth of knowledge and their belief in HRT shines through. Enjoy and learn.

Tom Barber DHP, MA, Director of
Contemporary College of Therapeutic Studies, UK
Co-author of *Thinking Therapeutically:
Hypnotic Skills & Strategies Explored.*

I recommend this book to all serious students and practitioners of Hypnotic Regression Therapy, and I wish it had been available earlier on in my career as a hypnosis professional. It is an excellent way to make the leap from working as a script bound, direct suggestion hypnotist, to one of being a powerful change maker who can get results when other lesser forms of hypnotherapy have failed.

Cal Banyan, MA, DNGH

Creator of 5-PATH® Hypnotherapy and 7th Path Self-Hypnosis®

Age regression is a very complex subject. The authors have made it easy to understand by all practitioners of hypnotherapy regardless of the level of their experience and knowledge.

A. Max Chaumette, Jr., M.D., ABA, ABMH

Note: Full reviews from all these professionals can be viewed on the Crown House website www.crownhouse.co.uk

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REGRESSION
THERAPY**

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C. Roy Hunter, MS, CHt
Bruce N. Eimer, PhD, ABPP



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C. Roy Hunter

Bringing a book like this to fruition demands the help of many people. First, we gratefully acknowledge the expert help, patient assistance, and continual support of our editors at Crown House, Mark Tracten, Rosalie Williams and Beverley Randell, who made this project possible. We gratefully acknowledge David Bowman of Crown House for seeing the value in this book.

I gratefully acknowledge my two mentors in hypnoanalysis and hypnotic regression work, Dabney Ewin, MD and the late David Cheek, MD. Dr. Ewin has been a good friend and mentor for over 20 years. I also thank my mentor and good friend, Jordan Zarren, LCSW, for his friendship and all of the mentoring in hypnotherapy he has provided me over the years. I thank my wife, Andrea, and my daughters, Marisa and Allison, for loving and standing by me over the years, and my mother Cecile Eimer for being there for me my entire life. Last but not least, I thank all of the patients who have shared their life stories with me over the years.

Bruce N. Eimer

Foreword

Hypnosis is a level of focus that allows the person experiencing it to become almost completely unaware of the multiple other things that might otherwise flit in and out of mind. The person in deep tears over a lost love is experiencing hypnosis, as is the person who has unintentionally clicked off into a daydream state during a boring talk. No Olympic weightlifter would lift a weight in competition without being in a state of hypnosis. The mind of the weightlifter is singly focused on lifting the weight, without thoughts of, “I hope my parking meter has enough change in it,” or “On my way back I need to pick up some bread.”

Hypnosis is a natural state that we all enter spontaneously, and, in itself other than providing some time of focused retreat, it has no special healing properties. But, in the hands of a professional hypnotherapist that hypnotic state of single minded focus can facilitate more rapid wanted change. Hypnosis can also be used by the well trained therapist to gain access to parts that hold unresolved issues; unresolved issues that sometimes bring forth feelings of fear or rejection. That is what this book is about.

This is a book written by two skilled professionals who share methods to gain access to personality parts that need resolution. Things happen in our past that can continue to affect us in our present. That is the central tenet of psychodynamic psychotherapy. It was Freud’s understanding of this basic concept that allowed him to become widely known as the father of psychotherapy. Freud saw in his patients a connection between past traumas and the current feelings of being out of control, and he was correct in this vision. What he lacked was an elegant and streamlined therapeutic mechanism to relieve the trauma of the past so it would no longer interfere in the present. His psychoanalysis was lengthy, relied on interpretations of analysts, and too often proved to be ineffective. Still his work spawned other attempts by psychodynamic therapists such as Jung and Adler to assist patients to

gain relief from the traumas of their past. These therapies lacked a way to bring forth the parts of the personality (that held onto trauma) so these personality parts could get the needed assistance to gain relief.

The next big movement in psychotherapy was the humanist phenomenological movement. Person Centered, Gestalt and Existential Therapies were an attempt to assist personality parts to gain healing by being able to be heard and understood. Indeed the word, Gestalt, means whole and it was the purpose of the therapy process to bring out parts that kept the personality from being whole. By encouraging clients to talk about the phenomena that had been difficult or confusing it was assumed that they would gain resolution and then the whole personality could be functional. These therapies lacked both a theoretical understanding of the parts of the personality and regression techniques to assist the therapist to quickly and precisely get to the core of the problem. Too often the wrong part would be the talking part, and only truly gifted therapists could assist clients to speak from the parts that carried fear or rejection and speak to them in a way that brought resolution.

The current major movement in psychotherapy is CBT. The cognitive behavioural movement is a reflection of the symptom-based medical movement. The symptom, not the cause of psychological distress is the focus in this movement. CBT therapists are trained that the past is past and there is no benefit in spending time there. They are trained to work with clients to change the way they think about issues, and to give clients homework so they can practice functioning in a different way. A traumatised part of the personality is not accessed and is not healed. It is left with its trauma while surface parts are taught new ways of thinking and new ways of acting. The proverbial bullet is left in the wound, so complete, cathartic healing cannot be experienced.

These CBT techniques can help clients better deal with life issues and can help clients get through tough times, but they do not facilitate deeper change. The part that feels afraid or rejected continues to hold these feelings. If a fun loving and playful part of the personality experiences an incident where fear or rejection overwhelms this state and if

there is no real level of conversation and understanding afterword that state can become Vaded (a state overwhelmed by chronic negative feelings). This Vaded state may come to the surface at any time resulting in the person re-experiencing these same negative feelings of fear or rejection. The techniques presented in this book facilitate the therapist to bring out this Vaded state with regression techniques and help this state heal, thus eliminating the root cause of the negative feelings. The symptoms will automatically change because the previously Vaded state has been assisted to a state of normality. A real benefit of this type of intervention is that this state will again be free to resume its original role of being fun loving and playful. The client will feel more free, and will no longer carry those negative 'out of control' feelings. When a situation arises that would have previously brought out the negative feelings of fear or rejection not only will those feelings not come to the surface, but the client will be able to handle the situation using preferred personal resources.

Another benefit in using the types of techniques presented in this book is that they are very quick. It takes more time to train a client in methods of how to think about and deal with an unwanted symptom than it does to directly go to the cause and resolve it. Some therapists use hypnosis to merely focus on the symptom. Often hypnotherapy is thought of as a way to suggest that things will be different, and because of the power of hypnosis it is often thought that things will be different merely because the suggestion was made. Attempting to use hypnosis in this way is like using a smart phone to hammer in a nail. It might work a little, but not very well and, 'what a waste to use such an amazing tool in such a crude fashion.' Rather than make a suggestion that things will be different, leaving the client disempowered, and leaving the client with a suggestion that has not really changed anything about the cause of the problem, it is much better to use hypnosis to help the client to resolve the cause and be able to carry forward with better access to personal resources.

Knowing, understanding and becoming proficient with good regression techniques is a key element in resolving states that are holding onto negative emotions. It is well worth the effort to take the time to

add regression techniques to the tool bag of therapeutic skills. Equal emphasis should be taken to become proficient with the techniques to resolve the angst filled states that regression often brings out. The authors present a number of excellent techniques for that purpose.

Hunter and Eimer offer, in this book, tools of discovery, resolution, and power. Rather than simply suggest that things will be different, they provide a way to discover the original sensitising events that can continue to interfere with clients lives, they provide methods to assist in the resolution of these states that have held feelings of fear or rejection, and they offer the power for the resolved persons to use their preferred adult states, without the interference of previously angst filled states.

This book is a major addition to the building body of literature that can assist therapists assist clients actually resolve issues rather than merely moderate them. It is filled with techniques and underpinning theory that would be useful in any therapeutic practice, and it is thorough in providing techniques from introduction to the conclusion of the session. It is clear that the authors have prepared this book with a purpose for it to be a helpful tool for therapists to assist clients to experience fundamental change. They have achieved their aim.

Gordon Emmerson

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List of Abbreviations

AE	activating event
ASCH	American Society of Clinical Hypnosis
CBT	cognitive-behavioral therapy
EFT	Emotional Freedom Techniques
HRT	hypnotic regression therapy
ISE	initial sensitizing event
NLP	neuro-linguistic programming
OBE	out of body
PLR	past life regression
POP	psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy
PTSD	post traumatic stress disorder
SIE	symptom intensifying event
SPE	symptom producing event
SSE	subsequent sensitizing event
TI	traumatic incident

Introduction and Overview

Hypnotic regression therapy (HRT) is one of the most valuable hypnotherapy techniques available today; yet it remains one of the most controversial. This is partly due to both psychotherapists and hypnotherapists jumping in without competent training in hypnosis, as evidenced by numerous cases of false memory syndrome over the years.

Because of both the risk of false memories and the potential consequences of mishandling abreactions, anyone using hypnotic regression without knowing how to help clients who experience emotional discharges (i.e., abreactions) is advised to avoid employing regression therapy until properly trained in client centered regression. Sadly, however, a number of professionals criticize hypnotic regression altogether rather than considering the benefits of competent client centered regression therapy. They often mention mishandled regressions—some of which have resulted in litigation—but the critics often fail to acknowledge the untold thousands of clients empowered to resolve their problems after successful regression sessions.

The purpose of this book is to provide important information and guidelines for any hypnosis professional wishing to employ HRT, including a systematic protocol for assisting the client to consciously and subconsciously discover and release the core causes of his/her symptoms and problems.

We have divided the Introduction and Overview into two sections: an Introduction (written by Roy Hunter) and Overview (written by Bruce Eimer). Most chapters are a collaboration of both authors except where otherwise noted.

Introduction by C. Roy Hunter

Do you know anyone who is uncomfortable getting on an airplane? Over my years of practicing professional hypnosis, most clients who

saw me for the fear of flying experienced the success of overcoming the problem rather than simply learning to fly in spite of their anxieties. In fact, some of them became frequent flyers, logging tens of thousands of miles.

The reason is that instead of simply trying to suggest the problem away, I guide the client back in time during a hypnotic regression in order to discover and release the core cause of the fear of flying. Numerous clients seeing me for other problems over the years have also enjoyed success as a result of hypnotic regression therapy; yet in recent years, a number of hypnosis professionals have hotly debated the topic of regression.

The controversy did not come out of thin air. Hypnotic regression therapy enjoyed high popularity for a number of years during the latter half of the 20th century; but even before the end of the 1990s it became the subject of considerable debate. Genuine concerns are at the heart and core of the controversies. Here is a brief summary of the arguments for and against this technique.

Those who use regression often assert that it is very useful in helping the subconscious discover and release the cause of a problem, and that effective use of HRT often achieves lasting results. Those who oppose the use of hypnotic regression techniques usually state one or more of the following reasons for opposing its use: (1) the risk of false memories and/or (2) the belief that clients do not need to experience abreactions (emotional discharges) while remembering unpleasant experiences from their past. Occasionally a third reason is posted, criticizing hypnotherapists who use regression with almost every client. Note that neither of the authors of this book use regression with most of our clients.

This book will explore the concerns about hypnotic regression therapy summarized above, and respond to those concerns by presenting a very workable five-phase protocol for facilitating client-centered hypnotic regression therapy. This protocol was developed by me over a period of years, as described in earlier editions of my hypnotherapy

texts (Hunter 1995, 2000, 2007). It is to be distinguished from Cal Banyan's 5-PATH® Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy System. For information about Banyan's 5-PATH®, go to www.5-PATH.com. First, however, we need to define hypnotic regression.

What is a Hypnotic Regression?

The authors assume that anyone reading this book already understands hypnosis and the hypnotic process. Both my hypnosis students and my clients alike are presented with the concept that *imagination is the language of the subconscious*. Inside your imagination, you have total power and total freedom to be anywhere you wish and to do anything you choose. In addition, we can use the imagination to move through time as well as space.

During a hypnotic state, moving back in time inside the imagination is called a *regression*. As mentioned above, many hypnosis professionals use regression to guide a client back in time in order to discover the cause of a problem. Sometimes people simply wish to remember details about an event. There are also forensic applications of hypnotic regression techniques (briefly overviewed in Chapter 4). While the subconscious does make a record of everything we experience through the five senses, emotions can alter our perceptions, resulting in inaccurate memories.

Unfortunately, a primary reason for the skepticism regarding regression is that many therapists over the years have formed preconceived opinions regarding the causes of problems before hypnotizing their clients, and then proceeded to use regression to validate those opinions. This is inappropriate leading, and is a major cause of what we call "false memory syndrome," which means that a client may believe false perceptions to be facts.

Now let us look at the other side of the coin.

Hypnotic Regression Therapy Teachers

A number of well-known hypnotherapists have successfully employed hypnotic regression techniques in their clinical practices over a

period of many years, with some of their work documented here. My co-author, Bruce Eimer, Ph.D.—a student of Dabney Ewin, M.D. and David Cheek, M.D.—is a licensed clinical psychologist and published author who has used hypnotic regression therapy with numerous clients over the years.

David Cheek, an obstetrician-gynecologist, was a pioneer in the use of hypnotic regression therapy for psychosomatic problems, especially persistent pain syndromes such as chronic pelvic pain and interstitial cystitis, as well as gynecological problems such as infertility. A past president of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Dr. Cheek published a multitude of clinical case reports and literature reviews in the scientific journals, as well as several books on ideomotor signaling and other ideodynamic techniques for facilitating hypnotic regressions and communicating with the patient's unconscious (Cheek, 1993; Cheek & LeCron, 1968; Rossi & Cheek, 1994).

Dabney Ewin, a general surgeon and occupational medicine physician, who was a student of Dr. Cheek, has treated thousands of patients in his over 40 years of hypnosis practice using ideomotor signaling and other hypnotic regression methods. Also a past president of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Dr. Ewin is a pioneer in the use of hypnosis for the treatment of patients with severe acute burn injuries. He has also published many case reports and literature reviews on hypnosis for burns and hypnotic regression therapy for pain, asthma, hives and warts. He also wrote several books on his work (Ewin, 2009; Ewin & Eimer, 2006).

Gil Boyne practiced and taught hypnotic regression therapy for many years and included some case histories in *Transforming Therapy: A New Approach to Hypnotherapy* (1989). I personally witnessed Boyne employing regression therapy to help a stutterer back in the 1980s. A year later, I bumped into that same former stutterer at a hypnosis conference and shared a meal with him. His speech was so clear that one would have difficulty believing that he spent so many years of his life stuttering.

Randal Churchill, a former student of Boyne, chose to specialize in hypnotic regression therapy, and has written two books on this topic. The first one was *Regression Hypnotherapy: Transcripts of Transformation* (2002). He followed with Volume II six years later (Churchill, 2008), and has facilitated many thousands of hypnotic regressions during his career.

Charles Tebbetts, my former mentor, taught hypnotic regression therapy as well, including it in his *Miracles on Demand* (1985). Although he told me personally that he learned regression from Gil Boyne, Tebbetts used a more gentle style that I believe is more client centered.

Dave Elman occasionally used regression, and conducted an astounding session in front of a number of doctors. He claimed, as did David Cheek (1993), that a person in hypnosis could remember something that happened even while totally unconscious—even under anesthesia. Elman hypnotized a physician who had undergone surgery and regressed him back to the operating table where he remembered a conversation taking place during the procedure. As it turned out, his surgeon was one of the doctors present to witness this amazing regression, verifying that the conversation took place (Elman, 1984).

Gerald Kein, known for promoting the work of the late Dave Elman, also teaches hypnotic regression therapy. He taught it to Cal Banyan, a well-known hypnosis instructor, who incorporates regression in his 5-PATH® hypnotherapy program. Banyan has written articles on teaching hypnotic regression (Banyan, 2009) as well as including it in his first book (Banyan & Kein, 2001).

E. Arthur Winkler, Th.D., Ph.D., a Methodist minister with a degree in clinical psychology, conducted exhaustive research on past life regression. He also facilitated thousands of sessions with traditional HRT to a past time in the client's current life to discover and release the cause of the client's problem. To his thousands of students, he emphasized the importance of not practicing beyond their level of training, and the importance of properly guiding, but not leading, their clients.

During Dr. Winkler's lifetime, he hypnotized over 35,000 individual clients and thousands of others in groups. He authored 18 books on the healing power of the inner mind.

Winkler often spoke about Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, who was a 19th century New England clockmaker, inventor and freethinker. In the 1850s, he investigated the "magic" of mesmerism with a skeptical eye. Gifted as a clairvoyant, Quimby would sit and teach each patient about the root cause, or triggering cause, of his/her particular disease or problem. He then explained that, because the patient now understood *how* the disease started, they would now be able to get well—and many did get well. His reputation as a healer quickly spread. During a nine year period (1857–1866), Quimby helped 12,000 people become healed from all kinds of diseases of that day. Perhaps even more importantly, he steered 19th century American hypnosis away from mesmerism and toward the mind–body–spirit connection, which is a key to effective regression therapy today. Anyone wishing to research his work may read *Phineas Parkhurst Quimby: The Complete Writings* (1988) or *The Quimby Manuscripts* (1961). Quimby, often referred to as the Father of Modern Thought, could easily be called the pioneer of regression therapy.

Other practitioners over the decades have practiced and taught hypnotic regression in various forms; but this first chapter is not meant to be an in-depth historical discussion, so let us continue. My approach differs somewhat from most others, as explained below.

Client Centered Hypnotic Regression Therapy

The type of hypnotic regression therapy that I teach is client centered. One entire chapter of my book, *The Art of Hypnotherapy* (Hunter, 2010b; originally published in 1994), is devoted to regression therapy, with numerous references to regression mentioned elsewhere in the text. Besides teaching HRT since 1987, I have written numerous articles over the years. My approach is based on the concept that the answers to a client's problem can be found within the inner mind of the client:

"If you are a therapist reluctant to use regression then read this book as it will encourage you to confidently return to a powerful and misunderstood technique."

Peter Mabbutt, CEO/Director of Studies, London College of Clinical Hypnosis

Hypnotic Regression Therapy, or HRT, is a type of hypnotherapy in which, following the induction of a good trance state, specialized suggestions are given to guide the client in reviewing and emotionally reframing earlier experiences that have either caused or contributed to the client's current symptoms.

HRT is considered one of the most valuable hypnotherapy techniques available today, yet it remains controversial, partly due to inadequate training of psychotherapists and hypnotherapists which has contributed to numerous cases of false memory syndrome. In spite of the controversies, hypnotherapists successfully use regression therapy to discover the core causes of a number of problems and help clients release their emotional attachments to those causes.

This volume removes the fear of the dangers of mishandled hypnotic regression by presenting an organised, client-centered approach. You will learn when and how to use HRT effectively to help clients discover and release the causes of their problems and symptoms. The authors emphasize the importance of avoiding inappropriate leading and how to explain the risk of false memories to clients. They also clearly address the controversies about false memories and the handling of the emotional release that usually occurs during hypnotic regressions.

"Eimer and Hunter have produced an afternoon's read that contains a professional lifetime of knowledge. Their concise exposition on Hypnotic Regression Therapy offers the novice and experienced practitioner insight, theory and method."

Dr. Gabor Filo, DDS, DABHD, FASCH,FPFA

"Hypnoanalysis is truly more art than science and with the strokes of the pen this solid book teaches us to open a new canvas on which those trained in hypnosis arts can paint."

Joseph F Zastrow, MD FAAFP, ASCH President

"Scripts, techniques, 'how-to' examples and case studies, along with a defined structure for the therapy, make this the ideal read for the newcomer to regression work, as well as having much of worth to those more experienced."

Terence Watts, MCGI, Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine

Roy Hunter, MS, CHt, teaches professional hypnosis and advanced techniques for professionals and teaches self hypnosis to groups and clients for personal or professional motivation. He was specially selected to carry on the work of the late Charles Tebbetts. He was awarded a PhD from Alpha University and California University with a major in clinical hypnotherapy.

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