

# Hypnosis for Kids

with Kelley T. Woods

[www.woodshypnosis.com](http://www.woodshypnosis.com)

## Why work with kids?

Think about working with kids as another form of play! Not only do children need our services more than ever (research shows a severe lack of mental health resources for kids), every child you help is a life that is changed for decades to come. Our children are the future.

In addition, when you incorporate child clients into your practice, you add an element of youthfulness to your own life, reminding you to get and keep in touch with your own sense of playful openness.

## Typical issues kids need help with:

- stress and anxiety
- fears and phobias
- bedwetting or bowel control issues
- study skills, test anxiety
- habit control (thumb sucking, nail biting, hair pulling, etc.)
- pain relief
- attention issues
- grief
- skin issues
- sports performance
- bullying, relationships
- speech difficulties

## How to gain kid clients

There are many ways to build your pediatric hypnosis trade, including taking advantage of satisfied adult clients: many of your established clientele have or know of children who need help. Simply mentioning that you help kids in your practice can plant a seed.

In addition, creating integrative relationships with medical professionals will result in referrals. A good practice is to send a letter, with your client's permission, to their primary physician letting them know you are working together. Note: this is not to ask for permission to work with their patient; every patient has the right to seek out help on their own. This is to intimate that you are part of a healing team and will provide a pleasant introduction of yourself.

Public libraries are open to hypnosis presentations and usually have a teen club you can speak to. Home school associations and private schools may also be receptive to letting kids learn more about the power of their own minds.

Check out athletic clubs, sporting associations and introduce yourself to local coaches. Tip: People are most receptive when you are an active member of their club.

### **First Contact**

Determine who really has the problem and work accordingly. Strive to get the parent on board for change, even if they have to participate! I agree to see them only if they agree to do what I ask them to in my office – making a contract like this helps everyone and comes into play later if you decide to use a parent as a prop and demonstrate a technique with them.

### **Safety First**

Options to work with a kid vary – you may choose to offer to work with the child with a parent present, or the parent may sit in the next room, with the door open. Many pre-teens and teens prefer their parent leave. Giving the kid the choice is empowering to them.

Just like adults, children have the right to confidentiality – be sure to tell them (and their parents) that. The exception is if the child shares information of being abused or is in danger of harming themselves or others.

Familiarize yourself with local laws about child protection and establish a relationship with resource agencies. Don't wait until a problem surfaces to know who to contact!

Make sure your working environment is kid-proofed if you see small children. Don't have too many toys or other distractions visible. Stock small toys a kid can keep and take home.

### **Establishing Rapport**

It's easy to create rapport with a kid, no matter what their age. The recipe is this: make the kid feel like the most important person in the room. To do this, meet them at eye level, direct questions at them and engage in an open, yet light hearted way. If a child is recalcitrant, infuse the interaction with some play; bring out a deck of cards or do a pattern interrupt with a little dance! Be yourself and invite your own inner child out to connect with your kid client.

Active listening and watching for non-verbal cues are important. You can use what you notice to enter a child's trance.

### **Work in a Systemic Way**

Children usually don't arrive where they are independently, so it is often desirable and even necessary to include the family. If a parent is taking the trouble to bring their child to you *and* pay for your services, chances are that they may also be open to being part of the solution, so take advantage of that!

### **Work as part of a team**

- parents and caregivers
- doctors, dentists and other health practitioners
- counselors
- teachers, instructors and coaches

### **Strive to establish and cultivate “The Three R’s”**

One of the best ways we can help a child heal and begin to live an improved life is to help instill the Three R's: Resiliency, Respect and Responsibility. No matter our age, when we understand the value of living with these, it paves the way for awareness that we have choice in our lives...and choice is power!

Remember, as you work with kids to KISS (Keep It Super Simple) – simple language and an honest connection will do most of the work for you.

### **Induction...or not?**

Formal inductions are not always necessary! Kids are in trance states most of the time and you can take advantage of their highly charged imaginations to access their inner minds. Older children may have expectation of hypnotic phenomena, so let them have some fun.

Tip: Many younger children dislike closing their eyes and will keep opening them if instructed to close them! Expect them also to wiggle, climb and roll throughout your time together...you may even want to join them.

One of the best ways to harness a child's imagination is through story telling. Even a shy child will be intrigued when you help by suggesting, “Once upon a time...” and then let them continue the tale. You will be amazed where they go!

### **Inductions that are Easy and Fun**

Pretty much any induction/convincer that you use with your adult clients will map across to your work with kids. Think of each as an opportunity to teach valuable skills, whether that is how to

relax or how to gain control over thoughts, feelings and sensations. I usually start with one that adds a “wow factor” to satisfy any expectation they have that hypnosis feels magical.

Tip: Ask the kid what they think hypnosis feels like and then give that to them.

Approaches that give opportunity to teach skills:

Hand/Foot Stick	Magnetic Fingers/Hands	Finger Responses	Eye Lock
Arm/Hand Levitation	Magic Spiral Palm	Hypnotic Spiral	Visual Distortion
Card/Magic Tricks	Pendulums	PMR/Autogenic Training	
Eye Fixation	Visual Imagery	Breathing Techniques	Mindfulness

When you find an approach that resonates with the kid, turn that into a self-hypnosis tool. Move the kid in and out of hypnosis with it, showing them how they have learned to hypnotize themselves. When they show that they can do it, ask them when they might use this powerful tool – if they need some help in that, you can offer suggestions, but let them come up with some ideas first. Be sure to give post hypnotic suggestion later that they do practice self-hypnosis. A good time for them to do this is every night, before bedtime.

### **About Age Regression and Progression for Kids**

Although many children live in the present, shifting quickly from negative to positive states and back again, kids don't get freaked out by time travel! However, it is not recommended to regress children to traumatic events; to do so can be damaging, rather than helpful because they may not have developed the inner resources and perspectives to deal with anything that comes up.

It *can* be fun and empowering to load a kid into a time machine or a magic bubble to take a trip back to remember a favorite time, visit with their “little self” or fly forward to see their future self. For safety measure, do this in a dissociated state and allow the child to direct the action.

A good question is, “How would you like things to go?” and then have the child create the scene and feelings they want to experience, whether they are in the past, present or future.

Teach a kid how to climb into their time machine to retrieve positive, helpful experiences or recall information for a school test, for example.

### **Tools and Techniques**

Anchoring (Be careful anchoring with tangible items as they can easily get misplaced!)

I wrote about how to use an anchor collapse for sports performance in my book with Melissa, but you can teach it to kids for all sorts of issues:

## **Anchor Collapsing**

Many kids are subject to the competitive pressures of school sports. They are feeling a lot of stress and anxiety when it comes to meeting or exceeding their goals. This can often manifest in self-doubt and performance anxiety. We have found that helping a kid learn how to change states quickly, prior to athletic performance can make all the difference. We like using an anchor collapse technique that works like a charm and this variation of the Ellner/Jamison/Barsky Emotional Detox Technique is easy for kids to practice.

Kelley used it with a teen who had become stuck in her pole vaulting practice, seemingly unable to improve, despite her natural athleticism and desire. The girl revealed that the harder she tried, the more anxious she got just before she began her vaulting process.

Hyp: *Tell me how that feels.*

Teen: *I almost freeze. It's like I can't think straight and my knees get wobbly. This has never happened before.*

Hyp: *Why do you think it's happening now?*

Teen: *We're getting ready to go to state finals.*

Hyp: *So there's more pressure to do well?*

Teen: *Yes. My whole team is counting on me. My coach keeps bragging about how good I am and I am afraid to let him down.*

Hyp: *Yes, that's a lot of pressure! It's good that you can talk about it, don't you think?*

Teen: *Yes. I don't really talk about it at home.*

Hyp: *So, tell me how you would like it to feel, instead of that freeze and wobbly thing...*

Teen: *I want to be SO focused. Like I have been in the past, not worrying about messing it up.*

Hyp: *Because you have done it well many times in the past, right?*

Teen: *Yes. I know that I know how to do it. And I really love vaulting!*

Hyp: *That's just crazy to me! I really admire you! I can't imagine doing that! So, exactly how does it feel when you vault well?*

Teen: *Like I am flying. Just like that...*

Hyp: *Wow. That is really neat and I can see why you would rather feel that way than anxious. I know a trick that will help you make that happen. What I am going to show*

*you will let you very quickly change how you are feeling, no matter what is going on. Do you want to learn it?*

Teen: (nods quickly)

Hyp: *Okay, just put your hands on your thighs, like this (demonstrates). Now, please think about how it feels when you are anxious, nervous, doubting yourself. Maybe think about the last time you felt that way?*

Teen: *Day before yesterday...I choked!*

Hyp: *Yeah, that time. Let yourself remember how that felt. And notice...just notice, where you feel that in your body...*

Teen: (pauses) *In my chest. It feels really tight and hot.*

Hyp: *Good! That's your body telling you that you are not in the right mental place...no wonder it wasn't working for you. Please make a fist with one of your hands now. I want you to let all of those tight and hot, uncomfortable and anxious feelings move right down into that fist. Squeeze it really tight, as tight as those feelings are!*

Teen: (grimaces and squeezes)

Hyp: *Good! Now, release that fist and take a big, lung-filling breath...and let it go. Now...I want you to remember how it feels when you are feeling really calm...confident...clear. Maybe you are doing something you love...maybe you are having fun...it's a great day! You feel good...it's a perfect hair day! Let me know when you are there...*

Teen: (smiles) *Okay, I'm there.*

Hyp: *Wonderful! Now, make a fist in the other hand...squeeze it tight and take in all of those good feelings. Take them in...and then relax that fist. Take another big, cleansing breath. You can let your mind clear a bit. I like to think of some geometry to do that...I think of a square, then I think of a circle inside that square...then I see a triangle inside the circle...and then I let that fade...it's easy to do...Now, here's where the magic happens: I want you to make fists of both hands and then let's count backwards, 5-4-3-2-1...open your hands!*

Hyp: *Feel good?*

Teen: (nods)

Hyp: *Let's see what happened to that old anxious feeling...where did it go?*

Teen: (looks confused and then smiles) *It's...gone?!*

Hyp: *Yeah, pretty weird, huh? Now, you could go looking for it, but why would you want to do that? Why not just keep the good feeling that you have now and run with it? Run with it with your pole and make the highest jump ever!*

Teen: (laughs) *Yeah, I can do that!*

Hyp: *Hey, I want you to know that you can also use this little trick anytime that you are feeling out of sorts...when unwanted, unhelpful feelings are keeping you from doing what you want. Just make sure that you aren't getting rid of feelings that need to be listened to, okay? Do you know what I'm talking about?*

Teen: *I think so. Like if I am sad because my cat died?*

Hyp: *Yes, we need to move through feelings of grief and not just collapse them. But I think you're wise enough to know when this technique will be helpful for you. Have fun with it - practice makes perfect!*

And, as you can see, this approach provides a powerful format for expanding on the topic of emotions, helping to distinguish between those that are important signals and those that are unhelpful, stuck ones.

Tip: Give the kid a note card or a simply printed version of the technique. You can make it easy by outlining it with 3 simple steps:

1. Get in touch with the unwanted feeling and put it in a fist. Release.
2. Pick a better, different feeling and put it in the other fist. Release.
3. Make two fists and count. Release.
4. Feel great! (Oops, we lied, 4 simple steps!)

This anchor collapse is a fantastic tool for gaining mastery over not only any unhelpful emotional response but for physical ones, too. The applications are unlimited; play with it yourself and make it your own!

### **Co-Creating Stories to Find Solutions**

Our primary goal is to empower kids and what better way to do that but with a fun story? When we help a kid find the solutions to their problems, they feel a sense of satisfaction, along with having the opportunity to utilize their creativity in a productive way. Here is [a great example](#) of how it happens organically. There really isn't much you need to do except make a space for the child and ask them to tell a story.

Here's an example of how I helped a 4-year old girl who refused to eat following her father's car accident (he suffered a broken leg). I set the stage with several animal puppets and engaged her in a story, suggesting that Frog had a problem. She took it from there and here is what evolved:

### **The Problem with the Bubble in Frog's Throat**

One day, Frog was playing in his pond, hopping from lily pad to lily pad, when he miss-hopped and splashed into the water. Now, Frog is an unusually good swimmer normally, but this time, he was caught by surprise and slipped under the water with his mouth wide open. As he surfaced and climbed back onto a lily pad to catch his breath, he felt a strange feeling in the middle of his throat.

"Egads!" thought Frog, "I've got a bubble stuck in my throat!" Frog had heard of this happening (one of his great-uncles once had a bubble stuck in his throat and had never recovered.) This was a terrible dilemma: when a frog has a bubble in the throat, it restricts his ability to eat his favorite food: flies.

Frog sat for a while, feeling sorry for himself. He decided to just *try* and see how it felt to swallow a fly. Soon, a fly came flying by and Frog shot out his long tongue ~ WHACKK! He caught the fly and brought it back, into his mouth. He gulped and gagged, trying to swallow the fly, but he was sure he would choke and maybe even die from that fly. So instead, he spat out the fly.

A great panicky feeling came over Frog. "What will I do? I MUST eat flies, but I CAN'T eat with this bubble in my throat." He slumped on that lily pad in a great sadness, feeling no hope at all. Eventually, Frog felt a desire to move because frogs can only sit still for so long, just like children, they are designed to move and play and dance.

Frog hopped off of the lily pad and swam to the edge of the pond. He hopped out of the water and began to venture along the shoreline. He hadn't hopped very far when he encountered Rabbit.

"Hey Frog! What's up?" greeted Rabbit.

"Oh, Rabbit. It's terrible...I've got a bubble in my throat and now I can't eat a fly," moaned Frog, rubbing his throat with one webbed hand.

"Oh, Dear. Have you tried standing on your head? That might make the bubble fall out," suggested Rabbit.

So, Frog stood on his head, his legs waving in the air as he balanced carefully for a long moment. And, once he flipped back to his feet, he tried to swallow.

"No, it's still there," Frog sighed. And he hopped away, leaving Rabbit feeling sad.

A few moments later, Frog met up with Skunk, who was admiring her reflection at the edge of the pond.

"Skunk! I'm so glad to see you! It's terrible...I've got a bubble in my throat and now I can't eat a fly," exclaimed Frog.

"Oh, Dear. Have you tried holding your breath and counting to ten? I've heard that works," said Skunk.

So Frog took a deep breath, while Skunk counted to ten, out loud. One, two, three, four, five, (Frog was starting to turn a bit red now), six, seven eight, (now Frog looked a bit blue!), nine, ten!

Frog let out his breath with relief and then took a tentative swallow of spit. But his hopeful expression dropped to disappointment, “Nope. Still there. I’ll never swallow another fly. I’m doomed.”

Frog continued on his way, leaving Skunk feeling sad.

By now, Frog was feeling desperate. He began to think about his future and how awful it will be to never eat another fly. With each and every hop, he became more and more depressed. In fact, he was now so down that he nearly hopped right into Bird, who was hunting for worms in the grass.

“Watch out, Frog” chirped Bird. “You nearly flattened me!”

“I’m sorry, Bird,” groaned Frog. “It’s just that it’s terrible...I’ve got a bubble in my throat and now I can’t eat a fly.”

“Poor Frog,” replied Bird as she patted him on the head with her wing. “Join me here, I’m just about to have a picnic!” She pointed to a soft place where some flower cups and stone plates were resting around a delicious pile of wiggling worms.

“I couldn’t possibly, but you go ahead,” said Frog. He didn’t want to hurt Bird’s feelings, but worms were not appetizing to him at all. The only food he really wanted to eat was a fly and the more he thought about *that*, the more he felt the bubble in his throat.

“Frog, just sit here with me and rest,” invited Bird, gesturing to the inviting spot. Frog hopped closer and settled next to Bird, sighing deeply.

“This is a very special elixir I prepared this morning,” whispered Bird, as she pointed to the flower cups. A sparkling, greenish liquid filled them to the brim. “It’s my mother’s secret recipe: guaranteed to cure what ails you! Perhaps you might enjoy some...”

Bird passed a cup of the drink to Frog, who sniffed it suspiciously.

“Smells like...pond water,” grunted Frog.

“Of course, Silly! It may look and smell ordinary, but I promise you, it’s not! Try it!” urged Bird.

Frog lifted the cup to his mouth and gulped down the elixir. It tickled a bit as the sweet drink moved past the bubble in his throat.

“I don’t feel anything. The bubble is still there,” said Frog.

“Give it a little time. All good things take time,” suggested Bird.

Frog waited, a bit impatiently, hungrily watching a fly that had come to rest by the picnic spot. Then, he felt a tickling in his tummy, a bit of gurgling that grew louder and stronger and he looked down at his belly. It appeared to have grown larger, swelling quickly, like a balloon.

His eyes grew wide as he watched his round stomach move from side to side and from up to down...until, suddenly, from the very depths of his belly, moving upwards, through his throat and out his mouth, came a huge, echoing BURRRRRRRRRRRPPP!

Bird laughed out loud and flapped her wings while Frog, astonished, covered his mouth in embarrassment.

“Well?” asked Bird. “Where’s that bubble now?”

Frog stared back at her. “It’s gone!”

“It’s gone!” and Frog leaped into the air, flicking out his tongue and grabbed a fly, smacking his lips as he ate it happily.

“Bird, you’re wonderful! You saved my life!” thanked Frog. He hugged bird with a great, slimy embrace.

“Awe,” said Bird. “I didn’t do anything. It was my mother’s secret recipe and you’re the one with the giant burp!”

Frog waved good-bye and hopped back home, leaving Bird feeling happy.

(In my office, I had a quaint, tiny British tea set waiting to serve up the "tend" [pretend] drink, along with puppets that played the animal roles. My little client's belch was quite impressive! After that, we both shared a plate of small bits of fruit.)

## **The Reverse Metaphor**

One novel way to use stories for discovery and solution creation is to use a Reverse Metaphor approach. Here’s an excerpt from *Integrative Hypnosis for Kids and Teens*:

One of the risks of working with people of any age who have experienced trauma is re-exposing them to the experience and further entrenching negative responses (strengthening the neural pathways that maintain them). So, while it's valuable to learn a bit about the actual trauma and most particularly, the meaning the kid places on it, we want to keep their story-telling of trauma to a minimum unless we are doing some re-imprinting/re-coding as described above.

Another answer to this dilemma is to guide the teen through a reverse metaphor process. This allows the teen to process the experience from a different perspective and it is uncanny how the subconscious will *always* serve up a beautiful metaphor. Kelley first discovered this technique years ago from Mary Lee LaBay and has used it with kids of many ages, including adults.

To create a reverse metaphor, simply ask the teen to tell you a story of their own creation. Keep brief notes on the highlights and then repeat it back to them, making any desired changes, and then move through it again, drawing comparisons to the teen's experience. Here's a typical way we used the reverse metaphor approach for a teen who had been a runaway for nearly a week:

*Hyp: Let's play a little game. I'd like you to tell me a story...just a made up one if you like. It can be about an animal, or a person, or even something else. It starts with, "Once upon a time..."*

Teen: *Okay...hmmm...Once upon a time there was a horse...and the horse lived on a farm with some other animals. The horse had to be in a fenced area because it liked to run and the owners were worried that it would run away.*

Hyp: *Great. What else?*

Teen: *But the farm dog and cat got to just walk around without any fence...so the horse didn't like that.*

Hyp: *Yes. And then what happened?*

Teen: *One night there was a big storm and the fence blew down. The horse galloped off through the woods. Even though it was scared it was still happy to be free.*

Hyp: *And then what happened?*

Teen: *The horse met a bear and the bear shared some berries. The horse thought the bear was its friend but found out later that the bear only wanted to lure it back to its cave where it would eat it!*

Hyp: *Wow! What a story! What did the horse do?*

Teen: *The horse ran away. It just explored for many days until one day it got homesick. Then it went back to the farm. The farmer and his family were very happy to see it and decided to let it roam around without any fences so it was happy. The End!*

Hyp: *I love your story. Let me tell it back to you to make sure I got it right...*

(Paraphrases story back and asks for any changes...)

Hyp: *Good. Now, let's start back at the beginning...if there was something or someone in your life right now that relates to the horse in your story, who or what would that be?*

Teen: (thinks for a while) *I guess I am that horse!*

Hyp: *Cool! And if you are that horse, what is that horse thinking or feeling?*

Teen: *I don't like being told what to do. I hate it when I am grounded.*

Hyp: *And you had some other characters in your story...who or what do the dog and cat represent?*

Teen: *My brothers. They get to do anything they want and never get in trouble. It's not fair.*

Hyp: *And then a big storm comes!*

Teen: (laughs) *Yeah, we had a really big fight, my mom and I. I snuck out when everyone went to sleep.*

Hyp: *And you ran away!*

Teen: *Yup. I went to my friend's house. She let me stay in her room.*

Hyp: *The horse met a bear...*

Teen: *I guess that is my friend...or, I thought she was my friend. I don't really know her very well and she had some guys over that made me nervous so I left pretty quickly.*

Hyp: *You were gone for some time.*

Teen: *I bounced around to some other people's houses. But that got kinda old.*

Hyp: *The horse got homesick.*

Teen: *I did. I thought maybe enough time had passed that my folks would be happy to see me. I was scared to come home, though, in case they were really mad.*

Hyp: *The farmer and his family were happy to see the horse return.*

Teen: *I couldn't believe that my mom was crying when she saw me. Kinda felt good but kinda felt bad that I worried her so much.*

Hyp: *And the horse got to roam around the farm without a fence?*

Teen: *I should have got grounded again but my parents figured out that just makes me crazy! We're doing a new thing where we meet once a week and talk about family rules and that kinda stuff. I get to have some say in the rules, too.*

Hyp: *Is the horse happy?*

Teen: *It's okay now. Still feels a little fenced in sometimes and wants to kick stuff!*

Hyp: *What else could the horse do, besides kick stuff?*

Teen: *I don't know. Maybe go for a run?*

Hyp: *Yeah, I like that idea. Running usually helps...as long as you're not just running away from problems that need fixing.*

Teen: *Yeah, I know. Maybe running to figure out problems?*

Hyp: *Another great idea! You're pretty good at this. I really like your story. I know you like to draw. Would you like to have this copy of your story and perhaps make a drawing to go with it?*

Teen: *Yeah. I'd like that.*

It was easy to further utilize the horse-wanting-to-be-free metaphor for this teen. Acknowledging the need for freedom and exploration was important, while also getting in touch with the need to be part of a loving family reminded the kid of that value.

Another teen had a history of depression and anxiety and Mom reported that the kid was demotivated and in danger of failing some classes. The teen had a hard time expressing what was wrong and complained of just not having any interest in doing her homework.

Here's how Kelley used a reverse metaphor to get the ball rolling:

Kelley: *Hey, would you do me a favor? I know you love to draw, but would you tell me a story today?*

Teen: *What kind of story?*

Kelley: *Any kind...you can tell me one you have heard or you can make one up.*

Teen: *Can I tell you one my friend told me?*

Kelley: *Sure.*

Teen: *So, my friend was walking downtown and this guy, a guy she had never seen before, came up to her and asked if she wanted to buy a vape.*

Kelley: *And then what happened?*

Teen: *Well, my friend, you should see her...I mean, she looks normal, like she has blonde hair and dresses nice. There's no reason to think she'd want anything like that.*

Kelley: *I see. So, what did your friend do?*

Teen: *She just said no and got out of there.*

Kelley: *Alright, cool story. I'm glad you told it to me. Let me tell it back to you...(paraphrases the story back) And if there was something going on in your life that is related to your story, what would that be?*

Teen: (immediately replies) *That people misunderstand who I am. They think that I am just a normal girl. They don't see that I have problems.*

Kelley: *Which people?*

Teen: *People at school.*

Kelley: *And if people at school really knew who you are, how would that make things different?*

Teen: *I'd want to go there, I guess.*

Kelley: *What if we practiced that in hypnosis...so you could feel what that will be like?*

Teen: *Okay.*

The reverse metaphor, in this case, helped this teen express what was really bothering her, even though she had previously not realized how much she wanted others to see her authentic self and even to see the side of her that was struggling.

## **Wardrobe of Wonder for Kids**

This is a dynamic, fluid experience that starts with having a kid imagine they see themselves in a full-length mirror as they currently are and inviting any thoughts or emotions related to that vision to surface. Since it's common to notice our flaws, this means some of those may be negative and that's alright!

We don't linger there long, though, but move into noticing how we may be carrying (wearing) things that are outdated, ill-fitting, scratchy or otherwise uncomfortable (limitations). Perhaps we personally chose those things or maybe they were put upon us...even before we realized it or knew any better. We can frame specific perceived weaknesses (inability to pay attention, unhelpful emotions or reactions, etc.) as these objectified garments or accessories.

I invite the kid to take off these unnecessary, unwanted things and hand them back, through the mirror, to their original source. This is done in an open context and doesn't require that those sources are even consciously recognized. Using these metaphors automatically engages the subconscious, which is holding on to those limitations.

Following this, I point the kid's attention toward a beautiful wardrobe, a closet of their own design, adjacent to the mirror. Into this we delve for garments, accessories and props of CHOICE. (Being in choice leads to being in control!) I expand on the possible selection and let the kid make the choices...choices which represent traits, abilities, attitudes and emotions that are more congruent with who they are and who they wish to be.

Kids have discovered capes that give them super powers, glasses that help them see the bright side of life, cloaks that reduce pain, special shoes that motivate them, etc. Play with this and encourage the child to find strengths and solutions through this metaphorical closet.

I then future pace the kid into a time when they are "wearing" items from their Wardrobe of Wonder and suggest they can return to it anytime to update their selections.

Here's another resource from my book with Melissa Tiers:

## **Protective Bubble for Kids**

Helping kids in our care feel more secure is important – especially kids who suffer from trauma, fears and anxiety. We provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere on the external level just by maintaining a comfortable, clean and fun environment, along with a reassuring and patient manner. But what about on an internal level? What can we do to insure our young clients feel an inner security, not just when they are in our presence but when they go back out into the world?

One way we can do that is to co-create a virtual protective shield. This approach offers many different applications in addition to a safety device. It can serve as:

- a time travel machine for age progression or regression
- a bypass for geographical limits, exploring our world and even alternate universes
- a means to shift perspectives
- a meeting place

We have mentioned how important it is not to rely on reading a script to a kid. A lot of the cure for what ails the kid is contained in the creation of the cure itself. So be sure to give the kid lots of choices when you are helping them devise their own, personal protective shield.

Here's how you can structure it for a younger child:

Hyp: *Would you like to make something with me in your mind that is really neat...something that you can use a lot?*

Kid: *What?*

Hyp: *I like to call it a magic bubble, a bubble that keeps you safe, no matter what's happening inside or outside.*

Kid: *Okay.*

Hyp: *Alright, here we go. Remember how you told me that you get really scared when you have to go to the dentist.*

Kid: *Yeah. I don't like going there. Mommy gets mad at me because I don't want to go and I cry.*

Hyp: *Well, you know that grownups aren't perfect, right? We get sad and mad and we cry sometimes, too.*

Kid: *Yeah. I don't like it when she yells at me.*

Hyp: *That makes you upset.*

Kid: *Yeah.*

Hyp: *What if you didn't get upset? What if you could just be there at the dentist and it really wouldn't bother you that much? Would that be okay?*

Kid: *Yes, because then I wouldn't get a tummy ache.*

Hyp: *It's no fun to get a tummy ache.*

Kid: *No.*

Hyp: *Well, this magic bubble can help protect your tummy! It's really easy and fun to make it...we're going to make it together, okay?*

Kid: *(nods)*

Hyp: *First, take a big deep breath and when you blow it out, just imagine that you are making a great, big bubble that goes all around you.*

*(waits for exhale)*

Hyp: *Now your whole body is inside a big bubble. You can breathe just fine in there and the temperature is just what you want it to be. It's like you are floating in this bubble. Can you imagine that?*

Kid: *Yes. Can I see out of the bubble?*

Hyp: *Yes, you can! In fact, it's transparent, like a window. Now, because it's your bubble, it can be hard or soft. It can be just as thick or thin as you want it to be. You can even put a soft color in your bubble...or maybe you want some sparkles.*

Kid: *It's purple! With sparkles!*

Hyp: *Do you have a favorite smell?*

Kid: *I like cotton candy smell.*

Hyp: *Put that smell in there, too!*

Kid: *Mmmmm. I like that.*

Hyp: *Now, I want to tell you a secret about your bubble. Your bubble keeps out anything that makes you feel not okay. If there is yelling or bad words or mean looks or anything at all that might make your tummy ache, those will just bounce right off the outside of your bubble. They won't get in to hurt you anymore!*

Kid: *How about stinky things? Like when my dog farts!*

Hyp: *Yes, those stinky things, too. Now you might still know they are there, but they just won't bother you. You may just smile or laugh but it won't seem so gross to you.*

Kid: *If Jeremy calls me a name again, would that bounce off the bubble?*

Hyp: *Yes! That's a perfect time to use your magic bubble. Just let that word bounce right off...bounce, bounce, bounce... (gestures with hand)*

Kid: *Bounce, bounce, bounce! (laughing)*

Hyp: *Are you in your bubble?*

Kid: *(closes eyes) Yeah. Smells nice.*

Hyp: *Good! Can you make the bubble grow? Can you push it all the way to the corners of this room?*

Kid: *Okay. (nods)*

Hyp: *Notice how that feels. Sometimes you might want to have it be bigger, when you are with people who love you, like your family or friends...and sometimes, you might want to have it nice and small, so that only you fit into it. Or maybe you want your kitty to be in it, too!*

Kid: *Yeah, Fluffy can come in! But no stinky dog!*

Hyp: *Make it be just the size you need it to be now. Let me know when you have.*

Kid: *(pause, then nods)*

Hyp: *Great! Now, I want to show you how it works. You told me that you are scared at the dentist, is that right?*

Kid: *(nods)*

Hyp: *Let's climb in your magic bubble and use it for a time machine! You can take it to the future, to the next time you visit the dentist...and when you get there, you can just sit inside of it and notice how different it feels. Go ahead and do that...let me know when you are there.*

Kid: *(pause, then nods) I'm there.*

Hyp: *Good. Is that purple bubble all around you? Do you smell that cotton candy smell?*

Kid: *Yeah. Feels good. I'm not scared!*

Hyp: *Way to go! What else do you notice there at the dentist?*

Kid: *It's not stinky like it was before.*

Hyp: *Yes, that magic bubble keeps those smells away. You can still hear the dentist and the other workers there, can't you?*

Kid: *Yeah. But it's kind of soft and I don't care.*

Hyp: *You're pretty good at this. You know, you can keep that bubble close to you or if you want, you can make it bigger, too. It's all up to you! You are the boss of you!*

Kid: *Feels good.*

Hyp: *Yes, it does. Can you see that the dentist visit goes very quickly and soon you are leaving? Everyone is very impressed at how calm you are. Maybe they have never seen a kid that is so peaceful at the dentist!*

Kid: *I am peaceful. I like my purple bubble.*

Hyp: *And now it always belongs to you. You can keep it on, but you can also take it off whenever you want; you can put it in your pocket...or in your ear...or your nose...*

Kid: *In my ear?! Or my nose?! (laughing)*

Young children enjoy the sense of play this process brings and you can even finish it off with opening up a jar of bubbles and having fun blowing and chasing bubbles around your office!

Here's another great approach and an example of how I helped a kid who was pulling her hair out make a friend of the part of her that was managing the behavior:

### **Taming the Dragon**

This is one of Kelley's favorite approaches for helping children (and adults) transform a problem state into a helpful resource state. Years ago, she encountered Wendy McLarn's process, *Slaying the Dragon*, and soon after applying the concept to a few kid clients realized that name and its implied frame had to go. Not just because the idea of slaying something that at heart may be helpful was unappealing, but because these kids liked their misbehaving or otherwise troublesome dragon!

Here's how you can use the dragon metaphor in a parts-like process:

Tip: If you are working with younger children (4-8 or so) you don't need them to close their eyes. You might just suggest it, saying that it's up to them because sometimes it's easier to play this game with eyes closed. Like we say, the whole idea is to give them a sense of control and some kids feel out of control when "things get dark".

The following example features a case of hair-pulling that had gone on for years and despite a child behaviorist's attempts to help, the habit was still thriving. This wee client was barely four years of age and, according to her mother, had originally developed the habit by playing with her own hair while nursing. It occurred during both awake and asleep states. The child was beyond her age in language/cognitive abilities and enjoyed participating in narrative play.

Hyp: *So, tell me about your habit of hair pulling...do you like to do it?*

Kid: (surprised at the positive frame) *Sometimes...*

Hyp: *Can you share with me...where do you like to do it?*

Kid: *When I'm by myself...at night.*

Hyp: *And when you are by yourself at night...where are you?*

Kid: *In my bed.*

Hyp: *Cool. That's usually where I go at night, too. Do you know...how you feel at night in your bed when you don't pull your hair?*

Kid: *Scared.*

Hyp: *You feel scared. Sometimes I feel that way, I get it. And then, when you pull your hair, how do you feel?*

Kid: *Not so scared.*

Hyp: *Isn't that great?! A part of you found a way to help you feel better when you are scared at night in your bed! Where else do you like to pull your hair?*

Continue to explore the where, when, how, what, and sometimes who of the problem behavior in this way until both you and the child have a good idea of triggers and responses. Again, we hope to take every opportunity to raise a kid's emotional intelligence, so that they can not only find resolution within our work but be able to take the lessons forward in life.

Once we help the child discover the possible benefits of a behavior we also need to identify the detriments:

Hyp: *Well, even though this hair pulling thing has been helping you in a way, it's also been not helping you. Can you tell me what you don't like about it?*

Kid: *Um, I have some bald spots and I have to wear a bandana. And my mom cut my hair really short.*

Hyp: *Really?! Can I see?*

Kid: *Okay (shows spot on scalp)*

Hyp: *That's impressive! It took many times of being scared to get that, didn't it? What else do you not like about pulling your hair?*

Kid: *It makes my head sore.*

Hyp: *Ouch. It makes your head sore. I wouldn't like that either. Anything else you don't like about pulling your hair?*

Kid: *My mom gets mad at me and once she was crying.*

Hyp: *I can understand that you wouldn't like that very much. I wonder if she's not so much mad at you but frustrated, because she loves you very much and she hasn't been able to fix this problem. Isn't it good that she brought you here to the hair-pulling fixer?!*

Kid: (grins) *Yeah.*

Hyp: *And how will it be when you don't pull your hair anymore?*

Kid: (thinks for a while) *I can grow my hair all the way to my feet!*

Hyp: *Like Rapunzel?*

Kid: *Yeah! I'll have a long, long braid and the prince will climb up it into the tower but not the witch.*

Hyp: *I love it! I'll have to come see that, for sure. I'll bring you some long, long ribbons to weave into that long braid.*

Allow for some spontaneous future pacing here...You can also have some paper and markers on hand. Young kids respond well while drawing as you weave the narrative. The drawing can go home with them to anchor the experience or you can ask to keep it to help other kids with the same problem.

Hyp: *So, I've got a neat little game we can play. When we are finished, I think you are going to find that that problem you have had is greatly improved. Does that sound good to you?*

Kid: *Yeah.*

Hyp: *I want you to imagine the part of you that makes you pull your hair. Think really hard, now, and if that hair-pulling part of you were a dragon, what would it look like?*

Wait a bit here. One of the problems that happens when adults talk to kids is that they don't allow enough time for mental processing. Let the patient part of you help...

Kid: *Purple!*

Hyp: *Tell me about its skin...is it rough, or smooth? Does it have scales...or fur?*

Kid: *It's scaly...and cold.*

Hyp: *Scaly...and cold. Like a big lizard!*

Kid: *Yeah. And it has a tail. And claws on its feet.*

Hyp: *It has a tail. And claws on its feet. What about its head?*

Kid: *Big. With teeth.*

Hyp: *A big head with teeth. Good. What color are its eyes?*

Kid: *Red.*

Hyp: *And red eyes! Where is your hair-pulling dragon looking? Is it looking at something else or is it looking at you?*

Kid: *It's looking right at me!*

Hyp: *It's looking right at you. Hey, is your dragon a boy or a girl?*

Kid: *It's a boy.*

Hyp: *It's looking right at you and it's a boy. Anything else you want to tell me about your dragon?*

Kid: *It's scared.*

Hyp: *Your dragon is scared...How do you feel about your dragon?*

Kid: *I feel sorry for it.*

Hyp: *You're a kind and loving kid and you feel sorry for it...Where is your dragon? Is he in front of you, or to one side, or above you or beneath...or maybe behind you?*

Kid: (pauses to think) *He's right next to me...right here.* (points to right side of head, also where most of hair loss is located)

Hyp: *Excellent! He's right there* (points). *You're doing a perfect job of telling me all about your hair-pulling dragon. Now, are you ready to make things get even better?*

Kid: *Okay.*

Hyp: *Take a big breath...that's right...and then, let it out slowly. Good. Now, what I need you do, and this is important so I'm going to whisper it to you because I don't want the dragon to hear...listen very carefully...*

Hyp: (leans over and whispers in her ear) *Begin to change your dragon. We don't want to get rid of the dragon because he helps you but we can change how it helps you.*

Hyp: *You can start with changing the color of the dragon...what color would you rather it be?*

Kid: *Green.*

Hyp: *Okay, make that happen! Have him turn green. Next, what would you like to do with that scaly skin?*

Kid: *Make it soft and fluffy. Maybe some fur, like a puppy.*

Hyp: *Awesome! Look at your dragon changing! He is soft and fluffy, with fur like a puppy. How about the tail?*

Kid: *Keep the tail. But, the feet are different now.*

Hyp: *Nice. He still has a tail but his feet are different now. You're doing great. And how about those eyes, those red eyes?*

Kid: *I'll make them be brown.*

Hyp: *Like a puppy's eyes?*

Kid: *Yup!*

Hyp: *I love it. He has brown puppy eyes! And, you know how, when a puppy really loves you, he rolls onto his back and wants you to tickle his belly? Can you have your dragon do that?*

Kid: *Yeah...he likes that!*

Hyp: *How is your dragon feeling now?*

Kid: *He feels silly.*

Hyp: *He feels silly! How do you feel?*

Kid: *Happy.*

Hyp: *You feel happy. Is silly and happy better than feeling scared and sorry?*

Kid: *Yeah.*

Hyp: *Can you imagine that whenever you feel that way, from now on, that you can tickle your dragon's belly and feel better? Is that going to be good?*

Kid: *Yeah. I can do that at school, too.*

Hyp: *Yes, you can do that at school. You can do that at all those times and places where the dragon used to make you pull your hair!*

Kid: *Then my hair will grow very, very long!*

Hyp: *Yes, it will grow very, very long! Give your dragon a big hug and thank him!*

Kid: *(reaches out and hugs the air)*

Hyp: *You can keep your dragon with you, if you want. Or, you can let him go off and play. He likes to chase butterflies, you know.*

Kid: *There he goes! (waves)*

Following this experience, the child's awake hair-pulling totally resolved. The nightly, asleep habit remained for a week or two and then gradually dissipated, supported by an audio recording based on the dragon story.

The magic of this approach is contained in the idea that when we manipulate a metaphor consciously, the subconscious also automatically makes adjustments. Merely by changing the representation of the objectified behavior, we change how it operates and the meaning it holds.

You can take this process deeper into parts work with some age regression by asking the child when the dragon first appeared in their life. Using a time line approach, this can be a light vehicle for exploring conditions in earlier years that may have set up or contributed to the problem and you can take advantage of the time travel work to do some re-scripting of past experiences while you are there.

Additionally, this can also reveal or clarify any benefit gained from the behavior, if that's needed. Directly asking a child client, "*How does that help you?*" doesn't always result in a clear response and will most likely just confuse the kid and why would we want to do that?!

### **Director's Technique**

This is my version of a 3-step NLP approach which helps a kid first gain better awareness about an unwanted habit or reaction, then applies desired changes and finally, provides mental rehearsal for success. This can be done in waking state or within interactive formal hypnosis.

Ask your kid client to imagine seeing a screen – they are used to video gaming, watching TV or working on a computer or phone, so this is easy for them to visualize. Suggest that they see a blank place there and soon, a movie will begin to play. This movie will show a version of themselves, as they have been, struggling with the presenting issue. The good news is that they are the director of this movie!

Have them design the scene, bringing in anything that demonstrates how hard this has been. Use all sensory modalities and let them know that their inner mind might even be a bit goofy, that's okay!

Next, have them notice a child actor (actress) walking in to the scene. This actor may look just like the kid, or like someone else, again, they choose. Then, tell them that as the director of this performance, they need to instruct the actor on the role. Get specific about things like body language, emotions, etc. Make sure the kid understands this scene is showing how it USED to be (expectation and belief of change planted here).

When the kid is ready, have them call out ACTION! and go through the performance. The kid can interrupt anytime and direct the actor. They can bring in other characters, etc. I set up a finger signal to indicate when they have gotten to the end of the scene.

It's not necessary for them to verbalize anything to you - you will see the activity going on!

Step 2: return to the beginning and tell the kid this is Version 2.0 and it will now be a different scene from this play of their life...the one showing how they WANT it to happen!

Have them create the changes on the stage that will help - lighting, etc. Then, they instruct the actor on how they will be feeling, speaking, acting, etc. Once again, when they are ready, the kid starts the action. Within this scene, I suggest they use any tools they have learned from me: anchors, breathing, etc.

Tell them also to bring in challenges, unexpected problems and see how easily the kid actor deals with them. Continue to the end and wait for the signal that they have completed. Check that they are satisfied with the performance and if so, they can thank and dismiss the actor. If not, they can rewind and correct.

Step 3: Now it's time for the kid to step onto the stage and go through the scene themselves. This lays the mental blueprint for the future. Have them make any changes and improvements they need from that perspective and lead them through the successful event. From that point I move them right off the stage to deepening and input of positive suggestions.

As you can see, this process is powerful and empowering. It can be used for habit change, test or performance anxiety, etc.

It's fun and it's easy, because all you need remember is the 3 stages! Literally! LOL

### **Control Room for Kids**

This classic approach is instructional in nature, providing the kid with the experience of learning how metaphorical thoughts and imagery can shift perceptions and even physiological responses. Following is an example of how it may be used for inducing physical comfort, but you can imagine how it can be applied for just about any physical or emotional component.

This is an interactive technique, so a light state of trance is all that is needed to suspend disbelief and entice the kid's imagination. Be sure to use age-appropriate language. Following induction:

Introduce the idea of a "control room" of sorts, within the child's safe/perfect place. You can use some imagery such as a gateway, doorway, etc., depending on your preferences. Guide the kid into this space.

#### *Sample script:*

Notice that the walls of this space are lined with banks of softly flashing, colored lights...instrument panels...dials, levers, gauges of types...I want to tell you that this control room monitors and regulates everything in and about you.

One area measures, calibrates and adjusts your physical functions...everything about your body is controlled in this area. Another area is in charge of your emotions, your feelings. Still another section of this Control Room addresses your beliefs, your hopes and dreams.

I'd like you to focus on that area that controls your physical body...your anatomy...In fact, please focus in on the controls for your left hand...(Allow some time here) Let me know when you have found the controls for your left hand...

Good. Now, you will notice that there are many ways that your left hand can be and feel. You might see some controls for the strength or the weakness of your left hand...you might see some controls for the tension or the relaxation of your left hand...perhaps there is an itch adjustment for your left hand...You will also notice that there is a temperature gauge for your left hand. Look and see what the setting is right now. It may appear to you as a digital read-out or it may be in some color spectrum or identified by specific words. The control mechanism may be a dial, or a gauge or a lever...Just notice the temperature of your left hand...right now. Let me know when you are aware of this.

Good. Now, what I'd like you to do is turn down the temperature of your left hand. I want you to turn it *way* down. Just adjust that temperature control down. I want you to turn it down so far that you soon notice a sense of cooling coming in. You may notice it first on the top of your hand, or perhaps in the fingertips or maybe in the palms. Just notice as your left hand starts to cool. Really turn that temperature down...so that in a little while, a sense of numbness begins to arrive. A sensation of no sensation...numb, like when you have your gums numbed at the dentist. Or, if you like, the feeling you might get if you put your entire hand into a snowbank...or a bucket of ice water. So cold, so numb...now. Some people even notice that it starts to feel as if there *is* no hand...or, that it feels like a block of wood...inanimate...totally numb. Let me know when your left hand is so numb, it almost feels like it's not there...

*(Allow enough time for this to occur.)*

Great! Isn't it interesting how adept you already are at controlling your body sensations? Why, it only took a short while for you to bring all of that numbness into your hand! Wouldn't it be helpful if you could do that anytime you wanted to? In fact, wouldn't it be wonderful if you could then *transfer* that feeling to any other part of your body...some part where you wanted to have some numb feeling, some relief?

Of course, it would...and you may not be surprised to know that you wouldn't even necessarily have to move that numb hand to that body part...that you can just *think* of it transferring that numb, sensation of no sensation to that area and very quickly gain that numbing relief. OR, you might decide to just go straight to the controls for that body part and let the relief come right in...that might even be the way you decide to go...

*(You can now help the kid address certain areas of discomfort.)*

You really have to hand it to your mind...because your mind knows how to make you feel better when you decide you are ready and now you are ready to start to warm up that left hand...So, just turn that temperature back up...move it back up to the original degree...notice how the feeling comes drifting quickly back in...so that you are becoming, once again, aware of the feelings of your fingers, your thumbs, the palms...and the backs of your hands. Nice.

Of course, it might be fun to see what it feels like to *warm* your left hand even more...turning that temperature up even more now...really crank it up...let your begin to get *hot*...feel that warmth, that heat flowing into your hand...completely...You may even notice the outside air feels like it's chilled...Perhaps you imagine warming your hand next to a crackling bonfire or submerging it in a hot, sudsy bath...Very warm...even hot...now...Maybe there is even a bit of perspiration forming

between your fingers or on your palm...So hot...Let me know when your left hand is very warm and even hot...

Excellent! You are so good at this. When you are ready, you can turn back down the temperature of your left hand...let it return to the perfect level for you. You now understand that you can adjust how your left hand and how any part of your physical self is feeling, simply by coming to this Control Room and accessing the controls. You will even notice that you are not limited to just one modality for your body. For example, you can certainly turn down the discomfort and turn up the comfort...or you can turn down tension and turn up relaxation...can't you?

You are the one who knows your body best...you may decide to choose a numb feeling or you may realize that a feeling of warm relaxation is more helpful. But what you have certainly learned here is that you are the Boss of You. You can choose how you feel, at any time...and the more you practice and play here in this Control Room, the easier it becomes for you to elicit the feelings you want. In fact, I wonder if you even know how easy it will soon be for you to simply imagine the controls and quickly adjust them...and this helps make your life experience even more comfortable, more joyful...after all, that's what you desire and you deserve it! Everyone deserves to live in comfort and joy...

It's best to move kids in and out of different states, so pop them back into their Control Room several times during the session so that they can become adept at doing it themselves!

## **Utilizing an Ideomotor Pendulum**

Particularly for pre-teen and teens, this tool is marvelous not only as a convincer and an induction device, it's an excellent medium for self-discovery. Most young people are very interested in themselves – that's why any popular teen magazine contains at least one Self Quiz!

Imagine teaching a young client how to ferret out some direction on their own:

### **As a convincer:**

Start by showing the client your own ideomotor pendulum. (There are numerous designs available on the retail market, consisting of fine chain and crystals, but Kelley makes her own with simple metal "clock face" charms and fine black elastic string. The elastic, unlike sewing thread, is responsive but doesn't get twisted.)

You can simply hold the pendulum in the air and demonstrate how your thought of "Yes" or "No" creates motion in specific patterns. Don't get too detailed about why it works, because you want to keep some of the mystery for now. Be assured, you have now caught your child client's attention and they are thinking one or several thoughts:

*They are moving it on purpose.*

*It's moving!*

*I can't make that happen, myself.*

*I want to do that!*

Without delay, tell them it's their turn now and hand the pendulum to the kid and ask them to start thinking, "Yes". Once the motion has started, have them start thinking, "No."

### **As an induction tool:**

Suggest that the kid notice how the pendulum is responding, framing your language to fit the response. For example, if there is a strong response, you might say, *"Wow! You are really good at this! This tells me that your subconscious mind is responsive to what we are doing and you are a good candidate for hypnosis..."*

If, on the other hand, there is little movement of the pendulum, you can say, *"Very interesting...you know, sometimes it can take a little while to unlock that door and I wonder if you can imagine that happening soon. In the meantime, just keep staring at that thing and try NOT to make it move!"*

Or, on the off chance the pendulum doesn't move at all, you can have them switch to the "right hand" which just might be the left. Frame it in a positive way by implying that the unconscious mind wants a bit more play before it commits and suggest we can use the pendulum after hypnosis.

Regardless of the response, you can take advantage of attention fixation on the pendulum, along with the response or lack of response, to guide your client into further hypnotic entrancement. You can suggest that the arm become cataleptic and only when they are ready to go further does it drop down, eyes closing down with that motion.

Conversely, you can elevate the arm and suggest the eyes follow the pendulum higher. You can suggest that the fingers release the pendulum upon your command count. You could also simply lift the arm and turn it into the dreaming arm induction.

The possibilities are unlimited, including suggesting that the kid create some different response when they are ready to "enter hypnosis".

### **For self-discovery:**

How many of our adult clients say this to us: "I only wish I had known about this when I was younger!" It's pretty cool to teach kids something that they can use for the rest of their lives, right?

When we instruct a kid on using an ideomotor pendulum, it's important to explain what this process is and what it isn't. For example:

*"This pendulum acts as a kind of 'thought transmitter'. Your inner mind is simply communicating through tiny muscular movements, which create the motion. The messages come from within YOU.*

*For example, if you believe that the world is flat, your pendulum will agree with that statement. Additionally, if you are using your pendulum to locate a lost object, YOU have to be the one who has misplaced it!*

*Because our belief systems are constantly changing, you may find that your pendulum responses change over time, too.” (Isn’t that a great frame for change?!)*

One of the best applications of a pendulum for kids is for assisting with decision-making. For people of any age, learning to listen to and trust internal indicators is a desirable skill. By the time a kid has reached puberty, they have often learned to subdue their own natural instincts, especially when it comes to issues having to do with peers and other influences.

Using a pendulum to track down how they *really* feel can help them make decisions that are right for them. Even more importantly, playing with this tool is a process that can help a kid raise their emotional intelligence. Imagine the following:

*Hyp: Now that you’ve got your swing patterns established, what if you used your pendulum to pinpoint exactly how you feel about that problem?*

*Kid: How do I do that?*

*Hyp: I don’t know...maybe you could start by asking if it’s okay for you to do this investigating.*

Asking for permission helps a kid give themselves permission to participate in the activity. If the response is negative or otherwise not forthcoming, you can suggest that they ask something light hearted to further establish a connection with their inner mind. Or, they may want to continue with the more personal discovery privately, on their own. You can always mention that they can ask the questions silently, since it’s none of your business, anyway!

### **For rapport building and emotional education:**

Following a positive response, you can continue to provide some ideas:

*Hyp: It’s usually good to start with identifying HOW you feel about a problem or challenge...Do you know how you feel?*

*Kid: I don’t know.*

As mentioned before, the dreaded, “I don’t know,” is a common kid phrase! Sometimes, they really don’t know the answer but often they are not confident that they know the answer and hate to be wrong. Perhaps this is the result of all that testing going on in schools...but we’ll not open that can of worms here! Instead, let’s reframe it for ourselves so that we can get excited about helping a kid not only know the answers, but feel confident that they are learning and knowing more about themselves.

You can assist a kid by merely stimulating their imagination when it comes to emotional vocabulary. Humans experience hundreds of emotions, those inner senses, but we are mostly familiar with only a few dozen of them.

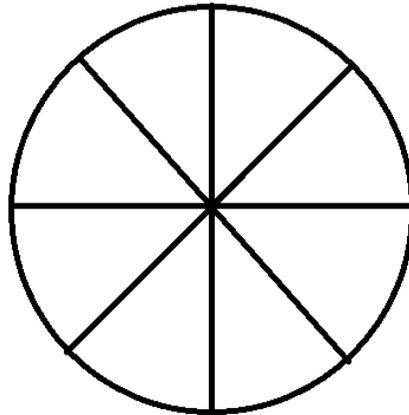
*Hyp: Sometimes, I like to start by finding out how I DON'T feel about a thing. For example, what if you asked your subconscious is you are pleased with this problem?*

Imagine the possibilities! One of the ironies in working with kids is how often they need to hold onto a problem and it can be quite a surprise for them to discover that a seemingly unhelpful attitude or behavior has a positive side to it.

*Hyp: Or, you can start with one of the emotions that feel familiar to you. You told me that you get angry a lot. Ask your pendulum if you are angry about this thing.*

You will notice that depending on the pendulum response AND, even more importantly, depending on the kid's reaction, it becomes easy to bypass typical interviewing tactics and utilize this tool to help a child open up to themselves and to you.

Create a simple handout to accompany the kid home; it will increase the chances that they will use their new tool! Here's an example of an Ideomotor Pendulum Guideline on the following page:



1. Establish your answer key

Yes

No

I Don't Know

I Don't Want to Say

2. Ask simple and clear questions

3. Be patient and allow time for response

4. Be a detective: When, Where, Why, Who, What

5. Limit session to 60 mins max.

6. Practice makes better

7. Have fun!

Hey, did you know that you don't even need to use a pendulum to be able to accomplish the things listed above? We've got all we need, walking around with us all of the time:

### **The Human Pendulum**

An especially fun way to utilize ideomotor response is to show the kid that they can be a "human pendulum" by having them stand nice and tall and think of a *Yes* statement. Have them repeat "*My name is...*" and say their name, and watch how their body sways. Or you can instruct them to close their eyes and ask their body to show them a *Yes*. Then do the same for *No*.

Kids (and grownups) will usually open their eyes in surprise as they feel themselves sway in two different directions. This allows them to check in with themselves without the need for any props and makes their inner guidance more accessible for school and other activities.

Another wonderful approach adds a layer of fun to EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) for kids. Kelley wrote about it in her book with Dave Berman, [\*Laughter for the Health of It\*](#), which also contains other recipes for families to lighten their lives:

### **Tap-n-Laugh for Pain Relief**

Many people are familiar with various forms of energy psychology approaches, modalities that consider and employ the mental, emotional and physical aspects toward healing. Examples of these are acupuncture, acupressure and Reiki. Practitioners of these arts/sciences subscribe to the belief that all of our life experiences are "downloaded" into not just our brains, but into our bodies.

These approaches also involve the idea that we are all, at a quantum level, energy and that we are constantly exchanging, depleting and renewing our energy fields.

In the 1980's, Dr. Roger Callahan helped a patient by tapping underneath her eye. A student of his, Gary Craig further developed a process based on combining thoughts and feelings with stimulating the designated energy meridians of the body.

Current research demonstrates the efficacy of Craig's process in helping to down-regulate hyper-arousal of the limbic system, releasing serotonin in the amygdala, which has been described as the "smoke detector" of the body.

This tapping practice has become quite well known and is commonly called EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques). Many hypnosis practitioners incorporate EFT and its spin-offs into their work and there is a long-standing debate over whether EFT is actually, in itself, hypnosis.

Regardless of that, EFT can be highly effective for changing how a person feels. It has even been approved for use with veterans by the Department of Defense!

For further information about EFT, please check our Resources Section at the back of this book.

Kelley has created a variation of EFT that incorporates laughter therapy. While EFT employs focusing on certain thoughts, our Tap-n-Laugh involves tapping the energy meridian sites in time with your laugh; you set the pace and tone that feels right to you.

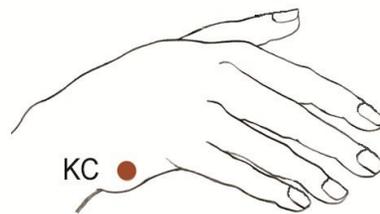
It's easy and fun to do and it works quickly. Here's how:

*Note: if tapping is uncomfortable for you, due to head or facial infirmities, you can instead gently rub in a circular motion.*

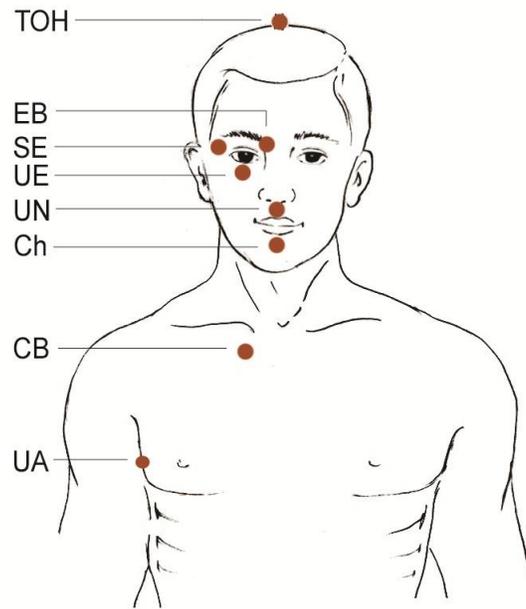
It is helpful to assess how you feel before and after doing a set of EFT, so close your eyes and measure your comfort level. You can use a scale of 1-10, wherein 1 is less comfortable and 10 is more or, you can let 1 be total comfort and 10 be a high level of discomfort – you get to choose.

Next, start to gently tap with your dominant hand's index and middle fingers onto your other hand's "karate chop" point (see diagram on below).

As you do, laugh lightly out loud. Tap and laugh 10-20 times.



Now, using the same tapping fingers, tap on the points indicated in the diagram below, starting at the top of your head and moving down. Tap 8-10 times on each point, laughing as you do.



Once you finish the tapping sequence, stop and measure your current level of comfort. If it is not yet ideal, repeat the course. You will notice that with each subsequent series of tapping and laughing, you feel better and better!

The great thing about EFT and laughter is that you can do it anywhere, anytime. Have fun with it and notice that very quickly, both emotional and physical states start to become self-regulated!

### Props and Play

You will want to stock up on some props to help you become more effective with kids. They serve as wonderful distractions and help kids naturally release inhibitions so that you can get to the good stuff while having fun. Some of the things that help are listed here, but I'm sure you can come up with even more ideas!

- |                          |                |                         |
|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Playing Cards            | Dice           | Mazes and Puzzles       |
| Puppets/Stuffed Toys     | Pick up sticks | Super Hero figures      |
| Drawing Materials        | Masks          | Hats, capes and scarves |
| An Etch-o-Sketch         | Modeling clay  | Small boxes/containers  |
| Pendulum making supplies | Happy glasses  | Socks for puppets       |
| Soap Bubbles             | Flashlights    | Tea Set                 |

Nesting Dolls

Juggling Toys

Magic Wands

Spirograph Game

Jenja/blocks

Buddha Board

### **Helping Kids with Eating Issues/Physical Activity Levels**

A nutritional crisis is attacking our children! “Space food” abounds and many people are still ignorant about the impact it is exerting on growing brains. Please always gather information about not just the child’s, but also the family’s, nutrition habits. Often, simply reducing or eliminating offending ingredients and adding high-density ones can result in remarkable cognitive and behavioral improvement.

Educate yourself on this subject so that you can ask the right questions. If a child is regularly consuming sweetened drinks and processed meals, there is a lot that hypnosis can do to change preferences *as long as the parents support those changes*.

Research shows that using dieting and exercise is *not* effective for helping obese children. What is effective is making lifestyle changes, involving kids in food choices and getting them to be more physically active through fun and play. Just like with many adult clients, reframing “exercise” to “recess” can be helpful.

Again, consider the systemic nature of obesity and nutritional deficiency (skinny kids can be just as unhealthy) and work with the family unit to make permanent improvements in this area. And when possible, work with a child’s doctor!

**Note:** The only responsible way to work with a child who has an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia is as a part of their medical/mental health team!

### **Additional Resources and Suggested Reading/Viewing:**

[\*Integrative Hypnosis for Kids and Teens\*](#), my book written with Melissa Tiers, won the 2017 Pen and Quill Award for Excellence in Literature from the International Medical and Dental Hypnosis Association.

[\*Secrets of the River – Riding the Creative Wave in Pediatric Hypnosis and Family Therapy\*](#), my book written with Nath Welch demonstrates how to use contextual psychotherapy within hypnotic approaches for kids.

[\*Hypnosis for Kids\*](#) on FaceBook. I invite you to join us!

Carol Dweck’s excellent book, [\*Mindset\*](#), on how to really motivate kids.

Susan Cain’s [\*book\*](#) for introverted kids is wonderful.

Lori Lite’s a great [\*source of kid’s books\*](#) that incorporate hypnotic imagery and patter for issues like stress and anger.

A free pdf that contains an excellent chapter on the teen brain – share it with parents! [\*The Female Brain - The-Female-Brain.pdf\*](#)

[\*Environmental influence on brain plasticity in kids\*](#)

[\*A good article supporting hypnosis for children\*](#)

A compelling, short [\*video\*](#) about the decline of play in children's lives

[\*30 minutes makes a difference for depressed and anxious teens!\*](#)

[\*Making the case for reading a book with a kid\*](#)



# Hypnosis for Kids

WITH KELLEY T. WOODS

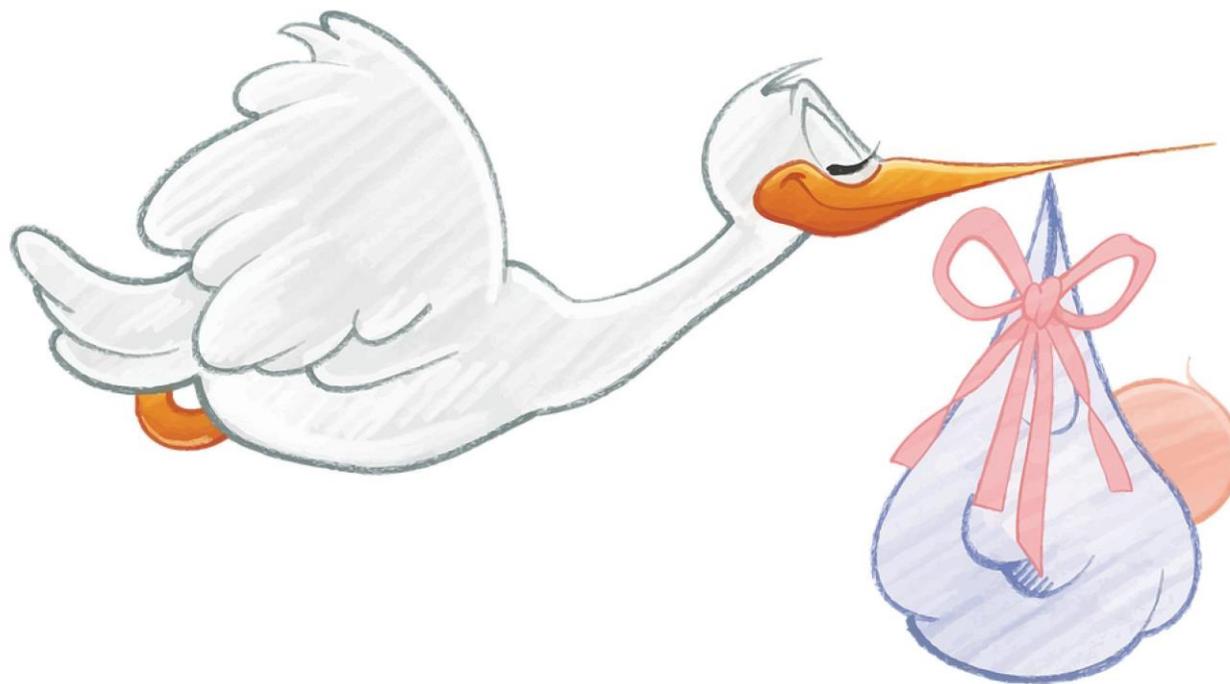
We all were children once...



# Why Work With Kids?

- ▶ **They need us**
- ▶ **Families are fractured**
- ▶ **Schedules are over-booked**
- ▶ **Society is stressful**
- ▶ **Resources are limited**
- ▶ **It's good for us!**

# Where Do They Come From?



# Sources of Kid Clients

- ▶ **Your current/former clients**
- ▶ **Medical/mental health professionals**
- ▶ **Athletic clubs/organizations**
- ▶ **Schools – private and public**
- ▶ **Public speaking engagements**
- ▶ **News stories**
- ▶ **Web search**



# First Contact



# Whose Problem is It, Anyway?!



# Parent Contract



# Working Systemically



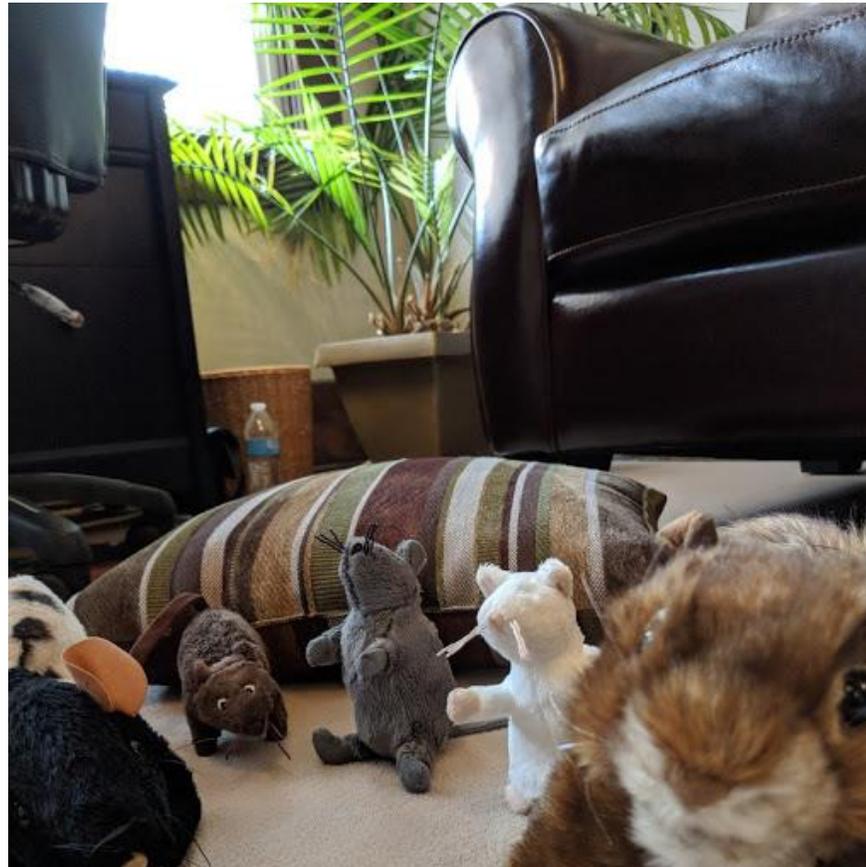
# Making a Safe Place



# Making a Connection



# Getting on Their Level



# Props are your Friends!

- ▶ **Stuffed Animals**
- ▶ **Hand Puppets**
- ▶ **Treasure Boxes**
- ▶ **Cards and Games**
- ▶ **Drawing/Coloring Supplies**
- ▶ **Puzzles**
- ▶ **Paper Dolls**
- ▶ **Flashlights**
- ▶ **Happy Glasses**
- ▶ **Nesting Dolls**

# Intake and Pre-Talk

## **ACTIVE LISTENING**

- ▶ Make the child the most important person in the room
- ▶ Listen with eyes and ears – pay attention to nonverbals
- ▶ Allow enough time for child to process and answer
- ▶ Don't allow parents to interrupt or speak for their kid
- ▶ Repeat back to the child what you understand them to say
- ▶ Normalize their feelings

# Focus on Solutions!



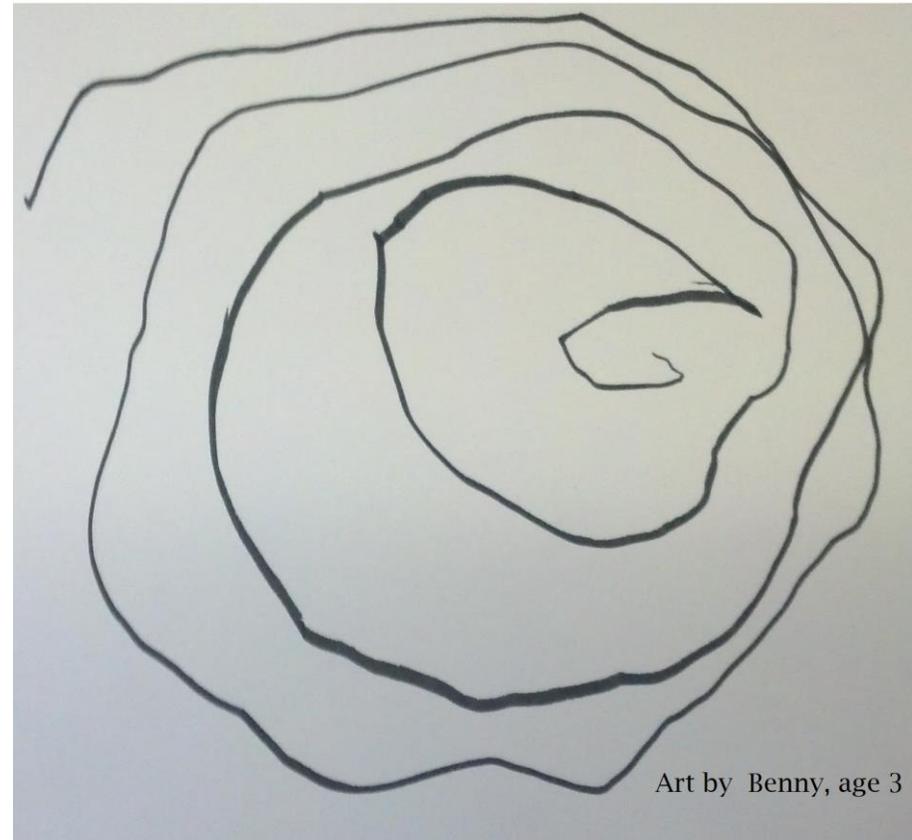
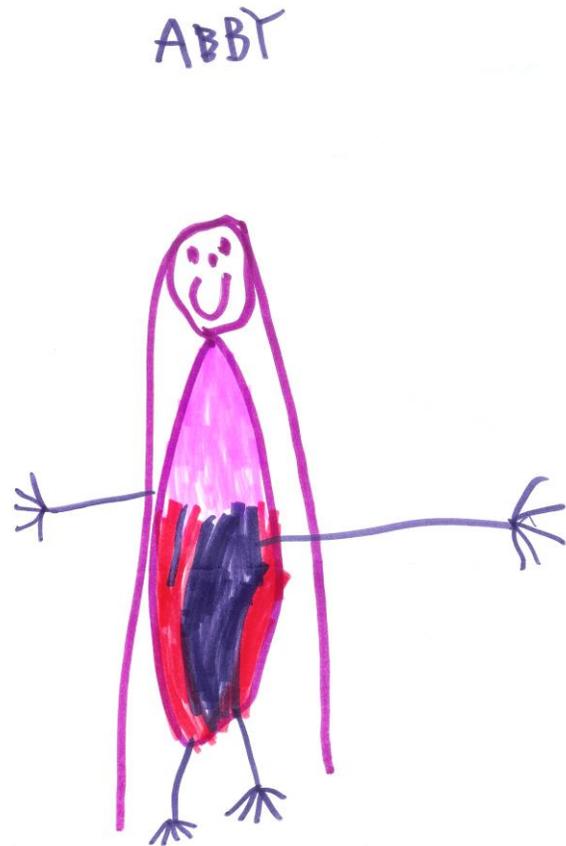
# Getting Parents on Board for Change



# Parents – In or Out?



# Drawing for Solutions



Art by Benny, age 3



# Parents as Props



# Creating Belief and Expectation



# Convincers That Will Thrill Them

- ▶ **Hand Stick**
- ▶ **Magnetic Fingers/Hands**
- ▶ **Finger Response**
- ▶ **Arm/Hand Levitation**
- ▶ **Magic Spiral Palm**
- ▶ **Hypnotic Spiral Visual Distortion**
- ▶ **Card/Magic Tricks**
- ▶ **Pendulums**

# Eye Fixation



# Ideomotor Response



# Teach Self Hypnosis!

- ▶ **Breathing Techniques**
- ▶ **Counting Numbers**
- ▶ **Visual Imagery**
  - ▶ **Video games**
  - ▶ **Favorite place**
  - ▶ **Favorite activities**
- ▶ **Heaviness or Lightness of Limbs**
- ▶ **Self Eye-Lock**

# Co-Creating Solutions

## **EMPOWERMENT OF CHILD**

- ▶ Use a stuffed animal who has a problem
- ▶ Ask for their advice for another of your kid clients
- ▶ Reverse roles with the child
- ▶ Help them ask an icon or hero for advice
- ▶ Help them ask their future self for advice

# Narrative Therapy

- ▶ Read a story or poem with child
- ▶ Co-create a problem solving story
- ▶ Director's Technique for kids
- ▶ Reverse Metaphor

# Anchors for Kids



# Power Signal

- ▶ **Strong**
- ▶ **Brave**
- ▶ **Fun**
- ▶ **Powerful**
- ▶ **Creative**
- ▶ **Flexible**
- ▶ **Unbreakable**
- ▶ **Laughing**
- ▶ **Loving**
- ▶ **Safe**

# Comfort Zones



# Copy and Paste



# Protective Bubbles



# Emotional Intelligence



# Transforming Self Talk

- ▶ **Play with sub modalities**
- ▶ **Retrieve their Power**
- ▶ **Hand it Back**

# Stress and Anxiety

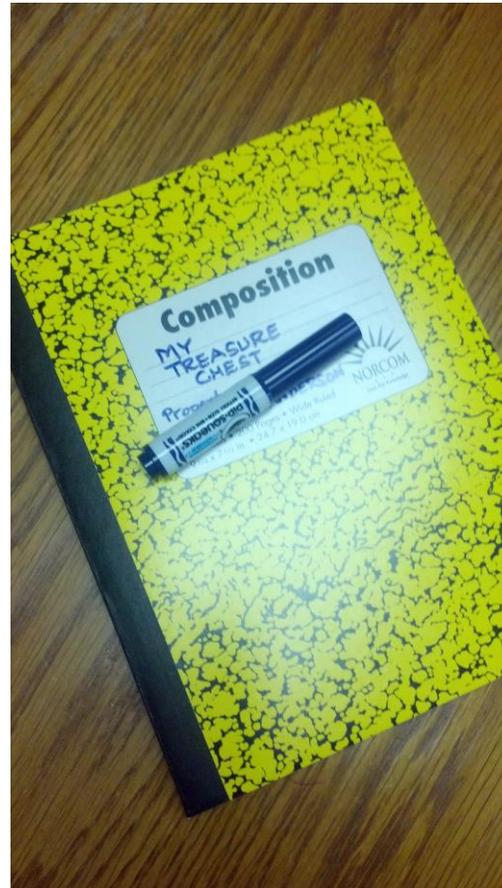
- **Test Anxiety**
- **Social Anxiety**
- **Using Public Bathrooms**
- **Speaking in Public**
- **Performing in Public**
- **Trying New Things**
- **Eating Issues**



# Ego Strengthening



# A Treasure Chest



# Fears and Phobias

- ▶ **Object Imagery**
- ▶ **Metaphors**
- ▶ **NLP Fast Phobia Cure**
- ▶ **Anchor Collapses**
- ▶ **Safe Timeline Work**
- ▶ **Laughter Therapy**
- ▶ **EFT**



# Taming the Dragon

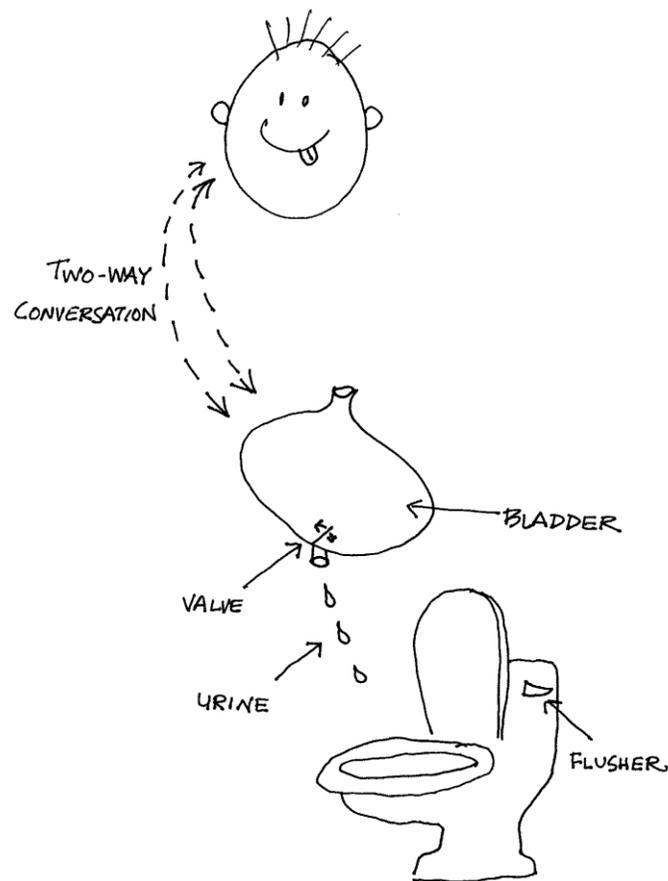


# Changing Habits

- Thumb sucking
- Nail biting
- Hair Pulling
- Skin Picking
- Swearing
- Tics and Twitches
- Throat Clearing/Coughing



# Bed Wetting and Bowel Issues



# Picky Eaters



# Nightmares



Attention, Please!



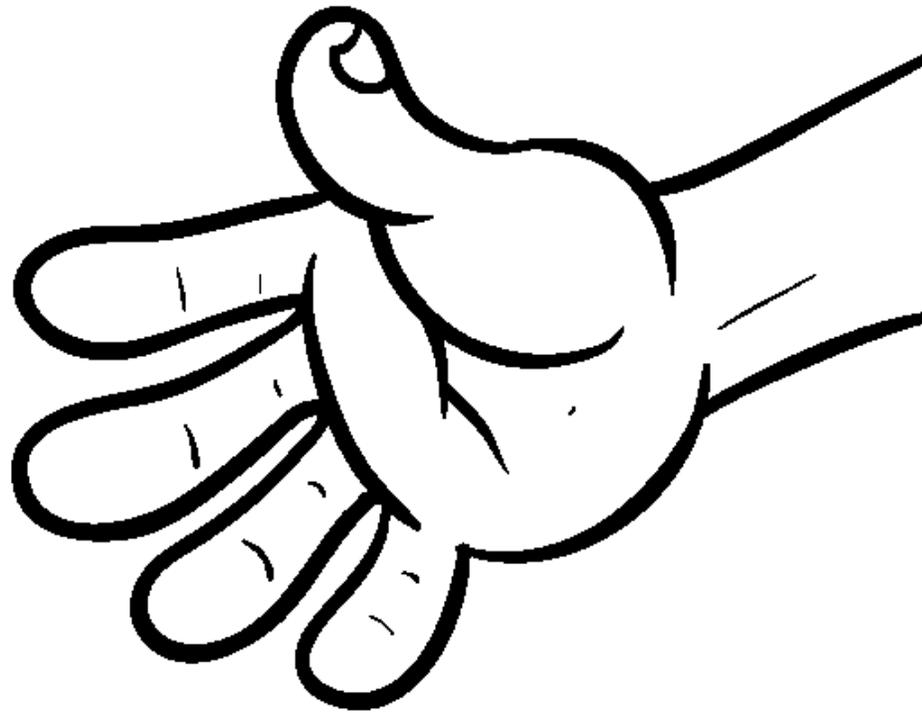
# Athletic Performance



# Medical Issues

- ▶ **Priority: Work as part of the child's medical team**
- ▶ **Fear and Anxiety**
- ▶ **Sleep Issues**
- ▶ **Pain Control**
- ▶ **Loss of Childhood**
- ▶ **Guilt**
- ▶ **Anger**
- ▶ **Helplessness/Sense of Lack of Control**

# Body Parts



# Grief and Loss

A child who is  
old enough  
to love  
is old enough  
to grieve.



# Helping Kids on the Autism Spectrum

- ▶ **Meet them where they are and meet who they are!**
- ▶ **May suffer from anxiety and sensory issues**
- ▶ **Often very literal-minded**
- ▶ **Harness their interests**
- ▶ **Focus on their strengths**
- ▶ **Help parents/caregivers**
- ▶ **Somatic approaches for non-verbal**

Homework? Yuk.

**K.I.S.S.**



# Wonka Wisdom

*"A little nonsense now and then...  
is cherished by the wisest men."*

*~ Willy Wonka*