

TRANCE-FORMATION

Our therapeutic model is built on synergy and for more than 30 years we have railed against the ever-expanding and prevailing 'silo' culture. We believe working within silos has undermined, and in some cases harmed human understanding and limited progress. This is true in the fields of science, history, psychology, sociology, spirituality, business, economics, politics; in fact every area of human existence has been marred by working in exclusive and for the most part non-cooperative ways. This in turn has led to different factions developing, which then protect their discoveries, knowledge and advantages; this has fostered a competitive culture of self-interest and arrogance. Unfortunately, this philosophy has found its way into all aspects of mental health too – as each school of thought professes to have a method/technique that resolves the issue better than the next. This misses the point that synergy is the answer... not silos.

The siloed approach defines human evolution in narrow, separate compartments, as if the best way to classify our knowledge and experience is to keep the different elements of our discoveries separate. This has caused great confusion because we have now developed the strange idea that things are best fixed in 'parts'. This means that we habitually pop off to see different people to help us fix our various ailments and concerns, removing the connection/relationship that exists between all the things that make us human. We cease to see how one aspect of our life is impacting on another.

In the field of mental health, we've created structures and systems where individuals are considered to be experts in brain health, exercise, bodywork, counselling/psychotherapy, diet and nutrition, abuse and addiction... and the list goes on. What is almost impossible to find is someone who can pull all these different elements together and not simply champion the virtues of their own particular silo, their system. This is why we believe that another approach is needed.

We are so busy chasing symptoms, looking for solutions and in the process missing the most important point, which is, that we cannot fix the mind whilst our bodies are ailing... and we cannot fix the body whilst the mind is riddled with fear, anxiety, and confusion. Also, we cannot fix the spirit when it has no positive focus, no meaning or purpose. In other words, attempting to address the symptoms will never provide us with lasting solutions because the symptoms are not the problem, they are merely by-products of the real issue(s).

The real problem is found in our deep-seated fears, the things that we deny are there, but which are in fact running our lives from behind the scenes. We need to transform the worst aspects of ourselves - attending to the forces and energies that keep the most damaged parts of us in control. This means cutting off their energy supply. As long as a parasite has a source of energy it can draw from, you can be sure it will stay where it is. In the same way, if we want to transform our old habits, patterns, and drivers, then the negative energy that keeps them going has to be removed and changed.

How can we be free from those thoughts, feelings and actions that still have the power to drive us down pathways we no longer wish to pursue? The answer is simple – immerse yourself in trance whenever and wherever you can.

The more we step into the world of trance, the more we can find the power to disentangle ourselves from the web of the past and create a new web of positive possibilities, a web that ties us to virtue and positive change and weakens the negative influences that have kept us stuck.

There are a number of ways to enter the world of trance, such as: meditation, prayer, mindfulness, relaxation, hypnosis, communing with nature, listening to particular sounds and music. In fact, any activity that creates some form of introspection and contemplation can take us into the incredible world of trance. And at that point trance-formation is available to us.

Trance bridges the gap between the conscious aspects of oneself and the unconscious realms (see: The Four Aspects of the Mind). Most of our choices and decisions appear to be taking place at the conscious level with very little consultation with the subconscious and unconscious minds. In fact, these two aspects of the mind have the most powerful impact on the way we see and act in the world. The sub and unconscious minds shape our beliefs and perceptions but because much of their involvement is happening in an anonymous and automated way, we rarely notice their input, failing to see how influential they are in our everyday lives.

Put another way, our past choices, decisions and actions, which have been recorded at the sub and unconscious levels, are driving a great many of our current decisions - to such an extent that we might believe we are making conscious choices, not realising that our doubts, anxieties, conditioning and fears are making so many of those choices on our behalf. Trance gives us a chance to change the way this internal mechanism works.

How does trance take us from the conscious world into the unconscious, giving us access to real transformation? All the introspective activities mentioned above take our brainwave activity out of the gamma and beta wave ranges (where the brain is at its busiest - see Brainwaves Overview) and lead us into the alpha and theta bandwidths (this is where the brain waves are oscillating in a way that leaves us feeling calm, relaxed and better able to focus). The alpha and theta states build a bridge between the conscious aspects of oneself and the unconscious aspects. If you've never experienced trance knowingly, you will certainly have experienced it without realising it - most of us think of it as daydreaming.

In that daydreaming state we are straddling two realms - the conscious and unconscious. If we can take advantage of this opportunity, then our daydreaming can become so much more. We need to learn how to improve the communication between the two realms... we need to learn the language of trance. Trance can lead us to lasting and positive change.

With our synergistic approach, we put a great deal of emphasis on experiential and introspective ways of working. This is because simply talking about our problems only goes

so far. In some instances that may well be enough. However, in just as many cases talking is insufficient, as it doesn't always reach the areas of trauma, pain and damage (see: Are Talking Therapies Sufficient?).

Although it is somewhat simplistic to only talk of the brain in terms of the left hemisphere (predominantly concerned with logic) and the right hemisphere (predominantly concerned with emotion) because both hemispheres address many more tasks than this, it is nonetheless useful to have this overview as it helps us to understand that if we are to resolve our issues, then we need to communicate with both the logical and emotional aspects of being human.

Although there is significant overlap, the strategies and methods for doing this are different for each hemisphere. The logical aspect of the brain responds very well to words, ideas, theories, and concepts. This is because it has a more mathematical orientation and generally seeks to make sense of things in more linear, chronological, and functional ways. The emotional part of the brain also works well with theories and concepts, but it is more interested in the abstract, metaphysical dimensions of those theories and concepts, working on the principle that just because logic has given us an answer, it doesn't mean that it is 'the' answer.

The right hemisphere has a more holistic approach to the human experience. It responds very well to metaphor, analogy, storytelling, and those techniques that draw on imagination. Therefore, if we want to change things in the more tangible world of the conscious mind, we need to regularly enter the intangible world of the sub and unconscious minds. And to do that we need to learn to speak their language so that our heartfelt messages and most important desires will be heard. Only then can we change our existing paradigms to ones that are better suited to our ambitions and dreams.

To familiarise yourself more with trance and learn its vocabulary, spend some time each day undertaking an introspective task. Breathing is a good gateway activity into trance, mainly because we all do it, which means it's easy to access and given how portable it is there's never a reason not to take advantage of its merits.

There are so many very good breathing strategies and techniques, so find one that suits you and practise it regularly. Focused breathing will naturally help you to move into that daydreaming state. From there you can learn the art of conscious daydreaming which enables you to install new ideas, thoughts, and feelings, using positive statements, affirmations and mantras (see: Introspective Practices). It's worth noting that you don't need complicated scripts to create a new, positive mindset. Short, simple statements are very effective, such as 'I deeply and completely love and accept myself', 'I am a self-healing organism and I am wonderfully well', 'every day, in every way I'm getting better and better'. Simple statements like these, repeated whilst in the trance state, can help us to overturn old ways of thinking and perceiving more quickly.

Visualising when in trance is an equally powerful way to bring about internal change. When you can see in your mind's eye your desired way of being, your ideal destination, the

act of 'seeing' what you need or want acts as a catalyst to connect all areas of the brain. This triggers the occipital lobe - located at the back of the head. This lobe is responsible for most aspects of vision - and also provides us with the ability to visualise things we've never even seen before. This wonderful function engages the imagination and then draws on the amygdala (the seat of our emotions) and the hippocampus (which offers vital context to our emotional experiences). The pre-frontal cortex (which oversees the executive functions) is also pulled into this dance of creativity, forging outcomes that had not up to that point been envisaged.

This is the crucible of creation, the place from which miracles are made. This is where the imagined meets the unimagined; where the physical meets the metaphysical and where we can reframe old, outdated patterns and mould new realities.

Commit to some form of daily practice. Choose an activity that appeals to you, there are so many to choose from. Most people fare better with a combination of activities, which stimulate and develop different areas of their being.

One of the fundamental principles of The Reach Approach is that 'knowledge plus application equals personal power'. In this worksheet the knowledge that has been offered states that transformation and lasting change are made easier by entering the trance state. So, it's only when we apply the knowledge that our success is guaranteed.

We must spend time regularly immersed in 'positive' silence. It's not enough to be still because you might be quiet whilst a tornado is raging inside of you. This would not be trance. Periods of silence need a positive focus. You need to galvanise your energy and channel it using the vehicles suggested, such as: breathing in a focused way, meditation - whether guided or self-perpetuated. Practise deep relaxation or self-hypnosis, using music, candles, or any other audio-visual aid. Become obsessive about positive affirmations and mantras, carry them wherever you go and whenever you get a chance to consciously daydream, grab it with both hands.

In closing, it's worth underlining here how crucial sincerity is. When we focus with a sincere heart, our aims and objectives are more readily attained. This is because sincerity is the most powerful magnet of them all. Understanding that we are surrounded by electromagnetic fields into which we are plugged all the time, helps us to realise how we can influence what is going on in our own realities. We are transmitters and receivers. When we clearly transmit what we want our messages travel through the electromagnetic fields and the energies of life conspire to create our heart's desires. To increase the chances of our aims being fulfilled, we need to remove as much negative interference as we can in order that we can become part of the positive flow. Then trance indeed becomes trance-formation.