***By Carolyn Lee***
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When Martin Bremmer of rural Venango established his hypnotherapy practice in January of this year, he thought he'd be standing alone in a field of corn, so to speak, about accepting hypnosis. He has since found out that a lot of people are receptive of its use.

"People out here have been extremely interested," he said Tuesday. "I thought most of my clients would be from the metro area, but I've found people who have used it" for years.

Bremmer said "country" doctors and dentists were using hypnosis during childbirth and dentistry during the 30s and 40s, when drugs to block pain and distress weren't available.

Bremmer, a farmer, became interested in science through owning a dog kennel and working with people.

While in college he worked for a cancer research lab in Denver, Colo. He also became certified as a nurse's aid and medication aid through Mid-Plains Community College in 2007.

This past January he took a two-week, intensive class at ISHI School of Hypnosis in Berkeley, Calif. He chose the school because it condensed an 80-hour course into two weeks, including Saturdays and Sundays.

"I immersed myself in the subject, on a level I hadn't experienced before. I was completely eating it up because of the intensity," he explained.

At the same time he was studying, Bremmer established Inner Life Hypnotherapy.

He is certified by the National Guild of Hypnotists, and expects to become board-certified next year, after passing a live hypnotism session, taking a test and practicing for a year.

What is hypnotherapy? Is it like the guy on stage who makes you do things you don't remember?

A stage hypnotist, Bremmer said, is pure entertainment.

"I'm not diminishing their abilities. They're taking the extremes of hypnotism, such as levitating a person between two chairs."

A hypnotherapist deals with "everyday issues they want to get rid of or enhance," Bremmer stated, such as addressing weight loss, pain relief and addictive behaviors such as smoking.

"These are everyday issues. The hypnotherapist guides you through them," he said.

Hypnotherapy is an exercise in positive programming, a therapist-led state of deep relaxation during which the therapist and patient work on deep-rooted issues of the patient's choosing. The hypnotherapist assists a person in delving into his or her inner consciousness to make desired mental and behavioral changes.

The mind is in an "alpha" state, Bremmer said, or a normal conscious state. He helps the client shift it into a subconscious state, which doesn't evaluate behavior, but accepts a new type of programming.

Say you like chocolate ice cream after a meal but don't want to eat it because it makes you gain weight.

Bremmer helps your subconscious reject the ice cream so that when you're back in consciousness, the programming remains and you also will reject the ice cream.

The fearful side of hypnotism, Bremmer said, is that people think it's mind control.

"That can't happen," he emphasized. "Nothing can happen that goes against your moral fiber. That's part of your subconsciousness that can't be switched off.

"The hypnosis client is always in control of what they want to believe," he said.

That could be a problem if the client doesn't want to change the behavior for which they are supposedly seeking help. Bremmer said a client needs to want to change that behavior before a

hypnotherapist can help.

Hypnotherapy isn't like psychiatry, either. The 43-year-old compared the two, saying a psychiatrist could operate a whole room full of exercise equipment, while a hypnotherapist could only operate one machine at a workout center.

"You can employ some of the things that a psychiatrist uses, such as talk therapy," he said, but a psychiatrist has much more education on how a mind works, behavior-wise.

Bremmer sees clients in Colorado and Nebraska. He has a good "pool" of clients on the front range, but is surprised by the number of clients he is contacting in rural Nebraska.

A session typically lasts 60 to 75 minutes, during which Bremmer uses a combination of techniques to guide his client into a deep state of relaxation and focus. Once the client is in hypnosis, Bremmer works with him or her on goals specified at the beginning of the session.

According to Bremmer, the client is aware of everything that happens during the session, and remembers the entire session afterwards.

He works with individuals or groups.

During a group session, he performs "light hypnosis" and positive suggestions.

"We reconfigure daily habits that you're aware of and want to alter or change," Bremmer pointed out. A group of people, such as a smoking cessation one, has a common goal.

"You can achieve that as long as all participants want to be there," he added.

The hypnotherapist offers on-site sessions in offices, schools and churches.

Bremmer sees himself as an educator as well as a hypnotherapist. He receives a lot of questions about his practice and is glad to answer them.

"Needless to say, people I have met are very curious about hypnotherapy," he said.

Bremmer is in the process of establishing a web site for InnerLife Hypnotherapy at www.innerllifehypnotherapy.com. He may also be reached at home at (308) 447-5566 or on his cell phone at (303) 243-1543.