

## **TRIGGERS.....to eliminate cravings and to stimulate, motivate & elevate**

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We are one 'giant memory' that reacts to many stimuli that we have witnessed, whether real or imagined, since birth and before. The passion, or the circumstances, or the repetition with which any given stimulus is presented to us, dictates the effect resulting in specific reactions that please us, or empower us, or haunt us, or disturb us, or 'attempt' to destroy us. As hypnotists, we cannot fight fair fights with the enemy for the enemy itself never fights fairly. The subconscious mind must be befriended, beseeched, commanded, and de-programmed and re-programmed with, among other hypnotic techniques, Pavlovian-style 'triggers' and Jungian symbols that counterbalance and overcome the old, learned, harmful stimuli. One of our goals is to neutralize and improvise. We must look into the workings of the subconscious mind and the collective unconscious to conclude that we act and react in accordance to the imprints which have been stored in the subconscious, and there is no escape from the negative aspects of our personal history without recognizing these imprints, which have now become 'triggers' in our life's physical and psychological activities. At the outset, we must note that triggers may be negative or positive.

Our clinical experiences with clients from all walks of life dictate that no one is immune from negative triggers. I look for these triggers in every client, and always find them. Recently I watched a movie 'The Greatest Game Ever Played', in which the author absolutely understood life's triggers. He demonstrated these subconscious triggers during two golf scenes. The greatest pro golfer at that time was a commoner in 1913, and the upper class in London refused to recognize or honor him. When he was a youngster, the founders of the exclusive golf club were at a ground breaking ceremony and he was sitting in a wagon looking at them. They were imposing figures with black long coats and top-hats. He felt insecure and with low self-esteem inherent in his station in life. Later in life during all of his outstanding accomplishments he was playing in a match and was taking a critical shot. The image of these snobs in the top hats was mentally reflected on the bottom knob of his golf club and his youthful low self-esteem returned to him compelling him to botch the shot, which he did. The image was the trigger of stimulation, which pops up involuntarily at the brink of our particular actions. The trigger stimulates the negative emotions that we have been subconsciously harboring since childhood. A similar experience happened to the greatest amateur against whom he was playing. The 17 year old amateur, also of the working class, had a father that did not want him to play golf, never supported his passion, and was extremely critical of him since he was a child. The boy was always surrounded by upper class snobs on the golf course, because they were the only class that played golf a hundred years ago. When the boy was also taking a critical shot, the mental image of his father appeared in the crowd of spectators, long enough for him to feel the insecurity and low self-esteem that was 'attached to and a part of' that image. Naturally he also botched the shot....a negative trigger again.

Triggers are anything that stimulates emotions or feelings, consciously, subconsciously or automatically. Pavlov's famous experiments with his dog proved the unconscious, automatic reactions to a stimulus that was repeated over and over again, much like our reflexes are conditioned through repetition. Pavlov's dog was shown a piece of meat and a bell was rung. Every time the meat came out the bell was rung, the

dog smelled the meat, and the dog was permitted to eat it. This was repeated hundreds of times. Salivation is an unconscious and automatic reflex. After the repetition, no meat was brought out, but the bell was rung. The bell alone caused the dog to salivate. The bell triggered the salivation. How many times have we had our appetite bell rung by smelling some great food cooking, by seeing a scrumptious meal on the TV, or in a magazine, or in the movies. We began salivating because the smell or picture stimulated our memories which stimulated our cravings, urges, needs, or desires for food....so we take something to eat in between meals or at other inappropriate times. A very large culprit is the refrigerator. Thoughts of the goodies that you placed in the frig conjure up the taste buds and good feelings you had when you ate that food in the past, so now your craving is again stimulated. The trigger that I use in this instance: Fight fire with fire....ask your client to bring into your office a photo of herself that you can use as a trigger. a photo when she was at a weight and shape that was great, even if one must go back years. I have been asked by students what to do if the client never was slender or of a nice shape. Well, the client can select a movie actor or actress that would inspire her/him to control the appetite and shed poundage. When the client brings the photo or picture into the office, and during the induction have her hold the photo in the dominant hand, and after the hypnotic state has been induced, ask the client to imagine that photo vividly, every aspect, the garment that is being worn, the contour of the body, the particular size and shape, the happy look on the face in the photo (if there is a happy look). When the client starts feeling great about the photo, tell the client to feel the happiness, the joy, the thrill, the power, the satisfaction that the photo brings with it....to feel it in her blood, throughout her bones, throughout his entire being!! When the client is at the peak of these excellent emotions, squeeze the client's right wrist thereby anchoring the feelings and while you are squeezing repeat all of the good emotions, and then create the trigger by saying, "Every time you imagine this photo you have the power to eliminate cravings, urges, needs and desire to eat in between meals, they simply disappear. All urges, cravings, needs and desires to overeat, or to eat in between meals simply disappear. All urges to eat greasy, fatty, fried food, or rich desserts disappear automatically. You refuse to overeat. You eat well balanced meals. You only eat food that is good for you and your proper, healthy weight. This image symbolizes all that you desire for yourself. Take this power. It is yours." Then tell the client to stick the photo on the refrigerator so that she can see it every time she passes the refrigerator or starts to open the door. This is a 'double-bang. She has the photo on the refrigerator because that is where the temptations are usually kept (she may even add a photo to the cupboard), and she has the photo as an image in her subconscious mind which she can call upon away from home, any place. One photo, one word, one image can change a person's life.

The programming of the client above is generic for this article and should be modified to fit into your client's history. For example: I had a client who was addicted to Chinese food. He could not walk past a Chinese restaurant without going in to eat, regardless of the time of day. He thought about Chinese food constantly. We had to create a photo trigger which was used mainly to eliminate the constant thoughts about and cravings for Chinese food. By the way, his photo was not of himself nor of an actor. It was of a sleek, blue boat that he saw in the harbor. The sleekness was the symbol of his power to shed poundage and maintain the proper weight, the 'sleek him' that he wanted to be. We must remember that it is the client's therapy and not ours. It is what the client chooses to use to empower himself/herself.

Simply stated, I deal chiefly with creating positive psychological triggers to overcome negative psychological triggers, although sometimes I do use a physical trigger which I will address hereinafter. Triggers enter our minds through our five senses: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Olfactory and Gustatory. You saw an auto accident that bothered you emotionally or saw an eagle soaring that empowered you; you heard a bird sing and felt good all over, and thunder that put a scare into you; you felt the touch of a loved one or touched a hot stove; you smelled backyard grilling or the stench of garbage; you tasted some great food or some bitter medicine. All of these create memories and depending upon the nature of the experiences, time in your life when witnessed such as in a state of shock or other altered state, or number of repetitive happenings, have the ability to become triggers. These are the simplest descriptions of triggers. Now, consider the child who has a lack of love from her parents, a parent who constantly belittles the child, the 5 year old birthday party that was ruined by her fathers drunkenness in front of her little friends, the child who has witnessed some acts that do not need description herein.....things happening over and over. So now when it comes to birthdays, the child, now grown up has uneasy feelings and cannot figure out why; the other child is getting ready to take the nurse's exam but remembers the belittling and goes blank, much the same as if we hypnotists looked through every type of childhood imaginable. This is what the client may bring into your office. You may want to start with some type of washing away of the prior crummy memories, by using Parts Therapy or Time Line Repair or other technique for desensitization. After inducing hypnosis determine one of the finest days that the client has lived to date. (You may also want to address this in the waking state) Although there are difficult clients in that their lives have been so rough, find something, it is there, persevere...this is your chosen profession, this is one of your duties. Then create the mental image and have the client feel all of the emotions that this image conjures up as we did in the weight example above. Anchor the image and the positive feelings and proceed to program the trigger....that every time she imagines herself in the scene of the finest day she has ever lived, she begins to feel the great emotions that the scene stimulates, that she becomes so self-confident, with such high self-esteem that she can accomplish anything that she sets her mind to, that she can overcome all issues, all problems, that she has the power to think clearly, to address every aspect of her life, etc. You will tailor it to the specific needs of your client. Just remember to build up the emotions to a great pitch.

So far we have dealt with triggers to overcome negative imprints in our lives but as stated earlier, we all have positive triggers from the past in our subconscious minds. We hypnotists can use these triggers well. This is the reason that we ask our clients of their successes, what they are most proud of accomplishing, to identify the look of love in a mother's face (if there was one), of a loving touch. When we determine a great experience or two from the past, then we create that experience into a trigger, by having the client re-experience all of the great emotions and feelings from that past experience. Then we lock it in by anchoring (squeezing the wrist) and have them feel the emotions again and tell them that whenever they bring that image to mind or see something similar to it, all of the great emotions return. We would do this in greater detail applicable to the client....keep extending and expounding on the good feelings. There are physical triggers such as teaching a client that when she touches her elbow or face or knee or whatever part of the body can be easily touched without attracting attention, that she will experience all of the excellent emotions that you locked in by squeezing the wrist earlier. The touch on the selected part of the body stimulates all of the positive emotions. I prefer the creation of psychological images through the use of the imagination as I believe that they are more powerful. The client should be advised to

practice bringing up the image and feeling the emotions while at home, at work, at play. Although we did anchor the image and the feelings and created the trigger, the repetition fortifies all that we have done, just like the repetition in her childhood fortified the negative imprints.

We started with a movie, so we'll finish with one: "The Manchurian Candidate" A soldier was programmed with a particular trigger while being an enemy prisoner. He was brain-washed by being subjected to bright lights, a water faucet slowly dripping water all night long, drip-drop, drip-drop, electrical shock to his body, sleep deprivation, watching buddies getting tortured and killed, showing them pictures of their loved ones and repeating all kinds of atrocities, repetition, repetition, repetition. Then the trigger was implanted into his subconscious mind. (It is not a stretch of the imagination to relate this type of torture to the torture that some children are subjected to. Both weaken the spirit, make a person weary, and a prime target for either programming, brain-washing and then reprogramming. In this case a deck of cards was employed and the Queen of Hearts was the trigger. When the Queen of Hearts was turned up whether in person or simply through a telephone call telling the soldier that the Queen of Hearts was just turned up, this triggered the brain- washed soldier to follow every command thereafter. In this case, the commands were murderous, even though the soldier was a decent person before his capture and brainwashing.

I cannot think of any client that I have not used at least one trigger with. All of you have used past successes of the clients as triggers, but there are several triggers that a client must overcome and several new triggers that you could create. Use your imagination to improvise but above all, let the client select the triggers. It's what conjures good feelings to her and not to you. How could I ever have come up with a 'sleek, blue boat' in my wildest imagination, but my client did!! As noted Jungian psychologist James Hilman says, "It is the client's fiction that heals, not yours".