

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

## peace, calm, confidence & gratitude: what I learned from hypnotherapy with adam cumberland

In my last post I mentioned I had some hypnotherapy at the end of last year. In this post I'm going to tell you all about it - get comfortable!

Going to hypnotherapy was an interesting development because, as I've mentioned, 2012 was a challenging year to say the least. I found myself floundering a little. Well, a lot. And I didn't actually realise it was happening until I had arrived, with my suitcases packed, at Hotel de Rock Bottom.

I didn't really talk about the harder side of last year publicly, mostly because I like to focus on the positive in life. I don't like being a "whinger". I feared the judgement of others if I admitted that life post-redundancy was a bit depressing, scary and overwhelming. But focusing on the positive was getting harder and harder for me to do. I couldn't understand. I had achieved my dream of writing full time. My book was finished and doing the rounds where hopefully, eventually, someone would say yes. Why wasn't I happy? What was wrong?

I didn't slow down enough last year to answer that question. I just thought if I kept working, kept ploughing through, found another race to train for and another agent to submit to, it would all be OK. I thought I was so ready for the next stage, ready to jump off the cliff....but I just dangled there. Waiting. For permission? For change? For validation? Who knows. But for whatever reason, I just wouldn't let myself jump. Every time I got an email from a grateful reader telling me how inspiring I was or from a former colleague telling me how pleased they were that things had worked out for me, I just wanted to cry because I felt like such a fraud.

Having said all of that, there was a lot about last year that was amazing. I would have days that would be awesome and filled with great work, news and opportunities, but a few days later I would topple off that high into another low. It was a life of extremes - either everything was going really well or really badly. It was exhausting. I really lost sight of what I *had* achieved and could only focus on what I hadn't.

Around this time, [renowned hypnotherapist, speaker and coach Adam Cumberland](#) approached me with an offer of a hypnotherapy session with him and my first thought was NO WAY. I had the idea that hypnotherapy was being put to sleep and having instructions placed in your brain! But then I broached the subject on my Facebook page and found that many of you had been to hypnotherapy before and it had really helped. Not one person thought it would be a bad idea. So that's when I decided to give it a go because I figured I had absolutely nothing to lose. I couldn't go on as I was, something needed to change.

Adam does all kinds of hypnotherapy - he does [hypnosis for anxiety](#), [hypnotherapy for weight loss](#) and for depression, confidence issues, addictions (including stopping smoking) and OCD. I just told him I wanted help with feeling confident and in control again, as I really felt I had lost my way. I was emotionally exhausted, incapable of seeing the big picture and feeling I was constantly making the wrong decisions.

I had my appointment a few weeks before Christmas. It was an intense four hours. We chatted for about an hour and a half and then the rest of the time I was "under". But what's funny is that you're not asleep or unconscious. You are fully aware of everything. It's just a relaxed, almost dream-like state where time seems to stop. In fact, when I opened my eyes Adam asked me...how long did I think I'd had my eyes shut for? I guessed about fifty minutes - it had been two hours and forty-five minutes! It really did absolutely fly.

Adam himself was a lovely, genuine and very likeable therapist. He's incredibly warm, compassionate and generous, both with his time and sharing his own experiences and insights. I felt very comfortable with him. I was encouraged to approach the session with an open mind and be willing to accept whatever came up. In fact, Adam warned me that some parts of the session

wouldn't be very comfortable and he was right.

"All I can advise is for you to surrender to it. Let go," he said. "You have to help me to help you. Don't put up barriers, let all the dark stuff in. Be brave."

I left Adam's office feeling like I'd had a blood transfusion. There was something very different coursing through my veins. I felt so peaceful.

"You look lighter," Adam said after the session. My husband Tom remarked similarly when I got home. I came away with such a deep sense of peace, but also a ferocious desire for change, for a fresh approach and to take decisive action.

Rather than go into the nitty gritty detail of those four hours - not just because it's a bit personal but everyone's experience of hypnotherapy, or any kind of therapy, is different - I thought I'd share with you, nearly eight weeks later, the most significant benefits and changes in me that I've noticed since the hypnotherapy.



Image courtesy of [Adam Cumberland](#)

## Clarity

All of a sudden I knew **WHY** I was feeling the way I was. I could see why things hadn't worked out the way I hoped. I could see how negative my thinking and behaviour had become. I could see why things had happened the way they did. And I also realised, with dazzling clarity, that despite believing I was now back at the bus stop, waiting for a bus that was never going to come, I was still in the driver's seat and had in fact been there all along. With this clarity has come a powerful determination, a "right, no more wasting time, let's go!" attitude. I can see what needs to be done and I'm doing it. It feels great.

## Feeling peaceful and calm

This was a wonderful feeling and was something I noticed immediately after the session. I've tried to cultivate it as much as possible. The key has been learning new techniques to calm the mind when I feel it spinning out of control. One of the things I did during the session was visualise a candle burning. I had to focus on it and the light it was giving. It was very calming. I try and do this now when I feel myself getting a bit overwhelmed. Tom has observed a bit of a change in how I cope with setbacks too. "You bounce back a lot quicker," he told me when I asked for his feedback while writing this article. That's good to know 😊

## A quieter mind

I think this goes hand in hand with feeling peaceful and calm. Immediately after my hypnotherapy session, and in the few days afterwards, the chatter in my mind had quietened significantly. In fact, it was so quiet I barely noticed it. It's been such a change after over twenty years of constant internal dialogue. After the initial euphoria of the session wore off it did come back a little, but I've been keeping it in check with my "refresher" tools (see further on).

## Openness and connection with others

My session with Adam made me realise that the quality of your relationships is what informs the quality of your life. I definitely feel more connected to other people since the hypnotherapy. I've certainly felt less isolated, which I'm coming to realise was mostly self-inflicted. It's OK to let

people know that you're feeling down and need some support. You don't have to hide away if things aren't going well.

## Gratitude

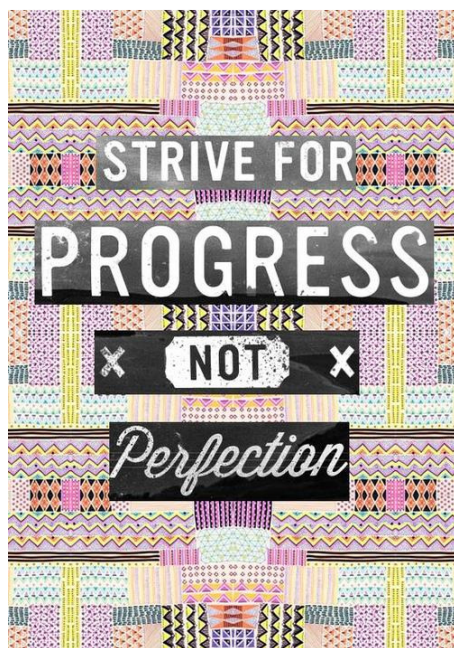
This has been a rather life-changing effect of the hypnotherapy. Every day I find myself thinking about things I'm grateful for, even if it's the same stuff each time! I usually write them in my journal at the end of each day.

Adam recommended I do a gratitude meditation morning and night, but I've started small and tend to do it just at night. I like to write at the end of each day anyway, to write about what I got up to or little things I noticed and want to remember from that day, and I find myself just writing a stream-of-consciousness gratitude list. It's nice that my last thoughts as I go to bed are those of gratitude. Often the things on my list are very simple things like having enough to eat and a roof over my head. Good health (that's been on every list). Being able to pay my bills. Things I might have once taken for granted but the past year has ensured I do not!

I had certainly seen gratitude lists and journals as a strategy for feeling good and peaceful and present, but to be honest I had kind of pooh-poohed it over the years. But it does work! It's a really good way to stop feeling sorry for yourself. When you operate from a place of abundance and gratitude for your existing blessings, however small you might think they are, you just start engaging with the world in a different way. A more open, less entitled, more generous way. And it also contributes to the sense of peace and calm too. When you're aware of your blessings and gifts, you don't feel like you're missing out, you already have enough. Therefore, the anxiety that often comes with the fear of missing out is gone, or certainly less. That's how it's been for me anyway. I really would recommend giving a daily gratitude list a go.

## Confidence and self-belief

This was the trickiest thing of all, and the whole reason I went to Adam in the first place. I think what hypnotherapy did for me was reaffirm something I did already know - that confidence comes when you decide to have it. The feeling of being in control again after so many months of feeling lost and floundering was one of the most precious gifts I took away from the session. I can change things if I just make the decision to. In fact, I have done that before in my life, quite a few times. So things have been a lot better in the confidence stakes. My self-belief, which has always been a bit shaky, is a lot stronger. Perhaps I'm still in the "fake it till you make it" stage, but I'm still going!



Definitely! [Image source](#)

If you're considering hypnotherapy to help you unblock a few things and move forward in your life, I think it's a great tool. It's a great way to "log off" from the rational/critical conscious mind and give more helpful behaviours and thoughts some airtime. It's definitely worth investigating to see if it would be right for you.

But like all tools, don't approach it with the expectation of it being a miracle cure. Like most things, it will work as long as you work too. I walked away from Adam's office that December night really wanting to hold on to that amazing feeling that was a combination of peace, calm, confidence and gratitude, so I have had to do things to keep that feeling. A fire will eventually go out if you don't put more logs on it.

So, I'm learning how to meditate. I do a gratitude list nearly every day. I'm reaching out to people more and shutting myself away less. I'm trying not to get hung up on the small things. I'm trying to take life, and myself, a bit less seriously. As I mentioned in my last post, I'm focusing on achieving goals that will truly fulfil me rather than those that just look impressive to the outside world. I'm trying to listen, really listen, to people. I'm trying to be present, more open and giving. If I feel myself panicking or getting overwhelmed, I try to do the candle visualisation or just a good old simple "count to 10". It doesn't always work and I do still have my moments but overall things are so much better than they were a few months ago. Not allowing the emotions and unhelpful thoughts to completely spin out of control and feed on the panic and overwhelm, like they were before, has made a huge difference.

The challenges have not gone away but I'm just handling them differently. I filter things differently. Instead of being stressed and overwhelmed, I try to take calm and positive action. I can see a difference, and those close to me have seen a difference. I feel empowered and in control again, and like my enthusiasm and zest for life is returning. As a result, 2013 has been rather great so far!

*I was offered a session with [hypnotherapist Adam Cumberland](#) in exchange for writing about my experience. Adam specialises in [hypnosis for anxiety](#), [hypnotherapy for weight loss](#) and for depression, confidence issues, addictions (including stopping smoking) and OCD. What is written above is my honest opinion of my experience and results but please be aware that therapy is a very personal thing and results will vary between individuals.*

**Have you ever had hypnotherapy? What benefits did you notice?**