

From the Chair of the Hypnotherapist – Conquering Your Fear of Spiders

The Edinburgh Reporter's Mike Smith is a qualified hypnotherapist. In the latest of his series of articles on how hypnotherapy can help address unwanted habits or disorders, Mike looks at how this can help conquer a fear of spiders.

There was a story on the BBC Scotland news website the other day about how a giant spider had been found in a shipping container at a manufacturing company in the west of Scotland. The Huntsman spider is commonly found in Australia, Africa and Asia but this creature found itself in Dumbarton. As if to illustrate this was a beast of an arachnid, the BBC saw fit to publish a photograph of a Huntsman spider alongside the article, resulting in those with a fear of spiders turning away from their computer/laptop/mobile phone screen in horror. It's arguable who might have got the bigger fright upon its discovery – the person who came across it or the poor spider finding itself thousands of miles from home and in Dumbarton, of all places...

A fear of spiders is a fairly common phobia for which hypnotherapy can help. Like most phobias, it doesn't target anyone in particular. I've been asked if I can provide help to an array of people who have a fear of spiders, from big burly brickies to young teenage girls, one of whom told me recently she gets her dad to 'deal' with spiders in her house.

An example recently was 'S', a male in his early 30s. He works in the construction industry and has been in a happy relationship with his partner for nearly five years. He is the proud father to a two-year-old boy. You might think S would be happy with his life and, for the most part, he is. However,

there is one issue he struggles with and has done all his life – his fear of spiders.

S has always been afraid of spiders but has always regarded his fear as just him being stupid. He has no qualms about dealing with other issues, for example, he and his partner were recently troubled with mice in their home and last year there was a wasp infestation which terrified his partner. Not so S, who dealt with it in his stride. However, when it comes to the seemingly harmless spider, S will run to the other side of the room, seeking help and shouting instructions to whoever is in his company to 'get rid of it'.

S approached me as a 'last resort' (actually, that's not as bad as it sounds – hypnotherapy is still a relatively 'young' profession) He had tried other methods but without success. First of all, I told him he wasn't being 'stupid'. And I congratulated him on taking the first steps to improving his life. We arranged a suitable date and time for an initial consultation – I offer a free consultation to ascertain if my clients will be receptive to hypnotherapy.

S told me he wasn't sure if hypnotherapy would help cure him of his fear. This was perfectly understandable. He explained he always associated hypnotherapy with swinging stopwatches and making people dance around the room thinking they were a demented chicken. Part of the initial consultation is to explain the whole process of hypnotherapy to my client. I assured S he would be conscious and aware, in control at all times and he would certainly not be doing anything he didn't want to do.

S told me that simply the sight of a 'big hairy spider with their long legs and the way they scuttle across the floor' scared him. He further explained his rationale. 'They appear from nowhere, racing across the floor usually as I'm in a relaxed state. Their clingy webs are everywhere. And I've read that spiders use their own bodily fluids catch their

unassuming prey, before cocooning the poor beastie in the stuff and injecting it with some foul substance to dissolve its innards...'

If you have a fear of spiders this is probably too much information. But please bear with me, it's worth quantifying S's thoughts. I asked him how long he had this phobia and if he could remember the first time he feared spiders. He explained he was about 10 years old and was alone at home while his mother had popped out to the shops. He was lying on the couch not feeling very well when he spotted a spider crawling along the bottom of the fireplace. It crawled slowly but steadily and S froze, unable to move, until his mother returned.

It seems this was the catalyst for his fear which has remained with him ever since. Stripped down to its basic form, S's subconscious mind is controlling him through his experience of seeing that spider many years ago (sorry, S – you're not really that old) When he sees a spider his conscious mind – the one we all have which enables us to perform our usual day-to-day tasks such as getting up in the morning, getting dressed, driving the car to work – tells him it's just a spider, a wee harmless beastie that is not interested in him and is probably frightened of S hence why it scuttles furiously across the floor to avoid him. S's subconscious mind, however, keeps relating back to that incident when he was ten years old and feeds on his fear of spiders. Until now...

The more I was able to talk to S's subconscious mind – and it took a few sessions lasting no more than an hour each time – the more his fear of spiders subsided. After a few short weeks, hypnotherapy had helped him. S no longer fears spiders and when he sees one crawling across the floor he accepts it for what it is doing.

A lifetime of fear had come to an end.

Does this story sound familiar to you? Interested? Contact me today and I can start helping you to re-educate your brain and make your fear of spiders history.

There's a FREE consultation and if you decide this isn't for you then you've literally lost nothing. If you wish to proceed and you're a public sector worker and a member of the Premium Benefits scheme, then you get a whopping 20% off each session.
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