**To Band or Not to Band?**

The Hypno Gastric Banding technique is a hot topic at the moment, with articles on the subject appearing in news media all over the world, but is it suitable for everyone who wishes to lose weight?

Perhaps controversially, my opinion as a UK-qualified and accredited Hypnotherapist practising in Sliema, would be "definitely not". It is one technique among many, and while it has its place in the Hypnotherapist's toolbox, it is really only suitable treatment for people with a Body Mass Index of over 33, who habitually eat large portions of food and have no other food-related issues.

It's an aversion technique which persuades the client virtually, via their subconscious mind, that their stomach has become too small to accommodate large meals any more, much as the genuine surgical gastric banding technique does in a real, physical sense.

And this is wonderful if your problem is purely eating portions too large for your body's needs. Unfortunately it does not take account of those who make poor food choices, snack throughout the day, eat for comfort, fail to exercise or have other HGB-incompatible issues around food.

By now you are probably getting the correct idea that weight loss by hypnosis is a complex issue. As a Student Hypnotherapist, at the turn of the Millennium, I was told that working with weight issues is like opening "a can of worms", and indeed it can be. Weight problems are NEVER about food alone and ALWAYS about the emotional triggers which drive people to undesirable behaviours around food.

So what can a client expect from me when they take a seat in my "magic chair of change"? Well, for starters they know they will be treated as the individual they are. No two clients are the same and so my clients know they will be given unique treatment which directly corresponds with their personal desired outcome, or "solution state". This is important to make clear, as historically Hypnotherapy was pretty much a "one size fits all" affair with the therapist authoritatively reading the same "script" to all clients attending for the same issue.

Happily, things have moved forward and I'm glad to say that my training included gaining familiarity with Neuro Linquistic Programming (taking account of each individual's personal model of the world), Positive Psychology and Gestalt Therapy among other leading-edge techniques.

My practice is multi-stranded, gentle and completely interactive, using feedback from the client to creatively guide them towards their own stated desired outcomes. It may also require the use of safe, dissociative regression to locate and re-frame events from the past that continue to affect current behaviours towards food.

Make no mistake, Hypnotherapy is a powerful tool for weight loss - and wouldn't we would all be slim if willpower were the solution? But should you jump on the Hypno Gastric Band bandwagon? Probably not. Why would you choose that "one trick pony" when I have so many other flexible and creative techniques in my personal toolbox to help you to your weight loss goal.

*Pippa King*