

The Power of Nothing

From IELTS Masterclass by Peter May and Simon Haines. Original article by Geoff Watts, New Scientist - 26 May 2001.

'Tablearning' & 'Colour coding' techniques invented by Teacher Luc: luc@peacemakerfoundation.com

Synonyms & similar words	Mnemonic	L	Text	Word family
<p><i>unconventional, different</i></p> <p><u>concerned</u>, <i>compassionate</i></p> <p>medication, therapy <i>sickness, illness</i></p> <p>spirituality, holiness</p> <p>energy channels in the body <i>visible light around a being</i></p>	<p>alter a native</p> <p>simple and pathetic</p> <p>treat men with tea parts</p> <p>misty criticism</p> <p>married Ian Or a...</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>	<p>Want to devise a new form of alternative medicine? No problem. Here's the recipe. Be warm, <i>sympathetic</i>, reassuring and enthusiastic. Your treatment should involve physical contact, and each session with your patients should last at least half an hour. Encourage your patients to take an active part in their treatment and understand how their disorders relate to the rest of their lives. Tell them that their own bodies possess the true power to heal. Make them pay you out of their own pockets. Describe your treatment in familiar words, but embroidered with a hint of mysticism: energy fields, energy flows, energy blocks, meridians, forces, auras, rhythms and the like. Refer to the knowledge of an earlier age: wisdom carelessly swept aside by the rise and rise</p>	<p><u>alternate</u> (<i>between</i>), <u>alternatively</u></p> <p><u>sympathizer</u>, sympathy, <i>sympathetically</i></p> <p><u>treatable</u> disordered, <i>disorderly</i>, <u>ordered</u>, <u>orderly</u></p> <p><i>mystically</i></p>

<p><u>using</u> a mechanism, <i>physical</i></p> <p><u>stop pretending</u> from your imagination</p>	<p>mechanic his tick parts parts</p>	<p>of blind, <i>mechanistic</i> science.</p>	<p>mechanics, mechanism, <u>mechanize</u>, <i>mechanistically</i>, <i>mechanically</i></p>
<p><i>believable</i>, credible</p>	<p>Ken & Vince (sing)</p>	<p>30 Oh, <u>come off it</u>, you're saying. Something invented <i>off the top of</i> <i>your head</i> couldn't possibly work, could it? Well yes, it could—and often well enough to earn you a living. A good living if you are sufficiently <u>convincing</u></p>	<p>conviction, <u>convince</u>, <i>convincingly</i></p>
<p><u>healing</u>, <u>treatment</u></p>	<p>There! A pea!</p>	<p>35 or, better still, really believe in your therapy. Many illnesses get better on their own, so if you are lucky and <u>administer</u> your treatment at just the right time</p>	<p>therapist, <i>therapeutically</i></p>
<p><u>dispense</u>, <u>give out</u></p> <p><u>praise</u>, recognition</p>	<p>Ad+minister credit card</p>	<p>40 you'll get the credit. But that's only part of it. Some of the improvement really would be <i>down to</i> you. Your healing power would be the outcome of a</p>	<p>administration <u>creditable</u></p>
<p><i>because of you</i></p> <p><u>seemingly contradictory</u> <i>conservative</i>, <u>conformist</u></p>	<p>parts</p> <p>parachute+docks convention + al</p>	<p>45 paradoxical force that conventional medicine recognises but remains oddly <i>ambivalent</i> about: the placebo effect.</p>	<p>paradoxically conventionalize, <i>conventionally</i></p>
<p><i>undecided</i>, in <i>two minds</i></p>	<p>Happy I am! Be violent!</p>	<p>50</p>	<p>ambivalence, <i>ambivalently</i></p>
<p>a <u>fake</u> medicine (<u>often given</u> in <u>experiments</u>)</p> <p>belief</p>	<p>place + bow (wr)/play by sea+ rainbow Faith (name) has faith</p>	<p>55 Placebos are treatments that have no direct effect on the body, yet still work because the patient has faith in their power to heal.</p>	<p>faithfully, <i>faithlessly</i></p>
<p><u>fake</u> pill</p> <p>process, <u>formula</u></p>	<p>parts</p> <p>proceed+you're..</p>	<p>Most often the term refers to a dummy pill, but it applies just as much to any device or procedure, from a sticking</p>	<p>proceed, <i>procedurally</i></p>

<p><i>charlatanism (fake treatment) ~ present, give</i></p> <p><i>sensitive</i></p> <p>person who practices corresponding, <i>extra</i></p> <p><i>almost</i> the <i>same</i> as <i>charlatanry</i>, quackery</p> <p>conventional, traditional</p> <p><i>on one level</i>, <i>in a way</i> emotional or mental state</p> <p><i>bodily</i> processes, body</p> <p><i>scarce</i>, <i>sparse</i>, <i>rare</i> ~ <i>up to now</i></p>	<p>quack (duck's noise) + Kerry ~ Ken has fur touch + 'Eeeh!' word family completely elementary Tea, ant, + a mountain Charlotte + tan+ism(suffix) author+docks</p> <p>parts parts</p> <p>physical biology</p> <p>S + can't(wr) parts</p>	<p>60 plaster to a crystal to an operation. The existence of the placebo effect implies that even quackery may confer real benefits, which is why any mention of placebo is a touchy</p> <p>65 subject for many practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine, who are likely to regard it as tantamount</p> <p>70 to a charge of charlatanism. In fact, the placebo effect is a powerful part of all medical care, orthodox or otherwise, though its role is often neglected and misunderstood.</p> <p>75 At one level, it should come as no surprise that our state of mind can influence our physiology: anger opens the superficial blood vessels of the face; sadness pumps the tear glands. But exactly how placebos work their medical magic is still largely unknown. Most of the</p> <p>80 scant research to date has focused on the control of pain, because it's one of the commonest complaints and lends itself to experimental study.</p> <p>90 Here, attention has turned to the endorphins morphine-like</p>	<p>quack ~ conferment, conferable,</p> <p>touchingly practice, practise complementarily</p> <p>charlatan</p> <p>orthodoxy</p> <p>physiologically</p> <p>scanty, scantily</p>
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<p>chemicals in the brain</p> <p>ban, forbid</p> <p>encourage, persuade</p> <p>reconcile, controlled</p> <p>activate, set off</p> <p>desire, want</p>	<p>neuro (to do with the brain) + chemicals</p> <p>a polished...</p> <p>introduce</p> <p>mediate (wr)</p> <p>trigger</p> <p>William will will for a will.</p>	<p>95 <i>neurochemicals</i> known to help control pain.</p> <p>100 That case has been strengthened by the recent work of Fabrizio Benedetti of the University of Turin, who showed that the placebo effect can be abolished by a drug, naloxone, which blocks the effects of endorphins. Benedetti induced pain in human volunteers by inflating a blood-pressure cuff on the forearm. He did this several times a day for several days, using morphine each time to control the pain. On the final day, without saying anything, he replaced the morphine with a saline solution. This still relieved the subjects' pain: a placebo effect. But when he added naloxone to the saline the pain relief disappeared. Here was direct proof that placebo analgesia is mediated, at least in part, by these natural opiates. Still, no one knows how belief triggers endorphin release, or why most people can't achieve placebo pain relief simply by willing it.</p> <p>110</p> <p>115</p> <p>120</p> <p>Though scientists don't know</p>	<p>neurology, neurologically</p> <p>abolitionist, abolitionary,</p> <p>inducement, induction, inductively</p> <p>mediation, mediatory, mediatively</p> <p>trigger</p> <p>will power, willingly</p>
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<p>build up, amass</p> <p>doctor who deals with pain in muscles & joints</p> <p>pill, pod, case, shell tablet to reduce pain</p> <p><i>tranquilizer, downer</i></p> <p>pick-me-up, upper</p> <p><i>general, broad, non-specific, original</i></p> <p>doctor</p> <p>comforting, supportive behavior, conduct</p> <p>discussion, talk</p>	<p>vacuum + you late</p> <p>room mat biologist</p> <p>cap + sue + L parts</p> <p>Said+date+I've.. S+Tim+mule+ ant</p> <p>gene + Eric</p> <p>A doctor is like a physical musician</p> <p>re(prefix-again)+sure ring~Don't call a man 'her'!</p> <p>con(cheat)+insult (+ noun suffix)</p>	<p>125</p> <p>130</p> <p>135</p> <p>140</p> <p>145</p> <p>150</p> <p>155</p>	<p>exactly how placebos work, they have accumulated a fair bit of knowledge about how to trigger the effect. A London rheumatologist found, for example, that red dummy capsules made more effective painkillers than blue, green or yellow ones. Research on American students revealed that blue pills make better sedatives than pink, a colour more suitable for stimulants. Even branding can make a difference: if Aspro or Tylenol are what you like to take for a headache, their chemically identical <i>generic</i> equivalents may be less effective.</p> <p>It matters, too, how the treatment is delivered. "Physicians who adopt a warm, friendly and reassuring manner," reports Edzard Ernst, professor of Complementary and Alternative Medicine at Exeter University, "are more effective than those whose consultations are formal and do not offer reassurance."</p> <p>Warm, friendly and reassuring are alternative medicine's strong</p>	<p>accumulation, accumulative</p> <p>rheumatology, rheumatism</p> <p>encapsulate</p> <p>sedation, sedate</p> <p>stimulation, stimulate, stimulatingly</p> <p>generically</p> <p>reassurance, reassure, reassuringly mannerism</p> <p>consultant</p>
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<p><u>activate</u>, <u>set off</u></p> <p><u>incorporate</u>, <u>mix</u></p> <p><u>producing</u> the <i>opposite</i> of what is <u>intended</u></p> <p><i>instinctively</i> <i>unusual</i>, <i>mysterious</i></p> <p><u>normal</u>, <i>usual</i></p>	<p>mobile phone + I sing</p> <p>Two into one? Great!</p> <p>parts</p> <p>word family eggs+hot+tic</p> <p>parts - bog (swamp) + standard</p>	<p>160 suits, of course. Many of the ingredients of that opening recipe—the physical contact, the generous swathes of time, the strong hints of supernormal healing power—are just the kind of thing likely to impress</p> <p>165 patients. It's hardly surprising, then, that complementary practitioners are generally best at <u>mobilising</u> the placebo effect.</p> <p>170 The question is whether alternative medicine could be <u>integrated</u> into conventional medicine, as some would like, without losing much of its</p> <p>175 power . But for much of alternative medicine (<i>CAM</i>)—especially techniques in which the placebo effect accounts for most or perhaps all the benefit—</p> <p>180 integration might well be <u>counter productive</u>. After all, the value of alternative medicine depends partly on its unorthodoxy. ‘One <u>intuitively</u></p> <p>185 feels that something <i>exotic</i> has a stronger placebo effect than something bog standard. And some complementary therapies are very exotic," says Ernst.</p> <p>190</p>	<p>mobilization, <i>mobile</i> (<u>phone/home</u>)</p> <p>integration, <i>integral</i>, <i>integrative</i></p> <p>produce, <i>productively</i></p> <p><u>intuition</u>, <i>intuitive</i> <i>exoticism</i>, <i>exotically</i></p> <p>standardization, <i>standardize</i></p>
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<p><u>obstruction</u>, <u>barrier</u></p> <p><i>moral</i></p>	<p>observe through spectacles a thick oil</p>	<p>195</p>	<p>Integration faces other obstacles, too. Doctors would face serious <i>ethical</i> problems in recommending what they know to be placebo treatments to their patients. And complementary practitioners would likely be</p>	<p>ethics, <i>ethically</i></p>
<p><u>laugh at</u>, <u>mock</u></p> <p><i>similar</i> person or thing</p>	<p>Dis (prefix-not) parachute+age parts</p>	<p>200</p>	<p><u>disparaged</u> by their conventional counterparts, as they often are today. Integrated medicine "would have about as much validity as a hybrid of astronomy and astrology", wrote anaesthetist Neville</p>	<p><u>disparagement</u>, <i>disparagingly</i></p>
<p>the <u>study</u> of <u>space</u> ~ the <u>study</u> of the <u>effects</u> of the <u>stars</u> and <u>planets</u> on <u>human life</u></p>	<p>Astro (prefix- space related) + onomy (suffix- field of study) Astro+ology (suffix- field of study)</p>	<p>205</p>	<p>Goodman in the April newsletter of HealthWatch.</p>	<p>astronomer, <i>astronomically</i> astrologer, <i>astrologically</i></p>
<p><u>indicate</u>, <u>show</u></p>	<p>Parts</p>	<p>210</p>	<p>Some would also <u>point out</u> that a professor of surgery with a confident manner, an expensive suit and an international reputation who sees you privately and guarantees to solve your problem with a costly operation is still <i>unrivaled</i> as a source of placebo power. But most doctors are <u>beaten hands down</u> by countless alternative practitioners who might not</p>	<p>reputedly, <i>reputable</i></p>
<p><u>standing</u>, <u>name</u>, fame</p> <p><i>unequaled</i></p>	<p>Rare (Winnie the) Pooh in a station</p>	<p>215</p>	<p>operation is still <i>unrivaled</i> as a source of placebo power. But most doctors are <u>beaten hands down</u> by countless alternative practitioners who might not</p>	<p><i>rivalry</i></p>
<p><u>beaten decisively/easily</u></p>	<p>un (prefix- not) rival + led parts</p>	<p>220</p>	<p>know a lymphocyte from a lump of cheese. What they do know is how to make you feel better. And that's a big part of the battle.</p>	<p><u>beating</u></p>
<p>a cell <u>found in</u> blood</p>	<p>limb + foresight</p>	<p>220</p>	<p>know a lymphocyte from a lump of cheese. What they do know is how to make you feel better. And that's a big part of the battle.</p>	<p><u>battler</u>, <i>embattled</i></p>
<p><u>fight</u>, <u>clash</u></p>	<p>bat + oil</p>	<p></p>	<p>that's a big part of the battle.</p>	<p><u>battler</u>, <i>embattled</i></p>

Positive Thinking

Some sages from the past have told us that everything in the world is mediated by mind.

There is a book called ‘The Secret’ which says that positive thoughts can actually change circumstances.

When people receive a placebo – it helps them to create the positive idea that they are being cured. The positivity of this idea is the cure in itself. So positive thoughts and faith are often called ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’.

For example:

- You believe that tomorrow will be a good day (a ‘prophecy’). So this makes you cheerful, and this makes you have a good day (the ‘prophecy’ has been fulfilled).
- You believe that a person is trustworthy. So you trust them. This makes them closer to you, and therefore they will not cheat you.
- You believe that the presentation will go well. Your confidence helps you to stay relaxed and therefore the presentation goes well.

Q1: Do you have any other examples of when a positive outlook or idea has changed circumstances?

Q2: What is the key to being more positive generally? How to achieve greater positivity?

Q3: It’s very difficult to always be positive. Should we aim to be more positive or just give up and accept the way we are?

Q4: Is it better to try and be positive or better to learn to take thoughts less seriously?

‘The greatest precept is continual awareness’

‘The greatest medicine is the emptiness of everything’

‘The greatest meditation is a mind that lets go’ (Atisha)

‘If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself.’ (Charles Schultz)

‘Laughter is the best medicine!’ (Mark Twain)

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