

THE
MAYFAIR
MAGAZINE

APRIL 2012 • ISSUE 007

DESIGNER
Hotels

FROM BULGARI TO
MOSCHINO, THE LABELS
BEHIND THE LUXURY

Vintage
MAYFAIR

ROLLS-ROYCE, TURNER
AND THE LITERARY
HISTORY OF THE AREA





Mind over matter

Can hypnotherapy really help you to lose weight?
OLIVIA GOLDING visits a leading practitioner on Harley Street to find out



LOUISE MOORE believes that anything is possible with hypnotherapy. She can help you quit smoking, make you think that you have a gastric band and even ensure a virtually pain-free birth, all through the awesome power of the mind. With a healthy dose of scepticism, and an unhealthy addiction to sugar, caffeine and the good life in general, I find myself in a reclining leather chair on Harley Street fully prepared to hand over my subconscious to someone who can hopefully do a better job with it than I have so far.

'We only ever use a small percentage of our mind,' says Moore, 'we can do so much more if we find a way to engage the rest. Hypnotherapy is all about engaging the subconscious which by now has several "hooks" on which it has attached thoughts and habits – both good and bad. Hypnotherapy allows us to go in and change these for the better.'

Surely a good, old-fashioned Atkins, Dukan, or the hideous side-effect inducing cabbage soup diet are better if you want real results though?

'No. The reason diets work is because you are focusing all your attention on them, but nothing has actually changed in your mind. You still want the bad stuff, you are just concentrating enough to avoid them. But the minute you lose your focus, you will be right back to where you started,' she says. 'What I do is not a diet, it's a lifestyle change, so you will be totally relaxed around food and only eat when you are naturally hungry. You will start to eat more slowly and begin to really enjoy your food.'

The figures add up

– diets have an average 95% failure rate, while hypnotherapy enjoys a 98% success rate if it is done correctly. Hypnotherapy has recently received a lot of attention for health and weight loss purposes, with several A-listers admitting to turning to it for help in getting red-carpet ready. Lily Allen reportedly went from a size 14 to a size 8 through the aid of a Harley Street hypnotherapist, while Oprah has spent years encouraging the world to engage in 'mindful eating'.

I've always privately believed that hypnotherapy was a bit obvious – no one overeats because they are unaware of the consequences.

'True, but to many, food has lost its nutritional value because it is so loaded with emotion,' says Moore. 'People don't eat because they are hungry anymore, there are so many reasons: boredom, anxiety, distress and so on; if we remove these from the equation, then food becomes something lighter, to enjoy but not think too much about.' To someone who can spend an entire day finding reasons to justify a desert with dinner, this freedom from food guilt sounds like heaven. Surely removing that weight alone will aid my goal.

We begin the session by talking about my life, diet and ideal goals from the treatment, all the while Moore

scribbles private notes to help her when I am 'under'.

She asks me to visualise this achievement – for example to picture myself wearing a size ten dress, picturing the colour, style and fit while imagining how good it feels to be in it. Her voice is soft and calming and I find myself incredibly at ease talking about long-held diet convictions and food issues.

After this, it's time for me to 'go under' and my fears that I would mentally fight, or worse burst into inappropriate laughter have melted away in this calm environment.

As Moore counted down from five, asking me to picture a relaxing place in my mind, I remained completely aware of what was happening and being said, but relaxed enough to just let it wash over me. Sirens and outside noise faded into the background as I listened to her soporific voice re-writing my flawed mindset.

Afterwards I 'awoke' feeling like I had had a long nap; refreshed, despite only 25 minutes of semi-conscious shut-eye.

At the time it was hard to tell if it worked, but that night I had dinner with a friend and ignored the bread as if it was not there. I now don't want it. I also eat slower than I can ever remember doing, and despite the food being delicious, I am unable to finish it. My usual mentality of finishing what is on my plate (derived, Moore guesses, from

a childhood being told to 'eat up') is calmed by the thought that I can simply eat again later, as and when I am hungry. Guilt be gone!

My next appointment is two weeks on and while I could hear Moore in my head for the

first few days, I do feel my resolve weakening as the days to our next meeting get closer. She explains that it takes a few sessions for the message to sink in, but once you have started, the process gets easier each time. Indeed this time I found myself even more relaxed than before and the visualisations stronger.

I left once again feeling confident of my ability to distinguish between hunger and cravings and really quite serene and at peace with the world. That night I sleep like a baby and manage to switch off the endless 'to do' list that usually circles in my mind, a pointless whirlpool of guilt.

It's now been four weeks since my first appointment and I have lost 4 lbs through making very few changes. I have eaten less (and what I have eaten has been substantially more healthy), but I have avoided any feelings of deprivation that usually accompany my diets. I plan to return for another session to maintain my newfound healthy mindset, but knowing I am not on a diet is the lightest I've felt in ages. Now if I'm hungry, I'll eat, who knew it was that easy? ■

*A session with Louise Moore costs £150
7 Harley Street, London
(louise@lifemattersgroup.com; 07970834446)*

'The figures add up – diets have an average 95% failure rate, while hypnotherapy enjoys a 98% success rate if it is done correctly'