HYPNOSIS WAY TO STOP SMOKING



Picture: CHAI KHIAN CHONG

WANT to kick the smoking habit within an hour?

Impossible, you say? Well, not if you take lessons from British hypnotherapist Valerie Austin.

Austin, 47, is a world authority on hypnotherapy — a mental technique which can cure bad habits, stress, insomnia and smoking.

Besides running a private clinic in London, she also conducts hypnotherapy courses in Langkawi, Kedah with trainers from the Austin Institute established last year.

Austin has visited Malaysia annually since 1992 to conduct seven-day courses organised by the institute of which she is principal.

The courses, conducted thrice a year, are aimed at helping people use hypnotherapy besides teaching them the technique to help others.

There are also annual weekend courses specially to help people stop smoking.

Austin is in Malaysia for a three-week visit to her institute and will return to Britain on May 8.

She was also interviewed yesterday by Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Bhd (TV3) over the morning talk show *Malaysia Hari Ini*.

Speaking to *The Malay Mail* later, Austin said hypnosis was like getting rid of a virus in a computer and making it function properly.

"With hypnosis, the subconscious mind is programmed to change the person's pattern of behaviour," she said.

"Smokers who undergo hypnosis will be made to relax, sleep and free their mind of negative thoughts," said Austin.

"They will visualise themselves as being freed of the smoking habit and when they wake up, the urge to smoke is gone.

"It is like putting them in a daydream where they will mentally sift out the bad things in their lives."

Austin also said many people do not give up smoking because they fear that they

By DENNIS CHUA

would not enjoy life once they quit.

"Smoking is a mental problem, and smokers do face problems when they suddenly stop the habit.

"But with hypnosis they will have a simple and yet effective way of quitting cigarettes," she said.

While different people take different periods to stop smoking, many get out of the habit within an hour.

"There is a 95 per cent success rate for smokers," said Austin.

The former journalist became a firm believer in hypnotherapy after suffering from amnesia following a road accident in London in 1979.

She tried various treatments but was finally cured by the noted Hollywood hypnotherapist Gil Boyne in an hour.

"Boyne read about my plight in an article in *The Daily Mirror*, a British newspaper," said Austin.

After her successful treatment, Austin sought out many American and British hypnotherapists who taught her the subject.

She learnt many different hypnosis methods and adapted them to create her own.

In 1994, the then Health Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai gave his personal approval to Austin's techniques as a valuable tool to combat smoking.

"I do not heal them but help them heal themselves," said Austin.

"Hypnotherapy is specially for the individual to give himself or herself a hand in overcoming problems."

Austin's courses in Langkawi last for seven days and are held in resort hotels.

Six to 12 participants join every course where they are given personal attention.

Austin also conducts similar courses in Beverly Hills, California, and in London.

People who qualify from these courses will receive recognition from the American Examining Council of Hypnosis.

Austin has written a book entitled *Stop Smoking In One Hour* which is published by Berita Publishing Sdn Bhd.

The book provides a simple and yet detailed method of self-hypnosis for smokers. It will be on sale from next week and is priced at RM19.90.

Another book written by Austin two years ago, *Self-Hypnosis*, has been translated into Bahasa Malaysia by Melati Publishers Sdn Bhd and will be on sale next month.

Austin's Langkawi course is on the Internet at http://www.paradiselearning.com.

For more information, contact 04-9552586/03-4563490.



Austin with her new book to help people stop smoking

Stop the open burning

DO your bit for the environment.

Clerk Maria Masmon, 19, says one way to do so is to stop open burning.

"Many still believe burning rubbish is the only means of getting rid of it. It may be true, but it damages the environment," says Maria.

She advises the public to pack their rubbish and wait for the garbage collectors.

"Now that is definitely one way of contributing positively towards the preservation of the environment," she adds. — *Talent from IR PRODUCTION*