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Melbourne Observer Health

EDITOR'S 'VIRTUAL GASTRIC LAP BAND'

ASH LONG reports

This report started as many do. An e-mail arrived from a publicist, advising of the impending visit of a keynote speaker at an industry conference.

UK-based publicist Leigh Clark advised that Yorkshire hypnotherapist Sheila Granger was visiting Australia to introduce a weight loss system that incorporated a 'Virtual Gastric Band'.

Leigh asked if the Melbourne Observer would like to report on the visit by Ms Granger, who has made news in America and the UK, including coverage on the BBC.

We replied that we would be prepared to report on the visit, and suggested that your scribe be a real-life candidate.

We placed one over-riding condition: that we give a truthful account of the success (or otherwise) of the therapy.

There was a prompt reply, agreeing to the trial.

"Your over-riding condition of a truthful account is certainly fair provided you adhere to all given instructions," Ms Clark noted.

Success

"The therapy has a 95 per cent success rate. However, we have discovered that the remaining 5 per cent failed to take time to follow the exercises set out by Sheila and didn't find time to listen to the back-up CD provided.

"As long as you follow the instructions, there is no reason why this won't work for you."

So, on Saturday, May 14, I attended a suburban hall in Keysborough where 42 local clinical hypnotherapists had gathered for two days to learn Ms Granger's techniques.

My previous exposure to hypnotherapy had been largely positive.

When I was a TV producer in the 1990s, I had the task of producing 13 shows for a doctor who used hypnotherapy in his practice.

I had visited his



inner-suburban practice in Melbourne, to trial the procedure.

I sat in a chair, we went through the relaxing routine, and I was always conscious of what was being said.

Control

At any time, I could have released myself from the procedure, under my own control.

Another hypnotherapist successfully showed me techniques for relaxation.

I joked that a third hypnotherapist's only success had been to suggest to me that I take him \$55 every Friday.

Before this 2011 session, I had checked out Ms Granger's credentials, on the Internet. All seemed OK there.

She has been winning publicity as she has offered her technique to the UK National Health Scheme to help people fight obesity.

I sought the OK from my general practitioner, who said there was nothing to lose.

A personal friend, who is a psychologist, said it was "bound to work ... hypnosis is a very powerful clinical tool".

So ... here we were, in a positive open frame of mind, ready to be critical or accepting. How did it work out?

● Learn more about Ash's trial on Page 17

QUICK FACTS

■ Hypnosis has been in use for thousands of years. Back in 1400 BC Hypocrites was the first to record that there was a mind-body connection. Hypnosis use be seen in some primitive people's religious and healing ceremonies.

■ Hypnosis used to be called 'suggestion therapy' and can be traced back over 4000 years to ancient Egypt

■ Studies are showing, through modern techniques and scientific based evidence, the potential benefits of hypnosis.

■ The 'Virtual Gastric Band' is a treatment in which the participant believes they have undergone a physical operation to reduce the size of the stomach to a golf-ball.



● Above: Melbourne Observer Editor Ash Long undergoes 'virtual gastic lap banding' with hypnotherapist Sheila Granger

● Right: Visiting hypnotherapist Sheila Granger from East Yorkshire, UK

Jean-Alain d'Argent

Over the last thirty years I have devoted my life in the search of teachers and techniques, in the view of improving my understanding and mastery of my entire mind.

The reason for this quest was to hopefully assist myself and share with others the secrets to complete health and well being.

Part of this quest led me to study Hypnotherapy. As a clinical Hypnotherapist and working with Hundreds of clients, I came to realize that all physical emotional and mental disorders have their origins in the Subconscious mind, and to have a permanent resolution to the issue presented, then one must firstly have approval from the subconscious mind otherwise it may simply be a band aid rather than a permanent resolution.

This advanced secret to healing such as Hypnotherapy has always been known by all the great healers of past and present.

Long term Stress Phobias addictions etc are simply coping mechanisms for the conscious mind as a reminder that we need to stop, review and let go of the obstacles which



brought about the discomfort in the first place.

In the mind all time in seen as the present. Only once the mind subconsciously has realized that time has passed and danger is over will it recalibrate and restore permanent balance in health and well being.

In the case of weight issues Hypnotherapist such as myself have found "Virtual Gastric Band" for weight loss and excellent technique to assist client in managing their weight and return to a happier life and a healthier state of mind and body.

Jean-Alain d'Argent can be contacted on jeanalain@dharmayoga.com or 0404-277-494

Melbourne Observer Magazine

'FAT CHANGE'

By Ash Long

It was not always this way. Looking back at family photo albums, your scribe was once a thin teenager, who was an active cross-country runner and footballer, albeit lacking talent.

As the years went by, the adjectives started to change. A brief time at Melbourne University saw counter lunch-driven tutorials at Naughton's Hotel in Parkville rather than in the lecture theatres. People would start to say "you're in a good paddock".

In the heady 1970s and 1980s, the 'long lunch' became an art form, particularly for those in the media. People would use the term "prosperous". One discreet newspaper reporter used the word 'burly' about me.

As time marched on, the weight gain continued. Fatty take-away food became convenient between newspaper deadlines, with lots of beer to wash it down.

At my worst, the scales hit 148-kg, that was in the late 1990s. These days, it has been consistently 130-kg, when it should be less than 100-kg. The politically incorrect but accurate adjective is 'fat'.

At age 54, the task of losing weight has become more difficult. No longer do I regularly drink any alcohol, but those take-away meals have still been handy in a busy Editor's life. We joked that the four major food groups for me were McDonalds, KFC, Hungry Jacks and Pizza Hut.

A heart attack almost three years ago modified some of the bad dietary behaviour, but it hasn't been enough. There have been two heart operations since. Brutally, the only adjective is 'morbidly obese'.



● Melbourne Observer Editor Ash Long undergoes hypnotherapy with Sheila Granger

As a Type 2 diabetic, I have neuropathy, a loss of sensation in the feet. It makes it difficult to exercise by walking. Nonetheless, we have tried swimming, more walking and even the gym.

But problems compound as the years progress. Any exercise brings on perceived heart pain or angina.

My general practitioner has suggested gastric lap banding. A diabetic specialist concurred. It can be drastic surgery, and not without risk.

So when news came that UK hypnotherapist Sheila Granger was to visit Melbourne with her 'virtual gastric band', it seemed appropriate

"Nothing to lose," said my GP.

Sheila Granger's weight-loss technique involves hypnotherapy where the participant believes that they have undergone a physical operation to reduce the stomach to the size of a golf ball.

There is zero risk involved and no special diet is required. Instead the participant naturally reduces their food consumption, feeling satisfied with smaller portions.

In the UK, her first trial saw 24 of 25 candidates lose 190 lb (86 kg).

Sheila Granger has been keen to help those struggling with weight. Actual gastric band surgery is not always successful and aftercare can also be costly.

Sheila explains: "There is nothing magical or mystical about what I do. I am passionate about promoting the benefits of hypnotherapy and allaying the misconceptions associated with stage hypnosis."

"I believe that 'Virtual Gastric Band' can revolutionise weight loss and I am looking forward to hearing further success stories from my international associates."

I volunteered to be a candidate for the therapy, held over two days at Keysborough, at a conference of clinical hypnotherapists.

I was put into a relaxed state through hypnosis. At all times, you have complete control, and are aware of every word, and every thing going on around you. Some practitioners call it a state of 'concentrated attention'.

Antoine Matarasso, National President of the Australian Hypnotherapists' Association, says: "Basically it means that if there is something in your life than you really want - then behave in a way that you already have it - you are very likely to actually get it."

you might change your behaviour on a daily basis to alter your food intake.

There is no special diet. You can eat anything you wish - just less of it!

The treatment is backed with a CD, which you are encouraged to play daily. It takes 17 minutes.

It creates pathway in your brain regarding your attitudes towards food.

It suggests that the strategies that you adopted towards 'comfort foods' in years past, are not necessarily the strategies that need now apply, years later. Times have changed.

The treatment suggests practical advice regarding weight loss. Don't eat food whilst watching TV; give it your full attention. Don't eat the full serving, just because it is there. Be conscious of what you are eating. Drink lots of water.

Put your knife and fork down between mouthfuls; put your sandwich down between mouthfuls.

In my case, the hypnotherapy involved me picturing myself at my favourite beach. Beside me, I was asked to picture a bucket, in which was the fat I had lost.

I was asked to visualise dipping any fast food into that bucket, before eating it. Interestingly, I haven't visited a fast food store in the 10 days since then!

I am starting each day, consciously planning the food I will eat, and - more importantly - the food that won't pass my lips. It isn't an easy process - but it has been made easier by the therapy.

Other techniques are taught to confront 'head hunger', where you think you need food, but your body is not actually demanding energy.

Some of the strategies involve waiting it out (about 10 minutes), exercising, concentrating on deep breathing, or eating a little bit of something nutritious.

Of course, it also means taking responsibility, taking pride in what you are doing and in each goal achieved.

In the first week, I achieved weight loss of 2½ kg, and the drop continues.

Part of the treatment involves identifying some of the short- and long-term goals, outlining any strengths and weaknesses.

One example might be "I have a weakness for chocolate so I am not going to have any in the house."

For me, it has meant removing small change from the house and car, making it difficult to visit take-away food stores. They are my enemy.

Who knows what success we will achieve in coming weeks? I truly do picture that an imaginary little yellow virtual gastric band is helping me achieve those aims.



● Then-and-now: Ash Long on his 21st birthday in 1977, and weighing in at 130-kg, 34 years later in 2011.



● Antoine Matarasso, National President of the Australian Hypnotherapists' Association, with visiting 'Virtual Gastric Band' therapist Sheila Granger