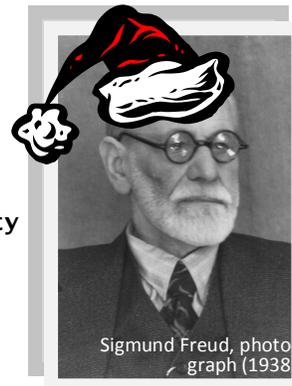




# The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter  
College of Saint Benedict & Saint John's University



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## The Hullabaloo about Hypnosis

By Rachel Heying



We've all been exposed to hypnosis, whether through stage hypnotists or on TV and in the movies. But how many of us have experienced it firsthand? In October, Dr. Aubrey Immelman demonstrated to his Introductory to Psychology students the phenomena of hypnosis. Several of the students took part in the demonstration, and experienced many different phenomena. Apart from the typical relaxation and sense of comfort that are associated with hypnosis, students also experienced arm catalepsy (the inability to lift, move, or bend the arm), arm levitation, and were able to open their eyes without falling out of the trance. They also experienced post-hypnotic suggestions that caused them to be unable to pick up simple objects and gave them amnesia of vowels and odd numbers. Students struggled to pick up their backpacks, and were unable to correctly spell their names as they left out all of the vowels.

So how does hypnosis work? As is the case with many phenomena, there is no general consensus for how to explain hypnosis. Dr. Immelman explains that the most common theory is that hypnosis is an "altered state of consciousness, accompanied by hypersuggestibility." Dr. Immelman, who has used hypnosis many times as a practicing psychotherapist, says that he uses a permissive and indirect approach to hypnosis induction to help overcome resistance. He also uses

paradoxical injunctions; to escape the paradox, the person acts but denies responsibility for the actions.

While cartoons may lead us to believe that anyone can be hypnotized -even by accident- by a simple swinging watch, this is not an accurate description of hypnosis. Since hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, you must be willing to be hypnotized; it cannot be done against your will. Furthermore, not all people are equally susceptible to hypnosis. Using traditional methods, about 20 percent of people are considered highly hypnotizable, 20 percent are unlikely to be hypnotized, and the remaining 60 percent are moderately hypnotizable. Unsurprisingly, it has been shown that people with an active imagination are more easily hypnotizable, because they are open to suggestibility.



Picture Courtesy of Dr. Immelman

(Story Continued on Page 2)

## Upcoming Events

### Behavioral Economics

### Speaker

Dec. 6th at 2:40 p.m.

### Finals

Dec. 17th- 19th

# Hypnosis Hullabaloo Continued:

 However, Dr. Immelman describes another view that “most people are hypnotizable if you use less traditional, less authoritarian, more indirect approaches tailored to the individual.” Most of all, the person must be open and willing to hypnosis. Even so, it is believed that the majority of people experience some sort of hypnosis in our everyday lives. When a person loses track of time while engrossed in a book, or drives several miles without being fully aware of it, it is believed that they are experiencing types of hypnotic trances.

Though today we often see hypnosis used for entertainment purposes, it continues to be used by psychotherapists to help their patients. Hypnosis is often used as part of the treatment for phobias, addictions, and pain. With the hyper-suggestibility that comes with hypnosis, patients are able to receive help for their conditions. As Deirdre Barrett writes in

Psychology Today, “A hypnotic trance is not therapeutic in and of itself, but specific suggestions and images fed to clients in a trance can profoundly alter their behavior.” When Dr. Immelman was a practicing psychotherapist, he often used hypnosis to help patients with anxiety disorders and pain syndromes. Several studies have been done on the effects of hypnosis on pain, and it has been found that hypnosis eliminates the emotional aspect of pain without affecting the sensory sensation; therefore, a patient with chronic pain would know that he or she was touched, but not that it hurt. Though hypnosis has its share of skeptics, it is a real psychological phenomenon. While it certainly can be used to entertain, there is real validity to the use of hypnosis in psychotherapy.

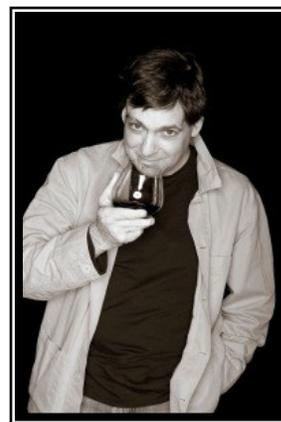
To view a video of the demonstration Dr. Immelman did last semester, visit <http://youtu.be/GGTFsn1gnJk>.



## Behavioral Economics Speaker

By Hannah Stevens

 This week on December 6th Dan Aierly is coming to speak at St. Johns. He has written three books about behavioral economics. Behavioral Economics is a new field that combines psychology and economics. Ariely has written three books on Behavioral Economics dealing largely with irrationality. This is a new and exciting field so you won't want to miss the opportunity to hear what Aierly has to say. He will be speaking on Thursday December 6th at 2:40 p.m. in Alumni Lounge. This event has been sponsored by The Behavioral Economics Reading Group and Clemens Chair.



Picture Courtesy of [www.danaierly.com](http://www.danaierly.com)



# Holiday Spending Got You Down?

By Erin Noel



 *Sir, I wanna buy these shoes for my mama, please. It's Christmas Eve and these shoes are just her size. Could you hurry, sir? Daddy says there's not much time...*

While a Christmas never goes by without hearing (and tearing up) this song, researchers at Carnegie Mellon, Stanford, Harvard, and Pitt put this classic Christmas tune to the test: is there a connection between sadness and buying?

In their 2008 *Psychological Science* study, the researchers showed participants either a sad video (a scene of the death of a boy's mentor, from *The Champ*) or a neutral, emotionless clip (a National Geographic video on the Great Barrier Reef).

"Afterward, participants had the option of buying an ordinary commodity—a water bottle. Those that had previously viewed the sad clip were willing to pay, on average, 3 times more for the bottle than those who viewed the neutral clip. Interestingly, the 'sad' group insisted that the content of their clip did not affect their willingness to pay the amount they chose," said one summary of the study.

Authors suggest that the sad clip prompted participants to "devalue both their sense of self and current possessions, making them willing to pay for new material possessions."

Researchers emphasized that this was a "modest study of empathy in the form of short video clips" and that the impact of truly intense sadness could lead to much more dangerous spending behavior.

According to co-author James Gross, "people can't and shouldn't go shopping when they feel down—when we're feeling sad, we may be making really unwise decisions financially."

So heed this warning, if you are on a tight holiday budget—delete "Christmas Shoes" from your Holiday playlist and save yourself some dollars (and some tears) this year.

## Faculty Trivia!

 Many Students spend hours in the classroom with their Professors and may know little about them. Try to match these faculty members to their interesting fact! (answers are below)

1. Robert Kachelski

2. Lisa Platt

3. Pam Bacon

4. Rodger Narloch

5. Aubrey Immelman

6. Stephen Stelzner

A. Has run two marathons.

B. Sometimes went to elementary school barefoot.

C. Never missed a single class during college.

D. Met his wife in FYS.

E. Is the youngest of 9 children.

F. Hometown is 40 miles from Yellowstone National Park.



Answers: 1-E, 2-F, 3-C, 4-D, 5-B, 6-A.

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UNIVERSITY

## **Questions? Comments?**

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