

Reprogramme the mind



VALERIE AUSTIN, 50, is a hypnotherapist. Here she talks to **NICK MORGAN** about how she helps people achieve well-

being by curing trauma-related phobias:

ALMOST 20 years ago I was involved in a horrific car accident which left me with trauma-related memory loss. I forgot who my closest friends and relatives were. I went to the U.S. looking for a cure and found it in hypnotherapy.

I was amazed by its power to change people's lives. Since then I have developed my own form of hypnosis to help people overcome phobias and fears.

For instance, I recently saw a high-flying executive in his 30s whose insomnia was ruining his work. Under regression, I learned that at university he had stayed awake for three nights to study for his finals. When he passed his exams successfully, his brain associated insomnia with success.

Once you know about a problem, it is normally easy to bring the memory forward and correct it. Hypnosis is like a shot of tranquiliser to the conscious mind: it lets it lie back for a short time so the unconscious can be reached.

Many phobias are the result of a childhood trauma. One of my hypnotherapy students, Jane, had a fear of spiders.

Under regression, I discovered she'd been naughty at infants school and the teacher had locked her in a shed full of spiders. She looked at the spiders and thought



Valerie Austin: Battling phobias

about how much she hated the teacher. The hate became stuck in the spider and the phobia formed.

That is how simple it was to understand and fix. Within an hour she was sitting at a table with a spider on it.

The mind is like a computer — you get out what you programme into it. Most successful people programme themselves naturally with positive goals. Negative goals, phobias and associations are the results of bad programming. Hypnosis is simply going into some bad programming and getting rid of the bugs.

■ **VALERIE AUSTIN'S** latest book on hypnosis, *Free Yourself From Fear* is published by Thorsons.