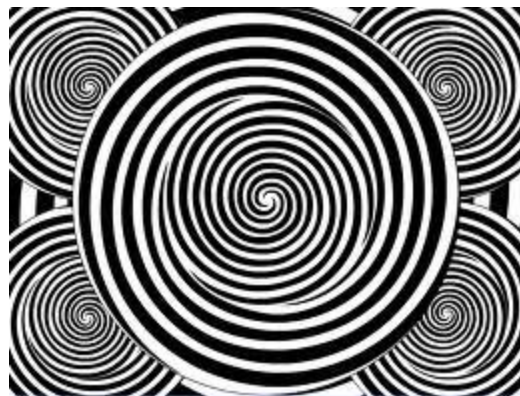


# The Link Between Hypnosis & Thai Yoga Bodywork



**By: Terry Ann Wohl**

When Trilby, the beautiful model-singer in the infamous 1931 movie, tells Svengali that she is unable to work all day because she has had one of her ‘funny headaches’ again, Svengali says, “Possibly I can take it away for you right now...I mean it. It is so easy.” He seduces her into hypnotic trance by saying, “Now you sit there quietly and do just as I tell you...You look, you look at pretty Svengali...Look me right in the eyes... Liebchen. Right in the eyes... You shall see nothing, hear nothing, dream of nothing, but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali...”

By the end of the trance induction, Trilby is hypnotically repeating his name, “Svengali, Svengali, Svengali...” For most of who know of the story, we come to see Svengali as an evil, exploitive hypnotist who manipulates Trilby into leaving her boyfriend to become a great singer and Svengali’s wife.

In fact in our culture, just the name Svengali conjures up images and references to evil hypnotists. Many people have come to associate hypnotists with people who have exploitive and/or negative intentions. Thus, many people have an innate fear of hypnotism. Yet most of us enter trance like hypnotic states every day.

Have you ever driven past the street where you were planning to turn? Or have you ever lost track of time when you have been utilizing the Internet on the computer? These are also forms of hypnotic trances.

According to the online Merriam-Webster dictionary, hypnosis is defined as: “a trancelike state that resembles sleep but is induced by a person whose suggestions are readily accepted by the subject.” Trance is defined as: “a state of profound abstraction or absorption.” In these states, our brain waves slow down and change from beta to alpha, theta and/or delta. In other words, any state other than beta is connected with a state of being in light to deep trances.

As a Thai Yoga Bodywork Practitioner, I have noticed that every time a client lies down on my mat, they enter an altered state. I guide them to breathe deeply and maintain the deeper breathing state during the session. To dispel their self-judgment about their anxious shallow breathing state, I often tell them that we are all members of “The Shallow Breathing Club.” This simple instruction helps them shift out of the beta state and relax into either an alpha or theta state.

### **Understanding the Four Types of Brain Wave States**

- 1 . **Beta** - The beta state is our primary natural awake and alert state. We utilize this state to accomplish cognitive tasks and attend to the outside world. It is the most externally oriented state that we possess. The state is utilized to take pass tests, participate in sports or give presentations. Some qualities that characterize the beta state are” being alert to external stimuli, utilizing the left hemispheres of our brain

to form judgments and process information. It is also the fastest brain wave frequency of the four states. Most of your clients will be in the beta state when they walk into your treatment room. This is also the state that is associated with mental activity, focus and anxiety.

2 . **Alpha** - The alpha state is the second fastest moving brain wave frequency state.

This is the state that people enter when they are beginning to relax and let go of worries, fears, and frustrations. When a person begins to daydream, he has entered the alpha state, which leads us to the understanding that alpha states (as well as the theta and delta states) are connected to the subconscious mind. In this state a person begins to focus inward. Yet the alpha state is a state where there is a connection between the conscious and subconscious mind (the left and right brain hemispheres). When you guide your client to close his/her eyes and focus inward, you are leading your client into the alpha state and perhaps even the theta state.

3 . **Theta** - The theta state is the second slowest brain wave frequency state. It is the twilight state related to the moments right before you drift off to sleep. It is also connected with the deeper daydreaming states. In this state you will also have access to total dream recall, unlike the Delta state.

4 . **Delta** - This is the slowest brain wave frequency states. Delta is the most unconscious of the four states. People are not able to access their dreams in this state.

So, anytime you and/or your clients leave the beta state, you are considered to be in an altered state. The alpha, theta and delta states are closely connected to the subconscious mind. You might ask what are the why would people want let go of the beta state and access the subconscious mind?

Letting go of the beta state brings people into the “feel good” state, where everyday problems are not so important in the present moment. When people begin to let go and relax, there is a greater chance for the body to relax, regenerate and achieve a sense of restoration. Alpha, theta and delta states are the states in which people have the greatest amount of access to their subconscious mind.

### **Significance and Characteristics of the Subconscious Mind**

Have you ever wanted a specific thing to happen in your life, but just the opposite thing happens? If your subconscious mind is not aligned with your conscious mind, most likely whatever beliefs and expectations are stored in your subconscious mind will dominate your experience. For instance, a person may say they want to be thinner, but if their subconscious is not in agreement with this desire, the person will have a very difficult time losing weight, as well as maintaining the weight loss. The Subconscious Mind is connected with a person’s bio-survival instincts.

Some of the most significant facts about the Subconscious Mind are:

- 1 . The Subconscious Mind is about 80%-95% of our minds
- 2 . Long-term memories are stored in the subconscious mind.
- 3 . Emotions are connected with the subconscious mind.

So if you want to affect any true healing and transformation in your client as well as in yourself, you must get your subconscious mind on board with your commitments.

#### Important Characteristics of the Subconscious Mind:

- The Subconscious mind is like a four or five-year-old child
- It takes everything literally. It doesn't have a sense of humor and doesn't understand sarcasm.
- It will follow orders rather than question them.
- It will also follow the commands of the conscious mind, if the conscious mind connects with it.

#### **Significance of Your Words.**

The client's subconscious mind will take what you say on a deeper level. So if you say to your client, "Gee, that is an ugly knot," you client will begin to view this part of his/or body in a negative way.

Or if you say to your client, "When we work out the tension in this muscle, the tension will just settle in another part of your body."

These are statements that I have actually heard in sessions. What I would suggest instead is that you guide your clients to appreciate and accept their bodies. Also guide them to fully release the tension versus sending it to other parts of the body.

Possible positive phrases might include, "Just breathe into this area of tension and allow the tension to fully move out of your body on your exhale."

Or perhaps you want to guide your client to appreciate their body by affirming their willingness to be fully present with the messages that are connected to the current physical challenges. Rather than say, “Gee that is an ugly knot,” you can say, “You are lucky to have a resilient and responsive body. So let’s focus on releasing the tension and congestion that has been held in this part of your body.” The main idea is to give your client encouraging positive suggestions that assist them in feeling more present and more vital in their body and their lives. Most importantly let the good intentions of your healing practices also be conveyed through your words as well as your touch.

*P.S. An interesting book that may give you some ideas about working with conversational hypnosis is a book about the work of Dr. Milton Erickson titled, My Voice Will Go With You.*