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# RESIDENT

P U B L I C A T I O N S

NY Resident Magazine, 28 East 28th Street, 9n, NY, NY  
October 16, 2006

## Couples Seeking Babies Turn To Hypnosis

By Megan H. Chan



Tara Faith Brockman sunk into her hypnotherapist's reclining chair, closed her eyes and visualized a journey through her uterus. At her therapist's prompt to imagine her womb as a special room for her baby, Brockman envisioned a place where an older goddess with flowing white hair and gown served as its caretaker.

A few months later, 31-year-old Brockman was pregnant with Cora Lily, and she said she believed her hypnotic treatments were what enabled her to conceive.

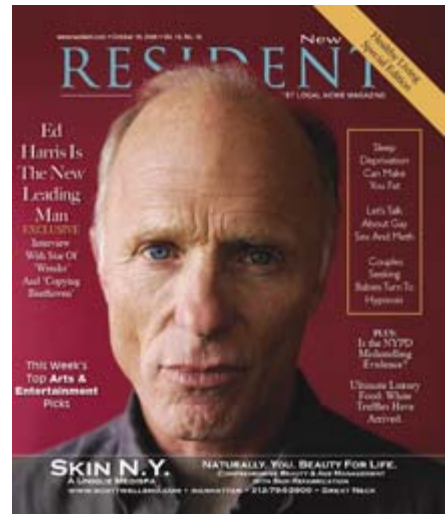
Today, more women are turning to hypnosis as an alternative fertility treatment. While common medical treatments like in vitro fertilization can cost as much as \$15,000 a cycle, hypnotherapists specializing in fertility charge about \$150 a session in a sequence of four or five. Women desperate to conceive naturally have started to take notice of the growing number of hypnotherapy centers and hypnotherapists offering fertility CDs online.

Jennifer Harris and her husband spent a decade trying to have a child. After myriad semi-invasive medical procedures, Harris almost gave up. In a last attempt to conceive naturally, Harris underwent hypnosis.

Like Brockman, Harris, 37, said she underwent a series of guided visualizations to relax her and "connect my body and reproductive system." She visualized the cilia in her fallopian tubes bopping her egg toward her uterus, where it found a "cushy warm spot." Nine months later, redheaded Edana was born.

"To me, there's no way to quantifiably prove any other way than the way it was," Harris said from Littleton, Colo. "I tried to get pregnant for 10 years and we did hypnosis and bam, I was pregnant."

Lynsi Eastburn, who treated both Brockman and Harris, travels the country teaching hypnotherapists fertility techniques beyond primal sperm and egg visualizations. Her work won her the hypnosis research award at the National Guild of Hypnotists 2005 conference.



With her HypnoBirthing method, a trademark technique for women in labor, Eastburn is the leading, if not the only, hypnofertility therapist trainer in the country. Eastburn said she focused her work on “getting the nervous system’s switch unstuck.”

“It’s reminding the body at the subconscious level that it knows how to become pregnant,” Eastburn said.

According to a 2004 study by researchers at Israel’s Soroka University, 28 percent of women undergoing in vitro fertilization became pregnant after hypnosis compared with 14 percent of women in the control group. While the study hasn’t been replicated, several hypnotherapists said it supported the notion that hypnosis relaxes the body, causing it to be more receptive to conceiving.

Emotions and stress may possibly contribute to infertility, said Dr. Alan DeCherney, a reproductive endocrinologist and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, Los Angeles Medical Center. Although he said the trend in mainstream fertility treatments focuses more on high-tech procedures and less on patients’ emotions, DeCherney said he would support a patient’s decision to use hypnosis as a complementary option.

“I definitely don’t discourage my patients from using alternative therapies as long as it isn’t something they take into their body,” DeCherney said.

Though most fertility hypnotists focus on women, some hypnotherapists said it could be effective for men, although they may be less likely to seek help.

Nate Bonilla-Warsord of Tampa, Fla., whose blog “A dad someday?” is one of a handful written from a male perspective, said there was relatively little that mainstream Western medicine could do to help him at this point. He and his wife of eight years, Cristina, have been unsuccessful in their attempts to have a baby.

“I either have the option of trying alternative therapy or not doing anything,” Bonilla-Warsord said, adding that he was open to trying hypnosis.

For 20 percent of infertile women, the cause is inexplicable, according to several doctors specializing in infertility treatments. Though the link is unproved, many women said they felt their stress was a main contributor to their infertility.

Amber Olson, 30, of Denver, started off as one of Eastburn’s clients and is now a hypnotherapy fertility therapist. After three years of trying to have a second child through expensive medical treatments, Olson consulted Eastburn and now credits the therapist for helping her to conceive her 21-month-old son, Liam.

“All the doctors, the ovulation kits and the timing, it starts to feel like you have no control over it,” Olson said. “You feel like nothing can be done and ask ‘Why am I broken, what’s wrong with me.’ And hypnosis lets you know that you’re body is working. It’s liberating.”