

Transcript—The Case of Myra

Process-Oriented Hypnosis in a Case of Depression

By Michael D. Yapko, Ph.D.

Michael: And is there something in particular that you'd like some help with?

Myra: I'd like to have more freedom to actively pursue the things that give me pleasure. I tend to stop myself.

Michael: You tend to stop yourself.

Myra: Yes.

Michael: How do you do that?

Myra: Sometime, there's a, a voice within me, a very strident voice that says, "No! I don't want to!" And sometimes I just have this sense that, well, what's the point? I'm too tired. I'm too bothered. It's not going to make any difference.

Michael: Okay. So, at a given moment in time, Myra, how do you decide what you're actually going to do?

Myra: (Thoughtfully) Good question.

Michael: Thanks! (Joking)

Myra: I, on a weekend, for example, I never, well, just about never, make any kind of plans for my time outside of work. It's as though I go to work and then I come home, and I flip a switch and shut myself off. So, much of the time I'm in from Friday evening through Monday morning by myself watching TV and reading murder mysteries. Or now that I'm living in Las Vegas and I'm right behind a very nice casino, I go like a real glutton playing slots for five, six hours at a stretch.

Michael: Okay. Now I'm going to ask the question again. How do you decide what you're actually going to do?

Myra: I think that I make myself very tired and kind of narrow my focus so that much of the time I'm not aware of wanting to do anything except kind of lie there. Sometimes when I want to do something, like go out for a long walk or something like that, I'll start to feel more tired or my feet will start to hurt or I'll tell myself, aaah! I know, it's too much of a bother to get up and get dressed and take a shower and wash my hair and make myself presentable to go out. And I just, I'm not going to do that.

Michael: Okay. So you decide that it's too much effort.

Myra: Yeah.

Michael: And if you ask yourself the question, why bother, how do you answer it?

Myra: There's no reason to bother, you know, it's like, "why bother?" Okay. Why bother?

Michael: Okay. What would be a good enough reason to bother?

Myra: Because I really want to.

Michael: Well, you've *been* wanting to.

Myra: I've been wanting to.

Michael: But that hasn't been a good enough reason.

Myra: No.

Michael: So, what *would* be a good enough reason?

Myra: Believing that it would make a difference that, that it would just make me feel better all around.

Michael: But if what you're doing is anticipating that it's just going to make you tired and your feet already hurt, how would you anticipate that it would be beneficial in any way?

Myra: I don't know how I would know, really know that, you know, all the way in a way that would make me act on it. Because I know, I know things that give me pleasure, the lasting kind of pleasure. And I don't do them, even though I know that they give me pleasure. I know that I want to. And I just, I just get so jammed up. I get... I feel like I'm in prison...

Michael: (Following induction and building a response set) But all through these minutes that we're together... when I start introducing something new... something different... you'll be in a very comfortable position to decide what to use and what to ignore... what to take in and hold on tightly to... and what to let slide by... it's really no different than when you moved to Las Vegas... And you really weren't sure whether that was going to be a good move... whether you were going to like living there... whether it was going to be useful to live behind a casino... And you might remember, I asked you how you decide... how *you* decide... and you really didn't know how to answer... And it's one of the things now that you begin to discover... just what it means to make a decision... to make a decision knowingly, deliberately... And when there are so many different ways of making a decision... about what you're going to do next... (Myra's hand drops) That's right... How are you going to decide Myra? You can decide according to what's easy... You can decide according to what's familiar... You can decide according to past history... But there's something new that you can discover today... and rediscover over and over again... And what you can discover is what happens when you make a decision based on what you want... And what the outcome is... The result... I remember working with a woman not long ago who said to me... something not unlike what you said... She described herself as alone and lonely... Nobody called her... Nobody came to see her... And I said to her, "You stand a much better chance of meeting interesting people... if every once in a while... on the weekends, especially... You'd *leave home!*"... And she said, "I know, but I don't *feel* like it"... What a curious statement, "I don't feel like it"... And what does someone have to feel like... to want to enjoy doing interesting things?... And what does someone have to feel like... in order to mobilize the energy to have fun?... And how often does that feeling come around?... Just about every Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday... When you have all the time, all the freedom... And then the question is how you choose... How *you* choose... Now, there's a lot that I can say about freedom... And, of course, there are many different kinds of freedom... The freedom to make mistakes and still be wonderfully likable... The freedom to, metaphorically, put your foot in your mouth... and have a very charming way of getting it out again... The freedom to remind yourself... you're single and living in Las Vegas... And what happens there stays there... And so it's an entirely different framework, Myra... So that when I ask you how you choose... in the past you might have said, "I really don't know."... And in the future, when you find yourself answering, "I choose according to the result I want."... It's a very different framework... that you can discover and reinforce... and enjoy. ..