

INTEGRATED MENTAL TRAINING (IMT) SELF-HYPNOTIC TRAINING OF COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

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IMT, a systematic Self-Hypnotic training, has during 35 years been used by more than 3 million Swedish people. Starting with the National and Olympic Teams and the Swedish School System in the seventies, IMT has then been applied to most areas of the Swedish Society.

I. INTRODUCTION

IMT is defined as a systematic, longterm and evaluated training of mental processes (Thoughts, Images, Emotions)

Other IMT characteristics:

1. IMT is based on the use of alternative states of consciousness (ASC1), mostly on Self-Hypnosis, which is operationally defined as the "Inner Mental Room" (IMR).

This makes it possible to use:

- a. Alternative systems of Control (ASC2) like "triggers" and Images
 - b. Alternative systems of change (ASC3) from very structured and training based changes over to "cybernetic programming"
2. IMT is replacing the traditional clinical and problem-based model with a solution-based and life-long developmental model

This means that in IMT

- a. Goals are identified instead of problems ("Creating your own future")
 - b. Change is related to satisfaction instead of dissatisfaction and direction is changed from "away from" to "towards"
 - c. Life is looked at as a lifelong and flow-related journey, where an exciting future and the best from the past is integrated into a now-focused life-process.
3. a. IMT is long-term in the sense that the training programs are used between 3 and 7 months, after which the cognitive, emotional and behavioral changes are so integrated that the effects are stable and often lifelong.
- b. IMT is systematic, starting with the basics (Muscular relaxation and Self-Hypnosis) followed by specific interventions and applications and a more general personal development system with Self- and Goal-Image Training, Attitude- and Mental Toughness Training, Training of specific Mental Skills like Concentration, Creativity etc., and finishing with Emotional- and Life Quality Training.
 - d. IMT is scientifically evaluated from two different aspects.
 - One part of IMT was constructed by an analysis of more than 30 methods for personal growth. The analysis was made in order to take away the unnecessary and mystical parts, find the effective components and use them in IMT
 - Another part came from analysis of successful people (in sport and other areas) in order to find the mental reasons for their success.
 - Continuous evaluations of the IMT-programs have been made to make it possible to modify and develop them and in order to be sure that they give the expected effects. (Ref. G,H,I)

II. BACKGROUND

Integrated Mental Training was created 1970 based on a number of studies in the sixties. These studies focused on two areas:

- A. Hypnosis, Self-Hypnosis and other Alternative States of Consciousness (ASC)
- B. Mind and Body issues, especially directed to Sport Performances (The author was an athlete himself)

Example of studies made: (see REFERENCES I)

1. Training and Hypnosis

Hypnosis has been regarded as a stable personality trait by many experts and is still so today. Even in modern textbooks numbers could be found, indicating how many percentage of the population who could enter "deep, medium, light hypnosis" etc.

However, it exists very little scientific support for such a statement. "Hypnotic depth" is a very relative measure and there are low correlates between different measures

The degree of hypnotic depth is also situation specific and varies with the hypnotist, the method used, motivation, the expectation etc.

Even interindividual variations in hypnotic responses when the same hypnotist and the same method is used are no proof for claiming that these differences in hypnotic susceptibility should be regarded as a stable personality trait. It could as well be regarded as lack of training. This was one reason to look into the effect of long-term training. In a number of experiments in the sixties I managed to show that:

- a. There are significant increases in hypnotic susceptibility scores (Stanford scales) after 6 months of hypnotic training.
- b. There are significant increases of imaginary capabilities after 6 months of imagery training (References A, B, C)

Thus, the interesting question is not if he or she is a good hypnotic subject but instead: "What training methods could be used to develop a good hypnotic capability in this person in so short time as possible?"

2. Hypnosis versus Self-Hypnosis

Another common opinion is to regard Hypnosis as a part of the relation between two people.

In a number of experiments, also in the sixties, I was able to show:

- a. The effect of an hypnotic induction was the same if I gave the induction "live" or through a recorded tape.
- b. The effect of 6 months of self-training was in some areas even better (more independence, easier to apply the training to new areas) than after 6 months of training by an hypnotist

Thus, it seems as if all Hypnosis could be regarded as Self-Hypnosis where the hypnotized person has the control. However, in order to be able to take over the control, the subject must know:

- that he is in control
- how to take control

As hypnosis makes alternative systems of control possible, these have to be learned first. If the subject is using the "dominant systems" (voluntary effort) he/she will often feel out of control. (Ref. C, D)

3. The Ideal Performing State (IPS) as an Hypnotic State

One line of investigations which led to the development of IMT and to its applications in Sport, Stage and Work Performance was studies where I investigated the relation between IPS and Hypnosis. It was possible to show that both states were almost identical in areas like amnesia , perceptual changes, trance logic, change of control system etc. (Ref. E,F,G,H)

III. INVESTIGATIONS OF AND WITH IMT

Of the more than 50 studies made about IMT, its principles and its effects, I will mention 20 typical studies (see REFERENCES II)

A. IMR

1. Investigations of the Inner Mental room (IMR) showed the biggest EEG changes in the theta band, more than in the alfa band, in which a lower part increase and higher part decrease can be seen. (1)
2. IMR was also related to a "hemispheric shift" with a similar activation of left and right ("holistic brain")
In one pilotstudy a worldchampion in archery was compared with an athlete of lower level. 10 seconds before each shot the situation was the same with a higher left hemispheric activity. However, the worldchampion had the skill to go into an hypnosis-like state with a hemispheric shift. The shot was released when both hemispheres were inside the "optimal zone of activation". Asked how she knows when to shoot she answered: "I don't but my body knows. I do not shoot, my body does". In this Ideal Performance State (IPS) the release of the shot is done by an ideomotor response, which is much smoother and stable compared with a voluntary release.(2)
3. IMR also seemed to be related to "Section divine", the ratio 1.618 (the old ration for beauty and harmony). This ratio was found both in the measurement of IMR-activation and also in the ratio between the EEG frequencies (Beta 1 and 2, alpha, theta, delta). Thus, the holistic brain concept could be complemented with the "harmonous brain". (3)

B. SPORT PERFORMANCES

4. PE-students "shooting" 30 hypnotic basket penalty shots a day made a significant improvement (compared with a controlgroup) and improved as much as those making 30 physical training shots a day.(4)
5. An experiment group of 100 bowlers showed personal but not performance improvements compared with the hundred in the controlgroup after 3 months of IMT-training, but after that the difference also in performance became bigger and bigger during the investigation period of 3 years. (5)
6. Objective measures and subjective ratings from alpine skiraces show that the worst results were related to active thoughts of various technique details while the best results came after hypnotic race programming, handing over the race to the body and supporting the body with a "positive emotional rhythm production".(6)
7. After reaching the finish line in the national downhill championships the skiers were asked to ski the race again, now mentally. The best skiers had more similar time in the physical and mental skiing. (7)
8. Physical training (swimming a.o.) became more effective by replacing the traditional negative and delayed feedback with a positive and immediate feedback produced by

operant techniques, where the "right performance" was reinforced through signal released posthypnotic positive emotions.(8)

9. a. Posthypnotic induced variations of mental states and attitudes produced a performance variation, measured through isometric strength. The "normal" maximum strength in the subject could be increased with 18% when the subjects had the best attitude to themselves (self-image) and an optimal attitude to the task (goal-image)
b. The worst performance came when the subject were "relaxed". This finding led to the construction of the new english word "relaxense" corresponding to the swedish "avspänd". This state, which is crucial for IPS, is characterized by "an optimal tension in the right muscles and relaxation of the antagonistic muscles". (9)

C. "INNER BODY CHANGES"

10. Significant decrease of cortisol and increase of betaendorphin levels are common effects after a number of weeks of regular IMT-training (10)
11. Significant immunological positive changes, measured with T4/T8 cells, have been shown in 3 different IMT-investigations. A further analysis showed that it was the "Life Quality Training" ("Emotional Training") that gave the most positive changes. (11)
12. 300 cancer patients were matched into a control and experimental group. The difference between the control and the mental training group was largest in the terminal ill group(12)
13. 70 tinnitus patients had regular mental training for 3 months. Few of these got rid of the sound but many reduced or got rid of the disturbance.
14. The same effect has been showed in Hans Olssons work with Mental Training for chronic pain patients at Helsingborgs hospital. The most common effects have to do with moving and reframing the pain and learning to ignore and refocus.
15. Relaxing music and positive hypnotic and posthypnotic suggestions improved the conditions during and after 70 surgeries compared with a control group with white sound (15)
16. In a recent study, not yet published, the aging process (measured with DHEAS) could be reversed through 6 months of mental training (16)

D. OTHER AREAS

17. The National Team in swimming was divided in a controlgroup and 3 experimental group (mental training, melatonin, placebo) in a jetlagstudy before the Sydney Olympics. The Mental Training group showed the best results in the measured variables (Sleep quality and Performance ratings) (17)
18. In a number of studies the effects of IMT on areas like Sleep, Weight, Smoking etc. have been shown. The best results are shown if the training starts with the basic mental training (learning self-hypnosis) before starting with the specific application (18)
19. The applications of IMT into the Swedish Schoolsystem started 1975 and after six years of studies (doctoral dissertation by Sven Setterlind etc.), Sweden became the first country to include Mental Training into the school scheme. (19)

Just now is a "Lifeskills training" under investigation in a number of schools from primary to high school level, containing Basic Mental Training, Mental Training, Lifestyle training, Communication and Teamwork, Emotional and Mental Toughness training, Parentship and Leadership Training.

20. At the University level continuous evaluation are made from those professional related academies (The Police Academy, Music Academy etc, where Mental Training is an integrated part of the studies), to those Universities having specific courses like "Humor and Health", "Learning to learn", "Mental Training and Project Leadership" over to the private Scandinavian International University, which specialize in using Mental Training,

NLP and Coaching for education to a number of new professions, like Licensed Mental Trainers, Stress Coaches, Health Coaches etc. (20)

IV. FINALLY

Hypnosis is not a method and Hypnotherapy is not a specific therapy. Both concepts refer to eclectic areas which could be filled with all kinds of methods, strategies and interventions. This means that the important is not to learn hypnosis but – as in IMT - to learn how to use it. Thus, in the hypnosis courses we have had since the sixties we have emphasized that heterohypnosis should only be used by medical doctors, psychologists and dentists and the use should be restricted to the area where someone is the expert-

However, for many reasons Self-Hypnosis ought to be taught to every human being. One of these reasons is that every human being daily will slip into alternative states of consciousness, similar to Self-Hypnosis. In this state thoughts and images become real (decreased reality testing).

At the same time is our mind more easlily caught by negative thoughts/images

Reasons for this:

1. The focus on problems and obstacles in our Society
2. We are caught by those thoughts and images which contains strong emotions (like fear etc.)

By learning "Mind control" through IMT, the individual will become a Master of his/her own Life.

CET

In order to reach the IMT-vision of "A better Life for everyone through IMT" CET-centers are established around the world.

CET stands for "Center for Excellence Training" (another word for IMT) and has the main goal of offering methods of Self-Hypnosis and Mental Training to every individual independent of race, religion or language.

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