

Using hypnosis to eliminate bad habits

British hypnotherapist Valerie Austin has developed a technique in self-help for stress reduction and trauma-related problems. Through hypnosis, she says, one can quit smoking permanently in just one hour. JOSEPH EDWIN reports.

DEALING with the consequences of negative stress buildup can be extremely unnerving, but a British hypnotherapist says the problem can be resolved in just one day through hypnosis.

In Kuala Lumpur for the first time, hypnotherapist Valerie Austin says she can help people manage their stress levels better by getting them to enrol in one of several self-help courses on hypnosis that she will be conducting at the Crown Princess Hotel.

Austin, 40, has developed a technique in self-help for stress reduction and trauma-related problems.

The Austin Technique, as it is called, is a method of programming that teaches people the art of re-training the mind to choose a better personality and eliminate bad habits and unwanted behaviour.

It is a blend of Heightened State of Awareness (HSA) and the Alpha State, a bringing together of old and well-tried methods to re-frame and persuade the mind to form an innovative technique.

Austin claims that hypnosis is the quickest and most effective stress management programme today.

Her one-day course teaches a person to use his own natural techniques to halt stress buildup and channel negative stress into a more positive area.

"You can make stress work for you instead of against you by simply re-channelling it," she says.

Austin likens stress to electricity. "It is neither good nor bad. Just like electricity, stress can be channelled into a good area such as a hospital or a bad one such as a torture chamber,"

she says.

The day course will teach clients how stress works, how to use self-hypnosis with quick and simple techniques and to halt negative stress buildup, thereby increasing productivity and quality of life.

If the stress is trauma-related, it will take more time to deal with it, she says.

Austin became a firm believer in hypnosis after being cured of amnesia through hypnosis about 15 years ago.

She spent two years in a mental fog after nearly being killed in a 1979 car accident.

"I never forgot who I was, but I forgot friends, day-to-day occurrences and business appointments. It got so bad that I could only remember something for a maximum of 50 seconds."

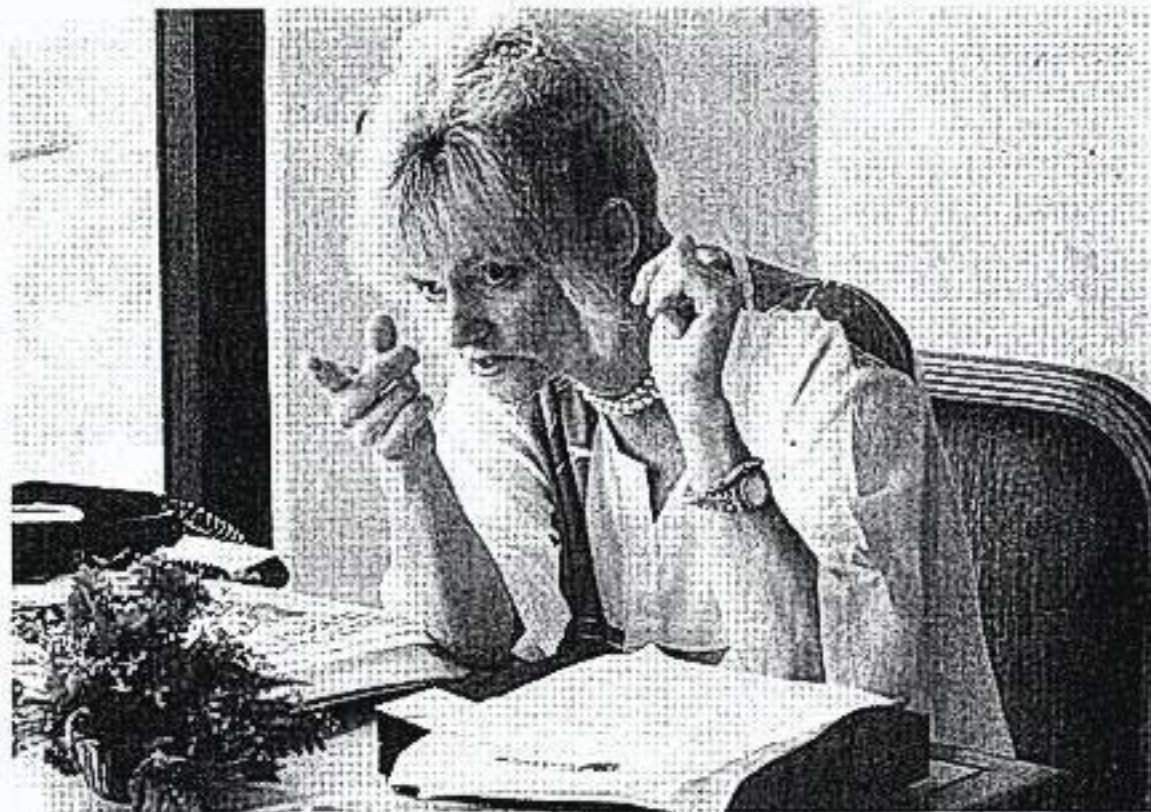
At the time, Austin was working as an advertising executive in England. She then tried numerous treatments, all of which failed.

In desperation, Austin went to Los Angeles after hearing about a new miracle drug that promised help.

But even that did not change her condition. Some time later, Hollywood hypnotherapist Gil Boyne read an account of Austin's plight in a British newspaper while he was in England.

Several months later, Austin appeared on his doorstep at the Hypnotism Training Institute in Glendale, California, and was cured of her condition in less than one hour.

After her successful treatment, Austin sought out many major hypnotherapists in both the United States and the United Kingdom, and enrolled for



Austin says she can help smokers quit their habit in just one hour

courses on the subject.

Some years later, she began to adapt the best of these methods and came up with her own routine to treat her clients for not only stress, but a host of other conditions.

Her Stop Smoking programme, utilising suggestion hypnosis, has received much attention in London, where she runs a practice in Harley Street as a consultant to psychiatrists and doctors, following a year as a hypnotherapy consultant to a private hospital in Britain.

Austin says she can get her clients to stop smoking permanently in just one hour of hypnosis.

"It's the most effective, simplest, quickest and probably cheapest way of giving up smoking," she says.

To prove her point, Austin will be conducting a one-day Stop Smoking course on Jan 29 at the Crown Princess Hotel.

"Suggestion has been proved to have a 60 per cent success rate, nearly three times more than anything else on the market," she says.

Austin also offers a personal, one-to-one course for a higher fee. She says that with this course, the success rate increases to between 80 per cent and 90 per cent.

"This treatment is more expensive as it is more intricate and uses advanced techniques in hypnosis rather than just the suggestion techniques," she adds.

Austin says the reason it only takes one hour to get a person to quit smoking is that smoking very rarely begins with a trauma.

Those who fail to be rid of their smoking habit by hypnosis are usually trauma-based clients and they would need a back-up session (which is included in the fee), she adds.

The Austin Technique has been so popular that a book on the subject, written by Austin, is due to be published in June this year.

Ten years after she was cured of trauma-related amnesia in the United States, Austin became one of UK's most successful marketers of Stop Programmes.

If the stress-management and stop-smoking programmes are successful Austin will soon be intro-

ducing other programmes such as speed reading, achieving weight-loss and curing insomnia through hypnosis.

For her Kuala Lumpur courses, which are registered under a company called Oliwaard System, Austin will be assisted by hypnotherapist Wamen Veal from the UK.

Austin's stress management and stop smoking day courses (RM250 per person) will be conducted through February (each weekend) and a diploma course on learning to increase productivity (RM4,500 per person) will be available in April and May (four weekends).

She will also be conducting her stress management courses at the Langkawi Holiday Villa till November. For a personal one-to-one course Austin charges RM500.

The fee for all courses includes refreshments and a take-home package on self-hypnosis.

For more information on the courses, call the Crown Princess Hotel at Tel: 03-2625522 and ask for Austin hypnotherapy courses.