

Some thoughts about scripts (and how to avoid them!)

Featuring 'The Tour through the Warehouse of the Mind.'

Before I go any further I have to stress that like most of us, when I first qualified I used scripts with my clients and tried to vary them session to session in order to provide a sense of progression for each weeks therapy.

After a short while though I decided to move away from this approach because A) it seemed a bit rigid, B) the scripts weren't written in my language patterns and C) they often seemed too direct for my liking.

With this in mind I began to write my own scripts - which naturally took care of the language pattern concerns but still seemed a touch pre-meditated and therefore not spontaneous enough to deal with the actual emotions and feelings encountered in the session at any given time.

So I ditched the folders of A4 crib sheets and took to the tightrope without a safety net!

Amazingly, I discovered two things:

- 1) Lots of the general 'patter' of all those scripts had somehow been absorbed and memorised ready for instant access anyway and ...
- 2) Relevant ideas and themes flowed freely into my mind as I took my client through their trance, thus making the whole process feel much more personal, creative and fun for all concerned.

These are responses I am sure you will encounter too, so what follows is a generalised 'theme' around a *jazz* approach to my 'subconscious warehouse tour' followed by my thoughts on scripts and how to make them more fluid.

Introducing the script

- Note: Before embarking on your hypno-journey have you checked that your client is OK with the general imagery to be found in the script you are about to read them? – specifically here we need to know that they are fine with lifts/enclosed spaces etc. but other scripts might include water, mountains (heights) etc. we can check this gently by mentioning it beforehand as a kind of advanced training approach:

“In a moment we shall be going on a wonderful journey utilising your inner lift – does that sound good”

“We all have access to an inner lift, whenever we want it!”

- Notice that I want to layer positive usage of each word/phrase used, wherever possible - and we are not even in trance yet ... are we?
- Note too how we are already ‘rambling’ around the central focus

So having completed our induction via PMR or intro of choice we can continue on our journey:

“Imagine that you are standing in front of a elevator door and you have just pressed the button to call the lift car within.”

“You can hear the whir of the finely tuned cogs and wheels deep inside the workings of the elevator as the car makes its way to you from above, dropping down to your level as you wait there ... nice and relaxed ... breathing softly and patiently... just waiting for the lift to arrive so you can step on board.”

“The sounds slow down to a soft murmur as the lift comes to a stop and the doors gently glide open as you find yourself looking into the interior of this most exquisitely designed lift”

- Note: what’s that lift going to look like? Describe something that will appear to your client’s imagination. What sort of thing would THEY want to see? Will it be a glass sided elevator like you see in American high power business blocks? Or an old-fashioned brass and wood panelled lift from a romantic Parisian hotel? Or could it be like stepping into the TARDIS?
- One aspect I ALWAYS include is a softly lit, full-length mirror – because this will be a useful image to reflect (!) upon later.

So for example:

“As the doors open you find yourself looking into a wonderful old fashioned lift with gleaming brass switches set into richly polished wood panelling ... softly lit by gentle lighting ... glowing warmly from the ceiling overhead.”

“ You are struck by just how well-kept this lift is and marvel at the pride the lift attendant must have in his/her work, which you understand with a great surprise is your role today ... because there is no one else around and so with some excitement you press the button marked 3 and the lift doors slowly begin to glide shut as the elevator starts to prepare to take you down to the next level”

- Note: so where will your client find themselves when the doors open? Think of all those deepener’s you have stored away in your hypnotherapist’s bag. This lift can take you anywhere.
- I usually find level three is a green valley, which we can explore for a while - church bells, sheep/cattle way off in the distance, blue skies and the smell of the ocean carried on a gentle breeze. Level two is a beach with warm soft sand and a stroll down to the waters edge to float in the sea or marvel at the shells etc. Level one is a colourful mist that wraps around us like a comfortable blanket/void of space, were we can see all eternity and every direction is the future.

And on to Level Zero – the sub-basement area in which we find the subconscious warehouse.

“ As you step back into the lift feeling the security of this wonderful warming colour flowing with you you turn to face the control panel and notice there’s one more level to visit.”

“You are excited to see that there is a level zero and you are curious to discover what you might find there as you reach forward and press the button.”

“Once more the lift begins to move and you feel as if, for just the briefest of moments, you are floating – it’s as if the lift is moving just a touch faster that you ... and you are actually floating in parallel with the floors and walls of this magical elevator.”

“This time the lift takes much longer to reach its destination and you realise this level is much, much deeper than all the others ... much, much deeper - more that you could ever consciously imagine and as you are pondering this thought you feel the car slowing and your feet returning softly to the floor as the finely tuned machinery quietens to a total silence, the lift comes to a gentle stop ... and the doors glide open”

- Note: You might choose to fade your music out at this point for maximum, dramatic effect – it’s a nice way to invisibly re-enforce that something important is happening.

“As the lift doors open you find yourself looking out into the most amazing room full of row upon row of filing cabinets, with bookshelves and boxes stacked up all around the walls for just as far as you can see ... and in the distance there are doors leading to corridors, leading to other rooms, with other doors leading to an endless library of information that you now realise with surprise and delight is all available to you now you know how to reach it and that this lift can always bring you here to research something or file something or simply browse and enjoy the quiet and peaceful solitude of this most amazing place.”

“You decide to step out of the elevator and investigate”

- Note: You are now about to describe the subconscious warehouse so think about how your client might want it to be, as well as how you may have described it during previous sessions. As you know, I use this metaphor during my IC so the visual imagery is fairly well established in advance of our ‘trance visit’ and so hopefully it will seem strangely familiar to my client when we first arrive - *an example of a slow-burn ramble!* - but I will tailor it to include details that fit with each client that I have picked up during our time together. For example: a poster of a favourite pop star on the wall, a DVD of a favourite film sitting on a cabinet, or a radio broadcasting the cricket commentary echoing gently from the back of the room ... etc.

But the general idea would be something like:

“As you wonder around this vast storeroom you are amazed by the things to find. There are old school books of yours that cover subjects you had forgotten you ever learnt ... and there’s a picture of you with your family on holiday when you were just a child. For some reason it has been put with some files full of (un)paid bills and then you notice that much of the information stored here has been filed in the most curious manner and it’s no wonder that sometimes you can’t locate that thought that would be most helpful to you. Its as if links have been made that worked at the time but could now really do with an update”

“You notice that some of the boxes are labelled ARCHIVE and you think perhaps it might be quite a good idea to archive much of those past patterns of behaviour you don’t need to access anymore – there’s a file titled “I used to pick my nose, and you chuckle to yourself, thankfully its archived, untouched for many years ... honest ...and there’s another that

says “I used to smoke” and one that say’s “I used to do this, I used to do that” and they can all be safely archived. Neatly filed, not lost but filed away. Should you ever need them you’ll know where they are, but now they are not needed. We can leave them back here against the wall were the bulbs need replacing – it’s OK we have a torch, we can find our way”

“So you have already made quite some space at the forefront here where it’s easily accessible to instant thought. What will you file there I wonder?”

- Note: Now you can utilise all your mind controlling, brainwashing techniques to embed commands into your clients subconscious in order to make them do what you want ...
- ... or you could continue with gentle, *indirect* suggestion and delicate, general observations to promote a sense of curiosity within the client that encourages THEM to make the changes that feel most appropriate to their wishes at this time – this would be my approach.
- BUT WHY? I hear you ask – well, I shall answer that question at the very end. Before I do so we must remember that we have a client on our couch deep in trance exploring their subconscious warehouse and we need to bring them back to a waking state before they become stuck in hypnosis, permanently and forever!

So, having roamed around and gained the maximum use from their visit (see thoughts at the end) I would end with something like ...

“ Lastly here today you notice a door in the far wall that somehow seems to call your attention. There is something written on the frosted glass pane of this door and as you get closer you see it is a question mark.”

“ Before you even try the handle of this door you know it isn’t locked. In fact you realise that none of these doors are ever locked to you. You are NEVER locked in this subconscious room, you are always free to travel in and out at will and you always know how to navigate your way around the room.”

“This door with the question mark takes you back out into your conscious self ... your future life ... I wonder what that question mark represents to you as you ponder your journey ahead?”

“But before you leave this special room of learning, take a good look around and feel good about the changes that are already occurring and the knowledge that you are taking with you here today”

“So as you open the door you find you are standing in a short corridor that leads to five steps, leading up to another door. There is a big strong solid tick, like the mark of success (pause), painted on this door and you can see movement of the world outside shimmering through the frosted glass as you make your way to those steps.”

“Each step brings you back to a bright, clear, full wakefulness and as I count each step from one to five you feel yourself returning to the room ... with one, you can hear the sounds around you as two, your muscles return to an energised normal and three an energy is running from the tips of your toes up to the very top of your head. On four you are reaching for the door and you can anticipate a sense of confidence and full alertness on that final count as we reach five ... you can open your eyes”.

- Note the ambiguity of the final moments in the storeroom: “*Before you leave this special room of learning*” and “*There is a big solid Tick, like the mark of success*”.
- Also note that the general suggestions of positive subconscious change are being re-enforced right until the very end of the trance ... and beyond.

Scripts are very useful as frameworks on which to hang our trance session but I don't think there's any need to read them off word for word or adhere to them as if they were law: A script is NOT a magic spell (regardless of what the writer might think), it won't go wrong if you leave bits out and no-one will be turned into a frog.

If it's going to work it will work because the client buys into it, whatever it is.

For this reason I like to keep things general and encourage my client to find the reason behind what I just said, rather than wait for me to spell it out.

I approach it this way not because I'm lazy or because I want the client to work harder but simply because if it's left to me I might get it wrong! – the client KNOWS what they need to do to change, I only suspect.

“What would be the single most effective thing you could do today to help you start that change you are seeking? – imagine you are doing it NOW, how does that feel, what's different?”

You could ask that same question everyday and have a different answer each time – but the response will always be relevant to the client.

So with that in mind, why would I spend any time detailing the colour, size, fragrance etc of a bunch of flowers in a vase at the bottom of a set of stairs in order to set the scene for a client when I could suggest they create their own imagery? I am, after all trying to get them to activate and utilise their creative imagination, so how about ...

“You reach the bottom of the stairs and there’s something on the table to the side of you that captures your attention. I wonder what it is. Its something from your subconscious ... a positive message that reveals something to you right now ... See it now and create it in your mind, something that’s just perfect for you to be looking at, and whether its consciously understood or simply subconsciously held it simply doesn’t matter... it’s a clue and it leads the way”

Collecting it all up:

I tend to approach the trance as an opportunity to feed back the wisdom my client has already presented me with – consciously or subconsciously – and that’s why I am constantly listening out for the little details they provide as we *seemingly* ramble around a specific point.

I like to think of this as The Sherlock Holmes Approach:

- What interests do they have?
- Where have they been?
- What’s their favourite colour?
- What might they have in their handbag/wallet?
- What’s the name of their goldfish?
- Endless stuff that is their life – tiny details that connect them to everything they do & think – note them.

Free Your Mind

A great way to free yourself of scripts is to simply imagine yourself in a scenario that works for the atmosphere/mood you are trying to convey:

For example: Try this exercise for yourself now:

Imagine you are relaxing on a beach: What can you see? What can you feel? What can you hear? What’s alongside you? What’s above you, etc. Imagine all these things for yourself then describe them to your client, adding in any details that connect the scenario to them.

Last word

Rapport and Intent are in my opinion, the two most important factors of hypnosis. A belief that what you suggest will work because you are a hypnotist and because your client will allow it to.

So I would suggest that with regard to anything we say to our client we might perhaps consider these three key points:

- We can offer focus through options: “*I wonder what you can see now?*”
- The ‘script’ can simply be the positive feedback of the session
- It’s less important for the client to hear what we say than it is for us to **say what we hear**.

So have confidence in breaking away from scripts – you can do it, just give it a try: you’ll be surprised at how much imagery simply comes to you when you just sit back and let it flow.

Have fun with the process and enjoy creating your own rambling tours around the glorious landscape of the human subconscious.

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