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Handbook Of Hypnotic Suggestions And Metaphor By C Hammond

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Unlocking the Power of Clinical Hypnosis: A Deep Dive into the Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors by D. Corydon Hammond

For practitioners of clinical hypnosis, the journey from novice to expert is paved with more than just textbook theory. It requires a rich vocabulary of therapeutic language, a deep understanding of how the unconscious mind processes symbolism, and a toolkit of interventions that can be tailored to the unique needs of each client. Few resources have achieved the legendary status of D. Corydon Hammond's **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors**. This seminal work is not merely a collection of scripts; it is a masterclass in the art and science of therapeutic communication. For decades, it has served as the go-to reference for hypnotherapists, psychologists, and medical professionals seeking to enhance their clinical practice. In this comprehensive exploration, we will unpack why this handbook remains an indispensable resource, examining its structure, its core philosophy, and its enduring impact on the field of hypnotherapy.

The Author and the Genesis of a Classic

To understand the weight of the **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor**, one must first appreciate its editor, D. Corydon Hammond, PhD. A prominent figure in the field of medical hypnosis and a professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, Hammond is renowned for his rigorous, evidence-based approach to hypnotherapy. He did not simply compile a random assortment of scripts. Instead, he curated a compendium of contributions from over 100 of the world's most respected clinicians and researchers. This collaborative effort transforms the book from a simple manual into a symposium of collective wisdom.

The handbook was born out of a practical need. Clinicians often struggled to find the right words at the right moment. While theory provided the map, it did not always provide the language for the journey. Hammond sought to bridge this gap by creating a resource that was both comprehensive and immediately usable. The result is a text that respects the complexity of the unconscious mind while providing concrete, accessible tools for the therapist. It is this balance of depth and practicality that has cemented its place as a cornerstone of hypnotic literature.

The Core Philosophy: Suggestion as a Therapeutic Art

At its heart, the **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor**is built on the premise that suggestion is a potent therapeutic tool. However, Hammond and his contributors move far beyond the authoritarian "you will feel sleepy" style of stage hypnosis. The book champions a permissive, indirect, and client-centered approach. The underlying philosophy is that the unconscious mind is highly intelligent, protective, and creative. Therefore, the role of the hypnotherapist is not to command but to collaborate. Suggestion becomes a form of elegant

communication that respects the client's autonomy while gently guiding them toward therapeutic goals.

This philosophical stance is evident in the extensive use of metaphor. The book posits that metaphors bypass the critical factor of the conscious mind, speaking directly to the subconscious in a language of imagery, emotion, and symbolism. A well-crafted metaphor can allow a client to see their problem from a new perspective, access inner resources, and initiate profound change without the resistance that often accompanies direct instruction. This emphasis on metaphorical thinking is one of the key differentiators of this handbook, elevating it from a simple script book to a guide for sophisticated therapeutic artistry.

Structure and Content: A Treasure Trove of Therapeutic Tools

Spanning over 600 pages, the **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors** is meticulously organized for practical use. It is not a book to be read cover-to-cover in a single sitting, but rather a reference to be consulted and revisited throughout a clinician's career. The structure reflects a deep understanding of clinical workflow, categorizing suggestions by therapeutic goal and clinical population.

The content is divided into broad sections that cover an impressive array of applications. These include general principles of hypnotic induction and suggestion, as well as specific chapters dedicated to medical and psychological conditions. For the beginner, the early chapters on "Basic Principles" and "Induction Techniques" are invaluable. For the seasoned professional, the advanced sections on "Pain Management," "Surgery and Obstetrics," and "Psychotherapy" offer nuanced interventions for complex cases.

Key Areas of Application

The breadth of the handbook is staggering. Here are just a few of the major areas it covers:

- Pain Management: This is one of the most well-researched applications of hypnosis, and the handbook provides a wealth of suggestions for acute, chronic, and procedural pain. Contributors offer scripts that utilize dissociation, displacement, and sensory alteration to help clients manage discomfort.
- Anxiety and Stress: Dozens of scripts are dedicated to inducing calm, building confidence, and reframing anxious thoughts. The use of metaphors—such as a "still lake" or a "calm harbor"—is particularly effective in this domain.
- Habit Control: From smoking cessation to weight management, the book offers structured, multi-session protocols. These suggestions often focus on empowering the client, enhancing motivation, and re-framing cravings as signals rather than commands.
- Medical and Surgical Applications: This section is a testament to the integration of hypnosis into mainstream medicine. It includes pre-operative suggestions for reducing anxiety and blood loss, as well as post-operative suggestions for accelerating healing and reducing nausea.
- Psychotherapy (Trauma, Depression, PTSD): The handbook approaches these sensitive areas with great care. Suggestions are designed to be safe, patient, and respectful of the client's defenses. Ego-strengthening, a core concept introduced by John Hartland, is given significant attention, providing a foundation for healing.

The Unique Value of Metaphor

While the book contains hundreds of direct suggestions, its heart lies in its extensive collection of therapeutic metaphors. The **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor** dedicates significant space to this art form. A metaphor in this context is not just a comparison; it is a story, an image, or an analogy that parallels the client's situation. For example, a client struggling with indecision might be told a story about a "crossroads in a forest," where the path is not about choosing the "right" way, but about trusting one's inner compass.

Why are metaphors so powerful? The conscious mind analyzes logic; the unconscious mind understands symbolically. A direct suggestion like "you will feel confident" can be met with internal resistance: "But I've never felt confident before." A metaphor, however, bypasses this resistance. It presents a scenario where confidence

is natural and inevitable. The client's unconscious mind accepts the analogy and applies it to their own life, often without the conscious mind ever realizing what has happened. This indirect approach is the hallmark of the Ericksonian tradition, and Hammond's handbook serves as the definitive anthology of this approach in practice.

Practical Applications for the Modern Clinician

In an era of evidence-based practice and short-term therapy, the **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor**remains profoundly relevant. It is not a relic of a bygone era but a living resource that adapts to the needs of the modern therapist.

Adapting Scripts for Individual Clients

One of the most common misconceptions among new hypnotherapists is that they must read a script verbatim. The handbook explicitly warns against this. The scripts and metaphors provided are not meant to be robotic recitations; they are templates, springboards, and sources of inspiration. The true art lies in taking the structure of a suggestion and weaving the client's own language, history, and imagery into it.

For example, if a client describes their pain as a "red, hot poker in their back," the skilled therapist can take the "pain management" metaphor from the book—perhaps one about "cooling water"—and adapt it to incorporate the client's "hot poker" imagery. This personalization is what makes the intervention effective. The handbook provides the raw materials; the clinician provides the craftsmanship.

Ethical Considerations and Professionalism

A significant strength of Hammond's work is its unwavering commitment to ethical practice. The introductory chapters and the structure of the suggestions themselves emphasize safety, informed consent, and the importance of working within one's scope of practice. The **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor** is not a "do-it-yourself" guide for the public. It is a professional text intended for those with a solid foundation in clinical skills and hypnotic principles.

The book also addresses the ethical use of regression and the careful handling of trauma-related material. It reminds the reader that while hypnosis can be a powerful accelerator of therapy, it can also be destabilizing if used recklessly. The tone throughout is one of respect—for the client, for the therapeutic process, and for the power of the unconscious mind.

Comparing the Handbook to Other Resources

While many excellent texts exist on hypnotic suggestion, few offer the sheer breadth and depth of Hammond's handbook. Books like *The Art of Hypnosis* by C. Roy Hunter or *Hypnosis and Suggestion*by Deirdre Barrett are valuable for specific angles or theoretical depth, but the Hammond handbook stands alone as a comprehensive clinical reference.

Its closest rival in the space of "script books" might be *Scripts and Strategies in Hypnotherapy* by Roger P. Allen. However, Hammond's text is significantly more extensive and places a greater emphasis on the use of metaphor. Another classic, *My Voice Will Go With You* by Sidney Rosen, is a brilliant book of therapeutic stories from Milton Erickson, but it is not a systematic handbook for clinical practice. The Hammond handbook synthesizes the Ericksonian tradition with a structured, cataloged format, making it uniquely practical for the busy clinician.

Integrating with Modern Evidence-Based Practice

Some might argue that a book filled with metaphors and stories is less "scientific" than a manual focused on standardized protocols. This is a false dichotomy. The **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphor**is deeply grounded in the clinical research of its time, and the principles it teaches—such as the importance of

expectation, the therapeutic alliance, and the use of client-centered language—are all supported by modern psychotherapy research. The rise of third-wave behavioral therapies like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which heavily utilize metaphor and cognitive defusion, has only validated the approaches championed by Hammond decades earlier.

Today's therapists can seamlessly integrate the techniques from this handbook with other modalities. A CBT practitioner can use a Hammond metaphor to help a client reframe a cognitive distortion. A trauma specialist can use a safe-place induction from the book to resource a client before EMDR. The versatility of the material is one of its greatest assets.

Conclusion: An Enduring Legacy in Therapeutic Communication

The **Handbook of Hypnotic Suggestions and Metaphors by D. Corydon Hammond**is far more than a book; it is a rite of passage for the serious student of clinical hypnosis. It represents a collective wisdom, a distillation of decades of clinical experience from some of the greatest minds in the field. For the aspiring hypnotherapist, it provides a safe and structured way to learn the language of the unconscious. For the seasoned expert, it offers an endless wellspring of inspiration, a reminder of the elegance and power of well-chosen words.

In a world that often demands quick fixes and standardized solutions, Hammond's work champions the deeply human art of storytelling, connection, and healing. It reminds us that the most profound therapeutic changes often occur not through force of will, but through the gentle, indirect guidance of a powerful metaphor. For any clinician looking to deepen their practice, enhance their communication skills, and truly master the art of hypnotic suggestion, this handbook remains the single most valuable resource ever compiled. It is not just a guide to hypnosis; it is a guide to the therapeutic power of language itself.

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