

The Elite Clinic

Tucked away in a side street off a pretty square in the centre of Fuengirola is a clinic which is literally saving lives. Since May 2008 the Elite Clinic has been offering Gastric Mind Band Therapy. The treatment originated from a brief conversation with a client, who said, "I just know that if I had a Gastric Band fitted like my neighbour the weight would drop off me.

Couldn't you just hypnotise me and make me believe that I had undergone the procedure and be done with it?" An interesting idea! Hypnotherapy alone proved not to be the solution, but over the following twelve months a possibly unique therapy was developed, cleverly combining Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, NLP, Hypnotherapy and guided imagery, and the client's wish was granted!

The idea is simple - The patient is hypnotised into thinking they have had gastric band surgery and will never need to eat so much again - and it works. A recent guinea pig, Claudia Connell recounts her astonishing experience. "Lying on a hospital trolley, feeling pleasantly woozy from the recently administered pre-med, I am about to be wheeled down to theatre to have my gastric band fitted.

I can hear the noises of a busy hospital and am aware of that very distinct clinical smell. Despite what lies ahead, I don't feel in the least bit anxious as the anaesthetist puts me under and the surgeon prepares his scalpel for that first incision. Perhaps my calm state of mind is because I am relieved to finally be addressing the weight problems I have struggled with for two years - but, in reality, it's far more likely to be due to the fact that I am not in a hospital at all but reclining on a comfy chair, under hypnosis and in a state of deep relaxation, in a therapy room on Spain's Costa Del Sol."

Slightly cynically, I visited the clinic and was warmly greeted by Martin Shirran, a psychologist and specialist in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy who also holds a Diploma in Clinical Hypnosis, and is certified and registered



with both the American Board and British Institute of Hypnotherapy. So, armed with the knowledge that this man is most definitely qualified in his field, I opened my rather closed mind to the work of the clinic.

Before we sat down to talk, Martin introduced me to a patient who had just arrived from her fifth session at the clinic. He said, "talk to Lisa, ask her anything you want.

Don't just listen to me". And so I sat opposite Lisa, a 34 stone American who had travelled to the clinic from her home in Ireland. In her words "this is it, the end of the road for me, I can't have a gastric band fitted as I can't lose the weight to get fit for the operation and have too many other health issues.

"I'll just die anyway. So what have I got to lose by coming here?" Lisa went on to tell me that her dream was to go shopping with her daughter, to go to a mall and try on clothes. After seeing the results of the clinic for myself, I do believe that one day in the not too distant future her dream will become a reality.

Today was Lisa's fifth session and the day of the "op". The previous four sessions had produced amazing results to the extent that Lisa no longer focused her day on food, she was not hungry at all and had eaten minute portions the size of a golf ball for breakfast lunch and dinner and no snacks in-between.

A far cry from the mid-morning snack consisting of a 2lb