

# Reverse Psychology is Homeopathy Whatever you do –

**-DO NOT READ THIS ARTICLE-**



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**Reverse psychology aka Emotional Homeopathy or (Using Emotive Like Treating Behavior Like)** is a technique involving the advocacy of a belief or behavior that is opposite to the one desired, with the expectation that this approach will encourage the subject of the persuasion to do what actually *is* desired: the opposite of what is suggested. This technique relies on the psychological phenomenon of [reactance](#), in which a person has a negative emotional reaction to being persuaded, and thus chooses the option which is being advocated against. The one being manipulated is usually unaware of what is really going on.

PSYCHOLOGY

## Children

Reverse psychology is often used on [children](#) due to their high tendency to respond with [reactance](#), a desire to restore threatened freedom of action. Some parents feel that the best strategy is sometimes "reverse psychology": telling children to stay in the house when you really want them to choose to go outside and play.<sup>[1]</sup> Another example is saying "I bet you can't catch me" which results in being pursued by the cunning child; a game many have played as a child.

Questions have however been raised about such an approach when it is more than merely instrumental, in the sense that 'reverse psychology implies a clever manipulation of the misbehaving

child<sup>[2]</sup> and nothing more. With respect to "'emotional intelligence"...[&] successful fathering', the advice has been given: 'don't try to use reverse psychology....such strategies are confusing, manipulative, dishonest, and they rarely work'.<sup>[3]</sup> In addition, consistently allowing a child to do the opposite of what he/she is being advised, undermines the authority of the parent.

## Paradoxical intervention

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Closely associated with reverse psychology in [psychotherapy](#) is the technique of 'the *Paradoxical intervention*....This technique has also been called "prescribing the symptom" and "anti-suggestion"<sup>[4]</sup> Here the technique employed is to frame the therapist's message so that [resistance](#) to it promotes change (i.e. paradoxical prescriptions, reverse psychology)<sup>[5]</sup>.

Such interventions 'can have a similar impact as humor in helping clients cast their problems in a new light....By going *with*, not against, the client's resistance, the therapist makes the behavior less attractive'.<sup>[6]</sup>



## Paradoxical marketing

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'In a world where it is expected that all things should be available...less availability' has emerged as a new selling point: 'by engaging in such a restricted anti-marketing ploy the brand has won kudos<sup>[7]</sup> - reverse psychology. The result can be 'what the Japanese call a [secret brand](#)...no regular retail outlets, no catalog, no web presence apart from a few cryptic mentions...people like it because it's almost impossible to find'.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Adorno and Horkheimer

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[Theodor Adorno](#) and [Max Horkheimer](#) characterized the effect of the [culture industry](#) as "psychoanalysis in reverse". Their analysis began with the [dialectic](#) which operated in Germany when heirs of the Romantic movement became seekers of "Strength through Joy", only to have their movement co-opted by a combination of the mass media and National Socialism. A modern example begins with the "fitness and jogging" boom in the United States in the 1970s. The "running craze" at the Boston Marathon and in California, dialectically, was the thesis that one did not have to be "Rocky" in a sweaty gym to be physically fit, and that body acceptance was the key to effective aerobic training. The culture industry responded to the thesis with major advertising campaigns from Calvin Klein and others, using images featuring exceptionally toned models. People compared themselves to these models, which created a sense of competition, and many high school students avoid jogging because of the resultant body shame.

The culture industry mass-produces standardized material. This would not be dangerous if the material was meaningless, but it frequently offers and reinforces ideals and norms representing

implied criticism of those who fail to match up. Empirical studies show that mass culture products can lower confidence and self-esteem, and cause humiliation among men and women whose particular characteristics fall outside the normalized range for appearance, behavior, religion, ethnicity etc. Similarly, advertising frequently seeks to create a need to buy by showing differences between *actual* and *ideal* situations. The intention is usually to induce dissatisfaction with the present situation, and to induce expectations of satisfaction through the acquisition of products which will transform the actual reality into the idealized reality. Hence, if the peer group buys, all those who cannot afford the products will feel additional unhappiness and frustration until they eventually join the group. Thus, sometimes the process of advocacy for the one outcome really intends to produce the opposite outcome as the motivation for purchase.

However, more often than not, the cause and effect is unintended. Marxist logic applied to the culture industry indicates that it is, *per se*, a dialectic in which declining profit margins and increasing costs make investors anxious for "sure things". Repeating winning formulas and stereotyping create the lowest common denominator products with the lowest costs. But the less creative the input, the more likely it becomes that roles will be cast in ways which match, rather than challenge, common prejudices which can inadvertently (or quite deliberately) damage the esteem of those in the marginalized groups.<sup>[9][10]</sup>

## Examples



## In popular culture



Homeopathy is an effective system of natural health care that uses remedies made from minute amounts of specially prepared natural substances to stimulate the body and mind to heal naturally. One of the basic premises of homeopathy is that the mind, body and emotions are inseparably inter-linked. Samuel Hahnemann, who founded homeopathy almost 200 years ago, said when a person gets ill, he is affected emotionally and mentally as well as physically.

Now widely recognized as a complement to conventional medicine, homeopathy is used all over the world. It is part of the national health care system in Germany, and is part of medical care in France. It is the treatment of choice of the Royal family of England. Wherever this effective natural health care system is used and understood, it is appreciated for its gentle healing of the whole person, mind, body and emotions.

When we are treated homeopathically for emotional problems, the emotions are not suppressed or dulled as they are by sedatives or tranquilizers. The mind remains clear and alert and we are able to feel our emotions. Some of the ways that people have expressed the results of taking the correct homeopathic remedy for emotional upsets are: "I seem to be able to cope with the situation better." "I feel some distance to the disappointment that allows me to think more clearly about what this means to me" or "My body isn't out of control with the fear".

Not every upset in life requires a remedy. Even though homeopathic remedies are completely safe and non-toxic, it is important to remember that the best way to get through life's upsets is to deal with them. Grief, for example is a very normal part of everyone's life. Many people experience a death of a loved one and go through a normal grieving process without the help of any kind of treatment. If, however, an individual is having difficulty getting through a stressful time a homeopathic remedy may be very helpful.

Long term emotional problems such as depression, chronic anxiety, PMS and lack of confidence can be addressed with constitutional homeopathy. This requires the skill of a well-trained homeopath who will interview the individual and find the remedy that is the simillimum. The simillimum is the one remedy out of the hundreds of homeopathic remedies which exactly fits the pattern of symptoms expressed by the person. This remedy stimulates the body and mind to begin to heal on a deep cellular level. The ideal result is a very profound yet gradual improvement. The emotional state becomes brighter, energy and vitality increases and undesirable physical symptoms lessen.

Constitutional treatment is an excellent complement to psychotherapy. It is not unusual to see therapy move more quickly and the fear of addressing deeper issues diminishing. This is because a person under successful homeopathic treatment is stronger, more centered and, most important, has the energy to do the work.

Classic examples of reverse homeopathic psychology in popular culture include a [large, bright red button](#) with a sign next to it saying "Do not push", or a sign saying "Jump at your own risk", such as in the computer game [Neverhood](#), where a large drain is accompanied by signs that say "Do not jump in!" and "You will die!", although jumping in the pipe is the only way to achieve [game over](#) in the whole game without finishing it. The [Looney Tunes](#) are also well known for using such "bright red button" gags. A well-known example of reverse psychology is the Looney Tunes cartoon [Rabbit Fire](#), where [Bugs Bunny](#) and [Daffy Duck](#) are trying to convince [Elmer Fudd](#) it's the [hunting season](#) for the other species and not their own. After a back-and-forth with Bugs proclaiming "[Duck](#) season!" and Daffy "Wabbit [sic] season!", Bugs switches to say "Rabbit season!", to which Daffy begins saying "Duck season!"- even going so far as to exclaim "I say it's duck season, and I say, FIRE!" Daffy is promptly shot and is quite annoyed after noticing he was tricked. Occasionally, humor is derived from reverse psychology backfiring, as in a [FoxTrot](#) strip when Jason, faced with punishment, begs his mom to take away his computer rather than make him eat a whole box of Ho-Hos, and she agrees. A similar example [appears](#) in [Narbonic](#).

- In the [Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief](#) novel by Rick Riordan, Percy tells Procrustes (Crusty) to sit on a water bed to see if it could hold the giant's weight. Then Percy straps the giant to the bed chopping off his feet and killing him for a while. In [Percy Jackson and the Titan's Curse](#), Percy tells the old man of the sea (Nereus), "not the sea" to trick him into thinking Percy would die in the water. So he jumps off the dock and Percy strengthens, since his father is god of the sea.

- In one of [Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus](#) stories, [Brer Rabbit](#) escapes from [Brer Fox](#) by repeatedly pleading "Please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in that briar patch". The fox does so, allowing the rabbit to escape.
- In some episodes of Bugs Bunny, Bugs uses reverse psychology on Daffy by pointing Elmer's gun at himself, saying that it is rabbit season, then Daffy says that it is duck season (instead of rabbit season) and that Elmer should fire.
- On the ride ([Splash Mountain](#)), you can see the robotic versions of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, with Brer Rabbit hovering over a boiling [cauldron](#). As he is about to fry, Brer Rabbit shouts "Alright, you can boil me! But *please* don't throw me in dat der Briar Patch!", at which point the riders fall down a 50-foot drop.
- In the film version of [The Neverending Story](#), Mr. Coreander asks Bastion some rather poignant questions about his love of books, and then off handily warns him that the book he's reading is "not for you", clearly because he wants Bastion to take it when he leaves the room to answer the phone. Which Bastion does.
- In the episode "A Twist of Ed" of the television show [Ed, Edd, and Eddy](#), in an attempt to demonstrate reverse psychology, Edd commands Ed not to eat a pile of dirt; therefore, eating a pile of dirt is the first thing Ed does. The three Eds use reverse psychology on their mortal enemies, the Kanker sisters, which backfires when the girls use *reverse-reverse psychology* on the Eds, similar to double-bluffing.
- A real-life example of reverse psychology occurred when promoting [Bohemian Rhapsody](#). The song is 5 minutes and 55 seconds long, and many record companies felt that it would be too long to gain public interest. [Freddie Mercury](#) gave a copy to [Kenny Everett](#), a London DJ and good friend, with specific direction **not** to play the song, believing that Everett would be more likely to play it as a result.
- In the movie [Who Framed Roger Rabbit](#), Roger is persuaded to drink a shot of [Scotch whisky](#) by means of reverse psychology.
- In an episode of [Trick or Treat](#), a show featuring [Derren Brown](#), a student was challenged *not* to kill a kitten, by pushing a button. Throughout the show, she was shown to be extremely conflicted, and by the end, she almost pushed the button just as the timer ran down to zero. During this episode, other situations are also explored, such as young children being told *not* to open a box given to them by the host, all of the subjects ended up opening them.
- Another real life example of reverse psychology occurred when pop artist [Lady Gaga](#) promoted her upcoming album ARTPOP and its lead single "Applause" by releasing a short film urging fans **not** to buy her music and stating that she was "no longer relevant as an artist".<sup>[11]</sup>



# DO NOT READ THIS!!!

**I BET... EVEN WHEN IT SAYS DO NOT READ THIS YOU ARE READING IT. IM JUST WANTING TO PROVE A LITTLE BIT OF REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY. FOR EXAMPLE IF I SAY... DONT THINK IN PINK ELEPHANTS!!! NOW, TELL ME WHAT YOU THOUGHT ON WHEN YOU READ THAT... I BET IT WAS IN A PINK ELEPHANT, LOL. SO... IF YOU WAS SOOO BORED AND READ ALL OF THIS, DO NOT GIVE IT A LIKE, SHARE OR COMMENT!!!**

## **Psychotherapy: Homeopathic Style**

Too often people assume that psychological problems require psychological solutions. Since some psychological symptoms arise from physiological processes (and vice versa), it is of value to treat the psychologically sick person holistically. A holistic approach is inherent in homeopathic care.

A homeopath prescribes the individually chosen medicine for the sick person, but he or she may do more than this. When appropriate, a homeopath will provide basic information on nutrition, exercise, stress management, and social and environmental determinants to health and disease. A homeopath may also counsel the person to help him or her deal with the emotional and mental state he/she is experiencing.

Today, many modern psychoanalysts utilize homeopathic-like perspectives and practices. In contrast to some philosophical theories that assume that human nature is essentially destructive and perverted, integral to homeopathy and many psychoanalytic practices is the assumption that human nature is basically creative and that the organism has implicit self-healing capabilities. Symptoms, including psychological ones, are presumed to be ways that the bodymind is trying to adapt to and to deal creatively with various internal and external stresses.

Some very simple psychotherapeutic processes that might be considered "homeopathic" in their approach are "paradoxical intention" (19) and therapeutic double-bind (20), which try to dislodge the symptom and thus to set a curative process in motion. In these systems the therapist actually encourages the patient to pretend to experience the problematic emotional state. For instance, if a person has a phobia of snakes, he or she is asked to pretend to see a snake and to pretend to feel afraid. This method is effective insofar as the person is sometimes not able to produce the fear at will and then not as susceptible to have the phobia at other times.

In another form of paradoxical intention, the therapist encourages the patient to exaggerate the emotional or behavioral problem. Milton Erickson gave a classic example of this strategy when he described the case of a boy who sucked his thumb. Rather than discourage the child from this behavior, Erickson expressed unmistakable concern that the child was not giving equal attention to his other fingers. Erickson asked the child to begin sucking them. Shortly after this suggestion, the child stopped sucking his thumb altogether. (21)

Psychotherapies that recognize the importance of accepting rather than denying one's emotions are an obvious first step toward a "homeopathic" cure. (22) Engaging with and expressing those emotions is the second step. The energy block by habituated responses and long-term traumas is thus freed cathartically. The symptoms are transformed in an overall revitalization of the individual's healing capacities. This approach is certainly more in line with homeopathic thinking than shortcut methods that define an ideal way of being and that encourage patients to act in a specific, prescribed way. Simple rational analysis of emotional processes is likewise an inadequate way of dealing with structures and energies that are unconscious and go to the root of the organism.

Behavior modification strategies that primarily change the way one acts but don't affect the underlying tendencies that led to that behavior in the first place are another clearly "unhomeopathic therapy." And therapeutic measures which palliate extreme symptoms may only temporarily compensate for problems, not cure them.\*

[\* Just because a psychotherapeutic intervention is "unhomeopathic" does not mean it doesn't have an equal value or efficacy in specific cases.]

Some principles of gestalt therapy are also quite homeopathic. Gestalt therapy, as the name itself implies (gestalt means a unified whole), is a way of looking at a specific problem in the context of the whole person. Rather than treating the problem as extraneous to the person and simply trying to change it, the gestalt therapist (and therapists from various similar schools of thought as well) encourages the person to become more aware of him/herself in toto and to transform one's whole being. If a person had a sexual problem, the gestalt therapist, like the homeopath, would not understand the problem as only a "sexual problem" but as "a problem of the whole person." Modern psychoanalysts, like homeopaths, have understood that symptoms are not "the problem" but only manifestations of the problem. Sigmund Freud laid the groundwork for this perspective by uncovering the sublimated and unconscious nature of psychological disorders and the manner in which they are expressed. Carl Jung extended this perspective by showing how those sublimated psychological patterns contain also symbolic representations of transpersonal unconscious materials. Wilhelm Reich showed how they were locked into actual physical states. In general, the psychoanalytic process involves the patient in re-experiencing those unconscious dynamic elements that lie at the basis of the pathology. This re-creating or mimicking of an original submerged experience is clearly homeopathic-like in the largest sense.

The awareness of the dynamic complexity of symptoms is shared by homeopathy and psychoanalysis. Although most classic homeopathic texts contain an outdated psychological terminology, the very basis of homeopathic medicine comprises a sophisticated psychoanalytic framework. More recent homeopathic texts\* correct this problem, and the best homeopaths are often excellent psychotherapists.

[\* See Edward C. Whitmont, **Psyche and Substance: Essays on Homeopathy in the Light of Jungian Psychology.**]

Still, homeopaths have much to learn from the field of psychology. Too often homeopaths try to obtain information about a person's psyche by asking such direct questions as "What fears do you have? What makes you angry? What types of things make you cry?" Homeopaths obviously have to learn more sophisticated means not only getting but of interpreting this information and distinguishing real character from affect and ego-oriented character.

And of course, the field of psychology has much to learn from homeopathy. Hering's Law of Cure is an invaluable assessment tool for the progress of treatment. The emphasis in homeopathy on the minimum dose will encourage therapists to find the deepest-acting, individualized treatment which doesn't require obsessive re-application, but is powerful enough to have a significant effect. It is interesting to surmise how this might be done in a sophisticated psychotherapy, both with and without actual homeopathic remedies. And ultimately, when homeopathy's law of similars is more fully understood and utilized, psychologists and psychiatrists will automatically recognize symptoms as the organism's adaptive responses and seek to aid patients in efforts to go with, rather than against, this self-defensive, self-healing process.

## **Homeopathic suggestion In plays and fiction**

There are numerous examples of reverse psychology in fiction, cinema, and [cartoons](#), including William Shakespeare's [Julius Caesar](#) where [Mark Antony](#) uses reverse psychology to get the town's people to cause a riot.

In one of [Joel Chandler Harris's](#) [Uncle Remus](#) stories, [Br'er Rabbit](#) escapes from [Br'er Fox](#) by repeatedly pleading "Please, Br'er Fox, don't fling me in that briar patch." The fox does so, allowing the rabbit to escape: 'the Rabbit uses "reverse psychology" to outsmart the Fox'.<sup>[12]</sup>

In "[Mary Poppins](#)" the titular character sings "Stay Awake" to the Banks children in a successful bid to use reverse psychology to get them to go to bed.

Reverse psychology occurs several times on [The Simpsons](#). In the third season episode "[Saturdays of Thunder](#)", Homer has a conversation with his brain after reading a passage in [Bill Cosby's](#) parental-advice book [Fatherhood](#):

**Homer brain:** Don't you get it? You've gotta use reverse psychology.

**Homer:** That sounds too complicated.

**Homer's brain:** OK, don't use reverse psychology.

**Homer:** All right, I will!

'In *The Ghost Writer* (1979), the Master - E. E. Lonoff - is "countersuggestible"; one manipulates him via reverse psychology in much the same manner as, say, [Poe's](#) cerebral detectives match their wits against master criminals'.<sup>[13]</sup> Similarly in Poe's "[The Cask of Amontillado](#)", Montresor uses reverse psychology to persuade Fortunato to enter his vaults. He says that Fortunato is too tired and should get some rest, and that he should find someone else to help him with his problem. Montresor knew that Fortunato would disagree and insist on entering the vault.

## See also

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- [Devil's advocate](#)
- [Double bind](#)

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