

Hypnotism and Television

In most homes in America, there is a device that puts you into a type of hypnotic trance—something that you focus your eyes on, flickers every few seconds, and can produce this hypnotic-like trance. More than 96% of American homes have at least one of these devices.

What is this device?

In 1939, at the World's Fair in New York, David Sarnoff introduced a new invention to the world. Mr. Sarnoff was the President of a company, founded in 1919, called the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). Mr. Sarnoff had known of the device called television, but until that time, it had not been determined as to how television could be used practically. When David Sarnoff became president of RCA, which, was involved in radio broadcasting, he saw the potential of the television, which not only could transmit sound, but also pictures. Over the next 10 years, he worked with the engineers who had invented the television, to produce a product that could be used by the common person. Finally, at the World's Fair in 1939, America was first shown the potential for this new invention.

From its first introduction to an innocent public in 1939, television watching, over the past 70 years or so, has become the number one "leisure activity" in America. Up to 97%, of the population engages in watching television.

How does television work?

The classic setting for television (TV) watching or video-watching is similar to the typical environment that is used to induce hypnotism: a darkened room, a flickering light (the TV set) as a single-minded focus, and freedom from all outside diversions.

In the hypnotized state, an *alpha* brain pattern is operative, during which we do not critically analyze information. In this state, an individual will record information and suggestions without interpretation and without frontal lobe filtering. A flickering light that trains the eyes to focus in one place has been noted to easily induce a hypnotic state. As you continue to focus on the flickering light, you do not critically analyze the information being received. None of the information is filtered according to your sense of values or moral worth; *your very reasoning powers are being bypassed. Your frontal lobe has been short-circuited.* To compromise this control center of the brain, even temporarily, is dangerous. In terms of brainpower and brain functioning, the worst thing that could be done is to sit and watch television

Does *what* you watch make any difference on your mind and character?

Yes. The content you view exerts a powerful effect on your mind; the medium itself also appears to have profound mental effects. The television medium is, in itself, usually detrimental. This is due to camera-switching work in most television and videos and the “rapidly changing scene of reference.” The average television program changes its scene of reference every three to five seconds.

Several doctors have gone on record to report the negative effects of television. Dr. Morris cites television’s rapid change of reference as contributing to the hypnotic-type effect. Dr. Herbert Krugman, a brain wave researcher, concludes: “Television is a communication medium that effortlessly transmits huge quantities of information, not thought about at the time of exposure.”

Watching television also gives the effects of artificial stimulation. Alvin Toffler details the effects of artificial stimulation. "Constant stimulation of the senses shuts down the analytical processes of the mind and ultimately shuts down the ability to think and face life rationally. This leads to escape techniques and adaptive responses which tend to involve withdrawal, apathy, and rejection of disciplined thinking when faced with difficult duties and decisions."

Warnings about hypnotism

The Spirit of Prophecy has given us warnings about hypnotism. "Be cautious in regard to what you read and how you hear. Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism." –*Medical Ministry*, p. 102

What is the Spirit of Prophecy telling us? Hypnotism is from Satan. Satan is our enemy and adversary, who is doing all in his power to prevent us from reaching heaven. Will Satan's hypnotism always be practised in the same way as in the past? "In the future, Satan's superstitions will assume new forms. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 293

What should we, as the people who preach in Zion, do about Satan's hypnotism? "The hypnotism of Satan must be shown in its true bearing." –*The Upward Look*, p. 251

If watching television and videos is hypnotism, and hypnotism is from Satan, are television and videos from Satan? The answer is yes.

“Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God’s tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely... We are not to tamper with mesmerism and hypnotism—the science of the one who lost his first estate and was cast out of the heavenly courts. The science of a pure, wholesome, consistent Christian life is obtained by studying the word of the Lord.” –*Medical Ministry*, p.110–111

Based on these testimonies and the other evidence mentioned in this article, we should not watch worldly television and videos. We should even be very careful about the quantity of Godly videos we watch. We should also witness to our friends, family and our work colleagues about the powerful hold that television can have on them.

What does medical science say? Is television a positive influence on us?

1. Television strengthens negative qualities in children and its adult watchers. Especially mentioned in the research, is MTV, which increases problems with violence.

Research has demonstrated that 22 to 34 percent of violent male criminals, who are serving time for crimes such as murder, rape, and assault, admit having consciously *imitated crime techniques* that they learned from television.

As society generally is getting more violent from TV watching and competitive sports, are we getting closer to the great Battle of Armageddon, the great battle between good and evil, the great battle between Christ and Satan?

2. Television watching also affects the health of children.

The metabolic rate of children ages 8 to 12 during television viewing was significantly lower than when the children were at rest and doing nothing. A lower metabolism, combined with the high fat snacks eaten during the hours in front of the TV, places children at high risk for obesity. Children watch 26 hours of TV weekly, on average. Childhood obesity now affects one out of four children.

3. Television also affects our ability to detect when someone is lying.

Among television viewers, 52% of the people detected the lie (similar odds to flipping a coin). Of newspaper readers, 64% detected the lie. With radio listeners, 73% detected the lie.

4. Television has been proven to be addictive.

In a 1976 survey and trial conducted by the Detroit Free Press, the results of a one-month trial were amazing. When the television was removed, family members manifested actual withdrawal symptoms. Insomnia and headaches were common.

5. Television itself has been shown to affect the frontal lobe development of children.

Parents who spent long hours in front of the television also affected the frontal lobe development of their children. The lack of parental involvement in the lives of children directly relates back to two other frontal lobe robbers: alcohol and tobacco use. Researchers from Louisiana State University Medical Centre in New Orleans demonstrated this when they studied over 2000 fifth and sixth graders for three to four years. Children, who reported that their parents spent more time with them and had more communication with them, were less likely to use alcohol and tobacco. They were also less likely to choose friends who used these substances.

6. Many use television as escapism.

Most of the time, escapism occurs on a mental level, and is, indeed, an extension of ignoring the stressor. The person remains in the presence of the stressor, but turns to a mind-altering escape to help forget about its presence. Such an escape can be diverse as watching television, or taking a mixed drink. Even in its highest form, television watching takes time away from activities such as exercise that could help enhance coping reserves or diffuse stress.

7. Television viewing is also one reason why North Americans do poorly in the sleep department.

The more television you watch, the less time you have to sleep. This is particularly a problem for American youth. Many are not getting enough sleep because of their liberal diet of TV.

“Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?” Habakkuk 2:13

As people of God, we need to remove television watching from our lives. “Cut away from yourselves everything that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work. —Letter 20, 1902.” – *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 350.

But what about television news?

Television news is supposed to be entertainment. The Detroit News surveyed 40 TV news broadcasts on four stations in December 1996, and January 1997. “Crime was by far the most common type of story on each station.” “Disaster stories—accidents, floods, blizzards” were second.

In Bombay, some residents rebelled against TV in a dramatic way. Hundreds of people, tired of televised violence and sex, hurled their TV sets out their windows in December of 1994. Each family reported that their family life improved as a result.

There are many other sources of information that we can access, to find out what is going on in the world, without needing to resort to the television. These sources include: Newspapers, news journals, weekly news magazines, computer websites, and on-line services.

Television is, in reality, an entertainment box. Even the network news producers themselves have stated openly that they consider television as entertainment.

In summary, the SIXTEEN HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TV WATCHING

1. Television watching produces a hypnotic effect, bypassing frontal lobe filtering
2. Television watching reduces interest in reading and learning
3. Television watching weakens brainpower
4. Television watching encourages poor lifestyle habits
5. Television watching encourages obesity
6. Television watching increases daydreaming
7. Television watching weakens creativity
8. Television watching may reduce our powers of discrimination.
9. Television watching trains people in non-reaction
10. Television watching influences viewers to regard violence lightly
11. Television watching makes children more irritable

12. Television watching increases aggressiveness
13. Television watching is addictive
14. Television watching reduces time available for productive achievement
15. Television watching steals time from family interaction
16. Television watching adversely affects spiritual pursuits

Exercising the brain will expand it. “The understanding adapts itself to the dimensions of the subjects with which it is required to deal. If occupied with trivial, commonplace matters only, never summoned to earnest efforts to comprehend great and eternal truths, it becomes dwarfed and enfeebled. Hence the value of the Scriptures as a means of intellectual culture.” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 8

“The Bible, just as it reads, is to be our guide. Nothing is so calculated to enlarge the mind and strengthen the intellect as the study of the Bible. No other study will so elevate the soul and give vigor to the faculties as the study of the living oracles... As the mind is brought to the study of God’s Word, the understanding will enlarge and the higher power will develop for the comprehension of high and ennobling truth.” –*Mind, Character, and Personality*, p. 93

What do we replace television watching with?

Many people have no idea what activities to engage in to replace television. Here are some suggestions:

Family Activities

- Family council meetings
- Teach children to express gratitude
- Invite friends who will abide by family rules
- Special weekend meals
- Special occasions with extended family

- Routine phone tradition
- Give inscribed books as gifts
- Make and show home videos

Self-Improvement Activities

- Learn geography, science, math, or art
- Learn to cook and bake
- Develop hobbies and related skills
- Visit the library
- Quilting, sewing, etc.
- Learn to handle money
- Learn a musical skill
- Subscribe to newspapers or magazines

Physical Activities

- Outdoor non-competitive exercise
- Grow a garden
- Participate in daily chores
- Make home comfortable and serene
- Help others; offer your services

The home should be a place that is comfortable and at times quiet enough to allow creative thinking. Displaying the children's artwork as well as having "master" artworks or replicas around that can be studied and contemplated without a distracting television, will bring great rewards.

Seven and a half decades after David Sarnoff, President of RCA, unveiled the first television at the 1939 World's Fair, it is time to ask—what is television doing to our country? More specifically, what is television doing to me?

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

Think about this.

“By beholding we become changed. If you allow your mind to dwell upon the imperfections and moral deformities of others, you will be changed into the same image. You will become deformed in character, and mentally one-sided and unbalanced. Let the mind dwell upon the perfect life on Christ. If the thoughts are centered upon Him, and the conversation is on the heavenly themes, you will be ‘changed into the same image from glory to glory.’ You will become ‘partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.’” —*Signs of the Times*, May 8, 1884.

References and statistics in this article are from the book, *Proof Positive: How to Reliably Combat Disease and Achieve Optimal Health Through Nutrition and Lifestyle*, Neil Nedley, 1999.

