

Self Empowerment through Self Hypnosis

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A book review by Tim Brunson, PhD

The use of self-applied hypnosis as a tool for personal growth and fulfillment is a very valid concept. It provides the core of [Self Empowerment through Self Hypnosis: Harnessing the Enormous Potential of the Mind](#) by Carl Llewellyn Weschcke and Joe H. Slate, PhD. They define hypnotic trance as a state of increased receptivity. This allows individuals to influence their future condition. (Their definition seems to somewhat mirror my contention that hypnosis is a process that empowers selective thinking.)

I enjoyed reading this book. The essential message is one of a belief that a person can use the power of the mind to overcome debilitating situations and move toward a more fulfilling life. However, despite their numerous descriptions of experiences at established universities and mentions of several clinical practitioners who played a role history of hypnosis, this book is largely an idealistic work with little if any scientific credibility. Thus most of their statements will have to be accepted more on faith than on more rigorous standards. Additionally, I regret that their linking hypnosis to ideas such as psychic and medium-related abilities, further leads mainstream clinical readers to reject hypnosis as not being sufficiently scientific to warrant its regular use in hospitals and mental health facilities. This unfortunate prejudice is one that I spend most of my time attempting to dispel.

As my predilection is clearly toward more scientific approaches to hypnotherapy, readers will naturally wonder why I waste my time reading and reviewing a book that is clearly idealistic. However, unlike my scientific colleagues, I realize that there may be some validity to the ideas proffered by the authors. Both scientific and idealistic writers start off with a set of hypotheses, which tend to explain causal factors. From that point the sound pursuit of science dictates that empirical observations - which at best can be replicated by others - will provide the basis for logical conclusions concerning causation and correlations. On the other hand, idealists skip the observation step - or at best rely on limited observations which are congruent with their preconceived conclusions. They rely more on faith than a sufficient body of observations.

This does not mean, however, that idealists are always wrong. I think not. Sometimes their ideas are merely waiting to be supported by scientific methods. For instance, Albert Einstein promoted the concept of "thought experiments," most which used mathematics to predict that conclusions could be eventually be vindicated. The fruits of his seemingly unlimited litany were initially rejected and accepted only after confirmation by state-of-the-art instruments. So, it is highly probable that idealistic theories may still be relevant even if they cannot immediately be confirmed scientifically. In this case, the authors promote conclusions regarding the relationship of the mind and esoteric entities of a more universalistic or spiritual dimension. My contention here is that the authors present hypotheses and conclusions that sound rational even though their reasoning cannot be sufficiently verified by currently available measurement devices. Considering that the history of mankind has constantly shown that spiritually-based beliefs have always preceded scientific confirmation - albeit with a clearer explanation - I would not be too rash to dismiss the authors' statements as being irrelevant.

Rather, their message of hope and empowerment should be embraced. Whether you accept their causal explanations or not, within the realm of modern scientific research there exists plenty of solid evidence that when coupled with decreased resistance and heightened receptivity, suggestion and imagination can alter a person's physiology and psychology. For the more closed-minded clinician who is looking for a book full of protocols backed by scientific evidence, this book should remain unread. However, for those who are more open to new ideas and willing to look for truths within the inadequately validated thoughts, this book will provide insightful reading.