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THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

Last Saturday I saw my first Hypnotist stage show. It was a fund raising event for the Laconia High School Band and they brought in Hypnotist Paul Ramsay who did a magnificent job both entertaining and educating the audience. From a larger group of volunteers there were about twelve brave individuals were selected to take part. There was no way that I would ever volunteer but my son Joshua did – but unfortunately he along with a few others were not found to be quite ready.

Many many years ago I dabbled a bit with hypnotism as a psychology major in the only school ever visited by the renowned Dr. Sigmund Freud. Knowing how challenging it can be to hypnotize someone in a controlled environment leaves me wonder in amazement at how Mr. Ramsay is able to hypnotize an entire group of people in a public auditorium. This guy is really good!

A hypnotist does not take control over the person that is hypnotized. Hypnosis is not unlike a deep meditative state or even a deep dream like state. The hypnotist doesn't control the person but he/she does utilize the power of suggestion to create responses that might not otherwise be expected. For a stage show this can translate into people dancing on stage who might not otherwise be so inclined to do so..... and other responses that are very entertaining to watch.....

But the power of subconscious suggestion is not limited to hypnotists. We all are vulnerable to suggestion – and very often we might not have any idea of where it comes from. Our culture and our society shape how we feel, think and act --- unless we consciously challenge the underlying assumptions. Some would say that these cultural imperatives become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy – where

we become what we think. On the negative side we find some people who fail because since they were young they have been told that they would never make it. At the opposite end of the spectrum we have those who espouse the power of positive thinking and how visualizing success helps you to achieve that success.

As people enter their retirement years they oftentimes find that there are a lot of *'expectations'* on the part of others as to what is and is not appropriate. They find that there are many unwritten *'rules'* about what you should do and should not do. Grandmothers and Grandfathers are supposed to act in certain ways --- and they should never, ever do anything that would embarrass their adult children!

It was George Bernard Shaw who wrote: *"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."*

One of the *'suggestions'* that society sometimes conveys is that being older is all about being serious, dealing with ailments and getting ready to meet your Maker. Many people enter their retirement years and assume that learning and having fun are part of their past but not their future. Retirement isn't about *'disengaging from life'* but rather it is an exciting time to engage in new, different and fun things.

The *'Red Hat Ladies'* have it right! What better time than when you are older to be Outrageous! Being proper and conservative have their place --- but not every place and all the time! It is wonderful for me to see people who shed the old *'suggestions'* and rediscover how to have fun! There will always be people out there who will be quick to tell you that you are *'too old'* for this or *'too old'* for that --- don't listen to them! If there is something that you want to do – it is better for you to fail trying to do it than to not try at all – and you might just surprise yourself at the fun you have along the way.

"It ain't over till it's over" so sayeth the great Yogi Berra! Give yourself the power of suggestion --- the power of Positive suggestion that you can do and be

all that you want to do and be --- and that age doesn't matter unless you are a cheese!

Age Well!

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