

Developing Your Anchor

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In this article I would like to describe just how hypnosis or self-hypnosis can be most effectively used to achieve your personal goals or outcomes. Although experiencing the hypnotic state can be both relaxing and pleasurable, most people also expect to experience some beneficial effect or change in their lives as the result of being hypnotized. Creating an **anchor** that represents what you want to achieve and then using this anchor during the process of self-hypnosis is a proven way to help bring your specific goals to fruition.

What is an anchor? For the purposes of this article, an **anchor** is a way of simplifying, through a single representation, a group of ideas, goals, objectives or outcomes. An anchor will represent *all* of the content of your particular goals or objectives. Anchors can therefore be thought of as symbols that will evoke all of the associations that you choose them to represent.

How do anchors work? Our minds naturally tend to link together our experiences through associations. This is the way we give meaning and continuity to our experience. Most of our associations, however, are a matter of happenstance and not of intention. For example, you hear an old song and it evokes a memory within you from some time in your past which includes; the friends you were with, the mood you were in, the particular place or circumstance, smells, tastes, sounds, etc... In this example the song has acted as an anchor for all of these associations.

Another example of how we naturally form associations is to close your eyes and imagine the word *house* and to see what memories or associations come into your mind. Take a moment to describe to yourself what you are seeing in your mind's eye. Next imagine the word *home* and see what memories and associations come to you. Notice whether or not there are differences between the memories you associated with the word *house* and the ones that you associated with the word *home*. Most of us see very different pictures when we use these words, yet, in our culture, they are often used to refer to the same place. Although these two words can be used interchangeably they almost always evoke different associations. This demonstrates the way in which anchors can tend to catalogue our individual memories and experiences.

Forming Intentional Anchors For some time it has been commonly accepted by most professionals that work in the field of psychotherapy that our minds do, in fact, categorize or catalogue our memories into groups of associations. This process is highly individual, as it is based upon our own unique, individual experiences and the way we, as individuals, tend to link together or associate these experiences - our own personal filing system, if you like. No two of us will file the same experiences in the same way.

Forming associations is usually an unconscious process that occurs naturally, as we sort and file away more and more memories. Since it is an ongoing, unconscious process, few of us ever give it much thought. It is as if our memories are filed automatically, without any effort on our part. However, we can have volitional control over how and when we form associations simply by using the following process. The obvious benefit to forming an anchor is in helping to achieve some important goal. Why this works is not well understood but has long been appreciated by those who practice the art of hypnosis.

How do you develop an anchor? To develop your own intentional anchor in order to accomplish some change or achieve some goal, it is necessary to first write out what it is that you want, making certain that you express yourself as fully and specifically as possible. Next, take the time to edit this down to 25 words or less. After you have done this, read your condensed goals over a few times and make any necessary changes so that you reflect, as accurately as

possible, your desired outcome. Then choose a **word, image, symbol or feeling** which best and most clearly associates for you all of what you have just written. Use images stated positively that reflect your desires not images stated negatively (i.e. seeing yourself as a non-smoker versus wanting to stop smoking). The unconscious process responds more quickly and fully to positive images or suggestions than it does to negative ones. Therefore, avoid stating or defining anything in the negative and find a way to express the same thing in a positive way.

Your anchor can now be used whenever you decide to use the process of self-hypnosis. Visualize your anchor before you start the process of trance and use the same anchor during the deepest portion of your trance. Also, it is important not to limit your results to just what the conscious portion of your mind feels is possible. Accept and expect a larger version of what it is you are after at any time. This process has limitless potential so begin to appreciate and respect its power.

There are **3 important things** to remember concerning this process:

- 1) Keep your first goal(s) simple and measurable.
- 2) Your original written goal(s) needs to be as explicit as possible. The condensed goal of 25 words or less can be a more generalized, while your specific anchor will be your own personal representation for this entire process.
- 3) Make certain to read over your original written goal(s) several times before attempting to edit it down to 25 words or less.