Legendary Langkawi perfect spot for mind-power course

By K. Bala

HYPNOSIS and the beauty of the island paradise of Langkawi seem to be intertwined for British hypnotherapist and motivational psychologist Valerie Austin.

She may not be the only one to have been hypnotised by the uniqueness of the group of 104 islands with their sandy beaches and the lush greenery of the fields and mountains. Millions of other foreigners have flocked to Langkawi since it erupted from its obscure legendary state early this decade.

But Austin, 47, is special for she makes the island her retreat away from her Harley Street practice to conduct her mind-power hypnotic holiday courses dubbed "Learn in Paradise".

Little wonder therefore that this lover of Langkawi thanked the "lovely people of Langkawi for their help and guidance" in the acknowlegement section of her first self-help guidebook entitled *Self Hypnosis*.

There is in fact a similarity in the awakening of Langkawi and her own life.

After being a sleepy hollow under the spell of the curse of Mahsuri for seven generations, the island awakened to become a popular holiday resort within a mere 10 years.

Similarly Austin "woke up" after hypnosis treatment for memory loss following a nasty car crash which nearly claimed her life. The treatment under American hynotherapist Dr Gil Boyne led her to become one herself, developing a technique for stress reduction and trauma-related problems.

Besides the British, her sessions to help people quit smoking in an hour and overcome weight and stress and trauma-related problems have begun to make an impact in Malaysia as she is sought after by those who value her prowess in heightening their state of awareness.

Over the past two years, she has conducted seven advanced mind-technique courses for Malaysians besides giving talks at institutions of higher learning.

The Health Ministry has also given the endorsement for her one-hour stop smoking technique which retrains and heightens the subconscious to drop the satisfaction obtained from a bad habit and replace it with a good habit like exercise.

Austin was on the island recently for her seventh advanced course at the classy Raddisson Resort in scenic Tanjung Rhu.

"I am happy that more and more Malaysians are becoming interested in hypnosis to be used as a tool to empower their own lives," she said when met at the end of her latest course.

She is particularly keen to impart to Malaysians what she calls "a new wave in the West to increase people's instincts".

"They found out in the futures market (stocks and shares) that even with all the necessary knowlege their investments could go wrong," Austin says.

"People who make the money are those who go with their instincts as well as their knowledge."

Perhaps her greatest satisfaction derived from her one-week course was to hear from a banker-pupil that he made RM35 million within two weeks of attending her session.

The banker managed to push six projects at one meeting without any objections.

"As a banker, he already had the skills but he acquired greater confidence after my hypnotherapy course," Austin said.

Another satisfaction was that she had her first doctor as her pupil in the latest Langkawi course though she has had many in London.

"Some doctors are sceptical of hypnosis," she said, adding that "we are not part of the medical profession but we work with the medical profession for we can unlock the door when they get stuck."

Austin is selective of the people she wants for her courses — people with gold-card credit rating — to maintain the image for this journey of the mind.

Her next session in Langkawi is scheduled for Oct 26-Nov 1 while there will be one in London from Sept 28-Oct 4.

The London course bookings can be made with Malaysia Airlines Golden Holidays (Tel: 03-2655124) and enquiries for the Langkawi session can be made by calling 03-4563490.

Austin turns sceptics into believers

DR Aminah Amin, a private practitioner from Kuala Lumpur, is now convinced that hypnotherapy can complement the medical profession in curing the sick.

She was sceptical at first but after first-hand experience under Valerie Austin for seven days, she feels that she will be able to better deal with her patients.

"As a doctor, you see all sorts of patients, not just those with medical problems.

"People come with emotional and stress-related problems and the doctor takes the long-winded way of finding out the reasons for the depression.

"By using hypnosis, I will be able to go straight to the problem faster.

"This direct access to the sub-conscious mind will certainly be helpful to members of my profession," she says, adding that it is not harmful in any way.

Dr Aminah says she will be able to treat her patients "as a whole" now that she has learnt to be a hypnotherapist as well.

This time around, if any patient walks into her clinic to seek help to quit smoking, she is equipped to do it the hypnosis way in a mere hour for after all, the Austin method has a success rate of 90 per cent.

Another participant, Dunstan Chan, a lawyer from Kuching, has been conducting motivational courses, including the art of public speaking and communication skills, for more than two years.

His initial sceptism of hypnotherapy was "that I personally did not experience it except for hearsay though I generally accepted it."

But after personal experience, he is convinced of its powers.

On motivational courses, of which he is well versed, Chan says "motivation courses in itself does not guarantee that the person continues to apply the techniques.

"During the course, they can be motivated but after some time, the old habits may return.

"In hypnosis, the sub-conscious mind is programmed to change the pattern of behaviour.

"With the programme locked-in, the person can then apply all the motivational techniques," says Chan, adding that his motivational courses from now on will adopt a different perspective. — By K. Bala



MIND POWER ... Austin (right) with Dr Aminah

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