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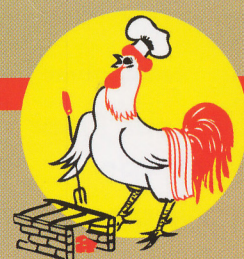


Hazel McCallion

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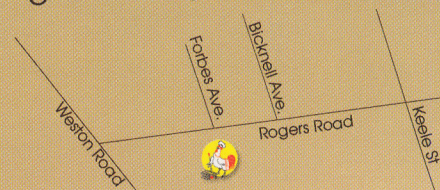
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By: Paula Barreiros Henriques

Hypnotherapy helps heal the mind and soul

Phoeby Sheldon, a 42-year-old London, Ont. resident has been treated for agoraphobia using a one of a kind treatment. Sheldon who battled the fear of having panic attacks in public for most of her life is now living a normal life upon completing a series of hypnotherapy sessions with a well-known therapist in Toronto.

When Sheldon was six, she was highly shy and sensitive which made it impossible to make friends with others. This would continue for another 30 years. "I was always filled with anxiety due to life events," She said. "Moving, facing social rejections, deaths of friends and family and betrayals would all trigger panic attacks." She believes the phobia has been a part of her life unconsciously since birth but she began feeling the symptoms of agoraphobia as young as the age of two. The first two years of her life were unstable due to poverty, immigrating and family stress.

She also tied her agoraphobia to influences from others around her who had neurotic tendencies. This affected her into her adulthood and interfered with relationships and her personal life. In January of 2009, Sheldon decided it was time for a change. After reading an online article featured on CNN news about a New York woman who was treated for a similar phobia, Sheldon decided to give hypnotherapy a try. This would be the first time she would drive to Toronto to meet Debbie Papadakis, a hypnotherapist, founder and director of the Toronto Hypno Healing Institute Inc. Sheldon would then have three other sessions in 2009. March, June and August. "There were subtle immediate positive effects with waves of significant small, medium and large healing effects over days, weeks and months after a session," Sheldon said. "It didn't take long for me to learn how to completely let go of my fears as time passed. I am now able to respond to life calmly interpreting a larger framework of what is occurring and being able to smooth out the anxiety and panic in my life." Sheldon claims before she met Debbie she was very impulsive and would often have nightmares related to her phobia accompanied by acute anxieties throughout the day. She was easily angered and would get panic attacks easily at any given time. "This made my life quite erratic and unpredictable with severe emotional ups and downs with moments of anxiousness," she said. "Most importantly, it corroded my ability to maintain commitments." One year later, Sheldon is now free of agoraphobia. She is now able to go out in public without the fear of having a panic attack.

"With this therapy, I was also able to heal other areas

of my life simultaneously such as repairing parental and family relationships. I have also been able to create inner peace for myself," Sheldon said. Through the use of hypnotherapy, more commonly known as hypnosis, Debbie Papadakis has helped hundreds of clients like Sheldon. Her work specializes in using hypnosis to cure all types of phobias and addictions.

To become a hypnotherapist, Papadakis took numerous courses with the Transformational Arts College, the National Guild of Hypnosis and the International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association. Papadakis who has been a hypnotherapist for 15 years takes pride in knowing she has helped transform the lives of hundreds of people.

Her work focuses mostly on overcoming phobias. She also works with addictions. She explained the most common phobias she works with include the fear of public speaking, cultural phobias and fear of the future. Although many believe hypnosis is a scam, Papadakis has proved her line of work is effective. "First of all, people need to know I don't cure phobias and addictions," Papadakis said. "I use the term clear or relief. I help clients clear their mind of the phobias by working with them to find out what caused the problem to start." Papadakis explained becoming a hypnotherapist is harder than it seems. Years of experience are needed to perfect the methods she uses. Papadakis explains she uses two methods of hypnosis. For one method, she talks to her client for 20 minutes and hypnotizes them. Once in hypnotic state, she will give the person suggestions and feedback. The person doesn't speak. If they agree with what she says, the procedure continues. "Sometimes the person may not like what I say or suggest. When this happens they will snap out of their hypnotic state and we need to start over," Papadakis said. The second method involves talking for 20 minutes as well. Once the client is hypnotized, they are asked a series of questions involving their phobia or addiction. Then, suggestions are made. Once the client is brought back from their hypnotic state, a discussion takes place to see if there is any improvement. "Anywhere from two to four sessions are needed to successfully clear a phobia or addiction," Papadakis said. "Sometimes, but very rarely can it be done in one session."

Papadakis also explained hypnosis does not send people into la-la land. The mind just becomes very relaxed and this allows for penetration of the subconscious mind. Once this happens, she helps her clients reverse their phobias and addictions. Her clientele include an equal male to female ratio. The average age of her clients range from 40 to 50. She also helps school children mainly for fear of not doing well on tests.

"Through the use of hypnosis we can cut into our hidden power to expel fear and negative emotions. We can heal our body and mind, and we can make positive and vast changes in our life to reach our full potential," Papadakis said.