

## HEALTH



Alla Tchemodanova uses hypnotherapy to help her clients deal with unpleasant experiences or give up bad habits.

## The power of the mind

By Maey El Shoush, Staff Reporter  
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There was a time when the "in" thing was to head to your local therapist to deal with emotional problems.

After all, it is easier to unburden oneself onto a stranger rather than someone you know.

Nowadays, however, lying on someone's couch and revealing your deepest, darkest secrets no longer seems to fully do the trick. At least that's what a number of people in Dubai think.

That's why they are looking to hypnosis to help them deal with their life problems. Sound scary?

It's not that bad. Alla Tchemodanova, master Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner and hypnotherapist, explains the process.

"People think we are going to control them, but we do not. I cannot make a person do or say something that he or she does not want to," she says.

### Tackling issues

Hypnotherapy is all about getting into the subconscious and bringing to surface suppressed emotions.

Practitioners believe that when a person is in a trance, they are more receptive to suggestions.

"My clients are aware of what I am saying to them and vice-versa. Once they are in a trance, I try to replace negative feelings with more positive ones," says Tchemodanova.

The "negative feelings" often come from an event in the past - something felt, seen or heard.

Through hypnotherapy, an expert explores the core of the issue and tackles it.

### Learning from experience

Tchemodanova herself had been suffering from depression for more than 20 years.

She did not understand why, until she consulted a hypnotherapist.

It was then that she realised she had been abused as a child and it was only after several hypnotherapy sessions that she came out of the depression.

Having gone through that experience, she feels she can help others.

"Our minds are like sieves. Some memories are forgotten while others are stored in our subconscious," she says.

And during a session, you will see your life playing like a movie, she adds.

Interesting. I decided to take a friend along to see if hypnosis actually works.

My friend, who wishes to remain anonymous, was at first reluctant but felt it was a perfect opportunity to deal with her slight fear of public speaking.

Her worries about hypnosis probably showed on her face, as Tchemodanova immediately got down to clearing misconceptions about the therapy.

"People are often put off by hypnotherapy. Many movies show hypnotists as being weird," she says.

But she's young and funky and not a bit like what we had expected.

Then there was talk of client confidentiality and I was out of the room.

I learnt afterwards that, while dealing with issues of public speaking, the hypnotist saw there was relationship issues and decided to focus on those.

### Making a difference

If the problems are not major, a client can see a hypnotherapist for more than one problem at a time.

Following the session, my friend felt very relaxed and was in a very good mood. However, she was unsure about how she was put into a trance.

"I really don't remember what specific moment I was put in the trance or how I came out of it. But I was conscious of what I was saying," she said.

She also felt she was chatting to Tchemodanova for no more than 10 to 15 minutes, when in actual fact the session lasted more than an hour. The specialist said this was normal.

My friend was told to go back for a second session to fully deal with her personal issues.

"We talked about relationship problems and personal issues and how to deal with tough situations. We also talked about building confidence," said my friend.

Although she was skeptical at first, she felt the sessions made a big difference and has come away with a more positive outlook.

"I didn't think it would be like this, I had a different idea of the subject. I really do feel more at ease and have learnt to accept certain situations," she added.

Tchemodanova explains that the negative feelings are "all in our minds" and can be easily changed.

She does not perform miracles or erase memories but instead brings them to surface and helps us to accept them.

### Get hypnotised

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