

Wellbeing

Why I became a hypnotherapist

Amanda Evans helps people to address issues ranging from anxiety to phobias using a combination of hypnosis and therapy. She tells Ellie Stott about her work

How did you become a hypnotherapist?

'I was always attracted by the idea and trained when I was off work looking after my children. At the time my career was in sales and I couldn't afford to leave to build a hypnotherapy business. I started doing a few sessions at evenings and weekends for "easy" things such as weight loss and quitting smoking while I retrained in the newer techniques until I was ready to commit to it full time.'

What sort of work do you do now?

'My preference is treating anxiety, depression and trauma because they are the most challenging. But I still deal with phobias, sleep problems, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and so on. Hypnotherapy, as the word suggests, is a combination of hypnosis and therapy. Hypnosis gets to the deeper level of the mind where our memories and habits are stored so we can re-educate the brain at the root of the problem.'

How do you know when someone's "under"? Are there people who can't be hypnotised?

'Ninety nine per cent of clients who come to me want to be helped and therefore will be receptive. There are some giveaway signs when a person is deeply relaxed – their facial features flatten out similar to during sleep, breathing patterns slow and skin tone can change. You can see the eyeballs moving under the eyelids, much as they do when

HERE TO HELP
Amanda Evans switched careers to follow her vocation



dreaming. It's not a magic wand, though – they have to work with me, follow instructions, and have a willingness to change.'

What is it like to be hypnotised?

'Most people already know what it feels like. I say to people who drive "have you ever driven from A to B and arrived at B realising you didn't even notice part of the journey?". That's a trance. When I hypnotise someone they're aware of my voice, and while they may not really listen to all of what I'm saying as their mind drifts, their brain "hears". To go back to the driving example, you're not fully present, but if the car in front of you had braked suddenly you'd have reacted – you're

not asleep or unconscious in any way – you're still in control.'

Are you ever presented with any unusual issues to solve?

'Some of the phobias can be a bit unusual, especially ones to do with food. I've had clients who haven't ever been able to eat a vegetable. And I'm quite regularly asked to hypnotise people so they can have dental treatment. Every case requires its own approach because obviously people become phobic, or suffer from anxiety, for different reasons, and some are more willing than others to let go of their problem. Sometimes it's serving a purpose for them that they haven't recognised. I rely on clients to tell me what they want to achieve; if you have

'Remember you are not your thoughts, and thoughts are not facts. So many people feel bad just because of what's going on in their minds'

a spider phobia, for example, do you want to be able to touch one, or just put a glass over one to remove it? I take cues from them and feed that back during the treatment.'

Is there anything we can all learn from hypnosis?

'Remember you are not your thoughts, and thoughts are not facts. So many people feel bad just because of what's going on in their minds. Ask yourself the question, "What if I'm OK?" – that sets off an unconscious search in the brain for other times when you've been OK. Try it.'

Amanda is a member of the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis (bsch.org.uk). Contact her at amandaevans-hypnotherapy.co.uk



Photography: Matthew Lloyd, WENN Rights Ltd / Alamy



24 HOURS ON MY PLATE PETER DUNCAN

The actor and former Blue Peter presenter is a keen cook even though he has a live-in chef son

'Waking up at home in Wandsworth I had a cup of English breakfast tea with semi-skimmed milk. Breakfast was a bowl of granola with milk topped with blueberries and plain yogurt plus a slice of white sourdough toast with butter and honey.'

'Then it was down to the basement, where I'm creating a huge plastic giant, which I'm taking on tour. I spent the morning spray painting, breaking for a cup of flat white. Lunch, the remains of Saturday night's supper, was a Yorkshire gruel made with potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, beans and celery topped with three slices of bacon and a fried egg plus a glass of diluted elderflower cordial and an apple.'

'Back in the studio I added some eyes, ears and nose to my giant. However by 4pm I'd run out of energy so went upstairs to do some admin and scriptwriting. Supper cooked by our resident chef, my son Arthur, was a Cambodian fish curry – haddock and salmon steamed with lemongrass, coconut milk and galangal – with green veg. Over the evening I had three glasses of red wine and some water. I then caught the end of Newsnight with a cup of Sleep Easy tea.'

'I love cooking but with a live-in chef, rumpus can erupt in the kitchen. I like to be inventive but it often ends up with him saying: "You don't do it like that!"'

Peter Duncan stars in The Dame on tour across the UK from January 24, starting at the Ustinov Studio, Bath

THE VERDICT

Emma Williams, Partner & Nutritionist, says

'Breakfast provided heart-healthy oats, fibre, 5 a day and calcium but read the granola label, checking for hidden calories from any added sugar or fat. Salmon contains omega-3, important for your brain, heart and vision. You met your 5 a day and dairy needs but some



starchy carbs (rice) with the curry would have given you extra energy. Watch out for your saturated fat intake and those extra glasses of vino (14 units per week is recommended) and add more fibre! **3/5**



THREE OF THE BEST ALCOHOL-FREE DRINKS

Have you committed to Dry January 2020? Success relies on finding alternatives you actually enjoy. Here are three to try out:

1 Torres Natureo De-Alcoholised Red Wine £5.99/75cl

The world's most admired wine brand, according to Drinks International 2018, has come up with this de-alcoholised wine (above). Made entirely from Syrah grapes fermented and barrel-aged in French oak before being carefully stripped of alcohol, this full-flavoured red wine is the perfect accompaniment to Sunday lunch.



2 Æcorn Aperitifs Bitter Non-Alcoholic on offer £17/50cl (was £19.99, offer ends 21 Jan)

Verjus – literally 'green juice' made from sour grapes or crab apples – was a favourite in Roman and medieval times. This non-alcoholic aperitif, inspired by 17th century herbal remedies, contains English-grown Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier grapes. They are hand-picked, gently pressed and blended with herbs, bitter roots and botanicals to tease your taste buds.



3 Erdinger Weissbräu Alkohol Frei £1.30/50cl

This refreshing thirst-quencher, brewed under the strict Bavarian Purity Law, is made from only the highest quality ingredients. It's also relatively low in calories at 125kcal per 50cl bottle.