

## Chuck's Version of the History of Hypnosis

Father Joseph Gassner (1717 – 1799) uses exorcism of “The Evil One” to cure himself and many others of headaches, dizziness and other disturbances among parishioners in central Europe.

Austrian physician Anton Mesmer (1734 – 1815) heads commission appointed by Prince-Elector Max Joseph of Bavaria, in **1775** refutes exorcism theory and replaces it with theory of animal magnetism.

“Mesmer was not prepared to consider the role of imagination, the explanation which the Royal Commission had proposed, because psychology was not then far enough advanced for imagination to be taken seriously in relation to science.”

**Late 1700's** Mesmer becomes well-known for his salons in Paris where “hysterical” women patients are cured by falling into convulsions or fainting following his animal magnetism treatments, and recovering free of symptoms.

Committee of Inquiry set up in **1784** by the King of France composed of leading scientists (including Benjamin Franklin) debunks theory of animal magnetism and replaces it with the theory of imagination.

American Mesmerist Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802 – 1866) cures bedridden invalid Mary Baker Eddy (1821 – 1910), later the founder of Christian Science.

English surgeon John Elliotson (1791 – 1868) reports in **1834** on numerous surgical operations performed painlessly under mesmeric sleep.

Scottish physician James Esdaile (1808 – 1859) reports in **1846** on 345 major operations performed in India with mesmerism as sole anaesthetic.

Scottish physician James Braid (1795 – 1860) skeptically attends lecture on Mesmerism, becomes convinced of technique's effectiveness. Coins term **hypnosis** for “nervous sleep.”

Jean-Martin Charcot (1825 – 1893), the most distinguished neurologist of his day, demonstrates hypnotic phenomena in his clinic, presents paper in **1882** with theory that hypnosis is hysterical in nature and a result of abnormalities in the nervous system. Teaches Freud 1885 – 1886.

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Hippolyte Berheim, medical colleague of Chjarcot, advances theory that hypnosis is normal phenomenon, attributes it to influence of suggestion.

First International Congress for Experimental and Therapeutic Hypnotism, Paris, 1889, attended by William James and Sigmund Freud.

**1885** *Studies in Hysteria* by Freud and Breur published. Freud has abandoned hypnosis and begun exploring free association and psychoanalysis.

Pierre Janet (1859 – 1947) develops theory of dissociation of personality as an aspect of hypnosis, influences American Morton Prince, who founds the Psychological Clinic at Harvard. Janet writes in 1925, “Hypnosis is quite dead – until it comes to life again.”

Treatment of “shell shock” in World War I revives interest in hypnosis as treatment modality.

Clark Hull, University of Wisconsin and Yale University, publishes *Hypnosis and Suggestibility* in **1933**.

Milton Erickson (1901 – 1980) attends lecture by Clark Hull, begins practicing hypnosis and developing his own approaches to direct and indirect influence. Promotes idea of hypnosis as naturalistic, describes variety of hypnotic responses and approaches to influence in lifetime of writing and teaching.

Erickson students Jay Haley, Ernest Rossi, Kay Thompson, Jeffrey Zeig, Stephen Gilligan, Bill O’Hanlon, Steve de Shazer, and Stephen and Carol Lankton, and their students, expand and develop Ericksonian ideas of **utilization, direct and indirect suggestion, family and relationship trances, formal and informal trance, reframing, positive connotation of symptoms, the unconscious as an ally**, and many others, including his essentially pragmatic and optimistic philosophy of “**life is to be enjoyed.**”