

## Clearing up hypnotism myths

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In an effort to debunk the myths and misconceptions about hypnosis, hypnotist Debbie Papadakis hosted workshops in recognition of World Hypnotism Day and managed to raise as much as \$800 for local food pantries.

Papadakis, a 15-year hypnosis expert and founder of Toronto's Hypno Healing Institute in the Keele and Dundas Street West area, has garnered international fame as a feature of TV talk show queen Oprah's *O's Big Book of Happiness*, Oprah.com and CNN.com as well as the W Network and SliceTV, among others. Six years ago, Papadakis was instrumental in initiating World Hypnotism Day, which is celebrated annually on Jan. 4.

"We celebrate that day because we want to clear up the misconceptions that people have about hypnosis," said Papadakis Tuesday evening after a day of sessions.

What are these common misconceptions?

"That 'I will not wake up' or, 'You'll manipulate me' or 'You'll take control over me,'"

said the long time Durie Street resident.

However, this is simply not the case.

"You can only be hypnotized if you allow yourself," said Papadakis. "If I ask you to do something horrible, something you wouldn't do in a normal state, you won't do it. Hypnotism is a tool that allows you to go to that part of your mind that's holding information."

Emotion resides in one's subconscious mind, Papadakis said.

The founder of the Keele Street clinic and school said she is currently working with one little girl, for example, who hates to do her mathematics homework. To help alleviate the difficulty, Papadakis said she has taught the girl how to associate her homework with the feeling of fun that she gets when she plays computer games.

"A lot of people come to see me. A lot of people – including myself – need hypnosis," she said.

Papadakis celebrated World Hypnotism Day by hosting three special events, two workshops and a gala open house.

She donated \$200 to an organization called 'Common Cents,' which handed out meals to the homeless on Christmas Day and \$600 to The Stop Community Food Centre.

"My workshops consist of explaining how hypnosis works and the benefits and how blockages are created," said Papadakis.

The cost of the workshops were \$25 with all of the proceeds going to local food banks. Participants were also encouraged to donate non-perishable food items.

Papadakis is a certified instructor with the National Guild of Hypnotists and the International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association. In addition to working with habits, fears, anxieties, and removing blockages, she is internationally recognized for her work on sleep disorders and relationship issues.

A Feb. 13 workshop called 'Transform and Embrace Your Relationship' will also raise money for charity. Learn how to restore and renew the bridge of any of your relationships by removing the blockages that hinder them.